

# The Link

FamilyConnection

South Carolina

helping children-connecting families

August 2007

Vol. 18 No. 3

## Support groups make the parent connection

*“I have friends that do not judge my son. Everyone knows where I am and where we will go.”*

Many parents who have a child with special needs sometimes experience an overwhelming sense of confusion - a sense that they have fallen into this world of disabilities that they know little about. While this feeling may continue for some time, parent-to-parent connections are an outlet for parents to gain emotional support and answers to their questions from parents who know it best. Support groups are a way for parents to truly connect, sharing stories, concerns, resources and information. Family Connection calls these groups “Parent Connections”.



Parents met at an autism support group and heard from a parent who updated the group on Ryan's Law.



Parents are able to receive valuable advice from other parents and share concerns and issues.



Parents are the best source of information and support.

Lyle Bushong, who attends a group in Columbia, said, “My wife has met several other families who have created helpful outlets for information and friendships. Our children see each other often at therapies, which gives them familiar faces to see.”

Many Parent Connections provide childcare during the meetings, creating an opportunity for children to socialize with each other. College and community volunteers give their time to help with childcare.

There are over 50 Parent Connections statewide, covering topics from cerebral palsy to single parenting. For a complete listing of Parent Connections, see pages 5 - 8. All of Family Connection's Parent Connections are free of charge and all offices host a number of different groups. Speakers are often brought in to further discuss issues of interest to the group. Parent Connections even meet outside the office and enjoy fun family activities. For information about any of our Parent Connections or to volunteer to facilitate a group, please call your local Family Connection office or toll-free at (800) 578-8750.

*“I have learned more from this support group than from anywhere else - we learn from each other. Parents are the best source of information!”*

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2006-2007

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## From Andy Pope Executive Director

It is with tremendous pride to review this issue of The Link and see all of the shared information, informative events and fun activities that are happening statewide. You can attend a Parent Connection in 'South Carolina's Golden Corner' Oconee County (see page 5) or travel to the coast to celebrate the accomplishments of individuals with Down syndrome (see page 9). Across our beautiful state, parents who have children with special health care needs are giving their time, talents and heart while providing assurance, information and community awareness to other parents. Family Connection is about parent-to-parent connections, giving families an opportunity to discuss shared experiences while lifting up the successes of the children they love.

With equal pride, I have the honor of working in an organization of professionals that demonstrate the passion of Family Connection on a daily basis. Area offices are led by kindhearted, selfless area coordinators

and supported by area councils that desire to create opportunities for all families to find a home at Family Connection. Every day, I witness a statewide staff that is willing to meet for hours in order to plan family events, enhance ways to reach more families, reach out to health professionals, and educate about important legislation. Beyond these activities, staff members also work to help with evening Parent Connections and maintain weekend activities. Each day I hear a new and uplifting story about how a support parent, a family partner or a community parent listened, inspired, educated and respected the parent with whom they were matched. I rarely, if ever, publicly thank our/your amazing staff for helping make Family Connection one of the leading organizations in the state. Thank you for making my job easier and demonstrating the heart of Family Connection.

Have a beautiful day!

Andy Pope

Executive Director

## Board spotlight: special thanks to Ashley Houser

In this issue, we say goodbye to a board member who has given so generously of his time and heart. **Ashley Houser** is rotating off the board after serving for six consecutive years.

The entire Family Connection family extends a warm thank you to Ashley. Our organization has been strengthened by your work and enhanced by your vision. You have enriched the lives of so many families of children with special needs in South Carolina.

# Awareness: The Key to Friendships

"Awareness: The Key to Friendships" is a school program created to open students, faculty and staff's eyes to the world of disabilities some students face on a daily basis. This program is held in schools across the state and allows participants of all ages to experience through hands-on activities what it is like to have various disabilities. Through a grant awarded to Family Connection by the SC Department of Education, forty schools (see below) have received grant monies to implement the program in their school this coming school year. If you would like to recommend a school to receive the program in the future, please visit our website under programs, "Awareness: The Key to Friendships".



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Andrew Jackson High School (Kershaw)              | Manning Elementary School (Manning)            |
| Beaufort High School (Beaufort)                   | Manning High School (Manning)                  |
| Berkeley Intermediate School (Moncks Corner)      | Marion High School (Marion)                    |
| Blacksburg Elementary School (Blacksburg)         | McCormick Elementary School (Mullins)          |
| Brushy Creek Elementary School (Taylors)          | McKissick Elementary School (Easley)           |
| Burns Elementary School (Charleston)              | Midland Park Elementary School (N. Charleston) |
| C. E. Williams Middle School (Charleston)         | Monarch Elementary School (Union)              |
| Croswell Elementary School (Easley)               | Oak Pointe Elementary School (Irmo)            |
| Daniel Island Elementary School (Daniel Island)   | Oakdale Elementary School (Rock Hill)          |
| Edisto Beach Elementary School (Edisto)           | Old Pointe Elementary School (Rock Hill)       |
| Estill High School (Estill)                       | Pinkney Elementary School (Mt. Pleasant)       |
| Gadsden Elementary School (Gadsden)               | Rawlinson Road Middle School (Rock Hill)       |
| Gettys Middle School (Easley)                     | Rock Hill High School School (Rock Hill)       |
| Harbison West Elementary School (Columbia)        | Rosewood Elementary School (Columbia)          |
| Hunt Meadows Elementary School (Anderson)         | Stiles Point Elementary School (James Island)  |
| James B. Edwards Elementary School (Mt. Pleasant) | Sumter High School (Sumter)                    |
| LaFrance Elementary School (LaFrance)             | Townville Elementary School (Townville)        |
| Lambs Elementary School (N. Charleston)           | Varnville Elementary School (Varnville)        |
| Laurens Elementary School (Laurens)               | Wade Hampton High School (Greenville)          |
|   | West Florence High School (Florence)           |
|   | Whitesides Elementary School (Mt. Pleasant)    |

# Protecting our kids

Children with disabilities are 3.4 times more likely to be abused or neglected than children without disabilities. Thanks to Target, you can attend a pizza night workshop in Anderson, Columbia, Greenville, Charleston or Florence to learn how to better protect your child.

The Prevention of Adolescent and Children Exploitation (PACE) workshop is a curriculum that is specially designed for families of children with special needs. Parents will learn the importance of taking care of themselves in a caregiving situation, as well as specific tools to help keep their children safe.

The PACE workshop will be held in Anderson on August 16, Columbia on October 18 and Greenville on October 23. Dates for Charleston and Florence are to be announced.

## Mark Your Calendars!

### September is EdCeptional Kids Month! CELEBRATE THE ABILITIES OF CHILDREN

During the month of September **EdVenture Children's Museum** will be celebrating the abilities of children and individuals who are facing life with the challenges of a disability. Throughout the month, special events will be offered in the museum to showcase the talents of children across South Carolina who have soared beyond the restrictions that a disability can create.

There will be performing arts groups, demonstrations of various assistive technologies, and exhibits that will allow all guests to experience what life might be like if it was impacted by a disabling condition.

Through the generosity of donors, families will be admitted free on **Saturday, Sept. 22 & Sept. 29** when presenting this flyer.



So make plans to bring your whole family to see EdVenture and EDDIE®, the world's largest child!



211 Gervais Street • Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-779-3100 • www.edventure.org  
Tuesday - Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm Sunday Noon-5:00pm

## In Loving Memory

To the precious friends we have recently lost, we miss you deeply.

Hanoyva Sumter, daughter of Latosha Sumter

Dylan, son of Tyann and Michael Sanchez

Rathael Lundy, son of Rolitta Lundy

Eduardo Rosas, son of Teresa Rojas

If we have missed your loved one or someone you know who has been supported by Family Connection, please let us know of your loss.

## Parent's Corner

Hi! My name is Ramont, but I go by Monty. I was born on October 27, 2001. I was supposed to be born in early February of 2002, but I decided to make my debut at 26 weeks, weighing in at a whopping 1 lb and 7 oz. My mommy was so scared and the doctors weren't sure if I was going to make it. I spent an entire four months in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at the Greenville Hospital System's Children's Hospital. During my NICU stay, I was on a ventilator for 3 months, had a grade 3 intraventricular hemorrhage (bleeding in the brain), a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, as well as several surgeries.

My most serious surgeries included closing a valve near my heart, laser eye surgery for retinopathy, a G-tube for feeding and a trach to help me breathe.

By the time I was ready to go home, I weighed 8 lbs and my mommy had to undergo lots of training in order to know how to care for me. Even though I finally made it home, my room looked like a miniature version of the NICU. My room was filled with oxygen tanks, a feeding pump and various supplies that my mommy needed in order to take care of me. I had to see a lot of doctors as well as receive occupational, physical and speech therapies. I was also in and out of the hospital because of breathing problems and more surgeries, one of which consisted of having a VP shunt placed in order to help drain fluid from my brain.

During the times I was coming and going to the hospital,

my mommy got really sick and had to leave me to go to the Medical University of South Carolina and get a new liver. Mommy was afraid to leave me because I was the one who was always getting sick, but she had to go to get better so she could continue to take care of me. Mommy finally came home the day after my first birthday after spending three weeks at MUSC. A few months after my second birthday, the doctor told my mommy and me some very exciting news. I would be able to have my trach removed!

After my trach was removed, I was able to hear myself cry and make sounds that I never knew I was capable of making. I also got to eat food by mouth for the first time. It took a long time for me to learn to say different words and get used to the texture of certain foods. Today I have a vocabulary of 40 words, and I'm learning new ones everyday. I recently got a walker to help me get around, and

I'm getting better using it every day. My doctors, nurses and therapists are so proud of all the progress I have made over my five years of life, but my mommy is the proudest of all.



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*"During Monty's stay in the hospital, I was visited by a representative of Family Connection and learned about the Family Partner program. The next day, I was contacted by a Family Partner who had a child with the same diagnosis as Monty. I was relieved that there was another parent out there to share the experience that they went through. Family Connection is a program that I am forever grateful for, simply because I know that I am not alone when it comes to all the struggles that Monty and I have to go through." - Cheryl Major, now a Family Partner who does outreach in the NICU and runs the apraxia support group in Greenville.*

## Upcoming Medicaid changes

The face of Medicaid is changing in our state, going from traditional fee-for-service to managed care. As each region starts enrollment, packets will be sent to members who are newly eligible for Medicaid and those who are up for renewal that month. Fee-for-service information will be an option included in the initial enrollment packet, but it must be requested by the member. As these changes near, watch for workshops in your area to help you understand Medicaid Managed Care. Family Connection has a trained parent on staff who is helping other parents navigate through the Medicaid changes. For more information, call Crystal Ray at 1-800-578-8750.

# Statewide parent connections

## Aiken Area

Please call the Aiken Office at (800) 578-8750 unless another number is listed.

- Movie Matinee - 1st Tuesday of each month during the summer months, 4 p.m. at the Aiken Mall Cinema. \$5.50 per child, parents/caregivers free. Free popcorn and soda. Sound is reduced and lights stay on. Tickets purchased in advance only by calling (800) 578-8750.

## Anderson Area

Please call the Anderson Office at (864) 231-8100 unless another number is listed.

- A Precious Few- Oconee Co.- Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and the 4th Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the McDonald's in Seneca. Call Barbara Morgan at (864) 885-1562 for more information.
- Asthma Connection - Meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Anderson Mall Community Room and the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at The Seneca United Way building.
- Children R Special - Meets the 3rd Thursday every month from 10 a.m. - noon and the 1st Friday of the month from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at the Anderson Mall Community Room.
- Mom's Morning Out - Call the Family Connection office for more information.

## Charleston Area

Please call (843) 556-5010 for more information unless another number is listed

- Down Syndrome Support Groups (Sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association of the Lowcountry): Mt. Pleasant Mom's Group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month. North Area Mom's Group meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Email Glenda Crain at [crainclan@comcast.net](mailto:crainclan@comcast.net) for more information.
- Down Syndrome Youth Group - For young adults 14-21. Email Martha Hoover at [Martha\\_Hoover@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:Martha_Hoover@charleston.k12.sc.us) for more information.
- NICU - Meets every other Tuesday of the month at 9 a.m. at the NICU at MUSC.
- Parent to Parent Support Group - For all parents of children on the autism spectrum. Children are welcome! Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1519 Sam Rittenberg Blvd. Call Lenore Rudolph at (843) 573-2172 or (843) 532-2330 for more information.
- Sickle Cell Information and Education Group - Call April Rivers-Bowman at (843) 991-3830 for more information.

## Columbia Area

Please call (803) 252-0914 or 1-800-578-8750 for more information unless another number is listed.

- ADHD Connection - Meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at the FC office. Call for childcare.
- Asthma Connection - Meets the in August and September, then quarterly, at 6 p.m. at the FC office. Children are welcome and food will be provided. For more information, call Michelle Drayton at (803) 252-0914.
- Autism Connection - Meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the FC office. Call for childcare.
- Columbia Playgroup - If you are interested in having a playgroup in your area, please call the FC office.
- Family Fun Event for the entire family - Meets at a different location once a month. Call the FC office for dates and times.
- Fathers Network - Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at the FC office. Please call for more information.
- Mom's Night Out - Monthly get-together for moms. Please call the FC office for current schedule and to add your name to our call list.
- Morning Coffee - Meets weekly at 9 a.m. at a different location. Call the FC office for the current schedule.
- NICU - Meets the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. in the NICU classroom of the NICU at Palmetto Health Richland.
- NICU Scrapbooking Group - Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. in the television area of the NICU of Palmetto Health Richland.
- Parents' Hope Association - Meets quarterly. Call the FC office for more information.
- Scrapbooking - For all parents, meets monthly at The Scrapbook Store on Forest Drive. Call the FC office to be added to the calendar mailing list for dates.
- Sibling Network Meeting - For siblings ages 21 and over. Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. at the FC office.
- Single Parents Connection - Meets quarterly at 6 p.m. at the FC office. Call for childcare.
- Sumter Connection - Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. at the Chick-Fil-A in Sumter Mall. Call Becky at (803) 499-2970 for more information.
- Teen Connection - For teens in the Midlands area only, ages 12-18 with disabilities and special needs to gather and socialize with one another. Funded by Central Carolina Community Foundation. To sign up for an event, call the FC office.
- Up on Downs - Meets quarterly. Call the FC office for more information.

○ Punch to hang

■ Anderson  
(864) 231-8100

■ Charleston  
(843) 556-5010

■ Columbia  
(803) 252-0914

■ Florence  
(800) 578-8750

■ Greenville  
(864) 331-1340

■ Rock Hill  
(803) 366-4839

■ Spartanburg  
(864) 585-5462

# September 2007 Events



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grandparents Day Luncheon, 1-3 Twin Lakes Clubhouse	Asthma Connection Autism Connection Parents Helping Parents Autism Connection	TEFRA workshop Asthma Connection ADD Connection Autism Connection Hitch-Up	Morning Coffee	ADHD Connection Down syndrome Connection Families Helping Families	Children-R-Special	Mom's Night Out
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Grandparents Day Luncheon, 1-3 Twin Lakes Clubhouse	Asthma Connection Autism Connection Parents Helping Parents Autism Connection	Support Parent Training, 9-1 Mt. Pleasant Down syndrome Father's Network Morning Coffee	A Precious Few Asthma Connection NICU Scrapbooking	Autism Parent-to-Parent Sibling Connection	Occupational and Speech Tools for Parents Workshop	Family Event, 10-1, Swan Lake Iris Gardens
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Autism Connection ADD/ADHD Pizza Night	North Charleston Down syndrome Cerebral Palsy Connection Sumter Connection PACE workshop Morning Coffee	NICU Parent Break	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Apraxia Connection Sharing Parents Connection		Asthma lunch-n-learn, 12:30 - 2:30 Fusion Warehouse Support Parent Training, 9:30 - 1 The Beacon book signing with Beth Tally, The Happy Bookseller, 11
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
The Beacon book signing with Beth Tally, The Open Book, 2:30 Buddy Walk Furman University Buddy Walk, 2 p.m., Etiwan Park		NICU Parent's Hope Association Parent's Night Out	Morning Coffee	A Precious Few Autism Connection Down syndrome Connection HOPE		Kid Connection, 10-3

# October 2007 Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Asthma Connection Autism Connection Parents Helping Parents	Mt. Pleasant Down syndrome Father's Network Morning Coffee	Asthma Connection A Precious Few NICU Scrapbooking	Autism Parent-to-Parent Sibling Connection	Couples Communication Workshop Mom's Night Out Children-R-Special	Fishing Rodeo, 4-6, Firelake Family Connection/Palmetto Pediatrics Fall Festival
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Autism Connection	Asthma Connection ADD Connection Autism Connection Hitch-Up	Morning Coffee	ADHD Connection Down syndrome Connection Families Helping Families		

14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Autism Connection	North Charleston Down syndrome Cerebral Palsy Connection Summer Connection Morning Coffee Air Buddies	Morning Coffee	Children-R-Special NICU Parent-Break Single Parent Connection SC Respite Coalition Conference, 8-4, Saxe Gotha Pres. Sharing Parents Connection		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Buddy Walk, 1:30 Buddy Walk, 1:30 Saluda Shoals Park	Pizza Night	NICU PACE workshop	Morning Coffee	A Precious Few Autism Connection Down syndrome Connection HOPE		Kid Connection, 10-2, First Baptist North Church Fishing Rodeo
28	29	30	31			

## November 2007 Events

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Autism Connection	Autism Connection	Asthma Connection ADD Connection Autism Connection Hitch-Up	Morning Coffee	Parent-to-Parent Sibling Network	Children-R-Special	Healthy Hoops	ADHD Connection Down Syndrome Connection Families Helping Families	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 5 p.m., Greenville Downtown Airport, Hangar #2	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 5 p.m., Greenville Downtown Airport, Hangar #2	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 7 p.m., The Coop	Family Event, 10-12, Fox Tree Farms	Mom's Night Out	
11	12	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Autism Connection Asthma Connection Pizza Night Parents Helping Parents	Autism Connection	North Area Down Syndrome Big Thursday, 6:30 p.m., Souris in Mt. Pleasant Summer Connection Morning Coffee Big Thursday, 6-10, Rock Hill Country Club Big Thursday, 6 p.m., Rock Hoppers	A Precious Few Asthma Connection Pee Dee Mom's Lunch, Down Syndrome	A Precious Few Autism Connection Down Syndrome Connection HOPE	Big Thursday, 7 p.m., The Coop	Morning Coffee	ADHD Connection Down Syndrome Connection Families Helping Families	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 5 p.m., Greenville Downtown Airport, Hangar #2	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 5 p.m., Greenville Downtown Airport, Hangar #2	Children-R-Special Single Parent Connection Sharing Parents Connection Big Thursday, 7 p.m., The Coop	Family Event, 10-12, Fox Tree Farms	Mom's Night Out	
18	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
			NICU	Morning Coffee	Morning Coffee	Morning Coffee								

For more information about these support groups, see pages 5 or 8. For more information about these or any of Family Connection's events, please call your local area office or toll-free at (800) 578-8750.

# Statewide parent connections

## Florence Area

Please call (800) 578-8750 for more information unless another number is listed.

- Asthma Patrol Connection - Call Irene Fulmore at (843) 773-3261 for more information.
- Autism Connection - Meets the 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m., Theodore Lester Elementary School, 3501 East Palmetto Street. Call Beth Dynan at (843) 661-5360 for more information.
- Down Syndrome Connection - Meets on the last Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the McLeod Medical Plaza, 800 E. Cheves Street, 5th floor canteen. Call Tricia Street at (843) 662-7934 or Sue Martin at (843) 665-1513 for more information.
- HOPE - Meets the last Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew's Church, Hartsville. Call Angela West at (843) 229-3129 for more information.
- Pee Dee Mom's Lunch Out Down Syndrome Connection - Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at Applebee's on 811 South Irby Street. Please call Sue Martin at (843) 665-1513 if you plan to attend.

## Greenville Area

Please call the FC office at the Center for Developmental Services (864) 331-1340 for more information unless another number is listed.

- ADD/ADHD - Will meet on September 17 at 7 p.m. at Shannon Forest Presbyterian. Call Elizabeth Stuff at (864) 286-6872 for more information.
- Air Buddies- For families who have children with asthma. Will meet on October 16 at 6:30 p.m. at CDS.
- Andy's Kids- For middle school age children with disabilities and their families. Events and locations vary.
- Apraxia Connection -Will meet on September 20 at 6:30 p.m. at CDS. Call Cheryl Major at (864) 331-1340 for more information.
- Autism Connection - Will meet on September 10, October 1, November 5 and December 3 at 6:30 p.m. at CDS. Call Julie Kellett at (864) 331-1340 for more information.
- Down Syndrome Family Alliance of Greenville - Events and locations vary. Call Mindy Ramsey at (864) 331-1340 for more information.
- Father's Network - Events and locations vary.
- Grandparent's Connection - Will meet August 23 at noon at CDS.
- Mothers First - For expectant mothers delivering a child with special health care needs. Call Mindy Ramsey at 864-419-8024 for details.
- Pizza Night - Your Resource Connection - Will meet September 17, October 22 and November 12 at 6:30 at CDS. Call Brenda Copeland at (864) 331-1340 for more information.

## Rock Hill

Please call the Rock Hill office at (803)366-4839 unless another number is listed.

- ADD/ADHD Connection -Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month at St John's Methodist. Call Hollye Reid at (803) 366-4839 for information.
- Autism Connection-Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month at St. Johns Methodist. Call Hollye Reid at (803) 366-4839 for information.
- Down Syndrome Connection-Meets the 1st Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Family Resource Center. Contact Ellen Maulding at (803) 802-3138 for more information.
- Hitch-Up - A support group for hearing impaired toddler and children with unlimited potential. Meets the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at St. John's Methodist Church. Call Catherine O'Grady at (803) 802-2660 for more information.
- Sharing Parents Connection - A support group for families in York, Chester and Lancaster counties who have children ages birth to 6 with special needs meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at St. John's Methodist Church. Childcare provided. Call Michelle Vanhook at 684-2138 or at 366-4839 for more information.
- Parents Acting Together - Meets every other month at various restaurants. Call Hollye Reid at (803) 366-4839 for information.

## Spartanburg Area

Please call (864) 585-5462 for more information unless another number is listed.

- Andy's Kids - For middle school aged kids with special needs and their families. Events and locations vary.
- Autism Connection- Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church. Call for childcare.
- Coffee Break - Breakfast and coffee on your own. Meets quarterly, please call the FC office for times and locations.
- Families Helping Families - Meets the 1st Thursday at noon at Cherokee County DSN. Call (864) 489-3259 for more information.
- Fun For The Family - Outings for families of children with special healthcare needs, and their siblings. Meets quarterly. Please call FC office for times and locations.
- Mom's Night Out - Meets quarterly. Call the FC office for times and locations.
- NICU Parent Break - Meets from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Call the FC office for dates.
- Parents Helping Parents - Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian. Call the FC office to reserve childcare.

## Respite Sites

- Central Baptist, Columbia-2nd Sat. of month 2:30 p.m. - 5:30pm. Contact Wanda Brown 803-788-1199.
- Crowfield Baptist Church, Goose Creek-3rd Friday of month, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Contact Angie Beard at 843-821-6579 or 843-708-0859.
- Epworth Early Intervention Center, Columbia-4th Sat. of month, 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Contact Kay Richardson 803-212-4757.
- First Baptist, North Spartanburg - Call (864) 585-5462 for more information.
- Low Country Christian Community Church, Charleston-Last Sat. of month 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Contact Peggy Carr 843-406-0088.
- Pine Street YMCA, Spartanburg- 2nd Sat. of each month 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Contact Shannon Batson at (864) 414-9577.
- Saxe Gotha Presbyterian Church, Lexington-1st and 3rd Sat of month, 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Contact Al Edens at 803-996-3716.

# Buddy Walk

It's time to grab your buddy and come to a Buddy Walk near you. Buddy Walks are being held throughout the month of October, National Down Syndrome Awareness Month. Family Connection participates as a host of this event in celebration of individuals with Down syndrome. Family Connection hosts the Anderson Buddy Walk (October 21 at 2 p.m.) and the Columbia Buddy Walk (October 21 at 2 p.m.). The Greenville Buddy Walk, sponsored by the Down Syndrome Family Alliance of

## Record-breaking number of Support Parents trained last quarter

During the months of January through March, 37 Support Parents were trained statewide at Family Connection. This is a record-breaking number!

Support Parents are parents who have children with special needs who are at a place in their life where they feel they are ready to support another parent in need. Currently, there are over 500 volunteer Support Parents in South Carolina. These parents are extraordinary and positively touch the lives of families through encouragement, by being a listening ear and sharing an incredible wealth of knowledge that only another parent would possess.

Based on information received through the P2P USA Conference, the decision was made to shorten the number of hours needed to complete Support Parent training. Before then, Support Parent trainings consisted of two six-hour Saturdays.

"We realized that this training schedule may be difficult for some parents to complete, so Support Parent trainings were shortened to just four and a half hours of training either during a weekday or a Saturday," said Andy Pope, executive director.

It is certainly exciting to see such an increase in the number of Support Parents trained after this change. There is always a need for Support Parents, as there are always parents who need support.

For the next Support Parent training near you, see our events calendar on pages 6 and 7, or call (800) 578-8750.

Greenville, will be held on September 30 at Furman University. The Charleston Buddy Walk, sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association of the Lowcountry, will be held on September 30 at 2 p.m. at Etiwan Park on Daniel Island. Whether you have a relative with Down syndrome or just want to show your support, the Buddy Walk is a perfect opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of these individuals. To make a financial contribution, call your local office or toll free at (800) 578-8750.

## Partner's Plus Trainings

are still being offered in Greenville and Spartanburg counties. Thanks to the Children's Trust Fund, participants can learn about respite options and the skills needed to create quality respite care. Come join us to learn how you can take a break on August 25 in Greenville.

## Save the Date!

**Big Thursdays** across the state  
Carolina and Clemson come together to raise money for families of children with special needs.



Anderson - November 20  
Charleston - November 20  
Columbia - November 23  
Greenville - November 15  
Rock Hill - November 20



Dish: your favorite **Recipe** Serves: everyone

Family Connection needs your recipes! Send in your favorite family recipes to be featured in the upcoming Family Connection cookbook. Recipes can be easy to make, designed for special dietary needs or fun to make with the kids, and can be in honor/memory/thanksgiving of anyone you choose. Send complete recipes - with photos of your kids! - to [laurenhuebner@familyconnectionSC.org](mailto:laurenhuebner@familyconnectionSC.org).

Beth Tally, a local author, has chosen Family Connection as a recipient of some of the proceeds of her new book, The Beacon. Book signings for The Beacon will be held in Columbia and Greenville. See the Events Calendar for more information.

## Grantors

April 2007 - June 2007

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### The mission of Family Connection of South Carolina

To strengthen families who have children with developmental delays, disabilities or chronic illnesses through a parent-to-parent network of family-focused support to provide assurance, information, community awareness and enhanced parent/professional relationships.

## Read *The Link* online

If you would like to help us reduce costs and read *The Link* online, please email [laurenhuebner@familyconnectionSC.org](mailto:laurenhuebner@familyconnectionSC.org) with your preferred email address and RECEIVE LINK ONLINE in the subject line. We will use your email address to alert you when you can view the newsletter on our website.

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Thanks to your generous contributions, Family Connection can continue to provide necessary support for parents of children with special needs. Your donation brings special families together. You make a difference.

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