When Samantha was 10 years old, she was bullied by a male classmate. She remembers walking through the halls of her elementary school and hearing these words: “Why are you on this earth? You don’t deserve to be alive.” The bullying followed her every day. “I didn’t want to go to school because I knew he would be there. I was afraid,” says Samantha, now 11. Weeks into the school year, the harassment and intimidation escalated and turned physical. “It was usually mental [abuse], but at one point in fifth grade the bully came up to me, and he punched me on the back,” says Samantha quietly. This was the breaking point. “I had enough,” says Samantha’s mother Karen. “The verbal and physical abuse needed to stop.”

Samantha and her mother reported the incident to the school and the police resource officer. Another student, who witnessed the physical bullying, stepped forward and also reported the incident to the school. The bully was reprimanded by the officer; however, no further action was taken by Samantha’s school. Although the daily torment ended, Samantha’s respite was temporary.

The bully’s verbal aggression resurfaced, and it started to impact Samantha’s schoolwork, self-esteem and overall health. Karen says her daughter exhibited many of the warning signs of being bullied — depressed mood, physical ailments and school avoidance. “It started small with her belly hurting. Then she didn’t want to go to school,” says Karen. “Samantha stopped doing homework and spent as much time in the nurse’s office as she did in classes.” Samantha missed 30 days of school that year due to bullying.

Finding a safe haven

To help her daughter get the tools she needed to manage the effects of being bullied, Karen reached out to Boston Children’s Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention and Advocacy Collaborative (BACPAC).
Mentor Match - Partners For Youth with Disabilities

By Becky Rizoli, Youth Program Coordinator, LINK Center (FCSN)

If you are an adolescent or a young adult with a disability, you may often feel alone. You may feel that there is no one else who understands the struggles you go through. While your family, teachers, therapists, and other adults in your life may support you; you may feel as though they don’t truly understand you. If only there was some way that you could connect with someone who could relate to the challenges that you go through, perhaps someone with a disability who had been through special education and transition.

Well, you’re in luck. There is such a way, and it’s called Mentor Match through Partners for Youth with Disabilities, or PYD for short. PYD offers a program for young people with disabilities ages 6-24 (living within the MA-128 belt surrounding Boston) to meet their full potential for personal development and independence by matching them with a caring adult mentor, many of whom have disabilities themselves. Mentors talk with their mentees at least once a week via phone or email; and take their mentees out to fun places like the beach, shopping, or athletic events. Both the mentor and the mentee benefit from the match as they grow and learn from each other.

I have had the honor to be a mentor through PYD’s Mentor Match. I was paired with a young woman, and I have enjoyed getting to know her and being a source of support to her. I have been able to help her with issues surrounding relationships, careers, health, disclosing a disability, and staying organized. Much of the advice I have given her stems from a direct result of having similar experiences in my own youth. Because she and I both have “hidden” disabilities, (that is, no one can tell that we have disabilities just by looking at us) I am able to connect with her in a unique manner. Since I have experienced many of the same struggles and obstacles as my mentee, I am able to share the life lessons I have learned, and pass them on to her. I feel truly honored and privileged to have this opportunity. We also have a great time together as we get to know each other and take part in fun activities around the Boston area.

If you are interested in learning more about how to become a Mentor or Mentee in PYD’s Mentor Match program, visit PYD’s website at: www.pyd.org/mentor-match.php
From the Executive Director: 
In these Uncertain and Anxious Times!

There is so much uncertainty and change in our world right now. We’re not sure who will be the next president of the US, not even who will be the candidates to choose. The business markets seem unstable – up one day, dropping the next. Gas prices are down – for now, but maybe they will spike!

Congress passed a new Elementary and Secondary Education Act called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), but what does it mean? How will the Federal and State governments make it happen? The state mandatory education test is changing again, MCAS will be gone after nearly 20 years. PARRC may be the replacement? No, now it will be MCAS 2.0! But how will students pass this exam? Social Media report it all with instantaneous speed.

In these uncertain times, how is a parent of students with challenges to cope with all of these issues/changes/and uncertainties? Indeed, raising a child with Special Needs means facing many challenges and uncertainties. The Federation for Children with Special Needs truly believes that parents of children with special needs can equip themselves to face the challenges of today’s world.

We view disability, special needs or individual differences as a natural part of life; that Children are our greatest assets and hope; parents when empowered with the necessary resources can help their children reach their potential. We promote the active and informed participation of parents of children with disabilities in shaping, implementing, and evaluating public policy that affects them. And we believe in the power of parents helping parents and have infused a proven model of peer support throughout all our work.

The Federation is here to assist you. The Call Center is available daily to help answer questions you may have. Parent Consultant Training will provide you a deep insight into the educational and healthcare systems you depend upon. Presentations & Webinars will enhance your understanding and support your ability to think clearly. Visions of Community Conference will allow you to experience the richness of our community.

You are not alone. The Federation is a reliable community of parents and professionals, and we are here to help – one family at a time. Call us, attend an event, participate online. You’ll be glad you did.

Rich Robison
Each year the Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC) sponsors a conference to express appreciation to the dedicated individuals who volunteer their time as Special Education Surrogate Parents (SESPs), Department of Families and Children (DCF) Foster/Adoptive Caregivers, and the professionals who serve them.

The 4th annual RTSC Making a Difference Conference held at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center in Marlborough was a huge success, thanks to the financial support from Seyfarth Shaw, Jason Hayes Foundation, Sasson Turnbull Ryan and Hoose, Tom Canel, Netina Nelsoms, and The Addison Group. In addition to the financial support, we had wonderful, generous presenters and volunteers from our partner organization, EDCO Collaborative, and Federation staff, who assisted us throughout the day.

In Massachusetts, children in state custody who receive special education services depend on SESP to protect their legal right to a free and appropriate education. SESP are volunteers who act on behalf of individual students with all the rights and authority of a parent in the matters of special education. For the children in our program, education is a life-line in a challenging world. SESP help them access services and develop tools they need to grow into successful adults. Since SESP generally work alone, this conference provides a unique opportunity for attendees to learn and network with each other, child welfare professional and RTSC staff.

The day began with introductions from Rich Robison, the Federation’s Executive Director and RTSC Project Director, Renee Williams. Dr. Nancy Rappaport, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, was this year’s keynote speaker. She gave an informative talk about providing support for children with challenging behaviors. Dr. Rappaport described how misbehavior can be a symptom of a disability that requires a paradigm shift in how we respond. Later that day the afternoon keynote speaker Marty Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education, gave a special “Mini-State of the State” lecture on a variety of issues, including the State Systemic Improvement Plan and Low Income Education Access Project.

The conference also included four workshops that addressed transitioning to adult life, bullying, the impact of toxic stress, and trauma-informed evaluations and programs -- all critical issues for DCF-involved children.

Dr. Heather Forkey is the Chief of the Child Protection Program and Clinical Director for the Foster Children Evaluation Program at the University of Massachusetts Children’s Medical Center and Associate Professor at the UMass School of Medicine. Her workshop Developmental and Educational Implications of Toxic Stress talked about the concept of toxic stress, how to identify the symptoms and then how to develop strategies to address families and children at risk from adversity or impacted by trauma.

Dr. Jennifer DelRey currently works in private practice where she consults with school districts, parents, and attorneys, regarding children with special educational, emotional, and social needs. In her workshop Trauma Assessments and Trauma-Informed Programming in the School Setting, Dr. DelRey gave an overview of the different types of trauma, the impact of trauma-based symptoms on school functioning, and how to craft trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive school-based programming.

Leslie Hughes is an autism public education specialist through the Autism Special Education Legal Support Center at Massachusetts Advocates for Children and a parent of a child with disabilities. In her workshop IEP and School-Wide Strategies to Prevent Bullying of Students, Ms. Hughes talked about district-wide bullying and prevention plans, staff training, and IEP protection for students with disabilities.

Marilyn Weber, a seasoned parent consultant and advocate specializing in transition issues, gave attendees a wealth of knowledge in her workshop Transition to Life after High School: How do we Get There? She touched on the best education, transition, economic outcomes, employment opportunities, and independent living outcomes for youth.

Between workshop sessions, the nearly 200 attendees browsed the tables of exhibitors from programs around the state: American Training Inc., Children’s Law Center of Massachusetts, Crystal Springs School, Dare Family Services, Families Affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, FASD, Kennedy Day School at Franciscan Hospital for Children, Northeast Arc, Salem State University, and Special Needs Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPAN).

At the end of the conference attendees walked away with resources and knowledge they can use in working with youth in care. Program evaluations reflected on how much attendees learned and how grateful they were to connect with others. One woman said “I only wish there was more time,” and another, “This is useful information to use with any student.” Many said they could not wait until next year when we can all be together again.

The next Making a Difference conference will be on Tuesday, November 15, 2016, so save the date. We hope to see you there.
Samantha’s story: Partnering with BACPAC Program to End Bullying
(continued from page 1)

Samantha and Karen met with the BACPAC team, including pediatric neurologist and BACPAC Program Director, Dr. Peter Raffalli. Samantha shared her story of victimization, learned skills to combat bullying and was given tools to promote self-empowerment.

“Samantha spoke for two hours, and she told the team about the bullying. She was happy that someone who wasn’t a loved one validated she was being bullied and it wasn’t her fault,” Karen recalls. “As she spoke, I could see the burden begin to lift from her shoulders.”

About Boston Children’s BACPAC program

The BACPAC program was founded in 2009 and was initially framed as an anti-bullying resource for physicians and caregivers, families and school administration. In 2011, Raffalli and a team of physicians launched a formal patient-centered clinic, which has treated over 100 children since its inception.

The program is housed in the hospital’s Department of Neurology because the pediatric neurology patient population—typically, children with ADHD, autism and other learning disabilities, are at a significantly higher risk for peer victimization than the general population.

The power of empowerment

Samantha completed the fifth grade and moved onto a regional middle school with greater strength and empowerment. The bully no longer attends the same school but now she has the tools needed to cope with challenging and stressful social situations should they present themselves in the future.

When asked why she wanted to share her story, Samantha said without hesitation, “…because I don’t want any other kid to go through what I went through.”

“Samantha showed great courage and a determination to survive the situation,” Raffalli says. “She is very bright and articulate, and I am very impressed with her strength.”

The BACPAC Program is located at Boston Children’s Hospital, 300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115, 617-355-6388, www.childrenshospital.org/centers-and-services/programs/a_-e/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-and-advocacy-collaborative-bacpac-program/bacpac

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The BACPAC program is the first of its kind nationwide.

“Our goal was to establish a program where children faced with bullying and cyberbullying could come to be heard, learn their rights under federal and state laws and learn strategies that might help end the abuse,” Raffalli says.

During their appointment, Raffalli offered Samantha and her Mom tools to combat bullying including:

- strategies to help end bullying situations and bullying-prevention advice for the future
- empowerment strategies on how to develop a network of adult staff at school that could be available to her and who could advocate for her at the level of the principal’s office when reporting bullying
- ways to improve Samantha’s friendship group as a strong friendship group (this has been shown to be an insulating factor against bullying)
- education regarding their rights under the Massachusetts anti-bullying legislation
- a list of various state agencies that could be called upon if the family feels the school is not adequately troubleshooting the situation
- reports and recommendations to share with the school in the hopes that the suggestions could be used by the school to protect Samantha

Samantha says she felt better about returning to school after visiting the BACPAC program and meeting Raffalli. “He made me feel happy and made me feel like even though I was getting bullied I could get through it.”
The Parent’s Role: A Balancing Act During Transition Planning

By Jennifer Stewart, Project Coordinator, LINK Center (FCSN)

Finding the right balance for parent involvement during a youth’s transition from high school is an important consideration. Most parents want to help, but are not quite sure how. Being helpful, supportive and effective in a youth’s transition will look different for every family. The relationships, level of support needed, level of independence, self-advocacy, and of course teenage hormones will all impact how parents and youth can work together when transition planning.

Finding a balance relates to the level of parent’s involvement in helping their youth navigate connecting to new systems of support. Parents can be great connectors for their youth, but learning when to back away and trust that their youth can succeed on their own is a challenge. For example: a parent is encouraging their youth to get a summer job. How can they help? What should they do? What if the youth won’t get off the couch? What if the youth is not socially appropriate?

There are many questions that make navigating parent involvement in transition planning difficult. Every youth will be different, but here are some suggestions to finding a balance between helping and empowering a youth to be more self-sufficient.

Transition Planning Activity: Goal - John will get a summer job working with animals. Action Steps for Parents:

- Suggest John create a list of places he is interested in working
- Help John think through how he could apply or communicate with the employer that he is interested in working there
- Help John think about how he will get to the employer’s location
- Practice interview questions
- Discuss job responsibilities, appropriate behaviors on the job, what to do if he encounters a problem
- Let him go!! Succeed or Fail it is a valuable experience preparing him and providing him skills for life long transitions ahead!

These strategies are considered helpful exercises that can help guide a youth toward their own self-advocacy, but parents are not actively driving the process. Parents want to guide their youth toward self-sufficiency and take a step back from being the main organizer to the main supporter.

For more information about the LINK Center visit fcsn.org/linkcenter

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Strengthening Our Family Supports

The Family Support Centers of Seven Hills Family Services are the “Go-To” Centers for all children with disabilities and their families seeking support tailored to their needs. Families can network with other families; access real-time information; explore avenues to community inclusion; and receive unique, individualized supports while navigating the social services system. Family Support Specialists respond to each family’s needs with a planned course of action. Drop-ins are welcome, or call for a personalized appointment.

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The Importance of Family Involvement

By Mary Castro Summers, Project Director, Family TIES of Massachusetts (FCSN)

Families of children and youth with special health needs address a wide range of concerns on a daily basis. How do I keep my child healthy, safe, and happy? Can I provide opportunities for my child’s growth and development to enhance their life today and in the future? Almost every minute of the day is focused on assuring proper health care, academics, social needs, and a sense of well-being for their child.

It is also crucial for parents to focus on a different aspect of family involvement: family advocacy. A strong team approach can deepen understanding of a child’s talents and needs. Together, child-specific, appropriate services and systems of care can be actualized.

When parents are able to articulate and demonstrate their child’s skills, challenges, and progress, the child’s medical team, therapists, teachers, and community supporters all benefit. This strategy can reduce frustration for everyone and increase the likelihood that a child’s healthcare, educational, and social needs will be met.

Sometimes, parents are unaware or uneasy about their role on a team. Many parents believe they need medical, educational, or professional training to boost their status in discussions about next steps for a child’s complicated future. They may feel that doctors and educators have years of training and experience with many children, while they only have experience with their own child. Family and cultural traditions may impact a parent’s ability to feel like an equal with trained professionals.

What some parents lack is the awareness that when it comes to their own child they are the most important experts in the room. Nobody understands their child’s unique needs like they do, and this really matters.

Parents need to feel confident in their skills to participate in the many teams that support their children. There are a variety of Parent Leadership programs and opportunities that can bolster a parent's understanding of their powerful role, as well as develop skills to enhance their participation. Minnesota developed the Partners in Policymaking program in 1987; studies in 1996 “found that the training enhanced families’ practical advocacy skills, opportunities for networking with other families, and a greater sense of self-confidence.”

Since its inception the Federation for Children with Special Needs has led the way in advocacy training and leadership for families. The agency is founded on a strong belief in the strength of a parent-to-parent, peer model, which has been crucial as parents rise to leadership positions in schools and SEPACs and in healthcare and community settings. Parent training is a component of the Federation’s many projects, around topics of education, special education, transition, health, and community outreach. A strong belief in the strength of a parent to parent, peer model has helped parents rise to leadership positions in SEPACS and schools, healthcare and community settings.

Mass. Families Organizing for Change, first funded by Mass. Department of Developmental Services in 1990, has led family leadership trainings and activities across the state. Through its vision for empowerment and focus on individuals with disabilities and their families, Leadership Series participants are introduced to the history of the movement for family advocacy, creative ways to envision the future for individuals with disabilities, and an overview of national, state, and local policymaking to bring forth their visions to reality. For many participants, this is a first opportunity to team up with other family members and develop a sense of the value of working with other families who share similar life experiences, with a goal of systems change.

More recently, the Office of Family Initiatives of the Mass. Department of Public Health has offered the Family Leadership Training Institute. The Institute responds to an understanding by federal and state governments that consumer input is essential to develop meaningful systems of care to address the needs of children & youth with special health needs and their families. Participants in the Institute focus on developing knowledge and skills related to family advocacy, become part of a community, receive mentorship, and have opportunities to practice the skills they learn by working on a community action project where the family perspective makes a difference. The training fosters a deeper understanding of current services and builds skills to enhance parental involvement in improving or developing systems of care.

Family TIES of Massachusetts coordinates the Share Your Voice! program to offer family involvement in planning activities for its funder, the Mass. Department of Public Health, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs. A past effort brought family perspectives to emergency planners around the state to ensure that children and youth with special health needs have access to emergency services during times of local disaster. Parents have participated in program reviews, including for Early Intervention and the Pediatric Palliative Care Program, as well as a number of other opportunities.

Parents may contact their local Family TIES Regional Coordinator for more information about any of these training programs or to join the Advisor Program: 800-905-TIES (8437) or visit massfamilyties.org. Together, we all make a difference.

Welcome to the Federation’s Newest Board Members

The Federation’s Board of Directors is made up of a majority of parents and also business leaders in the community who are passionate about children with special needs. We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our Board:

Susan Arndt is a parent and advocate for her son, Zachary. She is involved in the special needs community volunteering as an officer for her town’s Special Education Parent Advisory Council. At her son’s school she is a Corporator, committee member for some of their fundraising projects and was an officer of the Parent Advisory Group. She is the Committee Chairperson for the Federation’s annual Gala. Susan has taken many Federation trainings, including the Parent Consultant Training Institute in 2011, is trained as a Special Education Surrogate Parent, and has testified on Special Education issues at the State House. Susan’s professional background is in interior design and home staging.

Philomena Asante, MD, MPH, is the Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Health at the Boston Public Health Commission, the city’s public health agency. Trained at the Harvard School of Public Health and at the Children’s Hospital Boston, Dr. Asante transitioned back into public health in 2014 after years of private pediatric practice. She is part of the Community Advisory Board at the Children’s Hospital Boston. Dr. Asante has a child with ADHD and a sister with moderate developmental delay. Her passion lies in supporting immigrant families with Children with Special Health Care Needs.

Melanie Perkins McLaughlin, is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, a disability rights advocate, public speaker and the mother of three children, the youngest of whom has Down syndrome. She was the Allen Crocker Fellow with the Mass Developmental Disabilities Council and is currently the co-chair of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Special Advisory Committee, a family faculty member of Boston Children’s Hospital Institute for Professional Ethics, a family faculty member for The Arc of MA Operation House Call and a consultant with The Institute for Community Inclusion (UMass) and The Institute on Disability (UNH).

Teresita Ramos, Esquire, is an attorney at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute specializing in civil rights, language access, and education. She has served on the Wellesley School Committee, is the Co-Chair of the MA Department of Education’s Special Education Advisory Committee, and was appointed by Gov. Deval Patrick to the Board of Registration of Social Workers of the Commonwealth of MA. She is the mother of two girls, one of whom has autism.

Leo Rotman, CFP is the founder of River Financial Group, LLC and specializes in working with families that have children with disabilities. He lives in Sudbury, MA with his two boys- Jakob and Noah, one of whom has autism. He is the founder of Metro West United Sports, a non-profit program that runs unified sports for children with disabilities. When not working or volunteering, Leo enjoys spending time with his boys, traveling the world and Cross Fit.

Remembering Board Member, Miryam Wiley

We are deeply saddened to report the passing of longtime Board member Miryam Wiley. Miryam joined the Board in 2000 and served as Clerk since 2002. Among her many contributions, Miryam strengthened our Outreach to Portuguese speaking/Brazilian families. Born and raised in So Joo del Rei, Brazil, she had journalism degrees from the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and from Metropolitan State College in Denver. She was a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and worked as a free-lance journalist for the Wellesley Townsman, the Metrowest Daily News and other publications. Earlier in her career she was a reporter and anchor of the Today show at TV Globo in Brazil. She also co-produced and was a host of Globinho, a meaningful news program for children. Miryam was a champion for immigrant rights and was the coordinator for Vida Verde Co Op Brazilian Womens Group, an organization that assisted Brazilian House Cleaners in using healthy, green friendly cleaning products. Miryam’s spirit, commitment and dedication to advocating for families of children with disabilities, especially those of underserved populations, will continue to inspire the work of the Federation.
Join us for the Federation’s annual fundraiser gala. We have a wonderful evening planned which includes a Silent Auction and reception, dinner, an award ceremony and entertainment. This year we’ll be honoring:

**President’s Award:** Deborah Allen - Director, Bureau of Child, Adolescent and Family Health
Boston Public Health Commission

Prior to coming to the Public Health Commission, Dr. Allen was Associate Professor of Maternal and Child Health at the Boston University School of Public Health and Co-Principal Investigator for the Catalyst Center. Before BU, she directed the MA Department of Public Health Division for Special Health Needs, which was nationally recognized for its support for family leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs at all levels.

**Martha H. Ziegler Founders Award:** Amy Weinstock - Director, Autism Insurance Resource Center

Amy Weinstock has an extensive background on insurance issues related to autism and has played a key role in passing several significant pieces of autism insurance legislation in Massachusetts, including the groundbreaking 2010 law requiring health insurance to cover medically necessary treatment for autism. Amy also serves as a trustee of the Riverview School, and as a Commissioner on the State’s Autism Commission.

**Patricia Blake Advocacy Award:** Maureen Brenner - Head of School, Riverview School

Maureen began her career as a high school teacher in her native Ireland and later served as an educational psychologist, special education director, and assistant superintendent of the Nauset Public Schools on Cape Cod. Maureen has spoken at local and national conferences on topics related to program development, non-profit governance, educational leadership, transition planning, and the employment of individuals with disabilities. In addition, she regularly consults with schools and adult programs throughout the US.

Tickets on sale now! For more information contact Maureen Jerz, Director of Development mjerz@fcsn.org or 617-236-7210, ext.374 or visit fcsn.org/gala.
La historia de Samantha: Asociándose con el programa BACPAC para Terminar el Acoso

Por Maureen McCarthy, Boston Children’s Hospital

Cuando Samantha tenía 10 años de edad, un compañero de clase la acosaba. Recuerda caminar por los pasillos de su escuela primaria y oír estas palabras: “¡Por qué estás en este planeta? No mereces estar viva.”

El acoso continuaba día tras día.

“No quería ir a la escuela porque sabía que él estaba allí. Tenía miedo”, cuenta Samantha, que ahora tiene 11 años.

Unas semanas después del comienzo del año escolar, el acoso y la intimidación aumentaron y pasaron a ser físicos.

“El maltrato era generalmente mental, pero en quinto grado un día se me acercó y me golpeó por la espalda”, relata Samantha en voz baja.

Esa fue la gota que colmó el vaso.

“Yo estaba harta”, dice Karen, la madre de Samantha. “El abuso verbal y físico tenían que parar.”

Samantha y su madre informaron el incidente a la escuela y a un representante escolar de la policía. Otro alumno que había presenciado el acoso físico también se presentó e informó el incidente a la escuela. La persona de enlace con la policía le llamó la atención al agresor, pero la escuela no tomó ninguna otra medida.

Aunque el tormento diario paró, el alivio de Samantha fue temporal.

La agresión verbal comenzó otra vez y empezó a afectar el trabajo escolar, la autoestima y la salud general de Samantha. Otro alumno que había presenciado el acoso físico también se presentó e informó el incidente a la escuela. La persona de enlace con la policía le llamó la atención al agresor, pero la escuela no tomó ninguna otra medida.

Un refugio seguro

Para que su hija consiguiera las herramientas necesarias para lidiar con los efectos de la intimidación, Karen se puso en contacto con un programa de apoyo y prevención del acoso y el ciberacoso de Children’s Hospital llamado Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention and Advocacy Collaborative (BACPAC).

Samantha y Karen se reunieron con el equipo de BACPAC, que incluye al Dr. Peter Raffalli, neurólogo pediátrico y director del programa. Samantha relató su experiencia como víctima y aprendió destrezas para combatir el acoso y herramientas de fortalecimiento personal.

“A Samantha habló durante dos horas y le contó el equipo cómo había sido el acoso. La alivió oír que alguien que no era un ser querido validara su experiencia y le dijera que el acoso no era culpa de ella”, recuerda Karen. “Mientras hablaba, podía ver cómo empezaba a sacarse un peso de encima.”

Acerca del programa BACPAC de Boston Children’s

El programa BACPAC se fundó en 2009, inicialmente como recurso contra el acoso para médicos, proveedores de cuidados, familias y administradores escolares. En 2011, el Dr. Raffalli y un equipo de médicos lanzaron formalmente una clínica centrada en el paciente que ya ha tratado a más de 100 niños.

El programa forma parte del Departamento de Neurología porque sus pacientes, típicamente niños con trastornos por déficit de atención e hiperactividad, autismo y otras dificultades de aprendizaje, corren un riesgo significativamente más alto de ser víctimas de acoso.

El beneficio del fortalecimiento

Samantha terminó quinto grado y se cambió a una escuela intermedia (“middle school”) de la región con más recursos de apoyo. El acosador no va a la misma escuela y ella ahora tiene las herramientas necesarias para responder a cualquier situación social difícil y estresante que pueda surgir en el futuro. Cuando le preguntamos por qué quería contar su historia, Samantha contestó sin dudarlo: “Porque no quiero que ningún otro niño tenga que pasar por lo que pasé yo”.

“Samantha demostró mucha valentía y determinación para sobrevivir esta situación”, comenta el Dr. Raffalli. “Es muy inteligente y elocuente. Su fortaleza me impresiona mucho.”

Continúa en la página 11
BACPAC es el primer programa de su tipo en todo el país.

“Nuestra meta era establecer un programa donde las víctimas de acoso y ciberacoso infantil pudieran ser escuchadas, se informaran sobre sus derechos de acuerdo a las leyes estatales y federales, y aprendieran estrategias para poner fin a la intimidación”, explica el Dr. Raffalli.

Durante la cita, el Dr. Raffalli les ofreció a Samantha y a su madre herramientas para combatir el acoso, por ejemplo:

• Estrategias para poner fin a las situaciones de acoso, y consejos para prevenirlo en el futuro
• Estrategias de fortalecimiento para crear en la escuela una red de adultos que puedan estar a su disposición y abogar a favor de ella a nivel del director escolar si informa situaciones de acoso
• Maneras de fortalecer las amistades de Samantha, porque se ha demostrado que contar un grupo fuerte de amigos es un factor de protección contra el acoso
• Información sobre los derechos que le confieren las leyes contra el acoso de Massachusetts
• Una lista de agencias estatales a las que la familia puede llamar si cree que la escuela no está investigando la situación y respondiendo adecuadamente
• Informes y recomendaciones para compartir con la escuela, con la esperanza de que estas sugerencias se puedan usar para proteger a Samantha

Samantha dice que después de ir al programa BACPAC y reunirse con el Dr. Raffalli se siente más preparada para regresar a la escuela. “Me hizo sentir contenta y confiada de que puedo afrontar el acoso.”
The Guild Serves

Students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and behavioral challenges including:

- Students with Autism,
- Students with Down Syndrome and other genetic disorders,
- Students with dual diagnosis (ID and Mental Health diagnoses).

The Guild educates male and female students from age 6 until their 22nd birthday.

TRANSFORMING LIVES, REALIZING POTENTIAL.

The Guild for Human Services serves students through a community-based day school and residential program. Opportunities for Extended Evaluations may also be available. Educational services are provided in a central school building with residential services being provided in nearby family-style homes.

Applied Behavior Analysis is the foundation of The Guild’s interventions with students. Each student has an individualized behavior plan as well as an Individualized Education Plan. Small group and 1-to-1 direct instruction is provided for academic, daily living skills, speech/language, occupational therapy, pre-vocational/vocational services and adapted physical education.

Improvement of behavior, social skills and independence as well as the generalization of skills into community settings are key program components. Counseling services are available as needed. Psychopharmacology consultation is also provided for all residential students.

The Health Services Department combined with the Nutrition and Wellness Programs support the physical health of students as they make consistent, effective progress on educational goals.

The Guild also runs Adult Residential Programs for individuals qualified by DDS for such support.
Knowledge is the Power!

By Jaya Pandey, Parent Advocate

With Autism, things are not routine or traditional in our life. As I always say “everything is custom made,” so we keep learning and adjusting and trying. After many years with so many workshops, seminars, doctors’ visits and books and everything in between, we equip ourselves with knowledge but there is so much more to learn. Sometimes it is frustrating but at the same time it inspires us to do more.

At one of these seminars, a speaker mentioned the program the Federation runs for advocates: The Parent Consultant Training Institute (PCTI). Lucky for me the class was about to start in two weeks. It is a weekly course of 9 classes, 6 hours each. I decided it was time to get into the advocacy world, not as a professional per se, but to know more. I started the class 4 weeks ago, a drive of 40 miles from home. It’s been a journey full of heartaches, inspiration, hope, worries, motivation, togetherness, compassion and passion.

Thirty-five of us - parents, teachers, professional and attorneys – are all in this together with a shared passion to do more for our kids, students and clients. We want to educate people around us. I heard the Federation was having a tough time reaching out to parents in the Asian community because of culture and attitude. They didn’t have Indian volunteers to talk to parents. I offered to try to help them in any way I can, because I know how it is to be a mom, especially an Indian mom.

I know how easy and comforting denial can be. How lonely and dark the path can be when you have no support and information around and shutting down all the doors seems the best option. I know how scary it is to think of the future but at the same time I know how knowledge can empower any mother. A well-informed mother is what we need for our children.

The fantastic coordinator of the PCTI, Linda Surprenant, pictured above with me, was inspired by her daughter to learn more, connect, support and unite people and now educating others is her mission. I so wish to follow in her footsteps.

For more information about the Parent Consultant Training Institute at the Federation visit fcsn.org/PTIC

Education for All Abilities

Seven Hills Academy at Groton is a DESE-approved, private special education day program for children with complex medical and developmental disabilities whose learning needs can best be met within a person-centered, multidisciplinary environment. Classes follow the MA Curriculum Frameworks with integrated arts and adaptive technology to encourage a multisensory, experiential appreciation for learning. Our highly qualified staff provides comprehensive allied health, medical, nursing, speech pathology, and individualized therapies. Assistive technology, wheelchairs, braces, and hand splints are all customized to fit as the children grow.

Have your child grow with Seven Hills Academy at Groton! Call today, 978.732.5253.

Frameworks for Success

Stetson School is a nationally accredited, fully licensed, Chapter 766-approved Residential and Education Treatment program for male youth, ages 9-22, who have high-risk behaviors, sexually reactive behaviors, complex developmental difficulties, chronic mental illness, and other behavioral and trauma-related issues. Our curriculum meets the MA Frameworks, offering English, math, history and science for grades 4 through 12. Youth also participate in health, physical and vocational education, career studies, social development, service learning, art, and woodshop. Remedial reading is provided by our Literacy/Assessment Coordinator. Stetson works with each family/guardian to strengthen the continuum of supports that will enable their loved one to successfully return to the community. To learn more, call 978.355.4541 x4139 today!
Quando Samantha tinha 10 anos de idade, ela foi intimidada por um colega do sexo masculino. Ela se lembra de estar andando pelos corredores da sua escola elementar, ouvindo essas palavras: “Por que você está neste planeta? Você não merece estar viva.” A intimidação acompanhava-a todos os dias.

“Eu não queria ir à escola porque eu sabia que ele estaria lá. Eu tinha medo,” diz Samantha, agora com 11 anos de idade. Semanas durante o ano letivo, o assédio e a intimidação intensificaram-se e viraram físicos.

“Era geralmente mental [abuso], mas em um dado momento, na quinta série, o agressor se aproximou de mim, e me deu um soco nas costas,” diz Samantha calmamente.

Este foi o ponto culminante.

“Cheguei no meu limite,” diz Karen, a mãe de Samantha. “Era necessário parar com o abuso verbal e físico.”

Samantha e sua mãe relataram o incidente à escola e ao oficial de recursos da polícia. Outro estudante, que testemunhou a agressão física, apresentou-se e também relatou o incidente à escola. O valentão foi repreendido pelo oficial; no entanto, nenhuma ação adicional foi tomada pela escola de Samantha. Embora o tormento diário tenha terminado, a trégua de Samantha foi temporária.

A intimidação verbal do agressor ressurgiu, e começou a impactar o trabalho escolar, a auto-estima e o estado geral de saúde de Samantha. Karen diz que sua filha exibiu muitos dos sinais de alarme de quem está sendo intimidado - humor deprimido, doenças físicas e evasão escolar.

“Tudo começou bem devagar, com uma dor de barriga. Depois ela não queria mais ir à escola”, diz Karen. “Samantha parou de fazer o dever de casa e passou tanto tempo no consultório da enfermeira, quanto na sala de aula.”

Samantha perdeu 30 dias de aula naquele ano, em consequência da intimidação.

**Procurar um refúgio seguro**

Para ajudar sua filha a obter as ferramentas das quais ela necessitava para administrar os efeitos de estar sendo intimidado, Karen procurou o **Boston Children’s Bullying and Cyber-bullying Prevention and Advocacy Collaborative (BACPAC)** - (Prevenção e Proteção Colaborativa contra Intimidação e anti-intimidação para as crianças de Boston).

Samantha e Karen encontraram-se com o time do BACPAC, incluindo o neurologista infantil e o Diretor do Programa BACPAC, Dr. Peter Raffalli. Samantha compartilhou a sua história de vitimização e aprendeu técnicas de combate à intimidação e recebeu ferramentas para promover a auto-capacitação.

“Samantha falou por duas horas e contou ao time sobre a intimidação. Ficou feliz de que alguém que não sendo uma pessoa querida relacionada a ela, validava o fato de que ela estava sendo intimidada e de que não era culpa sua,” lembra-se Karen. “Enquanto ela falava, eu podia ver o peso começando a se levantar de seus ombros.

**Sobre o programa BACPAC do Children’s Boston**

O programa BACPAC foi fundado em 2009 e foi inicialmente concebido como um recurso anti-intimidação para médicos e prestadores de cuidados, famílias e administração escolar. Em 2011, Raffalli e um time de médicos, lançou uma clínica convencional centrada no paciente, que já tratou mais de 100 crianças desde o seu início.

O programa está situado no Departamento de Neurologia do hospital, porque a população de pacientes de neurologia pediátrica – tipicamente, crianças com ADHD – Transtorno de Déficit de Atenção com Hiperatividade - TDAH, autismo, e outras deficiências de aprendizado, encontra-se em um risco altamente significante para a vitimização dos colegas do que na população geral.

**O poder do fortalecimento**

Samantha completou a quinta série e mudou-se para uma escola elementar regional com muito mais capacidade e fortalecimento. O agressor não frequenta mais a mesma escola mas agora ela tem as ferramentas necessárias para lidar com situações difíceis e estressantes caso elas venham a se apresentar no futuro.

Quando lhe perguntaram o motivo de querer compartilhar a sua história, Samantha disse sem hesitação, “...porque não quero que uma outra criança passe pelo que eu passei.”

“Samantha mostrou uma coragem e uma determinação enorme para sobreviver à situação,” diz Raffalli. “Ela é muito inteligente e articulada, e eu estou muito impressionado com a sua força.”
The Putterham branch of the Public Library of Brookline will be purchasing three iPads and an iPad mini, and investing in apps featuring assistive technology, support for disabilities and literacy development. These preloaded iPads will be available for standard 4 week patron circulation. Patrons who do not want to take the devices home will have the option of requesting them and using them in the library.

Apps for the “Libraries Welcome Everyone” program will be specific to Autism, Visual Impairments, Learning Disabilities, and Hearing Impairment. However, other suggestions are welcomed.

In conjunction with Easter Seals of Massachusetts, the library will offer several technology workshops to train patrons in the use of the devices and apps that we make available for circulation. The program will kick off in April, 2016, with the devices starting to circulate in mid-April. The goal is to show disabled individuals and their families what the library has to offer, both as a community space and as a technology and information resource; provide the public with access to more expensive apps which they may wish to test out before committing to purchase, or which they may be unable to afford; and to promote literacy and serve as a resource for patrons with learning differences and disabilities.

In addition, the Public Library of Brookline will be hosting several public presentations in the library, regarding various disabilities and the community supports available to people.

This program is generously funded by The Friends of the Brookline Library. Current confirmed speakers and dates:

**Monday April 25, 6pm** - Marianne Leone, Actress and Author of “Jesse: A Mother’s Story,” (previously published as “Knowing Jesse: A mother’s story of grief, grace, and everyday bliss”) Marianne will discuss the fight to get Jesse an appropriate education, and the difference that adaptive technology made in Jesse’s life, allowing him to communicate and excel.

**Wednesday May 18, 6pm** - Local author, blogger, and advocate Susan Senator will be speaking about her new book, “Autism Adulthood” and resources in the area for autistic teens and young adults.

For more information visit: www.brooklinelibrary.org/programs/libraries-are-for-everyone
FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street, Suite 1M3
Boston, MA 02129

617-236-7210 Voice/TTY | MA Toll Free 800-331-0688 | Western MA 413-323-0681 | www.fcsn.org | info@fcsn.org

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