

FAMILY FOOTNOTES

September 2004

What's New at FSRC

Family Footnotes is Family Support & Resource Center's quarterly newsletter. For 18 years, we have mailed it to all families, respite care providers, donors, and community partners on our mailing list. Circulation is currently 2193. Over the years, we added several other smaller and targeted publications: "Provider News" for respite care providers, "Movin' in the Middle" for people interested in promoting inclusion in middle schools, and various "Updates" for contributors to our Families Can't Wait campaign.

With this issue of *Family Footnotes* we will be combining all of our publications into a single newsletter. This change will save production and mailing costs and will insure wider distribution of our materials. To help you find the information you are most interested in, *Family Footnotes* will be organized into fairly consistent inserts and sections. As before, our newsletter is also available on-line at www.fsrcdane.org. If you have feedback or suggestions, be sure to let us know.

Inside this "Back To School" Issue

Vocational services for high school graduates in trouble—p. 1

Donor news: An interview with Nancy Valentyn, Chairperson of our Families Can't Wait campaign—p. 3

Bulletin Board: Events and Announcements—back page

Better Together: FSRC's Inclusion Page

- "No Limits" by Dennis Granzen
- Portfolios—a new tool for families
- UW Whitewater Camp helps students chart future

Steve McConnell debuts as an actor

Respite News Page

- Respite Provider Beth Wojciuk talks about a fun way to do respites
- Connecting Families Committee seeking volunteers
- Activity Idea
- Respite & Inclusion—volunteers can do both!

School websites provide ideas for inclusive activities

FSRC's Calendar Page: Dane County Area Events Listing

CELEBRATE

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It has been a busy summer for athletes. In June **Nicole Lukken** and **Megan Miller** represented Mt. Horeb at the state Special Olympics in Stevens Point. Megan won a 2nd place medal in the 100 meter dash and Nicole took home a 2nd in the 400 meter walk and 3rd in the 50 meter dash. Keep up the good work!!!

Congratulations to **Sara Lawson** and her friend Aimee. They participated with the East YMCA traditional softball team that took a 2nd at the Onalaska tournament and went on to play in the state finals in Eau Claire in August. Way to go!!!

Celebrate your right to choose. Don't forget to vote on Tuesday, November 2.

To the SBC Pioneers for their generous donations of backpacks and supplies this year.!

Thank You

*FSRC Picnic-Sept 18th, McKee Park in Fitchburg, 4-7p.m.

*Resource Fair-Oct. 11th, LaFollette H.S., 6-8 p.m.

*Rally-Sept. 23rd





Great Futures Are Out There for Kids with Disabilities!

In each issue, Family Footnotes highlights accomplishments and special events in the lives of the young people we support: awards for athletic feats, participation in performances, attendance at special proms, and especially—graduation from high school. In last month's issue, for instance, we recognized 7 graduates who were leaving high school with paid employment.

It is a truly fortunate and wonderful characteristic of Dane County that students with developmental disabilities, who have been prepared for the world of work during their school years, are able to continue employment following graduation. They do this because Dane County's Department of Human Services has had a commitment to provide vocational support to new high school graduates, so that they will retain their jobs and skills instead of sitting at home on a waiting list for county-funded services.

In addition, more and more graduates are pursuing post-high school education and/or starting their own small businesses (for example as house painters, couriers, or entertainers). Check out the article on "Transition Camp" in our Community Inclusion insert for one summer program that helps kids chart a future after high school.

But... Don't take it for granted!

Our service system for young people with disabilities is seriously threatened by recent and proposed county budgets. Agencies that provide services have already made significant cuts in staff and services. The Department's 2005 budget request, recently presented to County Executive Falk, makes further cuts in operating expenses, provides no funding to respond to crises, and proposes **elimination of all funding for vocational support to future high school graduates**.

All of us have a stake in the future. If you have a child with a developmental disability, this fall is a crucial time to become informed and involved in the political processes that will determine the future for your child and your family. **TAKE THE TIME!** Go to the hearings. Show up at the rallies. Register and vote in this fall's elections. Call, write, email, or visit your elected state and county representatives. If possible, make sure that your family member with a disability participates with you, too.

LINK's website (www.LINKdaneconomy.org) can keep you informed of developments on the county level. The DAWN website (www.DAWNinfo.org) has information on state level issues. If you don't have internet access, call our office for written materials.

DID YOU KNOW?

- »During 2003 in Dane County, there were 840 adults with developmental disabilities working in paid community supported employment
- »55% of these employees had worked with their employers for over 5 years
- »90% of these employees earned more than minimum wage; the average wage was \$6.13 per hour
- »800 Dane County businesses were involved in employing people with developmental disabilities
- »over 2.5 million dollars was put back into Dane County's economy through paychecks earned by persons with developmental disabilities

Respite News

Provider's Minute ...

Hello everyone! My name is Beth Wojciuk and I have been working with Family Support and Resource Center for about 4 years. Besides doing respite through FSRC, I also work at Verona Area High School in Special Education.

I was introduced to group respite a few years ago by my friend Victoria Oimoen. She has been doing it for years and it looked like a lot of fun to me so I tried it out and I absolutely LOVE IT! You may ask "what is group respite"? Well, it is exactly what it sounds like. On a given Friday night I take out between 2-4 young adults and do various activities. Some of these activities include going out to dinner, mini-golf, movies, sporting events, plays, fairs and much more. The young adults in my group all go to Verona Schools. It is nice because all of these young adults know each other, and it makes it easy for them to socialize.

Group respite is wonderful opportunity for young adults to socialize with their peers. The young adults I work with are awesome and so are their parents. Both the parents and young adults look forward to our Friday nights out.

If you have any questions about group respite or how to get into it, please feel free to contact me at: bwojock@aol.com.

Connecting Families Committee Seeking Members

Please join us in planning the 4th Annual Connecting Families Gathering for families of children with disabilities. The event provides families and community members with opportunities to learn about community resources, and connect with one another about available supports to Dane County Children with Disabilities.

The event committee is now forming and working to finalize ideas and topics for the 2005 gathering. The committee typically holds monthly daytime meetings; however, many past planning members have participated via email or at alternative meeting times. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Dennis Granzen at inclusion@fsrkdane.org.

LOCAL TRAINING RESOURCES FOR IN-HOME CARE PROVIDERS


The Waisman Center Training and Consultation Program hosts a variety of trainings appropriate for in home care providers. These trainings are reasonably priced, locally available and lots of fun. The FALL 2004 Waisman Center Training and Consultation Events Catalog can be found on-line at http://www.linkdanecounty.org/resources/Fall_2004_Catalog.doc.

GARDEN STEPPING STONES

Here's an easy and fun respite or family activity:

You will need:

- Concrete garden path stepping stones
- Acrylic paint
- Acrylic Sealer (spray can)



Stepping stones are available in a variety of colors and sizes from garden centers or retail landscape supply stores. Dust the surface of the stone to remove any loose particles. If necessary to wash, do so only with water (no soap!) and allow enough time to thoroughly dry. The stones may then be painted using acrylic paint by brush, stamp or hand. The finished design should be bright, but not thickly applied. When completely dry, permanently seal the stone with a clear spray acrylic. A path or garden display will last for years. Individual stones make great gifts.



Respite News

Respite Care and Community Inclusion Collaborate To Help Kids Connect To Peers

The **Respite Care Program** receives referrals each semester from the University of Wisconsin, Edgewood College and MATC of students interested in completing work experience hours with families of children with developmental disabilities. The students are in need of hands-on experiences for a range of hours throughout the semester. Matches have included everything from weekly visits to one-time assistance at a particular event. Each school year, FSRC's **Community Inclusion** facilitators provide local schools and families with support to encourage peer inclusion and friendship building.

This Fall, our two programs will join forces and embark on the first semester of a collaboration bringing university and college students into the efforts of facilitating friendships and community building for Dane County school age kids.

Here's how it will work. After the Respite Program staff identify university students through presentations to classes at UW, Edgewood and MATC, FSRC's Community Inclusion facilitators will provide students with training related to inclusion and will assist in facilitating connections within school settings. University students will spend time with families and kids in a variety of inclusion situations. Possible projects include: after school program or club support, facilitating peer birthday parties or recreation activities, lunch bunches, and recess support.

Look for updates in upcoming Family Footnotes to hear of progress from this new venture.

School Websites Offer More than just the Lunch Menu

Staying connected is much easier these days. With a click of the mouse, a school's website can provide you with a plethora of information. In a recent web search, we found that several Dane County school districts offered listservs where parent could post questions and talk to each other, sign-up for electronic newsletters, and links to variety of different educational websites.

Most schools provide school and community calendars providing natural opportunities for inclusion. Attending a sporting event, cheering on a school team, and even volunteering are excellent ways to expand the social network of students with disabilities. Don't forget concerts, plays and fundraisers! Consider planning respite around an event. Sometimes this can be more enjoyable, especially for teens, than going to an event with mom or dad.

Websites can be helpful for planning ahead. Often information is posted on a website before it goes out through other school channels.

Belleville: www.belleville.k12.wi.us

Cambridge: www.cambridge.k12.wi.us

Columbus: www.columbus.k12.wi.us

De Forest : www.deforest.k12.wi.us

Deerfield: www.deerfield.k12.wi.us

Edgerton: www.edgerton.k12.wi.us

Madison: www.madison.k12.wi.us

Mc Farland: www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us

Middleton/Cross Plains: www.mcpasd.k12.wi.us

Monona Grove: www.mononagrove.k12.wi.us

New Glarus: www.mhasd.k12.wi.us

Oregon: www.oregon.k12.wi.us

Sauk Prairie: www.saukpr.k12.wi.us

Stoughton: www.stoughton.k12.wi.us

Sun Prairie: www.spasd.k12.wi.us

Verona: www.verona.k12.wi.us

Waunakee: www.waunakee.k12.wi.us

Wisconsin Heights: www.wisheights.k12.wi.us



Better Together: FSRC's Inclusion Page

No Limits

by Dennis Granzen

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."

- Mark Twain

Talented and dedicated educators are precious gifts to their students. They instill a love of learning, find ways to transmit complicated facts and concepts to young minds, and often act as mentors to those in their charge.

However, just as important - sometimes even more so - are a student's peers. Who you learn with is as crucial as who you learn from. The culture of learning in an educational setting, its atmosphere, can either enhance and encourage or detract from and discourage a particular student's achievement. And the culture and atmosphere are determined to a large degree by the students.

When choosing a college or university, students and their families should keep an eye on the student body as well as the faculty. One reason the "elite" colleges are elite is that the students are diverse and motivated. While not everyone will be admitted to the elite schools, whatever school you might attend is going to have within it groups of students more interested in learning than others. Attach yourself to those groups; find a way to contribute to them, and you'll be in good shape. And never forget that students with disabilities, whatever their particular labels or challenges, can contribute to the culture of learning.

The same principle holds for elementary, middle and high school. We need to find that group of students with whom to attach. That's one reason why so many of us feel inclusion is so important. Learning together, in an atmosphere of mutual curiosity and encouragement, with students who are both like you and different from you, makes everyone achieve more. It also brings out the best in teachers.

W.B. Yeats once wrote, "Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire." That fire, lit by teachers and parents, is best stoked by fellow students.

All About Me!

by: Fil Clissa

It's okay to be a little selfish once in a while, especially when you're talking about "strength-based portfolios". This scrapbooking tool offers students and their families an opportunity to highlight information they want to share with caregivers, school staff and friends. It provides a window into the life and experiences of an individual.



I'm sure you've had the experience of thinking you know someone fairly well and then suddenly finding out something about that person that you never knew. For students and teachers this can be particularly true. The school year is just not long enough. When it ends, you've just begun to know someone and then you begin the process of "getting to know you" all over again with new people. Portfolios can help bridge that gap, shorten the "get to know you" phase, and aid in transitions. Taken from a model developed by the Institute on Human Development and Disability, portfolios offer insight in a way formal assessment tools can't. They offer a glimpse into a student's personal thoughts, experiences, preferences and dreams.

FSRC will be piloting the portfolio project at the end of August, and we hope to offer workshops to anyone who is interested in compiling one. The workshops will provide the tools to put together a portfolio using prepared sheets and scrapbooking tools. You bring the photos! The process takes several hours; you can add to or change the portfolio at any time. Inviting a friend to assist in putting a portfolio together can also be great fun and an opportunity to connect on a more personal level.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to participate in a portfolio making session, contact Fil Clissa.



Transition Camp: A Few Questions for Jenny Wagner

For the past two years Jenny Wagner has helped coordinate "My Future My Life," a transition summer camp for high school students with disabilities. The one week camp takes place on the UW Whitewater campus and helps students prepare for life after high school. For some that means going directly into the work world, for others it means entering higher education. In large group experiences, small group breakouts and one-to-one sessions the students - limited to a total of 45 - learn about: running their own IEP and getting the most out of high school; the world of work and choosing a career; self-advocacy; technical colleges vs. universities and how to get into one; vocational services; and social security benefits. There's also a session for parents on transition information. The camp is sponsored by the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities; the Waisman Center's Healthy and Ready to Work Project; and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. For more information you can contact Jenny directly at 262-472-1492 or by e-mail at wagner.j@uww.edu Jenny was interviewed by Dennis Granzen:

- **Who should attend the camp?** Anyone with a disability - freshmen through seniors - can sign up and come. The younger the better.
- **What are some of the things they learn about?** They learn about their options for the future and how to get ready for them. They learn self-advocacy. For example they learn what accommodations they might need either at work or in school and how to advocate for them. One of the unique things they leave camp with is an individualized plan for the future. Several times during the week each student meets individually with a professional counselor to create a career plan. Some go to breakouts on work and others on higher education. We also emphasize making friends and having fun.
- **How does the setting make a difference?** For those who are going straight to work it's a nice week away from home. For those interested in college it's a week spent in real dorms, eating in a college cafeteria, and getting around a college campus.
- **Any stories you want to tell?** There are lots, but here are two: This year we had a student who chose not to participate in many of the sessions, so staff spent time with him apart from most of the planned activities. His parents called the week a success because he didn't get sent home and they never even received a call. Hopefully they can build on the experience. The second is of a young woman who attended the first year without any expectations for higher education. After camp she went to technical college to gain the units needed for admission to a four year school. She now attends UW-Whitewater.

The Play's The Thing!

Steve McConnell tried something new. He got involved in a drama production at his school and unexpectedly was asked to become an actor. It was a great success. Here's Steve's story, in his own words:

I am Steve McConnell. I am 19 years old. I go to Verona high school in Verona, Wisconsin. I was in a school play, *Guys and Dolls*. It is a musical. In the play there are two cabaret scenes where the Hotbox girls sing and dance. I was a Hotbox patron.

I didn't think I would be an actor. I worked behind the scenes. I painted sets. When the Hotbox girls were practicing I came on stage. I swayed in the music and clapped. Then the director said 'I want you in that scene.' That is how I got in the play.

I said I am not an actor. I was afraid I will mess up. But other kids helped me get on my costume and go on and at the right time. I really like being in the play. I like the music. I like taking a bow and the applause.

If you want to be in a play go help out. You have to go to practices, too.

Picture not available.

Steve McConnell and aide Shannon O'Connor work on repairing a piano for the fall play.

Dane County Area Events Listing

September, 2004

- Sept 14-Oct 19: Weekly Toddler Story and Stroll** Olbrich Gardens
Join Olbrich for a story followed by a guided tour of the gardens. Cost is \$3, adult is free.
No registration necessary.
- Sept 16-19: First Annual Madison World Music Festival** UW Memorial Union
The festival will feature artists and bands from around the world. Free and open to the public.
- Sept 18: Food for Thought Festival** Off the Capitol Square, Madison
Cooking demonstrations, live music, kid's activities, animals and great food!
- Sept 18: FSRC's Family Picnic** McKee Park in Fitchburg, 4-7 P.M.
- Sept 18-25: Overture Opening** Many free music events for the whole family
- Sept 28: World Dairy Expo** Alliant Energy Center
International trade show for dairy producers. Includes live cattle, craft show, and delicious ice cream!

October, 2004

- Oct 6: Wisconsin Book Festival** Various locations in Madison
The Wisconsin Humanities Council presents a celebration of the pleasures of reading and benefits of literacy. Go to <http://www.wisconsinbookfestival.org> for more information.
- Oct 8-10: Octoberfest** Downtown New Glarus, WI
Come enjoy a variety of activities from cheese making to a 5K walk! And of course there will be lots of great food and drink!
- Oct 9: Faire on the Square** Downtown Baraboo
Over 150 exhibitors, food court, live entertainment, and tons of kid fun! 9am to 4pm.
- Oct 9: Great Pumpkin Give Away** Oak Bank Parking Lot, Fitchburg, WI
Perfect fall activity! Children receive a free pumpkin. Also apple bobbing, refreshments, and much more.
- Oct 15-17: Irish Language and Cultural Weekend** JF Friedrich Center, Madison
Here is a chance to immerse yourself in the Celtic culture.
- Oct 29-31: Halloween at the Zoo** Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison
Three days of Halloween fun at the zoo! Check out www.vilaszoo.org for updates!
- Oct 30: BOO-Fest (Free!)** Downtown Baraboo
Safe trick or treat zone with hayrides, inflatable fun, games, costume contest and more



Dane County Area Events Listing

November, 2004

- Nov 2: Food-A-Rama 2004** Temple Beth El, Madison
Benefit with proceeds going towards area groups, this is an opportunity to sample some wonderful kosher foods!
- Nov 5-7: Autumn Festival: An Arts and Crafts Affair** Alliant Energy Center, Madison. Arts and crafts vendors from over 30 states!
- Nov 6-7: Madison Antique Show** Lafollette High School, Madison.
Sat. 9am to 5pm and Sun. 10am to 4pm.
- Nov 6: Celebrating Youth!** Monona Terrace, Madison
Showcase of Positive Youth Development featuring a youth parade from the Capitol to Monona Terrace; stages of continuous youth arts and cultural performances; art exhibit and contest; exhibits by youth organizations, non-profits and businesses; hands on activities for all ages.
- Nov 7: UW Men's Basketball Family Fun Day** Kohl Center, Madison
Join the Wisconsin Men's Basketball team for their annual Family Fun Day. This is your chance to get autographs of your favorite Badger players and coaches. Admission is free.
- Through Nov 7th on Sundays: Teinen Farm Lodi** This year's maze is in the shape of a pirate ship. Enjoy a unique experience-find your way through our 10-acre cornfield maze with over 3 miles of twists, turns, and dead ends. Challenge yourself, your friends and family members to solve the maze and find all the clues in this mind-boggling living puzzle.

Information collected from Greater Madison Convention and Visitor Bureau
www.visitmadison.com





Community Partners Add to FSRC's Successes

Families Can't Wait! Since its beginning almost 6 years ago, those three words have been the theme of our campaign to raise funds for the 230 families on our waiting lists. And, thanks to a generous response from businesses, foundations, and individual donors, many families have not had to wait. Since 1999, FSRC has met requests for financial assistance from well over 200 waiting families. Grants averaging \$1100 have been used by families to purchase safety and accessibility modifications for their homes and vehicles, specialized equipment and therapies, respite care, summer programs and child care, parent training, and a variety of other goods and services.

Why Should I Get Involved?

To answer that question, it's best to ask someone who has already made that decision. Here's what our Campaign Chairperson, **Nancy Valentyn**, has to say:

What led you to get involved with FSRC?

"A friend approached me six years ago and asked if I would be interested in becoming a Board member. She told me that FSRC was the agency responsible for providing their family with respite care, safety features for their home, and other supports for their son who has autism. I knew what a positive impact FSRC had on their family and was shocked to hear of the number of kids on the waiting list and the years families had to wait to receive help. As a mother of a daughter with disabilities, I know the daily challenges these families face. My decision to become involved with FSRC as a Board member was an easy one."

What do you tell others who might be interested in supporting FSRC?

"I am proud to be affiliated with FSRC because of the tremendous work the agency does for Dane County families who have children with significant disabilities. Supporting FSRC either monetarily or by volunteering in some capacity is a win-win situation. You keep children with significant disabilities with their families and you save Wisconsin taxpayers millions of dollars by preventing out-of-home placements.

"We have made great strides in creating an awareness of FSRC and our mission in Dane County and raising money for families. However, cuts in governmental support for human services have made it more difficult for FSRC to carry out our mission at the level families need

I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in our mission to become a board member, to make a cash donation, donate to our silent auction, or offer in-kind help.

"Being a Board member for FSRC has been my most gratifying volunteer experience."

(Nancy has been a member of our Board since 1998 and Chairperson for the Celebrity Dinner for the past 5 years. Families of children on our waiting list are indebted to Nancy for her hard work and commitment to this cause.)

Celebrity Dinner to be held November 8

Over 35% of the money raised from our Families Can't Wait campaign has come from FSRC's Annual Celebrity Dinner.

This year's dinner will feature a silent auction and a delicious dinner at the beautiful Nakoma Country Club, served by local celebrities.

Tickets are \$75.

There are several ways business can contribute:

- » Sponsor & reserve a table for 10 for \$1100.
- » Make a tax-deductible donation of \$600 to help underwrite the cost of the event.
- » Donate an item for the silent auction. Art, furnishing, appliances, toys, jewelry, books, music, sports equipment, auto graphed items, and gift certificates are all popular donations.



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Inclusion Facilitator:

FAMILY FOOTNOTES-BACK PAGE

STAFF NEWS

Becky Ogiba was married in April and is now Becky Ziemba.

Jess Focht was married July 31st and is now Jess Focht-Perlberg.

Amy Polka had a son on 7/27, 8 1/2 lbs, Corbin Theodore. Both are doing fine.

Sara Russell had a little boy, Ryan Jacob, on Friday the 13th of August. He's 8 lbs 12 oz and 20 3/4". Everything went well and they are both home.

Patti Jo Becker is expecting a little girl any day now. We will update you in the next newsletter.

As of Sept. 1st Lauren Meyers will be taking over Sara's case load until she returns. Lauren will be staying on after on a part-time basis.

CONGRATUATIONS EVERYONE!!!!

BULLETIN BOARD

Wanted: Hospital bed

For Sale: wheelchair accessible dual driver van 118,000 miles, asking \$6,900

To Give Away: Gait Trainer-like new

Call Sharon at 221-4611 for more information