"It's Who We Are... It's What We Do"

Assisting and strengthening individuals with disabilities and their families through a coordinated network of resources, services and supports.

*** PARISHES WE SERVE ***
Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion Parishes

WORDS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Laci Polotzola

As we welcome the month of October, we welcome the month where many organizations are raising awareness on a variety of issues. Included in October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2018 is "America’s Workforce: Empowering All". Check out https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndea/index-2018.htm for more information.
Throughout the past few months, I have served on a variety of committees, councils and stakeholder groups where the focus is to ensure individuals with disabilities are provided an opportunity for a successful and meaningful life. As a parent of a child with a disability, I reflect on the time and effort we, as parents, put forth towards Keeping up with our children's medical appointments, making sure we know about all of the resources and services available, navigating the education system and just dealing with life in general. It's often an overwhelming time but we push through the tears and sleepless nights to ensure one thing.. our children are set up for success! I often wonder what happens after these years. I'm doing everything I can to help my
child now but what happens when he reaches the age of majority? What will he want to do? At that time, it will be his choice. His interest will determine what life he will lead. I am here as a parent to be his voice and guide him in the process but the bottom line is it is his life. The decision on what he will do will be his decision and based off of his interests.

I am honored to work with families across the state who are creating systems change in regards to employment and individuals with disabilities. There has been a shift in our state to help individuals with disabilities obtain meaningful employment. Individuals now have choices. We need to keep pushing to make sure everyone has a choice and an opportunity to choose where their path will lead.

As we celebrate National Disability Awareness Month, there will be multiple activities held throughout the state to raise awareness. If you would like to get involved with these activities or want more information, please contact our office, follow us on social media and check our website for upcoming events.

Thank you Acadiana for allowing me to serve as Executive Director of Families Helping Families of Acadiana.

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*
- Anne Frank

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

What does the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council do?

The Council engages in **advocacy, systems change, and capacity building** activities that contribute to a coordinated, individual and family-centered, individual and family-directed comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life. To build capacity and effect systems change, Councils are charged with carrying out specific activities in the **Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act**:

- To Organize and Enlist Others to Influence
- To Empower
- To Change Public Attitudes
- To Advocate and Influence
- To Demonstrate Innovation
- To Provide Training and Technical Assistance
- To Redesign the System
- To Remove Barriers
- To Educate Policy Makers
- To Educate the Public
- To Develop & Support Coalitions
- To Outreach

The Council has four committees to address the objectives in the Council’s Five Year Plan and
functions of the Council.

- Executive Committee – takes immediate action when necessary, makes policy and other recommendations to the full Council, and evaluates the performance of the Executive Director.
- Self Determination/Community Inclusion Committee – monitors plan activities that fall under the areas of Community Supports and Advocacy and Leadership Development.
- Education/Employment Committee – monitors plan activities that fall under the areas of Education and Early Intervention, Employment, and Child Care.
- Act 378 Sub-Committee – oversees implementation of the Community and Family Support System.
- Ad Hoc Committees are appointed on an as-needed basis.

Greetings to you AMAZING LaCAN members!! It is time that we start gearing up for this year’s legislative session. In preparation, we will be visiting legislators in all seven parishes, getting ready for our Legislative Roundtable just after the new year, and preparing testimonies from you guys according to our advocacy agenda.

I would like to inform each and everyone of you to be on the lookout for calls and emails with an invitation to visit your legislators within the upcoming months. I would also appreciate you all thinking about possible testimonies according to YOUR stories to put a face with the name of the disability issue that ails you. I understand that both of these events – visiting your legislators and telling your stories – can be quite uncomfortable, however they are both big steps in the direction of positive change.

Thanks to each and every one of you for your efforts toward advocacy and making changes to protect and better life as we know it within the disability community!!

– Jamie Duplechine, Region 4 LaCAN Leader

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

If you are interested in finding out more information about Families Helping Families of Acadiana and the services we provide, please call our office and we will be more than happy to schedule a meeting with you!

We are striving to educate EVERYONE in the community about the services we offer, as well as express the importance of inclusion and empowering individuals with disabilities.

Upcoming Events...
Lafayette Parent Training and Info Session
Public • Touchstone ABA

WE AREN'T DIFFERENT
WE JUST ALL HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA

The Lagniappe Club

The Lagniappe Club offers an opportunity for adults with disabilities to get out and enjoy activities in their community.

When: 1st Wednesday of each month. Where: TBA

For more information
Call our office: (337)984-9458
Join the Facebook Group: PHF Acadiana The Lagniappe Club
Or follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PHFAcadiana/

COME JOIN US EVERY FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH FOR A NIGHT OF FUN!

Acadiana Diversity Job Fair

Tuesday, October 9th, 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Heymann Convention Center, Lafayette, LA
Business Registration is now open! No cost to register!
REV UP stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your power! The REV UP Campaign aims to increase the political participation of the disability community while also engaging candidates and the media on disability issues. REV UP Louisiana is part of the national REV UP campaign, organization by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and was established just this year under Louisiana’s Statewide Independent Living Council.
REV UP is important because full political participation for Americans with disabilities is top priority. We want to educate voters about issues and candidates; engage candidates and the media on current disability issues; and protect eligible voters’ rights to participate in elections. Without full participation from the disability community, we would not be where we are today. It is important to become educated and remain active while standing firm in our advocacy efforts to maintain what has already been done as well as further the progression of positive systems change.

If you would like more information about the REV UP campaign, you can visit aapd.org/advocacy/voting

– Jamie Duplechine

Click LEAP CONNECT GUIDE to review the guide developed by Louisiana Department of Education relevant to LEAP Connect.

Glossary of Key Terms
Are you confused by the jargon used in IEP meetings or terms you may encounter as you try to decipher the special education process? The Louisiana Department of Education website (www.louisianabelieves.com) has a wealth of information – including a glossary of terms related to supporting students with disabilities. Click here to learn more.

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504 Plans
The Department of Education has presentations and information to explain 504 plans and the process to request one for your child.
Click here for an overview of 504 plans:
Click here for Frequently Asked Questions about 504 Plans:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
You can also contact us to attend one of our weekly discussion groups on education rights – where you and other parents can share what is working in your schools, as well as the topics on which you would like more training. Contact Families Helping Families of Acadiana today for more information!

PREP for parents
Are you ready to PREP parents for the school year? The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights has a program to help – PREP:
Parent Readiness and Empowerment
PREP is dedicated to empower parents, through trainings, workshops, and resources, to help them understand education rights. PREP’s goal is to engage parents, so they can make certain their children have the opportunity to succeed in education. Their site includes resources specific to Louisiana, webinars, and volunteers who can answer parent questions. Click the link below to learn more.
http://prepparents.org/resources/louisiana/

Who Needs a Surrogate Parent
Date: Tuesday, October 23, 2018
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Audience: Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students.
Registration link: https://tinyurl.com/yd3n9o4v
Who Needs a Surrogate Parent - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gives parents of children with disabilities an active role in planning their child’s educational programs and decision-making. However, sometimes the parent is not available and IDEA allows a surrogate parent to fill this very important role. This training will go over the children eligible for a surrogate parent, who can be a surrogate parent and most importantly, who cannot be a surrogate parent.
Co-Sponsor: Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans

Getting and Keeping Your First Job
Getting and then keeping a job for someone with a disability can be tough. This training will go over why work is important, challenges for youth, the labor market, disability disclosure, accommodations and more.
Date: Thursday, November 15, 2018
Time: 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Audience: Parents, Caregivers, Transition Professionals, Adult Service Providers, Youth with Disabilities and Adults with Disabilities
Co-Sponsor: Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans

IEP Tips and Pointers
This webinar features tried and true tips on how to positively advocate for your children,
strengthen the relationships between parents and service agencies, and help create the appropriate IEP program. This webinar is perfect for families looking for ways to make the IEP meeting a more positive experience for everyone involved. **Date:** Friday, December 7, 2018  **Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  **Audience:** Parents, Caregivers, and Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students.  **Co-Sponsor:** Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans

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**Children's Special Health Services (CSHS)**

The CSHS program is the principle public agency ensuring that children and youth who have special health care needs in Louisiana have access to health care services designed to minimize their disabilities and maximize their probabilities of enjoying independent and self-sufficient lives. Children and youth who have special health care needs are those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that most children or youth require. Currently in Louisiana, there are more than 207,000 children and youth who have special health care needs. This is about 19 percent of all Louisiana children and youth.

For information: Rose Viltz 337-262-5616 Ext. 123

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**MEET THE STAFF**

**Laci Polotzola**  
Executive Director

**Annette Fruge’**  
Information & Referral Specialist  
Administrative Assistant

**Venice Roberts**  
Information/Referral Specialist  
Adult Program Coordinator

**Chaney Guidry**  
Information/Referral Specialist  
Early Steps

**Deborah Fontenot**  
Community Outreach Specialist  
Early Steps

**Nicole Flores**  
Education Liaison

**Rose Viltz**  
CSHS/Parent Liaison

**Jamie Duplechine**  
LaCAN Leader

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Thanks to all the Vendors, Presenters and Attendees for making this a successful event!
Volunteering can help you put existing skills to work and can bring you closer to your community.

If you would like to donate, please contact our office to make arrangements for delivery.

If you are in need of medical supplies, please call our office for availability.

Here's How You Can Donate:

- **Paypal**
- **Website**

Join us at Batch 13 Biscuits & Bowls! On every 13th of the month, Batch 13 Biscuits & Bowls will donate 13% of its sales to Families Helping Families of Acadiana for the quarter! See you at 2668 Johnston St., Lafayette, La. on October 13th, November 13th and December 13th!

**AROUND THE STATE....**

Nicole Dejean
Chair

Vernesa Roy
Secretary

Mechelle Roberthon
Member

Alice Landry
Member

Shana Boutte
Member
The mission of the Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD) is to increase public awareness of and to provide access for individuals with behavioral health and developmental disabilities to integrated community based services while promoting wellness, recovery and independence through education and the choice of a broad range of programmatic and community resources. To this end, a comprehensive system of care is offered which provides research-based prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support services to citizens of Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermilion parishes, directly and through community collaborations.

For More Information: 337-262-5610

NOW RECRUITING
REGION 4 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS
Please fill out the nomination form below and email it to: troy.abshire@la.gov
Role and Responsibility of Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Members:

- Provide public input into the regional planning process

- Review and comment on regulations proposed by the office and on the proposed regional plans and budgets.

- Collaborate with the regional office to develop consumer awareness plans for the region to provide for public dissemination of information regarding the services available through the regional office. Such plans shall provide for public dissemination of information regarding the services available through each regional office.
Nomination Form
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)
Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

Region: 

Name of Nominee:

Street Address:

City: State: LA Zip Code:

E-Mail Address: 

Daytime Phone: Fax Number:

Parish of Residence: Parish of Work:

Recommended by:

The purpose of collecting the following information is to assist in the selection of members who can best represent the region’s population. You are not obligated to provide this information.

Racial Ethnic Group: (Circle One)
White Black Hispanic Other

Sex: (Circle One)
Male Female

If selected, I will serve as a
Individual with a developmental disability
Parent of an individual with a developmental disability who lives at home
Parent of an individual with a developmental disability who lives in a group/community home or an apartment
Parent of an individual with a developmental disability who lives in a state-operated developmental center
Representative of an advocacy organization Name:
Public Provider Name:
Private Provider (not-for-profit) Name:
Other Name:

Please tell about any experiences you have had that are relevant to serve on this committee. Also, describe what you hope to accomplish by serving. You may attach additional sheets, if necessary.

Signature of Nominee:

☐ Note: An individual with a developmental disability and/or parent(s) of an individual with a developmental disability must check this box to indicate a need for assistance to participate in the meetings. Please list the accommodations needed:

You may use my name and email address on OCDD’s website __________ PLEASE INITIAL.
Louisiana Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council

Mission Statement
The Louisiana Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council (LA-SICC) works in collaboration with the Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, in an advisory capacity, to design and oversee the implementation of a family-centered, community-based, comprehensive, interagency system for infants and toddlers (birth through two years of age) who are eligible for Early Steps and their families. Our goal is to advise and assist the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), as the Lead Agency, in the monitoring and evaluation of this system to ensure that families are supported and the potential of each child is maximized.

Overview
The legislation for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), calls for a comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention services. In Louisiana, this system is called **Early Steps: Louisiana’s Early Intervention System.** Early Steps is an interagency effort administered through LDH in conjunction with LA-SICC.

Experience has shown that families with young children with special needs frequently require a range of services which cannot be provided entirely by a single agency. Intervening with coordinated health, social, and educational services during the first three years of life increases developmental and educational gains for the child, improves family function, and reduces the costs of special care later in life.

In drafting the original legislation, Congress recognized the need for a group outside of the Lead Agency to “advise and assist” in the development of this comprehensive system of coordinated early intervention services. LA-SICC is required by statute to be appointed by the Governor and is an important participant in the development and implementation of such a system. LA-SICC is an independent board that operates within the Office of the Governor.

**Click here for upcoming meetings of LA-SICC.**

**Purpose**

Our purpose is to advise and assist LDH in the performance of its responsibilities as the Lead Agency, particularly in regard to the following:

- Identification of the sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention services
- Assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency
- Promotion of interagency agreements

LA-SICC also advises and assists LDH in the preparation of applications, the transition of infants and toddlers to preschool or other appropriate services, and the preparation and submission of an annual report to the governor. We also update federal authorities on the status of **Early Steps: Louisiana’s Early Intervention System.**

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