

PACERSETTER

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A news magazine of PACER Center, Inc. by and for parents of children and young adults with disabilities



Nick
Sullivan

Creative Kids names winner

Thanks to 16-year-old Nick Sullivan, PACER's 2009 greeting cards will be a colorful, fun way for families and businesses to send their best wishes and support PACER at the same time.

The Minneapolis Edison High School student won this year's Creative Kids Contest with "The Sledding Snowman and Three Rainbow Penguins" (above) earning him the cover of PACER's 2009 greeting card.

Nick, an aspiring cartoon animator who has autism and several other disabilities, says drawing is a calming activity and a way to express himself. He is also an avid musician.

A set of eight greeting cards can be purchased for \$10 by ordering online at PACER.org/help/creative2009.asp or calling 952-838-9000. Cards are also available in large quantities for businesses.

PACER extends a special thanks to artist Anthony R. Whelihan and Creative Kids sponsors: Gallery Services, Gannett Offset, and Bloomington Art Center.

Federal stimulus package increases special education funding

Special education received some positive news when its federal funding was nearly doubled as part of the economic stimulus package passed in February 2009.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 includes an additional \$12.2 billion allocated for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) over the next two years. It includes:

- \$11.3 billion for IDEA Part B (age 3 to 21)
- \$400 million for IDEA preschool funding (age 3 to 5)
- \$500 million for Part C (birth to age 3)

This increases the federal share of special education funding from 17.2 percent
(Continued on page 2)

Little girl is biggest Frankie Valli fan at Benefit

For little Isabella Rupp, almost every day is a Frankie Valli day. The 7-year-old St. Paul girl with autism and other disabilities has Valli's entire anthology on her iPod, has memorized most of his songs, and regularly chooses "Frankie" tunes for dinner music.

That's why PACER Center was happy to invite Isabella and her parents, Chris and Libby Rupp, to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons' May 2 performance at the 27th Annual PACER Benefit.

Prior to the concert, Isabella found herself face to face with her favorite singer.

The star gave her a hug and Isabella presented him with a crayon drawing, but she was too overwhelmed to speak. "She was so excited," Libby says. "She skipped all the way to the concert, and skipped all the way back. She's never skipped before. It was a moving time for us."

After dancing with her mother as the concert ended, Isabella still wanted one more Frankie Valli song. "I was rocking her to sleep and she said, 'Sing me a Frankie song.' She can't really express herself," Libby says, "so it's those little things that tell you the depth of the emotion." For more on the Benefit and photos of the event, see page 11.



Frankie Valli and Isabella Rupp

to 34.2 percent –nearly doubling the amount – but only for the next two years. For Minnesota, this would mean an estimated increase of \$189.8 million for Part B, \$7.7 million for Part B preschool funding, and \$7 million for Part C.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded 50 percent of the Part B federal funds to states on April 1 and the other half is expected to be awarded by Oct. 1, 2009. Each school district will decide how to allocate the money.

“We encourage parents to become involved and ask how this money will be used in their local school districts,” says Kim Kang, PACER’s public policy director. Kang recommends a few simple ways for parents to learn more:

- Visit the Minnesota IDEA Watchdog blog at ideamoneywatch.com/states/mn for resources and information and to share how your district is spending the funds.
- Contact your school board members and school superintendent to ask: How will the money be spent? How will the public be able to find out how the money will be spent?

“Parents can play a role to ensure accountability of these important funds,” Kang says.

The federal government suggests that states should use the one-time funds in short-term ways that have the potential for long-term benefits.

Possible uses in Part B include:

- Obtaining state-of-the art assistive technology devices and providing training in their use to enhance access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities.

STC’s library offers latest software, AT devices

The Simon Technology Center Library offers an inexpensive way to preview software and assistive technology (AT) devices for children and young adults with disabilities.

Containing more than 2,500 items, the library has some of the newest software and devices on the market. Anyone can visit and view the materials; Minnesota parents, individuals, and professionals who are members may borrow them.

For hours or more information, contact Tara Bakken at 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/stc/library.

Links to more funding information

- Find links to the stimulus bill at PACER.org/legislation/news.asp
- U.S. Department of Education’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Web page is www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html
- Recovery.gov has current information about the ARRA from all federal agencies
- Ideamoneywatch.com offers blogs for each state that report on use of funds and provide information and resources
- A preliminary breakdown of IDEA funds for each Minnesota school district can be viewed at the Minnesota Department of Education Web site (education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html) under Current Topic, Federal Stimulus Update

- Providing intensive districtwide professional development for special education and regular education teachers that focuses on expanding proven and innovative evidence-based, schoolwide strategies in reading, math, writing, and science, and positive behavioral supports to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Developing or expanding the capacity to collect and use data to improve teaching and learning.
- Expanding the availability and range of inclusive placement options for preschoolers with disabilities by developing the capacity of public and private preschool programs to serve these children.

Possible uses in Part C include:

- Providing in-service training on evidence-based practices to early intervention service (EIS) program staff and EIS providers to ensure that infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families receive high quality early intervention services in a timely manner.
- Expanding activities to ensure that all states meet their performance targets related to serving infants under age one and infants and toddlers birth through age two.

Parents can learn more about ARRA funds by calling Kim Kang at 952-838-9000.

More than 300 attend National Parent Center conference

More than 300 people attended the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) National Parent Center Conference Jan. 28 -30 in Washington, D.C.

PACER Center is the ALLIANCE National Parent Technical Assistance Center and plans and administers the conference with assistance from the six Regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers and 104 parent

centers. The ALLIANCE Web site is taalliance.org.

Parent advocates from across the country and staff from the U.S. Department of Education took part in sessions covering the latest information on national education policy; research-based practices on inclusion, early childhood, collaboration with diverse families, and more. Attendees gave the conference positive reviews.

One attendee thanked organizers "for all of your efforts to organize, prepare, and welcome us to a very successful conference."

To view materials from the conference, visit taalliance.org/conferences/2009/agenda.asp. ALLIANCE co-directors are Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director, and Sue Folger and Sharman Davis Barrett of PACER.

PACER advocate quoted in New York Times article on autism

One of PACER's multicultural parent advocates has become a source of information of late to the New York Times, the BBC, and the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

PACER staff member Hassan Samantar works with Minnesota's Somali community to help families access and

understand special education services.

He was quoted most recently in March and April by the New York Times and the Star Tribune in articles concerning the large number of children with autism in Minnesota's Somali community.



Hassan Samantar

"There is no word for autism in Somali,"

Samantar says. "People are calling it 'the American disease.'"

In an effort to find out why a large cluster of children in the local Somali community have autism, the Minnesota Department of Health is conducting an epidemiological survey in consultation with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Find links to the articles at PACER.org/newsandevents/news.asp.

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PACER Web site: PACER.org

ALLIANCE site: taalliance.org

FAPE site: fape.org

C3 site: c3online.org

BULLYING: PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org

(Alternate format is available upon request.)

Sen. Edward Kennedy honored

U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island recently accepted an award for his father, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, at a reception on Capitol Hill. The reception was presented by Best Buy and cosponsored by PACER Center and the National Coalition of Parent Centers.

Sen. Kennedy was honored at the reception in late January for his political courage and bold leadership on behalf of the millions of children and youth with disabilities and their families in



Donna Fluke and Rep. Patrick Kennedy, R.I.

this country. Donna Fluke, coordinator of the National Coalition of Parent Centers, presented the award.

Mann Foundation brings national experts to symposium

This popular national symposium co-sponsored by PACER will be bigger than ever this year. A total of 1,100 parents and general education teachers have already registered for the Fourth Annual National Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium about Children and Young Adults with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities.

All seats have been filled and registration is closed for the Aug. 12 event at the Sheraton Bloomington Minneapolis South.

In addition to numerous breakout sessions, this free event features these nationally-known keynote speakers:

Russell A. Barkley

Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D., an internationally recognized authority on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adults, has specialized in ADHD for more than 30 years and is a research professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York.

His most recent books include “ADHD in Adults: What the Science Says” (2008); and “Your Defiant Teen” (2008).

Rick Lavoie

Rick Lavoie is a popular author and



Russell A. Barkley



Rick Lavoie



Roberto Rivera



Roberta Mann Benson

national speaker with more than 30 years' experience in special education. Widely known for a popular PBS video and practical workshops, Lavoie aims to provide information and inspiration to parents and teachers of children with learning disabilities. His latest video on behavior management

is titled “When the Chips are Down.”

Roberto Rivera

An artist and educator, Roberto Rivera transformed himself from a disengaged youth in special education classes to an honors graduate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison with a unique degree titled: “Social Change, Youth Culture, and the Arts.”

The former teenage runaway is now a successful businessman who uses his story and award-winning skills as a film producer, poet, and actor as he speaks about engaging youth.

Roberta Mann Benson,

sponsor of the event, “has a passion for raising

awareness about adult and children's mental health and learning disabilities among teachers, parents, and the general public,” says Mary Schrock, PACER Center's chief operating and development officer. “This symposium will inspire and enlighten parents and professionals alike.”

New online videos for parents explain special education, transition

PACER has developed two new videos that parents can access on PACER's Web site at PACER.org.

“Special Education: What Do I Need to Know?” is a 37-minute audio/video overview of special education created to help parents of children with disabilities understand what special education is, how a child might begin

in special education, how to resolve disagreements, and what role parents play.

The presentation, also translated into Hmong, is funded in part by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education.

A new 30-minute video called “Tran-

sition Planning for Children with Disabilities” gives a brief overview of the transition planning process for parents and families of children with disabilities.

Find both of the new presentations at: PACER.org/publications/specedrights.asp.

Free multicultural publications for parents available

PACER Center has published a series of free brochures for reaching families from diverse cultures who may have concerns about their child's development.

The materials are in Hmong, Spanish, Somali, and Russian. English versions, available to all parents but especially directed to American Indian and African American parents, also accompany each order of translated materials.

The eye-catching brochures feature culture-specific photographs and family-friendly language. There is space to affix a label providing local contact information on the back page of the brochure.

For more information about ordering hard copies, contact Barb Ziemke at bziemke@PACER.org or call 952-838-9000.



Membership in a local Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is one way parents can be involved in their child's education and ensure academic success for their child and others.

That's why PACER is expanding one of its newest projects, a one-stop Web site called MnSEACInfo.org. The site supports SEACs throughout the state by providing information and resources so local SEACs can form more effective organizations.

Funded by a Minnesota Department of Education grant, the site provides strategies and hands-on tools that are helpful to parents and schools as they work together on behalf of students receiving special education services.

"This high-quality resource has

made a positive impact on our ability to build capacity for a responsive, effective, and efficient SEAC," says Mary Kreger, director of special education for School District 196 serving Rosemount, Apple Valley, and Eagan.

"We now have a structured tool to use to help us take it step by step," says a parent SEAC chairperson from a rural school district. "We will have a mission, vision, and bylaws in place where there were not any before. In order to stay effective, we will look to PACER for continued guidance."

The expanded project will add several new features, including:

- Sample forms and templates for SEAC activities such as recruitment brochures, membership applications, bylaws, and agendas

- Interactive Web site features including a "SEAC Topic of the Month" with opportunities to share ideas, resources, questions, and best-practice strategies

- Printed manual of the "SEAC Strategies for Success" online training modules

- New "Parent Involvement" Web site section with resources school districts can use to facilitate parents' involvement their child's special education program

- A Webinar providing a "guided tour" of new MnSEACInfo.org online resources

For more information on the project, e-mail Barb Ziemke at seacsupport@PACER.org, call 952-838-9000, or find a link to the SEAC project on the PACER.org home page.

Expecting the best for your child has

By Carolyn Anderson

Having high expectations is not an easy path to follow when raising a child with a disability. It requires challenging yourself, your child, and others to do more than simply assume that a disability limits a child. Choosing the path of high expectations is certainly worthwhile, however, because it improves a child's life.

Challenging your expectations

Parents have dreams and hopes for their children even before they are born or adopted. Often these are not expressed openly. But when we discover, sometimes suddenly, sometimes slowly, that our child has a disability, our dreams and hopes may have to change.

We don't have to expect less, though we may need to expect something different than what we've imagined. One mother said, "I don't make assumptions now. I am more conscious of my hopes and dreams for all my children."

Parents can choose how they react to and engage in the "world of disability." At PACER, we see many different parent reactions. Reactions and choices may be affected by one's culture, family values, personality, education, economic status, learning style, health, or self-esteem.

However, these influences need not define what we do. We can make



intentional choices. We can't control the circumstances that affect our lives, but we can control how we react to those circumstances.

For example, I was a very shy person until I became the parent of a child with disabilities. I decided to overcome my shyness so that I could better advocate for my child. This has not been easy, as shyness is part of my basic personality. But I made a decision that speaking up on behalf of my child was important enough for me to make this fundamental change. People who know me now have no

idea what a shy, reserved person I used to be!

So why did I think I had to speak up for my child? Like most parents, I knew nothing about my child's disability. Once the disability was diagnosed, I read everything I could find and talked to everyone who seemed to know anything about it.

I learned that there were conflicting views on how to deal with this disability. One method of educating and rearing a child with this disability was popular with the school system. After considering that method and my vision for my son, I decided that the popular method was not appropriate for him. I would need to advocate for something different if I wanted my child to achieve the dreams I had for him.

I decided to challenge myself to speak up when I'd rather sit back and be quiet.

It wasn't easy, and it took a number of years before I was comfortable in my new role; but it was worthwhile. My son has done more than I ever envisioned.

Virginia Richardson, PACER's director of parent training, wanted her child with a cognitive disability to be a reader, so she expected the school to teach reading. There were reading goals on every educational plan. She also read to her child, encouraged her to read at home, made sure she saw others read, and gave her books on topics that interested her.

lifelong benefits, rewards

She was intentional about her vision. Reading does not usually just happen; this parent used strategies to help make it happen. Her child grew up to be a good reader who reads the daily newspaper for pleasure and information.

While there is no guarantee that a vision will be realized, parents are responsible for making an effort and every child's life is enriched by working toward goals. Stay committed to your dreams for your child, work with others, and keep in tune with your child's changing needs.

Maintaining high expectations can be difficult but worthwhile. Parents have told us:

Stay committed to your dreams for your child.

- "It's been the biggest challenge of my life, and I know we're not through. It's been a challenge to be the best advocate I can be for my child and still keep myself sane!"
- "I can honestly say I don't stay up late at night worrying about my fears anymore. If my expectations have changed in anyway, they have only become bigger, wider, and more grandiose."
- "My son is going to teach us a lot more in life than we will ever be able to teach him. I'm holding true to my

expectations for this child like those already in place for my older two children who happen to be physically and mentally healthy."

This article is an excerpt from a new PACER booklet called "High Expectations."

The booklet is free to Minnesota parents and can be ordered using the form on page 23 or by calling PACER at 952-838-9000.

New booklet provides data on special education in Minnesota

A new booklet full of easy-to-read graphs and charts provides detailed statistics about students with disabilities in Minnesota schools.

The "Minnesota Annual Report on Special Education," published by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), is meant to keep parents, students, school personnel, legislators, and the public informed of Minnesota's current performance and progress in improving results for students with disabilities.

The 33-page booklet summarizes key data collected by MDE for its 2006-2007 Annual Performance Report (APR). That data must be reported to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), explains Nancy W. Larson, supervisor of data and reporting for special education policy at MDE.

The APR includes data on 34 performance indicators or areas for report-

ing, and whether the state met its target goals for each area. The targets can change each year and are set by stakeholder groups.

The new booklet provides information and key facts related to: demographics, educational environments, student performance on statewide assessments, high school completion, dropouts, post-school outcomes, and special education finance.

Key facts include:

- Over the past three years, the percentage of students ages 6 to 21 receiving special education increased slightly.
- The percentage of students with specific learning disabilities is decreasing, while the percentage of students with autism spectrum disorders and other health disabilities is increasing.
- A higher percentage of African American and American Indian stu-

dents were placed in special education in 2006-2007 than students in other groups.

- The graduation rate for students with disabilities has increased slightly over the past three years.
- In Minnesota, 60.5 percent of students with disabilities who participated in a post-school outcomes survey were or had been competitively employed within one year of leaving high school, while 42.7 percent were participating in some type of postsecondary training or education within one year of leaving school; and 25.5 percent are competitively employed and participating in some type of postsecondary training within one year of leaving school.

To receive a copy of the Minnesota Annual Report on Special Education, call PACER at 952-838-9000.

Identifying strengths, being flexible

By Judy Moses

With the economy in a downturn and unemployment levels rising, this may seem like a difficult moment for your son or daughter to enter the job market. Despite the economy, there are still many options and opportunities for youth with disabilities who prepare for the new world of work and are flexible in their approach to employment.

Preparation begins by encouraging youth to earn an advanced degree or certificate if they are able so they can compete in this tough job market. Some students find employment immediately upon graduation, but most students need to use their job seeking skills for six months or longer before becoming employed. Keep in mind that a postsecondary education may result in employment in an unexpected position or career area. According to the Department of Labor statistics, adults change their careers 10 times or more during the course of their lifetime. Awareness of this when entering the job market may help youth think more creatively about transferring their strengths and skills to areas they or their counselors may never have foreseen. Parents can help in the following ways:

Review goals

Many people plan for one career, but through surprise opportunities or necessity, end up entering a totally different



line of work. This is not failure: People are simply transferring skills and interests to meet new opportunities. In the middle of a job hunt this may be difficult to recognize without the larger perspective a parent can provide.

Reflect upon experiences

Community service as a pre-teen or teen is invaluable when preparing for careers. Many youth have more work experiences and skills than they realize.

Discussing your youth's past hobbies, volunteerism, social groups, entry level jobs, family chores, and faith-based contributions will do more than fill out an otherwise brief employment résumé. It will increase your youth's vision of who he or she is and who he or she might become.

Start with your youth's concrete skills and experiences. Volunteering at a community library might result in skills such as answering phones, filling out overdue notices, entering new books into a database, shelving materials, or helping individuals find materials. This could be categorized on a résumé as "organizing according to a system" or "customer service." Moving from concrete skills to a more abstract descriptor helps both the youth and future employers visualize additional employment possibilities. More important, it increases the range of employment opportunities for your

Resources for training, job experience

- One Stop WorkForce centers have career, job seeking, and training resources. This includes city, county, state, and federal jobs; summer jobs; intern and volunteer experiences; and links to local, regional, and national employment databases. Learn more at: mnworkforcecenter.org/jobopenings.htm.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services is an individualized employment service for persons with significant disabili-

ties. Visit: deed.state.mn.us/rehab/transition or call 1-800-328-9095.

- AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps Vista, or AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps pay a living stipend as well as a student loan award and provide a variety of work experiences. Learn more at: americorps.gov. Watch for other community service jobs that are likely to expand with the new federal adminis-

tration.

- College placement and guidance services are usually free for new graduates and alumni. Also check out civic and career organizations that may be helpful for career networking, research, and referrals.
- Find federal jobs for entry level and advanced positions at www.usajobs.gov.

help youth enter job market

youth when signing up for college-arranged company interviews or researching job data banks online and at employment centers.

Encourage work opportunities

The biggest barrier for all youth entering the job market is lack of job experience to detail on a résumé or to share during the job interview. College students sometimes may think they do not have the time to take part in work-study programs, internships, or part-time employment.

Focusing all their energy on their course load may be necessary, but it's also important to make time for work experiences. This could be accomplished through summer work, by adding extra semesters to take advantage of an internship, or by reducing credits to allow for a part-time job. Students who focus all their energy on receiving good grades and little energy on practical experience will be at a significant disadvantage compared to students competing for similar jobs who have had a variety of work-related experiences.

Develop cover letters and a résumé

The cover letter usually makes the first impression with potential employers and yet is often neglected. It needs to immediately and clearly answer the question "Why should I hire you?" and refer to information in the résumé. In today's competitive job market, it might be wise to consult with an employment specialist on developing a cover letter and matching résumé that professionally highlights the

student's strengths and skills.

The cover letter and classification of work skills and goal descriptions on the résumé can determine whether the youth will receive an interview. The résumé should be simple to update, have a clear font style so it's easy to read when faxed, and have no grammar mistakes or misspellings. Have several people review the letter and résumé.

Transition from high school to postsecondary education or training can be an unsettling experience that causes many students to feel uncertain about their choices. Job hunting and the first months at a new job are also difficult times when youth may doubt their career choice. It's not unusual for youth to fear failure or the unknown, or worry that the career may not be right for them.

An appointment with a career counselor can often help during this period. Post-graduate career counseling is a service that may be requested from your state transition rehabilitation counselor through a WorkForce Center and needs to be included in your youth's Plan for Employment. In Minnesota, links to career counselors can also be found at stpaul.lib.mn.us/weblinks/career-counseling.html.

To learn more call Judy Moses, coordinator of PACER's Project PRIDE (PACER's Rehabilitation Act Information & Disability Education) at 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/pride/index.asp.

Teen lands job after identifying skills, taking training course

In high school, Sarah worked part time at her father's business doing general office work. During her last year of high school her state vocational rehabilitation counselor had her list her work experience skills as part of her career assessment.

Sarah thought about the tasks she performed: answering phones, filing invoices, arranging meetings, entering new inventory into the data base, printing reports, and welcoming customers. She had also learned to keep all information about clients totally confidential.

Although Sarah enjoyed these activi-

ties and felt she was good at them, she knew that she didn't want to work for her father forever. The pay was too low, she wanted more independence from her family, and she looked forward to interacting with more people during her work day.

Sarah knew it would be difficult to be hired as an office manager at another company without more education or experience. With her counselor's encouragement, Sarah considered some technical certificate programs at area colleges.

One of the programs that interested her and used her office skills would

lead to a position called health unit coordinator. In this position, Sarah would work in a hospital and order supplies, arrange meetings between staff, and set up outpatient appointments.

The employment outlook was good for this position and it would provide her the experience to move into an office manager position for a larger company if that still interested her in the future.

When she finished her training and was interviewed at a local hospital, Sarah was able to share her past work experience with confidence. She was offered the job.

CD helps teens learn “Top Secret Job Skills”

Teens with or without disabilities can learn the interpersonal skills needed to do well at a job interview and be successful at work with PACER’s interactive CD “Top Secret Job Skills: Declassified.”

Teachers of 344 Minnesota students in three Minnesota school districts used the CD in their 2008 classes. Through animated workplace situations and problem-solving activities, students learn job-related interpersonal skills. PACER supplied each student and the school district with a CD and school district staff facilitated student use on the computer.

Students said they learned to:

- Talk to co-workers properly



- Have courtesy and manners
- Look people in the eye
- Be a team worker
- Talk to the boss properly
- Dress properly
- Be on time
- Act like an adult at work

- Ask for help when needed
- Be responsible for mistakes

Teachers at the school districts said the CD was a “very good introduction to a job-seeking visit,” and an “excellent program with great information for students.”

The CD features optional audio with written text voiced by characters and can be used in educational settings or at home.

Watch a clip from the CD by visiting PACER.org/publications/transitionCD.htm or order the CD by calling 952-838-9000. Cost is \$35 per CD.

New Ticket to Work rules provide more options

By Judy Moses

Changes to the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (1999) provide additional options for individuals with disabilities seeking work. The new rules took effect July 21, 2008.

The original federal law was designed to encourage and assist individuals who receive Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income to work without losing Medicare or Medicaid benefits. The new changes expand the program and remove some limitations that were often obstacles to joining the labor market.

The Ticket to Work Program provides more choices for receiving employment services. Under the program, the Social Security Administration (SSA) issues tickets to eligible beneficiaries who, in turn, assign those tickets to an Employment Network (EN) where they can receive employment

services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services needed to reach their work goals. An EN is a state or local, public or private organization that enters into a contract with SSA to deliver employment, vocational rehabilitation, and other services.

The new Ticket to Work rules:

- Provide options for long-term employment support services such as health aids, job supports, or coaching.
- Exempt individuals who are using their Ticket to Work from medical Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs), which means individuals can work without fear of losing their disability designation and their benefits.
- Expand the number of beneficiaries who are eligible for the Ticket to Work program. Individuals who are receiving benefits and expected to improve medically are now eligible

for the program at an earlier date.

- Allow people to attend postsecondary training longer while receiving benefits because there is now a broader definition of “timely progress” toward employment goals.

The old rules made it difficult for an individual to attend college or a technical school for longer than the initial 24-month period and retain their benefits because “timely progress” could only be demonstrated by working.

Now an individual can attend school for a four-year degree program but must complete the degree program in six years to remain in the Ticket to Work program. Social Security will clarify exactly what the individual needs to do to show timely progress under the new rules.

For more information, call Judy Moses, coordinator of PACER’s Project PRIDE, at 952-838-9000.

BENEFIT '09

PACER Center's 27th Annual Benefit, May 2, 2009 - A supplement to PACESETTER

"Oh, What a Night!" 27th Benefit a success

PACER received wonderful support at its 27th Annual Benefit on May 2 when 2,400 people attended the event featuring Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons.

"And about the PACER folks: It's nice to know there are people out there who care about kids," Valli said to the crowd at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Valli echoed the sentiment expressed that evening by Minnesota's only Senator, Amy Klobuchar. The former PACER advisory board member kicked off the evening's program by noting PACER's national role of assisting parent centers across the country. Because her daughter Abigail, had health problems early in life, Klobuchar said she experienced a small taste of the issues faced by parents of children with disabilities. She said that period of time made her realize the importance of PACER and other parent centers in the lives of families.

"It was fantastic to have Sen. Klobuchar with us," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER's executive director. "And it's wonderful to have such incredible support from PACER's dedicated friends. We're so thankful for the hard-working Benefit Committee, our terrific corporate sponsors, and the hundreds of volunteers who are committed to helping children with disabilities."

Major sponsors of the Benefit were Steve and Mary Sue Simon; ticket sponsor was Best Buy Company, Inc.; Friend of PACER sponsor was Target Corporation; and live auction sponsors were Allen and Kathy Lenzeimer. The next PACER Benefit is May 8, 2010.



Above: (L to R) PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg, Mary Sue and Steve Simon, and Mary Schrock, PACER's chief operating and development officer.

Right: Emcees Frank Vascellaro and Amelia Santaniello with Sen. Amy Klobuchar. Below, seated (L to R): Pamela Brown, Muffy MacMillan and daughter Mara, Peggy and David DeMarsh. Standing (L to R): Gary Rauk, Donna Oricchio, Jim Oricchio (Corporate Sponsor Committee co-chair), Frankie Valli, Joanne and Don Davidson (Corporate Sponsor Committee co-chair).



Thanks to Benefit's support, Minnesota families



Above, seated (L to R) Colleen McGough-Wood, Brad Wood, Dr. Charles Crutchfield, Sheri Davis, Dennis and Pam Berry. Back (L to R): Jonathan and Nicki Weinhausen, Melissa Borowick and Ryan Schlemmer. Below (L to R): Benefit co-chairs were Danna Mirviss, Colleen McGough-Wood, Patrice Alkire, Jessica Broyles, and Judy Schumeister.



Lynne Singer Grossman and Andy Redleaf.



Longtime PACER supporters Marvin Grimm III and Richard Grimm Jr.



Alicia Kunin-Batson (PACER Board vice president) and Hayes Batson (Corporate Sponsor Committee).



Above, Ken Rosenbloom (Corporate Sponsor Committee) and Ann Simonds enjoy the silent auction prior to the performance by Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons.



Above, seated (L to R): Rob Riggins, Kathy Riggins, Sara Challen, Allen Lenzmeier, Pat Broyles, Rowan and Jessica Broyles (Beckman Lindeberg).

s have no-cost services



Supporters from Target attended the Benefit. Seated (L to R): Shelley Heredia, Jodee Kozlak (PACER Advisory Board member), Cammi Baer, Kristi Curoe. Standing (L to R): Tony Heredia, Nick Kozlak, Tim Baer, Tim Curoe.



n and Rosemary Fish with Richard



Volunteer Margaux McClure helped with the jb hudson mystery treasure bags.



Mary Schrock (L) with longtime PACER supporters Jim and Mary Frey.



A bike tour with Greg LeMond (third from right) on May 9 was one of the extra special events available at the silent auction. Below, seated (L to R): Mary Sue and Steve Simon (Major Sponsors), Bill and Mary King. Standing (L to R): Peggy and David DeMarsh, Gig and Woody Ginkel, Kathryn and Roger Ringham.



hmielewski, Maggie Broyles. Standing: benefit co-chair), Suzy and Mark



More Benefit memories



Above: Silent Auction Committee (L to R): Sarah Meek, Michele Heimes, Julie and Don McNeil. Left: John and Nancy Lindahl (back) and Elliott and Eloise Kaplan (PACER Advisory Board member) enjoy the evening.



Brad Bremer (L), Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Jack Cameron (Corporate Sponsor Committee) pause for a moment at the silent auction. Below, seated (L to R): Miriam and Bob Kleinbaum; Michael and Linda Jacobs (Treasure Box co-chair), Patrice Alkire (Benefit co-chair). Standing (L to R): Norton and Susan Gray (dinner co-chair), Chuck and Melanie Barry (dinner co-chair), Gary Alkire.



Emma Johnston (front) attended along with (L to R) Bonnie Madsen, Bonnie Lundrum, and Michael Johnston.



Artist Tony Whelihan (L), who donates his artwork each year for the Benefit, chats with Corporate Sponsor Richard W. Perkins.

Save the date!
Next year's Benefit is:
May 8, 2010

Five tips for staying involved in your teen's education

By Heather Kilgore

Nearly everybody agrees that parent involvement in education is important – teachers, parents, and policymakers work to increase parent involvement in many ways.

Unfortunately, research shows that parent involvement declines as children move into middle and high school and most involvement programs focus on the elementary level. It's still important for you to be involved in your child's education during the teen years, but you may need to try different strategies to stay connected. Try the following suggestions to stay involved in your teen's learning.

Connect with others

Knowing others in the school community is an important way to support children as they grow through their teens. Sooner or later you will have questions or problems, and someone who knows the system can help. Try to keep in touch with a teacher, counselor, active parent, or other member of the school staff a few times a year.

If you can, get to know the parents of your child's friends. This is a great way to learn how your teen is interacting with other youth, as well as to share ideas with other important adults in your child's life. Some families have even created formal groups to share phone numbers and names, like the Uniting Proctor Parent group in Proctor, Minn.

Help your child dream for the future

Parents can help teens be specific about what needs to happen so they can have the adult life of their dreams. When teens feel like talking about it, ask for details of their dreams. Asking "which college" or "what kind of job seems most interesting" can help your teen form concrete goals, either about college, technical training, or career choices. At this point, giving them something to aim for is more important than the specific job or career choice.

Focus your teen's time

Helping your child use time wisely is important for a variety of reasons. Parental monitoring can help your child avoid risky behaviors and build life skills that will be important after high school. As a parent, you can encourage extracurricular activities, which can be an important factor in college admissions. Limit the use of TV, video games, and computers to help your child focus on school work. As children age, parents shift from managing their child's schedule to providing advice and monitoring. This role is just as important!

MINNESOTA PARENT CENTER

Minnesota PIRC
A project of PACER

Motivate your child with high expectations

The evidence is overwhelming: Parents' high expectations improve teens' success. In fact, high expectations are

the most significant influences on high school seniors' achievement growth, credits completed, and whether the student will become a lifelong learner. When children experience high and realistic expectations, they understand and adopt the high value the family places on education. Regular encouragement and discussions about school and higher education also promote students' college aspirations and preparation.

Encourage reading for pleasure

Students need to read to learn, and parents can encourage pleasure reading at home to build reading skills. Even reluctant readers can increase their vocabulary and comprehension, grammar, and spelling skills if they find something enjoyable to read.

How can parents help? First, talk with teens about what interests them, says Alicia Anderson, Teen Services librarian at Hennepin County Library. Choose materials based on their interests and widen your ideas about reading materials. Magazines, non-fiction, or how-to books might interest your teen more than a novel. Also consider other alternatives. Graphic novels (which are similar to comic books, but longer), short stories, or novels in prose or journal format can be read quickly and can give a reluctant reader a sense of accomplishment. If your son or daughter is interested only in sports magazines, make sure he or she has a good supply.

Visit the library and encourage your teen to ask the librarians for help. They can help find materials your teen will enjoy. Anderson also suggests that parents let teens choose their own books and respect their choices.

To learn more ways to be involved in your child's education, visit PACER.org/mpc.

Don't miss PACER's e-news!

Interested in breaking news affecting children with disabilities or the latest updates on PACER events?

Don't miss the latest news!

Send your e-mail address to PACER@PACER.org to receive up-to-the-minute happenings through PACER e-news.

Three ways to lessen family stress

Create time to enrich your life

Is the bad economy adding to the stress in your life? One way to lessen the strain is by asking a relative, close friend, or trusted neighbor to spend an hour or so caring for your child with a disability, and then using the time to enrich your life.

Because parenting a child with a disability can mean more time is required for medical appointments, therapies, dressing, providing comfort, and other activities, it's especially important for the primary caregiver to have some occasional breaks. Even a short respite can provide healthy dividends.

Consider what you could do while someone spends 60 to 90 minutes caring for your child:

- Take a walk
- Work in the garden
- Read a book
- Take a nap
- Exercise
- Go for coffee with a friend
- Get a haircut
- Visit the library
- Pursue a hobby

Asking for help, however, can seem more complicated when your child has a disability. Parents may be

reluctant to trust someone else to care for their child, while family members and friends may not feel confident enough to offer help. Finding ways to familiarize relatives and friends with your child's likes and dislikes will often help them become comfortable with your child.

Step one: ask

Instead of waiting for offers of help, parents may want to be the first to raise the subject. They also need to be prepared for family members or friends to say no.

"We miss a lot of support in life because we're afraid to hear the word no," says Virginia Richardson, director of PACER's parent training.

Before you ask the question, tell people that they can say yes or no. Tell them that either answer is acceptable and will not change your relationship. "Give the person you are asking to watch or care for your child the permission to say yes or no. Say it up front, and mean it. Then you can't be angry if they say no," Richardson says. "It doesn't mean they like you or your child any less. Accept that this is just a 'no' to this request."

Step two: build confidence

Family members and friends may fear taking care of a child if they perceive the child to be fragile. With a little guidance and practice, they will learn to trust themselves with the child and the parents will then feel comfortable leaving the child in their care.

No matter who agrees to care for your child, it's important for all concerned to prepare friends or family in a gradual way. First, involve them in caring for your child while you are together. Give them opportunities to observe how you care for your child and then offer to let them help while you are there.

Next, let them care for your child while you stay home, using the time for something you enjoy. "Whatever you do, make sure you aren't hovering," says Judy Swett, a PACER early childhood advocate. "Give your friend or family member a chance to take care of your child on their own, knowing that you are there if they need help."

Finally, start spending time away from home, but let your friend know that you can be reached by cell phone and will return at the time agreed upon or earlier if necessary. If your child has challenging behaviors, make sure you demonstrate any strategies you know that help avoid the behaviors from occurring. Let friends or relatives also know about any consequences used with your child so they can follow through while you're gone.

"Allowing the person to spend time with you and your child in your home or at the playground will help that person become familiar with how you

Tips for preparing family and friends to watch your child

- If you are apprehensive, try not to communicate it to your child
- Say good-bye casually and make it clear you will return
- Be clear about when you will return and stick to it
- Have cell phone and emergency numbers posted in an identified location
- Keep a list of favorite books, toys, and activities
- Be clear about any expectations concerning snacks, TV watching, or naptime

during tough economic times

manage situations,” Swett says.

Enjoy the time away to enrich your life, knowing that it will have many benefits. “Finding spaces in your life that you can devote to your own inter-

est and growth will make you a more effective parent and family member,” Richardson says.

Reduce homework stress

Daily homework struggles with a child can add to the stress families face during an economic downturn, but parents can take steps to alleviate homework tension.

“Much of the time, families handle homework in really effective ways, but often it is a stress for the parent and the child,” says Virginia Richardson, PACER’s parent training director. “First, as a parent, you need to be clear in your own mind that the child’s homework is the responsibility of the child.”

For some children with disabilities, homework issues can be magnified because of their inability to do the assignment or to pay attention. Parents can lower their own stress level if they first pinpoint the problem by asking themselves the following questions, and then work with the child’s school staff so the homework can be managed.

Does the child bring the assignment home?

If this area is problematic, see if assignments are listed on a school Web site or a homework phone line. One teacher e-mails assignments to both the student and the parent. If using a school planner doesn’t seem to work, have your child write assignments on a piece of paper to keep in his or her pocket.

One student with attention deficit disorders writes reminders on his hand so he can’t lose the paper; another brings every one of her notebooks home so she doesn’t forget something. Consider if using an electronic device may help your child stay organized, and ask your child’s teacher(s) or school counselor for suggestions.



Does the child know how to do the homework?

If a child is trying to do the homework but doesn’t understand it, parents should give the child positive encouragement for working hard and restrain their own frustration.

“Getting angry at a child doesn’t help,” Richardson says. “Parents have the responsibility to check their interactions with a child.”

Explaining the rules of homework may also help alleviate tension. Tell

continued on page 19

Swap technology

Looking for ways to save? Try swapping assistive technology (AT) or consider programs that provide computers to people with disabilities. Following are several services.

PACER’s SUPER Service connects people seeking to buy used AT with sellers. Buyers must contact sellers of used equipment directly. Items can be posted in the following categories: ambulation and walking; architectural adaptation; augmentative communica-

tion; computer hardware and software; daily living aids; environmental controls; ergonomics, health, and therapy; ramps and lifts; recreation and leisure; seating and positioning; transportation; vision and hearing technology; wheelchairs and scooters.

PACER does not provide technical support for products. Learn more at PACER.org/stc/super/index.asp or call 952-838-9000.

STAR Technology Exchange (STARTE) is a “classified ads” service hosted by the Minnesota STAR Program (A System of Technology to Achieve Results). It promotes the reutilization of AT equipment. Categories of devices listed on STARTE are: computers and related; daily living; environmental adaptations; hearing; learning; cognitive and developmental; mobility, seating, and positioning; recreation, sports and leisure; speech

continued on page 19

Surrogate parents help students receive special education rights

What is an educational surrogate parent?

A surrogate parent is a person appointed by the school district to represent a student and ensure the protection of the child's rights to a free and appropriate public education.

Which students need a surrogate parent?

The school district must appoint the surrogate parent when the parent, guardian, or conservator is unknown or unavailable; when the student is a ward of the commissioner of human services; or when the parent requests a surrogate in writing. The request may be revoked in writing at any time.

What should surrogate parents know?

The district must either make the information and training available to the surrogate parent or appoint a surrogate parent who has all of the following: a knowledge of state and federal requirements; a knowledge of district structure and procedures; an understanding of the nature of the student's disability and needs; and an ability to effectively advocate for an appropriate educational program for the student.

Who cannot be a surrogate parent?

Employees of public agencies who

are involved in the care or education of the student or have an interest that may conflict with the interest of the child cannot be surrogate parents. A county social worker, in the event the student is a ward of the state, cannot be a surrogate parent.

Can a foster parent be a surrogate parent?

A foster parent may be appointed if:

- The natural parents' authority to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been extinguished under state law;
- The foster parent has an ongoing, long-term parental relationship with the child;
- The foster parent is willing to make the educational decisions required of parents under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
- The foster parent has no interest that would conflict with the interests of the child.

What responsibilities do surrogate parents have?

Surrogate parents represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child, and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. They represent the interests of the child in special educational matters, ensuring the child's

rights, and providing consent. This involves being the responsible party who signs the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Surrogate parents do not represent the student on general education issues and would not, for example, sign a permission slip for a field trip.

What responsibilities does the school district have?

The school district must make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate parent not more than 30 days after they determine that the child needs a surrogate parent. If the student's parent is unknown or unavailable, the district must make reasonable, documented efforts to locate the parent.

What responsibilities does the school board have?

If the surrogate parent is a person with a conflict of interest, fails to perform the duties of a surrogate, or the student no longer needs special education, the school board can remove the appointment by a majority vote.

Where is there more information on surrogacy?

An online resource titled "Online Training for Surrogate Parents," is available at PACER.org.surrogate/index.asp.

Webinar addresses ways to serve diverse families of young children

PACER's free online training, "Serving Diverse Families: Strategies for Early Childhood Service Providers," is now available as an archived Webinar on PACER.org.

Geared for early childhood intervention or early childhood special education professionals who work with parents from a culture different from their own, the comprehensive

training shows how to help the family determine family-directed outcomes based on their concerns, needs, and priorities.

It also includes "Practical Tips for Successful Interactions," a panel presentation and Q & A by PACER's multicultural parent advocates.



Reduce homework stress *continued from page 17*

the child that homework is his or her responsibility. The parent's responsibility is to assist by enforcing homework time, answering questions, and providing resources.

Be clear about homework rules: If a child has difficulty concentrating and is allowed a 10-minute break following 15 minutes of work, explain what can be done during the break. "You might let them run outside but not play video games," Richardson says.

Whatever the rules, parents should always look for the positive and tell their children what they are doing right. Praise children if they are able to work for 15 minutes, for example, but also give them a new goal of expanding the work time to 20 minutes.

"Reinforce the positive learning of your child and keep the emphasis on the child," Richardson says. She offers examples of how to say positive and honest statements to your child:

- If you bring home the assignment, you can do the work.

- When we break the assignment into chunks, you can do the work.

- You have very creative ideas but difficulty putting your thoughts on paper.

- If you understand the directions,

you can do the work.

When children prepare their homework, have them separate assignments into two piles: "What I can do myself" and "What I need help with." Have them first complete the assignments they can do on their own. This builds their confidence and may give you time to unwind.

Parents should also make sure their child isn't spending too much time on homework. "I expect that a child with a disability should spend as much time on homework as other kids their age," Richardson says. "No child should be in school all day and do homework all night." Remember, teachers don't know how much time students spend on homework.

Ask the teacher what the typical length of time should be. Parents may need to ask teachers for homework modifications such as doing the odd- or even-numbered problems on a math sheet if the homework load is too heavy.

Does the child return assignments to school?

If a child has difficulty turning in homework, try some of the following strategies and don't forget to ask

teachers for suggestions.

- Place a basket that is designated for homework by the front door so the child will see it in the morning before leaving, or teach the habit of returning work to the backpack as soon as it's completed.

- Have your child wear a rubber band on his or her wrist as a reminder to bring homework to class.

- See if a teacher is willing to ask your child for assignments.

- If you're able to pick up your child from school once a week, designate that day as "locker clean-up day" to encourage routine cleaning. Your child may discover lost assignments.

Parents can also reduce tensions at home by not letting homework time become a power struggle. Establish a consistent time for your child to do homework. Explain that you are happy to help if asked, but make it clear that homework is his or her responsibility, not yours. Remember, the child earns the grades, not you. Remove yourself from the power struggle, and help your child assume responsibility for his or her own work.

Swap technology *continued from page 17*

communication; vehicle modification and transportation; vision. Learn more at www.mnstarte.org or call 651-201-2640 or 888-234-1267 (toll-free).

Minnesota Computers for Schools (MCFS) – Special Kids provides low-cost desktop or laptop computers to Minnesota students who are frequently absent from school or have a disability. To participate, students must have a referral letter from their school. Depending on grant fund-

ing and the student's location, prices range from \$50 to \$250. For more information, visit mncfs.org or call 651-779-2816.

PCs for People is a nonprofit Minnesota program that rebuilds, refurbishes, and redistributes computers. People who have a family member with a disability may apply. Computer needs are analyzed and tailored to fit a client's needs, and a \$35 to \$50 donation for the computer is requested. Those interested in receiving

a computer may call 651-354-2552 or 507-304-4291 for an appointment. Learn more at pcsforpeople.com.

Computers Go Round is a program of United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota to distribute quality recycled computers to children and adults with a disability in Minnesota's Stearns, Sherburne or Benton counties. See upc.org or call 320-253-0765.

New publication helps youth with mental

Youth with mental health needs face unique challenges as they transition into the adult world because they are moving from an education system that is mandated and structured into systems that are less clear.

A new publication, “Tunnels and Cliffs: A Guide for Workforce Development Practitioners and Policymakers Serving Youth with Mental Health Needs,” was recently published by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) to help address these challenges.

“Some individuals face very specific challenges,” says Curtis Richards, NCWD/Youth Director. “Tunnels and Cliffs” is an excellent primer for anyone who wants to better understand the common pitfalls that specifically face youth with mental health needs as they transition into adulthood.”

“This new publication is especially helpful to parents and young adults who need to know the role various service systems play in this transition,” adds Sean Roy, projects director for transition and workforce partnerships at PACER. Young adults and their families should be aware of the following issues that are addressed in the new pub-



lication:

Different systems have different age and eligibility requirements

Youth can face potential problems when they “age out” of the education or youth mental health systems. Some adult services start at age 18 while others may start at age 21. This creates a unique situation where a person may be a “youth” in one system and an “adult” in another. Families need

to be aware of the age and eligibility criteria of various systems to avoid misunderstandings about when services will start.

Mental health systems use different criteria than schools to determine the needs of a youth

It’s also crucial that young people’s mental health needs are appropriately identified so they can receive needed services or be referred from one service system to another as they transition into the adult world. Because of their differing roles, the education and mental health systems use different criteria to identify children’s needs.

The education system does not diagnose mental health needs, but determines if the child’s disability has adversely affected his or her learning and makes a special education placement based on that. If the mental health need does

NCWD provides valuable resources for families, youth, professionals

NCWD/Youth has many valuable resources for families, youth, and professionals. Visit ncwd-youth.info for these and other free publications:

Road to Self-sufficiency: A Guide to Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities

Shows how entrepreneurship education can be implemented in programs and offers suggestions on how to introduce self-employment as an option for all youth, including those with disabilities.

Negotiating the Curves Toward Employment: A Guide About Youth Involved in the Foster Care System

Developed to encourage collaborative efforts between workforce development, child welfare, mental health,

schools, and other community institutions to improve the chances for youth in foster care to successfully transition into adulthood.

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities

Designed for youth and adults working with individuals to learn about disability disclosure. Helps young people make informed decisions about whether to disclose their disability and understand how that decision may impact their education, employment, and social outcomes.

health needs avoid transition pitfalls

not affect the student's ability to learn, schools do not have the legal responsibility for addressing a student's mental health needs through special education services. Likewise, juvenile corrections or workforce systems are often not equipped to meet the mental health needs of youth. The result can be periods of lost progress and frustration for youth and families if the youth does not have proper supports.

Youth mental health systems use broader criteria and may be able to meet a student's individual needs such as employment support and counseling. To learn more about accessing mental health programs, call PACER at 952-838-9000 and ask for PACER's Project for Families of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders.

Effective mental health programs meet youth "where they are at"

Families can recognize an effective mental health program for youth by looking at how it operates. Programs that work well with youth with mental health needs include those that

have separate sites for youth and adults. Effective programs also have well-trained, age-diverse staff members who can neutralize the stigma of having a mental health diagnosis while helping youth understand their own needs and plan for future success.

"Regardless of the service system, be it education or employment, families should seek services that are able to work with youth 'where they are at,'" Richards says. "For example, some youth may not be ready to jump right into competitive employment. The good programs will recognize where each youth needs to start and build from that point."

NCWD/Youth is a partnership of experts in education, youth development, workforce, disability, and family issues. PACER Center, an active member of NCWD/Youth, helps infuse the family perspective into the collaborative's materials and training. Find a link to NCWD/Youth and other transition resources at PACER.org/tatra/links.asp.

Supports helped guide teen to independent life

By Julie Holmquist

Transition services geared toward youth with mental health needs helped guide Jean from a halfway house to an apartment, a job, and to college.

"I don't know what would have happened without that support," says Jean, now 24. "I wouldn't have the confidence I have right now, and I don't think I'd be able to accept my mental illness. I know I wouldn't have enrolled in college, because I was kind of in my own shell."

Jean was hospitalized after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and severe depression when she was 18. While living in a halfway house, she was introduced to PRIDE4, a transition program offered at that time through PACT4Families, a mental health collaborative that continues to provide services in Minnesota's Kandiyohi, Yellow Medicine, Renville and Meeker counties.

Jean was assigned a transition coach who proved invaluable. The coach taught her coping skills and showed her how to find an apartment, as well as obtain housing assistance through the Housing and Rehabilitation Authority.

"She helped me find a job, and a couple years later, she helped me enroll in college," Jean says.

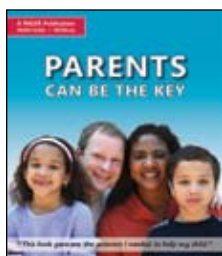
The young woman also gained confidence by taking a leadership role in the program's Youth Reflections group. The youth-driven organization met for support and made presentations about mental health needs.

"Youth Reflections made me feel so good about myself. It gave me confidence that I didn't have before," Jean says. "It really showed me that there were other kids my age going through the same thing, and it gave me extra support from my peers."

Jean's advice to other youth with mental health needs:

- Talk to people about it. It won't get better by hiding it. Don't be embarrassed.
- Hang in there and learn what you can about your diagnosis. Don't be afraid of it.
- Accepting it will make it easier to deal with.
- You are not alone. There are many people out there with dealing with mental illness.

New



Parents Can Be the Key

This updated handbook for 2009 describes basic special education laws and procedures.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a1

New

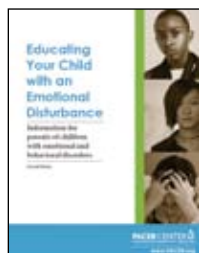


New Edition! Families Are Important! An Early Childhood Guidebook for Families of Young Children

Updated for 2009, this book helps families of children with disabilities or delayed development understand

Minnesota's early intervention system and how to access services for their child.

■ \$7 10+ copies, \$5 each PHP-a9



Educating Your Child with an Emotional Disturbance

This concise guide will help parents of children with emotional or behavioral disorders participate effectively in planning their children's special education. Easy to read and understand, it covers school discipline policies, placement options, student support needs, and much more.

■ \$5 10+ copies \$4 each PHP-a21

Let's Talk Activity Cards



The activity cards, published by Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), are an easy, entertaining way for parents to help their young child build vocabulary and speaking skills—the first steps in learning to read. Simple instructions and comfortable handling make the cards enjoyable and easy to use. For all children, ages 2-6.

■ \$4 10+ copies, \$2.50 each or 100+, \$2 each MPC-9

New

High Expectations

Having and maintaining high expectations for your child with a disability can be difficult, but worthwhile. This eight-page booklet outlines how to have high expectations yourself, challenge your child, and challenge the low-expectations others may have for your child.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2.50 each PHP-a34



New

Honorable Intentions: A Parent's Guide to Educational Planning for Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders, 4th Edition.

This updated comprehensive guide includes information on comprehensive evaluation, functional assessments, positive interventions, effective communication, and writing meaningful Individualized Education Programs.

■ \$15 10+ copies, \$12 each PHP-a29



Housing: Where Will Our Children Live When They Grow Up?

Parents of youth with disabilities will find that the new (2007) edition of this attractive, easy-to-use book answers many questions about future housing choices to make with their child. From housing options to a resource directory, there is a wealth of information.

■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6 each PHP-a26



Beyond Sticks and Stones: How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying

More than 160,000 children, many with disabilities, miss school each day to avoid harassment and intimidation by classmates. This book helps you to help your child address the problem of bullying.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$4 each BP-7



Resources

New



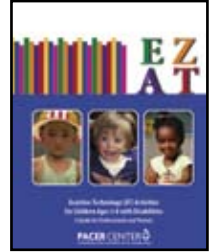
A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Helps parents work with schools to address each child's special needs through understanding the required components of the IEP. Includes examples from the Minnesota state recommended form. 2008.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a12

EZ AT Assistive Technology Activities for Children Ages 3–8 with Disabilities

A compilation of activities for children with disabilities is the result of submissions by parents and professionals across the nation. Many of the ideas are simple and inexpensive to incorporate at home and school. All represent best practices that most effectively use technology to promote learning and inclusion.



\$10 10+ copies, \$8 each STC- 16

To order the listed materials...

1. Specify how many you want of each item and the cost
2. Total your order, adding appropriate sales tax
3. Enclose payment with your order
4. Mail to: PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

Prices include postage and handling. A discount may be available if 10 or more of the same item number are ordered.

■ indicates one item is free to Minnesota parents or guardians of children with disabilities and to Minnesota young adults (age 14 and older) with disabilities.

For foreign orders, please telephone or e-mail PACER (see page 3). Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

The items listed on these pages are also available through PACER's Catalog of Publications.

Order number	Name of publication/video ordered	Quantity	Per item cost	Total item cost
Total cost of all items ordered ➔				

Amount of order: Sales tax: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

(Minneapolis residents, 7.4 % Hennepin County residents, 6.9 % Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington counties, 6.75 % Most other Minnesota residents, 6.5%) Varies with specific location.

Please complete the following:

☐ Parent ☐ Professional ☐ Other _____

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ E-mail: _____

If a parent:

Birth date of child with disability: _____ Disability: _____

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SAVE THE DATE!

**PACER's 6th Annual
HOT Party, COOL Cause
is Sept. 26, 2009**

Workshops

PACER Center workshops are free to Minnesota parents. For information and updates call 952-838-9000 (metro area) or toll free at (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or visit PACER.org.

Boardmaker, Boardmaker Plus Basics

A hands-on workshop for parents and professionals. Make picture communication symbols, schedules, and charts **June 23, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

No Child Left Behind

Parents and professionals will learn what the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) means for children with disabilities who are

in special education. **July 20, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

Webinar: All About Digital Books

Parents and professionals who have students with print-related disabilities will learn why digital books are important, how they can obtain digital books, what is needed to access them and more. **July 16, 2 to 4 p.m.**

Microsoft Accessibility Features

Learn how to adjust Window computer settings to improve the visibility, make the mouse and keyboard easier to control, display captions, and speak text aloud. Each participant will receive a free Microsoft Accessibility Demonstration CD set. Seating is limited. **July 30, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

Do you want to make a difference?

Order PACER's COUNT ME IN® puppets!

Help children learn about disabilities with your very own set of COUNT ME IN® hand-and-rod puppets. The puppets represent children who have various disabilities and are the stars of educational programs for preschool and elementary grades 1-4.

The puppets are for sale in sets:

BASIC SET: Six puppets with scripts for preschool and elementary shows.

STARTER SET: Three puppets with scripts on several disabilities for elementary students.

All sets include puppet wheelchair and props, "Disability Awareness: A Guidebook for Families and Educators," and a "Coordinator's Handbook" for creating a COUNT ME IN® project with volunteers. Training is also available.



Visit these engaging puppets at PACER.org/puppets!

For more information e-mail puppets@PACER.org or call PACER at 952-838-9000.