

July - September 2015

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Providing programs & support to individuals with disabilities to build an inclusive community

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CHURCH OF THE KING, MANDEVILLE CAMPUS

**JOIN US FOR A
Family Friendly Event
with Music, Food & Fun!**

Tickets: \$6 / Person
\$25 / Family or Group of 5
Kids under 2 are free

Gates open at 9:30am for kids with disabilities
Purchase tickets online @ www.fhfnorthshore.org or
Call Northshore Families Helping Families @ 985.875.0511 for more info

CHURCH OF THE KING

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See Page 10 for Sponsorship Information

The work of NFHF, including publication of this newsletter, is funded by Florida Parishes Human Services Authority, Louisiana State Department of Education, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, and is supported by corporate and individual contributions. Northshore Families Helping Families is a United Way recipient.

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BOARD

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SHELLEY MARENGO
ANGELA TRAILL
Board Members

MICHELLE ANDERSON
Advisory Board Members

You are always welcome at NFHF Board Meetings. Six meetings are held each year on the first Friday of the month.

The next meeting will be held
Friday, September 4, 2015
at 7:30am at the NFHF office.

If you would like to
address the board, call
Sue Ellen Stewart at 985-875-0511.



NFHF Office:

204 W. 21st Avenue
Covington, LA 70433
(985) 875-0511
(800) 383-8700

info@fhfnorthshore.org

Office Hours:
9:00 am—4:00 pm
Monday—Friday

You can help make a difference by directly donating to our organization. Many companies are interested in donating to non-profit organizations and will match an individual's contribution.

Please contact Sue Ellen Stewart with questions.

DONATE

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Mission: To provide the individualized services, information, resources and support needed to positively enhance the independence, productivity and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Vision: To ensure all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to attend school, live, work, recreate in their own communities.

NFHF NEWS

Welcome Gaynelle!

Gaynelle Franklin graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in 1972 with a degree in social work. While waiting to join the airforce, she began teaching in one of the first special education classrooms established in Tangipahoa Parish. She fell in love with teaching students with disabilities. She returned to Southeastern and received a Master's degree in special education. After teaching nearly 22 years in Tangipahoa Parish, she retired and went to work as a case manager for children and adults with developmental disabilities. She later worked at Options as the Residential Director for a short time. In January of 1998 she returned to the classroom, this time in St. Tammany Parish, where she taught for another 15 years. She has two adult children and three grandchildren who are the loves of her life. Her passion for helping people with disabilities is driven by the memories of her first cousin who was born with Down syndrome during a time when people with disabilities had few, if any, rights.



We are excited to have Gaynelle join the team at NFHF as an Education Specialist. Gaynelle, as well as Hannah Rucker, will be in the office throughout the summer, ready to assist parents and students who want to refine their advocacy skills and plan for the upcoming school year.

Congratulations Justine!

Justine Fucci, NFHF Administrative Assistant, is a graduate of the Partners in Policymaking Class of 2015! NFHF board members and staff are proud of your accomplishment!

Justine reflects - "My experience at Partners in Policymaking was a great one. I learned how to better advocate for myself and other people with disabilities. I also learned about Social Capital and how it is a key part in advocating. I learned about the Advocacy Center and how they help people with disabilities get the services that they need when they haven't received their Support or NOW waiver and I was very surprised to learn that they use volunteers to help them with their fundraisers and other events. I learned about how hard life was for people with disabilities and that instead of getting them the services they need to live in their own homes, they put all of them in institutions and the work they did in the workshops gave them very little pay. I also learned about the process of employment for people with disabilities and how to better create a portfolio and how to interview well to get a well paying job. I enjoyed the course and would recommend anyone to take it to learn about life for people with disabilities in the past and now and also would learn about how to better advocate for yourself and others with disabilities."

Partners in Policymaking is a national leadership training program for people with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities. It provides the most current knowledge about disability issues and develops the competencies necessary for effective advocacy to influence public policy at all levels of government. [Partners in Policymaking Brochure](#)



Congratulations Partners in Policymaking Class of 2015!

WELCOME BOARD MEMBERS

Matthew Gardner has returned to the Board at NFHF. Matthew previously served on the board from April 2010 through July of 2013. Matthew lives in Mandeville with his wife Megan and they have two boys, Benjamin (3) and Waylon (2). Matthew's oldest brother, Philip, has Angelman's Syndrome and also lives in Mandeville. Matthew has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Louisiana Tech University, as well as an Accredited Asset Management Specialist® designation from the College for Financial Planning. He has worked as a financial advisor with Edward Jones for the past six years.

Bernadette Lala joins NFHF as a Board Member. Bernadette resides in Slidell with her husband of 19 years, Dominick Lala, and their 4 year old son, Sebastian. Upon Sebastian being diagnosed with Autism in 2013, Bernadette decided to sell her business and stay home with Sebastian to focus on his therapy. In addition, she decided to get involved within the community to help advocate and spread Autism awareness. Bernadette has helped raise money for organizations such as Autism Speaks, Autism Society of Greater New Orleans, Shriner's Hospital, St. Jude and local Autism events. She has also started a parent's club at Spear's Learning Center where her son attends.

"I am thrilled to have found an organization such as NFHF. The sense of knowing that I made a difference in someone's life, whether it's the person effected or their caregiver, is my driving force to continue the fight for all in need."

Shelley Marengo lives in Covington with her husband of 13 yrs, Jeff Marengo. She has two sons. Robert Killeen, 25, graduate of LSU and currently Marketing Director/Copywriter for Big Fish Presentations in Baton Rouge. Ethan Marengo, 11, a sixth grader at Pine View Middle School. Ethan has Aspergers, along with other co-morbidities. Shelley worked in the health field for 17 years, primarily in medical management. She is now a full time wife and mom. She is a 2012 graduate of Partners in Policymaking. She is a member of the Exchange Club of West St Tammany and most recently was recognized as the New Member of the Year for 2015 for outstanding service. She brought the Buddy Bench Initiative to the St Tammany Parish Public School system providing benches throughout the elementary and middle schools and was awarded the 2015 Superintendents Award for Outstanding Character and Citizenship. She actively volunteers at Ethan's school and also has been a volunteer for NFHF for several years. She has donated time to SOAR, The Blood Center of La, as well as reaching out to the community to secure donations for various fundraising events.

"My passion is to advocate for all people with special abilities by educating others and spreading the message of inclusion and acceptance. NFHF has been an integral part of my journey beginning 4 years ago when Ethan was diagnosed with Autism. I am very happy to be able to join an organization that I believe is an invaluable asset to the community."

Angela Traill is thrilled to join NFHF as a Board Member. Angie has spent the last decade within the public and nonprofit sectors, working on grants, policy, and program development at United Way of the Bay Area (San Francisco) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (Washington, DC). While in DC, she received a Masters in Public Administration from The George Washington University, with a focus on nonprofit management and program evaluation. Angie grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and has lived in Covington for the last three years with her husband Eric and two young daughters, Mia and Elliana. She is grateful for the opportunity to be involved with such a great organization.

NFHF Quarterly Events

JULY 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Region 9 LaCAN Meeting	2	3 Office Closed	4 Fourth of July
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Breakfast and a Flick
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Pool Party	20	21	22 People First Northshore & RICC Meeting	23	24	25 Resource Fair - North Shore Mall
26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 RAC Meeting	19	20	21 Education Conference	22
23/30	24/31	25	26 People First Northshore	27	28	29

SEPTEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day / Office Closed	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 People First Northshore	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Free Education & Resource Webinars



Families Helping Families of Jefferson invites you to free webinars full of rich content. A webinar event is viewed right from your computer where you can watch, listen, and have the option to post questions and get LIVE responses. For a listing of webinars visit www.fhfjefferson.org and then click on “[What’s Going On](#)” and choose a topic and register. Families Helping Families of Jefferson, 201 Evans Road Building, Suite 100, Harahan LA 70123, 800-766-7736.

Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center

[Health Disparities, People with Disabilities, and How the ACA Can Help](#)



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING NFHF!

Northshore Families Helping Families extends deepest thanks to:

Abney Elementary
 Bass Pro Outdoor World
 GiveNOLA Day
 Leslie Gates' Autism Fleur-de-lis Prints
 Louisiana School Psychological Association
 St. Timothy on the Northshore UMC
 Trainer's Choice Vitamins & Supplements
 and to the families and community members who supported events!



Fundraising events raised nearly \$6,500 for our organization!! Your donation will help support our mission of building an inclusive community for individuals with disabilities. Thank you very much! We appreciate your support!



EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT NFHF!

Shop at AmazonSmile
 and Amazon will make
 a donation to:
 Northshore Families
 Helping Families

Get started

amazon smile

AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of your purchase total to Northshore Families Helping Families when you shop online at [AmazonSmile](https://www.amazon.com/smile). Be sure to select NFHF as your organization of choice and add the link to your bookmarks!



Visit www.goodsearch.com and select Northshore Families Helping Families as your cause.

Create a user profile that will allow you to keep track of your individual amount raised.

Use the search box on www.goodsearch.com or download a Good To-Go add-on to search the Internet just like you normally would, with the added bonus that you are earning a donation for virtually every search.



Shopping for Resources: Community Resource Fair

Saturday, July 25, 2015

10:00 am - 2:30 pm

North Shore Square Mall

150 North Shore Boulevard, Slidell

Free Informational Sessions in the Conference Room Near the Dillard's Women Entrance

10:00 am - 10:15 am -- Early Steps: Services for Children 0-3

Presenter: Sherry Larson, Community Outreach Specialist, Early Steps

10:20 am - 11:20 am -- Getting Ready for School: IEPs and ITPs

Presenters: Hannah Rucker and Gaynelle Franklin, Inclusive Education Specialists, NFHF

11:30 am - 12:45 pm -- Getting Ready for Success: Life as I Want It

Presenter: Sharon Delvisco, Adult Program Coordinator, NFHF

1:00 pm - 2:15 pm -- Getting Ready for Work

Presenters: Elizabeth Maillion, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services
and Laura Stazio, LSU Health Sciences Center, Human Development Center

Shop these resources throughout the mall:

- A Place of Our Own
- Aetna Better Health of LA
- Amerigroup
- Arc of GNO Northshore Community Center
- Autism Society of GNO
- Barefoot Books
- Bethany Community Center
- COAST
- DSAGNO
- Early Steps
- Ekhaya Youth Project
- Florida Parishes Human Services Authority
- Girl Scouts of Southeast LA
- Good Measures
- Helping Hands The Movement

- Integrative Touch Pediatric Occupational Therapy
- Interact NOLA
- LaCAN & LaTEACH
- Liberty Resoration
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services
- Louisiana Workforce Commission
- MetLife
- NAMI St. Tammany
- National Total Care Services
- North Lake Resource Center on Developmental Disabilities
- Northshore Families Helping Families
- Northshore Technical Community College

- Office of Consumer Advocacy
- People First Northshore
- Prudential Insurance
- REACH with Disabilities
- Renewed Hope Center
- Senior Health Insurance Information Program
- Slidell Memorial Hospital
- St. Tammany Fire District #1
- STOPS
- St. Tammany Parish Public School System
- Theophilus Community Programs
- Tulane Center for Autism and Related Disorders



www.fhfnorthshore.org
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Inclusive Practices in Today's Schools: Access and Achievement for All Students

Presenter: Marilyn Friend, Ph.D.

Date: Friday, August 21, 2015

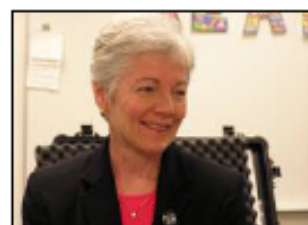
Time: 8:30 am (Check In and Breakfast)

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Clarion Inn & Suites Conference Center

501 N Highway 190

Covington, LA 70433



Register for the FREE workshop: www.fhfnorthshore.org

Continental breakfast and buffet lunch will be served

Reform continues to characterize today's schools. The Common Core State Standards, higher expectations for student achievement, the mantra of being college and career ready...and all these and the many other initiatives apply to all students, including those with disabilities. The result is that inclusive practices have a somewhat different implementation than in the past. In this workshop, the goal is to emphasize several critical dimensions that must be in place for students with disabilities to succeed.

Topics to be addressed include these:

1. Students with disabilities and the Common Core State Standards, including the complexities of providing needed supports in the general education setting
2. Co-teaching as a vehicle for reaching the contemporary goals of meaningful curriculum access, inclusiveness, and high achievement
3. Specially designed instruction delivered in general education settings
4. The place for services in a separate setting and criteria for decisions related to such services
5. The importance of and strategies for family/school communication and collaboration in order to foster positive student outcomes
6. Questions and concerns that you have about inclusive practices appropriate in the current education climate

Marilyn Friend, Ph.D., has spent her career as a general education teacher, special education teacher, teacher educator, and staff developer. She is Professor Emerita of Education in the Department of Specialized Education Services at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and she is Past President of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. Dr. Friend has consulted with school professionals nationally and internationally (more than 3000 presentations and projects in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia) as they collaborate to educate their students, assisting them to form productive and efficient work teams, to learn the best ways to manage awkward or adversarial conversations, and to communicate effectively with parents. Her particular areas of interest include skills for collaboration, co-teaching, inclusive school practices, team building, shared problem solving, interpersonal communication, conflict and controversy, and home-school communication. She is the author or co-author of three widely used college textbooks on special education: a variety of co-teaching materials for teachers and administrators; more than 50 articles about collaboration, inclusive practices, and co-teaching; and a highly popular video series on co-teaching and other inclusive practices.



www.fhfnorthshore.org
info@fhfnorthshore.org
 985-875-0511

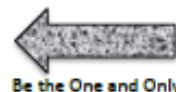




SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

MONSTER JAM Sponsorship - \$5,000

- Sponsor logo/name displayed most prominently on:
 - * Personalized banner at the event
 - * Advertising posters
 - * NFHF web & fb pages with hyperlink to your business' web & fb pages
 - * Sponsor board
 - * Event T-shirt
- Sponsor name recognition on press releases, media, advertising & printed materials
- Free vendor table setup at event including 50 event tickets and 50 train ride tickets



THE TANK Sponsorship - \$2,000

- Sponsor logo/name displayed most prominently on:
 - * Advertising posters
 - * Event T-shirt
 - * NFHF web & fb pages with hyperlink to your business' web & fb pages
 - * Sponsor board
- Sponsor name recognition on press releases, media, advertising & printed materials
- Free vendor table setup at the event including 20 event tickets and 20 train ride tickets

THE BIG RIG Sponsorship - \$1,000

- Sponsor logo/name displayed on:
 - * Advertising posters
 - * Event T-shirt
 - * NFHF web & fb pages with hyperlink to your business' web & fb pages
 - * Sponsor board
- Sponsor name recognition on press releases, media, advertising & printed materials
- 10 event tickets and 10 train ride tickets

BULLDOZER Sponsorship - \$500

- Sponsor name displayed on:
 - * Event T-shirt
 - * NFHF web & fb pages with hyperlink to your business' web & fb pages
 - * Sponsor board
- Sponsor name recognition on printed materials

HOT ROD Sponsorship - \$200

- Sponsor name displayed on:
 - * NFHF web & fb pages
 - * Sponsor board

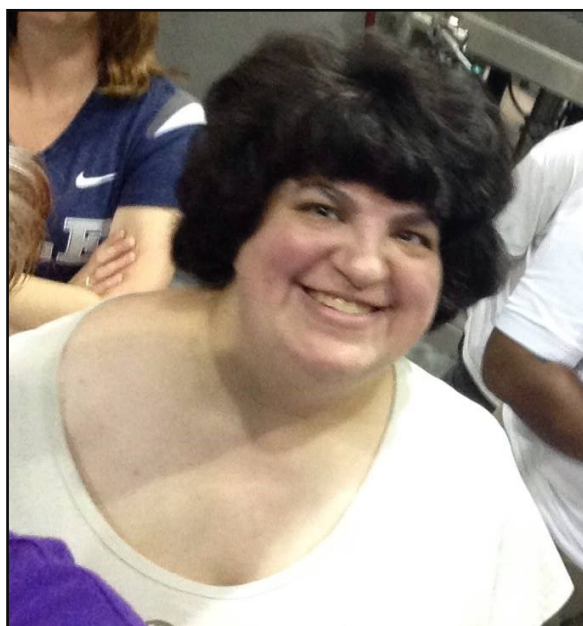
Contact Northshore Families Helping Families
 985-875-0511 or info@fhfnorthshore.org
www.fhfnorthshore.org

Touch a Truck Sponsorship Registration Form

Adult Program Spotlight

We have been busy! A number of friendships have developed among people attending our events on a regular basis. We have two romances blooming among members of the Covington Book Club. One of the members of the Hammond Book Club has improved his reading skill level and challenged himself with word find games. We went on a brewery tour, listened to love music, went shopping at the Farmers Market, went out to dinner, and went to an antique car show. We have 8 members in the Northshore People First Self-Advocacy Group and we attended the People First Louisiana State Advisory Board planning meeting in Baton Rouge. We will have a People First Northshore information table at the NFHF Shopping for Resources: Community Resource Fair on July 25th at North Shore Square Mall. Contact sharondelvisco@fhfnorthshore.org or justinefucci@fhfnorthshore.org for more information.

[View the Meet and Greet Calendar](#)





People First Northshore Meeting Schedule



Wednesday, June 24th People First Northshore Meeting from 1 pm to 2:30 pm at the Arc of GNO Northshore Community Center @ 106 E 25th Avenue in Covington. Come learn about People First and self-advocacy. People First of Northshore co-leaders are Perry Evans and Scott Smith. Advisors are Sharon Delvisco and Dawn Culbreath. Agenda includes: leadership bingo, questions for candidates in governor's race.



Wednesday, July 22nd People First Northshore Meeting from 1 pm to 2:30 pm at the Arc of GNO Northshore Community Center @ 106 E 25th Avenue in Covington. Come learn about People First and self-advocacy. People First of Northshore co-leaders are Perry Evans and Scott Smith. Advisors are Sharon Delvisco and Dawn Culbreath.



Wednesday, Aug 26th People First Northshore Meeting from 1 pm to 2:30 pm at the Arc of GNO Northshore Community Center @ 106 E 25th Avenue in Covington. Come learn about People First and self-advocacy. People First of Northshore co-leaders are Perry Evans and Scott Smith. Advisors are Sharon Delvisco and Dawn Culbreath.



Wednesday, Sept 23rd People First Northshore Meeting from 1 pm to 2:30 pm at the Arc of GNO Northshore Community Center @ 106 E 25th Avenue in Covington. Come learn about People First and self-advocacy. People First of Northshore co-leaders are Perry Evans and Scott Smith. Advisors are Sharon Delvisco and Dawn Culbreath.

To register or questions: Sharon Delvisco at sharondelvisco@fhfnorthshore.org
or Justine Fucci at justinefucci@fhfnorthshore.org

www.fhfnorthshore.org

info@fhfnorthshore.org

985-875-0511



LaTEACH is a statewide grassroots advocacy network created for the purpose of effecting systems change. LaTEACH promotes appropriate, inclusive education for all students. LaTEACH works to make parents, educators, the general public, and state leadership informed and supportive of research-based and effective practices used appropriately for each student. If you believe all students, with or without disabilities, should be provided the same opportunities to be educated in neighborhood schools as their sisters, brothers, friends and neighbors, and should be provided the support to learn together effectively, then you should consider becoming a LaTEACH member. Visit www.lateach.org for more information.



LaCAN is a statewide grassroots network of individuals, families and advocates who have worked together since 1988 advocating for a service system that supports individuals with disabilities to live in their own homes rather than having to be segregated from their communities in a facility to receive support. For more information, contact Region 9 LaCAN Leader, Sharon Delvisco at 985-875-0511 or laican.region9@gmail.com. Region 9 Florida Parishes Team Member Meeting to discuss items for next year's agenda will be held on Saturday, July 25th from 10:00am until 11:30am at the NFHF Shopping for Resources: Community Resource Fair at North Shore Square Mall in Slidell.

Legislators heard the voices of LaCAN members and responded in this year's legislative session. Thanks to your persistent advocacy efforts, the legislature passed the State Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 with \$3.5 Million in state funds (\$9.25 Million total) to fill all frozen home and community-based waiver slots for individuals with developmental disabilities, \$170,000 restored to Families Helping Families, and an additional \$500,000 for EarlySteps. As we celebrate this success, we will continue to monitor the budget situation closely and keep you informed. There continues to be on-going concerns about the budget and insufficient funding for Medicaid. Mid-year cuts are predicted that would one again put funding for DD services in jeopardy.

Thank you for your advocacy!



TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



LaTEACH Employment Opportunity

Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children

Are you inspired to:

Support other parents and self-advocates to connect with their policymakers?

Inform policymakers of the impact of policy decisions on students with disabilities?

Receive training and education in topics related to special education?

If you answered YES to these questions, contact LaTEACH!

Regional Team Leader Requirements:

- Be a parent or family member of someone with a developmental disability or an individual with a disability
- Strong belief in full inclusion of people with disabilities
- Effective verbal and written communication skills
- Organization and presentation skills
- Enthusiastic attitude and ability to work well as a team member and leader
- Minimum GED or high school diploma
- Live in Region 9 (Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington Parishes)

Regional Team Leader Receives:

- Competitive hourly pay and performance-based bonuses (as budget allows)
- Regional and statewide travel reimbursement (based on current Louisiana state rates)
- Continuing education hours

Qualified applicants are encouraged to send a resume' and letter of interest to:

Susan Benoit, Executive Director Families Helping Families of SWLA

2927 Hodges Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601

337-436-2578 (fax)

800-894-6558

info@fhfswla.org



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

LaDDC NEWS

Provider Questionnaire Helps Individuals and Families Make Informed Choices

Are you or a family member a waiver recipient? When you're looking for a provider, do you wonder about the types of services they provide or their staff turnover rate? Maybe you've wanted to know if the provider is able to provide supports for individuals with intense medical needs. A couple of years ago, the Council recognized that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families need more information to make informed choices about providers and asked the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) to make provider data available online. In late 2014, OCDD began asking providers to complete a voluntary questionnaire which includes questions about the services they provide, the staff they employ, any specific populations they serve, and other various things about their agency. The completed questionnaires are available to the public on the Freedom of Choice website, but since it is voluntary, very few providers have completed it.

In order for individuals with developmental disabilities and families to have access to information to help them make more informed choices, individuals and families must ask providers to complete this questionnaire. Visit the [Freedom of Choice website](#) to see if your current provider has a questionnaire online. If not, ask them to [complete it here](#) so you and other individuals/families will have access to the information.

The next time you are looking for a new provider, check the [Freedom of Choice website](#) to see if the providers you are considering have completed the questionnaire. If not, ask them to [complete it here](#) so you and other individuals/families will be able to make an informed choice.

Providers need to know that this information is important and without it they run the risk of losing business to other providers who have completed the questionnaire.

www.laddc.org

Through funding from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, we provide stipends to self-advocates and family members directly involved in the support of an individual with a developmental disability to attend conferences and trainings on disability related topics. Download a stipend application [here](#).



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

LaDDC NEWS

2014 Annual Report Available

Each year, the Council publishes an Annual Report detailing its activities during the previous year. The [2014 Annual Report](#) and [reports from previous years](#) are available to view online. The 2014 Annual Report includes advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities that impacted policy and practice changes in 2014. Highlights in the report include successful advocacy for funding for individualized community and family supports and collaboration with the Advocacy Center on a pilot project to establish effective approaches for an Ombudsman program for people in Supported Independent Living. A systems change initiative of note includes successful advocacy resulting in an alternative pathway for certain students with disabilities to be promoted to higher grades and graduate. Featured in the 2014 Annual Report is a farewell article on a long-time advocate, Kay Marcel, who relocated to another state. Kay's mark on the state of Louisiana will be felt for many years to come.

www.laddc.org



SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, November 19th

Marriott Hotel
Baton Rouge, LA

Featuring National Speakers

Al Condeluci & Deborah Whitfield

Hosted by

La Developmental Disabilities Council, LaCAN, & LaTEACH

Registration will open September 1, 2015

More details coming soon!



All Students Values in Proposed School Accountability Measure

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) submitted a renewal application for the state's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver with a significant shift to count diplomas earned by students with significant disabilities (assessed by LAA1) in the school accountability system. The Legislature passed Act 833 last year after advocates requested pathways for all students to earn a diploma and have the achievements of all students count in the school accountability system. Initially, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) expressed concerns over whether it was legal for Louisiana to offer alternative pathways to a diploma. It was therefore understandable that LDOE was hesitant to include diplomas earned by students on this alternative pathway in the ESEA waiver request in 2014. Fortunately, both in a report by the U.S. DOE and in a presentation by Melody Mosgrove, Director of Special Education for the U.S. DOE, to Louisiana stakeholders in May 2015, it was shared that U.S. DOE researched diplomas across the country and recognized the changes occurring in Louisiana were following how most other states balance the needs and outcomes of students with disabilities with the expectations for high stakes testing and accountability.

What is the significance of counting the achievements of students with disabilities in the school accountability measures? Awarding schools points for diplomas earned by students with significant disabilities removes a disincentive for schools to serve all students. In the high stakes world of education today, points matter - a lot. Schools deserve credit for serving every student, particularly students who tend to need the most supports and services.

Counting and valuing the diplomas earned by students with significant disabilities is a huge step forward in the state's education accountability system. While the graduation index impacted by this change is only one fourth of a high school performance score, the significance of recognizing the accomplishments of students with the most significant disabilities who earn diplomas in the school and district accountability measure is an incredible step forward. The Council is pleased the Louisiana Department of Education took this bold move and has committed to continued shifts toward fully valuing achievements and outcomes of all students.



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

LaDDC NEWS

The Impact of the 2015 Legislative Session on Individuals with Disabilities and their Families

Facing a \$1.6 Billion budget deficit, legislators spent the majority of their time during the 2015 legislative session debating various ways to raise funds and deciding which programs they could save that had been cut in the Governor's proposed budget. However, they took the time to listen to the voices of people with developmental disabilities and their families and responded.

After advocating for over three years for equity in school funding, students with disabilities, their parents, and advocates received a long-awaited victory that all schools receive funding based on the same funding formula beginning in the 2015/2016 school year, despite attempts to delay implementation.

Advocates were also gratified that the legislature included funding for home and community-based services for people with developmental disabilities that had been cut in the Governor's Executive Budget. While every need was not met, the fact that any additional funding was provided was quite an accomplishment, and certainly a testament to the influence of the advocates in the "yellow shirts" and the relationships they have built with their legislators. Below is a recap of these and some of the other issues affecting people with developmental disabilities and their families that were addressed by the 2015 legislature.

Home and community-based supports

Advocates will recall that the legislature appropriated funding in the 2014 legislative session to fill approximately 1,200 waiver slots for people with developmental disabilities. However, less than half of those had been filled when mid-year budget cuts were announced in February 2015. The filling of the vacant slots was immediately halted by the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) and the hopes of those on the waiting list was crushed. After hearing powerful testimony from parents of children with developmental disabilities during the 2015 legislative session, legislators responded by appropriating \$3.5 Million in state funds (\$9.25 Million total) to fill all vacant home and community-based waiver slots for people with developmental disabilities.

The legislature also restored \$170,000 to the Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers that was cut in the Governor's Executive Budget and added \$500,000 for EarlySteps. Senators Jack Donahue and Dan Claitor and Representatives John Schroder and Ledricka Theirry led the efforts to secure funds for all of these programs that meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.



The Impact of the 2015 Legislative Session on Individuals with Disabilities and their Families (Continued)

There were cuts in the Executive Budget, however, that were not restored by the legislature, and these will have a direct negative impact on individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Approximately \$1.1 Million in state funds that had been appropriated by the 2014 legislature for the Individual and Family Support Program in three areas of the state was eliminated in the Executive Budget and not restored in the 2015 legislative session. As a result, many families have been notified that their services will be reduced or eliminated effective July 1st. The regional Human Services Districts/Authorities and the program offices in DHH also took substantial cuts.

Health

The Louisiana Health Insurance Premium Payment (LaHIPP) Program was eliminated for Fiscal Year 2016 due to budget cuts and due to the fact that the program was no longer cost effective for the state. Approximately 1,500 Louisiana households of Medicaid recipients received notice in mid-June from the state Medicaid office that their insurance premiums, co-pays and deductibles would no longer be covered by the state. However, DHH has delayed the discontinuation of the program until December 1, 2015 to give families more time to consider their options.

Education

Advocates appreciate Senator Dan Claitor's efforts to continue seeking equity in funding across school systems for students with disabilities. After three years of requesting and expecting the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to fix funding inequities and ensure schools receive the funding needed to serve students with disabilities, Senator Claitor, with strong support from Representative John Bel Edwards, championed **SB 267** ([Act 467](#)) throughout the session. In addition to clarifying that all schools should receive funds based on the same funding formula, SB 267 will require charter schools to serve a fair share of students with disabilities.

Funding inequities were caused by using a different funding formula for charter schools than used for traditional public school systems. Traditional schools are supposed to receive 2.5 times more money for each student with a disability than for each student without a disability. But charter schools received the same amount of money for every student. Since the amount charter schools receive is deducted from traditional public schools, using different funding formulas caused disruptions, i.e., reductions, to the amount of money almost every traditional school system should have been receiving.



The Impact of the 2015 Legislative Session on Individuals with Disabilities and their Families (Continued)

Funding inequities create two huge problems for students with disabilities. First, charter schools have a financial incentive to avoid serving students with disabilities. Second, both charter and traditional schools need appropriate funding to educate students enrolled in their schools.

Funding levels to traditional public school systems have not been following the funding formula passed by BESE and the legislature. Many legislators in support of equity believed BESE was not applying existing law correctly and wondered why SB 267 was even necessary. Data produced by LDOE illustrated the impact this inequity has had on the state portion of funding. With one exception, every Type II charter school received more money than should have been provided according to the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) formula. On average, charter schools across the state received over \$150,000 more than they should have received for the students they served last year. Charter school proponents advocated for the funding inequity to continue for another year.

A majority of legislators, led by Senator Claitor and Representatives Edwards, Joe Harrison, J. Rogers Pope, Steve Pylant, Jerome “Dee” Richard, John Schroder, and Patricia Smith, agreed that this inequity has gone on long enough. Passage of SB 267 sends an absolutely clear message to BESE and the LDOE that schools should receive funding based on the students they enroll and the inequity needs to stop immediately.

Minimum Foundation Program and School Funding

Once again the legislature did not pass the MFP ([HCR 18](#)), the state funding formula for distributing \$3.6 billion across school systems. In a strange twist, the main budget bill did contain full funding for the proposed MFP - even though the MFP failed. This funding resulted in an additional \$5.4 million in the High Cost Fund, a fund that covers services needed by students with disabilities who have extra-ordinarily high cost needs. Even with these additional dollars, about ten million more dollars are needed statewide to cover all services for students with high cost needs. Given the budget challenges, advocates were pleased that BESE and the legislature heard their voices and provided additional funding toward the High Cost Fund to enhance services for students with disabilities.

Other Bills of Interest

HB 508 ([Act 117](#)) by Representative Franklin Foil provides for an income tax deduction for employers employing a qualified individual with a developmental disability or military



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

LaDDC NEWS

The Impact of the 2015 Legislative Session on Individuals with Disabilities and their Families (Continued)

service disability for four continuous months at no less than twenty hours per week at a rate comparable to and in the same setting as other employees performing the same or similar task. The deduction is limited to 100 employees program wide.

HB 204 (Act 379) by Representative Franklin Foil provides for an adult with an intellectual or physical disability, or his tutor or curator, to file for child support to continue beyond the age of majority if the individual is unmarried and incapable of self-support.

HB 598 (Act 411) by Representative Franklin Foil provided for implementation of the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program in Louisiana. Although ABLE Act legislation passed last year in this state, it was prior to passage of the federal authorizing legislation. HB 598 puts the structure and oversight in place for Louisiana to operate and manage the ABLE Account Program. Once operational, individuals with disabilities and their families will be able to save private funds that can be used for support services to maintain health, independence and quality of life.

SB 58 (Act 250) by Senator Conrad Appel adjusts language in the Deaf Bill of Rights to align with requirements in federal laws and existing rules. Advocates behind changes to the Deaf Bill of Rights were pleased the Legislature recognized the specific needs of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind with language specifying evaluation and program requirements in statutory law.

Five legislative instruments to **expand Medicaid** in Louisiana were introduced and failed to pass. However, **HCR 75** by Representative Chuck Kleckley, which provides for a “hospital stabilization formula,” did pass. This resolution creates flexibility to design a plan to provide for more efficient and effective ways to maximize the state’s use of monies currently expended for health care services to the state’s low income and uninsured residents. HCR 75 authorizes DHH to calculate, levy, and collect an assessment from certain hospitals if several conditions are met, and to establish certain reimbursement enhancements for inpatient and outpatient hospital services, if several other conditions are met. The resolution lays the foundation for Louisiana should the next governor choose to implement some form of health coverage expansion that meets the requirements under the Affordable Care Act.

www.laddc.org



Department of Health and Hospitals Delays LaHIPP Discontinuation to Dec. 1

The Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) extended the discontinuation date of the Louisiana Health Insurance Premium Payment (LaHIPP) program Monday, moving the date from July 1 to Dec. 1, 2015.

DHH is moving the date in an effort to give families more time to make arrangements for the change, such as enrolling in Bayou Health or finding a new provider if their current providers do not accept Medicaid as primary payer. All Medicaid-eligible recipients will continue to keep their current form of Medicaid coverage, although some may transition from legacy fee-for-service Medicaid to a Bayou Health plan by Dec. 1. The Department also will continue to pay the applicable portion of the recipient's private insurance until the Dec. 1 discontinuation date.

Bayou Health, Louisiana's Medicaid managed care program, has been successful in both increasing recipients' access to care and saving the state money. Because of those successes, DHH determined it is more cost-effective to transition some LaHIPP to Bayou Health. Some LaHIPP recipients receiving home- or community-based waivers may choose to opt into a Bayou Health plan for certain services or may elect to remain on legacy fee-for-service Medicaid.

The Department is sending letters to each of the approximately 1,500 households with additional details. Recipients who have questions about these changes or would like to transition from legacy fee-for-service Medicaid into a Bayou Health plan may call DHH offices Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-888-342-6207.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventative and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit www.dhhlouisiana.gov. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).

www.dhh.louisiana.gov

[Press Release](#)



ADVOCACY CENTER
SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

LA Plans Changes to Behavioral Health Service System

In November 2014, the Department of Health and Hospitals announced a major shift in how Medicaid funded specialized behavioral health services will be provided. Since March of 2012, these services have been managed by Magellan of Louisiana. Beginning on December 1, 2015, these services will instead be provided by the Bayou Health managed care companies that currently provide services for primary and acute care.

The Advocacy Center's PAIMI Advisory Council has been monitoring this transition and is concerned that there are significant gaps in the state's plan. It sent a letter to Secretary Kliebert outlining the Council's concerns regarding the involvement of consumers in the planning process, the need for truly integrated services, the importance of a smooth transition and the preservation of services, and the responsibility of the Bayou Health companies to address the gaps in certain services, like respite and crisis stabilization. [Click here to read the letter sent to Sec. Kliebert.](#)

At a meeting with providers, consumers, and advocates on April 29, 2015, DHH provided the following timeline for implementation:

- August 1, 2015 - Finalized Bayou Health contract amendment
- September/October, 2015 - DHH readiness review of MCOs
- September/October, 2015 - Open enrollment begins
- December 1, 2015 - Integration go-live

DHH also announced plans to move forward with several positive changes. "Crisis Stabilizations" (a service providing out-of-home care for children and youth in crisis for periods of up to 7 days) will be made available to all Medicaid eligible youth who need it. Right now, this service is only available to youth who have been approved to receive services through the Coordinated System of Care ("CSOC"). Additionally, DHH will expand the availability of providers for short-term respite services (respite care for up to 72 hours) for CSOC participants by allowing Therapeutic Foster Care providers to provide short-term respite services for CSOC recipients. DHH is also planning to include Therapeutic Foster Care in the State Plan as a Medicaid covered service.

To read more about the state plans for the transition, visit <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/subhome/43>.

If you use Medicaid-funded behavioral health services and have questions about the transition, contact Stephanie Patrick at 504-522-2337 X 143 or spatrick@advocacyla.org.

Advocacy Center staff are concerned about the end of the Louisiana Health Insurance Premium Payment (LaHIPP) Program and whether the state gave individuals sufficient notice to make a decision and smooth transition. If you think that this change will impact your ability to access needed services, please email Nell Hahn (nhahn@advocacyla.org). Include your name, details of your situation, telephone number and the best time to reach you.



About EarlySteps

EarlySteps provides services to families with infants and toddlers aged birth to three years (36 months) who have a medical condition likely to result in a developmental delay, or who have developmental delays. Children with delays in cognitive, motor, vision, hearing, communication, social-emotional or adaptive development may be eligible for services. EarlySteps services are designed to improve the family's capacity to enhance their child's development. These services are provided in the child's natural environment, such as the child's home, child care or any other community setting typical for children aged birth to 3 years (36 months).

Services

Services the EarlySteps program provides include:

- * Assistive technology
- * Audiology
- * Health Services (family education, assistance with other EarlySteps services only)
- * Medical Services (evaluation only)
- * Nutrition Services
- * Occupational Therapy Services
- * Physical Therapy Services
- * Psychological Services
- * Service Coordination
- * Social Work Services
- * Special Instruction
- * Speech Language Pathology
- * Translation Interpreter Services (foreign language and sign language)
- * Transportation (to and from an EarlySteps service only)
- * Vision Services

Effective October 1, 2013 EarlySteps implemented a cost participation system which allows families to share in the cost for some early intervention services. Financial information is gathered during intake for children who are eligible for EarlySteps. Family size and income are used to determine if a family will be required to pay for some services.

The EarlySteps Process

Anyone can make an EarlySteps referral. Children can be referred to EarlySteps by contacting the [System Point of Entry](#) (SPOE) in their region. Once the [SPOE](#) receives the [referral](#), the family will be contacted to begin the eligibility determination process.

For more information call: 985-429-1252 or 1-866-327-5978

Free Work Incentives Planning & Assistance for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Beneficiaries.

For Assistance Call 1-855-877-8599
(Monday-Friday 8AM-6PM)

Advocacy Center's Southeast Louisiana Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (SELAWIPA)

Call Us If You Have Questions About:

- Going to work or working more
- Social Security Work Incentives
- Medicare and Medicaid eligibility while working
- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI payments while working
- Information and referral to employment programs

Do You Receive SSI and/or SSDI?
Do You Want to Work or Work More?

Do you want to know how Work Pay\$?



www.work-pays.org

If you are on SSI or SSDI and you want to start working or work more, call Advocacy Center's South East Louisiana Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (SELAWIPA) program today!

To request assistance call us at

1- 855-877-8599

What Can You Expect from The Program?

Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICS) will help you understand how work and earnings may affect your SSI, SSDI and other benefits. CWICS will also explain how SSA's Work Incentives, including the Ticket program, can help you start working or work more!

SELAWIPA Serves The Following Parishes:

Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, East Baton Rouge, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, West Feliciana, East Feliciana, St. Helena, Livingston, Ascension, Terrebonne, Assumption, LaFourche, Washington, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Charles

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**St. Tammany Outreach for the Prevention of Suicide
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**Join us for more than just a walk,
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One step at a time.**



**5k Run/Walk
Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015
Abita Springs Trailhead
Walk/Run as an individual or as a Team!**

Registration 7:00 - 7:30 am

**For registration information visit
www.stops-la.com or call 985.237.5506.**

See stops-la.com for sponsorship levels

Get Involved

NFHF is currently looking to grow our volunteer base.

If you are interested, [sign up here](#).

Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC)

Each region in the state has a Regional Coordinating Council (RICC). This gives parents an opportunity locally to stay current with the latest information and provide valuable feedback to EarlySteps. Parent participation is needed at our Regional Interagency Coordinating Council Meetings. The next RICC meeting is:

Wednesday, July 22, 2015

9 am - 11 am

Louisiana Workforce Commission

1711 Nashville Ave., Hammond, LA 70401

Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

The Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for Developmental Disabilities Services for Florida Parishes Human Services Authority, established by legislative act, ensures public input in an advisory capacity in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources to the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities. This input shall be derived from communication with, but not limited to, individuals with disabilities and their families and other concerned groups or individuals.. Give comments about an interest, need or concern about issues facing families or individuals with disabilities. Get information about resources that may be available for you or others. Region 9 RAC wants to hear from you! For more information on the Regional Advisory Committee, email: reachwithdisabilities@gmail.com. The next RAC meeting is:

Tuesday, August 18, 2015

10 am - 12 pm

Florida Parishes Human Services Authority Conference Room

835 Pride Drive, Suite B, Hammond, LA

RAC is Seeking New Members!

The Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for Developmental Disabilities Services for Florida Parishes Human Services Authority, established by legislative act, ensures public input in an advisory capacity in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and the allocation of resources to the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities. Over the next few months, the terms of several members will expire and the committee wants you to join! Positions needed:

Adults with disabilities

Parents and family members representing persons who receive developmental disabilities services

Private providers

Representatives of advocacy organizations providing developmental disabilities services

If you live in the parishes of Washington, Tangipahoa, St. Tammany, St. Helena or

Livingston please complete the [nomination form](#) and return it to Tamara Cannon - reachwithdisabilities@gmail.com.