






Meet Our Staff (cont. from page 1)

 **Louise Schneiders** is our Mentor Parent Coordinator and has worked with CARE for 11 years. Louise conducts all training for new mentor parents, links parents with a mentor, and provides follow-up support to ensure the quality of parent-to-parent support. She is also responsible for facilitating the mother's support group. Louise is currently serving on the planning committee for the annual conference of the Family Resource Centers Network. She has been a presenter at many conferences for both parents and professionals. Louise has a daughter, Karen, and a son, Mark, who attends DVC.

 **Linda Smith** is a Family Support Specialist who has been with CARE for 12 years. Linda works with newly-referred families to help them identify and access the services needed for their children. Linda will be coordinating with the Child Care Council as we work together to enhance services for families of children with disabilities. She is also responsible for providing family support to the County Office of Education's Early Start groups in Oakley and Concord. Linda served as an alternate Commissioner for First Five Contra Costa. She has three children, Holly, Melissa, and Jonathan.

 **Anne Struthers** has just started working with CARE as the Early Childhood Coordinator. She will be responsible for developing and implementing activities designed to increase coordination and improve access to information for families of children with special needs. She will be working closely with the child care provider community, specialized service providers, and special educators. Anne previously served as the coordinator for the resource parents in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. She has 3 children, Todd, Emlyn and Hillary.

Family Support

- E **Drop-In Clinics** are offered on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. (noon). Please call first so we can determine if this will meet your needs and review with you what to bring to make this session productive for you.
- E **Make and Take** workshops for parents of children with special health care needs are scheduled by request. Please call Joan Crook at 925-313-0999 x 104.
- E **Padres Latinos** is a group for Spanish-speaking parents and usually meets the first Saturday of the month at our office in Martinez at 2 p.m. The dates are April 3, May 1 and June 5. Call Angela Quiroga, Family Support Specialist, at 925-313-0996 for more information.
- E **Just for Fathers** meets on the first Wednesday of the month at our office in Martinez at 7:30 pm. The dates are April 3 (changed from regular schedule for a picnic), May 5 and June 2. Please call for more information.
- E **Support for Moms** meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m in Concord. The dates are April 1 & 15; May 6 & 20 and June 3 & 17. Call Louise Schneiders, Mentor Parent Coordinator, to discuss attending the group.
- E **Parent Infant Play Group** of the County Office of Education Early Start Program is supported by Linda Smith, Family Support Specialist, on the 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Monday of the month in Oakley. On the third Tuesday of the month she is joined in Concord by Victoria Sanabria, Bilingual Family Support Specialist. Changes due to holidays are an exception to this schedule.



News from CCS


Do you know your CCS Public Health Nurse/Case Coordinator?

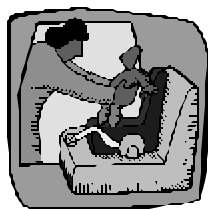
Contra Costa County California Children Services (CCS) serves children from birth to age 21 who have eligible medical conditions and whose families are unable to pay for all or part of their care. Each child is assigned a Public Health Nurse (PHN) who serves as their Case Coordinator. Each Case Coordinator has a wide range of nursing experience over many years. The Case Coordinator is first responsible for determining a child's medical eligibility for the program. Once a child is in the program, the Case Coordinator manages the child's health care by coordinating appropriate facilities, physicians, specialists, authorizing procedures, equipment, supplies, rehabilitation and much more. The Case Coordinator also makes referrals to other agencies when necessary. There is a great deal of collaboration between the CCS Case Coordinator and other agencies serving children with disabilities.

The CCS Case Coordinators are truly dedicated to serving their clients. Families are encouraged to contact their Case Coordinator with any questions or concerns they may have. The CCS phone number is (925) 313-6100.


Medical Equipment & Supplies Exchange

 **I-V Pole** – FREE—contact Lacey at 925-228-0283.

 **Rear Walker**—FREE— for a small child, excellent condition, contact Debbie at 925-432-4835.



For the following items call Joan at 925-313-0999 ext. 104 .

 **Baby Car Seat** – FREE – Century SmartFit Plus, for babies under 22 lbs., and less than 29” long.

 **Rifton Supine Board (Front Facing Stander)**- excellent condition, for a child 30-50” tall.

Calendar

APRIL 3: Workshop on Dyslexia, San Jose, 408-559-3652

APRIL 14: M.I.N.D. Institute: Bruce F. Pennington, Atypical Spoken and Written Language Development; Understanding Learning Disorders, 916-703-0285

APRIL 17: Free children's clinic on Anat Baniel (based on work of Dr. Feidenkrais) Method for Children, Oakland, 510-573-0301

APRIL 17: STAR Conference on Autism, Oakland, 925-313-0999

APRIL 24: Special Kids Day, (see pg.6)

APRIL 29-MAY 1: 2004 State Conference on Learning and Attention Disabilities, San Mateo, 866-685-3222

MAY 1: Special Needs Trusts & Limited Conservatorship, Walnut Creek, 925-280-0172

MAY 15: Free children's clinic on Anat Baniel (based on work of Dr. Feidenkrais) Method for Children, Oakland, 510-573-0301

MAY 21-23: Disabled Family Camp (near Yosemite), City of Berkeley, 510-981-5146

MAY 27-30: 7th National Self-Advocacy Conference, Anaheim, 916-567-1974

MAY 29-31: Hydrocephalus 2004, San Francisco, 415-732-7040

JUNE 5: Special Needs Trusts, Walnut Creek, 925-280-0172

JUNE 19: Summer Picnic sponsored by COPE-DB, Santa Rosa

JUNE 19: Free children's clinic on Anat Baniel (based on work of Dr. Feidenkrais) Method for Children, Oakland, 510-573-0301



First Five Funds Early Care & Education Programs for Children with Special Needs

As part of its early childhood strategy, First Five Contra Costa has recently awarded funding to programs to improve the quality of child care, and has earmarked a portion of these funds to benefit children with special needs. This action was taken as the culmination of many months of work to develop a comprehensive plan to improve the quality of child care; and, for children with special needs, to provide additional assistance to their families. The work was undertaken by child care providers, early childhood development experts, parents, and educators.

The goals for early childhood education include assisting licensed child care providers to achieve and maintain accreditation, to provide incentives for providers to increase their knowledge of early childhood development, and to provide resources and technical assistance to providers caring for children with special needs as well as to support their parents in gaining access to child care and other needed services. All goals are inclusive of children with disabilities.

CARE Parent Network and the Contra Costa Child Care Council were selected to share a \$350,000 grant to support parents of children with special needs. The Child Care Council will use its funding to provide inclusion specialists to assist child care providers to care for children with special needs. CARE Parent Network will use its funds to assist parents to find appropriate services and provide resource coordination, as well as to conduct outreach. An additional focus will be to improve coordination among the different agencies serving children with disabilities, to identify and address training needs of agency staff, and to begin to create a central point for access to information about disability services for infants and young children.

This work is part of a long-range vision to increase the capacity of child care providers to serve children with special needs, to improve coordination and collaboration among child care providers, special educators, and disability service providers, and to help parents navigate the system. The goal is to create a child care delivery system which is responsive to family needs and identified as a community partner by both families and the specialized agencies serving them.

Both CARE Parent Network and the Child Care Council are actively working to develop and implement these services. For more information, call Anne Struthers (CARE) at 925-313-0999, Ext. 107 or Ange Burnett (Child Care Council) at 925-676-5442.

Reminder

If you would like to receive information by email from us, please forward your email and the kind of information you would like to: CAREofARC@aol.com

We regularly send out information on issues relating to health care, regional center services, special education, and conference announcements.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- ★ Erika Buckman
- ★ Julia Greenwell
- ★ Catharine Harrison
- ★ Terry Ho
- ★ Deborah Penry
- ★ Barbara Piper
- ★ Kathy Williams

- In Memory of Rev. Paul Klett:
- ★ Joan Crook
 - ★ Sharon Davis
 - ★ Mr. & Mrs. William Griffitts
 - ★ Diana Jorgensen
 - ★ Barbara Sheehy
 - ★ Linda Smith
 - ★ Rocio Smith

Just for Fathers

This article was originally published in the Hydrocephalus Association newsletter. We acknowledge their generosity in allowing us to reprint the article. Thanks to Bob Jacobsen for taking the time to write about Just for Fathers. Please call us if you would like to know more about this group.

I'll never forget how shell-shocked I felt when, five years ago, my wife and I were informed that our daughter would be delivered prematurely-within the hour. A sonogram had revealed enlarged ventricles in my child's brain. In the next few days I was to learn more than I ever thought I would know about intraventricular hemorrhages, preemie problems and, of course, hydrocephalus. For the next month, the intensive care nursery was my second home. I had never felt so emotionally drained and mentally overloaded.

Once I returned to work, one of my first stops was to the Hydrocephalus Association, fortunately just a few blocks from my San Francisco office. I had the pleasure of meeting Emily Fudge, who provided not only information but some much-needed encouragement and support. It was then that I began to realize that I didn't have to go through this experience alone-that there were many other fathers who were on similar paths. I began to look around for them.

My search led me to Just for Fathers, a group of fathers of children with disabilities that meets monthly in Martinez to share information and experiences. I was the only father of a child with hydrocephalus, but I didn't feel alone there. I learned how fathers deal with Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy and many conditions without a firm diagnosis.

What we all have in common is a sort of life we hadn't planned for but somehow have to manage. We can talk to each other about what is going on in a way we can't talk to our other friends and neighbors. We discuss how to deal with IEPs, behavior problems and how to manage our managed health care. At times we talk about other aspects of our lives-our jobs, our wives and especially our kids. Occasionally we meet at a pizza place and get to know each other in a more casual setting.

Annually, we bring our kids to a picnic and cook a fun meal together. Picture a bunch of fathers at a park with their kids. Some of the children are in wheelchairs. Some are using walkers. To an outsider, it's pretty clear that this group represents "different" kids. But inside the group, there's not a bit of embarrassment shown by the fathers-just pride! For all of us fathers, it's wonderful to finally be able to meet all of the children we've only heard about before. We can all see how special and precious they all are.

At a Hydrocephalus Association conference I mentioned this group to a meeting of fathers. The response was, "You're sure lucky to have that." That comment hit home. Prior to that comment my attendance at this group was hit or miss. Afterward I seldom missed a meeting. I finally realized how important this group is to me. There's something vital in knowing you're not alone-and in knowing you make a difference to others. That became especially important at a recent meeting.

At that meeting we received the worst news that any of us could imagine-that the son of one of our fathers had died two days before as a result of post-surgical complications. That hit all of us hard. Many of us were there at the services to pay our respects for the brave little boy we knew and to his wonderfully devoted dad. There's something powerful in just being there for each other. Ultimately that's what this group represents to me.

For those fathers who don't wish to make the journey alone, I recommend finding a fathers' group. It's a great place to find out about resources and share experiences. Most important, it's a place to make a difference-for yourself, your family and for other fathers.

Bob Jacobsen



Free Special Kids Day

The Lions, Lioness and Leo Clubs of District 4-C3 and the "Picnic People" of Castle Rock Park invite you to the 20th Annual Family Special Kids Day

April 24, 2004

10:00 am—3:00 pm

Castle Rock Park

1700 Castle Rock Rd.

Walnut Creek

There will be: Games to play, animals to pet, free food for all attending, special guests, motorcycle rides, music and dancing. Send to: Sue Olin, 819 Terra California #1, Walnut Creek, CA 94595 by April 15, 2004. Questions? Call Sue at 925-939-4598.

Name _____

Organization/School Name _____

Address _____

Phone# _____

Number of Adults _____ Number of Children _____

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a program of Contra Costa ARC
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