

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are happy to welcome you to a new year of Pyramid training, support groups, and one-to-one assistance. Last year 397 parents and professionals attended 28 activities. Several of these events are captured in the articles and photographs contained in this issue.

We begin this year with attention to changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and what these changes may mean for you and your child. We also want to make sure that you understand your rights and responsibilities under the No Child Left Behind law.

In addition, new discipline policies are in development at the Orleans Parish Schools that you will need to know.

There is much to be learned and done, however, as parents we are accustomed to facing challenges for the sake of our children. The Pyramid staff wants you to know that you are not alone. We will walk with you as you secure an appropriate education for your child, and we will offer you opportunities to increase your knowledge about research based best practices that can improve your quality of life.

May this be the best year yet for you and your family. We look forward to seeing you at our many activities.

*Best Wishes,
Ursula & DJ*

Thanks for the New Year

Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center has been funded by the United States Department of Education to continue our work in New Orleans.

As we celebrate, we are mindful of the importance of relationships. It is a blessing to have such a strong foundation of reliable friends, families, and colleagues that support and encourage our work in the community.

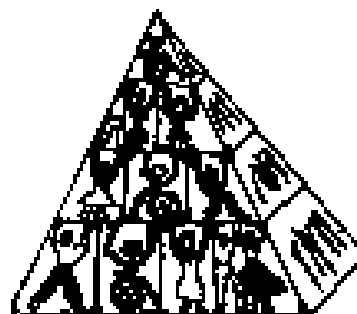
Thank You
DJ, Ursula, Karran and the Pyramid Staff

Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center

Newsletter

Volume 8-Number 1

January 2005



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.

Autism Support Group

On November 13, 2004, Pyramid hosted an Autism support group meeting. We were pleased to see parents turn out for the meeting. We invited Dr. Bart Sevin of the Louisiana's Center for Excellence in Autism to join us.

Dr. Sevin's expertise is in behavior and our parents were able to discuss ways to work with their children's challenging behaviors. He also shared with our parents ways to get their children to do specific tasks by using physical and verbal prompts.

A prompt is a way to get your child to do a task by using your voice or physically helping to do the task. Dr. Sevin will be joining us for other meetings. We know the challenges that parents face when it comes to helping our children who have autism and getting to meetings. It can be very difficult. We really hope that you can attend some of the future meetings. Our next meeting will be held Saturday, January 29, 2005 at the Pyramid office from 10:00am to 12:00pm. We hope to see you there.

— Dwayne Farlough

Tacoma

On October 22 & 23 parent associates Dwayne and Lynne Farlough had the opportunity to conduct Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) training in Tacoma Washington with the parents of Parent to Parent Power. Parent to Parent is a Parent Community Resource Center that serves the Asian community. During the two day training a total of fifteen people attended, which included parents, young people with disabilities and interpreters.

Program director, Yvonne Link prepared parents to come with their behavior concerns regarding their children. This led to a lively discussion of many of the important parts of PBS. Some of the sentiments parents expressed were: "It does not matter where you are, we all face the same problems", "I am very happy to have a new way of looking at my child's behavior." Dwayne and Lynne really enjoyed the Tacoma experience and this will be an ongoing project of Pyramid and Parent to Parent.

— Dwayne Farlough



IDEA Re-Authorization

On Friday, December 3, President Bush signed IDEA 2004 which will become effective on July 1, 2005. There are major changes to the IEP process, Due Process, and Discipline provisions in the law. These changes will have major implications for children receiving Special Education Services. The changes in IDEA 2004 makes it evermore important that parents learn about their rights under the law and about the types of services their children will need in order to progress in school. We will provide details of the changes in upcoming newsletters and discussions at our February 12, 2005 NCLB/IDEA Roundtable.

— Karran Harper Royal

Voting Accessibility

Pyramid organized parent volunteers to survey polling places the day of the presidential election. These surveys were used to collect data about polling place accessibility.

Dwayne Farlough, Lynn Farlough and Denise Salaam attended a "Train the Trainer" workshop in Baton Rouge regarding the Help America Vote Act. At this meeting they were introduced to the curriculum approved by the Secretary of State's office. Pyramid CPRC will conduct 4 training sessions over the next year to inform persons with disabilities about their voting rights.

— Denise Salaam

Social Workers Meet Pyramid CPRC

Milestones Mental Health Rehab agency invited Pyramid CPRC to conduct an in service for their staff of Social Workers. This training focused on the services available to parents through the resource center, one-to-one assistance, PBS trainings, the Best Practices Series and the Family Leadership Academy. The agency has referred parents of troubled teens with special needs to Pyramid and we are always happy to advocate and provide information.

— Denise Salaam

CHADD Children's and Adult Support Group Meetings

CHADD of New Orleans will now offer a facilitated Children's Support Group meeting and Adult Support Group meetings at its monthly Tuesday evening meeting. The children will be grouped by age, Group 1, ages 6-11 and Group 2, ages 12-17. There will be a limit of 15 children in each group and is limited to the child with AD/HD. Admission to the group is on a first come first serve basis by calling 468-5400 to register for the group. There is no limit on participation in the Adult Support Group meeting. See the regular CHADD schedule for dates and times.

— Karran Harper Royal

Positive Behavioral Support

On August 27 and November 22, Michelle Deville and Lynne Farlough conducted Positive Behavioral Support training at Central City Headstart. We are very pleased to be able to do this work in the early childhood area. The teaching staff was willing to learn a new way of looking at the behavior of the children they teach. Some of the comments the teachers made were: "This workshop offered a lot of positive ways to redirect behaviors" and "This helped me with my son." Ms. Cynthia Gilmet is the director of the center and plans to continue this work with Pyramid.

— Dwayne Farlough

Pyramid's Denise Salaam Becomes A Certified AD/HD Trainer

Denise participated in CHADD's (Children and Adults With Attention Deficit Disorder) Parent To Parent Family Training on AD/HD. This intensive training certifies Denise to be a key trainer for CHADD's upcoming series on ADHD.

— Karran Harper Royal

LASIG Conference

On December 10th Pyramid CPRC staff attended the Louisiana State Improvement Grant (LASIG) Statewide Leadership Training Conference in Baton Rouge. Breakout sessions included topics such as School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) and Family-school Linkages (FSL). The conference was well attended and informative. — Denise Salaam

LOOKING BACK ON 2004



On Oct. 5, 2004, Pyramid hosted a visit from Stephanie Lee, the Assistant Secretary at the Office of Special Education Programs. Above: Ms. Lee with parents and staff. At Left: Ms. Lee with Ursula Markey.



The Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leaders (RWJ-CHL) Black Caucus met in mid-October in Phoenix, AZ for their annual meeting. The African-American CHL decided to form a Black Caucus with members from around the country.



The LAYES (LA. Youth Enhanced Services) Consortium Meeting held on July 9, 2004. The focus was children's mental health and positive, sustainable systems change.



Pyramid's co-directors, Ursula and DJ Markey attended a Data Camp in Portland, Oregon in July 2004 along with other members of the Center for Evidence Based Practice (CEBP).

*Always go to an IEP with someone!
Never sign an IEP that has been developed without
you and/or that you don't fully understand!
Experienced Pyramid Parents will be there for you!
Just call!
(504) 827-0610*

"When I first came to Pyramid I felt at a total loss when it came to knowing my rights. My child Curtis has ADHD. I She and Ms. Ursula went out of their way to get the services my son and I needed. Then I began to meet more

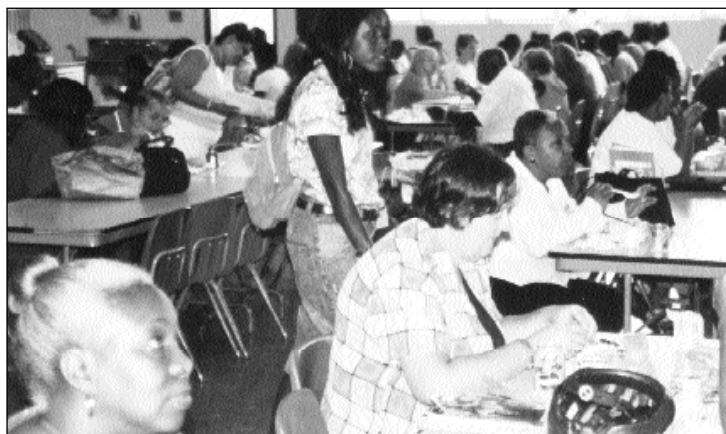
AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO 2005



On July 22, 2004, Pyramid CPRC held their first community day for the neighborhood children. Snowballs, popcorn, and fun activities were provided.



One of five Family Leadership Academies. This one, led by Ted Quant, was held at Sojourner Truth Community Center on October 30, 2004.



CHADD conference, co-sponsored by Pyramid and OMH (Office of Mental Health). Over 200 parents and professionals attended.



On July 8, 2004, Pyramid CPRC held an IDEA/NCLB roundtable workshop for parents and professionals. Far left: Parents and staff discuss ideas. At left: Lynne Farlough and parent read over information provided.

met with Karran Harper Royal to discuss some of the problems I was having with the schools Curtis has attended. members of the Pyramid staff. They make you feel like you are a part of them.” — Parent, Dana Davis

WE ARE HONORED TO ANNOUNCE THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE 2004 FAMILY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY!

On November 20, 2004, a dedicated group of parents joined the ranks of informed and motivated child advocates who have passed through the Family Leadership Academy.

These family members attended five Saturday sessions over two months to learn laws and effective tools that ensure a better educational environment for students in special AND general education.

Jim Comstock-Galagan of the Southern Disability Law Center shared vital information on IDEA law, No Child Left Behind, and systems advocacy. With this foundation in place, Ted Quant of the Twomey Center came in to work with participants on leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution, and negotiation. Graduates practiced these concepts through role plays and other exercises. The most recent graduates already have shown great initiative in requesting a contact list so they can continue to stay in touch and support one another.

The Academy is a project of the Louisiana State Improvement Grant, or LaSIG, a program that seeks to improve education systems in Louisiana. LaSIG staff and partners work with School Improvement Teams (SIT's) at identified schools to generate solutions to the challenges they face. The Academy is held so that the most important partners in school change and improvement, THE PARENTS, will have the information and support they need to work on SIT's.

Future events for parents at LaSIG schools will include the Best Practices in Research-Based Practices luncheons and an inclusion training at Augustine Middle School and McDonogh #28. If you are interested in attending upcoming events or next year's Academy, please call Celeste Hannah or Denise Salaam at 827-0620.

The Fall 2004 Graduating Class

Julie Parlow Andrews

Kermit Bradford

Melinda Bran

Vanessa Cashen

Algina Causey

Patrice Garrison

Sigrun B. Gibson

Earlene Henry

Tyra Holmes

Najia Jacques

Nina Jackson

Elizabeth Ann Johnigan

Tammy Jones

Cheryl Knight

Cheryl Lalonde

Yvonne Lyons

Betty McGee

Teiwana Miller

Tanya Patterson-Prince

Loretta Powell

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

Pyramid CPRC Welcomes New Members To Its Family

Sharon Brumfield serves as the new Administrative Assistant. Sharon comes to Pyramid from the Orleans Parish School Board. She has many years of experience as an educator and a parent advocate. Sharon is excited to be at Pyramid, "It is great to be a part of what Pyramid is all about." Sharon has a 9-year old son named Blake.

Tiffany Powell serves as Pyramid's Development Coordinator. Tiffany brings her expertise in organizational development to us. She holds a Masters Degree from Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy. Tiffany is grateful to

work at Pyramid, "I am so happy to be surrounded by such an inspirational group of people."

Joaniko Kohchi, LCSW, clinical social worker, instructor at LSU Health Sciences Center, and specialist in infant, toddler and early childhood social-emotional development, joined Pyramid part-time as a consultant. Joaniko is excited about this opportunity to work with Pyramid, and hopes that "together we can bring positive behavior support principles to enrich early childhood settings."

Laura Tackett is a graduate student in Tulane University's School of Social Work. Laura is working with Joaniko of the LSU Infant Mental Health Department. She is assisting with research involving Positive Behavior Support. "I am so excited working with Pyramid. All of the staff I have met have been absolutely wonderful and I feel blessed to have the opportunity to work with them."

Congratulations To Brad and Erica Ise On Their Marriage

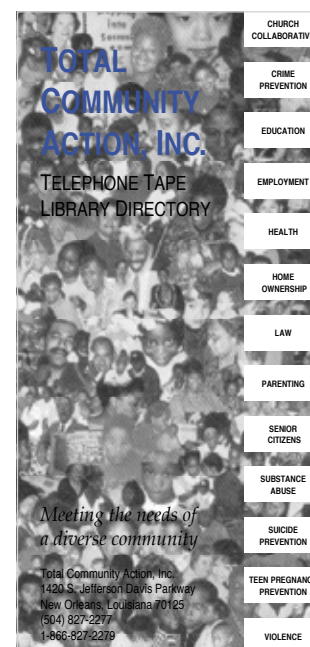
Erica Bynum, who designs and creates some of Pyramid's dissemination materials, was married to Brad Ise on December 12, 2004. We wish the couple all the best and welcome Brad to our family. They currently reside in New York City, and will continue to work with Pyramid.

Remember to use your resources: The Total Community Action Telephone Tape Library Directory (Dial: 504-827-2277)

Call for the answers parents are looking for, here are some of the questions:
Series 1700 Special Education — Questions Parents Ask

- 1701 I think my child may need special help in school. What do I do? What is special education?
- 1702 Who is eligible for special education?
- 1703 How do I find out if my child is eligible for special education?
- 1704 What happens during an evaluation?
- 1710 How can I get more services for my child? How can I support my child's learning?
- 1711 Questions Parents Ask About Individualized Education Program (IEPs).
Who develops my child's IEP?
- 1712 So, can I help with my child's IEP? What should I do before the IEP meeting?
- 1713 What happens during an IEP meeting?
- 1714 Can my child's IEP be changed?
- 1717 Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- 1718 Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disability (PDD)
- 1725 Spina Bifida

And much more . . .



J A N U A R Y

C A L E N D A R E V E N T S

Autism Support Group:

Date & Time: Sat., Jan. 29th from 10am to 12pm

Location: Pyramid Office, 2552 St. Philip Street

Best Practices Luncheon:

Dates & Time: Sat., Jan. 29th from 10am to 12pm

Location: Zachary's Restaurant, 8400 Oak Street

CHADD AD/HD Support Group:

Dates & Time: Sat., Feb. 12th from 10am to 12pm

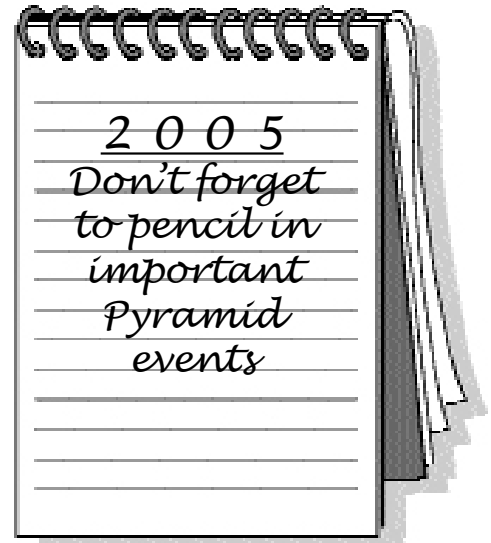
Location: Pyramid office, 2552 St. Philip Street

NCLB/IDEA Roundtable:

Date & Time: Sat., Feb. 12th from 10am to 12pm

Location: Pyramid office, 2552 St. Philip Street

Call 827-0610 to register for these events and to request a stipend if needed no later than 3 days prior to each meeting date.



TO:

Pyramid Community
Parent Resource Center
2552 St. Philip Street
New Orleans, LA 70119