

# Volunteer Connections

**MAY 2014**

Dear Volunteers,

With the school year coming to a close, many parents are looking for activities and programs that will provide structure for their children with special needs during the summer months. I have been personally impressed with the many programs available to choose from. In my own individual journey to find programs and activities for my daughter, I've found the following tips helpful to consider:

- First, look for programs geographically close to your home. Convenience matters! For example, start with your local recreation center and ask to speak with someone knowledgeable about adaptive programs. Most children with disabilities do well in an inclusive environment with their non-disabled peers. Participants with more significant disabilities can also participate in programs with non-disabled peers with the help of a peer buddy or an aide.
- Search the UPC's Summer Activities List for programs that compliment your child's strengths and interests. Schedule an orientation with the program provider to determine if it will meet your child's unique needs. **Summer Activities List 2014:** [Utah Parent Center 2014 Summer Activities List](#)
- For teens, explore volunteer opportunities that help develop job skills. I personally have had success finding volunteer opportunities at Deseret Industries and the Bishop's Storehouse. Agencies such as the Utah Food Bank, Splore, Camp Kostopolus and the Hogle Zoo also use volunteers. For more ideas go to the United Way's Volunteer Center at [www.uw.org/211/](http://www.uw.org/211/).

If I can help you with any ideas or suggestions please let me know.

## **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

#### Summer Planning Guide for Parents of Children with Special Needs

Summer vacation often poses a challenge for parents of children with special needs. You can find programs that will provide an engaging and enriching environment for your child, but it's important to start thinking early about what kinds of activities your child would benefit from and what your options are. The following article written by the Federation for Children with Special Needs includes practical advice for parents to:

- Determine their child's needs
- Explore available options
- Identify the right questions to ask
- Develop a plan to ensure their child's experience is a positive one

Link to article: [Summer Planning Resource](#)

**Searching for recreational activities near you?** Use the following resource list to help add structure to your child's summer activities: [Utah Parent Center 2014 Summer Activities List](#)

#### Extended School Year (ESY) – Does Your Child Qualify?

Parents of students on an IEP, who are at risk of significant regression over the summer months, should have a discussion with their IEP teams about Extended School Year (ESY). The IEP team determines whether or not a student qualifies for Extended School Year. Through a process of data collection your child's IEP team will consider the possibility of regression in both academic and functional areas. If your child is found eligible for ESY your team will determine an appropriate program to maintain his or her abilities. Learn more about ESY by reviewing the following information from the Utah State Office of Education.

Rules and Regulations related to Extended School Year Services:

[www.schools.utah.gov/charterschools/Training/Directors-Meetings/2012-Directors-Meetings/November-2012/Special-education---ESY-technical-assistance.aspx](http://www.schools.utah.gov/charterschools/Training/Directors-Meetings/2012-Directors-Meetings/November-2012/Special-education---ESY-technical-assistance.aspx).

#### Free Lifetime National Parks Pass

Did you know that US citizens with documented disabilities can get a free lifetime pass to all national parks and recreation areas? The Access Pass is a free pass available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have been medically determined to have a permanent disability. It provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five Federal agencies. A National Parks Pass usually costs \$80 yearly. For more information go to: <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/access.html>

#### Other Summer Activity Resources

<http://fun.familyeducation.com>

Provides thousands of printable activities and games for kids of all ages including, arts and crafts, coloring pages, skill builders, puzzles & games, and more.

[www.readyschool.org/](http://www.readyschool.org/)

Provides activities, playgroups, resources and ideas for kindergarten readiness.

<http://utahfamily.com/calendar.php>

"No Bored Kids" calendar of daily activities statewide.

<http://careaboutchildcare.utah.gov/resources/default.aspx?list=7>

Statewide Summer Activity Guide

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

#### Introducing Amy Bates, new Family to Family Network Leader for Iron County!

"To let you know a little more about myself, I am the proud mother of 10 kids, some through adoption and others the old fashioned way. My husband and I have been foster parents for 15 years, and I continue to have a passion for children in foster care through my work as a recruiter for Utah Foster Care. I have my Masters degree in Special Education and have enjoyed teaching in both public and private schools until I was blessed to be able to stay home (or more appropriately, stay in the van) with my children. Five of my children are classified as special needs. However, as we all know, they all have special needs! Our 14-year-old son has been receiving DSPD services for almost 9 years. He has significant disabilities due to being shaken by his birth father. Developmentally he is about a one-year old; he uses a wheelchair and deals with seizures, among many other things. Our oldest son is in post high and currently on the waiting list for DSPD. He also has significant disabilities, although we are excitedly working towards him getting a part-time job. I am also in the process of getting all the paperwork done for DSPD services for our 3-year-old son who was also shaken by a birth parent causing brain damage, a seizure disorder and vision loss. I work part-time at a non-profit child abuse prevention agency as a grant writer.

About three years I became the coach for the Special Olympic team here in Cedar City that specializes mostly in athletes who are still at home. We have turned our team into a support group for parents as well as a social activity group for our athletes and families. Currently we hold events, which are not related to Special Olympics, about once a month, which I hope to continue.

I am very invested in helping families and children get the services and supports they need and have been very active with disability awareness issues in the community. Recently I was part of a committee that put together a conference and handbook of resources on disability awareness in Cedar City that was attended by over 70 professionals.

I am very excited for this opportunity to get to know more families of children with special needs and add to the events and support we are already doing."

*The Utah Parent Center is very excited to have Amy as a Network Leader supporting parents in the Iron County area. To connect with Amy 'like' the Family to Family Network Iron County Facebook page or e-mail her at [bates4ever@hotmail.com](mailto:bates4ever@hotmail.com).*

### UPCOMING CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports & Effective Practices Conference** is scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> at the Davis Conference Center in Layton, UT. This conference is designed to educate both parents and professionals on how to implement School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS). Topics include: Literacy and Numeracy, Positive Behavior Supports, Transition to Career Pathways, Building & District Leadership Teams, Early childhood, Education English Learners, Autism and more. For more information go to [www.umtssconference.org](http://www.umtssconference.org).  
**Scholarships available to interested volunteers.**

### **Emergency Preparedness for Special Needs**

This presentation will help in preparing your WHOLE family, including your child with disabilities or special health care needs, for emergencies.

Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2014

Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Location: Utah Parent Center: 230 West 200 South Suite 1101, Salt Lake City, UT, 84101

Register online at <http://conta.cc/1fmC7bg> or by calling 801-272-1051.

**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 available to interested volunteers.** For more information and to view a draft agenda go to:

[www.cvent.com/d/44qshb/1Q](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/)

### **NEW WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON THE UTAH PARENT CENTER WEBSITE**

Link to Webinars: [www.utahparentcenter.org/training/webinars/](http://www.utahparentcenter.org/training/webinars/)

### **Legal Solutions for Families with Disabilities**

This 25 minutes video presented by Lisa Thornton, provides parents and families with children with disabilities an overview of planning and legal needs for parents including: Special Needs Trusts, Guardianship, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, Letter of Intent and Life Care Plans.

### **Five Behavioral Issues with Kids with Asperger Syndrome:**

#### **Why They Happen and How to Fix 'EM**

The Utah Parent Center in partnership with presenter, Melissa Genaux, M.Ed are pleased to provide this 50 minute webinar discussing behavior issues for children with Asperger syndrome and related disorders. Melissa will discuss common behavior issues and strategies to change behavior, which behaviors are hard-wired and which are deliberate, and why knowing the source of behavior really does matter.



### **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**

#### **Feds Warn Charters on Special Education**

In a "Dear Colleague", letter the U.S. Department of Education said that charters have the same obligations as regular public schools to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in addition to other federal civil rights laws. Such responsibilities are the same whether or not charters receive federal funding, the Education Department guidance indicates.

Read more: [www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/05/15/feds-warn-charters-special/19368/](http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/05/15/feds-warn-charters-special/19368/)

#### **ESPN to Broadcast Special Olympics World Games**

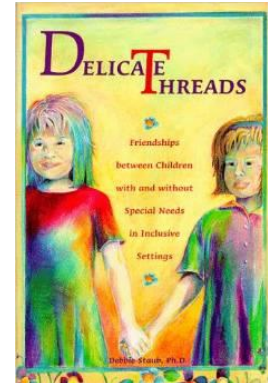
Some of the world's most talented athletes with intellectual disabilities will be center stage on national television under a deal with ESPN. Organizers of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles said the sports network will broadcast next year's summer games.

Read more: [www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/05/06/espn-broadcast-special/19341/](http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/05/06/espn-broadcast-special/19341/)

### **BOOK OF THE MONTH – Available for loan from our Lending Library** **Delicate Threads, Friendships between Children with and without Special Needs in Inclusive Settings by Debbie Staub, Ph.D.**

This book provides an insider's view of the social lives of children with and without disabilities. It successfully weaves the voices of children with critical information from the developmental literature. It reveals characteristics and patterns of these complex relationships and provides useful suggestions for families, teachers, and others interested in supporting children's relationships.

**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.**



### **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](#)

## Utah Parent Center Volunteer Connections: May 2014

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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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