

Family Connections

THE NEMASKET GROUP

NEWSLETTER # 57

JULY – AUGUST 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FRONT COVER

- Dreamnight.....1

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Consequences of Segregation.....2-3

INFORMATION TO SHARE

- Autism Insurance Resource Center Receives Support from MASS DD Council.....4
- iAdvocate Tools for Parents.....4
- 10th Annual Golf Tournament.....5-6

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Sibshop.....7
- 2011 Hearts & Hands Walk for Autism and Family Fun Day.....8
- Buddy Walk by the Sea....9
- Hispanic Parent Support Group Annual Cook-Out.....10-11
- Save the Date: Stress Management Training.....11
- Save the Date: Turning 14 Transitional Planning Workshop11
- Save the Date: The Nemasket Group's Summer Sizzler12

DREAMNIGHT



A special night for chronically ill & disabled children to enjoy the Zoo

It's that time again! Dreamnight, a very special event held at Zoo New England's Franklin Park Zoo, is a special evening for chronically ill and disabled children to enjoy the Zoo with their families, free of charge. Dreamnight will be held at Franklin Park Zoo in Boston on Sunday, August 21, 2011 from 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Dreamnight guests have the opportunity to get a more intimate view of the Zoo than the average daytime visitors through zookeeper talks and animal encounters. The evening will also feature activities, costumed characters, food and fun.

Dreamnight is not open to the general public. This event is strictly for invited children and their families.

To register for this FREE event, please send an e-mail to Dreamnight@zoonewengland.com with the number of attendees and contact information, or call 617-989-2015.

Family Connections Staff

Sandra Kinney,
Program Director

Kathleen Amaral,
Family Advisor

Louis Nisenbaum,
Executive Director

Jorge Pagan,
Family Advisor

Jennifer Newcomer,
Family Advisor

Amy Cornell,
Administrative Support

Sherry Amaral-Lopez,
Family Advisor

Emily M. Nisenbaum,
Associate Executive Director



Food for *Thought*

Consequences of Segregation

From the www.disabilityisnatural.com E-Newsletter by Kathie Snow

What are the consequences of segregation? Segregation can certainly harm children with disabilities (per other articles described later). But it can also cause negative consequences for children and adults without disabilities and our society-at-large.

Experiences during our recent family vacation provide a good illustration. We headed off for a two-week driving trip to visit presidential museums (a passion of our son, Benjamin) in different cities, then on to museums and memorial sites in Washington, DC. All was well: great weather and light crowds at presidential museums in May.

Things changed, however, when we arrived in DC. The weather was still great, but huge crowds were everywhere, composed primarily of middle-school tour groups, herded here-and-there by their teachers/chaperones. Making our way was sometimes difficult, as Benjamin carefully maneuvered his power wheelchair through the crowds. We could handle that. What was more difficult to deal with was the behavior of thousands of middle-school students and their teachers.

Most stared bug-eyed at Benjamin, and some whispered to each other as he passed by. Many displayed exaggerated responses as Benjamin tried to get from here to there: some students gave him an extremely wide berth (urged on by loud exhortations from their teachers) and made a “big deal” of moving out of the way, as if Benj had a communicable disease. Others did the opposite—barely moving aside—despite Benj’s numerous and polite requests to, “Excuse me, please.”

At one museum, visitors were instructed

to take a large glass elevator to the top (sixth) floor, visit that floor’s exhibits, then proceed down to the next floor using the two sets of stairs on each floor. We were told to use one of the two elevators, which were marked as being *only* for people with disabilities and/or people pushing children in strollers.

Piece of cake, we thought. But no, the designated elevators were routinely full of middle-school students—none of whom had a disability or pushed a stroller! After waiting and

waiting, we bit the bullet and entered an elevator that was only half-full. The students and their teacher had to squeeze together so we’d all fit; staring and an uncomfortable silence followed. I asked the 30-something teacher (she’s in charge, right?) if she

was aware of the signage regarding the use of the elevators. She gave me a blank look and said, “No.” Her students’ faces had similar blank looks. I politely told her what the signs said; she had no response and looked away. (We then complained to a museum staffer who said the staff would monitor the elevator usage.)

Why did the students—and *their teachers*—behave the way they did? I don’t believe they were inherently mean-spirited. I *do* believe they were ignorant and prejudiced. Prejudice—prejudging someone—is usually rooted in ignorance, and this ignorance is probably caused by a lack of personal contact with—or *even basic awareness of*—people with disabilities. This, in turn, seems to be a consequence of the segregation of students with disabilities in “special” separate environments in public schools, houses of worship, and/or school-recreational activities. Despite all the

The world of education is like an island where people, cut off from the world, are prepared for life by exclusion from it.

Maria Montessori

progress in laws that prohibit disability-based discrimination, too many people with disabilities remain invisible to society-at-large.

On our trip, we saw thousands of students in their tour groups, but did not see one who had an apparent disability. Thus, it seems the students did not attend schools where children with and without disabilities were together in general ed classrooms. If those students—and *their teachers*—had friendships and/or familiarity with children with disabilities, the students and their teachers probably wouldn't have behaved the way they did toward my son.

When children *with* disabilities are *excluded* from participation in ordinary environments, children *without* disabilities have no opportunities to get to know them, to see them as their peers/equals, and/or to see beyond the disability. Thus, they're ignorant that children with disabilities are children, first, and are more like them than different.

Worse, however, are the attitudes and perceptions children without disabilities may acquire based on their awareness that children with disabilities are in the "retard room" (this is what many students call it) or other segregated setting. This awareness can breed negative attitudes, such as children with disabilities being perceived as "other," they're not "like us," they don't belong, they're "less than," and more. In the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* that outlawed racial segregation, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote that segregation is "usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the [segregated] group." If children without disabilities grow up with only negative perceptions of children with disabilities, most will likely grow into adults whose perceptions remain the same, unless or until they have positive personal experiences with children/adults with disabilities.

Let's think long-term. Children with and without disabilities become adults. When they grow up together—not *separated*—in schools, worship services, social/recreation activities, etc., they learn from and about each other, and develop relationships. What might happen when those children are adults? If a child without a disability grows up to become a general ed teacher, she most likely wouldn't automatically turn away a student with a disability from her classroom. If a child *without* a disability grows up to become the human resources manager at a large company, he probably wouldn't routinely

assume a job applicant with a disability couldn't do the job. The teacher and the HR manager would remember the children they grew up with; they would have learned from their friends with disabilities that having a disability is not a barrier to success; that disability is "no big deal." Finally, some of those children *without* disabilities will one day become *parents* of children with disabilities. Isn't it probable their attitudes about their own children may be different than the attitudes of parents who did not have positive experiences with children with disabilities during their childhoods? Can you think of other examples that might be possible?

When my children are growing up, parents of my son's classmates at their inclusive school routinely told me they were so glad our children were friends. They also shared that the inclusive school and our children's friendships had a positive impact on the lives of their children and their families.

Inclusion can generate positive outcomes from everyone. Segregation can generate negative consequences for everyone, and these can continue from one generation to the next. The uncomfortable experiences during our trip, as described in this article—and similar experiences of other families and people with disabilities—represent the tip of the iceberg and are all too common.

Parents, teachers, service providers, or others may believe in the value of a child/adult with a disability being in a "special" (segregated) environment. But we must also be aware of—and take responsibility for—the negative consequences, both short-and long-term, generated by segregation.

Segregation—excluding children and adults with disabilities from the mainstream—sets up an "us/them" mentality and also reinforces negative, stereotypical, and erroneous perceptions about individuals with disabilities. Perceptions and attitudes are intertwined, and our attitudes drive our actions. Thus, negative attitudes result in negative behaviors: stares, whispers, rudeness, pity, and more.

Inclusion is the right thing to do, morally and ethically. It can also reverse the negative outcomes of segregation and change the fabric of our society. How did we ever come to believe that people with disabilities are "them"? As adults, do we not have more moral responsibility to eliminate the negative consequences that segregation inflicts on all children?

Information to *Share*



AUTISM INSURANCE RESOURCE CENTER RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM MASS DD COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council has awarded New England INDEX, a UMass Medical School Project at the Shriver Center, a \$25,000 grant for the support of the recently initiated Autism Insurance Resource Center. The Center provides information and support about the new autism insurance law known as "ARICA" to self-advocates, their families, and the autism community. The Center is directed by Amy Weinstock who led the advocacy movement and is regarded as having been instrumental in the passage of the act.

The Center has been operational at INDEX since March 1. Major accomplishments include:

- The establishment of a new INDEX webpage (www.disabilityinfo.org) dedicated to ARICA and providing details about the legislation, Division of Insurance bulletins, and information for employers and employees covered by self-funded (ERISA) plans.
- Approximately 20 presentations by Amy Weinstock regarding nature of ARICA and issues involved in the implementation of the new law
- Responses to over 150 inquiries from consumers, insurance companies, providers and other seeking information about autism insurance.

Please check our website for upcoming presentations in the community and for webinars that will occur later this summer and fall.



iAdvocate Tool for Parents

iAdvocate is a project of Syracuse University School of Education, Syracuse University Parent Advocacy Center, and The Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies. The goal of iAdvocate is to share and develop specific strategies with parents for working collaboratively with a school team to improve their children's education. iAdvocate uses problem-based learning strategies, simulations, and provides contextual access resources to build parental advocacy skills and knowledge.

To find out more information, and to download this free application to your iPhone, iPad, or iTouch, go to www.itunes.apple.com.
This free application is rated 4+ stars by users!

the
nemasket
group

**All Proceeds Benefit
The Nemasket Group**

*"Offering personalized flexible support to families
and individuals with disabilities to live, work and
develop relationships within our communities."*

Golf 10th Annual Charity *Tournament*

Check In 11:30 am to 12:45 pm
Shotgun Start 1:00 pm

\$150 per Golfer
(Includes Golf, Cart, Lunch, Dinner, Prize Eligibility)



**Auction Featuring
Dustin Pedroia
Autographed Baseball**

For more information, contact Kathy at The Nemasket Group at 508-999-4436 x 122 or email us at Golf@NemasketGroup.org
To learn more about The Nemasket Group, visit www.NemasketGroup.org

Monday, August 29th, 2011

Golfers

\$150.00 per Golfer

(Includes golf, cart, lunch, dinner & prize eligibility)

Non-Golfers

Dinner \$40.00

Sponsorship Opportunities

Tournament Sponsors.....\$5000

(Complimentary Foursome at tournament
Banner & Inclusion in literature & ads)

Dinner Sponsors.....\$3500

(Complimentary Foursome, inclusion on
tournament banner, literature & ads)

Cart Sponsors.....\$2000

(Company name on all carts, Two complimentary
spots in tournament, inclusion in literature and ads)

Lunch Sponsors.....\$1500

(Company displayed on lunch box, one complimentary
spot in tournament, inclusion in literature and ads)

Supporting Sponsors.....\$1000

(One complimentary spot in tournament,
Inclusion in Literature & ads)

Ball Sponsor.....\$700

(One complimentary spot in tournament,
Inclusion in Literature & ads)

Beverage & Snack Sponsors.....\$300

(Sign at table and beverage stations,
Inclusion in Literature)

Hole Sponsors.....\$100

(Tee Sign advertisement at one of the holes)

Raffle or Auction item.....N/A

(Inclusion in all literature and displays)

Your donation to the Nemasket Group is tax
deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

1st Golfer _____

2nd Golfer _____

3rd Golfer _____

4th Golfer _____

_____ Golfers x \$150 = \$ _____

(includes golf, cart, lunch,
dinner & prize eligibility)

_____ Tournament Sponsor \$5000

_____ Dinner Sponsor \$3500

_____ Cart Sponsor \$2000

_____ Lunch Sponsor \$1500

_____ Supporting Sponsor \$1000

_____ Ball Sponsor \$700

_____ Beverage & Snack Sponsor \$300

_____ Hole Sponsor x \$100.00 = \$ _____

Sponsor Name _____

_____ Meal Only x \$40.00 = \$ _____

I will contribute:

Raffle/Auction Item Value: \$ _____

Description: _____

Or Donation Towards Tournament: \$ _____

TOTAL Enclosed \$ _____

Final Registration August 23, 2011
Please Make Check Payable To:
The Nemasket Group, Inc.
GOLF 56 Bridge Street, Fairhaven MA 02719

Available Resources



Sibshops is a program for brothers and sisters of kids with special needs!



Now offers Sibshops

Our Sibshops are scheduled for the 1st Thursday of each month from 5pm until 8pm.

They are held at
The Nemasket Group
56 Bridge Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Our Sibshop program is for children ages 8-12 who have siblings with special needs.

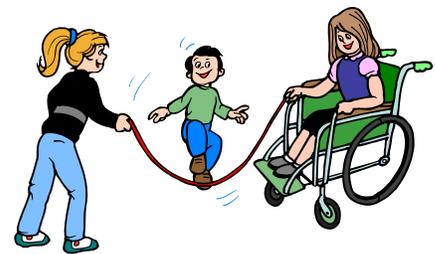
For more information and to sign up
Contact: 508-999-4436
Kathleen Amaral ext 133
Jennifer Newcomer ext 118

*Space is limited and registration is required.

Sibshops take a wellness approach and the kids who attend them appreciate that they are fun and engaging.

The relationship between "sibs" is often the longest of one's lifetime. Although not therapy, Sibshops prove to be therapeutic to some children.

Sibshops are workshops that provide opportunity for brothers and sisters of children with special needs to obtain peer support and education within a highly recreational context.



If e-mail is more convenient,
KathleenAmaral@nemasketgroup.org -or- JenniferNewcomer@nemasketgroup.org

Step Out & Walk

Support Autism Services

Support C.A.R.



Community Autism Resources Announces

THE ONE, THE ONLY The 2011 Hearts & Hands Walk for Autism and Family Fun Day!

Saturday September 24, 2011

From 9:30 to 2:30 at Bristol Community College.

All proceeds benefit the free services that Community Autism Resources provides to children & adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families!

The Hearts & Hands Walk for Autism is our MAIN and most important fund raising event of the year. We will have a fantastic day full of fun, and games for all ages, an amazing Autism Awareness Store, incredible raffle, free sno-kones, popcorn, pizza and other snacks and of course the 2 mile Autism Awareness Walk. We will also pay tribute to our 2011 Volunteers of the year! **With so much fun and festivity it's no wonder that year after year families tell us how great it is to be able to take their children to an event where they feel comfortable and where they can have a terrific time with their family and friends too!**

All of us at Community Autism Resources hopes that everyone who has had the benefit of receiving information and support from our staff, either through phone conversations, private appointments, consultation, or who have taken advantage of our free services & programs (*for example: the wave pool, dance programs, skating, family hay ride, family movie days, Social Skills groups, Friendship groups, the Grandparents Brunch, Community Day at your local Fire Station, Circle of Friends, courses in Autism Spectrum Disorders, just to name a few*) will want to support Community Autism Resources, so we can continue to provide information, supports and services that are so vital to the families in our service region!

For more information: Contact us at 508-379-0371 X 16 or visit us at www.community-autism-resources.org



buddy walk by the sea

Saturday, August 27, 2011

Falmouth Marine Park • 180 Scranton Ave • Falmouth, MA
<http://mdsc.kintera.org/bwbythesea>



Walk With Us

The Buddy Walk is our largest public awareness and fundraising event to celebrate the Down syndrome community, promote acceptance and inclusion, and support programs and services the MDSC offers including Parents' First Call, Advocates in Motion (AIM), Teacher Partnership Network, Educators Forum, Annual Conference, and Legislative Advocacy.

We hope you will be able to take part in MDSC's first Buddy Walk by the Sea to celebrate and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with Down Syndrome. Whether you walk the 1.2 miles on August 27th or support from afar, you can help the MDSC in its continued efforts to provide information, networking, and advocacy for and about Down Syndrome.

Schedule of Events

Rain or Shine

- 9:00am Registration Opens and Pre-Walk Festivities: continental breakfast, entertainment, children's games, and more!
- 10:00am Picturesque 1.2 mile Walk Begins
- 11:00am Enjoy a Post-Walk Frozen Treat and mingle with Buddy Walk by the Sea Self-Advocate Ambassadors



Register Today!

To form a team, be an individual walker, virtual walker, or to make a donation, please visit: <http://mdsc.kintera.org/bwbythesea>

Children & Young Adults (22 and under) - \$10.00 • Adults \$20.00

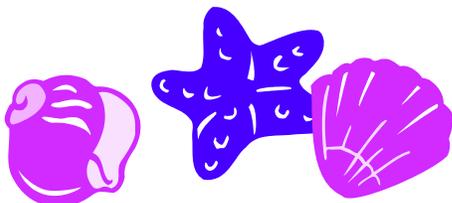
Registration includes pre-walk festivities, event t-shirt, and light refreshments.

*Please note t-shirts are only guaranteed for people who pre-register. All others will be given out while supplies last.

Can't make it? Join us at the Buddy Walk & Family Picnic on October 9 in Wakefield. For more information e-mail buddywalk@mdsc.org



buddy walk by the sea



Saturday, August 27, 2011

The Hispanic Parent Support Group Annual Cook-Out

The Hispanic Parent Support Group has been active with a new group of families. On June 22, 2011, we welcomed the 2011 summer and celebrated the end of another school year with a lunch at Old Country Buffet Restaurant. A group of parents and kids met to network, exchange ideas and have a great time together. I discovered that this kind of event provides a chance to families to unite with new parents in the group and have discussions of many different issues and challenges that families face when raising a family member with developmental disabilities. The assistance always is constant. After the luncheon, we organized and we decided to have our Annual Cookout on July 22, 2011.

Our Annual Cookout was celebrated at the Gazebo at Fort Phoenix Beach in Fairhaven. Unfortunately, the attendance for that event was small due a really steamy, hot day of 104 degrees. Even though we were a small group of 26 people, everyone really enjoyed the event. It was a rich and rewarding experience for us. The intention was to create a day of recreation that would be inclusive of children with disabilities, their siblings and families. I would like to express our gratitude to all of the families that participated at the Cook-Out and those who allow us to be part of their lives on a regular basis, year after year. Thank you.



Hispanic Parent Support Group Cook-out Continued...



Save the Date

STRESS
MANAGEMENT
TRAINING

October 3rd, 2011
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

TURNING 14
TRANSITIONAL
PLANNING

April 11th, 2012
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Nemasket Group's
2011 Summer
Sizzler



DATE: August 18, 2011
(rain or shine)

TIME: 4:00 - 7:00 pm

LOCATION: The Nemasket Group
56 Bridge Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719

Come celebrate summer with the staff and families of The Nemasket Group and Family Connections. Join us for a cook-out and lots of fun!



and drinks will be provided by The Nemasket Group.
Families are asked to bring dessert and lawn chairs.



the
nemasket
group

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
FAIRHAVEN, MA
PERMIT NO. 51

Family Connections

Joint Project of The Nemasket Group and
DDS (Greater New Bedford Department of Developmental Services)
56 Bridge Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719
Phone: 508-999-0077
Fax: 508-997-9239



United Way
of Greater New Bedford

Creating a network of family support
For individuals with developmental
disabilities and their families