A Note from the Executive Director...

Spring is in the air... as I sit down to write this note during another Maine snow day. With that in mind, at Maine Parent Federation we are ready to head into what we refer to as “IEP season”. Please contact MPF for all of your educational needs as you navigate your way through the end of one school year and into the beginning of another.

Over the winter we have been busy, here are a few highlights:

- MPF trained an additional 10 Family Support Navigators
- 67 people attended our sponsored screening of Intelligent Lives
- We held our second Supported Decision-Making training with participation from 3 professionals, 10 youth, and 13 parents/caregivers.

Legislative updates include:

- Proposed CDS Legislation will be L.D. 1977 we will update you as soon as the language is released and hearings are scheduled,
- All proposed changes to MUSER or Chapter 101 were repealed but we are aware there will be another attempt to make changes and we will keep you updated,
- The Maine Alliance of Family Organizations has written a letter to the Commissioner of DHHS addressing the Results of the Children with Behavioral Health Services Study. We have included recommendations we feel should be made a priority, and
- We provided written comment opposing L.D. 464 “An Act To Change the Period To Request a Due Process Hearing for Costs Related to a Unilateral Private School Placement from a Public School”, which was unanimously voted down in the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee.

Upcoming events this spring include:

- Free Screening of Intelligent Lives at Thornton Academy on March 12th
- Annual Conference “Family Road to Resiliency” at MaineGeneral in Augusta on March 23rd
- Two Transition Resource Fairs - March 21st at Greeley High School and April 2nd at the YMCA in Boothbay Harbor.

Please continue to watch our website, www.mpf.org and social media pages on Facebook, Twitter, & YouTube for continued updated information and as always, please reach out to Maine Parent Federation with any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards, Carrie Woodcock
What’s New in the Information Center at MPF?

Maine Parent Federation has informational packets available on more than 200 topics. These packets contain researched information, tips, local and national resources, and a list of related lending library material available here at MPF. The following information packets have recently been updated:

Disability/Disorder Related Topics:
- Diabetes
- Eating Disorders
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- Including Your Child
- Learning a Diagnosis

If you would like to receive any of our information packets, or would like information on another topic, please contact MPF by:

- Phone: (800) 870-7746
  (Ask to speak with a Parent Information Specialist)
- E-mail: parentconnect@mpf.org
  (Please provide mailing information)

These materials are offered free of charge!

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Family Support Navigator Program

Maine Parent Federation has trained Family Support Navigators (FSN) that can help support your family at no cost to you! A FSN is an experienced parent who lives in your area and is available for one-on-one support. A FSN can help you:

- organize your paperwork.
- interview a prospective service provider.
- prepare for a meeting with your child’s doctor, school, or service provider.
- provide support at an IEP meeting.
- locate resources in your area.

To learn more about the FSN program, visit our website at www.mpf.org or call us at (800) 870-7746.

We are currently accepting referrals to the program. If you are a parent that needs help or know of a family that needs help, please contact the Regional Family Support Coordinator in your county for more information:

Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, and Waldo
Deborah Newcombe, (800) 870-7746, dnewcombe@mpf.org

Cumberland and York
Jodie Hall, (207) 841-4129 jhall@mpf.org

Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, and Washington
Robin Levesque, (207) 538-0866, rlevesque@mpf.org
Living Innovations, Maine Parent Federation, and Thornton Academy team up to bring you a free screening of

“Intelligent Lives”

This documentary, from award-winning filmmaker, Dan Habib stars three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities – Micah, Naiere, and Naomie – who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper contextualizes the lives of these central characters through the emotional personal story of his son Jesse, as the film unpacks the shameful and ongoing track record of intelligence testing in the U.S.

INTELLIGENT LIVES challenges what it means to be intelligent, and points to a future in which people of all abilities can fully participate in higher education, meaningful employment, and intimate relationships.

**Event Details**

Please join us March 12, 2019 at Thornton Academy Auditorium, 438 Main Street in Saco at 6 PM. This event is **free**, but pre-registration is required. Please use the link to register: [http://mpf.org/form.html](http://mpf.org/form.html)

For more information, contact Jodie Hall at (207) 841-4129 or [jhall@mpf.org](mailto:jhall@mpf.org).

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**~ Upcoming Events ~**

**Autism Awareness Day 2019** - Saturday April 6th - NOON -3:00 PM
2606 Camden Road, Warren. ME - [https://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/event/2019-autism-awareness-day/](https://umaine.edu/autisminstitute/event/2019-autism-awareness-day/) Our hope for this day is to bring community together, raise awareness, and make new friendships and connections.

**2019 Brain Injury Resource Fair** - March 28, 2019 - 1:00 - 4:00 PM
State Armory, Western Avenue, Augusta Maine - Contact [Sarah Gaffney](mailto:sarah.gaffney@maine.gov) if you have questions or need assistance.

**Maine Family Planning: Annual Comprehensive Sexuality Education Conference**

**Advocacy Day at the State House** - April 4, 2019 - 10:00 AM - NOON

**Southern Maine Autism Conference** – March 16, 2019
Self-Care and Spring Cleaning: Tips For Parents Raising Kids With Disabilities

As spring approaches, we begin to clean our homes and throw out items we no longer use. Whether it is the toy that your child no longer plays with or the sweater that your spouse never wears, spring cleaning is a time of “out with the old and in with the new”.

It is time to think about also scheduling a spring-cleaning of your soul. We are so busy with the stress of daily life that we often forget the importance of taking care of ourselves. Self-care is more than just eating healthy foods and exercising. It is also about taking care of your psychological and emotional development. For parents raising children with disabilities, it can be difficult to make time for self-care.

Cleansing yourself of all the negativity in your life and creating achievable goals so that you can become stronger and more empowered! Making sure you are surrounded by the most supportive people to help you achieve your goals. Remember, when you are physically, psychologically and emotionally strong, you can be the best advocate for your son or daughter.

**Acknowledge your accomplishments**

Remind yourself of all that you have achieved in the last few days, weeks, months, or even years. Your ability to survive stressful challenges and difficult stressors. Even if it may seem like a small accomplishment, remember that is one step forward for you, your child, and family. Use this reflection on your amazing successes as motivation to continue to achieve. Remembering the great things that you have done will help you continue to set goals and have the confidence in yourself to achieve them. Whether it is finding your child a new therapist, surviving an IEP meeting, getting a promotion at work or handling a difficult project—remember that you conquered each goal and have faith in yourself that you will continue to make even more accomplishments. Create smaller and more specific goals so that you have a step-by-step plan to reach your overall desired goal. As you successfully accomplish these smaller goals you will begin to fuel your inner fire and become motivated to continue achieving.

**Lessons learned from your disappointments**

As you reflect on your achievements, it is also time to reflect on your disappointments. Whether it is difficulty losing weight or issues with your child’s school—what lessons have you learned in the past few days, weeks, months, or years? How can you make sure that situation never happens again? Maybe reassess the situation and remember that there was some progress, but not as much as you would have liked. As humans we tend to be very hard on ourselves and need to remember to stop and see the glass as half full instead of half empty. Think about how the lessons you have learned from these situations can help you create new goals that are more realistic and achievable. Parents tend to want to conquer the world for their child and family – but sometimes it is important to remember to stop and think “What are some alternative goals that can make me just as happy?”

**Reflecting on your relationships**

As you are thinking about your accomplishments and disappointments, you should also reflect on the different relationships in your life. Who are the most toxic people in your life? Who are the most supportive people in your life? Surprisingly, sometimes one person can fit into both categories. Maybe a new goal would be to finally figure out how to deal with the negative people in your life. You cannot get rid of your mother, BUT you can learn to say no or politely tell her to stop interfering in your life. Remind them that you need to focus on yourself and your family, so you do not have the time for their negativity. To the people who have been the most helpful and supportive—how can you maintain your relationship with them? How can you be there for them in their time of need? Also, remember to stop and say “thank you.” Whether a call, text or email, trust me—they will appreciate it!

*Dr. Frances Victory received her PhD in Developmental Psychology at CUNY Graduate Center in New York City. Her thesis was titled, "Exploring the Role of Perceived Religiosity on Daily Life, Coping, and Parenting for Jewish Parents of Children with Autism." You can reach her at victory.frances@gmail.com.*

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2019 SUMMER CAMP Directory

We have updated our summer camp directory for 2019. It is available on our website, www.mpf.org. If you would like a printed copy, call (800) 870-7746, or E-mail parentconnect@mpf.org.

"FAMILY ROAD TO RESILIENCY" Conference

Saturday, March 23, 2019
8:00 AM to 3:30 PM
MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta, ME

This conference is for parents/caregivers of youth and youth ages 10 to 21 with emotional and behavioral health needs and special health care needs. The conference will focus on the importance of wellness and resiliency. Sessions will address self-care, wellness strategies, and resources. Free lunch, therapeutic massage, Reiki, and other education opportunities will be offered.

Keynote Speakers:

Anne T. Uecker, MD - Dr. Uecker is a pediatric neuropsychologist at the Edmund N. Ervin Pediatric Center in Augusta who specializes in the evaluation and treatment of children, adolescents, and their families with cognitive, neuropsychological, emotional, behavioral, and social concerns. She incorporates the use of multiple mindfulness and meditation techniques within her practice.

Carol C. Weitzman, MD – Dr. Weitzman is Director of Yale Medicine's Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Program and Adoption/Foster Clinic, an a developmental-behavioral pediatrician. She treats children of all ages for Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, developmental delays, cognitive problems, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

To register, please click on the link below: https://crisisandcounseling.org/famconf/

If you have any questions, contact GEAR Parent Network at (800)-264-9224 or Maine Parent Federation at (800) 870-7746.

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt for Kids

- Find something outside you enjoy looking at
- Find something that is useful for you
- Find something that is your favorite color
- Find something you know someone else will enjoy
- Find something that makes you happy
- Find something that tastes good
- Find something that smells amazing
- Discover something new
- Find something that makes you feel safe
- Find something that makes a beautiful sound
- Find someone you are grateful for
- Find something that is unique to you
- Find something that makes you laugh
- Find something in the night that you enjoy
- Find something in the morning that you enjoy
- Find something a friend/pet that you love spending with
- Find your favorite place to spend alone time
- Find something that reminds you of the people you love
- Find something that you enjoy doing outside with friends
- Find a place that you love