



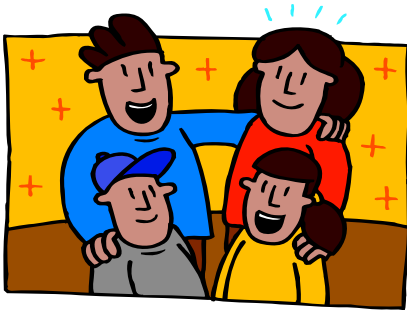
Family Resource Network

Helping Families Meet the Challenge

Volume 19, Issue 2, Spring 2011 Edition

*Last Series for this school year.
Register Now!*

Positive Empowering Parenting Project PEP



Family Resource Network is excited to once again have the opportunity to offer this series of parenting workshops for parents of children, age 14 or younger, who are receiving services through Valley Mountain Regional Center. Project PEP has been designed by, and for, parents of children with special needs

Project PEP is a fun, informative way for parents to learn ways to enhance their parenting skills. There is no cost to attend Project PEP and space is limited. There are 6 workshops on Tuesday evenings and parents are asked to commit to attending all sessions. **Session attendance is rewarded!**

Sessions will be conducted April 5, 12 and 26th and May 3, 10, and 17th. We will not be meeting on April 19th as some schools are not in session that week. All sessions will be at FRN's Stockton office from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The registration form is on the calendar section of FRN's website, www.frcn.org. At this time it is unknown if FRN will be funded to offer this series in the future. We hope that you will be able to join us.

Family Resource Network invites you to

An Evening with Krisi Franzone

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 28, 2011

Wentworth Education Center

San Joaquin County Office of Education, Stockton

Krisi Franzone is an adult with a developmental disability. She is a self-advocate which means that she has learned how to speak up for herself. She lives in her own apartment and uses public transportation.

Krisi is a member of the Self-Advocacy Council VI and she speaks to groups throughout our area about issues related to the needs of people with disabilities. She represents our region at the Department of Developmental Services Consumer Advisory Committee. Her work on DDS's Leadership Project is posted on the DDS website, under "Consumer Corner."

This event is a great opportunity for parents and their teens or young adults with special needs to hear Krisi's story. Parents of younger children will also want to attend as they will gain great insight into the positive aspects of being an adult with a developmental disability. Krisi will talk about what services and agencies assist her in her quest for independence. She will answer questions from the audience, and local resources will be shared. Come prepared to be inspired!!

There is no cost to attend. To register for this event, just go to the calendar page at www.frcn.org or call 472-3674.

Family Resource Network Newsletter
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 Printing 7,800 copies

EDITOR: Ann Cirimele
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 Stockton, CA 95207
 Email: FRNfamilies@aol.com website: www.frcn.org



The recreational support group for non-disabled siblings, ages 7 through 13:

Friday, May 6th, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Quail Lakes Baptist Church, Stockton.

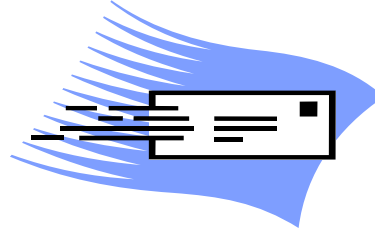
Meet other siblings who have the same kinds of issues. There are games, crafts, discussion activities, food and lots of fun! There is no cost to attend.

Registration is required and must be submitted one week prior to event. Call 472-3674 or 800-847-3030 to request a registration packet.

See page 6 for more sibling info!!

Info on Local Support Groups

Local support groups are encouraged to email or mail flyers and information on their groups to FRN. FRN will have the information on display in the office and will share information as appropriate with families who call FRN asking for info on specific disabilities or support groups.



Stay In the Know

Want up to the minute info on issues affecting children with special needs? You can have your email address added to FRN's email list. FRN's newsletter is published only a few times per year so email is a great way to keep up on important information. If you would like to be added to FRN's email list, email the following info to FRNfamilies@aol.com:

- Your name
- The county you reside in
- Please indicate if you are a parent of a child with special needs or a professional working with special needs children



Congrats to the WINNERS of FRN's latest drawing:

**Jonisha Hamilton
 Heather Powell
 Christine Sanchez**



We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.

Dag Hammarskjold
 Swedish statesman

Training Opportunities

April 7 – Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs • Presenters: Area VI Board and Family Resource Network • SCDD, Area VI Board • **Jamestown Community Hall, Jamestown**, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required, for reservations call 800-847-3030.

April 14 – Writing An Effective IEP for Your Child with Special Needs • Presenters: Area VI Board and Family Resource Network • SCDD, Area VI Board • **Continuum College, Turlock**, 6 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required, for reservations call 800-847-3030.

April 28 –An Evening with Krisi Franzone • San Joaquin County Office of Education, **Stockton**, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. FREE, reservations are required, for reservations call 800-847-3030.

May 4 - Building Bridges – Transitioning Your Child from the Early Start Program • Presenter: FRN, Sherwood Executive Center, 5250 Claremont Ave., **Stockton**, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., free for parents, \$15 fee for professionals, for info call 800-847-3030.

May 18 –Moving Forward: Helping Your Child Transition to Adult Services • Presenter: FRN, San Joaquin County Office of Education, **Stockton**, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. FREE, reservations are required, for reservations call 800-847-3030.

***And don't forget Project PEP
- - see page 1 for info!***

There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

Henry Kissinger
American Diplomat

CHOICES 2011

Friday, April 8, 2011

FRN is one of the cosponsors that proudly presents the 24th Annual CHOICES Institute

This year's theme is **Work = CHOICES** and we will be looking at different types of work choices that are available to people with developmental disabilities. Registration forms are available at <http://www.wix.com/choices2011/sq> or by contacting the CHOICES Institute at 209-948-8011 or CHOICESInstitute@hotmail.com



Saturday, April 2, 2011
10th Annual Autism Forum

The Keynote Speaker is Jennifer McIlwee Myers, Autism presenter, writer and person with Asperger's Syndrome. There are breakout sessions on promoting language; tips for picky-eaters; the emotions experienced by parents raising children with autism, and social narratives.

Registration is through the San Joaquin County Office of Education, 468-4928.

Partial scholarships are available for parents. Contact FRN for details.



Check FRN's website, www.frcn.org and click on "calendar" for updated information on trainings and events. Registration forms for FRN events are on the website.

***From document developed by ARCA
(Association of Regional Center Agencies)***

**Steps in Developing a Relationship with
Local Legislators**

REQUEST a meeting...

- (1) Contact your local legislators.
- (2) Ask for the name of the DISTRICT scheduler and the person who would be best to speak to in the DISTRICT office on issues relating to people with developmental disabilities.
- (3) Speak to the scheduler about the process for setting up a BRIEF get-acquainted meeting with the legislator. This may entail sending a "meeting request" in the form of an email or letter with the following information:
 - a. Your name
 - b. Your address
 - c. Your regional center and your affiliation (parent, vendor, regional center staff, etc.)
 - d. Purpose of the meeting (e.g. meet my representative and provide information about regional center services)
- (4) In addition to that meeting with the legislator, ask when would be a good time to stop by and speak to the staff person most knowledgeable about the developmental disabilities/regional center system.
- (5) Make the appointment for as soon as possible.

IN the meeting...

- (1) Be respectful of their time. Ask in advance how much time they have to meet with you, then ask again in the meeting itself.
- (2) Get to know the legislator and/or staff person. Ask if they have any personal connection with the developmental disabilities system.

(3) Don't ask for anything specific in the early meetings. Share information about the regional center and your personal story. Personal stories are very important. Focus on regional center SERVICES, not the organization itself. If they outright ask what you want or what you hope to accomplish in the meeting, just say that you want them to hear your story and understand what the regional center has done for you or for children and adults you know who are developmentally disabled. Keep it personal.

(4) Ask if there is anyone in the SACRAMENTO office you should contact regarding issues affecting our system.

(5) Get business cards or write down the names and titles of legislative staff who participated in the meeting. Make sure you have correct spelling.

AFTER the meeting...

- (1) Write a thank you note to the legislator, mentioning staff you met by name, and including a return address so they know you are a constituent.
- (2) Send ARCA (or the Sacramento office of your state-wide organization, if you belong to one) a brief summary of your meeting, including date, location, and names of those involved.

FOLLOW-UP activities...

Invite legislators and district staff to events where they can meet constituents with disabilities and their families (e.g. open houses, ribbon-cuttings, fund-raisers). One idea is to invite district staff to ride along on a bus taking people to and from school or day programs (after making sure there are not legal or insurance barriers).

Put district offices on mailing lists for meeting agendas and other routine mailings.

Editor's Note: If you go to <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html> and key in your zip code, you will get the contact information for all the California legislators that serve your area.



FRN has received donations from:

Sue Allyn
 Thea Etheridge
 Robert Jones
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 Jeffrey & Claire Lazaro
 Nichole Loos
 Efrain Rosas
 Christi Torres-Rogers
 Wal-Mart
 Kathleen Werner
And
 Anonymous Donors

**FRN received donations through
 Employee Matching Programs from:**

Bank of the West
 Intuit

We thank you ALL!



**Asparagus Festival
 Volunteers Needed!!**

Family Resource Network volunteers will be working in the Deep Fry area at this year's Asparagus Festival which takes place in Stockton, April 15 - 17th. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. If you would like more information on volunteering just call or email FRN with your name, phone number and email address. You will be contacted by FRN's Volunteer Coordinator.

Thank you!!



**FRN extends its thanks to the following
 for their support of the 13th Annual
 Mothers Retreat:**

- ☞ Mark Drobny Law Office
- ☞ Boomers, Modesto
- ☞ Ann Taylor Loft, Stockton
- ☞ Chili's Restaurant, Stockton
- ☞ See's Candies
- ☞ Canepa's Car Wash
- ☞ Jamba Juice, Lincoln Center, Stockton
- ☞ Joe Cirimele
- ☞ Costco Wholesale, Stockton
- ☞ Department of Developmental Services
- ☞ Jackson Rancheria
- ☞ Home Depot, Feather River Drive, Stockton
- ☞ Bryce Crump
- ☞ Alma Maier
- ☞ Megan Maier
- ☞ Riri Nakasone
- ☞ Linda Johnson, Events by CRAVE
- ☞ Don Okura
- ☞ Patt Rasmy
- ☞ Jennifer Rasmy
- ☞ Elegant Essence
- ☞ Delicato Family Vineyards
- ☞ E & J Gallo Winery
- ☞ San Joaquin County Office of Education
- ☞ Valley Mountain Regional Center
- ☞ Irene Valdez
- ☞ Gnekow Family Winery
- ☞ Boudin Sourdough Bakery, Stockton
- ☞ Starbucks Coffee, Lincoln Center, Stockton
- ☞ Parents Helping Parents
- ☞ PEDS
- ☞ California's Great America
- ☞ World of Wonders

An Action Alert from The Arc of California

If you, or someone you care for, lost services through a regional center without an IPP/IFSP team meeting since 2009 -- and if you want the services restored -- now is the time to ask for a team meeting to consider restoring them.

Likewise, if you are eligible for an exception or exemption to a categorical service cut, and you want the service back, you should consider asking for a team meeting now.

A planning team meeting now may -- or may not -- result in your services being restored. But it should give you a chance to try to restore them.

What's changed now is that the Department of Developmental Services has sent the regional centers an important notice as a result of a bill that The Arc sponsored and Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro authored in 2010. We sought the bill because some IPPs and IFSPs had been changed without the planning team meetings that the Lanterman Act requires.

At the end of the 2010 legislative session, at our request, Mr. Chesbro negotiated an agreement with the department. He withdrew consideration of the bill, and the department promised to notify the regional centers that the Lanterman Act planning process is still the law.

The department now has kept its promise and issued the notice, called an "advisory," reminding regional centers that the Lanterman Act procedures for changing IPPs and IFSPs "remain intact and must be followed."

The department's advisory notes that 2009 legislation "established new criteria for the purchase of some regional center services." This legislation was the Schwarzenegger administration's budget cut that we tried and failed to stop in the Legislature.

"However," the department's advisory states, "the person-centered/individualized planning process, which is the cornerstone of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, was not changed as a result of this legislation.

"Decisions concerning the consumer's goals, objectives, and services and supports that will be included in the consumer's IPP or IFSP and purchased by the regional center or obtained from generic agencies shall be made by agreement between the regional center representative and the consumer or, where appropriate, the parents, legal guardian, conservator, or authorized representative at the program plan meeting," the advisory states.

It goes on to remind the regional centers that the law "also contains exemptions and exceptions to some provisions of law." Separate legislation adopted last year requires the regional center to tell you if you are eligible for an exemption to a categorical cut -- usually for health and safety reasons. Mr. Chesbro also authored that legislation, sponsored by The Arc and Disability Rights California.

When you request an IPP or IFSP team meeting, remember that you have a right to invite anyone you want to be part of the team. This can include a service provider, a friend or relative, or anyone else you want. You never have to go to a team meeting alone, whether the meeting is in person or by phone.



The Sibling Support Project has just launched the Sibling Stories, a blog featuring essays by siblings of people with disabilities.

There has been growth in "sib lit"--essays, articles, and books written by sibs of people with disabilities--during the past few years. Sibling Stories hopes to feature great writing by siblings of all ages.

Please visit <http://siblingstories.blogspot.com/> to see the new blog. It features essays by Allan Goldstein ("An Unanticipated Love") and Emily Mario Holl ("Happily Ever After?" from Thicker than Water) and an excerpt from Eileen Garvin's terrific book, "How to Be a Sister: A love story with a twist of autism." More stories will be added in the future. Feel free to share a link to Sibling Stories with families and friends.

Tax Benefits for Disabled Taxpayers and Parents of Children with Disabilities

A tax tip from IRS.gov: Taxpayers with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities may qualify for a number of IRS tax credits and benefits. Learn about the [seven tax credits and other benefits](#) which are available if you or someone else listed on your federal tax return is disabled.

For more information on tax credits and benefits available to disabled taxpayers, see Publication 3966, Living and Working with Disabilities or Publication 907, Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities, available on the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov> or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

IRS Tax Tip 2011-24, February 03, 2011

Taxpayers with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities may qualify for a number of IRS tax credits and benefits. Listed below are seven tax credits and other benefits which are available if you or someone else listed on your federal tax return is disabled.

1. **Standard Deduction** Taxpayers who are legally blind may be entitled to a higher standard deduction on their tax return.
2. **Gross Income** Certain disability-related payments, Veterans Administration disability benefits, and Supplemental Security Income are excluded from gross income.
3. **Impairment-Related Work Expenses** Employees who have a physical or mental disability limiting their employment may be able to claim business expenses in connection with their workplace. The expenses must be necessary for the taxpayer to work.
4. **Credit for the Elderly or Disabled** This credit is generally available to certain taxpayers who are 65 and older as well as to certain disabled taxpayers who are younger than 65 and are retired on permanent and total disability.
5. **Medical Expenses** If you itemize your deductions using Form 1040, Schedule A, you may be able to deduct medical expenses. See IRS Publication 502, Medical and Dental Expenses.
6. **Earned Income Tax Credit** EITC is available to disabled taxpayers as well as to the parents of a child with a disability. If you

retired on disability, taxable benefits you receive under your employer's disability retirement plan are considered earned income until you reach minimum retirement age. The EITC is a tax credit that not only reduces a taxpayer's tax liability but may also result in a refund. Many working individuals with a disability who have no qualifying children, but are older than 25 and younger than 65 do -- in fact -- qualify for EITC. Additionally, if the taxpayer's child is disabled, the age limitation for the EITC is waived. The EITC has no effect on certain public benefits. Any refund you receive because of the EITC will not be considered income when determining whether you are eligible for benefit programs such as Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid.

7. **Child or Dependent Care Credit**

Taxpayers who pay someone to care for their dependent or spouse so they can work or look for work may be entitled to claim this credit. There is no age limit if the taxpayer's spouse or dependent is unable to care for themselves.

For more information on tax credits and benefits available to disabled taxpayers, see Publication 3966, Living and Working with Disabilities or Publication 907, Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities, available on the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov> or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Links:

- [Publication 3966](#), Living and Working with Disabilities
- [Publication 907](#), Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities

YouTube Videos:

- Free File and Fillable Forms: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)
- e-File and Direct Deposit: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)

