



Opinions contained herein do not necessarily represent those of the funding source, and no endorsement should be inferred.

# The Deep South

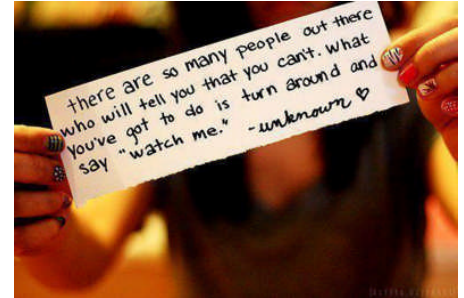
Fall 2011

Volume 5, Issue 2

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

*By Carol Calix, mom*

There are over 60 causes that have chosen October for their “National Month,” from “Applejack Month” to “Toilet Tank Repair Month”.



All kidding aside, there are two October events that we are targeting in this quarterly newsletter and that is **National Disability Employment Awareness Month** and **Disability Awareness Month in Louisiana**.

For individuals that are considered “able” to be employed, the job market is a tough one right now. But those that have different abilities should not be discouraged and should still seek out employment opportunities. There are several programs that are available in the community to assist in finding employment. We have several stories within this newsletter of individuals who are employed and love what they do.

One of the highlights of the month is the WORK PAY\$ Job Fair & Work Incentives Seminar (page 2), which will be held on October 12 in New Orleans.

What can be expected at the job fair? There will be agencies that provide assistance in training and finding a job. There will also be different local and state agencies that can assist in understanding how SSI and Medicaid will be affected when employed, with a clear understanding of just how much money can be earned without affecting Medicaid coverage.

Currently the state of Louisiana is working on an Employment First Initiative (see page 17). What does this mean? It means that EVERY individual with a disability should be offered an opportunity to be employed FIRST. That option should not be the last one on the list but should be at the top of options for someone’s adult life. And this type of mindset should start while they are still in school. Too many times individuals with disabilities exit the school system with no skills, no community-based training at all, and are doomed to sit at home for the rest of their lives. It has been proven over and over again that individuals with disabilities have the same wants and desires as those that do not have disabilities. They want to have their own money and want to be able to contribute to their family’s financial needs. They want to be able to take care of themselves and not be totally dependent on a government check and their parents. They want the same freedoms – AND are willing to take the same risks as everyone else. They might get fired, they might get mad at the boss, and they might really like what they do and enjoy going to work just like everyone else.

(continued on page 18)

Board of Directors**Eddie Tebbe**

Board Chairman

**Molly Sullivan**

Board Vice Chair

**Polly Campbell**

Secretary

**Lang Le**

Treasurer

Board Members**Bobbie Bedney****Kathy Hume****Hyacinth McKee****Adranell Murray****Claudia Smith****Dr. Sarintha Stricklin****Georgette Wallace**FHF of SELA Team**Carol Calix**

Executive Director

**Donnica Conway-Strawder**

Projects Coordinator

**Fay Daspit**

Family Advocate

**Shay Hunter**

Early Steps—Community

Outreach Specialist

**Aisha Johnson**

Family Advocate

**Tracy Jones**

MHSD Office Assistant

**Willie Martin**

MHSD Office Assistant

**Diana Parker**

Bookkeeper

**Delery Rice**

LaCAN Leader

## ***WORK PAY\$ Job Fair & Work Incentives Seminar - New Orleans***

If you have a disability and would like to go to work, don't miss this event. The Job Fair brings together employers who want to profit by investing in workers with disabilities and those wanting to return to the workforce or enter for the first time.

A Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE) will be offered at each Job Fair. At this seminar you will receive information and guidance on work and how work may impact Social Security benefits, gain knowledge and work incentives that are available to increase your success on the job, learn how to better track your earnings, how to report earning to SSA, reduce overpayments due to lack of appropriate reporting to SSA, and gain confidence in remaining employed.

To register to attend the job fair online at [www.work-pays.org](http://www.work-pays.org). Employers/business owners can also register to attend at [www.work-pays.org](http://www.work-pays.org).

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana envisions a region where people with disabilities live and are fully included in school, work, and recreational activities.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to educate and empower individuals with disabilities, their families, professionals and communities by providing resources, training, and family-to-family support.

### **UNO TRAC Center**

2000 Lakeshore Drive, Building #27  
New Orleans, LA 70148

10 am - 1 pm



As a non-profit doing business in Louisiana, board meetings are open to the public. Our meetings are scheduled bi-monthly, on the second Thursday of the month at 6 pm. Board meetings are scheduled on **October 13 and December 8, 2011, and February 9, April 12 and June 14, 2012**. FHF of SELA has created a five year strategic plan and soon work groups will be formed, which are also public meetings. Check out the website to view the strategic plan. Meetings will be posted on the FHF website. If you are interested in serving in **any** capacity, please contact Carol at 943-0343.

## iPad and iPad2 at FHF of SELA

We are pleased to announce the addition of the iPad and iPad2 to our library! Families wishing to purchase an iPad for themselves or family members can test out the many features and applications the iPads have to offer, such as the Tap to Talk, a communication tool used for those with limited verbal skills, e-books of your favorite stories or music apps for your budding musicians. Teachers can view the many educational programs designed for their students' individual learning needs. The iPads are also available for families to research disability related issues. FHF of SELA is open Monday—Friday, 9 am—4 pm. Please call to set up an appointment to come in and try the iPads.



**Be sure to register for:**

**iPad Apps workshop**

**Wednesday, October 12, 2011**

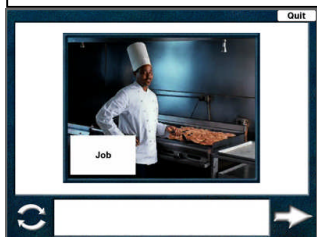
**10am-12:00pm**

**Belle Chasse Assistive Technology Center**

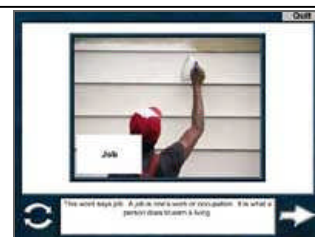
**8342 HWY 23**

**Belle Chasse, LA 70037**

**Call 943-0343 or 1-877-243-7352 to register**



## It's APptastic!!



Staff members at FHF of SELA research apps for the iPad and iPad2 that are user friendly,

informative, yet entertaining for the families that we serve. This edition spotlights **Functional Skills System: Employment Information, Signs and Words**. This application is designed to teach common signs and words critical for independent living. It contains short, concise video vignettes of every part of an employment application in addition to key terms, such as overtime, vacation, holidays, leave of absence and many more, all in an effort to allow users to become more capable of functioning independently at work. Other apps and podcasts created by Functional Skills System are: Entertainment in the Home, Entertainment in the Community and Communication Skills. For similar apps go to iTunes and click on Podcast and search "Apps for Children With Special Needs" on your computer or iPad device.



## Clinton's Passion for His Job

Clinton Salzer has been employed with Elmwood Fitness Center since June of 2009. AcME, Inc. facilitated his placement in the Environmental Services Department, where he began working as a "floater". This position requires him to work at several different Elmwood locations performing various tasks; keeping the racquet ball courts clean and maintained and keeping the work-out areas maintained. The Director of Environmental Services, Ronnie Strassel states that, "Clinton always has a great attitude and he is always excited about work". He adds, "Since Clinton came on board we have seen our member satisfaction survey score getting better". An added benefit, Clinton began using his membership and has lost 40 pounds.



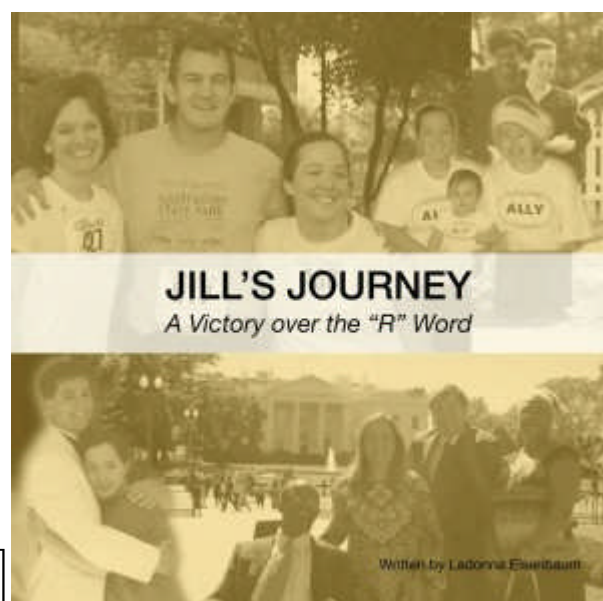
## Jill's Journey

Jill's Journey is a life-long trip. She has recently left The Arc of Northern Virginia and moved to New Orleans with her family. At 35 years old, she has found her purpose in life, to advocate for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) whose cries for reason are being ignored by society. Her work is a never-ending journey – as long as there are people with intellectual, developmental disabilities. Jill's Journey will take her to all corners of our country, wherever the voice of people with IDD need to be heard.

Jill's story comes from deep within and is heart-warming. Would your group or organization like to book a personal speaking engagement with Jill? She would love to speak to your organization.

"Jill's Journey, A Victory Over the R-Word" is a life story about me overcoming one setback after another while growing up. I had such an incredible desire to fit in and do cool and normal things like my peers, but absorbed one humiliation after another. Still, I refused to be deterred. Each pain endured would make me stronger and more determined. The turning point in my life was when Nancy Mercer, director of The Arc of Northern Virginia, discovered my abilities to communicate. She taught me to use my inner strength developed in my early years of setbacks, to express my passion for supporting others with IDD.

To order Jill's book or to email her about speaking to your organization, contact her through her website at <http://www.jillegle.com>.



The cost of the book is \$10.

To order go to <http://www.jillegle.com>

## Adults With Autism Thrive as Software Testers



Employees Oran Weitzberg, left, and Rick Alexander, celebrate a breakthrough, at Aspiritech, a nonprofit enterprise that specializes in finding software bugs, as they test a new program in Highland Park, Ill. (AP)

(AP) HIGHLAND PARK, Illinois - The software testers at Aspiritech are a collection of characters. Katie Levin talks nonstop. Brian Tozzo hates driving. Jamie Specht is bothered by bright lights, vacuum cleaners and the feel of carpeting against her skin. Rider Hallenstein draws cartoons of himself as a DeLorean sports car. Rick Alexander finds it unnerving to sit near other people.

This is the unusual workforce of a U.S. startup that specializes in finding software bugs by harnessing the talents of young adults with autism.

Traits that make great software testers - intense focus, comfort with repetition, memory for detail - also happen to be characteristics of autism. People with Asperger's syndrome, a mild form of autism, have normal to high intelligence and often are highly skilled with computers. Aspiritech, a nonprofit in Highland Park, Illinois, nurtures these skills while forgiving the quirks that can make adults with autism unemployable: social awkwardness, poor eye contact, being easily overwhelmed. The company's name plays on the words "Asperger's," "spirit" and "technology."

Clients, nine companies in Aspiritech's first two years, have been pleased.

"They exceeded my expectations," said Dan Tedesco of Shelton, Connecticut-based HandHold Adaptive, which took a chance on Aspiritech to test an iPhone application. "There is a pride in their product you don't usually see in this type of work."

Aspiritech was founded by Moshe and Brenda Weitzberg after their son, Oran, now 32, was fired from a job bagging groceries. Oran was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome when he was 14. He now works at Aspiritech.

"He went from failing at bagging groceries to being one of the best software testers on our team,"

said Brenda Weitzberg.

The Weitzbergs modeled Aspiritech on a successful Danish company called Specialisterne, or "the Specialists." Specialisterne also employs software testers with autism. Its satisfied clients include Oracle and Microsoft.

Other companies in Belgium, Japan and Israel are either hiring or training adults with autism as software testers.

This year, Aspiritech projects \$120,000 in revenue, with 60 percent coming from donations and 40 percent from clients. The Weitzbergs hope to raise the client revenue to 50 percent next year.

"There have been a couple of attempts in the U.S. and Aspiritech is the one that's making it," said Scott Standifer of the University of Missouri's Disability Policy and Studies office and the organizer of a national conference on adults with autism and employment.

The exact unemployment rate for adults with autism is unknown, but it's thought to be high, Standifer said.

"We don't know how many adults have autism and, because of that, we don't know their rate of unemployment," he said. "We do know from tracking adults just emerging from high school that they are having great difficulty finding jobs."

A 2009 U.S. Department of Education survey found the employment rate for young adults with autism was on par with that for deaf-and-blind young adults, and well below the rate of those with blindness alone or learning disabilities or traumatic brain injuries, Standifer said.

Since Asperger's syndrome didn't become a standard diagnosis until the early 1990s, many of Aspiritech's software testers were adults when they first learned they were on the autism spectrum. They are pioneers, the first generation of adults with Asperger's.

Katie Levin, 35, was diagnosed in her late 20s with Asperger's. As a child, she'd been labeled as mentally ill.

"Asperger's is not a mental illness," she said. "I definitely feel like I identify with the Asperger's community more than I did with the mental illness community." She tests software and runs Aspiritech's Facebook page and Twitter feed.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

Rick Alexander, 24, another tester, has a degree in computer science from the Illinois Institute of Technology and completed an internship developing software for the city of Chicago.

"I have a lot of social anxiety. I don't like meeting new people," said Alexander, who was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome as a teenager. Like many of the other testers, he lives with his parents.

He'd rather be a software developer than a tester, he said. But selling himself in a job interview is "very difficult for me." "When you're a child, the school is very concerned with you, the state is very concerned with you," Alexander said. Organizations help adults with autism, he said, but "you need to approach them and for somebody with Asperger's syndrome, it's very difficult to do the approaching."

Most research dollars have gone toward studying children with autism while adults have been neglected, said Molly Losh, an autism researcher at Northwestern University.

"Our vocational structure really isn't suited to funnel people with autism into the workforce," Losh said. Aspiritech "is a magnificent and innovative venture," she said.

Many businesses hire offshore companies to test software. Mike Mestemaker, director of

engineering for Schaumburg, Illinois-based ISI Telemanagement Solutions, chose Aspiritech because it offered competitive rates but was based in the United States.

"They dove right in and worked very quickly," Mestemaker said. "They were very detail-oriented people. They really got the job done."

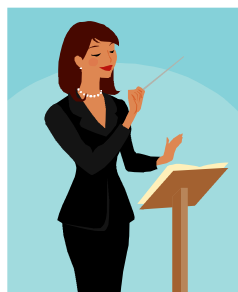
ISI was happy with the work and has hired Aspiritech for a second project, he said.

Aspiritech provides meaningful work (pay is \$12 to \$15 an hour) in a relaxed environment where bosses never yell if you're late and nobody minds if you need to be alone for a while. What's more, the company is building social skills. The software testers, who are in their 20s and 30s, are trained to work together and they take part in organized outings: miniature golf, bowling, eating at a restaurant.

"We want to improve social skills among people who tend to be socially isolated," said Marc Lazar, Aspiritech's autism specialist. For many of them, software testing is not going to be their lifelong career, Lazar said, "but while they're here they're going to improve their job skills and they're going to learn what kind of behavior is expected on the job and they're going to have more to put on their resumes."

**Reprinted with permission of the Associated Press**

**2011**



## Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to parents of children with developmental disabilities and to individuals with developmental disabilities that would like to attend workshops and conferences. Please visit the websites and/or call the agencies that are hosting the event you are interested in attending to see if this is something you would

benefit from if you attended. If you want to attend and need help with the cost of the registration, hotel and/or mileage, please call us for a **Stipend Application**.

Funds are limited so we ask that you notify us of your request as early as possible.



Call us at 504-943-0343 or 1-877-243-7352.

### Upcoming conference you may be interested in:

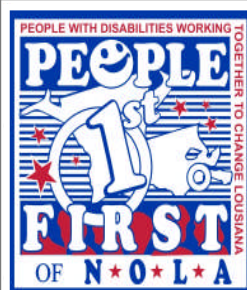
**LOUISIANA STATE AUTISM CHAPTER STEPPING FORWARD FOR AUTISM**

**NOVEMBER 4-5, 2011** Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Baton Rouge, LA

Keynote speakers for conference 2011 will be Dr. Vincent Carbone from the Carbone Clinic and Dr. Jane Guice from the University of North Carolina. For more information contact Louisiana State Autism Chapter.

Contact Pat Giamanco at 800-955-3760 or email her at [pjmanco@cox.net](mailto:pjmanco@cox.net).





### People First of NOLA:

- Is a self advocacy group run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities.
- Where people learn to speak up for themselves about decisions they make.
- Members can connect with others in their community, across the nation

and around the world.

- Members learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States of America.

### Mission Statement of People First of Louisiana:

People First of Louisiana supports people with disabilities to empower themselves in becoming effective decision makers, to gain more independence, and enjoy life as equal citizens of the United States of America.

### Vision:

People with disabilities build personal visions that are reached through respect, equality and many different experiences that lead to choices and life decisions.

People with disabilities support one another to control their own lives, understand and speak up for their rights and live up to their responsibilities.

### Disability is Natural:

“Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in

no way diminishes the right of individuals to

- live independently;
  - enjoy self-determination;
  - make choices;
  - contribute to society;
  - pursue meaningful careers; and
- enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society.”

**People First of NOLA** meets every third Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm.

Meetings are held at:

Goodwill Headquarters  
3400 Tulane Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70119

Upcoming meeting dates are:

**October 18**

**November 15 (Thanksgiving Dinner)**

**December 20 (Holiday Dinner)**

**Coming in 2012—A Mardi Gras Ball!**

**See pictures from the picnic on page 10!**

## Parents Needed to Join the Louisiana State Interagency Coordinating Council

by Shay Hunter

The role of the Louisiana State Interagency Council (SICC) is to advise and assist the lead agency, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, in implementing EarlySteps, Louisiana's early intervention system for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. The goal of the SICC is to foster and strengthen interagency collaboration and coordination between participating state agencies, public and private early intervention service providers, and families by increasing opportunities for interagency collaboration and coordination, networking, information sharing, and public input. The successful implementation of EarlySteps depends upon a strong commitment of the SICC members.

The SICC meets on the second Wednesday of the months of January, April, July and October. The SICC meetings are all day commitments (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) with committee meetings in the morning and the SICC meeting in the afternoon. The meetings are always held in Baton Rouge. It is extremely important for members to attend and actively participate in these quarterly meetings. Each member chooses at least one committee to serve on. The committees may meet more frequently depending on their goals and objectives and current activities. SICC members are reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties. Parent members receive an additional \$100.00 childcare stipend for attending SICC meetings.

Please contact **Shay Hunter**, EarlyStep's Community Outreach Specialist Region 1 and 10, at 504-943-0343, for application information.



(Part C of IDEA states “at least 20% of the members shall be parents of infants or toddlers with disabilities or children with disabilities aged 12 or younger, with knowledge of, or experience with, programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities.”)

# The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Presents:

# 2011-2012 Inclusive Schools Art Contest



## Contest Theme:

### **“Inclusion: Building a Brighter Future Together”**

To bring greater awareness of the importance of inclusion in today's society, we encourage you to participate in the 2011-12 Inclusive Schools Art Contest. We will be accepting entries that illustrate or describe ideas related to this year's theme and accompanying definitions of inclusion of persons with disabilities. Trophies and special recognition from Governor Bobby Jindal will be presented to the winners. Contestants are encouraged to use art as a means to share their vision, experiences, and talents to demonstrate “what inclusion means to me.” Winning entries will be publicly displayed.

## Artwork Criteria:

- All artwork entries must be framed or ready to hang.
- Submissions must be exactly 16x20. Any entries smaller or larger than 16x20 will be ineligible.
- Any suitable materials or a computer generated design may be utilized.
- Package artwork entries so that they are easy to carry, transport, and display.
- Place adequate postage on your mailing package. The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs will NOT pay for postage due on parcels.

## Contest Rules:

- Open to all public, private, charter, parochial, and home school students in grades Pre-K through 12.
- No group artwork will be accepted. One entry per student.
- All entries must be received by December 20, 2011.
- Winning art work may be used as prize material, distributed, and not returned.
- An 150 word essay that describes the contest theme in the student's artwork must be submitted.
- Artwork not selected as winners may be picked up. Those not picked up by March 28, 2012 will remain the property of the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs.
- By submitting your entry, you give the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs permission to use your art in support of the contest theme.
- Registration form must be typed or printed legibly in ink, signed, and attached to the back of the entry. DO NOT STAPLE to artwork.

To complete an application go to [http://www.gov.state.la.us/assets/Art\\_Contest\\_Flyer\\_2011-12.pdf](http://www.gov.state.la.us/assets/Art_Contest_Flyer_2011-12.pdf)





**Is coming to every parish in the Region One  
beginning in November!**

**Sibshops: A program just for brothers and sisters of kids with special needs!  
Sibshops are a celebration of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters.**

***For ages 7-13***

One Saturday a month Sibshops will meet in Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes. Locations and dates in each parish to be announced.

Sibshops can only operate with a minimum 10 children per parish.

If you are the parent of a child with a developmental disability and you have another child between the ages of 7 and 13, please consider this program for your child. Siblings have an opportunity to meet other siblings and are able to speak freely about how they feel about being the sibling of someone with a disability.



Sibshops are sponsored by:  
Metropolitan Human Services District  
For More Information and Registration  
Contact Troy Robair at 599-0245 or  
Monica Roberts at 399-6329

Registration Fee is \$15.00  
(Covers the cost of the Sibshops t-shirt)

**Here's what kids say about Sibshops:**

**"At Sibshops you can talk about the good and not-so-good parts of having a brother or sister who has special needs".**

**"At Sibshops you get to meet other brothers and sisters of kids with special needs".**

**"Sibshops have outrageous games".**

**"Sibshops are fun"!!!**

**Sibshops are for kids who have a brother or sister with  
developmental disabilities.**

**Join Us!!!!**

**Reserve Now, Space is Limited!!!!**



People First Summer Picnic





**ADVOCACY CENTER**

SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

**ELECTION  
HOTLINE**

**CAN'T GET INTO A POLLING PLACE?**

**CAN'T ACCESS A VOTING MACHINE?**



**CALL THE**

**ADVOCACY CENTER**

**ASAP**

Voting Questions? Disability related issues?

Call the Advocacy Center. Trained staff is ready to help.

**1-800-960-7705**

Or e-mail us: [AdvocacyCenter@AdvocacyLA.org](mailto:AdvocacyCenter@AdvocacyLA.org)

**Open: On Major Election Days**

**6 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Also Monday – Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**



## THE ROLE OF A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN TRANSITION PLANNING

A student needs to begin thinking about what he or she wants to do as an adult before the first transition planning meeting takes place.

Come and find out how your child can be actively involved in his or her transition planning.

**Saturday, October 15, 2011**  
**Families Helping Families SELA**  
 4118 Franklin Ave, NOLA 70122  
 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

**To register for any of these  
workshops call 504-943-0343  
or 1-877-243-7352.**

**These workshops are supported  
under a contract with the Louisiana  
Department of Education with funds  
under Part B of the Individuals with  
Disabilities Improvement Act**

## TRANSITIONING TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

Inclusion is an educational practice based on a notion of social justice that advocates access to equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of the presence of a disability. Inclusion involves students with disabilities learning with their peers in regular schools that adapt and change the way they work in order to meet the needs of all students. This workshop will show you how these inclusive practices will help your child to be successful outside in this big world of ours.

**Thursday, November 3, 2011**  
**Grace Baptist Church**  
 3900 N. Rampart St.  
 New Orleans, La 70122  
 10:00 am to 12:00 pm



## PREPARING FOR FUTURE SUCCESS, FINAL DOCUMENTATION: YOUR CHILD'S SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

IDEA 04 requires schools to provide a "Summary of Performance" to a student who will no longer be eligible for special education services because he is exiting high school. The Summary of

Performance must include information on the student's academic achievement and functional performance; it must also recommend ways to help the student meet his postsecondary goals. The information provided in the summary should be adequate to satisfy the disability documentation required under federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 - which apply to both postsecondary education and adult employment. **Be sure you, as the parent, obtain and keep a copy of your child's Summary of Performance.** This will ensure the document is not lost should your teenager misplace or discard his copy.

**Thursday, December 1, 2011**  
**Location TBA**  
**10:00 am to 12:00 pm**



# Stress Management Techniques



**November 17, 2011**

**Registration starts  
at 9:30  
10:00 –1:00**

**Goodwill  
Industries  
3400 Tulane Ave  
New Orleans, LA**

**To register call  
504-943-0343**

It is pretty safe to say that being the caregiver for someone with a disability is stressful. The holidays can make it even worse.

There are many concerns to deal with and the stress level raises significantly due to issues such as grief, guilt, feelings of inadequacy, isolation, lack of emotional support, frustration, self-care (or lack thereof), financial, and the incredible stress that is put on your own personal relationship.

Come learn tips and techniques on:

- ⇒ Dealing with a disability
- ⇒ Knowing how and when to ask for help
- ⇒ Surviving family stress
- ⇒ Surviving holiday stress
- ⇒ Plus much more!





## **Know Your Rights in Health Care**

*By Karen Scallan*

*Program Director,*

*La Family to Family Health Information Center*

When you go to the grocery store and the clerk overcharges you or refuses to serve you, most of us respond by asking for a manager. Why then do we not seek a higher authority when it comes to problems with a health care or other service provider? For whatever reason, this is frequently the case. Patients need to know their rights in the health care system.

Any provider accepting Medicaid, LaCHIP or Medicare or who receives a federal grant--whether they be a therapist, primary care physician, dental provider, hospital or nursing home--is considered a "Federal financial assistance" recipient. As such they are subject to nondiscrimination laws. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

These entities must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex or religion.

Recipients of Federal financial assistance must also take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs, services and activities by people who do not speak English or are limited in English proficiency. They may need to provide language assistance services, such as interpreters and translated documents and provide program brochures in languages specific to the languages spoken in their area.

If you feel you or your child has been discriminated against by a medical provider, we recommend you first go up the chain of command in that health care facility. If you do not feel the situation was corrected, you can contact the US Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights which has the authority to investigate these types of complaints. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the discriminatory act unless a waiver is granted by the Department. The Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center can help you navigate the systems of care and complaint processes. For more information contact The Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center at 800-331-5570 or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, Voice Phone: 214-767-4056; TDD 214-767-8940 or visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/index.html>.





## **What Can Hands & Voices Louisiana Do For Your Family?**

**Hands & Voices is a nationwide non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families and their children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as the professionals who serve them. We are a parent driven, parent/professional collaborative group that is unbiased towards communication modes and methods.**

**Hands & Voices Louisiana provides families with individualized support, connections to other families, advocacy assistance, and help with obtaining information and resources. Our diverse membership includes those who are deaf, hard of hearing and their families who communicate orally, with signs, cue and/or combined methods. We exist to help our children reach their highest potential.**

**Hands & Voices continues to be driven by the need to improve the educational outcomes and quality of life for our children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information about Hands & Voices Louisiana and future family events, visit us on Facebook: Hands and Voices of Louisiana, give us a call, or email us.**

**Denise Sherman, President**

**225-243-5203**

**P.O. Box 1395**

**Zachary, LA 70791**

**Mariah Ranko, Board Member**

**504-919-8147**

**Email: [handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com](mailto:handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com)**

**Facebook: Hands and Voices of Louisiana**

**National Website: [www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org)**

**“What works for your child is what makes the choice right.”**



***LIVES WORTH LIVING* PREMIERES ON THE PBS SERIES  
INDEPENDENT LENS ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2011 AT 10 PM**

***Powerful Documentary Chronicles the History of America's Disability Rights Movement***

(San Francisco, CA) — While there are close to 50 million Americans living with disabilities, *Lives Worth Living* is the first television history of their decades-long struggle for equal rights. Produced and directed by Eric Neudel, *Lives Worth Living* is a window into a world inhabited by people with an unwavering determination to live their lives like everyone else, and a look back into a past when millions of Americans lived without access to schools, apartment buildings, and public transportation — a way of life unimaginable today. *Lives Worth Living* premieres on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, on Thursday, October 27, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

*Lives Worth Living* traces the development of the disability rights movement from its beginning following World War II, when thousands of disabled veterans returned home, through its burgeoning in the 1960s and 1970s, when it began to adopt the tactics of other social movements. Told through interviews with the movement's pioneers, legislators, and others, *Lives Worth Living* explores how Americans with a wide variety of disabilities — including the blind, deaf, mentally, and physically challenged — banded together to change public perception and policy. Through demonstrations and legislative battles, the disability rights community finally secured equal civil rights with the 1990 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, one of the most transformative pieces of civil rights legislation in American history.

To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the film's companion website at [www.pbs.org/independentlens/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/). Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.



501 BRANWYN STREET, SUITE 410 / SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107 / T. 415.356.8383 / F. 415.356.8381 / WWW.PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS

Be more



PBS

# Employment First and Self Direction Waiver Option Community Meetings



**Wednesday, December 14, 2011**  
**9:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m.**  
**Goodwill Industries**  
**3400 Tulane Avenue**  
**New Orleans, LA 70119**

**Thursday, December 15, 2011**  
**9:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m.**  
**West Bank Regional Library**  
**2751 Manhattan Blvd.,**  
**Harvey, LA 70058**

Target Audience: Parents, Adults currently not employed but interested in employment, Service Coordination Agency Directors and their supervisors and staff, Executive Directors of Community Service Providers that provide Vocational and Supported Living Services.

Facilitators: JPHSA and MHSD Supervisors and Staff, Louisiana Guardianship, LRS Representation– East and West Bank, Jefferson Parish Public School Interagency Transition Coordinators, Orleans School Representatives

The agenda for both days is as follows:

9:30 - 10 am Registration

10 - 10:30 am Presentation of Successful Adults Who Have Maintained Employment in Individual Jobs

10:30 - 12 noon Rosemary Morales Presentation on Employment First

12 am - 1pm Networking of Employment Providers and Family Members and Interested Adults (Refreshments and Lite Lunch Served)

1:00pm - 2:30pm Presentations by Family Members and Adults who are successfully using Self Direction Waiver Option

2:30 - 4pm State OCDD Presentation on Self Direction Waiver Option

4pm - 5pm Networking among Parents and Adults to discuss the Self Direction Waiver Option



(Continued from page 1)

Some of this is hard for even me to understand as I have an adult daughter with very significant disabilities. I don't quite see the BIG picture when it comes to her being employed. But then again, I have never tried. Why? Because in my own mindset, she can't do it. But maybe she can with the right supports. Sometimes we, the parents, are the ones that keep our children from succeeding in a job. We have fears about their safety, the fear of failure, fear they will lose their SSI and Medicaid, and the fear of their success. Yes, their success. It would mean letting go. There are issues to consider, such as transportation, scheduling, rearranging our lives to be able to meet their needs. It's not easy, but if our children did not have a disability we would be after them about going on to college or a trade school or get a job and move out. Our expectations should be no different. It just means we may have to walk a different path to get them to successful employment and on to independent living.



My daughter, Alicia, at age 35

People collectively, not just those with a disability, will not all reach the same level of success, and that's just the way life is. This is not a cookie cutter deal. Not every individual with a disability will fit into the same job and there must be exploration not only into their abilities but into their personal choices. Do they like to work in busy places or do they prefer something quiet and more personal? We are all that way. Some of us are good at numbers and make excellent bookkeepers and accountants. Some of us are better at outdoor activities such as building houses or professional sports. And there are some things that we absolutely do not like to do. A personal story, if I had to run a day care center or work as a hairdresser, I would really be terrible at it. But give me a keyboard and a mouse and I can work a 16 hour day.

This is why the Job Fair is so important and why you and your loved one with a disability should attend. Find out what is going on in Louisiana. Find out what options are available for training and job seeking. Knowledge is power. Seek it out and you may be pleasantly surprised at what opportunities are out there just waiting to be discovered.



**Please help  
employ  
people with  
disabilities by  
recycling your  
newspapers.**

JOB LINK has a recycling bin for newspapers at the Whole Foods Store, uptown location (5600 Magazine St. New Orleans, LA 70115). The bin is in the back garage.

Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana  
will be closed the following days this quarter:



November 11, 2011  
Veterans Day



November 24-25, 2011  
Thanksgiving Holiday



December 19, 2011-  
January 2, 2012  
Wishing everyone a very  
Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!



ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
NEW ORLEANS LA  
PERMIT NO. 267

4118 Franklin Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70122

504-943-0343  
1-877-243-7352 (Toll-Free)  
504-940-3242 (Fax)

[www.fhfsela.org](http://www.fhfsela.org)

*FHF of SELA receives partial funding from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, Metropolitan Human Services District, Louisiana State Department of Education, Family to Family Health Information Center, and Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.*

**LaCAN**  
LOUISIANA CITIZENS FOR ACTION NOW

### Still Waiting for Waiver Services?

#### Join LaCAN NOW!

LaCAN (Louisiana Citizens for Action Now) is a statewide grassroots network of individuals and families who have worked together since 1988 advocating for a system that supports individuals to live in their own homes rather than having to move to a facility to receive needed services.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE! JOIN LACAN!**

**WWW.LACANADVOCATES.ORG**



Louisiana Together Educating All Children (LaTEACH) is a grass root network of individuals that believe all children should have the opportunity to be educated with their typical peers in a typical classroom.

LaTEACH has made great strides this year but they still need **YOU** to help make a difference in improving education for our children with disabilities.

Donnica Conway-Strawder -  
LaTEACH Region 1 Area Coordinator  
Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children  
2927 Hodges St  
Lake Charles, LA 70601  
337-436-2578 FAX



### A Statewide Talk List

**What is LadisAbility Talk?** An e-mail talk list from Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center/Families Helping Families of Jefferson to help families of people with disabilities and their advocates in Louisiana share information, resources, and support.

**What's a talk list?** It is a way for e-mail users to be in a group with others who have similar interests.

**Who should join?** Parents of children with disabilities, self-advocates, and advocates for people with disabilities in Louisiana.

**How do I join?** Just send an e-mail to: [fhfprompter@yahoo.com](mailto:fhfprompter@yahoo.com) or [LaDisabilityTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:LaDisabilityTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

FREE—FREE—FREE