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Support Parent Training

Family Support Network of Wake County will be offering a Support Parent Training on Saturday, October 9, 2004. The purpose of this workshop is to train parents to support other parents of children with special needs.

This support comes in many forms such as emotional, resources, information, school issues, eating issues, etc. The list goes on and on. We all know what it feels like to have a child with special needs and feel so totally isolated. There is nothing more encouraging than talking to someone who has been there and knows how you feel. Please take a minute to read the letters from parents about their parent matches on page 4, and you will understand what I am talking about.

Many of our support parents are parents who have been supported in the past. They are a little further “down the road” and now feel it is time for them to give back. These parents become support parents so that they can help others at the beginning of their journey. As a support parent myself, I can tell you there is no more rewarding job around.

FSN/WC is starting a Hospital Outreach Program where we will support families who have children in the NICU and Special Care Nursery. We will be providing support parents for those families and are looking for parents who have had children spend time in the hospital.

So, if you have a child with special needs and/or one that has spent any time in the NICU, please consider attending our workshop on October 9th. I guarantee that you will love your new role as a support parent, knowing that you have helped someone down that long road that we all must travel. For more information, please call Micki at (919) 662-4600 ext. 257.

Rene’ Morrison
Program Director

Newsletter Dedication

As you look through this newsletter, you will see a recurring theme—Support Parents. FSN/WC is dedicating this newsletter to its Support Parents—all 135 of you!

Support Parents are the heart and soul of what Family Support Network is about. There would be no program without all of you.

You have given so graciously of your time to support others in need, and FSN/WC truly appreciates each and every one of you.

As time goes on, our children’s needs change, and they go on to elementary, middle, or high school. Sometimes there is a new diagnosis, therapy, or medication. FSN/WC needs to be aware of those changes so that we can appropriately match you with referral parents.

In the next month, we will be sending out update forms for you to fill out. Please include any changes

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Charity Night—October 24, 2004

This year Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh will be sponsoring a Charity Night Gala event which will be held on October 24, 2004 from 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. at the mall. Tickets to the Gala event are \$25.00 and entitle the ticket holder to entertainment, food, a door prize, complimentary valet parking and entry into a raffle drawing for prizes valued of at least \$500.00. The event is black tie dress (optional). Additional raffle tickets are available for \$1.00 each for the chance to win several shopping sprees at the mall. For more information or to purchase tickets contact Jodi at (919) 662-4600, ext. 257 or jodi@familysupportonline.com.

Wheelchair Basketball

The Triangle has its own wheelchair basketball team called the "Wheels of Steel." The team ranges in ages from K5 to 12th grade and has been in existence since the 1990's. If you can't participate in regular sports programs due to a physical limitation, you can play wheelchair basketball. You do not necessarily need to be completely wheelchair bound. We practice on Sundays at the Cardinal Gibbons High School across from the RBC Center in Raleigh. Our season begins in late October through February. If you're interested, please contact Pansy Brannan (DDbrannan@cs.com) at 919-779-4120.



Teen Dance

Triangle Down Syndrome Network will be holding their fall teen dance on Saturday, October 23 from 7:00—9:00 p.m. at White Plains United Methodist Church in Cary. The dance will have a fall/harvest theme (Halloween costume optional). For more information contact Leigh Menconi at (919) 856-0391 or Lmenconi@earthlink.net.



Newsletter Dedication

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and additions that your child or you have experienced.

Once again, our hats are off to all of you for a job well done!



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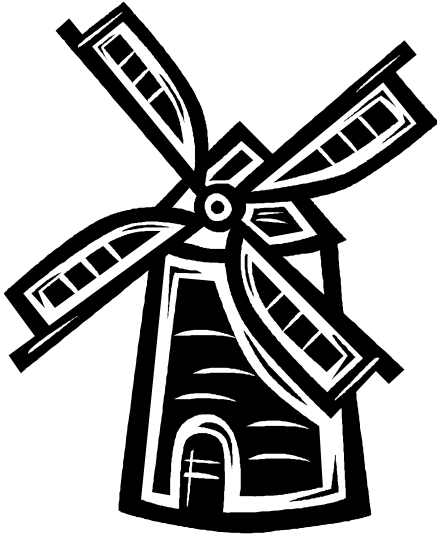
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“Holland Tour Group” Gatherings

*Brooks Avenue Church of Christ,
700 Brooks Ave, Raleigh*

Sponsored by Family Support Network/WC



Based on the “Welcome to Holland” story, these parent gatherings are designed to bring together families of children with special needs for information sharing and social time.

6:30 – 7:00	Dinner and social time—bring a sandwich, and we’ll provide drinks and dessert
7:00 – 7:45	Speaker
7:45 – 8:00	Wrap-up

Location: Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, 700 Brooks Ave., Raleigh

September 21st – *“Ask The Counselor”* Questions about parenting the child with special needs, marriage, siblings, etc.

October 19th – *“How Do I Get My Child With Special Needs To Use The Potty?”*

November 16th – What families can do to *“Take Stress Out of The Holidays”*.

December 14th (2nd Tuesday) – *“Let’s Talk, Plan and Celebrate”*

Open discussion, plan what we want to do next, and *Celebrate The Season*.

At the September and October meetings, we will be setting up Secret Pals (for those that want to participate). You will be able to support someone without them knowing who you are. Sometimes just receiving a note or card can really brighten someone’s day. We will reveal Secret Pals in the spring.

RSVP to Micki Stall, 662-4600 x257, or micki@familysupportonline.com. *Free onsite respite is available for children if you let us know no later than one week prior to the gathering date.*



E-mail Group for Parents

“FSN Wake” is a parent-only e-mail group for our families to stay in touch with one another. It’s a great place to vent on a bad day, extol successes (even small ones), ask for ideas, share your story, and generally commune with other parents of children with special needs. We’ll also use the e-mail group to keep you updated on events in the Triangle of interest to families.

To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FSNWake/> for details. For questions, call Jodi at 662-4600, ext. 257 or e-mail her at jodi@familysupportonline.com.

Breakfast with Santa December 4th



Mark your calendars now for December 4th for our 8th annual Breakfast with Santa for Children with Disabilities and Their Families. Look for details in our next newsletter.

Parent Views

Someone To Talk With

Having my 2½-year-old son diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder 6 months ago has been, by far, one of the most devastating events in my life. Not knowing what ASD was, where to turn, or what to do left me feeling helpless and alone. As soon as I was introduced to Family Support Network, they flooded me with information, resources, support group information, and, best of all, a support parent. It was so comforting to talk to my support parent for the first time. I found out that she had experienced all of the emotions, fears, and uncertainties that I was experiencing. She listened and empathized with all that I was going through with my son. Since she had had similar experiences, she was able to give suggestions and advice on what I needed to do to start getting help for my son. I still struggle with the diagnoses and have many fears and worries about the future for my son, but knowing that there are others out there to talk to and commiserate with has been a tremendous support for me and my family. I can't thank my support parent and Family Support Network enough for all of their love and support. I don't know how I would have made it this far without them.

Catherine Shearin

I'm Not Alone!

When we took our son to the DEC evaluation, I was devastated when they told me he was autistic. I am sure most of you know that feeling...like your whole world has been turned upside down. When I received the DEC report in the mail, they included a newsletter from the Family Support Network. I read in the newsletter information about getting a support person. I e-mailed FSN within a few days about getting someone. My support person called me the next day after getting my e-mail. She told me her son was also autistic. She called on a day when I was feeling particularly down and defeated after taking my son on a play date with a couple of my friends and their boys.

I talked to my support person and realized there were lots of other parents out there going through exactly what we were, and that there was LOTS of information and help available. For the first time, I felt like we weren't alone. A couple of days later, I received a package in the mail from my support person with all kinds of great information on autism, treatments, resources in the area, etc. She calls and checks in with me from time to time to see how I am doing and if there is anything she can do for me. I can't describe how wonderful it is to know there is someone I can call anytime I need her.

Sherry Warner

Triage and Transition

The emergency call came in to FSN Wake, and Micki, the "FSN 911 Operator" was on it! One worried mom, one special needs child transitioning to a typical kindergarten, and one base school not showing up for the transition meeting. I was told by our IEP team that all would work out "fine," but I was not convinced. I was interested in having my child attending a magnet program because I felt this was a good match for his learning style and skills, but previous attempts to place him there had been denied. Our only alternative was to appeal to the school board.

I had never requested a support parent match from FSN but have always had great success with the staff guiding me to meet the needs of my son Jordan and to find the resources that would help do that. Today was no exception. FSN matched me with a wonderful support parent who had been through what my husband and I were living. My support parent was so wonderful and explained the process to me and provided several options for us to think about.

We had no prior knowledge that my son would face some challenges during my pregnancy, but I had a dream that shook my deepest fear. I prayed that evening, that if something were wrong with my child, that God would put the people into my life to help me with raise this child. To date, I have not been let down. From the incredible "gift" of a wonderful support parent to the other members of FSN and numerous other sources, I have received incredible help and guidance in this journey. I hope that someday, I will be able to "pay it forward" by helping others. To all support parents, thank you so much for being there! You have made a real difference in one child's life.

Julie Osborne

Someone Finally Understands

Thank you, Family Support Network, for pairing me with such a wonderful parent match! My 14-month-old son, Justin, has been in the hospital 8 times this year, and I need all the support I can get. My support parent is wonderful. Although her son is very different from my son, they have some feeding issues in common. We are at the beginning of the tough road that her family has already weathered. I cannot express how fantastic it has been to talk to another mom who can understand how it is to be in the hospital for long periods. She too has watched death hover so closely over her child and knows how God can heal the unhealable situation. She is a great listener, and when I seek advice she is so knowledgeable.

No other people in my life have a child with special needs, but my support parent has been where I am right now. No one else I knew could truly relate to what type of mother I strive to be to Justin. She just understands my life without lots of explanation. It has been an immeasurable gift. Thank you!!!!

Sarah Keller

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Parent Views

continued from page 4

Someone To Help Guide

When our son, Nick, was diagnosed on July 14 (at 22 months), my husband and I had no idea where to turn for help. Still in a state of denial, grief, anger, and confusion, we contacted Family Support Network. We were matched with a support parent. She has been a shoulder to cry on, a voice of reason and reassurance, and a vital source of information about programs, therapies, etc. She directed us to the resources we need and explained how to access them. She helped us negotiate the bureaucracy. Most importantly, she provided the emotional guidance that every parent needs when faced with this diagnosis. We are lucky to have her.

Kim and Wayne Fenton

Support Parents – Why They Do What They Do

Why do parents of children with special needs do all the things they do for others? What is their motivation? Why do 135 parents agree to be support parents for FSN of Wake? Why did the program have over 2,100 hours of volunteer time given in the last year? Why do parents agree to give up their Saturday morning to come and be trained as support parents? Why are some of the founding members still involved with the program 19 years later? Why do parents agree to talk with other parents who have just learned about a diagnosis for their child? Why would anyone agree to talk with another parent, knowing it might bring back those terrible feelings and memories? Why do parents make phone calls to strangers, not knowing what will be said or what will happen?

There certainly has to be some overwhelming reason that parents do all these things. The overriding reason that support parents give is that they want to help someone else make it through. They use the knowledge they have gained from their experience to benefit other parents. They have reached a state in which they have come to terms with the disability of their child, and they want to help other parents who are experiencing what they have already been through. Even if services fall into place quickly, there is still the emotional strain and stress that has to be dealt with. The arrival of a child who does not fit the “dream child mold” is a terrible blow. Many describe it as being in a dark cave or hole with no light to show the way out or like being on a deserted island. This is what support parents wish to help with – to show the way out, to show that life can be good again, and that there can be happiness and laughter.

Many times people feel that there is some hidden motive or agenda, but the “Why?” can be answered with a simple desire to help others – there is no ulterior motivation. Support parents feel that the experiences that they have can help them have empathy with others experiencing the same things. They have been there and understand. Support parents don’t set out to be role models, but that is what they become. Many parents who are helped describe this characteristic.

What support parents do is on a volunteer basis. They donate their time, gas, etc. They do not receive any compensation for their time or expenses because of the program’s limited budget. Many go the extra mile to meet with the family and sometimes friendships develop.

Seeing parents you have worked with at a later time and seeing them happy and enjoying their child and their life makes it all worthwhile. It is also the desire of support parents to “pay back,” to give back what they have received by helping others. We want to pay back what someone did for us by passing the help on to someone else. That’s why we do what we do and why so many people will continue to be support parents. It is the greatest, most rewarding, “non-paying” job around!

Mabel Dillard
Former Board Chair



**FAMILY
SUPPORT
NETWORK**

of Wake County

Support Parent Training

The next support parent training will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2004 from 8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. at the Tammy Lynn Center. Free, onsite respite care will be provided. Please call Micki at (919) 662-4600, ext. 257 to register for the training and respite by Friday, October 1, 2004.

Help Us Save Postage

If you would like to receive an electronic copy (PDF Version) of our quarterly newsletter please e-mail us at jodi@familysupportonline.com.

Family Support Network of Wake County is a non-profit organization for parents and run by parents.

Disclaimer

The Family Support Network newsletter is an informative paper that is published for parents who have children with special needs and for professionals who work with those children. Family Support Network of Wake County does not endorse any particular group or advertiser.

Family Support Network's Web Page
www.familysupportonline.com



Family Support Network of Wake County is a Wake County Smart Start Partner.

The Central Directory of Resources (CDR)

The CDR is a resource center available to parents, families, and professionals statewide. This computerized resource center provides access to important information and materials about

- Services, agencies, and other resources;
- Specific health problems or disabilities and handicaps;
- Parent support programs throughout the state and nation;
- Assistive technology (devices and services that help people with disabilities in their daily activities).

The Central Directory of Resources is a toll-free number: 800-852-0042 (TDD/VOICE).
www.fsnnc.org

Donations Through The Triangle United Way

Family Support Network of Wake County is listed with Triangle United Way as an additional giving option in this year's campaign. Family Support Network of Wake County is eligible to receive designated gifts.

Family Support Network of Wake County is affiliated with Family Support Network of North Carolina

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Support Group Information

“Teen To Adulthood”

Teen To Adulthood is a parent group dedicated to helping parents understand transition services and issues for teens and young adults with disabilities.

Meetings are scheduled every second Saturday of the month, from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Millbrook Exchange Community Center, 1905 Spring Forest Road, Raleigh. The next meeting dates are 10/9/04, 11/13/04 and 12/11/04. Light refreshments will be provided. This program is free of charge. Contact Kathy Honeyman for more information at honeymank@earthlink.net or call her at 919-878-3239.

HITCH-UP

A Support Group for Parents/Guardians of Children Who Are Hearing Impaired

Hitch-up was established to provide families of children who are hearing impaired helpful information, education, and socialization. The group will meet once a month on the first Tuesday of the month from 7:00—9:00 p.m. at the Auditory Learning Center in Raleigh. For more information please contact Margot Cook at (919) 771-2811 or mheitlercook@yahoo.com or Natalie Skergan at (919) 878-0117 or skergan@nc.rr.com.

“Ready to Soar”

Special Needs Family Celebration

Crosspointe Church in Cary will be hosting their first annual “Ready to Soar,” Festival for special needs children and their families on October 23, 2004 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The festival is an outreach program for the newly-formed “On Eagle’s Wings,” Special Needs Ministry of Crosspointe Church. For more information and directions log on to: <http://www.crosspointe.org> or contact Julie Osborne at (919) 387-4632 or cjo3@earthlink.net.

Cerebral Palsy Support Group

Does your child have Cerebral Palsy (CP)? Are you looking for a support group? A group in which you can share and learn with other parents? A new support group has started. There will be guest speakers, fun outings, and a time to share with other parents who understand the daily struggles and joys that comes with raising a special child. Please e-mail (onetrdrop@aol.com) or call Rachel Pack (319-0286) to receive information on the upcoming meetings.

Calendar of Events



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.familysupportonline.com
FOR WEEKLY UPDATED CALENDAR LISTINGS

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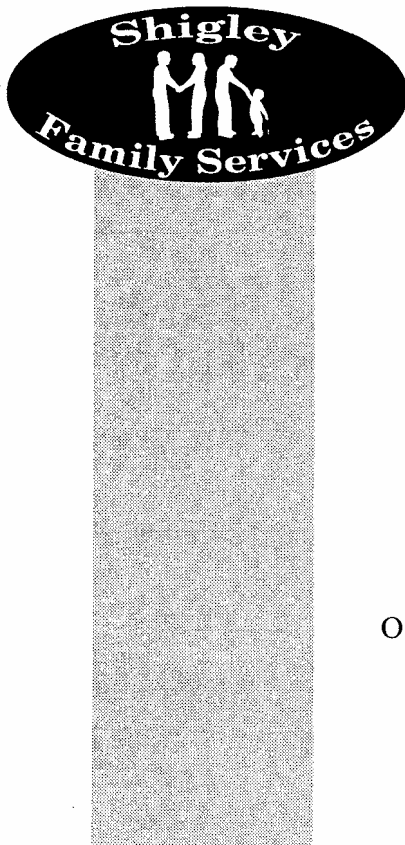
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