

Providing support and information for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other health care needs

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TxP2P Program Update

Laura J. Warren, Executive Director

Our 2nd Annual TxP2P Parent Conference will be upon us shortly and the registration has kept us hopping in the office. Registration for both the conference and **Wrightslaw** has far exceeded our expectations. By the time you receive this, the child care, SibShop, and hotel stipends will be closed and Wrightslaw and the Family Gathering may also have to be closed. We wish we could accommodate more of you but we've already doubled last year's conference registration and St. Edward's University has run out of rooms for us. We'll have to find a bigger space for next year! Thank you to all those that are contributing to making this conference a reality (TxP2P staff and Board, our sponsors, speakers, exhibitors, volunteers, St. Ed's, child care workers) and to all of you for making it so popular! This year's conference has lots of exciting new items! We have a pre-conference session this year with Wrightslaw. Our family gathering this year will have entertainment by We Are the Chorus and Joe McDermott. Nancy DiVenere, President of Parent to Parent USA, will be our keynote speaker on Saturday and will talk about the history and power of parent to parent support. We are working with a wonderful Recreational Therapist, Mona McCullough, from Austin ISD, who is creating a schedule of activities for the child care rooms so the kids will stay busy and have fun! And finally, St. Edward's University has been wonderful to work with and we're looking forward to some great fun and food.

Jeanine Pinner, our Outreach and Training Coordinator for the **TxP2P Family to Family Health Care Information and Education Center**, is busy scheduling trainings across the state for parents, parent groups, and professionals. If you have a parent group or staff that you think would benefit from a training on Community Resources, Medicaid Waiver Programs, Advocacy, Health Care Transition Process: Pediatric to Adult Care, Medical Home, Telling Your Story, Self-Determination, or any similar topic, contact Jeanine 512-217-3558 or Jeanine@txp2p.org Finally, we're planning our **2nd Annual Vine 2 Wine Fundraiser** on Thursday, October 5th, at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin. Last year it was a lovely evening event with wonderful food donated and prepared by Central Market-Westgate and wine donated by Republic Distributing Company. We had over 100 silent auction items, including large format wine, a UT bucket of snacks and football game tickets, original artwork, and autographed items. I know you cannot all participate but I hope some of you will be able to join us this year!

Volume 5, Issue 2
 Summer 2006

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Help TxP2P by using our Randall's Good Neighbor' Remarkable Card Number 10043!

Advocacy, Inc. and Special Education

Kay Lambert, Education Policy Specialist

Advocacy, Inc. (AI) opened its first office in Texas in 1978, three years after Congress passed legislation requiring each state to have a program, funded by Congress, to provide "protection and advocacy" services for persons with developmental disabilities. Protection and advocacy programs are established as disability legal rights agencies and special education is one of many issues covered. Over the years, Congress has added many responsibilities to protection and advocacy programs. Instead of serving only persons with develop-

mental disabilities, Advocacy, Inc. now provides protection and advocacy services to:

- Persons with mental illness in institutions and in the community
- Persons with disabilities that do not meet the criteria of a developmental disability or mental health disability
- Persons who are clients, or want to be clients, of the state's rehabilitation programs

Issues covered by AI in addition to special education include:

- Enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act

- Enforcement of the Fair Housing Act
- Right to be free of abuse or neglect, including improper physical restraint or seclusion
- Right to live in the community
- Access to community services
- Right to vote
- Access to Medicaid and Medicaid waiver services
- Access to assistive technology

As a way to manage the many areas of responsibility with limited resources, the AI Board of Directors has chosen to adopt priorities

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which limit the cases we will take. Priorities are developed after input from staff and from the public. Priority areas are those in which the Board sees the highest need, and in which they believe our intervention will help the individual(s) impacted, as well as others in similar situations. (For information about AI's current priorities and our priority setting process, please go to the website: www.advocacyinc.org)

Advocacy, Inc. has grown to include six offices around the state, as well as eight smaller satellite offices. The regional offices cover all of the priorities and no one in a regional office works exclusively on special education.

The majority of our work in special education is individual case work provided by an attorney or advocate.

The advocate or attorney working with you is juggling many other cases on a variety of issues. We also have staff working at the state level in the area of public policy. Many of our clients are families who come to our trainings and call our 1-800 phone numbers, but we also have clients in residential care facilities, foster care, and even a project in the Texas colonias. Our mandate requires us to do outreach to those who might not know about our services. In 2005, Advocacy, Inc. handled over 4,000 cases and responded to over 12,000 requests for information, materials, or referral.

No one on AI's staff likes telling a parent they can not take their case, go to their ARD meeting, or provide other services such as writing letters or making phone calls on behalf of their child. We try our best to provide written information or a referral to another program if we cannot take your case. When they can, staff will try to answer your question or strategize with you on the phone or

Priority areas are those in which the Board sees the highest need, and in which they believe our intervention will help the individual(s) impacted, as well as others in similar situations.

sometimes in person. Staff may be available to conduct training for your parent organization.

Following are some tips for making the best use of Advocacy, Inc. services in the area of special education.

1. Read the Parent Manual, "It's a New IDEA." It is currently available on our website (<http://www.advocacyinc.org/handoutEducation.htm>). The answer to your question may be in there.

2. Go to the Handouts section on our website at: (<http://www.advocacyinc.org/handoutEducation.htm>). The information you need might be there. For example, you can find an explanation of the Texas Education Agency's complaints process and guidance on how to file a TEA complaint.

3. If you have a question about a disciplinary action taken by a school district against a student with a disability, AI has developed an interactive online program that can answer your questions about the disciplinary process. Go to: <http://www.advocacyinc.org/guides>.

4. Go to the Texas Education Agency's website. They have a lot of information about special education policies and procedures. You can also find a copy of the state rules and regulations governing special education on their website. Most of the information you might need can be accessed through the special education homepage (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>). However, there is other useful information on the websites of other divisions of TEA. For example, information on TAKS, SDAA, and LDAA can be found at the site of the Division of Student Assessment. There are also divisions for No Child Left Behind and Charter Schools, among others.

5. Contact the Partners Resource Network (www.partnerstx.org) with your question about special education or to request training. They are funded specifically to perform this function. Smaller organizations such as Family to Family Network (www.familytofamilynetwork.org), Texas Parent to Parent ([\[txp2p.org/\]\(http://txp2p.org/\)\) and the various Arc Chapters \(\[www.thearcoftexas.org\]\(http://www.thearcoftexas.org\)\) can also answer many of your questions about special education. They also provide some parent training.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

6. Review AI's current priorities in the area of Education (<http://www.advocacyinc.org/prior2.htm>) to see if your issue seems to fall within those priorities. If not, our services will be limited.

7. Determine which of AI's regions you live in (<http://www.advocacyinc.org/contact.htm>) and call that regional office. Though we do have a statewide intake number, it will save time if you call the correct office directly. Ask to talk to intake staff. If you call someone else, perhaps someone you know, you will still have to talk to an intake worker to take the required information. It saves everyone time if you talk to an intake worker first. Intake hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

8. Be as clear as you can be about the specific problem you are having for which you want AI's assistance and have the information you might need to answer questions with you when you call. You may be asked questions such as the date of your child's most recent evaluation or IEP.

I hope the above information is helpful. AI wants to help as many parents and students as possible. We can help more people if we are used to provide a service that other programs cannot provide or provide information you cannot find from another source.

If you have gained information, either from AI or someone else, that you have found useful in getting a good IEP for your child or for being an effective participant in an ARD meeting, we hope you will share that information with other parents in your community. Working together is the best way to have a positive impact on the 500,000 Texas students who receive special education services and their families.





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THANKS TO STERLING'S PRINTING & COPYING FOR PRINTING THIS NEWSLETTER AT A REDUCED COST!

Board and Advisory Committee Openings & Appointments

The governor has the honor of appointing members to several key positions that affect people with disabilities on boards, councils, and advisory committees for state agencies and other entities. Texas Parent to Parent would like to ensure that parents are part of those committees. If you would like to serve on one of these boards, councils, or committees, we would like to help you get appointed to one that would be of interest to you. We can help you with the application and writing a letter of support for you appointment. We obviously cannot make any promises but we are willing to help. Here are the positions, the number of positions available, and the date of the openings that were listed as of 06/12/06:



*Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities; 6 positions; 2/1/06

*Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Council; 8 positions; 2/1/05

*Health Disparities Task Force; 1 position; 2/1/06

*Statewide Health Coordinating Council; 4 positions; 8/1/05

*Statewide Independent Living Council; 3 positions; 10/24/05

*Texas Office for the Prevention of Developmental Disabilities, Executive Committee; 1 position; 2/1/05

*Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Governing Board; 3 positions; 1/31/05

You can find this list at

<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/appointments/current>

Information on how to apply is at <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/appointments/process>

The application itself is at <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/appointments/application>

For a printed application or more informa-

tion, you can contact us or the Governor's Appointments Office, P.O. Box 12428, Austin, TX 78711; 512-463-1828 or fax to 512-475-2576.

The Governor recently appointed many individuals to a variety of councils and advisory bodies, some of whom are connected to Texas Parent to Parent. So congratulations to the following:

Pat Alvarez, Austin; TxP2P Parent; 2002 Partner in Policymaking Graduate; appointed to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas

Opal Irvin, Dimebox; TxP2P Parent; 2002 Partners in Policymaking Graduate; and **Frank McCamant**, Austin, TxP2P Parent; appointed to the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Christy Dees, Austin; TxP2P Parent; and **Shewanda Williams**, Houston; TxP2P Parent; 2005 Partner in Policymaking Graduate; appointed to Continuing Advisory Committee for Special Education.

Evacuation Help: Registry for People with Disabilities from DADS and Advocacy, Inc. Offers Help for Evacuees

The 2006 hurricane season began June 1. Experience has shown that many Texans are not able to evacuate themselves because of physical and functional disabilities or medical conditions. Other individuals may not be able to evacuate because they don't have transportation. Local jurisdictions are planning their evacuation strategies now. They are seeking input on the number of people that may need assistance evacuating. The state has

Individuals that need assistance evacuating can register by calling 2-1-1.

developed a special needs registry to assist local jurisdictions in estimating the need for transportation resources during an evacuation. Individuals that need assistance evacuating can register by calling 2-1-1.

Please, if you need help with your child or if you know someone else that may need assistance evacuating, call 2-1-1 today. Registration is free, it is easy, and it may save the life of a Texan with special needs.

Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services **Advocacy, Inc.** has received a grant from the Texas Council for Develop-

mental Disabilities which provides four community integration specialists to help individuals with disabilities affected by last year's hurricanes in Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex, San Antonio, and Central Texas to analyze their options for living in the community in Texas or Louisiana. Another grant received by Advocacy, Inc. from Katrina Aid Today goes through October 2007 and is helping individuals with disabilities recover from the hurricane. Contact Advocacy, Inc. at 800-252-9108 (V/TDD) or 512-454-4816 (V/TDD) for more information.

"Understanding Family Support and Opening Doors to the Future"

Texas Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin

The Texas Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin has produced a new guide on "Understanding Family Support and Opening Doors to the Future." The 26-page guide was created as a resource for parents of children living in institutions in Texas or at extreme risk of placement;



however, it contains information valuable to a broader audience. For example, the guide has lists of the state's seven Medicaid Waivers, other state-administered community care programs, parent groups, state agencies and state disability advocacy organizations. There is also information on natural supports, formal sup-

ports, the importance of living in a family, Medicaid, and how to navigate the service system. Funding for the guide was provided by The Trull Foundation of Palacios, Texas. The guide is online at http://tcds.edb.utexas.edu/documents/ut_tcds_family.pdf or contact them at 512-232-0740 or 800-828-7839.

ESY Project in Texas

In 2004, the Federal Government found that school districts in Texas were not providing ESY services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and directed the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to ensure that local school districts provide ESY services in compliance with the requirements of the law. The Southern Disability Law Center (SDLC) recently received a multi-year grant from the State Bar of Texas to improve the quality and availability of Extended School Year (ESY) Services for children with disabilities in Texas. SDLC is a nonprofit legal services organization founded to protect and advance the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the Gulf states. All of SDLC's services are free. SDLC is currently assisting parents in Houston and San Antonio who want to file complaints with the TEA about the ESY services offered (or not offered) to their children.

The purpose of the ESY Project is to improve the overall quality of school services available for chil-

dren with disabilities, not only during the summer, but during the traditional school year as well. The SDLC wants to make systemic improvements in the availability and quality of ESY services throughout the state. This will enhance the overall quality of special education services in Texas. Specific goals include:

- To ensure that schools tell all parents of children with disabilities that their child may be eligible for ESY, and that parents are allowed to fully discuss ESY services with the ARD committee.

- To make sure schools consider all children with disabilities for ESY services, not just children with "certain" disabilities.

- To require schools to formulate ESY services based on the individual needs of the child, and not just enroll children in "one-size-fits-all" programs.

- To ensure that schools provide

appropriate related services during ESY, such as counseling, speech, occupational and physical therapy.

- To make sure schools provide transportation for children to and from ESY programs.

- To ensure that schools make decisions about ESY services in a timely manner, so that parents may appeal a school's decision if they so choose.

To ensure that children in ESY programs have access to their non-disabled peers, and are educated in the least restrictive environment.

Parents in the greater Houston and San Antonio areas who are concerned about their child's access to appropriate ESY services can contact the SDLC for free advocacy services. Parents can talk to a lawyer on the SDLC staff and receive help in filing a written complaint with the TEA about ESY services. Interested parents may contact: Southern Disability Law Center, 705 Highland Avenue, Austin, TX 78703, or call toll free 1-877-499-0265



Keynote Address - Girl Scouts Lone Star Council 2006

Women of Distinction Luncheon

By Amy Litzinger, Austin, TX

Good afternoon, distinguished citizens of Central Texas! I have been a Girl Scout since kindergarten, moving to Austin in 2nd grade. Upon arriving in Austin, we formed a troop of thirteen girls who had just moved here from five countries. We are a neighborhood troop who blends cultures and religions, and public and private school calendars!

Girl Scouts has enabled me to sleep with sharks, survive storms and speak to legislators. Let me share a few of the many stories.

For Girl Scouts' 85th Anniversary celebration, our Council planned a parade down Congress Avenue. To prepare, we attended Clown School and visited a nursing home to practice clowning! At the parade, we walked single-file down Congress Avenue, with a long clothesline that held hilarious laundry. As the parade began, it started raining! Our clown make up left our faces and the laundry became heavy with water. The spectators fled and so we went out

for hot chocolate!

For one of our many camping trips, we camped in a state park south of San Antonio. We had a great night and a fun morning. Suddenly a wall of black clouds moved in, followed by lightening, torrential rains and hail. Are you starting to notice a theme here? The park police told us to crouch in ditches if we saw a tornado - the ditches with the alligator signs, and the lightening! We were amazed by the force of a Texas storm! Our tents, food and gear were destroyed. The local stores were closed until Monday, so we came home! After all we were only 8 years old!

We also took great trips, visiting Space Center Houston and the Texas State Aquarium to sleep in front of the shark tank!

In middle school we increased our level of service to the community. We visited nursing homes to perform scenes from The Music Man, Annie and Cats. We hosted badge days for Girl Scouts across Austin,

volunteered at Austin's Trail of Lights, and filled backpacks with school supplies for foster children.

In high school, there was greater emphasis on leadership and career exploration. We continually got to meet and work with lots of inspiring adults.

For example, our troop visited St. Edwards University, where Dr. Quinn taught us to regenerate cauliflower from a single cell. We learned about biology careers and had a deep discussion about the ethics of chemical companies selling grain to third world countries which can't produce offspring crops.

As a troop we earned our Silver Award, by creating an Ability Awareness Fair for the general public. Our fair featured about 100 stations where you were assigned a disability, and then given a game or craft to try. We also asked Ballet Austin to teach wheelchair ballet, plus I demonstrated my voice dictation

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Keynote Address

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software.

As we planned and implemented this fair, our troop learned the effect one person can have on a master schedule. We also learned how to collaborate with outside organizations. After our fair, which about 2,000 people attended, we were told that we had become a project coordination team, similar to one in a corporation.

Next, came our Gold Awards which were more individual. For example, Alyssa built bat houses for Bat Conservation International. Brandy, already a horse woman, held a horse show for children who take therapeutic riding. Kelsey furnished a babysitting center at a YMCA.

My next story leads up to how I chose my Gold Award Project! In 9th grade, I testified to our Texas Legislature about the needs of children who have disabilities. The situation, simplified a lot, is that our state institutions are becoming empty, because today's families want to raise their children away from institutions and in communities. So Texas has 100,000 children who, instead, need a community model of support. So I told my story to the legislature, which is: "Why would I take 8 advanced placement classes and then move into an institution for a daily bath?

Wouldn't I want help in my home or college dorm, to continue living the full life I lead?"

After testifying about this, I was asked to speak to other groups about self-advocacy. I was invited to help the Texas Youth Leadership Forum, with a leadership conference. I was able to easily join a team of adults to create this conference, because we learned how to work as a group during our fair.

Next, I was appointed to a federal committee called the National Council on Disability, as their high school representative! We communicate with youth across the USA, plus we call on members of Congress, and we write an annual paper to be submitted to Congress. On this committee it is equally important to advocate for people with all types of disabilities. My experience of being in such a diverse Girl Scout troop, prepared me well for this committee.

Next, at a recent 15th anniversary celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act, held at the Kennedy Center, I was invited to help President George Herbert Walker Bush, give awards, to people who work for the rights of persons with disabilities.

After these experiences, when it became time to choose my Gold Award Project, I decided to teach

people how to testify to their Legislature. I held three classes, and then we had a mock hearing, in a Senate Hearing Room at the Texas Capitol. I invited legislative staff to listen and give us pointers. As my project completed, I was appointed to the Texas Children's Policy Council, by Commissioner Hawkins. Also, I was honored as a Young Woman of Distinction, at the 2005 Girl Scout National Convention in Atlanta, where



they honored 25 girls in the United States for their Gold projects, two from the Lone Star Council!

Our Girl Scout troop is about to graduate, ten of us who've been Girl Scouts since kindergarten, and 2 foreign exchange students from Germany! Our last event will be a slumber party, here at this hotel, after finals are over. Isn't it scandalous to sleep here and then drive over to our last day of high school? I've shared lots of stories, but believe me I could share lots more. I have had thirteen fantastic years in Girl Scouts and I hope to have many, many more! Thank you!

IMAGES OF FATHERS

James May, Program Director (retired), Washington State Fathers Network

As the Program Director for the Fathers Network, I have spent the past seventeen years crisscrossing the country helping set up support groups for fathers of children with special needs. I have visited thirty-eight states and completed more than 400 trainings. I have experienced the bitter cold of Maine, the tropical climes of Hawaii, and the scorching heat of Texas. It has been a grand time, both in terms of seeing much of this country and the diverse people who inhabit it, but also in meeting men who are endeavoring to be the best possible dads for their children

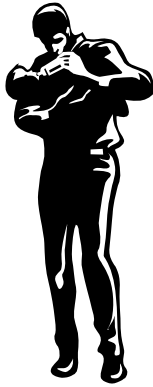
What stands out is the isolation so many men experience, afraid to share their special world, fearful of being misunderstood and unwilling to reach out to others for help.

with disabling conditions or chronic illness. I often have been touched and moved to tears hearing the stories these men share with each other. When I reflect on these travels, I find poignant images and memories full of wonder and delight, all saying something important about fathers and their desire to be competent, concerned caretakers. I remember two men who came to the first meeting of a fathers group and were surprised finding each other at such a gathering. With amazement and some embarrassment they discovered each had a child with a disability -- amazed because they had worked together for the past four years but had never shared this "secret." I have seen and heard variations on this story almost everywhere I go. What stands out is the isolation so many men experience, afraid to share

their special world, fearful of being misunderstood and unwilling to reach out to others for help. The old male models of manliness -- being in control, self-sufficient, capable of handling all problems without asking for help -- die slowly. To finally openly talk about one's child, to know we all have the same fears, angers, frustrations as well as the joys of personal accomplishment, is an incredibly powerful experience. I routinely ask men why they come to such meetings. Often the answer is, "my wife wanted me to," or "I came because I was told to." When I ask them again at the end of the session the simple answer is, "I came to share my experiences and feelings with other men of similar backgrounds." The isolation slips away as the commonalties become supremely evident.

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One way to deal with our pain is to deny we have it. A glib "I'm fine," or "everything's great" masks the confusion and concern men often feel regarding their families and the struggles they are going through. I think of the man who installed my storm windows. He seemed particularly angry, and we made little eye contact. Upon completing the job he asked to use a phone in my office. On the desk was a copy of a book about families raising children with special needs. With a sudden blurt he asked me, "What do you know about kids with disabilities?" Upon telling him about my job, he unleashed twenty minutes of unbridled rage about the past fifteen months of his life since his child with special needs was born. He complained bitterly about the medical costs, the stresses he was experiencing with his wife, and the loss of a job. It was evident this was the first time he had openly shared these thoughts with anyone else. What was also evident behind the frustration and anger was the immense love and concern he felt for his child. Not daring to interrupt, I let him share his stories, and when through, I told him about groups of men who meet to share similar feelings and help support each other through their struggles. He was dumfounded such groups existed. Like so many other men, he needed a place to vent his frustrations, share his fears *and* joys and reach out for assistance. With men so often what is outwardly shown is not what is going on inside; men need safe places to be accepted and understood.



I am continually struck by how a group of men from disparate backgrounds can immediately connect with each other. In a fathers'

group one finds mechanics and computer salesmen, loggers and professors, servicemen and engineers. I have often cringed a bit when first starting a session, quietly asking myself how these men will ever find something in common. I particularly remember one man who was absolutely silent the entire two-hour session; he seemed utterly detached from what was going on, and no amount of coaxing could elicit a comment. He seemed supremely bored by what was happening. As we were about to finish he finally looked up and began to talk about his child, haltingly at first but increasingly confident as he went on. He made it clear the session had been very special to him and that he intended to return the next time. Obviously I had misjudged him; I could only remark later to the group leaders how much camaraderie among the men was built in such a short period of time, and that we all have our own unique ways of sharing who we are. While the men seem so very different, in reality they are so very much alike. Underneath the tough exterior is a tenderness wanting to come out and be acknowledged. Their children bond them together. I would be remiss not to comment about the laughter, the good humor and enjoyment the men bring to discussions regarding their children. The first steps at age five, the mastering of a feeding session or a diaper change, the joy in taking a son swimming on a Saturday afternoon, the relief of making it through a child's heart surgery, and the chance to take a daughter on a camping trip -- these are the stories that make our times together such a pleasure. The playful kidding with each other, the earthiness of discussing who had the last vasectomy, the exchanging of cigars with the birth of a child, and the preparation of a spaghetti dinner for the wives -- all are done

with great gusto; rarely have I left a session feeling down or overwhelmed by sadness. For dads of children with special needs, success comes in different ways-- slow and measured, hopeful after what had seemed so hopeless. For most dads the child ultimately becomes a gift of love, a teacher. As one father proclaimed, "I feel proud of her [his daughter] and even proud of myself -- that I'm a damn good father. The irony is, I probably wouldn't have been if I didn't have a child with special needs."

There is much written today about fathers being "derelict" in their fatherly responsibilities. These men have taught me to look past such stereotypes, and to see men working with great diligence to be superb fathers -- caretakers filled with compassion and sensitivity. It has been a privilege to share this endeavor with so many men. I have learned much and I thank them all.

James May, Program Director (retired)

Washington State Fathers Network

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Updated and reprinted from "Fathers' Voices" column, *Exceptional Parent* magazine, October, 1993. (updated May, 2002). Copy or duplicate only with Mr. May's permission at jmay@seanet.com



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You know you have a child with special needs when ...

You compare ERs instead of grocery stores.

You compare your children's oxygen saturations.

You view toys as "therapy."

You don't take a new day for granted.

You teach your child HOW to pull things out of the cupboard, off the bookcases, and that feeding the dog from the table is fun.

The clothes your infant wore last fall still fit her this fall. Everything is an educational opportunity instead of just having plain old fun.

You cheer instead of scold when they blow bubbles in their juice while sitting at the dinner table (that's speech therapy), smear ketchup all over their high chair (that's OT), or throw their toys (that's PT).

You also don't mind if your child goes through the house tooting a tin whistle.

You fired at least 3 pediatricians and can teach your family doctor a thing or two.

You can name at least 3 genes on chromosome 21. (You really know your toast if you can spell the full names correctly)

You have been told you are "in denial" by at least 3 medical or therapy professionals. This makes you laugh!

You have that incredible sinking feeling that you've forgotten SOMETHING on those few days that you don't have some sort of appointment somewhere!

You get irritated when friends with healthy kids complain about ONE sleepless night when their child is ill!

Your vocabulary consists of all the letters OT, PT, SP, ASD, VSD, IFSP, etc.

You keep your appointment at the specialist even though a tropical storm is raging because you just want to get this one over with....you

waited 8 months to get it....and besides, no one else will be there! Fighting and wrestling with siblings is PT.

Speech therapy occurs in the tub with a sibling.

When potty training is complete, you take out a full-page public notice in the Washington Post. When the Doctors/Specialist/Hospitals etc. all know you by your name without referring to your chart.

You keep a daily growth chart. You calculate monthly statistics for the number of times your child vomits, and did this for more than one year.

You phone all your friends when your child sits up for the first time, at age two.

With a big smile on your face you tell a stranger that your four year old just started walking last week. Her medical file is two inches and growing.

You have a new belief....that angels live with us on earth.



Congratulations to the Newest Partners!!

Thirty-six Texans graduated from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities leadership and advocacy training program, Partners in Policymaking, on April 29. This brings the total number of graduates over the last 15 years to 608 Texans. Congratulations to the new Partners: **Kristen Cox**, El Paso, TxP2P Parent; **Margaret Crittendon**, Wichita Falls; **Dianne Douzart**, Tyler; **David Forbis**, Haltom City; **Kristen Foret**, League City, TxP2P Parent; **Laurie Garza**, Allen; **Ivy Goldstein**, Austin, TxP2P Volunteer; **Angela Gonzalez**, San Antonio, TxP2P

Volunteer; **Shea Hales**, Corpus Christi; **Adriana Haro**, Laredo; **Bertha Hernandez**, El Cenizo; **Guadalupe Hernandez**, Floresville; **Paul Houston**, Jersey Village; **Katy Hull**, Austin; **Gerard Jimenez**, Austin, TxP2P parent; **Bertha Jones**, Tyler; **Anita Karney**, Waco, TxP2P Parent; **Michelle Luper**, Port Lavaca; **Joanne Mayes**, Hungerford; **Jennifer Osborne**, Nocano; **Sonia Penn**, San Antonio, TxP2P Volunteer; **Jennifer Puckett**, Longview; **Michelle Robbins**, El Paso;

Jeane Rogers, Kingwood; **Amanda Sanchez**, El Paso; **Priscilla Schramek**, San Antonio, **Marieli Sierra**, Kingwood; **Joel Silos**, New Braunfels, TxP2P Parent; **Amy Smith**, Weatherford, TxP2P Parent; **Kristin Tassin**, Missouri City; **Tracey Tatum**, Nederland; **Jennifer Vincent**, La Porte, TxP2P Parent; **Taylor Wiginton**, Bedford; **Eric Williams**, Austin; **Chris Wonnacott**, Longview; **Candi Yarbrough**, Scurry.



National Survey Examines Adult Sibling Relationships

To learn more about the relationship between individual with disabilities and their adult siblings, the National Sibling Consortium and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development has created the "Adult Sibling Questionnaire." The survey is for anyone age 18 or over with a sister or brother with disabilities. You can find the questionnaire online at <https://kc.vanderbilt.edu/Family Research>. Paper copies are available by calling toll-free to 888-322-5339 or sending your contact information to FamilyResearch@vanderbilt.edu

Thank You to Recent Donors to our 2005 Mail Campaign!!

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Serving children with disabilities,
 chronic illness and other special needs
 by providing support and information to
 their families through peer support,
 resource referral and public awareness.

Conference Schedule

Date	Conference Title	Location	Registration Information
Wednesday, July 12 through Friday, July 14, 2006	Texas Association on Mental Retardation 31st Annual Convention	Omni Hotel Corpus Christi, TX	TAMR (TX Assoc. on Mental Retardation) P.O. Box 28076 Austin, TX 78755 For more information, call 512-349-7470; email pat-holder@tamr-web.com ; or go to their website www.tamr-web.com
Friday, August 4 through Sunday, August 6,	2006 Texas Advocates Annual Conference	Hilton DFW Lakes Grapevine, TX	The Arc of Texas 8001 Centre Park Dr. Austin, TX 78754 For more information, call 800-292-9729 or go to their website www.thearcoftexas.org/ conference/txadvocates
Thursday, Sept. 7 through Saturday, Sept. 9, 2006	Texas State Conference on Autism	Adam's Mark Hotel Dallas, TX	ESC Region 2 209 North Water Street Corpus Christi, TX 78401 For more information, call 361-561-8400 or go to to their website http://autism.esc2/
Friday, Sept. 22 through Sunday, Sept. 24,	Coalition of Texans with Disabilities 28th Annual Convention	Omni Corpus Christi Hotel Marina Tower Corpus Christi, TX	Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD) 316 West 12 th Street, Ste. 405 Austin, TX 78701 For more information, call 512-478-3366 or go to their website www.cotwd.org/
Saturday, October 7, 2006	2nd Annual Disability Conference & Resource Fair	Graceview Baptist Church, Tomball, TX	Please email MichelleMGuppy@yahoo.com for registration information or mail request to Texas Autism Advocacy, 16210 Cypress Trace, Cypress, TX 77429
Wednesday, Nov. 8 through Saturday, Nov. 11, 2006	42nd Annual LDAT State Conference	Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, TX	LDAT (Learning Disabilities Association of Texas) 1011 West 31 st Street Austin, TX 78705 For more information, call 512-458-8234 or go to their website www.ldat.org/about/