

Fall/Winter 2009

NJ Parent to Parent Newsletter



A Father's Gift

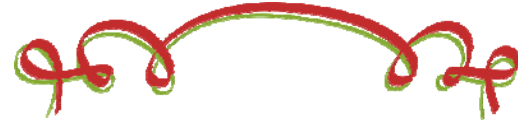
***By, Bob Williams, Southern Regional
P2P Associate***

When my son was 7 years old and other fathers were preparing their young men for football, I was on constant call for therapy visits to occupational therapists, physical therapy sessions in the pool and untold hours to meet with school administrators.

Many of the joys other fathers experience in those elementary school years, like teaching your child to ride a bike were not mine to behold. Day's I dreamed he would somehow magically be healed and not have the challenges that faced him. "What would his first date with a girl be like?" I thought. Handing him the keys to my somewhat dated automobile? These were probably not to be.

As Grant grew, these dreams were never lost or placed in a trunk in the rafters of the attic. What did occur was a shift in my perception in the joy in fathering a disabled Son, and the true gift his life has graced me with in my time here on earth.

I was speaking with a colleague in the fall of 2007, and the topic of all we as special needs parents encounter in raising our special child. I shared with him that I too have had struggles with the emotional, time commitment, and daily fatigue in being one of those parents. Also I reflected the new understanding I have come to know that allows me to freely give the love, care and happiness to others facing similar challenges in raising their children. The essence of which is.



"Grant's disabilities were in no way a product of mine or my wife's lifestyle before we desired to raise a family. They were from a mix of unfortunate circumstances and from what was to be destined from God. Unfortunate circumstances we had no influence over, and God's plans were pre-destined. The profound psychological shift was to tap into God's grace, for through his plans I have a Son from whom I receive humor, unfaltering love, and a closeness that is beyond any relationship I have ever had."

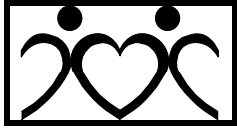
This life has provided a level of joy and reward, one in which self seeking and singular pursuit for want, would never have produced. Therefore I am truly blessed with God's ultimate gift, peacefulness, serenity and happiness.



Father's Corner

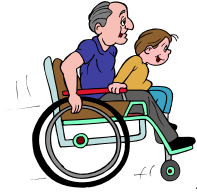
On June 18th - P2P hosted a tele-conference for fathers in honor of Fathers Day which was facilitated by Dr. Robert Naseef. He was joined by three other fathers who shared their personal experiences about fathering a child with special needs. If you would like to hear the audio of this call, go to www.spannj.org/support

"The central struggle of parenthood is to let our hopes for our children outweigh our fears."
(Ellen Goodman)



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10 Tips for

Caregivers

1. Reward yourself with respite breaks.
2. Watch out for signs of depression
3. When people offer to help, accept the offer.
4. Educate yourself about your loved one's condition.
5. Be open to technologies that support your loved one's independence.
6. Trust your instincts.
7. Be good to your back.
8. Grieve for your losses, and learn to dream new dreams.
9. Seek support from other caregivers.
10. Stand up for your rights.

Taken from National Family Caregivers Association www.nfcacares.org



Early Intervention

Family Alliance. The EIFA is a national organization of family members and supporters dedicated to improving the national early intervention program for eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families by assuring meaningful family involvement in the development of Part C policies and implementation at community, state and federal levels. For more information on how to join the alliance go to www.eifamilyalliance.org



New national website!

The U.S. Department of Labor has launched this site for people with disabilities, their family members, caregivers, employers and others. This site includes comprehensive information on disability specific programs and services. This site also includes opportunities for you to share and receive information by participating in online discussions.

www.disability.gov



RESOURCES

www.specialneedsparentcoach.com

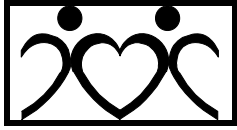
Our goal is to give you the practical strategies you need for successfully navigating life as a parent of a child with special needs. Our proven system helps you create a manageable, balanced, and joyful life, for both you and your family.

www.spannj.org

The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network provides information, training, technical assistance and support to parents and professionals on a wide variety of topics that impact children in NJ.

www.selfhelpgroups.org

New Jersey Self-Help Group Clearinghouse. Helping people help each other through mutual aid support groups. To find or form a support group in your area.



Upcoming Events

10-08, 9 & 10-09 - 27th Annual Conference of Autism New Jersey at the Atlantic City Convention Center. For more information call 609-883-8100 or go to www.autismnj.org

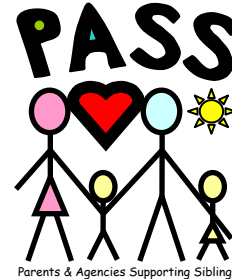
10-13-09 Brain Injury Basics for Parents & Professionals. Kean University 7-9pm. To register call 732-745-0200 or go to www.bianj.org

10-17-09 Community Health Fair at St. Francis Medical Center, School of Nursing, Crean Hall. 9am-2pm. For more information Call 1-877-452-5333.

10-20-09 Brain Injury Basics for Parents & Professionals. Rowan University. 6:30pm-8:30pm. To register call 732-745-0200 or go to www.bianj.org

10-29-09 Statewide Conference on Children's Mental Health at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor, NJ. For more information www.state.nj.us/dcf/behavioral/conference

10-29-09 6th Annual National Caregivers Conference. Woodbridge Hotel & Conference Center. For more information www.nationalcaregiversconference.org



Parents & Agencies Supporting Siblings

PASS Bowling Events

10-23-09 - The Lanes at Sea Girt. 4pm-6pm. To register call Ramona Carmeci at 732-528-8080.

11-20-09 - The Lanes at Sea Girt. 4pm-6pm. To register call Ramona Carmeci at 732-528-8080.

12-18-09 - The Lanes at Sea Girt. 4pm-6pm. To register call Ramona Carmeci at 732-528-8080.

1-22-2010 - The Lanes at Sea Girt. 4pm-6pm. To register call Ramona Carmeci at 732-528-8080.

We are scheduling more events throughout the state, so please check www.spannj.org/support soon for events in your area.