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Center for Community Inclusion Director Named

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Maine Perspective, "Center for Community Inclusion Director Named" (1992). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 732.

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Maine Perspective

A PUBLICATION
FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF
MAINE

VOL. 4, NO. 5
OCTOBER 2, 1992

Center for Community Inclusion Director Named

A longtime educator and advocate for people with developmental disabilities has been named director of the Center for Community Inclusion at the University of Maine, a statewide center for training, research and technical assistance for the estimated 18,300 Maine people with developmental disabilities.

Lucille Zeph, associate professor of education at UM, becomes the first director of the federally funded Center.

"Nationally recognized for her work in the field of developmental disabilities, Lu Zeph is an outstanding choice to lead the Center. As director, Dr. Zeph combines an understanding of the challenges facing individuals with developmental disabilities," said Judith Bailey, interim vice president for Research and Public Service, who oversees the new Center.

The Center, a University Affiliated Program, is part of a nationwide network of more than 45 programs designated as UAPs by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities. With offices at UM, the Center collaborates with existing networks in Maine, particularly those focusing on underserved rural communities. Collaborating state and community agencies include the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Department of Education, Eastern Maine Medical Center, the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, Maine Advocacy Services, Maine Consumer Information and Technology Exchange, and Maine Parent Federation.

Section of Bike Path to Undergo Construction

Beginning next month, a 2,000-foot section of the Bike Path that stretches from Old Town to Orono through the University of Maine will be unusable until spring as construction starts on a new sewer line.

The new pipeline for Old Town will be installed from the pump station off College Avenue through fields and along a power line adjacent to the J. Franklin Witter Center. It then will follow a route parallel to Stillwater Avenue, bisecting the Bike Path twice before falling on 2,000 feet of the Path at the Perkins Avenue entrance in Old Town.

The Bike Path beginning at the Civil Defense Shelter will remain intact, except for one small section where the pipeline will cross, according to Old Town officials. Pedestrians and bicyclists who traditionally use the Perkins Avenue entrance of the Bike Path will be most inconvenienced.

It is estimated that construction will reach the Perkins Avenue end of the Bike Path by mid-October and will be completed by year's end. Repaving of the reconstructed section of Bike Path will take place next spring.

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"Our role is to provide leadership throughout the state that will result in an improved quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities," said Zeph, who also serves as an appointee of the governor on the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council and the Commissioner's Consensus Panel of the Maine Department of Mental Health and Retardation.

The Center, established in March with a \$550,000 three-year federal grant, concentrates on self-determination and advocacy, early intervention and family support, inclusive education, community living, and technology for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Zeph has served as acting director since March.

Zeph has been a faculty member in the College of Education since 1979, with additional responsibilities as coordinator of the graduate concentration in severe and multiple disabilities. Before coming to UM, Zeph served as principal and director of Children's Opportunity Center in Brewer, directing a comprehensive educational program for students with moderate and severe disabilities.

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She has been director since 1988 of the LEARNS project, a statewide cooperative venture between the University and the state Department of Education to promote inclusive schools for children with disabilities. LEARNS (Local Education for All in Neighborhood Schools) now will be administered by the Center for Community Inclusion. The project provides technical assistance, staff development and research to help Maine school districts develop a plan to educate all children in regular classrooms.

Eight school districts in central Maine now have model programs of inclusive education for all children and requests for assistance have come from at least 14 more school systems this year, Zeph notes. "The whole idea of inclusive schools is that you don't take children with developmental disabilities out of the regular classroom to begin with. You do this by providing the support they need in the regular classroom," Zeph says.

The Center also plans collaborations with UM's School of Social Work to train social workers to work with families of children with disabilities and with the College of Education to train professionals to help adolescents with disabilities move from school to postsecondary education, work, and adult living alternatives.

Interdisciplinary training programs of the Center now involve

14 separate departments and units on campus. Applied research projects getting under way this year include a study of the differences in the attitudes of teachers who work with children with disabilities. A joint study with the California Research Institute is looking at how children's so-called "individual education plans" change when they go from a segregated classroom to a regular classroom.

"We're finding that kids who before were never perceived as capable of active learning in segregated environments begin to have much higher expectations of themselves in the regular classroom. We have found significant changes in individual student goals once they are in the regular classroom," Zeph said.

New projects of the Center include statewide training and technical assistance for parents and professionals in the area of facilitated communication - the term used for a new method that enables people without speech to communicate with letterboard or keyboard technology.

The initial grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provided \$150,000 for the Center's first year of operation, and an additional \$200,000 for each of the following two years. The Center then will be eligible to receive federal funds in three-year cycles at a minimum of \$200,000 per year. ▲

Bike Path *continued from page 1*

Installation of the pipeline will require widening the clearing approximately 20 feet on either side of the Bike Path along the 2,000-foot section off Perkins Avenue. There the Bike Path runs along the old Veazie Railroad bed through a low-lying section of University Forest.

According to project engineers from James W. Sewell Co., Old Town, and Old Town officials, the clearing needed to install the pipeline will be kept to a minimum. Officials estimate that eight to 10 large pines will have to be cut to make way for the pipeline, with logs to be used by the University. A clogged culvert that accounts for much of the water in the low-lying area will be cleared and, once the pipeline installation is complete, the Bike Path will be reconstructed on an improved gravel bed.

The project received approval from the Department of Environmental Protection Sept. 18.

Regeneration of the area in the spring will first involve reseeding with grass. Old Town officials have been in touch with members of UM's landscape horticulture faculty to have students design the reclamation project.

"We've done our best to minimize the amount of disruption that will occur," according to Old Town Manager Dave Cole. "Most of the Bike Path will be operable and usable through the duration of the project. And that section that will be disturbed will be reconstructed and made better.

"There will be some loss of vegetation that cannot be immediately restored, but we will do our best to restore natural vegetation. When the project is done, hopefully we'll have a better Bike Path and a nice area to walk through," Cole said.

The installation of 11,900 feet of sewer line was funded under the Maine Jobs Bond that requires the project to be under construction by mid-October. The \$856,000 project will

allow Old Town to serve Stillwater, which now has its sewage pumped to Orono's sewer treatment facility at a cost of almost \$70,000 annually to Old Town.

Old Town's sewer treatment plant, with a capacity of 1.7 million gallons per day, is now treating only 1 million gallons, Cole said. The new sewer line will add an additional 300,000 gallons.

The sewer project has been on the drawing board for almost a decade. In 1983, Old Town first commissioned a feasibility study of the project. At that time, four different routes were considered: one that would follow College and Stillwater avenues, two that would be installed east toward the Stillwater River, and the present route. All but the latter were abandoned because of increased pumping costs, excessive distances, and proximity to the UM campus.

"This was the compromise route most feasible for the city and University," according to Steve Murray, project manager with Sewell. "We realize the Bike Path is fairly heavily used, in addition to its aesthetic features. That's why we stayed off the path, paralleling it as much as possible." ▲

