The Federation’s 2017 Visions of Community conference was held on Saturday March 4th at the Seaport World Trade Center, welcoming over 900 parents and professionals seeking information to better support children with special needs. In addition to 30 workshops in English, this year’s event hosted sessions in Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, and, for the first time, Arabic. Topics included Assistive Technology, Autism, Early Childhood, Dyslexia, Parent Leadership, Special Education, and Transition to Adulthood, among others.

Our exhibition hall was, for many, a highlight of the event - 85 tables populated by organizations offering advocacy, support, financial planning, and medical care, as well as adaptive technology and recreation options. Visions of Community 2017 also offered the second year of the Federation’s Becoming a Leader Youth Forum, a “mini-conference” designed especially for young adults with special needs.

During the opening session, Federation Executive Director Rich Robison introduced special guests Elin M. Howe (Commissioner, MA Department of Developmental Services), Heidi Reed (Commissioner, MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), Emily Sherwood (Deputy Commissioner, Child, Youth and Family Services), and Russell Johnson (Senior Associate Commissioner, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), who gave updates on their respective programs and welcomed conference attendees.

The plenary also included our 2017 Community Partnership Award ceremony, which honors individuals whose...
From the Executive Director:

The Federation hosts its Annual Visions of Community Conference in early March at the Seaport World Trade Center, and each year some say it was the best ever. Over 900 people attended the conference this past March. Once again, we are dedicating an entire issue of Newsline to capture the highlights and excitement of the day. Those who attended will hopefully enjoy memories of a wonderful day or discover new parts of the conference they missed, while those who were not able to attend will gain some “windows” on this incredible event.

It was an inspiring day that lifted all our spirits. Sometimes the daily challenges that our families face providing supports and overcoming barriers for their children with disabilities can wear us down. Sometimes our home communities, schools, and healthcare organizations are not as welcoming as we might want or need. We need visions of what our communities can become to encourage us, inspire us and strengthen us to continue the journey. And that is the goal of Visions of Community!

For the second time, we included a Youth Leadership Forum, a popular offering which filled up quickly. Presentations were offered simultaneously in 8 languages and in ASL. Expert presenters provided 48 different sessions on essential topics.

This is what people saw, heard and experienced: fantastic energy, great presentations, inspiring keynotes, large numbers of attendees, good spirit, cooperation, youth engagement, happy children, culturally and linguistically diverse families, new faces, families connecting to resources, presenters connecting with families, networking, gratitude. One participant declared, “I had all my questions answered in just one day”.

Indeed, for at least one day, we demonstrated a little reality of Visions of Community – with the hope that brings to each one of us.

Enjoy this special Conference edition of Newsline. May it inspire you to build better community in your own home-town.

Warmly,

Rich Robison

Join Our Work to Help Children with Special Needs

Your generous support makes it possible for us to assist families across Massachusetts who struggle to find educational, health, and community resources for their children with special needs.

Would you like to help the Federation all year long? Join our monthly Sustainer program! Consider a monthly gift of $5, $10, $20, or more to provide ongoing support throughout the year.

fcsn.org/donate

2017 Youth Forum: “Becoming a Leader”

On March 4, 2017, as part of the Visions of Community conference, the Federation for Children with Special Needs hosted its second annual Becoming a Leader Youth Forum. Twenty young adults participated in the forum, alongside members of the Federation’s Young Adult Advisory Council, exploring the theme of “Self-Advocacy” through the day’s four workshops and group activities.

Attendees began the morning with Easter Seals, whose “Technology Playground” gave the young adults an amazing opportunity to learn about technologies that individuals with disabilities can use to improve their quality of life and to interact with the world around them. We are grateful to Easter Seals for making this wonderful “hands on” activity available to our participants!

The first workshop was a Self-Advocate Panel comprised of three young adults at various stages of postsecondary life. The panelists shared personal insights on transitioning from secondary education into postsecondary settings, including college and employment. Through telling their own stories, they shared the skills that have helped them become self-determined, self-advocating, independent adults. This workshop was inspiring for the young adults as well as for the panelists.

The second workshop, a Postsecondary Panel, featured professionals from three postsecondary transition partner organizations: state agencies, private employers, and colleges. Panelists highlighted key skills that, in their experience, had helped other self-advocates succeed within their track. The young adults were able to ask all of the panelists follow up questions and interact on a personal level.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities presented the third workshop of the day, an interactive workshop highlighting Access to Theater (ATT), an award-winning inclusive theater program that helps teens and young adults develop communication, artistic, and leadership skills. Their workshop at the Becoming a Leader Youth Forum encouraged the attendees to use their imaginations and interact with each other. It was a highlight of the day for many of the young adults.

The day was rounded out by the “I Am Able” workshop, presented by keynote speaker Brennan Srisirikul, which focused on empowering the young adults to participate in their communities. Brennan interacted on a very personal level and told his stories of success and failure. He fielded questions and spent time after the workshop talking with attendees about how they might inspire others to become self-advocates.

It was a busy and productive day for all of the young adults, Federation staff, and volunteers that attended. Friendships were formed and a sense of community was built through sharing personal stories and ideas. Feedback regarding the forum was extremely positive and we hope to see all of the young adults back next year!
No one has free time. Our fast-paced, increasingly complex society requires us to juggle family and work, follow community, state, and federal happenings, all while trying to get at least 6 hours of sleep each night. Never mind trying to keep up with Facebook. As parents of children with special needs, we know we need to step up to a higher level of advocacy to ensure that all children thrive. Our busy schedules require us to ask how we can be most effective, as our intentions to get involved are often sidelined by questions of survival, (e.g: “who will make dinner”).

At the 2017 Visions of Community Conference, MassPAC highlighted a new national curriculum, Serving on Groups, in a workshop offered to assist those who seek to make a difference for children by serving as a member of a decision-making group. Family participation is central to school improvement – research has demonstrated that when families are involved in schools, students perform better.

The Serving on Groups curriculum is available in an online guidebook. It is a useful introduction to opportunities for participation, along with the types of groups commonly used in decision-making. The guidebook shows you how to organize your skills so that you can communicate effectively in a group, represent other families, and bring the voice of a parent or family member to the table. We need our voices to be heard.

MassPAC will offer webinars in the coming months to help parents better understand their role on these decision-making groups, especially their local special education parent advisory council or SEPAC. Your time is valuable; it is important to find a group with either the authority to enact needed improvements or the ability to influence the decision-making body. Find a group that is meaningful to you.

You can make a difference. To access the online free guidebook: http://www.servingsongroups.org/

Seeing the Possibilities: Paula Kluth Keynote challenged us to keep the “4th” in IEP!

by Rich Robison

“Don’t we already do Inclusion?” This was the question keynote speaker Dr. Paula Kluth put to the audience at VOC 2017. Most schools will tell you that they do Inclusion, and that they have been doing it for a long time. However, as someone who provides professional development for teachers and personnel in schools across the country, Paula acknowledged that there is always more work to be done towards ensuring that true, meaningful inclusion is a part of a process, and she exclaimed: “Expectations about students with disabilities have changed a lot over the years, yet we can and need to do better”. She encouraged us to “adopt a philosophy” of always asking “what is possible?”

Paula described how her own personal experience in high school, where volunteering in a special education class helped form her understanding of what is possible. She became interested in students who seemed different, and those students became some of her best friends. The lessons she learned taking them to lunch and basketball games made a life-long impact and informed her career path. Over the years, the research confirms her experience; the benefits of inclusion are not limited to the person with a disability. Rather, they impact us all.

Don’t we already do Inclusion? Most schools will tell you that they do it. However, as someone who provides professional development for teachers and personnel in schools across the country, Paula acknowledged that there is always more work to be done towards ensuring that true, meaningful inclusion is a part of a process, and she exclaimed: “Expectations about students with disabilities have changed a lot over the years, yet we can and need to do better”. She encouraged us to “adopt a philosophy” of always asking “what is possible?”

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Imaginar las posibilidades: En su discurso, Paula Kluth nos desafió a mantener la “4º” en el Programa de Educación Individualizado (IEP)

by Rich Robison

“¿No estamos practicando ya la inclusión?” Esa fue la pregunta que la Dra. Paula Kluth, la oradora principal, le planteó al público en la conferencia Visions de la Comunidad de 2017. La mayoría de las escuelas les dirán que ya practican la inclusión y que lo han estado haciendo por mucho tiempo. Sin embargo, como alguien que ofrece capacitación profesional a maestros y personal escolar por todo el país, Paula reconoció que aunque todos hacen esfuerzos para educar y ayudar a los estudiantes con discapacidades durante más de 50 años, hay mucho más que se puede hacer para asegurar que la inclusión se practique de manera eficaz. Dijo enfáticamente que “la inclusión es un proceso, no un lugar”. “Las expectativas para los estudiantes con discapacidades han cambiado a menudo con los años. No obstante, podemos y debemos hacer más”. Nos estimuló a “adoptar la filosofía” de preguntar siempre “¿qué es lo posible?”.

Paula explicó cómo su propia experiencia en la escuela secundaria, como voluntaria en clases de educación especial, la ayudó a comprender las posibilidades. Se interesó por los estudiantes con discapacidades que parecían diferentes, y se

Continua en la página 9
2017 Community Partnership Awards

Health Advocacy: Renée Boynton-Jarrett

Dr. Boynton-Jarrett is a practicing primary care pediatrician at Boston Medical Center and is nationally recognized for expertise in the role of early-life adversities as life course social determinants of health. She has a special interest in the intersection of community violence, intimate partner violence, and child abuse and neglect and neighborhood characteristics that influence these patterns.

Self-Advocacy: Jamey Breen

Jamey refuses to allow his cerebral palsy to limit or define him. He loves wheelchair basketball, is a graduate of Stonehill College, and has written his own book about turning life’s challenges into opportunities. He feels blessed to be in a position to positively impact the lives of so many individuals, and could not have imagined the effect his words would have when he began his path of advocacy.

Community Outreach: Gloria Ricardi Castillo

As one of a very small group of Latino parents who hold community leadership positions and work on behalf of Latino families, Gloria has been instrumental in designing outreach strategies for vulnerable communities through her work at the Northeast Arc. She was also instrumental in organizing a Spanish Language Conference, providing training to support families that have a loved one with autism.

Inclusive Theater: Samantha Gould

J. Samatha (“Sam”) Gould is a real estate lawyer in her professional life, but her personal passion is running the Open Door Theater. Since 1980, Open Door Theater has had a unique inclusive mission to provide a theatrical learning experience to families and people with special needs. When Sam found Open Door in 2001, seeking a family theater experience with her younger siblings, it was immediately obvious to her that there was something exceptional about a company whose sole purpose was to make theater accessible to anyone and everyone.

Special Education: Johanna Hammer

A licensed clinical social worker with over twenty years of experience, Johanna feels she “learns something new every day” from the children she works with as Belchertown’s Autism and Behavior Specialist. Her work connects students and families with community members and resources, developing customized programs to increase inclusion opportunities.

Parent Advocacy: Lisa Jennings

Lisa’s work supports all types of disabilities, but her most passionate advocacy is in behalf of individuals with 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome. She hopes that her work in education, health care, and community building connects people with valuable information about this diagnosis. Lisa is also an active, longtime member of the Weymouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC).

School Administration: Maura Solari Johnson

Maura began her career when special education legislation (Chapter 766) was first implemented. She has spent over forty years as a special education teacher and administrator working in the Boston, North Andover, Lexington, and Malden School districts, collaborating with parents and colleagues to create and modify programs that promote more inclusive opportunities for students.

Parent Advocacy: Linda LaPointe

Linda’s journey to advocacy was launched by the birth of her daughter, who has Down syndrome and verbal apraxia. Linda currently serves as Director of Programs and Family Support and Advocacy at JERICHO Bureau of Exceptional Children and Adults, where she meets with families to discuss their IEP or Adult Services concerns and help them formulate plans to move forward. Linda feels it is a privilege to be allowed to do this work, and thanks her daughter, Jac, for inspiring her to help families of children with special needs.

Inclusive Recreation: Dianne Lecinskas

Inspired by her oldest daughter, who has an intellectual disability, Dianne has become an indispensable advocate for children with special needs. She is a member of the Boston Public School’s SEPAC, its Inclusion Task Force, and helped found its first Best Buddies chapter. For over two years, Dianne served as the Director of Inclusive Services at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester, overseeing Project B.L.ND. (Boston Inclusion Network for Disabilities), an award-winning program where local children aged 5-18 can participate successfully in activities.

General Education: Tracy Rayray

Tracy has spent 25 years in education, working with young children, many of which were spent nurturing kindergarten-aged students who fall on the Autism spectrum. She is proud to have consistently practiced inclusion across a range of classroom placements. A dedicated educator, Tracy fosters strong connections with students by acknowledging each child as an individual and meeting them “where they are”. This practice helps to bring out their best selves.

2017’s CPA winners line up for the awards presentation. The CPA awards are clear glass plaques, etched with the year and the awardee’s name. Dr. William Henderson presents Lisa Jennings with her award.

Health Advocacy awardee Renée Boynton-Jarrett congratulates Inclusive Recreation awardee Diane Lecinskas. J. Samatha Gould, of Acton’s Open Door Theater, smiles before receiving her award. Dr. William Henderson, Rich Robison, and Anne Howard.

Self-Advocacy award winner Jamey Breen poses for a picture with his family. General Education award winner Tracy Rayray happily holds up her award. School Administration award winner Maura Solari Johnson gathers with friends for a photo.
Mr. Thanh is a Vietnamese father living in Lowell, MA. His young daughter had developed typically until age three, at which time, in his words, “everything stopped”. She had begun showing signs of Autism.

Thanh spent the next seven years searching for ways to help meet her needs, but with limited results. The special education system has been challenging for him to navigate. He did not know how things worked, nor did he understand his rights or how to translate everything for his wife at the IEP meetings, struggling to understand the jargon and novel terminologies that professionals threw out at meetings. His daughter is non-verbal, and he never thought he would learn so much in one day. “I never thought I would learn so much in one conference,” Thanh said.

At the conference, Thanh was elated to find that many of VOC’s resources were available to him. Oanh was able to direct him to local sources for social, recreational, and educational support, even helping him obtain insurance coverage through MassHealth. With Oanh’s assistance, Thanh was able to fully understand his daughter’s diagnosis, navigate the complex system of special education, and become a strong advocate for her needs. He was so overwhelmed by the information that he connected him with other Vietnamese speaking parents and attended many of the sessions related to children with special needs.

Eventually, in July 2016, Thanh’s doctor referred him to Oanh Bui, the Federation’s Vietnamese Outreach Coordinator, who then connected him with other Vietnamese speaking parents of children with special needs. Now, he no longer feels alone, as Oanh was able to direct him to local sources for social, recreational, and educational support, even helping him obtain insurance coverage through MassHealth. With Oanh’s assistance, Thanh was able to fully understand his daughter’s diagnosis, navigate the complex system of special education, and become a strong advocate for her needs. It was Oanh who suggested that he attend the Federation’s 2017 Visions of Community (VOC) conference.

At the conference, Thanh was elated to find that many of VOC’s exhibitors offered exactly the services he needed as a parent of a child with special needs. He was able to connect him to local sources for social, recreational, and educational support, even helping him obtain insurance coverage through MassHealth. Oanh’s assistance, Thanh was able to fully understand his daughter’s diagnosis, navigate the complex system of special education, and become a strong advocate for her needs. It was Oanh who suggested that he attend the Federation’s 2017 Visions of Community (VOC) conference.

The bond created between parents of children with special needs is truly amazing. Our children have different struggles and different diagnoses, but our lives followed similar paths. Hours of driving our children to therapy or doctor’s appointments, hours of phone calls to insurance companies, doctors, or teachers. Hours of planning IEP meetings and making lists of questions to ask. Hours of worrying about our kids’ future. We talked, laughed, listened to each other’s war stories, and discovered we had a workshop together at the end of the day and we would save a seat for each other. I love gaining insight while listening to great presenters and hearing inspirational stories but my very favorite part of these workshops is the connection with other families like my own.

Feeling like you aren’t the only one living this amazing but stressful life. I am always very thankful for moments like these when we build in more “one-on-one” time with Arabic parents, to get a hearing for the Arabic language, the culture, and the challenges we face. Moments like these help us all feel connected and give us strength to continue to advocate.

The conferees were thrilled to explore offerings and materials for the Arabic community and we are grateful to Amel for her assistance and support, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors. In many cases, he did not even receive a response to his inquiry.

Oursaty: Supporting Arabic Families (continued from page 4)

Enxergar as possibilidades: A Dra. Paula Kluth nos propôs um desafio – de manter a inclusão nos Planos Individuais de Educação

by Rich Robison

“Já não temos inclusão?” - essa foi a pergunta feita à pública pela Dra. Paula Kluth, a palestrante principal do VOC 2017. A maioria do público se surpreendeu com a maneira como o professor, fazendo isso há muito tempo. No entanto, Paula, que presta serviços de desenvolvimento profissional a professores e profissionais de saúde, percebeu que havia mais trabalho a ser realizado para que a inclusão seja feita efetivamente. “A inclusão é um processo, não é um lugar”, ela exclamou. “As expectativas sobre os alunos portadores de deficiência mudaram muito ao longo dos anos, mas ainda podemos e precisamos melhorar.” Ela nos motivou a “adotar uma filosofia” de sempre perguntar “o que é possível?”.

Paula descreveu sua experiência pessoal no ensino médio, onde seu trabalho voluntário com alunos numa sala de aula de educação especial ajudou a formar seu entendimento sobre o que é possível. Ela se interessou nos alunos portadores de deficiência que pareciam ser diferentes, e esses alunos se tornaram seus grandes amigos. As lições que ela aprendeu ao levá-los para almoço ou ver jogos de basquete geralmente lharem um impacto duradouro e orientaram seu caminho profissional. Durante os anos a pesquisa tem confirmado a experiência de Paula.

Imaginar las posibilidades... discurso de Paula Kluth (continued from page 5)

convirtieron en algunos de sus mejores amigos. Las lecciones que aprendió llevándolos a almorzar y a juegos de baloncesto tuvieron un impacto permanente e informaron su trayectoria profesional. Con los años, la investigación ha confirmado lo que Paula nos enseñó: “es imposible no creer en las posibilidades”. El discurso de Paula Kluth nos propone un desafío a mantener la inclusión en los Planos Individuales de Educación (PJE) de nuestros estudiantes. La inclusión se practica eficazmente, se encuentra la manera de imaginar las posibilidades... desafío – el de mantener la inclusión en los Planos Individuales de Educación...
The Visions of Community Conference is always a wonderful opportunity for staff of the Recruitment Training and Support Center (RTSC) for Special Education Surrogate Parents (SESPs) to meet new people and spread the word about this important initiative. The Conference is populated with parents and professionals who, due to their own experiences, possess a wealth of knowledge about special education laws and procedures. These are the best volunteers for our program.

At the RTSC table, Recruitment Specialist Jean Willoughby and Project Associate Danielle Hardin gave out roses to active and potential volunteers as they distributed information about our program. The flowers, a perk from RTSC, provided an ideal conversation-starter with potential volunteers. Other perks included 20 partial conference scholarships for SESPs, an ideal conversation-starter with potential volunteers. Other perks included 20 partial conference scholarships for SESPs, and a designated space to network during the lunch break. For those who already knew each other, it was a great opportunity to catch up.

Behind the scenes, RTSC Project Director Renee Williams was minding the conference childcare. She had families fill out applications while organizing the volunteers who provided care for the 33 children. Janie Crecco and I had the pleasure to catch up.

To learn more about volunteering as a Special Education Surrogate Parent, visit: http://fcsn.org/rtsc/how-to-become-an-sesp/

At the end when the children were leaving a few told me they had a great time and were sad to leave. One tearful little guy ran over and gave me a great big hug telling me he wants to come again next year. I said, I look forward to it!

Dr. Paula Kluth, an author, advocate, and independent scholar, was our first keynote speaker. Dr. Kluth’s writing draws from her background as a special educator who has served as both a classroom teacher and an inclusion facilitator. Her presentation, titled “Don’t We Already Do Inclusion?”, was a rallying cry for increased inclusive practices in educational settings. Using an example from her own adolescence, she made the case that greater inclusion serves the development of children with and without special needs. This year’s Awardees were Renée Boynton-Jarrett (Health Advocacy), Jamey Breen (Self-Advocacy), Gloria Ricardi Castillo (Community Outreach), Samantha Gould (Inclusive Theater), Johanna Hammer (Special Educator), Lisa Jennings and Linda LaPointe (Parent Advocacy), Maura Solari Johnson (School Administrator), Dianne Lecinskas (Inclusive Recreation), and Tracy Rayray (General Education). Biographies can be found on page 6, as well as on our conference website, fcsn.org/voc.

Brennan Srisirikul closed out the plenary with an inspirational and deeply personal presentation calling for greater inclusion of all people. A Thai-born interracial actor, speaker, and self-advocate who lives with cerebral palsy, Brennan disclosed that he was openly gay, and described feeling like a “square peg in a round hole” during the early years of his life. Eventually, he began to see his disability as a “catalyst for understanding”, a way for him to hear people’s stories “of hardship, hope, and resilience”. He shared his conviction that the definition of “inclusion” encompasses women’s rights, racial equality, and the fight for acceptance of the LGBTQ community, adding that our many differences all contribute to the mosaic of the world. Brennan also played a key role in the day’s Youth Forum, leading a workshop on self-advocacy for the young adults.

More than 100 Federation staff and volunteers made this year’s conference possible, and the Federation thanks each and every one of them for their efforts in making the day run smoothly. The true joy remains in seeing parents’ faces and watching them connect with and inspire one-another by sharing stories, resources, and support.

**Visions of Community Conference 2017 (continued from page 1)**

contributions have made a difference in the lives of children with special needs. This year’s Awardees were Renée Boynton-Jarrett (Health Advocacy), Jamey Breen (Self-Advocacy), Gloria Ricardi Castillo (Community Outreach), Samantha Gould (Inclusive Theater), Johanna Hammer (Special Educator), Lisa Jennings and Linda LaPointe (Parent Advocacy), Maura Solari Johnson (School Administrator), Dianne Lecinskas (Inclusive Recreation), and Tracy Rayray (General Education). Biographies can be found on page 6, as well as on our conference website, fcsn.org/voc.

Did you miss our 2017 Visions of Community conference?

**Save the Date!**

Visions of Community 2018 will be held on March 10!

Look for registration information this coming Fall.
Visions of Community 2017
Enjoy more pictures from the conference at fcsn.org/voc

The Seaport World Trade Center provides a spacious venue each year.

Russell Johnson, Senior Associate Commissioner, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Our generous funders contribute so much to the success of our annual conference.

Emily Sheenwood, Deputy Commissioner, Child, Youth, and Family Services

Our Federation information table is ready for business.

Heidi Read, Commissioner, Mass. Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Our generous funders contribute so much to the success of our annual conference.

Elin Howe, Commissioner, Mass. Department of Developmental Services

Audience members take in the opening remarks.

Emmy Sheenwood, Deputy Commissioner, Child, Youth, and Family Services

Author, consultant, and special educator Paula Kluth spoke to our theme of inclusion.

Dr. William Henderson joins Russell Johnson and friends for the keynote speeches.

Keynote speaker and self-advocate Brennan Srisririkul delivered a moving presentation.

Dr. William Henderson joins Russell Johnson and friends for the keynote speeches.

Conference attendees review materials from the Massachusetts Family TIES program.

Keynote speaker and self-advocate Brennan Srisririkul delivered a moving presentation.

Elin Howe, Commissioner, Mass. Department of Developmental Services

Audience members take in the opening remarks.

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Author, consultant, and special educator Paula Kluth spoke to our theme of inclusion.
Change in the Air for MassHealth

By Carrie Noseworthy, Mass Family Voices

In these uncertain times, many families I speak with ask, "What is going to happen with healthcare?" And, almost in answer to that question, they say, “Thank goodness we live in Massachusetts.” The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is working toward making efficiencies in its Medicaid system, which currently serves 1.9 million people. In January 2018, our state is slated to begin changing the ways it organizes and pays providers in the MassHealth system. There are currently 18 accountable care organizations (ACOs) who have submitted service delivery bids for MassHealth. The program is also looking at bringing in new and different Managed Care Organizations which may change the landscape moving forward.

What does this mean for healthcare? And what does it mean for you? In the past, MassHealth has utilized a “fee-for-service” model of care (and payment). The Commonwealth is looking towards the future of healthcare and ways in which to service” model of care (and payment). The Commonwealth is looking towards the future of healthcare and ways in which to modify the model, working towards better care for the patient while utilizing a more efficient system of procurement and payment for services.

These changes and system overhauls are being done through the use of a waiver with the federal government which was negotiated through the Obama Administration. However, they believe that this waiver will be honored by the current administration. The Baker-Polito Administration is working hard to ensure that the Massachusetts Medicaid system remains a dependable service on the cutting edge of healthcare.

For further information on the plan, visit mass.gov’s Executive Office of Health and Human Services webpage, and click on “Newsroom”. A announcement from June 8, 2017 entitled “MassHealth Partners with 18 Health Care Organizations to Improve Health Care Outcomes for Members” lists the 18 possible ACOs. A related article appears in the June 8 Boston Globe.

Plan Now to “Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll” with us in October!

Summer is a wonderful and relaxing time to enjoy friends and family, and we hope you are having lots of fun! It is also a good time to start thinking about Fall family activities, and we hope you will consider joining us for our fifth annual family fundraising event and picnic, “Walk, Roll, Shobble*: Stroll for Children with Special Needs! This year’s event will be held on Sunday, October 1st, from noon – 3pm (rain or shine) at the Nature Trail on the grounds of the Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children (formerly Massachusetts Hospital School), 3 Randolph Street, Canton, MA.

This is a fun and easy way to support the Federation and here is how you can participate! This is a “free” event in that there is no registration fee required. We do ask each walker to commit to raising $100; that’s just 10 friends who will each “sponsor” you as a walker at $10 each! Or put together a team of walkers, with each team member committed to raising $100!

Plan now to put together a team of family, friends, and colleagues, and come join Federation staff and other families for a great day of networking, family activities, food, music, games and prizes (and of course the Walk!) all to support children with special needs and their families. There are two ways to register! Visit www.fcsn.org/walk to register online, or simply fill out the registration form and mail it to us at the address provided.

We hope to see you there!

Thank You to your 2017 Conference Sponsors!

The Federation for Children with Special Needs would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to the following organizations for their financial support of this year’s conference:

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U.S. Department of Education/Rehabilitation Services Administration

Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll: 2017 Registration Form

Federation for Children with Special Needs
The Schrafft Center | 329 Main Street, Ste. 183 | Boston, MA 02129

Walker’s Name: ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City ________________________________________
State __________________ Zip _____________
Phone ________________________________
Email _____________________________________________________

Circle one: Adult Teen Child

Circle one: Individual Walker Team / Family

Team Name ________________________________
Team Leader ________________________________
Team Category: Family/Friends Business/Corp.
Club/Org./School/Place of Worship ________________________________

By signing this form, I hereby waive all claims against the Federation for any injury I or my child might suffer in this event. I grant full permission for the Federation to use photographs of me in legitimate accounts and promotions of this event.

Signature ________________________________
Parent/Guardian (if under 18 years old, parent/guardian must also sign)

How did you hear about Walk, Roll, Shobble, Stroll?

Thank you to our 2017 Conference Sponsors!
Join us on October 1 for Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll for our 5th Annual Fundraising Walk!

*"When a shuffle meets a hobble* (Definition by Chelsey Kendig, self-advocate)