



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES



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Mission

The Federation for Children with Special Needs provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. We are committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities.

The Federation believes that individual differences in people are a natural part of life, and that disabilities provide children and adults with unique perspectives, insights and abilities which contribute to the overall well-being of society.

The Federation values children as the hope for the evolving improvement of humankind, and places great value on the family as a caring protector of children's vulnerability, as well as a catalyst for their healthy growth and development.

The Federation places a tremendous value on parents because of the contributions they make as the leaders of families toward supporting the health, education, and development of their children at home and in society.

The Federation promotes the active and informed participation of parents of children with disabilities in shaping, implementing, and evaluating public policy that affects them.

The Federation believes in the power of parents helping parents and has infused a proven model of peer support throughout all its work.

Most Federation staff members are parents or family members of children with disabilities and people with disabilities.

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Dear Friends,

2016 has been a year of tremendous growth for the Federation for Children with Special Needs. We have been fortunate to add a new program to our list of services through the Youth and Family Support Program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. This project is focused on assisting youth and families enhance their planning for post school employment and career development. With it comes a newly formed outreach effort to engage youth and young adults directly in our work and to establish new opportunities to promote self-advocacy and self-determination.

We celebrate the Federation as a vital resource for the more than 45,000 families, youth and professionals we serve annually. The Federation houses 15 major projects, receives 16,000 phone calls and emails from parents seeking assistance, and conducts 600 workshops for over 9,000 parents and professionals at 100 locations throughout Massachusetts each year. Over 35,000 families and professionals receive the Federation's newsletter, and the Federation's annual Conference is attended by over 900 families and professionals. The Federation remains committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities.

We are proud of our many activities that continue to change the world and change the lives of children with special needs, one family at a time. As we look to the future, we know that together we must continue to grow in our capacity to empower families to do great things for their children with special needs, and we must remain vigilant – never taking the rights of individuals with disabilities for granted.

Whether you are a longtime supporter of the Federation, or new to our organization, we extend a special thank you for being a part of our work. Your generous support enables the Federation to continue to make an important difference in the lives of children with special needs. You encourage us to keep on going forward.



Richard J. Robison



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Special Education Center



The <u>Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC)</u>, under the Individuals with Disability Education Act, provides information, support, and workshops for families of children with special needs. An important component of this project is the <u>Parent Consultant Training Institute (PCTI)</u>, an intensive eight-week training designed to offer parents and professionals in-depth information about state and federal Special Education laws and processes. Many PCTI enrollees choose to continue developing advocacy skills by completing an optional internship with the Federation. As part of this work, each

participant completes 25 hours of assistance in PTIC's <u>Call Center</u>, which operates five days a week as a resource for individuals with specific questions about the special education system. The Special Education Center also includes the <u>LINK Center</u>, which assists families, professionals, and individuals with disabilities with the process of Transition planning. Employees of the LINK Center provide guidance to help achieve students' future visions.

Family and Community Engagement Center



The mission of the <u>Recruitment Training and Support Center for Special Education Surrogate Parents (RTSC)</u> is to ensure that every child in state custody receives the educational supports they need to succeed. Students whose parents are unavailable to participate in educational decision making processes are provided with a "surrogate parent" for educational decision making. Employees of RTSC recruit volunteers from across the state, providing them with training and support to be effective Special Education Surrogate Parents (SESPs) The <u>Family and Community Engagement Team</u> offers education

improvement programs to districts and schools in Massachusetts, partnering with school personnel and families to improve scholastic achievement. The Family and Community Engagement Center also provides training and technical assistance on family engagement to school districts as a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved **Title 1 Support Partner** and **District/School Assistance Provider**.

Health Advocacy Center



Mass Family Voices (MFV) is the state chapter of a national network for families of children with special health care needs. MFV provides a forum for families to connect and share resources, while fostering partnerships between families and managed care organizations to improve access to services. The Family-to-Family Health Information Center, a program overseen by MFV, offers referrals, assistance with health care, and general information and support. Mass Family Voices collaborates with Massachusetts' Children's Health

Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Quality Demonstration Grant partners in developing and enhancing authentic family-professional partnerships through participation in the Children's Health Quality Coalition and the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) medical home initiative.

Parent-Professional Leadership Center



The Massachusetts Association of Special Education Parent Advisory Councils (MassPAC) facilitates educational support opportunities for members of state special education parent advisory councils (SEPACs). MassPAC's work includes leadership training, networking events, webinars, phone assistance, and an informative listsery. Advancing Parent-Professional Leadership in Education utilizes a collaborative training model to ensure parents' participation in systemic efforts to improve educational outcomes for

children with disabilities. The MASS FOCUS Academy provides professional development, training, technical assistance and knowledge dissemination of evidenced-based practices that improve post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. The Partnership Project is a collaboration with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other community partners to expand professional development for educators and pioneer model sites to encourage the development of tiered systems of supports to improve outcomes for all students.

Family Support Center



<u>Family TIES of MA</u> is a project through which parents of children with special needs can access peer support and information on topics ranging from emergency preparedness to early intervention. Each year, this project publishes a comprehensive directory of Massachusetts resources for children and adults with special needs. Family TIES is funded by the MA Department of Public Health, and is administered through six regional offices. **Pathways for Parents**, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, provides support to parents who have a child with

emotional or behavior issues, and offers referrals to those with complex DCF cases and child custody concerns.

OUR IMPACT IN FY16:

42 Federation staff members stewarded 642 volunteers, recruited and trained over 1,000 volunteers through our Special Education Surrogate Parent program, and guided 3,000 parents and professionals via Family TIES of MA. Mass Family Voices supported 1,300 families, while the PTIC Call Center answered the questions of nearly 4,300 parents.

Over 5,000 attendees visited our workshops, and we connected with more than 31,700 families at resource fairs across the state.

Our quarterly newsletter reached 35,000 readers.

IN FY16, WE TOUCHED MORE THAN 100,000 LIVES.

Visions of Community Conference: 2016

On Saturday March 5th, the Federation welcomed approximately 1,000 attendees to its annual day-long Visions of Community conference, which offers informative workshops and networking opportunities for parents of children with special needs and the professionals who serve them.

This year, the Federation was able to offer workshops in Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, and Somali in addition to 35 workshops in English.

More than 100 Federation staff and volunteers made this year's conference possible.























Our annual gala, Celebrating Every Child, was held on Friday, May 13th. Guests were welcomed by the Federation's Executive Director Rich Robison and former WCVB news anchor Susan Wornick, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the third year in a row. This year, Wornick was ably assisted by zzcohost Amy Robison

Honoree Dr. Deborah Allen received the President's Award, and Amy Weinstock received the Martha Ziegler Award. The Patricia Blake Advocacy Award was given to Maureen Brenner, whose acceptance speech rings true: "when young people with special needs are given opportunities equal to those that are given to their nondisabled peers, they embrace them, and they surprise themselves."

FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN

Friday, May 13th 2016 | 6-10 PM Westin Waterfront Hotel | Boston, MA



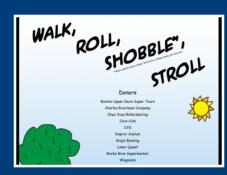


Walk, Roll, Shobble, Stroll

The weather was beautiful for the third annual Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll for Children with Special Needs, held on September 27, 2015, at the Massachusetts Hospital School in Canton, MA.

This event is more than just a walk. Participants were invited to play games and to get creative with arts and crafts. There was face painting, music, and dancing as well! All of us at the Federation look forward to another funfilled walk next year!

This year's walk raised \$9,000 to help the Federation continue its work supporting families of children with special needs.















The LINK Center: Connecting to Your Future



The transition from high school to young adulthood is a critical stage for all teenagers and maybe more so for youth with disabilities. The LINK Center assists families, professionals, and individuals with disabilities who are transition age (14-26) in accessing information, supports and services to achieve their future visions. Our staff provides answers to transition-related questions via our call center, our statewide education and training sessions, and a centralized transition-based website with relevant resources and information for families and professionals.

Another primary goal of the LINK Center is to collaborate with statewide agencies and organizations

to support effective transition practices. This collaboration with outside agencies has been strengthened by the addition of the WIOA Student and Family Support Project , a partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. The goal of WIOA is to support families in addressing transition-related concerns, with tactics such as technical assistance, group workshops, and face-to-face meetings. This project started to rollout in late 2016 and is generating significant enthusiasm and interest throughout the state.

The focus on transition for students with disabilities is a hot topic in the field of Special Education, but there are few organizations available to assist students and families with this important decision-making process. A lack of resources, accompanied with busy schedules and stressful lives, increases the importance of the services the LINK Center provides to families and professionals. With the addition of the WIOA Student and Family Support Project, the LINK Center will continue to build relationships across the state, develop new resources and workshops, and improve the services provided to students, parents, and professionals regarding transition.

Sharing the Story of James Breen:



James (Jamey) Breen is a 25-year-old youth advocate. He has been involved with the Federation's Youth Forum since his 2014 graduation from Stonehill College. Since then, he has written a book about the power of positivity, *Keep it Rollin'*, available on Amazon. He is cultivating his reputation as an inspirational speaker, and seeking a full-time job in the Human Services industry. Jamey is affected by cerebral palsy and uses a

wheelchair, but he refuses to let his disability to limit or define him.

Jamey's parents had been attending the Federation's Visions of Community conference for years, since Jamey was in grade school, which made it especially pleasant for them to re-connect this year, when he was presented with a <u>Community Partnership Award</u>. Jamey's mother credits the wealth of resources available at each conference, as well as services provided by the Federation, with improving not only Jamey's life, but his family's lives as well.

During his speaking presentations, Jamey postulates that each person has challenges in their lives, both great and small, and advocates in favor of moving through the challenge with a sense of opportunity and optimism. He believes that bringing this message of positivity empowers his audiences to become part of a community and reduces stigma around individuals with special needs. Jamey also uses social media like Facebook and Twitter to help spread the word - he considers himself a "multimedia storyteller". He is honored and proud that people see him as a resource, role model, or mentor, and feels blessed to be in a position to positively impact the lives of so many individuals.

Cullen Tyman Tells his Story:



We are all born into this world different and yet the same. In a way though, I was more different than others - I was the first person in Massachusetts to be diagnosed with a syndrome that didn't even have a name until the 1980's!

This syndrome brings many challenges, but also a gift: the ability to make people smile. During my sophomore year of high school, my principal dubbed me "mayor of the school". I was Prom King in my junior year, and, during senior year, my class voted my "daybrightening friendliness" as the fourth biggest reason they survived high school.

My parents realized that I could use my strengths to help others with disabilities, and together we began finding ways to be of assistance. One year, I spread awareness at several TD bank locations while raising money for the Special Olympics. The Special Olympics then chose me as the keynote speaker for an event with 250 businessmen and women in attendance. My most recent accomplishment was being chosen to join the Federation's Young Adult Council and joining several discussion panels about transitioning to adulthood.

Although my family had received FCSN's newsletter for years, it wasn't until I became a member of the Council that my mom and dad made personal connections with other parents. Through these connections, they were able to find resources to enrich my life and the lives of other differently-abled individuals. Without the Federation, none of us would have been aware of these possibilities. The staff at the Federation respects us and values our input. They believe that our stories are worth being told, which has empowered us to help others in similar situations.

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned the name of my syndrome. It is called Smith Magenis Syndrome. Although I want to raise awareness about the syndrome, I don't want it to define me. I would rather have people get to know me first.

Our challenges can make us stronger and disabilities can turn into abilities. Our uniqueness can be our strength. If we celebrate who we are, spreading awareness and pride, the world will celebrate along with us!

\$10,000 and Up Individuals

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Thousands of parents of children with special needs depend on us for resources, training, and support.

Without your generous assistance, our work would not be possible.

Thank you.

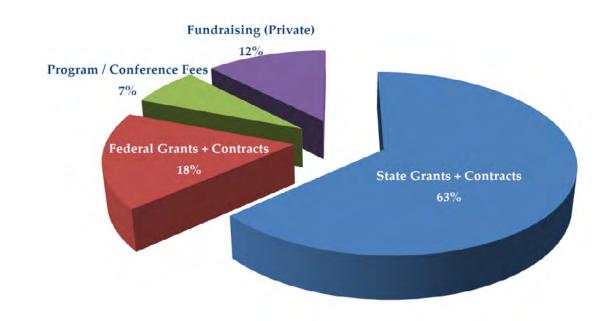
We have made every effort to include all donors for FY16 in this report. If any errors have been made, please let us know so that we can correctly acknowledge your gift.

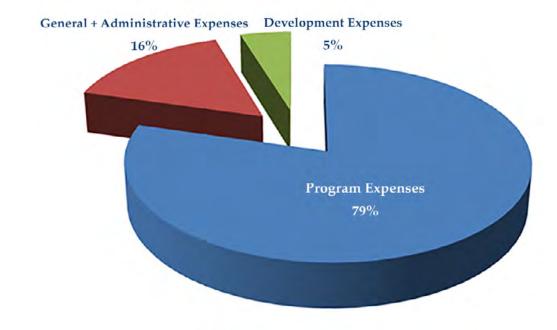
Income

INCOME AND EXPENSE CHARTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2016



INCOME AND EXPENSE CHARTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2016





Total Income	\$3,311,511
Fundraising (Private)	\$405,864
Program/Conf. Income	\$228,871
Federal Direct Grants & Contracts .	\$576,034
State Grants & Contracts	\$2,100,742

Program Expenses	\$2,496,230
G & A Expenses	\$492,922
Development Expenses	\$148,684
Total	\$3,137,836

This financial information is derived from audited financial statements.
Copies of audited financial statements are available upon request.

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