

Family Support Council Newsletter

A Community Bridges Family Connection Initiative

Special Interest Articles:

- Assistive Technology
- Early Supports and Services
- Family 2 Family

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It's Your Council by Sondra Brake and Sandra LeBeau, Co-chairs

The Family Support Council is at the heart of Community Bridges and its mission. The council is

- a forum where families share information and support
- a voice for change and inclusion
- a source of encouragement
- a resource of talent, experience, and perspective
- a community of people who care

The volunteer council works in partnership with Community Bridges to provide knowledge, support, and advocacy so families can create new options in their communities and make informed choices. Please consider joining the Family Support Council or become a Friend of the Council. Contact Sondra Brake, Council Co-chair at 603-927-4746 or brakefam@tds.net

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**One of our goals is to increase communication with you. See our advertisement for a paid newsletter coordinator position on page 5.**  
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Assistive Technology by NH A-Tech

NH Assistive Technology Evaluation & Consultation (NH-ATEC) is a highly specialized clinical program that provides evaluation & consultation services in the area of assistive technology. Their staff is an interdisciplinary team of occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and rehabilitation technicians, all of whom possess advanced training in this field. This confluence of clinical expertise enables us to

assess complex medical, physical, orthopedic, cognitive and communication needs and recommend assistive technology solutions. They provide an array of services including:

- *wheelchair seating and mobility services;*
- *Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) services for those who are unable to effectively use speech to express themselves;*

- *computer access services for individuals who require special hardware or software to use a computer at home, school or work;*
- *home and worksite modification services; and*
- *modification and fabrication services to modify commercial products and fabricate equipment not otherwise available.*

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New Hampshire Assistive Technology
Evaluation and Consultation Services

“Our team model and individualized approach facilitate recommendations for a system that will promote health, function, and quality of life.”

Assistive Technology (continued from page 2)

Seating and Wheeled Mobility services address the configuration of wheelchairs and seating systems to meet the unique needs of the consumer. The program includes the availability of Force Sensing Array technology, a computerized system that maps pressure distribution on any weight-bearing surface. Our team model and individualized approach facilitate recommendations for a system that will promote health, function and quality of life. Our long-term relationships with consumers provide opportunities to address issues related to growth and changes in medical, physical or living conditions.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) services focus on communication methods, strategies and devices for those who are unable to effectively use speech to express themselves.

Physical, cognitive and social concerns are addressed through communication devices, access solutions and strategic plans for educational, vocational and personal success.

Program components include evaluation, trial, training and follow-up services.

Computer Access services are designed for individuals who require assistive technology to use a computer. Recommended solutions facilitate physical access, written expression, organizational skills, and participation in educational and vocational activities. Suggestions are also intended to prevent injuries and maximize function through the use of appropriate positioning and ergonomic strategies.

Home Modification, Mobility, and Aids for Daily Living services promote accessibility,

safety, function, and quality of life for people with disabilities. In addition to providing recommendations for ambulation aids, standers, bathroom equipment, handrails, lighting, personal care items, utensils, and environmental control units, clinicians also address issues related to room usage and physical access. Home modification solutions such as ramps, door widening, elevators and lifts are reviewed, and if indicated, general recommendations related to remodeling are presented. Clinicians are available to consult with architects and contractors during the planning and construction phases of the project.

Worksite Modification services address how assistive technology can improve accessibility, communication, task completion, and productivity within the workplace. Injury prevention, back and labor saving solutions, and ergonomic strategies are also explored.

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Assistive and Universal Design Technologies

Achieving Educational Success for All by the UNH Institute on Disabilities

Achieving educational success for students who experience a disability is a team effort. During times of economic challenges, a great opportunity exists for innovative and creative thinking in order to obtain needed solutions. This six-part professional

development series focuses on the development and implementation of quick and cost effective assistive technology solutions as well as embracing universally design technology to support all students.

See the four workshops which will be delivered in 2010 and registration information.

Continued on page 4

Inside Early Supports and Services by Ellen Schreiber,

Director of Early Supports and Services

Early Supports and Services, (ESS)

provides developmental therapies, service coordination, and parent education and support to eligible children, age birth to three, and their families. Children are eligible if they are determined to have a 33% or greater delay in any area of their development, have a condition that is known to cause a delay, or meet stringent at risk criteria.

A play-based evaluation, parent input, and a review of medical records are used to determine if a child is eligible for services. If a child is eligible, the family and the evaluation team create an Individualized Family Support Plan, (IFSP), which addresses the child and family's concerns and goals. "Individualized" is key. Every IFSP is unique to a specific child and family. Services are provided in home and community settings, such as child care. Service providers are chosen to match the family's needs. The program is designed to be parent consultative. Because we believe that the day-to-day opportunities parents have to impact their child's development exceeds the impact of the therapist's direct intervention, our goal is to provide parents with resources, supports and interventions that they can implement in their regular routine. Our staff

includes developmental specialists from a variety of professional disciplines, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, early childhood and special educators and mental health counselors. All our staff is trained to look at the child and family holistically, and address a wide variety of needs, either directly or through consultation or referral. Our model allows us to support families through any further evaluation, which may mean helping a family understand a report, develop a list of questions for a doctor, report or accompany the family to an evaluation.

The essence of rationale for ESS is the belief that early intervention can eliminate or reduce the need for services in the long run. If a child is not developing typically, nor has a delay, the earlier we can address the issue, and help the child develop to their best potential. The eligibility criteria assist us in providing services to children who have a wide range of needs. Many children "catch up" and graduate from services without the need for continued therapies.

About 80% of the children who continue with ESS until their third birthday will be eligible for preschool special education services. These begin when a child turns three.

About 8-10% of the children we see will continue to be eligible for area agency services after their third birthday. Each child has a transition plan detailing the next steps to assure appropriate services are in place upon the child's third birthday.

We are privileged to get to know so many wonderful and amazing children and families through out a child's early years. We have the unique opportunity to share a very special time with families. We cheer each success, and provide support through each challenge.

We are the first partnership in your child's development, and we hope to set the stage for positive partnerships throughout your child's life. We believe that what we do matters, and we want to do it as well as possible, because what matters to us are you and your child.

"We are the first partnership in your child's development and we hope to set the stage for positive partnerships throughout your child's life."



Assistive Technology & Universal Design

Inclusion for All Individuals



NOTICE...

Another terrific initiative is in the works. Look at the Community Bridges web page in late spring/early summer for a Community Resource Online Database.

This is yet one more way Community Bridges is working to help you and your families connect to your local communities.



Assistive and Universal Design Technologies

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Becoming an Assistive Technology MacGyver or MacGyvette
 Instructor: Therese Willkomm, Ph.D. |
 Registration Fee: \$225

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

IntelliTools Level I – Introduction to Classroom Suite 4
 Instructor: Dan Herlihy |
 Registration Fee: \$75

Friday, March 17, 2010

Building and Using an Assistive Technology Transformer For Solving Everyday Challenges in the Classroom
 Instructor: Therese Willkomm, Ph.D. |
 Registration Fee: \$95

Thursday, April 1, 2010

IntelliTools Level II – Next Steps with Classroom Suite 4
 Instructor: Dan Herlihy

Registration Fee: \$75
Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm
Location: Holiday Inn, 172 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301

** Registration fee includes continental breakfast, lunch, and workshop materials.*

RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America) CEUs will be available for an additional \$16 per session if requested.

For Full Workshop Descriptions, Presenter Information, and to Register:

Visit <http://www.iod.unh.edu/events.html> or call 603.228.2084

Family to Family by Sarah Aiken, Family to Family Liaison

The Family Support Council funds a position within Community Bridges called Family 2 Family. Sarah Aiken is the current Family 2 Family liaison. Please contact your service coordinator if you would like to be in contact with a veteran family who has some information or experiences to help you and your family.

As well, if you are a veteran family who is at a point where you can support

others (by email, telephone, or meeting); please contact Sarah for more information on becoming a volunteer.

In the past, families have connected either a few times or some have developed into lifelong friendships. Either way, family matches provide the opportunity for a unique sharing of information and emotional support. Shared experiences are the foundation of Family to Family.

~ Take a few minutes to connect with another family. It may be the best few minutes ever! You'll never know until you try. ~

Newsletter Coordinator Position Available

The Family Support Council is made up of individuals who have families much like yours. We balance our individual family needs along with our work.

We endeavor to improve communication with families, while at the same time honoring the amount of time people have to volunteer.

We are so committed to improving communication that we have allocated a portion of our budget for printing and mailing costs as well as a newsletter coordinator contract position.

If you have the necessary skills and would like to earn some extra income, please consider

applying for the position.

The person hired may work from home to coordinate and assemble articles for the newsletter 4-6 times per year.

High school graduate with excellent writing and editing skills, strong organizational skills, the ability to conduct research and interviews, excellent computer/PC skills, and the ability to learn and use Community Bridges standards for external communication.

You will be responsible for writing, editing, layout, and possibly production. The person hired may be required to attend volunteer training sessions. The right person for this position will be detail orientated, organized, and responsible.

Send your resume to:

Sondra Brake

PO Box 217

North Sutton, NH
03260

Attn: FSC Newsletter
Position

or email to

brakefam@tds.net

You will be contacted to meet with the Council. Please enclose or bring along work samples.

Save the Dates...

New Hampshire Family Support Council Conference

April 30-May 2, 2010 at the Mount Washington Resort

Upcoming Focal Area Events

Kearsarge Area
(New London, Sutton, Warner)

Screening of "Including Samuel" with all the fixings, including a childcare option. Look for an upcoming mailing with details.

Other Focal Areas

As a friend of the council, plan something in your area and we'll post it here!

Family Support Council Meetings

We meet every 3rd Wednesday from 6 PM until 8 PM at the Community Bridges Whitney Road office. A light dinner is served.

Please feel free to join us in 2010.

January 20, 2010
February 17, 2010
March 17, 2010
April 21, 2010

Place these events on your calendar, PDA, and tell your friends!



Family Support Council

c/o Community
Bridges
2 Whitney Road
Concord, NH 03301

PHONE:
603-927-4746
Sondra Brake
Co-chair

603-526-7444
Sandra LeBeau
Co-chair

E-MAIL:
brakefam@tds.net

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[http://www.communitybridge
snh.org/family_council.cfm](http://www.communitybridge
snh.org/family_council.cfm)

Resources, Resources, Resources

<http://www.spedchildmass.com/newsletters>.

Massachusetts Disability Services and Events in Greater Massachusetts

This site includes some terrific articles.

www.inclusion.com
Inclusion.com

This site was created by Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint. Inclusion.com sells books, newspapers, videos and posters published or distributed by Inclusion Press. It includes information and registration for workshops, seminars, institutes provided by the Inclusion Network.

www.iod.unh.edu
Institute on Disability

The mission of the Institute on Disability is to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities. The Institute on Disability (IOD) at the University of New Hampshire was established in 1987 to provide a University-based focus for the improvement of knowledge, policy, and practice related to the economic and social participation of persons with disabilities in New Hampshire.

Assistive Technology (continued from page 2)

Modification and Fabrication services are available to enhance the appropriateness of an assistive technology device for an individual consumer. Our skilled team of clinicians and rehabilitation technologists apply their combined talents to create effective solutions such as seating systems, communication

equipment, switches, reading stands, pointing devices, jigs and fixtures, and splints. Our ability to creatively modify commercial products, and fabricate equipment not otherwise available, optimizes a person's ability to benefit from assistive technology solutions.

For more information about NH Assistive Technology Evaluation & Consultation (NH-ATEC), call (603) 528-3060 or

www.nhassistivetechology.org

Community Bridges
2 Whitney Road
Concord, NH 03301

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