

Informing Families ... Today and Tomorrow

A project of the Washington State DD Council



We All Belong

Making connections this summer and beyond...

Summer can be challenging for many families who struggle with the loss of structure and activities that school provides, but it also comes with opportunities for individuals of all ages to try new things and make connections that last beyond the season.

In this issue, we explore the benefits and differences between inclusive and specialized activities, programs and supports.

Rachel Nemhauser's article, *When Batman Came to Dinner*, reminds us all that inclusion doesn't have to mean blending in; sometimes, it



means standing out and allowing the community to embrace differences.

As always, we encourage you to consider ways that resources in your community can support your family member's immediate and longer term

needs and life goals. Our new four page toolkit (below) can help you get started.

For the most up to date news and information on developmental disability issues and resources, be sure to sign up for our bi-monthly e-news: informingfamilies.org/news.

Sincerely,

Ed Holen
Executive Director
Washington State
DD Council



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
SEATTLE 2018



The 2018 Special Olympics USA Games will be held in Seattle, Washington July 1-6, 2018. More than 4,000 athletes and coaches representing 50 state Programs and the District of Columbia, along with the support of tens of thousands of volunteers and spectators, will compete in 14 Olympic-type team and individual sports.



The 2018 USA Games will feature a number of Special Events that will take place during the week of the Games, July 1-6 2018. These events include: Opening & Closing Ceremonies, Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes Festival, and the Motor Activity Training Program.

Learn more at: specialolympicsusagames.org.

New Toolkit Features Free and Low Cost Support



If you are not receiving a paid service from the Developmental Disabilities Administration, or you're looking for more support, our newly published Resource Toolkit can help you identify supports and activities available in most communities.

This four page toolkit includes links to state and local resources, support for all members of the family, and ideas for connecting with your community.

Order or download your free copy at informingfamilies.org/nps-toolkit.

Inclusive or Specialized?

Contributed by The Arc Snohomish County arcsno.org

When planning to enroll your child in a camp or activity, an important consideration is whether to look for an inclusive setting (children with and without special needs participating together), or find a specialized experience (exclusively for children with special needs).



Benefits of an INCLUSIVE Camp/Recreational Activity

- ☼ Gives your child a sense of community belonging.
- ☼ Provides an opportunity for growth and a stimulating environment.
- ☼ Honors everyone's unique abilities.
- ☼ Builds collaboration and interdependence.
- ☼ Enhances self-esteem.
- ☼ Is often more affordable than specialized programs.
- ☼ Allows for siblings to attend together.

Benefits of a SPECIALIZED Camp/Recreational Activity

- ☼ Geared to your child's special needs.
- ☼ Provides opportunities to socialize with peers who have similar challenges or disabilities.
- ☼ Opportunity to network with other families.
- ☼ Most activities and rules will be appropriate for your child.

Plan for Success

Consider your child's interests and abilities.

Look for camps or organizations open to family participation, ideas or suggestions.

Present your child in a positive light.

Visit the program/activity location prior to the first day of camp or class.

Work with your child on gaining appropriate skills.

Ensure s/he has the necessary equipment, clothing and personal supplies.

Ask if there's anything you can do to help your child and the staff have a great experience.

Register early.

Support for Kinship Caregivers

Are you a grandparent, older sibling or other relative who has stepped up to raise a child whose parents are unable to do so? There are supports for you!

Kinship Caregiver Support Program (KCSP) can help financially with short-term, urgent, basic needs for children not involved in the child welfare system (available in every county).

Relative Support and Service Funds offer emergency, short-term funds to unlicensed relatives and other approved caregivers with a state dependent child with an open case (non-foster care) with Children's Administration. Contact the child's social worker to access these funds.

Kinship Navigator Program provides navigators (in 30 counties and eight Tribes) who can help with emotional support and accessing services and benefits.

Kinship Support Groups facilitate connection with other relatives and provide helpful information.

Free Kinship Family Annual Passes to the Seattle Aquarium and Pacific Science Center: Available through each county's KCSP, Kinship Navigator Program, or the child's social worker.



LEARN MORE

For more information on Kinship Caregiver resources and where to locate programs in your community, visit: dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare

Inclusion doesn't have to mean blending in...

When Batman

Came to Dinner

by Rachel Nemhauser



There was a time not too many years ago when Nate wore a superhero costume as often as possible. He adored the adventure and predictability of shows like Batman, Spiderman and the Incredible Hulk, and he strove to mimic their heroism and bravery.

He created extensive scenarios and exciting battles of good versus evil in our backyard. He saved the city or his sidekick. He built traps and he made plans. His imagination was limitless and his dedication to preventing crime was fierce.

When we'd venture out into public for a family dinner or a visit to the park, Nate's commitment to his character often meant a passionate resistance to changing into street clothes.

Nate's brother Isaac, a middle-schooler at the time, would beg him to change his clothes, and even spend a few minutes trying to wrestle the costume off him. In the end though, Nate's insistence would usually prevail, and

we'd have a superhero join us for an outing.

Oftentimes people in the community would notice and smile. Sometimes a stranger would stare or laugh. One frozen yogurt outing ended abruptly when a throng of middle-school girls walked into the shop and Isaac insisted we leave immediately before they could see that Spiderman was with us.



Nate was a lanky pre-teen, it wasn't Halloween, and no one else would be wearing a costume. He would stand out on those outings, and people would take note.

The beautiful thing about Nate was that he wasn't embarrassed, ashamed, insecure or secretive about his costume. He'd wear it proudly and without an ounce of shame. He felt awesome and *(con't on back page)*

Summer Meals for Kids

The Summer Meals program picks up where school meal programs leave off in June, providing free meals and snacks to kids age 18 and under all summer long. All kids are welcome, and some sites allow adults to purchase a meal as well. No proof of income, address or citizenship is ever required.

Find sites near you: parenthelp123.org/resources/summer-meals-program.

If you have a question about Summer Meals, call the Family Food Hotline at 1-888-436-6392.

Employment Funding for Transition Grads



The budget for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) includes new employment funding for high school transition graduates who:

- ▶ were born between September 1, 1995 and August 31, 1997;
- ▶ want to work;
- ▶ are not on a Home & Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) but would like to be; and,
- ▶ are functionally and financially eligible for person care services funded by Medicaid Community First Choice (CFC).

Anyone who meets these criteria and requests the service will begin receiving long-term employment services through DDA after graduating and turning 21.

For contact information to request services, visit: dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

One to one support to help gain/maintain employment. The services are developed based on your interests & abilities and promote career advancement.



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Developmental Disabilities Administration
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WAS STATE DEPT
OF ENTERPRISE SRVCS
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(Batman can't from inside)

strong and ready to fight crime if it arose. The rest was just background noise to him.

Stares and laughs are harder for me to ignore though, and sometimes accompanying Nate into the community means feeling uncomfortable. It means being noticed and wondered about. Judged and criticized. Losing anonymity and opening myself up to unsolicited questions or advice.

To be honest, frozen yogurt with a superhero is really not for the faint of heart. I sometimes wished I could just blend in, but dining with a non-verbal 10-year-old dressed as Spiderman didn't always allow for that.

It's been a few years since the superhero costumes have made an appearance. I'm sad to say that as Nate became a teenager a new self-consciousness took hold. He's shyer

and more reserved in public. He's more of an observer and less of a live-action superhero.

Now, the costumes wait patiently in a basket in the corner of the room while he focuses his attention on more mature endeavors like Xbox games and YouTube videos.

A lot has changed as he's grown, but what remains is Nate's unwavering confidence, and his willingness to be his authentic, emotional, noisy, creative, unique self, no matter where he is or who is watching.

It is likely we will never blend in when we accompany Nate into the community, and I'm forever thankful to him for teaching me how OK that is.



Washington State's Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISE) provides comprehensive behavioral health services and supports to Medicaid eligible youth, up to 21 years of age, with complex behavioral health needs.

WISE is designed to provide individualized, culturally competent services that strive to keep youth with intense mental health needs safe in their own homes and communities, while reducing unnecessary hospitalizations.

For more information about Wraparound with Intensive Services, visit: informingfamilies.org/wise.