

Resource Room News



Spring / Summer 2009
Volume 6 Issue 4

A Publication of
The Family Resource Room at
Kinsmen Children's Centre
(306) 655-6871

Partners with Families Helping
Children

Special points of interest:

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www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca



Spring is here and summer is on the way!

Autism Conference

As mentioned in the last Family Resource Room News Fall/Winter 2008 edition, May 6-8, 2009 is the "Lining Up Strategies for Autism Interventions: Eat, Embrace, Experience!" conference. The Saskatoon Region Early Childhood Intervention Program" will be presenting a 3 day conference focusing on children with autism spectrum disorder from birth to age 7 years.

Presenters are:

- **Dr. Lori Ernsperger** who has more than 23 years experience as a teacher, administrator and behavioural consultant. She holds bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees in Special Education. Her extensive work with children who have behaviour disorders particularly focused on those with autism spectrum disorder.
- **Shirley Sutton, BSc. OT**, has worked with children and teens with special needs for over 25 years. Her special interests and training include developmental disorders, autism, sensory integration, and early intervention. She is also the co-author for books on sensory integration and Asperger Syndrome including the book: Building bridges Through Sensory Integration (OT for Children with Autism & Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders).

The conference Schedule is as follows:

Day 1&2 topics include:

- How to Get Your Kids to Eat: Easy, Effective Answers to Food Aversions & Eating Challenges
- Proactive Strategies for Managing Problem Behaviours for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders

Day 3 will cover:

- Sensory, Oral, & Fine Motor issues as well as offering a "Make and Take Fun" session for parents, students and others in attendance.

Registration fees for days 1&2 are:

- Professionals \$50 / Parents and Students \$25 (includes book)

Day 3 registration fees are:

- Professionals, Parents and students \$25, (includes book).

For more information please contact:
Events of Distinction at: (306) 651-3118 or
email eofd@sasktel.net.

The Saskatoon Region Early Childhood Intervention Program is part of a province wide network of community based supports for families of children who experience or are at risk for developmental delays. Early Childhood Intervention Programs utilize a strength based approach to deliver family focused home and centre based services to families. Parents and caregivers can directly access services by calling (306) 655-1083 or email:

Arlene.trask@saskatoonhealthregion.ca

Parent Information Sessions: "Understanding the System"



1) The **Alvin Buckwold Child Development Program Department of Social Work** is hosting more Parent Information Sessions about "Understanding the System". This group is held 3-4 times per year. The next session will be on **April 22, 2009 at 7:00pm-9:00pm**. This session provides an overview of resources and supports available for children with special needs. Parents and caregivers will have an opportunity to share information. In the event that you are unable to attend let us know so that we may notify you about the next one. To register please call **Linda Charlton at: 655-1085**.

2) "**A Story Sharing Circle: Surviving the School Years**" is a 2 session group for parents and caregivers to have the opportunity to share their own experiences of school life and to pass this knowledge on to others. The tentative dates will be in May and June 2009. A separate youth group for those ages 13-17 years will be held if there is sufficient interest. For more information or to express your interest in participating please contact: **Linda Charlton at: 655-1085**.

Great opportunities to enhance speech and language development!

Nurturing With Rhymes: The Parent & Child Program

The **Saskatoon Adlerian Society** is offering a free eight week program designed for parents and caregivers and their little ones to come together and learn rhymes, songs and stories in a setting that will encourage parents to have fun and bond with their children. The benefits of the program include:

- Parents and children will enjoy each other and have a shared repertoire of rhymes, songs and stories.
- Parents will feel less isolated and families will benefit from connecting with other families.
- The children will develop stronger literacy skills.

Programs start on April 20 and run through to June 15, 2009. There are groups available for ages from birth to 3 years. For more information please contact: **Sharon Baby at 242-6036 or email: sbaby@sasktel.net.**



The Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society (SDSS):

has a lot to offer parents and families with a family member who has Down Syndrome. There is a website at: www.skdownsyndrome.ca,



a lending library and they offer at least three free events per year and a quarterly newsletter.

The plan is to hold the **Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon** this year on **April 25, 2009** where a new board of directors will be elected. The current chair is Tim Yates who can be contacted at: (306) 693-4929 or email: timyates@sasktel.net.

Events offered this summer include a **summer camping escape** to Cypress Hills Provincial Park from **July 24-26, 2009**. It will be a fun filled weekend where participants can camp or stay at the hotel.

Reserve a camp site by calling:

(306) 662-5484 or hotel room at:
(306) 662-4477.

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) 22nd National Conference is in Halifax on May 15-17, 2009. The conference is a platform to share developments and information from specialists in their respected fields in the form of speakers, reviews, panel discussions and presentations featuring current medical, health, social, research, education and advocacy issues. To register call: **1-800-883-5608** or email: info@cdss.ca

Feature Article: Siblings of Children with Special Needs

The following excerpts are from Exceptional Family Magazine Volume 4 Number 3, pages 35-37, Spring 2009. The article is titled: **Gifts My Family Gave Me: Humour, Honesty and the Space to be Myself**. The story explores one woman's experience as she reflects back on growing up with an exceptional sibling. Growing up with a sibling that has an exceptionality certainly has an influence and shapes one's life.

In the 1960's Susan Day Fragiadakis's older brother Rick was diagnosed with autism. She recalls the stigma fostered by the medical profession that encouraged institutionalization. It was believed that mothers caused their children's autism due to their cold, unemotional parenting styles labelling them as "refrigerator mothers" in need of psychotherapy. A lot has changed and improved since then thankfully for both parents and children with Autism. We now know this not to be true.

Challenges are both physical and emotional for the whole family. Parents often rarely get a break from their full-time job as caregivers. Even if there was a babysitter for her brother Susan and her older sister were really the ones to look after Rick from a very young age since he was most comfortable with them and his sisters knew his preferences and dislikes inside out. Many experiences were missed out on as a child like eating at restaurants or going to the movies as a family. She endured people in the town talking about "the retard" and a new elementary school friend who came over to play being told that she could "catch what was wrong with Rick". She remembered feeling angry, self-conscious and sometimes even sorry for herself that Rick was her brother. Positive memories over time have largely outweighed most of the difficult ones.

Fast forward now to the present day as this applies to today's siblings. As an adult one can look back and laugh at things that at the time seemed catastrophic. Embarrassment due to other's behaviour is a normal expression of development for any typical teenager. Keep in mind how teens often even find their own mother's behaviour quite embarrassing too.

Susan credits her parents and brother for the gift of humour; "for showing me that even at difficult times in our lives it was crucial to take a positive approach and try and find pride in Rick's accomplishments, even if they seemed insignificant to people who did not know him well." Equally important is for parents to be honest with their children about the person with a disability's needs, strengths and challenges. Even young siblings deserve honest information; for if you are not truthful in your answers to their questions, they will believe that having a disability is shameful. Informing your children about their siblings' disability will also help them to better understand why certain familial rules and expectations may not apply equally to everyone. This can be very helpful and go a long way to dispel frustration and jealousy at what may appear as preferential treatment of the sibling's disabled brother or sister.

Reaching out to siblings via support groups:

- Be clear that the support group is not meant to provide "therapy" - we are not sibs that need "fixing".
- Groups for younger children should centre on fun activities while providing information about disabilities and siblings' particular conditions.
- All children, but particularly teenagers, need to be reassured upon arrival to the group that what they say is confidential and will not be discussed with their parents or others (unless something is said that could cause harm).
- Underscore to participants that they are not expected to convey exclusively positive feelings about their siblings and parents at group meetings.
- Have teens do a flip chart exercise under the heading: "Things I wish adults would understand about being a sibling of a person with special needs"; it's an excellent conversation starter.

Susan Day Fragiadakis is a faculty member with the Geneva Centre Training Institute in Toronto. One of her roles is developing and delivering workshops and courses on topics related to Autism Spectrum Disorders including family and sibling issues.

**For more information and books available about this topic and many other disability issues contact:
The Family Resource Room at Kinsmen Children's Centre: 655-6871 or email: kccfrr@saskatoonhealthregion.ca**

What ever happened to the resources from the John Dolan Resource Centre at the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living ?

First of all we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the incredible **Lalita Martfeld**. Her tireless efforts built an amazing wealth of resources that helped numerous parents and families who went to the John Dolan Resource Library for information over many years past. Lalita you did a fantastic job for which you should be very proud! Change is the rule not the exception but that's life. Since the library has closed a large part of the resources went to the **Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation (STF)**. The resources from the **John Dolan Library** are accessible through the **Stewart Resource Centre of STF** in Saskatoon at: **373-1660, ext. 6323**. You can also search the catalogue of resources on their website at: www.stf.sk.ca. If you wish to search the SRC catalogue yourself you may do so by:

- Visiting the STF website at www.stf.sk.ca
- Choosing the link for the Stewart Resources Centre
- Clicking on the option for the Online Catalogue & Unit Plans
- Clicking on the heading entitled Online Catalogue
- Choosing the Expert tab when LibraryNet opens
- Typing John Dolan in the empty field to the right of the Keyword title, and then pressing ENTER
- All of the items that were donated to the STF from the John Dolan Collection will appear in lists of 10 items at a time. You may click on individual titles to see more details, such as kit contents, book authors, and whether a particular item is in the library or out on loan.



Spring / Summer Recreation & Other Program Contacts:

- **Abilities Council:** 653-1694

For program information visit:

www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca

- **Autism Services:** 665-7013
Down load program calendar at:

www.autismservices.ca

May 2, 2009 @6:00pm Spring Gala Event

May 20, 2009 @5:30pm In Person Registration for Summer Programs

- **Canadian National Institute for the Blind:** 374-4545
Toll Free: 1-800-563-2642
- **Epilepsy Saskatoon:** 665-1939
Toll Free : 1-866-EPILEPSY
- **Radius Acquired Brain Injury Community Integration Service:** 665-0362

Youth Companion Program

- **Saskatchewan Cerebral Palsy Association:** 955-7272

- **Saskatchewan Association for Community Living:** 955-3344
- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Support Network of Saskatchewan:** 975-0884
or Toll Free: 1-866-673-3276
- **Community Living Association Saskatoon Inc. (CLASI):** 652-9111

Parkridge Rehabilitation Centre Children's "Buddies" Recreation Program

Respite Services

Summer Day Camps for children, teens and young adults with intellectual and/or physical disabilities July & August 2009

- **Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Saskatchewan North:** 249-1362 or Canada
Toll Free : 1-800-565-9488

"Sneakers & Wheels" & BBQ June 6, 2009, swimming, basketball, and dance programs

- **City of Saskatoon Leisure Services:** 975-3200

F.Y.I.'s

Workshop for Families Experiencing Exceptional Loss (FEEL), Family members who have lost a child or sibling with a disability. **April 24-26, 2009** at the Travel Inn Resort, Saskatoon. **Contact: Jerome Nicol, (306) 652-9111 from CLASI, or email: sac1@sasktel.net**

Strong Together, Parents Helping Parents: Saskatchewan Families with children who have **Autism** created a website to bring together information, programs, and resources to help parents get started once they receive their diagnosis. For more information email:

info@strongtogether.net or search the website:

www.strongtogether.net