



# SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

## **Our Mission:**

The purpose of Support for Families is to ensure that families of children with any kind of disability or special health care need have the knowledge and assistance they need to make informed choices that support their child's health, education, and development.

We provide peer support to families, and information and education to families, professionals and the community at large.



# Annual Report 2006

# Information...

**Families raising a child with disabilities need to understand their child's special needs and learn about available resources. Support for Families offers several ways to obtain this vital information.**

The Support for Families **Phone Line, Drop-In Services** at Open Gate Family Resource Center and at **satellite facilities** in San Francisco neighborhoods offer families and professionals information resources, referrals and guidance through different systems that serve families. Community Resource Parents can provide information in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

**The Joan Cassel Memorial Library** at the Open Gate Family Resource Center lends books, catalogs, audio-and video-tapes, on a wide range of topics for

families and professionals. In addition, there is a toy lending library. (The library is the subject of our Program Highlight article on page 8.)

**Resource Packets** on specific topics such as Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Behavior and Autism provide another source of information; packets are available in three languages. The Support for Families **website** ([www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)) continues to expand its scope and reach, with information on upcoming events at Support for Families and in the Bay Area, and links to resources from around the nation. Families

can also access online resources at OpenGate, where there is a computer specifically for parents. Staff members are also available to provide help. Several **list-serves** keep families and professionals up to date.

The quarterly **Newsletter** features articles relating to children and youth with disabilities. Spanish and Chinese editions are available to readers of those languages.



*"I have someone to talk to who understands my situation.." -parent*

*"The Community Resource Parent was great. She went above and beyond." - parent*

**In follow-up interviews, 94% of more than 145 families told us that Support for Families helped them obtain information and education they needed about services and resources; 97% felt better prepared to participate in the decision-making process; 84% told us they were able to obtain more appropriate services for their children.**

# Education...

**Support for Families' many educational activities give families — and professionals who work with families — opportunities to develop new skills, learn more about resources, and communicate more effectively with one another.**

Education activities in 2006 included **parent-professional workshops, small group individualized clinics, trainings, parent panels, presentations and conferences.** Topics for parent/professional workshops

and trainings during the year included Early Intervention, Hearing Loss, Inclusion, Individual Education Programs, and Planning for the Future. Meanwhile, weekly small-group clinics on the Individual

Education Program (IEP) and transition issues offered more individualized help for families. To make it easier for families to participate in these activities, free on-site childcare was provided. Clinics were presented in English, Spanish, and Cantonese; simultaneous translation was available for workshops and trainings.

The annual **Information and Resource Conference** was held in March and offered a full day of educational activities.



Fourteen workshops, an Assistive Technology demonstration center, and 65 exhibitors provided families and professionals with a wealth of information and opportunities to network with each other.

**Community education and outreach** activities in 2006 included teams of parents and staff who made presentations to classes, community organizations, and professional groups about disability issues and the experiences of families. Medical and nursing students were also matched with

families to help them develop a better understanding of family needs and concerns.

# Family-to-Family Support

**Family-to-family support is part of every service provided by Support for Families. Most of our direct service staff, all our Parent Mentor volunteers, and the majority of the members of our board of directors are, themselves, parents or family members of children with disabilities or special health care needs.**

**Support Groups** offer peer support, information, and resources to parents, caretakers and siblings of children with disabilities. New groups in 2006 included ones for families of premature infants, children with Autism, and children who are deaf or hearing impaired. Continuing groups included those for Spanish speakers, Cantonese speakers, families with mental health issues, families of young children and others.

**Volunteer Parent Mentors** are parents of children with disabilities who complete extensive training and are matched with other parents to offer support and resources on an individu-

alized basis. Outreach and support to Spanish-speaking Mentors continued this year.

**Mental Health Services** in 2006 included short-term counseling, referral, and case management available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

**Family Recreational and Social Events** provide relaxing, fun opportunities for families to get together and enjoy themselves. More than 1,000 parents, children and enthusiastic volunteers attended free family events during 2006, including Walk & Roll, Arts and Crafts Day, Halloween Carnival, and a Holiday Ice Skating Party.

## **The Numbers:**

Support for Families services continued to impact large numbers of children and families in 2006.

- 583 new families received an intake consultation with a Community Resource Parent.
- CRPs on the phone line made 6,648 phone and in-person contacts with families and professionals
- There were 6,429 Newsletter readers, including 434 in Spanish and 371 in Chinese.
- 157 workshops, trainings and clinics had attendance by 1,929 families and 1,326 professionals.
- 301 families and professionals, attended the 2006 Information and Resource Conference, which had 14 workshops and 65 exhibitors.
- There were 41 matches through the Parent Mentor program.
- 219 individual family members attended one or more of our 17 support groups.
- There were 164,857 visitors to the Support for Families website with 1,667,710 website hits. More than 4,800 unique visitors accessed the website's disability information packets.
- The Support for Families listserve received 1,680 posts.

# Special Projects

Support for Families actively collaborates in several projects, often taking a leadership role, to help improve the systems and services that work with families of children with disabilities.

## Statewide Initiatives:

- **Family Voices of California (FVCA)** is a collaboration of Family Resource Centers and other agencies working to improve policies and systems of care for children with special health care needs. Support for Families is a coordinating agency.
- Support for Families is also an active member and fiscal agent of the **Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA)**, a collaboration of centers providing parent-to-parent support for families of children with disabilities throughout California.

## Local Service Coordination Initiatives:

Support for Families is involved with other agencies in four projects working to improve service coordination in San Francisco for children of different ages:

- The **DCYF Special Needs Inclusion Project** is developing a Strategic Plan to help ensure that city programs will have the resources and support they need to provide positive inclusive experiences for children and



### Support for Families is...

- A Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) on special education (as part of the Northern California Region 4 Collaborative).
- A California Family Empowerment Center on Disability.
- A California Department of Developmental Services Early Start Family Resource Center.
- A Family Voices of California Family-to-Family Health Information Center.

youth with disabilities ages 3 to 18. Support for Families is the lead agency for this project.

- The **Improving Transition Outcomes Project (ITOP)** focuses on youth with special needs ages 14 to 24. ITOP is also developing a Strategic Plan to ensure that youth can transition smoothly to adult services. Support for

Families and Jewish Vocational Services are co-coordinating agencies.

- Support for Families is also actively involved in the **High Risk Infant Interagency Council (HRIIC)**, a project of First5 San Francisco that brings together agencies working with children birth through five with special needs. HRIIC is co-located with Support for Families.

- The **Open Gate Family Resource Center** is a collaboration with the Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE), the KIDS Project, the Community Advisory Committee on Special Education, the San Francisco Unified School District, and Community Behavioral Health Services.

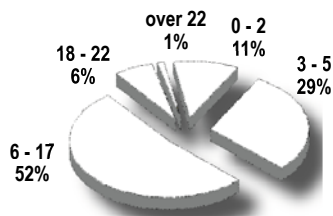
## Other Partnerships and Collaborations:

- Membership in the **Child Care Inclusion Challenge Project (CCICP)** working to increase inclusive child care opportunities for children with special needs in San Francisco.
- A partnership with **California Children's Services** for family liaison services.
- A partnership with the San Francisco **Department of Human Services Family Resource Centers** to offer outreach to families of children with disabilities birth to five in underserved neighborhoods.
- A partnership with the **Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (CAC)** is helping this parent group plan for the future.

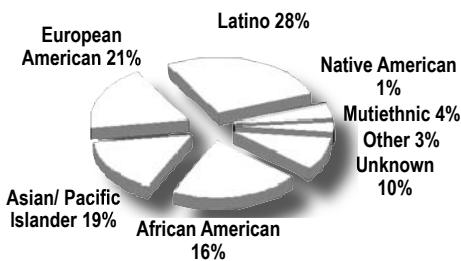
## Who are the families we serve?

**Families of children with disabilities come from all walks of life and all income levels. Because Support for Families does not have eligibility requirements, we can assist families of children with any kind of disability or special health care need, including learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and children at risk for disabilities.**

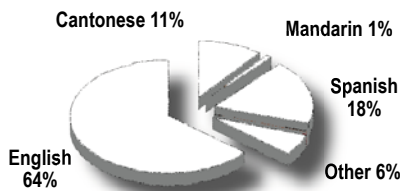
**The data below is from the 583 new families who had consultations with Community Resource Parents in 2006.**



**Ages of Children and Youth**



**Ethnicities of Children**



**Primary Languages of Families**

### Most frequently reported family issues in 2006:

- Needing Support
- Needing Child Care
- Assessment or Screening
- Problems with, or questions about, the Individual Education Program (IEP) for Special Education
- Other Education Issues
- Child's Behavior
- Financial Assistance

## One Family: *Maria, Juan, Umberto, and Nery Tuyub*

It was 1998 when Maria and Juan Tuyub suspected that their son Umberto might have a problem. Then a preschooler, Umberto seemed unable to sit still even for short periods and didn't speak as much as other children his age. Like most parents in their situation, when they were told Umberto had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the Tuyubs were anxious and confused about what this diagnosis would mean for Umberto's future, and, more immediately, what help he would need at home and at school.



"We were supposed to have an IEP [Individual Education Program], but we didn't know what that was," says Juan. "CCS [California Childrens Services] told us that Support for Families could teach us and provide information in Spanish. They were right. Support for Families was great for us." Support for Families Spanish-speaking Community Resource Parents at the Open Gate Family Resource Center explained the IEP process and services available through the school district. At age four, Umberto started speech therapy and special education. The Tuyubs were heartened by his progress.

Then their second son Nery was born. It was a normal pregnancy and everything seemed fine. At age 1 1/2 Nery was already speaking and walking well. But then something happened. "Nery started crying and crying. We were worried," Juan recalls. "We didn't know what was wrong with him." Then things got even more frightening: "Nery stopped speaking. His eyes looked nowhere; they were locked into space. We felt as if we'd lost our child."

Worried and upset, Juan and Maria came back to Support for Families with many questions. They got support, information, and a referral to the Golden Gate Regional Center. "Support for Families helped me understand much about the disabilities of my children and how to help them more," says Maria.

Thanks to the help they received, Umberto and Nery are doing well, both at home and at school. Umberto is now 11 and in an inclusive middle school program. He still has some problems with writing, but get helps from the Resource Specialist Program. And he's definitely speaking a lot more. In fact, notes Juan, "He talks so much we have to tell him to be quiet!"

Nery is also much more happy. "He came back to us. He hugs and kisses us. He's speaking, not as much as we'd like, but he's developing. Maybe some day he'll say 'I love you, mom'".

Now both Juan and Maria volunteer as Parent Mentors, helping other Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities as they learn to navigate education, health, and social service systems and find the information and support they need to help their children. "When we're asked anywhere by people - whether their children were just diagnosed or older - we can now provide them with information," Juan says. "Support for Families was our main place for help. Now we are part of the family and we're always going to be."

Our thanks to the Tuyubs and two other families who were kind enough to share their stories on a video that can be accessed on the Support for Families website: [www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org).

# Thank you!

The following individuals, corporations, businesses, organizations, and grantors ensured that Support for Families services reached families in 2006:

**CORPORATIONS,  
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ORGANIZATIONS:**

**\$15,000 +**  
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Paragon Real Estate  
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Hieu VanTran  
Angela Wong

**Government Grants and Contracts:**  
Administration on  
Developmental  
Disabilities, U.S.  
Dept. of Health and  
Human Services  
Maternal and Child  
Health Bureau,  
U.S. Dept. of  
Health and Human  
Services  
Office of Special  
Education and  
Rehabilitation, U.S.  
Dept. of Education.  
California Dept. of  
Developmental  
Services  
California Dept. of  
Education  
California State  
Council on  
Developmental  
Disabilities  
San Francisco First5  
San Francisco Dept.  
of Children, Youth,  
and Their Families  
San Francisco  
Human Services  
Agency  
San Francisco Dept.  
of Public Health

\*some of the above work-  
place campaign gifts were  
made in 2005 but, due to  
campaign processing, did  
not reach SFCD until 2006.



*We apologize for any errors, omissions, or misspellings!  
Please contact us so we can correct our records.*

## Program Highlight:

# The Joan Cassel Memorial Library

With more than 3,000 items, the resource library at Support for Family's Open Gate Family Resource Center has something to offer parents, children, youth, and professionals. The Joan Cassel Memorial Library (named in memory of one of the agency's founders) offers free loans of books, magazines, and audiovisual materials such as CD's, DVD's, videos and audiotapes on a wide variety of topics related to disabilities and special health care needs. We have reference materials available for on-site viewing for example, newsletters from disability agen-

cies and programs around the country.

Many resources are available in Spanish and Chinese as well as English. Librarian Elaine Butler is very resourceful in locating excellent materials from the Children's Book Project, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, Learning Differences Library, publishers, authors, SFCD staff and families to meet the needs of parents and professionals.

Information and Resource Manager Nathaniel Jenkins is working on computerizing hold-

ings and developing an online catalogue. In the future, families and professionals will be able to review available materials and toys online.

With so many resources available online, a computer with Internet access for use by families is an important Library feature. Staff can assist families in linking to important online resources.

But it's the Toy Library that is undoubtedly our most fun resource at Open Gate. Families can borrow toys and games for a month to see if they are appropriate for their children, exchanging them for new items at the end of the period. No library card required!



**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES  
OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

2601 Mission Street, Suite 606  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415. 282.7494  
fax 415.282.1226

at Open Gate Family Resource  
Center:

2601 Mission Street, Suite 300  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415.920.5040  
fax: 415.920.5099

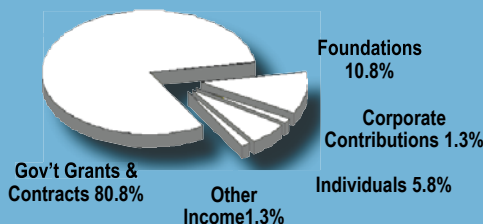
[www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)

## 2006 Financial Summary

Preliminary information. Complete audited financial statements for 2006 will be available in the Support for Families office in late spring .

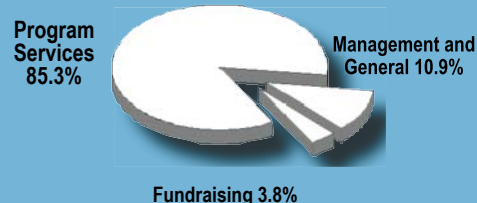
### Revenue \$ 2,264,330.

January 1 — December 31, 2006



### Expenses \$ 2,233,205.

January 1 — December 31, 2006



### Support for Families Board of Directors\*

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**Richard Adams**,  
*Treasurer*  
**Judy C. Chen**  
**Jeff Harrell**, *Secretary*  
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Allan Low, Esq.  
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\* as of 4/1/07

### Staff\*

**Juno Duenas**,  
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**Helen Rossini**, Co-  
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**Nina Boyle**, *Family  
Resource Center  
Program Manager*  
**Elaine Butler**, *Librarian*  
**Jo Cummins**, *Training  
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**Mike Durkin**, *Open  
Gate Office Manager*  
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*Director of Operations*  
**June Hew**, *Community  
Resource Parent*  
**Nathaniel Jenkins**,  
*Information &  
Resource Manager*  
**Patricia Mejia**,  
*Education Manager*  
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Events, and Volunteer  
Manager*

**Joseph Phillips**,  
*Mental Health  
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**Ashley Richards**,  
*Parent Mentor  
Coordinator*  
**Keith Rockhold**,  
*Information Systems  
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*Special Needs  
Inclusion Project  
Coordinator*

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**Sonia Valenzuela**,  
*Parent Mentor  
Coordinator*  
**Nitya Venkateswaran**,  
*Development  
Associate*  
**Linda Vossler-Swan**,  
*Family Voices of  
California Coordinator*  
**Jan Watson**,  
*Development Director*  
**John Weber**, *ITOP  
Coordinator*  
**David Witmer**  
*Administrative  
Assistant*  
**Lisa Yee**, *Community  
Resource Parent*

### HRIIC-High Risk Infant Interagency Council\*:

**Patsy Hampton**, *HRIIC  
Coordinator*  
**Zulema Rubalcava  
Barron**, *Special  
Needs Project  
Program Manager*  
**April Finocchi**,  
*Screening Specialist*  
**Carola Hastrup**,  
*Round Table Case  
Coordinator*  
**Shanta Jambotkar**,  
*Round Table  
Coordinator*  
**Karla Martinez**,  
*Screening Specialist*  
**Ana Vanesa Plasencia**,  
*Data Evaluation  
Specialist*

### Photos:

Patrick Sinott: cover,  
pg. 2, 4, 6, 7

Methanie Dempsay  
Binder: pg. 3, 8