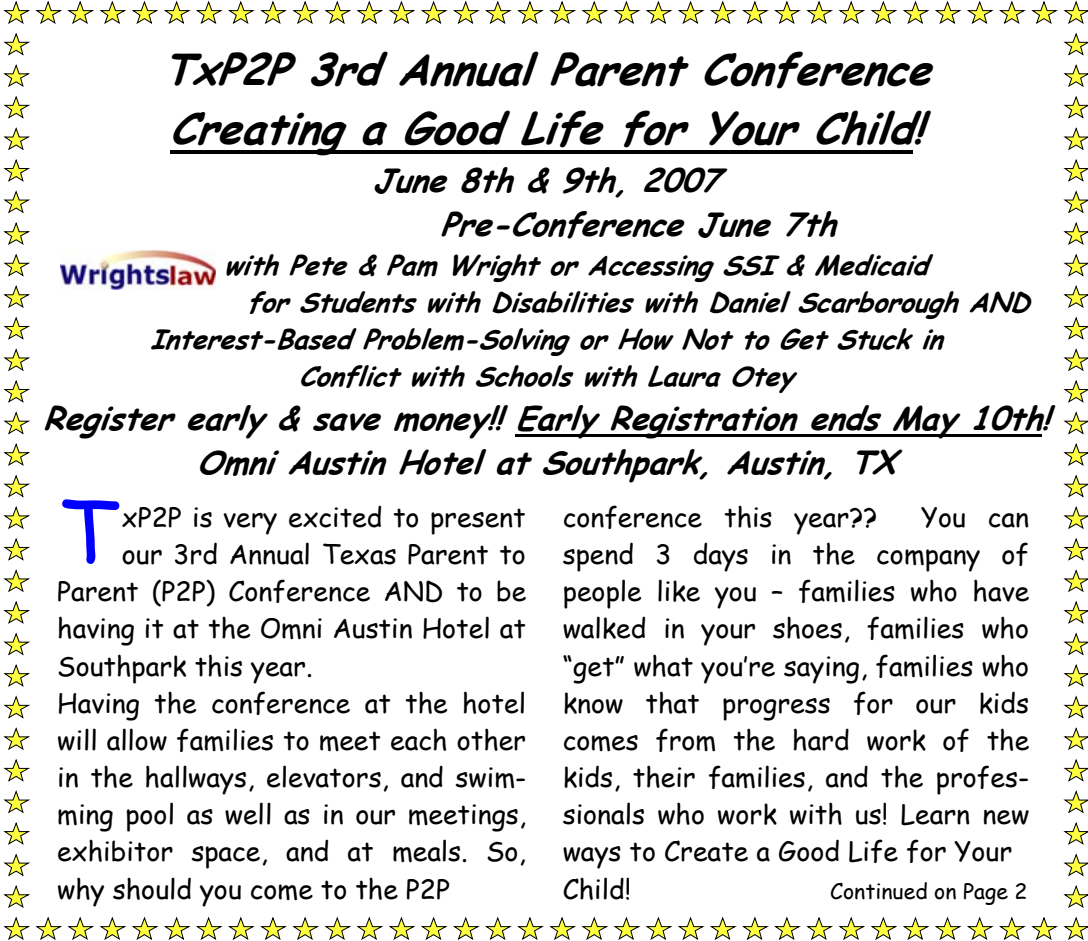


Texas Parent to Parent

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

3710 Cedar Street, Box 12, Austin, TX 78705
 866-896-6001 512-458-8600
 Website: www.txp2p.org Email: info@txp2p.org



TxP2P 3rd Annual Parent Conference Creating a Good Life for Your Child!

June 8th & 9th, 2007

Pre-Conference June 7th

***Wrightslaw with Pete & Pam Wright or Accessing SSI & Medicaid
 for Students with Disabilities with Daniel Scarborough AND
 Interest-Based Problem-Solving or How Not to Get Stuck in
 Conflict with Schools with Laura Otey***

***Register early & save money!! Early Registration ends May 10th!
 Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark, Austin, TX***

TxP2P is very excited to present our 3rd Annual Texas Parent to Parent (P2P) Conference AND to be having it at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark this year. Having the conference at the hotel will allow families to meet each other in the hallways, elevators, and swimming pool as well as in our meetings, exhibitor space, and at meals. So, why should you come to the P2P

conference this year?? You can spend 3 days in the company of people like you - families who have walked in your shoes, families who "get" what you're saying, families who know that progress for our kids comes from the hard work of the kids, their families, and the professionals who work with us! Learn new ways to Create a Good Life for Your Child!

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 Spring 2007**

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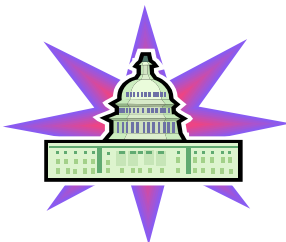
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The 80th Legislative Session is in Full Speed!

**Colleen Horton, Public Policy Director,
 Texas Center for Disability Studies, The University of Texas**

At this point in a legislative session, it is difficult to provide updates as the picture changes on a daily basis. The appropriations bill (SB1) is making its way through both the House and the Senate committees. Various recommendations have been made regarding funding for waiting lists, provider rates, children aging out of foster care, and much more. After the respective bills are approved by the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, they will go to the full House and Senate for debate. We don't know what will come out of the House and the Senate, but we do know that the bills won't be the same. Consequently, conference committee members will be appointed by the Lt. Governor and the Speaker of the House to hash out the final appropriations bill. This process will likely take until the end of the session (May).

That's a long way of saying that there is still plenty of time to impact the discussions and the decisions.
 The deadline for filing bills was March



9th. More than 5,000 bills have been filed for this session. In addition to the budget bill, other legislation affecting people with disabilities and their families has been filed and is being heard in various committees. This is where the tough work takes place as there is rarely a bill without opposition. Efforts focus on educating committee members as to the impact a particular bill will have on individuals with disabilities and their families. Many of the House Human Services Committee members are new to the committee and need help in understanding the issues.

Since bill filing ended March 22, and there are hundreds of bills to review, it is impossible to share with you all the bills affecting children and adults with disabilities. Below is a listing of some of the bills that disability advocacy groups are working on and following. A wealth of information on the bills filed, the legislators, and the committees can be found on the internet at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>. It's a very easy website to maneuver!

If you've never jumped in and helped with the legislative process, this is a great time to do it. Pick a proposed bill that interests you and you are passionate about. Learn more about the issue by talking to some of the advocacy groups working to improve services for people with disabilities, and ask how you can help. It can be a lot or a little; whatever time you have to give would be helpful.

Some bills of interest:

- SB 1 (Ogden)** - General Appropriations Bill.
- SB 10 (Nelson)** - Relating to the operation and financing of the medical assistance programs and other programs to provide health care benefits and services to persons in this state. (Medicaid reform bill)
- SB 108 (Deuell)** - Relating to a Medicaid buy-in program for certain children with disabilities.
- SB 419 (Lucio)** - Relating to health benefit plan coverage for enrollees with autism spectrum disorder.
- SB 673 (Zaffirini)** - Relating to allowing a student receiving special education services to participate in a

Continued on Page 3

NEW THIS YEAR: We have included an alternate choice for the **Pre-Conference** this year. Wrightslaw is returning this year on June 7th for a one-day seminar on Advocacy and Special Ed Law. You can attend Wrightslaw (for an additional fee) or we are offering two other 1/2-day sessions on SSI/Medicaid and Problem-Solving at school which are included in conference fee for Friday and Saturday.

Teen Transition Expo: The Teen Transition Expo is about transition from being a kid to being a young adult. It's about health and learning how to take care of yourself. It's about school and work. It's for teens and youth ages 13 to 22. Attendants are welcome. Registration is \$25.00 OR FREE, if you have already paid a child care fee. Limited to the first 40 participants. The day includes classes, new experiences, making friends, and FUN!

Child Care Fee: Child care is limited, so we are requiring a fee to reserve spots for your children. It doesn't matter if you are registering one or five kids, the cost will be \$25.00, refundable if you give us two weeks' notice that you are not coming. Last year, we had several families unable to come to the conference because we didn't have space for their children in child care. Since the child care is limited, if you can, please make other arrangements for your children so we can save the care for families who have no other option.

Stipend & Volunteer Opportunities: We have some funding for parent stipends and hope to receive more before the conference. These stipends will cover half of the cost of the parent registration for the conference and \$35.00 of the registration for Wrightslaw (\$60.00 for a couple). You must be on the TxP2P mailing list and request stipends on

your registration form. Registration will be available via our website, www.txp2p.org by the time you receive this. Stipends will be awarded on a first-come basis.

Other ideas for help with registration fees:

****If you are receiving services from ECI, MHMR, CSHCN, or a school district, ask them for help with your cost for Wrightslaw or the P2P Conference.** Many agencies have funds to help you attend conferences. Your local school district may also have money allocated for parent training that you can use to help defray your costs of attending the conference.

****Volunteer to help us at the conference.** We need session facilitators, registration workers, audio-visual technicians, and Spanish or sign interpreters. Let us know on your registration form if you are willing to help. As a volunteer for one day, you'll receive half-off of the cost of your registration; for two days, you'll receive your registration for free.

****Let us know if you cannot find any funding and need help with all the expenses.**

Hotel stipends are once again available through funding we received from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities to cover a portion of hotel room costs. Priority will be given to family members who have never received stipends from TCDD before. You can request hotel stipends on your registration form. The stipends are only for the Omni Hotel.

OTHER HAPPENINGS: The 2-day **P2P Conference** will have seven break-out sessions featuring our favorite speakers presenting on resources, behavior, starting parent groups, special education, inclusive communities, self-determination and transition, medical home, and much

more. Plus, the little horses will be back!!



The **SibGroups** will also be back - two sessions on Saturday.



In addition there will be 3-days of our terrific Exhibitors and of course, our Friday Night Family Gathering for the whole family with great food & entertainment.



UPDATES & CHANGES: We have received notice that our Educational **CEUs** are approved for Wrightslaw and our Social Work and Professional Counselor CEUs are approved for the entire conference. We're still waiting on the Legal CEUs for Wrightslaw. Our session on **Dads' Groups** has been changed - it will be a Dads' Gathering instead. We'll have more information in the Conf. Program. TxP2P's Board and staff are anxiously waiting to welcome you to our 3rd Annual P2P Conference. We look forward to meeting new friends and catching up with those we made over the last two years' conferences! Hope to see you soon!

TxP2P Board and Staff

Family Wisdom

Family Wisdom is the newest buzz word on a national level showing up in connection with support for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness, or special health care needs. Family Wisdom has been identified as an essential component of evidence-based practice which is a process rather than a particular set of standards. Parent to parent support

is based on best practices identified by evidence-based research.

But what is Family Wisdom? I see it as that moment when you listen to your inner voice and follow your own path for your child rather than what you've been told to do. Or in talking with other parents, that moment you say "I wish I'd known that when my child was younger!"

TxP2P wants to share your Family

Laura J. Warren, TxP2P

Wisdom with other parents. Please consider writing up a page or two on the best things you've learned or the things that have worked best for you and your family. Attach a photo of your child or family and email it to me at Laura@txp2p.org We'll use your story on our website and in our newsletters and possibly as a packet for new parents. Share the wisdom!!

The 80th Legislative Session is in Full Speed! Continued from Page 1

SB 1000 (Shapiro) - Relating to the accessibility of services for certain students with autism or autism spectrum disorder. (Autism voucher bill)

SB 1342 (Gallegos) - Relating to the establishment of an autism spectrum disorders specialist certificate for public school teachers.

SB 1625 (Watson) - Relating to the statewide plan for delivery of services to public school students with disabilities and resources for teachers of public school students with special health needs.

SB 1866 (Zaffirini) - Relating to an exemption from cost limits specified for certain medical assistance waiver programs administered by the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

SB 1870 (Zaffirini) - Relating to the implementation of the community living options information process for certain persons with mental retardation at certain institutions.

HB 19, (Corte) - Relating to a school choice program for certain students with disabilities. (School voucher bill)

HB 439 (Hockberg) - Relating to the statewide plan for delivery of services to public school students with disabilities and resources for teachers of public school students with disabilities.

HB 650 (Rodriguez) - Relating to the establishment of a task force to assist certain long-term care facilities in developing the capacity to provide services to individuals with disabilities through community-based arrangements.

HB 1094 (Hughes) - Relating to advance directives of health care or treatment decisions made by or on behalf of patients.

HB 1224 (Davis) - Relating to health benefit plan coverage for enrollees with autism spectrum disorder.

HB 1230 (Rodriguez) - Relating to services provided to youth with disabilities transition from school-

oriented living to post-schooling activities, services for adults and community living.

HB 1984 (Thompson) - Relating to the creation of a statewide autism spectrum disorders resource program.

HB 2339 (Naishtat) - Relating to behavioral health services for children and establishment of the Children's Behavioral Health Council.

HB 3622 (Brown) - Relating to accessibility of services under Medicaid waiver programs.

HCR 35 (Rodriguez) - Relating to the 24-month waiting period for Medicare benefits.

If you would like further information on any of these bills, feel free to contact Colleen Horton at

colleen.horton@mail.utexas.edu. If you would like to receive email updates on the legislative session or notices of important hearings, contact Colleen or ask to be added to the TxP2P Advocacy Listserv.

2006 Tax Benefits for Parents of Children with Disabilities

Mike O'Connor, Esquire

If you have a child with a disability - a severe learning disability (SLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), AD/HD, or other physical, mental or emotional impairment - you may qualify for valuable tax benefits.

According to parent attorney Mike O'Connor, "It's likely that 15-30 percent of families with a disabled child have one or more unclaimed tax benefits."

Did you know that "tuition costs for a special school that has a program designed to educate children with disabilities and amounts paid for a child's tutoring by a teacher

specially trained and qualified to deal with severe disabilities may be deducted"?

Did you know that "Special instruction or training or therapy, such as sign language instruction, speech therapy, and remedial reading instruction" may be deductible? Did you know that related books and materials can qualify for the medical expense deduction"?

Did you know that "Parents who attend conferences to obtain medical information concerning treatment for and care of their child may deduct some of the costs

of attending a medical conference relating to a dependent's chronic health condition"?

In 2006 Tax Benefits for Parents of Children with Disabilities, Mr. O'Connor provides a summary of the most significant federal income tax benefits. He advises you to print out this guide and provide your tax adviser with a copy. We agree with this excellent advice!

Download your copy of 2006 Tax Benefits for Parents of Children with Disabilities by Mike O'Connor, Esq. <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/tax.2006.benefit.s.oconnor.htm>

Texas Ramp Project

If you ever wonder whether one person can really make a difference, just remember John Laine and his Texas Ramp Project.

In 1989, Mr. Laine, a manufacturer's representative for aerospace hardware, "was looking for a way to get involved in the community."

Opportunity was right before his eyes. He was a member of the Kiwanis Club of Richardson, which had started a program to build access ramps for residents of Dallas



and its suburbs in 1985.

During its first five years, the club had built about 20 ramps.

"In 1989, we started to wonder about the actual need for this service in our area and visited hospitals, rehab centers and other places that might deal with people with disabilities.

"What we discovered was that ramps were a very hard thing to get and that they can be quite expensive." Mr. Laine says that bids

from construction companies "will be three, probably four, times our cost."

"As we grew, it became apparent that we needed to involve many more organizations that could help us to fund the project and to provide volunteers," Mr. Laine said. That led Mr. Laine and his associates to start looking for ways to produce more free wheelchair ramps. They found a warehouse that donated space and negotiated with a truck rental company for a

Continued on page 4

discounted rate.

"We now work as an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with connections to many other groups such as civic organizations, churches, high schools and colleges, alumni organizations, area businesses and medical centers.

"We now build more ramps per month than we did in total for our first five years." There is no government agency that offers such a service, Mr. Laine said.

The Dallas Ramp Project, which serves much of North Central Texas, has built nearly 2,000 ramps. Now

Mr. Laine is working hard on the Texas Ramp Project.

"We're already in Houston, San Antonio, which I visited again last Monday, Austin and probably in Fort Worth this month. This year I am working full time but still a volunteer."

While the Texas Ramp Project continues to grow, it's structured so that each city operates as a local organization.

Each city ramp project has its own board and also has a representative on the board of the Texas Ramp Project.

There are three ingredients that drive each local organization. They are:

- A skilled team leader who teaches the volunteers how to build a ramp.
- Volunteers.
- Money. The demand continues to grow as the need grows. The local budget is around \$5,000 a month and soon will grow to \$6,500.

To learn more about Texas Ramp Project or if you would like to help with time, money or materials, call 972-235-7309 or e-mail volunteer@dallasramps.org

Non-educational Community-Based Support Services

Albert Felts, Education Specialist, Education Service Center XIII

Non-educational Community-Based Support Services funding is made available annually to school districts for the provision of non-educational community-based support services to certain students with disabilities and their families so that those students may receive an appropriate free public education in the least restrictive environment according to the Texas Education Code § 29.013.

§ 29.013 Non-educational Community-Based Support Services for Certain Students with Disabilities:

- a) The funds may be used only for eligible students with disabilities who would remain or would have to be placed in residential facilities primarily for educational reasons without the provision of non-educational community-based support services.
- b) The support services may include in-home family support, respite care, and case management for families with a student who otherwise would have been placed by a district in a private residential facility.

Only school districts may apply for these funds. Application is a local district decision and is strictly volun-

The support services may include in-home family support, respite care, and case management.

tary. The purpose of these funds is to provide periodic, short-term non-educational services for students receiving special education services, who are at risk of residential placement for educational purposes.

These funds may not be used for:

- **Educational services that can be provided through the students IEP as part of their educational program
 - **Services provided while students are in residential placement.
 - **Intensive or long-term care services.
 - **Additional therapy services in excess of what the IEP supports.
- What kind of services can be purchased with these funds?
- **Respite Care: Providing relief to parents and/or family with intermittent, short-term care (e.g. weekends, during school holidays, summer break is not considered a school holiday)
 - **Attendant Care: Providing occasional outside assistance to parents and families. These services should be provided to normalize family activities. This should not be mistaken for babysitting services.

**Psychiatric/Psychological Consultation: Consulting with the student, family, and all persons involved in providing non-educational services, or in causing them to be provided. The focus of the consultation should be to develop a functional family unit. This service excludes medical or treatment related services.

**Management of Leisure Time: Working with the student to develop skills that enable the student to entertain him or herself appropriately without adult supervision.

**Socialization Training: Working with the family to help the student develop appropriate skills and behavior in public.

**Generalization Training: Training the student and family to use a behavior management plan outside the structured, educational environment. The training may include modeling parenting skills.

For more information regarding accessing non-educational community-based support services please contact your local special education director to see if your student qualifies.

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What is a Parent Match? It is a "Spark" and a Gift of Sharing

Patty Geisinger, TxP2P

It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and soon all those around can warm up to its glowing... Once you've experienced it, you want to pass it on.

Excerpts from the hymn "Pass It On" by Kurt Kaiser

No one knows this journey we are on with our children better than we do. It can sometimes be a very isolated journey, without friends or family to help. So how do we find each other? We sometimes see each other in the mall, at schools, or on the street. We recognize children with "something" different and yet, to smile at the parent or ask about the child may seem to just be another rude stranger, especially if you don't have your child with you or your child has an invisible disability. We should have our own pin or some way to identify who we are to each other that says, "Hey, I'm not a stranger; I understand; I also have a child with something going on!" We want and need to reach out to each other so we can share the journey with others on the same path. Also, to share our knowledge and survival skills, our joys and sorrows, our favorite resources and programs, and help each other plan for our child's future. **We need to light a fire with a spark from a Parent Match!**

One of our primary goals at Texas Parent to Parent is to match parents of children with similar disabilities or issues for emotional and/or informational support. We may have asked you if you wanted a match when you first called us to get information. Perhaps you said yes, perhaps we were able to find you someone, or perhaps you are still waiting. As a fairly new Parent to Parent Program, we need at least twice the trained Supporting Parent Volunteers we have (180+ but need over 300) to cover the requests for matches we receive. Please see the volunteer trainings offered for the remainder of this year below.

TxP2P strives to follow the national best practices for parent-to-parent support:

Parent to Parent USA endorses the following best practices for parent-to-parent support, based on findings of a national study to determine the effectiveness of parent-to-parent and the experiences of several statewide parent to parent programs.

A parent-to-parent match:

- The match is driven by the concerns, needs and priorities of the referred parent.
- Matches are made within 24 to 48 hours of request or as soon as possible.
- The person facilitating the training coordinates the parent matches.
- Support Parent makes at least 4 contacts within the first 8 weeks of receiving the match.

Glossary of Terms

Matching - The act of formally connecting one parent to another parent for the purpose of receiving emotional and informational support. Formal matching involves connecting a parent to a support parent who has received training and ongoing support from a Parent Matching Program.

Parent to Parent Program - Programs that formally match a parent whose child has special needs to an experienced, trained Support Parent.

Support Parents - Parents with children or youth who have special needs who have participated in specific skill-building or training session in preparation for their role as a Support Parent.

Referred Parents - Parents with children or youth who have special needs who request to talk to another parent with similar experiences for the purpose of emotional and information support.

We match parents based on the most pressing issue the Referred Parent tells us they want to talk about. It may be the specific disability, a medical procedure to be done, special education, or resource questions. Our Supporting Parent Volunteers attend at a 7-hour training to learn more about the

matching process, effective listening skills, resources for children and youth with disabilities and their families, the stages parents go through, including the grief process, and how to communicate their own story. Our volunteers are just other parents who have reached that moment when they want to share their experiences and knowledge and help other parents work through their journey with its joys and challenges.

A Parent Match is not an automatic friendship, a play date, counseling, or social work. A Parent Match is an equal relationship between parents, with both volunteer and the new parent sharing what they have experienced, learning from each other, sharing resources, and discovering what they have in common. We try to not give advice but through sharing what we have experienced or heard from other parents, we learn from each other.

We may not be able to find a good match for every parent. A volunteer may forget to call or a new parent may never call a volunteer back. Making a Parent Match is an imperfect art. BUT, when a match is helpful, amazing things can happen!! Support groups get started, life-long friendships are made, legislature is created and turned into law, insurance companies are challenged and make changes, problems can be solved, and in the end, hopefully both the support parent and the referred parent have grown and are better able to care for their children. We hope you will consider sparking your match. Think about going through the training to become a Supporting Parent Volunteer and passing on the fire of knowledge and support to another parent new to our disability community.

Austin: April 28

Corpus Christi: July 28

Weslaco: August 25

Houston: September 15

Dallas: October 13

Contact Erika Goyer (Erika@txp2p.org) or Patty Geisinger (Patty@txp2p.org) or contact either by phone at 866-896-6001 (local Austin: 457-8600) if you want to join us.



Most of you only know us as a voice on the phone or emails via the Internet. Some of you may imagine that TxP2P is a big organization with lots of staff and offices. Some of you know the reality and know some of us from when we worked at Pilot Parent in Austin. We're moms first - always have been and always will be. Our kids mean the world to us and creating a good life for them is our life! Helping you do the same while building a community and friendships for all families of kids with disabilities, chronic illness, and special health care needs is our mission! There are 11 TxP2P staff now - 3 full-time and 8 part-time. We rent space in a 100-year old building that was built as a Confederate Widows Home in Austin - don't kid yourself that it's some kind of a mansion. It has a nice front porch, a few large trees, a lot of character, and the lingering smell of mold. It is home to over 30 nonprofits who share meeting space, a copier and fax machine, grant deadlines, hard work, and a lot of laughs. Most of our office furniture was donated to TxP2P, much from other nonprofits in the building. Debbie De Luna has a home office in Weslaco in the Rio Grande Valley. Most of us work around our kids' schedules, school holidays, and illnesses of our kids or our aging parents. There's 20 years difference in our ages and we have different beliefs, politics, religions, and hobbies but we all share the belief that our kids deserve the best we can get for them. And that families deserve support in their efforts for their children.

After five years, we have finally reached the point where we are paying someone else to print, fold, label, and process the mailing of our newsletter - over a thousand newsletters a quarter. For the past five years, James Alworth, my husband, has helped me late into the night prepare these newsletters for bulk mail. He also helps us when our computers misbehave or we get new ones. He designed our website and

then taught me how to change and maintain it. And he makes it work when I get stumped! He's helped at the last two conferences, toting and carrying, running up and down stairs and between buildings making the audio/video equipment work for the different speakers, and helping with the dads' meetings. James is an integral part of TxP2P but you don't see his name anywhere. So, I'm taking this opportunity to officially thank James for all he's done and for his belief in TxP2P and me!

There are two other people I want to thank for their part in making TxP2P what it is today. My aunt, Jean Skelly, gave us \$15,000 to help get TxP2P started. It helped us rent and set up an office. She did this out of her love for me and my son, Jason. She came to Texas while Jason was still in the NICU. He was about four months old but still weighed less than 4 lbs. Neither of us got to hold him that day but she appreciated his struggles and mine. She heard about my work with parent to parent support for years so when we started TxP2P, she was our first donor. She celebrated her 90 birthday in Ireland and died last year at age 94.

The other person who stepped forward when we decided to pursue a grant for our Medical Education Program was Dr. George Sharpe, Austin neonatologist. Dr. Sharpe was my son's neonatologist and although I know it was a team effort, I will always credit him for saving Jason's life. He connected TxP2P with doctors in the Seton Hospital Network who agreed to let us provide trainings to their Pediatric and Family Practice residents. One helped us develop the grant and it was the first grant we received! Dr. Sharpe was also instrumental in starting the Mother's Milk Bank in Austin. He died last year at age 62. Both of these unique individuals are greatly missed by family and friends. One other group which I have to thank is our wonderful Supporting Parent Volunteers - there are now over 180 of you!! TxP2P could not do

what we do without you!! We have made almost 650 matches since we started. Your desire to help other parents is inspiring!

So, what's new with TxP2P? We received a contract to start outreach and support for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing by the DARS Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECI). Due to the recently mandated hearing screening in the hospital, many families are finding out about their child's hearing loss or deafness earlier than in the past. These families have to make difficult choices about their child's communication very early. TxP2P is providing an additional component to our Supporting Parent Volunteers who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing to address the decisions families have to make. We will match new parents with more than one trained volunteer based on the communication decisions they are considering. Lisa Crawford, mother of a daughter who is deaf, is works with us on this project and will create a parent manual for new parents. Lisa also works with the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) and is helping to develop a parent group for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing across the state. In addition to working with ECI, we have worked with TSD and the Education Service Center Region 10 through the Texas Education Agency in creating the training and parent manual. We also came across a listserv specifically for parents: A listserv has been formed for Texas families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Our purpose is to connect Texas families, to provide support, answer questions, share our stories, and to unite in an effort to improve the lives of all children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Texas. Parents of children who are deaf with other disabilities are welcome also. This listserv is limited to families; sorry, no professionals allowed yet. To join send an email introducing yourself to mcnwilwhite@sbcglobal.net



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Top 10 Tips for Parents

Partners Resource Network - TEAM Project

Many of these tips work well for the beginning of a school year but they may help you in planning for Spring ARDs as well:

1. Introduce yourself to new teachers and others working with your child
 - a. Send a note or email to them introducing yourself and your child
 - b. Stop by before or after school (5 minute rule)
 - c. Face to face meetings pay the highest dividend
2. Get involved in your child's school
 - a. Join the PTA so you will have a voice in school matters
 - b. Get to know other parents and professionals who are involved in your school
 - c. Volunteer for a classroom
 - d. Give a presentation for career day
3. Know how (and who) to call for help and answers
 - a. Keep a list of primary contacts at your child's school handy
 - b. Network and communicate with other parents to share information
 - c. If you run out of friends or answers, TEAM is always there to provide help and hope
4. Become knowledgeable about special education in your district
 - a. Find out "who's who", and become familiar with each persons responsibility
 - b. Research structure and



- c. Check school standards: academic, code of conduct, etc. and how they apply to students with disabilities
 - d. What types of programs and services do they offer, and the location
5. Help promote your child's academic success
 - a. Help with homework when you can
 - b. Be sure homework is being completed and turned in
 - c. Find fun ways to learn
 - d. Routine study time
 - e. Homework buddy
6. Have a regular schedule to check progress and get updates
 - a. Find out how each person prefers to be contacted
 - b. Provide easy and reliable ways to contact you if they have any questions or problems
 - c. Go above and beyond to keep the lines of communication open
7. Map out upcoming evaluations and assessments
 - a. Check the date of the most recent evaluation
 - b. If another evaluation is coming up, think about the areas you believe the school should test
 - c. Ask about school-wide assessments and what accommodations are available
8. Check the IEP and your child's schedule
 - a. Review the IEP and all the dates.
 - b. Find out as soon as possible how services will be delivered to your

- c. Make sure you know your child's schedule, and if it is a good fit with the IEP.
 - d. Be open to teachers' suggestions
9. Make sure that everyone helping your child is familiar with the IEP
 - a. Check to see if the general education teachers have a copy of your child's IEP
 - b. Let them know you are always available to provide additional information
 - c. Work with the Special Education teacher on an easy to understand summary list of modifications and accommodations
 - d. Include information on your child's interests and abilities
10. Remember that fun and friends are important
 - a. Do not underestimate the value of social skills
 - b. Work with your child to find after school activities
 - c. Know your child's friends
 - d. Be aware of opportunities to help cultivate new friendships

✦ Call Partners Resource Network - TEAM Project toll free @ (877) 832-8945

✦ Visit our website @ partnerstx.org



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Conference Schedule

Date	Conference Title	Location	Registration Information
Monday, April 30 th to Thursday, May 3, 2007	Unlock your Child's Potential Relationship Development Intervention 4-Day Parent Training	University of Phoenix, West Loop Campus, Houston, TX	RDI/Connections Center Parent Trainings Dr. Steve Gutstein & Dr. Rachelle Sheely Phone: 866-378-6405 x108 Email: galinato@rdiconnect.com www.rdiconnect.com
Thursday, June 7 th , 2007	TxP2P 3rd Annual Pre -Conference Seminar Wrightslaw Advocacy & Special Education	Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark Austin, TX	Texas Parent to Parent 3710 Cedar Street, Box 12 Austin, TX 78705 Phones: 866-896-6001 or Local 512-458-8600 Website: www.txp2p.org
Friday, June 8 th to Saturday, June 9 th , 2007	TxP2P 3rd Annual Conference Creating a Good Life for Your Child	Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark Austin, TX	Texas Parent to Parent 3710 Cedar Street, Box 12 Austin, TX 78705 Phones: 866-896-6001 or Local 512-458-8600 Website: www.txp2p.org
Thursday, June 21 st , 2007	Partners Resource Network's Parent Leadership Institute 2007 <i>Do You Have All the Pieces to the Puzzle?</i>	Marriott West Loop Hotel Houston, TX	Partners Resource Network 1090 Longfellow Drive Beaumont, TX 77706 Phone: 800-866-4726 Website: www.partnerstx.org
Wednesday, July 25 th to Friday, July 27 th , 2007	32nd Annual Convention TX Association on Mental Retardation	The San Luis Resort Galveston, TX	TAMR P. O. Box 28076 Austin, TX 78755 Phone: (512) 349-7470 Fax: (512) 349-2117 E-mail: pat-holder@tamr-web.com www.tamr-web.com