



Families Helping Families

Region 7

Serving: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster



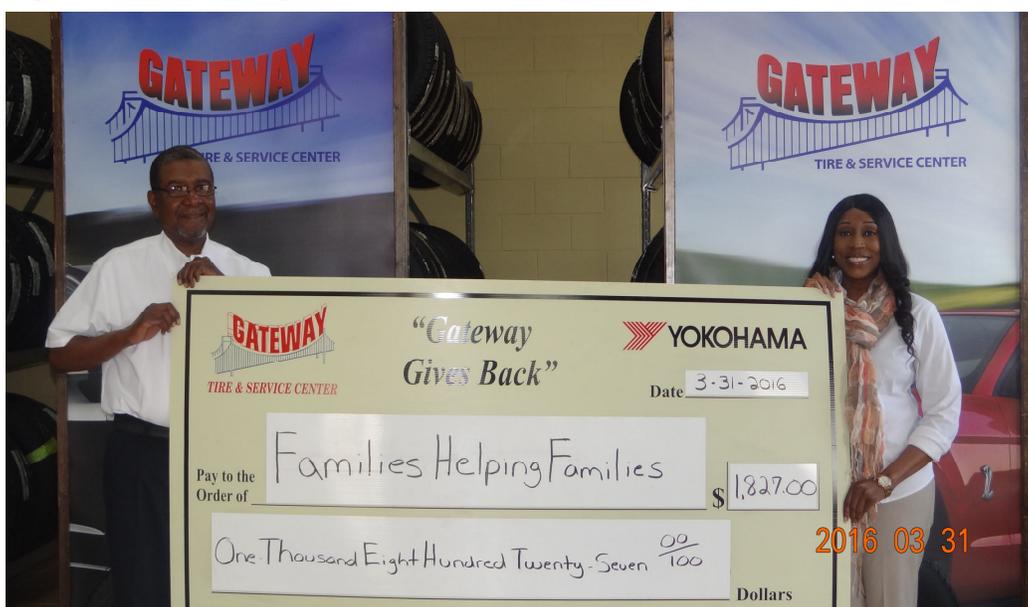
Gateway Gives Back to Families Helping Families Region 7

Families Helping Families Region 7 was selected to be the recipient of Gateway Gives Back for the month of March. The Gateway Gives Back campaign is sponsored by Gateway Tire and Service Centers and Yokohama Tires.

In March of this year, \$3.00 from every Tuesday's oil change performed at all ArkLaTex Gateway Tire and Service Center locations, was donated to Families Helping Families Region 7.

Mr. Henry, manager of Gateway Tires and Service Center on Bert Kouns proudly presented Families Helping Families Region 7 Executive Director Chanel Jackson with a check in the amount of \$1,827.00. This money will go to fund the center's annual Spring Fling Celebration.

Families Helping Families Region 7 is so grateful to have the support from the community. Together we are changing lives and making a better community for all.



Who?

A family directed resource center for all individuals with disabilities and their families

What?

Providing information, referral, and support through a network of services and assistance throughout Region 7

When?

8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Monday – Friday

Drop-ins are always welcome!

Where?

2620 Centenary Boulevard
Building 2, Suite 250
Shreveport, LA 71104
318.226.4541
877.226.4541
info@fhfregion7.com
www.fhfregion7.com

Medicaid Expansion

By: Mary Jacob



Bayou Health is changing names to Healthy Louisiana and will now include everyone eligible for the Medicaid Expansion in addition to those already on LaCHIP and Medicaid through Bayou Health.

Effective July 1, 2016 Louisiana will expand the Medicaid program to include tens of thousands of Louisiana citizens that didn't make enough money to qualify for a federally subsidized health care plan through the Affordable Care Act. If you or someone you know in the past has been told they do not qualify for a federally subsidized health care plan because they DIDN'T earn enough money - they should now be able to get Medicaid.

The Louisiana state's new Medicaid Expansion program applies to individuals that are:

- Louisiana residents, aged 19 to 64 years old.
- Doesn't already qualify for Medicaid or Medicare.
- With or without dependent children.
- Is a U.S. Citizen
- Has a household income less than 138% of the federal poverty level.

Below is a chart of 138% of the Federal Poverty Level for 2016:

Household Size	Weekly	Bi-Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$316	\$631	\$1,367	\$16,395
2	\$426	\$851	\$1,843	\$21,108
3	\$536	\$1,071	\$2,319	\$27,821
4	\$645	\$1,290	\$2,795	\$33,534
5	\$755	\$1,510	\$3,271	\$39,248
6	\$865	\$1,730	\$3,747	\$44,961

Greater New Orleans Community Health Connection and Take Charge Plus programs will automatically be included in the new Medicaid Expansion and Healthy Louisiana. Individuals currently enrolled in GNOCHC or Take Charge Plus do not need to apply for Medicaid expansion coverage. Those eligible for Medicaid expansion coverage will get a letter from Medicaid telling them they will have full Medicaid effective July 1. If you have changed addresses and your letter is returned undeliverable - YOU WILL BE REMOVED from all coverage. Living in specific areas determine your eligibility and moving without notifying the appropriate people of your change and continued eligibility determined is grounds for denying coverage.

How to Apply for Medicaid Expansion:

Effective June 1, 2016 individuals can apply for Medicaid in one of the following three ways:

- Online at www.healthy.la.gov
- Call 1.888.342.6207
- In Person at one of the many statewide application assistance centers. To find an application assistance center near you, please [click here](#).

How to Choose a Health Plan:

Make a list of the doctors, clinics, hospitals and other providers you use now. Decide which ones are important to you and which ones you want to keep using. You can search those providers to see if they are on any of the Healthy Louisiana Health Plans [here](#).

If you currently don't have a doctor or any other medical provider, choose a plan first. The plans that are currently available are:

The 5 Plans currently available are:

- Aetna Better Health - 1.855.242.0802
- Amerigroup Real Solutions - 1.800.600.4441
- AmeriHealth Caritas - 1.888.756.0004
- Louisiana Healthcare Connections - 1.866.595.8133
- United Healthcare - 1.866.675.1607

To learn more about each of these plans click [here](#). All plans will provide basic health services which include doctor/professional services, well child visits, chiropractic services for children, emergency room services, eye care services, family planning services, inpatient hospital services, home health care, immunizations for children, lab and x-ray services, maternity care while pregnant and through delivery, medical transportation, medical equipment, mental health services, occupational therapy, outpatient hospital services, physical therapy, prescription drugs and speech and language therapies.

Additionally, each plan offers some extra benefits. These benefits include extra things like adult dental care, free memberships to Weight Watchers, Boys and Girls Clubs, High School GED Program, Cell phones, free over the counter medicines and a variety of gift cards. To read more about these extra benefits, click [here](#).

To learn more about the new Louisiana Medicaid Expansion or Healthy Louisiana, call 1.855.229.6848 or email at Healthy@La.Gov.

For more information call Mary Russell at Families Helping Families Region 7 at 318-226-4541/877-226-4541 or email her at mrussell@fhfregion7.com.

Reprinted from Exceptional Times June 2016 Newsletter

Affordable Care Act (ACA): How Can Families and Professionals Help Children with Special Needs Keep Insurance Coverage as they Age Out?



Families and professionals working with children with disabilities need to know about various insurance coverage options as children age out of programs. Choices may be different depending upon whether the insurance is employer-based, obtained through the Marketplace, or public insurance. NOTE: Children with special health care needs may be eligible for more than one type of plan.

What is Dependent Coverage?

There are several ways families can keep their child under their plan. These are:

- Under the ACA (Affordable Care Act), families can continue health insurance coverage for their children until age 26, even if their children are living on their own. (See also Marketplace plans, below.)
- Some states have their own laws, which if more generous, would override federal requirements. For example, dependent coverage is available until age 31 in New Jersey if the dependent young adult is living at home, unmarried, etc.
- Using the “disabled dependent provision”, sometimes still called the “certification of the handicapped provision”, a child could be covered regardless of age as long as the parent is employed. Parents can ask their employer’s human resources department for the form, which is important to complete prior to age 18, since coverage, once suspended, cannot be restored.

Marketplace Plans

As mentioned previously, families can continue dependent coverage until age 26 under the ACA. The Marketplace will only pick one type of plan (Qualified Health Plan {QHP} or Medicaid.) Families can apply for coverage during open enrollment periods, special enrollment situations (e.g. losing a job), or Medicaid anytime.

Adult children up to age 26 can stay on a parent’s plan even if they are:

- married
- not living with their parents
- attending school
- not financially dependent on their parents
- eligible to enroll in their employer’s plan

Public Insurance

Medicaid provides coverage for individuals who have disabilities or low income. After age 18, the individual is seen as a “family of one” and parental income is no longer “deemed” as part of their income. States that expanded Medicaid under ACA have coverage starting at age 19. This may make it possible to transition from Medicaid for children or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to adult Medicaid, although this is not automatic, so it is necessary to apply. Some children may be eligible for a Medicaid waiver due to their medical status, regardless of family income.

Parents can contact their Maternal and Child Health Title V agency or their Family Voices/Family-to-Family Health Information Center (see Resources.) In most states, if a child is eligible Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides financial aid, they are also eligible for Medicaid.

Medicare offers coverage for individuals over age 65 or with certain disabilities. Medicare will cover children who have kidney disease and need dialysis or transplant. Disabled Adult Child (DAC) provisions allow eligibility for Medicare if the child was disabled before age 22 and a parent is disabled, retired, or deceased.

Other Options for Health Coverage

Catastrophic Plans: People under age 30 are eligible for catastrophic health plans. The plans are called “catastrophic” as they protect against high costs of care for a major illness. The benefits are limited for both primary and preventive care. Catastrophic plans have fewer benefits than QHPs so may not be the best choice for people with disabilities.

College Plans: Students are not exempt from the requirement to have insurance that meets certain standards or else pay a penalty, but many college health plans qualify as coverage for this purchase. However, some of these plans may not have as many benefits as QHPs or may not qualify as creditable coverage under the health law. Students should check to see if they are eligible for tax credits to purchase a Marketplace plan. Note that, in states that have expanded their Medicaid program, students age 19 and older may qualify for Medicaid.

Having More than One Plan: A child may be eligible for a private employer plan as well as Medicaid and/or Medicare as mentioned previously. It is important that there is “coordination of benefits” for all plans to reduce costs for families. If a provider doesn’t participate in Medicare, the doctor can send their “opt-out” Medicare letter to the private insurance company with the bill. Families can even file claims this way (see Resources). Also, if a provider doesn’t participate in Medicaid but the child also has private coverage, the doctor can contact the insurance plan to find out how to bill “out of network” as secondary.

Families have options available to them as their children “age out.” By checking resources (see below) and contacting the organizations listed there, they can determine the best option for their child with disabilities.

This tip sheet is based on an ACA blog authored by Lauren Agoratus, M.A. Lauren is the parent of a child with multiple disabilities who serves as the Coordinator for Family Voices-NJ and as the southern coordinator in her the New Jersey Family-to-Family Health Information Center, both housed at the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) at www.spanadvocacy.org.

More of Lauren’s tips about the ACA can be found on the website of the Family Voices National Center for Family/Professional Partnerships: <http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/>.

**Affordable Care Act (ACA):
Helping Families of Children with Special Needs to Understand Deductibles**

One of the most confusing aspects for families of children with disabilities is the concept of deductibles and how that plays into cost-sharing. Many parents will choose plans with lower deductibles, but this may mean there is also a level of fewer benefits, which could be particularly problematic for children with special health care needs.

What is a Deductible?

According to Healthcare.gov, the deductible is “[T]he amount you owe for covered health care services before your health insurance plan begins to pay.” For example, if the plan’s deductible is \$500, that’s how much you would have to pay before insurance kicks in.

Please note that there can be either individual or family deductibles under the plan. (Each individual deductible generally will be lower than a family deductible for a similar plan.) If you have an individual (“embedded”) deductible, each individual would have to reach that deductible before his or her healthcare costs would be covered. If it’s a family (“aggregate”), deductible, that means that the deductible amount would have to be spent across all family members before their healthcare costs would be covered. It may be necessary to call an insurance plan to find out what type of deductible it has.

While it may sound better to have one family deductible this is NOT necessarily better when it is expected that one family member – such as a child with special health care needs – will have higher health care costs than other family members. For example, if there is a family deductible of \$2,000, then insurance coverage won’t apply for any family member until the family has spent that much out of pocket. But if each family member has a \$500 deductible, then insurance coverage will be applied for an individual family member once his or costs have reached the deductible. (See blog post from the Georgetown Center on Health Insurance Reform at <http://chirblog.org/embedded-deductibles-and-how-they-work/>.)

What Families Need to Know

Deductibles are only part of total health costs. Parents must also consider premiums (cost of buying the insurance policy) as well as out-of-pocket costs, including copays (see Resources.) Families can also save money by using “in-network” providers, which means health care providers that participate with their plan and agree to accept the payment amount provided by the insurer.

Key things for parents of children with special needs need to keep in mind about deductibles are:

- There is no deductible for preventive services.
- Some plans offer other (non-preventive) services without a deductible, although any copayments will still apply. Examples include visits to a primary care provider and some specialists (e.g. mental health), and/or prescriptions. To find out which services are covered

without a deductible, go to healthcare.gov, pick a plan, and click on “costs for medical care.” An even more detailed list is available on the plan “Summary of Benefits and Coverage.”

- When choosing a plan, families can look at services without a deductible along with premiums and other out-of-pocket costs. During open enrollment, there is an “Out-of-Pocket Costs” tool on Healthcare.gov which estimates premiums, deductibles, and copays for the year.
- Some families can save on out-of-pocket costs by selecting a “silver plan.” More information is available at <https://www.healthcare.gov/lower-costs/save-on-out-of-pocket-costs/>.
- It is important to find out whether a plan has a family deductible or individual deductibles for each family member, and then figure out which is likely to be more advantageous for them. (If the type of deductible is not indicated on healthcare.gov, it will be necessary to call the insurance company to get that information.)

Understanding deductibles and other cost-savings is a key issue for families of children with special needs. By examining how deductibles work, and not just picking the lowest- deductible plan, parents will get the best coverage for their child with special healthcare needs at the most affordable cost.

Resources

- *Deductibles and your Marketplace health insurance* <https://www.healthcare.gov/blog/deductibles-in-the-health-insurance-marketplace/>
- *6 things to know about deductibles in the Health Insurance Marketplace* <https://www.healthcare.gov/blog/6-things-to-know-about-deductibles-in-the-health-insurance-marketplace/>
- *Your total costs for health care: Premium, deductible & out-of-pocket costs* <https://www.healthcare.gov/choose-a-plan/your-total-costs/>
- *Pay less even before you meet your deductible* <https://www.healthcare.gov/why-coverage-is-important/pay-less-before-meeting-deductible/>
- *Five Facts About Deductibles:* <https://blog.cms.gov/2015/11/17/five-facts-about-deductibles/>
- *CHIR Blog: Embedded Deductibles: Source of Consumer Confusion* <http://chirblog.org/embedded-deductibles-and-how-they-work>.

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

By: Thuy Nguyen



It's the start of summer and for most children family – school is in recess! Unfortunately, statistics have shown that summertime is when a lot of injuries occur among children. Every year, 30 to 50 children are treated for injuries caused by falls from windows. Almost half of all unintentional injury-related deaths in the United States among children ages 14 and younger occur during the three months of summer. (Statistics from University of Washington Medicine)

Fortunately, by talking to your children and taking proactive measures, such incidences can be avoided. I have mentioned a few below.

It is very important every family should have a well-stocked first aid kit at home as well as have one in the car and one to bring along when going on a family trip. Keep a list of emergency numbers, such

as number where parents can be reached, emergency medical services (911), doctor's, dentist, poison control, etc., where they are easy to find.

OUTDOOR SAFETY

Make sure children are always aware of their surroundings. They should be on the look-out for insects, poison ivy, as well as areas where they can trip or fall.

- Wear proper clothing: clothing should be light-colored and lightweight.
- Make sure to drink lots of water
- Watch out for wild animals.
- Know what to do if someone gets lost. Remind them that if they get lost, they should wait in a safe, sheltered place until an adult can find them.

SUN SAFETY

Children will be eager to be outside enjoying outdoor activities. Take precautions since excessive exposure to the sun can cause suffering and permanent damage to the skin. The sun is at its peak from 10am to 4pm.

- Apply sunscreen that is at least SPF 15 (products with UVA and UVB protection). Children should wear water resistance sunscreen and it should be reapplied every two hours if swimming.
- Seek areas that are shaded such as under large trees.
- Wear long sleeves, wide –brimmed hats, sunglasses

WATER SAFETY

Children can drown in many different types of water sources such as bathtubs, buckets, swimming pools, spas, lakes, oceans, streams, etc.

- Children should have some formal swimming instructions.
- Adult supervision is very important especially when younger children are in or near the water. Adults should be within arm's length.
- Never swim alone, even good swimmers need buddies.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties."
- When on a boat, children should wear life jackets along with the adults, making sure it fits properly. The jacket should not be loose and should always be worn with all straps belted.

BUG SAFETY

- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeves, long pants, and socks, especially in the evenings. Avoid wearing bright color clothing or flowery prints.
- Spray or rub insect repellent containing DEET.
- Remove visible stinger from skin by gently scraping it with a credit card or your finger.
- Call the doctor for any concerns or questions.

Visit these websites to find more safety tips:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/summer/summer-safety-tips-for-kids/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/news/Pages/Summer-SafetyTips-Sun-and-Water-Safety.aspx>

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Summer-Safety-Tips.aspx>

<http://www.uwmedicine.org/health-library/summer-health-tips>

Reprinted from Exceptional Times June 2016 Newsletter

Response to Intervention: What It Is, and How It Can Help Your Child



Are you worried that your child isn't doing as well in school as he could be? Do you feel he needs a little extra support in the classroom, but doesn't need special education services? If so, you should talk to your school about what types of Response-to-Intervention programs it has in place.

Response-to-Intervention, or RTI, is a relatively new concept for schools across the nation. It's a program designed to provide educational help to struggling students, before they are referred to special education. That's the "intervention" in Response-to-Intervention: catching kids before they fall too far behind. And the good news is that the intervention takes place in the regular classroom.

The RTI process is three-fold. In Tier 1, students whose teachers or parents think they need some extra assistance are screened and placed in small groups for additional instruction. After a few weeks, the teacher will do some testing to see how your child is doing and either graduate him from the small group or move him to Tier 2 for more intensive small group instruction. If, in another few weeks, your child is still not making progress, then Tier 3 provides one-to-one instruction and/or a referral for a special education evaluation.

Unfortunately, not all schools have put the three-tiered RTI process into place yet. But, as a parent, you can advocate for your child's right to such programs. Rachel Brown-Chidsey, PhD, RTI expert and co-author of the book *Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice*, thinks the more parents know about the process, the better it is for students. "I have yet to meet a parent who said no to RTI after learning that it means immediate services with data collection," she says.

"Getting parents supportive of RTI will only make it better to the children."

Here are five ways to initiate that support and learn about the process:

1. Ask the question. Find out whether your school district has an RTI plan. According to Dr. Brown-Chidsey, "Parents should be asking teachers and administrators what instructional services are offered." If there's a problem, don't wait to get help for your struggling student.
2. Be persistent. If your school doesn't have an RTI program, find out why. Then ask how and when they plan on implementing one. After all, this is your child's education, and the law says schools have to use RTI.
3. Know what types of intervention are offered. Changing a child's seat, letting him do less work than other kids or "keeping an eye on him" aren't appropriate interventions. Since your child is having trouble learning things in the way they are being taught in the classroom, a different teaching strategy or style is called for. What programs will your school use to accomplish this?

4. Be patient - to a point. When your child is struggling, three weeks can feel like a long time to wait to see if something is helping. Keep in mind that trying out different intervention strategies gives a better idea of what will and will not help your child. And the good thing about individualized intervention is that if progress needs to be looked at more than weekly, it can be. Just make sure it's written into your child's plan.
5. Speak up if you don't think its working. The same law that provides for RTI allows parents to ask for a formal evaluation at any time during the process. If you feel your child needs to be evaluated for special education services now, don't hesitate to ask. Your child deserves a learning experience that will work for him, no matter what.

For additional information about Response to Intervention please contact Ester Drakes, Education Specialist at (318)226-4541/877-226-4541 or email her at edrakes@fhfregion7.com.

***Article reprinted from Response to Intervention: Principles and Strategies for Effective Practice, www.education.com/magazine/article*



How Does EarlySteps Support Families?

EarlySteps provides supports for families with eligible children by working with them to achieve 4 goals:

Goal 1: To help you understand how to help your child develop and learn.

To meet this goal your child's team, which includes you, will design supports to address the needs of your child and family.

Goal 2: To help you understand your Rights in EarlySteps

Every family in EarlySteps is guaranteed the following rights and it is the Goal of EarlySteps to assure that you understand these rights:

- Written prior notice
- Use of Parent's native language or preferred mode of communication
- Parent Consent
- Confidentiality, Privacy, and Release of Information
- Examination of records
- Accept or decline services without jeopardy/Refuse to complete or sign documents
- Resolution of Disputes
- Child's right to a Surrogate Parent

Goal 3: To Help Families effectively communicate their child's needs

A main focus for early intervention is to meet the needs of your child and family. To accomplish this, you are asked to participate as a team member with others in the early intervention system.

As a team member you will participate in the development of the service plan designed to meet your child and family needs: the Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP.

As a team member you will identify your Concerns, Priorities and Resources regarding your child and family through a Family Assessment. EarlySteps refers to the family assessment as the "CPR".

The role of the other team members is to assist you in communicating the needs of your child and family.

Goal 4: To have a successful transition out of EarlySteps when it is time to exit

Intake and Family Support Coordinators (FSC) discuss transition at every IFSP—even the 1st one—there is a page on the IFSP that just addresses transition.

Ask you what supports you need to make transition successful.

Design steps to meet the needs you identify.

Have a transition conference prior to exit and invite school system or other representatives to attend and provide information to you.

Transitioning Into Employment by Matt Villano



High-school and college graduations are exciting milestones for parents of neurotypical young adults. For parents of young adults with disabilities and special needs, however, the accomplishment can lead to anxiety, discomfort and the daunting task of facilitating transitions to the working world. This uneasiness certainly is well-founded; while everyday transitions for young adults with disabilities and special needs can be challenging, monumental life changes have the potential to be downright cataclysmic. Thankfully, parents don't have to endure the process alone. The following tips are our inside look at making things easier.

Consider a private job coach

Perhaps the most efficient way to smooth a young adult's transition from school into the working world is to research state resources available for job coaching and employment services or hire a private job coach who has specific experience working alongside people with disabilities.

Generally speaking, these experts act as liaisons between the young adult, the parents and the employer. Their typical role is to provide coaching on the job, creating supports designed for the young adult's specific deficits. In many cases, these coaches also utilize role-playing to prepare the young adults for what they likely will expect in the workplace. A job coach can be utilized in employment and volunteer jobs alike.

"It's important for all employees—special needs or not—to understand non-verbal queues in the workplace, and for young adults with special needs, this is particularly where a coach can help."

Private job coaches can be expensive (though some fees may be deductible) so make sure to research the state resources available.

Investigate employment services programs

Another option for helping young adults with disabilities ease the transition into the work world might be to work with local non-profit organizations that have employment services programs designed to help. Young adults work with a job developer to find a job that matches their interests and skills. This process includes assistance with their resume, job applications and Interview Seminars. Interview Seminars teach job seekers with disabilities basic interviewing skills and give them the opportunity to socialize with others with special needs looking for work. The job coach worked closely with the family to ensure messages about appropriate behavior were reinforced at home. "Learning how they must present themselves and how they must act around customers are important skills, and they're skills that, in many cases, we don't have the time to teach."

Mind the intangibles

Regardless of the methodology parents use to help young adults with disabilities and special needs transition into the work world, experts say the most successful approaches incorporate intangibles such as personalization and communication. The notion of personalization gets at what motivates certain people to work. Simler, the consultant, recommends that parents demand for pre-employment screenings and assessments to gauge how and where particular individuals can provide the most value. Some programs, such as Autism Works, include these screenings. Other options do not. "If we put a person in a place where it's not of their interest, they're not going to enjoy going to work every day, and ultimately will lose interest," he explains. "On the other hand, if we get to know the person, if we get to know what their interests and hobbies are, we're that much more likely to make a fit that lasts and benefits everyone." Fecher has seen tremendous social growth in the working young adults with ASD. "I've seen clients come out of their shell and gain confidence. Research shows sustained employment for adults with ASD can be challenging. We've helped them take their first steps on that journey."

For additional information about Transitioning into Employment please contact Comeaka James, Transition Facilitator at (318)226-4541/877-226-4541 or email her at cjames@fhfregion7.com.

Reprinted from www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/transition

Strikeout Autism



Families Helping Families Region 7 teamed up with Strikeout Autism and invited Isiah Davis to throw the first pitch at a Bossier Parish Community College baseball game to help raise awareness for autism during the month of April which is Autism Awareness month. Isiah is an 8th grade at Youree Drive Middle School and was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 5. Trooper Harris from the Louisiana State Police was there as well to support the cause. Isiah was given a ball by the team and also got to sit in the bullpen and watch the game. Thank you Strikeout Autism and BPCC Baseball Team for making Isiah's day!!!!

Disability Rights Day 2016



Hundreds of LaCAN members from every region of the state gathered at the Capitol on Tuesday April 5th to participate in Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council Disability Rights Day. Members formed small teams to visit with their regional legislators sharing this year's message, "We're not an OPTION. We're a PRIORITY," along with fact sheets detailing the importance and necessity of funding for various supports and services that people with disabilities need to live in their own homes and be fully participating members of their communities. Many of these services

are in jeopardy of cuts and/or elimination in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) due to the budget shortfall. At noon members converged on the Capitol steps for a rally program which was highlighted by the first-ever appearance of a Louisiana Governor. Governor John Bel Edwards spoke to the crowd, committing to work to protect disability services, and encouraging advocates to continue their work in sharing their stories and educating him and members of the legislature.

Hi LaCAN Members from your Region 7 Leader



First off I wish to **THANK ALL** of the members who did the Action Alerts and contacted your Legislators to fund the Waivers (NOW, Children's Choice, Supports and Residential Options Waiver) funding the 9 FHF Centers across the State. All the trips to the Capital for Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance Committee and your Advocacy sure made a difference.

Legislators listened to the voices of LaCAN members and responded in this year's legislative session. Thanks to your persistent advocacy efforts, the legislature passed the State Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 for these programs:

- Restore/Allocate funding for all DD Waivers (Current Recipients)
- Human Services Districts/Authorities – IFS/FFF (Funding at the level originally proposed in the Executive Budget. However, funding was partially restored.)
- Families Helping Families (\$170,000 cut was restored)
- Long Term Personal Care Services (LT-PCS)
- Pediatric Day Health Care Program
- State Personal Assistance Services (SPAS)

As we celebrate this success, we didn't get any funding to fill vacant waiver slots for those on the waiting list, insufficient funding for the Human Services Districts/Authorities to meet all the needs in their regions and, no funding to pay overtime for Direct Support Professionals.

LaCAN Leaders will not stop the fight. We met up in June for the Legislative Debriefing and will have a Legislative Kickoff in September to find out more ways to help you be better advocates.

I plan on a summer time LaCAN Members meeting to talk about our success and to socialize. I do need compelling stories of your wait on a waiver slot so let me know about them.

LaCAN will continue to educate our Legislators for Community and Home Based Services and I will help LaCAN members build relationships with their Legislators so you can express any concerns with them. Anytime you wish to meet and speak with your Legislator about a Waiver issue I will help you set up a visit.

Please feel free to contact me anytime you wish with your concerns 318-688-4830 or email me at dke1949@bellsouth.net.

Families Helping Families Spring Fling 2016



On May 20th Families Helping Families Region 7 hosted our Spring Fling Event. This event was truly a celebration that marked the end of the school year for all the families that we serve. Families, friends, loved ones, and our staff gathered together at North Bossier Park to partake in an evening of love, fun, and great food. Our menu included boiled crawfish, potatoes, corn, sausage, burgers, hotdogs, chips, and more. We would like to thank the Gateway Gives Back Program for making this event truly possible through their generosity. Also, we would like to extend our gratitude to the owner and operator of Tummy Time Cakes & Desserts, Mrs. LaWana London, for donating her delicious cupcakes. Our amazing food was cooked on site by Ragin Cajun Catering. Our volunteer food service teams were truly incredible and hospitable to each guest. Mr. Frazier of Kona Ice provided each person exemplary customer service via each Kona Ice that he served. We are very grateful for this opportunity to celebrate with all who attended. The best is truly yet to come!! Please see our calendar at www.fhregion7.com for information on upcoming events in which you can participant in or support.

Congratulations to the Seven Nights with No Dishes Winner Ms. Stephanie Salter!!!!



Ms. Stephanie Salter, won seven nights of eating out at: Chili's, Applebee's, Olive Garden, I-hop, Red Lobster, Outback, and Longhorn Steak House. Thanks are certainly due to the wonderful board members and staff of Families Helping Families Region 7 for selling all of the tickets. The programs of Families Helping Families Region 7 will be better served with the help of those who bought tickets. Thank you all and we wish you luck next year!



LaTEACH (Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children) is an initiative of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council. We were formed to effect systems change in the education system that promotes inclusive education for students by using best practices and research based methods.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"LaTEACH promotes appropriate, inclusive education for all students. We work to make parents, educators, the general public, and state leadership informed and supportive of research based and effective practices used appropriately for each student."

We believe all students, with or without disabilities, should be provided the same opportunities to be educated in neighborhood schools as their sisters, brothers, friends and neighbors.

We believe all students, with or without disabilities, need and should be provided with the support to learn together effectively, involving family, school and community.

We believe all educators should be provided with the training and resources to teach students with diverse learning styles and needs.

We believe all students, with or without disabilities, need and should be provided educational opportunities which address their individualized needs, use research based practices, result in meaningful outcomes, and prepare them for productive and satisfying lives.

We believe all parents should take the lead through active participation and be given the training and resources to address their child's individualized needs, use research based practices, result in meaningful outcomes, and prepare them for productive and satisfying lives.

We believe that ALL students are valued members in society and can and should become fully participating and contributing citizens.

Who should join? Students, Parents, Family Members, Educators, Administrators, or any interested person in inclusive education.

For more information about LaTEACH or to become a member of LaTEACH please visit their website at www.lateach.org or contact your Region 7 LaTEACH Leader Mindy Hartzo at Mindy.Hartzo@lateach.org or call her at 318-560-2358.

What Is Hanging With Friends?

Hanging with Friends aka HWF is Families Helping Families Region 7 support group for self-advocates over the age of 18 or out of the school system. Hanging with Friends was birthed out of the idea that all people should have friends as well as being active and included in their community. We get together one a month to have fun, meet new people, and participant in community activities. Some activities include bowling night, movie night, sweetheart dance, community festivals, and holiday celebration plus much more. As a group we are serious about self-advocacy issues, but we also want to make you laugh and feel good about life. Join us to celebrate the strengths of self-advocates. Most of all, let's work together to help people live the life they want with the support they need. **All HWF activities can be found on our website at www.fhfregion7.com or you can contact Mary Russell at (318)226-4541/877-226-4541 for additional information.**



What is P.O.P.?

Power of the Parent aka P.O.P. is Families Helping Families Region 7 support group for parents or caregivers of individuals with disabilities. Parents and family members of children with disabilities or special needs are encouraged to come, share, and learn with other parents. Power of the Parent meets every third Wednesday of the month at the Families Helping Families Region 7 center from 5:30pm – 6:30pm.

Please feel free to contact Monica Stampley at (318)226-4541/877-226-4541 for additional information or directions.

Children's Special Health Services Medical Transportation Project

In continuing our spirit of partnership, Families Helping Families and Children's Special Health Services have joined to provide travel assistance through the CSHS Medical Transportation Project. Our agencies are working together to provide eligible families with financial assistance for the costs of travel to out-of-town medical appointments or services. **Please contact Families Helping Families Region 7 at (318)226-4541/877-226-4541 to find out more. Many families have benefited from this help with their expenses.**

Ways to Give Back to Families Helping Families Region 7



Support Families Helping Families Region 7 by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know and love. Same products, same prices, and same services.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Families Helping Families Region 7 whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.



Families Helping Families Region 7 is proud to announce their participation in the Kroger Neighbor to Neighbor Donation Program. If you shop at Kroger and use a KrogerPlus Card this is an easy and fast way to donate money to Families Helping Families Region 7 without coming out of your pocket. Kroger will donate money Families Helping Families Region 7 every time you use your card.

Helping Families Helping Families Region 7 is so simple just register your Kroger online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com. You must have a registered KrogerPlus card account to link to FHF Region 7. If you do not have a KrogerPlus Card, cards are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. If you are a new online customer, you must click on SIGN UP TODAY in the 'New Customer?' box.

- You can sign up for a Kroger Community Rewards Account by entering your zip code, clicking on favorite store, enter your email address, create a password, and agree to the terms and conditions.
- You will get a message to check your email inbox and click on the link within the body of the email.
- You will click on My Account and use your email address and password to proceed to the next step.
- You will click on Edit Kroger Community Rewards information and input your Kroger Plus card number.
- You will update or confirm your information.
- You will enter our **NPO number 90225** or our **name Families Helping Families Region 7**, or select **Families Helping Families Region 7** from list and click on confirm.

To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see Families Helping Families Region 7 name on the right side of your information page.

REMEMBER, purchases will not count for Families Helping Families Region 7 until after member(s) register their card(s).

LET THE DONATING BEGIN!!

Board of Directors

Renata Bradberry
Self-Advocate/Secretary

Charles Spearman
Self-Advocate

Shaina Newton
Parent/Chair

Chanel Jackson
Executive Director

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council's Mission

To ensure all individuals with disabilities benefit from supports and opportunities in their communities so they achieve quality of life in conformance with their wishes.

Through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Congress funds and authorizes the Developmental Disabilities Council to conduct advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities. The Council's efforts are designed to promote the increased self-determination, independence, productivity, integration and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in their communities.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is made up of people from every region of the state who are appointed by the governor to develop and implement a five year plan to address the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. Membership includes persons with developmental disabilities, parents and representatives from public and private agencies. Several members rotate off the Council each year in October and nominations for new members are always welcomed.

You may contact the DDC by calling 1.800.450.8101 or visit their website: www.laddc.org

Families Helping Families Region 7 programs and this newsletter are supported by the F2FHIC, Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council Louisiana State Department of Education, and Office of Citizens with Development Disabilities



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