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Issue  
2/06

Page 2 - SSI & Food Stamps  
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Page 5 - Road to Adult Services

### February 2006

**20 Monday** 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
Parent to Parent Support Meeting  
2001 H St • Pam: 360-255-2056

**20 Monday** 7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Spin Dance - Max Higbee Center  
315 Halleck St • 360-676-6985

**25 Saturday** 7:00 pm  
People First 315 Halleck St  
Susan: 360-738-2060

**27 Monday** 4:30 - 6:00 pm  
Whatcom County DD Advisory Board  
3333 Squalicum Pkwy  
Jessica Lee: 360-676-6724 X32014

### March 2006

**2 Thursday** 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
Ferndale Family Support Workshop  
"Guardianships and Trusts"  
Lisa Beck: 360-383-9213

**6 Monday** 4:00 - 6:00 pm  
The Arc Board of Directors Meeting  
1111 Cornwall Ave #204  
Dana: 360-715-0170

**7 Tuesday** 12:00 - 1:30 pm  
Interagency Coordinating Council  
Garden Street Family Center  
Beverly: 360-715-0170 ext 4

**14 Tuesday** 1:00 - 4:00 pm  
Self Advocates in Leadership  
Seattle Hilton • 360-715-0170

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*All Events are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted*



Judy Singer, Mandy Fuetz, staff for Rep. Linville and Senator Harriet Spanel at the PC Legislative Coffee in December.

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Legislators want to hear  
from YOU!

Legislators want to hear  
from their constituents. Your  
legislators represent you and  
others in your district, but they  
cannot do so effectively if they  
do not know what you want.

*There is power in your  
presence and your 'voice'.*

Senator Harriet Spanel recently offered this advice to families. "E-mails and letters work well. What's most helpful is to relate your own experience; share the personal impact that particular issue has on your life. It means so much more and we (your elected officials) can share your message in our caucus."

A personal visit leaves a big impression. See page 2 for information on visiting Olympia for Advocacy Days. If you are not sure who your legislators are, review the January Parent Coalition newsletter or visit: <http://www.leg.wa.gov> and click on 'district look-up'. Or, call your local Parent Coalition at 1-360-715-0170.

### The Art of a Clear Message

When you speak up for yourself, or for others, **you are an advocate.** To be a good advocate, get your point across with a clear message. Shape your message with three main points: *The issue most important to you, how this issue affects your life or the lives of others and the action or results you are seeking.* Assume the person you are communicating with does not know anything about you, your life or the issues that affect your life.

Be sure that your message answers these three questions: *Who are you and where do you live? What is important to you and why? What action do you want taken?*

**Legislative Hotline:** The toll-free Legislative Hotline, 1-800-562-6000, is a fast way for you to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. When you call the Hotline, an operator will answer and take your message. Your message will be sent to all three of your legislators and the Governor. The Hotline is not an answering service for the legislators. It is only a message service for you to express your opinions. Weekday hours are 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Saturday hours are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. during legislative session ONLY. If the Hotline is busy when you call, KEEP TRYING! You will get through, but it may take several calls.

### Telephone Tips

Your call is so important that if just ten or fifteen calls are made that support or oppose a bill it is considered a landslide of public opinion!

Continued on Page 2



# The Latest in Washington D.C. and Washington State

Toll Free Legislative Hotline • 1-800-562-6000

## Legislative Advocacy (Cont'd from page 1)



When you do make a Hotline call, be sure to follow these easy guidelines:

- State your NAME and ADDRESS. If you know the names of your LEGISLATORS, give their names, as well as your DISTRICT.
- Identify the specific BILL you are calling about. Use the exact bill number, if you know what it is.
- State YOUR POSITION (support, oppose, amend) and keep it simple.

Note: You can also call directly to your legislators' offices in Olympia. This is not free, but does offer an opportunity for longer discussions.

### You've Got E-Mail

More and more legislators are using email to communicate with their constituents. It's fast, efficient and easy to use. When you send an e-mail message, follow the same rules as for letters and phone calls.



Advocacy Tips: excerpted from The Arc of Washington State - www.arcwa.org

## Advocacy Day 2006

Advocacy Day is held every Wednesday during the legislative session. It's a great way for people with developmental disabilities, their family members and other advocates to learn about the legislative process in person. The day begins at 10:00 in the morning with an hour briefing that includes speakers on the day's highlighted topic (see below), as well as current issues such as bills and budget issues.

Participants are offered several ways to advocate during the afternoon such as: meeting with legislators or their aides\*, attending hearings or voting sessions or writing messages to legislators.

\*Appointments with legislators must be made in advance of your visit.

### Highlighted Topics

**February 15 - *Transportation***

**February 22 - *Independent Living Rally***

**March 1 - *Budget***

**March 8 - *Session Wrap Up***

For more information The Arc of WA: 1-888-754-8798, ext. 105

## Sign up for Parent Coalition e-alerts!

In an effort to keep you informed beyond the timelines of the newsletter, we will be sending periodic updates via e-mail on trainings and other announcements of interest. If you would like to be included and receive the benefit from this information, please send us your email address to: **parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org**



## Three Simple Questions... Are you on SSI (Supplemental Security Income)? • Do you pay for heat or two other utilities? • Does your rent exceed \$115.00 per month?

If you answered "YES," to all three questions... Call the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) today toll-free 1-877-380-5784 and ask about Basic Food. If you are on SSI, you must act now to get more Food Assistance before it is too late. In 2006 DSHS will mail letters to those on SSI who will be getting more food assistance (Food Stamps) because of a recent lawsuit - Chamberlain vs. DSHS.

**Who will get this letter?** You will get a letter if you are on SSI and you got a Quest card to help pay for food through the Washington State Combined Application Program (WASHCAP) in January, February, March or April 2005.



### What happens if I get this letter?

- DSHS will add \$17.00 to your Quest card for each one of the above months that you were on WASHCAP.
- It will tell you that you might get more help in the future by applying for the regular Food Stamp Program - Basic Food.

### What should you do if you get a letter?

If you get a letter, call DSHS toll-free at 1-877-380-5784 to ask if you can get more help by applying for Basic Food. If so, ask for an application, sign it, and return it to DSHS before the deadline in the letter. You must apply by the deadline in the letter or it may be too late to change food programs!



A Community Education Project of Columbia Legal Services, January 2006



## Get Involved



### February Spin Dance

Monday, February 20, 2006  
7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Max Higbee Center  
315 Halleck Street

### March Spin Dance

Monday, March 20, 2006  
7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Max Higbee Center • 315 Halleck  
  
Contact Amanda 360-676-6985



### Guardianships and Trusts

Learn more about guardianship, long term financial planning and special needs trusts

Thursday, March 2, 2006 • 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
Vista Middle School  
Ferndale School District Family Support Workshop  
Contact: Lisa @ 360-383-9213

### Hearing Loss Awareness Panel

Saturday, March 25, 2005  
3:00 - 5:00 pm  
Garden Street Family Center 231 N Garden St, Room #200

Whatcom Co. Families for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children are joining with local and state agencies to spread awareness of hearing loss in today's youth. Listen to the stories & experiences children face at home, in schools and around our community.

Interpreters provided. Refreshments served. Free childcare-RSVP by Friday, March 17, space is limited. Contact Christine @ 360-715-9970 or c-griffin@webtv.net

### Best in the Northwest Conference Autism Society of Washington

March 2 - 4, 2005  
Red Lion Hotel • Vancouver, Washington

More info: toll-free 1-888-279-4968  
[www.autismsocietyofwa.org](http://www.autismsocietyofwa.org)

### What Is Your Advocacy Style?

What is Advocacy?  
What makes an advocate successful?  
Join us for an afternoon of ideas, tools and strategies.

Parent Advocate Training  
Saturday - March 18, 2006  
12:00 noon - 3:00 pm  
511 E. Holly Street  
Whatcom Ed. Credit Union Education Building  
Contact: Beverly @ 360-715-0170 ext 4

### Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board Needs YOU!

The board serves in an advisory capacity to the Whatcom Co. Developmental Disabilities Program, focusing on early childhood learning and employment support for working aged adults. Members help plan and coordinate these services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

If you have a developmental disability or are a citizen knowledgeable about developmental disabilities, and want to speak up, represent yourself, and be a part of the solution....

Contact Jessica Lee: 360-676-6724 X 32014



### Thank you to everyone who has generously contributed to The Arc of Whatcom County in response to our recent fundraising letter

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sandra Abernathy            | Kulshan Supt. Employment |
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| Dawn Kinsella               |                          |



## Parent Advocacy: What You Should Do

by Leslie Seid Margolis, Esq.

### Prepare for Meetings: Prioritize Your Child's Needs

- Everything you want for your child is not equally important. Make a list of what your child really **needs**, what you **want** for your child (but may be willing to compromise on), and what would be nice to have but that you would definitely be willing to give up.
- Think about the evidence you have to support each requested item (i.e., reports, assessments, experts, other documents). If you prioritize your issues and have facts and evidence that support what you want, it is more likely that you will be taken seriously.



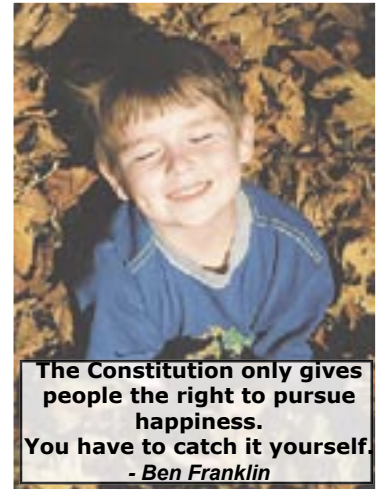
### Build Good Relationships

- Develop positive relationships with school personnel, to the greatest extent possible. Ask your child's team to explain things you do not understand.
- Take the high road. As hard as this may be to do, being polite and courteous is always better than being rude. If a meeting is deteriorating with negative comments or behavior from any team member, ask for a break or ask that the meeting be continued to a later date and time.
- Good relationships with school personnel and central office staff will generally ensure that issues you bring up will be taken seriously.

### Document Issues & Concerns

- Ask that items and issues you feel strongly about be documented in the meeting summary or notes. Review the summary before you leave the meeting. Know your rights about amending your child's records.

*Excerpted from Wrightslaw.com*



**The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself.**  
- Ben Franklin



**The Parent Coalition of Whatcom County newsletter** is published monthly by

### The Arc of Whatcom County

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### The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors

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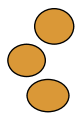
### Administrative Assistant

Dana Little

OFFICE HOURS: 9-12 M-F

## Job Coaching in a Rural Community

A **free** training for employment specialists, teachers and interested others.



**Tuesday, February 21st, 2006**

**9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Anacortes Public Library • 1220 10TH ST., at the intersection of "M"



Join Monica McDaniel from Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) in examining practical skills for coaching individuals on the job.

Discussions on the role of the job coach, effective training methods and balancing the needs of the employer and supported employee.

Learn how to conduct a job analysis for a successful job placement and target necessary skill building.

Introduction to creating coworker supports & fading specialized supports from the job site.

Contact Marsha @ 206-343-0881 x103

*For interpreter services contact WISE at least one week in advance of the training*

*Sponsored by: Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities*



## Choice and 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.*

### **The Road to Adult Services: Transition Speaker Series**

Workshops for individuals with developmental disabilities ages 14 to 21 years of age and their families, educators and community members.

#### ***Building a Student Portfolio***

**Wednesday, March 1, 2006**

6:00-8:00 p.m.

- A portfolio can help share your skills, talents and interests with employers and others
- Market your strengths • Connect with resources - *This is a hands on workshop.*

#### ***\$ Financial Planning and Creative Supports***

**Tuesday, March 28, 2006**

6:00-8:00 p.m.

- Trusts • Social Security and Medicaid • Private Financial Planning

#### ***Becoming an Adult: What's it all about?***

**Wednesday, April 26, 2006**

6:00-8:00 p.m.

- Exploring relationships, friendships and boundaries • Building Independence
- Promoting Self-determination • Staying Safe •

***Speaker: Rick Pribbernow***

**LOCATION:** St Luke's Health Education Center • 3333 Squalicum Pkwy • Bellingham

- Pre-registration is requested but not required. Call Pat at 676-6724 ext. 32243 to register. Hear about life skills classes being offered this fall. Workshops are free and light refreshments will be provided.

*Sponsored by: Whatcom Co. Developmental Disabilities Program • For questions: Jessica Lee at 676-2504 ext 32014*