

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are really hoping that this newsletter reaches you. We are painfully aware that many of you have new addresses, or are still in temporary housing. Wherever you are, we want you to know that you will always be part of the Pyramid family, and that you can always count on us to help with your child's educational issues.

We have learned that recovery in New Orleans is a dreadfully slow process. Pyramid was able to hold its first roundtable meeting post Katrina on Nov. 3, 2007. Affordable housing is taking much too long to return and as a result, many of you remain scattered across the country, even two years after the storm. Truthfully, without you, home is just not home anymore. Still, we are working toward the day when coming home will be a real option for you.

Our work goes on with the knowledge that we must play an active role in the rebuilding and improvement of the systems that are so necessary for our children's progress and well being. Therefore, we have made sure our concerns about children with disabilities are being heard as the city addresses the need for housing, health care, and education. We continue to collaborate with our partners, The Beach Center on Disabilities, Total Community Action, the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, the NAACP and others who are trying to create a better New Orleans.

In this issue of the newsletter you will be introduced to our new Board of Directors, and our schedule of activities planned for this year. We have also included information on our events and resources that may be of interest. We are still operating out of our homes, however, JJPL has kindly given us space in their building to hold staff meetings. Also, TCA and the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School have let us host activities in their spaces.

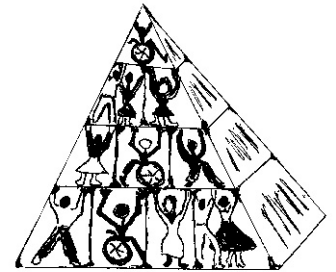
We are sad to report that the disability movement has suffered a serious setback in New Orleans. We are learning that some newly chartered schools have little or no understanding about IDEA and the rights of children with disabilities, yet in their application for becoming a charter school, they stated that they would serve our children. Another problem is the ongoing issue of selective admission requirements in many schools. Such policies keep our children out. We are also concerned about disciplinary policies that are punitive and vague. Despite these discouraging reports, we are counting on you to use what you have learned about IDEA and best practices in special education to keep pushing for a free, appropriate public education for all of our children with special needs.

Karran ,Lynne and Tiffany send their warm regards.

*Please keep in touch,
D.J. and Ursula*

Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center

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Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center

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THE MISSION OF THE PYRAMID
COMMUNITY PARENT RESOURCE
CENTER IS TO STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITY BY REACHING
UNDERSERVED FAMILIES
OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES
WITH THE INFORMATION,
TRAINING, AND SUPPORT THEY
DESERVE, TO ACHIEVE THEIR
MAXIMUM POTENTIAL.

A New High School

Working with the Gentilly Civic Improvement Association, Pyramid's Karran Harper Royal, helped write the proposal for a new high school in Gentilly. In the two years following hurricane Katrina, the Gentilly area of New Orleans does not have a high school that serves all children.

The school will have a technology focus and will have open admissions to all students including those with disabilities. Currently, the only high school in Gentilly is Ben Franklin Charter, which has selective admissions. The new school will be built on the site of the Lake Area Middle School on Paris Avenue.

Karran lives in Gentilly. She has an 11 year old son who attends school in uptown New Orleans. She has dreamed of the day when her son could attend school in his own neighborhood. Her involvement in her community to bring this new school has made her dream become a reality.



Hurricane Katrina Aid Continues

This Summer, Pyramid helped Latasha Davis and her family renovate a trailer so they would have a place to live. Ms. Davis has a six year old son who has autism and three other children. Ms. Davis used money received from Pyramid to renovate her trailer into a lovely space for her family. Since the devastation of hurricane Katrina, it is always gratifying for Pyramid to assist families in need and help them to get on their feet again.

Parents' Guide to Public Schools Updated

The updated version of the New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public schools has been released. This guide has information about every public school in New Orleans. It includes information such as the name, location, phone number, mission statement, grades served,

admissions requirements, and special education model. This guide is very helpful as a resource in helping parents to decide on a school choice for their children. Pyramid has a small quantity of these guides available for parents. The guide can also be obtained online at www.nolaarentsguide.org.



It's Love in the Heart of Kenner, Louisiana

There is a single tennis court in the Rosemary Minor Park in Kenner, Louisiana. Most days the court is empty with the exception of a couple of adults that meet for occasional play. When the adult tennis players meet, the kids run to the court to pick up tennis balls and get a little attention. Community members decided that something should be done to encourage the young people in the sport. They dug in their heels and began to organize a free tennis clinic for the youth. Certified instructors from the neighborhood volunteered their teaching talents. Other community members pitched in and



offered picnic tables, prizes, food and drink.

With Pyramid's help, each kid walked away from the event with their very own tennis racket. Parents in the neighborhood are very excited to have a productive activity in which the children could be involved.

2008 Board of Directors

Inez Green
Donald Harness
Linda Bryant Landry
DJ Markey
Shirley Marrero
Lee Ann Vaught

2008 Calendar of Events

Best Practices Luncheons
Workshops
Roundtables
Advocacy Training
and much, much more



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Parent Resource Center**

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