



Connections

Information & Support
for Families of Children with Special Needs
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

Fall Issue 2008

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

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Teresa Emory
Outreach Coordinator for
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Debbie Bowman
Outreach Coordinator for
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An Affiliate of
Family Support Network-
North Carolina

With Support From

Appalachian State University

Children's Developmental Services
Agency—Blue Ridge

High County United Way

Friends of Family Support
Network—High County

Avery Partnership for Children

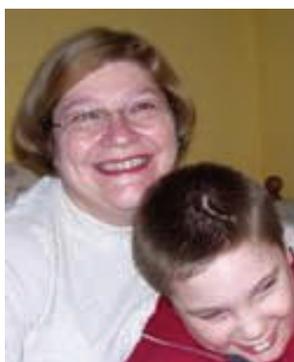
Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for
Children



Family Support Network-HC

Meet Our Outreach Staff

Norma Bouchard



"I am excited about going to work each day, knowing that I can give back a little of what I've learned throughout the years. I'm honored to serve the children and families of our area because each one has their own unique story. I watch as they conquer the "unknown" and begin empowering themselves to advocate for their children and family members. It's the best job anyone could ever have and one I thought that I could never do. And yet...Here I am!"

Norma Bouchard began her work with Parent to Parent FSN-HC as the outreach coordinator for Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes Counties in December of 2005. She received training to work with the organization in both New Hampshire and North Carolina. Prior to her employment with the program she worked as the director of a daycare center and a preschool teacher for 20 years. Her children inspired her to make a career change. She has a 12-year-old son who has cerebral palsy and a 29-year-old daughter who has learning disabilities, so she can definitely relate to the families she serves. She is very grateful for all of the support that her family has received over the years and would

now like to give back to other families in need. She knows exactly what it feels like to not know where to go or who to turn to when in need of support and the isolation that some families feel because of their child's disability. In working with Parent to Parent FSN-HC Norma would like to reach more families by spreading the word about the organization and raising awareness about the availability of resources in each of the counties in which she works. Norma plans on empowering parents to advocate for their children through her work with the program in the future.

Teresa Emory



"When your world has been turned upside down, a parent who has been there, provides a connection and hope like no one else can."

Teresa Emory works with Parent to Parent FSN-HC as the outreach coordinator for Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Her own personal experience led her to this position. She prematurely gave birth to twin boys in December of 2005. They were quickly whisked away to the neonatal intensive care unit. Sadly, one of them passed away after three days. The other one had to remain in the hospital for a total of 101 days before he was allowed to go home. Her family received a lot of support from Parent to Parent FSN-HC and the program in Asheville during this very trying time in their lives. They were paired with another family who had also lost a twin and had one survive. Teresa quickly realized the value of the services that her family was receiving and developed a desire to give back to other families

Meet Our Staff Continued

in need. When a position with the organization became available in her area, Teresa jumped at the opportunity. Through her own personal experience and work as a licensed clinical social worker she felt prepared to tackle the job. One of Teresa's immediate goals is to get support groups going in the counties in which she works. She hopes to have one regular group going in both Mitchell and Yancey Counties by November. She would also like to make her community more aware of the services offered by the program.

Debbie Bowman



"Supporting one another offers us all hope, courage and strength we need to continue on."

Debbie Bowman is the new Avery County Outreach Coordinator. She lives in Avery County with her husband and two children. She began working with the organization in May of this year. In addition to her

work with Parent to Parent FSN-HC, Debbie provides early intervention services on a part-time basis. As a mother of two, she definitely understands the difficulties associated with parenting and feels as though the more support parents have, the better. She feels that "support is important for us all and that it gives us hope, courage, and strength to continue on." Debbie is committed to spreading awareness about Parent to Parent FSN-HC to the citizens of Avery County in hopes of connecting with families in her area who could potentially benefit from the services offered by the program.

ECAC

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center

has 26 information packets that are FREE to North Carolina parents! They range from ADD to Transition to Adulthood.

To view the list of packets go to

<http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org>
or call

Toll-free Info Line: 800-962-6817



Family Support Network High Country

- Matches families one-to-one with a trained, volunteer family for emotional support and information
- Provides information for families and service providers
- Sponsors support groups
- Connects families to resources, lending libraries and legislative information
- Sponsors free community workshops for families and service providers
- Provides newsletters, website and toll-free family phone number
- Promotes collaboration among families and service providers

All services are free and confidential

IF YOU WOULD LIKE

- ✓ **To talk with another parent who understands**
 - ✓ **Information about a specific disability or health condition**
 - ✓ **To be a Supporting Family**
- Please contact us toll free!**
866-812-3122

People First Language: In Response to Tropic Thunder



People First Language: In Response to *Tropic Thunder*

By Letisha Greene ,ASU School Psychology Graduate Student

The movie *Tropic Thunder*, released on August 13, 2008, is being heavily criticized by the public because of its blatant disrespect for people with cognitive disabilities. Apparently the word “retard” is tactlessly used numerous times in the film to refer to Simple Jack, a character played by Ben Stiller who has a cognitive impairment. Other demeaning words such as “idiot,” “moron,” and “imbecile” are also used to describe him in the movie. Nowadays it is socially unacceptable and irresponsible to degrade people with disabilities by referring to them using terms such as these. In fact, the word “retard” is now referred to as the “R-word” because of the stigma associated with it. More detailed information (including video clips) about this controversy can be found on The ARC of the United States website at <http://www.thearc.org>. Their website also contains a short ARC PAS on Respect.

Incidences such as these remind us that we need to *think before we speak* and be mindful of the ways in which we refer to people with disabilities and the services that they receive, hence the purpose for the development of people first language. People with disabilities are in fact capable of doing many of the same things that people without disabilities can do. So instead of focusing on their limitations, we should concentrate on their abilities. When referring to someone with a disability you should always remember to put him/her first, *before* his/her disability. For example, it would be inappropriate to say “Bernard’s crippled.” Instead you should say, “Bernard has a physical disability.” Bernard’s physical disability should not be the first thing that comes to mind when referring to him. On the other hand, the fact that he is a person just like you and I, should be. In other words, Bernard’s physical disability does not wholly define who he is as a person. See table for more examples of people first language.

What NOT to say:	What to say:
She’s autistic	She has autism
He’s wheelchair bound	He uses a wheelchair to get around
She’s learning disabled	She has a learning disability
Normal/healthy people	People without disabilities
She’s a midget	She’s of short stature
Handicapped buses	Accessible buses

Area Support Groups

Alleghany County Parent Support Group

Date: First and third Thursday of each month
 Time: 6:00 p.m.
 Location: The Family Resource Center, Sparta
 Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 to RSVP. For child care call 372-6583

Ashe County Parent Support Group

Date: Last Tuesday of each month
 Time: 6:00 p.m.
 Location: Midway Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
 Mt. Jefferson Rd., West Jefferson
 Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122 to Meal Provided with RSVP.

Mitchell & Yancey County Parent Support Group

Call Teresa Emory 866-448-5781 for dates & times

Watauga County Parent Support Groups

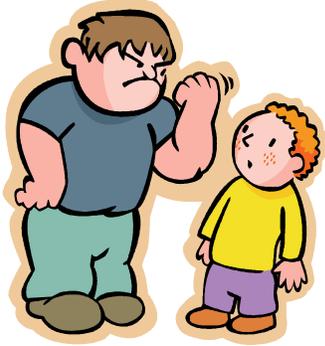
Challenging Behaviors and Medically Fragile

Date: Second Friday of each month
 Time: 6:00-8:00 p.m.
 Location: Boone Unitarian Universalist Church (381 E. King St, beside the Playhouse)
 Contact: Kaaren Hayes at 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122 or e-mail hayeskl@appstate.edu. RSVP for childcare and supper!

Wilkes County Parent Support Group

Date: The last Thursday of each month
 Time: 6:15 p.m.
 Location: “Our House” 203 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro
 Contact: Norma Bouchard at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Dessert and drinks will be served!

Article: Bullying



Prevention Awareness Week Calls on Communities to Unite

True Story About Bullying

By Letisha Greene
ASU School Psychology
Graduate Student

I personally remember being bullied in the fifth grade. At the beginning of the school year I became good friends with a girl named Krystal Greene. We quickly realized that our last name was not the only thing that we had in common and enjoyed making each other laugh all the time. Krystal was already best friends with another girl in our class who was also named Crystal (except she spelled her name with a C instead of a K). Crystal began to show signs of jealousy as me and Krystal's friendship grew stronger and she tried her best to destroy our bond.

For example, one time she lied and told Krystal that I was cheating off of her reading test so that she would get mad at me and stop being my friend. On one occasion she tried to humiliate me in front of my classmates by announcing very loudly that I had "dog toes and ashy knees." One time she even had the nerve to threaten me. She said that she was going to beat me up during recess. I was scared because I had never been in a fight at school before and she was bigger and stronger than me. Right before our class was about to go outside I asked my teacher if I could go to the library so that I could avoid the pending fight. At that point I began to feel hopeless, like there was no way out of the situation. I did not feel comfortable talking to my teacher or parents about what was going on because I felt like they would not understand, and even if they did, they

would not be able to do anything about it. I also feared that Crystal would retaliate if I opened my mouth about her bullying me. I simply tried to hide the pain that I felt inside.

Many adults can remember times in their lives when they were tormented in school because the effects of bullying (such as the resulting feelings of hopelessness) can potentially last a lifetime.

Types of Bullying

The different forms of bullying are as follows:

- ✦ **Verbal bullying** occurs when one student directs derogatory remarks toward another student with the intention of psychologically or emotionally hurting him/her.
- ✦ **Physical bullying** occurs when one student actually puts his/her hands on another student with the intention of physically hurting him/her.
- ✦ **Relational bullying** is most commonly seen amongst females and it involves behaviors such as gossiping, spreading rumors, ignoring, giggling, eye rolling, teeth sucking, etc. Oftentimes a student who engages in relational bullying will get other students to go along with his/her maltreatment toward a target student.
- ✦ **Cyberbullying** is a fairly new form of bullying that is commonly seen in schools today. It involves the use of technology such as computers and cell phones to deliberately psychologically or emotionally harm others. An example of cyberbullying would be a student developing a website containing hurtful (yet inaccurate) information about another student and informing others of the website's address by way of text messaging.

What Bullying Is and Is Not

Arguments. Confrontations. Fighting. This behavior happens between siblings, schoolmates, teammates, even best friends. Unkind words might be spoken. Names may be called. Pushes can lead to shoves.

Article: Bullying

Is it bullying? In many cases, it is not. Usually, such quarrels are simply clashes that can be resolved with an apology over cookies and milk. They are a normal part of growing up and learning social skills.

Sometimes, however, these actions are intentional acts of bullying. To help distinguish bullying from routine childhood conflicts, look for these hallmarks*:

- **Bullying is intentional.** The target does not knowingly provoke the bully and may have made it clear that the behavior is unwelcome.
- **The behavior is often repetitive.** Bullying generally is carried out repeatedly over time. It can sometimes be a single incident.
- **The incident involves hurtful acts, words, or other behavior.** Bullying is an oppressive or negative act intended to hurt someone else.
- **The act is committed by one or more people against another.** Bullying can be done by a single person or by a group.
- **There is a real or perceived imbalance of power.** A child without power cannot bully. Power can be defined as either physical strength, social status, or intimidating behavior.

**Adapted from Preventing Bullying: A Manual for Schools and Communities, U.S. Dept of Education*

“When 160,000 children in the United States miss school each day as a result of being bullied, it’s time to take action,” said Paula F. Goldberg, executive director of PACER, a national parent center located in Minnesota. “Teachers, parents, students and adults throughout each community must work together to create a climate that doesn’t accept bullying. When bullying is reduced, communities will see more students with higher self-esteem, better school attendance, less physical and mental stress and better school performance.”

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Where Can I Go for Help?

PACER Center, Inc.

Web site: <http://www.pacer.org>

E-Mail: pacer@pacer.org



Phone (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CST,

Monday - Friday)

TTY: 952.838.0190

USA: 888.248.0822



Bullying Prevention Videos

PACER Center Inc. now offers three bullying prevention videos on their web site featuring elementary school students

"What Bullying Is"

"How Bullying Feels"

"What You Can Do"

CD Rom

Self contained version of the “Kids Against Bullying” Web site (No internet connection required!) The CD is based on the Web site PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org, which is an informative and creative resource to educate students about bullying prevention and provide methods to respond to bullying situations. Great for use in the classroom or at home. \$15, Order #BP-8

Book

Beyond Sticks & Stones--How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying

Is your child being bullied? This book offers specific, practical information on how to prevent and respond to bullying. Developed for parents of children with disabilities and professionals, it includes proven strategies to use at home and school. \$6, Order #BP-7

CD Rom and book can be checked out from the FSN-HC Lending Library
Call toll free: 866-812-3122

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Please support our program so that we can continue to serve families and the community. Any help you can give will be very appreciated. Please detach this form and send any donations to the address below. Donations are tax deductible.

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Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____

Amount \$ _____

Name of Honoree _____

Thank you for your contribution!



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