



1111 Cornwall Ave. #205
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-715-0170 fax 715-8522
1-866-284-8444 (toll free)
email: parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org
www.arcwhatcom.org

April 2006

Page 2 - Telephone Assistance
Page 3 - Gold Medal Olympians
Page 4 - Get Involved
Page 5 - Special Ed Ombudsman

April 2006

17 Monday 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Spin Dance – Max Higbee Center
315 Halleck Street – 360-676-6985

17 Monday 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Parent to Parent support meeting
2001 H Street Pam: 360-255-2056

21 Friday 6:30 – 7:30 pm
Parent to Parent Family Swim Social
Arne Hanna Aquatic Center
114 Potter Street, Bellingham
Contact Pam: 255-2056

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

26 Wednesday 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Exploring Relationships
3333 Squalicum Pkwy
See page 4 for details
Jessica Lee: 360-676-6724 X32014

28 Friday 5:30-7:30 pm
The Arc Pizza Party and Membership Meeting
Max Higbee Center
360-715-0170 X5

29 Saturday
Down Syndrome Outreach
Cooking and nutrition workshops
See page 4 for details or
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2

29 Saturday 7:00 pm
People First 315 Halleck St
Contact Susan: 360-738-2060

May 2006

1 Monday 4:00 – 6:00 pm
Arc Board of Directors Meeting
1111 Cornwall Ave, #204
Contact Dana: 360-715-0170

4 Thursday 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Transitions to Adulthood
Ferndale Family Support Workshop
See page 4 for details
Contact Lisa 360-383-9213

15 Monday 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Parent to Parent support meeting
2001 H Street Pam: 360-255-2056

15 Monday 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Spin Dance – Max Higbee Center
315 Halleck Street – 360-676-6985

All Events are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted

Legislative Success Stories in Washington State

Your voice is heard! Several priority bills came out of the legislative process alive and well. Some of the winners are:

Birth-to-Three Early Intervention Services -- HB 1107. This legislation phases in the participation of all local school districts in the birth to three early intervention system for children with disabilities by 2009.

Disability Access Voting -- HB 2479. This bill uses Help America Vote Act funding to ensure accessible voting in every county, a 20-day voting period, and county advisory boards that must include persons with disabilities.

Mercury-Free Vaccines -- SB 5305. This legislation, spearheaded by the Autism Society of Washington, prohibits vaccinating pregnant women and children under age three with vaccines that contain mercury. There's been a debate as to whether or not mercury is linked to the incidence of autism. While this bill doesn't settle the issue one way or the other, it does remove at least one barrier for those who avoid vaccinations out of concern about autism.

Protecting Dependent Persons -- HB 1080. This bill expands



Susan Larson, Ken Larson, Lisa Rolston, Senator Harriet Spanel and Kristina Hoffman share their stories.

the circumstances under which a person can be guilty of criminal mistreatment. HB 1080 includes the withholding of basic necessities of life by someone who has assumed the responsibilities to provide these basic necessities.

Although the legislature's final budget did not include an increase in family support services funding, a change in budget proviso language will allow more families on the wait list to receive services. The budget still needs to be signed by the Governor before it's final.

From The Arc of Washington

The Budget for Developmental Disabilities Includes:

\$4.2 million in state funding for the following:

- **\$1.1 million** for about 250 high school transition graduates to have employment/day services

- **\$1.0 million** for DD residential staff to receive an extra .15 cents per hour in King County and .12 cents per hour everywhere else

- **\$778 thousand** for 14 additional case resource managers and staff to bump up the pace of assessing clients not receiving a paid DD service



Qwest Lifeline Program Provides a Telephone Bill Discount



Lifeline is a government program that offers qualified people a discount on their monthly local telephone bill. Each state has its own guidelines to qualify. In Washington, Lifeline is known as Washington Telephone Assistance Program.

How much can be saved on my phone bill?

You can save up to \$10.62 per month.

How do I apply?

To apply for Lifeline call 1-800-244-1111. You will be asked to provide proof of your eligibility by providing your identification number supplied by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Your Lifeline benefits will take effect when proof of eligibility is received.

You're eligible for Lifeline if you participate in any of the following programs:

- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medical Assistance
- Medical Coupons
- Community Options Program Entry Systems (COPES)
- General Assistance
- CHORES Services
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

High School Senior Shows Many Talents

When high school senior Jason McElwain scored 20 points in the last four minutes of a game during his basketball debut in February, he put a spotlight on inclusion.



Jason McElwain Celebrates His Win

When Jason McElwain made three swish baskets from mid-court, the crowd went wild. So, apparently, did the entire nation, including President Bush, who took the opportunity to have a photo taken with the young star.

But while Jason's achievement was impressive, it's hard to work out what the hype is really all about.

Jason's not only verbal and academically competent, he's planning on a college career. He didn't play basketball for the team because, at 5 feet six inches, he's simply too short. Not too incompetent on the court. Simply, like so many other kids -- too short.

His coach liked him and chose to offer him a special opportunity. He took it, and he shone. But he's never played as a regular part of the team. He found friends and his niche as the manager for the basketball team at his high school near Rochester, N.Y.

In the last home game, McElwain, switched his white shirt and tie for a uniform, got his hands on the basketball and scored.

Source: Betsey Flagler, Parent to Parent; the Charlotte Observer

April is Autism Awareness Month



According to the Autism Society of America, (ASA), 50

children are diagnosed with autism every day. They explain that "As with cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, early diagnosis and treatment are essential to ensuring a better quality of life for individuals with autism. However, early diagnosis and treatment can only occur with increased awareness."

Every April, the ASA sponsors "National Autism Awareness Month" to share its message of hope to the millions of families affected by autism, and to heighten public awareness.

Locally, the Whatcom/Skagit Chapter of the Autism Society of Washington meets the first Thursday of the month at 7p.m. at St Luke's Health Education Center, 3333 Squalicum Parkway. For more information, call (360) 371-8699



Down Syndrome Outreach Cooking and Nutrition Workshops

Joan Guthrie Medlen, a registered, licensed dietitian, focuses her wide array of activities on nutrition and wellness coaching for people of all ages and stages. Her experiences span a variety of people's needs and settings.

On Saturday, April 29th, 2006 Joan will present two workshops for the DsO Community, Cooking by Color, and Food, Feeding, Family... FUN!: Building a Foundation for Healthful Living. The topics will be of interest to teens and adults with Down syndrome, along with parents and caregivers. The hands-on cooking workshop will also be open to pre-teens with Down syndrome and all parents. Joan will give us a sneak preview of her cookbook, Cooking By Color, expected this summer and bring a few copies of her book for sale as well.

Both workshops are free of charge to attendees, however, as space is limited pre-registration is required for everyone attending. Workshops will be held at Sehome High. Registered participants will receive confirmation and a map to the workshop. Please register before April 19th, 2006.

Cooking by Color 10:00 am to 11:30 am
Food, Feeding, Family ... FUN! 2-3:30 pm

Persons needing accommodations to attend either of these workshops may contact Sarah Weg at (360) 715-0170 X2, by April 19.



North Whatcom Basketball Team Brings Home the Gold!

The North Whatcom Basketball Team, Master 3 won the Gold at the Washington State Special Olympics Winter Games. This is the first time since 1998 that the team has come home from State with the Gold medal.

Team members are: Erik Bromley, Taylor Walser, Kimmer Gordon, Todd Childs, Lance LaFontaine, Grant Brickbealer, Darin Haak, Chris Pike and Nicholas Rothbauer. Coaches were Bill Stamey, David Walser, and Mark Smith. Also pictured: Coach Mary and Levin Drewes.

Referral and Workforce Resource Center Opens in Mt Vernon

The Home Care Quality Authority (HCQA) in Olympia has opened additional Referral and Workforce Resource Centers (RWRC's) across the state.

The registry is a web-based search and match tool that connects the most suitable workers and those who need in-home services.

The Home Care Quality Authority is responsible for improving the quality of long term, in-home services.

The Center is registering people with disabilities and seniors who receive Medicaid in-home services. You are invited to attend an open house at the new office, located at: 1101B S. 2nd Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 (the old Greyhound bus station), on April 26, 2006 between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm.

For additional information, please call Barbara Browning or Linda Perry, Referral Registry Coordinators at: (360) 336-9246.

Warning! Watch Out for Medicare Telephone Scams

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) warns seniors and people with disabilities about a scheme called the "\$299 Ring" for the typical amount of money Medicare beneficiaries are talked into withdrawing from their checking accounts to pay for a non-existent prescription drug plan. Consumers can report these cases to their local law enforcement agencies or 1-877-772-3379.

Take Steps to Protect Yourself by Remembering:

- * No one can come into your home uninvited.
- * No one can ask you for personal information during their marketing activities.
- * Always keep all personal information, such as your Medicare number, safe, just as you would a credit card or a bank account number.
- * Whenever you have a question or concern about any activity regarding Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE.



From Mess to Magnificence! Assembling and Organizing Your Child's History

Saturday, April 22, 2006
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
511 E. Holly Street
Contact Pam: 360-255-2056
Parent to Parent



Down Syndrome Outreach Spring Fling

Saturday, May 20, 2006
11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Hovander Homestead Park, Ferndale
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2



Family Swim Social

Friday, April 21, 2006
6:30 - 7:30 pm
Arne Hanna Aquatic Center
114 Potter Street, Bellingham
Contact Pam: 360-255-2056
Parent to Parent

Camp TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More)

Friday and Saturday May 12-13
Camp Kirby
Register by April 21
Contact Amanda Grove: 360-676-6985

Specialized Recreation Advisory Meeting

Wednesday, April 26, 2006
4 pm - 5:30 pm
Bellingham Public Library Lecture Room
Contact Amanda Grove:
360-676-6985

Infant and Early Childhood Conference May 3 - 5, 2006

Maydenbauer Center in Bellevue
Increase family and provider effectiveness
through new skills, strategies and ideas
Contact: 360-629-8181 or visit www.ieccwa.org

Adult Transition Workshops

Oak Harbor High School
From School to Work
Tuesday, April 18
7:30 - 8:30 pm

Administrative Service Center
For students, parents, educators and others
interested in adolescent to adult transition
Contact: Diane Fesler-Macaluso
360-914-1494 or dfesler@ohsd.net



Becoming an Adult: Exploring Relationships

Wednesday, April 26, 2006
6:00 - 8:00 pm
St Lukes Comm. Health Ed Center
3333 Squalicum Parkway
Contact Jessica Lee: 360-676-6742 X32014

Transitions to Adulthood

Thursday, May 4, 2006
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Employment government benefits, and adult
services
Vista Middle School
Ferndale Family Support Workshop
Contact: 360-383-9213

Parent to Parent Support Meeting

Tomatis - Effect Listening Program
Monday, April 17, 2006
7:00 - 8:30 pm
2001 H Street
Participants will learn about theories
and techniques used to help accelerate
and enhance listening and social
communication
Contact Pam: 360-255-2056



April Spin Dance

7:00 - 9:00 pm
Monday, April 17, 2006
Max Higbee Center, 315 Halleck St
Music by Fritz and the Freeloaders
Contact: Amanda 360-676-6985



Adaptive Cycling

11 am - 2 pm
Saturday, May 20, 2006
Lottie Street in front of city hall
Contact Amanda Grove: 360-676-6985



Summer Camp 2006 Directory

There are dozens of camp opportunities for people of varying ages who have developmental disabilities. A directory produced by Children's Resources Center and the Center for Children with Special Needs at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center can help you find the camp that best fits your needs. The Summer Camp Directory can be found online at <http://www.cshcn.org> or call toll free at (866) 987-2500, option 1.

Acknowledgements: Support for this directory comes from the Washington State Department of Health, Children with Special Care Needs Program. Feel free to copy this directory and share it with others.



"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."

--Helen Keller

Special Education OSPI* Ombudsman: Confidential Resource for Parents

What is an Ombudsman?

An Ombudsman is a neutral party that works to ensure that bureaucracies function fairly and provide equitable treatment. All Ombudsmen work independently and confidentially.

How are Ombudsman services beneficial to citizens?

Government is complex. Ombudsman services exist to address individual concerns regarding bureaucratic systems.

The OSPI Special Education Ombudsman functions as:

- A liaison between citizens and school districts
- A person who can provide information regarding Special Education laws, regulations, and procedures
- A person to turn to for ideas when unsure about options for resolving Special Education related disagreements
- A person who can explain formal dispute resolution options
- A person who acts as a neutral and confidential sounding board to explore options for resolving Special Education related disagreements
- A check and balance to the system

- An advocate for a fair process
- A person who works to prevent individual concerns from being overlooked by the system
- A person who listens, assists with problem-solving, and provides appropriate referral services
- A person who makes recommendations to OSPI based upon patterns of complaints, if patterns emerge.

What the Special Education Ombudsman located within OSPI is **NOT**

- An attorney who provides legal counsel
- One who develops or sets Special Education or OSPI policy
- One who writes reports on and/or conducts large scale investigations
- An advocate acting on behalf of any one party or organization
- A defender of OSPI practices
- One who can order a public agency to fix your problem

How can I contact the Special Education Ombudsman?

Kristin Hennessey:
(360) 725- 6075 or email at: khennessey@ospi.wednet.edu

***OSPI stands for Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**



The Parent Coalition of Whatcom County newsletter
is published monthly by

The Arc of Whatcom County
1111 Cornwall Ave. #205
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-715-0170 or
1-866-284-8444 (toll free)
email:
parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org
or: DanaL@arcwhatcom.org

Newsletter Production Staff:
Robin Childs, Rose Formichella,
Nancy Briegel, John Cain, Beverly
Porter, Marie Eschenfelder & Sonja
Hellinga

Funded by grants from the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program, the United Way, and your donations.

The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors
Kristina Hoffman, Co-Vice President
Marilyn Korver, Co-Vice President
Marguerite Ryan, Secretary
Michele Hill, Treasurer
Jan Carlson, Maureen Godwin, and
Julee Johnson

Executive Director
Susan Jewell
Administrative Assistant
Dana Little

OFFICE HOURS: 9-12 M-F



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.

Kulshan Supported Employment Annual Banquet

Kulshan Supported Employment Awards Banquet is by special invitation and is only for Kulshan clients who have kept their job for 3 years or more.

The purpose of Kulshan Supported Employment is to assist people who have a disability in finding appropriate, meaningful employment and to help them keep their jobs once they have one.

*Contact Matt Carlson,
Director, at 360-676-9010*



Congratulations to the following!

Seated on floor: Amy Bye with her son, Larry
Seated in chairs: Nick Smith, Stacy Sandilands, Paula Smith, Annette Kooistra, Marcy Nelson, Jasmine Lange, and Lisa Rolston

Standing: Tony La, Daryl Kooy, Susan Larson, Dale Whipple, Alvin Westman, Janice Gibson, Jeff Henken, Troy Jones, Todd Childs, Darin Haak, Tami La, Megan Cole, Dan Grover and Kristen Underhill

Also recognized but not pictured: Glenn Johnson, Jarrad Ranger, Kim Menninga, David Drake, Noel Johnson, Robert Strong, Sandy Courtney.