



## NEWS AND NOTES

Essential information for people with developmental disabilities, their families and caregivers in Stearns, Benton, Morrison and Todd Counties.

### Workshops Designed for You!

#### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders:

FASD is more prevalent than Autism and Down Syndrome combined, yet most people are unaware of the impact of FASD on society. Most people with FASD look "normal" and most have average IQs, but they have damage to their brains that affects learning and behavior. This workshop will explore the "invisible disability" of FASD and give strategies that promote success in the home, classroom and community for the affected child. Instructor is Karrie Halbur, MOFAS.

March 25<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:30 PM Apollo High School  
\$10/individual \$15/per family  
Register with St. Cloud Community Education.  
[www.stcloudcommunityed.com](http://www.stcloudcommunityed.com) or call 320.529-6500.

#### Sensory Processing Challenges – Practical Strategies for Everyday Life:

Many individuals with special needs have difficulty with self regulation and sensory processing that interfere with daily routines and can cause troubling behaviors. What does this look like and how can sensory processing challenges be identified and treated? The presenter is an occupational therapist and parent of an adult child on the autism spectrum, who will offer both a professional and parental perspective. Practical proactive strategies for the home, work and school environment will be explored. A certificate of attendance will be available.

April 20<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 8:30 PM Apollo High School  
\$10/individual \$15/family.  
Register with St. Cloud Community Education.  
[www.stcloudcommunityed.com](http://www.stcloudcommunityed.com) or call 320.529.6500

### Valentine's Day Bingo Party at the Melrose

**American Legion** on Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM. Lunch and beverage will be provided. Questions? Please call Marlene at 320.352.3321



### 2010 Regional Potpourri Conference

February 27, 2010 – Sauk Rapids Rice High School  
Check out the outstanding opportunities to learn from well qualified presenters on a wide variety of special needs topics! Registration form is available on our website at [www.arcmidstate.org](http://www.arcmidstate.org) or call our office at 320.251.7272 and we will mail a form to you.

## January/February 2010



### Disability Day at the Capitol February 11, 2010

The \$1.2 billion projected state budget deficit will mean services to persons with disabilities and their families will again be at risk. We need to raise our voices loudly right from the beginning of the state

legislative session and let our elected officials know they must not harm disability supports. **Come to the State Capitol for Disability Day at the Capitol on February 11, 2010, and make your voice heard.** Visit with your state representative and senator, get a briefing on the upcoming session, and rally with other supporters of services for people with disabilities! There is NO COST to attend, but you must register. You can register online at [www.arcmn.org](http://www.arcmn.org). If you are interested in going with a group from Arc Midstate please contact Rita at 320.251.7272. Have you been impacted by recent changes in service options? If we want others to care about supports and services, we must make the effort too!

## Autism Supports

### Autism Parent Group

This support group is for parents and caregivers of younger children newly identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder or who may be in the process of being assessed. Parents have the opportunity to connect with other parents and gather information while children play together under the close supervision of specialized child care providers. This ongoing group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the YMCA in St. Cloud, 1530 Northway Drive. The sessions run from 6:00 – 7:30 PM. Please contact Arc Midstate to register for the meeting and to make a child care reservation. The ASD Support Group is supported by Arc Midstate, The St. Cloud Area IEIC (Interagency Early Intervention Committee) and the Benton Stearns Education District. Email [info@arcmidstate.org](mailto:info@arcmidstate.org) to be added to the group email list.

### Teen Night for Teens with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's or NLD (7th Grade thru high school)

Socialize with peers and familiar adults – activity expenses, transportation and liabilities are the responsibility of each family. Teens attending need to be accompanied by an adult. Please call or email for more information: 320.251.7272 or [info@arcmidstate.org](mailto:info@arcmidstate.org).

*The mission of Arc Midstate is to support and advocate for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and their families as they choose how they live, learn, work and play.*

*Arc Midstate is a 501c3 non-profit agency serving Stearns, Benton, Morrison and Todd Counties.*

## FAS – Hand and Hand Series In Person or Online

Come together and learn about FASD in a supportive and informal setting! The Hand In Hand Series (formerly Family Seminar Series) is an opportunity for caregivers who have received or suspect a fetal alcohol diagnosis of a family member. This is a five-part series which addresses the basics of life with FASD. For the first time this series will be offered both in person and ONLINE. For those who cannot make it to the Wednesday night meetings in St. Paul, there is an option to complete written and online assignments during the week, and then participate in a live webinar with other participants.

### **Topics Include:**

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: The Basics
  - FASD at Home
  - FASD at School
- Building Strong Families
- Parent Discussion Panel

### **In-Person Session**

**Dates:** Wednesdays, February 3rd - March 3rd

**Time:** 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Cost:** \$80/person or \$120/couple includes food, materials, and speakers.

**Location:** Children's Home Society and Family Services, Weiser Room, 1605 Eustis Street St. Paul, MN 55108

### **Online Session:**

Internet access is required and you must register as a user for the Virtual Family Center on the MOFAS website. Participants will receive a hard copy of the MOFAS Hand in Hand manual as well as digital materials on a CD. Each week reading and online interactive assignments are to be completed before the time of the live discussion via internet and phone.

**Dates:** Tuesday evenings, February 23rd - March 23rd

**Time:** 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$50/family includes MOFAS Hand in Hand manual as well as digital materials on a CD.

**Location:** Internet access is required!

**Some scholarships are available. For more information or to register for either class contact Sierra Asamo-Tutu: 651.917.2370 or [sierra@mofas.org](mailto:sierra@mofas.org)**

This series is made possible by the generous support of **THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION**

## Parents of Young Children with Down Syndrome

Meets the first Thursday of most months at 6:00 PM  
Hope Covenant Church in St. Cloud

### **Morrison County Parent Group**

for parents/caregivers of children with any special need of any age meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:00 – 7:30 PM  
Morrison County Learning Center  
Please let us know if you plan to attend 877.251.7272.

## **Thank you for renewing your dues!**

### **Arc Midstate Annual Dues**

**Individual \$20 ■ Families \$30 ■ Organizations \$75**

**Membership dues will increase soon!**

**Renew now at the current rate!**

Doris Schleicher  
Paul and Amy Gaebe  
Kurt and Lori Persson  
Perry & Barb Beise  
Tammy Marthaler

Dianna Nelson  
Judy Seitz  
Dr. David Pull  
Duane & Bonnie Lahr

## **Looking for Cell Phone Options?**



**Verizon** introduces the LG Migo phone which looks quite compact and weighs just 2.46 oz.

The Migo also features four parent programmable numbers, a dedicated emergency key (also programmable) and the most important thing: a simplified keyboard and interface.

Website:

[http://www.mobilewhack.com/reviews/verizon\\_introduces\\_lg\\_mig\\_o\\_for\\_kids.html](http://www.mobilewhack.com/reviews/verizon_introduces_lg_mig_o_for_kids.html)

**KAJEET** is a company based in Bethesda, Maryland that makes the only pay-as-you-go cell phone service that puts kids first.

Website:

<http://www.kajeet.com/kajeetStore/landing.do?o=L17&c=G09&lp=AltLWT4&gclid=CPz56s61g50CFRYhDQodxWEofQ>

## **The Arc of Minnesota Housing Access Services Program:**

Arc announces announcing an outstanding new service for adult Minnesotans of all ages who have been assessed and determined to be eligible for Minnesota Medicaid home care or waiver services and who want to move to homes of their own. If you or someone you know is ready to move, contact Deb at Arc Midstate 320.251.7272.



## Behavioral Challenges in Persons with Down Syndrome

The behavioral challenges seen in children with Down syndrome are usually not all that different from those seen in typically developing children. However, they may occur at a later age and last somewhat longer. For example temper tantrums are common in 2-3 year olds, for a child with Down syndrome temper tantrums may begin at 3-4. When evaluating behavior in a child with Down syndrome it is important to look at the behavior in the context of the child's developmental age, not only their chronological age. It is also important to know the child's receptive and expressive language skill level as many behavior problems are related to frustration with communication. Many times the behavior issues can be addressed by finding ways to help the child communicate more effectively.

**Wandering/running off**—the most important thing is the safety of the child. This would include good locks and door alarms at home and a plan written into the IEP at school regarding what each person's role is in the event the child leaves the classroom or playground. Visual supports such as a STOP sign on the door and/or siblings asking permission to go out the door can be a reminder to the child to ask permission before leaving the house

**Stubborn/oppositional behavior**—a description of the child's behavior during a typical day at home or school can sometimes help to identify an event that may have triggered the non-compliant behavior. At times the oppositional behavior may be the child's way of communicating frustration or lack of understanding due to their communication/language problems. Children with Down syndrome become very good at distracting parents or teachers when they are challenged with a difficult task.

**Attention problems**—children with Down syndrome can have ADHD but they should be evaluated for attention span and impulsivity based on developmental age and not strictly chronological age. The use of parent and teacher rating scales such as the Vanderbilt and the Connors Parent and Teacher Rating Scales can be helpful in diagnosis. Anxiety disorders, language processing problems and hearing loss can also present as problems with attention.

**Obsessive/compulsive behaviors**—these can be as simple as always wanting the same chair at the table to repetitive behaviors such as dangling beads or belts when not engaged directly in an activity. This type of behavior is seen more commonly in younger children with Down syndrome and while the number of compulsive behaviors is no different than those in typical children at the same mental age the frequency and intensity of the behavior is often more in children with Down syndrome.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**—autism is seen in approximately 5-7% of children with Down syndrome. The diagnosis is usually made at a later age (6-8 years of age) than in the general population and regression of language skills if present also occurs later (3-4 years of age). The interventions strategies are the same as for any child with autism and it is important for the child to be identified as early as possible so he/she can receive the most appropriate therapeutic and educational services.  
*Source: National Down Syndrome Society Website*

### From the Director

Another new year is underway. We look forward to another year of connecting families, helping you to find resources and partnering with you on your journey.

Please take a few minutes to review the enclosed Action Alert regarding PCA cuts. We invite you to join us at the Disability Day at the Capitol. If you have been impacted by the recent changes in the PCA services please contact Rita at 320.251.7272 and share with her how this has impacted your family.

The annual Arc Midstate community Christmas party was again very well attended. We are thankful for the generosity of the members of the Moose Lodge in Waite Park for all their support. Thank you to the many wonderful volunteers who shared in the fun, both at the event and behind the scenes.



### Isabell receives weighted blanket

Lois Fischer, a quilter for Project Linus, made a beautiful weighted blanket for Isabell. Project Linus provides blankets for

children who experience trauma such as having a parent in Iraq, the death of a classmate, or other issues. This is the first weighted blanket donated to a family who participates in our ASD Parent group. To learn more about this, please contact Cindy at the Arc Midstate Office at 320.251.7272 or [info@ArcMidstate.org](mailto:info@ArcMidstate.org).

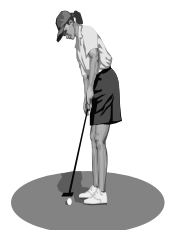
### Mark the Date!

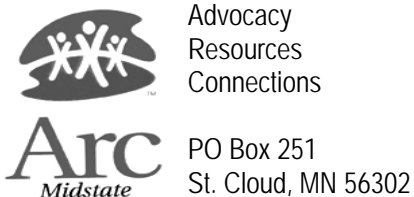
#### ARISE/Arc Midstate Golf Event

June 11, 2010

Blackberry Ridge Golf Course

Opportunities for sponsorship and prize donations are available!





Non Profit  
Organization  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 451  
St. Cloud MN 56301

To Contact Us:  
  
320.251.7272  
Toll Free 877.251.7272  
Fax 320.253.6844  
Info@ArcMidstate.org  
  
Website  
[www.ArcMidstate.org](http://www.ArcMidstate.org)  
  
  
Community Partner

Return Service Requested

**Calendar**

Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> Thursday 6:00 – 7:00 PM  
ASD Parent Group - St. Cloud Area YMCA

Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 6:00 – 7:30 PM  
Down Syndrome Parent Group – Hope Covenant Church

Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> – Flyer enclosed  
Disability Day at the State Capital

Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 1:30 PM  
Arc Valentine Party at Melrose Legion

Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 6:00 PM  
Morrison County Parent Group

Feb. 19th - Friday 6:00PM  
ASD Teen Group – call for details

February 22nd - Monday 6:00PM  
Arc Midstate Board meeting

February 25<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 6:00 -7:30 PM  
ASD Parent Group – St. Cloud Area YMCA

February 27<sup>th</sup> – Saturday  
Potpourri Conference  
Sauk Rapids Rice High School