

Volunteer Connections

FEBRUARY 2014

Dear Volunteers,

February is a month dedicated to loving and appreciating those we support and care about. I hope you remember you are truly the 'heart' of our organization. It has been said that the heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others. As you use your leadership skills to reach out and serve others in your communities, their lives are enriched, they are more easily able to handle the unique challenges of being a parent of a child with disabilities. Thanks for all your heartfelt work!

Please send me information on any event or resource you feel would be valuable to other volunteers. Don't forget your reporting!!! Thank you everyone!

Sincerely,

Rebecca

Rebecca Turley
Volunteer Programs Coordinator
(801)272-1051 / rebeccat@utahparentcenter.org

VOLUNTEER REPORTING:

Please take the opportunity to report any volunteer activities you've been involved in. The link below will provide you with 6 different types of activities you can report on such as:

- Direct support to families.
- Conferences and trainings.
- Helping parents with IEP related support.
- Serving on committee's that promote systems change for families who have children with disabilities.
- Outreach promotion of UPC services and events.
- Sharing your family story with educators or participating on a parent panel.

If you have participated in any of these activities, select "yes" when your activity appears on the survey. You will then be asked: When did you participate in the activity?; How much of your time was involved?; and How many people were served?

Reporting Link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Volunteer_reporting

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GIFTS: ALL volunteers who have provided service and have fully completed the reporting survey will receive an appreciation gift! This is our way of thanking you for your time and dedication in serving parents who have children with disabilities and telling us about it! Each gift will include its own message of appreciation. Please take the time to do your reporting so we can recognize your good works!

What's Your Story?

The Utah Parent Center is looking for success stories from families who have been helped by the UPC. We will be using the stories and pictures we collect on our website, in marketing materials, and in training publications and resources.

- Did you call the Center for problem-solving help, resources, support, information, training, or materials?
- Did you attend one of our many workshops or the Family Links Conference?
- How did it help you? What did you learn that made a difference?

Send us a short paragraph telling your story and how the caring, competent staff of the Center helped you and your family.

Be sure to include a picture (or two!) that we can use when sharing your story. You could also video record yourself briefly explaining how the UPC helped you. Please e-mail your story, pictures and a completed media release form to cassandra@utahparentcenter.org. **Media Release Form:** [Image/Media Release Form](#)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

It is my pleasure to spotlight Lendy Hart, an IEP Coach from Murray School District. Lendy is a busy mom with 7 children ranging in ages from 11 years old to 29 years old. Her children have a variety of disabilities including autism, adhd, ocd and anxiety. Lendy has been volunteering for the Utah Parent Center for many years and enjoys serving in all capacities. Participating in parent panels gives Lendy the opportunity to share her story and provide insights about her children's educational experience to future educators. Lendy expresses, "It's an honor to speak publicly, especially with students going into special education as well as general education. Sharing my story with them enables me to speak from the heart about my own experiences in regards to inclusion."

Lendy supports other parents who have children with disabilities by always being available to listen, suggesting resources, and referring many of them to the Utah Parent Center. As an IEP Coach, Lendy has attended many workshops offered by the UPC and is skilled at helping parents advocate for the educational needs of their children. She also enjoys volunteering in other capacities such as helping with conferences and events. Lendy's passion for her volunteer work comes from her desire to give back to society and her community. It is important to Lendy to help others see things they normally might miss. Lendy's goal is to help parents and families to not only endure life but to live and enjoy life by empowering them with the knowledge and tools they need to be successful advocates for their children.

IEP COACH CORNER – Getting Involved in the Legislative Process

It's important that the parents you work with understand the difference they can make by sharing their personal stories and experiences with their legislators. Our representatives need to hear both the successes and needs of the systems that support children and adults with disabilities. As volunteer leaders you can invite your designated representative to hear the needs of the families in your area. Many parents take the time to write thank you notes to their representatives. Contacting and educating the legislators/committee members is important. Remember if legislators don't hear from you, they assume everything is okay. Please take time to share your story. The following agencies and contacts have dedicated their time to legislative advocacy and would be happy to teach you more about how to get involved in the legislative process:

- **Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities (LCPD):** Joyce Dolcourt, Chair of the LCPD; utah.lcpd@gmail.com. To join the coalition and learn how to get involved go to <http://www.lcpdut.org/>.

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- **Grassroots Advocacy Partnership (GAP):** Kristen Chapman, GAP Outreach Coordinator; Kristen@utahadvocacy.org. To join the Network Partnership, find your regional representative and stay up to date on current legislative happenings go to www.utahgap.org.

The following information pieces on public policy will provide additional information on how to be actively involved.

- **Public Policy Work/Month to Month Advocacy:** <http://www.utahparentcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Section-8-Public-Policy-Work-Section-for-Participants-Handbook.pdf>

Understand the Legislative Process

by Kris Fawson, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities (LCPD)

To understand how to influence potential legislation, you must first discover how the legislative process works. The State Legislature is responsible for making and changing state laws, as well as setting funding levels for the executive branch of government (the state budget).



There are two processes that take place:

1. **The Appropriations Process decides the state budget** and sets the funding levels for state programs, for example: funding for the waiting list, education, health care, Medicaid, housing, deaf and blind services, employment, etc. This is where your advocacy will take place if you have budget concerns.
2. **The Bill Process creates or changes state statute** and creates new programs, for example: creating an assistive technology program, the lemon law, changing statute of how funding is distributed to school districts, etc.

Advocacy begins when YOU recognize a need to improve a program, create a new program or change state statute. Begin by talking to advocacy groups and getting others involved. Next you want to talk to state agency directors. Finally you take your issue(s) to legislators.

If your issue goes through the **Appropriations Process** you want to find out which Legislative Appropriations Committee would be discussing your issue. Contact the members of that committee. The appropriation committees that work consistently with disability issues are:

Health and Human Services – Early Health Services, Health Care including Medicaid, Mental Health, and Services for People with Disabilities

Higher Education

Public Education – Education, Schools for the Deaf and Blind, Rehabilitation including Independent Living, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Services for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Vocational Rehabilitation

If you are **creating or changing state statute** you must find a legislator who can support your idea or “carry the bill”. This idea then becomes a bill which needs to pass through the legislative process in order to become law. A bill will be heard and voted on seven times before it becomes a law.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

The IEP Process and Dispute Resolution Questions and Answers

Please join the Utah Parent Center and the Disability Law Center for this IEP Process and Dispute Resolution Question and Answer Session for parents of children and youth with disabilities or special needs.

Call (801) 272-1051 to register now

Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Location: Utah Parent Center – 230 West 200 South, Suite 1101, SLC, 84101

Transition from School to Adult Life!

Students with autism spectrum disorders or intellectual disabilities in combination with a mental illness (Dual Diagnosis) require specialized supports as they transition to adulthood. Dan Baker, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, will explain the impact of Dual Diagnosis and provide best practices for the career development process, steps necessary for successful employment, and how using community-based instruction can positively impact students. Call the Utah Parent Center at (801) 272-1051 to register now.

Dates: Friday, May 9, 2014 or Saturday, May 10, 2014

Time: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Lunch will be provided

Location: Utah Parent Center – 230 West 200 South, Suite 1101, SLC, 84101

Latest E-Connections, for more resources and events including a schedule of upcoming UPC workshops:

<http://www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/electronic/e-connections/>

PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING TAX SEASON?

The IRS Offers Help to Parents of Children with Special Needs

Parents of children with special needs have unique financial concerns - their children often need special care that is expensive. The government grants these families many special tax deductions that they are often unaware of. Please review the following article for a listing of credits and deductions that could provide some financial relief.

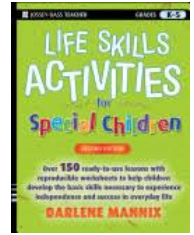
http://www.nesca-news.com/2013/04/the-irs-offers-help-to-parents-of.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+NescaNewsNotes+%28NESCA+News+%26+Notes%29

Tax Disability Exemption Form

Attention parents who have a child who is receiving special education services. You may qualify to apply for a tax exemption. For more information go to: <http://tax.utah.gov/forms/current/tc-40d.pdf>.

BOOK OF THE MONTH – Available for loan from our Lending Library

Life Skills Activities for Special Children by Darlene Mannix – This book will provide you with a collection of practical, easy-to-use, open-ended activities to assist in teaching life skills to special children. Many types of skills are required today, not only to survive but to experience independence and success in everyday living. Included in this book are 145 ready-to-use lessons with reproducible worksheets to help children develop the basic skills necessary for independence and everyday living. **If you are interested in borrowing a copy of this book please call the Utah Parent Center at (800) 468-1160. We would be happy to mail you a copy.**



SPECIAL INTEREST: DISABILITY ISSUES IN THE NEWS

New Medicaid Waiver Rules Set To Take Effect - In a long-awaited move, federal officials are clarifying what counts as home and community-based services for people with disabilities.

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/01/10/new-medicaid-waiver/19007/>

Supreme Court To Consider What Defines Intellectual Disability - How should states decide if someone convicted of a crime has an intellectual disability, when the answer means life or death? This spring the Supreme Court will wade back into these murky waters, 12 years after it took the death penalty off the table for criminals with mental disabilities but left the details to the states.

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2013/12/10/supreme-court-intellectual/18959/>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Please contact me at rebeccat@utahparentcenter.org or call at (801) 272-1051 if you are interested in participating in any of the following volunteer opportunities. I would love to hear from you!

Seeking new Family to Family Support Group Leaders and/or Co-Leaders Statewide

New Network Leaders should be receiving services, on the waiting list, or in the process of determining eligibility with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD). This allows Leaders to be a resource for individuals and families using these services as well as for other organizations. Networks may have Leaders or other officers who do not meet the criteria related to DSPD. New Leaders will receive ongoing support from the Utah Parent Center and existing Network Leaders. Please contact me for more information.

Parent Panel Requests: The Utah Parent Center is asked several times a year to speak to students at the college level going into both general and special education. Our current parent panel requests come from the University of Utah and Westminster College. Volunteers who participate on the panel share information about their child with a disability and provide insights about their child's educational experience to future educators. It provides parents with a great opportunity to share what has worked well with their children and offer advice and tips on what needs to work better. The students benefit greatly from the 'parent perspective.'

IEP Coach Training: The Utah Parent Center has an ongoing need for parent volunteers who have been trained to help parents successfully go through the IEP process. If any volunteers are interested in receiving this training or know of someone who would make a good IEP Coach, please let me know. New volunteers will need to take our New Volunteer Training as a prerequisite to the IEP Coach Training and will need to fill out a New Volunteer Application. All IEP Coaches need to support parents by attending a minimum of 3 IEP meetings per year to remain active. For more information about this training program please review the following information piece:

[IEP Coach Opportunity Program](#)

CALL FOR PICTURES

The Utah Parent Center is looking for pictures of children or young adults with disabilities engaged in the following types of activities:

- Family Photos – Showcase your family including your child with a disability.
- Using assistive technology
- Participating in a community based activity.
- Showing off a talent.
- Working at a job site.
- Demonstrating a skill.
- Participating in a school based activity

The Utah Parent Center wishes to use these pictures in training and marketing materials which promote the Center's goals and objectives. All parents will be asked to fill out a media release authorizing the use of your pictures. Please e-mail all pictures and completed media release form to cassandra@utahparentcenter.org.

Media Release Form: [Image/Media Release Form](#)