

# Volunteer Connections

**JULY 2014**

Dear Volunteers,

I hope you are enjoying the summer months with your families. I have a 19 year old daughter with significant disabilities who will be transitioning out of her post-high transition program within the next few years. Sarah's goals for herself include finding employment, continuing her education and having the ability to enjoy community experiences. In order for Sarah to achieve her goals she will need access to funding and programs which will provide her with Supported Employment and Supported Living opportunities. Programs like Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and/or the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) can work in collaboration to provide an appropriate level of service individualized to the client or person receiving the services. The following newsletter provides information and resources for parents preparing to transition their young adult with disabilities into adult programs and supports. Please share these resources with the parents you serve.



## **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.

**Reporting Link:** [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Volunteer\\_reporting](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!

### IEP COACH CORNER

#### Family Roles in the Transition from School to Work

The following are suggestions of things parents can do to help their sons and daughters in planning and preparing for college and careers:

- Listen and support your child when discussing interests and future goals, even if his/her ideas may seem unrealistic
- Provide early career exploration activities such as opportunities to visit and discuss a variety of job/career opportunities through family outings, job shadowing experiences with family, relatives and friends
- Emphasize through family and home activities the basic skills needed to succeed in school and the workplace such as: organization, decision-making, time management, problem-solving, and getting along with others
- Monitor school assignments and capture opportunities to relate skills to the world of work and adult roles and responsibilities such as: relating math skills to budgeting; relating written and oral language assignments to interacting with employers, co-workers, or the public; relating research assignments to collecting information that helps make informed decisions
- Encourage career-related activities during your child's spare time such as volunteering at a hospital or a veterinary clinic, baby-sitting, or doing odd jobs in the neighborhood
- Communicate openly and often with your child's teacher; ask how school work can be coordinated with the home; work together to resolve problems when they arise; help create a system of regular communication not just when bad things happen (phone call schedule, e-mail, notes, etc.)
- Build a relationship with your child's career or guidance counselor or transition specialist; ask for career information
- Be available for visits or phone calls from your child's employer; if appropriate offer to provide first-hand information or suggestions that may be helpful on the job
- During transition planning meetings provide the team with information regarding your child's skills and behaviors at home, past experiences, and dreams and goals for your child
- During transition planning meetings ask questions of teachers, counselors and your son or daughter regarding education and career options, labor market trends, community resources, specific family and student preferences and realities
- Encourage your child to be a major player on the planning team and to talk about his/her interests, dreams and goals

The National School to Work Information and Learning Center (1996) identified effective features of transition programs for students with disabilities that families can look for:

- Longitudinal Planning - Beginning at age 14, students with disabilities begin looking ahead and making long-term plans which will facilitate their transition from school to adult life, which may include college, advanced technical skill training, or direct entry into employment
- Emphasizing Careers, Not Labels - The individualized assessment and planning of students should lead to placement according to the student's interests and preferences, not according to expectations based on "labels" or by what is available in the community
- Work-Based Learning - Many opportunities are available for real exploration and experiences in the world of work, including job-shadowing, internships and paid work experiences.
- Connection to Community Resources - Linkages are needed with community and adult services so that all aspects of a student's life are considered including independent living skills and arrangements and family and community interactions, all of which impact on a successful transition.

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- Sustained Involvement of Employers - True Business/Education Partnerships where employers are part of the transition planning and training process, system-wide and on an individual basis lead to a sustained investment by employers where they benefit directly from the partnership and work experiences.

To help ensure that youth with disabilities were served through inclusive School-to-Work Opportunities Act programs, the following strategies were identified:

- Full participation of the student with disabilities in the planning and decision-making process with a focus on the student's preferences.
- Full integration of youth with disabilities into the school-to-work system rather than a separate, set-aside programs.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the members of the IEP and transition planning team including students, parents, teachers, counselors, and service providers.
- Continuous communication between members of the IEP and transition planning team.
- Employment of a Transition Specialist who can provide career guidance and counseling to students as well as assist employers, teachers and parents to plan and implement strategies for assisting youth with disabilities.
- Emphasis on long-term planning and future workforce demands, as opposed to one-year program planning and current job availability.
- Providing the same school-to-work opportunities and options for all students, including students with disabilities, while holding all students to the same high standards.
- Providing opportunities for students with disabilities to build the social and interpersonal skills needed to become fully integrated into the world of work and the community.

*The Partners for Independence Project, a project of the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) in Virginia originally prepared this information. The TATRA Project provided PEATC with additional resources to develop their expertise on School to Work issues. To access additional online information produced by PEATC's Partners for Independence project go to [www.peatc.org/helpfulinfo.htm#Transitioning](http://www.peatc.org/helpfulinfo.htm#Transitioning)*

### **CAREER WEB RESOURCES**

How do you find "good" career resources for your student? The internet is full of options, but which are good, reliable resources? Below are websites designed to help students select a career path that compliment his/her interests, strengths and skills. Parents and students can explore these options together.

#### **Utah Futures Career Information System – [www.utahfutures.org](http://www.utahfutures.org)**

Students are able to answer questions about themselves and connect to occupations that may match their interests, skills, and employment preferences. Students can learn about occupations and employment options, find training programs and education, create resume's and search for jobs.

#### **O\*Net Online – [www.onetonline.org/](http://www.onetonline.org/)**

Use this site as a tool for career exploration and job analysis. The O\*Net program is the nation's primary source of occupational information.

#### **My Next Move – [www.mynextmove.org/](http://www.mynextmove.org/)**

This site is simple and easy to navigate. It will explore different types of jobs and provide a description of the skills, abilities, personality traits, and technology abilities that an individual should have in order to be successful at the job.

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**Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)** – [www.bls.gov/ooh/](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/)

Another career discovery website containing information about hundreds of occupations.

### OTHER TRANSITION RESOURCES

#### **Transition to Adult Life Information Sheets**

[www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/infosheets/transadultinfosheets/](http://www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/infosheets/transadultinfosheets/)

The Utah Parent Center website provides a series of useful and practical information sheets to help parents and young adults understand the transition process from school to adult life and services.

#### **Peer Connections – A Program for Establishing and Enhancing Relational Skills, a project of Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain**

Peer Connections is a transition program designed to help students ages 16-22 with High Functioning Autism establish and enhance their relational skills, while exploring work and career activities. The project fills an existing service gap for students with High Functioning Autism by providing opportunities for regular social interactions with a peer of similar age during a structured community service activity. Students in the Peer Connections program receive real world experience in an employment setting which is designed to target essential employment skills. Interested parents can contact Jacquelynn Bradley at [jacquelynnb@esgw.org](mailto:jacquelynnb@esgw.org) or (801) 244-3177. More information about this program can be found on the Easter Seals website at: [www.easterseals.com/esgw/our-programs/autism-asd-services/peer-connections.html](http://www.easterseals.com/esgw/our-programs/autism-asd-services/peer-connections.html).

#### **BOOK OF THE MONTH – Available for loan from our Lending Library** **Starved Stuff, Feeding the 7 Basic Needs of Healthy Relationships by Matt Townsend**

Creating a healthy and lasting relationship with your partner can be both wonderful and demanding. Acclaimed national speaker and relationship expert Matt Townsend explores both the challenges and solutions for healthier couples.

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.



### UPCOMING CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

**Annual Institute on Special Education Law** is scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at the Ogden Eccles Conference Center, 2415 Washington Blvd in Ogden. This conference is designed for administrators, educators, service providers, parents, families, and others responsible for the implementation of IDEA 2004 and the accompanying regulations. National speakers for this conference will include Melinda Jacobs, Julie Weatherly, Lenore Knudtson, Dave Richards, and Jim Gerl. **Scholarships are available to interested volunteers.** For more information and to view a draft agenda go to: <http://www.cvent.com/d/44qshb/1Q>

**Latest E-Connections, for more resources and events including a schedule of upcoming UPC workshops:** [www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/electronic/e-connections/](http://www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/electronic/e-connections/)

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Please contact me at [rebeccat@utahparentcenter.org](mailto: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](#)

### **SPECIAL INTEREST: DISABILITY ISSUES IN THE NEWS**

#### **Aggies Elevated: Dreams Do Come True**

Aggies Elevated is a pilot program at Utah State University that offers an inclusive, on-campus college experience for young adults with intellectual disabilities. It is the first of its kind in Utah. What is it? Why is it important? How does the program work?

Find answers here: [www.cpdusu.org/featuredstories/062714/](http://www.cpdusu.org/featuredstories/062714/)

To follow Aggies Elevated on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/aggieselevated](http://www.facebook.com/aggieselevated)

#### **Sheltered Workshop Eligibility May Soon Be Limited**

Federal lawmakers are moving forward with a plan to require most students with disabilities to try competitive employment before they could be employed by sheltered workshops. The U.S. Senate voted 95 to 3 on Wednesday to approve a sweeping jobs bill known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Tucked within the measure are significant changes for students with disabilities transitioning to adulthood.

Read more: [www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/06/26/sheltered-eligibility-limited/19481/](http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/06/26/sheltered-eligibility-limited/19481/)



### 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](mailto:cassandra@utahparentcenter.org).

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

### 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](mailto:cassandra@utahparentcenter.org). **Media Release Form:** [Image/Media Release Form](#)

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*

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