

DsO Spring Fling a Huge Success for Families

Down syndrome Outreach is grateful once again to have experienced another beautiful Spring Fling, with an amazing turnout of families, volunteers and sunshine! With delicious dishes and desserts to share and a gently used toy or book to exchange, families helped provide for this event in many ways. After the event, a parent told DsO Coordinator Jessika Houston, "This Spring Fling was the best one I've ever been to. Thank you!" So much of that is because of the effort of community members, staff and volunteers.

With the help of Assistant Volunteer Coordinator Makenna Padgett, we had another year with many stellar volunteers, who provided the opportunity for families to relax and reconnect on this beautiful day. These volunteers helped create a safe and inclusive atmosphere with a variety of activities including arts and crafts, face painting, lawn games, sensory stations, playing at the playground and making music. With live music provided by a father and fellow musicians, people were found dancing with their shakers or simply lounging on picnic blankets enjoying the day.

DsO is looking forward to their next gathering on Monday, August 24th, from 5 –7pm at Lynden's Million Smiles Park (see page 6). Just bring yourself, family and friends for an informal evening at the park.

Also just around the corner is the 12th Annual Buddy Walk on October 3, 2015. Mark your calendars—it will be here before we know it!

For more information about Down syndrome Outreach, DsO events, or how to get involved, please contact Jessika at (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, or email jessikah@arcwhatcom.org.

THANK YOU to
Bellingham Parks and Rec
for their co-sponsorship of
the Spring Fling!



Legislative Recap

On June 30th, the Governor signed into law the operating budget for Washington State for 2015-2017. Advocacy by many concerned citizens made a positive difference this year! Programs and services for people with developmental disabilities will see more gains than setbacks in this budget.

Here are some highlights from the new budget that impact clients of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA):

- 4,000 new openings for Individual & Family Services waivers!
- 1,000 new openings for Basic Plus waivers! These new slots will serve individuals not already on a Medicaid waiver, but who are eligible for Medicaid Personal Care services and interested in employment services. This now includes High School Transition students. (Contact the local DDA office to apply for any of these programs).
- State-only employment and day program clients will transition to the Basic Plus waiver.
- Increased funding for Early Intervention Services. Previously, the numbers of children needing early intervention was rising without any increase in funding. This is not only great news for families, but a cost effective standard for WA State.
- Various rate and benefit increases are approved for adult family home, in-home and community residential service providers, and State union employees.
- Funding is provided to develop short-term community-based services across the state for both adults and children with developmental disabilities as an alternative to using respite services in an institutional setting. This was a big focus of advocacy this year. However:
 - Increased funding for Residential Habilitation Centers to ensure that federal compliance requirements were met was also provided.
 - Emergent respite services will be provided at a residential institution in Yakima. Advocates will continue to support more funds for respite services closer to home.



All in all, a very positive picture. If these issues are important to you, communicate with your representatives in Olympia. Now is the time to thank them for a job well done, or discuss issues for the next legislative session. You can find your legislators' contact information at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>.

If you have specific questions regarding the 2015-17 Biennial Budget, or other results of the legislative session, you can find more detailed information at http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue_papers.

HURRAY FOR CAMP TEAM! (Together Everyone Achieves More)

"Outrageous Fun" was the theme of the 13th annual overnight Camp TEAM for teens & adults with developmental disabilities, other community members, and students from WWU. Participants enjoyed a long list of fun activities: games, putt-putt-golf, arts & crafts, nature walks, indoor and outdoor adapted sports, learning new dance moves, and sitting around a bonfire eating s'mores.

Best of all, this year the event was held at Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center, located in Snohomish County. The new Camp TEAM location has ADA accessible cabins, restrooms, dining hall and activity space. The Warm Beach Camp site allowed for new experiences and more inclusion for all participants.

Here is what participant Teri Hansen had to say about the experience: "This year's camp location had better access for wheelchairs and other mobility devices. They also had better travel paths for easier access. There was more room for campers to be involved in their favorite activities."

"There were a few activities that I had never had the opportunity to try that Camp made more accessible for all. One was volleyball. We used beach balls, which were lighter and easier to handle than volley balls. Participating in this activity gave campers a chance to do something physical that used to be limited. Emotionally, having the ability to participate in these activities promotes future opportunities and the expectation that all can participate."

"We also played charades as teams. My team was given the 'human toaster,' where each member had to perform an act of the toaster. It was exciting because I was included in a way that I could actually help my team members out."

"Having Camp TEAM at the new location gave individuals a chance to participate in some new activities that enhanced their mobility successes. Having a more accessible site gave everyone the opportunity to focus on their abilities versus their disabilities."



Thanks to Camp TEAM sponsors Western Washington University, Skagit County Health and Human Services, Whatcom County Health and Human Services, Whatcom Educational Credit Union, Bellair Charters and Bellingham Parks and Recreation.

Legislation in Action

Changes to Existing DDA Services

A couple of program changes are taking place that make new enrollments (see box at right) possible. Each has a different process and timeline, but both are likely to affect most individuals who are applying for these new programs and those who are already in these programs.

If you or your family member receives services through one (or more) of the following programs, you can expect changes to what and how services are delivered:

1. Individual & Family Services (IFS) will become a Home & Community Based Services waiver.
2. Personal Care will become a new state plan program called Community First Choice (CFC).
3. Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers must comply with new federal regulations for a person-centered approach to planning and the delivery of services in an integrated setting.

Why are these changes happening?

The first two changes come at the direction of our state legislature and bring in more federal funding that will allow DDA to serve thousands more families.

The third change is a result of new federal Medicaid rules intended to reinforce a person-centered approach to planning and to ensure that covered services are fully integrated into the community.

What will be DIFFERENT or the SAME about services?

- First, and most importantly, no one will lose services or have their service amounts reduced as a result of these changes.
- No one on an HCBS will lose his/her waiver enrollment.
- Most clients will be happy to learn that they might have more services.

When Is It Happening?

These changes began to take place in the spring of 2015 and will continue into 2017 and beyond. If you are currently receiving IFS, you will be transitioned when you have your annual assessment.

Individual and Family Services (IFS)

IFS is moving to a federal waiver, which brings in federal funding to double the program's enrollment. It also comes with more regulations and less flexibility than the existing IFS program, but will basically offer the same type of services, plus a few more. Clients who transition to the new IFS Waiver will receive Medicaid coverage in addition to any other insurance they already receive.

Key Changes:

- The waiver program provides services, not activities. This is different from the current IFS, which is a more flexible funding program.
- Services will only be delivered by qualified, contracted providers. This is a big change for families currently receiving IFS who are used to the flexibility of being reimbursed for non-contracted respite providers or recreational programs.

New Enrollments

Thanks to recent legislation, several thousand new enrollments will open for individuals on the No Paid Services Caseload.

What to Do if You're on the No Paid Services Caseload

Raise Your Hand for Services: If you are not on a wait list for DDA services, call the DDA NPS caseload number (800-567-5582) and request the service you feel best meets your child's needs. For service descriptions, visit: dshs.wa.gov/dda.

If you are not yet a client of DDA, apply now! You can get eligibility, application and service information by calling the local office at 714-5000 or by checking out our handouts at <http://whatcomtakingaction.org/category/how-to-handouts-videos/dd-services/>

- Medical Co-pays and exceptional medical costs are not covered. But, everyone on the new IFS waiver will likely become eligible for Apple Health (Medicaid), regardless of family income.
- All community-based services must meet the new federal regulation for an integrated (that is, non-segregated) setting.

Out with the Old, In with the New

The good news about the new IFS waiver is that it offers services and a stable funding source that the state-only program did not provide. Here are some of the new additions to approved services: Assistive Technology, Peer Mentoring, Person-Centered Planning Facilitation, Community Engagement (support to participate in integrated community programs), Supportive Parenting (for parents with I/DD), and Skilled Nursing Services.

Personal Care & Community First Choice (CFC)

Another significant change taking place in the coming year will impact everyone who receives personal care services. It's called Community First Choice (CFC). It's a new Medicaid state plan option that brings more federal funding to enhance community-based services. This will add capacity to DDA's Basic Plus waiver and the new planned Individual and Family Services waiver. The CFC will provide services that are designed to offer choice and flexibility of services to increase independence and skills.

To date, the state has created a menu of services that are likely to be included (see below). The most important thing to know is that the CFC will not cause anyone to lose their current personal care services.

Community First Choice Menu of Services*

CORE BENEFITS (service credit based on assessment): Personal Care/Relief Care; Skills Training; Back-up Supports; Training on hiring, managing and dismissing providers.

ENHANCED BENEFITS (flat annual service credit): Assistive devices that replace human assistance, Specialized medical equipment, or Additional Core Benefits may be purchased.

*Pending finalization by the state and approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Source: Informing Families Building Trust, <http://informingfamilies.org/News/>

Community Events

Community
FOOD CO OP
LOCALLY GROWN • COMMUNITY OWNED



Thank you to the Community Food Co-op!

This year, Young Adult Self-Advocacy (YASA) was accepted to the Community Shopping Day program with the Community Food Co-op. Each year, organizations are chosen for their service to our community, and YASA was selected for promoting social justice, human rights, education, wellbeing and community health.

The Community Shopping Day provided an opportunity for self-advocates to do outreach and skill building, two of YASA's main objectives, at both Co-op locations on May 16th, allowing an opportunity for community members to learn about YASA and The Arc. In addition, The Co-op donated 2% of that day's proceeds to YASA!

YASA has another chance to have fun and connect with our community at the Co-op's Summer Party on **Sunday, August 2nd from 12pm-5pm at Maritime Heritage Park**. There will be music, circus arts, and \$3 burritos! Young Adult-Self Advocacy will have a table, as well as other non-profits accepted for the CSD program this year. Come say "hi" and join the fun!

For more information about the CSD program and Summer Party, visit www.communityfood.coop. For info about YASA, contact Jessika at (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, or jessikah@arcwhatcom.org.

Parent to Parent Family Social Tuesday, August 18th, 3:30-5:30pm Boundary Bay Brewery 1107 Railroad Ave, Bellingham



Join Parent to Parent for an informal Family Social at Boundary Bay the 3rd Tuesday of the month during the summer. Come mingle with other families while enjoying the music of Out of the Ashes, a music therapy program that gives people with disabilities the chance to play music.

For more info on Out of the Ashes, visit www.outoftheashes.us. For more info on the Family Social, please contact Karlene at Parent to Parent: (360) 255-2056, ext. 3.

Autism Support Group Meeting For Parents & Caregivers

No meeting in August

Next date: Friday, September 11th, 12-1:30pm
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham

For more info, contact Monica at monicab@arcwhatcom.org or call (360) 715-0170, ext. 303.

Young Adult Self-Advocacy

Saturday, August 1st & 29th, 10am-12pm
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham

For more info, contact Jessika: (360) 715-0170, ext. 304.

Challenge Air Fly Day

Saturday, August 22nd, 9am-4pm
Paine Field Airport, Everett, WA



CHALLENGE AIR
for kids & friends

On August 22nd, over 100 kids with special needs and their families will join 20+ pilots and over 250 volunteers to enjoy a life-changing experience. The Paine Field Airport and the Historic Flight Foundation have opened their doors and their arms to provide an amazing opportunity for kids with special needs.

For more information or to register, visit www.challengeair.org. You can also call (214) 351-3353 or email events@challengeair.org.

Center for Independence

PHYSICAL CHALLENGES SUPPORT GROUP
Friday, July 31st, 2-4pm
114 W. Magnolia St, Suite 104

Do you have a spinal cord injury or a disability that limits your mobility? Then this support group is for you! This group is a safe and confidential way to have your questions and concerns heard and a way to meet new friends.

Please call to RSVP at (360) 393-3890 or contact Shawn Latham at (253) 304-5762 or shawnl@cfnorth.org.



You're Invited!
4th Annual Autism Awareness Music Benefit

Saturday, August 8th, 2-7pm
 Boundary Bay Brewery: 1107 Railroad Ave, Bellingham
 Cost: \$5 donation, kids are free!

Featuring: Joyride, The Fabulously Rich, and Scary Monster & the Super Creeps
 For more information, email info@facesnorthwest.com.



RASCAL RODEO

Wednesday, August 19th, 2-3:30pm
 Grandstand Arena, Lynden, WA
 Admission: FREE

Rascal Rodeo provides modified rodeos for people with special needs of all ages throughout the Pacific Northwest, giving those who are sometimes told "no" the opportunity to be the stars of the show. The purpose of Rascal Rodeo is to show the special needs community they are loved, cared for, accepted and can do things many say they cannot. Participants of all ages are encouraged to register for this free event to learn the different aspects of a rodeo in a safe and laid back atmosphere. Many abilities unknown to the participants, parents, and caregivers are revealed during this time of being cowboys and cowgirls. Lots of happy tears are shed at these events, especially for the parents who have never seen their child of any age so happy.

This will be the second year in Lynden, with last year hosting 53 participants. Rascal Rodeo invites you to get involved by volunteering, donating, or registering your loved one with special needs. No rodeo experience is necessary.

To participate or volunteer, visit www.rascalrodeo.org.



Center for Independence
OUT AND ABOUT
SUMMER 2015 SCHEDULE

Friday, August 7th
 Bellingham Bells Baseball Game

Monday, August 10th
 General Meeting at Bellingham Library

Thursday, August 27th
 Elizabeth Park Concert Series

Please contact Shawn Latham at (253) 304-5762 or shawnl@cfinorth.org for time and location information for each event. RSVP is required.



SMILES NEEDED!

Know someone who should be featured in The Arc's 2016 Smiles of Life Calendar?

The Smiles of Life Calendar is an amazing tool to promote inclusion, respect and awareness in our community, and we want you to be a part of it! Not only do we feature your beautiful smile, we also include an inspiring profile all about YOU! Nominations are open to all persons with a developmental disability, residing in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties.

Please contact Christine at (360) 715-0170, ext. 305, or christines@arcwhatcom.org as soon as possible with your nomination.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Resources for Individuals with Down syndrome and Their Families



Do you have a child with Down syndrome? Are you expecting a baby with Down syndrome? These community partners are working together to provide a network of support for you and your family.

DOWN SYNDROME OUTREACH (DSO)

- Provides a New Baby Kit for families once a connection is made with the DsO Coordinator.
- Has fun family networking events, specifically for the Down syndrome community.
- Provides birth through life support, info and updates via The Arc's newsletter and e-Alerts.
- DsO coordinator, Jessika, can answer your questions and help get you connected to community resources.



To get connected to DsO, contact Jessika at jessikah@arcwhatcom.org or (360) 715-0170, ext. 304. Providers can refer a family by using The Arc's referral form and checking the DsO box.

PARENT TO PARENT (P2P)

- Can provide a Helping Parent match to another parent of a child with Down syndrome.
- Has monthly support group meetings for parents of children with special needs.
- Has fun family support events for families of children with special needs.
- Can help connect you to a trained Super Sitter.



To get connected to P2P, contact Christine at christine@p2pwhatcom.org or (360) 255-2056. Providers can refer a family by using the P2P referral form.

PROJECT LITTLE DUDE (PLD)

- Provides families with a new diagnosis of Down syndrome a kit with therapeutically minded and resourceful supportive devices as well as helpful and current books.
- Has educational therapeutic workshops for new families and providers.
- An independent source of info and support with connection to local support programs (above) and an online sharing source of tips, advice equipment, professionals list, product guides and suggestions.

**Project
Little Dude**

To get connected to PLD, contact Krissy at krissy@projectlittledude.com or (360) 483-6954. Providers can directly refer to their website at www.projectlittledude.com or email to request a kit.



DsO New Baby Reception

Sunday, August 2nd, 5-7pm
The Arc, 2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham

If you are a family with a new Down syndrome diagnosis and we have not yet connected with you, please call Jessika at (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, for information about this special event.

Next DsO Family Gathering

Monday, August 24th, 5-7pm
Million Smiles Park: 8460 Depot Road, Lynden, WA

Just bring yourself, your family and friends for a laid back gathering in the park!
Contact Jessika for more info: (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, or jessikah@arcwhatcom.org.

MEET LAURA RAWLINS

We wanted to hear from a Self-Advocate about what self-advocacy means to them and how they apply it to their lives. The Arc's Young Adult Self-Advocacy (YASA) Coordinator, Jessika Houston, spoke with Laura Rawlins who has been a member of YASA for five years as well as the newly formed Down syndrome Outreach Advisory Team, which provides direction to the DsO program. With these programs, Laura continues to develop skills of self-advocacy, leadership and to work with and for our community.

Jessika: As a self-advocate, and a member of the Down syndrome Outreach Advisory Team and of Young Adult Self-Advocacy, tell me a little about what advocating for yourself means to you.

Laura: Well, I advocate for myself and for others. I realize that we are all different. We are all equal. What makes us different makes us beautiful. I think different is better than perfect. And it makes us unique - just by being who we are...although not all people see it that way. But how we see ourselves is more important than how others see us. Being true to yourself is better than being how someone else wants us to be. I don't see myself as someone with a disability, just ability.

Jessika: Does that influence your self-advocacy?

Laura: Yes. We may be a minority, but we are powerful in many ways. People find it easy to underestimate us - without knowing our strengths. They misinterpret our abilities and that brings prejudice. When people see and acknowledge my abilities, I feel acknowledged in the community and not overlooked.

Jessika: What else does self-advocacy mean to you?

Laura: Wow...Self-control. Being true to yourself. Knowing what you want in life, and how to ask for it. Being brave when you're scared. Believing in one's self. Serenity. Stability. Balance.

Jessika: Why is self-advocacy important to you?

Laura: It gives me power.

Jessika: What are some ways you advocate for yourself?

Laura: By doing art. Poetry and writing. I like to write because I like to be honest with myself about what I feel and think. I advocate by eating healthy and cultivating healthy habits. And by speaking, like at Buddy Walk. I have a list of things I like to do, and I do those things.

Laura encourages all Self-Advocates, to dance, play, do what you love and stand up for what you believe in. Being involved in our community in various ways allows Laura to practice her advocacy and leadership skills, and she encourages you to do the same.

Laura has held a job at Western Washington University for almost 10 years and is an active member of our community. She has performed in theatre productions at WWU and has done public speaking for events such as Buddy Walk, where she will be speaking again this year. Laura also writes poetry and is currently working on a video project titled "This Is Me." You can visit her poetry blog at: <http://www.theuniquepoet.blogspot.com/>.



"When in doubt, dance."



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

The Parent Coalition

The Arc of Whatcom County provides leadership support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians. The goal of the Parent Coalition is to enable persons with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians to become effective and involved in accessing services.

The Parent Coalition newsletter
is published monthly by:

The Arc of Whatcom County

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Bellingham, WA 98225
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Stay Connected

Online Community Calendar:

Visit The Arc's website at www.arcwhatcom.org and click on Events.

Facebook: Visit our FB page: www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom for the latest information and events.

E-alerts: The Parent Coalition emails updates on legislation, workshops and upcoming activities. To sign up, visit www.arcwhatcom.org or email monicab@arcwhatcom.org.



The Parent Coalition is funded by grants from the
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DID YOU KNOW?

Families are being added to DDA services. See page 3 of this newsletter for more details, and check out <http://whatcomtakingaction.org/2015/03/13/dda-services-why-and-how-to-apply/>.



The Arc of Whatcom County
Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
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Event Calendar

August 2015

1 Saturday, 10am-12:30pm
Young Adult Self-Advocacy
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
Contact Jessika: 715-0170, ext 304

2 Sunday, 12-5pm
Co-op Summer Party
(see page 4 for details)

7 & 10 Friday
CFI Out and About Events
(see page 5 for details)

8 Saturday, 2-7pm
Autism Awareness Music Benefit
(see page 5 for details)

15 Saturday, 6-7pm
People First Meeting
114 W Magnolia, Suite 106
Contact Susan: 738-2060

17 Monday, 6-8pm
Spin Dance
Senior Center, 315 Halleck Street
Contact Amanda: 778-7000

18 Tuesday, 3:30-5:30pm
P2P Family Social at Boundary Bay
(see page 4 for details)

19 Wednesday, 2-3:30pm
Rascal Rodeo
(see page 5 for details)

20 Thursday, 5:30-7pm
Buddy Walk Planning Meeting
(see right)

22 Saturday, 9am-4pm
Challenge Air Fly Day
(see page 4 for details)

24 Monday, 5-7pm
DsO Family Gathering
(see page 6 for details)

SMILES NEEDED!

Know someone who should be featured in The Arc's 2016 Smiles of Life Calendar?
See page 5 for details!



NOTE: All events listed are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted. Find more events by visiting www.arcwhatcom.org and clicking on "Events."

Buddy Walk Planning Committee Seeks Volunteer Members

Do you love the Buddy Walk? Do you want to help ensure the success of your Buddy Walk and make this event even more amazing?



If so, Down syndrome Outreach's Buddy Walk Planning Committee is the place to get involved! We will discuss the details of this event and use one another's talents and efforts to create an even more awesome and memorable Buddy Walk than ever before.

Meeting dates:*

August 20th, Thursday, 5:30-7:00
September 14th, Monday, 5:30-7:00

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Rd, Bellingham

***Childcare is available with RSVP one week prior.**

To RSVP or for more info, contact Jessika at (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, or jessikah@arcwhatcom.org.