



Introduction to Inclusive Higher Education

National Down Syndrome Congress Convention
July 22, 2023

Presented by

Stephanie Smith Lee, National Down Syndrome Congress
Debra Hart and Cate Weir, Think College
Lizanne Pando, Parent/Professional
Jenna Pando, Student

Stephanie Smith Lee

Senior Policy Advisor for the
**National Down Syndrome
Congress**



Agenda

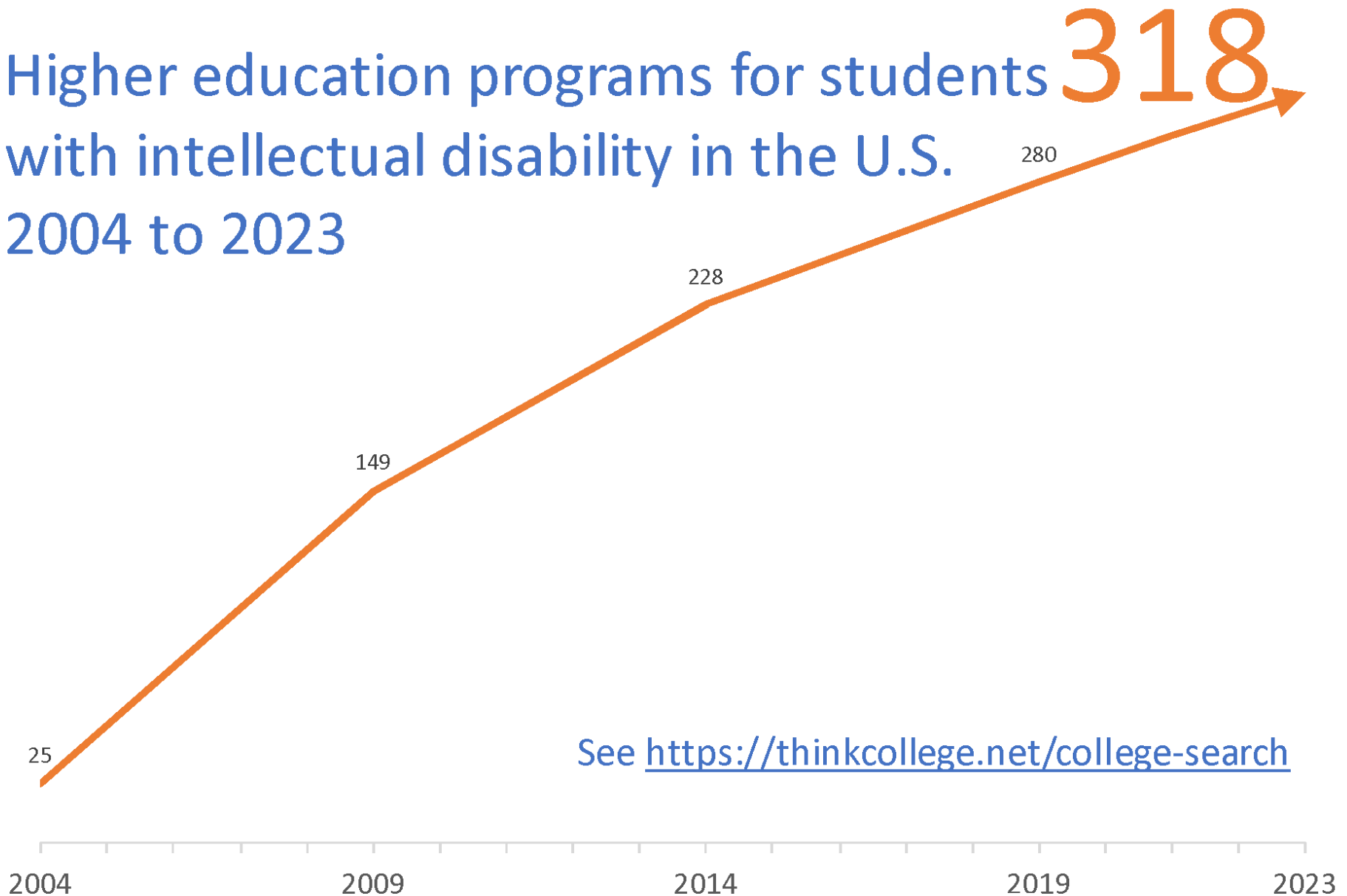
- Background and Key Features: Stephanie Smith Lee
- Think College Role, Evaluation & Outcomes: Debra Hart
- Finding the Right Fit and Paying for College: Cate Weir
- Preparing Students with Down Syndrome for Success in College: Lizanne Pando
- The Student Experience: Jenna Pando
- Resources and Q & A

Opening the Doors to College!

- Family and student advocacy key to new and increased opportunities!
- Advocacy led to Higher Education Act changes in 2008
- Now over 300 college programs!



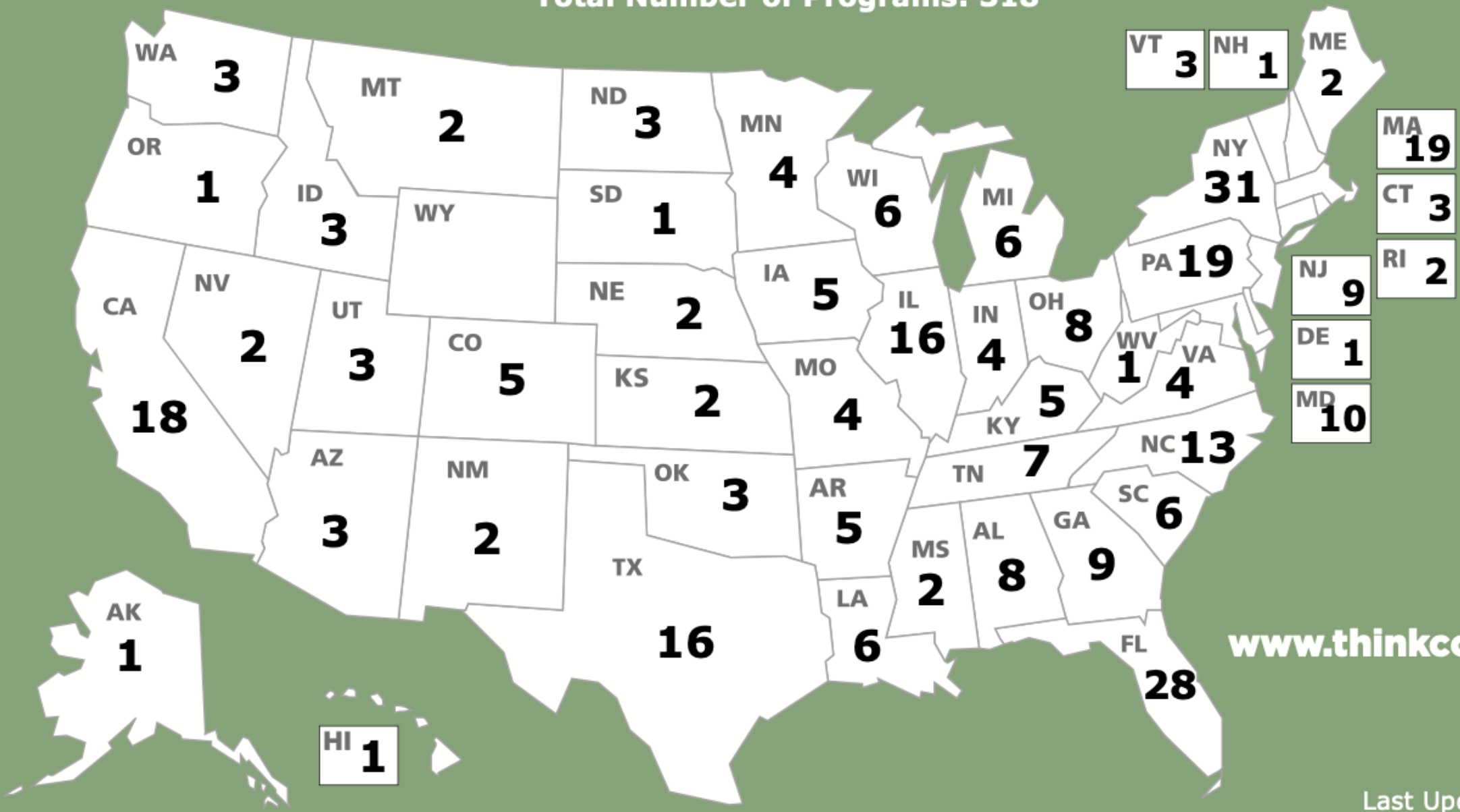
Higher education programs for students with intellectual disability in the U.S. 2004 to 2023



See <https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

College Options for Students with Intellectual Disability, May 2023

Total Number of Programs: 318



Think College

www.thinkcollege.net

Last Updated: 3/23/23



Higher Education Act of 2008

- Defined the **Comprehensive Transition Program**
- Provides access to **federal financial aid**
- Provides funding for model demonstration programs – (TPSID) and the **National Coordinating Center**
- Requires development of **model accreditation standards** for college programs
- Supports **data collection** from federally funded model programs

Some Key Features of College Programs

- Different admissions process & requirements
- Accept students who are non-degree seeking
- Vary in length from 2 years to 4 years
- Vary in level of inclusion
- Students earn a certificate at the end
- May offer federal student aid (not loans)





Student Experience

- Enrolling in college courses for audit and sometimes for credit
- Internships/work study
- Paid jobs (on/off campus)
- Campus Life/Organizations
- Learning to live independently

Academics

- Students may enroll in **college courses** to audit and sometimes for credit.
- If auditing, **modifications** are allowed.
- **Tutoring** services are often available.
- Students may have **specialized classes** just for students in program.





Extracurricular Activities

- Participating in **campus organizations**
- **Social support** from peer mentors
- Developing **independence** on campus
- At many campuses:
 - Student government
 - Greek life
 - Intramural Sports

Employment

- **Career development** activities
- **Internships/work** study
- **Paid jobs** on & off campus
- **Transition** to paid work after graduation



Housing

- **Dorms/On-Campus Housing**

- Sometimes with another student in the program
- Sometimes with a student outside of the program
- Supports based on the needs of students
- Some expectation for independent skills is typical

- **Off-Campus Housing**

- A house or apartment complex with other students in the program



Debra Hart

Co-Director of
Think College National Coordinating Center
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts, Boston





Federally funded since 2010 to provide coordination, training and technical assistance to any college or university who wants to establish or improve postsecondary education opportunities to students with intellectual disability on their campus.

www.thinkcollege.net

*College
options for
people with
intellectual
disability*



 COLLEGE SEARCH

 RESOURCE LIBRARY

 INNOVATION EXCHANGE

 WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE

The Think College Annual TPSID Report

**REPORT IS NOW
AVAILABLE!**



Access to Housing

60%

of ALL students in TPSID programs lived in campus or IHE-affiliated housing.

*84% lived in **inclusive** housing (available to all students).

291 (59%) students had
At least one paid
position while in their
program

50% of
employed
students **never**
had a paid job
before entering
the TPSID

Think Higher. Think College.
for Students with Intellectual Disability



thinkhighered.net



Think Higher. Think College.

A Public Awareness Campaign designed to build awareness and expand access to college for students with intellectual disability.

Think College Resources for Families

Resources for families on website:
<https://thinkcollege.net/family-resources>

Think College Learn module for families:
<https://thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn/families-0>

Scholarships for Students with ID:
https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/HTTC11_Scholarships_R.pdf

Families Think College Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1065141630294756>



Cate Weir, M.Ed.

Program Director, Think College
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts
Boston

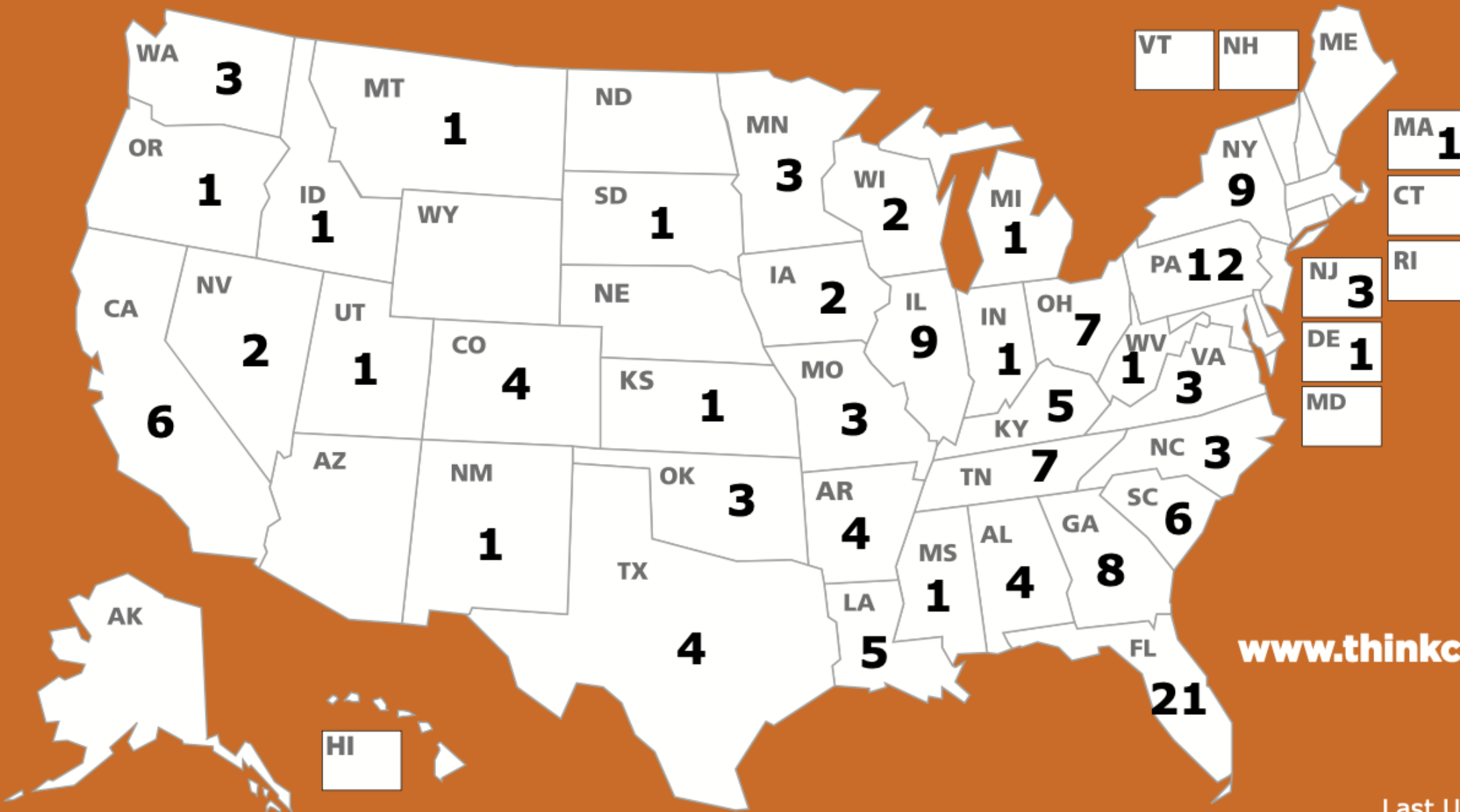


Federal Financial Aid (Grants & Work Study, not Loans)

- Student must meet definition of intellectual disability (ID)
- Student must be enrolled in approved Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)
- IHEs must apply to US ED for CTP approval
 - For list of approved programs:
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/intellectual-disabilities>
- Family must fill out FAFSA and meet financial need requirements

Approved Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Programs

May 2023: 151 currently operating



Think College

www.thinkcollege.net

Last Updated: 5/30/23

<https://thinkcollege.net/think-college-learn/families/families-paying-college>

Paying for College

- **ABLE Accounts**
- **Scholarships**
- **Federal and state support programs**, such as Vocational Rehabilitation or Community Services
- **Federal Financial Aid** (grants, but not loans).



Steps in the college search

Know the options



```
graph TD; A[Know the options] --> B[Plan and conduct your search]; B --> C[Dig deeper and ask questions]; C --> D[Visit and apply];
```

Plan and conduct your search

Dig deeper and ask questions

Visit and apply

Use Think College Search to view options



The only directory of programs for
students with intellectual disability

FAVORITES

Click "♥ save" to add programs to your favorites. You can then save, compare and download basic information for each one. See FAQ: [How do I save and compare programs?](#)

RECENTLY ADDED

- [Alabama A&M University](#)
- [Arkansas State University](#)
- [Bridgewater State University \(MA\)](#)
- [Gwynedd Mercy University \(PA\)](#)
- [University of Oklahoma](#)
- [Texas A&M University](#)

SEARCH

[CLEAR](#)

Program or Keyword

[SHOW ALL](#)

LOCATION

- Alabama (7)
- Alaska (1)
- Arizona (2)
- Show more states

PROGRAM FEATURES

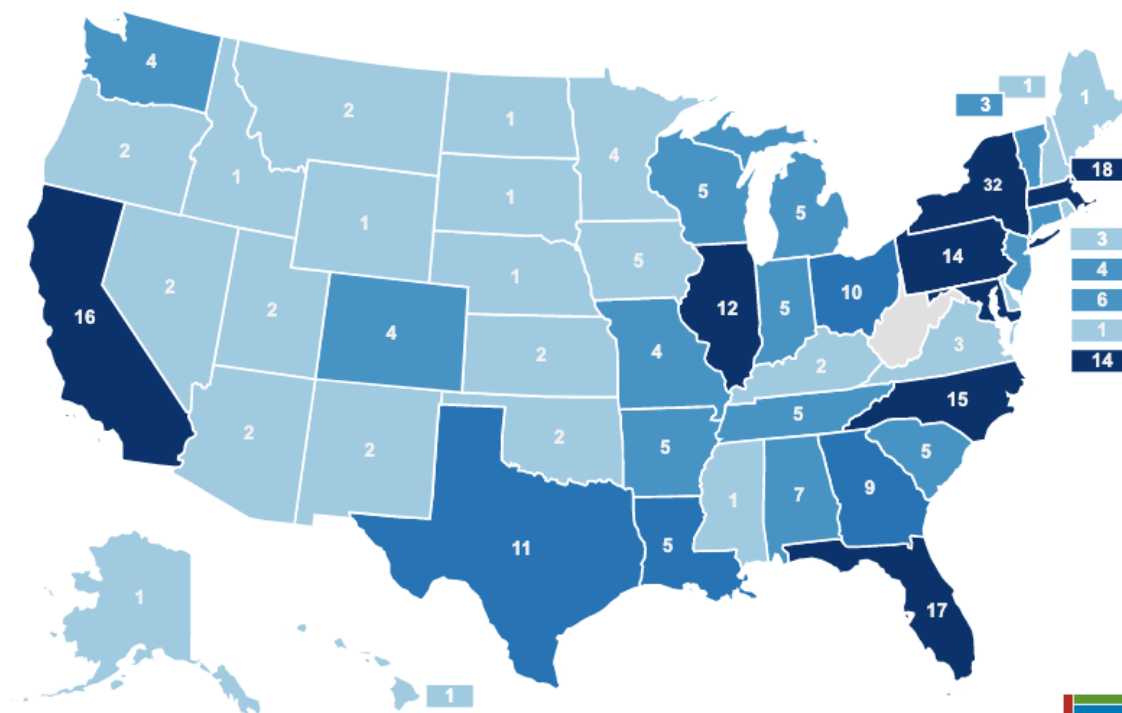
- Serves Students in High School *
- Offers Financial Aid
- Offers Housing
- Program not limited by student's high school district

Find the College that is right for you!

This directory includes information on [279](#) college programs for students with intellectual disability. You can search by program name, location, and other keywords. "Advanced Filters" offer more options to narrow your search.

Review these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for answers to some general questions on college programs, how we gather the information in the directory, and how to use the features of College Search.

Once you have located colleges you are interested in, download the [How To Think College Guide to Conducting a College Search \[PDF\]](#). It provides you with the right questions to ask in order to get the answers you need about each program on your list. The How To guide is also [available in Spanish](#).

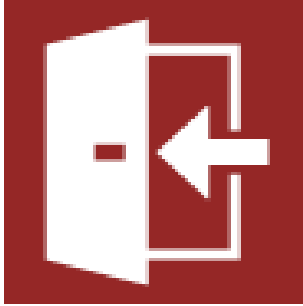


NUMBER OF PROGRAMS



[How To Think College Guide to Conducting a College Search \[PDF\]](https://thinkcollege.net/college-search)

<https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>



Admission



Fees, Tuition &
Financial Aid



Inclusion on
Campus



Academics



Housing



Supports



Program
Administration



Communication
with Parents



Career
Development &
Employment



Program
Outcomes



Visit and apply!

Visit your top choices to see the campus and meet the staff, faculty, and students.

Visit the disability services office to see how involved that office is with the program.

Connect with alumni and their families to learn about their experiences at college and what they're doing now.

Apply!

Dr. Lizanne Pando, Ed.D.

- Special Needs Advocate
- Public Speaker
- Researcher
- Author
- LizannePando@gmail.com



Preparing Students with Down Syndrome for Success in College

Dr. Lizanne Pando, Ed.D.



What supports students in Higher Education with Down syndrome reach their academic, social and independent living goals?

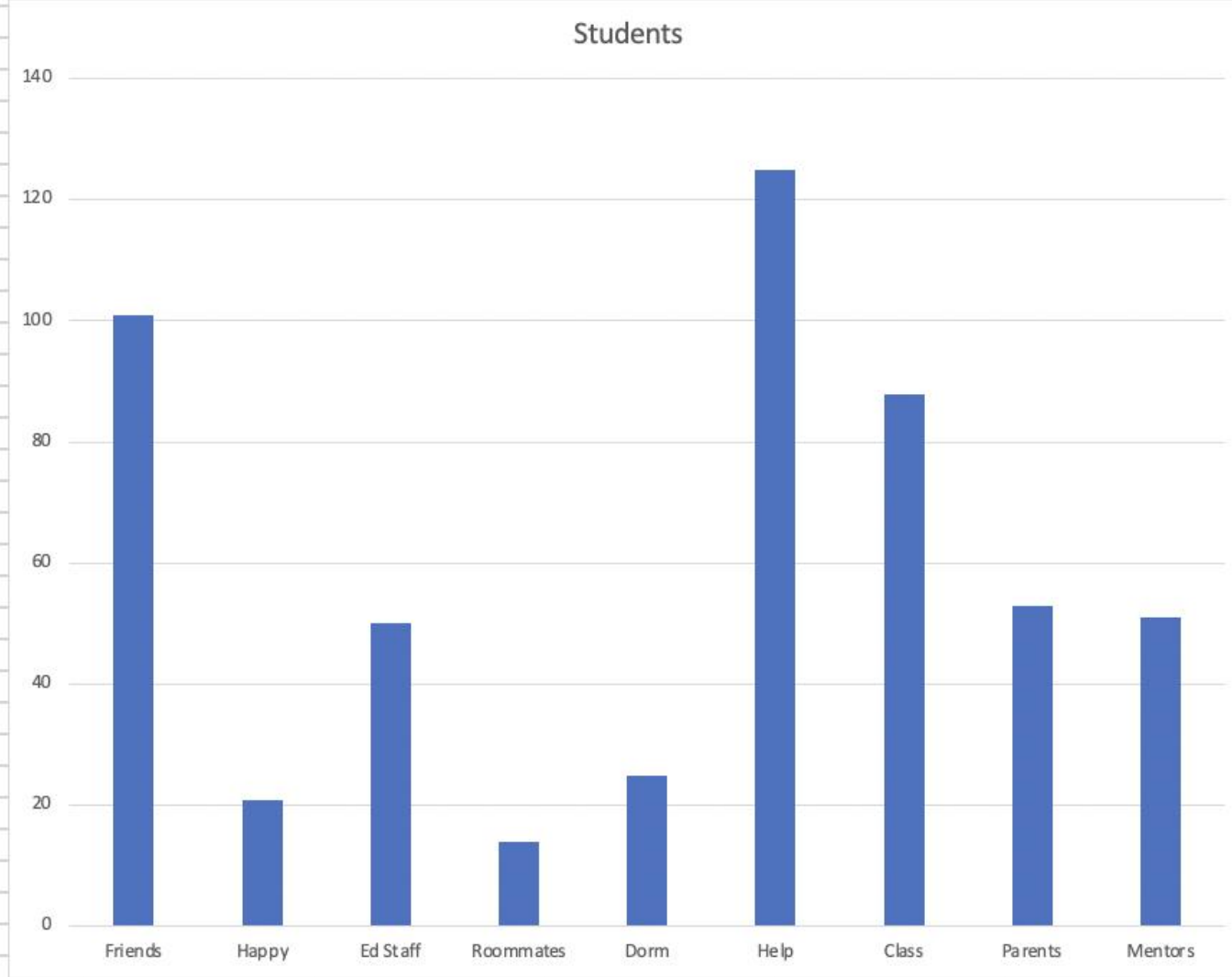
- The **ThinkCollege.net** , The Institute for Community Inclusion out of the Univ. of Massachusetts in Boston is a great resource for all things college for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (join their Families Facebook Page).
- Highlight the ‘Voice of the Learner’ (Robledo, 2006)
- There are 3 models of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) – This university uses an Inclusive Model
 - Mixed Hybrid
 - Fully Inclusive
 - Separative



Finding 1

- Universities Need to Presume Competence and Share Resources
- This was generated From Administrators, Directors, & Faculty
- Parents wanted to see more options and high schools to prepare their students for college

	Friends	Happy	Ed Staff	Roommates	Dorm	Help	Class	Parents	Mentors
Students	101	21	50	14	25	125	88	53	51



Finding 2

University personnel, families, friends, and self-motivation as Supports

- Educational Staff
- Parents/Guardians
- Peer Mentors
- Friends
- Selves

S

Specific
Who is involved in goal setting?
What do I want to accomplish?
Where is it done?
Why am I doing this?
Which requirements do I have?

M

Measurable
Can you track the goal?
How much?
How many?
How will I know I have reached my goal?

A

Attainable
Is the goal reasonable?
What measurements should be used?

R

Relevant
Is the goal worthwhile?
Will it meet the student's needs?
Is it consistent with their other goals?

T









Timely
Will it be obtainable in a semester, year or 4 years?
Will it prompt time management?

Finding 3 Research Question 2

- The Goal-Setting Plan is a Support

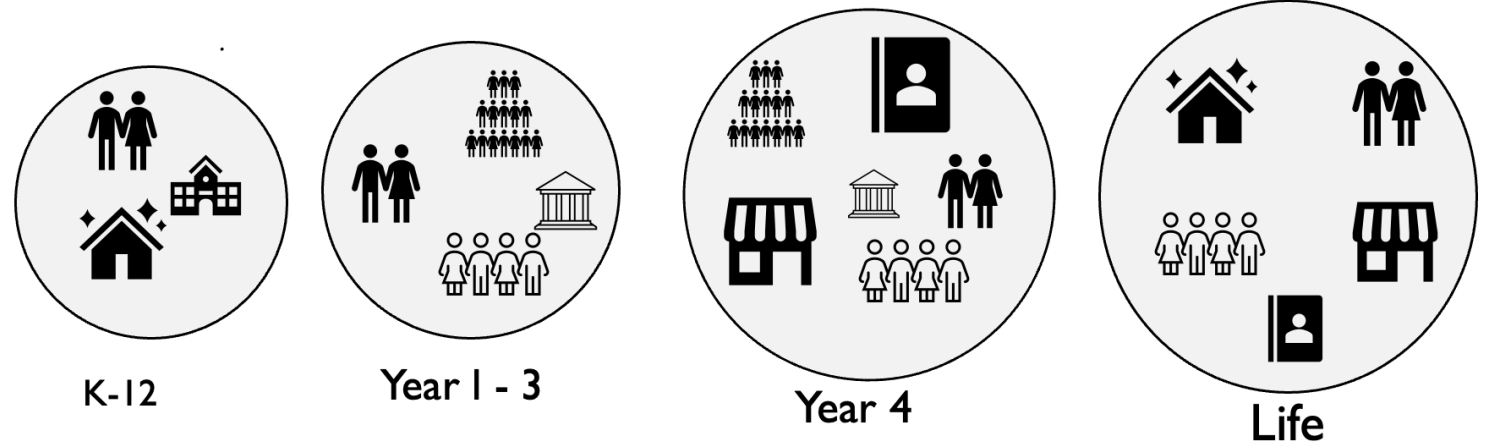
CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Finding 4

-  Family
-  Elementary to High school
-  Directors / Faculty / Residence Mentors / Peer Mentors
-  Friends with shared experiences
-  College with IPSE
-  Transition support staff and Agencies for Comm
-  Community and Neighbors
-  Workplace support (Employers, Co-workers, Job

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Data from interviews with Directors and Administrators
 * This process begins at Orientation
 Continues through graduation



Prior to College // Year 1 → Year 2 → Year 3 → Year 4 → Transition to Workforce & Independence

Finding 5

What was the most important part of the program?

DIGNITY OF RISK (STEP BY STEP PROCESS)

Behavior → Outcome → Analyze → Growth

Let's come together

Let's talk about what happened

Let's try to make some connections

What were you doing?

What were you thinking?

Why is it leading to this outcome?

What actions are happening?

How can we make it better?

How can we make changes?

How can we avoid this mistake in the future?

Recommendations for Practice

College Preparation for students and parents in the high school years

Setting goals is important to the planning of steps in the students achievements

Hire and train the correct staff to support the students

Focus programming that helps the student recognize where they can ask for and get help

Friends as support through creation of relationship development opportunities

Develop the program to support residential living and learning for independent living post graduation.

Financial planning with initial investment can see a profitable model within 3 to 5 years

Planned supported internships with job coaching and career development

Hire a transition coordinator to support moving from high school to college and from college to community

A woman wearing a red hijab and a black abaya is standing on a green sports field, holding a large flag. The flag features a logo of a warrior and the text "EAST SYDNEY WARRIORS". In the background, there are trees and a sign that says "T.O.L.". The image is partially obscured by a white, jagged-edged graphic on the right side.

Thank You

Dr. Lizanne Pando, Ed.D.

- LizannePando@gmail.com
- Mother
- Advocate
- Researcher
- Author
- Speaker

Jenna Pando

Senior at East Stroudsburg University

Fitness Instructor for YMCA

Assistant Camp Counselor



WISSAHICKON HIGH SCHOOL



Altar Server



Chorus



Color Guard



My Room

My ESU House





Sign Language
Classes



Fitness
Classes



Chorus
Classes



ESU Band



ESU Chorus Class



ESU Color Guard

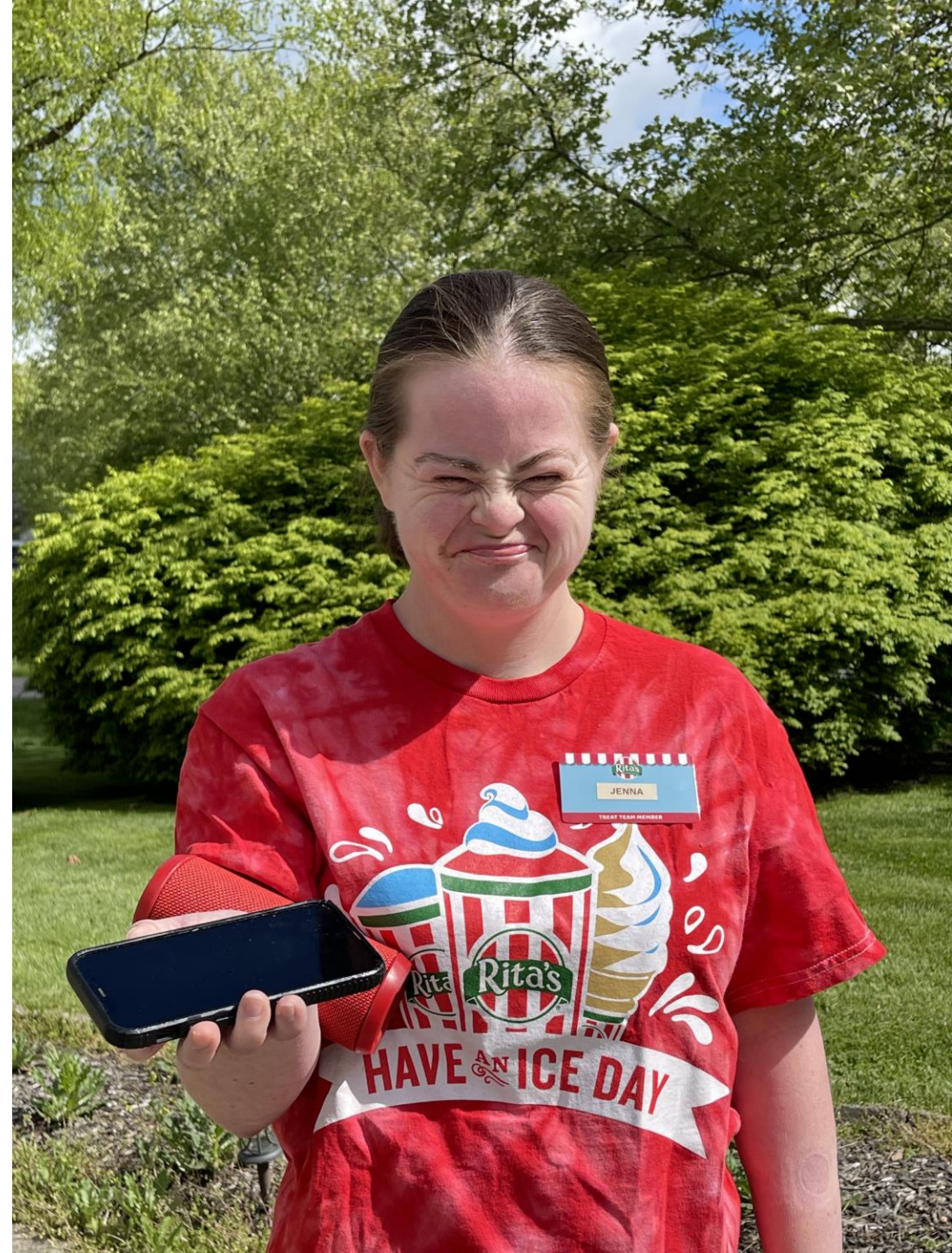
ESU Best Buddies E – Board Member



My Jobs are: Camp Counselor



Rita's Water Ice



YMCA Fitness Instructor



DISCOVER NEW CLASSES

**NEW Group-Exercise Options
LANSDALE AREA FAMILY YMCA**

DANCING FITNESS WITH JENNA

Line Dancing
Cardio and Toning
Lots of FUN!!!

This class is specifically designed for special needs members and all are welcome.

- Starting May 22nd
- 7:15 pm-8:00 pm
- Clemens Studio

LANSDALE AREA FAMILY YMCA

608 E. Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446 | 215-368-1601 | NorthPennYMCA.org



When I graduate
I will get an
apartment with
my best friend,
Amy



RESOURCES

www.thinkcollege.net

Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability: Progress on the Path to Education, Employment, and Community Living

REPORT TO:

United States Secretary of Education
United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup
May 2021





State of the Art Conference on Inclusive
Postsecondary Education & Individuals with
Intellectual Disability

& Student Leadership Conference

October 25 & 26

Colorado Springs, CO

<https://taishoffcenter.syr.edu/sota/>

Universal Design for Learning in Higher
Education <http://udloncampus.cast.org/home>



- National ABLE Resource Center
<http://www.ablenrc.org>

“She inspired those with Down syndrome as unstoppable — until she wasn’t” Washington Post , March 17, 2016

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/she-inspired-those-with-down-syndrome-as-unstoppable--until-she-wasnt/2016/03/17/f983fe5e-ea21-11e5-a6f3-21ccdbc5f74e_story.html?utm_term=.3da49bd0bf4c

- Ruby’s Rainbow: Scholarships for Youth and Adults with Down Syndrome
<https://rubysrainbow.org>

Stay Informed With NDSC

- Join the National Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition: <https://www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/national-down-syndrome-advocacy-coalition/>
- Sign up for NDSC action alerts: <https://www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/take-action-stay-informed/>
- Follow NDSC on Twitter @ndsc



