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May 2007

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May 2007

19 Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
DsO Spring Fling Potluck
Hovander Homestead Park, Ferndale
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 ext. 307
See page 4 for details.

19 Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Youth Self-Advocacy Group
2602 McLeod Rd.
Contact Maureen: 360-715-0170 ext. 302
See page 4 for details.

19 Saturday 7:00 p.m.
People First
2602 McLeod Rd.
Contact Susan: 360-738-2060

21 Monday 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Whatcom County DD Advisory Board
3333 Squalicum Pkwy.
Contact Jessica: 360-676-6724 ext. 32014

21 Monday 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Parent to Parent Support Meeting
2001 H St.
Contact Jennifer: 360-255-2056 ext. 1

21 Monday 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Spin Dance - Max Higbee Center
315 Halleck St.
Contact Amanda: 360-676-6985
360-738-7366 TTY

30 Monday 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Grand Opening &
Annual Membership Meeting
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Rd
Contact Cathy: 360-715-0170 ext. 205
See page 4 for details.

June 2007

2 Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Parent to Parent Roadtrip
Contact Christine: 360-255-2056 ext. 3
See page 4 for details.

4 Monday 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Arc Board of Directors
2602 McLeod Rd.
Contact Dana: 360-715-0170 ext. 305

12 Tuesday 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Interagency Coordinating Council At Large
Garden Street Family Center
Contact Christi: 360-734-5121 ext. 229

All Events are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted.

Whatcom County Transition Fair



The Fair was attended by more than 150 Whatcom County students who took the opportunity to connect with service providers.



Students, families and educators met with local agencies and organizations. Rick Pribbenow led participants through 'Shifting Gears' into adulthood.



Transition Success Stories Panel spoke to a packed room.

WHAT IS TRANSITION PLANNING?

Transition planning is a partnership involving students with disabilities, their families, school personnel, local community and adult service representatives, employers and interested others. The purpose is to assist students in identifying opportunities and experiences during their school years to help prepare them for life as an adult. More information on transition planning is available at:

The Center for Change in Transition
Services: www.seattleu.edu/ccts

Wrightslaw: www.wrightslaw.com

Pacer Center: www.pacer.org

Or contact your local school district community transition program.

For Whatcom County School Districts, call:

Bellingham	360-676-6400
Blaine	360-332-5881
Ferndale	360-383-9200
Lummi	360-758-3147
Lynden	360-354-4443
Meridian	360-398-7111
Mt. Baker	360-383-2000
Nooksack Valley	360-988-4754



State Bill Spells Relief For Families

For decades we've been advocating for families needing support for their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities. As parents ourselves, we know firsthand the challenges and struggles families face.

For example, it costs 2.2 times more to raise a child with developmental disabilities. Most parents provide care in their own homes around the clock. Behavior challenges, medical and therapy needs and personal care during daily activities can cost as much as \$30,000 per year or more.

Caring for a child with a developmental disability is a 24/7 job that most of us do without objection.

Our hope is that parents of children and adults with developmental disabilities can receive a little help from the state to be able to continue to provide care in their own homes. This year, with the help of supportive members of the Legislature, we've made great strides to improve the programs that provide support to families in need.

In the past 20 years, three different programs have provided family support. The separate programs have caused confusion for families and have cost money to manage and operate. Meanwhile, the waiting list for help has reached 10,000 families.

This year advocates wrote and supported a bill to combine the different programs into one. It was a great idea and one with legs as the House and Senate

actively supported the effort and this weekend passed the important legislation. The bill will create the Lance Morehouse Jr. Memorial Individual and Family Services Act and Program, named after the author's late son.

Along with the legislation, proposed funding of the program would help families with respite care, therapies, home and vehicle modifications, equipment and supplies, transportation, excess medical costs not covered by other sources, education, counseling and training, and other services that would help make it a little easier to care for a son or daughter with a developmental disability.



The funding also could be used to help a family nearing a crisis to avoid placing a child into an out-of-home placement or an institution.

We applaud the many legislators who have worked tirelessly to combine the family support programs and address the needs of thousands of families waiting for help. We hope the governor will sign this legislation quickly to provide needed relief for the thousands of families who have been living the waiting game.

Margaret-Lee Thompson is coordinator of the King County Parent Coalition for Developmental Disabilities, a program of The Arc of King County. Lance Morehouse is coordinator of the Spokane County Parent Coalition, a program of The Arc of Spokane.

Source: Seattle PI

Washington State Budget Proposals

Final Budget proposals are expected to be signed in early May. Below is a brief rundown of select items.

DD Employment Services - Funding is provided for an additional 720-750 clients (by the end of fiscal year 2009) who are expected to graduate from high school or who graduated in previous years. Services will cover both clients using waivers and those who are not. Employment and day services include job creation and job supports for paid employment. Of the total funding, \$1 million in state funds and \$1 million in federal funds is included to partner with school districts under the 'Jobs to 21 Program' to prepare high school students for employment.



Family Caregiver Support & Respite - Funds are provided for a 3 percent increase in family support services. State-only services will be phased in for an additional 1,300 families by the end of fiscal year 2009 Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5467 establishes a new, consolidated family support program based on assessed need. The funding level provided covers an average of \$3000/year, enough to allow 16 respite hours per month.

For an in-depth look at all budget proposals visit: <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2007/cs0709AgencyDetail.pdf>



How to Choose an Accessible Summer Camp

Parents may have questions and concerns about sending a child to camp for the first time, particularly a child with special needs. Will my child be able to handle being away from home? How can my child possibly participate in activities like white water rafting and tree climbing with his disability? Are these activities really safe? Is the camp staff really qualified to provide my child with the care he needs? The following tips can help parents through the camp selection process:

1. Review your child's interests and abilities to determine what type of camp setting may be most appropriate for him (e.g., day, residential, special interest, or inclusive camps).

2. Find out if the camp you are interested in is accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA) and if "standards for persons with special needs have been met.

3. Talk with the director about the camp's philosophy and goals. Ask about the director's training and experience in working with children who have similar disabilities to those of your child.

4. Check on the camp's health and safety procedures and facilities, e.g., is there a registered nurse in residence & have emergency arrangements been made with a nearby hospital?

5. Determine the age, training and experience of counselors. Are they at least 18 years old? Have they had experience working with children with disabilities?

6. Refer to the return rate of campers and counselors as an indicator of quality. An extremely low rate may be a bad sign.

7. Inquire about the ratio of counselors to campers. For children with severe disabilities, the ratio should be at least one counselor for every two or three campers.



8. If possible, visit the camp to observe the quality of its facilities and programs. Is it accessible to children with limited mobility? Are its activities interesting, stimulating, and appropriate for your child's age, interests, and abilities? Are campers encouraged to choose and plan their own activities?

9. Be sure to ask about the camp's registration fee. The expense of attending camp is not necessarily an indication of quality.

10. Remember that a child included in all stages of camp selection will be better prepared and have a more enjoyable camp experience.

Information provided by Easter Seals:

www.easter-seals.org (Edited for length)

2007 Summer Camps & Programs for children with special health care needs

The 2007 Summer Camps & Programs directory can be found at the Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs website:
<http://www.cshcn.org>
under resources.

Or call the Children's Resource line at:
866-987-2500, option 4.

Human Race Allows Participants to Help The Arc

Walk, run, or bike for The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center! We all win with the Human Race: Saturday, June 9, 2007 at Maritime Heritage Park. Race starts at 10:00 a.m.

This year's Human Race combines the options of a 5K walk, a 5K/10K run, or a 15K/30K bike ride sponsored by the Whatcom Volunteer Center and local businesses to raise funds for nonprofits, including The Arc.

Individuals and groups can pick up a packet at The Arc's office at 2602 McLeod to collect donations that will be used to support the Dan Godwin Community Center. The celebration culminates with a complimentary lunch, music, prizes, and a family fair.

75% of donations go directly to The Arc; 25% remains with the Whatcom Volunteer Center.



Working: Employment Supports

When interviewing agencies, ask about how the agencies work with you and your family.

The following questions may help families through the selection process.

What services does your agency offer?

How would you help me if I have special needs such as: medications, personal care, cultural diversity, behavior challenges, or safety issues?

How would you help me plan for the kind of services that fit me best?

What is special about your agency? What does your agency do best?

What types of jobs do you help people find?

How will I get to my job?

What kinds of connections do you have with companies in the community where I might get a job?

How will you keep communication open with parents, guardians, and important others?

How would you help me with long-term follow-up after I get a job?

Source: Washington State Transitions Notebook



Get Involved

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center Open House & Annual Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 30

3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Stop by anytime!

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Tours, Refreshments, Entertainment

Tour The Arc's new Dan Godwin
Community Center &
Listen to live music!

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Annual Membership Meeting

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Desserts & Entertainment

Enjoy desserts & meet individuals and
families in your community.

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham
Contact Cathy: 360-255-2056 ext. 205



Down syndrome Outreach Spring Fling Potluck

Saturday, May 19

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



Family and friends are welcome. Please
bring a salad, main dish, or dessert to share.
Activities & sport games
for the kids, young and old! Door Prizes!

Hovander Homestead Park - Brick Pavilion, Ferndale
Contact Sarah: 360-715-0170 ext. 307

Youth Self-Advocacy Group

3rd Saturdays of the month

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



Have a Dream? Join our Group!
Have fun learning about Self-Advocacy.
Make Friends and Work Together!
This event is held every third Saturday of the month.
Registration required - Ages 18 to 25 only.

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Rd, Bellingham

Contact Maureen: 360-715-0170 ext 302

Sponsored by: Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program

Parent to Parent Support Meeting

Monday, May 21

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Topic: Day Camp & Recreation Activities for
Children with Special Needs
Guest Speaker: Amanda Grove,
Bellingham Parks and Recreation



2001 H Street, Bellingham
Contact Jennifer: 360-255-2056 ext. 1

Spin Dance

Monday, May 21

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Music by: Fritz and The Freeloaders



315 Halleck Street, Bellingham
Contact Amanda:
360-676-6985 or 360-738-7366 TTY

Parent to Parent Roadtrip: Port Townsend, WA

Saturday, June 2

10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.



Join other parents and caregivers of children
with special needs for a one day get away to
relax and refresh.

Contact Christine: 360-255-2056 ext. 3

Safety Awareness and Sexuality Support Group

Every Monday

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

An opportunity to learn all about
personal safety and awareness.
Presented by John Davis and Jan Jung, Husband and Wife
Team of Mental Health Counselors.

Sessions run for 5 weeks.

Registration required - Ages 18 and older.



The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Rd, Bellingham

Contact Maureen: 360-715-0170 ext 302

Sponsored by: Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program

Skagit County Events:

What is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation?

Tuesday, June 5

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon

Contact Heather: 360-416-7570 ext 401

Sponsored by: Skagit County Parent to Parent

Show Me the Money: Financial Planning for Families

Tuesday, May 15

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Guardianships, Trusts, Letters of Intent, &
Special areas of financial interest to families.
Presented by: Larry Jones, Esq.

320 Pacific Place, Mt. Vernon

Contact Malinda: 360-336-9395

Sponsored by: Skagit County Parent to Parent



Arc events are held in accessible locations. For sign
language interpreter service, assistive listening devices
or communication material in an alternative format,
large print or audiotape, please call 10 days in advance.



Special Education, Children & Families

Individual Education Plans (IEP) Tips: What to Do at an IEP Meeting

Are you overwhelmed or intimidated at IEP meetings? Are you confused about your parental role? Professionals who attend IEP meetings often provide so many rules, regulations, policies, and assessment results that parents leave IEP meetings feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. These strategies offer common sense approaches about how to effectively advocate for your child, while learning how to provide input and build positive relationships with the school personnel who work with your child.

You are a full and equal member of the IEP team.

Don't be afraid to see your role as equally important as the educational professionals. Also, be sure that when someone says, *'The team feels . . .'* that you do agree with the statement. If you do not, say, *'I don't feel that way, and I am a full and equal member of this team.'* Remember that you have a valuable and unique perspective as the parent of your child. Do not allow yourself to get into a 'them versus me' situation.

Be an active listener.

Make sure you make eye contact with people as they are speaking. Give each speaker your full attention. Allow people to finish their thoughts before speaking up. Taking notes shows you're listening and helps after the meeting.



If the school did not provide records, evaluations, or proposed IEP goals ahead of time and you feel your ability to participate in the meeting has been compromised, consider rescheduling the meeting (with the utmost of tact).

The law says that parents are fully participating members of the IEP Team. You cannot be a fully participating member if you lack critical information about your child.

Discuss issues your child has that may affect his ability to receive educational benefits in the general education environment.

Focus on the supports and services your child needs to learn and be successful in school. For example, *'Due to Tim's hearing impairment, he requires a sign language interpreter to benefit from the general education curriculum.'* Your requests should be appropriate.

Send your agenda to the district a few days ahead of time.

Label this 'Proposed Agenda.' Bring extra copies of your Agenda to the meeting and politely invite each team member to take a copy.

Make sure your child's IEP goals are SMART.

In the corporate world, business goals are SMART:

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**ction words
- R**ealistic and
- T**ime specific.



If you don't understand what is being said or proposed, ask the Team to clarify.

Don't go to an IEP meeting alone.

The person you bring does not have to be a trained advocate. The person can be someone who cares about your child and family. If you think this is necessary, ask them not to speak. Just having someone there, taking notes, will let the district know that you take your rights seriously.

Debrief with your advocate, spouse, and any other person who accompanied you immediately after the meeting.

Write down what you remember, and then add your own impressions and opinions. Write a thank you note to the IEP Team for the time people spent meeting with you about your child. Use the thank you note to document key decisions made and to review issues that are still unresolved.

by Anne Eason, Esq. and Kathleen Whitbread, Ph.D.

Source: www.wrightslaw.com

I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me.
-- Dudley Field Malone

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2602 McLeod Rd.
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-715-0170 or
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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.

What is Self-Determination?

Self-Determination is the ability for people to: control their lives, reach goals they have set and take part fully in the world around them.

The right to self-determination must include individuals with all types of disabilities. Self-Determination has four basic rights and responsibilities: Freedom, Authority or control of own life, Support and Responsibility.

1) Freedom

Freedom for Americans with disabilities is like freedom for any American. It means deciding for one-self about:

- How to work, live and love
- Direct one's life
- How to give to the community
- What kind of services and supports to use (if any)

People who experience disability do not have to accept segregated schooling, institutional placement, service slots, or forced treatment of any kind.

2) Authority or control of own life

Americans with disabilities have the right to direct their lives. This includes:

- Having control over how to spend their money
- Having the right to vote
- Being able to sign legal contracts (like one for buying a house, or for getting married)
- Being able to decide how funds available for support services will be spent



Support agreements must be developed together by individuals and funding agencies. Funds must be assigned to individuals rather than slots. People with disabilities must be allowed to use those funds to purchase the supports they require. They also must be able to personally select (hire) and direct people who provide support or assistance.

3) Support

People with disabilities may desire support/assistance to:

- Care for themselves
- Be an active part of their communities

Each person who experiences disability can determine the supports that work for him/her. People with disabilities (together with those they trust, if they want) have the right to figure out their life goals, what kind of supports might work, and how to make and keep track of plans and budgets.

4) Responsibility

People with disabilities have the responsibility to fulfill the ordinary obligations of citizenship like:

- Voting
- Obeying laws
- Directing their own lives
- Participating in community life

Policy barriers must be removed when they prevent people who earn money from receiving health insurance, personal assistance, or other related supports.

Excerpt from: Oregon Health and Science University Center on Self-Determination