ERIN
By: Wendy Ward

My husband and I had tried for almost five years to have a baby. Then finally we were blessed with our little girl, Erin. The pregnancy was uncomplicated until around twenty weeks. I began measuring too large for my gestational age. The doctors told us this could sometimes mean that there was a birth defect. We were sent for a high definition ultrasound which revealed that Erin had a missing left radius, with short forearm and missing fingers on both of her hands. It was also noted that she had a Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). After about twenty more weeks of pregnancy and several sleepless nights due to worry, she was born.

She was born with bilateral club hands, missing left radius, missing thumbs on both of her hands and a small hole in her heart. The genetics doctor felt she had Holt-Oram Syndrome. We quickly began splinting her hands and visited the Cardiologist. Luckily we did not have to intervene surgically with her heart closure due to it healing on its own. However, she has had 7 surgeries on her hands. We continue to see a surgeon in Atlanta, GA and her surgeries are performed at the Scottish Rite Hospital.

She was enrolled in the NC Infant-Toddler Program and received early intervention services until she turned three. During that time I was matched with a parent through Family Support Network (FSN). This truly helped me as a parent to talk to someone who had a child with similar issues. Their child was a little older, which helped us look at future outcomes. When she turned three, testing was completed and she scored above average on fine motor skills. Therefore, she was not eligible for Occupational Therapy with the schools.

Erin is an amazing little girl! Through all of the surgeries, splints, external fixators, pins, stitches, casts and trips to Atlanta, she has never asked “why”. She just does her thing and when a child asks her “why do you have four fingers” or “why do you wear that thing on your arm” she is always confident in telling them: “Because this is the way God made me”. Surgeries have slowed down some over the past two years. However we know she may need revisions in the future.

(cont’)
She is now in the second grade and is very active in sports. She enjoys horseback riding, dance, soccer, and basketball. She is an artist that paints, makes necklaces out of tiny beads that she strings, and uses clay. She was the only one in kindergarten that could tie her shoes and she actually assisted others in helping them tie their own. She has one of the prettiest handwriting in her class too.

We as parents always want to know why, but they teach us that the “why” doesn’t really matter; it is what you do with “what” you were given that counts.

DANCE MARATHON: “IT’S FOR THE KIDS!”
By Rica Abbott and Karen Bullock

On February 19, 2011, Appalachian State University held their annual event, Dance Marathon, a student -run fundraising event that raises money for Western Youth Network and Parent to Parent of the High Country. Appalachian State University began this fundraising event in 2003 and since then has raised over $150,000. Each registered student pledges to raise a minimum of $150 through various fundraising events throughout the year, leading up to the day of the event when students dance for 15 hours to celebrate the lives of children.

Beginning at 11 am and ending at 2 am, ASU students literally danced their “booty off” from sun-up to sun-down. Not only was there great food, entertainment, and games, but over 200 students participated in this event and raised over $30,000 by the end of the night, or should I say morning?

Throughout the 15 hours, students showed off their fashion by dressing up in costumes related to each of the four themes; superhero, app pride, nerd hour, and the 80s. Students’ costumes consisted anywhere from Steve Urkel to Johnny Castle from “Dirty Dancing.”

The last five hours of this event is dedicated to the DJ Dance Party. This consists of unregistered students motivating and cheering on the dancers to finish the last bit of 5 hours of dancing. By the end of the event, students’ knees were shaking and some students fell to the floor.
With 150 Appalachian State students came 15 children from both the Western Youth Network and Parent to Parent FSN-HC organizations. Throughout the event, these children had the privilege of dancing with ASU students.

Senior Jill Yerden, President of Gamma Beta Phi and member of Phi Mu Fraternity says, “Dance Marathon is really a rewarding experience. Not only do the children get to see who is raising money for them, but we also get to meet, talk, and dance with the kids during a day that is centered around them. Now that was truly my highlight during the event.”

Jill had the opportunity to brighten a little girl’s day who was diagnosed with ADHD. By the end of the next day, Appalachian State University had raised approximately $30,047.52 for the kids of Western Youth Network and Parent to Parent FSN-HC.

**Whimsical Critters**

**Hard-Boiled Egg Mice**

1. Place the egg in a small saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil for 1 minute, then turn off the heat. Cover the saucepan and let the egg sit in the hot water for 12 minutes.

2. Once the time is up, run the egg under cold water to cool. Then ask your child to roll the egg on all sides to crack the shell. Peel under running water.

3. Slice the egg in half lengthwise. Place the halves yolk side down on a plate. (Alternatively, you can slice off a bit of the bottom of a peeled, hard-boiled egg so it can sit flat on a plate.) Slice tiny black olive “eyes” and radish “ears.” Then make small slits in the egg halves for the eyes and ears and push in the olives and radishes. Add chive tails.

4. Serve the pair of egg mice with a wedge of Swiss cheese for a playful lunch. Makes 2 mice.

FamilyFun Magazine
Love and Logic Helpful hint..<br><br> Kids are able to “hook” their parents into arguments.<br><br> Here are some Love and Logic “One-Liners” that will help get the adults off the hook.<br><br> **Remember!** These are only effective when said with genuine compassion, empathy and understanding.<br><br> “Probably so.”
“I know.”
“I bet it feels that way.”
“What do you think you are going to do?”
“I don’t know. What do you think?”
“Love you too much to argue.”

Area Support Groups: Contact Information

**Ashe County Support Group:** Norma Bouchard at 336/246-3222 or toll free: 866/812-3122 or bouchardnj@appstate.edu

**Mitchell County Support Group:** Teresa Emory at 866/448-5781 or emorytd@appstate.edu

**Watauga County Support Group:** Kaaren Hayes at 828/262-6089 or toll free: 866/812-3122 or hayeskl@appstate.edu

**Wilkes County Support Group:** Norma Bouchard at 336/838-0977 ext. 212 or toll free: 866/812-3122 or bouchardnj@appstate.edu

**Yancey County Support Group:** Teresa Emory at 828/682-4772 or emorytd@appstate.edu

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PROGRAM!

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