



KSCL Parent Advisory and Advocacy Group Jan/Feb Newsletter

Next meeting : February 20, 2007 at 6:30 – 8pm

Welcome to the KSCL Parent Advisory and Advocacy group newsletter. Our group's hope is to provide information, access to resources and support to parents, family members and /or caregivers of adults and children with special needs.

The highlights of our January 17,2007 meeting are as follows :

Much discussion about the School system – in particular concerns around educational assistants (EA's) and difficulty getting consistent coverage. As a child goes from one grade to the next it is not necessarily possible to have the same EA work with your child even though that may be in your child's best interests (EA knows your child has relationship with them knows communication systems routines etc.) because hiring positions for EA's are based on union seniority. Concerned parents feel that it is not in the best interests of the child to have a different EA each year.

- another issue with EA's is in regards to a letter that was sent out to parents that the local school district does not have enough staff to cover EA's if they are sick. Parents will be called by the school that day and expected to come and pick up their child if they are already at school or to keep their children at home. Interesting to note one parent told this group that she refused and said it was the responsibility of the school to provide coverage for all recognized school days as per the school calendar. She feels that when challenged the school did meet its obligations and did keep the child at school for that day.
- a reminder to all parents with any issues relating to the education system/school to check the Ministry of Education web site to know what the commitment and obligations of the education system is for your child.
- web site: bced.gov.bc.ca
- if you have concerns regarding this or any other issue write to Bob Minouski the Director of Special education for this School District.



Discussion around safety home systems for families who have non verbal children who may bolt. This was a very lively discussion and brought lots of ideas and feedback from everyone in attendance. A very hot topic! Suggestions ranged from high door locks for people who have children who do not climb ~ to alarm systems and motions detectors which while they do not necessarily stop a child from running out of the house, it does alert the parent to a child on the loose.



- ◆ Also recommendations that parents get to know their neighbors to let them know what your child's issues are and see them as a second line of defense; if they see your child out and unattended to contact someone in the family home.
- ◆ One parent has contacted the local police with a picture of her child and an information page as well as discussing the child's issues directly with officers. This has been a particularly positive experience.
- ◆ recommendations included having your child wear a wrist band with emergency info.
- ◆ Some parents have put a card into their child's clothing with parent's name phone number and emergency info on it.

Our group wants to hear from you !

- ***What is the best day of the week for you to attend KSCL Parent Advisory & Advocacy Meetings?***
- ***Is getting child care an issue for you on our meeting nights?***
- ***What kinds of information are you interested in getting from this group?***

***Call 365-2624 ext #1
with your ideas and input***

Full version of the minutes are available
Contact KSCL
365-2624 Ext #1



Ideas and info from the KSCL Parent Advisory Group cont'd



- ◆ overall, try to keep one step ahead of your child's ingenuity and perseverance with regards to finding opportunities to "get out there" especially when there are changes in routines on home or school
- ◆ be aware of changes in mood or in patterns of behaviour or escalations in certain behaviours which may precipitate the need to bolt.

Vancouver Foundation Fund : members of this group have heard that it is being used by some families in BC to increase accessibility ~ from modifying homes to vehicles. Could this extend to safety adaptations?

We have had a bit of time to research this and this is what we now know: Two new funds give BC families a better chance to keep their children with a developmental disability at home:

The Family Independence Fund, for adults and children with developmental disabilities, and the Child and Youth with Special Needs Supports Fund. The two grants are managed province wide by the Vancouver Foundation, and help families buy equipment, convert vehicles and renovate homes so loved ones can remain at home and gain greater access to their communities.



The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides the \$10 million Children and Youth with Special Needs Supports fund, while the \$30 million Family Independence Fund is provided for by CLBC.

The Vancouver Foundation manages the distribution of these monies and has created a volunteer advisory committee to review requests for funding.

*for the latest information on the Family Independence Fund visit the Vancouver Foundation's website.

At : www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca/grantinformation

Behaviour and diet – some parents have become aware of the Gluten-casein free diet that appears to be linked to Autism behaviours (in concert with "leaky gut syndrome"). There is information through your GP or Regional Health Authority and tests to see if this is an area of concern for your child.

Community Garden : plans are being developed for a plot in Castlegar

- ◆ An initiative by the Kootenay Food Strategy Society
- ◆ contact person: Sandi McCreight:365-2104



CLBC's review of residential programs; in particular the staffed group home model to see if clients and their families would like to pursue "something different" in a residential setting. A meeting was held at KSCL Jan 25 with CLBC representatives and interested families, to discuss residential issues, future plans and what alternative residential options could look like, what range of options are available and other issues like future funding and support service issues.

We are interested in parent feedback on this meeting.



Special Olympics British Columbia

Hosted a Registration Pool party Jan 24, 2007 at the Castlegar Recreation Complex Swimming Pool.

For anyone who was not able to attend this event to register, S.O. would like to encourage participants (children and adults) as well as volunteers who are interested in learning more about Special Olympics programs to contact 365-5605 for more information.



Ideas and info from the KSCL Parent Advisory Group cont'd



“A.C.E in the whole !”

Finding inspiration in unorthodox AND traditional places

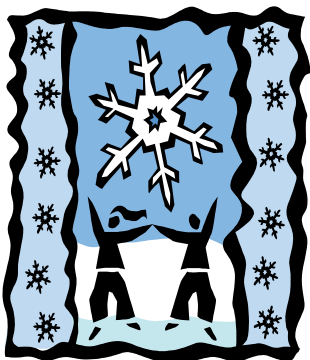
by Kari Burke

Being a parent of an alter-abled person (I prefer the term alter-abled rather than disabled) can be very challenging at times. But like most things , it is worth the effort it takes to jump in and attempt learning . Recently I have adopted a technique I like to call my " a.c.e. in the whole "...which is to accept, create and evolve (a.c.e ..!). I was inspired to create this game plan from an e-mail sent to me from my daughter's father regarding the work of cyber-scientist Steven Chen , who is working on what he calls " the third brain " or " supercomputer ". While reading the article , I came upon a sentence that Mr.Chen wrote...that " the good thing about human beings is that they continue to adapt , create and evolve." and it was as if I had been given a key to enter a room when I read those three words.

And that is how things happen in life. We sometimes find that success arrives in strange ways. We can see this happen throughout history. The three time heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali did the opposite of what most boxers do to win. He avoided punching and punches with continuously fancy and fast footwork until his component was exhausted and then Ali would deliver the final knockout punches.

Another example of unorthodox success is the architecture of Antonio Gaudi , whose designs came from observing the curves and geometry of nature while most other architects were busy with the tried and true 'lines' of building standards. And people , at first , had a hard time finding the beauty (the descriptive term for something that is conspicuous and excessively ornate is ' gaudy ' which came from the architects name) in his work , which included wildly imaginative use of color and broken dishes used in mosaics . But eventually people loved and admired his innovative genius.

Dr.Deepak Chopra writes in his "Book of Secrets" that " what you seek , you already are " and the Greek philosopher Socrates wrote that " the greatest way to live with honour in this world is to be what we pretend to be" so sometimes we need not 'look' too far for guidance or help...it could be within our own self (maybe just buried under something ?!) or it could be in a conversation you had with your neighbour. I think the main thing is to try to be open to learn and find the tools that help us build our lives. And realize that , as Dr.Chopra says " awakening doesn't happen according to plan...a single word can open a heart...a single glance can tell you who you really are . "



Next Meeting Tuesday, February 20th - 6:30- 8:00pm
meet downstairs at KSCL - Address: 2224- 6th Ave Castlegar
at Community Options space - access door in rear of parking lot.