

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Conference Aims to Help Teens with Disabilities Transition to Adulthood**

BISMARCK, N.D. – “Nothing About Us, Without Us” is this year's theme for the North Dakota Youth Transition Conference July 10-11, 2011, at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. The conference will feature presentations for teens with disabilities and their parents on various topics promoting successful transition planning to adulthood.

The first keynote presentation will feature Youth M.O.V.E. (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) National at 1:15 p.m. on July 10. This youth-led national organization advocates for youth rights in mental health and other systems that serve them including juvenile justice, education, and child welfare.

The second day of the conference will feature the nationally recognized CLIMB Theatre starting at 8:30 a.m. Theatre artists write, produce and present plays and drama classes on topics like bullying, self-control, respect, accepting differences, friendship, and drug prevention.

Other Monday afternoon events include a “career dash” that allows students to meet briefly with area employers and business leaders to explore employment opportunities. There will also be a resource roundup for parents, as well as breakout sessions focusing on vocational rehabilitation, transition to independence program, Individual Education Planning (IEPs), and disability self-disclosure.

Officials planning the conference said participants will gain a better understanding of how they can become better advocates for themselves by networking with peers and understanding what supports and services are available to help them in future planning.

The conference is sponsored by ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, ND Department of Public Instruction, ND Client Assistance Program, and the ND Department of Human Services' Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

To register for the conference, call 701-222-1223 or toll-free 1-800-484-2263. Registration accepted at the door. Registration and lodging scholarships may be available. Pre-registration deadline is July 8, 2011.

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