

Training the Next Generation of Leaders



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FUTURE LEADERS



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(1) **Miriam Lense**, a doctoral student in clinical psychology, and Reyna Gordon, a research fellow, conduct research involving electrophysiological methods of brain imaging with the mentoring of Alexandra Key (Hearing & Speech Sciences). Every day, graduate students, trainees, and postdoctoral fellows are receiving research or clinical training with more than 200 VKC-affiliated faculty members. At our 2012 VKC Science Day, young researchers—the future of the developmental disabilities field—presented research representing 72 research labs or programs.

(2) **The 2011-12 LEND trainees** represent 13 different disciplines at Vanderbilt University and area colleges and universities. Through LEND—Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities—trainees receive year-long training to prepare them for leadership roles in interdisciplinary, family-centered, culturally competent, community-coordinated services for children and youth with neuro-developmental disabilities and their families. Special emphases include pediatric audiology and autism.



(3) Relative to the general population, persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD) are at higher risk for experiencing behavioral, emotional, and psychiatric problems. Most psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers do not receive specialized training in IDD. With support from the John Merck Fund, the Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Clinic at Vanderbilt, a collaboration with Psychiatry, has provided services to persons with IDD while also providing interdisciplinary training to students from Vanderbilt, Belmont University, and Tennessee State University.

(4) **The VKC Reading Clinic** is the classic win-win. Young struggling readers receive individualized, one-to-one tutoring using assessment and instructional methods proven by research to promote reading. Many of the tutors are students in special education who learn and practice proven methods in reading assessment and instruction under the supervision of reading specialists. Students receive exceptional help. Future educators are better prepared to teach reading to diverse learners.

(5) **The Volunteer Advocacy Project (VAP)** trains interested individuals to become special education advocates so they can provide support to families of children with disabilities. Over 100 advocates across the state have been trained. VAP was developed and has been led by Meghan Burke, a doctoral student in special education. Burke received the 2011 Anne Rudigier Award for outstanding trainee from the Association of University Centers on Disabilities.

(6) **Megan Griffin**, doctoral student in Special Education and VKC UCEDD trainee, was 1 of 5 students selected nationally as a 2011-12 Think College Emerging Scholar. The program aims to build a network of the next generation of research professionals in postsecondary education for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Griffin soon will receive a Student Award of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for her extraordinary service in developing and implementing postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities at Vanderbilt and in Tennessee. ■

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