

# NEWSREEL!

2014 Annual Report

Advocacy. Organizing. Arts. Consumer Directed Services.

A message from the Executive Director of CTD

As 2014 comes to a close, we pause to reflect on a very big year for CTD services! We expanded our staff, continued making strides in our arts projects, and made history with our partners at the 2014 Texas Disability Issues Forum. To get an idea of what we did this year, see the highlights reel inside this mailer. Then, on the reverse side, read an overview of some of the major events and initiatives that ran through our year. We hope you'll continue supporting CTD and all of the work we do into 2015.

There are many ways to get involved with us, which you can find at [www.TXDisabilities.org](http://www.TXDisabilities.org). Here are just a few:


**Subscribe** to our free monthly e-newsletter, *The Messenger*, to stay current with CTD events, advocacy opportunities, disability news, and more!

**Donate** to CTD. Your donation is your personal commitment to our cause and work. Large or small, every donation counts at CTD!

**Join** a CTD Action Group. Tell us the issues that matter most to you, and we'll keep you informed about opportunities to promote a barrier-free Texas!

**Follow** us on social media    @TxDisabilities.

For a Barrier-Free Society,



Dennis Borel  
CTD Executive Director

## Newsreel! A year at CTD

In 2014, we kept a running tally of the highlight of each week, which we've listed below. For more details and photos of our big events and ongoing efforts, see reverse.

- Jan. 2 We processed end of year donations. Former colleagues, on-going partners, new friends and supporters: it always amazes us to see how many of you believe in what we're doing and support our work. What a way to start 2014!
- Jan. 6 COO Denise Curtice interviewed candidates to join our Consumer Directed Services Division team.
- Jan. 15 We met with Community NOW! and Texas Parent to Parent to plan the West Texas Disability Resource Conference in the spring.
- Jan. 20 Film Fest Coordinator William Greer met with the founders of the Jewish Film Fest to talk shop and discuss collaboration opportunities.
- Jan. 27 January is always a big month for our Consumer Directed Services Division, as we sent W2s and other state and federal tax forms to hundreds of attendant care workers employed by our clients.
- Feb. 3 CTD advocates met with gubernatorial candidate Greg Abbott's staff to discuss disability public policy and the need for "a culture change."
- Feb. 10 Preparations continue for the West Texas Disability Resource Conference this spring in Abilene.
- Feb. 17 Double whammy with the Barbara Jordan Media Awards! CTD and Golden Arm Media's *An Interview with Dr. Temple Grandin* won a Special Contribution by an organization. Plus, Film Fest Coordinator William Greer was the subject of the award winner in the Radio category.
- Feb. 24 CTD Advocacy staff attended the Managed Care Consumers Protections work group and noted a more complete roster of regular Capital advocates than usual. Consumer protection is emerging as an important policy issue.
- Mar. 2 Texans chose their gubernatorial candidates in the primary elections this week. Both Greg Abbott's (R) and Wendy Davis' (D) staffs consult with CTD advocates on disability issues.
- Mar. 10 We began work on a grant that would provide funding for two years of a policy fellow.
- Mar. 17 Executive Director Dennis Borel and Film Fest Coordinator William Greer met up with Golden Arm Production's Alex Murphy to accept our Barbara Jordan Media Award in Denton.
- Mar. 24 CTD's Creative Writing Contest Pen 2 Paper and VSA Texas teamed up for our second open mic at Malvern Books.
- Mar. 31 CTD staff presented at the State Independent Living Council and Texas Association of Museums conferences. Both presentations were well attended and received, opening doors to further opportunities for CTD!
- Apr. 7 CTD joined successful efforts to add the topic of disability rights to the LBJ Civil Rights Summit in Austin.
- Apr. 14 At a Promoting Independence Advisory Council (PIAC) meeting, we learned that, in part because of CTD efforts, 45,000 Texans have been relocated from institutions to communities and that the effects of the Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) lawsuit are even more far-reaching than we originally thought.
- Apr. 21 We reached out to new people and populations this week. We worked with the Texas Workforce Commission and Huston-Tillotson University. Then, we spent the weekend at the ADAPT Fun\*Run, Body Shift: Crippling the Streets, and Pen 2 Paper's third open mic with VSA Texas.
- Apr. 28 West Texas Disability Resource Conference in Abilene.
- May 5 Conference wrap up after a whirlwind weekend in Abilene.
- May 12 Good news all week- we received the grant for a 2-year Development Disabilities Policy Fellowship, our first 2014 Film Fest sponsorship, and confirmation that Wendy Davis will appear in person at the Texas Disability Issues Forum in September.
- May 19 A sweeping condemnation of State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) appeared in the Sunset Commission's review of the Health and Human Services Commission, followed by a flurry of media attention on the issue.

May 26	The Consumer Directed Services Division continued training efforts with Superior HealthPlan.
June 2	Candidate for Governor Wendy Davis met with us and other advocates to discuss issues and concerns in the disability community.
June 9	Summer vacation!
June 16	Our board voted in our newest board member, John Thomas of Abilene.
June 23	While the 2015 session was a ways off, CTD's legislative team got busy this week giving testimony at the Sunset Commission hearings for the Department of Aging and Disability Services.
June 30	Along with our partners ADAPT and the Disability Voting Action Project, we made progress with our plans for the Texas Disability Issues Forum, including our first site visit to the Radisson Hotel.
July 7	The third installment of our monthly <i>Cinema Touching Disability News</i> went out this week, including an exclusive interview with <i>My Gimpy Life</i> co-creator and star Teal Sherer!
July 14	KEYE TV interviewed Director of Advocacy Chase Bearden on employment and disability in Texas.
July 21	CTD celebrated the 24th anniversary of the ADA with Pen 2 Paper and VSA Texas' 6th open mic, featuring international comedian, writer, and disability activist Stella Young!
July 28	We had our first visit from 2014 Film Fest Intern Erika Lawn.
Aug. 4	channelAustin signed on to live stream and broadcast the Texas Disability Issues Forum. While they were here, they agreed to get involved in the Film Fest, too.
Aug. 11	Candidate for Lt. Gov. Leticia Van de Putte confirmed her attendance to the Texas Disability Issues Forum!
Aug. 18	Our advocacy staff interviewed candidates this week for our DD public policy fellowship.
Aug. 25	CTD officially offered our DD public policy fellowship to Chris Masey. He accepted!
Sept. 1	CTD staff ruled the media this weekend: Editor Susie Angel filmed a scene for a parody of Greg Abbott's garage ad; Peter Sagal mentioned William Greer & the Boston Marathon on <i>The Moth Radio Hour</i> ; and Dennis Borel attended the premiere of short film <i>Mother</i> with Darlene Cates, who gave a nod to CTD.
Sept. 8	Our Consumer Directed Services Division got a boost this week, with a rush of new clients and a two-day training seminar with the Department of Aging and Disability Services.
Sept. 15	CTD and our partners got a media boost this week at our pre-Texas Disability Issues Forum press conference. Newspapers, TV stations, and political bloggers from across the state picked us up!
Sept. 22	Made history with the Texas Disability Issues Forum!
Sept. 29	Two new employees joined CTD this week: we welcome Chris Masey as our DD public policy fellow and Erin Jones as the newest member of the CDS team.
Oct. 6	We met with <i>Austin Chronicle</i> staff to address a slanted article about State Supported Living Centers.
Oct. 13	The 11th Annual Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival was a huge hit!
Oct. 20	The Pen 2 Paper Creative Writing Contest and VSA Texas were pleased to bring author (and CTD member) Joyce Ann Tepley to Austin for an author signing and reading from her first book.
Oct. 27	Students from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired EXIT Program stopped by CTD to learn about what we do here- advocacy, organizing, the Film Fest, and more!
Nov. 3	The offices of Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General turned over, as did a number of legislative seats. This will play into our 2015 legislative plans. A transformative election, indeed!
Nov. 10	Our DD Public Policy Fellow Chris Masey conducted his first Project Advisory Committee meeting this week. Leaders from a cross-section of disability groups and interests attended to weigh in on our plans and progress for this grant. Thanks to our PAC members for their time and enthusiasm!
Nov. 17	The CTD Board met to review CTD's draft legislative agenda, including 29 issues and participation in a lawsuit on the restoration of rights for a person under guardianship.
Nov. 24	Planning began for Capital Day 2015!
Dec. 1	We organized consumer tests of new accessible voting machines from Hart Intercivic.
Dec. 8	Dennis Borel served as a panelist at the Discovering Cures Conference for the biotech industry.
Dec. 15	Happy holidays to all! Looking forward to a nice break and to 2015!

## Advocacy

Remember interim years, the even-numbered years when the Texas Legislature does not meet? A time when advocacy demands were low, and the year was less frenetic? Those days are history. Now it's advocacy, all year, every year, and the 2014 "interim" was no different.

CTD went directly to policymakers. Among the most important exchanges were recommendations and testimony to the Texas Sunset Commission, which this year studied health and human services agencies. CTD sits on two major advisory councils: Promoting Independence Advisory Council and the State Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Committee. Both of these considered and approved significant recommendations to the Legislature. We were also invited to testify to the House Human Services Committee and to provide major input to the State Capitol Accessibility project. As part of the Community First Choice Implementation Committee, CTD promoted an effective roll-out with a functional needs assessment.

A rare advocacy opportunity came via the candidacies of Attorney General Greg Abbott and Senator Wendy Davis for governor. Both campaigns reached out to CTD and partners to discuss disability issues. Major statewide media featured or quoted CTD and referenced our positions during the gubernatorial campaigns. Combined with the Texas Disability Issues Forum, these activities elevated disability issues to a level never before seen in statewide elections.

Concurrently, CTD trained and educated others at settings as diverse as

- state and national labor union conferences in Washington D.C. and San Antonio
- the Texas Association of Museums annual conference in Lubbock
- large disability meetings like the State Independent Living Council in Corpus Christi and Volar CIL's Our Lives conference in El Paso
- the West Texas Disability Resource Conference
- a visit from students of the Texas School of the Blind & Visually Impaired EXIT program (see below).



## West Texas Disability Resource Conference

May 2-3, 2014 | Abilene, TX



With our partners Community NOW! and Texas Parent to Parent, CTD trekked to Abilene for the West Texas Disability Resource Conference in May.

Sixty-five people attended our Friday night Reception and participated in our Interactive Advocacy Exercise. For this activity, we placed attendees into small groups and gave each one a brief fact sheet on an issue currently facing the disability community. The groups practiced speaking about their issue with ten mock legislators, played by organizers and special guests. This gave attendees a chance to think about delivering their message in a variety of situations. This exercise was one of the most talked about portions of the conference!

Saturday, we kicked off the event with a packed house of over 100 attendees and a lively keynote from guest speaker and local leader John Thomas. Presentations and workshops followed throughout the day, and during lunch, attendees enjoyed the true-life stories of two young men with disabilities who solved problems often faced by the disability community and have advocated for change.



*David Chapple recounts his nursing home experience.*

Many local participants reported that this was their first conference, and we hope it won't be their last! CTD looks forward to building upon the relationships we made with the folks there!

CTD began preparing for the 2015 legislative session by building our priorities and organizing with others. Raising community attendant wages is at the top of our legislative agenda. This will be the focus of our 2015 Capital Day (preparations are already underway!). We've also made major commitments to work groups focusing on guardianship and consumer protections. We'll continue our close involvement with the Texas Forward coalition to address state budget issues. CTD will initiate and/or be a principal advocate on many other issues including accessible parking, ASL access, dental access, and palliative care.



*DD Policy Fellow Chris Masey discusses plans for self-advocate training and original research with Project Advisory Committee member Gerard Jimenez and TCDD's Susan Mihalik.*

In addition to our tried and true advocacy team and methods, we've gained some major assets to help us make progress

on our 2015 priorities. Thanks to a grant from the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, CTD has added Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow Chris Masey (see above) to our advocacy team. And as we close the year, we're working with our creative partner Golden Arm Media to incorporate video into more of our member communications.

**Presentation Highlights**

- Jan. 11: **CDS presentation** at Superior HealthPlan
- March 31: **The Future of Advocacy!** at BEACH Annual SILC Conference
- April 30: **Disability Advocacy Overview** at Huston-Tillotson University
- May 1: **CDS presentation** at Amerigroup
- May 6: **Non-Traditional Partnerships** panel at CWA Legislative & Movement Building Conference (representing Texas Forward)
- Aug. 1: **Movement Building** panel at CWA Public, Healthcare & Education Workers Conference
- Oct. 30: **Nothing About Us Without Us** at Our Lives Conference
- Dec. 10: **Access to Biologics & Biosimilars** at Discovering Cures Conference

**Texas Disability Issues Forum**  
September 24, 2014 | Austin, TX



In an effort to bring attention to disability issues and to educate the public, a coalition of advocacy groups including CTD organized the Texas Disability Issues Forum (TDIF) on September 24, 2014 in Austin. For the first time in the state's history, major party candidates for the offices of Governor, Lt. Governor, and Attorney General were invited to a disability-focused event to address the public policy concerns of this community. In addition, organizers sent an 18-question survey to each of the invited candidates in order to learn about their stance on disability issues.

Each of the Democratic candidates-- Senator Wendy Davis for Governor, Senator Leticia Van de Putte for Lt. Governor, and Sam Houston for Attorney General-- participated and spoke with independent moderator Ben Philpott about their disability issue platforms. While the Forum was strictly non-partisan, we were disappointed that the Republican candidates (who all won their races)-- Attorney General Greg Abbott for Governor, Senator Dan Patrick for Lt. Governor, and Senator Ken Paxton for Attorney General-- did not attend. Davis, Van de Putte, Houston, and Abbott returned the survey, which is still available at [bit.ly/TxDIF](http://bit.ly/TxDIF).



*Senator Wendy Davis with TDIF organizers Bob Kafka (ADAPT) and Chase Bearden (CTD). Photo: Miguel Gutierrez Jr., Austin American-Statesman.*



CTD and our partners were thrilled with the turnout at the event. Over 300 people from all over the state attended in person (see left), and still others tuned in to the Forum on local television and via live stream (provided by channelAustin). With extensive media coverage and the support of fifty co-host disability organizations, we succeeded in boosting public awareness of disability issues this election cycle.

## Important Direct Services to Consumers

The CTD/ Consumer Directed Services Division, our in-house Financial Management Services Agency (FMSA), grew internally and as a business. We were happy to add Rosie Williams and Erin Jones to the CDS team. Our CDS staffers attended trainings and meetings with partners in order to keep up with state requirements for FMSAs and improve our service delivery. We're already seeing progress, as we increased our consumer base to 311.

## Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival



2014 marked the 11th year for our annual Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival. We returned to the newly renovated Alamo Drafthouse South Lamar for two big nights of food, fun, and of course, great cinema!

As always, we began our program both nights with our international Short Film Competition. We received over 100 entries from around the world! Congratulations to *Stumped*, Documentary Division Grand Prize winner, and *A Strange Man*, audience favorite and Narrative Division Grand Prize winner.

Friday night, co-hosted by VSA Texas and the Texas Physical Therapy Association, our feature film was *Musical Chairs* (2011) - a story of romance, rehabilitation, and wheelchair ballroom dancing! Featuring actors and dancers with and without disabilities and directed by award-winning filmmaker Susan Seidelman, *Musical Chairs* is about the strength of the human spirit, love, and compassion in the face of life's adversities. In conjunction with Friday's feature film, Austin's own mixed ability dance project Body Shift kicked off the Festival with a site-specific piece outside the Drafthouse entrance (see right).



Body Shift dancers, from left: Misty Pride, Juan Munoz, Kate Cleary, Kathey Ferland, Michelle Garza



Saturday, the audience enjoyed the first episode of award winning web comedy series *My Gimp Life*. The series is loosely based on creator and star Teal Sherer's real life adventures as a disabled actor navigating Hollywood in a wheelchair. Top billing went to the critically acclaimed *The Little Tin Man* (2013, see left). In this film, a struggling actor with dwarfism (newcomer Aaron Beelner) grows tired of being typecast and overlooked for "bigger" roles. With the help of his friends, he sets out to audition for the part of the Tin Man in Martin Scorsese's fictional remake of *The Wizard of Oz*.

We were thrilled that Aaron traveled to Austin from his home in Atlanta to support CTD at the Fest! He gave interviews to local media (see right), introduced his film, auctioned off a signed poster and DVD of *The Little Tin Man*, and held a lively Q&A with the audience. While we had to vacate the theater at 10 pm, audience members continued their conversations with Aaron at our after party at the High Ball.



Dave Dauber of *The Gene and Dave Show* interviews Aaron Beelner at the Alamo Drafthouse.

Read more about this year's Festival at [www.CTDFilmFest.org](http://www.CTDFilmFest.org)! Want to keep up with Cinema Touching Disability throughout the year? Sign up for our free monthly Film Fest e-newsletter, a 2014 addition to Cinema Touching Disability!

## Pen 2 Paper Creative Writing Contest



CTD celebrated the 5th year of our annual creative writing contest in 2014. We were thrilled to receive over sixty fantastic entries from across the country and around the world. In the Grand Prize winning entry, *Riding, Falling* by Tennessee-based Sandy Hiortdahl, two

prosthetics-users converse about their outlook on life and disability. We were also pleased to award prizes to the following division winners:

- Fiction: *Everyday Imperatives*, by Rebekah Orton
- Non Fiction: *In Defense of the Ice Bucket Challenge*, by John Florio
- Poetry: *I Want One*, by Cathy Bryant

Read these and other outstanding entries at [www.TXDisabilities.org/Pen-2-Paper](http://www.TXDisabilities.org/Pen-2-Paper)

Pen 2 Paper embarked on another development this year, with the Lion & the Pirate inclusive open mic series. Since February, we've met once a month for this event, co-presented by VSA Texas and hosted at Malvern Books (whose unofficial mascots lend the series its name). Local performers have come to sing, dance, read poetry, tell stories, do stand up comedy, show photos, and present some art that defies genre description! We've also brought in some exciting guests.

Australian activist and comedienne Stella Young stopped by this summer to perform. More recently, Dallas author and Pen 2 Paper judge Joyce Ann Tepley came down to read from her latest collect of non-fiction, *Thriving Through It-- How They Do It*.

We've had a blast, and we hope you'll join us to see who turns up in 2015!



Stella Young (center) with Pen 2 Paper co-coordinators Susie Angel and Laura Perna

## In the News

- April 8: *Disability Rights Advocates Get Speaker at Civil Rights Summit*. KEYE.
- May 29: *Commission reopens debate over supported living center closure*. Houston Chronicle.
- Sept. 14: *For advocates, Abbott's policy more important than his disability*. Houston Chronicle.
- Sept. 24: *Top Texas Democratic candidates address disabled voters*. Austin American-Statesman.
- Oct. 13: *Op-ed: Look Beyond the Wheelchairs*. TribTalk.
- Oct. 17: *Weekend Festival Focuses on Life with Disabilities*. KXAN. (see below)
- Nov. 7: *Disability Group Plans Meeting with Governor-Elect Abbott*. TWC News Austin.



William Greer and Aaron Beelner talk about the Film Festival on KXAN News Today.

CTD appeared in the media over sixty times in 2014! Review all of this year's coverage at [www.TXDisabilities.org](http://www.TXDisabilities.org)

## Awards and Recognition

- Dennis Borel was appointed to the state **Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Committee**.
- *Blind Marathoner*, a radio story about William Greer by KUT reporter Matt Largey, earned a Barbara Jordan Media Award and a national **Edward R. Murrow Award** in Sports Reporting.
- Last spring, CTD and Golden Arm Media filmed *An Interview with Dr. Temple Grandin*, which we premiered at the 2013 Film Festival. We learned early this year that the video collaboration won a 2013 **Barbara Jordan Media Award** in the Special Contribution category.



Alex Murphy of Golden Arm Media, William Greer, Dennis Borel at the Barbara Jordan Media Awards ceremony.

## Call to Action!

In the 84th Legislature, it's all about community integration, civil rights, adequate health care, and opportunity. We can make this a better state and world-- fairer, more accessible, and more integrated.

Stay involved with CTD throughout this session, and let's do it together. View our full legislative agenda and learn about opportunities for taking action at

[www.TXDisabilities.org/Advocacy](http://www.TXDisabilities.org/Advocacy)



# Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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@TXDisabilities

## Board of Directors

CTD's Board reflects the population of Texas in terms of types of disability, geographic representation, ethnicity, and income level.

### Executive Committee

President: Rodney Hanneman\*  
Vice President: Crystal Lyons\* \*\*  
Secretary: Judy Telge  
Treasurer: Frank Santos

### At Large Members

Region 1: John Thomas\* \*\*  
Region 2: John Curnutt\*  
Region 3: Regina Blye\*  
Region 4: Darrell Wilson\*  
Region 5: Marshall Burns\*  
Region 6: Francis Key\*  
Region 7: Gene Whitten-Lege  
Region 8: Jet Schuler

## Staff

Executive Director: Dennis Borel  
Director of Advocacy: Chase Bearden\*  
Chief Operations Officer: Denise Curtice  
Director of Communications: Laura Perna  
Film Festival Coordinator: William Greer\*  
Editor/Researcher: Susie Angel\*  
CDS Payroll: Dyanna Matthews\*, Rosie Williams  
CDS Claims Analyst: Hup Holland\*, Erin Jones  
Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow\*: Chris Masey\*\*

\* Person with a disability

\*\* Parent of a child with a disability



TEXAS COUNCIL for  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

*\*Financial Support for the CTD  
Developmental Disabilities Policy  
Fellowship is provided by the Texas  
Council for Developmental Disabilities, with Federal funds\* made  
available by the United States Department of Health and Human  
Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. \*\$67,500  
(71%) DD funds; \$27,011 (29%) non-federal resources.*

CTD is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with Federal Tax ID #74-2071160. CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefitting Texans with all disabilities of all ages. CTD is a membership organization controlled by people with disabilities.