



# The Deep South

Volume 3, Issue 4

Spring 2010

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***Join Us!***  
*by Carol Calix*

One of the major roles of Families Helping Families Centers across the state is to empower families. In past years people with disabilities were "sent away" to institutions, or were literally locked in closets, not allowed to participate in normal home living. Some parents were told at birth to put the child away and go on with their lives.

That never happened to me. Alicia, now 34, was diagnosed with unspecified severe/profound disabilities at five months. She had great doctors who believed that the bond between parent and child was critical to her survival. We were told that she probably would not live past the age of 10.

During Alicia's lifetime Louisiana started offering waiver services. Alicia is one of the lucky ones who has had community-based services through the New Opportunities Waiver since 1994. But there are many, many people who care for their children at home yet don't have this waiver. We can praise them for their love and commitment, but they also need our support in advocating for additional waiver slots to be opened.

This is why LaCAN exists. The Louisiana Citizens for Action Now is an organization that helps families and individuals advocate for community-based services. Every year they organize a Disability Rights Rally on the steps of the State Capitol. This year's rally is on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The LaCAN leader for our region, Delery Rice, has arranged for a bus to provide transportation. Information about the rally and bus are located on page 17.

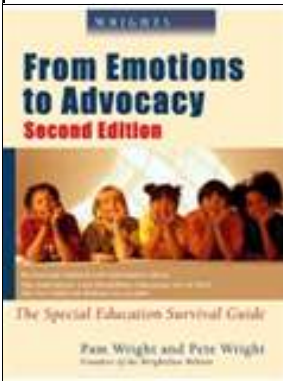
This is an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their families to show solidarity. Louisiana has come a long way but still has so much farther to go to provide the community-based services that so many need. Everyone can help by supporting the efforts of LaCAN and joining the rally on April 28<sup>th</sup>. For more information about LaCAN go to [lacanadvocates.org](http://lacanadvocates.org) or call Delery Rice at 722-8600.

*Opinions contained herein do not necessarily represent those of the funding source, and no endorsement should be inferred.*

***Inside This Issue***

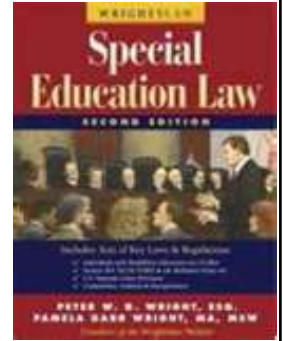
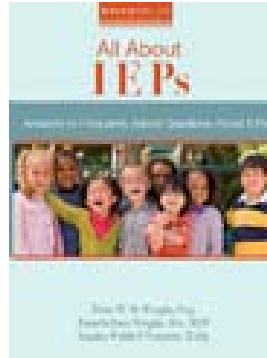
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# Attention Parents, Teachers, School Administrators!



## Wrightslaw

Coming to New Orleans!



Special Education Law and  
Advocacy Conference  
with Pete Wright, Esq.  
**July 29, 2010**  
9 am—4:30 pm

The program will be held at:  
  
LSU Health Sciences Center  
Medical Education Building  
1901 Perdido Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112

**Registration is free for Louisiana parents and for professionals working directly with the school system.**

There is a \$75 fee for out of state registrants and professionals not directly affiliated with the school system.

Online registration is available at [www.fhfsela.org/signup](http://www.fhfsela.org/signup), or you can mail or fax the registration form on page 18 or call 504-943-0343 or 1-877-243-7352

Lunch will be provided.

Registrants will also receive three books, which will be used at the conference:

*Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2nd Edition,*  
*Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy, 2nd Edition* and  
*Wrightslaw: All About IEPs.*

CEUs (continuing education units) will be available at the conference for a \$9 fee.

CLE (continuing legal education) will be available at the conference for a \$25 fee.

***Wrightslaw programs often fill up early - don't miss out!***

***Co-Sponsored by:***

***Families Helping Families of  
Jefferson***

***Louisiana Parent Training and  
Information Center***

***Families Helping Families of  
Southeast Louisiana***



**SAVE THE DATE!**



**LSU-HSC Human Development Center and LASARD (Louisiana Autism Spectrum & Related Disabilities Project)**

Presents the  
**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Autism Summer Institute**  
 June 15-17, 2010

*"I'm included...Now what?"*

**Hampton Inn - Convention Center**

Parents and students with disabilities, please consider taking advantage of the funding made available by the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

Call us today at **504-943-0343** or **1-877-243-7352** to see if you qualify. If you do, FHF of SELA will pay the full cost of your registration. **THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY!** Funding is limited so call early.

The LASARD Project and the LSU-HSC Human Development Center are proud to present the 2010 Autism Summer Institute. The Institute is open to any family members or professionals. The Institute features invited speakers from around the country on topics related to effective practices and key issues in programming for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Related Disabilities.

Visit our website for more information and future updates:  
<http://www.hdc.lsuhsdc.edu/lasard/>

LASARD Project  
 1900 Gravier St. 6B-2  
 New Orleans, LA 70112

Phone: 504-568-4331  
 E-mail: lasard@lsuhsc.edu  
 Fax: 504-568-7574

Days attending	Participating LASARD School Member	Family Member or Student	All Others
Day 1	\$25	\$60	\$75
Day 2	\$25	\$60	\$75
Day 3	\$25	\$60	\$75
3 Days (Whole conference)	\$75	\$120	\$150



**From Play to Pals: Social Development for Self-Reliance and Quality Living**  
**Wednesday, May 5, 2010**  
**8:30am - 3:30pm**  
**Junior League of New Orleans**  
**4319 Carondelet Street**  
**New Orleans, LA**  
**FEE: Registration: \$50.00**

We know that children on the autism spectrum have difficulty developing the social skills necessary for self-sufficiency as adults. This presentation will provide an overview of social skill development; the specific social difficulties and challenges associated with children on the autism spectrum, and the need to develop play skills, self-understanding, understanding of others, and the skills for successful community living, including recreation and the development of friendships. An overview of methods and strategies to assist and guide children and youth with autism spectrum disorder to develop social competence and self-reliance will be included.

This presentation is designed for parents to use at home, as well as all educators and therapists to use in their work with children on the spectrum. It will be geared towards participants who have a foundational understanding of autism spectrum disorders.

*Parents or individuals with a disability, if would like to attend this event, stipends are available to pay for registration. Call 504-943-0343 for more information. Funding is limited so call early.*

## Local Students Partner with LaCAN and Learn How to Advocate

By Kathleen Locmelis

Graduate students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at LSU School of Allied Health have been charged with conducting an Advocacy Project for one of their courses. Two of the students contacted our LaCAN leader, Delery Rice to assist with Advocacy efforts in our Regions. Below is a summary of what they are doing and have proposed to do:

LSU School of Allied Health promotes disability awareness in and outside of the classroom. Masters students in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at LSU are teaming up to share their passion for the rights of all people and their love of learning.

Each semester, students enrolled in Psychosocial and Cultural Aspects of Disability with Dr. Henry McCarthy, CRC, LPC, LRC, are encouraged to create and implement advocacy or service learning projects that fill a gap in policy, practice or programs related to people with disabilities. This semester, two groups stepped up to the challenge and are collaborating with their community to respond to disability needs.

One group is working closely with LaCAN to improve support services for people with disabilities by increasing awareness of and support for the NOW Waiver. The students hope to link more of the LSU community with LaCAN to show support for disability issues by lobbying legislators and

attending the Disability Rights Rally in Baton Rouge on April 28.

Another group project aspires to develop relationships and increase understanding between children with disabilities and children without disabilities, in the classroom and beyond. The project was inspired by class readings and discussions highlighting the need for disability awareness beginning at a young age. The group plans to provide opportunities for understanding and interaction through skits and group activities in middle school classrooms in Jefferson Parish.

The LSU students are in their second semester of a two-year program to become rehabilitation counselors. Rehabilitation counselors work together with people with disabilities in the movement from dependence to independence; setting and reaching goals in the environment of their choice, removing physical and attitudinal barriers, and improving overall quality of life. LSU Health Science Center Department of Rehabilitation is ranked 14th in the nation.



**Don't have time to attend workshops? You can take advantage of online trainings offered by our sister agency, Families Helping Families of Jefferson. Because we are all working toward the same goal, we welcome families to attend events in either regions. Find a list of their upcoming trainings at [www.http://fhfjefferson.org/calendar.php](http://fhfjefferson.org/calendar.php). If you have any questions about these trainings, call 504-888-9111.**



- Work pays..... for persons with disabilities who want to earn a salary and gain a sense of self worth.
- Work pays..... for persons with disabilities who want to own their own home.
- Work pays..... for persons with disabilities who want to live independently.
- Work pays for Employers.... who gain a reliable workforce.
- Work pays for Employers....who increase their customer base, because the public likes to see businesses that hire people with disabilities.
- Employers learn that work pays when the employee with a disability adds a new element to the work environment.
- Employers win by getting valuable tax credits when they hire people with disabilities.
- Work pays for the community.... Because the employment of people with disabilities provides a greater tax base.

**Visit WorkPay\$ at [www.work-pays.org](http://www.work-pays.org) or call the WIPA Hotline at 1-888-942-8104**

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The **Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church** recognized Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana for our "outstanding and untiring service, commitment and dedication" in a very special ceremony during the Annual AME Conference. We wish to extend a gracious Thank You to this amazing group for their recognition and generous gift.





## Upcoming Louisiana-Youth Enhancement Services (LA-Y.E.S.) Activities

### April 2010

- 9: LA-Y.E.S. Consortium, 10 am-12 pm
- 10: FIEP Workshop, 2-4 pm
- 13: LA-Y.E.S./Orleans Parish Council Meeting, 12:30-2 pm
- 15: LA-Y.E.S./St. Bernard Parish Council Meeting, 12:30-2 pm
- 15: LA-Y.E.S. Family Support Group Meeting, 5:30-7 pm

### May 2010

- 1: FIEP Workshop, 2-4 pm
- 8: FIEP Workshop, 2-4 pm
- 11: LA-Y.E.S./Orleans Parish Council Meeting, 12:30-2 pm
- 14: LA-Y.E.S. Consortium, 10 am-12 pm
- 20: LA-Y.E.S./St. Bernard Parish Council Meeting, 12:30-2 pm
- 20: LA-Y.E.S. Family Support Group, 5:30-7 pm

### June 2010

- 5: FIEP Workshop, 2-4 pm
- 11: LA-Y.E.S. Consortium, 10 am-12 pm
- 17: LA-Y.E.S./St. Bernard Parish Council Meeting, 12:30-2 pm
- 17: LA-Y.E.S. Family Support Group, 6:00-7:30 pm

For more specific information and locations of meetings, contact:

*La'Keidra H. Mitchell*  
 Consortium Developer  
 LA-Y.E.S.  
 3801 Canal St. Suite 301  
 New Orleans, LA 70119  
 Office: 504-483-7256  
 Fax: 504-483-7248

## **Are you a Certified Public Accountant? Do you have a passion to serve? WE NEED YOU!**

As a non-profit agency we strive to be fiscally sound and financially transparent, using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. We need the help of a CPA that can serve on our board, head up our finance committee, and assist the entire board in understanding financial reports. It would require approximately one hour of your time a month to review accounting records and assist with reconciliation. If you are interested in serving the community in this fashion, contact Carol Calix at 504-943-0343 or [ccalix@fhfsela.org](mailto:ccalix@fhfsela.org).



People with Disabilities Working Together To Change Louisiana

**People First**  
meets every month  
at 5:00 pm.

The next meeting will  
be held at  
3601 Canal Street,  
Suite 100,  
New Orleans, LA 70119

**2010 Meeting Dates**

- May 18, 2010**
- June 15, 2010**
- July 20, 2010**
- August 17, 2010**
- September 21, 2010**
- October 19, 2010**
- November 16, 2010**
- December 21, 2010**

**People First of Louisiana:**

- Is a self advocacy group run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities.
- Where people learn to speak up for themselves about decisions they make.
- Members can connect with others in their community, across the nation and around the world.

**Members learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States of America.**

**Mission Statement:**

People First of Louisiana supports people with disabilities to empower themselves in becoming effective decision makers, to gain more independence, and enjoy life as equal citizens of the United States of America.

**Vision:**

People with disabilities build personal visions that are reached through respect, equality and many different experiences that lead to choices and life decisions.

People with disabilities support one another to control their own lives, understand and speak up for their rights and live up to their responsibilities.

**Rehab act:**

“Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to

- live independently;
- enjoy self-determination;
- make choices;
- contribute to society;
- pursue meaningful careers; and

enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society.”

**Want to attend but can't afford the transportation?  
Call us at 504-943-0343 for information about  
transportation stipends.**

## Celebrate National Autism Awareness Month!

Text, bounce, connect and more with the Autism Society in April

Thursday, April 1, 2010

By: Carin Yavorcik

**Want to get involved with the autism community this April? Show your support this month by joining the Autism Society in wearing the ribbon, bouncing for autism, texting, and more!**

**Put on the Puzzle!** The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most recognized symbol of the autism community in the world. Autism prevalence is now one in every 110 children in America - that's 13 million families and growing who live with autism today. Show your support for people with autism by wearing the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon this month - as a pin on your shirt, a magnet on your car, a badge on your blog, or even your Facebook profile picture - and educate folks on the potential of people with autism! For suggestions and resources, visit [www.autism-society.org/ribbon](http://www.autism-society.org/ribbon).

**Spread the word.** Helping the autism community can be as easy as updating your Facebook or Twitter status! On April 1, the Autism Society is asking supporters to change their status on Facebook and/or Twitter to "Autism affects 1 in 110. Text "AUTISM" to 50555 to donate \$10 to the Autism Society. Help spread the word: <http://bit.ly/bUAVRf>." For the first time ever, supporters can now simply text "AUTISM" to 50555 to donate \$10 to the Autism Society. 100% of your donations will go to support the Autism Society's mission of improving the lives of all affected by autism.

**Make a difference.** There are several important bills moving through Congress that will have important effects on the autism community - safer educational settings (Keeping All Students Safe Act), better autism services (Autism Treatment Acceleration Act), greater financial independence (Achieving a Better Life Experience Act), better protection against toxic chemicals (Toxic Substances Control Act Reform, introduction anticipated soon), and more. For more information about this legislation and to take action to

support it, visit [www.vote4autism.org](http://www.vote4autism.org).

**Connect with your neighborhood.** The Autism Society and inflatable playground franchise Pump It Up are bouncing again with "Bounce for Autism" - over 100 community-based fundraising events that combine family fun with raising awareness and support for autism in locations nationwide that welcome children on the autism spectrum. Many Autism Society local chapters also put on events in the community through the month of April. But if you can't find an event that suits you just right, create your own! 1Power4Autism is an online tool that makes it easy to mobilize friends and family and help make a difference.

\* **Bounce for Autism:**  
[www.bounceforautism.org](http://www.bounceforautism.org)

\* **Autism Society chapters:**  
[www.autism-society.org/chapters](http://www.autism-society.org/chapters)

\* **1Power4Autism:**  
[www.1power4autism.org](http://www.1power4autism.org)

**Watch a movie.** Did you know that something that seems as simple as going to the movies is not an option for many families affected by autism? The Autism Society is working with AMC entertainment to bring special-needs families "Sensory Friendly Films" every month. Our special showing of How to Train Your Dragon is coming to a theatre near you on April 10. Or, you could see a movie about autism itself - the Autism Society is partnering with the Independent Television Service (ITVS) to support 70 community screenings of the new movie The Horse Boy, based on the memoir of the same name. In the film, Rupert Isaacson shares the inspiring story of how he and his wife learned to think of their son's autism as an adventure rather than a curse, a beginning rather than an end. Find participating locations for both events at:

\* **Sensory Friendly Films:** [www.autism-society.org/sensoryfilms](http://www.autism-society.org/sensoryfilms)

\* **The Horse Boy:** <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/horse-boy/>

Article originally published by the Autism Society of America ([www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)). Reprinted with permission.

Advocates, service providers, administrators, policy makers and the community at large are invited to attend the following presentation:

## Effective Communication in Health Care with Non-English Speakers & People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

**Office of Civil Rights, DHHS**

**presents**

“Effective Communication in Health Care for Individuals Who Are Limited English Proficient & Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing”

**REACH NOLA**

**presents**

“Communicating Effectively with Medical Interpreters & Limited English Proficient Patients”

**Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 1:00-4:30**

**LSUHSC Medical Education Building, 1901 Perdido St., Lecture Room B**

- ❖ *Receive resources & support*
- ❖ *Strengthen language access in your organization*
- ❖ *Improve effective communication in health care*
- ❖ *Learn about laws & regulations on communication barriers in health care: new Joint Commission standards, Title VI, etc.*

*RSVP to Katrina Badger • [katrinabadger@yahoo.com](mailto:katrinabadger@yahoo.com) • 937-657-5462*

*\*Sign language, Spanish, Portuguese and Vietnamese interpretation available*



**Tulane University  
School of Medicine**

**Office of  
Community Affairs  
and Health Policy**

## Making a Difference

One often wonders, "How do the people in Baton Rouge really know what I need down here in New Orleans, or Chalmette or Boothville?" How does information get from the person that has the need to the person that makes the decision about how and when those needs can be met? There is a mechanism in place that most are not aware of but can be a mighty force in affecting changes needed to improve services to individuals with disabilities.

There are two committees that act as the ears and the voice of the people. The purpose and mission of the committees are to ensure public input in an advisory capacity in the development and implementation of the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD). Policies, procedures and the allocation of resources are key components of the committee's duties.

The Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meets in New Orleans every other month to discuss the concerns of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The meetings are open to the public and offers committee members the opportunity to bring concerns to the table and gives them an opportunity to discuss the work done by the Metropolitan Human Services District. It is made up of a minimum of 12 members, made up of parents, self-advocates and agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities.

The State Advisory Committee (SAC) also meets every other month, on months opposite the RAC meetings. Two members of each RAC team across the state serve on the SAC. They are charged with the responsibility of taking information from the RAC meetings to the SAC meetings. Someone from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities attends the meeting to listen to the concerns of the regional committees and to act upon any issues that need to be addressed. The two SAC members for Region One are **Dorothy Sturkey** and **Carol Calix**, both parents of adult children with disabilities.

Since these meetings are open to the public, the schedule for meetings are as follows:

### SAC Meetings

May 12  
 July 14  
 September 8  
 November 10

These meetings are usually held in Baton Rouge or Pineville from noon to 3 pm. Some regions participate via conference call. If anyone wishes to participate, please call Carol Calix at 504-943-0343.

### RAC Meetings

April 16  
 June 11  
 August 13  
 October 8  
 December 10

These meetings are held at Volunteers of America, 4152 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70119 from 10 am to noon. The public is encouraged to attend and have input into the process of providing care in our region.



The Creative Learning Center of Louisiana is proud to offer a unique and enriching summer day camp experience for children and preteens with autism and other learning disabilities.

- Our camp is specifically for children ages 4 to 14 with a primary diagnosis of autism.
  - Six one week sessions are offered this summer from mid June to early August.
  - Campers may attend all summer or any combination of weeks.
  - Camp is in session from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.
  - Tuition is \$275 per week with a one time registration fee of \$50. All activities and materials are included in the tuition.
  - Children and preteens of all ability levels are welcome. Children who exhibit severe aggression or biting may be denied acceptance into the program. Camp is not currently prepared to meet the needs of children with severe physical disabilities.
  - Each child will be taught by a certified disability teacher and staff.
  - Each child is also assigned a non-disabled peer buddy.
- Siblings of children with autism are encouraged to volunteer.
- Counselors and volunteers employ best practices in behavior

Applications are available by contacting [CLCofLa@yahoo.com](mailto:CLCofLa@yahoo.com).

The Creative Learning Center of La.

**Choose a Summer Camp Program for Children of Special Needs**

### Summer Fun Learning Activities

Just because school has ended doesn't mean learning should stop. Educational research has made it clear that parents who are actively involved in their children's learning at home help their children become more successful learners in and out of school. Come and have some fun learning ACTIVE and ENTERTAINING ideas to keep your child engaged in learning during the summer.



**Date:** Saturday, May 15, 2010

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Families Helping Families of SELA

4118 Franklin Ave

New Orleans, LA 70122

**Presenters:** Donnica Conway & Shanida Mathieu

**To register, call:** 504-943-0343



## Choose a Summer Camp Program for Children of Special Needs

When investigating options for summer camps for kids, special needs parents should follow these steps to ensure they find the best summer camp program to suit their children's tastes and interests.

### Choose the Type of Camp

#### Day Camp

**Programs:** Determine if the camp focuses on just one area of interest (art, nature, math, sports, history) or offers a range of activities.

**Duration:** Can vary from a week to the entire summer. If you are working, make sure to ask whether camp is in session around summer holidays like Independence Day and Labor Day.

**Cost:** Day camps tend to be less expensive than resident camp. Weekly costs vary from \$75 to \$500, and some day camps—such as a church vacation Bible school—may even be free. Ask about scholarships, subsidies, and financial aid. How flexible is the payment schedule? Do you still have to pay for camp if you go on vacation or take a day trip? In addition, day camp fees are eligible child care expenses and can be included toward the

child care tax credit when you are filing your federal tax forms. (Be sure to get your camp's tax ID number while your child is attending).

**Pros and Cons:** Day camps give your child a chance to be with other nurturing adults while still returning home every evening. One drawback is fitting drop-offs and pick-ups into your daily schedule.

#### Residential Special Needs Camp

**Programs:** Camps designed for children of special needs can be need-specific or cater to a variety of special needs children.

**Duration:** While some residential camps are offered on a weekly basis, others may have longer minimum stays, such as two weeks, four weeks, or even eight weeks.

**Cost:** Costs for residential camps run between \$200-\$500 per week, special needs camps may cost more because of the specialized personnel and facilities required. Ask about camperships, subsidies, and financial aid. Are payment plans offered? Are there additional fees for equipment, field trips, and optional activities?

**Pros and Cons:** At special needs camps, your child will have the opportunity to meet other children with similar challenges. They can learn more about their condition and build their self-esteem as they learn what they and others like them are capable of doing. Being away from home at night is a big step for kids.

### Mainstream Residential Camp

**Programs:** Camp programs can be general, with crafts, swimming, hiking, and nature study, or targeted to specific interests like ballet, soccer, robotics, fishing, or leadership. If your child has a favorite sport or hobby, chances are there is a camp devoted to that area. There are also camps for members of organizations like the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, and the YMCA.

**Duration:** Residential camps may offer weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly sessions, or even have programs that last for the entire summer (typically eight weeks).

**Cost:** While many residential camps run \$200 to \$500 per week, some camps may run more than \$1,000 per week, depending on the activities offered. Are camperships, subsidies, or financial aid available for families? Is there a dis-

count for families with more than one child attending camp? Are payment plans available? Are there additional fees for equipment, optional activities, or field trips?

**Pros and Cons:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all camps to make reasonable accommodations for children of special needs. As with day camps, you can find resident camps for every interest. One benefit of a mainstream camp is that it may help your child feel like a "regular kid." On the other hand, if she is the only child at camp with a disability, she may feel awkward.

### Ask Questions and Evaluate Summer Camp Programs

Jane Carr, regional camp director of Easter Seals of Central California, offers the following checklist for parents of special-needs children to use when evaluating camps:

Is the camp accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA)? ACA accreditation ensures that camps meet recognized requirements for safe programs.

(cont. page 14)

**(cont. from page 13)**

What are the camp's health and safety procedures and facilities? Is there a registered nurse in residence? What emergency arrangements have been made with nearby hospitals? How do they handle daily medications, medical treatments, and therapies?

What kind of training and experience do the directors and counselors have? Do the camp directors and counselors have experience working with children who have similar disabilities to those of your child?

What is the ratio of counselors to campers? For children with severe disabilities, the ratio should be at least one counselor for every two to three campers.

What is the return rate of campers and counselors? A low rate for either group may be a bad sign.

Can you provide me with references of other families who have attended this camp?

The camp director should be willing to provide these, and parents should follow up on them.

Following these steps should help you arrive at a decision about the best camp for your child.

The following websites offer camp listings sorted by a number of search criteria, including region, state, religion, gender, session length, and special needs inclusion. You can also check with your school district, specific special needs associations, as well as your child's physician or therapist for additional recommendations. Your local newspaper may have a special section devoted to local day camps and summer programs.

[www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)

[www.kidscamps.com](http://www.kidscamps.com)

[www.veryspecialcamps.com](http://www.veryspecialcamps.com)

[www.mysummerncamps.com](http://www.mysummerncamps.com)

[www.campchannel.com](http://www.campchannel.com)

[www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com)

Article originally appeared online at EduGuide ([www.eduguide.org](http://www.eduguide.org)). Reprinted with permission.



## Summer Plans for Families

The Nola.com guide to regional summer camps:

[http://blog.nola.com/ariamontoya/2009/03/got\\_kids\\_heres\\_a\\_look\\_at\\_some.html](http://blog.nola.com/ariamontoya/2009/03/got_kids_heres_a_look_at_some.html)

Wrightslaw offers an online list of resources and directories that helps parents of children with disabilities find a program that suits every child's need:



[wrightslaw.com/info/camps.mil.htm](http://wrightslaw.com/info/camps.mil.htm)



## Dreamworks

If you ever wonder what your child will be doing in the next year, ten years, as an adult or when you are gone, don't miss this workshop!

An interactive session during which participants consider a series of questions about planning for desired outcomes in the life of a loved one of any age who has a disability. You will leave with a tool you can use again and again to create inspiration, hope and an action plan to help your loved one move toward a meaningful and desired future, regardless of their age or involvement with disability.

Date: Wednesday, June 16, 2010  
 Time: 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
 Location: Juvenile Regional Services, 1820 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 205, NOLA, 70130  
 Presenter: Charlene Comstock-Galagan  
 To register, call: 504-943-0343

## For Adults With Disabilities

### Next Chapter Book Clubs forming now for the summer!



A Model  
Community Literacy Program  
for People with  
Intellectual Disabilities

Tom Fish & Paula Rabidouze  
with Jean Char & Yolande Smith

If you are 18 or over and would like to be a part of a book club, contact FHF of SELA at 504-943-0343. Clubs are being formed for the summer months. You will meet once a week for an hour to read a book. It doesn't matter how well you can read, there will be someone to either help you read or read for you. The book clubs are held at bookstores, corner cafés, coffee shops, any place where people can gather and enjoy each other's

company for an hour. If you are interested call us and we will set up a group in your area.





## To Sign or Not to Sign...Medical Release Forms & What to Look For

By Karen Scallan, Program Supervisor  
Louisiana Family to Family Health Information

Taking care to ensure the privacy of your personal medical information is important. Here are some tips for releasing

information to various entities and what you should look for when signing medical release forms.

### 1. Is there an expiration date?

I know of at least one entity that has no expiration dates on their medical release forms. Release forms without expirations should not be signed unless you intend to give the other entity full access to your child's medical record for life.

### 2. How long should the release be good before expiration?

This depends on the entity you are releasing to receive information. You may consider giving a school district a more extended time if they are working on an evaluation, particularly an initial or full re-evaluation. This will allow them enough time to get what they need. In general, two or three weeks should be sufficient unless you have the kind of doctor that has a full work load (or procrastinates on these things). You can extend this to a month if the school is conducting an evaluation since the medical release isn't necessarily the first thing they work on for the evaluation.

### 3. Some school districts request families to have a medical release form on file for the school year.

This isn't appropriate. This gives any school personnel authorization to contact your child's doctor at any time. Release forms should be done for specific reasons and the reasons should be stated in the forms.

### 4. Create your own medical release form or edit the one you receive from school or other entity.

Edit the one they give you by hand, or take their form and retype it editing it to include what you release them to do.

5. Consider contacting the doctor yourself. You can ask the entity exactly what they feel they will need in the way of medical information. Ask them for a list and get the information from the doctor yourself. If they have a prepared form for the doctor, you can take it to your pediatrician yourself to have it completed or mail it in to the doctor with a request that it be mailed directly to you.

This way you can monitor the communication between the school district or other entity and your doctor.

6. If you have concerns about the doctor's staff communicating with school personnel inappropriately, speak up. Call your doctor directly and voice your concerns.

7. Request that your doctor's office contact you any time they receive a medical release form and request for information about your child's medical history. Explain to the doctor what, if any problems or issues you are having with the school district or other entity.

Consider including in the medical release form a statement that says that the doctor's office must contact you before releasing any information.

For more information on this topic or other related topics, contact:

Karen Scallan  
Program Supervisor  
Louisiana Family to Family Health Information Center

A Statewide Program of Bayou Land Families Helping Families

204 East Bayou Road  
Thibodaux, LA 70301

Phone: 1-800-331-5570

Fax: 1-985-447-7988

Email: [f2fhic@bellsouth.net](mailto:f2fhic@bellsouth.net)

Facebook: La Ftofhic

# Disability Rights Rally Day 2010

## April 28, 2010

### 1:00 - 1:30

This Rally is held to promote Louisiana moving to a culture of supporting and accepting individuals with disabilities as full contributing and inclusive members of their communities. Rally participants are advocating for legislators to consider:

- Consolidation and closure of developmental centers to provide a better quality of life for current residents and use cost savings to serve people on the waiver waiting list.
- Implementation of the Resource Allocation Model in developmental centers.
- Preservation of the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) and the NOW Trust Fund.

Other funding that enhances the availability and quality of home and community based services.

- Restore the rate cuts to the NOW



Each Spring a coalition of advocacy organizations invite people with disabilities, family members, policy makers, business leaders, and providers to gather at the state Capitol to celebrate our accomplishments, friendships, advocacy and community.

#### Let your Legislators know you are coming!

You are encouraged to contact your legislators and let them know you will be at the Capitol for the Rally. Many legislators often come out on the Capitol steps and meet their constituents participating in the Rally. You are also encouraged to meet with your legislators directly before and after the rally. LaCAN Leaders are available and will be coordinating these meetings. This can serve as an opportunity for you to share your stories and requests.

#### Rally Planning Organizations

The Disability Rights Rally 2010 is being organized and supported through the collaborative efforts of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arc of Louisiana, the Advocacy Center, LaCAN, Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers, and People First of Louisiana.

For more information or to participate in Rally Day contact your  
 Regional LaCAN Leader, Delery Rice at:  
 (504) 722-8600, or e-mail: [deleryrice@cox.net](mailto:deleryrice@cox.net)  
 Limited Transportation and Rally T-Shirts Available!

# Wrightslaw Conference Registration Form July 29, 2010

Registration also available online at [www.fhfsela.org/signup](http://www.fhfsela.org/signup)

Please complete the form below and return to FHF of SELA. We will contact you to verify your attendance.

CEUs and CLUs available for this conference for an administrative fee. Please indicate if you need: CEU \_\_\_\_\_ CLU \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the registration form below and return to FHF of SELA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to person with a disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:**

FHF of SELA by fax: 504-940-3242

or

By mail: 4118 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70122

or

call us at 504-943-0343

Transportation stipends are available to *family members* if requested in advance. **ONLY ONE STIPEND PER FAMILY**

**GoodSearch**  
YOU SEARCH WE GIVE™

**NEW!**  
**GoodShop** Shop at your favorite stores and we'll donate up to 37% of every purchase to your favorite charity! **SHOP NOW!**

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Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana has earned **\$239.37** since 2007 through your Goodsearch and GoodShop activities. We thank everyone for helping to raise money for our agency. Go to Goodsearch and add their toolbar to your internet page and earn money for FHF of SELA by simply searching the internet or shopping online.

Because we are a non-profit agency, all donations are tax-deductable and we welcome any and all donations, big or small. Thank you to the **HIPPY Program** for another donation of children's books, the **St. Bernard Christmas Tour of Homes**, for their recent generous monetary gift and to the **Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church** for their recent monetary donation.

As a non-profit doing business in Louisiana, board meetings are open to the public. Our meetings are scheduled quarterly, on the second Thursday of the month at 6 pm. Board meetings are scheduled for **June 10, September 9, and December 9, 2010**. As FHF of SELA seeks LANO certification, work groups will be formed, which are also public meetings. These work groups will be posted on the [www.fhfsela.ning.com](http://www.fhfsela.ning.com) website.



*The Mission of Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana is to enable and empower families of individuals with disabilities through an effective coordinated network of resources, support, and services.*

*The Vision of Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana is to ensure all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to attend school, live, work and recreate in their community with typical peers.*



You can also help FHF of SELA earn money by using the Facebook Causes toolbar that is available. Visit Facebook, go to causes, and add the toolbar to your browser. Be sure to list Families Helping Families of Southeast Louisiana as your cause.

