

Family Support Council Newsletter



A resource for individuals and Families working alongside Community Bridges

Community Bridges has now held four Sibshop events!

Sibshops are best described as opportunities for brothers and sisters of children who experience developmental disabilities to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context. The Sibshop model intersperses discussion activities with high energy games. Parents simply drop their children off to participate and enjoy!



pants. Sibshops can accommodate twelve

children per session, so sign your son or daughter up for an upcoming Sibshop! The scheduled for Sibshop is:

- Saturday, November 19, 2011
- Saturday, December 10, 2011
- Saturday, January 21, 2012
- Saturday, February 18, 2012
- Saturday, March 17, 2012
- Saturday, April 21, 2012

The first Sibshop event was held in May and the last was held in September. Sibshops are offered once per month on a Saturday at the Community Bridges office on Whitney Road from 10 am to 2 pm. Lunch is provided and free of charge! The attendees that have participated so far have been between the ages of seven and thirteen and each session had from two to four partici-

More information on Sibshops can be obtained by visiting:

The Sibshop website www.siblingsupport.org

The Community Bridges Facebook Page



E-Mail: sibshop@communitybridgesnh.org

Call: 603-226-3212, ext. 227.

Photo of Julia & Cameron participating in a Best "Beach Body" contest at the last Sibshop.

What is a FOCAL AREA?

A focal area is a group of communities combined to create a larger community. The Family Support Council divided all of the towns that are served by Community Bridges into five focal areas. Most focal areas, or set of towns, have a committee of parents and individuals that help set a calendar of three to five activities per year in which everyone in the focal area can participate. The calendars are then printed and sent out to

everyone in the focal area. Everyone is welcome to participate in a focal event in any focal area!

If you are interested in serving on the focal area committee OR would like to volunteer at one of the focal events, please contact Terri Warren, 226-3212 x269.

Focal areas are:

Concord: includes Concord, Bow, Pembroke, Hopkinton, Allentown, Boscawen and Dunbarton.

Hillsboro: include Hillsboro, Henniker, Weare, Winsor and Deering

Kearsarge: includes Bradford, Sutton, Newbury, Wilmot, Webster, Warner and New London

Pittsfield: includes Pittsfield, Epsom, Chichester and Loudon

Franklin: includes Northfield, Franklin, Salisbury, Andover, Canterbury, Hill and Danbury

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Amy Conley entertains the crowd with a sing-a-long



Bobbi and Darren entertain us with a puppet show

FSC Picnic Recap!

The Family Support Council Picnic was held on September 10th at Elm Brook Park in Contoocook. Families gathered on a beautiful sunny Saturday to renew friendships and start new ones, play games, share a fantastic meal provided by Washington Street Café, and dance to great music provided by Amy Conley.

There were a number of activities throughout the picnic. Tina and Jeff took on all comers at the horseshoe pit while Bobbi took to the links and played Frisbee Golf with Rebecca, Vicki and Jean. Bobbi and Darren also entertained us with hand puppets dancing to music while many others took to the dance floor themselves. Hillary

Gagnon shared information about Sibshops with interested families and the playground was packed with climbers and sliders throughout the day.

Check out more of the events hosted by the Family Support Council and keep your eye on upcoming editions of this newsletter for information on the 4th annual Family Support Council Picnic.



Tina and Jeff pose for a photo op!

Success!

Two years ago my daughter Jocelyn moved into her own home and her life has just been getting better ever since. In July of 2009 we were told that she had received a budget for her residential support needs, at the age of 30. We were told we had 3 months to make it happen and as I chose not to work with a vendor agency I decided to get right to work. I had become her vendor 2 years prior, to manage 10 hours a week for her support and had hired 2 young women who took her out 2-3 nights per week. This was going to be a lot bigger undertaking with 24/7 support staffing needs as well as all household expenses, and I was ready and willing to give it my best shot.

The first thing I did was to begin to scour the MLS listings to get an idea of where and how we could find her suitable housing. We found a great place close enough to our home in a safe and secure neighborhood, worked out financing and closed on it mid September. I also began to consider where I might find the perfect people to live with and support her in her own

home. She already had a few people who were working with her and all were very supportive and wanted to continue. Not only that, they also had ideas of others who they felt would work well with Jocelyn and the staff already in place. So I only ended up needing to hire 2 others and both of them came highly recommended by current employees, who also took it upon themselves to train and shadow while they all got to know each other. Jocelyn does not speak and communicates mostly with eye contact and some vocalizations. From the first day she moved in, Oct 1, 2009, she seemed very comfortable in her home and while I expected to hit a few snags, there were none. She and her team all got along very well and supported each other, a truly reciprocal approach.

Now 2 years later we are down to 2 staff, from the 5 original and life is still going smooth. As some left for family or work schedule reasons, the others just seemed to



pick up the additional hours. I keep asking if I should start looking but get a firm not yet for an answer. So the move went unbelievably smooth with no obvious transition period and 2 years later have had no more than little glitches that we all come together to figure out. Jocelyn has blossomed living on her own, She has made many new friends and gets out most every weekend and several nights a week. Flexibility is a key to this success and we are all very flexible to help each other out as needed.

Marlyn Curtin

Event Calendar

Did We Miss You?

Focal events have been in full swing this fall. The season started out with a family picnic at Kezar Lake in Sutton. A number of families came and participated in games, geo caching, swimming and a full picnic. In September, the Family Support Council hosted its annual picnic for all families at Elm Brook Park in Contoocook. Over 50 people came together to share in a day of food, fun and fellowship. On October 8th, over 50 people took to the corn mazes at Beech Hill in Hopkinton. They also enjoyed live music, popcorn, ice cream sundaes and the animal petting area. The Council also supported the Concord Halloween Howl by offering a treat or treat stop on Main Street. Check out the remaining events below!

Focal Area	Concord	Franklin	Hillsboro	Kearsarge	Pittsfield
January	21 st Concord Winter Carnival	TBD Franklin Outing Club Winter Carnival			
February	4 th Movie Night	TBD Franklin Outing Club Winter Carnival	Event to be Planned	11 th Winter Fest at Fisher Field Park	4 th Movie Night
March	17 th Family Night	24 th Movie Night	Event to be Planned	2 nd Family Fun Night	Event to be Planned
April	27 th -29 th Statewide Support Conference	27 th -29 th Statewide Support Conference	27 th -29 th Statewide Support Conference	27 th -29 th Statewide Support Conference	27 th -29 th Statewide Support Conference
May	TBD Spring into Summer	12 th Franklin Community Day	Event to be Planned	TBD A Family Quest	Event to be Planned

All events are sponsored by the Family Support Council Focal Groups.
Please do not let the cost of an event prohibit you from attending.

If you would like to RSVP for an event, please contact Terri Warren at 226-3212, ext. 269 or twarren@communitybridgesnh.org.

Resources

NH Connections is a program offered through the Parent Information Center. NH Connections provides technical assistance, workshops, and resources to enhance school/school district strategies of parent involvement in special education. To learn more about this program, please contact Audrey Burke at (603) 860-7015 or aburke@picnh.org.

Community Bridges is on Facebook! You can find events sponsored by Community Bridges, the Family Support Council and other organizations who support individuals and family who experience a disability. Check them out on Facebook by typing in Community Bridges.

NH Family Voices operates a "Family To Family Health and Education Center" with one to one phone assistance, educational materials, a Lending Library and quarterly newsletter. NH Family Voice participates in several projects, each with a specific focus on different ways we can help families to become informed, experienced, self-sufficient advocates for their children and themselves. There is no charge for the services we provide.

Check out the updated Community Bridges website at www.communitybridgesnh.org. It links you to outstanding resources like local trainings, upcoming events and the family resource database. You can also see previous issues of the Family Support Council newsletter.

A resource for individuals and families working alongside Community Bridges

The Family Support Council is vital to the success of Community Bridges' mission. The Council is made up of individuals who reside in our service area and who each have a family member with a disability. Its goal is to ensure that all individuals with disabilities are valued as contributing members of the community.

The Family Support Council encourages you to consider joining the Council. We will host our annual Recruitment dinner this spring. It is a great opportunity for you to come and meet the current Council members, learn more about what the Council does and what you can do to support your Council. If you are interested in talking with a Council member about an opportunity to serve, please contact Terri Warren at 226-3212 ext 269 or by email at twarren@communitybridgesnh.org.

We're on the Web!

www.communitybridgesnh.org/family_support_council.php



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Address Correction Requested