

Looking Back... The First 10 Years

A Review of the AACLD: 2000 to 2010

*The National Association for the Education of African American
Children with Learning Disabilities Annual Report*



A Message from the Board Chair



Greetings Friends and Supporters of the AACLD!

It is with the greatest of pleasure and pride that I share this 10th Year Annual Report on behalf of the AACLD Board of Trustees, and our beloved President, Nancy Tidwell. As you will see in the report, a great deal has been accomplished over our tenure as a non-profit organization, but as you know we still have so much to do on behalf of our children. The key has been and will continue to be your support of our mission and vision!

When I think of how far the AACLD has come and the critical times that we are in, the Adinkra symbol of vigilance and wariness, Akoben, comes to mind. The Akoben in the Akan philosophical writing system is a “war” horn used to sound a battle cry. Ultimately, Akoben is a symbol of readiness and willingness to take action, particularly on behalf of the protection of the village, and thus the children.

The AACLD hopes to remain vigilant and become an even stronger force advocating for quality education for African American children with learning differences, improving access to the necessary resources, and training and supporting parents in achieving the desired educational outcomes for their children.

The Akoben has sounded, our children are in crisis, some would say the village is burning, please continue to stand ready and willing to take action with us. We thank you and are so appreciative of all of the support you have given and will continue to give the AACLD in the future, as we move forward into our second decade of service so that our children might thrive.

In faith and service to our future generations,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda James Myers".

Linda James Myers, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

“We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of importance to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.”

Ronald Edmonds
Harvard University

Executive Summary

"I found the AACLD when I was at my whit's end—nothing on line and no other parents to talk to. The information I found on your website and received in your advocacy class was extremely helpful. I learned strategies that my counterparts were not aware of and shared it with all."

*Suburban Parent of a
Child with a Disability*

Our History

The AACLD was first organized in 2000 by a mother and her two sons for the purpose of increasing awareness in minority communities about learning differences and promoting parent advocacy. For more than a decade the family struggled with academic challenges and the maze they traveled for academic success resulted in a strong desire to make the road easier for other families in similar situations.

The AACLD has grown to serve thousands of African American families throughout the United States. In addition, it has continued to serve the broader public by responding to an extraordinary number of requests for information nationwide from a very diverse audience including teachers, public and private K-12 schools, colleges and universities, social service agencies, psychologists, hospitals, churches, lawyers, parent groups, and other organizations.

Our Vision

To improve the quality of education for African American children by raising the level of awareness in our communities about learning differences and promoting an understanding among parents, educators, and others of the culturally sensitive issues facing minority children with learning disabilities as defined by Federal law.

Our Mission

To link information and resources provided by an established network of individuals and organizations experienced in minority research and special education with parents, educators and others responsible for providing an appropriate education for students, specifically African American, although any new programs and practices implemented to benefit one child will ultimately benefit all children.

A Call to Action

When the AACLD was founded ten years ago, we knew there was a great need for information in the African American community. Many of our children were being mislabeled and misdiagnosed while the needs of others were just simply ignored. Only those children with unique abilities and parents who knew how to manipulate the educational system were able to achieve success.



The AACLD found its place on the national level advocating for the disadvantaged and seeking a remedy for the disproportionate representation of African American children in special education. We learned that the lack of political will and the paralysis of action among education leaders and experts has failed to address one of the most critical and enduring problems in special education.

Now we must take our place in history and change what is wrong with an educational system that has failed so many of our children. The African American community must become educated on federal law—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—that protects every child's right to a free and appropriate public education. We must be the ones that determine our children's future.

We hope that you will continue to support the AACLD as we take the accomplishments, milestones and lessons learned of the last ten years to help change the course of education in this country, if only one child at a time.

Nancy Tidwell
AACLD Founder & President

Milestones

"As a teacher for the past ten years, I have witnessed the frustration and hopelessness of many parents. I am alarmed at the number of African American males that are not experiencing success in their base schools and are placed in my alternative education class for behavioral issues. This experience (webinar) has ignited a fire in me for change."

Atlanta Metro Area

As a first step, the AACLD was able to promote a column to the more than 200 minority weekly newspapers throughout the country via the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

A website, www.aacld.org, launched in 2001 and was recognized by both the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Institute for Urban School Improvement.

In early 2002, the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities invited the AACLD to join in partnership with the other six nonprofit leaders in the field, including the Council for Learning Disabilities, Division for Learning Disabilities/Council for Exceptional Children, International Dyslexia Association, Learning Disabilities Association of America, National Center for Learning Disabilities, and the Schwab Foundation for Learning. Numerous requests were soon received for speaking engagements at meetings and conferences, television appearances, and the presentation of testimony before the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education.

The AACLD released in 2002, **One Child at a Time . . . A Parent Handbook for African American**

Families with Children Who Learn Differently. It was revised in 2005 based on the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and intersecting information from the federal No Child Left Behind Law.

In 2002, the AACLD received a grant to provide guidance and expertise in the development of public service ads for a national campaign targeting African Americans and encouraging parental involvement when a child is experiencing difficulty in school. In addition to a Parent Network, the AACLD developed a **Parent Leadership Institute** for the purpose of disseminating information to communities nationwide and for providing a collective voice on special education issues. The AACLD held its first nationwide training of parent leaders in late 2003.

"I witness every day parents who start off angry, frustrated, and intimidated. Then they begin an evolution—learning what IDEA says and obtaining advocacy skills. They become empowered and are soon mighty advocates!"

*PTI Coordinator
Columbia, South Carolina*

The AACLD served as a member of the 2004 Learning Disabilities Roundtable, a forum enabling national advocacy organizations to respond quickly to important policy issues, specifically the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

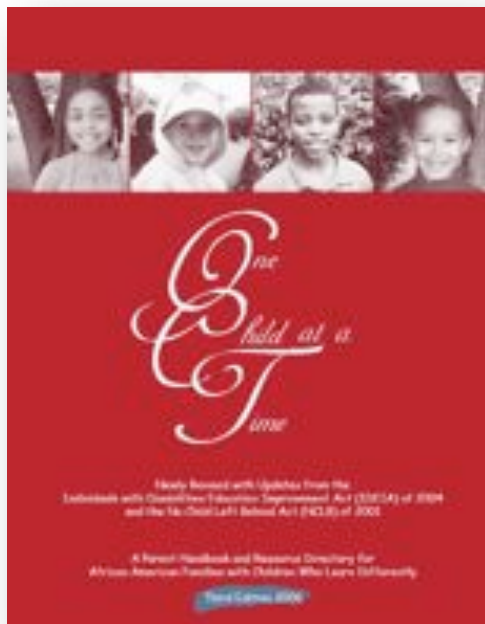
In 2005, the AACLD was invited to become a member of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), a committee representing 13 national organizations committed to the education and welfare of individuals with learning disabilities. Additionally, the AACLD participated in an African American Leaders Roundtable on Education hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and Dr. Dorothy Height, Chair and President Emerita of the National Council of Negro Women.

In 2006, the AACLD presented a *Train the Trainers for African American Parent Leaders* in school districts throughout Franklin County, Ohio.

In late 2007, the AACLD launched *Stand Up! A Campaign for the Children Left Behind*, a collective nationwide effort to promote racial equality in special education by providing a forum for parents to stand up and make their voices heard.

In 2009, the AACLD held its first webinar training for parent leaders representing 35 states.

In June 2010, the AACLD was awarded a planning grant from the **Oak Foundation** for the purpose of building "a strong, organizational foundation to support the expansion and sustainability of services to deepen understanding and advocacy for learning differences in African American children." As a result, the AACLD has conducted research to identify promising practices as well as engaged experts from academic and non-profit sectors to advise on how to support parent advocacy—efforts that have led to the development of a new multi-faceted plan for achieving the organization's goals.



"Thank you for sending me a copy of "One Child at a Time." It sends a balanced message about the importance of parent advocacy and the value of special education services. The document will be an excellent resource for families."

Director, Project FORUM,
National Association of
State Directors of Special
Education



"Commendations for a superb presentation! The facilitators and participants were excellent. The information was concise enough to be attention holding and motivating enough to send me for more research. I have been like a kid at Christmas waiting for this day and was not disappointed!"

Parent, Houston, Texas

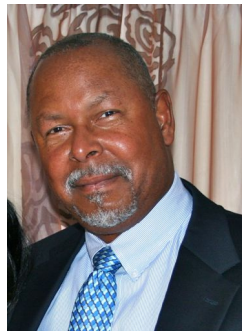
"Thank you so much for the creation of the AACLD website. I conducted a Google search for hours seeking information that your website now provides. I am relieved to discover that assistance is available sensitive to our needs."

Parent, Edison, New Jersey

African American Philanthropy

“Surprisingly, few African Americans define their traditions of giving as ‘philanthropy.’ Surveys indicate that many African Americans see their donations of time and money as unremarkable, and believe that ‘philanthropy’ is a term reserved for multimillionaires.”

*Erica L. Ball
Ph.D. Candidate in
History, GC, CUNY*



*“As parents, it is imperative that we are responsive to the needs of our children in order for them to become good citizens and productive adults. Their success is too great a matter to place solely in the hands of others. Although my children are grown, taking advantage of the **Employee Charitable Contributions Program at IBM** is my way of helping a new generation of children continue to have the chance to reach their full potential.”*

Ronald G. Gardner, IBM Delivery Project

According to Erica L. Ball, Ph.D, City University of New York, “From as early as the eighteenth century to the present day, African Americans have donated their time and resources to a variety of philanthropic organizations and causes, whether they be community-based mutual aid organizations, churches, or major political movements.”

In recent years, this rich tradition has been followed by a variety of new vehicles for giving. One of the easiest ways to give is through an employer. Many corporations offer matching gifts, or, for example, in the case of The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2 to 1 gifts, when their employees give to qualified charities. Other employers such as IBM have set up charitable giving programs for their employees to make contributions to approved nonprofit organizations through payroll deductions. The AACLD has been recipients of both.

The Irony of Giving

The AACLD was selected as the 2005 Project of National Smart Set (NSS), a black women's social organization, and received a donation of \$12,500. The primary mission of NSS is to perpetuate friendship but the organization has been making

contributions annually to charitable organizations for more than 70 years.

Each of its then 25 chapters had the opportunity to nominate a charity. Even though the AACLD was not yet well known nationally, the organization was nominated by both (unknown to each other) the Columbus, Ohio and Baltimore, Maryland Chapters.



The AACLD received more votes than any other nominees but the story doesn't end there. The AACLD was unaware that sitting in the audience at the presentation luncheon in Columbia, South Carolina, was a Smart Setter from the New York Chapter who made a decision that day to name the AACLD as a

beneficiary under The Anne Chapman Trust for which she served as trustee.

Imagine the surprise when nearly six years later (2011), the AACLD was notified that an additional contribution directed by a Smart Setter would be forthcoming!

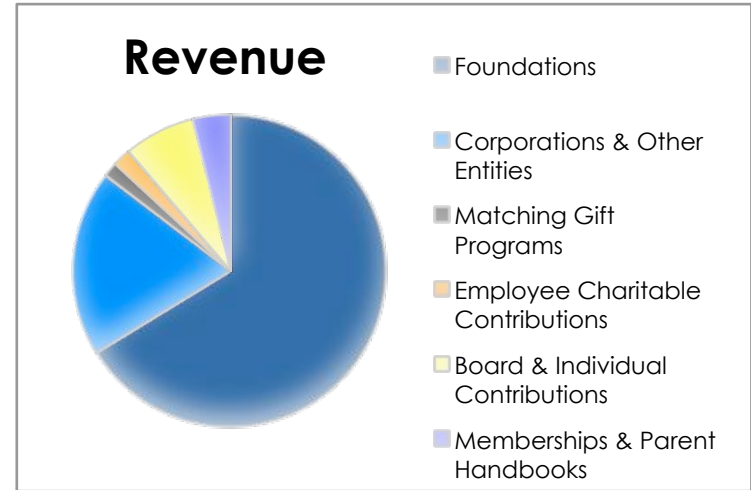
The AACLD salutes National Smart Set and all other African American contributors for continuing the tradition of philanthropy!

Financial Review

The AACLD attributes much of its success to volunteer and in-kind support but the organization could not have continued without individual and board contributions as well as the generous gifts received from corporations and foundations. Below is a breakdown of the AACLD's income over the last ten years.

Revenue (in thousands)

- Foundations = \$124,615
- Corporations & Other Entities = \$36,189
- Matching Gift Programs = \$2,808
- Employee Charitable Contributions = \$3,658
- Board and Individual Contributions = \$13,939
- Memberships & Parent Handbooks = \$7,028
- Total = \$188,237**



| Major Contributors | June 2011 Independent Auditor's Report |
|---|---|
| Columbus Foundation | <p>We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of the National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities as of December 31, 2010, and the related statements of activities, cash flows and functional expenses for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the management of the National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.</p> <p>We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.</p> <p>In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities as of December 31, 2010 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with general accounting principles.</p> |
| Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation | |
| Google Matching Gifts | |
| IBM Employee Charitable Contributions | |
| Ingram White Castle Foundation | |
| Nancy A. Herrin Foundation | |
| National Smart Set | |
| Nationwide Foundation | |
| Nationwide Insurance | |
| Oak Foundation | |
| Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council | <p>Jill Bonar, CPA Ohio</p> |
| Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives (We Care America) | |
| Schwab Learning | |



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