

We are proud to present news of interest for Montana families of children with disabilities and special health care needs, and for the professionals and educators who serve them; however, it does not constitute an endorsement.

"Politics ain't worrying this country one-tenth as much as where to find a parking space." —Will Rogers

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OPTIMIST SPECIAL CHILDREN'S CAMP FUND RAISER

Join us for dinner and entertainment with a Hawaiian theme (featuring Calamity Entertainment with a possible special guest appearance by Brenda Williams and Steve Repac) at the lower level of Shrine Auditorium

WHEN: April 30, 2005, doors open 6 PM with no host cocktails. Dinner served at 7 PM.

COST: \$45.00 includes entertainment, appetizers, and dinner. Trivia contest prizes and door prizes will be awarded.

This is a fundraiser for Optimist Special Children's Camp. This camp is attended by 45-60 Children ages 6–18 every year. Wear your grass skirts, muumuus, and Hawaiian shirts. Come prepared to dance the Hula, or to learn how. Tickets and information are available from any Optimist member, or call 252-1048 or 247-4704.

**2005 National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH) Annual Conference, August 4-6
Scholarship Deadline: April 29**

Kukulu kumuhana "Pooling Thoughts and Hopes to Solve Common Problems" August 4 – 6, 2005 | Honolulu, Hawaii
Center for Mental Health Services Application for Financial Support Application Deadline: April 29, 2005

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), through a contract with AFYA, Inc. (AFYA), is providing financial support to rural consumers of mental health services who would like to participate in the annual conference sponsored by the National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH). The purpose of the scholarships is to foster transformation of mental health care to focus on recovery. Please note: To be eligible for this scholarship, a completed application and letter of recommendation must be received by April 29, 2005.

Conference information is available at: www.narmh.org or by calling (320) 202-1820



Billings Associate Board planning Kids at Heart Gala, May 13

The event will be at the Sheraton in Billings Friday May 13th and will feature the band – *the Midlife Chryslers*. This band consists of Billings' area doctors who participate in 4 or 5 performances a year for local nonprofits. The Committee is excited about their involvement and is looking forward to the Gala. In addition to the band's performance,

the event will include heavy hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, a live auction, featuring auctioneer Bill Holt, and much more. For information on sponsorships or tickets, call PLUK's office at 406 255-0540 or 800 222-7585.

TBI News: New Grants and Partnerships Renew Your Vehicle Registration and Support Montana's Traumatic Brain Injury Fund

Montana has the second highest rate of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) per capita in the nation. In response, Montana has made application and received two Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) TBI grants since 2001. The federal grants have set into motion a constellation of activities that will provide guidance in planning for a comprehensive, community-based system of care that encompasses physical, psychological, educational, vocational and social aspects of TBI services and addresses the needs of families as well as individuals with a TBI. The Senior and Long Term Care Division, as the lead agency, has contracted with the Montana Center on Disabilities and the Brain Injury Association of Montana (BIAM) to assist in completing goals and objectives of a state TBI action plan. For more information about this grant, contact Nell Eby at (406) 655-7636.

You can help support department activities for people with TBI. Through special efforts of the BIAM, Montana's 2003 Legislature passed H.B. 698, which created a TBI account for public information and education on TBI. Montana vehicle owners can make a donation to that account through their renewal notices for motor vehicle registration by circling "Y" on the card for the brain injury fund and adding a dollar to the total due. (You can do the same for organ donor awareness.) We hope department staff will consider this option when they renew their vehicle registration. Another way to show support is to encourage the use of seat belts in vehicles and helmets for activities such as biking and snow sports.

Benefit Concert for PLUK—May 20, Kalispell



Celebrate the Power and the Legend
of America's First Journey West with

ROB QUIST
and

JACK GLADSTONE

In Their Highly-Acclaimed New Multi-Media Production

ODYSSEY WEST



**An Original Musical and Visual Narrative
Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition**

Flathead Valley PLUK presents:

Rob Quist & the Great Northern Band with Jack Gladstone in concert, presenting their collaborated production of the Lewis & Clark Expedition May 20th at 7pm at the Kalispell Christian Center.

Rob Quist and Jack Gladstone, two of (the West's most celebrated entertainers and songwriters, have united in an unforgettable new show, *Odyssey West*, commemorating Lewis and Clark's epic journey West.

Gladstone and Quist literally bring the West to life with the rich historical content of their original songs and narratives presented with dramatic live footage as well as haunting photographic and artistic images of the Old and New West.

Celebrate Our Heritage while supporting local children and adults with disabilities. Proceeds also benefit Special Friends Advocacy. Ticket purchases call 406/756-6159.

<http://www.robquist.com/promopage.htm>

Legislative Update 11 From C. Briggs

Legislative Update #11:

1. Appropriations. This past Friday, the Senate's Finance & Claims Committee completed its deliberations on HB-2, the key state appropriations legislation for the next biennium, following a three-day consideration of the bill's provisions as previously acted upon by the House. The Senate committee left its own mark on the "big bill," ultimately adding \$63 million to the overall cost. Republican legislators in both chambers reacted strongly to the current budget bill as seriously inflated. The bill will be debated on the Senate floor this coming Thursday and Friday. Democrats countered that much of the increase is due to cuts in federal funding, especially in Medicaid (the matching share for Montana is going up, in part, because of the pick up in the economy). Also, a big factor was the result of recent court decisions, such as concerning

school funding. The committee did make a number of cuts, such as the Governor's scholarship fund for Montana graduates and the increase to the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).

One interesting proposal came from Sen. John Cobb (R-Augusta), who offered an amendment for the state to use general fund dollars to cover the increases in direct care worker wages until sufficient revenues accrue from the I-149 tobacco tax. Those workers specified from the decisions of the joint Human Services Sub-Committee to HB-2 were in senior services—both community-based and skilled nursing facilities – as well as mental health workers. An added value of the general fund support, however, is that those funds would become part of the base budgeting for the next Legislature. Finance & Claims Chair, Sen. Mike Cooney (D-Helena), has indicated additional cuts will be made on the Senate floor later this week, especially since the bill now is nearly \$47 million over the spending cap.

2. Other Legislation. Many of you are aware of the discovery this past week in HB 5 (Wells), the Capital Improvements, Long-Range Building measures, which included a \$2.5 million request for a "secured housing unit, MDC Boulder." DPHHS officials apologized to advocates for not informing the disability community of this particular item, as they indicated it came as a recommendation from CMS. Negotiations followed late last week and an amendment will be offered when the bill is considered Monday (April 4), in Finance & Claims. On another significant funding issue, HB 475 (Matthews), which is the supplemental appropriations bill for final expenditures through this biennium that ends June 30th, is now scheduled for hearing in Finance & Claims April 8th.

Here is the most recent update of other bills we've been following:

HB 197 (Jayne) – making it a felony for anyone convicted of abusing, neglecting or exploiting an older adult or person with a developmental disability, at the request of DPHHS. It still awaits House concurrence. No action to date.

HB 336 (Lange) – appropriates \$287,000 over the biennium to provide services to youth with developmental disabilities who have graduated, until they reach age 19. It was approved "do pass" Saturday (2nd) in Senate Public Health Committee.

HB 438 (Buzzas) – This bill would establish Braille literacy for blind or visually impaired children throughout Montana schools. It was heard this past week before the Senate Education Committee, which referred it to Finance & Claims on the 31st.

HB 513 (Raser) – this will extend state tax credits to citizens who donate to developmental disabilities programs. Senate Taxation heard it last week on the 1st, but no action as yet.

HB 550 (Windy Boy) – Appropriates \$100,000 over the biennium for the leadership forum for youth with disabilities. It has been heard in Senate Finance & Claims and still awaits executive action.

HB 687 (Mendenhall) – This is an important companion to the I-149 tobacco tax initiative, as it makes provision to track tobacco sales, and compliments the actions of the sub-committee that funded six auditors for tax collection. It was heard last week in Senate Business & Labor, passing out favorably on the 2nd.

HB738 (Kaufmann) – Will establish an advisory commission to study all provider rates and services provided by DPHHS. The bill still awaits House concurrence on Senate amendments. It does not yet have an updated fiscal note.

SB 41 (Keenan) – Establishing "funding principles" for Medicaid; it's one of several the Senator offered as part of a larger Medicaid redesign. It still has no executive action by House Human Services.

SB 78 (Harrington) – This bill raises the minimum wage in Montana to \$6.25 per hour. Passed the Senate, it still has no action in the House by House Business & Labor.

SB 93 (Cobb) – Requires DPHHS to report monthly to the Legislative Finance Committee updating Medicaid cost estimates. It was heard in House Appropriations the 30th, but no action as yet.

SB 110 (Cobb) – As mentioned previously, this bill is arguably the most potentially significant piece of the Medicaid redesign legislation. Passed out of the Senate, it received a favorable hearing and approval on the 1st by House Business & Labor.

SB 127 (Keenan) – Another of the Medicaid redesign bills, this focuses on restructuring home & community-based waiver services. It was approved on 2nd Reading by the House on the 2nd and will have its 3rd Reading vote on the 4th.

SB 146 (McGee) – Based on a lawsuit, this bill intends to redesign—and fund—Montana's public defender system, which could be a good thing for people with disabilities on limited incomes. Approved by House Judiciary on the 1st, it now goes to the floor.

SB 150 (Keenan) – Establishes cost-sharing for community-based Medicaid services. Still no House Human Services Committee action.

SB 153 (Cobb) – Establishes performance measures for DPHHS. It passed 2nd Reading in the House on April 2, 3rd Reading scheduled for Monday.

SB 428 (Stapleton) – Establishes the 211 emergency human services system statewide. It passed out of the Senate last week, and will be heard in House Federal Relations, Energy & Telecommunications Committee, on the 4th.

SB 433 (Lind) – Creates a Medicaid pilot project for 50 developmentally disabled individuals, providing retention of unspent funds in their annual cost plan for future services, as well as a portion to the DDP “risk pool.” It still awaits House Human Services executive action

SB 485 (Ellingson) –This bill establishes for citizens a “next-of-kin” registry, for purposes of hospital or long-term care facility visitation and disposition of one’s remains upon death, and be housed in the Attorney General’s Office. It appears to be languishing in House Judiciary. No action, yet.

SB 500 (Cobb) – Revises state election laws to facilitate voting accessibility for people with disabilities. It was heard the 22nd in the House State Administration and received committee approval on the 30th.

Well, there is certainly more to follow this coming week. This week will be an important time to let especially your senator know the funding issues that are dear and important to you, hopefully by Thursday.

Charlie Briggs, CEO
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“Riding the Bus with My Sister” to air on TV May 1

Rachel Simon’s book *Riding the Bus with My Sister* has been made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame television movie. The film will air May 1 on CBS stations around the country.

Department of Education: IDEA Comment Meetings Schedule

ANNOUNCING:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, as Amended by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces plans to hold a series of public meetings to seek comments and suggestions about proposed regulations, which the Secretary intends to publish in a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in the Spring of 2005, to implement programs under the recently amended IDEA.

DATES: The public meetings will be held from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.:

- Monday, June 6, 2005 in San Antonio, TX
- Friday, June 17, 2005 in Nashville, TN
- Wednesday, June 22, 2005 in Sacramento, CA
- Friday, June 24, 2005 in Las Vegas, NV
- Monday, June 27, 2005 in New York, NY
- Wednesday, June 29, 2005 in Chicago, IL
- Tuesday, July 12, 2005 in Washington, DC.

Health Tip: Symptoms of Autism

(Courtesy Yahoo News)

Mon Mar 21, 11:48 PM ET Health - HealthDay

(HealthDay News) -- With autism on the rise -- as many as 12 in every 10,000 children (boys more than girls) -- how can a parent tell if their child is autistic or if they have some other mental health disorder? Autism prevents children and adolescents from interacting normally with other people, and affects almost every aspect of their social and psychological development. According to the National Mental Health Information Center, autism has a wide variety of characteristics ranging in intensity from mild to severe. One child with autism does not behave like another child with the same diagnosis. Children and adolescents with autism typically:

- Have difficulty communicating with others
- Exhibit repetitious behaviors, such as rocking back and forth, head banging, or touching or twirling objects
- Have a limited range of interests and activities
- May become upset by a small change in their environment or daily routine

In addition to these characteristics, some children with autism experience hypersensitivity to hearing, touch, smell or taste. Symptoms of autism can be seen in early infancy, but the condition also may appear after months of normal development. In most cases, however, it is not possible to identify a specific event that triggers the disorder.

Read more at http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/hsn/20050322/hl_hsn/healthtipsymptomsofautism.

Scholarships for High School Seniors Who Have Disabled Parents

(From Monday Morning in Washington D.C)

In recognition of the more than nine million parents with disabilities in the U.S. and their families, Through the Looking Glass (TLG), non-profit organization, announced the 2005 College Scholarship Fund specifically for graduating high school seniors who have disabled parents. May 1, 2005 is the application deadline. For information, visit their site at <http://lookingglass.org/scholarships/index.php>

The NY Public Library's Digital Gallery

(From The Christian Science Monitor)

March 21, 2005 By Jim Regan, csmonitor.com

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA – You may have heard that the New York Public Library recently put a substantial portion of its collections online in the form of a Web-based gallery. You may have also heard that the response was so overwhelming that the Library was forced to briefly take the site down in order to beef up its ability to respond to a phenomenal number of visitors.

Well, back in operation and now equal to the challenges of high traffic, the NYPL Digital Gallery is open for business once again - you can see what everyone else has been looking at.

Officially launched on March 3rd, the NYPL Digital Gallery is presently offering 275,000 images (stored on a 57-terabyte, a thousand billion bytes of data, network of servers) for public perusal and free personal use ("...individual private study, scholarship and research..."). Most of the contents of the Gallery are in the public domain, and if you can obtain your own reproduction of any image you find here, you can probably use it as you see fit.

Find out more about the NYPL Digital Gallery, and read the rest of this article, at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0321/p25s01-stin.html>.

Preemie Magazine

(Courtesy of Preemie Magazine)

SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA - March 17, 2005 - Preemie Magazine, LLC is pleased to announce the launching of Preemie Magazine, a free print magazine and online community for parents of premature infants as well as the professionals that care for them.

Preemie Magazine's print edition provides parents and professionals with information across the lifespan of the premature child, from infancy to the school years. Its online community allows its audience to connect with one another with forums, scheduled live chats with professionals, a large listing of resources as well as a growing list of support groups and playgroups. The online community went live in March 2005 and the print edition's first issue is slated for June 2005.

"With our online community and print magazine, we are the resource for the preemie community," comments Deborah Discenza, Publisher of Preemie Magazine, LLC and mother to a daughter born ten weeks early. "Parents are hungry for information from the time the child is born to well into the school years. Research has shown that prematurity can have long-term effects and we're here to fill the void that leaves these parents feeling scared and alone."

With the March of Dimes stating that 1 in 8 pregnancies ends in premature birth, the preemie parent community is large and growing.

About Preemie Magazine, LLC

Started by five parents of preemies, Preemie Magazine provides a free and informative publication and online community that empowers the preemie parent and educates the preemie professional. The first of its kind, Preemie Magazine is the resource for the preemie community.

For more information, please visit www.preemiemagazine.com.

Infants Use Their Hands to "Talk"

(From The Christian Science Monitor)

By Liz Nakazawa, contributor, The Christian Science Monitor

Sign language is attracting a new group of enthusiastic practitioners: parents and their infant children. The appeal of such communication has nothing to do with hearing impairments. Instead, it's about getting in touch with the thought process of babies who can't yet speak.

Jill and Jeff Rupert of Portland, Ore., have learned 25 signs so they can teach them to their hearing baby, Joel. "We're trying sign language to communicate with Joel sooner than we would be able to if we waited for him to talk," says Jill.

The Ruperts are part of a national movement of hearing parents teaching their hearing babies and toddlers American Sign Language (ASL) to help increase communication.

Read the rest of this article at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0322/p14s01-legn.html>.

NOFAS NEWS: Surgeon General's New Advisory Against Women Drinking While Pregnant Wake Up Call for Pregnant Women

(Courtesy of National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS))

February 23, 2005

For Immediate Release

Contact: Adam Litle (202) 785-4585

WASHINGTON - With the recent update of the 1981 Surgeon General's alcohol advisory against women drinking while pregnant, the call of those fighting for complete abstinence from alcohol during pregnancy is vindicated.

On Monday, February 21, 2005, U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona cautioned pregnant women and those women who may become pregnant to avoid alcohol completely throughout their entire pregnancy to keep their fetus free from the harmful effects of prenatal alcohol exposure. Such exposure can lead to fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), the leading known preventable cause of mental retardation.

"We do not know what, if any, amount of alcohol is safe. But we do know that the risk of a baby being born with any of the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders increases with the amount of alcohol a pregnant woman drinks, as does the likely severity of the condition," Dr. Carmona said while speaking at a press conference in San Diego, CA. "And when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby. Therefore, it's in the child's best interest for a pregnant woman to simply not drink alcohol."

Read the complete press release at <http://www.nofas.org/news/surgeon031505.aspx>.

Wrightslaw: IEP FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions About Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) from Wrightslaw.

1. My child is eligible. What next?
2. What is an IEP?
3. What information is in an IEP?
4. Who develops my child's IEP?
5. So, I can help develop my child's IEP?
6. What to do before the IEP meeting?
7. What happens at an IEP meeting?
8. What are related services?
9. What are special factors?
10. What is assistive technology?
11. How is placement decided?
12. What options do I have?
13. What about placement?
14. Can my child's IEP be changed?

Visit <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.faqs.htm> for the answers.

ASBJ Special Report—Depression: Ready or Not, Your Schools Must Face Children's Mental Health Problems

(From ASBJ.com)

By Kathleen Vail

Twenty-five years ago, people believed it was impossible for children to be depressed. Now, of course, we know that's not true. In fact, one in every 33 children and one in eight adolescents may be suffering from depression, according to the federal Center for Mental Health Services. And while we're getting better at recognizing depression in children and teens, a majority still are not getting help.

Up to 70 percent of children with diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, are not receiving mental health services, according to the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health. Within that scope of disorders, depressed children are the least likely to get treatment. But some of the help they are getting is coming from their schools.

Read the report at <http://www.asbj.com/specialreports/0305SpecialReports/S3.html>.

New Web Course on Victims with Developmental Disabilities

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

There is a new web course available on victims with developmental disabilities. The course includes artwork from Martha Perske and video clips that highlight key points nicely. While targeted to healthcare professionals, it is valuable for anyone interested in this area of advocacy.

CEU's are available. For more information about the course, see: <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/maltreatment/#price> and the flyer: <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/maltreatment/flyer.pdf>

Partners in Employment

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C)

"Partners in Employment" is a self-study course designed to help people with developmental disabilities find meaningful jobs and jumpstart their careers. This course has been created to provide practical skills needed to find real, competitive employment. Throughout the site, you'll learn how other people with disabilities have overcome common obstacles to find jobs and succeed in the workplace.

"Partners in Employment" is part of the continuing effort to create a new employment culture - one in which willing workers are welcomed and embraced by satisfied employers and a supportive public. The design and development of this e-learning course was financed in part by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Learn more about the course at <http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/employment/>

Individual Supports to Increase Access to an Inclusive College Experience for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Online Training Module)

The purpose of this online training module is to provide guidance on developing an Individual Support Model (ISM) to increase access to inclusive college experiences and to improve chances for the success of students with intellectual disabilities. An ISM approach provides students with individualized services and supports (e.g., educational coach, tutor, technology, natural supports) in college courses, certificate programs, internships, and/or degree programs. Offered by the On-Campus Outreach project at the University of Maryland; funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. Learn more at http://www.education.umd.edu/oco/training/oco_training_modules/IndividualSupports/start.html.

Training/Workshops/Meetings/Conferences in Montana::

TOOLS FOR INDEPENDENCE Teleconference, April 5 & 6, Missoula, Kalispell & Billings

Sponsored by Region V CSPD and PLUK

Title: Technology is Not a Solution, It's a Tool

Date: April 5, 2005, 1:00-4:00 PM

Where: Teleconference originating from Billings broadcasting to Missoula & Kalispell

Description: Session 1. This half-day seminar focuses on a simple common-sense approach to determine successful strategies and technology that will work for students at home, in school and at work.

Title: Technology for Reading and Writing

Date: April 6, 2005, 1:00-4:00 PM

Where: Teleconference originating from Billings broadcasting to Missoula & Kalispell

Description: Session 2: Technology Solutions for Reading and Writing Difficulties: This session will demonstrate many of the technologies that are available today for use with students who have reading and/or writing difficulties due to learning disabilities, motor difficulties, visual or cognitive impairments. These will include: scanning/reading systems, video magnification, screen reading and typing aids, voice input, electronic keyboards, and more.

Presenter: Roger Holt, rholt@pluk.org: Roger has worked as the director of technology programs for PLUK, serving families statewide, for 15 years. He presents nationally, focusing on technology and disabilities and the realm of Assistive Technology. He's recognized nationwide as a creative and talented professional in the field and is a RESNA Certified Assistive Technology Practitioner.

Locations:

- MISSOULA: Blackfoot Telephone, 1221 N Russell
- KALISPELL: Byte Savy, 309 S Main
- Billings: PLUK Office, 516 N 32nd St

Contact: Nancy Marks, Region V CSPD Coordinator, 728-2400 ext 1088, admin@cspd.net

To Register: Go to <http://www.cspd.net> and register. No Registration FEE for these workshops

PLUK eNews April 04, 2005

Credit: OPI Renewal Credit - 3 hours per session, Early Childhood - 3 hours per session

Audience: General educators, administrators, technology support personnel, special educators, paraeducators, parents, OT, PT, speech language pathologists, and anyone interested in the range of technology options that are available.

Registration Deadline April 8 for NAPAS—IDEA 2004: WHAT'S NEW, April 14 Webcast

Presented by: Diane Smith, Disability Rights Center

Don't Delay! Registration Deadline is April 8th!

This two-hour webcast will take place on Thursday, April 14, 2005 at 1:00 pm EDT. A registration fee of \$30 will be charged for the P&A Network (multiple employees participating on the same line for one fee). Persons outside the network will be charged \$50.

This training session uses an accessible webcast technology; to take part in this training you will need a computer with a high-speed dedicated Internet connection and the ability to open a web page with a recent web browser. If you have any questions about what may be required to take part in this accessible web cast based training, please contact Matt Hayden (matt@napas.org).

If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth.greczek@napas.org or 202-408-9514.

Bullying: What We Know and What We Can Do, April 14, Miles City Community College

Presenter: Marlene Snyder, PhD

Marlene is an independent consultant, international conference speaker, curricula writer, and workshop presenter for educational, child welfare, juvenile justice, and parent education agencies. She is one of five Master Trainers for the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. She trains trainers that work with school administrators, teachers, support staff, law enforcement officers and parents to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. In addition, she regularly consults on issues involving juvenile crime and violence prevention in rural communities with professionals in the juvenile justice system.

Session Description: Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting, kicking, threatening others, teasing, name-calling, excluding from a group, or sending mean notes or emails. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Often, children are bullied not just once or twice, but repeatedly. For many years, bullying has been treated as a rite of passage - an undesirable, but sometimes unavoidable, reality of growing up. This is far from the truth. Bullying is a serious public health issue that affects countless young people everyday. Further, research shows that the effects of bullying can last well into adulthood.

Visit <http://www.pluk.org/training/Bullying.htm> for information and online registration

Montana Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, April 13-15, Billings

The 2005 Montana CEC Conference focuses on "diverse abilities" and presents variety of topics suited to diverse audiences including parents, professionals, and students. Registration rates vary (\$45-\$125) and CEUs are pending.

Print a copy of the registration form at <http://www.mtcec.org/registration.htm>. For more information, visit the Montana CEC website at <http://www.mtcec.org/conference.htm>.

Montana Counseling Association Annual Conference

"A Community of Healing: Integrative Practices in Trauma Response"—April 21-22, Helena

The Montana Counseling Association (MCA) will hold its annual conference on April 21-22 in Helena entitled "A Community of Healing: Integrative Practices in Trauma Response." The schedule features nationally distinguished keynote speakers, state government officials, University researchers, and clinicians. This conference will address childhood traumatic stress, PTSD, sexual abuse, and trauma response to war, terrorism, natural disaster, and school violence and will emphasize the importance of collaboration between organizations.

The Division of Educational Research and Service (DERS) at The University of Montana (DERS) will contribute expertise from its Montana Center for the Investigation and Treatment of Childhood Trauma Project. This multi-year project is part of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Child Traumatic Stress Network. The project joins DERS with childhood mental health experts at Duke University, the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), RAND Corporation, Los Angeles Unified School District, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Similarly, St. Vincent Healthcare will contribute expertise in mental health issues specific to the health care community—particularly first responders. Through funding from the U.S. Department of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), St. Vincent has begun collaboration with numerous agencies across Montana, including the

Department of Public Health and Human Services, to provide training programs using the all hazards approach to disasters as well as placing an emphasis on the interagency response required in the event of bioterrorism.

CEUs are available. For more information, including the schedule and registration, visit <http://www.montanacounseling.org/conferences.htm>.

It's NOT About the Technology! Tools for Independence, April 22, Wolf Point

Presenter: Roger Holt, ATP

Roger is a native Montanan. He works as the director of technology programs for Parents, Let's Unite for Kids, serving families state-wide. He serves on a number of Councils and Boards and presents nationally focusing on technology and disabilities and the realm of Assistive Technology. He's recognized nationally as a creative and talented professional in the field. Mr. Holt is a RESNA Certified Assistive Technology Practitioner.

Overview: This full-day seminar offers a unique opportunity to gain valuable information on the topic of assistive technology. The two morning sessions will cover the basic information of technology and the law and how to make technology decisions. The afternoon sessions will cover specific strategies, devices, resources and what may be expected in the future.

Visit <http://www.pluk.org/training/AT.htm> for information and online registration.

Region I CSPD

"Child Abuse and Neglect," April 22-23, Glasgow

Cost - \$20.00, includes lunch on the 23rd. This training is an 8-hour approved training for participants on the Practitioner Registry and for Day Care Provider Renewals and CEU's.

For more information or to register contact: Jody King at 406-228-9431 or 1-800-659-3673.

PASSPORT to Health Summit, April 26, Helena



As the PASSPORT to Health program enters its twelfth year of successfully managing the delivery of health care to Montana's Medicaid clients, the DPHHS Managed Care Bureau is planning provider summits to solicit your feedback about the program and identify suggestions for change. A primary goal of these events is to look at the program in a truly comprehensive way; all ideas are open for consideration.

One-day facilitated summits are planned for locations across the state.

Helena on Tuesday, April 26 at the First Presbyterian Church (535 Ewing) from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Coffee and doughnuts will be served at 9:30 AM, and lunch will be provided.

Summits are also planned for:

- Havre during the week of May 10
- Billings during the week of May 17
- Kalispell the week of June 7

A cross-section of PASSPORT stakeholders will be invited, including: PASSPORT providers, specialists and other non-PCPs, representatives from billing companies, hospitals, FQHCs, RHCs, the tribal health community, and client advocates.

If you have ideas and would like to participate in one of the summits, contact PASSPORT Program Officer Niki Scoffield at (406) 444-4148 or niscoffield@mt.gov.

For more information on the PASSPORT to Health Program, visit the DPHHS website at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hpsd/medicaid/medrecip/pdf/passporthandbook.pdf>

Fourth Annual Native American Brain Injury Conference, April 26-27, Billings

The Fourth Annual Native American Brain Injury Conference, scheduled for April 26-27 in Billings, will feature nationally recognized speakers and an evening concert with singer-songwriter Jack Gladstone.

Registration fees vary (\$55-\$105). Pre-register by April 8, 2005 for the best rates. Register online at <http://www.msubillings.edu/mtcdregister>. Questions? Call Ian Elliot at 1-888-866-3822, or Nell Eby at 406-655-7636 for more information

Step Up to Writing—A Key to Academic Success, April 25-26 - Missoula, April 27-28 - Kalispell

Step Up to Writing is a writing program that makes a dramatic difference in student success. This two-day workshop is designed for teachers who want to help struggling students learn to communicate in an organized and effective manner. Participants will leave the workshop with a wealth of strategies that motivate students as they significantly increase their academic success.

The trainer, Neilia Solberg, B.A., is a Step Up to Writing consultant for Sopris West Educational Services. Included in her years of teaching are elementary school and staff development in the language arts and content reading. Recent

experience in Academic Achievement plans across the curriculum and grade levels as well as expanded responsibilities in coordinating instruction development.

For more information and to register online, go to the Region V CSPD web site: <http://www.cspd.net>.

Session 3: Getting Students Past the "Gatekeeper" Courses in Math-Creating Success in Pre-Algebra and Algebra, May 5, Missoula

Effective instruction, especially at the middle school level, is a critical component for laying the foundation for higher-level mathematics. This one-day workshop focuses on the "big picture" concepts and those topics necessary for algebra success. By tackling the important topics and modeling the "big picture" concepts for students, teachers and students can "tear down" these roadblocks to algebra success.

To register, or for further information, please go to <http://www.cspd.net>

Family Learning Weekend for the Visually Impaired, Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind June 10-12, MDSB, Great Falls

A FREE three-day weekend in Great Falls at MSDB is designed specifically for families with children who are visually impaired. This weekend is packed with ideas. A nationally renowned keynote speaker, Judith Lesner from the National Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI), will be speaking to families about the importance of parent advocacy. She will present with her son, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, who will be addressing the current issues in the education of the blind. Both Judith and Jacob are experienced will be working with our parents to design a Montana chapter of NAPVI. For more information, please contact MSDB at 1-800-882-6732 or Barb Rolf, Outreach Vision Consultant at (406) 251-5674.

MASP Summer Institute, June 12-14, Billings

Jack M. Fletcher, PhD (professor, Dept. of Pediatrics at University of Texas Health Sciences Center-Houston, Assoc. Director Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS)), will present "Neuropsychology of Developmental Disorders." Explore the origins of brain dysfunction, review the behavior systems model, discover the current concepts behind the behavior-brain relationship, and investigate learning disabilities identification, intervention, and research.

The Institute will be held from Sunday June 12 through Tuesday June 14, 2005, at the Mansfield Health Education Center in Billings. CEUs are available. Fees vary (\$110-\$145)

Pre-register before May 30, 2005, registration will also be available on site.

Download the MASP SI Brochure at http://www.pluk.org/MASP_SumInst_2005.pdf. The brochure will print out at full size on legal paper (8.5" x 17") and at reduced size on letter paper (8.5" x 11").

Power Mobility Camp, June 13-17, Billings

Located at MSU-Billings campus, the purpose of the camp is to allow any individual an opportunity to try power mobility. Several sessions are encouraged for evaluation. For more information, please call Mary O'Connell, PT, ATP at 1-800-732-0323 or 406-243-5688. People of all ages, with any disability, are welcome.

Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Autism Walk—June 12, Great Falls

To date, NAAR has committed \$21.1 million to fund 211 autism research projects and fellowships worldwide - more than any other non-governmental organization. NAAR has been able to make these investments, in large part, through the success of Walk F.A.R. for NAAR, the signature fundraising and autism awareness event of NAAR. Each year, walks throughout the USA, Canada and England attract thousands of walkers and raise millions for research.

Great Falls Walk (<http://www.autismwalk.org/greatfalls>)

Help spread the word about the Montana Walk F.A.R. for NAAR event. Download the event flyer at http://www.autismwalk.org/site/DocServer/Great_Falls_Walk_Flyer_FINAL.pdf?docID=705. Want to build a Walk F.A.R. team, check out http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=fundraising_tips.

Find out more about the Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Events at <http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage>.

Interested? Want to Learn More?

Penny Martin--Local Volunteer Leadership--406.771.3998 or j.martin@bresnan.net

Scott R. Moore--Pacific Northwest Regional Director

National Alliance for Autism Research - 1370 Stewart Street - Seattle WA 98109

206.464.5182 smoore@naar.org <http://www.autismwalk.org> or <http://www.naar.org>

Closing The Gap Forum Announcements

(Courtesy of Closing the Gap)

]Closing The Gap Forums is a discussion board exploring the many ways that technology is being used to enhance the lives of people with special needs. Please feel free to participate in the discussions listed below and share this valuable resource with friends and colleagues. There is no fee to participate. Visit: <http://www.closingthegap.com/forums> and go to the "Featured Discussions."

Activities and Camp for Families

Moderators: Jill E. Senner, PhD, CCC-SLP; Lesly Levitas, OTR/L; Pam Harris

Participants in this discussion will learn about camp and how naturalistic summer recreation activities can provide rich communication opportunities for AAC users.

IntelliFeatures Match

Moderators: Mariangeles "Nena" Murphy-Herd, e-Learning Design Lab, University of Kansas;

Mary Dunbar, e-Learning Design Lab, University of Kansas; Susan Bashinski, PhD, Bureau of Child Research, Assistant Research Professor; Cathy Drobny, Educational Technology Consultant; Suzanne Feit, Curriculum Developer and Training Specialist, IntelliTools

With a limited budget, what are creative ways to use limited hardware for access assessment and training using the IntelliTools Classroom Suite.

Electronic Mentoring for Students with Disabilities

Moderators: Scott Bellman, Project Coordinator/Counselor DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, & Technology)

Discuss the benefits to students, available online programs, how to start your own online mentoring community.

Video Magnification: The Good, the Bad, and the Future

Moderator: Lou Lipschultz, CEO, OcuSource.com

We will be discussing features and ergonomic considerations of video magnifiers currently available.

OS X Perspectives

Post your questions and comments about Apple's latest operating system and it's new accessibility features.

Upcoming Forums:

Developing Switch Skills - Using One and Two Switches

Begins: April 11, 2005. An opportunity to discuss the introduction and development of switching skills with particular emphasis on how using a two switch approach can often benefit some students who have made little progress with single switch scanning.

Check out the "Closing The Gap Forums" <http://www.closingthegap.com/forums>.

Disability Law Resource Project Webcast: IDEA 2004, April 6

Please join The Disability Law Resource Project (DLRP) at ILRU for a Webcast on IDEA 2004.

IDEA 2004 is most current version of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, the nation's law that works to improve results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Troy R. Justesen, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education will present this Web cast on Wednesday, April 6, 2005, from 3:00-4:30pm Eastern; 2:00 Central; 1:00 Mountain; 12:00 Pacific; 11:00 Alaska; 9:00 Hawaii.

IDEA 2004 becomes effective July 1, 2005. In this Web cast, Dr. Justesen will provide an update on the development of the implementing regulations for IDEA 2004. He will outline the next steps in the process as well as opportunities for the public to provide comment. Additionally, he will address some key issues raised during the comment period to help us understand some key changes introduced in this latest version of IDEA as well as what those changes may mean for students, parents, and schools.

Please submit questions for the presenter ahead of time to webcast@ilru.org.

To link to this Web cast and download accompanying materials visit: <http://www.ilru.org/online/calendar.html>.

For instructions on how to access a Web cast visit: <http://www.ilru.org/online/instructions.html>.

Please visit this site ahead of time to test and ensure your computer is configured and updated to participate in the Web cast.

For technical assistance, please check out our FAQs (frequently asked questions) at:

<http://www.ilru.org/online/FAQ.html> or contact a Web cast team member at webcast@ilru.org or 713/520-0232 (v/tty).

Telecast: Social Security Disability Benefits Issues Affecting Transition-Aged Youth, April 13

The successful transition of students with disabilities from school to work and full community participation is rapidly gaining momentum as a major policy and program initiative for Federal, State, and Local government agencies. As school systems work collaboratively with State vocational rehabilitation agencies, community rehabilitation programs, one-stop career centers, and employers to facilitate transition from school to work, they quickly encounter barriers posed by Social Security disability benefits. The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center (AIDTAC) is hosting a telecast by the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention.

When: April 13, 2005 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Who's Invited? Students with disabilities, Parents, School Personnel, and Disability Advocates

Following the telecast, participants will be able to:

- Describe at least two Social Security benefit issues affecting transition-aged youth and their families.
- List strategies for success to increase knowledge and understanding of Social Security Administration benefits and work incentives.
- Explain what the Student Earned Income Exclusion is, and why it is important to transition-aged youth.
- Describe what Parent-to-Child deeming is and how it affects Supplemental Security Income recipients under age 18.
- Explain what a Plan for Achieving Self-Support is and why it is important to transition-aged youth.
- Describe how Social Security Administration rules apply to child support payments.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP to 243-5441, no later than April 8.

How can I learn more?

Contact the American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center (AIDTAC) at <http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu>

Telecast, Social Security Disability Benefit Issues Affecting Transition-Aged Youth April 13, 3- 5 PM EST

From One-Stop Toolkit Resources of the Week Technical Assistance Project RRTC on Work Support Satellite Telecast: Social Security Disability Benefit Issues Affecting Transition-Aged Youth April 13, 2005 -- 3:00 - 5:00 PM Eastern Time <http://worksupport.com/Topics/training.asp>.

The successful transition of students with disabilities from school to work and full community participation is rapidly gaining momentum as a major policy and program initiative for Federal, State and Local government agencies. As school systems work collaboratively with State VR agencies, community rehabilitation programs, one-stop career centers, and employers to facilitate transition from school to work, they quickly encounter the barrier posed by Social Security disability benefits. Students with significant disabilities and their families are understandably concerned about the effect that employment will have upon cash benefits like SSI or SSDI as well as Medicaid.

Fear of losing these critical benefits often prevents families and students from participating in community based employment programs during school. This telecast will focus on what school personnel, disability professionals, Benefits Specialists, and parents need to know about Social Security disability benefits for transition-aged youth and will provide specific instruction for using Social Security work incentives to promote employment, facilitate career planning, and enhance earnings capacity during and after secondary education. Presenters will offer strategies for preparing for and handling critical transitions within the Social Security benefits systems, with particular emphasis on issues surrounding the 18th birthday. Failure to consider Social Security benefits issues during transition planning is not just a missed opportunity. Harm can be caused when students and family members are not educated about nor prepared for the effect of earnings on cash benefits and medical insurance.

For more information, contact Roberta Martin, rmartin@titan.vcu.edu, (804) 827-0749

Teleconference, Reasonable Accommodation: Best Practices for an Interactive Process, April 19

Speaker: Bart Bartlett, County of Orange, Santa Ana, California; Beth Loy, Ph.D., Human Factors Consultant with the Job Accommodation Network; Kendra Duckworth, Human Factors Consultant for the Job Accommodation Network

The cost for the session is \$25 for nonprofits and \$40 for other entities for each location, regardless of the number of participants at each location (multiple people can attend at one location for the same flat fee). There is no charge for participants who come to the following locations: Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission in Columbus, OH, and Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL) in Lancaster, OH.

Sessions are 90 minutes in length and delivered via audio conference. Participants are in a "listen-only" mode until the question and answer period. The sessions are offered real-time captioned on the Internet, and a transcript is developed and posted to the Internet following the session. In addition, a digital recording of the session is archived on the Great Lakes ADA Center web site at <http://adagreatlakes.org/PnServices/AudioConferencing/Archives/>.

If you are unable to access this site, please email us at adaohio@aol.com, and we will assist you further.

For more information, teleconference times, and registration, please contact the Region 8 DBTAC at <http://www.ada-infonet.org/>, email RegionVIII@mtc-inc.com, or call (719) 444-0268 (V/TTY), (719) 444-0269 (Fax)

Training/Workshops/Conferences outside Montana::

2005 CEC Convention and Expo, April 6-9, Baltimore MD

The "largest and most exciting professional development event devoted to special and gifted education" the CEC Convention and Expo offers pre-convention workshops, more than 700 program sessions, the world's top exhibit show for professionals who work with exceptional students, the CEC Career Connections (with school district representatives from throughout the U.S.), and a variety of special events—including the CEC Teacher of the Year luncheon and the Yes I Can! Awards Gala. Convention registration varies (\$50-\$525), group discounts and CEUs are available. Register by phone 1-888-232-7733, TTY 1-866-915-5000, fax 1-703-264-9494, or online at <http://www.cec.sped.org>. <http://www.cec.sped.org>

Institute for Family-Centered Care Seminar: Hospitals Moving Forward with Patient- and Family-Centered Care, April 10-13, Houston, TX

An in-depth seminar focusing on maternity care, newborn intensive care, pediatric inpatient and outpatient care, pediatric intensive care, emergency care, and rehabilitation. For a seminar brochure, and more information, please visit <http://www.familycenteredcare.org>.

2005 ADA Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability Conference, April 11 - 13, Columbus OH

(Courtesy of Ohio State University, ADA Office)



April 11th Pre-conference seminar presented by ADA-OHIO Demystifying the Interplay of the ADA, FMLA & Workers Compensation
April 12th and 13th Multiple Perspectives on Access Inclusion & Disability

The Fifth Annual Multiple Perspectives conference will provide opportunities to share practical information on best practices, explore current research, and develop collaborations. The conference will continue its tradition of bringing together a diverse audience (individuals & employers, students & educators, advocates & policy makers, consumers & service agencies) to reflect on the many dimensions of disability. This year's theme, sameness, difference and equity, is summed up by the comments below:

In her opinion in *Tennessee v. Lane* Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said "Including individuals with disabilities among people who count in composing 'We the People,' Congress understood in shaping the ADA, that it would sometimes require not blindfolded equality, but responsiveness to difference; not indifference, but accommodation."

In an article discussing accommodations for college students with disabilities Paul Grossman, attorney for the Office For Civil Rights, described the accommodation mandate in disability law as an opportunity for rewarding self-examination. "No other set of laws so entreats academia to take its own temperature, examine its traditions, and thoughtfully deliberate about which of its standards are essential and which are merely unexamined habits." Grossman's observation is as true for the workplace and wider society as it is for education. For more information, contact: ada-osu@osu.edu or ADA Coordinator's Office, 614-292-6207 (V), 614-688-8605 (tty).

Visit <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences/2005.htm> for more details.

Making Sense—Autism and Sensory Processing Conference, April 15, Denver CO

Discussing medical, intervention, educational, and research issues related to autism and sensory processing. This conference offers dozens of choices for attendees and features keynote speaker Dr. Morton Ann Gernsbacher, PhD, "internationally recognized researcher, and mother of a sensational child with autism and severe dyspraxia. For 20 years, Gernsbacher has investigated the cognitive processes and mechanisms that underlie language comprehension. She is a central figure in the field of psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology."

Registration rates vary (\$150-\$175). Register online at https://www.blacktie-colorado.com/online_sales/kidfoundation.cfm or download a registration form at <http://www.kidfoundation.org/conference/conference.reg.pdf>.

2005 National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH) Annual Conference, August 4-6, Honolulu Scholarship Deadline: April 29

Kukulu kumuhana "Pooling Thoughts and Hopes to Solve Common Problems" August 4 – 6, 2005 | Honolulu, Hawaii
Center for Mental Health Services Application for Financial Support Application Deadline: April 29, 2005

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), through a contract with AFYA, Inc. (AFYA), is providing financial support to rural consumers of mental health services who would like to participate in the annual conference sponsored by the National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH). The purpose of the scholarships is to foster transformation of mental health care to focus on recovery. Please note: To be eligible for this scholarship, a completed application and letter of recommendation must be received by April 29, 2005.

Conference information is available at: www.narmh.org or by calling (320) 202-1820

Autism One Conference, May 26-29, Chicago IL

As always, Autism One 2005 features four major tracks to help parents and professionals make the most informed choices and decisions, they are: Biomedical Treatments; Behavior / Communication / Education Therapies; Complementary/Alternative Treatments; Government/Legal/Personal Issues. Each track offers three days of presentations focusing on particular treatments, research, and/or issues of that field. All presentations are open on a walk-in basis—conference registration covers them all.

Learn about the most effective treatments and therapies, how to obtain services and how to deal effectively with schools. Learn what to expect in future for the fields of medicine, education, government, and law.

Registration rates: \$99-\$295

Register online at <https://www.exporeg.com/autismone/>. Questions or registration concerns, email Registration@AutismOne.org. For more information, visit <http://autismone.org/homepage.cfm>.

National ADA Symposium, May 17-19, Overland Park, KS

(From Monday Morning in Washington, DC)

The National ADA Symposium is the most comprehensive and effective event available on the Americans with Disabilities Act and disability related issues. It is designed to meet the specific needs and interests of professionals who are involved in interpreting and implementing the American with Disabilities Act's guidelines and regulations. Experts directly involved in interpreting, regulating and implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act provide the training. The Symposium brings together presenters from the key agencies involved with the ADA including the U.S. Dept. of Justice, the EEOC, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Labor and the U.S. Access Board. These presenters provide dynamic training that participants can put to use in their professions.

For more information, including online registration, go to <http://www.adaupdate.org/Symposium.html>.

People on the Move Sessions, June 8-9, Salt Lake City, UT

The People On The Move program consists of two days of instruction for travel trainers, teachers, job coaches, bus operators, transportation coordinators, independent living specialists and others who assist people with disabilities in their use of public and private transportation so that they can go to school, jobs and other community destinations.

If you missed the March 2 deadline for Ann Arbor, there are other dates and cities; each is followed by the application deadline:

- June 8-9, 2005: Salt Lake City, Utah (May 27)
- September 7-8, 2005: Boston, Mass. (Aug. 3)
- November 14-15, 2005: New Orleans, La. (Oct. 3)

The Collaborative Assistive Technology Conference of the Rockies, June 9-11, Westminster, CO

Attendees will learn about local and national perspectives on state-of-the-art assistive technology devices and services. Don't miss the largest assistive technology conference in the Rocky Mountain Region, with attendance estimated at over 600. With over 70 sessions geared toward every age and disability, there is something for everybody! Presenters are among the most respected in their fields. This conference is co-sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education, SWAAAC teams and Assistive Technology Partners, a division of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine - NIDRR Grant #H224A0014.

The goal of the conference is to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities through the appropriate selection and use of assistive technology. Anyone with an interest in assistive technology devices and services is welcome. Breakout sessions will focus on funding issues and legislation, education, employment, hands-on assistive technology training and the design and development of low-tech adaptive devices.

This conference is designed for people with disabilities and their families, special educators, teachers, government agency representatives, occupational & physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, public health administrators, legislators, rehabilitation counselors, employers, insurers, and people who need up-to-the-minute information about technology devices and services.

If you use or recommend assistive technology now - or you're planning to take advantage of all that technology can offer—this conference will give you the "inside track." With 70+ sessions covering all aspects of assistive technology, you'll have the opportunity to take a walk along today's technology landscape and 'surf' what tomorrow's technology will offer. With local and national presenters, this conference is your hands-on route to new insights and information, including:

Today's Assistive Technology Devices and Services

- Future Trends
- Changes in Legislation
- Case Studies
- Innovative Technology Applications
- Funding Strategies and Procedures
- Technology Assessment

The deadline for early registration is April 29, 2005. Register early and save! Access a PDF registration form at <http://www.uchsc.edu/atp/conf2005/conf2005reg.htm>.

National Leadership Summit on Improving Results: Policy and Practice Implications for Secondary and Postsecondary Education and Employment for Youth with Disabilities, June 14-15, Washington, DC

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

In response to the need to improve high school experiences and post school outcomes for youth with disabilities, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) hosted its first National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth in September 2003. More than 250 participants attended, including state agency leaders; policymakers; professionals representing general education, special education, career and technical education, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, and other agencies; parents; and youth with disabilities.

In order to continue the national conversation which occurred at the 2003 Summit, NCSET in partnership with federal agencies and national organizations will co-host a second National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth in Washington, DC in June 14-15, 2005.

The goal of this event is to convene state-level teams of policymakers to examine the progress made in the implementation of the strategic action plans developed at the 2003 Summit, and to further build state/territory capacity to improve high school experiences that lead to successful post school outcomes for all youth.

Access <http://www.ncset.org/summit05/> for more information and registration.

From Roots to Wings: Guiding Youth With Disabilities to Employment, RSA's First National Transition Conference, June 16-17, Washington, DC

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

[Note, this conference follows the 2005 National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth.]

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), State VR agencies, State educational agencies, youth leadership organizations, consumer organizations, and other stakeholder groups are planning a national conference that will offer learning experiences and networking opportunities for State VR agency and State education agency staff at both the state and local levels. This conference will bring together VR and education policymakers and practitioners, as well as personnel from collaborating agencies that work with transitioning youth with disabilities.

Access <http://www.dtiassociates.com/rsatransitions/> for more information, including an agenda and registration.

"Making Connections, Strengthening Communities" 14th Annual Community Technology Conference June 17-19, Cleveland, OH

(Courtesy of CTCNet)

The Community Technology Center Network's major event is "the largest national gathering of community technology organizations, programs, and experts." The goal for the 2005 conference is to "to chart the progression of the community technology movement from a small grassroots effort, focused on technology access, to a growing national and international field of practice harnessing technology to meet human and social needs." According to CTCNet, the Annual Conference "is a gathering of our member organizations, leaders in the field, and others in related fields interested in creating equitable participation in information technology. CTCNet members receive a discounted registration rate and repeatedly cite this conference as one of the most important services CTCNet offers."

For registration rates and more information, visit the CTCNet website at <http://www.ctcnet.org/conf/2005/attending/registration.asp05>.

NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY CONFERENCE, July 7-10

(From NDSS)

Sponsored by NDSS, the National Down Syndrome Conference will be held at The Fairmont Hotel in Chicago. Self-advocates, families and professionals are encouraged to attend. For more information, visit <http://www.ndss.org/content.cfm?fuseaction=NwsEvt.EvtConfNC>.

Selected Sources::

1. *Monday Morning in Washington, DC*, <http://www.inclusionresearch.org>
2. *Rocky Mountain DBTAC*, <http://www.adainformation.org>
3. *PEN Weekly NewsBlast* <http://www.publiceducation.org>
4. *Health and Disability Training Calendar* <http://mtdh.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training.htm>
5. *The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center Training Calendar*
<http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/TrainingCalendar.htm>
6. *Technology for Nonprofits*: <http://www.techsoup.org>

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- ❖ **Vision Statement:** Given information and support, individuals with disabilities and their families will feel empowered to advocate for themselves and participate fully in educational and community opportunities.
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