

Families Helping Families
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**“It’s Who We Are...
 It’s What We Do.”**

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**Families Helping Families
 of Acadiana**

Mission Statement:

To assist and strengthen individuals with disabilities and their families through a coordinated network of resources, services, and supports.

We are now accepting applications for the full-time position of office receptionist.

Another two positions available are: Community Outreach Specialist with Early Steps and a Parent Liaison position with CSHS. Both of these position are part-time.

Please contact the Executive Director, Kathy Allen, Ph. D., if you are interested. Please send a resume, via fax, email or postal mail, and have at least three references.

**News from the Desk of Richard Landry,
 Region IV Director,
 Office for Citizens with
 Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)**

OCDD Region IV staff welcomes and congratulates new Families Helping Families of Acadiana Executive Director, Dr. Kathy Allen, Ph.D. Our office pledges to continue working with Families Helping Families toward our mutual goal of supporting people here in Region IV. I am certain that Dr. Allen has realized the professional, courteous, and competent staff at Families Helping Families; and, we, at OCDD, will continue to offer her and the staff our full cooperation toward our goals.

Here at OCDD, staff have been involved in several activities. At this time of year, we begin preparation for the ending of our current fiscal year, and preliminary planning for the upcoming fiscal year which begins July 1. The month of May also brings increased attention and preparation for the upcoming hurricane season. As a Department of Health and Hospitals regional office, OCDD has responsibility as part of the team involved in the operation of a Medical Special Needs Shelter should one open here in Lafayette. We are, of course, hoping for minimal impact from storms this year.

Our Waiver Supports and Services Section, in addition to their ongoing reviews of yearly Comprehensive Plan of Care reviews, are also reviewing the plans which are being developed for the new persons participating in our home and community based waiver programs as a result of the new waiver opportunities which were funded during last year’s legislative session.

Of course, all families with children are anticipating the end of school for this year within the next few weeks, and we hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer.

Anyone have a 3-wheeled adult bike for a young lady with a disability? Preferable, one with a ‘magic brake’? Contact Valerie Hernandez at 337-482-6505 during the day Monday-Friday and 337-572-9157 any other time.

FHF announces the promotion of Linda Ledet to Data Specialist and Legislative Liaison. Congratulations on your promotion, Linda!

FHF wishes our former CSHS parent liaison, Leah Quesnel-Bruce, good luck with her future endeavors as she leaves FHF to pursue other opportunities. We and the Staff at CSHS appreciated her efforts on behalf of the families we serve. Thank you, Leah, for your dedication and service to FHF!

FHF has said goodbye to Connie Amos, former Early Steps Community Outreach Specialist and Educational Liaison. We wish Connie well in her future endeavors.

FHF STAFF

Kathy Allen , Ph.D.
 Executive Director

Linda Ledet
 Data Specialist
 Legislative Liaison
 LaCAN Team Leader
 Region IV

Sabrina Hagan
 Educational Transition
 Liaison
 LaTEACH Coordinator

Valerie Balsler
 LaPTIC Education Advocate
 Educational Liaison

Bernadette Myers
 ECSS Facilitator
 Sibshop Facilitator
 Family to Family Health Care
 Information Coordinator
 UL Professional Development
 Site Liaison

Vickie Nettles
 CSHS Parent Liaison

Barbara Bergeron
 Bookkeeper

Jarvis Landry
 Clerical Assistant

Teri Shaw
 Clerical Assistant
 Advisory Council Chair



H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Information for Concerned Parents and Caregivers

What is H1N1 Flu?

H1N1 is a type of influenza (flu) virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people. Most people infected with this virus in the United States have had mild disease, but some have had more severe illness, and there has been at least one death. Young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease may be at higher risk for complications from this infection. More information about who may be at higher risk will be available when more is known about the disease. There are steps you can take to protect your family and to know when to seek medical care.

What are the symptoms?

In most children, the symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular flu. They include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills and fatigue
- Occasionally, vomiting and diarrhea

Young children may not have typical symptoms, but may have difficulty breathing and low activity. Little is known about how H1N1 may affect children. However, we think the infection may be similar to other flu infections. Typically, flu infections

cause mild disease in children, but children under 5 years old are more likely to have serious illness than older children. Although rare, severe respiratory illness (pneumonia) and deaths have been reported with flu infections in children. Flu infections tend to be more severe in children with chronic medical conditions.

How to keep from getting it:

Flu viruses spread from person to person mainly through the coughing or sneezing of a sick person. Flu virus may also be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. We think H1N1 flu spreads the same way as other flu viruses. Right now, there is no vaccine to protect against H1N1 flu, but there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like H1N1 flu:

- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.

- Teach your children to cough and sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of their elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.

- Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.

- Children who are sick should stay home from school and daycare and stay away from other people

until they are better.

- In communities where H1N1 flu has occurred, stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters, or other places where there are large groups of people.

What to do if your child is sick:

- Unless they need medical attention, keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school or daycare.

- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water, Pedialyte®).

- Keep the sick child comfortable. Rest is important.

- For fever, sore throat, and muscle aches, you can use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age. Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

- If someone in your home is sick, keep him or her away from those who are not sick.

- Keep tissues close to the sick person and have a trash bag within reach for disposing used tissues.

If your child comes in contact with someone with H1N1 flu, ask your doctor if he or she should receive antiviral medicines to prevent getting sick from H1N1 Flu.

If your child experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that he or she does not want to be held
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Their symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For more information call 1-800-CDC INFO, or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1>

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Contact Us:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd
Atlanta, GA 30333

800-CDC-INFO
(800-232-4636)
TTY: (888) 232-6348
24 Hours/Every Day

cdcinfo@cdc.gov



Create and Take

We will be making a newsletter to share with school staff and personnel about your child.

Date: Wednesday, July 15th
 Time: 6:00 - 7:00 pm
 Location: FHF of Acadiana office
 Presenter: Valerie Balsler

Call to register: 337-984-3458, or 1-800-378-9854.



Coffee Talk



June 19 @ 10:00 am
 Evangeline Parish Library
 242 West Main Street
 Ville Platte, LA 70586
 363-1369

Hosted by: Bernadette Myers

July 21 @ 10:00 am
 Starbucks Coffee
 1103 East Admiral Doyle Dr.
 New Iberia, LA 70560
 365-5168

Hosted By: Vickie Nettles

Aug. 18th @ 10:00 am
 Starbucks Coffee
 1907 West Pinhook St.
 Lafayette, LA 70508
 261-1343

Hosted by: Linda Ledet

Upcoming Events and Trainings

IEP Boot Camp

Obtain knowledge on the "basics" you need to know to become a full participant in your child's educational planning. We will also discuss key points that relate to strategies to ensure a successful new school year.

Date: Saturday - August 15th

Time: 10:30-11:30 am

Date: Wednesday - August 19th

Time: 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: FHF of Acadiana office

Presenter: Valerie Balsler

Call to register: 337-984-3458, or 1-800-378-9854.

Looking to the Future: Transition

This workshop is for parents, youth with disabilities, and professionals who assist this population. We will look at transition services during high school, adult services and employment.

Date: June 18, 2009

Time: 10:30 - 12:00 pm

Location: North Public Library, 5101 North University, Carencro, LA 70520

Contact Sabrina Hagan at FHF, 984-3458, for more information. Limited seating available.

Certified Safety Training, LLC

Announces Swimming Programs for Individuals with Disabilities:

Parents and Children with Disabilities Aquatics

This course is designed to help parents/caregivers orient children with disabilities to the water. Instructors will show how to help children become comfortable in and around the water so they can be ready to enter the Learn to Swim program. Developed for children 6 months to 5 years old.

Learn to Swim for People with disabilities

This course is designed to teach people with disabilities to swim and be safe in, on, and around water. Course level will be varied to meet individual learning needs in order to make swimming fun and safe.

Water Aerobics for People with disabilities

This course will focus on health and fitness activities in the water for people with disabilities. Exercises will focus on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility, and weight management. This form of aerobic exercise is designed for adults regardless of fitness level or swimming ability.

Water Aerobics for Children with disabilities

This course will focus on health and fitness activities in the water for children with disabilities. Exercises will focus on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility, and weight management. This form of aerobic exercise is designed for children regardless of fitness level or swimming ability.

For more information contact Kay LeBlanc at (337) 739-6875.



Med Camps: Camp Rolling Thunder, May 31st – June 5th. (For Children Living with Spina Bifida & Orthopedic Conditions); Camp Rough Riders, June 7th – 12th (For Children Living with Cerebral Palsy) ; Camp Easy Breeze, June 14th – 19th (For Children Living with Asthma); Camp Little Giants, June 21st – 26th (For Children Living with Sickle Cell Anemia) Camp Busy Bees, June 28th – 30th (For Children and Families Living with Autism); Camp Big Heart, July 5th – 10th (For Children Living with Hearing / Speech / & Visual Disorder); Camp Shining Stars 5th – 10th (For Children Living with Epilepsy & Seizure Disorder); Camp Kan-doo , July 12th – 17th (For Children Living with Developmental Disabilities) Camp Wounded Knee, July 19th – 24th (For Children Living with Hemophilia) Camp Tall Pines Retreat July 26th – 28th (For People Living with Developmental Disabilities). Med Camps are FREE!! Contact Med Camps for a camp package and application. For more information, go to www.medcamps.com, or call, (318) 329-8405 • (877) 282-0802.

Special Olympic Young Athletes Program

This is a program for athletes who do not yet qualify for competition in Special Olympics. Skills stressed will be those needed to begin competition in Special Olympics when participants reach age 8.

When: June 13 and July 18

Where: St. Edmond Church - Family Center, 4131 West Congress St., Lafayette

Who Qualifies: Ages 2 to 7

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Hosted By: St. Edmond Knights of Columbus, Council #10293 & St. Edmond Catholic Church

Who to Contact: Charmaine Noel, 981-5456 or charmnoel@cox.net via email.

Registration: Please call or e-mail to register or for more information.

* Parents are required to be present with their child during the session.

Getting To Know Me! By: Valerie Balsler, Educational Liaison & LaPTIC Parent Advocate

Helping teachers get to know your child is the first step in building a strong relationship between them. By giving teachers a personal understanding of your child, they are more likely to have empathy and understanding in regard to medical needs and unique behaviors. The IEP is very informative, but it focuses primarily on academics and doesn't give much personal insight about who your child is.

The Getting To Know Me document is designed so the information provided is being

told by the student. This personalizes the relationship between the student and teacher and creates a light-hearted mood. You will focus on your child's abilities and strengths to share key information about them and their family. You want to stress the uniqueness of your child while giving crucial information the teacher needs to know in order to understand and support your child throughout the school day. Some children aren't able to communicate their likes and dislikes, so this knowledge is key to understanding learning styles,

typical reactions and resulting behaviors in certain situations.

Many formats can be used such as a scrapbook, flyer or newsletter. Be creative, use humor and remember to include your child in the process. You will want to ask them questions, use their ideas, include a drawing, etc. The goal is to create a complete picture of who your child is to share with their teachers.

It is a good idea to update the information regularly and

keep a list of who you've given the document to for future reference. Be sure to give a copy to anyone who is involved with your child or can simply benefit from the information.

Families Helping Families will be offering a Create & Take Workshop several times during the summer to assist you in making a document for your child. The dates are listed on our Calendar of Events pages, so please join us for this fun and important activity!

From: President Barack Obama
The White House, Washington

Good afternoon,

My staff and I plan to use these messages as a way to directly communicate about important issues and opportunities, and today I have some encouraging updates about health care reform.

The Vice President and I just met with leaders from the House of Representatives and received their commitment to pass a comprehensive health care reform bill by July 31.

We also have an unprecedented commitment from health care industry leaders, many of whom opposed health reform in the past. Monday, I met with some of these health care stakeholders, and they pledged to do their part to reduce the health care spending growth rate, saving more than two trillion dollars over the next ten years – around \$2,500 for each American family. Then on Tuesday, leaders from some of America's top companies came to the White House to showcase innovative ways to reduce health care costs by improving the health of their workers.

Now the House and Senate are beginning a critical debate that will determine the health of our nation's economy and its families. This process should be transparent and inclusive and its product must drive down costs, assure quality and affordable health care for everyone, and guarantee all of us a choice of doctors and plans.

Reforming health care should also involve you. Think of other people who may want to stay up to date on health care reform and other national issues and tell them to join us here: www.whitehouse.gov/EmailUpdates

Healthcare reform can't come soon enough. We spend more on healthcare than any country, but families continue to struggle with skyrocketing premiums and nearly 46 million are without insurance entirely. It is a priority for the American people and a pillar of the new foundation we are seeking to build for our economy.

We'll continue to keep you posted about this and other important issues.

Thank you,
Barack Obama

Financial Assistance Available to Attend Conferences and Trainings

Are you a parent of a person with a developmental disability or a self-advocate, an individual with a disability? Do you ever want to go to a conference, workshop or training to learn more about disabilities and need assistance?

Families Helping Families of Acadiana has a contract with the LA Developmental Disabilities Council to provide stipends to individuals wanting to attend such events. Stipends can be used to pay for registration fees, travel, respite or child care, PCA services or other costs related to attending an event. There is an application process and funds are dispersed as available.

If you would like to apply for a stipend, call FHF of Acadiana, (337) 984-3458 or (800) 378-9854.

LaCAN Update by: Linda Ledet, Region IV LaCAN Leader

LaCAN has had three “yellow shirts” days already this legislative session.

The first one was on April 23rd. Bernadette Myers, Kay Marcel and Lynette Fontenot from Region IV gave public testimony to the House Appropriations Committee. They all did a great job! Representative Peterson, who is also Speaker Pro Tem, said she will be offering an amendment to HB1 for 2,000 NOW slots. She also said her bill calling for a tobacco tax increase (Bill 75) will include dedication of funds to support the continuation funding for these slots and other health care needs.

The second one was on April 28th. Representative Peterson’s tobacco

tax bill to enact Louisiana Healthier Families Act (HB75) was heard and failed in the House Ways and Means Committee. Representative Connick and Representative Peterson sponsored an amendment to restore cuts to private providers in the NOW program. The committee members passed it without objection. It includes \$25 million in state general funds and \$100,062,531 in federal funds.

The third one was on May 7th, Disability Rights Rally Day!! The Appropriations Committee met, and, it was believed that Representative Peterson was going to offer her amendment to HB1 for 2,000 NOW slots. Unfortunately, Representative Peterson did not offer up the amendment as she had previ-

ously stated she would. It is believed this is due to her belief that the amendment would not pass as the 2025 NOW slots that were awarded last year, as of yet, have not all been processed.

We did it!! This year’s Rally was the best yet! What a great turnout! Such an enthusiastic crowd! There were more individual contacts with legislators than ever before! This year’s Master of Ceremonies, Wallace, played a big role in keeping the crowd engaged and enthusiastic, especially during the rousing rally chants!!

Finally, although the members of the Appropriations Committee disappointed us, the rally participants provided just the motivation

and encouragement needed to persevere. Senator Eric LaFleur stated publicly that he and other legislators will sponsor a bill in the Senate for 2,000 Now slots.

LaCAN advocates still need to keep working on the Action Alert to oppose HB 788 by Rep. Nowlin. This bill calls for an individual cap on home and community based services. If the bill passes, people with high needs will be forced into institutional setting in order to receive services. You can read HB 788 on the legislative website, www.legis.state.la.us ; scroll to “Bill Search” and enter the bill number.



Disability Rights Rally - Parade of Prizes Raffle

In order for us to continue to support the Disability Rights Rally, we are selling raffle tickets. The chances are \$2.00 per ticket or Bundle of 6 for \$10.00. A variety of prizes will be available; a laptop computer, hotel stays, an assortment of gifts certificates to restaurants, bookstores, and other retail establishments. For a complete list of prizes, go to: www.lacanadvocates.org .

If you are able to sell or buy some tickets to help LaCAN support the Disability Rights Rally, please contact: Linda Ledet, Region IV LaCAN Leader, 337-984-3458, 1-800-378-9854, or email Linda at lindal-fhfacad@hotmail.com .

Thanks to all who participated in the 2009 Disability Rights Rally!! We hope to see all of you again next year!

Questions for Parents to Prepare for Transition from High School - by Sabrina Hagan, Educational Transition Specialist

1 - What does the student want to do with his or her life?

What are his or her dreams and goals? If the student is non verbal or has difficult communicating, parents can still use their knowledge of the student to be sure that transition services reflect their preferences.

2 - What are the student’s personal needs, abilities and skills?

Look at the amount of assistance a student needs to accomplish a task. What type of assistance is needed to complete each task?

3- What are the outcomes that a student and parent want to reach or achieve?

Parents and students should bring suggestions to the transition-planning meeting.

4 - How do young people develop self-advocacy skills?

Parents and school staff should encourage self-advocacy in young people. Staff should direct questions to the student and encourage students to answer. It is important to have parent assist with answers when appropriate.

5 - What are the programs, services accommodations or modifications the young person wants or needs?

Parents and their students need to think about these and make notes

to bring to the meeting. Parents need to be clear as to what will benefit their student.

6 - What kind of accommodations will the student need when they go to higher education or employment?

Parents and students need to think and consider the types of accommodation and supports the students is using on the high school level.

7 - Who will be responsible for what part of the transition plan in the IEP?

It is wise for the parents and the student to know who is responsible for each transitional goal.

8- Should the educational & transition program emphasize practical or academic goals? Does the student need a combination of both?

This will depend on the goals of each individual student.

10 - If a student plans on going to college is he or she taking the course needed to meet college entrance requirements? When will student graduate? What kind of diploma option is the best choice for each individual student?

If you need any help with transition planning, please contact Sabrina at FHF.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS & SUPPORT GROUPS

Alzheimer’s Support Group - For those who care for Alzheimer's patients. Sessions are offered in New Iberia on the 1st Wed. of the month at 6 pm at the AAA Home Health Facility. For more information, call 289-8517.

ALS Support Group - Meets on the 2nd Sat of each month, 2 - 4:00 pm at Active Rehab in Crowley. Call Mia Patout for more information, 234-0080.

Autism/ASAC/Lafayette - Meets the 1st Tues of every month at Alesi's, on Johnston St. at 6:30 pm. Parents and professionals welcome to attend. Call 369-2885, for more information, or visit www.acadianaautism.org

Autism/ASAC/Iberia - Meets the 2nd Tues of each month. Contact Anne Porche, Aspiemom51294@yahoo.com or Darrell Thibodeaux at 577-0986.

Autism/ASAC/St. Landry - Holds meetings every odd month, jan. and Mar., The Palace Café, 942-2142, 135 West Landry St., Opelousas, at 6:00 pm. Contact Bambi Polotzola, 585-3715, for more information.

Autism/ASAC/Vermilion - Holds meetings in Abbeville. Contact Carmelite Leach for more info, 337-369-2885.

Autism/ASAC/Just Dads - Meets on the third Thurs. of each month in Lafayette. Contact Dwayne Bourgeois, (337) 369-2885, for more information.

Connections - For people who are dealing with mental disorders. 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, First Lutheran Church, Sunday

School wing, Bldg B, 6:00 -7:30 pm. Call Carla Nobles - 257-5989.

Down Syndrome Association of Acadiana - Meets the 1st Tues. of every month at Women’s Foundation Classroom, Bldg A, Suite 100, 6:00 pm. Parents and professionals are welcome. Confirm by calling (337) 234-3109 for more information.

Family-to-Family Support Group - For family members of those with major brain disorders or mental illness. Contact Karen or Steve Dubois, 654-2138.

Head Injury Support Group - Contact Peggy Meche at 261-1683.

Lupus Support Group - Call Bea Stelly at 942-6939.

Parkinson’s Disease Support Group - Meets at 6:30 pm every 3rd Tues. in Room 108/109 at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center. Call 289-4978 for more information.

Sibshop - A support group for siblings who are brothers and sisters of individuals with disabilities. Contact Bernadette Myers at FHF of Acadiana, 1-800-378-9854, for more information.

Sickle Cell Disease - Contact Shannon at 232-1883.

Stuttering Support Group - Meets 1st Tues. of the month at UL in the faculty lounge on second floor. 6 - 7:00 pm is for children, ages 6 yrs - teens, and adults will meet from 7 - 8:00 pm. Contact Mitch Trichon, stuttering@louisiana.edu , 337-412-6201, or 917-334-7646. Meetings are free and open to the public.

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www.fhfacadiana.com/goodsearch



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