



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2010

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Support for Families of Children with Disabilities is a nonprofit, support, resource and networking organization for families of children with special needs and the professionals who work with them. Our purpose is to support families as they face challenges. All services are free of charge including resources, phone-line, drop-in center, support groups, workshops & family gatherings.

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2010



Join us for an evening of Italian food and Italian music at the beautiful and exclusive Italian Athletic Club.

Volunteers are needed to help with planning and on the day of the event. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Hilary Bothma at (415) 282-7494, ext. 104 or at hbothma@supportforfamilies.org

We have moved!

Support for Families of Children with Disabilities is now located at:

**1663 Mission Street
7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103**

The office is located between Duboce Street and South Van Ness Avenue.
Our phone numbers and hours remain the same:

Phone:
(415) 282-7494
Family Resource Center
(415) 920-5040

Hours:
Mon, Wed and Fri 9:30-4:30
Tues and Thurs 12:30-8:30

Autism: What Can Family and Friends Do to Help?

Excerpt from "Autism Parent Handbook: Answers to Common Questions".

It may be hard to tell your family and friends that your child has autism. When you are ready to tell them, give them this booklet, so they can learn more about autism and how they can help. If you are a friend or family member who wants to help the parent of a child who has autism, you can:

1. Learn about autism. There are many books you can read to learn about autism. It will be easier for you to help if you know more about autism.
2. Teach your children about autism. Help them to be understanding and kind. Plan a play date for your child and the child with autism.
3. Use your skills to help. Many kids with autism are on special diets or in special classes. If you are a good cook, offer to help with meals. You can also drive the child to and from special classes. Or, if you have good computer skills, you can help by find-

ing information about autism on the Internet.

4. Visit the child in his or her home if it is better for the child. It can be hard for some children with autism to visit other people's houses. Shorter visits may be better than longer visits.
5. Try not to ask why the child does not do things other kids do, or why they act the way they do. This is part of autism. It can be hard for parents when other people expect their child to act a certain way.
6. Give a child with autism a small task to do instead of a big one. Children with autism usually learn better by breaking big tasks down into smaller tasks. This is the most common way to teach children with autism. This will help the child to learn and feel good about what he or she can do.
7. Offer to watch the child so the parents can go out and take a break. Parents can relax while they are out, knowing their child is in good hands.

8. Plan activities that the child with autism will like. If she is a good swimmer, go to a pool or beach. If he likes animals, plan a trip to the zoo. Try to find an activity where everyone in the family can be comfortable.

9. Give gifts that are useful. Great gift ideas include supplies for their special classes. Checking with your loved one is a way to make sure you'll give a helpful gift.

10. Join an autism group to show support for people with autism

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Sue Kuyper is our Licensed Clinical Social Worker and can be reached at 415-920-5040 X33 or via email at skuyper@supportforfamilies.org. She speaks Spanish and English. Please call if you would like more information about our counseling, case management and support group services.

Meet SFCD Board Member Antje Shadoan

I am the 'old lady' on the Board and go back to a time when SFCD was only a dream born out of a necessity.

More than 30 years ago I worked as a physical therapist and then director of a small program for children with developmental and learning differences at what was then Garden Sullivan, later the Child Development Center at CPMC.

Our social worker, Helen Rossini, had a support group for parents of the children we saw in therapy. After hearing about the parents' frustrations and hunger for information, she and another parent decided to do something about it: they formed a new organization and started on the path toward SFCD. I followed their activities

closely and watched how the organization developed and blossomed. They became legally incorporated and now needed Board members.

So it was only logical that I joined the Board and remained on it for more than 6 years. SFCD was like my child, who I watched grow and unfold from the very beginning. Like my own children, SFCD is now grown up and has become a wonderful adult that I am very proud of. In this stage of life my parenting has become grand-parenting, and SFCD has recruited me for yet another term on the Board - a grandparent to SFCD?

I am full of admiration and wonder at what our little organization has blos-

somed into. Its staff and leadership are amazing, the areas of involvement have become wide and far reaching, and the help parents are able to get now is more professional and in depth than ever. We have a wonderful Board, and I urge anyone interested in joining it to give me a call or write me an email - we want the Board to reflect all of you reading this newsletter.

Antje Shadoan retired 10 years ago as manager of the Child Development Center at CPMC. She lives in SF with her husband Richard, manages his office, spends a lot of time with her grandchildren, and can never be reached on Wednesdays when she hikes the hills of Marin.

S.F. Unified School District (SFUSD) Special Education Lottery Remains Unchanged

This school year SFUSD and the Board of Education have been busy re-working the education placement system. The district went to great lengths to say they wanted parents involvement in the decision making process.

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) set up focus sessions with parents in many neighborhoods all over San Francisco. They conducted focus groups for non-English speakers in their native language. I attended the focus group meeting for parents of students receiving Special Education services.

During the meeting we went over the possible options for the different ways the lottery may work. Several methodologies were by defined by various types of geographical zoning. Unfortunately the details of each "zoning" possibility were very sketchy. Parents asked detailed questions but many "details" were not worked out.

In the end, however, the parents and the moderator realized that the details simply made no difference because the logic used to create the lottery "options" simply doesn't legally apply to students enrolled in Special Education programs. For example, what if a child needs a nurse on the school

site and there are no nurses on site in that child's zone? Suppose a child needs an instructor with a particular type of training and none exist in that child's zone? Where is the parental participation that is supposed to happen in conjunction with choosing a placement? The fact is: zones and lotteries do not belong in the Special Education assignment process.

All the parents at the focus group stated quite clearly that Special Education placement should be delivered through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. The PAC moderator brought back this information to SFUSD. However, when SFUSD staff presented its findings to the Board of Education, this consensus from the parents was never included in the presentation. The early slides talked about how much work SFUSD did to get parent involvement; however it is unfortunate that they didn't include the unanimous parent decision of the Special Education focus group. In fact, they just decided to continue the Special Education lottery. According to Federal law, placement is supposed to be the result of an IEP meeting that includes parent participation. SFUSD has gone to court over the lottery placement and lost twice.

The current Special Education lottery system consists of a random stack of

IEPs. There is no computer lottery. Students are placed in schools that have openings by a group of people at the Education Placement Center. There is no consideration for geography, teacher training, or individual needs, just the "disability category" of the special day class.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for Special Education tried to bring up this inequity again last fall, only to be told by SFUSD legal counsel: "The lottery is fair because it is "equal" to the general education students". Maybe they need to listen to Thomas Jefferson. He said: "There is nothing more unequal than the **equal treatment of unequal people**."

Robin Hansen

The CAC for Special Education is an advisory committee to the Board of Education, made up of parents and professionals, whose purpose is to advocate for quality special education. The CAC welcomes all to meetings on the 4th Thursday of every month, 7pm at SFCD. Contact the CAC at cac_specialed@hotmail.com or visit their website at www.sfcacsped.org.

Parent Mentor Program News

On May 7th, the Parent Mentor Program (PMP) graduated its most recent group of Parent Mentors volunteers from the Special Education Training series. Nine (9) English speaking Mentors and nine (9) Spanish-speaking Mentors participated in the 8-month series that began in September and finished this May with a party to celebrate their accomplishments. In the Special Education series, our Mentors covered various areas, including Evaluations and Assessments, the IEP Process, and Related Services. And on April 20th, the PMP hosted a panel of professionals that covered the subjects of IDEA, Section 504 and ADA for the audience of Parent Mentors.

In June we will have our Parent-to-Parent (P2P) portion of our training – **June 26th (English)** and **June 22nd and 29th (Spanish)**. During this training we will talk about communication skills, active listening and what it means to be a Support for Families Parent Mentor. Our volunteer

Mentors have been an integral part of our organization and a benefit to our families who have utilized their support.

In September we will again begin the eight month Special Education Training series using CASE/DRC's Rights and Responsibilities handbook and other resources to help our new Parent Mentors gain knowledge about the special education environment.

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Mentor, please contact us at (415) 920-5040, or by email:

Joan E. Selby, PMP Coordinator (English)

jselby@supportforfamilies.org

Sonia Valenzuela, PMP Coordinator (Spanish)

svalenzuela@supportforfamilies.org

Christine Reina, PMP Coordinator (Spanish)

creina@supportforfamilies.org

The Special EDge: Early Childhood and Children with Special Needs

The Special EDge, published by the California Department of Education's Special Education Division, is a newsletter that provides information about special education and related topics for parents, educators, and other service providers. The Winter-Spring 2010 issue focuses on early childhood, and many of the articles include information and resources about young children with disabilities.

The lead article, "Early Childhood Takes Center Stage," describes high quality early childhood education and its importance for all children, especially for children with disabilities. In addition to describing the key components of a high quality early education program, the article discusses challenges that young children with disabilities may encounter in a classroom and ways that teachers and other children can address those challenges.

The article concludes by stating that "... a high-quality early childhood program becomes a resource for families in their efforts to provide a supportive early education for their child with special needs. High-quality early childhood education is a benefit for all children and may be especially beneficial for children with disabilities. It offers a sensitively stimulating, supportive, safe, and engaging environment in which each child's developmental potential can be realized."

"Early Childhood Inclusion: What It Looks Like, How It's Done" provides more information about preschool inclusion—specifically in early childhood programs in Napa County Office of Education, Santa Clara County Office of Education, and Etiwanda Elementary School District in San Bernardino County. Suggestions for creating inclusive programs are woven into the stories about the experiences of children, parents, and staff.

Two articles feature training and technical assistance programs for California's early childhood teachers and caregivers: the California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL) and the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN).

CA CSEFEL is one of 11 states participating in a partnership with the National Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). CSEFEL provides training, technical assistance, and resources for promoting children's social and emotional development, the "... foundation for a child's development in all areas, including physical and intellectual."

The CSEFEL approach has been particularly effective in giving teachers and caregivers strategies and tools for supporting children with challenging behaviors and significantly reducing

referrals for special education services. Staff from several San Francisco Head Start, SFUSD, and preschool for all programs have participated in local CSEFEL training.

The California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) is under the California Department of Education's Child Development Division and Special Education Division. Through a statewide regional system, CPIN provides professional development in a number of topics such as social and emotional development, language and literacy, English language development, school readiness, and the inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs. Other professional development programs are listed at the end of the CPIN article.

To read these and many other articles, download the complete issue at www.calstat.org/info.html.

All quotations are from the articles in the Special EDge newsletter. Permission to copy and share information is given by CalSTAT (California Services for Technical Assistance and Training), which publishes The Special EDge through a contract with the California Department of Education, Special Education Division.

About the Authors

Ann Carr, Director of HRIIC and **Judy Higuchi**, Assistant Director can be reached at 415-206-7743 or visit their web site at: www.hriic.org

Support for Families 5-Year Strategic Plan

Over the last year, with the assistance of a grant from the San Francisco Foundation and Jude Kaye as our Strategic Plan facilitator and guide, Support for Families has completed our 5 Year Strategic Plan. We would like to thank all the families, professionals and agencies that responded to our surveys, focus groups and telephone interviews. We would like to thank the Board of Directors and SFCD staff for their time, input, and direction.

Our new Mission Statement is:

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 support to make informed choices that enhance their children's development and well being. Through fostering partnership among families, professionals and the community our children can flourish.



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A support and resource organization providing services for families of children with disabilities

Our Services

HOW YOU CAN USE US

CALL US AT:
(415) 920-5040

EMAIL US AT:
info@supportforfamilies.org

VISIT US AT:
1663 Mission Street
7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

GO TO OUR WEB SITE AT:
www.supportforfamilies.org
to get the latest information
on workshops, events and
new resources.

Phone Line/Drop-in Center

Get individualized information, referrals, and answers to all your questions from Support for Families staff, who are parents themselves. Staff will follow up to make sure you get the answers you need. Staff speak Cantonese, English, Spanish. Care giving for children available 4:30 to 8:30 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Resource Library

Access more than 3,500 books, videotapes, DVDs and a toy lending collection for families and professionals. Visit the library catalog online at: supportforfamilies.org/library.html. On-site computer access and hands-on assistance is also available.

Support Groups

Come to a support group to find solutions to challenges, learn advocacy skills, and explore resources. Support groups provide a network for families to gain strength by sharing experiences with peers.

Volunteer Parent Mentors

Find a match with a trained volunteer Parent Mentor based on a shared culture, language, or disability issue.

Educational Workshops and Clinics

Learn about resources, rights and responsibilities in monthly parent/professional

workshops and weekly small-group clinics. Care giving for children and interpretation services available with advance reservation for clinics and workshops.

Family Links to Mental Health

Get peer support from parents or a professional consultation from mental health clinicians who can help families and professionals access mental health and other services for children.

Family Gatherings:

Socialize and network in a fun relaxed atmosphere at quarterly events, such as our annual ice-skating party and Halloween party.

Newsletter

Read the quarterly newsletter in English, Spanish, or Chinese to find articles of interest to families and professionals.

MISSION STATEMENT

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 support to make informed choices that enhance their children's development and well being. Through fostering partnership among families, professionals and the community, our children can flourish.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sally Spencer, *President*
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Laurie Strawn

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Juno Duenas

How You Can Help

All services and events, even childcare, are always free of charge to encourage participation by all families. With the demand for services greater than ever, your donations help make this possible.

A gift to Support for Families means that families of children with special needs will be better prepared to help their children—and that more children with disabilities will live their lives with dignity and opportunity.

Send a check to the address below or give online at supportforfamilies.org/help.html. Every gift can help make a difference in the life of a child with special needs.

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Ongoing Clinics

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) CLINICS 4:00-6:00 PM

Presented by Support for Families

Learn about Special Education law, the IEP process, what to do when things aren't working, and how to become a more active & effective team member

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) CLINICS

Presented by Katy Lusson, Ph.D., J.D., Disability Rights California

An overview of Social Security with a focus on SSI disability benefits.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the presenter to ask their individual questions.

TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES CLINIC

Presented by Support for Families

Learn about special education transition services for children age 16 and over, and how to effectively participate in the development of your child's transition plan.

All our clinics are free of charge and, unless otherwise indicated, provide childcare with advance notice. Call 415-920-5040 for more information.

For dates and times of clinics, see Calendar of Events, on back page. For more information, call Open Gate Family Resource Center at 415-920-5040.



Support Groups

All our support groups are free of charge. Childcare is provided, unless otherwise indicated and must be reserved in advance. If you are interested in participating in any of these groups, call Open Gate at 415-920-5040 for more information.

Autism Group. Monthly support group for families of children with Autism. **NO CHILD CARE PROVIDED.** *Facilitated by Jackie Fox.*

Asperger's Group. For families who have children with Asperger's Syndrome. *Facilitated by Karen Haney-Owens.*

Chinatown Child Development Center. For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. *Facilitated by Lisa Yee.*

Down Syndrome Group. For parents and caretakers of children with downs. *Facilitated by Judy Silva and Wes Horner.*

Evening Autism Group. For parents and caretakers of children with

Autism. *Facilitated by Priya Mathur.*

Family Links/Vinculos Familiares Group. A peer support group of parents of children with mental, emotional or behavioral difficulties. *Facilitated by Sue Kuyper.*

Foster Parent Group. A group for foster parents caring for children with special needs to exchange resources, support and information. *Facilitated by Sue Kuyper and Dennis Lockett.*

Living with Loss Group. A group for parents and caretakers with medically fragile children and children facing life-threatening illness. *Facilitated by Nancy Iverson, MD.*

Mission Head Start: Group for Spanish-speaking parents of children birth to five with special needs. *Facilitated by Sonia Valenzuela.*

Parents of Transition Age Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities. Join us for information, resources and support for the issues we and our youth face as they reach

adulthood. *Facilitated by Linda Tung.*

Prader-Willi Group. For families of children with Prader-Willi Syndrome. Sibling group also provided. *Facilitated by Sue Kuyper and Christina Lewis.*

SFCD Group. For Chinese-speaking families of children with special needs. *Facilitated by Tammy Kong.*

Spanish Speaking Group. A group Spanish-speaking families of children disabilities. *Please call Sue Kuyper, for information*

Tuesday Night Group. For families of children birth to five who have been recently diagnosed with a disability. *Facilitated by Nina Boyle.*

Please contact Sue Kuyper, Social Worker, at 920-5040 X33 for information about other support groups being offered or if you are interested in a group on a specific issue. Sue speaks Spanish and English.





Saturday Parent-Professional Workshops

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

Workshops are held at Support for Families of Children with Disabilities' new home at

1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor (between Duboce Street and South Van Ness Avenue)

Registration: 8:30 am

Program: 9:00 am-12:30 pm

Please note that Workshop presentations begin promptly at 9:00 am.

Reservations are required.

Sign up early—space fills up fast!

To attend a workshop, reserve child care, and/or interpretation services, you must call at least two weeks in advance: **415-920-5040**.

Relationship Tools: Getting Your Child Ready for Peer Relationships

Saturday, September 11, 2010

Presented by Maisie Soetantyo, RDI (R)
Program Certified Consultant, Comprehensive
Autism Treatment for Children

About the presenter: Maisie Soetantyo has been working with special needs children for the past 17 years. She has been a Certified Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) consultant for the past 8 years, and her work focuses on empowering parents to make a difference in their special needs children's life at home. She helps parents to become better guides for their children through building dynamic thinking and communication, as well as helping their children to become apprentices throughout life opportunities, thus preparing them to successfully manage the complicated and potentially confusing realities of daily adult life.

Parent Mentor Training Programs

You have the skills to support families in need! Come and learn to be a mentor!

You are invited to the following Parent Mentor Program's Trainings:

- June 2010 Parent to Parent (P2P) Training, and
- Sept 2010-May 2011 Special Education Series Training (8 month duration, break in Dec 2010)

Please join our group of volunteer mentors. Your personal knowledge and experiences in the area of support, healthcare and education for children with special needs can make a difference.

Participants in the P2P training will receive information and an opportunity to practice listening and communication skills; participants in the Special Ed Series will receive information and resources in understanding Special Education.

Parent to Parent Training (English)

Saturday, June 26, 8:30am – 4:30pm

Parent to Parent Training (Spanish)

Part 1, Tues, June 22, 4:00 – 8:30pm

Part 2, Tues, June 29, 4:00 – 8:30pm

Special Education Series (English and Spanish)

Starting Sept, 2010 - Dates to be determined

Location:

Support for Families of Children with Disabilities
1663 Mission Street, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Pre-registration required

Meals and limited childcare are provided with advance registration. To pre-register, contact Joan Selby, Parent Mentor Coordinator (English), Sonia Valenzuela or Christine Reina, Parent Mentor Coordinators (Spanish), at (415) 920-5040.



Calendar of Events

June 2010

June 3	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Cantonese)
June 10	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (English)
June 17	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Spanish)
June 22	4:30-8:30 pm	PMP (Spanish)
June 24	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (English)
June 26	8:30-4:30 pm	PMP (English)
June 29	4:30-8:30 pm	PMP (Spanish)

July 2010

July 8	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Cantonese)
July 15	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (English)
July 22	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Spanish)
July 29	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (English)

August 2010

August 5	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Cantonese)
August 12	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (English)
August 19	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Spanish)
August 26	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (English)

September 2010

September 2	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Cantonese)
September 9	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (English)
September 16	4:00-6:00 pm	IEP Clinic (Spanish)
September 23	4:00-6:00 pm	Transition to Adult Services (English)

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)
CLINICS will resume in October 2010.**

Improving Transitions Project Council (ITOP) continues to meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. If you are interested in information regarding ITOP, please e-mail info@supportforfamilies.org - Improving Transition Outcomes Project



Upcoming Special Events

Introducing an exciting new program on our website:



4-As, Arts And Activities for All!

Go to the Arts and Activities for All page on the SFCO website to find events and activities ideal for families of children and youth with disabilities. Find opportunities in the greater Bay Area for people with disabilities and their families to have a successful experience being in an audience, trying a fun activity at a local museum or fair, or participating in other programs they may never have known about!

Examples of activities that have been posted:

- ◆ New Conservatory Theatre performances for children with special needs
- ◆ Free art classes
- ◆ Sensory-friendly AMC movies
- ◆ Fun, free health and recreation events such as Access to Adventure

If you know of a event that other families would enjoy, anyone can go to our website and post an event. <http://supportforfamilies.org/artforall/>



2010 Information and Resource Conference

A community of more than six hundred parents, professionals, workshop presenters, exhibitors, and volunteers gathered at John O'Connell High School on March 20, 2010 for the 2010 Information and Resource Conference.

This year's conference began with keynote speeches by San Francisco Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Richard Carranza, Executive Director of Special Education Clare Davies, and School Board Commissioner Rachel Norton. After the welcome and keynote, the three hundred and twenty-five parents and professionals in attendance were invited to attend twenty-one educational workshops, a drop-in Assistive Technology Lab, and visit sixty exhibitor information tables. Children in the care giving area enjoyed a day of play and pizza.

We would like to thank all of the organizations and individuals who participated in every aspect of the IRC, from set-up on March 19 to registration, workshop assistance, food court, and clean up on March 20. Their contributions of time and energy to the 2010 Information and Resource Conference ensured the success of this event.

Thank you to:

- The workshop presenters who contributed their valuable time to conduct educational workshops and the exhibitors who shared helpful information and resources with families and professionals
- Event Partners: Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (CAC); High Risk Infant Interagency Council (HRIIC); Improving Transition Outcomes Project (ITOP); Special Needs Inclusion Project (SNIP); San Francisco Unified School District
- The Junior League of San Francisco
- John O'Connell High School staff and administration, including Principal Rick Duber, Coach Bob Gamino, Nurse Jane Steiner, and Mr. Gary Cruz
- Salomon Garcia and family for catering
- San Francisco Unified School District for providing language interpreters
- Keynote speakers: San Francisco Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Richard Carranza, Executive Director of Special Education Clare Davies, and School Board Commissioner Rachel Norton
- City College of San Francisco-Disabled Students Programs and Services, Judy Higuchi and Raymond Ching, Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center, Mayor's Office on Disability, Parents for Public Schools, and San Francisco Unified School District for generously loaning us several sets of interpreting equipment
- Support for Families, HRIIC, and SNIP staff: Juno Duenas, Hilary Bothma, Nathaniel Jenkins, Kathleen Schlier, Sonia Valenzuela, Mike Durkin, Tammy Kong, Joan Selby, Zulema Rubalcava Barron, Christine Reina, Shanta Jambothkar, Linda Tung, Nina Boyle, Frances Qiu, Judy Higuchi, Ann Carr, Lauren Crook, Alison Stewart, Dee Hayden, Lisa Yee, Sue Kuyper, Keith Rockhold
- A very special thank you to Sonia Valenzuela, Kathleen Schlier, and Mike Durkin for their invaluable work before, during, and after the conference
- The many individual volunteers and groups that gave their time to help with conference

It would not have been possible to present such a wonderful conference without the assistance of so many dedicated individuals and organizations!

Chris Ide-Don, our Education Manager, has left Support for Families. A spectacular trainer and advocate, he is moving on in his career. We wish him well. If you would like more information about our educational programs please contact us at info@supportforfamilies.org

Nathaniel Jenkins, SFCD's Information and Resource Manager, has moved away. Among his many accomplishment while at SFCD was to expand our multi-lingual library. He was the king of organization and we are grateful for the systems he set up. If you would like information about our library, please contact us at info@supportforfamilies.org

Access to Adventure: Celebrating All the Wonderful Opportunities Within Our Reach



Our second annual Access to Adventure event, was held on Saturday, May 1st, a bright and sunny day for children, youth and their families.

Health and recreation organizations brought sailboats to climb on, whiffle balls to bat, puzzle squares to paint, and Ukuleles to play at the Music Concourse Bandshell in Golden Gate Park. Thirty organizations helped to make this year fun for the kids and youth of San Francisco.

(continued on page 10)

Help Center to the Rescue!

By Cindy Ehnes, Director, California Department of Managed Health Care

With national health care reform looming, consumers and those with chronic diseases will need more help than ever to navigate our health care system. The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) is the nation's only stand-alone managed care regulatory agency, touching the lives of more than 21 million health plan enrollees.

The DMHC is the State agency that oversees all California HMOs, and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield PPOs. We make sure that health plans follow the law and that health plan members receive the right care at the right time.

The Help Center at the DMHC is here to explain your health care rights and help you understand how to use your health care benefits. We make sure that health plans follow the law and address member complaints on time.

The Help Center is a **free consumer assistance/protection program**

whose mission is to help people resolve problems with their health plans, such as the following:

- Denials of care and treatment
- Denials of prescriptions drugs and therapies
- Delays in getting referrals, authorizations and diagnostic tests
- Problems coordinating timely medical care
- Claims, billing and co-pay issues
- Keeping existing providers when health plan network contracts change
- Continuing coverage on Cobra and Cal-Cobra
- Cancellations of coverage
- Access to language assistance

We are staffed with analytical, clinical and legal experts who review health plan members' complaints and administer the State's Independent Medical Review (IMR) program where health plan denials of medically necessary or experimental treatments are sent to an independent review organization for a final determination.

The Help Center has assisted more than 1 million consumers resolve complaints and problems with health plans. The Help Center has also recovered more than \$11 million for consumers in payments or reimbursements owed by health plans, resolved more than 4,500 urgent cases within three days, and referred more than 9,000 cases to the independent medical review (IMR) process. In 2008 alone, nearly 60 percent of health plan treatment denials sent to IMR were overturned, resulting in requested healthcare services being provided to consumers.

Although not all types of health insurance coverage is under our jurisdiction we are here to help and can connect people to the appropriate agency or resource.

To find out more about the Help Center or Independent Medical Review, go to www.healthhelp.ca.gov or call 1-888-466-2219.

Access to Adventure (continued from page 9)

There are many organizations, companies and individuals who contribute to this event. Thanks to SF Recreation and Parks, **Project Insight's** director, Ben Oudekamhuis, for partnering with us again for this fantastic day in the park. Thanks to **Simple Kindness** who provided lunch to the families.

Thanks to **DJ Hightop** for being our MC, and performers, Rodney Bell and Sebastian Grubb from **Axis Dance**. Thanks to **Performing Arts Workshop** for providing the drumming activity for the children on stage, and to the **The Lone Mountain Band** for playing their soulful bluegrass harmonies.

We would like to thank our board member **Jane LaPides** who helped plan the event, and purchase all the supplies. Thanks to our sponsors **AAA of Northern California, The Junior League SF, Sports Basement, and Simple Kindness**. Thanks to all the organizations who contributed to our raffle.

Thanks to the many volunteer groups who helped us at the Prep Day and at the event - **Hands on Bay Area** (Give a Day, Get a Disney Day program), **The Junior League San Francisco**, provisional group, our own SFCD Junior League committee, **One Brick** and **SF State Hearing and Speech volunteers**.

We also would like to thank graphic designer **Amanda Sargisson** for helping with the passport design, **photographer Jennifer Kregear** for taking photos, and **Magic Jeanne** for the roving magic act. These individuals provided an amazing amount of volunteer support the day of the event.

For a complete list of the organizations that came to the event with their web addresses, please visit our website: www.supportforfamilies.org and click on Access to Adventure.

Kathleen Schlier is our Care Giving, Special Events and Volunteer Manager. She welcomes SFCD volunteers and can be contacted via email at kschlier@supportforfamilies.org.

Thank You!

Donations received January 16, 2010 through April 20, 2010.

Support for Families gratefully acknowledges gifts from the following individuals, groups, and businesses. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please contact us so we can correct our records.

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Nina Berg
Murray Cahen and Jane Lapidés
Michael Gamboa and Judy Chen
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Access to Adventure

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- Web site:
www.supportforfamilies.org

This NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in English, Spanish & Chinese. If you have a question or comment, send it to:
info@supportforfamilies.org

Please note our new address!

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