

F2F News

Boletin Familia A Familia

www.familytofamilynetwork.org

Winter 2010

The Newsletter for the Family to Family Network, Inc.

El Boletin oficial de Grupo de Familia a Familia, Inc.

The Mission of Family to Family Network is to help families of children with disabilities by providing information, training, referral and support.



Making a Difference Together

5th Annual Special Education Parent Conference and Resource Fair

*Sponsored by:
Family to Family Network
and Katy ISD Special Education Department*

Date: Saturday, February 27, 2010

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Location: Morton Ranch High School (Katy ISD)
21000 Franz Rd., Katy, Texas 77449

This free conference is open to family members of children from ages birth to adult, with any type of learning or developmental disability. Topics will include: early childhood development, positive behavioral strategies, ARDs, disability law, specific disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, ADD/ADHD, learning disabilities, etc.), estate planning and special needs trusts, transition, therapy practices, advocacy, inclusion, communication, and more.

Pre-registration is required:
Register online at www.familytofamilynetwork.org
or call 713-466-6304.

Para registrar por teléfono, llame 713-466-6304

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Keep Up-to-Date On F2F Happenings!



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Family-to-Family-Network/48962804332>

OR



<http://twitter.com/>

F2F- Who We Are and What We Do



At Family to Family Network, we are dedicated to providing families with:

- *Information and Referral;*
- *Training on how to navigate the complex special education, medical and social systems;*
- *And Support.*

We do this by providing:

- Educational workshops, training sessions, speakers, and Get2gethers for parents and professionals;
- A Resource Center with materials, books, and more to create learning materials, portfolios, and communication boards;
- Parent liaisons to answer questions and give support to families in need;
- Texas Project FIRST, Family Friends, and other programs benefiting children with disabilities.

Staff

Executive Director: Mary Jane Williams

Family Friends Project Staff:

Joanie Hoffner Carolyn Cardinal-Walker

Parent Liaisons:

Leslie Lawson Michelle Naccarato Liz Ortega (Spanish)

Disability Leadership Network of Houston:

Teresa Petersen Laura Buckner

Texas Project FIRST Staff:

Laura Buckner Leslie Phillips Jan Sheehy

Accountant: Nuria I. Hale

Newsletter Editor: Jan Sheehy

E-Digest and Lending Library: Chris Wilson

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and
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Earl Brewer, MD, &
Ria Brewer

Statement of Policy and Disclaimer

The editor of F2F News writes as a non-professional. We attempt to report items of interest to the families of F2F. These items are not necessarily endorsed by F2F or reflect the opinion of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. Family to Family Network does not promote any therapy, institution, or professional system. Our desire is to bring information to families in an attempt to create an informative dialogue.

From our Executive Director:

Knowledge Is Power!

Happy New Year to everyone! Out with the old - In with the new. Family to Family Network has a new website that is up and running. Thank you to the University of Houston MIS graduate students for undertaking this project! Please take time to explore: www.familytofamilynetwork.org.



Mary Jane and Rick Williams with daughter Rachel (16) and son Christopher (19)

As we enter the new year, many of us are making resolutions to change our eating habits or to exercise more: Let's not forget to keep our brains fit as well. As caregivers of children with disabilities - knowledge is power! Take advantage of the training opportunities that abound (not only through our organization, but others in the area). Your child will ultimately benefit...and you will feel better and more empowered.

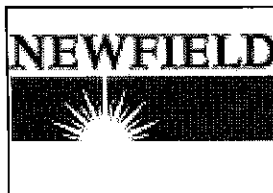
Family to Family Network is offering a wealth of training opportunities either in our office, at our Katy chapter, with Katy and Spring Branch ISDs, at regional service centers, or at statewide conferences this Spring. See our calendar (pages 4 and 5). You can also log onto Texas Project FIRST and learn more about TAKS, TEKS, and IEPs (along with lots more!). To piggyback off the Rotary theme - The Future is In Your Hands....

Remember Your Child's Future is In Your Hands!

Our organization's future is dependent on you, too. If you have an opportunity, Family to Family Network would love to hear how we have benefited your child or yourself. Please share your comments/story at: <http://greatnonprofits.org/reviews/family-to-family-network1/>

Make it a great year!

Mary Jane



Family to Family Network sincerely extends appreciation to the
Newfield Foundation

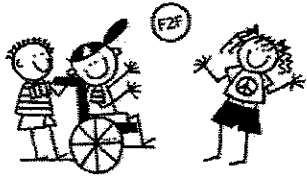
for financial support that enables us to reach out to families of children with disabilities.



Family to Family Network acknowledges

Gainer, Donnelly & Desroches, LLP

for its generous financial support which helps us sustain our programs.



2010 F2F Educational Events

All trainings are held at the Family to Family Network Office and are free of charge. Space is limited: Please RSVP as soon as possible to 713-466-6304 or f2fleslie@sbcglobal.net

Special Ed 101 Trainings

If you are new to special education or the state of Texas, or would just like to learn more about your responsibilities and how things should work at an ARD meeting - these meetings will be for you.

January 28, March 25, and April 29
10:00 a.m. - Noon

IEP Review

January 19, February 9, March 9, and April 13
(Other dates are available by appointment)

Every month, you can sign up to bring in your paperwork and meet with a Parent Liaison, who can help you understand what it all means. Before you come in, please ensure that you:

- Have called and reserved a time with a parent liaison.
- Have gathered and organized ALL IEP paperwork. (Evaluations, IEP documents, IEP progress reports, etc.)
 - Have obtained a copy of It's a New IDEA (available online at <http://www.thearcoftexas.org/>) and read pages 31-37.
 - Read page 1 of your Procedural Safeguards document (<http://framework.esc18.net>).

The above trainings will be held at the Family to Family Network Office, 13150 FM 529, Suite 106, Houston, Texas 77041 (in the Eldridge Plaza shopping center on the corner of Eldridge and FM 529)

For more information, please e-mail familytofamilynetwork@sbcglobal.net or call 713-466-6304

F2F-Katy Daytime Meeting Schedule

The Katy Chapter will host the following daytime meetings (2nd Tuesdays) at Crosspoint Community Church, 700 S. Westgreen, Katy, TX 77450.

January 12 - Connecting to the TEAM: The ARD Process (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)

March 23 - Student Introduction Portfolios: From Kindergarten to Work (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Evening Meeting Schedule

The Katy Chapter will host the following evening trainings in collaboration with Katy Autism Support, DSAH-Katy, and Katy-ADDA at St. Peter's United Methodist Church, 20775 Kingsland Blvd, Katy, TX 77450 (south of I-10, between Fry and Westgreen).

January 19 - Connecting to the TEAM: The ARD/IEP Process (7 p.m.)

April 20 - Summer Activities (7 p.m.)

Other Training Opportunities



Spring Branch Independent School District

Trainings for Parents of Students with Special Needs

Connections...Creating a Positive School Culture by Uniting Families and Schools

Offered by Mary Jane Williams, Executive Director
Family to Family Network

All sessions will be held at the SBISD Administration Building, Room 275 (955 Campbell, Houston 77024)

January 8 - Connecting to Yourself (9 a.m.-11 a.m.)

January 22 - Connecting to Communication Skills (9 a.m.-11 a.m.)

January 29 - Connecting to the School (9 a.m.-11 a.m.)

February 5 - Connecting the the TEAM...The ARD/IEP Process: Part 1 (9 a.m.-11 a.m.)

February 12 - Connecting the the TEAM...The ARD/IEP Process: Part 2 (9 a.m.-11 a.m.)

Around the State...

January 25 & 26 - "Connections" Trainer of Trainer Event at ESC 14, Abilene, TX (9 a.m.-2 p.m.)

January 28 - Connecting to the TEAM...The ARD/IEP Process at ESC 17, Lubbock, TX

February 10 - 13 - Inclusion Works Conference at Renaissance Hotel, Austin, TX

February 15-17 - Texas Transition Conference at the Doubletree Hotel, Austin, TX

Disability Leadership Network of Houston

Spanish Only training to be held April 10, 2010

Una clase diseñada específicamente para los defensores de habla hispana está prevista para el 10 de abril de 2010

For information call 713-466-6304.



Meet the Naccarato Family!

Parents often claim that they would move "to the ends of the earth" for their children. And that's exactly what the Naccarato family did when it came to finding the right educational setting for their son, Joshua. For this New York family, the "ends of the earth" is Houston, where the Naccarato's relocated in 2006 so that Josh could attend the Monarch School.

Josh's mother Michelle admits that it was difficult at best to leave extended family and their dream house in Albany, NY. However, finding the optimal school for their then 13-year-old son with Asperger's Syndrome was their top priority. For four years, Josh had travelled two hours each way to attend a private school for elementary school students with neurological differences. Transitioning to public school in the sixth grade was a "horrendous" experience, according to Michelle. "The students were totally segregated, and the program did nothing to prepare them for inclusion." At that point, the Naccaratos diligently began a national search for schools that would be most appropriate not only to meet Josh's immediate needs, but also to prepare him for the future.

After much research, Michelle identified four schools that met her criteria. She discovered Monarch had a summer program, so in the summer of 2006, the family decided to make a temporary move to Texas so that Josh could attend the summer program and determine if the school would be a good fit. It was Josh and his dad Joe who, upon their return to New York, told Michelle that it was time to move. Within two weeks, the Naccaratos had listed their house and relocated to Katy - along with their 4-pound Yorkie named Gus - so that Josh could begin the fall session.

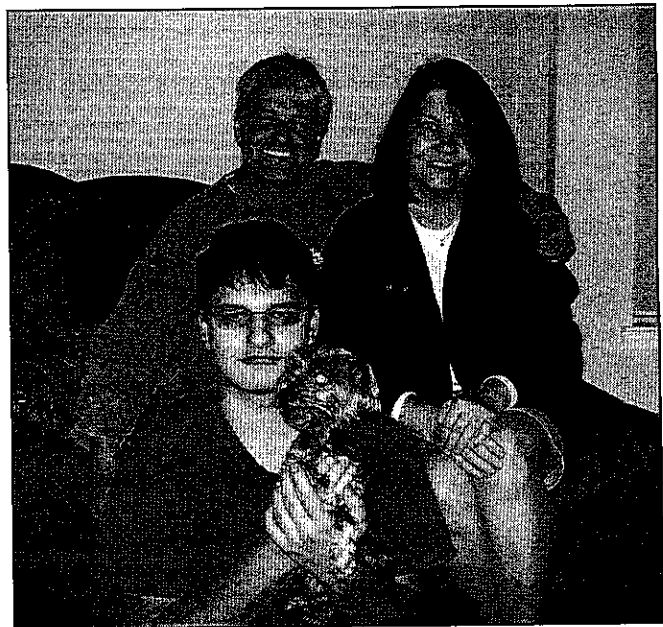
Drastic - maybe. The right move - "absolutely," says Michelle. "Josh loves it. It has been a fantastic experience. He is doing very well academically and has many friends. He has come to understand the give and take of relationships. Through the school, he gets a lot of volunteer experiences in the community, and this has broadened his perspective. Joshua now has the skills to make choices for himself and decide what kind of person he wants to be. He has a better understanding of life."

Last summer Michelle joined Family to Family Network as a Parent Liaison. The transition to Family to Family Network was a "natural step" for Michelle, who brings valuable experience working with families and children with disabilities. While in New York, Michelle worked with Parent to Parent as a new parent contact and advocate for families of school-aged children. She also worked for several non-profit organizations and earned a certificate of graduate study in autism and behavior from the State University of New York at Albany.

As F2F's parent liaison, Michelle works one on one with families to help them navigate the complex special education, medical and social service systems. She is also Project Coordinator for F2F's 5th Annual Special Education Parent Conference and Resource Fair in February. Her husband Joe owns and operates a pool and spa retail and service business in Katy, where they live.

As for the future, "Joshua is planning on attending college, and we are already looking at some colleges on the East Coast," says Michelle. "His dream is to be an architect or engineer. Josh has always loved looking at structures to figure out how they were built."

Michelle describes raising a child with neurological differences as an "interesting journey that has taken us to a part of the country that we would never have seen otherwise." And, she notes, "we've met some wonderful people along the way."



The Naccaratos: Joe, Michelle, Joshua, and Gus the Yorkie.

Family Friends Corner



The F2F Annual Holiday Party was a lot of fun as you can see from the pictures! We wish to thank the following for their support and generosity:

Knights of Columbus Council 7901
(for providing the food and cooking)

Costco (N. Gessner Store)
(for cakes and cookies)

Bear Creek United Methodist Church
(for the use of their gym)



Volunteers:

Jersey Village H.S. Interact Club

Mike Walsh

Paula Walker

Linda Sutton

Jan Pirtle

Meghan Fjeld

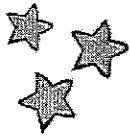




Friends of Family to Family Network

Reach for the Stars!

Family to Family Network gratefully acknowledges our sponsors, donors and volunteers for their generous support of our 4th Annual Reach for the Stars Dinner and Silent Auction on Saturday, November 7, 2009:



Anthony and Elizabeth Deluca

Lanier Law Firm



Elizabeth Bruman, P.C.

Charming Charlie

Continental Airlines

Diamonds in the Rough, Inc.

George and Jill Dietrich

Hungry's Café and Bistro

Mark and Karen Jagers

Peter and Sharon Meaden

Rick and Leslie Lawson

Southwest Airlines

Andrea Meade

Anything Bling

Bayou City Safe and Lock

Brian & Kristina Seiler

Campioni's

Cappy Gratwick

Carla Knight

Carino's

Carl and Annette LaSala

Carolyn Cardinal-Walker

Chad and Kelley Wiginton

Charles and Kim Conrad

Chili's

Chuy's

Cynthia Reece

Dan Rosen

Dana Smith

Daryl & Joanie Hoffner

Darque Tan

David & Andrea Meade

David Maggard - "The Wine Man"

David & Diana Nelson

Deb Hanzel

Deborah Fitzgerald

Don and Bonnie May

Doug & Teresa Vermaelen

Drew's Pastry Place

Desirée Frugé-Mataya

Events

Forest Blends LLC

Frank & Melanie Imbruglia

Gene & Charlotte Schindler

George & Mary Dietrich

Georganne Scruggs

HEB at The Vintage

Hobby Lobby

Hotel Sorella

Houston Aeros

Houston Astros Baseball Club

Houston Museum of Natural Science

Houston Symphony

Houston Texans Foundation

Impulse Art

Java Jo'z Coffee & More

Jennifer Roden

John & Marcine Kowpak

Jose & Valerie Perez

Kathleen Hanson

Mary C. Fry

Nell Oppenheim

Jennifer Tisch

Jim Parsons

Joe & Michelle Naccarato

Judy Parsons

Kendall & Melody Ashmore

Kathleen Hanson

Keith & Cheryl Sobolik

Kenneth P. Thomas

Kim Taylor

Kristi Foret

Kristy Marino

Kim Walker

Kristy Casey Deal

Kristie Marino

La Paz Salon and Day Spa

LaDonna MacDonald

Lavina Oevermann - Tupperware

Mark & Ellen Goudeau

Mark & Kim Leonard

Marilyn Noll

Marilyn Runyon

Marvin & Lillian Schindler

Meghan Fjeld

Meredith Levine

Nuria Hale

Jersey Village HS Interact Club
 LaDonna MacDonald
 Mary Puskar
 Michael and Tammy Gibbs
 Mike and Helen Fitzgerald
 Museum of Fine Arts Houston
 Nancy Hetzel
 Perfecting Skin Care
 Pamela Desselle Interiors
 Purdy Photography
 Rafael and Liz Ortega

Rick and Mary Jane Williams
 Rod and Ingrid Monroy
 Scruples
 Shellie Reagan, DDS
 Studio Movie Grill
 Teresa Petersen

2009 Reach for the Stars Co-Chairs:
Karen Jagers
Charlotte Schindler



Kevin and Renee Parker



Renaissance Hotel Greenway Plaza
 Rob & Rachel Irby
 Tulips & Tutus
 Ralph & Sandy Perry
 Renee Wilson
 Sue Ellen Latham
 Sue Troutman & Art Aldag
 The Children's Museum Houston
 Tony & Cathy Zarvou
 Up in Tangles Salon
 James & Joanne Meade
 David & Jean Darling
 Pat & Diane Pakel

Richard Cardinal
 Lorene Cardinal Welsh
 David & Anne Budke
 George & Mary Dietrich
 Deborah Fitzgerald
 Paul Lynch
 Dan & Jan Sheehy
 Ana & David Nelson
 Pat & Diane Pakel
 Taste of Texas
 Shirley Badgett
 The Potter's Wheel
 David & Jeanne Budke

Sue Troutman & Art Aldag
 Jean & David Darling
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 & Abdolreza Feizkhah
 Frank & Melanie Imbruglia
 Carl & Annette Lasala
 James & Joanne Meade
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Young Man with Asperger's Syndrome Shares His Story

By Johnathon Vermaelen

On November 7, Family to Family Network recognized Johnathon Vermaelen as our "2009 Shining Star". This honor recognizes a youth or young adult who has "reached for the stars" and overcome great obstacles to achieve his or her goals and accomplishments. This is Johnathon's inspirational story in his own words...



Johnathon shared his story at the Reach for the Stars gala with his proud father Doug by his side.

My name is Johnathon and I am 14 years old. I have Asperger's Syndrome, which is a form of Autism. Autism is a neurological disorder that affects the way a person interacts with others and his world. People with Asperger's have a different, not defective way of thinking. We like knowledge, truth, perfection, facts, numbers, and rules. We have trouble reading body language, hints, slang or unwritten rules. Although we have high intelligence, we struggle with other things that most people don't. Asperger's makes me who I am. I am really smart and can remember facts and events with a lot of detail.

I was born 8 weeks premature so I weighed only 3 pounds and 14 ounces. My parents adopted me when I was 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ weeks old - which was when I was released from the hospital. I cried a lot when I was a baby, and became sick at six weeks old. After that, I seemed to be sick all the time. My mom worried about me because she didn't think I was doing the things I should be doing for my age. When she

would ask the doctor, they would always blame it on me being born too early.

When I didn't start talking like I should, my mom worked and worked with me. I started to say one word at a time, but I didn't put sentences together. I liked to read books in the corner of the room and I really got upset if someone moved the toys I was playing with. This seemed odd to my parents, but everyone said that I would outgrow it.

When I was three, my mom put me in a therapy called Sensory Integration Therapy. After one month of this, I started to make some big progress. Then I started going to Speech Therapy also. At this point, I started speaking in sentences and was able to communicate much better. I went to these therapies from the age of 3 to the age of 6. There are some days when my mom and dad wonder why they paid so much to get me to start talking!

When I was 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old my mom started going to the Family to Family Network meetings to learn

how to help me. It was from a friend at Family to Family that she learned about Asperger's Syndrome and decided that I might have that. She was right! But that is not the only thing she learned from Family to Family. My mom learned that she needed to keep me included with typical kids my age so that I could learn from them. So my mom did not put me in a special class with just other kids with disabilities.

"Asperger's makes me who I am. I am really smart and can remember facts and events with a lot of detail."

I went to Mother's Day Out, Pre-School and Kindergarten at a private school. I was in all the holiday programs that we put on, and went on all the field trips. When I was going to be in first grade, I wanted to go to the school where my sister went. So my mom went to the public school to help them understand how they could help me be successful. She had learned from Family to Family Network how to work with the school so I could be in a regular classroom but get some extra help that I needed.

I went to that school for first and second grade, but I didn't like it. It was a big school and the cafeteria, PE and music classes were really crowded and loud. I also didn't get as much help as I needed because I was so smart that the teachers would forget that I needed extra help. It was frustrating. I asked my mom if she would home school me. She didn't want to do that because she knew that I needed to be around other children and not be at home alone. So for third grade I went to a small private school. I liked it there. I stayed at that school until the end of fifth grade. At the end of fifth grade I knew that I would go to middle school next and I wanted to go to the school where my sister went - back to public school.

My mom was concerned that I wasn't ready to go back to public school because I hadn't learned some of the things they test in public school for the TAKS test. We made a deal that if I let her home school me for 6th grade and if I could catch up by the end of the year, I could go to Kleb Intermediate. I worked really hard that year to learn as much as I could. I liked being at home, but I missed being around other kids. That year while I was home schooled, I did go to a gymnastics class and an Art class. I love Art and am always drawing. When I grow up I want to take all my creative ideas and make animated movies for Pixar.



*Johnathon displayed his artwork and awards.
Above: Teresa Vermaelen, Johnathon and
Mary Jane Williams*

By the end of my 6th grade year, my mom gave me the TAKS test that was online, and I did great! So she went to talk to the people at Kleb about enrolling me in 7th grade. At this time, she had to ask her friends at Family to Family Network

(Continued from page 11)

again about how to help me. She worked with the school so I could be in regular classes with a little extra help. At first I was nervous and got anxious at school because there were some really scary kids there. I got picked on in PE and in the halls. I had to learn how to stand up for myself or tell an adult what was going on. I also had to get used to having seven different teachers in seven different rooms. I worked really hard to make good grades, and the teachers liked me because I worked hard and was polite and had good manners. After the first semester, I was doing so well that my English and Science teachers asked my mom if they could move me to Pre-AP classes. We decided to try it for a 6 weeks and see how it went. It went great! I stayed there for the rest of the year.

I ended up having a great year at Kleb Intermediate last year. I was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society in May. I was proud of myself for that because that meant that I had good grades. Then when the TAKS scores came back, I found out that I scored a perfect score on the Math TAKS test. I was proud of that too! At the end of May there was an awards ceremony for the 7th graders, and I received a medal for being on the honor roll and I also received the 7th grade Math award.

This year is going well also. I am in a Theater Arts class this year, and I tried out for the Theater Arts team that goes to tournaments. I made the team and have already gone to one competition and won third prize with my oratory about having Asperger's Syndrome. I was supposed to be at a competition today, but I wanted to come tell you how much Family to Family Network helped my mom know how to help me. And I wanted to show you how well I'm doing because of it. Please help support Family to Family Network so they can help other children also.



Johnathon credits the support of his family for his accomplishments. Above: his father Doug, mother Teresa, and sister Jessica.

"When I was 1½ years old my mom started going to the Family to Family Network meetings to learn how to help me. It was from a friend at Family to Family that she learned about Asperger's Syndrome and decided that I might have that. She was right! But that is not the only thing she learned from Family to Family..."

Family Support: What is it and Where Do I Get It?

Even under the best of circumstances, having a child in your life brings new challenges, stressors and struggles. Add disability to the picture and families may feel overwhelmed and unprepared. Family support is critical.

What *is* family support? We can't give you a clear definition, because it will look different for every family. It's doing whatever it takes to support a family to care for their child with disabilities and allow that child to grow up in a healthy family. Family support can come from "natural supports" as well as more "formal supports."

Natural supports are important for every family; disability only increases the need for these kinds of supports. It's the kind of support you would get from people in your life if disability were not a part of the picture. It's friends, neighbors, extended family, people from your church, the lady at the local grocery store, the coach at the elementary school, the dance teacher down the street, a friend of a friend... It's the people who come in and out of our lives naturally and to whom we would turn for support under everyday circumstances. Sometimes it's harder to ask for help when disability is involved, but it need not be – many of those same natural supports are willing to be there for you in spite of the disability and they just need to be invited. There may be other natural supports just waiting to be discovered. Possible resources for natural supports in your community can be found at the end of this article.

Sometimes, though, a more *formal system of supports* is required. Perhaps local agencies, civic organizations, non-profits and/or faith-based organizations can help. You'll have to be a detective and ask, ask, ask. Other resources can be found through the state of Texas. A variety of programs are administered by the state of Texas to support the long-term care needs of children with disabilities. These include Medicaid, Medicaid Waiver programs or other community care programs, as well as the local school district. Possible resources for these kinds of supports can be found at the end of this article.

Get Your Child's Name on the Medicaid Waiver Lists: There's No Time to Lose!!!

While the state of Texas has a variety of programs available, there are usually waiting lists for the Medicaid Waiver programs and the wait can be long. If your child's disability is significant and likely to require more formal supports, **place your child's name on the waiting lists as soon as possible**. You can find information on the waiting lists (and the application process) at Tx Department of Aging & Disability Services (<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/interestlist/index.html>)

Additional Resources:

The Texas Center for Disability Studies offers their "Family Resource Guide: Understanding Family Support and Opening Doors to the Future" (<http://tcds.edb.utexas.edu/>). You can download the Family Resource Guide via a link at the bottom of the web page. The Guide includes specific information about the various Medicaid Waiver programs (page 14) available in Texas and how to place a name on the waiting list. **THIS SHOULD BE YOUR FIRST STEP!**

Texas Parent to Parent (<http://www.txp2p.org/index.htm>) connects parents and families caring for children with disabilities with other parents, parent supports groups or other organizations in your area.

Texas 211 (<https://www.211texas.org/211>) provides information on services in your area.

United Way (<http://www.uwtexas.org/display.php>) – state website can provides a link for locating local United Way agencies, which can help you locate local services.

Don't forget to look in your own backyard – your neighbors, friends, co-workers, your church, local YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, Boys' Club, Girls' Club, Little League, civic organizations (Rotary, Lions Club, Ambucs, Ambucs Too), etc., etc., etc.! Organizations need NOT be disability oriented in order to help.



Information, Education, and Support



This is a partial list of groups and organizations who have submitted information to us. The list will be updated quarterly. F2F highlights some events and conferences that may be of interest to our families. If any members have other information they would like included, please let us know. Also, if you call an organization listed below and the information has changed, please pass that on to us!

- **Special Kids-Special Parents** (Pearland) meets on the third Tuesday of every month in the library at Sablatura Middle School at 2201 N. Galveston Rd. at 7 p.m.
- **Down Syndrome Association of Houston** meets the last Saturday of each month, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at the DSAH Resource Center, 7015 W. Tidwell Rd., Bldg. G, Ste. 108, Houston, 77092. Lunch is served and babysitting is provided. For information, call 713-682-7237.
- **The Arc of Greater Houston Parent Support Groups:** The Arc of Greater Houston sponsors a parent support group meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month from 11:30-1:00, at the Arc of Greater Houston, 3737 Dacoma, Houston, TX 77092. Call 713-957-1600.
- **Familias Hispanas del Arc** meets 1 time/month on Saturday, 10am-Noon (dates vary) Meetings are conducted in Spanish and meet at the Community Family Center, 7524 Ave. E, Houston, TX 77012. Contact Mercedes Alejandro at 713-869-9582.
- **The Attention Deficit Disorders Association Southern Region (ADDA-SR)** has chapters that meet throughout Houston and Texas. The Northwest Houston chapter meets at Foundry United Methodist Church, 8350 Jones Rd., Room 205. Most meetings will be the 2nd Tuesday of the month. For information call Beth Henagan at 281-855-4478 or ADD Assn. at 281-897-0982.
- **TxABA Autism Special Interest Group Continuing Education Presentations** meet 6:30—8:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of even-numbered months, River Oaks Tower, Suite 540, 3730 Kirby Dr., Houston 77098. Contact David Whitcher 281-239-1328 or 800-304-6047, or david.whitcher@texanacenter.com
- **The Greater Houston Chapter of the Autism Society of America** holds meetings the 2nd Saturday of each month at the MHMRA Conference Center (one story building behind 7011 Southwest Freeway) at 10:00 a.m. Call 713-513-7575.
- **Mental Retardation Planning Advisory Council** meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. in Houston at 3110 Southwest Freeway. Call Dee Hall 713-970-7150.
- **FEAT-Houston, Inc., Families for Early Autism Treatment** 2nd Thursday of odd numbered months, 7-9pm. For location, call FEAT at 281-348-7067, www.feathouston.org, or email Lisa at feathouston@yahoo.org.
- **FEAT-Houston Fort Bend** meets on the 3rd Thursday of even numbered months at Sugar Creek Baptist Church, 13333 SW Freeway, Sugar Land, TX 77478 from 7-9 p.m.. Call 281-242-2858 for information.
- **LATCH, Lending Assistance to Challenged Homeschoolers**—this group meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Klein United Methodist Church to discuss ideas related to homeschooling children with disabilities of all ages. Contact Laura Urrutia at 281-516-1092 for more info.
- **NAMI Texas** offers education and support groups for persons with disabilities, their families, friends and professionals. They also offer an education program, **Visions for Tomorrow**, that is for direct caregivers of children and adolescents with a wide range of disorders. This program can also be taught to professionals in and in-service format. Call 1-800-633-3760
- **Houston Parent Information Network (HPIN)** HPIN meets on the first Monday of the month at 10:00a.m. to noon. at the Children's Museum, 1500 Binz (near the Texas Medical Center). Contact Elaine Hime at 713-926-2580 or Shelley Townsend at 713-743-5435.
- **Transition Workgroup (Families CAN Program)** meets every other month on the 2nd Thursday, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Shriners' Hospital, 6977 Main, on the 6th Floor. Meetings focus on programs and services for adults with disabilities. Free parking is available. Contact Elaine Hime, 713-743-5435 or Teresa Guzman, 713-743-5592.
- **NW Houston Autism/Asperger/PDD Parent & Professional Support Group**—1st Thursday of each month (except January, June, and July) 7 - 9 pm at Graceview Baptist Church, 25510 Tomball Parkway, Tomball, TX 77375 - North Campus Fellowship Area. Contact: Michelle M. Guppy - MichelleMGuppy@yahoo.com - 281-686-0103 - www.TexasAutismAdvocacy.org.
- **Bay Area Community Resource Meetings** are on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 8:30 AM at the Bay Area United Way Service Center. Call Barbara V. Rivas at 281-282-6038.
- **Hidden Miracles Parent Network** - For families of children with Down Syndrome. Meets in The Woodlands, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7-9 p.m. Childcare and refreshments provided. Various speakers and newsletter. Meets in conference rooms @ St. Luke's Community Hospital @ I-45 and 242. Contact Adrienne Walsh @ 936-264-1803 for more information.
- **Side by Side Community Support Team**—This South-side support group meets the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at 218 Clear Creek Ave. in League City. Contact Renee at 281-332-9270 or bennett4@prodigy.net. For Spanish, call Jose or Ana at 281-338-2576.
- **Katy Autism Support** — Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month at St. Peters United Methodist Church on Kingsland Blvd., 7-9 p.m., in Asbury Hall (near the sanctuary). Contact Karen at kkinkaty@comcast.com for more information.
- **Katy ADHD Support**— Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month, 6:30-8:30, at St. Peter's United Methodist Church on Kingsland Blvd. Contact Laura at 281-392-6064 or laurapeddicord@comcast.net.

Send your comments or input for **F2F NEWS** to
f2fnetwork@ sbcglobal.net.
Some articles may require Board approval.

Become a Member!



If you would like to become a member of Family to Family Network, or renew your membership, please fill in the form below and mail/fax to the F2F office.

How to Find Us...

From the North:
Take 290 west to Eldridge. Exit Eldridge and go south to the corner of Eldridge and FM 529.



From I-10:
Take I-10 to Eldridge. Go north on Eldridge to the corner of Eldridge and FM 529.

Our office is located in the Eldridge Plaza Shopping Center Suite 106

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Membership includes a subscription to our quarterly newsletter.

*Professionals, please call F2F if you would like additional copies of the newsletter for your place of business.

Family to Family Network needs your support!

Your annual membership dues help us build our lending library, print and mail F2F News, and provide parent trainings and support. We can't do it without you!

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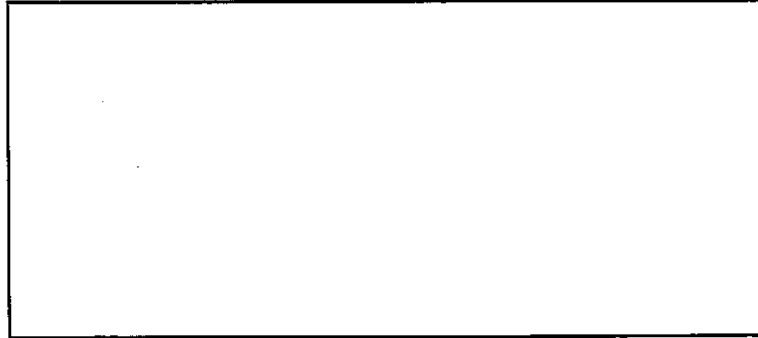
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The Newsletter of Family to Family Network, Inc., Winter 2010

Our Vision Nuestra Vision

We believe in hope.
We believe in dreams.

We believe that all people have value and belong, and that the only labels children need are their names.

We believe that "all" means ALL, and that while each individual's needs may be different, that is okay because we respect each other.

We believe that together we can open doors that were closed before and that, because of our work together, our children will live quality lives and accomplish whatever goals they may desire.

We believe in each other and our friendships.

By having known our children and each other, we have learned the true meaning of community.

We hope that others will be as fortunate.

The families of Family to Family Network

*Creemos en la esperanza.
Creemos en los sueños...*

*Creemos en que todas las personas valen y pertenecen.
Y que...*

La única etiqueta que un niño necesita es su nombre propio. Creemos que "todo significa todo" y que a pesar de que las necesidades de cada individuo pueden ser diferentes, esta bien, ya que lo importante es que nos respetemos mutuamente.

Creemos en que juntos, podemos abrir puertas que antes han estado cerradas.

Y que...

Nuestros hijos vivirán vidas cualitativas y que logran cualquier metas que se propongan, gracias a la unión de nuestro esfuerzo.

Creemos en cada uno de nosotros y en nuestra amistad. A través de conocer a nuestros niños y a cada uno de nosotros, hemos aprendido el verdadero significado de la palabra "Comunidad".

*Esperamos que los demás, sean tan afortunados...
Las Familias del Grupo Familia a Familia.*