



CRS Parent Connection

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

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Summer 2012

New CRS staff focus on improved system of care

Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) has recently entered the second phase of a federal grant that provides funding to enhance services for children with disabilities.

Awarded in 2011 by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the grant is designed to improve access to a "quality, comprehensive, coordinated community-based system of services" for children with disabilities and their families that is both family-centered and culturally competent.

Alabama is using funding from the three-year, \$900,000 grant primarily to strengthen children with disabilities' access to medical homes and ease their transition to adulthood and adult health care.

"We have now placed a project coordinator and also have a parent consultant for central Alabama at the River Region Health Center in Montgomery," said Lolita McLean, maternal and child health coordinator for CRS. "Location is important to us because it allows people first access to our services, particularly for people who may not know much about us."

The location, external to a CRS office, also allows easier access to children with disabilities who are not CRS consumers. Enrolling in CRS services is not a requirement to access care under HRSA funding.

"It's not about enrolling more children into CRS," said McLean. "It's about working



to improve the system so that all children with disabilities in our state – including those who don't come to CRS – can receive the services that they need."

CRS met personnel requirements before the first year funding deadline of June 30 when they placed a care coordinator/social worker in the Huntsville area. Next year's funding will allow CRS to implement similar systems in Tuscaloosa, Opelika and Dothan, said McLean.

In reaching the goals of the project, CRS educates doctors and doctors-in-training, places care coordinators or parent consultants

in pediatricians' offices to assist children with disabilities and their families, and provides leadership and support through building and enhancing partnerships with community organizations.

With just more than two years of grant funding left, CRS leadership is exploring ways to continue the program after funding ends.

Partnering with CRS on the project is Family Voices of Alabama. The UAB School of Public Health's Department of Health Care Organization and Policy will conduct evaluations on the program's success.

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Editor: Susan Colburn
State Parent Consultant

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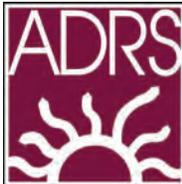
Contributing writers:
Ryan Godfrey
Sandra Hazzard
Sharon Henderson
Rita Hutcheson-Cobbs
Odessa Taylor

Address inquiries to:
Susan Colburn
Children's Rehabilitation Service
602 S. Lawrence St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone: (800) 846-3697, (334) 293-7041
Fax: (334) 293-7373
Email: susan.colburn@rehab.alabama.gov

Parent Connection is a complimentary newsletter published by Children's Rehabilitation Service for families of children with special health care needs. The goal of this newsletter is to increase communication and share information about children with special health care needs and their families. The newsletter reflects a family-centered theme throughout and serves as a forum for family members to share information, thoughts, feelings, concerns, etc. Nothing printed or implied in this publication constitutes an endorsement by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

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From the Director's Chair



Dear Parents,

You are very important to the leadership and staff of CRS!! Because of this, CRS has embarked upon new ways to find out how satisfied you are with the services we are providing to your child or children with special health care needs and to your family. Last fall, CRS began working with staff from Mississippi State University (MSU) to develop and implement a new Client Satisfaction Survey to ask clients/families about their experiences with the services CRS provides across the state. One part of the survey is already being conducted by phone, and the other part, a short clinic survey, is scheduled to begin on June 18th.

The telephone survey is a general satisfaction survey and is already being conducted by MSU staff. Perhaps some of you have already been contacted by them. Since a random sample of families is being used for the survey, not all parents/caregivers will be contacted. Most of the questions will require you to respond based on an agreement scale – for example, strongly agree to strongly disagree. Questions will be about the CRS enrollment process, plan of care, family choice, team approach, and clinic resources. Some examples are “It was easy to get my child enrolled with CRS” and “I have been told about CRS’s family choice policy.” This survey will end when all families on the random sample list have been contacted.

The clinic survey is scheduled to begin on June 18 and will focus on your clinic experience on the day of clinic. Areas to be covered include 1) satisfaction with choice in when/where to attend clinic/receive necessary services, 2) satisfaction with services received, 3) efficiency of clinic, and 4) environment of clinic. Some examples from the clinic survey are “The services we received today met my child’s needs,” “We were treated with courtesy during our clinic visit today,” and “I still have some questions about my child’s care or condition that were not answered today.”

The district supervisor and staff located in the office where you attend clinic will ensure

FY 2013 Funding

Gov. Robert Bentley signed the Education Trust Fund Budget into law on May 24, giving Children's Rehabilitation Service a \$60,198 increase over the previous year, and a 1.33 percent total increase for all divisions of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

While modest, the increase represents a major victory for CRS and ADRS. Considering that most ETF-funded agencies faced a 6.7 percent decrease in funding, CRS celebrates the support we have received by our legislators and is appreciative of any increase – however small – over the funding from the previous fiscal year.

Please see Survey, Page 3

Book Review

Reflections from a Different Journey: What Adults with Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew

edited by Stanley D. Klein, Ph.D., and John D. Kemp

This book should be added to the list of books every person should read before graduation.

It is for parents, caregivers, doctors, students, brothers and sisters. It is for all.

It is a composite of 40 stories from several adults with different types of disabilities and their portrait of how life was for them growing up with a disability.

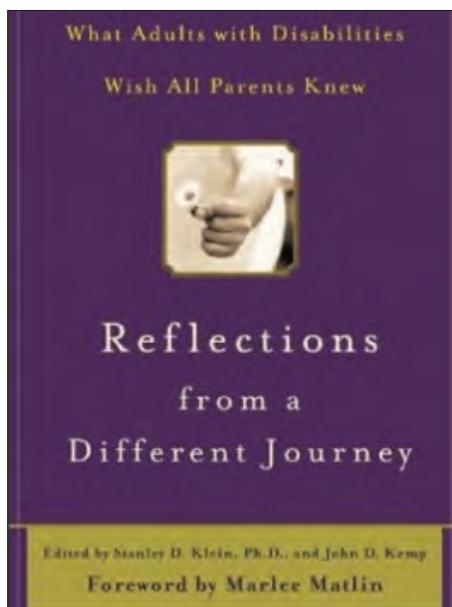
This book and others like it are available for loan in the parent resource centers at CRS offices around the state.

As I read passages from each adult, I couldn't help but smile

because as I read these observations and reflections they are pretty much the same as my own personal views, thoughts, and wishes for my parents from when I was a child growing up without a disability.

Early in my days as a parent of a child with disability, I was always looking for "the way" for my child.

After countless surgeries and therapies that either didn't work, only worked for a little while, or required more surgeries, I made the



decision to let my child be a child.

We as parents have to know when to say "enough is enough" and that our children will one day become adults whether black, white, Hispanic or disabled.

We all are people who want the same things in life: acceptance, respect, love and appreciation for who we are and who we will become. Some things do not need to be fixed.

I wouldn't want the color of my skin to be changed to make life easier for someone else or for myself.

I like who I am, so why do we try to fix all the things we think are broken in our children or loved ones with disabilities? We only need to make adjustment so that they can live their lives to the fullest – just as they are. We only need to teach them to love themselves and let the world see that they are lovable in spite of their disability.

In this book, Paul Kahn, who was diagnosed with centro nuclear myopathy, wrote: "Living with a severe disability remains a constant challenge that entails managing caregivers, maneuvering through service systems, and taking care of my health. I have been able to meet that challenge because my parents gave me their love and made me feel worthwhile. I strongly believe that the most important task of parenting is giving your children a foundation of self respect. "Everything else – your happiness and theirs – flows from that."

Sharon Henderson
Parent Consultant, Opelika

SURVEY

Continued from Page 2

that you have an opportunity to participate in the clinic survey at the end of your clinic visit. If you cannot for some reason, you may choose to complete the survey on line through a link to MSU's Survey Monkey, a program that is used to gather and analyze responses.

The clinic survey will end on or around Sept. 30 and will be conducted again every other year. MSU staff will prepare a detailed report of the results that can be shared with

you when completed.

When this survey is not being conducted, you will have the opportunity to participate in other surveys to be developed by CRS staff to find out even more information about how you feel about our services.

We want you to be satisfied with all of the services provided at CRS and will work continuously to make improvements. I hope that you will participate in the survey if called, or when you attend clinic. However,

you do not have to participate unless you want to, and please be assured that the services you receive from CRS will not change.

I also want to assure you that any responses you give will remain completely confidential. You can expect to receive further details at your next clinic visit.

Melinda Davis
Assistant commissioner, CRS

For more information about Children's Rehabilitation Service and to stay in touch with Parent Connection, please visit us on the web at rehab.alabama.gov/CRS and www.facebook.com/CRS.ParentConnection

A little lady with big abilities

Her name is Danielle Tadych.

Danielle was born with a disorder called osteogenesis imperfecta (OI), also known as brittle bone disease, a rare disorder effecting 1 in 20,000 births.

“The main side effects are fragile bones, which prevent bones from growing properly,” Danielle said. “Depending on the severity of the defect, other health problems will also arise.

“I was diagnosed with OI at birth after my parents learned I had two broken arms and other healed fractures. I did not leave the hospital until 12 days after my birth because of various respiratory issues. In addition to my tardy departure, I have survived two near death experiences from pneumonia, one near death experience from a bowel impaction, and multiple structural surgeries. My many broken bones and near death experiences have humbled my family and me greatly and have made us appreciate the value of life.”

Through Children’s Rehabilitation Service, Danielle received a new elevator wheelchair. This power chair is designed to lower to the ground so that she can climb in on her own and lifts her up to greater heights, enabling her to maneuver around town and school with ease.

Danielle is now a 17-year-old college freshman with a zest for life. She was instrumental in east Alabama getting a Miracle Field for kids with disabilities to play ball.

“My brothers played baseball, and I wanted to play too but we needed a smooth surface to play on,” she said.

She played ball for a while with Challengers and eventually Miracle League, but found that her talents and bones were best suited behind the scenes.

Danielle serves as a Miracle League board member and is the announcer for every game. With her enthusiasm and her brother Chris’s great selection of music, baseball games are loads of fun.

Attending classes at Southern Union



Community College, Danielle aspires to become an Environmental Engineer and help save the planet. She plans to attend Auburn University in another year and earn her doctorate in environmental science and to become a “voice of the people” for people with disabilities.

“I am blessed to have articulation when describing my thoughts and ideas, but many disabled people are not as fortunate as I,” she said. “My aspiration is to represent these people on many issues with my academic background supporting me along the way.”

Danielle works hard with her family. Her father, Len, is a carpenter and has a business, His Miscellaneous Projects. Some jobs call for the whole family to pitch in. Scooting around on her skateboard or on the floor, Danielle paints baseboards.

In her spare time, she loves to knit, play videogames with her brothers, and work on the computer. She manages the East Alabama Miracle League Facebook page and has created a website for a church.

She was home schooled with her brothers and is a well-rounded young lady.

“My parents made sure we received the same discipline and education,” said Danielle.

Her older brother Jacob is currently away in college, but they visit him often enough to satisfy the separation anxiety. The two siblings are very close.

Her brother Chris is by her side attending

Southern Union Community College.

“Having a sibling with a disability has changed my life,” Chris said. “I could’ve been an arrogant bully, but she has impacted my life so greatly and because of this I have a servant’s heart, and I’m grateful.”

Whatever Danielle aspires to do Chris and Jacob are right there to support her, even if it sometimes results in a broken bone. Danielle’s mom, Hope, tells a story of the day Danielle broke her arm while they were away.

“Len and I were at a Christian couples retreat in the mountains. I think it was the first time we’d left them by themselves. Danielle’s respite care worker called us and said, ‘I don’t want to alarm you, but Danielle broke her arm.’ So we dropped everything and headed back home. When we got to a place where reception was better we called back and spoke to Danielle to find out what happened and she said, ‘Well we were playing on the trampoline and’ Len and I said, ‘Trampoline?!’ Danielle said, ‘We’ll, I didn’t get hurt the first time.’ We said, ‘This wasn’t the first time?!’

“Now we have this ongoing sarcastic dialog with her when she and the boys are rough housing around that goes ‘You do understand that you were born with osteogenesis imperfecta, which means that your bones are

Please see Fragile, Page 6

The Gift

by Jana Massenburg

On March 26, 2010, the day before my 38th birthday, I received the best gift a mother could ask for – a bouncing baby boy!

But the gift gets better. He was not your typical bouncing baby boy; he was one chosen just for us by God. He was born with Down syndrome. Down syndrome occurs either before or at conception and is caused by one of three types of abnormal cell division involving chromosome 21. The embryo has 47 chromosomes in each cell instead of the usual 46. One child in every 800 live births has Down syndrome. As the child grows, the extra chromosome uniquely impacts how the body and brain develop.

Down syndrome a “gift,” you say?

YES, A GIFT!

We named our sweet baby Aaron Charles Drew, which means mountain of strength and wise man. This name is perfectly fitting because this is what he is to our family. His birth brought our family closer, made my relationship with God stronger, and made us all happier than we could have ever imagined.

Yes, a gift!

I thank God every day for allowing us to be the keeper of this sweet soul. Aaron has truly been a gift and a blessing. He is a healthy, HAPPY and a very smart boy. Aaron never meets a stranger and radiates joy. His infectious smile draws a crowd wherever we go!

Yes, a gift!

Our home in Gadsden is an hour away from Parent Advocate Down Syndrome (PADS), a nonprofit organization in central Alabama dedicated to promoting awareness, acceptance of, and advocacy for individuals with Down syndrome. We tried to attend



‘Team Aaron’ walks alongside Jana Massenburg and her son during the PADS Buddy Walk supporting individuals with Down syndrome

meetings and be more involved, but with work, school, and distance, it was difficult.

I went to Susan Tolle, executive director of PADS, about the need in our area for education and support programs for individuals with Down syndrome, their families, caretakers, educators, medical professionals, and for service providers.

The PADS board agreed, and the PADS Gadsden satellite was born.

Yes, a gift!

Our life would be very different if Aaron had not been born with Down syndrome. We would have had a life I think we would have taken for granted.

We would not change a thing even if we could. We would not take away Down syndrome. What would be nice to take away is the ignorance, cruelty, and prejudice that still exists within many people. But it is fine if we cannot take that away, because together we will rise above it.

PADS “believes individuals with Down

syndrome will excel, discover a hopeful future and enjoy life in an inclusive and supportive community.”

Our satellite will aid in accomplishing this in Gadsden and surrounding communities. The meetings are the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-6:30 at LIFE church, 4545 Rainbow Drive in Rainbow City. Child care and nursery are provided.

For more information, visit www.downsyndromealabama.org, email dsalgadsden@gmail.com or contact Jana Massenburg, northeast Alabama coordinator, at 256-492-6377.

My young daughter concludes this very well. As we left the house for our very first PADS Gadsden satellite meeting, my daughter looked at Aaron and said, “This is all because of you.” So much good and happiness has come from Aaron’s birth and the fact that he has Down syndrome; it has to be a gift!

Yes, a gift it is indeed!

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Children’s Rehabilitation Service
602 S. Lawrence St.
Montgomery, AL 36104





Karen Pesqueda with daughter Lexy; Sandra Hazzard, CRS Parent Consultant; and Jana Massenburg, northeast Alabama coordinator of PADS Gadsden Satellite, with son Aaron

CRS presents at PADS-Gadsden meeting

Recently during a March CRS Orthopedic Clinic in Gadsden, I met Jana Massenburg and her son Aaron, who was born with Down syndrome. This was their first clinic visit, and I was explaining our Parent Connection Program. She informed me about a new PADS (Parent Advocates Down Syndrome) Satellite support group she was forming in Gadsden, with a first meeting planned in April for families to meet and greet.

Jana took me up on my offer to show our

CRS Video and talk about “Parent Connection – A Parent to Parent Network in Alabama” at their May meeting. Emma Hereford, social worker and office coordinator for Gadsden CRS, also attended to answer questions about CRS services and how to apply.

A group of families from Etowah and surrounding counties attended. All have young children and are eager to learn about resources available in Alabama.

Jana has done a great job organizing and

coordinating speakers throughout the rest of the year. Meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month.

For additional information about PADS-Gadsden, see Jana’s article, “The Gift” (Page 5), and the calendar in this newsletter for additional information.

Sandra Hazzard
Parent Consultant, Anniston and Gadsden

FRAGILE

Continued from Page 4

fragile and can break very easily right?”

The East Alabama Miracle League has adopted the term “Ability.” It is on every T-shirt we make because that’s what it’s all about.

“It is easy to see a person’s disability, today you will get to see their Ability,” said CRS Parent Consultant Sharon Henderson and Miracle League board member.

“Danielle has been an inspiration to us all. She is aware of her disability, but she and her family focus on how to overcome obstacles

so that she can be included in anything she’d like. She has now begun taking driving lessons through Vocational Rehabilitation Service.”

It is important to know and remember that everyone has ability even if the only ability you have is breathing. From finding a way for kids to play baseball in wheelchairs to powering a wheelchair by blowing into a straw, there are endless possibilities.

Sometimes we just need to figure out how to do something and what will work for an individual to become all that he or she can be.

Find out what technology is out there and available to help you do it. If it’s not there, invent it.

Come up with an idea and it can possibly be made through our resources. ADRS can help. From assistive technology to assisted living, I don’t know who said it but I love the phrase “give ability a chance.”

Sharon Henderson
Parent Consultant, Opelika

CRS client participates in Disney's Dreamers Academy

A 17-year-old CRS consumer from Mobile was selected to participate in the 2012 Disney's Dreamers Academy with Steve Harvey and Essence Magazine.

Xavier Packer, who attends Neuromotor Clinic at the CRS office in Mobile, was the only student from Mobile selected, and one of only 100 chosen from around the country to participate.

Held in March, the 5th annual Disney's Dreamers Academy kicked off with a parade held in the students' honor at the Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World. This special group of teenagers, referred to as "Dreamers," was selected from more than 4,700 applicants reviewed by a celebrity panel led by comedian and philanthropist Steve Harvey.

The four-day program inspires selected students to dream bigger and encourages them to discover a world of possibilities by getting a jump start on choosing career paths and setting life goals, assisting to help make those dreams come true.

Activities at the academy include career-specific workshops, inspirational and informational sessions with notable professionals and celebrities and networking events. Additional time was also set aside for participants to have fun in Disney World's many theme parks.

In addition to Steve Harvey, other celebrities



Xavier Packer, 17, was one of 100 students from around the country selected to participate in the 5th annual Disney's Dreamers Academy

who participated in this year's program were gospel singer Yolanda Adams, sports personality Stephen A. Smith, BET's Terrence J, recording artist Sean Kingston, and *American Idol* winner Jordin Sparks.

With 2012 being the fifth anniversary of the program, one program alumna or alumnus from each year was invited back to share insights with this year's class.

Recent graduates selected to attend were Teyvyn Cole ('08), an entrepreneur with his own T-shirt company; Taylor Thomas ('09), a cast member with the Disney College Program; Nikki Dawson ('10), a first-year contestant on NBC's *The Voice*; and Princeton Parker ('11), a communications major at the University of Southern California and frequent contributor to *The Huffington Post*.



Kimberly Payne, CRS audiologist in Anniston, uses an advanced audiogram screening to assist in diagnosing hearing loss

Anniston CRS office celebrates Better Hearing and Speech Month

Whether it be a newborn learning to recognize the sound of his mother's voice or a great-grandfather intent on listening to the newest addition to the family coo and babble, people need their ears to be in the best working condition possible. And just how do you determine the condition of your ears?

You have them tested, of course!

That is why the employees of the Anniston CRS/EI/VR office were offered free hearing screenings by CRS audiologist Kimberly Payne as a way to celebrate "Better Hearing And

Speech Month."

Armed with a freshly printed audiogram, Kimberly was able to assure participants that they were hearing well, and the proof was there on the page, in living color!

Lora Chatmon, CRS speech pathologist, also offered participants suggestions on how to keep their voices healthy.

Everyone was treated to an ice cold bottle of water as she shared 10 tips, including drinking an average of six to eight glasses of water a day.

Let's YAC about it!

CRS summons Miracle for youth consultant post

At 21 years of age, Miracle Woods, who has cerebral palsy, has been a part of the ADRS family for longer than she can remember. She first started attending Children's Rehabilitation Service clinics at 21 months. Miracle is now a Youth Consultant for CRS, and brings a lifetime of experiences back to assist children in situations similar to her own.

Throughout her childhood, CRS met her orthopedic care needs, provided physical therapy, and purchased medical equipment to aid in her mobility. Later, as she began considering her options for life after high school, she attended CRS's Teen Transition Clinic.

From there, she was referred to Vocational Rehabilitation Service and met Rehabilitation Counselor Demetrice Coon.

Demetrice said she was immediately impressed by the young woman.

"From the moment I met Miracle in the hallway of Jeff Davis High School, I was amazed by her," Demetrice said.

Currently enrolled at Alabama State University as a secondary education major, Miracle has proven to be an exceptional student, making A's and B's and maintaining a 3.5 grade point average. She is on track to graduate with honors this fall.

Though it was difficult growing up with a disability, Miracle now views her cerebral palsy as a blessing, as it provides her with a unique perspective, complete with different avenues to inspire others to both reach and achieve.

"I have always wanted to teach," Miracle said, "but it was only later that I fully realized why I felt called to teach. I want to be an example for all students, but specifically for students with disabilities. I want to show them that, no matter who you are, you can do anything that you strive for in life."



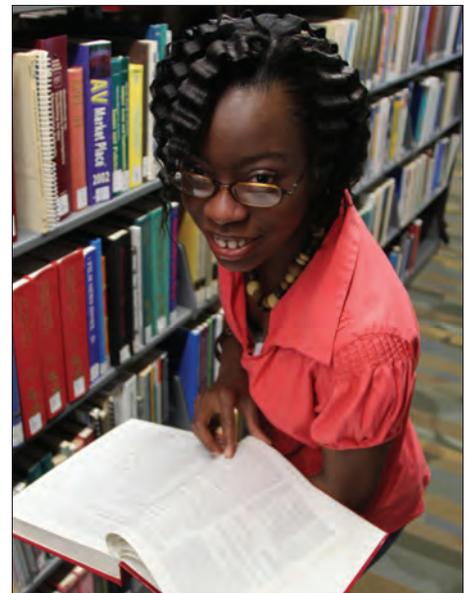
Miracle Woods and VR counselor Demetrice Coon pose for a photo on the campus of Alabama State University

Demetrice praised Miracle's determination and drive.

"She knows exactly what she wants," she said. "We've assisted her along the way by purchasing textbooks and helping with room and board and ensuring school accessibility, but she is largely self-sufficient. She knows precisely what she needs to reach her goals."

Miracle said she is thankful to ADRS for its role in her success.

"ADRS has been great," said Miracle. "They've been an integral part of my entire life. From first learning to walk, to now helping me through school, the department has been there, and I am very grateful. Demetrice is like a big sister to me and sometimes even a mother when she needs to be. I can always count on her, and I'll always appreciate that."



Miracle studies in the library at Alabama State University



From left, Beth Newlin; Susan Colburn; Ryn Rodgers, state coordinator at Family Voices Indiana; Marlyn Wells, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center of North Carolina; Jerry Oveson; and Trish Switzer at the Family Voices Partners in Care Summit in April.

Disability community mourns passing of Katie Beckett

It is always important to understand history. It helps us to appreciate where we have been and where we are. This is true for us as families of children with special health care needs. Many of you, especially parents of very young children with special health care needs and disabilities, may not know that before 1982, there was not a method of funding home care services for children with special health care needs and disabilities through Medicaid. Many families were forced to have their children live in the hospital or an institution if they were unable to provide the high level of around-the-clock medical care their children needed.

Julie Beckett, Katie's mom, worked tirelessly to secure a Medicaid waiver to bring Katie home, and in doing so, changed the lives of families all across America. Julie also was one of the founders of the national Family

Voices network. On May 18, Katie passed away at age 34.

The following is a statement from Heath and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius:

"Katie Beckett was a quiet hero and an inadvertent pioneer in the civil rights movement for people with disabilities. When she was only three years old, her family and her doctors wanted her to live at home despite her extraordinary medical support needs. At that time, Medicaid would not cover the cost of her medical services in the community -- only in the hospital. Thanks to her mother Julie's tireless advocacy, in 1982 Medicaid policy fundamentally shifted to allow people with significant healthcare needs and disabilities to receive care at home.

Over the past 30 years, the 'Katie Beckett Waiver,' a Medicaid program, has provided

over a half million children with disabilities the chance to live at home with their families and participate in their communities instead of living in hospitals and institutions.

As a result of this change, Katie was able to grow up as a typical young woman living with a disability – going to college, working as a writer and public speaker, and living an independent life – and in the course of her journey, Katie inspired a whole generation of young people with disabilities and their families.

Katie will be missed by many across the country, but her determined advocacy and that of her family, has changed countless lives for the better. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her parents, Julie and Mark, and all in the disability community who mourn her passing."

For information about Family Voices, please contact the Alabama state coordinators, Susan Colburn, 334-293-7041, susan.colburn@rehab.alabama.gov or Jerry Oveson, 251-438-1609, oveson@bellsouth.net.

Redefining traditional farm life into Funderful Times

If someone had told me five or 10 years ago, much less (eyes wide open as I write this) a year ago that I would have a chicken coop being built in my back yard, four cashmere goats housed in a fence made from old pallets, and honey bees, I would have laughed at him and kept on laughing.

However, here I am, laughing and looking out my window to make sure this isn't a dream; it is very much real. Funderful times are being had on our little farm built on less than four acres of land. And this doesn't include the raised garden beds or the various fruit trees and bushes we've added.

So, before you stop reading because you are thinking, "I don't have that kind of money to have such 'fun' with my family," let me tell you, neither do I. Let me share with you what I did to create what www.google.com calls the "sustainable backyard" (but my grandparents and parents called a farm) without using a lot of money or outside resources from retail stores.

The fruit trees and bushes were transplanted from other trees within our yard, woods, and surrounding area. The people I got some of them from were kind in sharing, and others I purchased at a fair price with a guarantee already with them that if they die, the store will be replace them within a year. Then I comparison shopped to make sure I got a great deal at the lowest price before I bought.

If your yard and soil isn't rich and healthy, any farmer will share his compost with you if you are willing to gather it. Talk about family bonding! What is better than that? This is how I started my compost pile too.

Seeds for vegetable gardens aren't expensive. Some department stores have them for 25 cents a package, or you can buy them by the ounce at your local farmer's co-op. We also harvest our seeds each year from the vegetables we eat, like tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, and more. Also, the great part of planting and growing vegetation of any kind



is that the family and neighbors can join in the fun. Plan a schedule for watering and caring for the plants. Everyone can do this at whatever level and age he or she is. Harvesting the rewards and cooking will be an amazing fun family event.

The farm animals took some saving of money. Their housing was built with wood and fencing that we have recycled from our house and buildings the storms tore down last year. We have gotten the goats and chickens through individuals or friends, paying a very small amount, but the benefits have been amazing and far outweighed their cost and feed. The goats have cleaned up their area and their fiber will help me tremendously in my work as an artist in the coming years. The chickens will not only provide us with eggs but added compost and further benefits of the free-range experience. The honey bees were an expense, but I have learned how to

use the whole hive, and watching them work has been beneficial and educational for each family member.

In short, we are utilizing our home place, teaching each child that he or she can do something fun as he or she learns. They also know that they have abilities that far outweigh any disadvantage within or without.

However, the most important thing in working with our sustainable backyard – or farm – is the smile and happiness it brings to each person who walks into the experience. That shows me that "funderful times" here meet the needs of whatever that individual's needs are at that moment. He or she forgets whatever is happening inside. He or she is free to be who he or she is and just be him or herself. It is a unique and rewarding time indeed.

Rita Hutcheson-Cobbs
Parent, Huntsville



Check Out What's Ahead ...

July 10, 2012

Children's Rehabilitation Service Family Fun Day

Description: Families who have a child enrolled in CRS can enjoy reduced admission for the museum and IMAX theater at the McWane Center. Admission is \$1 for museum, \$3 for IMAX, or \$4 combo, including both museum and IMAX. Parking in the deck is \$5.

Site: McWane Science Center, 200 19th Street, Birmingham

Information: Tammy Moore, 205-290-4572 or tammy.moore@rehab.alabama.gov

July 16-19, 2012

Camp JAWS 2012

Description: The Junior Ambulatory & Wheelchair Sports (JAWS) Camp is for youth, age 6 to 19, with a permanent orthopedic physical disability to experience "a day in the life" of Paralympic athletes. Athletes training for the 2012 London Paralympic Games will instruct and participate with students attending Camp JAWS.

Site: Lakeshore Foundation, 4000 Ridgeway Drive, Birmingham

Information: Mary Allison Milford, 205-313-7464 or maryallisonm@lakeshore.org

July 23-26, 2012

Camp Inclusion

Description: This camp is for youth, age 6 to 17, with a physical disability and a sibling or a friend. Participants will be grouped according to age with fun activities focusing on recreation, sports, and fitness. Campers must bring a lunch each day.

Site: Lakeshore Foundation, 4000 Ridgeway Drive, Birmingham

Information: Lori Watkins, 205-313-7429 or loriw@lakeshore.org

July 25-27, 2012

2012 AL-APSE Conference - "Step Into the Future: Employment Fits"

Description: The Alabama Association for Persons in Supported Employment and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities invite you to attend their 2012 conference, intended to disseminate a wide variety of information that would be of interest to professionals in the disability arena as well as individuals with disabilities.

Site: The Battle House Renaissance Hotel & Spa, Mobile

Information: Byron White, 334-353-7713 or alabamaapse@aol.com, or visit www.al-apse.org or www.acdd.org

July 26, 2012

Alabama Parent Leadership Academy

Description: This event is a leadership training opportunity for parents, foster parents, or other caregivers who have children from birth to 21 years of age with special needs. Parents will have the opportunity to develop advocacy and leadership skills, support networks, and positive parent-professional partnership. Training is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Free registration online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/parentleaders.

Site: Alabama Parent Education Center, 10520 U.S. Highway 231, Wetumpka

Information: APEC, 334-567-2252, toll-free 866-532-7660 or apec@alabamaparentcenter.com

Aug. 5, 2012

Horne Family Golf Tournament

Description: This special golf tournament, hosted by the Horne Family for the past four years, helps to raise awareness of Spina Bifida. Proceeds go to benefit families affected by this birth defect. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

Site: FarmLinks Golf Club at Pursell Farms, Sylacauga

Information: Angie Pate, 256-617-1414 or angie.pate@sbaofal.org

Aug. 6, 2012

Alabama PTI Workshop: Understanding IEP

Description: This workshop provides strategies and tools for understanding IEP to prepare parents and guardians for the upcoming school year. Workshop is from 6 to 8 p.m.

Site: Montgomery County Law Library, 251 S Lawrence Street, Montgomery

Information: APEC, 334-567-2252, toll-free 866-532-7660 or apec@alabamaparentcenter.com

Sept. 29, 2012

Second Annual Walk-N-Roll

Description: A family-friendly, one-mile walk event held to raise awareness about Spina Bifida. All proceeds from the program are used to serve people living with Spina Bifida in Alabama. Registration begins at 9 a.m., with the walk and roll, food, fun, live entertainment and other festivities kicking off at 10 a.m.

Site: Montgomery Zoo

Information: Angie Pate, 256-617-1414 or angie.pate@spaofal.org

Oct. 22-23, 2012

Alabama Assistive Technology Expo and Conference (ALATEC)

Description: An opportunity to see firsthand the latest in assistive technologies, practices, and services for persons with disabilities. ALATEC will provide professional development and training to increase the knowledge and skills in a variety of areas including, but not limited to, adult services, education/learning, visual and hearing impairment, communication, and physical accessibility/mobility.

Site: Auburn University Student Center

Information: Lydia Walls, 334-844-3108 or wallslw@auburn.edu

December 3-5, 2012

2012 EI Conference: "Together We Will Find the Way"

Description: The 28th Annual Early Intervention and Preschool Conference is designed for professionals at all levels and for families who want to grow in their knowledge and skill on behalf of children with disabilities, ages birth to 5 years.

Site: Mobile

Information: Jeri Jackson, 205-823-9226 or jbh50@aol.com, or visit www.ucpconference.org

Local PAC meetings: Check your local CRS office for dates and times of meetings in your area.



CRS Parent Connection

Children's Rehabilitation Service
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
602 S. Lawrence St.
Montgomery, AL 36104

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Summer Word Search Puzzle

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 S T A R U T S W H E N U I T S
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AUGUST	JULY
BARBECUE	RELAX
BASEBALL	SANDALS
BEACH	SHORTS
BIKING	SOCCER
GOLF	SUNBURN
HATS	SUNSCREEN
HOLIDAY	SUNTAN
HOT	SWIMMING
HUMID	VACATION