

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.

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OPTIMIST SPECIAL CHILDREN’S CAMP FUND RAISER April 30

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.

Free Tickets Available for Vigilante Player’s “Water Bingo” May 4

PLUK is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Yellowstone County Deputy Sheriff’s Association presentation of the Vigilante Player’s production “ Water Bingo.” This mystery play (about a vial of water stolen from the moons of Venus) is suitable for all ages.

WHEN/ WHERE: May 4, 2005, 7:00 PM at the Lincoln Center.

Interested? Tickets are available at the Billings PLUK office—call 406 255-0540 or 800 222-7585 for more information.



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.

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 and the Great Northern Band with Jack Gladstone in concert, present their newest collaboration May 20th at 7pm at the Kalispell Christian Center. Quist and 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 into the western frontier.

Jack Gladstone and Rob Quist 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>

Mental health: Kids benefit from parenting 'EQ'

Holly Kadesh

"Mrs. G." called and wanted counseling for her 9-year-old son "Tommy." (Both are fictitious composite characters).

When I asked why the boy needed counseling, she said, "Tommy won't do anything I ask him to do. I ground him for weeks at a time and it doesn't seem to faze him. He argues about everything, and I have to nag him over and over to do the few chores he's responsible for. The rest of the family can't do anything because Tommy is grounded all the time."

Read complete article at:

<http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?id=1&display=rednews/2005/04/06/build/health/65-mental-health.inc>

Fragile X divides, entwines MSU student and sister

By Evelyn Boswell - MSU News Service - 04/05/05

Ring the doorbell at a Bozeman duplex, and you'll find two sisters whose lives are both separated and entwined by a mutation in a single gene.

Amy DeBernardis, 28, lives downstairs with her yellow Lab, Beauty. She has Fragile X Syndrome, the most common form of inherited mental retardation. Symptoms vary by person, but they occur because one gene can't produce enough of a protein that's needed by cells, especially brain cells.

Marie DeBernardis, 22, lives upstairs. She doesn't have Fragile X, but spreads the word that Fragile X carriers can be detected with a simple blood test. A senior at Montana State University, Marie spent the last two summers at Stanford

University, helping researchers study Fragile X. Results of one study will be published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders. Results of the second have been submitted to the American Journal on Mental Retardation.

Read the complete article at: http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/04/05/health/c01040505_03.txt

OPI Parents Page: Indian Education

"The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity." Montana Constitution -- Article X, Section 1(2)

Visit at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/parents/IndEdParent.html>

MSU-Billings Equity Project April Newsletter Now Available Online

This project is a model to increase equity in the education of young women with disabilities, especially in regard to their successful transition to post secondary education or employment.

Download a PDF of their newest newsletter at <http://www.msubillings.edu/equityoutreach/Newsletter4.05.pdf>.

Find out more about the project at: <http://www.msubillings.edu/equityoutreach/>.

Legislative Update #12—From C. Briggs

Appropriations. The 59th Regular Session of the Montana Legislature is coming down the home stretch with about two weeks left. The main issues remaining mostly involve budgeting and taxation. HB-2 was passed out of the Senate finally on Saturday (the 9th), as amended. The bill is now transmitted back to the House to concur with the Senate amendments. Of course, the House will not accept the changes, and a joint conference committee will be appointed to reach agreement on the differences between each chamber's versions. The conference committee should begin meeting by mid-week. It's still a question whether it will be a "closed" conference meeting or a "free" conference, which would mean anything in the bill would be open to negotiations. A closed conference would limit their negotiations only to the differences between the two versions. I'm told each chamber have already selected their conferees – four for the House, three for the Senate. Once I get more details, I will pass them on.

It's good news that the Senate did not alter any of our funding priorities, which includes the developmental disabilities services increase using I-149 tax dollars, though with Cobb's amendment that uses general funds the first half of Fiscal year 2006, until sufficient revenues are generated by the new tax. The increased general fund appropriation for early intervention for developmentally disabled children (FES) is still there. The general fund half of the increase for extended employment remains, as does the general funding increase for independent living, and the new technology position at Blind & Low Vision Services remains. We will see how these all fare in the conference negotiations.

Also, within HB-5, which earmarks funds for long-range building, an interesting amendment was added in Finance & Claims late on Wednesday, whereby Sen. Cooney introduced an amendment that moved \$75 million out of HB-2 and put it in HB-5, to begin new construction of Highway-93 from Evaro to Polson, ostensibly because the project will take longer than the next biennium and there should be federal replacement funds. What is significant is that this action reduced the appropriations well below the now famous spending cap, allowing considerably flexibility for the final funding of HB-2. In addition, the bill as amended and passed by Finance & Claims provides \$2.5 million to build a "secure housing unit" for "housing for high risk behaviors" among developmentally disabled adults, which means it could be provided almost anywhere.

Other Legislation. Numerous other appropriations measures will either be killed or added into appropriations for the next two years. Finance & Claims already has nine bills scheduled for Monday morning. Two bills of interest to the disability network will be heard at that time: 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; and HB 438 (Buzzas), will establish Braille literacy for blind or visually impaired children throughout Montana schools. Also for their consideration—and considerably modified—is HB 745 (Matthews), the primary supplemental appropriations act for the remainder of this biennium.

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 is scheduled for 2nd Reading in the House the 11th.
- HB 336 (Lange) – (noted above)
- HB 438 (Buzzas) – (noted above)
- HB 513 (Raser) – this will extend state tax credits to citizens who donate to developmental disabilities programs. It has been approved by the Senate and returned to the House.
- HB 550 (Windy Boy) – Appropriates \$100,000 over the biennium for the leadership forum for youth with disabilities. It has not yet been acted upon by Finance & Claims.

- 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 approved last week by the Senate and returned to the House with amendments.
- 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.
- SB 41 (Keenan) – Establishing “funding principles” for Medicaid; it’s one of several the Senator offered as part of a larger Medicaid redesign. It has been approved by House Human Services, as amended and awaits 2nd Reading.
- SB 78 (Harrington) – This bill raises the minimum wage in Montana to \$6.25 per hour. It failed to pass 2nd Reading in the House on a tie vote and is most likely dead.
- SB 93 (Cobb) – Requires DPHHS to report monthly to the Legislative Finance Committee updating Medicaid cost estimates. It was concurred this past week in House Appropriations and now faces 2nd Reading.
- SB 110 (Cobb) – As mentioned previously, this bill is arguably the most potentially significant piece of the Medicaid redesign legislation. The bill passed House 3rd Reading last Friday and has been returned to the Senate.
- SB 127 (Keenan) – Another of the Medicaid redesign bills, this focuses on restructuring home & community-based waiver services. It passed the House, as amended, and returned to the Senate.
- 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. The House did on concur with Senate amendments and a joint conference committee was appointed on Saturday.
- SB 150 (Keenan) – Establishes cost sharing for community-based Medicaid services. The bill was tabled by House Human Services the 9th, one month after its hearing before the committee.
- SB 153 (Cobb) – Establishes performance measures for DPHHS. It has been transmitted to the Governor for his signature.
- SB 415 (Tester) – A significant bill drawing lots of attention designed to mandate utilities access alternative energy, such as wind. While seen as progressive energy policy, a number of non-profit organizations have raised questions whether it could potentially raise costs to consumers, since many of the alternative sources are not necessarily cheaper than existing ones. It will be heard in House Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications, Room 303, 3pm, Monday, the 11th.
- SB 428 (Stapleton) – Establishes the 211 emergency human services system statewide. It passed out House Federal Relations, Energy & Telecommunications Committee, the 5th, failed to pass 2nd Reading the 8th, but approved for reconsideration on the 9th, awaiting another 2nd Reading.
- 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 was finally passed by House Human Services and awaits 2nd Reading on the 11th.
- 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 was effectively killed by House Judiciary on the 5th.
- SB 500 (Cobb) – Revises state election laws to facilitate voting accessibility for people with disabilities. It was approved in the House on the 6th, and will probably be sent soon to the Governor after it returns to the Senate.

It should certainly be an interesting week ahead.

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National Autism Association's Helping Hand Program Provides One-Time Grants

(Courtesy of NAA)

NAA's Helping Hand Program is now awarding a grant of up to \$1,500 to families in need of financial assistance in getting biomedical treatments, supplements, therapies, basic living expenses, etc. for their child with autism. Priority is given to single parents.

For more information, please visit <http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/helpinghand.php>.

IDEA Public Meetings

John H. Hager, assistant secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education, is pleased to share with you the schedule of a series of public meetings to be held during calendar year 2005 to receive comments on the proposed rules to implement programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Schedule:

- Monday, June 6, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
San Antonio, TX
- Friday, June 17, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Nashville, TN
- Wednesday, June 22, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Sacramento, CA
- Friday, June 24, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Las Vegas, NV
- Monday, June 27, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
New York, NY
- Wednesday, June 29, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Chicago, IL
- Tuesday, July 12, 2005
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Washington, DC

"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.

The Sibling Slam Book: What It is Really Like to Have a Brother or Sister with Special Needs!

Over two years in the making, The Slam Book was a labor of love. It features the candid, funny, and insightful observations of 80 teen sibs of kids who have wide range of special developmental and health needs from five countries. The book also features an introduction by David Gallagher, star of WB's *Seventh Heaven*, brother to a young man who has autism, and CAN Youth Ambassador.

To learn more about the book, please visit www.woodbinehouse.com/main.asp_Q_product_id_E_1-890627-52-6.

ASBJ Special Report: School Nurses

(From Health Care Transition for Youth Digest)

About 13 million children in kindergarten through 12th grade take medication in any two-week time period, according to a study by Ann Marie McCarthy, an associate professor at the University of Iowa -- and the number of children who take medication at school continues to grow. At the same time, the number of school nurses is falling.

For more information, go to <http://www.asbj.com/specialreports/0305SpecialReports/S1.html>.

SAMHSA Family Guide Web Site

(Courtesy of Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

The Family Guide Web site (<http://family.samhsa.gov>) offers ideas and support for adults who interact with youth to promote mental health and prevent substance abuse. SAMHSA developed A Family Guide To Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy & Drug Free to support adults/parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, and other youth mentors in their efforts to help children aged 7 to 18 make good decisions, feel safe and protected, and have successful lives. The ultimate goal is to promote youth mental health and discourage youth drug use.

"Together, We Can Stop Underage Drinking" is the theme of the 19th Annual Alcohol Awareness Month in April. Thus, we have collected articles and resources that focus on underage drinking and the destructive effects it can have on youth. Please share them with your family, friends, colleagues, and listservs.

Educational Resources Offering Educators Access to Free 30-Day PC Software Trials

(Courtesy Educational Resources)

Educational Resources has provided educators and schools with the tools and services necessary to achieve their instructional technology goals since 1985. As the nation's largest source of educational software, hardware, accessories, and supplemental products, the company serves educators in more than 16,000 school districts grades K-12. Educational Resources represents more than 300 vendors with over 5,000 educational software titles, supplemental software, and mixed-media curriculum courseware, as well as peripherals and accessories.

Free Trial Details

- Free educational software trials are only PC versions of the program
- After you install the free trial, it will automatically expire after 30-days
- System requirements for each program are located on the respective product page
- Data collected during the free trial may be lost when the purchased version is installed
- Trials are free, there is no obligation to purchase or return anything
- Some networks may block EXE downloads; please contact our Customer Service department for alternate download options.

Check out the list of free trials at http://www.edresources.com/trials.aspx?Afid=ERhomepage_trials.

Can't find the software you'd like to try? Contact Educational Resources Customer Service at ftrial@edresources.com.

New CCD Fact Sheets on Social Security

(From CCD)

The CCD Task Force on Social Security has prepared a set of seven fact sheets on Social Security and people with disabilities. The fact sheets are intended to assist people in understanding what benefits people with disabilities receive from Social Security and the potential impact of privatization.

These are all available now on CCD's website (in both PDF and Microsoft Word format) at <http://www.c-c-d.org> under "What's New in CCD."

Autism News and Resources from Exceptional Parent

(Courtesy of EP News)

EP Magazine's April Issue: Highlighting Autism Awareness Month

To highlight Autism Awareness Month, Exceptional Parent Magazine's April issue has devoted an entire section to the topic of autism. Some of the articles are: *Amazing Brother* by Chris Zainey; *A Different Kind of Road Trip*, about a man inspired by his daughter with autism, who will bike hundreds of miles to raise money for autism awareness; *A Family Odyssey*, by Carol Huhn, where a mother details the long road to independence traveled by her daughter; *The Genre of Inclusion: Painting the World As It Is* by Nancy Bea Miller; and *Visual Strategies Leverage Autism's Strengths to Improve Lives* by Desiree McClimon.

Introducing Max and Friends

Max and Friends: Volume 1 is a multimedia skill-building program for children with autism and related disabilities. The innovative package uses a children's television program (on DVDs), storybooks and music to present proven therapy-based exercises in a fun, simple format for children with special learning needs.

"*Max and Friends* is a wonderful product. So many videos and children's programs go by at breakneck speed. Max has a wonderful pace for all children, especially those with ASD, for whom the slower learning pace is essential," said Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Editor-in-Chief, *Autism Spectrum Quarterly*. Developed by a team of autism therapists and children's media professionals, *Max and Friends* can be used to help children with special learning needs develop core skills, but is fun and entertaining for children of all developmental levels. *Max and Friends* is organized into volumes of related skills. Volume 1 focuses on Imitation, Commands, and Matching. Each skill is the focus of a DVD and an accompanying storybook. The package also includes an instructive manual designed to train parents in teaching, maintaining and generalizing the skills as well as a CD of eighteen children's songs. To order, visit www.launchintolearning.org or call 1-800-559-9751.

Overboard—New Software for Communication Symbols

Overboard, the alternative to Boardmaker, is available now. Overboard is a communication board design package containing over 5,500 high-resolution communication symbols. Create professional looking communication displays in minutes. Quickly search over 55,000 words in the keyword library and instantly retrieve the respective communication symbol(s).

Age appropriate for children, teenagers and adults. No stick men. Resize symbols and pictures to fit any page size.

Print and/or save your work to disk, flash drive or floppy disk. Print displays in black & white or color (requires a color printer). Copy/paste symbols to (or from) Boardmaker. Make worksheets, symbol instruction sheets, books, journals, or calendars. Paste in digital photographs or any of Microsoft 130,000 clipart images and symbols.

Download a free trial copy!

You may download Overboard and evaluate the FULL version at no charge by going to www.gusinc.com/Overboard/index.html (63MB - 5 minute download with Cable/DSL connection).

What are little monsters made of? Early support, stimulation help stop kids from bullying later

By Helen Fields

Although many of us think of bullying as a normal part of growing up, it is increasingly seen as a public-health problem. Research has found that bullies and their victims may end up with long-term psychiatric problems, including addictions, and may grow up to abuse their spouses. A new study from the University of Washington looked at what factors early in childhood might lead kids to become bullies later.

Read the complete article at: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/health/briefs/childrenshealth/hb050405a.htm?track=rss>

Dyslexic prof writes book on overcoming her disability

By Kelly McBride For the New-Herald

"It was survival," she said. "Either I learned, or I was out."

Upham has become a key player in advocating for and counseling UWSP students with learning disabilities, said Sue Slick, associate professor of education at UWSP. Her uncanny ability to identify potential learning disorders has helped many students who couldn't quite get a handle on the problem, Slick said.

In addition, Upham's book, "Making the Grade: Reflections on Being Learning Disabled" can be a valuable resource for teachers who have learning disabled students, Slick said.

Read complete article at: <http://www.wisinfo.com/newsherald/mnhlocal/288647893013502.shtml>

Secretary Spellings Announces More Workable, "Common Sense" Approach To Implement No Child Left Behind Law

April 7, 2005 Contact: Susan Aspey, Samara Yudof, (202) 401-1576

Under a new approach to implementing the No Child Left Behind law, states will have additional alternatives and flexibility if they can show they are raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced today. Secretary Spellings made the announcement during a meeting with the nation's state education chiefs and other education leaders at George Washington's Mount Vernon estate near Washington, D.C.

Read complete article at: <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/04/04072005.html>

Math Learning Disabilities

Kate Garnett, Ph.D., Division for Learning Disabilities Journal of CEC. November 1998

While children with disorders in mathematics are specifically included under the definition of Learning Disabilities (Federal Register, August 23, 1977), seldom do math learning difficulties cause children to be referred for evaluation. In many school systems, special education services are provided almost exclusively on the basis of children's reading disabilities (Badian, 1983). Even after being identified as learning disabled (LD), few children are provided substantive assessment and remediation of their arithmetic difficulties (Goodstein & Kahn, 1974).

Read the complete article at: <http://www.ldonline.org/article.php?max=20&id=974&loc=70>

Antioxidant Levels May be Linked to Autism

Research suggests children with disorder suffer higher oxidative stress.

By Serena Gordon, HealthDay Reporter

SUNDAY, April 3 (HealthDay News) -- Could oxidative stress, a suspected contributor to many disease processes like heart disease and cancer, also play a role in autism?

"Glutathione is the major antioxidant in cells important for detoxification and elimination of environmental toxins, and its active form is reduced in about 80 percent of the kids with autism," said the study's lead author, S. Jill James. She is director of the biochemical genetics laboratory at Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute and a professor of pediatrics at the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.

James presented the study findings Saturday at the American Society for Nutritional Sciences' scientific sessions at the Experimental Biology conference in San Diego.

While this study is just a first step, she said, it wouldn't be unreasonable for parents of autistic children to talk with their child's doctor about giving them antioxidant supplements since these supplements are non-toxic.

...
"This is an interesting study and worth some more follow-up, but for parents or clinicians, it's an item of note, not a call to action," said Craig Newschaffer, director of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore. "There are no leaps to be made about using antioxidants as a therapeutic agent."

Read the complete article at: <http://www.drkoop.com/newsdetail/93/524907.html>

Second Life Teaches Life Lessons

By Daniel Terdiman 02:00 AM Apr. 06, 2005 PT

As a massively multiplayer online game, many people think of Second Life as little more than a virtual playground. But an increasing number of people and organizations are employing the game in applications that are useful for far more than entertainment.

Second Life was crafted as an open-ended environment that would allow players to fly, drive fantastical vehicles, dress up in outlandish outfits and build just about anything they could imagine. The game's developers at San Francisco's Linden Lab, however, didn't expect it to be used as a way for business school students to test entrepreneurial talents or for abused children to rediscover social skills.

According to a woman who goes by the in-world name of Gwyneth Llewelyn, a British organization called ARCI is using Second Life to help abused children in Portuguese safe houses by bringing them into the game and then working on socialization, collaboration, team building, computer skills and more.

"They easily get in touch with people that they don't personally know," said Llewelyn, explaining how the children, who are forced into hiding to get away from abusive parents, benefit from the game. "This means we seem to break a barrier of socializing."

Another project, called live2give, was undertaken by nine adults with cerebral palsy, and seeks to provide a forum in which they can share in the everyday personal interactions that most people take for granted. The group of nine, who share a single Second Life avatar known as Wilde Cunningham, get to experience being around other people without being judged.

"Many of the real-world challenges are bypassed in Second Life," said June-Marie Mahay, who works with the nine at an adult day-care center in Mattapan, Massachusetts. "Fewer folks have a problem hanging out with them, which is quite the opposite in real life. Also, due to their speech challenges, many would need help understanding them in real life, but in Second Life, I just type what they say and do what they want."

Added Mahay, "They felt stigmatized by their disabilities, (which) kept them from the normal social integration we take for granted. Second Life removes both of these things."

Read the complete article at: <http://www.wired.com/news/games/0,2101,67142,00.html?tw=rss.TOP>

Iowa Baby Is World's First To Receive Life-Saving Robotic Surgery

Surgeons in Children's Hospital of Iowa at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City recently repaired a potentially lethal disorder in a six-day-old Iowa girl, making her the first patient to have this type of defect corrected with a robotic surgical system as a neonate, and the smallest person to ever receive robotic surgery of any kind anywhere in the world.

Read complete article at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/03/050326100204.htm>

Car Talk Special Needs Zone

Remember the old slogan, "It's not just a car, it's your freedom?" If you've got a physical challenge of some kind, finding a car you can drive can be an ordeal.

Fortunately, there are all sorts of ingenious adaptations that can be made to assist people in overcoming these challenges. And, there are lots of organizations and web sites out there who are willing to help.

So, we decided to sort through all the resources we could find, and present it all in a logical, coherent fashion. (Not qualities we possess. We had our lackeys do it.)

Here are the results. We hope you find this information useful!

Go to <http://cartalk.com/content/features/Special-Needs/>

Effective Therapies For Bipolar Children Sought Through TEAM Study

March 14, 2005 — Child psychiatry researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis are investigating the effectiveness of several therapies for children with bipolar disorder, also known as manic depressive illness.

The study, called TEAM (Treatment of Early Age Mania), builds on previous research that showed bipolar disorder can occur in children as young as 7. During the manic phase of the illness, children may experience an inflated sense of

power and self esteem and inappropriately behave as if they are in charge at home or school. They may seem extremely happy, silly and giddy, but their moods can change rapidly. A decreased need for sleep and excessive chatter also are common. Some bipolar children experience depression at the same time.

Diagnosis is difficult because the manic phase can be confused with the more common attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The confusion arises because mania and ADHD both involve hyperactivity, irritability and distractibility. However, researchers have developed a diagnostic interview that differentiates bipolar disorder from ADHD and other psychiatric illnesses. All children eligible for the TEAM study will be evaluated using that interview.

Read the complete article at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/03/050326003303.htm>

Catching up without letting go

By Stacy A. Teicher | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

What spells "success" for native American students? Certainly one answer would be improvement in their reading and math scores, which lag significantly behind those of their white peers. But many educators also seek to give native students a solid grounding in their unique cultural traditions and history. And some worry that this is a goal that will lose out as an unintended consequence of the 2001 federal education law known as No Child Left Behind.

Native Americans fought hard to regain a say over their own education in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and '70s. But now that school staff members need higher-education credentials, what will happen to native-language classes taught by community elders? If schools are sanctioned for not meeting attendance goals, but not offered funding to cut down on truancy, how will they avoid coming under state control?

Read the complete article at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0329/p11s01-legn.html>

Prof films life on wheels

BY KAT HUANG

Research scientist Galen Buckwalter, disability rights activist Vicki Elman and screenwriter Ernie Wallengren shared 18 months of their lives on camera hoping to get the public to see eye to eye -- three feet off the ground.

"Rolling: life in a wheelchair," is a documentary produced by Dr. Gretchen Berland, an internal medicine professor at the School of Medicine. Berland has distributed over 15,000 copies of "Rolling" and is currently in negotiations to broadcast it on PBS in the hopes of reaching a larger audience and promoting awareness of neurological disorders. She said she wants the film to influence health policy decisions, and a screening for members of Congress in Washington, D.C. is scheduled to take place May 24.

Read the complete article at: <http://www.yaledailynews.com/article.asp?AID=28946>

Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital Creates Disability Awareness Coloring Book

Mon Mar 28, 6:34 PM ET

Contact: Denise LeBloch, 630-462-4127 or dlebloch@marianjoy.org, Char Mufich, 630-588-7882 or cmufich@marianjoy.org, both of Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital

WHEATON, Ill., March 28 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital has created a coloring book for children that addresses the awareness and acceptance of individuals living with disabilities and emphasizes the respect and dignity of all people, regardless of their physical appearance or limitations.

The coloring book, entitled The Amazing Colors Within, tells the story of a young boy's first encounter with a child in a wheelchair. The reader is taken on a journey with the main character as he questions what it means to have a disability and ultimately realizes that he and the disabled child can do many of the same things - and that there are even things the disabled child can teach him. The story helps emphasize the importance of recognizing individuality, celebrating differences and not allowing physical appearances to overshadow an individual's abilities.

Read the complete article at:

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/usnw/20050328/pl_usnw/marianjoy_rehabilitation_hospital_creates_disability_awareness_coloring_book148_xml

Citizens' Group Wants Hyperactivity Drug Taken Off the Market

By GARDINER HARRIS Published: March 25, 2005

30-year-old drug to treat hyperactivity made by Abbott Laboratories should be banned immediately because of its toxic effects on the liver, a citizen's group said yesterday in a petition to federal drug regulators.

At least 13 patients have died since 1975 taking the drug, known as Cylert or pemoline, according to the group. Reports given to the Food and Drug Administration show that at least 193 patients have suffered serious consequences from the drug, said Dr. Peter Lurie, deputy director of the group, Public Citizen.

Read the complete article at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/25/business/25warning.html?ei=5088&en=6dd2b5c7f0f90286&ex=1269406800&adxn=1&partner=rssnyt&adxnlnx=1111929872-L8aoXg7PEd6+/SPvHpFmng>

Free web hosting for US public schools

LA HABRA, CALIF. – JAN. 18, 2005 – Lunarpages, a provider of web hosting services and support, today announced it will offer free web hosting to all K-12 public schools in the U.S., effective immediately.

"Educating our youth is extremely important and donating web space to schools is a small contribution that could potentially make a big impact on students, teachers and parents across the country," said Ron Riddle, CEO and co-founder of Lunarpages. "We welcome any district administrator, school principal or classroom teacher to participate in this unique program."

Schools and districts can take advantage of this program to create websites that serve a variety of purposes, including:

- Increasing visibility for the school within its own community and beyond
- Facilitating communication between teachers and parents
- Sharing information between schools within a district or classrooms within a school
- Providing valuable information about daily schedules and events
- Serving as a bulletin board for homework assignments and class projects

As part of the program, Lunarpages will provide 1000 MB storage, unlimited email addresses, 40 GB data transfer, and unlimited phone and email support for each new account.

There is no restriction on the use of the account opened in conjunction with this program, provided it is opened by a school official and is used for educational purposes. Private schools, colleges, churches, day cares and schools outside of the United States are not eligible to participate.

<http://lunarpages.com>

Rubella Eliminated from United States, CDC Says

Mon Mar 21, 2005 02:36 PM ET

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Rubella, a virus that once caused tens of thousands of birth defects and deaths in a single outbreak, has been eliminated from the United States, health officials said Monday.

But Americans still must vaccinate their children, and women who might get pregnant must still ensure they are immune because the disease exists elsewhere, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

"A disease that once seriously harmed tens of thousands of infants is no longer a major health threat, thanks to a safe and effective vaccine and successful immunization programs across the country," CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding told a Washington, D.C. news conference.

Read the complete article at:

<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=healthNews&storyID=7962919&src=rss/healthNews>

Training/Workshops/Meetings/Conferences in Montana::

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>.

NAMI-Billings: Challenges of the System and Trends in Mental Health Today, April 19, Billings

(Courtesy of NAMI-Billings)

Education Meeting: Challenges of the System and Trends in Mental Health Today

Learn about the inherent challenges of the modern mental health care system from a local provider's perspective and gain more information about the services offered through Deaconess Billings Clinic.

WHEN: 7:00 PM Tuesday, April 19, 2005

WHERE: Deaconess Billings Clinic, Mary Alice Fortin Conference Center

SPEAKER: Carol Christensen-James, Manager, Deaconess Billings Clinic Psychiatry

Visit NAMI-Billings at <http://www.nami-billings.org> for more information about "Billings' Voice on Mental Illness."

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, MSDB, 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 and 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>

Online Training/Workshops/Events:::

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."

New Discussion:

Developing Switch Skills - Using One and Two Switches

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.

Other Current Discussions:

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.

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

**E-SEMINAR: Empowering Families for the Long Term: Options for Long Term Care Planning and Financing
April 12th and 19th**

If you are like most family caregivers, you can always use more information on long-term care and financing issues. Here's an easy and innovative way to get some by joining an E-seminar called "Empowering Families for the Long Term: Options for Long Term Care Planning and Financing"

Teacher: Gus Velleco: Financial Services Professional specializing in long term care planning for over five years.

Moderator: Lauren E. Storck, Ph.D., Director, The Eldercare and Technology Matters Program for Online Learning and Support.

When: Two consecutive Tuesdays, April 12 and April 19th via emails

Cost: \$35 per person (\$30 for five or more) - (providers requesting CEU's add ten dollars per person please).

This two-day seminar is informative, fun, and immediately useful via emails, chats, and distribution of resources by two Seminar leaders. You are invited from all States and countries (English used) to participate any time convenient for you during each of the two days.

The E-seminar will cover the following topics:

- a. psychology and social issues for planning and long term care,
- b. new programs helping families and providers 'share the care' and take good 'self care,' and
- c. options to finance long term care.

REGISTER now online at www.caregiving-online.com by clicking on one of two links for the April E-Seminar. There is a cost to participate but NFCA members are being offered a 15% discount, when you sign up mention that you heard about the e-seminar from NFCA to get your discount.

If you have any questions send an email to drstorck@caregiving-online.com.

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)

AG Bell Live Chat on Cochlear Implant Technology Updates April 21

(From AG Bell)

Join AG Bell for a live chat on cochlear implant updates sponsored by Cochlear Americas on Thursday, April 21, 2005. Angela Wieker, M.B.A., Marketing Manager of the Progressive Segment of Cochlear Americas, will provide an overview of cochlear implant updates and answer participant questions. Angela has been employed by Cochlear Americas for 5 years and currently assists potential cochlear implant candidates and other hearing health professionals in learning about innovative technologies.

Chats will be held at 12:00 noon Eastern and again at 9:00 p.m. Eastern.

The chats will continue for one hour.

You do not have to be an AG Bell member to participate.

Instructions for Joining the Chat on April 21

1. Go to the AG Bell home page www.agbell.org.
2. Click on the announcement for the Cochlear Implant Update chat.
3. Read AG Bell's chat guidelines and rules.
4. Click on "Launch Java Chat."

a) The AG Bell Chat window is a pop-up. If your browser is enabled to block pop-ups, please make the adjustment to accept the chat pop-up. This can often be done by hitting "Control" on your keyboard while opening the Chat window.

b) Your Browser will also need to be Java enabled, so if it isn't, go to <http://java.com/en/download/installed.jsp> and follow the instructions.

5. Create a "Nick Name."

a) Feel free to use any name you'd like - this nickname will identify you when you join in on the chat.

6. Click "Connect Now."

7. Begin chatting!

Disability Law Resource Project (DLRP) Webcast: IDEA 2004, RESCHEDULED for May 18, 3:00-4:30 PM EST

The DLRP webcast on IDEA 2004 will now take place on WEDNESDAY, MAY 18 from 3:00-4:30pm Eastern. 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, May 18, 2005, from 3:00-4:30pm Eastern; 2:00 Central; 1:00 Mountain; 12:00 Pacific; 11:00 Alaska; 9:00 Hawaii.

PRESENTER:

As the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), Troy Justesen serves as the principal adviser to the Assistant Secretary of OSERS on all departmental matters related to special education and rehabilitative services. Additionally, he is Acting Commissioner of DOE's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Before coming to OSERS, Dr. Justesen served as the Associate Director for Domestic Policy at the White House. He also served as the Deputy Executive Director of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education and worked for three years as an Education Policy Analyst with DOE in the Office of Special Education Programs. Please submit questions for the presenter ahead of time to webcast@ilru.org.

SUMMARY:

IDEA 2004 becomes effective July 1, 2005. In this webcast, 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.

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

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Training/Workshops/Conferences outside Montana::

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>.

National Native American Families Together (NNAFT) Community Friends Conference "Educating Every Child: Meeting the Needs of Our Children in Special Education" April 25-27, San Diego CA

(From NNAFT)

This conference is designed to give the NNAFT Community, parents, teachers and other professionals the opportunity to learn more about the special education law and disability issues that affect Native children. The learning strands have been developed to allow participants to focus in-depth on one specific area. Participants who sign up for one strand and attend all the sessions will be able to earn college credit. Participants may also choose to attend a variety of sessions for an overview of issues in special education.

Cost: \$500/person

Register online at www.nativefamilynetwork.com.

CAST Universal Design for Learning: Supporting Struggling Readers April 25-26, Wakefield MA

Presented by Bridget Dalton and Patrick Proctor

Grades: Upper Elementary and Middle School

Register Now: <http://www.cast.org/pd/registration/index.html>

What is the greatest challenge facing today's educators? Many educators are faced with addressing the needs of students who are struggling readers. However, students struggle with text for a variety of reasons, and tackling the individual learning needs of struggling readers is crucial for their literacy success. If you are looking for research-based methods for supporting struggling readers, this institute is for you.

YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities Network 26th Annual International Conference "Building Brighter Futures for People with Developmental and Learning Disabilities," May 9-13, NYC

Dive into one of the largest conferences of its kind at the 26th annual YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities Network international conference. This event features more than 120 sessions and 2 full-day post conference workshops.

Cost: Varies \$195-\$545

Visit www.yai.org for conference details, including a full agenda, and to register.

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>.

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>.

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>.

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.

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>

PLUK eNews is published by:



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