



TARC NEWSLETTER

Oklahoma's leading information source on issues impacting the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families

April 2009

CONTENTS

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day.....1&2

Updated Status on Bills Still Being Considered.....3&4

AFP Employment Initiative.....5

Social Security Payment....5

FY 2010 Budget Resolution.....6

Stop the "R-Word".....6

Expanded Newborn Screening.....7

Comments on President Obama's Gaffe.....7&8

"Miss March" Misses.....8

Autism News Roundup.....9

Calendar of Events.....10

A Service System OF, BY and FOR People with Disabilities

These comments were delivered at the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day rally in Oklahoma City on April 22, 2007 by TARC Executive Director John F. Gajda.

As I stand here this morning and look out before me, I see a great illustration of what today is all about. It is about people with developmental disabilities. And the great numbers of you who are here today do more to demonstrate the point we are trying to make than anything I could say.

Today we are also joined by many professionals, friends and families who support the principles of self-advocacy and the reason we are here today.

Not that many years ago, a gathering of this type would never have occurred. That is because the system of services in Oklahoma and in most other places was set up to do things to people with disabilities. It was set up to tell you where you could live, what services you could have, how to spend your day, and who your friends could be.

There were some changes and the professionals working in the system liked to think they began doing things for people with disabilities. But there was something missing. The professionals were still making the decisions. What was missing were the voices of people with disabilities.

But that missing piece is being filled in by the many individuals who now have the courage to speak out themselves individually or as members of organizations like People First. The many voices of people like you who spoke out and continue to speak out to demand that you be heard has laid the foundation for a service system that now does things with people with disabilities and includes them in all phases and aspects of what occurs in the name of people with disabilities.

This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. There is a famous line in a speech he gave in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania that is often quoted and I think we can borrow that line today to capture the theme of our rally - Nothing About Me Without Me - and summarize why we are here today. Lincoln's line went "a government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Today we are here to cry out to members in

Please see "Awareness" on pg 2



TARC is committed to ensuring a high quality of life for Oklahomans with developmental disabilities through education, empowerment, support and advocacy. For additional information about TARC or to volunteer, contact us at:

16 East 16th Street, Suite 405, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-4447
www.ddadvocacy.net tarc@ddadvocacy.net 918-582-8272/800-688-8272 918-582-3628(Fax)

Continued from pg 1

the legislator, administrators who run government programs and private providers that like Lincoln's comments about our democracy, what people with developmental disabilities want is a service system of people with disabilities, run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities.

Lincoln ended his famous line with the phrase "shall not perish from the earth." Now as President of the United States when he uttered this line in 1863 Lincoln was making a commitment. When I say these words in front of you today they don't quite carry the same weight. What I do want to tell you today is that the power to guarantee a system of services in Oklahoma of, by and for people with disabilities lies in your hands and in your voices.

Like the troubled time when Lincoln uttered his famous words there are threats to what you want. Today those threats are not from a civil war but are from forces that are sweeping this country and our state. We are in tight economic times and in tight economic times those who are not outspoken, don't have the perceived power or authority, and who are not considered to be a force to reckon with often receive the short end of the stick.

Addressing you today, I must confess that I am concerned about the future. I might be accused of being an alarmist who, like Chicken Little in the nursery rhyme, is always crying that the sky is falling. After all, I have warned of upcoming problems before. But despite the fact that the Oklahoma service system for people with disabilities has made progress and offers more options than ever, we cannot ignore the reality that our system has been stalled for a couple of years like a car on the side of the road that has run out of gas with no gas station in sight.

I am concerned that as available government and private funds become tighter or decrease, existing services will be threatened and there will be fewer options for everyone.

I am concerned that as Oklahoma goes longer without rate increases for providers, it becomes impossible for providers to pay staff adequate living wages, thus creating excessive staff turnover. This is causing the quality of the services you receive to deteriorate.

I am concerned that those on the waiting list for community services, that continues to grow each month, will have no hope of ever receiving a community waiver slot.

I am concerned that as funding becomes tighter, individuals and families will be forced out of desperation to turn to older, restricted institutional based service models such as ICF/MR's and nursing homes when they don't want to.

I am concerned that the Oklahoma Legislature will use the tough economic times to continue to ignore the wide range of needs of people on the autism spectrum that are not being addressed in our state.

And most of all, I am concerned that the progress we have made in Oklahoma for people with developmental disabilities will be lost.

These are all things that you need to be concerned with because they could affect your way of life. But you also have an obligation. Your drive to reform the service system in Oklahoma and to make it a system of, by and for people with disabilities is laying the groundwork for future generations of Oklahoman's with developmental disabilities. You are the founding fathers and mothers of a new way of doing things. Hopefully younger generations of people with developmental disabilities will live in a better world because you insisted on being heard.

What should we do about these concerns I have shared with you and other personal ones you may have? Don't just be alarmed, be an advocate for addressing these concerns.

We are standing in front of our state capital and two of the groups that need to hear from you are in that building. They are our elected Representatives and Senators who are members of the Oklahoma Legislature. They need to hear what is important to you and they need to understand that you want a voice in those things that affect your lives.

There are appropriation bills and other measures being considered by our legislature that affect your lives and those of other people with developmental disabilities. The sky may not be falling yet but there are cracks showing that could have disastrous consequences. Insist that we have a service system in Oklahoma of, by and for people with disabilities by speaking up now. Your elected officials need to continue to hear from you.



Legislation Focus Narrows

With the 2009 Oklahoma Legislative Session at its midpoint, members of the legislature are now focusing on fewer active bills and with critical deadlines for action in the opposite house near, the number of bills alive is likely to dwindle even more. The following are those bills from the original tracking list that are still being considered for passage.

Bill	Principal Authors	Status/Date Updated Last	Description
HB 1019	Wright, John A. (H)	General Order-Senate 3/24/09	Recreates the Group Homes for Persons with Developmental or Physical Disabilities Advisory Board.
HB 1512	Blackwell, Gus (H)	General Order-Senate 3/31/09	Exempts certain schools meeting certain standards from liability for not providing necessary services to autistic children.
HB 1627	Pittman, Anastasia (H)	Second Reading- Referred to Senate Committee 3/17/09	Modifies language and reporting order for the Protective Services for Vulnerable Adults Act.
HB 1761	Enns, John (H)	Second Reading- Referred to Senate Committee 3/17/09	Allows for hunting with a traditional longbow with a mechanical bow draw device to hold the bow mechanically at full or partial draw for people with permanent disabilities.
HB 1763	Enns, John (H)	Subcommittee- Do Pass as Amended 3/25/09	Requires the Department of Education to provide training to special education due process hearing officers to ensure that they are knowledgeable in special education law and legal procedure.
HB 1778	Jones, Tad (H)	Senate Introduction and First Reading 3/02/09	It re-appropriates and redesignates \$2,204,037 from education Leadership Oklahoma to Academic Achievement Awards and \$1,354,329 from staff development to direct services of the Sooner-Start Early Intervention Program.
HB 1887	Richardson, Phil (H)	Second Reading- Referred to Senate Committee 3/17/09	Removes language prohibiting individuals who have been convicted or who entered a plea other than not guilty to a felony from being eligible for community sentencing. It modifies language related to a level of service inventory, allowing an offender with a moderate or high range on the inventory to be eligible for community punishments if the district attorney has consented to eligibility for an offender who has a mental illness or developmental disability or a co-occurring mental illness or substance abuse disorder.
HB 1893	Peterson, Pam (H)	Committee Report Pending-Senate 3/21/09	Authorizes the Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division to work corroboratively with other national, state and local agencies and community groups to establish a single-point-of-entry concept for aging and disability groups in Oklahoma, referred to as an Aging and Disability Resource Consortium Initiative.
HB 2004	Wright, Harold (H)	Second Reading- Referred to Senate Committee 3/18/09	The bill requires school administrators, teachers, and other school employees to be trained to recognize, accommodate, and assist students with mental health issues.

HB 2027	Steele, Kris (H)	Committee Report Pending-Senate 3/31/09	Requires persons wishing to practice as a licensed behavior analyst or a licensed assistant behavior analyst to apply to the Developmental Disabilities Services Division within the Department of Human Services. The Measure also directs the University Hospitals Authority to use funds for primary care provider evaluation training for providers in the Sooner SUCCESS program to acquire skills necessary to evaluate children with autism spectrum disorders. It directs the Developmental Disabilities Services Division to establish an applied behavioral analysis research pilot project. The measure also directs the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to establish a program modeled after Early Foundations, an outreach program that provides early intensive behavioral intervention for children with autism.
HB 2126	Shelton, Mike (H)	General Order-Senate 3/31/09	States that either a parent or teacher of a child or school district may initiate a request for an initial evaluation to determine if the child has a disability.
SB 0321	Anderson, Patrick (S)	Second Reading- Referred to House Committee 3/11/09	Authorizes the Aging Service Division of the Department of Human Services to collaborate with other national, state and local agencies to establish a single point-of-entry concept for aging and disability groups in the state, which is to be referred to as the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium Initiative.
SB 0479	Lamb, Todd (S)	House Committee- Laid Over 3/31/09	Modifies definition of “long-term care administrator” under the Nursing Home Care Act to exclude bed requirements as they relate to intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded. It exempts administrators providing health or habilitation services for mentally retarded or developmentally disabled persons from meeting current license requirements.
SB 0871	Russell, Steve (S)	General Order- House 3/31/09	Modifies membership of the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Advisory Council.
SB 0971	Sparks, John (S)	House Committee- Laid Over 4/01/09	Allowing related services personnel, as identified in policies for special education by the Department of Education, to be provided with the opportunity to participate in training applicable to their field that will enable them to maintain professional licensure.

Bills Dead or Dormant that Are No Longer Being Considered

HB 1842	Duncan, Rex (H)	Senate Committee-Do Pass Failed 3/30/09	Creates the Oklahoma Licensed Interpreter Act and the Oklahoma Board of Licensed Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing to regulate and enforce the practice of interpreting in accordance with the act. The bill makes it unlawful to practice interpreting in the state without a license.
---------	-----------------	---	---

AFP Launches Employment Initiative for Citizens with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

The Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) announced a national effort today to increase employment in the U.S. for people with developmental disabilities. Individuals with developmental disabilities want and need real jobs like everyone else. About 10% of the U.S. population has disabilities; but within that group, only 37% of them are employed. And it's worse for Americans with developmental disabilities, where only 22% of the entire group is employed.

The Alliance's initiative includes focused action and networking among multi-stakeholder state teams; national webcast education and town-hall events; national and state-level policy change advocacy; and directed local efforts to increase and enhance employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Also anticipated is an October 2011 national summit to share leading practice, process recommendations and establish meaningful national outcomes.

The primary focus of this initiative is on achieving demonstrable results on a state level. The Alliance is building and will guide state teams that include people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, advocates, service providers, business organizations, state government officials, and members of the general community to explore and transform the environment for employment in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

AFP members have each established national organizational goals and outlined planned actions to foster employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The primary focus of this nationwide effort is on demonstrative change in individual states. "Meaningful employment for people with developmental disabilities will go a long way toward realizing the goals of our 2005 summit – integration, productivity, independence and quality of life choices. A person with a good job can afford housing, and the supports and services that make their independence possible. With that job, people assume responsibilities and provide resources to their communities," says James F. Gardner, Ph.D. and Chairman of the AFP Steering Committee.

This effort stems from goals voiced and agreed upon by self-advocates and advocates participating in the 2005 Alliance for Full Participation national summit in Washington, DC. To learn more and get involved in this exciting new initiative, visit the AFP website at www.allianceforfullparticipation.org.

Source: The Alliance for Full Participation

Wanted: Sponsors and Volunteers for Shot in the Dark 2009!



On Friday, May 1st, golfers will gather after sunset for a starlight scramble on a golf course illuminated only by the moon and glow-in-the-dark golf balls! The 14th annual *Shot In the Dark* golf tournament benefiting TARC, will once again be held at the LaFortune Championship Golf Course.

Golfer registration begins at 7:00 p.m., with tee off shortly after sunset (approximately 9:00 p.m.) in a four-player, shotgun start tournament format. The course is set as a Par 3, and golfers play nine holes. The top three teams will receive trophies and bragging rights as tournament champions. The golfer who wins the "closest to the pin" contest receives a \$50 prize.

Sponsorships are still available and range from \$250 to \$10,000. Consider asking your employer to sponsor the event, or becoming a sponsor yourself!

Volunteers are needed as course monitors throughout the tournament. Volunteers will be needed on site from 6:30-11:45 p.m.

For more information on sponsorship opportunities or to volunteer, call Christina Merlo, TARC Director of Communications, at 918-582-8272 extension 223 or 1-800-688-8272 or email cmerlo@ddadvocacy.net.

One Time Payment from Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration has developed a leaflet describing the one-time payment of \$250 which will go to Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries. This payment is authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The leaflet describes the timing of the payment, who is eligible for the payment, how payments will be made, impact on SSI eligibility, and what to do if the payment does not arrive. The leaflet is available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10519.pdf>.

Source: Capitol Insider

Medicaid and Long Term Services and Supports



In the last week of March, two important bills were reintroduced in the Senate and House: the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act (CLASS Act) and the Community Choice Act (CCA).

The CCA was introduced in the Senate (S. 683) by Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) and in the House (H.R. 1670) by Representative Danny Davis (D-IL). This bill would require that states provide Medicaid community based support services to people eligible for institutional level of services. The bill would eliminate the institutional bias in the Medicaid program and making great strides toward eliminating waiting lists for community based services.

The CLASS Act was introduced in the Senate (S. 697) by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and in the House (H.R. 1721) by Representative Frank Pallone (D-NJ). The bill would establish a national public long term services insurance program that would pay cash benefits to eligible individuals. The benefits would not be means-tested and would not require that people become impoverished in order to receive services. The CLASS Act is expected to take some of the pressure off of the Medicaid program which has become the only significant source of public long term services supports in the nation.

Source: The Capitol Insider

Disability Law Guide

The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTAC) Southwest ADA Center, announced the publication of The Disability Law Handbook. This 50-page guide provides the basics of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability related laws. Written in an FAQ format, the Disability Law Handbook answers questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ADA Amendments Act, the Rehabilitation Act, Social Security, the Air Carrier Access Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, and the Fair Housing Act Amendments. Individual copies of The Disability Law Handbook are available at no charge by emailing Rauseo@bcm.edu, or by calling Dionne Rauseo at 713.520.0232

Source: The Capitol Insider

Two Studies on Long Term Care Services

Two recent studies/reports document the many ways Medicaid's Community-Based Long Term Care Services are cost-effective as compared to expensive institutional nursing facilities:

1. "Do Non-Institutional Long-Term Care Services Reduce Medicaid Spending?" Written by H.S. Kaye, M. LaPlante, and C. Harrington. It is in the Journal Health Affairs, vol 28, no 1 (Jan/Feb 2009). <http://content.healthaffairs.org/index.dtl>

2. "Taking the Long View: Investing in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Is Cost-Effective" written by R. Mollica, E. Kasser, L. Walker, and A. Houser. It is in the publication entitled INSIGHT on the Issues, vol I 26 (March 2009), a publication of the AARP Public Policy Institute. www.aarp.org/pp

Source: Information Bulletin # 281 by Steve Gold

Shawnee Girl Lobbies Legislature to "Stop the R-Word"

Shawnee High School Senior Alie Walsh lobbied state lawmakers, giving a speech on the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives urging them to help prevent the use of derogatory terms to describe people with disabilities.

Alie, whose older sister Jenny has a disability, specifically urged legislators to discourage the use of the words "retarded" or "retard" as derogatory terms.

"To me, to hear someone use the word 'retarded' as a putdown just doesn't line up, because I would never think of something that describes Jenny as a putdown," Alie said.

She noted her sister was the prom queen at Shawnee and participates in competitive swimming and dancing activities.

Alie said lawmakers and other adults can help by simply being good role models. "When kids hear teachers or role models use this word, they think it's okay to use it - and it's not okay," Alie said.

Gov. Brad Henry also issued a proclamation in support of the effort, declaring March 31st to be "Spread the Word to End the 'r' Word Day" in Oklahoma. That proclamation declares that "when the words 'retard' or 'retarded' are used without thinking to mean something stupid or bad, it is hurtful to people who have disabilities and the people who love them" and it "perpetuates prejudice and discrimination towards people with disabilities." State Rep. Kris Steele, who invited Alie to speak to the House, praised her efforts. "Alie has shown great poise and maturity in fighting prejudice," said Steele, R-Shawnee. "I believe it is incumbent upon us as elected officials to do our best to lead by example and I appreciate Alie reminding us of that responsibility."

States Expand Newborn Screening for Life-Threatening Disorders

New March of Dimes Report Finds State-By-State Gaps Nearly Eliminated

Regardless of where they are born in the United States, nearly all newborns now receive mandated screening for many life-threatening disorders, a remarkable public health advance of the last four years, according to a new report issued today by the March of Dimes.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia now require that every baby be screened for 21 or more of the 29 serious genetic or functional disorders on the uniform panel recommended by the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) and endorsed by the March of Dimes. If diagnosed early, these disorders can be successfully managed or treated to prevent death, disability, or other severe consequences such as mental retardation.

Although all states now have laws or rules that require the screening, as of December 31, 2008, Pennsylvania and West Virginia still must implement their expanded programs, according to the March of Dimes report card.

March of Dimes will maintain its watchdog role on newborn screening, said Dr. Howse, and will continue to promote consistent guidelines nationwide, and to advocate for funding for the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act (P.L. 110-204). The intent of this legislation is to help improve state newborn screening programs by providing education for families and additional funding for follow-up and treatment for infants who test positive for disorders identified through screening. The recent advent of tandem mass spectrometry provided the means to identify many conditions from one blood spot.

In 2005, the first year that the March of Dimes report card measured state-by-state requirements on expanded newborn screening, only 38 percent of infants were born in states that required screening for 21 or more of 29 core conditions. Today, as a result of years of intensive bi-partisan volunteer advocacy efforts led by March of Dimes chapters, nearly all babies born in the U.S. live in states that require screening for 21 or more of these treatable disorders. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia require screening for all 29 disorders, with more states expected to join them

this year. In fact, 46 states and the District of Columbia screen for 26 or more of these conditions.

Out of 29 screens mandated for every newborn, Oklahoma has required and fully implemented 28 out of the 29 with only one screen currently being tested for but not fully implemented.

Newborn screening is done by testing a few drops of blood, usually from a newborn's heel, before hospital discharge. A positive result does not always mean the infant has a disorder. If a screening result is positive, the infant is referred for additional testing, and if the diagnosis is confirmed, the baby is given treatment as soon as possible.

Parents can find information about the recommended newborn screening tests at the March of Dimes Web site: marchofdimes.com/nbs. A list of which screening tests are provided by each state can be found on the March of Dimes Web site at marchofdimes.com/peristats, which is updated regularly, or at the National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center Web site at genes-r-us.uthscsa.edu.

President Obama's Off the Cuff Comment



On Thursday March 29th, "The Tonight Show" hosted by Jay Leno, aired an episode with special guest President Barack Obama. During the taping the President was asked about his bowling game, in which he commented that his bowling score could compare to the Special Olympics. Even before the show aired on national television, many organizations spoke up against his comments.

This gaffe came as quite a surprise after the President's strong support of the disability community and the many issues people with disabilities face. "Statements such as these reflect pervasive societal attitudes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities somehow don't measure up – that their lives are of less worth. The biggest obstacle to including people with disabilities in community life is public attitudes," the Arc comments. This is not only a shock to the individuals with disabilities and their families but it is also an insight into the even larger problem of the public perception of individuals with disabilities. A strong stigma against people with disabilities still seems to seep into the public view, "This kind of

"President" Continued on pg. 8

language needs to be a teachable moment, I think, for our country,” Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver said. “I would hope every parent who’s at home this morning watching this show could turn to their children and say it’s a chance for us to recognize that when we talk about Special Olympics, when we talk about people with special needs, let’s make sure we talk about it in an affirming way.” The public attitude towards these individuals needs to be altered and comments like the President’s illustrates the need for continued advocacy. Full inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is the only way we will collectively shift the attitudinal barriers that prevent people from realizing their full potential as contributing members of the community. The Arc of the United States calls on President Obama to convene a meeting of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their parents and siblings, and those who support them to discuss the critical issues facing this community, such as:

- 700,000 individuals and families on waiting lists for home and community based services.
- Recent cases of abuse and brutality against people with disabilities in Iowa and Texas; and
- Lack of funding for supported housing, supported employment, personal assistants, respite and family support that are needed to enable people to live in their communities instead of costly and unwarranted institutions.

The Arc of the United States adds that this sudden surge in publicity over the President’s comment was an opportunity lost. “While that coverage is justified, it has been relatively limited in terms of any serious exploration of the current day challenges facing people with disabilities and their families. The superficial news coverage of the gaffe also missed out on an opportunity to call attention to the President’s expressed commitment to an aggressive disability policy agenda (see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/disabilities/>) which he had reaffirmed at a Town Hall meeting the previous day. Even though the public opinion has dramatically improved throughout the years, it is obvious that the public is still in need of a shift in opinion and beliefs about people with developmental disabilities.

Source: The Arc and Monday Morning Memo

Visit us on the web at
www.ddadvocacy.net



Tulsa People First Pancake Breakfast



Come join us and enjoy delicious pancakes while supporting TulsaPeople First!

What: Annual Tulsa People First Pancake Breakfast

When: Saturday, April 18th from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30

Where: New Haven Methodist Church, 5603 S New Haven Ave

Cost: \$5 for Adults, children under 3 eat free

“Miss March” Misses



The coalition that grew out of the protests against the film “Tropic Thunder” continues as watchdogs against offensive depictions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc, along with other advocacy groups, including Special Olympics is monitoring the film “Miss March” which opened nationwide on Friday, March 13. The movie, which uses the R-word, opened to poor reviews. Here’s an excerpt from an interview in the Chicago Tribune with actor Craig Robinson who is featured in the film.

Q - In the script, the word “retard” is used over and over. The comedy “Tropic Thunder” received a great deal of criticism for using the same word. Was there any concern over how this might be received?

A - I’ve heard nothing. There could very well be something, but I haven’t heard anything. We shot it probably the same time as [“Tropic Thunder”]. I wasn’t in the editing room. You’ll have to talk to the guys who made those decisions.

Q - But, as a comedian, is that just a toxic word now?

A - It does seem to be. You can see it from a parent’s point of view. But the way they use it in the movie is funny. It’s silly. It’s not going out to hurt anybody. It’s definitely not coming from an evil place; it’s just coming from the way people talk.

Source: Monday Morning Memo

Autism News Roundup



APRIL is National Autism Awareness Month

In the United States, April has been designated as Autism Awareness Month. During the month of April, television shows dedicate episodes to the varying aspects of autism spectrum disorders. In the past, companies and autism organizations have also teamed up to raise funds and awareness. Toys R'Us and Autism Speaks have created a partnership allowing customers, shopping both online and in retail stores, to donate money to support Autism Speaks.

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, which declared April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) in perpetuity. This UN resolution is one of only three official disease-specific United Nations Days and brings the world's attention to autism, a pervasive disorder that affects tens of millions. The World Autism Awareness Day resolution encourages all Member States to take measures to raise awareness about autism throughout society and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. It further expresses deep concern at the prevalence and high rate of autism in children in all regions of the world and the consequent developmental challenges.

The Autism Society of America (ASA) has been celebrating National Autism Awareness Month since the 1970s and over the years has been joined by many other organizations in this observance. April is a special opportunity for everyone to educate the public about autism and issues within the autism community.

Included among the ways that ASA suggests we can celebrate National Autism Awareness Month this year are:

1. Show your colors. Wear your autism awareness puzzle bracelet to show your support. To purchase autism awareness items visit the ADA online store at: https://secure2.convio.net/asa/site/Ecommerce?store_id=2001
2. Read a book. In *The Horse Boy*, Rupert Isaacson shares his inspiring story of how he and his wife learned to think of their son's autism as an adventure rather than a curse, a beginning rather than an end. Little, Brown and Company is publishing the book on April 14, 2009, and will be partnering with the Autism Society of America to raise awareness. Both the ASA and the book aim to empower families to think creatively and openly when it comes to treatment. Learn more at <http://www.horseboythebook.com/>.
3. Spread awareness. ASA has free download materials to help your family, your school, your church or other community organization learn more about people with autism. ASA has developed a poster which can be displayed to raise awareness in your community. Our "Growing Up Together" is a new, popular pamphlet that teaches typical kids how much fun they can have with their friends on the autism spectrum. Visit www.autism-society.org/shop_downloads for this and other great material provided free of charge. ASA's Safe and Sound materials are also critical to keeping our citizens with autism safe. Bring our cards and pamphlets to your local police and fire station and help us spread awareness today! To learn more, please visit www.autism-society.org/research_safeandsound.
4. Take action. Getting involved in advocacy efforts at the local, state and national levels is a crucial way to support legislation benefiting those with autism and their loved ones. Check out current national initiatives at www.autism-society.org/research_advo_action.
5. Learn the signs. Research indicates that early identification is associated with dramatically better outcomes for individuals with autism. The earlier a child is diagnosed, the earlier the child can begin benefiting from one of the many specialized intervention approaches to treatment and education. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities has developed the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Campaign and provide a number of informational materials on developmental milestones for parents, health care providers, early childhood educators and others that are available on their Web site <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>.



**TULSA ADVOCATES FOR THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENS
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

16 EAST 16th STREET SUITE 405
TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74119-4447

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TULSA,
OKLAHOMA
PERMIT #909

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The TARC newsletter is published monthly by the Tulsa Advocates for the Rights of Citizens With Developmental Disabilities, Inc., to inform readers about issues and legislative action that affect adults and children with developmental disabilities, their families, and professionals working in the field of developmental disabilities. The contents do not necessarily represent the official position of TARC.

Copyright 2008, TARC. All Rights Reserved.

HELP TARC HELP FAMILIES-BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Families in Transition
Families in Transition is a support group for parents of adult children with developmental disabilities.

Please Contact
Amie Farinella, 918-582-8272
For information about the next meeting.

Connections Asperger's Group

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, April 22nd-4:30 p.m.
Hardesty Library, 8316 E. 93rd St.
The "Connections" Asperger's Group is a social skills group for adolescents and young adults with Asperger's Syndrome. The group meets monthly. Contact Sherilyn or Amie at 918-582-8272 for more information.

Hispanic Parents Support Group
El Grupo Hispano de Apoyo a Padres de Familia

Next Meeting: Monday, April 27th
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
St. Thomas Moore Catholic Church,
2720 S. 129th E. Ave., Tulsa

Contact Zaida at 918-582-8272 for more information.



links to support, to information, to friends.
Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, April 15th
6:30-8:00 p.m.
Brookside Library, 1207 E. 45th Pl.

Links is a support group for adults with Asperger's Syndrome. Contact Amie Farinella, 918-582-8272 for more information.

Day Makers Activities group for adults with developmental disabilities

Contact: Amie, 918-582-8272

Tuesdays • 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Gatesway Foundation-Mabee Gym
1217 E. College in Broken Arrow

Thursdays • 1:00-2:30 p.m.
McClure Recreation Center
7440 E. 7th Street in Tulsa

MOMS & DADS SUPPORT GROUP

Next Meeting:
Thursday, April 30th
7:00-9:00 p.m.

Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church
4102 E. 61st St., Room B-8

The mission of the Moms & Dads Support Group is to nurture and support families whose children have a developmental disability, to encourage positive strategies in dealing with challenges, and to share in the joys of raising our children.

For more information, contact Sherilyn, 918-582-8272

1ST TULSA PEOPLE FIRST
Tulsa People First

Next Meeting:
Diamond Jacks
7031 S. Zurich Ave.
April 14th
Dinner 5:30
Meeting 6:30

For more information please contact Amie Farinella
918-582-8272

Support Group for Families of Children with Special Needs in Sapulpa

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, April 21st, 6:30 p.m.
CREOKS Behavioral Health, 23 E. Ross in Sapulpa
Childcare is not provided, but please take advantage of Sapulpa's great Respite Care Program

For more information, contact Mindy Littlefield, 378-5632