

Report from Families SIRG

Overview

The Families SIRG was “born” at the 2002 Inaugural IASSID Conference in Dublin. Since then we have grown to nearly 100 members (though the precise status of those who affiliate with us and those who have paid the previous dues is currently under analysis.) Thus, in five years we have grown to a group large enough and active enough to entertain the development of some Families Research activities outside of the larger IASSID meetings (more on this below.)

Since 2002 we have produced two *JIDR* Special issues on “Families Research” (December, 2006, and May/June, 2003), both of which have had contributions from across the world. This SIRG has met annually, usually affiliated with the Gatlinburg Conference on Research in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, though a small but representative group met in Maastricht last summer.

Plans Underway

The active members of the Families SIRG have engaged in discussion about another Special Issue journal project – perhaps this time with *JARID* or *JPPID*. Should such a project be approved by the appropriate editorial staff members, we would aim to produce articles with more of a research-to-practice orientation. This has not been the focus of the papers in the earlier *JIDR* volumes.

Other upcoming goals include the development of a plan for succession, as the current officers of the Families SIRG feel it is time to recruit new leaders. Eric Emerson has agreed to succeed Jan Blacher as Chair (as of Capetown); Richard Hastings is the current Treasurer, and Malin Olsson is the current Secretary.

Finally, we are considering formalizing our annual get-together, perhaps developing a Families SIRG working group that dovetails another meeting. Also, while many members do go to Gatlinburg, this doesn't draw in all members of the SIRG, beyond those from Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. Such a conference might be focused around data and other issues, with a special emphasis on student involvement.

Summary of Treasurer's Report

Current available funds: Historically, we have 1,145 US dollars; from SIRG disbursement from 2007 memberships, we have been allocated \$ 709.55 US dollars. Thus, total at present is \$ 1,854.55 US dollars.

We have no source of income at present other than SIRG funds from IASSID. Income before Capetown might grow by another \$700 dollars or so (hopefully, this

amount will be higher, as IASSID membership tends to grow in World Congress years.)

Current costs: The SIRG monies were originally designed to cover the IASSID meeting expenses for the Chair, but to date the Chair has only received funds from IASSID centrally.)

Potential plans for expenditure: At our last meeting, we discussed using some funds for the Capetown meeting, perhaps for:

- (a) A Families SIRG meeting over lunch, or evening with light refreshments
- (b) The underwriting of student attendance at the World Congress meeting: We are considering an expenditure of about \$2000 toward student scholarships, perhaps \$400 each, or perhaps covering registration fees for a number of student paper submission winners (fees are likely to be quite high .)

Future plans: Other SIRGS typically run an annual or otherwise regular conference/roundtable that serves as a meeting opportunity but also helps to raise some funds for other developments. We will consider doing so for these reasons.

Challenges

To date, we have identified three challenges:

- (1) Putting together a substantive Families Research Program for the Capetown meeting, given the expense and difficulty of travel to that location;
- (2) Increasing our membership, in light of competing organizations and their meeting schedules;
- (3) Increasing involvement by colleagues outside of the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, in order to develop a truly international perspective and knowledge base on families and intellectual disability.

Respectfully submitted,

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