

Star Program

Issue 1 for 2007

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Reading Pediatrics
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Doctor's Corner by: Dr. Raymond Hubbard "Adopt A Congressman"

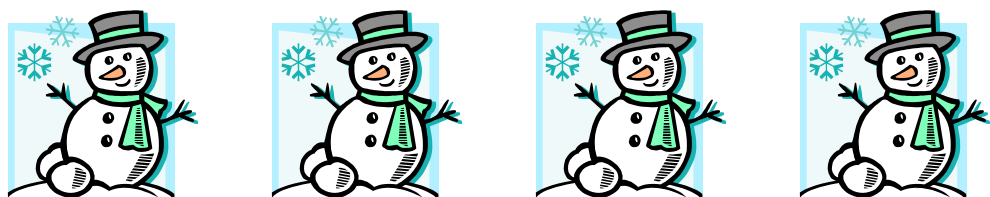
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Keep your calendar open for next November. Each fall the World Congress and Expo on Disabilities is held. This convention pulls together hundreds of exhibitors, dozens of specialists and multiple presenters, all with the focus on people of special needs. The most interesting presentation to me was "Making Your Case" by Sarah Lopez. The keynote message of her talk focused on how to advocate for your child at the highest political levels. Basically, she states "adopt a congressman". Ms. Lopez reminds us that most, if not all, politicians do have an altruistic streak that can be tweaked if done the right way. She adopts her politician by utilizing a corny but effective technique. She sends them an adoption certificate. Once notified, the legislator hopefully will become an advocate of your child. It is not that easy. As a parent, you must make yourself aware of the representative's voting record and be aware of the potential policies that will affect your child.

Hand written notes carry more impact. Send cards to your representative with pictures of your child. Know who their staff members are for often they do the research on bills and advise the legislator. Always thank the legislator for votes that favor children of special needs. If you do not agree with a vote, try to educate with specific examples that illustrate the impact of a policy on you and your family. Be an information source. One day you may be surprised by the legislator or their staff as they call you for anecdotes etc. about your child. Sounds good! According to Sarah Lopez it works. Of course it takes time and work on your part. Great you say - but possibly by starting an "adopt your legislator" club the work may be shared by many. As always, you have to take the first step.

For more information take a look at www.partnersinpolicymaking.com for online courses that help you in "making your case". For disability info go to www.disabilityinfo.gov.



Practice Manager's Corner by JoAnn Steinmetz

610-374-7400 ext. 3103

Happy New Year! 2007 brings a few changes to Reading Pediatrics. First, Dr. Yinka Olowolafe will be leaving Reading Pediatrics to pursue her career in Boston. We will all miss Dr. O. Second, Dr. Dana Devaney will be joining our practice on Monday, March 6th. You can visit our website to learn about Dr. Devaney. Third, Dr. Dave Zobian will be joining us in July. His information will be on our website very shortly.

There is a new vaccine, Gardasil, which we started administering in January 2007. This vaccine is to prevent the types of human papilloma virus (HPV) which can lead to cervical cancer. This is given to females, age 11 and up. Please call the office for further information.

As far as insurance changes, we do have some positive news. Both Unison and Amerihealth Mercy **DO NOT** need referrals for routine lab and X-Rays. Hopefully this will reduce a few phone calls for you.

If you have any suggestions to improve our office or have any questions, please call

Mary's Corner By Mary Frebel, RN

610-374-7400 ext. 3150

Several years ago when Reading Pediatrics got its feet wet with the Medical Home concept, we offered a free 'Networking Night' for the parents of our STAR patients. We had a guest speaker from Penn State Children's Hospital who spoke about her job as a family consultant and parent advocate. The talk was followed by a questions and answers. Our parent advisors were present and we allowed for plenty of time for networking. This first event was a great success and something we wanted to build upon. The feedback we received from the parents who attended was used to plan a second event with a much different format.

The second event was an 'Open House' in our Exeter office. We invited 10 representatives from community agencies and they each had a few minutes to introduce themselves and give a brief overview of the agency they represented. The representatives were each given an exam room where they could individually speak with families about specific issues. Once again, this was well attended and feedback was positive.

That brings me to our next endeavor! Another evening devoted entirely to you, the parent. We are calling it our 'Special Needs Health Fair'. Please mark your calendars and spend some time with us on Thursday, May 3, 2007 from 5-8 PM @ Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing. Come for a few minutes or spend the entire evening networking with other parents and visiting representatives from Amerihealth Mercy, Unison, Young's Medical, The Elks Home Service Program, HealthSouth, Parent Education Network and more. We also have a guest speaker planned from 6:15-7:15 PM to discuss estate planning. We will allow for questions and answers following the presentation.

I am hoping this date and time will be convenient for you. Please watch your mail for further details. We hope to make this event as successful as the two previous ones.

FAMILY ADVISOR PROFILES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR FAMILY ADVISORS TO YOU AND PROVIDE YOU WITH A CONTACT NUMBER IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF PEER SUPPORT OR SIMPLY HAVE A QUESTION THAT YOU THINK THEY MAY BE ABLE TO ANSWER.

NADINE BENTLEY

Nadine is the mother of Clayton, her son with Down Syndrome, born 7-12-95. She and her husband also have a typical daughter, Shelby.

Nadine can be reached by calling 610-916-1170.

CHRIS FLAMM

Chris is the mother of Amy, her daughter with Down Syndrome, born 1-26-97. She and her husband also have three typical sons, James, Cooper and Steven.

Chris can be reached by calling 610-779-8446.

NOE GATTONE

Noe is the mother of Greg, her son with Down Syndrome, born 10-17-89. She and her husband also have a typical younger daughter, Nikki. Noe has been actively involved working with daycare centers in the area of inclusion of special needs children.

Noe is active in the Down Syndrome Parents Network and can be reached by calling 610-929-8189

or by email: gregnoe1psu@comcast.net

For more information, you may also visit the network's web site www.dspn.org

MARIAN GEHMAN

Marian is the mother of Julia, born 5-7-02; her daughter who has profound mental retardation, cortical vision impairment and intractable epilepsy. Julia is wheelchair bound and G-tube fed. Marian and her husband, Tim, have three other typical children, Jenny, Jared and Jessica. Marian is a former Special Education teacher and can be reached by calling 610-777-3809 or by email:

mariangehman@juno.com

ANN MILLER

Ann is the mother of Olivia, her daughter with a preliminary diagnosis of Sotos Syndrome and Agenesis of the Corpus Collosum, born 7-31-00. Olivia has global delays including gross motor, fine motor, speech and cognitive that are greater than 25%. Olivia's specialists along with her parents are continuing to search for answers in an attempt to attain an actual diagnosis. Ann and her husband also have two typical children, Michael, and Hannah.

Ann can be reached by calling 610-385-0933 or by email:

annmiller@de.jazzed.com

LINDA PALM

Linda is the mother of Christopher Starke, her son with Cerebral Palsy and severe, profound mental retardation, born 7-21-80. Linda has years of experience with medical assistance and can provide you with a wealth of knowledge in that area.

Linda can be reached by calling 610-678-8995 or by email: LindaP53@comcast.net

MELISSA SOWERS

Melissa is the mother of Stephanie, her daughter with Cystic Fibrosis, born 8-7-97. Stephanie is an active elementary school student in the Wilson School District. Melissa and her husband also have a younger son, Eric, who is not affected by CF.

Melissa can be reached by calling 610-678-8816 or by email: msowers12@hotmail.com

AMY SNYDER, RN

Amy is the mother of Nicholas, son with Autism, born 8-7-97. Amy and her husband also have a typical older son, Jacob. Amy is a nurse in the Emergency Room at the Reading Hospital and can be reached by calling 610-796-1860 or by email: amysnest@msn.com

CAROL WENRICH

Carol is the mother of Adam, born 6-14-01, with complex congenital heart defects and without a spleen. Adam also suffered a stroke before he was 3 months old leaving him with a mild form of Cerebral Palsy.

Adam wears a leg brace and has received Botox injections. Carol and her husband, Darrell, also have an older daughter, Emily. Carol can be reached by calling 610-693-9607 or by email: brspri@aol.com

DONNA WOLF

Donna is the mother of Kyle, her son with Down Syndrome, born 6-23-97. She and her husband, Mike, also have a typical younger daughter, Taylor. Kyle attends elementary school in the Wilson School District. Donna is actively involved with the Eastern PA Down Syndrome Center and can be reached by calling 610-777-0758 or by email: wolfgsx@verizon.net

Waiver's By Linda Palm

What is a Waiver?

A waiver is a means for states to obtain federal funding for certain services not funded by medical assistance. There are currently three waiver programs operating in Berks County.

1. The Infant/Toddler Family Waiver, which provides services to children ages 0-3.
2. The Home & Community Based Consolidated Waiver, which provides services to children over the age of three-adults. The Waiver is also known as the "Consolidated Waiver".

The Person/Family Directed Support Waiver (P/FDS), which funds services for children over the age of three and adults.

Each County is allocated a specific amount of waiver funding to service a specific number of people each year. The state awards this funding based on each county's annual plan. As a result, immediate access to waiver services that meet all of your needs may not be feasible. If waiver services sufficient to meet your needs are not available, your services will be planned for and prioritized through a process called the "PUNS".

PUNS stands for Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services with Mental Retardation. It is a statewide data collection instrument used to assess needs of individuals waiting for services.

So now that you are aware of the Waiver grants that are available as parents, how do you decide where to start?

Your Supports Coordinator is your starting point. Asking for the application & understanding all the criteria is your Supports Coordinator responsibility to you. Remember to ask questions if something is not understood or confusing.

Being told your family member is approved for a waiver is the first step, having sufficient funding available is sometimes not always possible.

Being told your family member will be placed on the "PUNS" waiting list does not mean you need to stop there.

Fair Hearing & Appeal Processes

There are several processes in place to ensure appropriate conflict resolution for waiver recipients. These measures are in place to assure waiver recipients their choice of qualified service providers and a choice of applying for waiver services.

A county meeting

Usually, conflicts are resolved through team discussions and adjustments of services in a person's Individual Support Plan (ISP). Individuals, families/Caregivers can request this meeting by contacting your Supports Coordinator.

Independent Mediation

Currently, the independent mediation entity is the Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR). An ODR mediator is available on request of and at no charge to the County MH/MR Program or an individual receiving services /family.

Office for Dispute Resolution 6340 Flank Drive Suite 600

Harrisburg, Pa. 17112

1-800-992-4334

A request for mediation may be made orally or in writing to the County MH/MR Program

Fair Hearing

Our local A.R.C (610-603-0227) Executive Director Tom Dareneau was my personal advocate when I needed to appeal my son's continued placement on the PUNS waiting list.

Additionally available to families:

VISION FOR EQUALITY, INC.

Lyn Dougherty

Eastern Region Coordinator

1-215-923-3349 ext.128

ldougherty@visionforequality.org

Did You Know?

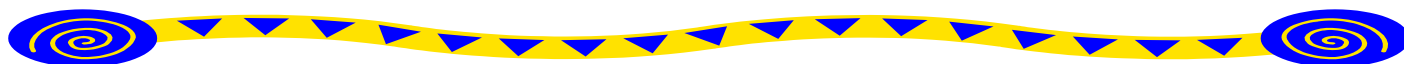
Sears Portrait Studio is offering a FREE 8X10 and sitting fee for those families that schedule a photo session. Just mention that your child is in the Special Needs Program @ Reading Pediatrics. Call 610-373-3139 to schedule your photo session.

If your child has a diagnosis of Juvenile Diabetes you are eligible for secondary Medical Assistance to help defray medical expenses. Please contact our office for an application.

Another local dentist, Dr. Blackburn, has a hygienist who has a son with Autism and is very knowledgeable working with special needs children. Please contact their office for more information: 610-375-3366

You may contact our parent advisors if you have specific questions regarding your child and issues you may need another parent's advice on. Please read their profiles in this issue.

Save The Date



Reading Pediatrics is sponsoring a FREE Special Needs Health Fair on Thursday, May 3, 2007 from 5 –8 PM @ Atonement Lutheran Church (Lundin Hall) in Wyomissing. Several community agencies will be represented as well as a speaker who will discuss Estate Planning. Please mark you calendar and plan to attend.



15th Annual Dayspring's Golf Tournament

Mark your calendar for May 21st and help a deserving group of people. Dayspring Homes is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1991 by Sister Francis Bisland, CPS. Sr. Francis has spent most of her religious life serving adults with special need sand their families. Dayspring Homes is dedicated to providing a Christian living environment for these adults who are mentally challenged.

Many of our residents' financial needs are not met by government funding. This annual golf tournament is the main fundraiser for residents and programs that are not government funded.

Come enjoy an afternoon of golf and take a few minutes to meet our residents who will be there to cheer you along. You are supporting a very special group of people and are in the daily prayers of the Dayspring Community.

1:00 P.M. Shotgun Start Chapel Hill Golf Course

Aaron's Acres

Aaron's Acres Summer Program for 2007

Aaron's Acres is pleased to announce the dates for camp for the summer of 2007. There will be 2 two week sessions of camp held at the Jewish Community Center of Reading. The dates are as follows: Session 1: June 18- June 29 and Session 2: July 9- July 20.

Aaron's Acres is unique in that it provides a camp-like experience for the child with special needs and his/her family. While the camper is at Aaron's Acres, the siblings have the opportunity to attend the JCC camp at the same site. In addition, the parents have the opportunity to take care of themselves by attending various sessions offered by Aaron's Acres. Relevant seminars will be led by professionals in the community (topics might include the following: behavior management, advocating for your child within the school system, planning for when your child graduates from high school, understanding family dynamics). Other sessions may include massages, manicures and reducing one's stress.

The camp is supervised by a licensed social worker. The staff is comprised of special education teachers as well as graduate and undergraduate students studying social work, special education, occupational therapy and psychology. Middle school and high school students are encouraged to volunteer their time and become "buddies" to the campers. In this way, these students act as positive role models for the campers and participate with the campers in all activities. A nurse is present at all times in order to address any medical needs. Staff to child ratio is low in order to promote positive interactions and appropriate behavior for these children. The camp day is comprised of typical camp-like activities including: swimming, arts and crafts, music, playground time and snacks. During the session, there are family events held in the evening in order that all family members can attend and have the opportunity to meet others in an informal social setting.

Children with all different developmental disabilities are accepted into the program (i.e. children using wheelchairs, children who are not toilet trained). Financial assistance is provided to those in need of this support. If you are interested in the camp program, please feel free to contact Risa Paskoff, MSW, at 717-368-1372 or e-mail Risa at paskoffj@aol.com for more information or to receive a camp application.



HealthSouth News

HealthSouth Reading Rehabilitation Hospital

The pediatric rehabilitation department at HealthSouth Reading Rehabilitation Hospital offers Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy. We evaluate and treat patients from birth to 21 years of age. Our patients have a wide array of orthopedic, neuralgic, genetic and developmental disabilities. Our goal is to achieve the highest level of functional independence possible for each child. We address limitations in the following areas: gross motor development, fine motor development, balance and coordination, strength and endurance, sensory processing / integration, activities of daily living and self-help skills, cognitive processing / attention, central auditory processing, and speech, language and hearing.

Two exciting and unique modalities that we offer are Aquatic Therapy and the Interactive Metronome. The Interactive Metronome (IM) is a brain based rehabilitation assessment and training computer program developed to directly improve the processing abilities that affect attention, motor planning, and sequencing. We also offer both individual and group therapies. Some of our current groups include social skills groups, fine motor/language groups for the preschool age child, and a water fitness group.

Our therapists collectively have over 40 years of experience working with the pediatric population with multiple specialty certifications including NDT and sensory integration processing testing. We accept most major health insurance plans including all three Berks County managed medical assistance plans.

For more information contact HealthSouth @ 610-796-6000



The Institute for the Advancement of Children's Environmental Health

A Child's World 2007 Lecture Series

February 15, 2007 - 7 PM

The Reading Hospital and Medical Center,
Education Center Rooms C & D
Childhood Nutrition: You Are What You Eat
Presented By: Dr. Alvin Moyer, Pediatrician,
Reading Pediatrics

April 19, 2007 - 7 PM

St. Joseph Medical Center, Franciscan Room
Second Hand Smoke
Presented By: Dr. Eve Kimball, Pediatrician,
All About Children Pediatrics

June 21, 2007 - 7 PM

The Reading Hospital and Medical Center,
Thun/Janssen Auditorium
Childhood Cancer
Presented By: Dr. Elizabeth Fox,
Pediatric Oncologist, National Institutes Of Health

August 16, 2007 - 7 PM

St Joseph Medical Center, Franciscan Room
Childhood Asthma and
Environmental Factors
Presented By: Dr. Dianna Schlessinger, Pediatrician/
Pulmonologist, All About Children Pediatrics

October 13 & 14, 2007

Kutztown University, Alumni Auditorium,
McFarland Student Union Building (Room 183)
Children And Environmental Exposure
Guest Speaker In Conjunction With Kutztown
University's Children's Environmental Health
Symposium.

December 6, 2007 - 7 PM

Kutztown University, McFarland Student Building
Current Trends: Town Hall Meeting On
Children's Environmental Health Issues
Moderator: Charles Gallagher, Editor, Reading Eagle
Guest: Kathleen A. McGinty, Secretary of the
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
Protection.

**Admission is free, but a reservation is preferred
to assure seating.**

Please call 610-683-4329.



BCIU Information

BCIU

Parent Partnership Project

Berks County Intermediate Unit's *Parent Partnership Project* sponsors training opportunities for parents, grandparents, educators and caregivers of children with autism. Meetings take place at Rivers Chase Center (BCIU). Check our website (www.berksiu.org)

For directions. Please register with Cathie Marella at 610-987-8495. There is no fee.

Upcoming Events

February 26, 2007

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Visual Strategies

Marilyn May, Speech/Language Pathologist

This presentation will provide an overview of the use of different visual strategies to support the communication and behavior of the children who have difficulty comprehending verbal language.

March 19, 2007

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Sensory Processing

Christina Argentati, OTR/L

We will discover the role sensory processing can play in the lives of our children and their families.

Basic terminology will be reviewed. The relationship between sensory processing and learning will be discussed and participants will learn how to design sensory strategies to use at home.

April 23, 2007

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Social Communication Competence:

“The Social Dance”

Melissa Walters, TaC

We will examine the development of social communication skills and learn how children become partners in the “social dance” through interaction with their families and caregivers.

May 7, 2007

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Picky Eaters: How to get them to “just take a bite”

Louise Miller, OTR/L

This presentation will discuss myths of eating, steps to eating and provide some general strategies that may help families expand acceptance of new foods.