



PACDS Newsletter

Parents Assistance Committee on Down Syndrome

Upcoming Events

Fall 2006

SEPTEMBER

Education Rights and Responsibilities In-Depth Training Series for Parents of Children With Special Needs
starting September 12

9/13: Parent/Child Group 10:00-11:30
Children's School for Early Development
Contact Kathy Higgins
347-3227

9/17: Buddy Walk NYC

9/18: 22nd Annual MBIA Golf and Tennis Invitational

9/20: Westchester Arc Ground Breaking Ceremony

OCTOBER

10/11: Parent/Child Group 10:00-11:30
Children's School for Early Development
Contact Kathy Higgins

10/22: PACD's Planning Meeting

10/25: Sibshop. Welcome Back Pizza Party

NOVEMBER

11/6: Parent/Child Group 10:00-11:30
Children's School for Early Development

11/11: Family Resource Day. White Plains HS

School Days!

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer. It is that time again to dust off the old back packs, purchase school supplies, and get lunch boxes in order. The beginning of the school year brings both excitement and anxiety for most of us as our children march off to meet their new teachers, friends, and challenges.

Motivating our children to get excited about going back is a challenge from the teenager who would rather be sleeping than catching a 7 am bus to the preschooler who isn't thrilled about leaving mommy and daddy for the first time. Remember, throughout this summer-fall transition period to stay positive and excited about the new experiences that are ahead. One way to lower the anxiety level for everyone is to touch base with your child's new teacher. Some parents of children with disabilities have found that when they talk to teachers before the start of the school year their child is likely to have a more positive experience because concerns, fears, and information can be shared.

To assist with the transition back to school, keep in mind that it is alright to say "no" to some of the activities and programs that will start up again in the next few weeks. Remember to put some time aside that focuses on your family. By scheduling a weekly family game night or an October family weekend away now might help put the brakes on the craziness that comes with the start of any new school year. Have a great school year and make it fun!

ATTENTION !! INTRODUCING PACDS' NEW WEB SITE

Now another great resource for our families: check out our pages on Westchester Arc's new web site www.WestchesterArc.org/about/family_resource_groups.html or just go to WestchesterArc.org and click on the blue Family Resource Groups button on the left. Please not only check it out but use the discussion boards which are now part of our new website! Now we have to figure out how to best utilize this resource!

CALL FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Join us for our first planning meeting for the 06/07 year. It will be Sun, Oct. 22, Roberta Lieber's house: 70 Smith Ave, White Plains. Please RSVP 997-5066. PACDS is presently seeking interested and spirited new committee members. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! The PACDS organization is expanding and it is important that we continue to provide support and programming for our families. Committee members can plan activities, educate new members, execute events, and make decisions that directly affect you and your child. It is extremely rewarding and will keep you connected to what is happening. If you are interested please contact Anne Majsak, 328-7909, or Roberta Lieber, 997-5066.

PACDS Contacts

Co-Chairpersons:

Anne Majsak

328-7909

Roberta Lieber

997-5066

New Parent Contact:

Terri Hunt 243-5874

Newsletter:

Caroline Furry

949-3948

Roberta Lieber

997-5066

Parent/ Child Group:

Anne Majsak

328-7909

Elem. Age Playgroup:

Caroline Furry

949-3948

Fran Cignarella

686-1104

Teenage Group:

Jean Corvino

693-5392

Magaly Olivero

949-2594

Spanish Liaison:

Rosa Sanchez

293-0130

PACDS Hotline 739-4085

Back-to-School Tips for Parents of Special Needs Children

Author Lisa B. Wershaw

Few parents know the extent of services to which their special needs children are entitled, according to attorney Lisa B. Wershaw of the law offices of Jeffrey S. Saltz, P.C. Herself the mother of a special needs child, Wershaw and her husband are a case in point: they paid for private education and services that should have been provided by their school district. Determined to help parents obtain appropriate services for their special needs children, Wershaw established a practice in special education law.

Wershaw offers these back-to-school tips to help parents get the school year off to a good start for their special needs children.

1. Establish your own goals for your child's school year, including where you want him or her to be by the end of the school year - academically, socially, emotionally - and how will you help achieve these goals in cooperation with the school and with extracurricular involvement.
2. Review the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) prepared by the school to be sure it's in synch with the goals you established.
3. Look for greater detail and reporting requirements that are part of the new IEP format which went into effect May 2004. Your child's IEP should include location, frequency, projected beginning date and anticipated duration of each specially designed instruction, modification and service to which he or she is entitled. This will help you to ensure that services are provided as promised.
4. Make sure your child's IEP contains annual goals and short-term objectives, which are specifically defined and have measurable time- limited goals and objectives so that you have something concrete by which to regularly monitor his or her progress.
5. If your child exhibits behaviors that impede his or her learning, or that of others, make sure that your child's IEP includes a behavior plan that articulates strategies and supports, including positive behavior interventions, to address those behaviors.
6. If your child is age 14 or older, make sure his or her IEP contains transition planning. This should include a coordinated set of activities designed to promote movement from school to post-school activities, including, but not limited to post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, adult services, and independent living or community participation.
7. Make sure that your child's IEP team considers him or her for summer, or extended school year services. Eligibility must be considered for all students with disabilities even if you don't request it.

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Websites of interest

www.sparcinc.org

Provides social, recreation and therapeutic services including horseback riding and Tae Kwon Do

www.adaptivesportsfoundation.org

Ski and snowboard instruction; a variety of sports instruction during summer

www.steffinossen.org

"Moving Wheels and Heels" dance class

www.yogashline.com

yoga class specifically designed for children with special needs

www.narha.org

Pegasus - Therapeutic horseback riding

www.northeastspecialrec.org

Swimming, Special Olympics training, day camp, etc.

www.secrec.org

Southeast consortium offers fitness, wellness and sports programs

www.heartsong.org

Music and art therapy programs

Adopt a Mouse

A group of students have established a campaign to raise funds for The Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation. The students are selling stuffed mice for \$21 each. For more information or to purchase visit www.adoptamouse.com

Future events to mark on your calendar

Education Rights and Responsibilities In-Depth Training Series for Parents of Children With Special Needs (Ages: Birth to 21 years old)- September 2006

Participants will receive detailed information on:

- Education Laws and Regulations, including:
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Independent Evaluations
 - Functional Behavioral Assessment
 - Understanding Evaluations
 - Components of an IEP Due Process
- Innovative Approaches to CSE Meetings
- Creating Your Vision for Your Child
- Developing Mentoring Skills to Assist Other Families

DATES /TIMES: September 12,14,19, 21, 26, and 28th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day. You MUST attend all sessions.

Location: White Plains/Elmsford area. Specific Site to be Announced.

FEE: \$50.00 (can be reduced/waived). Lunch is included

Contact: Joy Drummond at: (888) 788-6268 by September 7, 2006 to register

Buddy Walk New York City September 17



The 12th Annual New York City Buddy Walk will be taking place on Sunday, September 17, 2006.

An estimated 3500 participants are expected to attend this year's walk. Individuals with DS, families and friends will walk a one-mile course to promote inclusion and awareness of Down syndrome. John C. McGinley, who plays Dr. Perry Cox in the hit NBC show "Scrubs," is the 2006 National Buddy Walk Spokesman and will lead the New York City Buddy Walk.

Join us at 10:30 a.m. in the heart of Times Square to view the 2006 Times Square Video on the Panasonic Astrovision Screen. Weather permitting, this video will be shown on a loop at the Great Hill as well.

Buses will pick up passengers at 11:15 am on the corner of Broadway and will transport participants from Times Square to the Great Hill at Central Park.

We will be coordinating a meeting spot for PACDS families. If you are interested in this late-breaking news, please contact Anne Majsak at 328-7909 or email her at amajsak@optonline.net. Hope to see you there **22nd**

Annual MBIA Golf and Tennis Invitational September 18

On Monday, September 18, MBIA will host the twenty-second annual MBIA Invitational, a fun-filled day of golf, tennis and good fellowship to benefit Westchester Arc and Special Olympics-Hudson Valley. This landmark event netted over \$330,000 in 2005. This brings our grand total to \$5.5 million, including funds raised by the Bresnan Bike Tour. The event is held at Mount Kisco Country Club, Whippoorwill Club, Anglebrook Golf Club
For more information contact: Elyse Fowler, 914-428-8330, ext. 3027, efowler@westchesterarc.org

Westchester Arc Ground Breaking Ceremony- September 20

Celebrate the start of construction on Westchester Arc's new home, Wednesday, September 20, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. Meet Senator Nick Spano and other dignitaries, enjoy some good food, and raise a glass of champagne to Arc's future.

Where: 265 Sawmill River Road, Hawthorne, New York, 10532. For more information contact: Fran Higgins, 914-428-8330, ext. 2037, fhiggins@westchesterarc.org.

Transition Information Night- September 27

A night of information on the subject of transitioning into the adult world and services available for people with disabilities. Topics will include educational planning, government services, employment, housing, recreation and more. Sponsored by Westchester Arc's Life Planning Center and Family Outreach, Westchester Disabled on the Move and The Yonkers Public Library
Free admission - Free parking. 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Yonkers Riverfront Library Community Room

Contact: Ralph Szur, 914-949-9300, ext. 3002, rszur@westchesterarc.org or Martha Pisculli, 914-949-9300, ext. 3142, mpisculli@westchesterarc.org

Sibshop: Welcome Back! Fall Pizza Party! October 25

Hosted by Westchester Arc and Jewish Community Center Mid-Westchester. Made possible through a grant provided by The Westchester Community Foundation. October 25, 2006, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. JCC Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale RSVP: Nancy Succoso, 914-428-8330, ext. 3119, nsuccoso@westchesterarc.org or Charley Moskowitz, 914-472-3300, ext. 361, moskowitzs@yahoo.com

Family Resource Day- November 11, 2006

White Plains High School. A day full of workshops for parents and fun activities for kids. Details to follow on the Westchester Arc website, www.WestchesterArc.org

Resources

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTION CENTER

The Early Childhood Direction Center is information and referral source for children birth to 5 years of age who may have special needs. This program assists parents in getting information about and/or arranging for local services that may be needed. Some of the free and confidential services they provide are:

- Phone counseling to help you follow-up on your concerns about a child's development and/or specific disabilities.
- Information about services available through the EI and CPSE programs.
- Referral assistance for evaluations and community services.
- Follow-up with families until children are in kindergarten.
- Workshops for parents about the public special education and service system.
- Training and technical assistance for early childhood professionals to support inclusion of children with special needs in typical settings.

If you would like more information about their services and programs please contact them at 914-493-1358. The Center is located at the Westchester Institute for Human Development in Valhalla.

WESTCO/ Magic To Do Players

Westco is a full theater arts program for persons ages 8 through early 20's with developmental disabilities offering instruction in dancing, singing, improvisation, speaking, and acting skills. Rehearsals are on Saturdays with dress rehearsals the week of the show. Each session will culminate in a performance for friends, family and the general public.

Ages 8-14 meet 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm; Ages 15 and up meet 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm. There is a limit of 20 participants per age group. To secure the future of the Westco program it is important for us to have our younger children (8-14) who are interested in music and the arts to sign up and get involved. There is a \$150 registration fee. If you are interested in finding our more and/or want to sign up go to: www.westcoproductions.org or call 914-761-7463.

This program is sponsored, in part, by Westchester Arc and The Thomas & Agnes Carvel Foundation.

WORKSHOP I - Begins September 30, 2006. Performance is on December 9, 2006 at the Mamaroneck Avenue School, White Plains, NY. Additional performance on February 10, 2007 at the Westchester Broadway Theatre.

WORKSHOP II - Begins March 24, 2007. Performance is on June 2, 2007 at the Mamaroneck Avenue School, White Plains, NY.

Croton AYSO

Croton AYSO is planning to start a soccer team for kids with special needs in the fall. Ages 4 - 18, participants do not have to be ambulatory. Croton AYSO are dedicated volunteers committed to a healthy competitive atmosphere for youth soccer players and work towards developing responsible young people. If you want more information contact Josh Blumenthal, Josh@jdb2.com/827-3941.

MIRACLE LEAGUE OF WESTCHESTER

Registration is now being accepted through Greenburgh Recreation for the Inaugural Fall Season of the Miracle League of Westchester. This is a modified baseball program for children of all ages with disabilities to be played on Westchester County's first field constructed exclusively for this purpose!

Opening Day is September 9, 2006! Online registration forms and information can be found at www.MLWNY.org Or by calling: Steve Madey at 914-813-8007 (smadey@optonline.net).

Coaches and volunteers are also needed.

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