

Good People to Know, Good Places to Go

The world is a much better place for kids with disabilities and their families than it was 30 years ago. Children with disabilities can grow up at home with their families, attend public school, and have many more opportunities to be part of school classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and training for real jobs. Their gifts, dreams and achievements are more likely to be acknowledged and supported.

In addition to providing specialized help, service agencies are getting better at paying attention to the power of high expectations and positive imagery in shaping the lives of people with disabilities. The importance of inclusive environments and strong informal support networks is more widely accepted. Circles of support, person-centered planning, and mentoring or buddy programs are promoted as tools to help kids and families overcome feelings of isolation and loneliness.

What we've learned over the years is that good education, therapy, and medicine are essential but not enough. To thrive, kids and their parents also need many **good places** in their lives that are welcoming—ordinary community places willing and able to make accommodations for impairments or atypical behavior. And, they need many **good people** who can become companions, friends, allies, visitors, guests, hosts, as well as helpers in providing day-to-day care.

Both our Family Support Program and our newly named In Good Company share a goal of helping children and youth and their families to connect with more good people and good places. This is not a "service" that can be delivered with predictable or guaranteed outcomes. Rather, it is a purpose that is woven through our intentions, our choices, and our communications.

A recent survey of a sample of parents in our Family Support Program confirmed that families understand and appreciate this effort. When asked to rate the importance of various aspects of service delivery, respondents ranked as medium to high priority the following:

- "having my child actively involved with other kids" (88%)
- "getting connected with other parents" (77%)

The survey results were heartening. When asked how much has changed since receiving Family Support, 94% reported improvements in their child's involvement in the community and 97% felt better connected and supported.

Inside this issue:

As with every issue of *Family Footnotes*, we intend to use this newsletter to bring to you ideas, examples, and resources for finding good people to know and good places to go.

Good Places to Go: Stories of efforts to create places in our community where kids with disabilities and their families are welcomed.

Community Support: Good person to know: FSRC Board member Kelli Betsinger, plus information about "Families Can't Wait" grants.

In Good Company News: More good people to know: IGC families and providers, plus program announcements.

"No Limits" —Dennis Granzen's column describes PATH, one method of finding good people to help plan for a positive future.

Celebrate! News worth celebrating, submitted by FSRC families.

Back Page: Good websites for finding community events and planning for summer activities.



Looking for some good places to go this Spring and Summer? Interested in helping to create more welcoming places for kids with disabilities and families? Here are some ideas!

Jenni & Kyle Preserve

From Lisa Clayborn:



"I want to send a thank you to the family that created the Jenni & Kyle Preserve. My son has autism. I take him to the zoo and Tenney Park but it tends to feel a bit stressful for me. He's energetic, pretty vocal, and struggles with fishing 'etiquette' in a way that is kind of funny, but my sense of

humor is not always shared by other fishers. So, when I heard about the Jenni & Kyle Preserve, we decided to try it.

"The first thing I loved about it was wheelchair accessibility since our best buddy who is 8 is in a chair. Now he can come with us. I've told his mom about it, and we'll have trips together now. I also loved the fact that I can actually keep my son in view; he fishes in one spot for about 15 seconds before moving to another.

"But the best thing about the preserve was the sheer joy my son felt, catching his FIRST EVER TROUT— not one but two! He caught two panfish, too— enough for supper for the family. We took our extra worms and tossed them to some lovely painted turtles that were there. I got a photo of the BIGGEST smile ever. What a wonderful experience he and I will have for life. You only catch your first trout once!

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart, for giving that to my son. We said 'thank you, Jenni & Kyle' when we left, all smiles."

The Jenni & Kyle Preserve, a Dane County park located just south of Madison, was established by Jenni & Kyle's family as a park to be accessible and enjoyed by all children. The park is located at 925 Post Road. Take Fish Hatchery Road south to Greenway Cross and turn left (this becomes Stewart Street) and continue for 0.7 miles; turn right onto Syene Road and go 0.2 miles to Post Road and turn right. The parking lot is on your left.

"Out and About"

Come to Connecting Families: the 6th annual Gathering for Families of Children with Disabilities on Sunday, May 6, 12:30—4:30 p.m. at the Alliant Energy Center. The keynote and break-out sessions will focus on families sharing stories about recreation and travel. Lots of exhibitors, free parking, free child care an all-afternoon lunch buffet and drawings for prizes. For more information, call 237-7630 for a brochure.

Boundless Playground

Congratulations to the Elvehjem Elementary School Playground Improvement Committee for becoming one of 20 finalists in the Play-skool "Win a Boundless Playground Set" Contest! Co-chaired by parent and FSRC Board member Kelli Betsinger, the group is working hard to win the grand prize of a \$300,000 playground for the school which will be a safe and accessible play area for all of the school's students. To learn more or to help, go to <http://playgroundsupport.com/>

Alli's Family Bowling Day

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 5. The Allison Smith Foundation will hold its 6th annual Family Fun Bowling Day at Schwoegler Park Town Lanes on Madison's west side. It's a great way to have fun and support the wonderful work of the Foundation. Watch for a more details in April.

Welcome Home

Arboretum Cohousing, a condominium community that incorporates extensive common space and other strategies to build community among residents is planning a new development near St. Mary's Hospital. Eager to be inclusive, they have 2 units that they want to make affordable and accessible for homeowners who have a family member with a disability. To learn more, visit their website at www.arboretumcohousing.org.

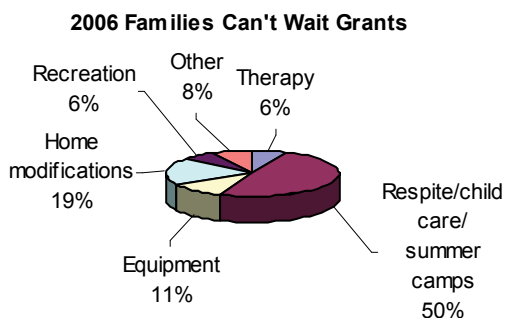


“Families Can’t Wait” Update

Eight years ago, Family Support & Resource Center began a campaign to raise money to provide short-term or emergency support for the 250 families on our waiting lists. At that time, families were waiting 5-7 years to receive assistance from our publicly funded programs, and there seemed to be no hope of improvement.

Because of generous donations from many businesses and individuals in our community, as well as the success of our annual Celebrity Dinner, FSRC has been able to provide cash grants to a majority of families on the waiting list for the past 8 years. We designed a simple application process for requesting grants: families (with the help of friends or advocates, if needed) complete and submit a simple, one-page form, explaining the reason for the request and the amount of money needed. FSRC staff review the requests monthly and, in almost all cases, the grant requests are approved.

In 2006, 66 grants ranging in size from \$100 to \$3000 were made to 58 families on our waiting list. The average grant was \$870. Below is a chart showing how the grants were used:



“I used the grant to pay for child care for my son so that I could continue to work over the summer months...This grant was appreciated more than you could know.”

“We used the money to pay for an aide for our son. The aide allowed us some “down time” and gave us some peace of mind during two afternoons a week during the summer.”

“I am so thankful for how helpful you were and how quickly you helped me.”

To learn more about Families Can’t Wait grants, go to our website at www.fsrcdane.org and click on the link to Families Can’t Wait. At the website, you can view and print the application guidelines as well as the request form.

A Good Person to Know: Kelli Betsinger

Kelli is the mother of two children, one who has cerebral palsy. She has been a member of FSRC’s Board for 2 years.

Q. What led you to become a Board member for FSRC?

A. Knowing that we are a family currently on the FSRC Waiting List, a good friend extended a special invitation for me to attend a board meeting. From that meeting, I could see that the FSRC board is a diverse group that works very hard to serve hundreds of families raising children with special needs in Dane County. I’ve found serving on the board to be motivating and very informational.

Q. What have you been able to contribute to the agency in your role as a Board member?

A. I enjoy working on the media committee and our public relations efforts that highlight the Dane County Celebrity Dinner. The dinner is a Madison tradition that brings people together to support a great cause – kids and families.

Q. In this newsletter issue, we are focusing on the importance of finding “good people”. How have you experienced this in your relationship(s) with FSRC?

A. As a board member I get a chance to meet people from all walks of life. Speakers regularly bring us up to speed on long-term issues for families raising children with special needs. As a parent of a child with special needs, I value and learn from these connections with every formal and informal meeting.

Q. What other activities/roles are you involved in?

A. Living in Madison offers almost limitless opportunities to get involved and I enjoy working to do my part as an Elvehjem PTO executive board member, Elvehjem Playground Improvement Committee co-chair, Take 5 Wisconsin committee member and Art in the Classroom volunteer.



In Good Company Video

IGC has been chosen by a UW – Madison Service Learning Class to have a video made about our program. Within the coming weeks, two PhD students will be conducting interviews with interested families and care providers to highlight the benefits of relationships for people with disabilities, providers, families and the community. The goal is to have a 3-5 minute product that IGC can use for promotional and recruitment purposes. If you are interested in contributing your story, please contact us.

Sara Stefka Joins In Good Company

Hello everyone! My name is Sara Stefka. I have recently joined In Good Company as the new Respite Care Coordinator. I am thrilled to be a part of a program that serves families with such dedication and compassion. I am originally from Grand Prairie, Texas, a suburb in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. I have a B.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from the University of North Texas.

My service experiences include direct care to individuals with developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's, and dementia, at camps and in residential settings.

In 2006, I moved to the Madison area with my dog, Jack. I relocated with the hope of continuing my career plans to remain an active participant in community supports and advocacy. Although the cold weather and snow have been added bonuses, I do look forward to the Madison summers! If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would love to hear from you!

Connecting Families:

Sunday, May 6th at Alliant Energy Center

Join us at the 6th Annual Connecting Families event! It's a gathering of families of children with disabilities for the purpose of sharing resources and building community connections. Call IGC at 608/237-7630 for more information about volunteering at the event, or to learn other ways you can get involved.

Want the most current information on requests for care and upcoming opportunities?

Check out the message board on www.linkdaneconomy.org. It's a place for IGC to post information for our providers, but also a forum for respite providers to communicate ideas, questions, and comments. If you haven't logged in before, click on "Provider Login," and enter your email address. Type "newlinkuser" as your password. Once you're in, you can set a new password, update your profile, and access the message board. (This will only work for providers already registered in our pool).

UPCOMING TRAININGS:

The following training opportunities are offered through the Waisman Center, Community Training and Consultation at 122 East Olin Ave., Suite 100, Madison. See cow.waisman.wisc.edu or call 608/265-9440 ext. 440 for more information on registration fees and course content. (Scholarships available for registered providers with approval by In Good Company).

OSHA Training:

May 22nd, 12:00pm -2:30pm

Managing Threatening Confrontations, Part 1:

April 18th and June 20th, 9:00am – 3:30pm

Managing Threatening Confrontations, Part 2:

May 16th, 9:00am – 3:30pm

American Red Cross: Adult CPR & First Aid:

May 1st and July 10th, 5:00 – 10:00pm

Safe Medication Administration:

April 4th, April 19th, May 1st, May 15th, June 6th, June 27th, and July 18th, 9:00am – 12:30pm

Sign Language Basics, Level 1:

April 20th and 27th, 1:00 – 3:00pm

Sign Language Basics, Level 2:

June 15th and 22nd, 1:00 – 3:00pm

Power & Control: Learning How to Use It Respectfully:

May 3rd, 9:00am – 3:00pm



KNOW YOUR IGC FAMILY

Name: Nuria Moffat

Age: 50

Occupation: Translator / Interpreter

My favorite Madison place or activity is: dancing---all sorts. My passion is Argentine tango. My favorite place is Olbrich Gardens, especially in the winter, because it reminds me of the rainforest in Costa Rica.

How long has your family been a recipient if IGC services? How have you benefited from these services? Our daughter has been in the program since 2004. Respite has given us greater freedom to do the things we enjoy. My husband and I use it so we can have some time together. We use it to have time for ourselves. We save most of our respite hours for use in the summertime, so I can visit my family in Costa Rica.

Respite is important to us because: for our daughter, our respite providers and their families have become friends. She loves going out and going to other peoples' houses. It's given our daughter a social life and social interaction—which was lacking before we were in the program. One of our providers, Sharron, is our daughter's favorite.

We like it best when providers: have a cheerful, young-at-heart, energetic personality. It's not so much what they do, but how they do it. Personality is an important factor. We love it when providers take the time to really play with our daughter, and to talk and interact with her.

If I could tell people one thing about receiving respite care, it would be: that it can improve the life of your child, it can improve your personal life, and it can even save your marriage. We are really appreciative of the benefits of being in the program. The services are the reason we moved here, and it has greatly improved our quality of life.

In each newsletter, In Good Company will highlight a family and a provider involved with our program. If you're a registered care provider or a family who receives our services, and are interested in contributing to this column, please contact IGC at 608/237-7630.

KNOW YOUR IGC PROVIDER

Name: Ben Burns

Age: 22

Occupation: I am a respite care provider, and I also work for the YMCA after-school childcare program.

My favorite Madison place or activity is: Union Terrace

How long have you been an IGC provider? How many families have worked with since then? I've been a provider since August 2006 and have worked with four families since then.

Providing respite care is important because: everyone has the right to be treated as a unique individual.

How I ended up working / volunteering in this field: I enjoy working with kids and wanted to make a positive difference in their lives, so I started working at Teen Outreach in the fall of 2005. When that didn't fit into my schedule any longer, I started doing respite.

If I could tell people one thing about providing care, it would be: At times it may be the most challenging thing you've ever done, but it will always be the most rewarding thing you've ever done.

WELCOME

NEW RESPITE PROVIDERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Courtney L.	Olivia C.	Melissa M.
Alison G.	Jason A.	Jessica S.
Lindsay E.	Roberta B.	Samantha L.
Kristine S.	Jennifer Y.	Jennifer G.
Jane R.	Melissa S.	Ross B.
Herman B.	Amanda P.	Emily P.
Leslie S.	Courtney W.	Emily W.
Patrick D.	Kelli B.	Meghan M.
Chia Y.	Jody K.	Laura S.
Stephanie S.	Amanda F.	Ashley T.
Brooke B.	Jennifer M.	Abrielle B.
Laura D.	Alexandria W.	Gabrielle A.
Melanie D.		



“No Limits” By Dennis Granzen

One way of bringing “more good people” into the life of your child and family is through various kinds of person centered planning. You might use a formal planning tool like PATH, Maps or Essential Lifestyle Planning, or you may decide to do something more informal. Creating a planning group can make asking for help from others less stressful and lead to a more creative and hopeful way of moving into the future. This sort of planning helps you prioritize what you want to do, and encourages you to find capacity. It can help you develop natural supports as well as better utilize paid ones.

At Family Support & Resource Center, we’ve developed a number of ways to assist families in bringing others in to help plan. One system a number of families have used is PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). PATH encourages people to invite those closest to them to help envision a positive future. The process starts with the dreams and passions of a person and family and moves backward in time to develop a practical action plan to move toward the goals. The developers of PATH have stated, “We have learned that in the seed of all dreams is the essence of a person’s real desire and what might eventually be feasible.” PATH develops a colorful graphic during the session that serves as its record. The process itself taps into neurons we’re not usually called upon to use. It gets the creative juices flowing and often is the starting point for an ongoing circle of support. A person’s ability or inability to communicate or participate may affect the preparation for and character of the session, but does not inhibit its success. PATH can be useful for groups as well as individuals. We also occasionally provide PATH facilitator training to family members as well as human services professionals.

In addition to a formal planning tool like PATH, we can also offer you assistance in more informal ways of planning that don’t require the presence of a trained facilitator. Over the last fourteen years of offering person centered planning, we’ve been able to develop a few tools that help families not interested in a formal session move in that same direction. Some are hybrids of steps from different formal plans, some are pull-outs from those plans, and others we developed based on our experience of supporting families. All of them help in bringing people together.

I’ve assisted in this sort of planning for people from three years of age to those in their seventies, and for individuals, families, and support teams. Anyone looking at any sort of transition in their life can benefit. These plans need not replace other sorts of planning such as an IEP, but rather can complement them. The feedback we’ve received from families has varied in its enthusiasm, but never have we heard that it’s been time wasted. One mother said the session made asking others in her family to help in supporting her son easier than ever before, and those other family members told me it made them more comfortable in offering their support

If you’re interested in articulating your dreams for the future, and taking a few steps in that direction, talk to a staff member at FSRC. You have nothing to lose, and many good people to gain.

When asked to rate the importance of various aspects of service delivery, 97% of families responding to a recent Family Support Program survey said that “planning for my child’s future” was a priority.

When asked how much has changed since receiving Family Support services, 94% said they felt better prepared for the future.

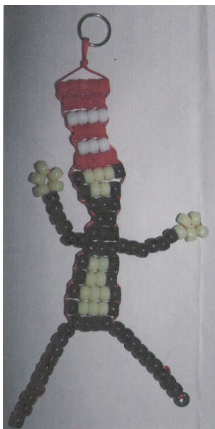


CASANDRA TAYLOR WINS NATIONAL AWARD!



A national organization of educators called the Council on Exceptional Children (CEC) has awarded Casandra the "Yes, I Can!" award for Technology. The CEC gives annual awards in several categories to individuals who have achieved something notable in that category or have overcome particular barriers in their achievement. A ceremony for this year's recipients will be held in Louisville, Kentucky in April. Congratulations, Casandra, on the award and on making honor roll this semester, too!

WHITNEY'S COOL BEADS!



Cat in the Hat keychain/backpack decoration



Decorative Zipper pull

Whitney Henricksen is involved in a great creative project for school! She and 4 other students have their own beading business, creating necklaces, earrings, key chains and other cool things with beads to sell at school. Last semester they made over \$400 in profit and treated fellow students to pizza at their Valentine's Day party!

Attention 2007 graduates! Send us your senior photos for inclusion in our special June Graduation issue of *Family Footnotes*.

SPORTS NEWS!

Dillon Holmes competed with his Special Olympics Basketball Team at the University of WI - Platteville on March 11th.

On March 10th **Dustin Holmes** competed in Special Olympics Basketball skills at Waunakee.



Above, **Hailey Disch** competes at a state competition for the cheerleading team the *Mad City Stars*.

MORE NEWS!

Colin O'Mara's first semester freshman year report card netted two As--one in PE and the other in English! Well done Colin!



Happy Birthday!!
Tomeka Thomas just had a wonderful birthday celebration with her family!

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Inclusion Consultation:

Fil Clissa Dennis Granzen

Website: www.fsrcdane.org

Community Calendar

Need some good ideas for where to go and what to do? Check out these websites for local events and resources:

www.visitmadison.com

The Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau's website where you can search upcoming and ongoing events. Link to "Kids Corner."

www.thedailypage.com/theguide

Isthmus newspaper's website; use the pull down "Events" menu to find "Kids Stuff."

www.madison.com/sectEntertainment/calendar

Here you can search Madison Newspapers' list of events. Use the "Calendar Search" tool to find the "Kids and Family" category.

www.dnr.state.wi.us

Department of Natural Resources website includes a link to "Open the Outdoors"— information on accessible cabins, trails, and fishing in Wisconsin's parks

www.mschr.org

Madison School Community Recreation. Click on the link to Summer 2007 Program Guide

www.wifilmfest.org

Wisconsin's Film Festival, April 12-15, this year includes a series of films exploring issues of disability.