The Federation’s annual conference, Visions of Community, held on March 10, 2007, at the World Trade Center in Boston, boasted the highest numbers of participants, presenters and exhibitors, the most diverse selection of workshops, as well as the broadest participation from collaborating agencies and state partners. Dr. Richard Robison, Executive Director of the Federation, greeted the more than 700 participants and noted the conference was, "an opportunity to empower, inspire and learn from each other about creating inclusive, caring communities for our children with special needs."

In keeping with the mission of the conference, keynote speaker, Dr. David Rose, who helped found the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), gave an inspirational presentation about Universal Design for Learning and ways to design school curricula so all individuals, especially individuals with disabilities, have expanded opportunities for learning.

Dr. Rose introduced the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), noting, "It is better, faster and cheaper to design things correctly from the start, rather than fix them later." Examples include curb cuts and television captioning. Originally designed to benefit people in wheelchairs, curb cuts make life easier for people pushing strollers. Captioning, now a feature of all television sets, was created for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, but individuals do not have to have hearing impairments to benefit. Many bars and restaurants use the captioning feature to reduce noise and still allow their patrons to follow a program. This is the major principle of UDL, it recognizes the "reality of diversity, builds in alternatives and benefits more people."

Moving on to written materials, Dr. Rose explained that books do not necessarily prepare students for the future, yet schools insist on using them, even though...
Pediatric Palliative Care Services for Massachusetts Children

When a child is sick with a cold, flu or other childhood illness, his family tries to make him as comfortable as possible and, depending on the illness, may seek medical help from a physician. The parents feel badly about their child’s discomfort, but they know he will soon recover and the family routine will return to normal. However, when a child is diagnosed with a life-limiting condition, she suffers the physical symptoms and undergoes the painful procedures, but the entire family experiences the emotional anguish and hardship of their child’s illness. Many families feel overwhelmed and in need of social, emotional and spiritual supports.

In April 2006, Massachusetts enacted health care reform legislation entitled Chapter 58: An Act Providing Access to Affordable, Quality, Accountable Health Care. A section of this bill included the creation of a Pediatric Palliative Care Program to address the needs of children with life-limiting illnesses and their families. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) administers this program and the Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts runs it, but it is not a hospice program. Eligibility does not include a six-month end-of-life prognosis and, unlike hospice, your child can receive palliative care services, continue curative treatments, and see other health care providers.

A life-limiting condition is a condition that may limit the normal life expectancy of an individual. It does not mean the child will die in a specific amount of time, just that the condition will affect overall life expectancy. Examples of conditions that may limit life expectancy include, but are not limited to, cancer, HIV/AIDS, cystic fibrosis, progressive genetic, neurological or metabolic disorders, organ failures, including renal failure or severe cerebral palsy.

The goal of the Pediatric Palliative Care Program is to provide supplemental services to improve the quality of life for children, birth to 19 years, with life-limiting conditions, and their families. These services, provided at no cost to eligible children, may include assessment or consultation for pain and symptom management, patient or sibling counseling, social services, spiritual care, respite care, emergency services, volunteer support and bereavement care, if needed. Health care professionals, community agencies or family caregivers can make referrals. Call the Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts at 781-255-7077 for the contact information for the program that serves the city or town where you live.

Family TIES of Massachusetts Resource Directory

Family TIES (Together In Enhancing Support) of Massachusetts is a statewide information and support network for families of children with disabilities, special health care needs, or chronic illnesses.

For the past ten years, Family TIES has published a Directory of Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs. While the Family TIES staff enjoys gathering information, we cannot do it alone. One of the most powerful sources of information and support is other parents. Every year, we invite other parents to contribute resources, and every year you deliver! We started with just under 100 entries, and this year’s 10th Edition includes more than 700 resources!

There is a new format for the 10th Edition. There are now five sections:

- Section (1) Resources by Topic, offers an enhanced listing of all supports for each topic header, including geographic area served, and, if available, additional language supports.
- Section (2) Resources A-Z, is an alphabetic listing of every program.
- Section (3) Early Intervention, contains information about services. Contact information for the Early Intervention program that serves your city or town is available on the Family TIES website or by calling any member of the Family TIES staff.
- Section (4) provides an expanded listing of state agencies and programs.
- Section (5) Resources En Español and Em Portugués.

The change in format lets us easily update the electronic version of the Directory, available on our website at www.massfamilyties.org. You will now be able to print a single page to make it easier to share resource information. If you’d like to receive a hard copy of the Directory, contact your Regional Parent Coordinator by calling 1-800-905-TIES (8437). We look forward to hearing from you.

For more than 45 years HMEA has provided specialized supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

- Early Intervention
- School-aged
- TRACS (“Turning 22” Program)
- The Darnell School for Educational and Behavioral Services
- Family Partnership Program

“We believe in the power of dreams, NOT the limitations of disabilities.”

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e-mail: hmea@hmea.org
Website: www.hmea.org
**Inclusion on Trial?**

“Inclusion” is back in the news. After the awful event at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School on January 19, 2007, where a student with special needs allegedly stabbed to death another student, someone told me it was his opinion that “inclusion” is now on trial. How did we go from responding to a horrible tragedy, an isolated incident, to the notion that segregation or exclusion of individuals with special needs will eliminate any threats of violence our students, and we all, may face? Unfortunately, in the public eye, a connection now exists.

Have we forgotten that the segregation of individuals with disabilities was the primary mode of service delivery for over 100 years in our country? This era came to a screeching halt in the 1970’s when the appalling conditions of our state institutions were revealed and with the subsequent passage of our contemporary special education laws (PL 94-142; MA Chapter 766). Drs. Ann and Rud Turnbull conducted a study of school inclusion, the results of which were published in "Exceptional Lives: Special Ed in Today’s Schools" (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004). They found that students with disabilities who were educated in inclusive school settings experienced greater self-confidence; developed natural friendships; had better academic performance; developed positive role models; were exposed to the real world; felt as though they belonged and were happier. More importantly, the Turnbulls studied the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities. They found that students demonstrated greater sensitivity; were more accepting of diversity; were helpful and supportive in class; had fewer behavioral issues; more friendship opportunities; improved self-concept and a richer sense of community.

Inclusion, when done well, ensures that all students means all students attend their local schools, without too many or too few other students with disabilities, in age appropriate groupings, with good teaching and cooperative learning, and finally, where special education is a set of services, not an isolated place.

When tragedy occurs, we tend to blame and try to make the pain disappear. However, best practice tells us there are no easy fixes, only opportunities to continue to improve, and to move forward. For examples of how to move forward, be sure the read the Champions of Inclusion article by Dr. Bill Henderson, Principal of the Patrick O’Hearn Elementary School, on page 7.

No matter how we view the event at the Lincoln-Sudbury school, all our students are benefiting from the experience of the past thirty years. Inclusion works, it is good for all of us.

Best wishes,

Richard J. Robison
Since the mid-1970s, families throughout the Commonwealth have relied on the Massachusetts special education law, commonly known as Chapter 766, and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to secure a quality education for their children with disabilities. However, this focus on special education led to the emergence of two separate educational systems, one for general education students and one for students in special education. Many students with disabilities found themselves restricted to classes emphasizing daily living skills. It was not until 1997, when IDEA was rewritten, that students with disabilities were not only allowed access to the school building, but they were also given "meaningful access to the general curriculum." For the first time, students with disabilities had the right to learn the same academic content as other students.

In 2002, a new federal law, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted "...to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education..."

NCLB and IDEA, existed side-by-side until 2004 when IDEA was revised again. This time, IDEA was interwoven with NCLB "...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living."

NCLB and IDEA include provisions to improve education for all students. These include:

- **High Expectations for All:** Since 1975, IDEA has cited "low expectations" as a barrier to academic achievement of students with disabilities. NCLB requires that every state establish challenging academic standards and goals for raising the performance of all children. IDEA emphasizes that standards and goals for students with disabilities must be consistent with those the state sets for all students.

- **Accountability:** All children with disabilities must participate in all state and district-wide assessments. Appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments, as indicated on a student’s IEP, must be provided. NCLB goes beyond the individual child by holding schools accountable for the progress of all students, including students with disabilities.

- **Scientifically-Based Instruction:** IDEA and NCLB require schools to use instructional methods that have proven to work. For students with disabilities, this might mean access to assistive technology as well as instruction that has been effective in teaching students with similar disabilities.

- **Highly Qualified Teachers:** NCLB requires that all teachers of core academic subjects (such as reading, math, history, science) be highly qualified to teach the subject they are teaching. IDEA now requires that special education teachers who teach academic subjects must also be highly qualified in both the subject(s) they are teaching and in special education. These NCLB and IDEA requirements help ensure that students with disabilities get quality academic instruction.

- **Parental Rights and Options:** Parental involvement is a cornerstone of both IDEA and NCLB. IDEA requires parental participation in each step of designing an appropriate educational program for their student with a disability. NCLB also views parents as critical partners and includes specific rules about how they should be involved. NCLB seeks to empower parents by allowing students in low-performing schools to transfer to a better performing school (if available), and to receive free tutoring if they are income eligible.

Now that IDEA and NCLB are aligned, both general and special education departments are responsible for educating students with disabilities. Parents’ PLACE, the Massachusetts PIRC (Parent Information & Resource Center), has developed materials (available in English, Spanish and Portuguese) to help you learn more about how these laws can help your child. Call 1-877-471-0980 or visit www.pplace.org. The Parent Training and Information Center (www.fcsn.org/pti) also has information about state and federal special education laws and NCLB.

NCLB is due to be reauthorized this year. Congress is now examining the law to identify any needed changes. To stay informed about proposed changes and how they may affect students with disabilities, visit the Federation website at www.fcsn.org.
A Helping Hand: Mother-to-Mother

The Federation for Children with Special Needs is a partner in a new, collaborative project, A Helping Hand: Mother to Mother. This work is funded by a grant from the Children’s Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Many agencies, led by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS), and assisted by Family Support staff at the Federation, will work together to improve the well-being of substance exposed newborns, their mothers and families. Jodi LaFond is the newly hired Family Support Specialist for the Cambridge/Somerville area; she will work directly with families. In the next year, the project will be expanded to the Fitchburg/Lewminster area, followed by Springfield.

A Helping Hand seeks to ensure that mothers receive needed substance-use treatment services, complete the treatment course, and achieve recovery. As the goal of this program is to provide a coordinated system of care for newborns affected by substance abuse and their families, babies will be enrolled in Early Intervention and the family will receive other support services that help with child welfare, child development, mental health, health, and other social services that address families’ needs and goals. Birthing hospitals and DSS workers who identify substance exposed newborns and their families make referrals to the program. The program is voluntary even if a substantiated neglect and abuse order has been filed. Mothers who would like to refer themselves to the program should call the Cambridge/Somerville DSS office at 617-520-8700.

The project is committed to collaboration and partnership among families, agencies, and service provider personnel. If a family chooses to accept program services, the mother and her family will be partners in making all decisions about the services they will receive. For more information, contact Barbara Popper, the Helping Hand Administrative Supervisor, at the Federation at 800-331-0688, ext. 322 or bpopper@fcsn.org or John Lippitt, Project Director, at 617-624-6017, or John.Lippitt@state.ma.us.

New Massachusetts Transition Planning Form

By Amanda Green, Parent Training & Information Project

If you know a student with disabilities, ages 16 to 22, you should also know about the new Massachusetts Transition Planning Form. Call your local special education department for a copy, or download it from www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf.

The Massachusetts Department of Education mandates the use of this form. It should be completed at a meeting before your student’s annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, or at the IEP meeting, and maintained in your student’s file along with the IEP. The form should help guide a discussion to develop a plan of action that will assist the student’s transition into adulthood. The plan should be results-oriented and focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student so that he can prepare for an adult life that matches his interest and considers continuing education, employment, adult services, independent living, and/or community life.

This discussion should include not only the typical members of the IEP team - teachers, specialists, parents - but also anyone who can offer insight into the student’s abilities and needs, or provide information about available resources. For example, you might invite a coach, guidance counselor, sibling, state agency representative, or a One Stop Career Center staff member.

The two-sided transition planning form features three sections to (1) document the student’s post-secondary vision, (2) list disability-related needs, and (3) write an action plan in order to "outline how the student can develop self-determination skills and be prepared both academically and functionally to transition to post-school activities in order to achieve her post-secondary vision." Visit www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html to see examples of completed forms.

The Federation for Children with Special Needs will offer training on the new form in the fall of 2007. Visit our website, www.fcsn.org, for the training schedule. For more information about transition or the new form, contact Terri McLaughlin, Transition Coordinator, at 800-331-0688, ext. 336 or tmclaugh@fcsn.org.
IDEA y NCLB: Todos realmente significa TODOS

Por Janet Vohs, Directora de Publicaciones y Entrenamiento de Currículo, PIRC de Massachusetts

Desde mediados de los años setenta, las familias de la comunidad han confiado en la ley de educación especial de Massachusetts, conocida comúnmente como Capítulo 766 y en la ley federal para la Educación de Individuos con Discapacidades (IDEA) para asegurar una educación de calidad para los niños con discapacidades. Sin embargo este énfasis en la educación especial condujo a la creación de dos sistemas educativos, uno para los estudiantes de educación regular y otro para los estudiantes de educación especial. Muchos estudiantes con discapacidades encontraron restricciones para asistir a clases que tenían énfasis en desarrollar habilidades para el diario vivir. No fue hasta 1997, cuando IDEA fue rescrita que a los estudiantes con discapacidades se les permitió el acceso a los edificios de las escuelas, así como también "un acceso significativo al currículo general.”

Por primera vez, los estudiantes con discapacidades tuvieron el derecho de aprender el mismo contenido académico que todos los otros estudiantes.

En el 2002, una nueva ley federal, Que Ningún Niño Se Quede Atrás (NCLB) fue decretada "... para asegurar que todos los niños tengan una oportunidad justa, igual y significativa para obtener una educación de alta calidad..."

NCLB e IDEA estuvieron juntas hasta el 2004 cuando IDEA fue revisada otra vez. Esta vez, IDEA fue entretejida con NCLB "... para asegurar que todos los niños con discapacidades tengan disponible una educación publica, gratuita y apropiada que acentúe el desarrollo de la educación especial y de los servicios relacionados para satisfacer sus necesidades y para prepararlos para una educación superior, empleo y para vivir independientemente.”

NCLB e IDEA incluyen reglamentos para mejorar la educación de todos los estudiantes. Estos incluyen:

- **Altas expectativas para todos:** Desde 1975, IDEA ha citado "bajas expectativas" como una barrera para el logro académico de los estudiantes con discapacidades. NCLB requiere que todos los estados establezcan normas académicas desafiantes y metas para aumentar el desempeño de todos los niños. IDEA enfatiza que las normas y los metas de los estudiantes con discapacidades deben ser consistentes con los que el estado establece para todos los estudiantes.

- **Responsabilidad:** todos los niños con discapacidades tienen que participar en todos los exámenes del estado y del distrito. Se les tiene que proporcionar a los niños acomodaciones apropiadas o exámenes alternativos como se indica en el IEP del estudiante. NCLB va mas allá del individuo y hace a las escuelas responsables por el progreso de todos los estudiantes, incluyendo los estudiantes con discapacidades.

- **Métodos basados en investigaciones:** IDEA y NCLB requiere que las escuelas usen métodos educativos que han demostrado que trabajan bien. Para los estudiantes con discapacidades, esto puede significar tener acceso a una ayuda tecnológica, así como también, educación que ha sido efectiva en la enseñanza a estudiantes con discapacidades similares.

- **Maestros altamente calificados:** NCLB requiere que todos los maestros de las principales materias académicas (como la lectura, matemática, historia, ciencias) estén altamente calificados para enseñar las materias que están enseñando. IDEA ahora requiere que los maestros de educación especial que enseñan materias académicas deben de estar también altamente calificados en la materia que están enseñando y en educación especial. Estos requisitos de NCLB e IDEA ayudan a asegurar que los estudiantes con discapacidades obtengan una educación académica de calidad.

- **Opciones para los padres de familia:** La participación de los padres de familia es como "la piedra angular" tanto para IDEA como para NCLB. IDEA requiere la participación de los padres de familia en cada paso del diseño del programa educativo para el estudiante con una discapacidad. NCLB también ve a los padres de familia como unos socios importantes e incluye reglas específicas acerca de cómo deben participar. NCLB busca darle poder a los padres de familia al permitirle a los estudiantes que están en escuelas de bajo rendimiento académico de transferirse a una escuela con un mejor rendimiento académico (si hay disponibles) y a recibir tutoría gratis si son elegibles por su presupuesto.

Ahora que IDEA y NCLB están ligadas en el departamento de educación regular y en el departamento de educación especial, ambos departamentos son responsables de educar a los niños con discapacidades. El Club de Los Padres, El PIRC de Massachusetts (Centro de Información y Recursos para Padres de Familia en Massachusetts) ha desarrollado materiales (disponibles en Inglés, Español y Portugués) para ayudarlo a aprender mas sobre como estas leyes pueden ayudar a su niño. Llame al 1-877-471-0980 o visite nuestro sitio en la Internet en www.pplace.org. El Centro de Entrenamiento e Información para Padres de Familia (www.fcsn.org/pti) también tiene información sobre las leyes estatales y federales de educación especial y NCLB.

NCLB debe ser reautorizado este año. El Congreso esta revisando la ley para identificar cualquier cambio que sea necesario. Para mantenerse informado sobre propuestas de cambios y como estos pueden afectar a los estudiantes con discapacidades, visite el sitio en el Internet de la Federación en www.fcsn.org.
Champions of Inclusion

By Bill Henderson, Principal, Patrick O’Hearn Elementary School and Federation for Children with Special Needs Board Member

Across the country, individuals are being recognized for successfully promoting inclusion in schools. These persons help make it possible for students who have disabilities to participate in meaningful ways with their peers in a wide range of activities. This article highlights the characteristics of these champions of inclusion.

1. Champions of inclusion CONNECT with students who have disabilities as individuals who are contributors first.

They are:

- the classmates who describe Victoria as a good friend who has started skiing and who drives a cool wheelchair;
- the English teacher who depicts John (who has learning disabilities) as a kid who writes great stories using that special computer program;
- the music specialist who relates how fantastically Ashley (who has Autism) sings during performances;
- the cafeteria worker who shares how helpful Diana (who has emotional disorders) has been cleaning up during the lunch period;

2. Champions of inclusion COMMUNICATE enthusiasm and act comfortably around students with disabilities.

They are:

- the classmates who nonchalantly give Keith (who has Cerebral Palsy) a tissue so that he can wipe the drool that sometimes emerges while he talks;
- the nurse who slips into a classroom, whispers to Nancy who is reading, and then changes the food cartridge in her backpack which is hooked up to her feeding tube;
- the special education administrator who warmly greets Scott (who has Autism) as he brings the attendance to the office each morning;
- the parent leader who welcomes new parents and tells them how wonderful it has been for her daughter, who does not have a disability, to learn in an inclusive school;
- the vision teacher who works with her student to show off some of the gadgets that he will be using to take notes in Braille;
- the history teacher who talks privately with John (who has significant Dyslexia) and assures him that his test grade will not be affected by spelling;
- the custodian who asks Charlene (who is deaf) to teach him how to sign, "have a good day;"
- Judy who offers her tired friend a ride on the back of her electric wheelchair.

3. Champions of inclusion CHALLENGE students with disabilities to work toward high standards.

They are:

- the classmates who cheer for Ernesto (who has a mobility impairment) to run his fastest and make it to first base;
- the language arts teacher who pushes Robert (who has learning disabilities) to read more challenging books with his adaptive equipment;
- the parent, who despite the recommendations of a pediatrician, advocates that her son (who has developmental delays) starts school in the inclusive early childhood program;
- the assistant principal who meets with Sean (who has emotional disorders) after his suspension for fighting and discusses ways he can more appropriately deal with his anger;
- the kindergarten teacher who won’t let Cherelle (who has multiple disabilities) play with blocks until she finishes drawing her circle;
- the math teacher who convinces Connor (who has Autism) and his mother that he should participate in the high school AP math class;
- James (who has learning disabilities and attention deficits) who works extra hours in school and at home to prepare his science project.

4. Champions of inclusion CREATIVELY adapt and UTILIZE appropriate strategies and materials to help students with disabilities learn and succeed.

They are:

- the classmates who figure out ways for Frank (who has Autism) to participate in the group’s Revolutionary War skit;
- the special education teacher who writes a simplified version of Romeo and Juliet for Juan (who has cognitive delays) so that he can grasp the key points of the play;
- the grade 5 teacher who learns to use computer-screen reading software so Timothy (who has significant decoding problems) can read the same books as his classmates;
- the basketball coach who designates and arranges tasks for Carmen (who has Down Syndrome) so that she can be the assistant manager for the team on which many of her friends play;
- the occupational therapist who coordinates a school store where students with a variety of fine motor and social needs can practice useful tasks;
- the teacher aide who identifies unobtrusive signals to keep Wong (who has ADHD) more on task;
- the art teacher who keeps a box of varying grips with her so that students with fine motor difficulties can better manipulate drawing and painting implements;
- William (who has Aspergers) who shows his class a more efficient way to solve a math problem.

Continues on page 12
they are not an effective instruction tool for many students. He noted that some students’ disabilities prevent them from even holding the books and turning the pages. Technology can help create books that are not “disabled,” that can address individual student’s needs, making books a universal tool for learning instead of a barrier to learning. The audience was treated to a fascinating demonstration of universally designed books. Dr. Rose demonstrated how technology could be applied to books to enlarge text, read aloud (with the choice of a male or female voice for narration) and with an option to enable music to cue the reader. There was a highlight feature to provide visual cues, built in definitions for words, pauses to encourage the reader to think about the story and prompts to help the reader write a summary.

As befitting UDL, this technology benefits not only the students, but also the teachers. Teachers can “spend more time teaching instead of remaking broken materials, enlarging text and cutting and pasting.”

Dr. Rose ended by encouraging parents to help drive these changes by participating on committees and advocating for UDL books.

To learn more about Universal Design for Learning, explore sample books or create your own book, visit http://bookbuilder.cast.org/. You will need to create an account to access this section of the CAST website. Accounts are free, but an email address is required.

**Special Guests**

The Federation was honored to have the following state agency representatives address the conference attendees. Ann Reale, the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care, said her department is assessing what they are doing right, what they are doing wrong and working to improve services. David Driscoll, the Commissioner of the Department of Education, noted that this is an "important time in the history of education reform" and that the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) strengthens parent/school partnerships. The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Retardation, Gerald Morrissey spoke about the importance of Chapter 171, how it brings families and state partners together to improve services. Sally Fogerty stated the Department of Public Health’s commitment to making services fit families’ needs.

Commissioner Jane Tewksbury, from the Department of Youth Services, was “thrilled” to be at the conference. She shared news of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative, a new program to ensure that youth at low-risk of delinquency, but with a high need for services, do not end up in secure facilities.

Commissioner Heidi Reed, from the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, said she enjoys working with the Federation to share resources and services for families of children with hearing impairments.

John Chappel, representing the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, stated, “There is a future after school,” and that they are working to “provide supports so all kids can lead independent, productive lives in the community.”

**After School For All**

Conference attendees enjoyed a special treat - the world premiere of the *After School For All* video. This eight-minute video contains a lifetime of lessons about how to create inclusive after school programs. These programs are more than just places to “hang out.” Rather, they provide activities that promote the academic, social and emotional growth of children with and without disabilities in inclusive environments. The video featured two programs: the O’Hearn School in Dorchester, and For Kids Only in Winthrop.

*After School for All* is dedicated to Christopher Bryant. This video was made possible by a generous gift from the Bryant family. They biked across the country to raise funds and awareness for the Federation for Children with Special Needs to ensure that all children are able to pursue their dreams. In addition, the Federation would like to thank John Doucet (John Doucet Film & Video) for his vision and commitment producing and directing this video. He was also responsible for organizing many talented professionals who generously volunteered their time and expertise.

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**Editors Note:**

If you were unable to attend the conference, you can download many of the presentations and handouts from the Federation’s website at [http://fcsn.org/conference/workshops_07.php](http://fcsn.org/conference/workshops_07.php)
Community Partnership Awards
Each year, the Federation for Children with Special Needs recognizes individuals who have shown outstanding support for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the community. This year’s eight awardees, recognized at Visions of Community, are "symbolic of things happening throughout the Commonwealth to make our communities more inclusive." This year's awardees were:

Exceptional Parent Advocate Award
Presented to Grace Burega
Grace, the parent of two children, one with Aspergers Syndrome, is president of the Canton Parent Advisory Council (PAC) on Special Education. She received the Exceptional Parent Advocate Award for her tremendous leadership and compassionate, caring support of the members of the Canton PAC. Grace demonstrates strong, collaborative leadership, and is a role model for parents throughout her district. She is committed to supporting parents and reaching out to those who might not otherwise be involved. She has highlighted the PAC's service in and around her community. These activities included organizing a college fair with a focus on opportunities for children with disabilities and reaching out to families who speak Spanish and/or other languages.

Exceptional Community Outreach Award
Presented to Dr. Lusa Lo
Dr. Lusa Lo is an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, with a special interest in family-school-community partnerships and assessments of culturally and linguistically diverse students. She is dedicated to supporting and advocating for Chinese families of children with disabilities and volunteers weekly at the Federation, providing technical assistance to families with special education questions.

Outstanding Educator Awards
Presented to Cliff Gallant of the Mary Lee Burbank School, Belmont, MA
Cliff Gallant has been teaching 3rd and 4th grade at the Mary Lee Burbank School for 10 years, and serves as the Elementary Co-Chair of Belmont’s Social Studies Steering Committee. Cliff’s teaching is characterized by his enthusiasm for learning and his delight in every child; students know Cliff believes in them, so they dare to believe in themselves. A skilled professional, Cliff individualizes the curriculum to address each child's learning needs, makes every student feel welcome and valued, provides clear structure and predictability, collaborates with school counselors and learning specialists, and is always on call for parents. His is a model inclusive classroom.

Presented to Pamela Vazquez of the Bradford Elementary School, Bradford, MA
Pamela has been working with children with disabilities since 1982. She is an extremely dedicated Special Education Teacher at the Bradford Elementary School, where she has been teaching since 1998. Pam works tirelessly with both her students and their families to ensure that the children are receiving the best education possible, as well as watching out for their social and emotional growth. The parent who nominated Pam summed it up best, "she helped me take my hopelessness and turn it into advocacy."

Outstanding Inclusive Recreation Awards
Presented to Kelvin Ing and Amy Lipkind
Kelvin and Amy, although having no children with special needs of their own, founded the Cape Cod Challenger Club in 2005. This inspiring organization provides year-round athletic, recreational and social activities for children with physical and/or developmental disabilities on Cape Cod. The Club offers a variety of sports, such as baseball, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, bowling, swimming and martial arts. There is also a year-round art program and the Club hosts social events and parties for the children and their families - all at no cost to the members. Charitable contributions and grants fund the volunteer-run programs, all coordinated by the Ing-Lipkind family. Now in its second year of operation, the Cape Cod Challenger Club empowers more than 100 children and their families by providing vital recreation, social, self-esteem building and networking opportunities.

Presented to Darlene Jones-Inge and Sharon Williams
Ms. Jones-Inge has been a special education teacher at the O’Hearn school since 1977. Ms. Williams has served as a representative on the O’Hearn Leadership Council. They started the O’Hearn After School Program in 1995, and have co-directed it ever since. More than 120 students participate in art, academic, recreational and social activities; 33% of these students have a disability and all of them participate in a wide range of activities alongside their peers.
Desde meados de 1970, através de todo o "Commonwealth", as famílias têm contado com a lei de educação especial de Massachusetts, geralmente conhecida como Capítulo 766 e a Lei de Educação para Indivíduos com Deficiência (IDEA), "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act", de âmbito federal, para assegurarem uma qualidade de educação para seus filhos(as) deficientes. Entretanto, esta ênfase em educação especial teve como resultado o aparecimento de dois sistemas de educação separados, um para os alunos recebendo educação regular e um outro para os alunos recebendo educação especial. Muitos alunos deficientes encontraram-se restritos a classes que enfatizavam as capacidades necessárias à vida diária. Foi somente depois de 1997, quando a IDEA foi reescrita, que foi permitido aos alunos com deficiência, a não só ter acesso ao prédio da escola, mas também foi dado a eles a ter "acesso significativo para o currículo geral". Pela primeira vez, os alunos com deficiência tiveram o direito de aprender o mesmo conteúdo acadêmico que os demais alunos.

Em 2002, a nova lei federal, Nenhuma Criança Será Deixada Para Trás (NCLB), "No Child Left Behind Act", foi decretada "...para assegurar de que todas as crianças tenham uma oportunidade justa, igual e significante, para obterem uma educação de alta-qualidade..."
IDEA e NCLB: Quando Tudo Realmente Significa TUDO (Continued from page 10)

• **Instrução com Base-Científica:** A IDEA e a NCLB exigem que as escolas usem métodos que foram provados eficientes. Para os alunos com deficiência, isto pode significar o acesso a uma tecnologia de apoio, assim como uma instrução que foi eficiente para ensinar alunos com deficiências similares.

• **Professores Altamente Qualificados:** A NCLB exige que todos os professores das matérias acadêmicas curriculares (como leitura, matemática, história e ciências) sejam altamente qualificados para ensinar a matéria que estão ensinando. A IDEA agora exige que os professores de educação especial, que ensinam as matérias acadêmicas, devem estar altamente qualificados na(s) matéria(s) que estão ensinado, bem como na educação especial. Estas exigências da NCLB e da IDEA ajudam a assegurar de que os alunos com deficiência recebam instrução acadêmica de qualidade.

• **Direitos e Opções dos Pais:** O envolvimento dos pais é a pedra fundamental da IDEA como também da NCLB. A IDEA também requer a participação dos pais em cada passo necessário ao planejamento de um programa de educação apropriada para seus alunos com deficiência. A NCLB também considera os pais como parceiros críticos e inclui regras específicas sobre como eles deveriam se envolver. A NCLB busca o fortalecimento dos pais ao permitir que os alunos que estejam frequentando escolas de baixo-rendimento sejam transferidos para uma escola de melhor rendimento (se estiver disponível), bem como receber aulas particulares gratuitas, se qualificados economicamente.
Champions of Inclusion (Continued from page 7)

5. Champions of inclusion COLLABORATE with others to maximize students' development.

They are:

- the classmates who meet with Sam (who has lost some mobility in a car accident) to discuss ways of supporting him;
- the early childhood teacher who discusses with her teacher's aide better ways of engaging Keisha (who is nonverbal) in play activities;
- the history teacher who shares the techniques he uses with students who have cognitive delays with colleagues at an in-service;
- the computer specialist who devotes extra time demonstrating how to use screen reading software on computers throughout the building;
- the special education administrator who listens to teachers' concerns, spends time becoming familiar with the issues by visiting classrooms, and then sets up follow-up meetings to deal with them;
- the parent leaders who, after meeting with staff leaders to prioritize needs, then coordinate activities to raise funds for more assistive technology;
- Carlos (a blind high school student) who volunteers to tutor a struggling grade 2 reader in an after school program using appropriate level print Braille books.

Extraordinary to Ordinary

In many cases, the acts of the 'champions of inclusion' highlighted above do not depend upon advanced degrees and training. In some instances, special skills are required, but more often it is the positive beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of these individuals that are most significant. In fact, these champions often state that what they are being recognized for is really quite ordinary.

Likewise, many adults who have disabilities report that their impairments were not as challenging to them in school as were the ways others related to their impairments. For many persons with disabilities, stereotypic beliefs, negative attitudes, and inappropriate behaviors were common experiences that impeded opportunities for meaningful participation. In order for successful inclusion in schools to become the norm, rather than the exception, changes in how people relate to students who have disabilities must occur.

Champions of inclusion are people who connect, communicate, challenge, and collaborate appropriately when dealing with students who have disabilities. They are also people who have developed and/or creatively implemented specialized skills, but they recognize that this expertise must be accompanied by appropriate beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in order for the skills being utilized to prove most beneficial. Indeed, what makes champions of inclusion extraordinary is that they are demonstrating on a regular basis how ordinary it can be for students with disabilities to participate successfully in a wide range of activities with their peers. These champions make inclusion extraordinarily ordinary.

This article was excerpted with permission of the author. Read the entire article at www.fcsn.org.
Imagine you're watching a suspenseful movie for the first time. Your heart pounds in anticipation of the unknown. This feeling may be so intense and unpleasant you never want to see the movie again. But what if you did watch it again, and it's not so scary because you already know the ending? After several viewings, it is even a little fun. With successive viewings, you overcome your initial fears. Now, imagine applying this same basic principle - making an event safe, less intense, more play-based and fun - in order to reduce a child's intense responses to overwhelming events.

This is the idea behind Replays: Using Play to Enhance Emotional and Behavioral Development for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, written by Karen Levine, a child psychologist, and Naomi Chedd, an educational consultant and mental health counselor. Replays is a novel, therapeutic approach that helps tame intense emotions in children with emotional regulatory issues (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorders, developmental disabilities, William Syndrome and Prader-Willi Syndrome) by using fun, high-energy, high-affect, symbolic and exaggerated repetition of children's fears and the problem behaviors that often accompany them. For children with such regulatory issues, reactions to common events (e.g. haircuts, bright lights, loud noises, clothing, interactions with other people) may escalate into insurmountable anxiety, fear, and frustration, which create huge challenges for caregivers. Once these feelings take hold, they can be difficult to dispel, and problem behaviors emerge as the only way many children can communicate or cope.

Parents, teachers, therapists and other caregivers can use the Replays technique to help children re-experience events that "prompt negative emotional and behavioral reactions by playing it over and over again as they 'master' it." The authors explain that children cannot learn new adaptive responses to situations unless caregivers and therapists slow down and dilute the intensity of the experience to be more emotionally manageable. Assisting children to do this in a safe and fun environment is at the heart of Replays.

Replays packs a lot of specific information, strategies, and examples into its trim 135 pages. It provides an easy-to-read, step-by-step format that caregivers can easily learn and apply. In addition, it includes troubleshooting tips, anecdotal examples, and every conceivable "what if" scenario, as well as the thinking behind the use of each strategy. Cheerful illustrations by artist Susan Levine, author Karen Levine's mother, punctuate and add relevance to the text throughout the book.

Researchers note that good intervention is simply good teaching. Children with developmental/behavioral concerns often endure a full schedule of therapeutic interventions in order to progress. Replays never forgets that good intervention can only be effective if it's fun - what could be better than that?!

Editor's Note: Ms. Chedd presented a Replays workshop at the Federation's annual conference in March. Her presentation is available on-line at http://fcsn.org/conference/workshops_07.php.

Guide to Children's Mental Health Services in Massachusetts

In the spring of 2001, the Boston Bar Association initiated a Children’s Mental Health Task Force. The more than 60 members of the task force, which included elected officials, representatives from state agencies and the court system, academics, health care providers, public and private health insurance payers, and advocates for children, each had a unique perspective about children's mental health services in Massachusetts. However, they all acknowledged that the mental health service system is confusing and parents often do not know how to access services when their children show signs of mental illness. In response, the Boston Bar Association, with support from Children’s Hospital Boston, created the Parents’ How-to Guide to Children’s Mental Health Services in Massachusetts.

This guide, first published in December 2004, is revised and now available on the Children’s Hospital website. The easy-to-read format helps parents: recognize the mental health problems their children may be having; access the services their children need; navigate the mental health service system; and provides advocacy tips. The updated version includes a chapter about planning for continued services, public and private health insurance options, and state mental health services for adults with disabilities after a child ages out of services.

Access the guide on-line at www.childrenshospital.org/mentalhealthguide, or order a free copy from the Boston Bar Association by calling 617-778-1934 or theguide@bostonbar.org.
Employment Opportunities at the Federation

The Federation currently has five available positions. For more information about these opportunities please visit our website at http://fcsn.org/aboutus/jobs/jobs.php.

MassCARE
Family Support Specialist
MassCARE (Massachusetts Community AIDS Resource Enhancement) is a statewide program for women, children, youth, and families living with HIV.
The Family Support Specialist will assist in the planning and implementation of MassCARE consumer participation activities and provide support to consumers at MassCARE sites. Will work closely with the MassCARE Director, Coordinator of Family Support Services, and other MassCARE staff to ensure completion of activities.

Family TIES Job Openings
Metrowest and Southeast Parent Coordinators
Family TIES of Massachusetts, a statewide information, referral and support network for families of children with special health care needs and/or disabilities, is now hiring part-time (20 hours per week) Regional Parent Coordinators for the Metrowest and Southeast regions. Applicants should be a parent of a child with special health needs and/or disabilities and must live in the region for which they are applying; both will work out of the Department of Public Health (DPH) regional office in Canton, MA.

Regional Parent Coordinators provide information and referral, technical assistance, and training to parents who have children with special health needs or disabilities and the professionals who support and provide services to families.

Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC)
Statewide Trainer and Outreach Specialists
Massachusetts PIRC, a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, is a federally funded statewide Parent Information and Resource Center which provides resources and supports to families, schools, community agencies and other organizations about parent involvement in education and No Child Left Behind educational reform. Massachusetts PIRC is seeking to hire a part-time (minimum 20 hours per week to maximum 32 hours per week) bi-lingual Statewide Trainer and Outreach Specialist to Spanish-Speaking Families and a Statewide Trainer and Outreach Specialist to African American Families. The Statewide Trainer and Outreach Specialist is responsible for coordinating outreach and providing trainings, information and resources to unserved and underserved families, communities, and organizations throughout Massachusetts.
The Federation is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Parenting a child with special needs
is a full time job.

Taking on new roles... Agonizing over decisions... Putting our own lives on hold, while struggling to balance all our responsibilities...
We do it gladly for our children, but it can be overwhelming.

Pride and Joy Life Coaching can help.
I have a child with special needs and I understand your journey. As your life coach, I’ll help you:
• Sort out priorities and gain clarity.
• Make choices and decisions with confidence.
• Take action toward your goals – in all areas of your life.

Life coaching takes place by phone, so it’s focused, productive, and easy to schedule. Call or email to set up a free sample session. You can create the life you want for yourself, your child, and your family.
Visit www.prideandjoycoaching.com to find out more!

Federation Staff member Rhea Tavares was recently profiled in People magazine.
Ms. Tavares was also the subject of a People Profile which aired on the CBS radio network.
To view a PDF of the People Magazine article or to listen to the radio broadcast, please visit our website at www.fcsn.org.
New Spanish Website by Families for Families with Children on the Autism Spectrum

Manitas Autismo Alianza Hispana Red de Apoyo y Mas hosts a new website that provides information and supports to Spanish-speaking families with children on the autism spectrum at www.manitasporautismo.com.

This site was created by families for families and has information in Spanish about autism spectrum disorders. They are developing a chat room and forum area where families can discuss educational issues, faith-based inquiries, and share information about food and supplements. Parents of children on the spectrum will moderate these areas. Two doctors from Mexico will answer questions about autism.

If you have experience and/or expertise you’d like to volunteer, or information you’d like to see included on the site contact Maria Teresa at abinader4@qmail.com.

Nuevo sitio web por Familias y para Familias con Niños con el Espectro del Autismo

Manitas Autismo Alianza Hispana Red de Apoyo y Mas presentan un nuevo sitio web que provee información y apoyo para las familias de habla hispana que tienen niños con el espectro de autismo. www.manitasporautismo.com.

Este sitio web fue creado por familias para familias y tiene información en español sobre el desorden del espectro del autismo. Estan desarrollando un area de charla y un foro, donde las familias pueden charlar sobre los problemas de la educación, encuestas sobre la religion, y compartir información sobre la comida y los suplementos. Padres con niños con el espectro podrán moderar estas areas de charla y el foro. Dos doctores de Mexico le responderan a sus preguntas sobre el autismo.

Si usted tiene experiencia y/o desea ser voluntario, o desea ver información incluida en este sitio llame a Maria Teresa a abinader4@qmail.com.

Visions of Community 2007 Conference-at-a-Glance...
Mark your calendars for these upcoming Federation Events

Parent Consultant Trainings

Summer 2007 - Sturbridge, MA
June 25-29
Now accepting applications

Fall 2007 - Boston, MA
Tuesdays October through November,
Accepting applications starting July 2

For more information on these or any Federation events,
please call us at 617-236-7210 or email fcsninfo@fcsn.org