



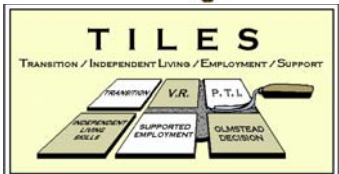
Fundamentally For Families

The Quarterly Newsletter for Families and Advocates of Children and Adults with Disabilities, Special Needs, or At-Risk and the Professionals Who Work With Them.

The Heart ♥ Network



PARENT
EDUCTION
NETWORK
Parents Educating Parents
in the Community
(PEP)



Sharing The Commitment



First Florida
Pooled Trust

The Right To A Decent Life

It seems like we've seen this all before, doesn't it? That's because we have. The fighting over pennies, the divisions in the disability community between the "haves" and "have nots," the nickel and diming people with disabilities into submission so that they can hopefully, somehow, simply survive. As I write this, the outcome in the Legislature of funding for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waiver is uncertain, but we've been here before.

My favorite term that I've heard used in favor of cutting the money available to persons with disabilities is "overutilization of services." Give me a break. That's just another way of saying that your right to live a decent life just isn't worth that much to us. We're just going to draw an arbitrary line in the sand and, if you need more than that to live, that's not our problem.

What we're talking about here is simple decency. Not extravagance. Not "overutilization". By the way, how does one "overutilize" a ventilator? What we're talking about here is the ability of persons with disabilities to lead a life where they don't have to continually beg and demean themselves just to be able to get through their day. We're talking about the ability of their families to lead a life where they don't daily sacrifice their mental and physical health, year in and year out, just so their children will survive.

Regardless of what happens with the APD budget, as of right now, the best estimates are that it will take six years for someone to get off of the HCBS waiver wait list and start receiving services. That's not a typo – I said six years. Let's try to put this into a little perspective.

Continue on page 2....

Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc. (The Heart ♥ Network)

2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL 33760-1610

(800) 825-5736 or (727) 523-1130 fax: (727) 523-8687

FND Web Page: <http://fndfl.org> FND e-mail: fnd@fndfl.org

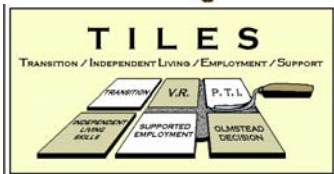
Executive Director: Rich La Belle e-mail: richlabelle@fndfl.org



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PARENT EDUCATION NETWORK Parents Educating Parents in the Community (PEP)



Sharing The Commitment



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Fundamentally For Families

The Right To A Decent Life

....continued

That's after the next presidential and gubernatorial elections. In six years, nearly all the current members of the Legislature will have moved on, having reached their term limits. However, Florida's citizens with disabilities and their families will be still be waiting for services.

Six years – what does this mean for people with disabilities and their families?

Six years until a mother can sleep through the night without fear of her child choking to death if she dozes too long.

Six years until the exhausted and overwhelmed parents of several young children with disabilities can get some help so that they can safely get from the parking lot to the store, managing two wheelchairs, a walker, and a stroller to do so.

Six years until a young woman with disabilities can have a personal care assistant of her own gender help her with her most intimate daily needs, instead of having to rely on her divorced father with whom she lives.

I'm sorry – am I getting too graphic? I hope not, because I'm not making this stuff up. I have been privileged and honored to work with and live among persons with disabilities and their families who have taught me, day after day, the meaning of humanity. This can't just be reduced to a matter of dollars and cents. This will dramatically impact people's lives.

Is this the best we can do? Of course not. Is this the best we will do? I hope not. Is decency really too much to ask?

Richard La Belle, Executive Director
Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.

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GOVERNOR CRIST RECOGNIZES AUTISM AWARENESS

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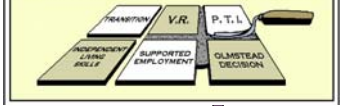


Parents Of the Panhandle Information Network

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TILES
TRANSITION / INDEPENDENT LIVING / EMPLOYMENT / SUPPORT

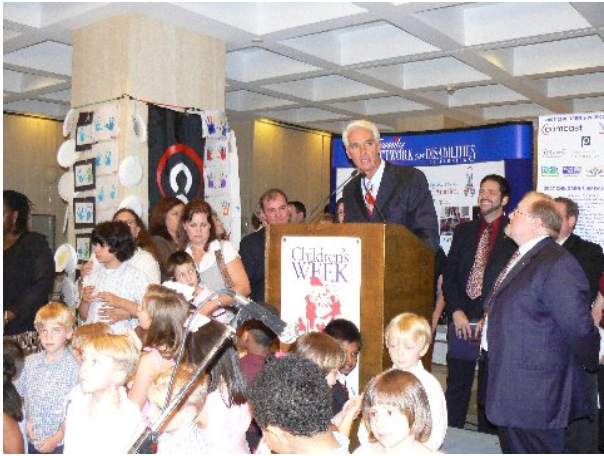



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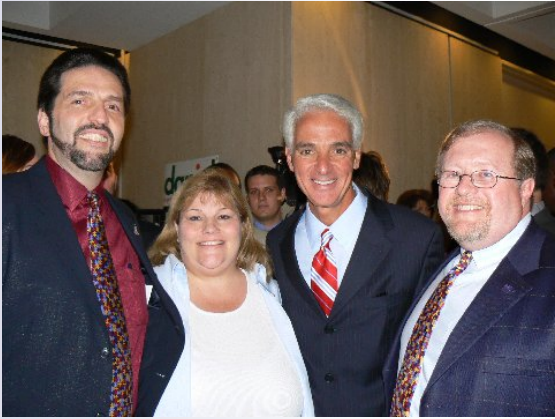



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Governor Charlie Crist recognized Autism Awareness Day in Tallahassee on Tuesday. The Governor spoke in the Rotunda of the Capitol at an event sponsored by the Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc. and the Autism Society of Florida. The Governor spoke movingly of the challenges facing those with autism and their families. He also introduced Guy and Kim, parents of Nicholas, who has autism. Guy is a member of the Governor's security detail.



"I greatly appreciate the Governor taking the time to be here with us today to recognize autism, which now affects one in every 150 children born in the United States," said Richard La Belle, Executive Director of Family Network on Disabilities, who also spoke at the event.



Ven Sequenzia, President of the Autism Society of Florida, introduced the Governor. Also present were Family Network Board members Sharon Rousey, Sarah Lopez, and Patricia Fry.

"I'd like to thank our Board members who came to Tallahassee to be here with us today," said La Belle. "Their commitment to Family Network, to autism awareness, and to improving the lives of all persons with disabilities is incredible. I'd also like to specifically recognize Ashley Ocampo, director of our Parents of the Panhandle Information Network, who made today's event possible with her tremendous hard work. Without her, this wouldn't have been possible."

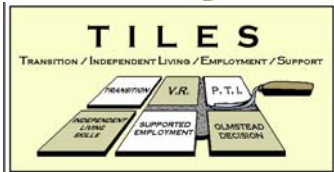
At present in the United States, a person is diagnosed with autism every 19 minutes.



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Family Network Seeks Applicants for Board Openings

The Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors of Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc. (FND) is currently accepting applications for a limited number of vacancies on the Board from a diverse population. The Nominating Committee invites persons with disabilities over the age of 18, family members of persons with disabilities, professionals who work with persons with disabilities, and members of the public to apply. Applicants will receive preference if they reside in the following counties: Alachua; Baker; Bay; Bradford; Broward; Calhoun; Collier; Columbia; Dixie; Escambia; Franklin; Gadsden; Gilchrist; Glades; Gulf; Hamilton; Hendry; Holmes; Jackson; Jefferson; Lafayette; Lee; Leon; Liberty; Madison; Martin; Miami-Dade; Monroe; Okaloosa; Palm Beach; Santa Rosa; Suwanee; Taylor; Union; Wakulla; Walton; and Washington.

Please apply if you are interested in being part of a dynamic, family-based advocacy organization that has positive change for persons with disabilities as its focus. We serve all persons with disabilities of all ages.

Board Member Duties and Benefits -

As a Board member, you will agree to attend a minimum of four Board meetings a year, which are usually held on Friday evenings and all day on Saturday, at various locations around Florida. Active participation in, and service on, Board committees is also required. A complete Board member agreement is included in the Candidate Application packet. Being an FND Board member is an exciting and rewarding experience. Benefits to you as a member of our Board will include being able to work with a diverse group of dedicated individuals; being able to participate in statewide efforts for systems change for persons with disabilities; and being kept up to date on the latest disability-related developments at the state and national levels. If you are looking for a meaningful way to contribute to the disability community through service, we invite your application. Please also forward this notice to other persons who you think may be good candidates for our Board.

For More Information:

For more information about FND, please visit our web site at www.fndfl.org.

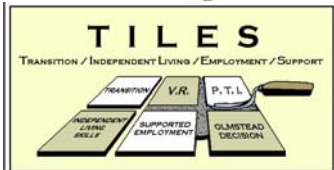
To request a Candidate Application packet, please email julieshaw@cfl.rr.com (be sure to enter "FND Candidate Application Packet" in the subject line) or call 386-847-6792.



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Camps for kids with special needs

The Mission of Camp Boggy Creek is to enrich the lives of children who have chronic or life threatening illnesses by creating camping experiences that are memorable, exciting, fun, empowering, physically safe and medically sound. To receive an application to attend camp, please fill out the following form. You may also request a form by calling **(352) 483-4200 ext 252**, or fax **(352) 483-2959**.
<http://www.boggycreek.org/2006/home.asp>



Very Special Camps is an online resource for individuals - with one or more of a wide range of special needs - to effectively obtain information about related summer camp programs and special needs camps.



www.verypecialcamps.com

My Summer Camps is a comprehensive, easy to use summer camps directory for kids, teens and youth.



<http://www.mysummercamps.com/>

The Guided Tour provides professionally supervised vacations for adults with developmental challenges, including, but not limited to the following: mental retardation, developmental disabilities, down syndrome, autism, learning disabilities, Williams Syndrome, Asperger Syndrome, ADD, Prader Willi, and ADHD.



<http://guidedtour.com/>

National Camps for Blind Children®/Adults (USA) and National Camps for the Blind®



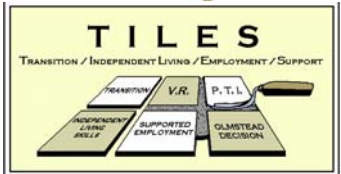
Each camp is scheduled at a well-equipped site, chosen especially for the standard of excellence and geographical location.

Committed staff and counselors are trained to meet the needs of our blind campers. Medical personnel are on duty 24 hours a day. Emergency care is available when needed.
<http://www.christianrecord.org/index.php>



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Upcoming Events



Sharing The Commitment



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Family Network on Disabilities of Florida is proud to present:
IDEA Part C Mini Conference
DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 12TH, 2007
TIME: 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
WHERE: STEP BY STEP,
5860 GOLDEN GATE PARKWAY, NAPLES, FL 34116

Presenters: Wilbur Hawke, Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.
Joan E. Foss, Program Director, Early Steps
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON PART C OF IDEA TO PART B IDEA
Panel Discussion with WILBUR HAWKE, JOAN FOSS AND OTHERS

THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT is the federal law that provides guides to states on educating children with disabilities. This workshop provides an overview of IDEA part C which includes basic information on evaluation for eligibility, Family Support Plans and more....

IEP/ CLINIC will provide information on the process and emphasizes the importance of parental participation. It also includes helpful tips on strategies for writing effective IEP goals.

Spanish translation available For more information contact A. Spinella, 239-734-7127 or Sherry Francis, 239-261-0082

Friday May 18th, 2007 9:30am-11:30am

It's a Great IDEA – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that provides guidelines to states on educating children with disabilities. This workshop provides an overview of IDEA and includes basic information on evaluation for eligibility, the Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP), conflict resolution, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This workshop is a great place to start if you've never been to a workshop about Exceptional Student Education.

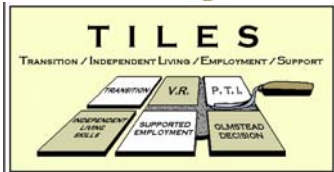
Contact: Nicole Brown, Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.
Email: nicole@fndfl.org
Phone: 800-825-5736
Location Details: ARC Gateway 3932 N. 10th Ave. Pensacola, Fl



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Are you in a Support, Information, or Advocacy Group??

Is your group listed on our website??

If not, please contact us and let us know that you would like to be listed!

We will also post a link to your website.

Call today! (800)825-5736 or e-mail fnd@fndfl.org.

FND Wants To Hear From You!!!!!!

FND welcomes input from our Fundamentally for Families readers. Whether you are a parent, family member, consumer, or professional, we value your opinions and insights.

If you would like to submit an article, an inspirational story about yourself, your child or family member, accomplishments or upcoming events of your local support group, photographs or best practices, you may write us at:

Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.

Attn: Tara Bremer

2735 Whitney Road

Clearwater, Fl 33760-1610

By email at: tara@fndfl.org or call the FND State Office at (800) 825-5736.

ONLINE TUTORIALS

There are TWO choices for online learning from FND!

Workshop Tutorials

Just like attending a workshop... only from the comfort of your own home!
Viewing each workshop takes about 30 minutes... but go at your own pace!

Topics include: IDEA, IEP, Juvenile Justice & IDEA,

Collaborative Communication,

PBS, Transition, The Rehabilitation Act and IPE!

Or An Online Course on "It's a Great IDEA!"

Based on the same curriculum as the workshop and tutorial, but more in-depth. This online 4-week course includes: mini pop-quizzes, weekly homework assignments, and a final test. Upon successful completion of this online Distance Learning course, participants will receive a personalized certificate in the mail.



Fundamentally For Families

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT FND

All donations are tax-deductible. Please send donations with this form to:
Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.
2735 Whitney Rd. Clearwater, FL 33760

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