

ADVOCACY IN ACTION NEWS

Volume I, Issue II

April 2006

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

What is so unbelievable to me is how excited I get when I witness the enthusiasm in young parents and self advocates while participating in the Partners in Policymaking sessions. Partners participants are diverse in age, race, economics, disability etc. but they are so “together” already. They have been offered a foundation of the history of people with disabilities in our culture and society and how it affects the present and the future. Participants are encouraged to understand the past in order to develop a vision and direction for developing public policy that will positively impact the lives of people with disabilities now and in the future.

Partners are beginning to understand how service coordination between state and local governments and agencies work to help both families and individuals with disabilities live quality lives. They learned how important it is to be actively involved from the beginning. Partners are learning how to tell their stories.

Guest speakers offered personal examples, inspiration and current information. From this training, participants developed an understanding of communicating across the generations and the impact of public



Cindy Norwood and Sue Swenson at the Disability Summit.

policy on change. This comprehensive training also has taught them how children with disabilities can be successfully educated in regular classrooms at their neighborhood schools.

Sue Swenson, Executive Director of the Arc of the United States spoke to the Partners in Policymaking class and at the Disability Summit. She challenged us when she stated, **“You never know what moment you will be called upon to make a difference. We need to ask why, questioning authority and focus on humanness, civil rights and democracy.”** Sue talked about developing an awareness of how to impact legislators and provided a model of sharing your story in 90 seconds.

“We need to have the guts to talk about changing the culture we see.”

Sue also offered individual support and guidance to participants and encouraged them to make change happen for people with disabilities in Ohio.

Gina Mitchner, one of the Partners participants states, “Yes, I do agree that parents have the right ideas for their children . . . What worries me is that I now feel I should want my



son with Down Syndrome to have a dual diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, so he can benefit from all of these great ideas

. . . I shouldn't have to feel this way. The reason I say that is because it now seems that we have singled out just one of so many disabilities to receive equal opportunities and benefits that all states should be providing for all people with disabilities. I know Autism is being diagnosed more and more these days, but does that mean we have to now separate the Autism group from the DS group or the DS group from the Cerebral Palsy group? We need to build a system that is supportive of **all** participants. We need to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, and cooperate between all disability groups and state leaders. As parents we want the very best for our children in all avenues of life. Disability groups need to work together, support one another, and rally together so all children with all disabilities are represented and supported by the state in areas of health, education, early intervention, Medicaid, waivers, etc..”

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SPOTLIGHT ON HELP SUMMER PROGRAM

Summer should be an enjoyable season for children. For many youngsters with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, however, summer can be a bewildering and disappointing experience. Routines are broken, skills are forgotten, and they are often unable to engage in the fun activities that their siblings are able to enjoy.

This is precisely the reason the HELP Foundation, Inc. established a Summer Program for children with special needs. Since 1972, the agency has provided a Continuing Education Summer Program designed to prevent regression of skills, promote socialization, and reinforce individual goals that the children were focusing on during the regular school year.

Originally designed to accommodate the twelve youngsters residing at the HELP Foundation's group home, the 2006 program plans to enroll 300 children at two locations: the Green Road Developmental Center on the east side, and the Westlake Developmental Center on the west side.

As a result of year-round planning and successful collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Help's Summer Program serves children and adolescents between the ages of 3 through 22

in a school setting. A comprehensive assessment is completed for each youngster at the time of application in the spring, and certified teachers use this information along with the child's IEP to plan and implement individualized instruction throughout a six and a half hour day, utilizing a 1:3 staff to student ratio.

Behavior specialist consultants and a sensory room aid the staff in accommodating children with behavior disorders, while caring registered nurses at both sites provide skilled nursing care to any child requiring medications, tube feedings, or other specialized medical treatment. Door-to-door transportation, nursing services, music and art activities, adaptive physical education, and a nutritious breakfast as well as lunch are provided for six full weeks.

The atmosphere at both program locations is positive and nurturing. Furthermore, several school districts throughout the county select the HELP Foundation as an extended school year provider for their students who are eligible for this service.

The Summer Program has established an excellent reputation and strives to provide each participant with a structured, well designed positive experience. Friendships blossom, progress as well as praise are



emphasized, and smiles are abundant. For many children and adolescents with special needs, the HELP Summer Program enables them to enjoy the summer season just like their siblings and typical peers.

Parents who feel their son or daughter may qualify for ESY through the HELP Foundation are encouraged to contact the HELP office at 216-432-4814 for further information and assistance.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY SUCCESSFULLY SPEND AND SAVE YOUR DOLLARS!

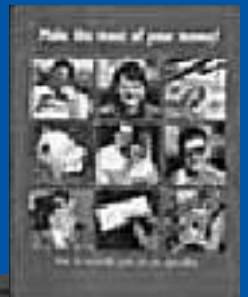
We will be offering a cognitively adapted training session designed for adults who are eligible for County Board of MR/DD services and other interested self advocates. Each participant will receive a copy of Make the Most of Your Money! a publication of The Arc of the US and the National Endowment for Financial Education. This training will assist self advocates to manage their own money, learn about banks, checking accounts, debit cards, paying bills, spending traps, and more.

When: Wednesday May 10, 2006 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM
Where: Fairview Park 21255 Lorain Road, Fairview Park, 44126
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*There is no cost for this training session.
Lunch is provided.
To register, call CMR.*



SUMMER ADULT RECREATION

There are lots of opportunities for an adult with MR/DD to interact with others. There are social groups and activities that meet year round as well as summer camps, both day and residential. Here are a few ideas for you to check out:

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Blue Ribbon Recreation

Locations: Solon, Mayfield, and more
Contact: Mary Shimits (440) 248-5747
pstiller@core.com
Website: solonrec.org/blue_ribbon.html

Catholic Charities Disability Services

Location: Various
Contact: Marilyn Scott (216) 334-2963
mjscott@clevelandcatholiccharities.org
Website: clevelandcatholiccharities.org/disability

SOAR!

Location: 4937 Mills Industrial Pkwy, N. Ridgeville
Contact: Scott Montgomery (440) 327-6454

Special Olympics

Location: 16363 Pearl Rd., Ste. 301, Strongsville
Contact: Jeff Vermillion (440) 846-513
clevspoly@aol.com
Website: ohiospoly.org

Society for Rehabilitation

Location: 9521 Lake Shore Boulevard, Mentor
Contact: (440) 352-8993 or (800) 344-3159
rehab@societyhelps.org
Website: societyhelps.org

MUSIC THERAPY AND LESSONS

The Cleveland Music School Settlement

Location: 11125 Magnolia Drive, Cleveland
Contact: (216) 421-5806
cmssinfo@thecmss.org
Website: thecmss.org

Royalton Music Center

Location: 6552 Royalton Road, North Royalton
Contact: (440) 237-9400
Website: royaltonmusic.com

THERAPEUTIC HORSE RIDING

Achievement Centers of Cleveland

Location: Mill Stream Run Reservation, Strongsville,
Contact: (440) 238-6200 ext. 44
jennifer.duckworth@achievementctrs.org
Website: achievementcenters.org

Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Ctr

Location: 16497 Snyder Road, Chagrin Falls
Contact: (440) 708-0013
tzimmer@fieldstonefarmtrc.com
Website: fieldstonefarmtrc.com

Valley Riding, Inc.

Locations: Rocky River and Brecksville
Contact: (216) 267-2525

valleyriding@sbcglobal.net
valleyriding.org

SUMMER CAMPS

Akron Rotary Camp

Location: 4460 Rex Lake Dr. Akron
Contact: (330) 644-4512
rotarycamp@akronymca.org
Website: akronymca.org/camp/rotary

CYO Camp Christopher

Location: 812 Biruta Street Akron
Contact: (800) CYO-CAMP
Website: campchris.org/camps/special.html

Cleveland Sight Center

Location: 1909 East 101st St. P O Box 1988 Cleveland
Contact: (216) 791-8118 ext. 227
Website: clevlandsightcenter.org

Camp Cheerful

Location: 4255 Northfield Road, Highland Heights
Contact: (440) 238-6200 ext. 23
tim.fox@achievementctrs.org
Website: achievementcenters.org

Recreation Unlimited

Location: 7700 Piper Road Ashley, OH
Contact: (740) 548-7006
info@recreationunlimited.org
Website: www.recreationunlimited.org

For additional information about these and other programs contact CMR. Please note that CMR does not rate, recommend, or screen any of the providers included on the above list.

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Former Cuyahoga Commissioner Tim McCormick gave participants a rare insight into working with their elected officials and to remember that they are people too. The session ended with an informal conversation with Martin Gelfand, Staff Council for Congressman Dennis Kucinich.



training. Together they will begin to positively impact public policy for all Ohioans.



Theresa Thompson Speaks with Martin Gelfand.

Partners participants will graduate in May after completing five months of

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