

# The Parent Coalition of Whatcom County

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## March-April 2002

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### APRIL 2002

#### 1 Monday - Bellingham

The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors meeting. 4 - 6 pm. 1111 Cornwall Ave. #204. 360-715-0170.

**1 Monday & 23 Tuesday - Bellingham**  
 Whatcom County Plan Work Group meeting. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

**3 & 17 Wednesdays - Bellingham**  
 Whatcom County Planning Committee. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

**8 Monday - Bellingham**  
 Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board meeting. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

**15 Monday - Bellingham**  
 SPIN dance. 315 Halleck Street (Senior Center). 7 - 9 pm. (Age 14 and older).

**15 Monday - Bellingham**  
 Parent to Parent Support meeting. 7 pm. WCEL, 2001 H Street. 756-3600.

**18 & 25 Thursdays - Bellingham**  
 Senior Families Support Group. Noon - 1:30 pm. 1111 Cornwall Ave. #204. 360-715-0170 to sign up.

**19 Friday - Mt. Vernon**  
 SPIN dance. Skagit Valley Community College cafeteria, 2495 E. College Way. 6:30-8:30 pm. People First of Skagit County. 336-3136 ext. 28 for info.

**20 Saturday - Bellingham**  
 Parent Advocate Training. 9 am - 1 pm. 1111 Cornwall Ave. #204. 360-715-0170 for sign-up or info.

**25 Thursday - Lynden**  
 People First of Lynden meeting. 8800 Bender Road (Sonlight Church). 5 - 6:30 pm. 360-715-0170 ext. 3 for info.

**26 Friday - Bellingham**  
 People First of Whatcom County meeting. 315 Halleck (at Max Higbee Community Recreation Center). 7 - 8 pm. 360-715-0170 ext. 3 for info.

### MAY 2002

**1 & 15 Wednesdays - Bellingham**  
 Whatcom County Planning Committee. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

**3 Friday - Bellingham**  
 The Arc of Whatcom County Annual Membership Meeting & Pizza Party. Max Higbee Center (315 Halleck). 5:30-7 pm. Call 360-715-0170 for more info.

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## Meeting the Unique Concerns of Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs

by Donald Meyer, Director, The Sibling Support Project, Seattle

In the United States, over 5.8 million children have disabilities. Most have brothers and sisters. Throughout their lives, these brothers and sisters will share many--if not most--of the same concerns that parents of

children with special needs experience, as well as issues that are uniquely theirs. Among their **concerns** are:

→ a life-long and ever-changing **need for information** about the disability or illness;

→ **feelings of isolation** when siblings are excluded from information available to other family members, ignored by service providers, or denied access to peers who share their often ambivalent feelings about their siblings;

→ **feelings of guilt** about having caused the illness

or disability, or being spared having the condition;

→ **feelings of resentment** when the child with special needs becomes the focus of the family's attention or is indulged, overprotected, or permitted to engage in behaviors unacceptable by other family members;

→ a **perceived pressure to achieve** in academics, sports, or behavior;

→ **increased caregiving demands**, especially for older sisters;

→ concerns about their **role in their sibling's future**.

*(cont'd. on page 6)*



### Washington State Fathers Network

*reprinted by permission*

## My Teacher by Clarence Burns, Tacoma, WA

Have you ever stopped to think that a seven, eight, or nine year old child can provide insight into life's experiences and help you establish your priorities? Well, neither did I until I started to learn about these things from my son Marc.

While I've often talked about Marc, I've yet to actually to put something down on paper about him and the very special relationship we share. Marc is 9 years old. He is autistic and epileptic, and experiences regular petit mal seizures. Marc is verbal; however, he does not respond to inquiries. Conversation with him usually consists of whatever is on his mind.

His physical development and appearance are normal; however, his cognitive skills are commensurate with those of a

two and a half year old. He is extremely hyperactive, with severe behavioral and mood swings. This makes it extremely difficult to engage in everyday activities. Even grocery shopping can be a real chore or a virtual impossibility, depending upon Marc's state of mind.

My wife Elizabeth and I struggle with "life with Marc" on a daily basis. Medication for the hyperactivity and seizures help, but it's still not enough to allow Marc to focus and attend to tasks so that he can learn new skills. In spite of this, we recognize what a wonderful gift Marc is and how he has enriched our lives. As a father, I used to dream about a son that I could play ball with and take to sporting events.

*(continued on page 7)*

**WA State Fathers Network**  
 statewide conference  
 June 1, 2002  
 Seattle Central Comm. College  
[www.fathersnetwork.org](http://www.fathersnetwork.org)

*The Arc of Whatcom County serves Whatcom, Skagit and Island Counties. Our mission is to improve the quality of life, increase the independence, and assure the full inclusion in the community of any person with a developmental disability.*

## Supplemental Budget Cuts Deep

The Washington State Legislature adjourned March 14, 2002, approving a 2002 supplemental state budget that adds \$22.6 million to the Division of Developmental Disabilities in a year when virtually all other health and human services programs were cut to cope with a \$1.6 billion loss in state revenues.

But there is little to celebrate. The details of the DDD budget will be devastating to thousands of families statewide, beginning July 1, 2002:

**SSI monthly supplement ends.** Federal SSI monthly payments will no longer include the State's monthly contribution of \$5 to \$25. This saves the State \$31 million.

The federal government requires Washington State to make a contribution to supplement these SSI federal dollars, what is called a "maintenance of effort." In the State's proposed supplemental budget, **Family Support becomes a monthly cash supplement, based on income.** These direct State payments to families will then be "credited" as the State's SSI supplement to satisfy federal requirements. Only families earning 150% of median income or less will



receive Family Support payments, so it is anticipated that thousands of families currently receiving Family Support would lose it as of July 1.

Due to receiving these direct cash payments, thousands of children will be removed from the CAP waiver. Children whose family income does not qualify them for Medicaid will lose Medicaid Personal Care dollars and Medical Assistance coupons.

It is also anticipated that to meet the federal "maintenance of effort" requirement, the State would begin direct cash payments to some people receiving day program services. Individuals who do not have CAP waiver (federal) funding receive their day program services (employment or community access) entirely from State funds. These State funds would no longer be administered by the County DD program, but would be distributed directly to these individuals as cash payments. The amount of these cash payments is not known.

It is expected that Transition services (all State funds) would also be changed to direct cash payments.

**Technical assistance dollars eliminated.** These funds have supported self-determination, safety training and support to senior families. **Parent to Parent, community guides, and family grants funding is also gone.**

## In Whatcom County

Good news for public transit users

### Sales Tax increase for WTA approved by 54% of voters

On March 12, 54% of Whatcom County voters approved a three-tenths of 1% sales tax increase, which will raise \$6 million annually to maintain existing Whatcom Transportation Authority's fixed route and specialized bus services. The sales tax increase goes into effect January 1, 2003.

The WTA Board has said it will also soon be considering an increase in the 50-cent-a-ride fare.

### 1st Annual CAMP T.E.A.M.

**Together Everyone Achieves More**  
*A fun experience for teens and adults with developmental disabilities, other community members, & WWU Recreation Program students.*

**Friday & Saturday  
May 17 & 18, 2002  
Camp Lutherwood  
(NW end of Lake Samish)**

For more information  
call 676-6985 ext. 217  
Bellingham Parks & Recreation

As this is printed, Governor Locke is expected to sign the 2002 supplemental budget into law. The Division of Developmental Disabilities will then be charged with implementing all of these changes by July 1, 2002.

What can families and advocates do? Tell Governor Locke how these changes will affect your family. **Some advocates are asking the Governor to veto "Section 205(1) Community Services a/b" of the Developmental Disabilities budget.** After a community meeting March 26, the Snohomish County DD Advisory Board wrote the Governor that "we were dismayed and alarmed at the potential impact on community services" by the shift to welfare-like payments, and apparently new public policy that circumvents the "systematic and thoughtful foundation" that has been developing for long-term self-directed services.

You can also communicate your concerns directly to Division of Developmental Disabilities Director Linda Rolfe. And to your legislators, who are home again.

Your input could still have positive effects on how these drastic cuts are implemented.

### For budget details:

[www.leg.wa.gov/house/opr](http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/opr)

"Statewide Summary and Agency Detail", go to page 101

**Governor Locke:** [www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov)  
Office of the Governor, Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504

**DDD Director Linda Rolfe:**  
360-902-8484

Email: [rolfela@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:rolfela@dshs.wa.gov)  
PO Box 45310, Olympia, WA 98504

### Senior Families Support Group

For parents of an adult (age 21 and older) with a developmental disability

**Thursdays (for 8 weeks)**

**12 noon - 1:30 pm**

**April 18 & 25—May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**

**June 6 or 13**

**Facilitated by**

**John Davis, Ph.D.**

licensed marriage and family therapist & contracted therapist for the Division of Developmental Disabilities

**Jan Jung, M. Ed.**

licensed mental health counselor & child mental health specialist

*No fee. To sign up,*

call The Arc at 360-715-0170

or toll-free 1-866-284-8444.

### The Bellingham DDD staff

thanks all who attended its Open House.

If you weren't able to attend,  
stop by to say hello & see the new office.

Bellingham Towers,

119 Commercial St., 7th floor

676-2000 or 800-239-8285

Parking is available in the adjacent lot (two wheelchair-accessible spaces—\$1 per hour for all other vehicles) and at meters on the street (25 cents per hour).

## MAY 2002

(continued from page 1)

### 4 Saturday - Bellingham

Preschool SIBSHOP (4-7 year-old siblings). 11 am - 1 pm. Alderwood Early Childhood Ctr. 756-3600.

### 6 Monday - Bellingham

The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors meeting. 1111 Cornwall Ave. #204. 360-715-0170.

### 7 & 28 Tuesdays - Bellingham

Whatcom County Plan Work Group meeting. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

### 11 Saturday—Bellingham

Recreation Expo 2002, a celebration of everyone's abilities. Bloedel Donovan Park. 11 am—3 pm. B'ham Parks & Rec., 676-6985.

### 13 Monday - Bellingham

Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board meeting. 4:30 - 6 pm. 1000 N. Forest. 676-6829.

### 15 Wednesday - Bellingham

Siblings ages 8-13 SIBSHOP. 6 pm. Treasury of Memories, Guide Meridian. 756-3600. (Also see story on page 1)

### 17 & 18 - Camp Lutherwood (Lake Samish)

1st annual Camp T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More). See page 6. Bellingham Parks & Rec, 676-6985 ext. 217.

### 20 Monday - Bellingham

Parent to Parent Support meeting. 7 pm. WCEL, 2001 H Street. 756-3600.

### 20 Monday - Bellingham

SPIN dance. 315 Halleck Street (Senior Center). 7 - 9 pm. (Age 14 and older).

## JUNE 2002

### 1 Saturday - Seattle

Washington State Father's Network conference. 8:30 am - 5 pm. Seattle Central Community College. [www.fathersnetwork.org](http://www.fathersnetwork.org)

### 15 Saturday - Bellingham

Human Race. 9 am. Maritime Heritage Park.



# EMPLOYMENT for people with developmental disabilities (DD)

Whatcom County is currently considering whether to change the way it contracts for employment support for individuals with developmental disabilities, and is studying the "Career Path" model developed in Snohomish County last year.

A decision is needed in May, if any changes are to be implemented in County contracts in fiscal year 2003, which starts July 1, 2002.

*This discussion on pages 4-6 of issues related to employment support for adults in Whatcom County was compiled by The Arc for the purpose of consumer and community information. It is based on information provided by the Whatcom County DD Program, its public meetings, and the publications and individuals here quoted.*

*Opportunities to participate in the discussion:*

## Whatcom County DD Advisory Board (DDAB)

April 8 & May 13, 4:30—6 pm

### DDAB Planning Committee

1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 4:30—6 pm

meeting at 1000 N. Forest Street, Bellingham

*Or contact:*

Whatcom County DD Program

Yvonne Sorter, Program Specialist

360-738-2504 ext. 32014, fax 360-734-2490

Email: [ysorter@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:ysorter@co.whatcom.wa.us)

1000 N. Forest St., Suite 101

Bellingham, WA 98225

## WHATCOM COUNTY Employment/day services

### INDIVIDUAL & GROUP SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

(1) increase employers' awareness about how they can employ workers with developmental disabilities (DD).

(2) More funding for individuals to increase employment. (3) Job search and work training for individuals with DD.

**PRE-VOCATIONAL/SPECIALIZED INDUSTRY** (1) More integration/inclusion and natural environments. (2) Transition more people with developmental disabilities into community employment. (3) Emphasize individual's growth & offer opportunities for career advancement. *From "Building for the Future", Whatcom County DD Program 1999-2001 Biennium Plan, pages 12-13.*

### EMPLOYMENT GOALS

*A County Developmental Disabilities Program and its Advisory Board set overall policies in a biennium (2-year) County Plan. This Plan is implemented by the County's service contracts with individual provider agencies (vendors).*

## SNOHOMISH COUNTY Career Paths

All participants will be supported to achieve community employment in inclusive settings through a career path approach. Each individual's career path will be unique to that participant's individual plan and should demonstrate increasing involvement in the community employment market, development of community connections, continued movement toward inclusive settings, and community-based employment. While on the career path, the individual may be supported in a broad range of activities that will contribute to their career goals and lead to employment of choice. This service is for all eligible adults regardless of the severity of disability. Some individuals will need more support than others.

*Support means the job development, training and coaching required for an individual to succeed in getting and keeping a job. The needed support may be minimal or extensive, depending on each individual's (dis)ability and work environment.*

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

97 individuals are served by nine agencies who provide 1:1 support to help clients find and keep jobs in the community. 55 people (67%) are currently working, 13 are at some stage of assessment with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and 29 are currently unemployed.

### GROUP SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

30 individuals are served by two agencies who provide 1:4 support to small groups or teams working for the same employer in the community.

### FACILITY-BASED EMPLOYMENT

*also called Specialized industries, Pre-vocational employment or Sheltered workshops.*

85 individuals are employed at two light industrial businesses in Bellingham. The support ratio is 1 staff to 7-8 workers.

### COMMUNITY ACCESS & SENIOR SERVICES

74 individuals who are not able to or interested in working, or who are in retirement, are served by eleven agencies. About 50% are assisted to perform a regular volunteer activity in the community, and the other 50% participate in leisure activities of interest.

### ELIGIBILITY

*remains the same: age 21 and eligible for services from the (state) Division of Developmental Disabilities/DSHS*

### TYPES OF SUPPORT to individuals

*Skill assessment  
Volunteer opportunities  
Job "carving"  
Job development  
Job training  
Job coaching*

### In Whatcom County:

*Support is provided by employment professionals working for eleven provider agencies.*

*Each individual with a developmental disability is on a lifelong career path. Services and supports are designed to help the individual reach his or her career path goals.*

**TRACK 1:** Extensive ongoing support needs.

**TRACK 2:** Moderate-high ongoing support needs; support for those new to the system, in job development phase, and/or served in multiple settings.

**TRACK 3:** Minimal-moderate ongoing support needs, in a situation that meets the individual's career path goals.

**TRACK 4:** Mostly independent, in a stable situation meeting an individual's career path goals, with natural supports in the community.

**TRACK 5:** Retirement services at the end of an individual's career path.

**TRACK 6:** Limited or part-time services due to personal needs, or minimal career path goals.

*continued on page 4*

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

EARNINGS: 55 individuals employed, working from 30-90 hours per month, averaging \$6 to \$7.50 hourly wage, \$400 monthly income. COSTS: 1:1 support costs per month for individuals average \$375, ranging from a low of \$50 to a high of \$2,000 per month.

**GROUP SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

EARNINGS: 30 individuals employed, working from 50-80 hours per month, averaging \$7 hourly wage, \$460 monthly income. COSTS: 1:4 support costs for individuals range from \$340 to \$380 per month.

**FACILITY-BASED EMPLOYMENT**

EARNINGS: 85 individuals employed, working from 86-92 hours per month, averaging \$2.40 hourly wage, \$220 monthly income. (Note that this category of employment is exempt from the state's minimum wage law.) COSTS: 1:7-8 support costs for individuals range from \$280 to \$320 per month.

**COMMUNITY ACCESS & SENIOR SERVICES**

EARNINGS: None. COSTS: Support costs for individuals range from \$285 to \$375 per month.

**EARNINGS & COSTS**

**In Whatcom County:**

286 individuals with developmental disabilities work an average of 70 hours per month for approximately 50 county employers, earning an average wage of \$5.28 per hour, or \$370 per month.

In 2001, the County spent \$1.1 million for employment support, and \$380,000 for day program support.

**TRACK 1:** Exceptional rate - based on medical/health status, intensive supervision needs due to behavior or community protection issues, and/or mental health issues

**TRACK 2:** \$450/month, for moderate-high ongoing support needs.

**TRACK 3:** \$350/month, for minimal-moderate ongoing support needs.

**TRACK 4:** \$200/month, for those mostly independent, in a stable situation.

**TRACK 5:** \$300/month, in retirement.

**TRACK 6:** \$250/month, for limited or part-time services due to personal needs, or minimal career path goals.

- ◆ An individual aged 21 or older is eligible for services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD/DSHS), and wants to work or have day program services.
- ◆ The case resource manager at DDD assists the individual in understanding his or her vocational choices and options, including: (1) supported employment in the community - individual or group; (2) facility-based employment; or (3) community access/senior services day programs.
- ◆ When an individual is ready, he or she participates in selecting a vocational direction and/or a provider agency. The case manager prepares a Community Services Authorization form (CSA) and sends it to the County DD Program. This initiates County-funded employment services, funds permitting. If funds are not currently available, the individual is placed on the County waiting list.
- ◆ The County and the provider agency modify their contract to add funds for services for the new individual.
- ◆ The employment support agency assists an individual to identify his or her job goals in more detail. The (state) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides skill assessments and technical assistance for an individual support plan and job training.
- ◆ An individual receives the services identified in his or her support plan.
- ◆ Virtually any changes require contract amendments between the employment support (provider) agency and the County.

**Individual eligibility**  
*does not change*

**Job goals**

**Career goals**

*An individual-centered career path approach replaces traditional categories of service.*

**Individual**

**Support Plans**

*DVR and provider agencies continue to implement. Person-centered planning is a resource.*

**County contracts**

*Once approved as "Qualified Providers," agencies do not have to respond to biennial Requests for Proposals.*

**Making changes**

*Changes in an individual's goals, job or support needs do not require the individual to change provider agencies. Changes do not require the provider agency & County to amend the service contract.*

*Compiled by The Arc of Whatcom County from information provided by the Whatcom County DD Program [Jan/Feb 2002 statistics] and the Snohomish County DD Program.*

"Career Paths" incorporates many of the key elements of the employment services model developed by the state's Stakeholders process over the past three years. This includes:

- elements of individualized funding;
- career path planning as a basis for supports purchased;
- enhanced information & education for individuals and families;
- removing "categories" from the options an individual has for support services to help them successfully achieve job goals;
- a priority on community employment or other individualized involvement with the community.

**In the TRANSITION PERIOD:**

- ◆ *Providers maintain the total level of funding they previously received.*
- ◆ *Providers determine the appropriate track for each individual they serve, within the agency's total allocation.*
- ◆ *A team of County DD staff and DDD case resource managers meet with providers to review proposals.*
- ◆ *A "Career Path Reserve Fund" allows for participants needing to move within Tracks as their needs or situations change.*

# EMPLOYMENT for people with developmental disabilities

**The reasons why Whatcom County is considering changes in employment services for adults with developmental disabilities include:**

- √ **Increase choices** that individuals with a disability have in the types of work they do, the pay they receive, and the environments they work in. *This is in keeping with the principles of self-determination in DD services, being implemented throughout Washington State and nationally.*
- √ **Put the individual first, not the "category" or "slot"** a person is assigned based on his or her (dis)ability.
- √ **Put higher priority on inclusion and integration**, so that every individual with (dis)abilities has the option of working in the community. *This is an increasing priority in Washington State's state-funded DDD services and County-defined policies and contracted programs.*
- √ **Streamline administrative procedures**, so that more time and money are spent for direct support services. *The challenge of decreasing public funds may be met in part by increasing efficient & more flexible use of available dollars.*

**Yvonne Sorter**

**Whatcom County DD Program Specialist**

"Federal and state government is asking Counties to support the reduction of individuals in 'sheltered employment' and increase the number of individuals in integrated community employment working in jobs that provide the same opportunities for the non-disabled person. For example: salaries that are at minimum wage, benefits that may or may not include medical, dental, retirement, vacation, sick leave, opportunities to advance in their agency or company, etc. The Career Path system developed for Snohomish County is one model that meets the criteria we are looking for."

**Sandy Abernathy**

**Chair, County DD Advisory Board, and parent:**

"What's most important is the opportunity for people with a disability to work at a job they enjoy and can succeed at. Anything that strengthens our ability to help people discover their own career goals, pursue them, and have stable and satisfying work lives sounds like a good idea to me."

**How would this change affect agencies that provide employment & employment supports?**

**Cascade Vocational Services, Bellingham**

*(providing individual & group supported employment to 30 individuals, as well as community access)*

"We don't know enough about how this will affect us. There seem to be more questions than answers right now. Who determines a person's track? What are the outcome requirements for individuals? We don't know reimbursement rates, or if we'd be able to survive with new rates. In Community Access, who determines how much service someone gets? Will there be a standard monthly amount of service hours? How easy will it really be to move people from one track to another? The County contracting system needs improvement, to reduce the micro-management of services and focus more on quality of life for our participants."

**John Butorac, Current Industries, Bellingham**

*(as of 3/29/02, providing facility-based employment to 66 individuals; 38 are people with developmental disabilities)*

"The strength of the concept lies in the effort to individualize services and provide funding based on support requirements (rather than disabling conditions). That there will not be the necessary funds or resources available to provide those support requirements is a glaring obstacle. The burden is placed on providers. Let's not make promises we can't keep."

Current Industries operates a business. We earn revenue.

This significantly enhances the level of services we can provide in terms of integration, hours worked, and wages paid. As I understand the Career Path concept, it places a higher value on community settings than measurable outcomes, including integration. There's more than one way to provide integration. We have an integrated environment, presently with a ratio of 2:3 [two employees without disabilities for every three employees with developmental disabilities], providing opportunities for meaningful interaction throughout the work day.

I would prefer if Current Industries' value was based on the services we provide and not on how we have been labeled by the state."

**Carol Lord, Northwest Industries, Bellingham**

*(providing facility-based employment to 47 individuals)*

"Are we trying to fix a system that already works? Are we excited about the results of Snohomish County and are therefore adopting someone else's process and negating the effective placement system we currently have? How is it we look to be coming up short?"

Over the years, many people have worked at NWI, then chose to work in the community and are now doing so. NWI also has employed a sizable (about 25% of our work force) employee base who have high support needs. Many of these employees were not able to secure jobs in the community. Is not this the system we are hoping to achieve by adopting the "Career Path" model? It seems we are doing (outcomes) what the state/county has/is asking for. So why is it we are able to find more money for start-up of new ideas (hoping they will be effective), all the while we keep reducing our County financial support for a working system?"

**Kathy Collman**

**Service Alternatives of Washington**

*(an employment support & community access provider in Whatcom and Snohomish Counties)*

"Service Alternatives has been involved in Snohomish County moving to the Career Path system and we support it. Career Path is based on the philosophy that everyone is employable -- with the right job and/or supports. It focuses on individual abilities and not disabilities. It allows more time to be devoted to participants' goals (outcomes) and less to administrative management. Career Path ends the segregation between those who are 'ready for employment' and those who 'aren't'. It assures a forward direction and progress for every person regardless of the severity of his or her disability."

**Susan Jewell**

**The Arc of Whatcom County**

"We support policies and practices that provide every consumer with a choice of where he or she works. As can be demonstrated very positively in our county, matching an individual with a developmental disability to the right job with the right supports leads to productivity, job satisfaction and success."

Increasingly, **opportunities** experienced by these brothers and sisters are also being acknowledged, and include:

- ⇒ **the insights** a sibling will have on the human condition as a result of growing up with a brother or sister with special needs. *"She taught me to love without reservation, without expectation of returned love...that human value is not measured with IQ tests."*
- ⇒ **the maturity** many brothers or sisters develop as a result of successfully coping with a sibling's special needs. *"I have a different outlook on life than many other people my age. I understand that you can't take anything for granted..."*
- ⇒ **the pride** brothers and sisters report in their sibling's abilities. *"Jennifer has probably achieved more than I have. She couldn't even talk when she started school; now she can, and she understands others. She's really fulfilling her potential. I'm not sure the rest of us are."*

Whatcom County Parent to Parent  
**SIBSHOPS:** for brothers & sisters of kids with special needs  
 with funding from Whatcom County DD Program

**Preschool Sibshop, 4-7 year olds**  
**Saturday, May 4, 2002, 11 am - 1 pm**  
*A day of games & great activities!*  
 Alderwood Early Childhood Ctr, Redwood Ave., B'ham

**Spring Sibshop, 8-13 year olds**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2002, 6 pm**  
*Sibs will make a small photo book (bring 6-7 pictures with similar theme), eat pizza (at Izzy's) & share thoughts.*  
 Treasury of Memories, on Guide Meridian, Bellingham

*For info & to get on the mailing list, call 756-3600.*

- ⇒ **the loyalty** brothers and sisters display toward their siblings and families. *"I'm used to being kind to my brother and sister, so I'm kind to everybody else. But, if someone starts a fight, I will fight. I won't put up with anyone teasing Wade or Jolene."*
- ⇒ **and the appreciation** many brothers and sisters have for their good health and own families. *"My mother is not a saint. In some ways she has still not come to terms with my sister's disability. Yet I see her as a tower of strength." "Living with*

*Melissa's handicaps...encourages me to take advantage of my mental capacities and to take care of my healthy body."*

Within the family, siblings will likely spend more time with the child with special needs than any other person, with the exception of the child's mother. And, because the sibling relationship is generally the longest-lasting relationship in the family, brothers and sisters are likely to experience these concerns for a long period of time. Sibling issues are lifespan issues.

*Ways to minimize concerns and maximize opportunities:*

- ✓ **Provide siblings with age-appropriate information.**
- ✓ **Provide siblings with opportunities to meet other siblings of children with special needs.** For most parents, the thought of "going it alone," without the benefit of knowing another parent in a similar situation is unthinkable. Yet, this happens routinely to brothers and sisters. Sibshops and similar efforts offer siblings the same common-sense support that parents value.
- ✓ **Encourage good communication with your typically developing child(ren).** Good communication between parent and child in families where there is a child with special needs.
- ✓ **Set aside special time to spend with your typically developing child(ren).** Your time is one of the best ways to communicate that you "are there" for them too.
- ✓ **Learn more about siblings' experiences and issues.** Watch, ask, listen, read. A bibliography is available from the Sibling Support Project.
- ✓ **Plan for the future of your child with special needs and share these plans with your typically developing child(ren).** When brothers and sisters are "brought into the loop" and given the message that they have their parents' blessing to pursue their dreams, their future involvement with their sibling will be a choice instead of an obligation.

*Adapted from "Sibshops: Workshops For Siblings Of Children With Special Needs by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy, 1994, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.*

**The Sibling Support Project**  
[www.seattlechildrens.org/sibsupp](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/sibsupp)  
**Email: donmeyer@siblingsupport.org.**  
**Phone: 206-297-6368.**

## David Inscho

DSHS/DDD Case Resource Manager  
 360-676-2244 or 1-800-239-8285



David Inscho found Bellingham on purpose six years ago. He was working with adults with developmental disabilities, in a day program in a small community in upstate New York. Feeling it was time for a change, he considered moving west. "I'm an outdoor person," he says. "I was looking for geography."

The more he learned about Washington State, the more interesting it sounded. He's been living in Bellingham happily since 1995. "Little did I know," he says now with a smile, "how nice a place this is." He likes running into people around town when he isn't working. "I really like that. It gives me a better sense of who they are, and who I am to them." He likes being able to walk or ride his bicycle to work. His last name (it's Scottish) is pronounced "Inn-sko".

From his corner office on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of Bellingham Towers, he has a view of the mountains. On the DD office walls are

some of the scenic photographs he's taken, in black & white and color, from mountainsides and riverbanks and meadows filled with flowers. He started taking pictures when he was 16, using a Nikon camera from a garage sale. His photographs, he explains, come from being in the right place and watching the light. He'll sit and watch and wait. He'll listen to the wind.

David's caseload is adults with developmental disabilities who live in adult family homes, and adults who live in the community on their own, a total of over 180 people. He's in the office usually four days a week, Mondays through Thursdays. He always welcomes calls from the people he

serves. "It's important for people to let me know what's happening," he says, "before things get to a crisis. Surprises can be harder to deal with."

The best days for David are when he's able to make it happen, to fulfill someone's request, to put the pieces into place that help someone get what they want. Some days are harder, when he can't seem to find the way to help someone avoid problems. He can't issue medical coupons or help people find a job, two common expectations that are simply not within a DD resource case manager's role. But by knowing about an individual's goals and needs, he can contribute ideas and support that might be useful. He keeps his personal sense of perspective with exercise and home projects in his free time.

And he's looking forward to spending his weekends this summer backpacking, with his 35mm camera and his journal, accompanied by his short-hair border collie Ceili (pronounced "Kay-lee") -- exploring the wild places.

*One in the continuing series of profiles of Case Resource Managers in the Bellingham DDD office. Written by J. Wilke for The Arc.*

You are cordially invited to

**The Arc's  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING**

**& PIZZA PARTY  
Friday, May 3, 2002  
5:30 — 7 pm**

Bellingham Senior Center  
315 Halleck St.

Pizza, drinks & ice cream will be served.  
Bring a salad!

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**  
Call 360-715-0170 for more info.

**THANKS TO ALL from WCEL**

Thanks to all who helped make Whatcom Center for Early Learning's VIP Performance and Auction in February such a success! A total of 120 people attended the reception, auction and performance of Bellingham Theatre Guild's "Our Town." The most popular item in the silent auction was the gourmet dinner for six, offered by Jim Stevens of the Bellingham School District and Steve Johnson, The Arc of Whatcom County's Board president and former WCEL parent.

With the majority of the expenses covered by business sponsors and parent donations, WCEL made \$2,800 from tickets and auction items. Thanks, everyone!

Katie Humes, Exec. Director  
Whatcom Center for Early Learning

**My teacher**

(cont'd from page 1)

I can't do those things with Marc, but he's more than I could have ever imagined. He's the son I could have never dreamed I would have.

I call Marc my teacher because he teaches me something new each and every day. Some days I learn something new about him, while on other days he helps me better understand the world around me. The most important thing that Marc has taught me is how to love. That sounds strange doesn't it, a nine year old child teaching an adult how to love? Well, strange as it might sound, it's true! Marc has helped me better understand the world in which we live. He's helped me put things in perspective and recognize what is and what is not important.

You see, everything Marc does is completely genuine. There is nothing phony or pretentious about him. His feelings are true, refreshingly devoid of the everyday biases that so many of us carry around. How he feels about someone has nothing to do with race, color, sex, or whatever. Marc simply doesn't know how to behave any differently. He regularly reminds me what an integral part I am of his life. I might be sitting down relaxing when Marc will come and climb into my lap and give me a big hug, saying only, "Stay with daddy." Being around Marc has made me a better person. He truly brings out the best in me.

While there is so much missing in Marc's life, so much that he will not be able to experience,

Excerpt from the article at [www.sign2me.com](http://www.sign2me.com)

**Sign With Your Baby**

Reports from recent studies funded by the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development report that children who begin learning sign language as young as 7 months gain a variety of developmental advantages.

Parents start with (American Sign Language) signs that represent basic ideas babies understand: "more", "eat", "milk". Communication that replaces frustration helps improve relationships with caregivers. Parents who communicate with their babies through sign listen more closely to their speaking children and adolescents. Studies confirm that communicating by sign can also strengthen the development of verbal language skills.

Excerpt from "The Link", Fall 2001/Winter 2002  
published by WA Dept. of Social & Health Services

**Start babies out on their backs**

All babies up to one-year old who have no medical conditions contraindicating it should be put down on their backs - NOT side and NOT tummy. Even when a baby develops the ability to roll over (developmentally at 5-6 months), continue to START them out on their backs.

Babies are safer wearing blanket sleepers or other sleepers adequate to maintain a comfortable body temperature, rather than using a blanket.

No other objects should be in the crib, NO pillows, stuffed animals, burp rags, or folded blankets used as pillows.

Washington State SIDS Foundation  
& American Academy of Pediatrics

enjoy, or appreciate, I know that he is happy and his life is full. His world is so much less complex than ours. Don't we all want to un-complicate our lives? Marc does this naturally, simply by never letting things get complicated in the first place. He is content in his own world and almost always happy. My wife and I often call him "Mr. Happy." I've never seen anyone capable of saying so much with so few words.

Marc has taught me now to be happy also. He's shown me that happiness is a state of mind, and we are all in total control of our own happiness. I watch as he takes charge of his own happiness everyday. I used to dwell on his shortcomings and get upset, lamenting that he would never be able to lead a "normal" life. Now I revel in his freedom of expression and contentment with envy. I often think the world would be a much better place if it were full of "differently abled" people like Marc instead of all of us "normal" folks that have done such a wonderful job of screwing things up. There's so much that we can learn from people like my son. All we have to do is take a moment and let them share their world with us, notice how they act and take note of what's important to them -- let them be our teachers

Clarence Burris lives with his wife, Liz, and son, Marc, in Tacoma, Washington. He also is on the Steering Committee of the Washington State Fathers Network. Liz is an occupational therapist.

**IEP help is just a phone call away.**

**On Tuesday  
10:00 am – 12:00 noon**

IEP parent trainer  
Trudy Rutter is in The Arc's office to help you find answers to your IEP questions.

Parent advocates are also being trained, to volunteer to attend your child's IEP meetings and mediation process with you if needed.

Call 360-715-0170 to leave a message for Trudy anytime, or talk directly with her on TUESDAYS.



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Whatcom County**

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Bellingham, WA 98225  
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1-866-284-8444 toll-free  
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OR [arc2@nas.com](mailto:arc2@nas.com).

**Newsletter Editor**

Jennifer Wilke

Funded by grants from the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program, the United Way, and your donations. While there is no subscription fee, designated donations are welcome.

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## CHOICE & SELF-DETERMINATION

*People with developmental disabilities and their families want services and supports delivered by a system that allows us choice and control over our own lives. This concept is called self-determination.*



### Sidewalks and Me by Carrie Dalton

My name is Carrie Dalton. I am 23 years old. I was born with cerebral palsy (CP), and I use a wheelchair. I need assistance in many aspects of my life, but Independence is important to me and many people like me. Often times getting around in the community is difficult and dangerous for persons with disabilities. These issues are what prompted me to write this article.

When I'm out in the community I have a hard time reaching the buttons for the crosswalks, and get myself turned around to cross the street after the button is pushed. A lot of the curbs because they are not level to the street enough for me to drive my wheelchair on to. Another obstacle is when I do get the buttons pushed I cannot get myself turned around in my wheelchair before the walk sign changes to don't walk, which causes the whole problem to begin again. Sometimes it takes me several times of trying over and over again, many different ways to get across the street.

I live on Illinois Street in an Adult Family Home, across from Haggens grocery store. A couple of days before Halloween I decided to go buy some face paint from Haggens, to complete my costume. On this particular date, it was in the late afternoon and very cold outside but I wanted to go anyways. I left my residence and completed shopping at Haggens, and on the way home it felt even colder than before. As I headed toward home I felt a cold chill run through my body, which in my experi-



ence with CP usually indicates a sign that a seizure may occur. I still headed towards home thinking I would be OK, but I was mistaken and blacked out.

Someone informed me but I did not know that my chair was spinning around on the sidewalk, or that it had gone out of control and landed on its side, with me still strapped in with a seat belt. When I slowly came to, there were a lot of people surrounding me, but one particular person caught my attention. It seems that this individual was driving by and noticed that I was in need of help, so he stopped to see what he could do. He ensured that my 300 pound electric wheelchair was put in its

proper upright position, with me still strapped in. He ran to the place where I live and told my staff to call 911. One staff came over to where I was, with the young man. She drove my chair and me back toward home, because my fingers were so sore that I could not bend them.

When the staff got me inside I was still cold, and I was in shock. Paramedics took me to St. Joseph's Hospital. I had to stay over night. I was a mess.

The next day was a pretty groggy one for me. I was overdosed with some kind of painkiller like Vicodin. In bed, it kind of hurt when I layed on my side, but it hurt on my back also; it hurt to lay any which way. I saw the doctors a lot that first day. They were checking on me when I was asleep as well.

The next day, the ambulance brought me back home, and I stayed in bed resting for several days following the accident.

This is just one story about me getting on and off sidewalks. I've been spending more time indoors lately because it's been cold. I'm hoping to get outdoors more often now that it's becoming warm and I like being out.

Sidewalks can be challenging, but they make life easier going places I want to go. I have a dream to go to Hawaii and swim with the dolphins. Too bad there's not a sidewalk that goes there!

*Carrie Dalton wants to help children with disabilities be less afraid if they are in the hospital or facing new experiences. This is her first published story. She's writing her next story about the dolphins.*