



Connections

Information + Support

Families of Children with Special Needs

Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

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FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK™ - HIGH COUNTRY

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With Support From
Appalachian State University

Appalachian District Health
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Friends of Family Support
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High Country United Way

Partnership for Children from:
Avery
Mitchell-Yancey
Watauga
Wilkes

Smoky Mountain Center

Ken & Jessica Powell, Mentor Family for 19 Years

By: Hunter Jacobs

I have been doing some work with the Parent to Parent FSN-HC as an ASU student and I was asked if I could do a video interview of Ken and Jessica Powell for a presentation for The Department of Social Services (DSS). I agreed and set up a time to meet with Ken and Jessica. Anyone visiting their home could see that this was a family that had a great deal of love and support in it. One could see all the family pictures, the kids were playing, but the thing that stood out to me the most was the posted list of homework rules. The rule that stuck out to me the most was one which said that, when doing homework, the kids had to be doing more work than dad and they had to be having fun.

Jessica arrived home after work and we began the video. It was a very interesting story and it was one that I was intrigued to hear. They began by saying that they have been associated with Parent to Parent FSN-HC for almost 19 years now. They first became acquainted with FSN-HC when they moved to Boone, NC from Greenville, NC. The Family Support Network program they worked with in Greenville put them in contact with the FSN-HC because their daughter Sydney was born with very rare neurometabolic disorder, *Pyruvate carboxylase deficiency*. The Parent to Parent FSN-HC helped with the family's transition to Boone.



Ken & Jessica with their daughter Sydney

Eventually, the Powell's became Mentor Parents and worked with countless families, providing support and advice for families who were seeking help. Ken became a Board Member helping with the FSN-HC in an advisory role with the organization. Jessica also served a year as the Volunteer Coordinator for the FSN-HC as well.



Sydney, became medically fragile and passed away just after her 10th birthday. As a memorial to Sydney, people donated to the Parent to Parent FSN-HC fund to help other families who need assistance to cover expenses for traveling to medical appointments. Jessica stated, "We actually benefited from that [medically fragile fund] so we felt it was important to give back to that."

Nowadays, Ken is a stay at home dad, and Jessica works at the Watauga Medical Center. They have adopted three children from DSS, and they are still connected with the FSN-HC by attending training sessions put on by the FSN-HC and DSS. Jessica said, "[The trainings] have had an impact on our life and our parenting skills and they help us so much to sometimes make sense out of the craziness of getting our three children at once" Ken also added, "...the real strength of the Family Support Network is they go beyond just helping people with their needs, they empower families to feel less of a victim and more of a champion for the kids they work with. Jessica added, "The name couldn't be more perfect, they really do provide support to families. They connect you to each other and help you get through whatever you are going through and make as much of a success in every aspect of your life as you can."

Ken expressed how he was nervous, and even compared it to the scene of *Cheaper by the Dozen* when someone is coming to interview the wife and they have a very hectic household. Just as in the movie it may have been a little hectic, but it was house that was full of love and support. The Powell family is one that I was very pleased to meet and could see how they have been associated with the FSN-HC for so long.

To watch the interview video, please go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgimAMYP7J4>

CONNECTIONS



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Center for
Parent Information
and Resources

Parents, do you need more resources?

If so, visit the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) website and/or **sign up for their monthly newsletter** at <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

What is it?

The CPIR serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities.

Newsletter?

Their newsletter contains valuable resources you can share with families and resources just for Parent Centers. Each newsletter has a feature called Spotlight which has specific resource information such as IEPs, SSIP, Transitioning, etc...

Dance Marathon 2015



Over 200 ASU students endured the cold wintery snow and helped raise \$41,045.62 for Parent to Parent FSNTTM-HC and Western Youth Network on Saturday, February 21st at ASU's 12th annual Dance Marathon. This was \$8,000 more than what was raised last year.

Thank you for making sure families will continue to receive support!

Underwater I Spy Bottle

What You Do:

1. Have your child drop in sequins, plastic ABC beads, and little plastic toys or figurines. Help your child sprinkle some glitter inside.
2. Fill half the bottle with water and a few drops of food color. Fill the other half of the bottle with corn syrup. The corn syrup slows down the motion of the contents and helps the glitter not to stick together.
3. You can hot glue the lid onto the bottle so little hands don't spill.
4. Shake it up and watch the pretty water! How many letters can your child spy? Can he/she spot the letters in her name? Have fun shaking!

What You Need:

- Empty water or plastic soda bottle (best to use one without ridges)
- Add little figurines or Alphabet beads from the craft store
- Glitter
- Sequins or any tiny sparkly things
- Corn syrup
- Water
- Food color (optional)
- Glue gun (optional)

