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**June/July 2006**

Page 2 - Social Security/Trusts  
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## June

**18 Sunday** noon - 4pm  
Kayak Workshop  
Bloedel Donovan Park  
Contact: Amanda 360-676-6985

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

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

**26 Monday** 4:30 - 6:00 pm  
Whatcom County DD Advisory Board  
St. Luke's - 3333 Squalicum Pkwy  
Contact Jessica: 360-676-6724 X32014

## July

**8 Saturday** 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm  
Parent to Parent Family Picnic  
Bloedel Donovan Park  
Contact: Pam 360-255-2056

**10 Monday** 12 noon - 1:30 pm  
Down syndrome Outreach Committee  
1111 Cornwall Ave, #204  
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2

**12 Wednesday** 8:00am-5:00pm  
Down syndrome Outreach  
Woodland Park Zoo Trip  
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2

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

**22 Monday** 4:30 - 6:00 pm  
Whatcom County DD Advisory Board  
St. Luke's - 3333 Squalicum Pkwy  
Contact Jessica: 360-676-6724 X32014

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

All events are in Bellingham, unless otherwise noted

## Camp T.E.A.M. *Together Everyone Achieves More*

### Let Your Light Shine



Activities included canoeing in Puget Sound.



Self-Advocate Terri Hansen helped develop the theme 'Let Your Light Shine'.



Participants performed skits at Camp T.E.A.M.

The FIFTH annual overnight Camp TEAM took place on Friday & Saturday, May 12-13 at Camp Kirby, on beautiful Samish Island. **Let Your Light Shine** was the theme for this fun experience for teens and adults with developmental disabilities, other community members, and WWU students.

Self-Advocate Terri Hansen participated in developing the theme, speaking about the vision of never letting your light burn out. Participants performed skits around the theme and sang songs.

It was an excellent time to meet new people and build ties between community members of Skagit and Whatcom counties. The chance to play games, create arts and crafts, go canoeing or on nature walks, play on the beach, sit around a bonfire, eat s'mores, build relationships, and boogie down and dance on Friday night!

Sponsored by Western Washington University, Max Higbee Center, Skagit County Health and Human Services, Whatcom County Health and Human Services, Whatcom Educational Credit Union and Bellingham Parks and Recreation.



## Special Needs Trust Administration Manual Explains Federal Law Changes

Shortly after the *Special Needs Trust Administration Manual: A Guide for Trustees* (People with Disabilities Press, 2004) was published, the Social Security Administration made three important changes\* (See story below) to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program rules. These revisions became effective on January 1, 2005.

**The Special Needs Trust Administration Manual: A Guide for Trustees 2005 Edition**, including the latest changes in regulations and benefits, is now available at [http://www.disabilitysbooks.com/special\\_needs\\_trust/index.html](http://www.disabilitysbooks.com/special_needs_trust/index.html) It is a valuable reference guide for anyone who is managing a special needs trust for a person with disabilities. In an uncomplicated, user-friendly way, it explains the rules that govern Special Needs Trusts and how those rules relate to the many complicated government benefit programs that assist people with disabilities.

The Manual is for laypersons, such as friends and family of a person with disabilities, and for professionals, including attorneys, financial planners, and social workers - anyone who is administering (or considering administering) a Special Needs Trust. It will explain how a trustee can use trust funds to meet the medical, recreation, and transportation needs of a person with disabilities without risking the benefits of government programs such as SSI, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing. The authors give useful advice and provide many concrete examples. *Source: Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities*

### The Manual is a practical reference book that answers common questions such as:

- What are my responsibilities to a person with a disability?
- Can I spend money for a car, trip, or gift?
- Can I buy a house or condominium, and if so, who should own the property?
- What expenses can I safely pay without risking SSI benefits?
- How do I open a bank account?
- Does the trust need its own taxpayer identification number?
- What happens if I need to resign?

### \*Federal Law Changes Are:

**1.** Clothing is no longer considered in-kind income. Formerly, if an SSI recipient received any clothing from a third party (including a Special Needs Trust), his SSI benefit might be reduced. This is because clothing (along with food and shelter) was considered in-kind income. Now the trustee's job should be easier, because she can use trust funds to pay for the beneficiary's clothes without reducing the SSI benefit. (However, food and shelter are still considered in-kind income that can reduce the SSI benefit.)

**2.** The \$4,500 limit on the value of an automobile has been eliminated. Formerly, if an SSI recipient owned an automobile, it had to be worth \$4,500 or less, unless it was specially adapted, required for medical transportation, or needed because of distance or geography. Now Social Security disregards the car's value.

**3.** The \$2,000 limit on the value of personal items (such as furniture, computer, jewelry, etc.) a recipient can own has been eliminated. Formerly, the value of a recipient's personal property could not exceed \$2,000. Now there is no monetary limit on that kind of property. Note, however, that the new law affects only personal items. SSI's strict \$2,000 limit on liquid resources (cash, bank account, savings bonds, etc.) remains unchanged. Besides these important changes, this second edition contains the 2005 figures for all SSI-related examples and calculations. Also, the 2005 figures have been used for all SSI-related programs.

*Source: Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities*



The new manual includes information on changes in car and home purchases like the ones above and left.



## Tips on How to Keep Your Job

Here are some things to remember that may help you. They are called "job-keeping" skills and behaviors. You were hired because you fulfilled an employment need. That means you are important to your employer and your workplace. Because you fill an important role, it is important that you go to work and do the best you can. Some things your employer will expect include:



Jim Ross at Work

1. **Showing up for work on time**
2. **Returning from lunch/breaks on time**
3. **Calling in when you will be late or are sick and cannot come in**
4. **Treating those with whom you interact with respect and courtesy**
5. **Honesty**
6. **Being able to solve small problems on your own**
7. **Speaking up for yourself and asking for help if you don't understand how to do something**
8. **Asking for work if you have finished your task instead of just sitting around**
9. **Showing that you are willing to learn new things**
10. **Having the ability to get along with others**
11. **Working as part of a team**
12. **Dressing appropriately**
13. **Asking for a reasonable accommodation if it will help you do your job better.**

You have been working on developing many of these skills and behaviors throughout your life at school, at home, in the community. They are skills that will serve you well at work, in school, and in all other aspects of your life. Whether it's paid employment or a volunteer position, early work experiences can have a positive impact on future employment. They can teach you a great deal about yourself, the world of work, and life. If you are in school and have an Individual Education Plan, you should be an active participant in the development of your transition plan. Your transition plan outlines your goals and the steps you will take to move from where you are now to where you want to be. As part of your transition plan, you can include activities that help you learn about your interests and abilities, and help you to learn job seeking and job keeping skills. *Source: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability [www.ncwd-youth.info/](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/)*

## A Discussion on Guardianship

The decision to seek guardianship for your family member is a matter that should be weighed very seriously. Two questions should be asked: 1) Is guardianship the only way to protect my loved one's rights? and, 2) If it is necessary, what is the least restrictive form of guardianship we can use?

Parents and families are usually concerned about a loved one's health and safety when they consider the need to take legal action to protect rights.

Certainly, there are some individuals for whom guardianship is the only viable option for protection. But for other adults, especially those who have family and friends involved in their lives, guardianship may not be necessary. In some cases, for instance, help with evaluating options may be all that is needed for a person to make informed decisions. Especially individuals who recognize their need for advice, information and reassurance.

You may wish to learn about various forms of guardianship, some alternatives to guardianship, and

Guardianship packets are available through The Arc of Whatcom County. They include information on the guardianship process, frequently asked questions and alternatives to guardianship. For more information, call Beverly at 715-0170 X4

health care legal issues that pertain to your family member. Working through the legal steps with an expert attorney can safeguard your loved one's rights, now and in the future.

As a parent/family caregiver, there are steps you can take and tools you can use to learn more about protecting those areas of your family member's life where he/she may be vulnerable. Don't let fear and lack of information keep you powerless. Gain the knowledge you need, choose your best option and take action!

*Edited from [http://www.miami.edu/futureplanning/future\\_planning.html](http://www.miami.edu/futureplanning/future_planning.html)*



## Get Involved

### Social and Life Skills Classes

**\*Session I** (4 Weeks) 4:00-5:00p.m.  
Aug. 3, 10, 17, 23 (Wed)

**\*Session II** (6 weeks) 4:00-5:00pm  
Sept. 28, Oct. 5, Oct. 11, Oct. 19,  
Oct. 26, Nov. 2

\*Session I is not required for participation in Session II. Each session covers similar material.



Location: St Luke's Health Education Center  
3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham

**Self-Concept & Self-Worth:** Learning to like me  
**Relationships – family, friends and formal:**  
Recognizing boundaries  
**Dealing with my emotions:** Feelings are okay  
**Communication:** More than talking

Individuals must be 18 or older, accompanied by a family member, friend or other support AND eligible with the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Classes are free but registration is required!

Space is limited. Register: Call Pat at 676-6724 Ext. 32243 [pfisher@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:pfisher@co.whatcom.wa.us).

Sponsored by the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program

### Down syndrome Outreach Woodland Park Zoo Trip

Wednesday, July 12, 2006  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

For persons with Down syndrome, family members, friends and caregivers.

Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2



### BEGINNING AND ADAPTIVE KAYAK WORKSHOP

Sunday, June 18  
12 noon-4 p.m.

Bloedel Donovan Park

AGES: 3 years and older

Supported by Bellingham Parks and Recreation

Contact: Amanda 360-676-6985



### June Spin Dance

Monday, June 19, 2006

Max Higbee Center, 315 Halleck

Music by Whatcom Sound (June)

Contact: Amanda 360-676-6985



### A Matter Of Time

29th Annual Employment Conference

June 21-23, 2006

Ellensburg, Wa

Contact: [www.theinitiative.ws](http://www.theinitiative.ws) or 206-343-0881

### Parent to Parent Family Picnic

Saturday, July 8 2006

12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Bloedel Donovan Park

Contact Pam: 360-255-2056



### Summer Camp at Camp Volasuca

Summer recreation for adults with developmental disabilities. Campers enjoy a heated swimming pool, cook outs, arts and crafts and campfires.

Session dates vary.

Contact: Chris Shroy, Program Director at 360-793-0646 or learn more on their website:

[www.voaww.org/camp](http://www.voaww.org/camp)

### World Down Syndrome Congress Conference

August 24 -26, 2006

Vancouver, British Columbia

Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 X2

### August Ice Cream Social and Spin Dance

Monday, August 21

Ice Cream 6:30-7 p.m.

Dance 7:00 - 9:00 pm

315 Halleck St

Music by Motown Cruisers

COST: FREE, but participants MUST reserve a space prior to event. Call 676-6985 (738-7366 TTY) for reservations.

### Greenhouse Gardening: Dig It!

June 21-August 23

Wednesdays 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Big Rock Garden Greenhouse

Contact: Amanda 676-6985



### Lions Camp Horizon

A recreational overnight camp for individuals with disabilities, held each summer at Lions Camp Horizon Park in beautiful Birch Bay, Washington.

Contact: (360) 371-2227 during camp or (360) 371-0531 year round

<http://www.LionsCampHorizonPark.org>



## Extended School Year Services

### Extended School Year Services

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) team decides if a child needs Extended School Year (ESY) services. ESY is not just for children with certain disabilities. A child may need ESY services one year and not the next. The IEP team looks at all appropriate factors. The IEP team considers whether the child's gains made during the regular school year are threatened if the Local Education Agency (LEA) does not give ESY services. Each child is different. The team writes the extended school year services into the Individual Education Plan.

### What Parents Need to Know or Do

Parents can ask for extended school year (ESY) services by having an IEP meeting. Parents may want to talk about these services with the IEP team. Parents can discuss their child's possible loss of skills. Parents may look at the length of time it takes a child to regain skills after long vacation times from school. Parents may have other information about their child that may help the IEP team.

*Adapted from Wrightslaw.com*



### The IEP team can look at:

- the extent of the disability
- the extent of the skills lost
- the time needed to relearn skills
- whether parents can help
- how quickly the child learns
- skill just being introduced
- the child's behavior and physical needs
- other resources available to the child and family

### Extended school year services (ESY) are:

- to help the child get ready for the next school year
- given in a variety of places such as home, school, or community
- sometimes just related services such as occupational therapy or physical therapy as needed
- determined when the team writes the extended school year services into the Individual Education Plan



## Ways to Show Kids You Care

- Listen to their stories
- Giggle together
- Say yes a lot
- Be honest
- Tell them their feelings are okay
- Send them a letter or postcard
- Give them space when they need it
- Learn what they have to teach
- Find a common interest
- Thank them
- Encourage win-win solutions
- Have fun together
- Ask for their opinions
- Be curious with them

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



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## 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.*

### Cooking and Nutrition Workshops

**O**n Saturday, April 29th, Down syndrome Outreach sponsored two workshops on nutrition and cooking with nationally known nutrition coach Joan Medlen. Adults, teens and pre-teens tried out healthier pizza recipes using whole grains products including English muffins, pitas and focaccia bread. The use of the food pyramid in meal planning and preparation was discussed, leading to experimentation with new tastes and textures.

**P**articipants gained self-awareness and an understanding of who they are as individuals, and how that relates to their food preferences and choices. People were excited to take advantage of the opportunity to learn about healthier choices with a user friendly curriculum. Building on skills acquisition, this event helped to promote and enhance the involvement of young adults and teens in independent community living.



**Above:** Paul Stratton celebrates!



**Top:** Brooke Brennan

**Center:** Cathy and Makaila  
Buys work as a team



**Above:** Mary McDonough and  
Laura Rawlins partner in learning