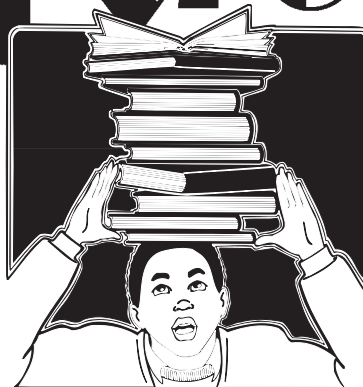


THE FAMILY FORUM

Volume 15, Issue 2
March/April 2004

Governor's Budget to Make the Grade



Fails

Governor Rendell released his proposed budget for 2004-05 on Tuesday, February 3. The total budget is \$50.1 billion, of which about 45%, or \$22.3 billion, is state general funds. This is a 4.1 percent increase in state funds. No new taxes are proposed. Unlike last year's proposed budget, there are no cuts to key human service programs. Medical Assistance programs, which are being dramatically cut in a number of states, are maintained in the PA proposed budget. And the trend toward growth in home and community based programs for people with disabilities is continued. The **community mental retardation** budget includes \$8,574,000 in state funds combined with additional federal funds for the Waiting List initiative. However, advocates have given the proposed budget a failing grade.

The MH/MR Coalition, representing 250,000 consumers who have mental retardation or mental illness, providers, counties and other advocates declared that the new budget places the community MH/MR service system at risk. They called on the Governor and General Assembly to appropriate additional funds to reverse years of flat or reduced funding. For the third year the budget fails to adequately address expanding waiting lists for services and the system's inability to recruit and retain a qualified workforce.

Proposed budget fails to provide essential funding for system in crisis, reports The Arc of Pa.

The Governor's proposal provides less funding than needed for over 17,000 individuals state-wide waiting for services. There is no funding for "system stabilization" or a COLA for community MH/MR programs. This signals to advocates that the Governor does not recognize the importance of these issues to consumers with mental illness and mental retardation, their families and their staff. Many worthy interests compete for state funding, services for people with disabilities are essential and must be provided by government.

This report edited from a press release from The Arc of Pa, representing the MH/MR Coalition, and an analysis prepared by the Policy Information Exchange. See box on page 6 for budget details and contact information.

Con't on Page 6



Diana Tabb and her mother display Diana's decade ceramic plate that won a blue ribbon and a special judge's award in 2003.

Get Crafting Now

Be in time to bring your art work or craft to the Cheltenham Square Mall on March 24th for The Arc of Philadelphia's 8th annual Competition and Exhibition.

To get an application, call Pat Bell-Wright at 215-229-4550, ext. 125, or by email to pbell-wright@arcpddc.org.

You can also download an application from www.arcpddc.org.

Visit www.MyCityMyPlace.com for an on-line version of The Family Forum and more!

- P**arents
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- R**eligious Leaders
- T**eachers
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- P**rofessionals

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Let's hear from you!

Please submit articles to: Editor, Family Forum, Mental Retardation Services, 2nd fl, 1441 Sansom St., Philadelphia, PA 19102

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MRS Internet Resource Directory **www.MyCityMyPlace.com**

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Just give us credit. Thanks!





SPOTLIGHT on ~~Stop~~ the Silence



Stop the Silence, End the Abuse

*By Steve Dorsey, Jody Saitzky
Esther Smits and Nancy Nowell*

Speaking For Ourselves has been working for three years to Stop the Silence, and End the Abuse of people with disabilities. Many people do not know that women, children and men with disabilities are much more likely to be victims of sexual and domestic violence than people without disabilities. Your son or daughter could be the next victim of violence.

“More than 90% of people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Forty-nine percent will experience ten or more abusive incidents.”
(Valenti-Hein & Schwartz, 1995)

For the past three years, Speaking For Ourselves has been working closely with Women Organized Against Rape (sexual trauma) and Women Against Abuse (domestic violence) in Philadelphia. Both of these organizations provide free, excellent, caring services to women, men, and children with developmental disabilities. We encourage people with disabilities in Philadelphia to call these agencies for help.

If you know someone with disabilities who has trouble sleeping, flashbacks, nightmares, is very irritable, is afraid of certain people, places or things, they may be experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Therapy provided at WOAR is 83% successful with non-disabled people in reducing or eliminating PTSD. This therapy is available to people with disabilities.

If you are concerned that someone you know has been a victim of sexual violence, call WOAR at 215-985-3315 to talk to a counselor. If they have been a victim of domestic violence call Women Against Abuse at 215-686-7082 and ask for the lawyer that is assigned to work with people with disabilities.

There are supports available from these organizations, and they want to work with people with disabilities. For help call them at the numbers listed above or call Speaking For Ourselves at 610-825-4592 for more information.

My Body ... My Choice, by Shirley Pacey and illustrated by Annette Russo Penhallegon, (\$7) covers the basics of body safety and is empowering people with disabilities across the nation to resist and report sexual abuse. It is a simple, straightforward way for parents and caregivers to teach their children about safety from abuse. It can also be used in peer education and ‘acted out’ by individuals with disabilities.

“Teach Me,” a CD by Jill Dixson and Shirley Pacey, (\$6) is a powerful song about a woman with disabilities who was sexually abused. Through the universal language of music, her message is clear to the listener. “Teach Me” is being used in employee training, parent education, community education, and in educating individuals with disabilities about sexual abuse. It has been a powerful tool in counseling individuals with disabilities who have been sexually abused.

Blue Tower Training offers this book and CD to help people to resist and report sexual abuse. All proceeds go toward enhancing services for people with disabilities. The reviews are written by Blue Tower Training. Other materials are available. To order contact Blue Tower Training, toll-free, 866-258-8266, or email spaceley@maconresources.org.

Study says Charters have Fewer Special Ed Students

by Paul Socolar, reprinted with permission from "The Notebook" Fall 2003

Why are special education students more scarce in charter schools than in regular public schools in Pennsylvania?

This is a key question raised in the state's five-year evaluation of its charter schools, published last year. It merits serious investigation, some special education advocates say.

The state's charter school law forbids charters to discriminate on the basis of disability.

Western Michigan University researchers Gary Miron, Christopher Nelson, and John Risley, who wrote the Pennsylvania charter school evaluation, found that three-fourths of the state's charter schools had a lower proportion of students with IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans) than the statewide average.

Overall, only 8.5 percent of Pennsylvania charter school students (excluding gifted students) had IEPs, compared with 13 percent of noncharter public school students statewide. If not for two charters with very high percentages of special education students, the low special ed enrollment rate at Pennsylvania charter schools would have been even lower.

Alice Heller, who heads the Philadelphia School District's charter school office, has also noticed the discrepancy.

"The number of special ed students in a charter school should mirror the number of special ed students in a public school," she observed. "If you go through the demographics of our charter

schools, some of them are way off. Some have 1 percent or no percent."

She said she would expect to find from 10 to 15 percent of a school's students in special education.

"That is something that we intend to research because it is a curious thing," Heller said.

The state's evaluation report also makes the observation that charter schools are more likely to serve students with mild disabilities, and the proportion of students with IEPs who have severe or moderate disabilities is three times higher in traditional public schools than in charters.

However, the Pennsylvania charter school evaluation did not find any more dissatisfaction among parents of students with special needs, compared with other parents.

Some charter school parents might disagree. Len Risley of the Education Law Center of Pennsylvania noted that the Center has handled many complaints from parents about special education in charter schools.

According to Risley, some children have been illegally discouraged or even barred from enrolling in charters because of their disabilities; in other cases, the charter was unable or unwilling to provide the child with the special services needed.

The state's five-year evaluation observed that while some parents were harsh in their criticism of charters, others were enthusiastic about how well charter schools were meeting their students' special needs.

Part of the problem has to do with Pennsylvania's charter school structure, Risley said.

Con't on Page 12

Pennsylvania's College of Direct Support

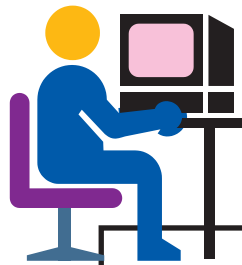
The Office of Mental Retardation, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is pleased to announce the availability of Pennsylvania's College of Direct Support. The College of Direct Support is a national, web-based curriculum designed for individuals who support women and men with developmental disabilities. It was created by some of the leading experts in the field and is built on established and validated skill sets. This curriculum comes as the result of requests made by direct support professionals, provider agencies, and counties for training that is practical, user-friendly, and flexible. Because the College of Direct Support is web-based, users have the freedom to participate at convenient times and places.

Furthermore, the curriculum has been customized to meet the Office of Mental Retardation's regulations, policies, and practices based on a review by a panel of Pennsylvania stakeholders. Topics addressed by the College of Direct Support include: safety at home and in the community (fire safety, emergency response, motor vehicle safety, universal precautions, etc.); maltreatment of vulnerable adults and children (defining, preventing, reporting, and documenting abuse); supporting healthy lives (individual health needs, recognizing signs and symptoms of illness, working with health care providers, etc.); individual rights and choice; community inclusion; positive behavior support.

Pennsylvania is proud to be the first state to offer this curriculum. By providing this training opportunity, the Office of Mental Retardation hopes to demonstrate its commitment to addressing the recruitment and retention issues faced by the

Commonwealth. The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to the Office of Mental Retardation has formed a workgroup to address these issues. (The PAC is a group comprised of a variety of stakeholders to the PA mental retardation system that provides recommendations to the OMR regarding the administration of the system.) The workgroup recently presented their recommendations to Deputy Secretary Casey. The Office of Mental Retardation looks forward to working with the PAC and the entire mental retardation community to continue to generate creative solutions to the problems of recruitment and retention.

The Office of Mental Retardation recognizes the value of the contributions of direct support professionals to the lives of the people we serve.



"Pennsylvania is proud to be the first state to offer this curriculum. We hope that by using the College of Direct Support, we will begin to build a common language, which will enhance communication and help us better support the people we serve," Kevin Casey said.

We want to thank direct support professionals for all of their endeavors and continuing contributions to the lives of Pennsylvanians with mental retardation.

We hope all agencies will sign up to be part of the College of Direct Support. The first step is to appoint a CDS Administrator for your agency. Contact the CDS at 865-934-0221 and ask for the CDS Help Desk. They will assist you in completing the registration paperwork. There will be an Administrative Fee charged, based on the number of individuals served by your agency. For county and individual registrations, please contact shesketh@tiu11.org.

Key Items in Governor's Budget

Governor Ed Rendell has proposed his FY04-05 budget. The following are the key items in the budget that impact persons with mental retardation and their families:

Early Intervention:

- ❑ DPW – New funds proposed for an additional 1,010 children from birth to three years.
- ❑ PDE – Funds current program only.

Education

- ❑ Special Education – 2.5% increase proposed (or \$22.6million)
- ❑ Approved Private Schools – 2.5% increase proposed (or \$1,636, 000)
- ❑ Intermediate Units – flat funded

Adult Services

- ❑ Waiting List Initiative
New \$15.3 million in state and federal funds proposed: Funds are for 6 months, to be annualized to about \$34 million next year; and are funded by an ICF “assessment” mechanism, which would generate state dollars and draw-down new federal dollars (this mechanism has to be passed by the General Assembly).

Over 500 new persons will be served:
325 persons in the consolidated waiver;
150 persons in the person-family directed supports waiver; 56 persons “aging-out” of EPSDT

Funds for 12 additional supports coordinators across the state

- ❑ Increased per diem rates for ICFs/MR
- ❑ No COLA for county MR programs for 3rd consecutive year
- ❑ No “system stabilization” initiatives (i.e., staff recruitment and retention, etc.)
- ❑ No state center closures; anticipates number of persons in state centers dropping by 5 as of July '04

Settlement Will Ensure Access to Polling Places

A federal judge has approved settlement of a class-action lawsuit that, over the next three years, will make every Philadelphia polling place accessible to people who are blind or use wheelchairs.

U.S. District Judge John R. Padova approved the settlement between the city and the National Organization on Disability and nine local disabled citizens. Under the settlement, each of the city's 1,682 polling places will have at least one electronic voting machine by January 1, 2006, that is equipped with earphones and audio instructions usable by a voter who is blind or visually impaired. The city also will create a Polling Place Access Committee to evaluate the approximately 800 of 1,682 polling places in 66 wards that are not accessible to people who use wheelchairs. Modifications to make the voting places accessible must be completed by May 1, 2006.



- ❑ **April 27 is Philadelphia's primary election day.**
- ❑ **October 4 is the last day to register for the November 2 general election.**
- ❑ **For information on ways to register, visit www.seventy.org, or call the Committee of Seventy, 215-557-3600.**

Contacts for Budget Information

MH/MR Program Administrators Association of PA, (717) 232-7554, mchamber@pacounties.org; PA Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, (717) 657-7608, gbianco@parf.org; PA Association of Resources for People with Mental Retardation, (717) 236-2374, shirley@par.net; PA Community Providers Association, (717) 657.7078, george@paprovidemorg; The Arc of PA, (717) 236-2621, ssuroviec@thearcpaorg; and United Cerebral Palsy of PA, (717) 761-6129, jmartinAucpofpa.org.

Free Tax Preparation by IRS-Certified Volunteers

Now you can avoid expensive commercial tax preparers, hidden fees, and high-cost loans. IRS-certified volunteers will help you prepare and file your taxes electronically and for free. Sites are throughout Philadelphia. Call the 24-hour information line – 215-686-2599 – to find the site nearest you, or visit www.gpuac.org. This free tax preparation is sponsored by the Campaign for Working Families, a project managed by the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition.



Get the Most from Your Paycheck

Make sure you get the most from your paycheck by applying for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). If you earn less than \$35,000 a year, you may qualify for this credit, which could give you up to \$4,200 based on family size and income. The IRS volunteers can help you apply for this credit.

State Income Tax Back, Too

You could get all or some of your state taxes back depending on family size and income. The amount differs from individuals to families. You must file the state income tax form PA-40 and include PA Schedule SP. Call 1-888-728-2937 for special Tax Back instructions or to have forms mailed or faxed to you. Or you can use the Internet at www.revenue.state.pa.us and select the PA.direct.file. At that site, you can file your taxes directly and have your Tax Back calculated for you. You may also download forms. The service is free. The IRS volunteers can also help you with this state tax back program.

Good News for People with Disabilities Hearing being Called about the Institutional Bias in Medicaid

Senator Tom Harkin, along with Senators Gordon Smith, and Arlen Specter, have called for a hearing on the institutional bias in the Medicaid program. The Medicaid statute requires that states provide nursing home care, but gives states the option of whether to offer home and community based services. There have been several bills introduced to address the inequity that would give states additional resources to provide home and community-based services to individuals choosing to leave a nursing home or institution. One of the bills, the Medicaid Community Attendant Services and Supports Act (MICASSA), S.971, would require states to provide community based attendant services to individuals with disabilities and older Americans. Source: press release from Senator Harkin's office

Treatment Study for Children with Autism

Are you looking for treatment for your child who has been diagnosed with autism or pervasive developmental disorder? Your child may be eligible for a treatment study at the Drexel University College of Medicine's Specialty Clinic for Children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders. For more information, call 215-842-4085.

School Readiness Resources

The United Way of Southeastern PA has published the Go 2 Guide for School Readiness: Resources for Families with Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers. In addition to a section on school readiness, it includes resources for children's health, preschools, child care, and listings of family services. To get the free guide, call 215-665-2630, or email go2guide@uwsepa.org. The guide can be downloaded from www.uwsepa.org. Click on the "Early to Learn" in the Of Special Interest box on the right of the screen.



Jean's Letter to the Governor

*Jean Searles
shared her
letter at the
Everyday
Lives
Convention
and
gave Family
Forum
permission
to print it.*

I was born on July 24, 1962. I have three brothers and four sisters — I am the second child. I had been taking care of my brothers and sisters ever since they were little. We were all born with a disability. My Mom and Dad were both heavy smokers and alcoholics. In our system they say we have “mild retardation.” I have a brother in an institution who has been blind since birth. He only comes home on holidays or on his birthday. He lives in an institution in Quakertown.

I went to special education classes in Philadelphia, and then I went to the institution in Scranton. They had nowhere else to put me. Then I went to another institution because I got older, and they wanted me to be with older kids. Living in an institution was like living in prison. You could never leave the grounds and you always had to have at least two weeks notice from your case manager or your family to come home.

Staff abused people in the institutions. If we did something they didn't like they would smack us, or curse at us calling us evil names, or they would throw us up against the wall. It was upsetting to see consumers with bruises on their faces and on their bodies. This is why I want to see the institutions closed — people with disabilities don't belong there.

The reason I am writing this story is because I would like to see all of my brothers and sisters out

of the institution and in the community where they belong.

I got out by meeting two people from an agency in Philadelphia. They came to the institution to interview me. They asked me if I wanted to come out. I said yes. Two weeks later I was out! I moved to a community living arrangement (CLA) in Philadelphia. I went to a sheltered workshop during the day. I worked on the floor and, sometimes if they were shorthanded, I worked in the office answering phones. I got paid for my work.

I told the job placement person that I wanted a job on the outside. She helped me get a job at Woolworths in the Neshaminy Mall. I was there for two weeks, and then I went to work at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP). I was a support to the lawyers. I worked there for three years, and then I found a job working at the Disabilities Law Project. I have been working there almost ten years. I am one of the secretaries/administrative assistants.

I lived in the CLA for thirteen years. Then I moved to my own apartment, and I lived there for six and a half years. Then I went to live with a family in family living. I like living with a family, but I wish I lived with a family that celebrated holidays. I have been with this family for almost five years.

I would like to talk more about this to see how we can work together to close every state center, state hospital and nursing home in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. With your brains and my knowledge we can work together to make Pennsylvania what it is supposed to be. If you'd like to contact me, please call me at 215-238-8070.

**Do you have a message for the Governor?
Also, send a photo and your letter to The
Family Forum. (See page 2 for contact info.)**

DID YOU

▶ **Mocha Moms** is a support group for mothers of color who have chosen not to work full-time outside of the home in order to devote more time to their families.

Mocha Moms welcomes people of all religions, races, educational backgrounds, and income levels. Annual dues are \$20.

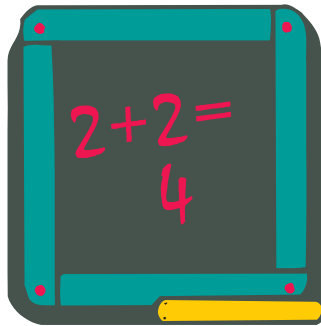
Visit their website at www.mochamoms.org, or call 215-266-5659.

▶ "Mocha Moms" Es un grupo de apoyo para madres Afro- Americanas que han decidido no trabajar tiempo completo fuera de la casa, con el propósito de dedicar mas tiempo a su familia. "Mocha Moms" recibe personas de todas las religiones, razas, nivel intelectual y económico. Cuota anual \$20. Visite su página en la Internet www.mochamoms.org o llame al 215-266-5659

▶ **Puddin's Pantry**, at Church of the Brethren, 6611 Germantown Avenue, is a community service that offers surplus foods to residents of zipcode 19119 and surrounding area, who temporarily need food. Free fruits, vegetables, salads, breads and pastries are available every Saturday evening from 7 pm to 7:30 pm, fresh from area markets. Bring bags and containers with you.

Availability is first-come, first-served. To participate or to volunteer, call Elvira at 215-842-1552.

▶ "Puddins Pantry" es un servicio comunitario localizado en la Iglesia de Brethren en el 6611 de la avenida Germantown, que ofrece excedentes de comida para residentes en el código postal 19119 y áreas cercanas que temporeramente lo requieran. Los sábados de 7pm a 7:30pm se ofrecerán gratuitamente frutas, vegetales, ensaladas y productos de panadería y repostería. Favor de traer bolsas y envases. Se servirá en orden de llegada



KNOW?

según la disponibilidad de los productos. Para participar o para ofrecer su ayuda como voluntario favor comunicarse con Elvira al 215-842-1542

▶ The **Medicare Rights Center** – founded in 1989, is the largest independent source of

information and assistance on health care rights and benefits for older and disabled men and women in the United States. For more information about MRC, call 212-869-3850, or visit the MRC web site at www.medicarerights.org. If you have a question for a hotline counselor, call 800-783-7067 for your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). These programs offer people with Medicare and their families help with their health insurance choices, Medicare rights and protections, dealing with payment denials or appeals, complaints about care or treatment, and Medicare bills.

▶ **A new database on Medicaid benefits** – <http://www.kff.org/content/2003/20031027> – is intended to help the public better understand the Medicaid program at a state level. The database is comprehensive, with information about benefits covered by each state, for what

populations the benefits are available, and the limitations, co-payments, and payment rules that apply to the benefits.

▶ El centro para los derechos de "Medicare" fundado en 1989, es la mayor fuente independiente de información y asistencia para los derechos de cuidado médico y beneficios para los envejecientes y las personas con impedimentos en los Estados Unidos. Para más información sobre MRC favor llamar al 212-869-3850 o visite su pagina en la Internet www.medicarerights.org.

Visit www.MyCityMyPlace.com
for resources

Con't. on Page 10

Any websites noted in The Family Forum are provided for your information and are not rated or reviewed. We welcome your input about useful sites you have visited. Email familyforum@phila.gov.

Did You Know?

Con't. from Page 9

▶ Si desea hablar con un consejero sobre el programa estatal de asistencia para seguro médico, llame a la línea caliente 1-800-783-7067. Este programa ofrece ayuda a las personas y sus familiares en medicare, acerca de su seguro médico, alternativas, derechos, protección, denegación de pagos, apelaciones, quejas acerca del cuidado médico o facturas médicas.

▶ Una nueva base de datos sobre los beneficios de "medicaid" esta disponible para ayudar al público a entender mejor el programa de "medicaid" en el ámbito estatal. La base de datos contiene amplia información acerca de la cubierta de beneficios en cada estado, a cual población esta dirigida, las limitaciones, reglas de pagos y co-pagos que aplican a los beneficios.

<http://www.kff.org/content/2003/20031027/>

▶ The **Asperger Syndrome Coalition** of the U.S. – www.asperger.org – provides news and information on Asperger Syndrome and related conditions. There is a support group, Asperger Syndrome Children Empowered Now with Dignity (ASCEND), which meets in Havertown. Call Dierdre Wright at 610-449-6776 or Sally Barr, 610-446-4065. There is a message board at www.aspergersyndrome.org.

▶ La coalición del Síndrome "Asperger" en Estados Unidos www.asperger.org provee noticias e información acerca del síndrome y condiciones relacionadas. Hay un grupo de apoyo "Asperger Syndrome Children Empowered Now with Dignity" (ASCEND), que se reúne en Havertown. Favor de comunicarse con Dierdre Wright al 610-449-6776 o Sally Barr al 610-446-4065. Para mensajes podrá buscar en www.aspergersyndrome.org

▶ **Volunteer Way** – www.volunteerway.org – is an interactive website that enables people to locate volunteer opportunities in the Greater Delaware Valley area. You can use keywords to match your interests, location, time constraints, specific months and other criteria to find a volunteer opportunity. There is an online calendar and email announcements that provide new volunteer opportunities, or contact the United Way of Southeastern PA by telephone, 215-665-2472.

▶ "Volunteer Way" www.volunteerway.org Es un sitio interactivo en la Internet que le permite a las personas localizar oportunidades para ofrecer su ayuda como voluntarios en el área del Valle de Delaware. Podrá identificar oportunidades para ofrecer servicios de voluntario de acuerdo a sus intereses, localización, tiempo disponible y otros aspectos. En esa página podrá encontrar un calendario de actividades que provee las oportunidades disponibles o puede llamar a "United Way" en PA. 215-665-2472

▶ The **National Dissemination Center** – www.nichcy.org – provides information on disabilities in children and youth; programs and services for infants, children, and youth with disabilities; IDEA, the nation's special education law; No Child Left Behind, the nation's general education law; and research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities. Call NICHCY at 800-695-0285.

▶ Provee información, programas y servicios relacionados a los impedimentos en infantes, niños y jóvenes, la ley IDEA que es la ley nacional sobre Educación Especial; la ley nacional de educación general conocida como 'Ningún niño será dejado atrás' e información sobre el desarrollo de prácticas efectivas para los niños con impedimentos. NICHCY 1-800-695-0285.

▶ Todas las publicaciones de NICHCY están disponibles aquí, gratis, en nuestro sitio de Internet. Para su conveniencia, las ofrecemos en versiones de texto solamente y PDF. www.nichcy.org/pubs/spanish/spanpubs.htm.

Thanks to Emilio Pacheco for the Spanish translation.

The Kaiser Family Foundation released the results of its survey of 1,505 non-elderly adults with permanent physical and/or mental disabilities on health care issues. The findings are published in a new Foundation report, "Understanding the Health Care-Needs and Experiences of People with Disabilities: Findings from a 2003 Survey", available online at www.kff.org/medicare/121203package.cfm and in a recent online edition of Health Affairs available at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/hlthaff.w3.552v1.pdf>.

The New year has begun and I am ready to kick off my childcare service. I am now accepting applications for childcare in my home. My hours of operation are from 7 am until 6 pm. I live in the Germantown section of the city. I can provide care of children with special needs, allowing parents to work or continue their education. I am state certified and subsidy is welcomed. Please call me at 215-848-3802.



Joyce Nelson

Visit www.professionalfit.com – a clothing company for people with disabilities. For a free mailed catalog, call 800-422-2348 or email kurt@professionalfit.com.



Book Reviews

Incredible Edible Gluten-Free Food for Kids

This cookbook by Sheri L. Sanderson (Woodbine House, \$18.95) will be a godsend to anyone who has – or cooks for someone with – celiac disease or gluten intolerance. Although the recipes are designed to appeal to kids, they will please adults as well. The 150 recipes range from snacks, breakfast, lunch and dinner, and desserts.

Feel Our Freedom: Communities and Connections for People with Developmental Disabilities

This book by Alisa Hauser Kraft and Jon Lowenstein (High Tide Press, \$27.95) profiles the everyday lives of 41 adults who are supported by human-service agencies in Illinois. Dramatic black-and-white photography combines with vivid story-telling to produce the desired effect: to increase our awareness of how important it is for people with disabilities to pursue goals and become as self-reliant as possible.

Toll-Free Hotline for Air Travelers with Disabilities who experience disability-related air travel problems, or who want to obtain information and assistance. The Hotline number is 1-800-778-4838 (voice) or 1-800-455-9880 (TTY).

- ★ Even Start is a family literacy program in which parents and children learn together. It offers free GED classes and parenting workshops in North, South, Northwest, and West Philadelphia. Call 215-351-7231 for information.

Jerry Ellis died January 15 at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital. He was 71. When he was six months old, he was dropped from a first-story window during a house fire and suffered severe physical injuries. When he was 14, he was placed at Pennhurst and stayed there for 35 years. Jerry's large family kept an eye on him while at Pennhurst, his sister said. In 1982, Jerry moved into a home with Lester Noch, his life-long friend. Jerry's sunny smile and fun-loving personality will be missed by all who knew him.

FOR SALE 12.5 cubic ft. frost-free refrigerator for \$75. Must be able to move it up one flight of stairs.

Tank vacuum cleaner with extra long hose and all attachments for \$20. Located in Lansdowne, Delaware Cty. Call Linda at 215-229-4550 x123, or lfalotico@arcpddc.org.

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Study Says Charters . . .

Con't. from Page 4

“Some charter schools appear highly successful in serving students with special needs, while others appear unable (or according to some critics, unwilling) to serve such students,” the authors wrote.

The report by Miron, Nelson, and Risley did not determine what is keeping special education students away from many charter schools, but did report that staff at many charter schools “complained that they lacked the human and material resources to optimally meet all their students’ needs.”

Part of the problem has to do with Pennsylvania’s charter school structure, Rieser said.

“The charter school law made each charter completely independent, free from involvement with the local school district or even other charter schools,” he explained. “The charters wanted that independence, but each charter has only its own resources to draw on when serving kids with disabilities, and that can be tough for a small school.”

Some critics say charter schools are sensitive to the economics of special education and avoid enrolling students who are expensive to educate unless the reimbursements they will receive are adequate.

But there are other theories about the low numbers of special education students in many charters. For example, families with special needs students may have deeper relationships with staff in traditional public schools and therefore be less likely to switch schools.

Will anyone be investigating this issue? Heller, for one, said her office at the District would be ratcheting up its monitoring of charter schools on providing access to students with disabilities and other issues.

The evaluation of Pennsylvania charter schools by is available on the web at www.wmich.edu/evalctr/charter/pa_5year.

Department of Education to Issue Rule on Testing and Students with Disabilities

The Department of Education is preparing to issue a new rule over the next few days that would exempt students with the most severe disabilities from tests designed to determine whether schools are improving or not. The new rule would reportedly allow school districts to exempt up to one percent of their students with “significant cognitive disabilities” (as yet, undefined) from tests designed to measure the performance of individual schools. Instead, these students would be tested against “standards appropriate for their intellectual development,” and these results would be added to the overall school profile. The Department estimates that this new rule would impact approximately 10% of students currently receiving special education. States could appeal to the Federal government to increase this number.



Congratulations to Anjuan and Iggy Robinson on the birth of Benjamin Miguel on February 3. Estatic grandmother is Pia Nicolini.

REPEATABLES

These are regularly scheduled meetings. However, check before you go for time, location, or date changes, especially holidays and the summer.

MONDAYS

- ☆ 1st Mon 6:30-9pm Speaking for Ourselves, St. Joes College, 5600 City Line, 610-825-4592
- ☆ 1st Mon 10-12pm PATH FDSS Adv. Com, Mary McAvoy, 215-728-4660
- ☆ 2nd Mon 7 pm COMHAR FDSS Adv. Com, Lydia Barashango, 215-537-4822
- ☆ 2nd Mon 10-12pm Northeast FDSS Adv. Com, Patty Caterina, 215-831-2883
- ☆ 2nd Mon 1:30pm Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities, 16th fl MSB, 1401 JFK, 215-686-2798

TUESDAYS

- ☆ 1st Tues 10am CATCH FDSS Adv. Com, Diane Jordan-Adams, 215-755-9804
- ☆ 2nd Tues 10am Hall Mercer FDSS Adv. Com, Madeleine McMahon, 215-829-5276
- ☆ 2nd Tues 5:30pm NHS/Mt Airy FDSS Adv. Com, Diane Howard, 215-248-6834

WEDNESDAYS

- ☆ 3rd Wed 7pm Consortium FDSS Adv. Com, Darlene Gonzalez, 267-284-0050
- ☆ 4th Wed 6-8pm JFK FDSS Adv. Com, Betty Harrigan, 215-568-0860 x3214 Note: Nov 03 meeting on Nov 19

THURSDAYS

- ☆ 2nd Thurs 1:30pm SEPTA Advisory Com. on Accessible Transportation, 1234 Market, 11th fl, 215-580-7145
- ☆ 2nd Thurs call for time WES FDSS Adv. Com, Shenette Blount, 215-227-8946 or 45
- ☆ 3rd Thurs 10am-12pm FDSS Steering Com., 1441 Sansom St, Deborah Groom, 215-686-0224
- ☆ 3rd Thurs 12-2pm Managed Care Coalition, Liberty Resources, 1341 N. Delaware, 215-634-2000 x240

FRIDAYS

- ☆ 1st & 3rd Fri 7-9pm Easter Seals Phila teen social club, 3975 Conshohocken Ave, Kendra Brooks, 610-565-2353 x231
- ☆ 3rd Fri 1-3pm Consumer Connection, Liberty Resources, 1341 N. Delaware, 215-634-2000 x320
- ☆ 4th Fri 1-3pm Support Group for people with disabilities, Liberty Resources, see above

SATURDAYS

- ☆ 2nd Sat 1-4pm Disabled in Action, American Friends Ctr, 1501 Cherry, 215-627-7255

National Organ Transplant Access Survey

Are people with disabilities being discriminated against if they need an organ transplant because of inadequate health coverage? The National Work Group on Disability Transplantation Access is conducting a survey about transplantation and persons with disabilities.

This urgent survey is meant for people with intellectual, physical or mental disabilities who have severe health conditions that might be helped by organ transplantation (e.g. kidney, lung, heart, liver, intestine, pancreas, cornea, etc). Please provide this information to everyone who should take the survey. The survey is online at www.govoter.org/transplant/survey.htm.

The final deadline for the survey is April 15.

The results of the survey will be used in a presentation to the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Organization (JCAHO) regarding the profound concerns growing about the adequacy of the health coverage for our constituencies.

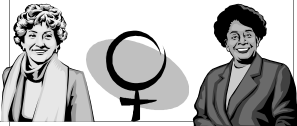

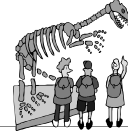













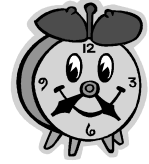






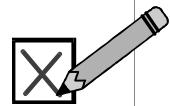

The only person who is constantly wrong and still keeps his job is the weatherman.

www.MyCityMyPlace.com
for more dates and
resources

MORE INFO

- ☆ Networks for Training 123 S. Broad St, 23rd fl, annual course guide available, 215-546-4111 x3454, www.networksfortraining.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>It Is Mental Retardation Awareness Month!</p> 	<p>1 *SFO, *PATH</p> <p>Women's History Month</p>	<p>2 *CATCH</p> <p>- Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential lecture series 3/2-3 on Brain Injured Children 215-233-2050</p>	<p>3</p> <p><u>Women's History Fact</u></p> <p>1848 years ago the first women's rights convention was held in the United States by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in New York</p>	<p>4 **Networks Tips for people who use wheelchairs workshop</p> 	<p>5 *Easter Seals</p> <p>- Don't forget about First Friday's in Olde City. Visit all the shops, museums, galleries, restaurants, and enjoy treats from each place. FREE/ Low Cost</p>	<p>6 Dinosaurs and Fossils lecture and hands on fun. 215-763-6529 x 12 Wagner's science museum 12:30-2p</p> 
<p>7 Special Olympics bowling tournament Erie Lanes 215-842-4690</p> <p>- PDDC 4-day outcomes certification training 3/8-3/11 215-686-9437</p> 	<p>8 *Mayor's Commission on People w/ Disabilities, *COMHAR, *Northeast **Networks creative fitness 5:30-8p</p> <p>-MR achievement awards NECC MH/MR 215-831-2800</p>	<p>9 *Hall Mercer, NWHS **Networks Understanding the MR System</p> <p>-Jillian's Bowling party 6-8p 215-632-9040</p> <p>-NE High School Transition Fair 215-875-3256</p>	<p>10 Special Olympics Developmental Swim Day at William Penn High School 215-842-4690</p> <p>- Understanding the MR system 6-8p Boone Family Center 215-978-3744</p>	<p>11 *SEPTA, WES ** Special Vacations visits the Gulf Coast 3/11-3/15</p> 	<p>12 Come visit the National Liberty Museum 321 Chestnut St. Exhibits, videos, games, & more 10a-5p \$5 admission</p> <p>- PDDC Seniors Open House 10a-3p 215-229-4550 x 178</p>	<p>13 *Disabled in Action</p> <p>- Special Olympics Leprechaun Run/Walk West River Drive 215-842-4690</p> 
<p>14</p> <p><u>Women's History Fact</u></p> <p>1878 Women's suffrage Amendment was passed, giving female US citizens the right to vote.</p> 	<p>15 Philadelphia Interagency Coordinating Council Core Group Meeting at COMHAR (Whitaker Ave.)215-731-2123</p> 	<p>16 AAPD Leadership Gala in Washington DC. For ticket info call 202 457-0046</p>	<p>17 *Consortium, *JFK</p> <p>- MR Adult Dance 7-9p at Houseman Recreation Center 215-685-1240 for all 21 and over 3744</p> 	<p>18 *FDSS</p> <p>- Poetry Performance workshop at Free Library 1901 Vine Street 215-686-5415</p> <p>- WESWORKS Employment Symposium 6-8p. Sam Greg 215-227-8933</p>	<p>19 *Easter Seals, *Consumer Connection</p> <p>-The book and cook culinary market and showcase. Fort Washington expo center 215-545-5353</p>	<p>20 Parents Involved Network Advocacy and Info conference at the Doubletree Hotel 215-751-1800</p> 
<p>21</p> <p>3/21-23 Annual Government Affairs Seminar in Washington, DC sponsored by the AAMR and ARC</p>	<p>22 Come join the Philadelphia KiXX indoor soccer team at the Wachovia Spectrum. Ticket \$15-\$20 call 888-888-KiXX</p> <p>-Understanding the MR system 2-4p Contact Bill Burns 215-235-5040</p> 	<p>23 Dance to the oldies w/NECC MH/MR 1-3p to RSVP 215-831-2925</p>	<p>24 Upcoming changes in Support Coordination training w/ PATH 10a-12p info call Mary MacAvoy 215-728-4660</p> <p>- ARC Art & Craft exhibit at Cheltenham Sq. Mall 215-229-4550 x 125</p>	<p>25 PCA legislative breakfast & briefing. 215-765-9000 x 4235</p> <p>- NECC Understanding the MR system 4-8p, 215-831-2883</p> <p>-WES Annual Outreach 5:30p-8:30p 215-227-8546</p>	<p>26 Points of Transformation Awards, Wyndham Franklin Plaza Horizon Ballroom 9a-12p</p> <p>-Rachel Simon book signing 12:30p Hall Mercer, Molly Davis 215-829-5226</p>	<p>27 The Little Engine That Could ASL interpreted at the Walnut Street Theater for kids K-6</p> <p>-Children's Hospital SIBSHOPS 10a-12:30p for siblings of people w/ MR. 215-590-7443</p>
<p>28</p> <p><u>Women's History Fact</u></p> <p>1983 Sally Ride was the first person to orbit the Earth aboard the space ship "Challenger"</p> 	<p>29 Last day to register before the primary elections</p>	<p>30 Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential Lecture Series 3/30-31 on Brain Injured Children 215-233-2050</p>	<p>31 CAPP Free Asthma Classes at Lehigh Ave. branch of the Free Library 4-5p 215-590-3261</p> <p>-PDDC open house and community resources 3-7p 215-299-4550 x 126</p>	<p>*Repeatables</p>	<p>**More Info</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">March 2004</p>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*Repeatables</p> <p>April 2004</p>	<p>**More Info</p>			<p>1 April Fools Day - **Networks: Sorting through Autism, Mental Illness & Mental retardation -UCP annual conference 1-3p in Boston, Mass 1800-872-5827</p>	<p>2 *Easter Seals -UCP 1 day Therapy Conference 1-800-878-5887 -HireDisability career expo in Philadelphia info 212-822-8524</p>	<p>3 Enjoy the art of doll making and collecting at the Philadelphia Doll Museum 2253 N. Broad Street. 215-787-0220 \$4 Thurs- Sat 10a-4p</p> 
<p>4 -Daylight Savings Time Begins- Set clocks forward 1 hour</p> 	<p>5 *SFO, PATH Schools Closed -CAPP Free Asthma Classes at Germantown Settlement 4-5p register 215-590-5261</p>	<p>6 *CATCH Schools Closed - Institute of Achievement for Human Potential lecture series on resources for Brain Injured Children 215-233-2030</p>	<p>7 Schools Closed - CAPP offers free Asthma Classes at Lehigh Avenue Branch of the Free Library 215-590-5261</p> 	<p>8 *SEPTA, WES Schools Closed - American helicopter Museum & Ed. Center photos and interactive exhibits and helicopter rides 1-1:30 Wed-Sat. 610-436-9600</p>	<p>9 Good Friday Schools Closed -The Philadelphia Art Alliance features many wonderful Art Exhibits this month including Mary Henderson "Amusements" 215-545-4302</p> 	<p>10 *Disabled in Action - Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival, Gala and Silent Auction 215-204-1448</p>
<p>11 Easter Sunday/ Resurrection Day</p> 	<p>12 *Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, *COMHAR *Northeast - Philabundance Walk Against Hunger 215-339-0900 x217 -PP&A benefits planning 215-229-4550 x 126</p>	<p>13 *Hall-Mercer, *NHS Mt. Airy - Olney High School Transition fair 215-875-3286</p> 	<p>14 Institute of Achievement for Human Potential lecture series on resources for Brain Injured Children 215-233-2030</p>	<p>15 *FDSS -Free Library book discussion with author Ellis Cose on <u>Bone to Pick</u> his newest book. 7p. 686-5415</p> 	<p>16 *Easter Seals Early Childhood Conference 2004 4/16-17 at Philadelphia Convention Center contact PMHCC 215-546-0300</p>	<p>17 Special Olympics basketball tournament at Northeast High School 215-842-4690</p> 
<p>18 - Spiral Q puppet theater presents "Picturing Women" historical works and contemporary art from Philadelphia Area institutions 215-222-6979</p>	<p>19 -**Networks- Person to Person infection control -CAPP Free Asthma Classes at Germantown Settlement 4-5p register 215-590-5261</p>	<p>20 The Franklin Institute's "Inside Africa" multidisciplinary exhibit exploring diverse African cultures, technologies, social institutions, and knowledge brought to the Americas. 215-448-1200</p>	<p>21 Transition Symposium with Community Pediatrics & Advocacy Program 8a-4p at Children's Hosp. 215-590-7230 -School of Rock concert w/ Paul Green 7p. Free Library</p>	<p>22 Earth Day Take-our-children-to-work Day -One- day overview of outcomes seminar at Interac. Info 215-686-9437</p>	<p>23 The Philadelphia Alliance sponsors Advancing in the Human Services Field workshop 8a-4p for Direct Support Professionals. 215-438-6400</p>	<p>24 Truly welcome Spring with a visit to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Center. FREE. Learn to make your flowers grow wonderfully all season. 215-988-8800</p>
<p>25 Special Vacations trip to Graceland. Will they spot Elvis???</p>	<p>26 Collective Advocacy workshops. Advocacy with Local Government 10a-12p Timing & Targeting your advocacy efforts 1-3p 610-938-9000</p>	<p>27 Presidential Primary Elections</p>  <p>- In depth Intro to outcomes 4/27-28 at JFK, for info 215-686-9437</p>	<p>28 *JFK</p> 	<p>29 Special Vacations VIVA LAS VEGAS!! trip</p>	<p>30</p>	

Points of Transformation Awards

Friday, March 26
9:30 a.m. to Noon

Wyndham Franklin Plaza
Horizon Ballroom
17th & Race Streets

Keynote address by Renowned Speaker 2004: The Year to Empower Direct Support Professionals

Lynne Seagle, the keynote speaker, has worked in the field of human services for over twenty years. She is one of the country's leading consultants in Organizational Development and Supported Living Services. The focus of her expertise encompasses organizational change, building self-directed work groups and participatory management. Her clients span the private and public sectors.

Ms Seagle was awarded the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation's International Leadership Award and she has been a keynote presenter at the President's Commission on Mental Retardation, in addition to many conventions and conferences such as the National Association of Design Administrators and International and National Disability Conferences. She has served as Executive Director of Hope House Foundation for over two decades.

Hope House believes that people with disabilities have the right to participate in community life to the fullest extent possible. Today, the agency provides services for nearly 100 people living in their own homes in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Chesapeake, Virginia. Participants in the supported-living program include those with mental retardation, autism, traumatic brain disorder and psychiatric disorders. More than 65% of the people served by Hope House were institutionalized an average of seventeen years and range in age from 19 to 75.

MARCH is Mental Retardation Awareness Month

Time to take stock. What are you doing to promote the public's understanding and awareness of people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities so these citizens can have increased access to community life, in employment, education, housing, medical care, and social opportunities?

If undeliverable, please return to:

Editor, The Family Forum
1441 Sansom Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

