Inclusive Schools week is celebrated annually by parents, students, teachers, professionals and community organizations across the country and abroad.

For the past six years, Inclusive Schools Week has been observed during the first week of December. This year’s 7th celebration is no different; mark your calendars for December 3 – 7, 2007.

On a daily basis, schools, families and communities work hard to include all children in education. Inclusive Schools Week is a time to profile these accomplishments and to identify and overcome the challenges of supporting and improving educational outcomes for all children.

This week will be a time to read stories about other countries and discover resources that may be useful in your community.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the Open Society Institute & Soros Foundations Network are supporting projects that help ensure that children around the world who are discriminated against due to gender, disability or socioeconomic status, receive a quality education. The Federation is proud to be a partner organization in these efforts.

Visit www.inclusiveschools.org to read about inclusive practices. The resources and events section links to lesson plans about anti-bias, decreasing drop out rates for students with disabilities and more.

Families are encouraged to work with school personnel to plan activities for this week. The checklist and planning form at www.inclusiveschools.org/involved.asp#get is a useful tool to help you organize an event in your school.

Mark your calendars for December 3 – 7, 2007
Visions of Community 2008

The Federation for Children with Special Needs will host its annual Visions of Community conference on Saturday, March 1, 2008, at the Seaport/World Trade Center-Boston. We are excited to announce that Paul Reville, the newly appointed Chairman of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, will deliver the keynote address.

There will also be more than 30 breakout sessions (many presented and/or translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Cantonese) with topical strands and information about Early Childhood, Special Education, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Health Care for Children with Special Needs, Transition, Social/Recreation Opportunities and more. The conference is also a great opportunity to network with other parents, learn about the programs and services offered by the Federation’s many projects and visit an exhibit hall where more than 50 vendors will have information about products for children with special needs and their families.

Visit the Federation website at www.fcsn.org for conference updates, the workshop schedule, and registration materials.

Community Partnership Awards: Now Accepting Nominations

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. Do you know an individual like this? The Federation invites you to nominate this person for a Community Partnership Award. Download the form at www.fcsn.org/conference08 and return by December 7, 2007. The awardees will be honored at the Visions of Community Conference on March 1.

MassCARE: Family Networking Day

On August 4, 2007, MassCARE hosted their annual Family Networking Day at the Girl Scout Patriots Trail in Waltham. More than 150 children, teens and adults, all affected by HIV, came from all over the state to participate in this event, which was planned by the Family Advisory Network (FAN). Everyone enjoyed a wonderful barbeque, swimming, games, and arts and crafts. A covered pavilion provided respite from the heat, but not the fun, as the DJ kept the crowd moving with an entertaining selection of music. In addition to the activities, this was also a day to network, catch up with old friends and make new ones. We extend our many thanks to the consumers, MassCARE staff and volunteers for planning and leading the many activities and for helping to make the day so successful.

MassCARE (Massachusetts Community AIDS Resource Enhancement) is one of 58 programs throughout the country funded under Title IV of the Ryan White Care Act. MassCARE ensures that children, adolescents, women and family members living with or affected by HIV/AIDS have access to coordinated, comprehensive, family-centered, culturally and linguistically competent counseling, testing, and care. For more information call Delores Qualls at 1-800-331-0688, ext. 311 or Linda Spinner at ext. 352.
Making Cents of Special Education Costs

Recently, the “Team 5 Investigates” television news team reported that special education costs are “rising rapidly” and local school districts claimed that special education costs are “out of control.” The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents stated that regular education and staffing budget cuts were a direct result of the high cost of special education. The promotional line that aired during the commercial breaks stated, “Special Education is cheating regular ed.”

The Federation respectfully disagrees. Neither special education students nor their parents are cheating the educational system. It is true that school budgets are stretched and school districts struggle to provide adequate school funding, but special education is not the only culprit. I have been a school committee member for 12 years, and have helped construct 12 annual school budgets. In addition to rising special education costs, the costs of textbooks, utilities (in particular heating oil and gas), staff salaries and their associated health benefits packages have all increased dramatically. Since 1980 (the same year that the citizen tax petition known as Proposition 2 ½ took effect), the cost of providing a public education to our students has increased 5-7% per year. Indeed, our revenue increases have not been able to keep pace with the rising costs. However, to conclude that special education is the sole or even primary reason for the crisis in educational funding is erroneous.

What is missing from this conversation is that accommodations that enable children with disabilities to be educated alongside their peers provide tremendous benefits to all students, and is really an investment in every student’s future. My children’s friends can describe, in detail, the benefits they have gained from growing up and going to school with my kids. I am sure they are not alone. To conclude that students with special needs have cheated any student is outrageous! To place their families in a demeaning position is unconscionable. To determine that the source of school funding problems is caused by the most vulnerable students and not by a lack of willingness to adequately fund education is disheartening.

The report found that educators agree this discussion is not about whether or not students with special needs deserve a good education. It is about who should bear the “burden of the cost.” It seems to me education costs are a shared responsibility that should not pit one group against the other. Rabbi Hillel, a Jewish scholar said, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?” To paraphrase, if we do not advocate for our students with special needs, who will? If we do not advocate on behalf of all students, what future does any student have? The time is now.

In support of all students,
Richard J. Robison

Support the Federation: Annual Appeal

“Our lives will never be the same!” “Thanks a million - for the workshops, interpreters and resources,” wrote another. These words from parents say what so many have felt after attending the Federation’s Annual Visions of Community Conference.

The Federation creates hope. Families can easily be overwhelmed by the maze of state agencies, rules and regulations, and school policies that become obstacles to ensuring an effective education for all students. Federation staff and volunteers responded to more than 8000 phone calls and emails last year. More than 600 workshops and training sessions were filled to capacity with parents and professionals wanting to learn how to maximize children’s educational services. Presentations in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin remind us that every family desires equal access to quality education, healthcare and community life. The Federation for Children with Special Needs has the unique ability and resources to respond to the diverse needs of families.

Each gift to the Federation directly increases our capacity to assist families and share the resources they need to help their children achieve their social, academic, physical and intellectual potential. We help parents at the beginning of their journey when their children are in Early Intervention, when their school-aged children are not making effective progress, and when their teens are learning to be more independent and transitioning to adult life.

Without your support, the Federation would be limited in our ability to provide essential services. With your support, families receive the information, resources and strategies they need to help their children.

We welcome donations through our website at http://fcsn.org/giving_events/annual_appeal.php or send a check payable to: Federation for Children with Special Needs, 1135 Tremont St., Suite 420, Boston, MA 02120. The Federation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Family TIES of Massachusetts

By Mary Castro Summers, Director, Family TIES

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. Family TIES staff provides information and referral services, parent-to-parent support, and free workshops for parents of children with special needs.

In the last edition of Newsline, we shared information about creating Individualized Health Care Plans and MASTART, a free technical assistance service from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. As a result of that article (http://fcsn.org/publications_resources/newsline/nlv28n1.pdf), readers requested tips about how to administer medications to children with special health care needs, especially children who take many medications throughout the day. Below are some tips about medication safety and ways to give your child medicine. Remember, each child is unique, and what works for one child might not work for another.

1. Parents and caretakers should know the names of all medications their children are taking, the dose, why the medication was prescribed, and the side effects. Talk to your child’s physicians and pharmacist about all prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications your child takes. If your child sees more than one physician, make sure each doctor knows all the medications your child is taking.

2. It is important to read the instructions or ask the pharmacist about how to administer the medication. Should it be given on an empty stomach or with food? Are there foods or drinks to avoid with a particular medication? Is the medication compatible with other medications your child is taking? If you have any questions about how to administer a medication (even OTC medications) and its compatibility with other medications, talk to the pharmacist.

3. When administering medication to your child, present the need for medicine in a positive light. If you are nervous, the child will be too. Using terms your child will understand, explain why the medicine is necessary. It’s much easier for the child to cooperate if he understands the medication will make him feel better.

4. You know your child best. What’s the easiest way for her to take the medication? If it tastes bad, consider administering liquid medications with a dropper on the back of the tongue, which bypasses taste buds and makes it more difficult to spit it out. Some medicines come in a variety of flavors. For OTC medicine, let your child choose. For prescription medications, ask the pharmacist if it comes in different flavors, and again, let your child choose. If your child cannot swallow pills, ask if the medication is available as a chewable tablet. For some children, a suppository may be the answer.

5. Give your child extra hugs and let him know you know it’s hard to have to do this, especially if it’s all the time. Your support can go a long way toward boosting your child’s attitude about taking medications.

Family TIES is pleased to welcome new staff in the Southeast, Metrowest and Boston Regions. “Meet” our new Regional Parent Coordinators in the article on page 14. For information about community resources and making parent-to-parent connections, contact your Regional Parent Coordinator by calling 1-800-905-TIES (8437). We look forward to hearing from you.
A Helping Hand: Mother-to-Mother

By Barbara Popper, Helping Hand Administrative Supervisor

The Helping Hand project is actually composed of many helping hands. It’s a collaboration between the Federation, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS), Brandeis University and the Institute for Human Recovery. Using a parent-helping-parent model, a mentor parent based at the Federation provides support and encouragement to mothers whose babies are born substance-exposed. The mentor parent, Jodi La Fond, receives referrals from DSS and makes immediate contact with the mother. To date, Jodi has worked with a dozen mothers. Her goal is to make sure that the babies are referred to an early intervention program, and that their mothers feel supported. This may mean accompanying a mom to a meeting, answering questions, or providing additional information about other services for which their families are eligible – in short – Jodi provides a helping hand. The project, originally operational in the Cambridge-Somerville area, is expanding to Fitchburg-Leominster, where a new host agency will hire a mentor parent.

As stated above, one goal is to provide individualized support and mentoring to mothers. Another goal is to improve outreach of this project and learn from the participants the most helpful ways to support mothers and their babies when substance exposure is an issue. Our research partners at Brandeis interview the mothers to see if the mentoring was helpful.

Special Needs Trusts - The Basics

By Neal A. Winston, Moschella & Winston

A Special Needs Trust (also called a Supplemental Needs Trust or SNT) is a way for families with children with disabilities to provide ‘extras’ for the child without compromising eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), MassHealth (the Massachusetts Medicaid program) or other public benefits. If a child receives SSI, he or she also receives the MassHealth benefit.

Eligibility for SSI is based on a disability determination, income and other assets, like money in a bank account. If the child is younger than 18, the parents’ income and assets are counted. If the child is 18 or older, only his or her income and assets are counted. If your child needs SSI and MassHealth, or will need to be in a care facility or supervised housing that has income restrictions, an inheritance or a gift may make your child ineligible for these supports. Establishing a Special Needs Trust is a way to maintain your child’s eligibility for benefits and also set money aside for other expenses.

Generally, the person with the disability does not receive funds from an SNT directly. Rather, a third party pays for the goods and services that the individuals needs that are not covered by government benefits; the beneficiary must be the principal user of these goods and services.

Many families leave assets to another family member with the understanding that this person will care for the child with a disability. While this can work, it can also be risky. The assets might be mismanaged or used for other purposes. An SNT assures that your child’s inheritance will be used only for his or her future needs, as these funds cannot be diverted.

When you set up the SNT, you will have to designate a Trustee to manage the trust. The Trustee will use investment income and principal from the trust to provide for the needs of the individual with the disability, within the guidelines of the SNT agreement. Choose a Trustee who will be part of your child’s life for a long time, and draft the trust to adjust for changing circumstances as your child ages. Properly set up and used appropriately, a Special Needs Trust is a loving gift that will benefit your child for a lifetime.

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Accessible Textbooks for Massachusetts Students

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic® (RFB&D®) and the Massachusetts Department of Education have announced a collaboration that will allow all Massachusetts public school districts to participate in a new federal program. This program makes it easier for students who have print disabilities (difficulties reading printed text because of blindness, visual impairment, color blindness, certain learning disabilities, and certain mobility problems) to quickly receive copies of textbooks in accessible audio format.

As of September 2007, public school districts will be able to enroll in RFB&D’s services at no cost due to the creation of the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). NIMAC, a repository for electronic files of recently published K-12 textbooks, originated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. This act requires states to make it easier for students with disabilities to obtain accessible textbooks. In 2006, federal legislation mandated that publishers adopt a new file format, the National Instructional Materials Access Standard (NIMAS) for all textbooks published after July 2006. RFB&D membership will allow school districts to provide their students who have documented print disabilities with digital textbooks from RFB&D and NIMAC.

At a school’s request, publishers are also required to deposit the electronic files into the NIMAC, housed at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, KY, where they are available to producers of accessible educational materials in audio, Braille and other formats used by students with print disabilities. RFB&D has been selected by the state as a provider of NIMAC books in digital audio format, which can be produced in a timely manner and shipped to educational institutions who request books from the NIMAC repository for their students.

So that all eligible public school students in Massachusetts will have access to this program, the Massachusetts Department of Education is making basic district-level memberships available to all public school districts, along with playback capabilities for participating schools. These memberships will make it possible for eligible students with disabilities to access newly published textbooks as digital audio books on CD through RFB&D’s library.

The RFB&D library contains more than 37,000 recorded titles, spanning all subject areas and grade levels, produced in digital audio format and provided to students on CDs that allow the user to easily navigate to specific pages and chapters. All of the audio books that RFB&D distributes to students can be played back on specialized digital CD players or on a laptop or personal computer loaded with specialized playback software. NIMAC books played back on a laptop or PC will provide the audio of the book being read and highlighted text on the computer screen.

The New England Regional Unit of RFB&D operates three recording studios in Cambridge, Lenox and Williamstown, which work with nearly 500 community volunteers who record several hundred new audio textbooks each year for students with print disabilities.

For additional information about this program contact Jeanne Guiney, Regional Director of Educational Outreach at the New England Regional Unit, (617) 577-1111, ext. 18, or email jguiney@rfbd.org.
Reauthorization of NCLB: Focus on Parental Involvement

By Janet R. Vohs, Director of Publications, Massachusetts PIRC

“We must...explore new and innovative strategies to engage parents and communities in helping kids succeed in school.” - Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Congress is now reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Signed into law on January 8, 2002, NCLB is one of the most far-reaching federal laws ever written in support of elementary and secondary education.

“Reauthorization” means to renew the law. When Congress passes laws, they include an expiration date. As the date approaches, Congress reviews the law, holds hearings, and asks for feedback from stakeholders, including parents and teachers. Congress uses this input to improve the law, and then votes to reauthorize it.

NCLB, now in its 5th year, expired on September 30. The reauthorization process has begun, and will most likely continue throughout the next year. During the process, the current law is still in place.

Parental Involvement

NCLB defines “Parental Involvement” as “regular two-way and meaningful communication around student academic learning.” Studies have found that the most powerful link to learning is close, regular communication between teachers and families around what students are learning and doing in class. The law requires that schools nurture and support this communication for every child. In addition, NCLB requires that parents play a significant role as partners in school governance and decision-making.

The centerpiece of NCLB is the requirement that schools bring all students—including students with disabilities and those who are English language learners— to grade level in reading and math by 2014. To achieve that goal, the law includes provisions aimed at increasing parental involvement in education. For example, parents must be given clear, understandable information and data about the quality of the schools. NCLB also gives parents more opportunities for school choice, free tutoring, and participation in school decision-making. Many parent advocates are pleased with the strong parental involvement provisions of NCLB; however, throughout the country, these provisions are often overlooked or weakly implemented.

Several major advocacy organizations have written testimony to Congress recommending changes that would empower parents to be true partners in the education of their children. Notable examples include:

- “PTA Recommendations for Parent Involvement in the Upcoming ESEA-NCLB Reauthorization” at www.pta.org/documents/03NCLB-rec07.pdf
- the Education Trust Recommendations at www2.edtrust.org, and

In addition, the House Committee on Education and Labor has posted a discussion draft with amendments that would strengthen the law’s provisions requiring schools to involve parents in forming school policies, goals, and reforms. Schools would have to demonstrate how they would receive and process parent feedback.

They would also be encouraged to use multiple forms of communication to reach out to parents. The entire draft is available at http://edworkforce.house.gov/bills/MillerMcKeonNCLBDiscussionDraft.pdf. Alternatively, you can read the summary at http://edworkforce.house.gov/bills/MillerMcKeonNCLBDiscussionDraftSummary.pdf.

The reauthorization period is a time to share your views about the law. Parents can participate in a variety of ways:

- Learn about NCLB and the major provisions of the law by contacting the Mass PIRC at 1-877-471-0980.
- Attend public hearings, town meetings, and other forums where you can share your views about your child’s education with other parents and community members.
- Invite policy makers to your school to show them what works and how NCLB is beneficial.
- Identify two or three major areas of NCLB that you believe need improving and share your views with your congressional delegation (contact information at www.congress.org).

The Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) will keep Newsline readers informed about NCLB reauthorization, with particular focus on accountability provisions and students with disabilities. Readers are encouraged to call the Massachusetts PIRC at 1-877-471-0980 with questions about NCLB and for ideas about getting involved in your child’s education. Relevant articles and resources are available at www.pplace.org.
Financing Options for Adapted Vehicles

Information from the Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Information Center, a project of Mass Family Voices

Before you start going to dealerships in search of the perfect vehicle, you may want to read a very useful brochure by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/ears/rules/adaptive/brochure/brochure.html. It has information about choosing a vehicle that best fits your needs, choosing a qualified dealer, licensing requirements, getting training to operate the vehicle and more. In addition, the resource section of the brochure has a list of car manufacturers that offer rebates or reimbursements on vehicle modifications. These tend to be small, generally $200 to $1,000, but every little bit helps.

In Massachusetts, vehicles purchased with the intent to modify or that are already modified are exempt from sales tax. In order to apply for the sales tax exemption, you will need to fill out and submit a MVU-33 form along with the RMV-1, which is the application for the vehicle title that the dealer will fill out with you. You can download the MVU-33 from the Department of Revenue website at www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dor/Forms/MVU/PDFs/mvu_33.pdf. The rules were modified so that parents or legal guardians of a child with a disability that needs accessible transportation can claim the tax exemption.

Easter Seals operates the Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan program. This is a way to get a low interest loan to pay for assistive technology, which includes adapted vehicles. More information and the loan application are available at www.massatloan.org or by calling 1-800-244-2756 ext. 428 or 431 (voice) or 1-800-564-9700 (TTY).

The Catastrophic Illness in Children’s Relief Fund (CICRF) helps families with expenses they incur as a direct result of their child’s diagnosis. It’s a reimbursement program, mean-

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ing you have to lay the money out first and hope your application is approved. The child must be a Massachusetts resident, must be 21 or younger, and the expenses must have been incurred in the past 24 months. To apply, out-of-pocket expenses must exceed 10% of the family’s gross annual income (for income less than $100,000) and 15% if family income is more than $100,000/year. You must also show that you have exhausted all other forms of reimbursement. Vehicle purchases and modifications are eligible expenses if the child uses a wheelchair or uses equipment that does not readily fit in most cars. When the CICRF application is for more expensive “medically related” items like vehicle purchases or modifications, the reimbursement is prorated based on family income. [Note: CICRF applications for reimbursement of direct medical services (physician/hospital care, prescription medications, etc) are not prorated.]

More information about the CICRF, eligibility, the application and a list of eligible expenses is at www.mass.gov/cicrf.

The Knights of Columbus have funds specifically to help children with special needs, and this includes purchases of adapted vehicles. There are no eligibility criteria. To apply, call the state council near where you live and speak with the Grand Knight. You will need to fill out some forms and have a physician provide documentation of your child’s disability, as well as provide several estimates. To locate the state council near you, call 781-551-0628 or visit www.massachusettsstatekofc.org and click on councils.

Independent Living Centers (ILC) have small pots of money through funds known as Title VII, Part B funds. These funds can be used for assistive technology and include the purchase of modified vehicles. You must pass a financial needs test based on a sliding scale fee and document that you have exhausted all other forms of payment. You can call your local ILC to see if your family meets the financial criteria. To find the ILC near you, visit www.masilc.org/docs/addresses.html and click on the service area.

*If you have additional funding ideas to share, please contact the MA Family-to-Family Health Information Center at 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210 or e-mail massfu@fcsn.org.*

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Informação do Centro de Informação sobre Saúde de Família à Família de Massachusetts, um projeto do Vozes das Famílias de Mass

Antes de você vá a uma agência de vendas autorizadas para procurar um veículo perfeito, talvez queira ler uma brochura bastante útil, oferecida pela Administração de Segurança de Trânsito da Auto-Estrada Nacional, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, no qual pode ser encontrado no site www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/brochure.html. Contém informação sobre como escolher um veículo que preencha melhor as suas necessidades, a escolha de um revendedor qualificado, os requisitos para a obtenção da licença, a participação do treinamento para a operação do veículo e outros. Além disso, a seção de recursos da brochura trás uma lista de produtores de carros que oferecem descontos e reembolsos para veículos modificados. Estas ofertas tendem a ser pequenas, geralmente de $200.00 a $1.000.00, mas qualquer valor serve de grande ajuda.

Em Massachusetts, os veículos comprados com a intenção de serem modificados ou que já foram modificados estão isentos de imposto sobre a mercadoria. Para você se qualificar para a isenção, terá que preencher e submeter o formulário MVU-33 juntamente com o RMV-1, que é o formulário para o título do veículo, que o vendedor preencherá com você. Você poderá baixar o formulário MVU-33 do website do Departamento da Receita, Department of Revenue, no www.mass.gov/ador/docs/dor/Forms/MVU/PDFs/mvu_33.pdf. As regras foram modificadas para que os pais ou responsáveis legais de uma criança com deficiência que necessita ter um transporte acessível, possam reivindicar a isenção de imposto.

A agência Focas da Páscoa, Easter Seals opera o programa de Empréstimo de Tecnologia de Assistência ao Deficiente de Massachusetts, Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan. Esta é uma maneira de se conseguir empréstimos de baixos juros para pagar tecnologia de assistência, que inclui os veículos adaptados. Mais informação e o formulário de empréstimo se encontram disponíveis no www.massatloan.org ou através do telefone 1-800-244-2756 ext. 428 ou 431 (voz) ou 1-800-564-9700 (TTY).

Fundo de Alívio para as Crianças com Doenças Catastróficas, Catastrophic Illness in Children’s Relief Fund, ajuda as famílias com as despesas que serão incorridas como resultado direto do diagnóstico de seu filho. É um programa de reembolso que significa que você deverá depositar o dinheiro antes...
e esperar para que sua requisição seja aprovada. A criança deverá ser residente de Massachusetts, ter 21 anos ou ser mais jovem e as despesas deverão ter sido incorridas nos últimos 24 meses. Para requerer, sua falta de fundos (despesa acima de seu limite) deverá exceder 10% da renda anual bruta da família (para rendas menores de $100,000.00) e 15% se a renda familiar for maior que $100,000.00/ano. Você também deve mostrar que já utilizou com exaustão todas as outras formas de reembolso. A compra de veículos e modificações são despesas qualificadas, se a criança usa a cadeira de rodas ou usa equipamento que não cabe com facilidade na maioria dos carros. Enquanto o formulário do CICRF se aplica aos itens mais caros “relacionados a problemas médicos”, “medically related”, como compra ou modificação de veículos, o reembolso é baseado na distribuição proporcional da renda familiar. [Nota: Os formulários do CICRF para reembolso de serviços médicos (médico / cuidados de hospital, receitas médicas, etc) não são calculados proporcionalmente].

Mais informação sobre o CICRF, a qualificação, o formulário e a lista de despesas qualificadas poderão ser encontrados no www.mass.gov/cicrf.

A fraternidade Cavaleiros de Colombo, The Knights of Columbus possui fundos especificamente destinados a ajudar as crianças com necessidades especiais, incluindo a compra de veículos adaptados. Não existe critério de qualificação. Para requerer, chame a junta administrativa do estado, state council, perto de onde você mora e fale com um Grande Cavaleiro, Grand Knight. Você deverá preencher alguns formulários e pedir para que seu médico forneça a documentação sobre a deficiência de seu filho, bem como fornecer várias estimativas. Para localizar a junta administrativa do estado perto de você, telefone para 781-551-0628 ou visite o www.massachusettsstatekofc.org e clique em councils, (conselhos).

Os Centros de Vida Independente, Independent Living Centers (ILC), têm pequenas somas de dinheiro através de fundos conhecidos como Título VII, fundos Parte B, Title VII, Part B funds. Estes fundos podem ser usados para a tecnologia de assistência e inclui a compra de veículos modificados. Você deverá passar por um teste de necessidades financeiras baseado em uma taxa de escala móvel, sliding scale, e documentação que mostre que você já utilizou com exaustão todas as outras formas de pagamento. Você pode chamar seu ILC local para ver se sua família preenche o critério financeiro. Para encontrar um ILC perto de você, visite o www.masilc.org/docs/addresses.html e clique no service area, (área para serviços).

Se você pode acrescentar e compartilhar de outras idéias de financiamento, por favor entre em contato com o Centro de Informação sobre Saúde de Familia-à-Familia de MA, MA Family-to-Family Health Information Center no 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210 ou através do e-mail massfv@fcsn.org.
Opciones de financiamiento para vehículos adaptados

Por el Centro de Información de Salud de Massachusetts de familia a familia, un proyecto de Mass Family Voices

Antes de comenzar a ver a distribuidores en busca del vehículo perfecto, tal vez le convenga leer un folleto muy útil de la Administración Nacional de Seguridad Vial en las Carreteras en esta página web: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/brochure.html. Tiene información sobre cómo elegir el vehículo más adecuado a sus necesidades y a un comerciante calificado, permisos requeridos, capacitación para operar el vehículo y más. Además, la sección sobre recursos del folleto tiene una lista de fabricantes de automóviles que ofrecen reintegros o reembolsos por modificación de vehículos. Tienden a ser sumas bajas, generalmente entre $200 y $1000, pero todo ayuda.

En Massachusetts, los vehículos comprados con la intención de modificarlos o ya modificados están exentos del impuesto a las ventas. Para poder solicitar la exención del impuesto a las ventas, hay que completar y enviar un formulario MVU-33 junto con el RMV-1, la solicitud de título del vehículo que el comerciante completará con usted. El formulario MVU-33 puede descargarse del sitio web del Department of Revenue: www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dor/Forms/MVU/PDFs/mvu_33.pdf. Las reglas se modificaron para que los padres o tutores legales de niños con discapacidades que necesitan transporte accesible puedan reclamar la exención de impuestos.

Easter Seals opera el Programa de préstamos para tecnologías de asistencia de Massachusetts (Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan program). Ésta es una manera de obtener un préstamo a interés bajo para pagar tecnología de asistencia, la cual incluye vehículos adaptados. En el sitio web www.massatloan.org o llamando al 1-800-244-2756 ext. 428 ó 431 (voz) ó 1-800-564-9700 (TTY), podrá obtener más información y una solicitud de préstamo.

El Fondo de Ayuda para Niños con Enfermedades (Catastrophic Illness in Children’s Relief Fund o CICRF) ayuda a las familias con los gastos directamente relacionados con el diagnóstico de su niño. Se trata de un programa de reembolso, lo cual significa que usted tiene que poner el dinero primero y esperar que su solicitud sea aprobada. El niño debe ser residente de Massachusetts de hasta 21 años de edad y debe haber incurrido en los gastos durante los 24 meses previos.

continúa en próxima página
Para solicitar esta ayuda, sus gastos de su propio bolsillo deben superar el 10% de los ingresos anuales brutos de su familia (para ingresos inferiores a $100,000) y el 15% (para ingresos superiores a $100,000 al año). Usted también debe demostrar que ha agotado todas las otras formas de reembolso. La compra y la modificación de vehículos son gastos elegibles si el niño usa una silla de ruedas o equipo que no cabe fácilmente en la mayoría de los automóviles. Cuando la solicitud del CICRF es para productos médicos más caros, como compra de un vehículo o modificaciones, los reembolsos se prorratean en base a los ingresos de la familia. [Nota: las solicitudes al CICRF de reembolso de servicios médicos directos (atención médica/en hospital, medicamentos recetados, etc.) no se prorratean.]

Podrá encontrar más información acerca del CICRF, los requisitos, la solicitud y una lista de los gastos elegibles en www.mass.gov/cicrf.

Los Knights of Columbus (Caballeros de Colón) tienen fondos específicamente para ayudar a niños con necesidades especiales y esto incluye la compra de vehículos adaptados. No hay restricciones de elegibilidad. Para solicitar, llame al Consejo estatal cercano a su domicilio y pida a hablar con el Grand Knight (Gran Caballero). Tendrá que completar algunos formularios y un médico deberá proveer documentación sobre la discapacidad de su niño así como presupuestos varios. Para localizar el consejo estatal más cercano a usted, llame al 781-551-0628 o visite www.massachusettsstatekofc.org y haga clic en consejos.

Los Centros de Vida Independiente (Independent Living Centers o ILC) tienen pequeños montos de dinero a través de fondos conocidos como Título VII, Parte B. Estos fondos pueden usarse para tecnología de asistencia e incluyen la compra de vehículos modificados. Usted debe pasar una prueba de necesidad económica basada en una escala móvil y debe documentar que ha agotado todas las otras formas de pago. Puede llamar a su rama local del ILC para ver si su familia cumple los requisitos económicos. Para averiguar la localidad desde un ILC cercano a usted, visite www.masilc.org/docs/addresses.html y haga clic en service area (área de servicio).

Si tiene sugerencias adicionales sobre fuentes de financiamiento para compartir, por favor, comuníquese con el Centro de Información de salud de De familia a familia llamando al 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210, o enviando correo electrónico a massfu@fcsn.org.
The Family TIES project is delighted to introduce three new staff members. Metrowest families will be connecting with Michelle Gaudet. Michelle is the mother of two boys with Epilepsy. While new to the Family TIES project, she is no stranger to Federation programs, as she has taken the Parent Consultant Training.

Miriam Scrivener, the Southeast Regional Parent Coordinator, also has ‘history’ with the Federation. She not only used to be a history teacher, she also took the Parent Consultant Training. As mom to two children on the Autism/Asperger spectrum, she understands what life is like for parents with children with special needs and knows how important it is to be able to connect with someone who “has walked in your shoes.”

Kassandra Castillo, the Boston Regional Parent Coordinator, is the proud mother of a teenaged son who has a specific learning disability and ADHD. Kassandra says her participation in the Federation’s Parent Consultant Training was “life-changing” and she is passionate about helping other parents.

Miriam and Kassandra will join Sara Diaz, the Spanish translator, as the project expands outreach and training activities throughout the state.

The MassCARE project welcomes Linda Spinner as the new Family Support Specialist. Linda will help consumers understand services, encourage their participation in the Family Advisory Network (FAN) and Teen Advisory Network (TAN), as well as support them in their advocacy efforts.

The Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center says good-bye to Melanie Funken. Melanie is returning to her first love – teaching; she will make a tremendous difference in the lives of her students!

Jackie Mckeon, the Development Associate at the Federation is moving on. We wish her well in her new position with a marketing firm.
If you’re married and have children with special needs, you probably don’t need to read a book that discusses marital stress. In fact, you could probably write your own book. However, if you have ever felt like you’re the only one who feels a certain way about your spouse or your child, this book can be extremely helpful in not only validating your feelings, but also in providing plenty of ideas and strategies for improving your relationship.

One of the most important strategies for improving relationships is good communication. The communication skills we use to advocate for services and supports for our children, and to collaborate with medical teams, school personnel, and community providers are the same skills that are essential to a strong marriage. And, when all else fails, don’t forget the art of compromise, even if it’s just to agree to disagree.

Each chapter includes family stories that lovingly ‘illustrate’ this book, reassures readers that they are not alone and helps break through the isolation married couples sometimes feel - both from each other and from other couples. Practical advice from the authors and other parents include ways to cope with stress, and a reminder to respect each partner’s coping mechanism.

Woodbine House has donated a copy of the book to the Federation, which you can borrow by calling 617-236-7210. Learn more about the Special Needs Collection at www.woodbinehouse.com.

Link to Amazon.com through our website www.fcsn.org and up to 6% of your purchase will help support the Federation.
Mark your calendars for these upcoming Federation Events

**Joining Voices Conference**
November 29, 2007  
Keynote Speaker - Dr. Suzanne Bronheim, National Center for Cultural Competence

**Inclusive Schools Week**
December 3-7, 2007

**Visions of Community Conference**
March 1, 2008

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