



Network News

Your Arizona Parent School Connection



Spring 2009

Vol. 17 No. 3

Look What's New!

by Barb Ross

The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce the addition of another PIN position for Maricopa County. We now have three PIN Specialists serving Maricopa County. Maricopa County is now divided by area codes: Barb Ross will continue to serve East Maricopa County, area code 480; Jill Castle will continue to serve West Maricopa County, area code 623; and, Holly Reycraft, our newest team member, will serve Central Maricopa County, area code 602. Holly resides in Gilbert with her husband, two sons and daughter. Her oldest son has autism. Holly says, "I find it very rewarding to empower parents as they navigate through the complex special education process, while giving them the tools to develop a positive relationship with their child's IEP team; you know what they say *knowledge is power!*" Welcome aboard Holly!

PIN Specialists develop and research new documents for the Clearinghouse based on the needs of the parents they support throughout the year. The Parent Information Network makes every effort to provide information that is timely and relevant for parents of children with disabilities.

The Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) has added several new resources and technical assistance documents again this year. We added four documents to the Disability Information Sheets and Resources section on dyslexia including: *Dyslexia Basics (DR20)*, *Multisensory Structured Language Teaching (DR26)*, *Dyslexia: Testing and Evaluation (DR29)*, and *ADHD and Dyslexia (DR30)* provided courtesy of the International Dyslexia Association.

One new document; *Dispute Resolution: Mediation (SE24)* was added to the Special Education Resources section. This document offers parents information and guidance on requesting this informal dispute resolution option provided by the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS).

New to the Transition to Adulthood Resources section is *Transition Planning Process (TR14)*. This document is an excellent resource to help parents understand the development of transition services.

Note: All PIN Clearinghouse documents may be downloaded from our website at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals or by contacting your regional Parent Information Network Specialist listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

April is Autism Awareness Month

by Amy Dill



National Autism Awareness Month was established in 1972. This month-long observance provides an opportunity for the autism communities throughout the United States to educate the public about this developmental delay that now affects 1 in 150 children in the United States. According to Arizona Revised Statutes [ARS §15-761 (1)], Autism is defined as "a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not include children with characteristics of emotional disability as defined in this section."

World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD), April 2nd, shines a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. Autism now affects approximately 67 million people worldwide, and more children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with diabetes, cancer, and AIDS combined. For more details of upcoming events please visit: www.autismspeaks.org.



Gilbert Public School's Mesquite High School Student Government hosted Family Fun Day in conjunction with a Health Summit to increase autism awareness. This event was held on April 4th with all the profits going to the Arizona State University's Autism/Asperger Research Project and Gilbert Public School's S.P.I.C.E. (Social, Pragmatics, Independence, Communication, Emotional) Program. This was the third event held by Mesquite High School Student Government in an effort to increase autism awareness and raise funds. The students have chosen autism as a five-year project with a goal of raising \$1 million to benefit the ASU project and Gilbert Public School's S.P.I.C.E. program.

April is a month when individuals with autism are warmly welcomed and embraced in events around the globe. Check your local newspapers for activities scheduled in your area and use this month to celebrate the unique gifts, talents, and skills of individuals with autism in your community.

Time for Summer Fun?

by Jill Castle

Looking for summer programs can be a daunting experience for a parent of a child with special needs. There are many options ranging from disability-specific camps to traditional camps with support. Summer is a great time for exploration, growth and confidence building which promotes progress as well as enhances the child's overall quality of life.



Once a parent has determined what they are looking for, the search for the right program can begin and should start early as most camps fill up fast! Listed below are a variety of resources and programs to explore in Arizona.

AZ Magic of Music and Dance is a program for children and young adults who have physical or cognitive disabilities and enjoy theater. They have two locations, one in Fountain Hills and one in Phoenix. The week-long camp prepares participants to stage a wonderful theater production that is written and choreographed especially for them. More information is available at www.azmagic.org or by calling 602-653-8702.

Camp Civitan is dedicated to individuals with developmental disabilities. They have 15 sessions available June through September and are located in Williams. Campers can attend as "private pay" campers, or if they are clients of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) - they can attend at the "respite rate" as the camp is a licensed vendor for the Arizona Department of Economic Security/DDD. The camp is open to all ages and sessions include field trips to a variety of fun locations: Grand Canyon, Sunset Crater, Cardinals Football Camp, and the Lowell Observatory. Daily activities can include: arts and crafts, fitness activities through an adaptive physical activity program, bowling, hiking, sensory trails, music therapy, swimming, and fishing. More information is available at www.campcivitan.org or by calling 602-953-2944.

KEEN: Kids Enjoy Exercise Now provides free one-to-one recreational opportunities for children and young adults with cognitive and physical disabilities. KEEN's activities are non-competitive and inclusive; their mission is to promote self-esteem and confidence. KEEN is located in the Phoenix area. More information is available at www.keenphoenix.org or by calling 602-508-3939.

Kris' Camp is located in Flagstaff and is a branch of a therapy intensive/respite camp for children with disabilities and their families. Their focus is with children diagnosed with autism and/or autism-like challenges from ages 4-15. They only have two sessions in 2009 and the first is already full! The remaining camp is July 19-25. More information is available at www.kriscamp.org or by calling 602-366-5867.

Lions Camp Tatiyee, Inc. is a residential coed camp that serves special needs children and adults of all ages. Their mission is to provide a camping experience for individuals with disabilities, among their peers, that encourages

independence and self-confidence. Sessions are divided by age with special sessions for those with physical disabilities, cognitive challenges, hearing, and visual impairments. The camp is located in beautiful Lakeside. Camp activities include: ceramics, crafts, music, fishing, hiking, dance, swimming, camping skills, team building, performing arts, and field trips. More information is available at www.arizonalionscamp.org or by calling 480-380-4254.

Whispering Hope Ranch is located in Payson. Their mission is to offer special needs children and their families a rustic, ranch style experience. The ranch also serves as a home for animals born with physical differences or rescued from difficult circumstances. Programs are designed to foster nurturing interactions between campers and the animals. More information is available at www.whisperinghoperanch.org or by calling 602-266-2216.

Traditional camps may accommodate children with disabilities. If there is a specific camp you feel your child would love to attend, call to see if they will allow your child to participate. Offer to help support that experience by sending your child with his/her habilitation provider, a volunteer, or a family member.

For additional camps related to specific interests, parents can visit the following websites: www.MySummerCamp.com, www.campzilla.com, and www.kidscamps.com.

Many city parks and recreation programs provide an adaptive recreation specialist to work with your child within their existing summer programs. For more information, contact your city parks and recreation department and ask to speak to the adaptive recreation services coordinator to discuss accommodations or supports your child needs.

Organizations specific to your child's disability can be found in the *PIN Blue Pages: Disability Related Resources (GR07)* which contains a comprehensive listing of these organizations and their contact information. GR07 is available on our website at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals or by contacting your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4.

Surrogate Parents

by Barb Ross and Candice Trainor

So what is a surrogate parent? A surrogate parent is a volunteer who has been appointed by the court or by the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) to represent a child in decisions regarding special education.

Who can be a surrogate parent? Anyone who (1) does not have conflict of interest, (2) is not an employee of a public agency involved in the care or education of the child, and (3) has skills and knowledge to adequately represent the child including knowledge of state and federal special education laws, district special education procedures, and the nature of the child's disability.

What are the surrogate parent's responsibilities? Surrogate parents act as the child's parent throughout the special education process. Surrogate parents can review educational records, request and consent to evaluations and re-evaluations, give written consent for the release of records and sharing of confidential student information, and challenge the recommendations of the public education agency (PEA) by requesting informal and formal dispute resolution procedures. Surrogate parents are not responsible for the care, maintenance, or financial support of the child.

A child with a disability requires a surrogate parent if any the following conditions exist.

- A parent cannot be identified.
- The public agency cannot determine the whereabouts of a parent, after having made reasonable attempts.
- The child is a ward of the state and a parent cannot be identified or located.
- The child is an unaccompanied youth as defined in the McKinney-Vento Act.

The Parent Information Network has partnered with the State's Surrogate Parent Program to provide training for those interested in becoming a surrogate parent for children with special needs. To become a surrogate parent for the ADE/ESS, you must have a Department of Public Safety (DPS) fingerprint card (or be able to secure clearance), attend specific training, and pursue the application process. The Surrogate Parent Coordinator, Candice Trainor, and the Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialists are providing training opportunities to parents and professionals across the state. These include training on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the role of a surrogate parent, paired with training on advocating for children with special needs and the special education process.

If you are interested in becoming a surrogate parent, or would like to learn more about the Surrogate Parent Program, please contact Candice Trainor at 602-364-3984 or by e-mail at Candice.Trainor@azed.gov. For information on local PIN trainings contact your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4.

State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report

by Teri Rademacher

Just as special education eligible students in Arizona's schools have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) has an IEP too. The State's IEP is their State Performance Plan. With the reauthorization of the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004, each state was required to put into place a performance plan that outlined how the state planned to implement the provisions of Part B (children age 3-22) of the Act. The plan covers a five-year period from 2005 to 2010.

The State Performance Plan (SPP) was developed to address 20 indicators identified by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as being critical areas to ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students determined eligible for special education services.

The State Performance Plan indicates the benchmark for each indicator, identifies the goal or percentage of anticipated improvement, outlines how progress will be measured and what measurement tool (data) will be used to chart progress, as well as any improvement activities that will be implemented to ensure adequate progress. As you can see, the similarities to the IEP process are significant.

The State also is required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) to OSEP. This process mirrors the annual review of a student's IEP. The APR reports on the State's progress towards their goals using the data submitted by public education agencies (PEAs) or schools throughout Arizona. Based upon the APR, OSEP responds to the States and identifies areas that need improvement. As the APR is being drafted for submittal to OSEP, ADE/ESS begins to develop strategies and identify

activities to address those areas that need improvement. This proactive approach highlights Arizona's commitment to ensure that IDEA eligible students are receiving FAPE.

PEAs or schools are required to submit data that impacts these indicators. When that data is analyzed, ADE/ESS then identifies areas of concern and works with the school(s) to develop strategies to address the issue(s).

Parents are directly involved in Indicator 8 when their school is required to conduct the Parent Survey. The Survey consists of 25 questions that can be responded to either online or on paper. Survey questions are designed to measure the percentage of parents who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. For more information on the survey, visit the website at www.azed.gov/ess/parentsurvey or contact your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4.

If you are interested in learning more about the State's SPP and APR, or want to see the data being reported by Arizona's schools, you can do so online at www.azed.gov/ess. Scroll down to the bottom of the home page and explore the drop-downs under State Performance Plan and SY 2006-07 Results Public Reports.

20 Indicators-State Performance Plan

1. Graduation Rates
2. Drop-Out Rates
3. Participation & Performance on Assessments
4. Rates of Suspension/Expulsion
5. School-age Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
6. Preschool LRE
7. Preschool Outcomes
8. Parent Involvement
9. Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality
10. Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality by Disability
11. Child Find – Evaluation Timelines
12. Early Childhood Transition (Preschool)
13. Secondary Transition (High School)
14. Post School Outcomes (after High School)
15. Identification and Correction of Noncompliance
16. Complaint Investigation Timelines
17. Due Process Hearing Timelines
18. Hearing Requests Resolved by Resolution Sessions
19. Mediation Agreements
20. State Reported Data – Accuracy and Timelines

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For more information contact the PIN/Child Find Coordinator: Becky Raabe, (928) 679-8106, or Becky.Raabe@azed.gov.

**Help Us Update Your Name and Address!!!**

We are updating our *Network News* mailing list to ensure we send it only to those who want to receive it. **Please help us by completing and returning the postage paid card coming your way! If this card is not received by May 1st, your name and address will be deleted from the *Network News* mailing list.**

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