



August 26, 2011

Dear AAIDD Leaders, Members, and Friends:

I am extremely honored and humbled to serve you as the 135th President of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This is the first in a series of letters to the membership that I intend to send during my term as President. I would also love to hear from you with ideas, suggestions, or recommendations on ways to strengthen the Association, move the field forward, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. My email address is: sgomez@epmi.org. My telephone number is: 337-309-7064.

We had a very successful and well-attended conference in St. Paul, Minnesota in June of this year. Over 500 people from around the world gathered to learn about and explore this notion of Inclusive Communities. It was my intent to carry this theme forward throughout my Presidency. To that end, I have appointed a Task Force, chaired by Dr. Angela Novak-Amado, that will sponsor a number of training opportunities through a variety of media on inclusion. Stay tuned for webinars, printed information on the website, ongoing dialogue on our Facebook page, and short clips on our YouTube channel on topics such as social inclusion, inclusion in the workplace, inclusion in faith communities, using technology to support inclusion, inclusion in schools, supporting social relationships, and individualized supports. If you can think of any other topic regarding inclusion that you would like to learn more about, please don't hesitate to contact me.

We have a number of chapters, regions, task forces, special interest groups, divisions, and action groups that further the work of AAIDD. If you are not involved in any of these and want to be please contact me, and I will personally find a place for you to become engaged.

AAIDD currently has five statements posted on our website on the position of the Association on aversive procedures, caring at end of life, environmental health, growth attenuation, and professional conduct. I have appointed a task force—chaired by Peter J. Smith of Illinois—that is charged with reviewing these policies to determine their relevance and, if necessary, revise. I invite you to review them and send any recommendations for revisions to me.

AAIDD, with the Arc of the United States, also engages in a process to develop new and periodically revise current joint position statements. I have asked AAIDD members Barbara Mazzella from Massachusetts, Susan Palmer from Kansas, and Denis Keyes from South Carolina to represent AAIDD on the joint Arc/AAIDD workgroup. I invite you to review the

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joint position statements posted on our website and to send any recommendations you have for revisions to me.

Finally, I would like to thank you for being a member of AAIDD that, since 1876, has been providing worldwide leadership in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. We're a powerful community of leaders with a strong voice and important mission and I thank you for being a part of that. I would also ask you to share the importance of our mission with other professionals working to the field and encourage them to join us. I look forward to keeping in touch with you in future letters and hearing from you on issues that affect our association and impact our field.

Thank You!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sharon Gomez'.

Sharon Gomez, FAAIDD
President, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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