

Family Connections Center

Here you will find articles, links to news, ways to connect with other families, providers or services, resources and upcoming events.

Family Support: Creating a network of family support for individuals with disabilities and their families

The FAMILY CONNECTIONS CENTER is the Greater New Bedford Area Family Support Center, for the Department of Developmental Services. We support families from New Bedford, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Wareham, Rochester, Marion, Mattapoissett, and Gosnold. DDS puts forth guidelines around what Family Support Centers offer for families of children and adults who are eligible for services. The guidelines read, in part:

“Center staff is expected to be experts in generic resources and services in their respective areas and work with families to maximize natural supports. Centers are expected to encourage active family involvement and consultation to identify interests and needs in developing activities and service options. Each Family Support Center provides the following array of services and supports for families: project is designed to listen and respond to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families so that all people with disabilities, young and old, have equal opportunity to live, work and develop relationships in their communities. Family Support Advocates work in partnership with family members and individuals recognizing and supporting their strengths and respecting their privacy.”

Some of the services we provide include information and referral, family trainings, parent networking, and resource sharing. While more intense support requires DDS eligibility, we are more than happy to talk with you and offer some suggestions as to where you might best find what you are seeking.

We are open Monday through Friday 9-4:30. We also offer additional times on Monday through Wednesdays evenings, by appointment only. Call us today for an appointment.

Tel: 508-999-4436

Meet our Team:

Sandra Heller - Associate Executive Director/Program Director

Jennifer Newcomer – Family Support Program Coordinator

Jorge Pagan-Ramos - Family Support Advisor (Spanish)

Kathleen Amaral - Family Support Advisor, Co-Coordinator Family Leadership Series

Ivone Rego-Cass – Family Support Advisor (Portuguese)

**If you would rather receive an electronic version of this newsletter,
please call Amy Cornell at 508-999-4436 or visit our website to subscribe to the newsletter.**

What better way to celebrate the holidays, than to brush up on your child's Special Education Basic Rights?!



Family Connections Center ended last year with an introductory workshop into Special Education Basic Rights with our Spanish speaking families. Spearheaded by Jorge Pagan, Family Support Advisor, we were able to bring some holiday cheer by empowering our families with knowledge of their Basic Rights.

For more information on the next workshop geared towards our Latino community, feel free to contact Jorge Pagan at ext. 106 or Ivone Rego-Cass at ext. 118.

Family Leadership Series 26



Every year, Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change (MFOFC) offers a series of workshops in our region for families who are interested in creating a vision for their family.

For more information on MFOFC or the Family Leadership Series, please visit...

<http://mfofc.org/family-leadership-series>

DID YOU KNOW...

The Supreme Court's March 2017 decision in *Endrew F. vs. Douglas County School District* which requires schools to provide special education that enables them to meet "challenging" and "appropriately ambitious" goals. See how this decision can impact the way your child learns at school.



For more information, please visit: <http://www.bazelon.org/endrew-f-v-douglas-county-school-district/>



Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education

A blog was recently distributed by the *ABC Law Center in Michigan* that depicts the *Disability Rights Advances and Setbacks of 2017*. It's a great way to reflect on all that has happened and keep an eye on all the changes that impact our children, our families and our community.

To see more about the Disability Rights Advances and Setbacks of 2017, visit:

<https://www.abclawcenters.com/blog/2017/12/12/u-s-disability-rights-advances-and-setbacks-2017-year-in-review/>

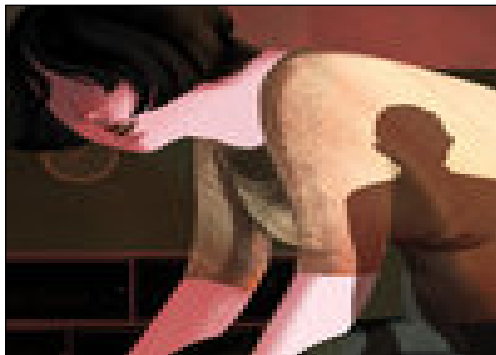


Photo courtesy of npr.org

In addition to the discussion of sexual harassment and the *#metoo movement*, NPR recently released a series call *Abused and Betrayed*, which is a collection of interviews that brings attention to a widespread, but under-reported, issue of sexual violence against people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

See more: www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed

Rewarding Work

Did you know that DDS families have access to Rewarding Work's *Free Job Posting Board*? Families can search for a Personal Care Attendant or respite provider on the website. Contact your local Family Support Center.

For more details or visit www.rewardingwork.org

DID YOU KNOW...



SafetyNet

Tracking Systems

We recently met with a family with a young boy known to bolt. Given his diagnosis and safety concerns, Grandma thought Safety Net would be a viable option to help keep him safe, both at school and when out in the community.

Upon meeting with her, she mentioned she was establishing a working relationship with their local police department, who were trained in Safety Net Tracking Systems. It is amazing to learn about technology being used to keep people safe.

Safety Net Tracking Systems has proven technology that works in densely wooded areas, buildings and shallow water. Its radio frequency technology works in finding and rescuing people of all ages, who are at-risk of wandering or becoming lost. Safety Net is equipped to work with law enforcement and other public safety agencies that are trained, certified and equipped with Safety Net Search and Rescue Receivers.

To find out more... www.safetynettracking.com/

Exciting news!

We received word in this "Dear Colleague letter" from Secretary of Health & Human Services Secretary, Marylou Sudders, that Governor Charlie Baker appointed the interim acting Commissioner, Jane Ryder, to The Department of Developmental Services (DDS).



Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to announce that Governor Baker has appointed Jane Ryder as Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) effective immediately.

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DID YOU KNOW...

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As you know, Jane has served as DDS Interim Commissioner since July and has worked for DDS since 1995 most recently as Deputy Commissioner where she was key-in the implementation of DDS priorities, including waiver enrollment, promotion of shared living and self-direction, and improvement of consistency in practice across the state. Prior to joining the DDS, she was the Deputy Director at Community Teamwork Inc., a non-profit community action agency serving low income residents in the Greater Lowell Area. She has prior public service at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development as Director of the Office of Energy Conservation. She is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross where she received a B.A. in Political Science and holds Masters Degrees from the McCormack Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

It is a privilege to work with Commissioner Ryder, who is a strong advocate for the more than 38,000 adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. Her leadership will ensure greater consistency across the agency and strengthen relationships with families.

Please join me in congratulating Commissioner Ryder.



Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Other news... On February 2nd, new Commissioner Jeffrey Riley was appointed to lead the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).



(Photo courtesy of Lawrence Public Schools)

Mr. Riley has overseen the operation and improvement of 35 schools serving more than 14,000 students as the Lawrence Public Schools superintendent/receiver since 2012. Prior to that, he worked for Boston Public Schools as academic superintendent/chief innovation officer. Mr. Riley has worked in urban and suburban educational systems as a teacher in Baltimore, Md., administrator at High Tech Academy @ Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Boston and principal of Tyngsboro Middle School and Boston's Edwards Middle School.

This information was found on the DESE website. For updates go to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/updates.html>

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...



Shared courtesy of Arc
Massachusetts: Written by Katerina Daley, Development and Digital Media Associate

Expect Success: Celebrating Achievers

In the coming months, the Arc will be sharing the stories of the six people with disabilities who have excelled in the arts, classroom, business world, and beyond. The first story highlights the achievements of Tess Keijser, a young woman with Down syndrome, who never let her disability define or limit her. Tess reminds us about the importance of social inclusion and the impact it has on success.

Save the date! *Expect Success: Celebrating Achievers Gala, April 25.*

Social inclusion has been one of the most crucial aspects of Tess Keijser's success. For her entire life, Tess, a young woman with Down syndrome, has been in inclusive settings, whether in the classroom or the workforce. Now almost 22 years old, Tess is thriving as a Director for Pampered Chef, hosting her own parties and selling over \$20,000 worth of products in the three years she has been with the company. And she has done all of this and more while managing celiac disease, dealing with chronic episodes and flare ups along the way.

Tess has never thought of herself as a person with a disability who is limited or defined by her condition. She knows she has the right to do and be anything, and that self-awareness and self-motivation have led to her becoming quite the entrepreneur. While in high school, she passionately wanted to work at Forever 21, so she applied for a position not once, not twice, but three times. Each time, she moved further along in the application process, and the third time, she was hired...only for the store to be notified it was shutting down the following week.

But not even that momentary setback was enough to deter Tess from making her dreams come true. At age 19, Tess began to work as a Pampered Chef. The flexibility of their scheduling allowed Tess to decide to throw her sales parties whenever her health and spirits were in the best shape. With the help of scripted guides, she is able to throw the parties essentially on her own, and she also makes sales calls to maximize her returns.

Tess's hardworking entrepreneurial spirit, along with her positive demeanor and responsibility, led to her being promoted to the position of Director within Pampered Chef. At a conference in Chicago in August 2017, she walked across stage with 500 other Pampered Chef Directors, in front of a crowd of 5,000 spectators.

Her battle with celiac disease has been particularly harrowing. A single incident, involving the smallest bit of contact with gluten, can necessitate 6-12 months of recovery time. Even as she has dealt with all of these struggles, Tess has remained forward thinking, focusing on her business, her passion for dance, and her desire to have a well-rounded social life.

In the coming months, Tess and her mother, Dale, are hoping to put together a cook book, so Tess's impressive culinary achievements can be shared with all.

Read more: www.thearcofmass.org/expect-success-celebrating-achievers-tess-keijser/

Ever wonder about the health benefits of drinking tea? If so, grab a warm throw, sit on your favorite chair and brew yourself a cup of hot tea... And, enjoy the read.



The Royal Teatox Flush

By: Nathaniel Rego

For centuries, people have worshipped and consumed tea. Teatoxes like other types of natural tea, warm or cold (iced) are consumed for the following reasons; 10-15 pounds of tea is drank per week, it helps lose weight, it reboots and detoxifies your body, etc. Two cups of tea should be drank per day to help fight off viruses and bacteria threatening the immune system. Tea also helps recover from overeating, increases metabolism, and prevents cravings. Green tea containing potent antioxidants called Catechins, when drunk for 10-12 weeks, can result in weight loss.

Some tea(s) are organically caffeinated, which can increase alertness and attention spans. Unlike tea(s), non-natural caffeine in beverages like energy drinks, such as Monster and Red Bull can pack an alarming amount of caffeine that surpasses the average daily dose of 200mg. In addition to containing caffeine, Oolong tea contains polyphenols and antioxidants like many other types of loose leaf tea. The health benefits to such tea(s) include increased brain and immune power. These antioxidants help combat cellular damage while inclining the body's defense against viruses and diseases. Another way to rid the body of toxins is by consuming teas made from Fennel, lemon peel, and bay leaves. These tea(s) hold key mandatory ingredients in tea that contribute to eliminating bodily toxins naturally. In order to reap the benefits, one must consume such tea(s) all day, every day or more specifically 1-3 cups per day.

Teas especially those that are store bought depending on their nutrition facts and benefits of health even deprive you of growing skin risk, such as skin cancer. With tea, you can induce anything healthy. And for taste, feel free to add a touch of almond milk, ginger, or even honey. Make sure that there is not a lot of sugar in tea. According to the American Heart Association 1, Men should consume no more than 36 grams, which equals to 9 teaspoons of sugar. And for women, it is recommended to consume no more than 25 grams, which equals to 6 teaspoons of sugar. In fact, another health benefit of tea is that it helps reduce the anti-aging process. Thus, it helps stop premature aging. Especially, White tea(s) that contain collagen as well as MMPs, which are enzymes that help breakdown health risks including aging skin.

One of my favorite tea to consume and I highly suggest you purchasing some next time you're at Panera Bread, is the bottled iced Schizandra Berry Tea. It easily perfects the skin, and tastes like freshly picked ripened berries. Other health benefits you may find in tea is detoxifying the liver and ridding yourself or easing symptoms of anxiety, stress, and other behavioral disorders. Chamomile rids you of imperfect skin by being used on the closed eye lids, washing in the shower, and has a calming effect if ingested prior to bed. According to a past episode on tea of Dr. Oz, tea(s) are the number one source of healthy drink next to water, related to nutrition. Teas are consumed around the globe and help decrease natural ailments like aging, skin disease, obesity, overeating, and slowing metabolism. In conclusion, drinks like water, milk, and juice may have some benefits, yet I believe tea is the most crucial to one's health and should be part of everyday life.

Works Cited

1 American Heart Association - http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Sugar-101_UCM_306024_Article.jsp#.WlePG66nHcs.

2 "The Royal Teatox Flush". Dr. Oz. Fox. 17 May 2017. Television.

UPCOMING EVENTS ...

Ever need a night of relaxation with a friend? Recently, my friend Megan and I got together for a much needed mini stay-cation. We caught up on life, kids, work and she was telling me all about her practice and, how she is working with more families who have family members with unique needs who may benefit from a calmer environment or space in their homes.



Megan Pogash, Feng Shui Master, owner of Your Feng Shui Guru, provides chi-boosting Feng Shui analysis for residences, businesses, and families who have children with Autism or ADHD along the South Coast. She will be participating as a guest speaker, offering Feng Shui tips and insights on Kim Ferrara's (owner of WiggleKids) Mastermind "Decluttering Your Office" class on Zoom, held March 7th at 7:30pm. The talk is focused on helping practitioners with clients who have Autism, to have a calm, approachable, peaceful, sensitively-arranged space.

<http://www.wigglekids.org/workshops>

Megan's website is: www.YourFengShuiGuru.com

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council and the Arc of Massachusetts would like to invite you to:

The 40th Annual Legislative Reception Honoring 40 Years of Success: Facing an Uncertain Future



Wednesday, March 7, 2018
10:30am - 12:00pm
Great Hall, the State House, Boston



This is an ideal opportunity for persons with disabilities, family members, advocates, state agency staff and legislators to interact and catch up on legislative priorities and other important issues.

A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Great Hall, the State House, Boston Professionals Who Serve Them

Visions of Community 2018

A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them



Workshops Offered in:

- English
- Español
- Português
- العربية
- Tiếng Việt
- 中文
- Kreyòl Ay-tyen



fcsn.org/voc

Saturday, March 10th, 2018

7:30 am – 5:00 pm

1 Seaport Lane, Boston

For more information go to: www.fcsn.org/voc

