



# Spring 2010 Issue

## The Family Sustainer

### Mission Statement:

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

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#### Ponchella Boutte

CSHS Parent Liaison  
Parent to Parent Facilitator

#### Amy Theobald

CSHS Parent Liaison

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This newsletter is supported by the following agencies:

Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

Louisiana Department of Education

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

\*Articles from outside sources may not reflect language usage preferred by our agency and funding sources.



## The Family Sustainer

**\*\*ATTENTION SUBSCRIBERS\*\***

**RE-SUBSCRIBE BY: April 30, 2010**

Families Helping Families of Acadiana needs your help to update our mailing list for our newsletter. We are requesting that everyone who is interested in continuing to receive our newsletter please re-subscribe by using the enclosed subscription form. If you do not re-subscribe by April 30, 2010, you will be removed from our mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ✂

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please check which applies Parent  Student  Professional

Child/Student Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child/Student Disability \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to receive *The Family Sustainer* by U.S. Mail.

No, I do not want to receive *The Family Sustainer*. Please remove my name from the mailing list.

Return this form to:

**FHF of Acadiana**  
**510 West University Ave.**  
**Lafayette, LA 70506**  
**or email request to**  
**[jjohnson@fhfacadiana.org](mailto:jjohnson@fhfacadiana.org)**  
**or fax to: 337-984-3468**

### News from the Desk of Richard Landry

#### Region IV Director, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)

OCDD is continually assessing and developing creative ways to address continuing challenges within the framework of existing resources. One such challenge has been the increasing number of youth with developmental disabilities who have been involved with the juvenile justice system.

OCDD Region IV has developed a mentoring program targeting adolescents who have been involved with court systems, which incorporates skills training in areas of social interaction, authority acknowledgement, and other life situations specific to particular individuals. The services/training may occur on an individual basis but also provides the opportunity for group experiences in specific settings within the community. The focus is to provide these skills for overall community success which will hopefully minimize future court situations, thus minimizing the potential for placement in a correctional setting.

OCDD will continue to develop more creative and effective methods to meet new challenges.

**Families Helping Families of Acadiana Welcomes New Team Members!!!!**

**Ponchella Boutte**  
*CSHS Parent Liaison*

Ponchella has joined Families Helping Families and Children's Special Health Services as a Parent Liaison. She is a native and resident of New Iberia, LA. Ponchella brings with her years of caring and advocating for children and adults with special needs. Her ability to effectively communicate with families will ensure that she will provide the best possible resources, services, and supports.

**Jackie Johnson**  
*Office Manager*

Jackie started with Families Helping Families of Acadiana in November 2009. She has worked for several area non-profit organizations as well as businesses in the private sector. Her organizational skills and attention to detail have made her an excellent addition to the FHF team. She is also the proud mother of a son with Asperger's syndrome.

**Dehvin Chaisson**  
*Administrative Assistant*

Dehvin is a native of Lafayette, LA. Ms. Chaisson is a graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, with a Minor in English. She has always had a strong passion for helping those in need in her community.

**Amy Theobald**  
*CSHS Parent Liaison*

Amy has joined FHF and CSHS as a Parent Liaison. As a soon-to-be graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and former Americorps volunteer, she brings a passion to making a difference in the community. Having two children with communicative disorders, Amy strives to provide other families with resources and support.

**THANK YOU!**

To ALL of you who contributed to the overwhelming SUCCESS of "Treats at The Village 2009"!

Our team at Families Helping Families of Acadiana wishes to extend our gratitude for your generosity in contributing to a successful "Treats at The Village 2009." We are deeply appreciative of your benevolence that helped us provide Halloween fun and fellowship in a safe environment for the people of Region IV.

Thank you for helping us fulfill our goal of assisting and strengthening individuals with disabilities and their families. Your time and willingness to contribute are things for which we are truly thankful! We hope to work with you again and wish you well personally and professionally. Please stop by and visit our office at any time and many thanks from all of us!

**JOIN LaCAN TODAY !!!!**

We at Families Helping Families of Acadiana would like to extend a warm welcome to our new LaCAN Region IV Team Leader, Ms. Karen Coleman. Welcome to the team!!!!

**Karen Lagrange Coleman**  
Ms. Coleman is no stranger to LaCAN advocacy. She has been an active member of LaCAN since 1991. She is the mother of three children and has one grandson. She is a resident of Scott. If you have any questions regarding LaCAN, please feel free to contact her.

**E-Mail Address:**  
[lacan4@gmail.com](mailto:lacan4@gmail.com)  
**Phone:** [337-945-0543](tel:337-945-0543)

*Check out the LaCAN website for Membership Benefits and Information*  
[www.lacanadvocates.org](http://www.lacanadvocates.org)

*Advocating for individualized community supports for Louisiana citizens who experience developmental disabilities.*

**The aim of education should be to teach us how to think, rather than what to think.**

*- James Beattie*

**AUTISM SOCIETY OF ACADIANA**

The Autism Society of Acadiana is proud to announce the opening of their new office located at 3108 West Pinhook Road in Lafayette. The office includes a playroom for children to access when visiting the office with their families and a small meeting room. Their first employee is a long-time volunteer and leader in the chapter, Vickie Nettles. Call 235-4425 for more information.



**Advocating for individualized community supports for Louisiana citizens who experience developmental disabilities**

**What is LaCAN?**

**LaCAN** (*Louisiana Citizens for Action Now*) is the statewide grassroots network of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council. It consists of individuals, families and advocates who have worked together since 1988 advocating for a service system that supports individuals with disabilities living in their own homes rather than being segregated from their communities in a facility. LaCAN members are organized into regional teams and are contacted by email or phone when communication with state policy makers is necessary. Please contact Karen at 337-945-0543 to update your contact information. Outdated contact info will be purged from the membership list.

**Disability Rights Rally**  
**SAVE THE DATE**

The Disability Rights Rally will take place at the Capitol in Baton Rouge on April 28, 2010. Free transportation will be available, and we will begin taking reservations for bus seating on April 1, 2010. Contact Karen at 337-945-0543 or FHF at 337-984-3458 to save your seat on the bus!

The Disability Rights Rally is a multi-agency collaborative effort to help people advocate with legislators for themselves and for their family members with developmental disabilities. The Rally is held to promote Louisiana moving toward a culture of supporting and accepting individuals with disabilities as fully contributing members of their communities.



*Kathy Allen, Executive Director of FHF of Acadiana, accepts a donation check from members of the Woman to Woman Social Club.*

### Children's Special Health Services

Children's Special Health Services (CSHS) is a program for children with special health care needs in Louisiana. A child with special needs is:

- 1) A child with a health problem that affects how the child grows, moves and acts **AND**
- 2) A child who needs more health services than most other children.

A child can get help from CSHS if he/she lives in Louisiana, is less than 21 years of age, has a health concern that CSHS covers and has Medicaid OR meets CSHS income rules.

Common conditions seen in CSHS Clinics are:

- **Arthritis:** juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma and lupus
- **Audiology:** hearing loss or deafness
- **Cardiology:** ventricular septal defect, atrial septal defect and defect of heart valves
- **Cleft Lip and Palate**
- **Neurology:** seizures, cerebral palsy, stroke, brain injury
- **Neurosurgery:** hydrocephalus, malformations of the brain, spina bifida
- **Ophthalmology:** strabismus, amblyopia, cataracts, glaucoma and birth defects of the eye
- **Orthopedic:** cerebral palsy, scoliosis, club foot, spinal cord injuries, spina bifida
- **Otology:** hearing loss, birth defects of the ear, frequent ear infections
- **Plastic surgery:** scars or contractures that limit function or movement
- **Scoliosis:** curved spine
- **Spinal Cord:** spina bifida, spinal cord injuries
- **Urology:** birth defects that involve the bladder or kidneys, frequent urinary tract infections.

For more information, contact Ponchella Boutte at (337)262-5616 ext 113 or (337)984-3458 or [ponchella.boutte@la.gov](mailto:ponchella.boutte@la.gov).

**ECSS Program Information**

ECSS (Early Childhood Supports and Services) Acadiana is a state-funded prevention and/or intervention program. ECSS, along with Families Helping Families, services families in Lafayette, Iberia and St. Martin Parish. The program's purpose is to identify and provide support and services to young children from age 0 through 6 years old who are at risk of developing cognitive, behavioral and relationship difficulties. Their goal is to ensure the future of children.....one child at a time.

ECSS provides Infant Mental Health services which promote the development of healthy parent/child attachments while striving to eliminate those things that negatively impact the child in the local community by providing support services to the families.

The program screens, identifies and refers eligible children and their families to appropriate agencies for assistance with basic, emotional, social, educational and child care needs.

The ECSS program functions as a multi-agency network through-out Lafayette, Iberia and St. Martin Parishes. Monthly meetings with Network Partners in the surrounding communities are held to discuss and provide a holistic approach in meeting the needs of our families.

Our goal is to assist children and their families in becoming knowledgeable about services and supports that are available to help them lead happy and productive lives.

*For more information about ECSS, please contact (337)984-3458.*



### Parent to Parent

The discovery that your child has a disability can be traumatic, confusing, and possibly overwhelming.

**Parent to Parent** is a program designed to give direct help to parents of children who may need support and encouragement. Individuals will receive support from a parent mentor who, in addition to their own experience, has received training in:



- How to accept a diagnosis of disability.
- Sharing the challenges and pleasures of raising a child with a disability.
- Strategies for teaming with doctors and other service providers.

#### How can a support parent help my family?

- By providing someone to talk to or listen which can help the family as a whole.
- By providing acceptance without judgment.

For further information please contact Ponchella Boutte, CSHS Parent Liaison, at 337-262-5616 ext. 113, or [ponchella.boutte@la.gov](mailto:ponchella.boutte@la.gov).

### Secondary Transition

During the course of a day, we make several transitions. For example, going from home to school or home to work is a transition. Secondary transition involves establishing a planning process which includes a coordinated set of supportive activities that will prepare students with disabilities to successfully live their adult life in the community of their choice. Families Helping Families offers individuals with disabilities and their families training to educate themselves in the steps of the secondary transition process to higher education and/or employment, and assistance with IEPs (Individual Education Program). Students with disabilities in middle and high school are entitled to a free and appropriate education until the age of 21, at which point they may become eligible for adult services. Individuals will have to advocate for themselves to receive adult services; they will have to apply for the appropriate services for their individual needs. Taking steps to ensure that your child's transition plan has all of the necessary components is very important to attain your child's future goals and meet his/her needs as he/she prepares for adulthood.

**For further information or assistance with transition services, contact Janise Anthony at (337) 984-3458 or (800) 378-9854.**

**LENDING LIBRARY NEWS!  
LATEST WRIGHTSLAW BOOK**

Just in at our lending library – the new book released by Wrightslaw entitled All About IEPs. The latest Wrightslaw book answers more than 200 questions and guides you through different IEP scenarios. Learn about your rights, responsibilities and special education law in plain language that you can understand. Come in and browse through our lending library and check out books and videos for three months at a time. You may also use our computer, color printer, laminating machine and Boardmaker Plus software. We look forward to seeing you soon!

# How long must we wait?

## The waiver request lists

Written by Nancy LeBlanc

**F**or families with special needs children, the financial realities can come as a shock, and with limited options, are sometimes impossible to manage. If you are observant, you might see people petitioning on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol wearing yellow t-shirts that state, "A Waiting List is Not a Service". This idea by LaCAN (Louisiana Citizens Action Network) is an effort to increase awareness and the need for immediate change for those waiting, sometimes years, for financial assistance for the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW).

NOW is a community-based program for both adults and children with developmental disabilities that has an average waiting list of nine years to receive services. Income as well as disability requirements must be met to be considered and put on the waiting list. The program gives parents and caregivers the option to provide the necessary treatment and care their loved ones need at home or within the community rather than in being placed in an institutional or residential care center. Some of the services provided include personal care attendants, respite services, modifications to homes, vehicles/modifications, medical equipment and supplies. It is a way for parents to continue to be with their child on a daily basis and being put on a waiting list does not offer much comfort to an already difficult situation.

Once on the NOW list, children may be offered the Children's Choice Waiver as an option. This waiver began in February 2001 to offer supplemental support to children with developmental disabilities who currently live at home with their families, or who will leave an institution to return home. There is a cap on the annual amount for this waiver and there is also a waiting list.



2009 Disabilities Rights Rally

Families choose to either apply for Children's Choice, or remain on the Request for Services Registry for the NOW. However, should an emergency or crisis situation arise, there are exceptions made. Children who reach their 19th birthday will transfer with their waiver opportunity to an appropriate New Opportunities Waiver as long as they remain eligible for waiver services

Currently, according the Department of Health and Hospitals website, those who requested NOW services in June 2001 just received notification of services at the end of 2009. Those who requested Children's

Choice services in March 2002 received the same timeline notification.

According to LaCAN, there are more than 9,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families waiting to receive assistance for critical services and care. A change must be made to the system of caring for those in need in our community and state. These families and children should not have to sacrifice and suffer as they wait for assistance to care for some of the most precious members of our community. Let your voice be heard.

For more information, call (800) 450-8108 or visit [www.lacanadvocates.org](http://www.lacanadvocates.org)

### Qualification for supports and services is defined by the Developmental Disability Law in Louisiana Revised Statute 28:451.2 as a severe, chronic disability of a person that:

- Is attributable to an intellectual or physical impairment or combination of intellectual and physical impairments.
- Is manifested before the person reaches age twenty-two.
- Is likely to continue indefinitely.
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency.
- Is not attributed solely to mental illness.
- Reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated, or
- A substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition in a person from birth through age nine which, without services and support, has a high probability of resulting in those criteria (listed above) later in life that may be considered to be a developmental disability.

Source: Office of Children with Developmental Disabilities, [www.dhh.louisiana.gov](http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov)  
Reprinted with permission by Special Parents Magazine

YOU WORK HARD FOR YOUR MONEY.



Make your money work for you.

We can help.

### GET FREE TAX PREPARATION HELP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

If your 2009 combined household income is less than \$49,000, you can get free tax preparation help from several sites across Acadiana. IRS-certified tax preparers will help you get the refund you deserve. You could qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which could mean thousands of dollars for your family!

Visit a site near you to learn about other tax credits for which you may be eligible, free or low cost bank accounts and other financial services.

## Earn it. Keep it. Save it.

For more information,  
dial 2-1-1 or 337.232.4357.

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



This program is supported by the Department of Social Services, United Way of Acadiana, the Acadiana Asset Building Coalition and 211-HELP/LA 211.

#### WHERE TO GO:

**ACADIA PARISH**  
ASSIST Agency  
11 North Parkerson  
Crowley, LA 70526  
337.788.7550 ext 138

**EVANGELINE PARISH**  
KidsLinks  
618 West Long Street  
Ville Platte, LA 70586  
337.831.1887

**IBERIA PARISH**  
Iberia Community Action Center  
722 Walton Street  
New Iberia, LA 70560  
337.365.8151

**LAFAYETTE PARISH**  
Lafayette Career Solutions  
706 East Vermilion  
Lafayette, LA 70501  
337.262.5601

Lafayette Community Action Center  
501 St. John Street  
Lafayette, LA 70501  
337.234.3272 ext 203

Acadiana High School  
315 Rue de Belier  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
337.984.2324

**ST. LANDRY PARISH**  
Continuous Links  
8202 Highway 182  
Opelousas, LA 70570  
337.831.1887

The Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives  
232 South Liberty Street  
Opelousas, LA 70570  
337.943.2410

**ST. MARTIN PARISH**  
St. Martin Community Action Center  
2097 Terrace Road  
St. Martinville, LA 70582  
337.394.6013

**ST. MARY PARISH**  
St. Mary CAA Central Office  
1407 Barrow Street  
Franklin, LA 70538  
337.828.5703

St. Mary Neighborhood Service Center  
330 Cardinal Street  
Morgan City, LA 70380  
985.384.7446

St. Mary Neighborhood Service Center  
203 Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Baldwin, LA 70514  
337.923.4657

**VERMILION PARISH**  
ASSIST Agency  
2115 Charity Street  
Abbeville, LA 70510  
337.898.9554

#### WHAT TO BRING:

- Original Social Security Card or ITIN
- All W2s, 1099s and other income forms
- A voided check for Direct Deposit
- Last year's tax return
- Receipts for child care along with provider's name, address & tax ID number
- Receipts for any charitable donations
- Photo ID
- Any other tax-related documents

**"It's Who  
we are . . .  
It's What  
we do . . ."**

*"Strive  
not to be  
a success,  
but  
rather  
to be  
of value."*

*- Albert Einstein*

**"If a man  
does  
his best,  
what else  
is there?"**

*- General George S. Patton*

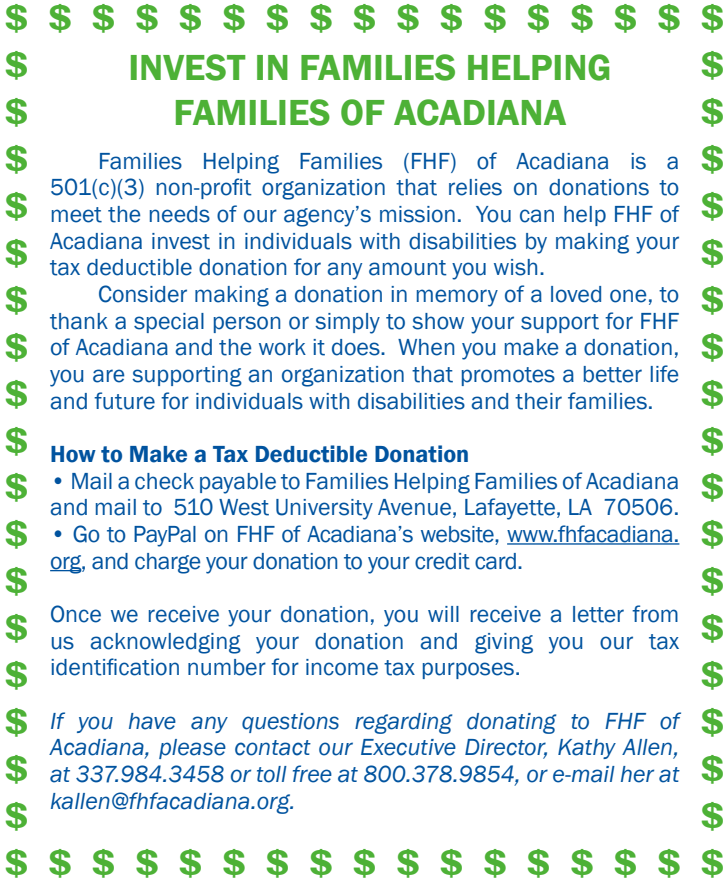
### Financial Assistance Available to Attend Conferences and Trainings

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

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.

Families Helping Families of Acadiana has a contract with the LA Developmental Disabilities Council to provide stipends to

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



## INVEST IN FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES OF ACADIANA

Families Helping Families (FHF) of Acadiana is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that relies on donations to meet the needs of our agency's mission. You can help FHF of Acadiana invest in individuals with disabilities by making your tax deductible donation for any amount you wish.

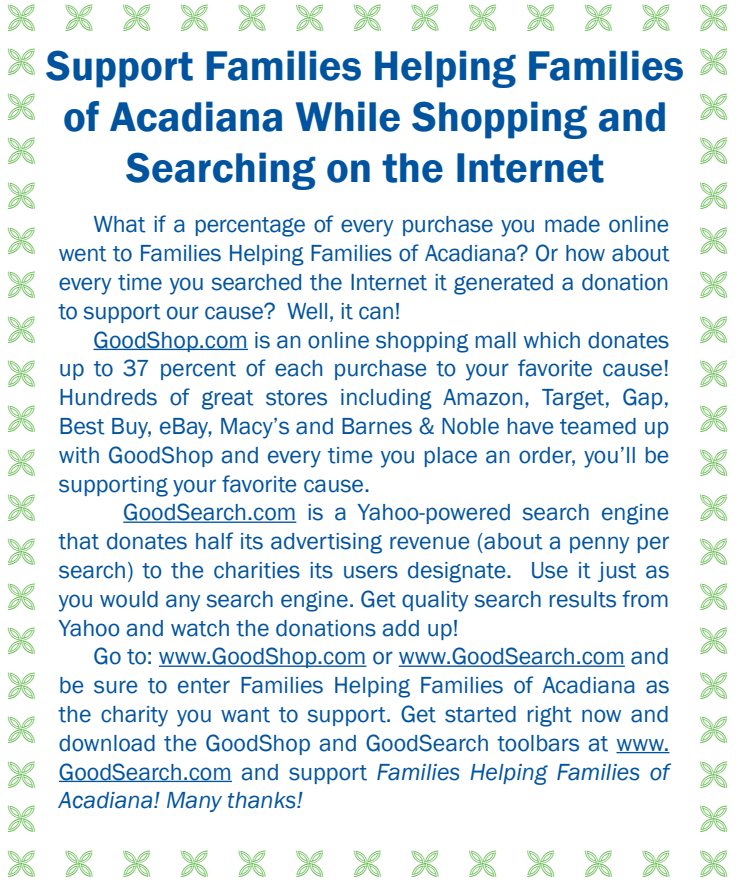
Consider making a donation in memory of a loved one, to thank a special person or simply to show your support for FHF of Acadiana and the work it does. When you make a donation, you are supporting an organization that promotes a better life and future for individuals with disabilities and their families.

### How to Make a Tax Deductible Donation

- Mail a check payable to Families Helping Families of Acadiana and mail to 510 West University Avenue, Lafayette, LA 70506.
- Go to PayPal on FHF of Acadiana's website, [www.fhfacadiana.org](http://www.fhfacadiana.org), and charge your donation to your credit card.

Once we receive your donation, you will receive a letter from us acknowledging your donation and giving you our tax identification number for income tax purposes.

*If you have any questions regarding donating to FHF of Acadiana, please contact our Executive Director, Kathy Allen, at 337.984.3458 or toll free at 800.378.9854, or e-mail her at [kallen@fhfacadiana.org](mailto:kallen@fhfacadiana.org).*



## Support Families Helping Families of Acadiana While Shopping and Searching on the Internet

What if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to Families Helping Families of Acadiana? Or how about every time you searched the Internet it generated a donation to support our cause? Well, it can!

[GoodShop.com](http://GoodShop.com) is an online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

[GoodSearch.com](http://GoodSearch.com) is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue (about a penny per search) to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine. Get quality search results from Yahoo and watch the donations add up!

Go to: [www.GoodShop.com](http://www.GoodShop.com) or [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) and be sure to enter Families Helping Families of Acadiana as the charity you want to support. Get started right now and download the GoodShop and GoodSearch toolbars at [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) and support Families Helping Families of Acadiana! Many thanks!

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