



TriLine

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Can Stem Cell Treatments Help People with CP?

Cover Story

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Mother supports her son in walker

The United Cerebral Palsy organization answers, "Stem cell therapy is promising, yet there is misunderstanding regarding the current state of its readiness for treatment of cerebral palsy. There are only two institutions in the United States conducting carefully designed research trials of stem cells in cerebral palsy, but there are a number of clinics outside the US offering this therapy."

Cerebral Palsy (CP) results from damage to the motor control centers of the brain. The damage is caused by a lack of blood and oxygen to the brain. It can occur during pregnancy, childbirth, or from other trauma within a few years of birth. People with CP experience limitations in muscle control, movement and mobility.

Neurons are the communicating cells in the nervous system. One neuron communicates electrochemical signals to another through a thin fiber called an axon. Most axons are surrounded by a substance called myelin. Myelin is a protective fat.

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Vision: Persons with developmental disabilities live fully and safely as active and independent members of their community.

Mission: TCRC provides person and family centered planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize opportunities and choices for living, working, learning and recreating in the community.



From the Executive Director

by Omar Noorzad, Ph.D.

After almost a decade of ongoing reductions in funding for services,

last year's 2013 State of California budget provided Developmental Services with a reprieve. The improvement in funding reflected the growth of the number of persons served by the Regional Centers across the state along with the end of a 1.25% payment reduction to Service Provider rates, as well as for Regional Center Operations budgets. There remain many aspects of the state budget and its operations that can potentially affect services to persons with developmental disabilities. Through the efforts of TCADD Board members and TCRC's Leadership team, changes in legislation are closely monitored.

As our system experiences growth of 4% annually in the size of the population served, TCRC monitors the needs for support with Service Coordinator positions. As a result of careful planning, TCRC is able to now add six new Service Coordinator positions. These positions will be allocated according to the highest need to support all of our teams. Despite the budgetary changes and implementation of new legislation impacting our system, our Service Coordination teams, along all TCRC staff members, have consistently delivered outstanding quality support of people receiving services. Results from the 2012 TCRC Services and Supports Satisfaction Survey showed a significant increase in satisfaction for all aspects of the survey compared with results in the previous year, as well as with the initial year of the survey, over twelve years ago. Over the last four

years, there has been consistent and steady improvement. Thanks to those of you who took the time to speak with the staff of our survey administrators, Kinetic Flow Inc.

One aspect of legislation that has greatly impacted our system was the passing of SB 946 in 2012. This law requires private insurance companies in California to contract with qualified Service Providers and cover Applied Behavioral Intervention (ABA) services. Regional Centers must ensure that families seek payment for ABA services from their health insurance plan prior to requesting payment from the Regional Center. TCRC supports families by offering ongoing in-person trainings, online resources, and assistance by TCRC Autism Services Coordinator, Colleen Duncan. Additionally, a position of Benefits Coordinator was created to ensure that families and persons served are supported to advocate for payment from their insurance company as well as have access to generic services. Pedro Mendoza, Service Coordinator, was selected to fill this role in March 2013. Service Coordinators refer families to the Benefits Coordinator, after initially providing assistance, for additional support and advocacy with insurance companies and other generic resources.

An important aspect of managing change is the TCRC 2013-2015 Strategic Performance Plan. The Plan's objectives reflect input from all stakeholders about issues important for persons served by TCRC. During the first year of the Plan, 2013, TCRC made excellent progress towards achieving objectives in the Strategic Focus Areas

of Family Support, Autism, and Information and Communication. Additionally, the Operational Focus Areas in the Plan allow for ease of tracking and understanding the multiple aspects of TCRC's Performance Contract with the State. Operational Focus Area 3 for Organizational Development is a key aspect of the Plan. Staff is working with leadership to integrate person centered practices in the performance management plan, a basis for ensuring that all staff, along with TCRC, achieves their annual goals. The End-of-Year 2013 2015 Strategic Performance Plan report is posted on TCRC's website.

Person centered practices are an important part of our work, supporting planning, decision making and honoring input for all stakeholders. In September 2013, TCRC was pleased to host the 6th Annual California Gathering for Person Centered Practices. The deep learning experienced at these types of events benefits persons receiving services and all stakeholders. Staff, service providers, school district employees, persons served parents, other regional center staff and AB 9 leadership enhance their skills around person centered practices. We always have seats for persons served and family members.

This new year provides us with a fresh start and perspective for current issues and a positive outlook to depend on as we face whatever challenges occur for our regional center and our system. Our mission and vision help us to rely on solid principles as well, to make good decisions and guide our work in the future.



One Big Community (with Dancing)

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator

Santa Barbara DJ Chris Benedict is also a presenter and a motivational speaker. He's been holding monthly dance events that are fully accessible for people with disabilities. He's

expanding now, with a vision to reach out to the entire youth community of Santa Barbara, intending to offer an alcohol and drug free environment with music young people actually want to hear.

His contagious passion and unstoppable enthusiasm exemplify the Rolling Stones lyric, "catch your dreams before they slip

away". He's been hard at work, pulling the right people together to form a non-profit to help bring his vision to reality in the new year. Watch for upcoming events where people of all abilities can come together, meet friends, dance and have fun. To keep updated on progress and support his vision, visit Chris on Facebook or the web at www.clubdiversitysb.com.

TCRC Enhances Emergency Communications Platform

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator



At Tri-Counties Regional Center we're committed to supporting our staff, Service Providers and the people we serve in taking precautions to be prepared for an emergency. Although TCRC is not a first responder, we aim to be a first communicator; our goal is to ensure that people in harm's way receive the timeliest disaster notification possible.

One way TCRC has prepared to assist people served is through the development of a staged emergency response process. A few years ago during the Santa Barbara Tea Fire, as well as with the most recent White Fire in Camarillo, the system was put to the test with very good results. Meredith Catalini, VP of Operations for People Creating Success, explained, "My team let me know that they thought the system provided great information and a feeling of additional support for all those in the fire zone."

Lead Quality Assurance Specialist, Tracy Jackson, adds "It's effective, and helps me identify folks in the path of potential harm. I am then able to communicate with them, and let other agencies and parties know their location and if they are safe."



The first stage of the emergency response process (Planning and Initial Communication) is to coordinate communication and actions of employees, vendors and other key individuals in the status of the emergency. Stage Two (Evacuation) supports the planned evacuation messages, and more communication regarding varying roles of employees as well as the agencies involved. This includes identification of evacuation centers, and possible assistance for persons with disabilities at these centers. The final stage is the planned Closure of an Office Location, if necessary, and the transfer of resources to an alternate TCRC office.

TCRC is currently initiating an exciting new mapping software system called Everbridge, which uses all the various contact information and devices for any people served that may be in an evacuation zone. The Everbridge system works like an automatic dialer, sending emergency messages through home phones, cell-phones, tablets, PCs or any mobile device to the person served, family members, programs, agencies and service providers in the form of text messages or recorded voice messages.

Persons served, Service Providers and families need to ensure that complete and correct information is included in the Everbridge system. Click on the green "Ready" link on the lower right of the TCRC home page (www.tri-counties.org) to register today.

TCRC is committed to doing everything possible to assist with communication needs during an emergency. For greatest effectiveness, and to ensure that messages go to the correct addresses, please take this moment to prepare yourselves and the people you care for. It's as simple as adding your contact info.

To find out more about the new system, visit this website: www.everbridge.com/solutions/mass-notification/

TCRC's Emergency Communications Platform coordinates support during fire, flood, earthquake, tsunami or any other potential disaster in our region. Visit our website to update info to keep yourselves and those you care for protected. Click on the green "Ready" link on the lower left of the TCRC home page (www.tri-counties.org) to register today.

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Recurring Topics

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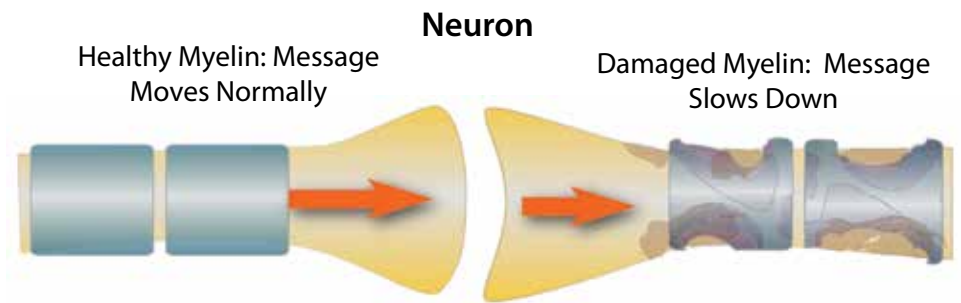
Can Stem Cell Treatments Help People with CP? *(Continued from page 1)*

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator

It insulates axons and speeds the transmission of signals along axons. Neurons need myelin to function properly but do not produce it themselves. That is done by another class of cells called oligodendrocytes. Early damage to the brain causes oligodendrocytes to die. Consequently, neurons are deprived of myelin. Eventually, they too will die. It is the loss of neurons that causes movement and mobility issues. If something could replace myelin before the neuron dies, then mobility issues may be improved.

Research is underway to find out if stem cells can be used to replace oligodendrocytes and the missing myelin. Duke University is running a clinical trial using a child's own stored cord blood. The other clinical trial in the United States is at Georgia Health Sciences University. Stem cells come from various sources. They can come from umbilical cords, from babies and adults. Stem cells from different sources behave differently. One might think of them as "blank" cells. Under the right conditions stem cells become other types of cells.

Some news sources report breakthroughs in stem cell treatments. Dr.



Harley Kornblum of the UCLA School of Medicine states that he hasn't yet seen research proving that stem cell treatments increase myelination. However, stem cells may "facilitate a reparative environment". Dr. Kornblum believes one challenge for researchers is to find the optimal time when treatment should be given. Timing is important in the developing brain.

Crystal Ruff, Jared Wilcox and Dr. Michael Fehlings at the University of Toronto have published an online newsletter on stem cell treatments for cerebral palsy. More detail can be obtained at www.childhooddisability.ca. They write, "No trustworthy stem cell treatment for CP currently exists, and it will take a number of years for safe and effective therapies to make it to the clinic."

In the meantime, subjective reports of treatments sound pretty amazing. Videos and articles describing improvement have people seeking offshore treatments. Clinics in China, India, Germany and Central America offer "Stem Cell Tourism". Dr. Kornblum says many of his patients ask about these unproven stem cell treatments. He's concerned that people don't know what they are getting. Ruff, Wilcox and Fehlings suggest that people "look beyond amazing videos". They advise, "Critically examine the information and look for total clients treated, detailed methods of treatment, detailed information about the results of treatment, comparison to similar patients who do not receive treatment, and long-term follow up."

Dr. Kornblum believes that there is no true theoretical basis for many of the things people are paying for at these clinics. He states, "It's not impossible that it will work, I just don't know how or why." He's also concerned that people don't fully understand the risks because they don't fully understand the treatments. Dr. Kornblum advises, "The only way that I would participate is if it was part of a [scientific] trial." He adds that he would not participate in any trial that he had to pay for.

Perhaps a certain level of optimism is warranted. Dr. Kornblum sees promise in some of the new research. "I think there is hope. There are a lot of avenues of research developing. My patients ask, 'Why not do something that has potential benefit and that may not cause harm?' I think that with these therapies the potential for harm is there, and you have to investigate carefully. Unfortunately, there are some charlatans in this field."



A father and son visit the doctor



Playing together at the park

Many feel that true breakthroughs are forthcoming. Based upon our advances in knowledge and use of stem cells, Ruff, Wilcox and Fehlings believe that scientists “will develop ways to transplant stem cells into damaged tissues to treat and cure injury and diseases like CP”. Perhaps our excitement should be counter-balanced with patience. The scientists need a little more time to prove that certain treatments are safe and effective. For those who don't have time to wait, the experts encourage becoming informed. The National Institute of Health (NIH) remains a good source for information (<http://stemcells.nih.gov>). Dr. Kornblum has also found good articles at Children's Neurobiological Solutions (www.cnsfoundation.org), as well as the previously-mentioned United Cerebral Palsy organization (<http://ucp.org>) and the International Society for Stem Cell Research (www.isscr.org).

Dr. Harley Kornblum, MD, PhD is currently a Professor of Psychiatry, Molecular and Medical Pharmacology and Pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He is a Pediatric Neurologist, and is the Founding Director of the UCLA Neural Stem Cell Research Center. He is a Principal Investigator in the UCLA Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center and a member of The Brain Research Institute, The Molecular Biology Institute, The Broad Stem Cell Research Center and the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center at UCLA. His degrees include a BA in Biology from Washington University and a PhD and MD from UC Irvine. His research interests include the biology and use of neural stem cells, brain development, brain tumors, neural repair and autism.

Understanding Generic Resources - The New TCRC Benefits Coordinator Offers a Helping Hand *by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator*

In March 2013, TCRC created a new position, TCRC Benefits Coordinator to help families navigate healthcare services and generic resources. Pedro Mendoza, a TCRC Service Coordinator, was selected for the position. Generic resources are services or programs, not reimbursed by TCRC, available in the community including certain services for children, special education, employment counseling and rehabilitation, mental health, public transportation, recreation and other programs.

This new position is especially important for and focused on the needs of families who are submitting requests for payment of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services, which can benefit children and adults with Autism. A bill passed in 2012, SB 946 requiring California regulated insurance companies to pay for evidence based treatments such as ABA for people with autism.

If a request for insurance to pay for such services is denied because the health insurance provider has determined the

service to not be medically necessary, Service Coordinators should be contacted. The Service Coordinator may then refer families to Pedro Mendoza for further assistance with an appeal. Most of the appeals submitted have been found in favor of the family receiving treatment services through insurance.

Pedro also works with TCRC's three Family Resource Centers to help people get connected to In Home Support Services (IHSS), Social Security, and Medi-Cal. Help is also available through Disability Rights California (DRC) and Area Board 9.

In addition to his other duties, Pedro also assists with training to staff, Service Providers and families about eligibility for certain services, the appeal process, or program changes. He can also support some families with the Medi-Cal application process for children and is working with the Medi-Cal offices in each county to improve the annual Medi-Cal re-certification process.

Your Service Coordinator is your local expert and first contact about generic resources, so if you have questions, start there. If your request gets referred to Benefits Coordinator Pedro Mendoza, you'll know that you are in good hands.



Pedro Mendoza

Brandon's Transition: It Takes Several Villages

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator, Photos by Isaac Hernandez



Jeanine with her son Brandon

Jeanine Singer has chosen a hands-on philosophy around the care of her son Brandon, who has Autism. They live together, Jeanine, Brandon and two of his three sisters. As he entered adolescence, especially from fifteen to eighteen, he became physically aggressive, throwing toys and breaking things.

"We took him to doctors... and they said to put him in a group home until he was eighteen." Jeanine decided to commit to caring for him herself. She continues, "What can a group home do that we can't do? So we learned to just re-teach him coping skills and adapted our living space to keep him safe. We padded his room. He used to throw himself at the wall. We had three adults here at all times. They say it takes a village to raise these kids... it takes way more than a village. It takes several villages."

She learned the hard way how to navigate behavioral challenges. "We had some tough times. We moved to this (specially-renovated) house, and worked together as a team to manage it. Brandon would throw things or do things that were inappropriate. It was this whole process of just staying on him. It was like potty training again. I used to spend hours in

the bathroom with him. I knew he was capable, no matter what anyone said."

Brandon has been much calmer for the last three years, despite a fascination with breaking glass. He would take glass bottles from the fridge, dishes or whatever he found, and throw them against a hard surface. "I think it's like a symphony for him -- to hear it shatter, and see the glimmering."



Cupboard, devoid of glassware

Jeanine replaced the dishes with paper plates and plastic cups and bowls. The armoire, with a few bits of family china, is wired shut. The refrigerator remains locked, as well as the cabinets. If Brandon finds a bottle in the fridge, he grabs it, so Jeanine keeps an eagle eye. "This is the longest period of time we've ever had a ceiling that doesn't have holes in it; it's been three

or four years now. I don't have cups... which is fine; I'd rather live off plastic and paper than have holes in my ceiling. It's more expensive to keep up!"

Other adaptations to their home include an alarm system, bathroom remodel and swimming pool. Jeanine describes Brandon's attraction to water, "We put the pool in for him seven years ago; he lives in that pool." She continues, "Brandon loves water. When he's not in the pool, he enjoys the bathtub -- sometimes a little too much!" Brandon also likes to overflow the tub. A drain added during the remodel keeps the rest of the house from flooding. Jeanine put in tile flooring and removed extraneous fixtures.



Brandon plays by the pool

Navigating the transition process went fairly smoothly for them. "You know, it was pretty good. It was all done by the time he was eighteen. Brandon's Service Coordinator, Francisco Santana, has gone above and beyond. When my daughter graduates from High School, this home will transition to serve people receiving Supported Living Services. Francisco has been instrumental in connecting me with the resources to make it happen."

Jeanine is very grateful for the help of Pattis Thompson. When Brandon was young, she asked Pattis to do table tasks

with him. She's been helping since he was five. "What a blessing," says Jeanine. "We couldn't have done without her. She's amazing. She's like his second mother. She goes with me to all his appointments... his dental appointments have to be under anesthesia, she goes to all the IEPs, she knows the lingo."

Along with Pattis, Brandon's three sisters have helped tremendously, as has Brandon's helper, Randy. This circle of support provides multiple perspectives for the best care for Brandon. "I guess that's where the success story came in. We all batted down the hatches and said, 'You know what? We're going to do this. We're going to handle this.' It may have been tough on my daughters, but they wouldn't be who they are if it wasn't for Brandon. I certainly wouldn't be who I am."

After Brandon graduated from high school, Jeanine looked into adult day programs. "But you know, there isn't really a program that's appropriate for him. One-to-one sup-



Brandon with his stuffed animals

port works best. We did a lot of legwork and proposed some creative ideas to the regional center. TCRC worked with us to find ways for him to volunteer in the community. During the week Brandon and his close friend, Randy, go to the Rescue Mission, Habitat for Humanity to straighten up their stores, and to Bargain Box, a thrift store downtown." Jeanine's house serves as

home base. Brandon does gymnastics twice a week and also helps care for alpacas.

To keep things in balance, Jeanine goes on vacation as often as possible, gets time off every other Sunday, when Brandon goes to his dad's house, and finds sanctuary in her work (she co-owns Le Beau Salon and Spa in Ventura).

One family friend thinks they should do an Autism reality TV show. "So many things that happen around here are hilarious. He'll go in the fridge and eat a stick of butter. He loves butter. He used to pour stuff down the sink. He poured laundry soap in the jacuzzi, making tons of bubbles... sometimes you just have to laugh, as there's just no other way to cope with it." Jeanine finds that soap bottles are harder to get into with the help of some super glue.

Brandon loves Disney movies, iPad games and his stuffed animals. Each stuffed animal has a song or sound that Brandon can activate.

Jeanine believes that speech and other therapies have helped. "Brandon can tell you more about what he wants now than he could when he was five or ten years old." He can throw a ball really well and has phenomenal aim. He has a sixth sense about people. Jeanine has learned to interpret his feelings about newcomers based on if or when he approaches them for a good whiff. One needs to pass the "smell test" to join this village.

Jeanine has never wavered in her determination to adapt her family and home to support her son. "It's clear to me I made the right choice."

For others facing issues around transition, Jeanine offers advice born of her experience. "I guess it's just about being patient, and knowing that you're not alone. Reach out and say, 'I need help.' You need to count on people, and if you don't have family, you need to bring outside forces in. That's what we had to do. You have to laugh - - out loud."



Events

Santa Barbara County

ALPHA RESOURCE CENTER

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

email: info@alphasb.org / www.alphasb.org

Santa Maria Office Santa Barbara Office
805.347.2775 877.414.6227
805.683.2145

Alpha Resource Center offers a wide variety of services and supports to encompass the needs of individuals with disabilities of all ages and at all stages of life.

Children & Family Services ~ Assists parents of children with special needs to gain the knowledge and skills to enable their children to be all they can be. Parent-to-parent and family support, parent-professional collaboration, resource meetings and workshops, information & referral, transition, future planning, and much more!

Resource Libraries ~ offer over 2000 titles on developmental and other disabilities. Located at Tri-Counties Regional Center offices in Santa Maria and Santa Barbara. Mobile library services are available. Call for hours or specialized assistance.

Katie's FUND™ ~ provides social and recreational opportunities for teens and young adults with developmental disabilities. Contact: Amy Buesker at 683-2145 x127 or abuesker@alphasb.org.

Alpha Adult Services ~ provides a broad spectrum of services for adults with developmental disabilities. Each participant assists in the development of individualized services tailored to achieve his or her personal goals. 805.964.3547.

CLUB DIVERSITY

First Friday of each month, 7pm-10pm, Jodi House, 625 Chapala St, SB. All ages welcomed, alcohol-free, inclusive event. Club Diversity is about meeting new friends, having fun and working together to eliminate barriers between able bodied individuals and those with disabilities. \$3 fee, \$1 refreshments. DJ & Live Sound, DJ of Ability, Chris Benedict 805.729.1512 or djofability@gmail.com

SANTA BARBARA SPECIAL NEEDS ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS WEBSITE

A wide variety of 100+ community resources, events and information supporting our area special needs agencies. Find activities for all ages posted on website. www.sbSNAP.org

PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT

Sponsored by Special Needs Network. Meets third Thursday of every month, 9:00am at Coffee Diem, 505 S. McClelland Street, SM. Contact: Diana 805.937.8756.

CITY OF SB PARKS & RECREATION DEPT

Check out what they have to offer. Contact: Adapted Programs 805.564.5421.

SOMETHING FOR THE SIBLINGS

The Special Needs Network is a new club for the siblings of individuals with disabilities. The club will consist of several fun activities for the siblings and will also be a chance to get away and relax with others who also have siblings with disabilities. Contact: Laura King, 805.344.1403.

SANTA MARIA SPECIAL EDUCATION & SUPPORT INFORMATION

Kathy Rowley hosts a Yahoo Group for parents of children with special needs who live in Santa Maria. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/santamariassupport>.

AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA - SANTA BARBARA CHAPTER (ASASB)

Contact: Marcia or Sandy at 805.560.3762 or info@asasb.org, www.asasb.org.

SANTA MARIA AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

Has an online support group for parents of children diagnosed with autism. There is also a weekly playgroup that meets at a local park. Contact: 805.714.1187 or email begeasykr@yahoo.com.

LOMPOC AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

A support group for parents and other caregivers of children diagnosed with autism. Contact: Polly Bleavins 805.347.2775 or email pollyb@alphasb.org.

ALPHA PARENT GROUP

A parent support group meets the second Wednesday of the month, 9:30-11:30am at the Alpha Resource Connections library at TCRC. Contact Jennifer Griffin at jgriffin@alphasb.org or call Alpha at 805.683.2145.

ART OF AUTISM

The Art of Autism has various events around Santa Barbara County throughout the year. Visit www.the-art-of-autism.com or email theartofautism@gmail.com.

SBATA@YAHOOGROUPS.COM

Online group for parents of special needs children, email info@asasb.org.

NEW DIRECTIONS TRAVEL CLUB

Come join this fun club for adults with special needs who love to travel! We meet the 3rd Tuesday of each month 5pm-7pm for dinner and travel presentation. Call 805-967-2841 for dates and meeting locations.

AQUATIC WELLNESS AND EXERCISE - TUOHY FOUNDATION AQUATIC CENTER

2415 De la Vina Street, SB. Wheelchair accessible with depths from 3 1/2 ft. to 6 1/2 ft) Aquatic exercise equipment is available to pool users. Aquatic Wellness and Exercise Programs are open to the public and instrumental in helping participants meet their personal fitness goals. Organized by Cottage Hospital Rehabilitation Center. Apts. required for classes, phone (805) 569-8999, ext. 82552 or <http://www.sbch.org>

5TH ANNUAL DSASBC BUDDY WALK & FESTIVAL

5th Annual DSASBC Buddy Walk and Festival, Saturday, May 14, 2014, Chase Palm Park Great Meadow, Santa Barbara – Volunteer, Fundraise, Sponsor and Register online at www.dsasbc.org

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara County Region offers year-round sports programs and competitions for 350 children, teen, and adult athletes from Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, and Goleta. Fall sports for youth and adults are set to begin in August. Sports include floor hockey, bowling, soccer, tennis and softball. Call 805-884-1516 to learn more.

SUMMER CAMP AND ACTIVITY GUIDE Available online at www.sbSNAP.org

SANTA MARIA NONVIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAININGS

Program focuses on management of disruptive, assaultive, out-of-control behavior. Initial Course designed for school staff. Refresher Course: to renew certification. Phone: 805-683-1424 or <http://sbcselpa.org/Events.aspx>

ADAPTED GOLF PROGRAM

Mondays: 9:00 to 11:00am. Santa Barbara Golf Club, 3500 McCaw Ave, Santa Barbara. Designed for persons with physical, visual

Santa Barbara County

or cognitive impairments. \$8.00 for 30-minute lesson, or 6 lessons for \$30. Includes: putting, chipping, and/or driving with occasional use of the golf course. Program is wheelchair accessible. Organized by René Van Hoorn, RTC. 805-569-8999 x82102

3-2-1 FAMILY PLAY GROUP FOR PARENTS THAT HAVE CHILDREN BIRTH - 4 YEARS OLD WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Meets monthly at various locations to help parents of children with Down syndrome birth through 4 years old and siblings of similar age to connect and play with other families. For details and monthly updates, contact Jamie Weitzman@yahoo.com or 805-566-4753

NORTH COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Meets every 1st Friday at McDonalds, Lompoc from 10 - 11:30am. Come share your experiences, meet new people and get resources while your children play. All are welcome. Website or Map: <http://alphasb.org>. Organized by Jennifer Griffin Phone: 683-2145 or jgriffin@alphasb.org

INCLUSIVE CHEERLEADING!

Spring and Fall - Santa Barbara location. Challenger Cheerleading - Inclusive of children and teens of ALL abilities to learn cheer, dance and stunts for community performances. Instructed by local Cheerleading coaches/camp instructors. Fees: \$35 per child includes practice uniform and pom poms. Contact Retta Slay 805/681-9165. Organized by college students and community volunteers.

YOGA FOR ALL

4-6 week sessions run throughout the year at the Goleta Valley Community Center. Come stretch and flex with Molly Pennette and Jessica Simons; bring your own mat, towels and water bottles. \$5 per session-drop in anytime. Parents welcome to participate, 805-681-9165 or www.sbSNAP.org
MUSIC with SWING Along Band including Wheel Chair Dancers for Adults -Seniors! Every Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30am to 12pm - Wheelchair users and those with special needs are welcomed to join the twice weekly adult/senior social dance

group that meets at the Goleta Valley Community Center -Organized by GVCC Senior Center; Contact Amey at 805-683-1124.

SB MOPS = MOTHERS OF PRE-SCHOOLERS

Every other Wednesday during the school year from 9am to 11:15am - Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara. We have put this site together to help all you moms out there keep track of current MOPS activities as well as have a place to contact us or just learn more about our group! Organized by Joylyn Kovacevich Joylyn@sbmops.com

CHALLENGER FOOTBALL - FLAG FOOTBALL (*ADAPTIVE)

August 23rd - Nov 1, 2014 10:00 - 11:30 am: Santa Barbara Location. Boys and Girls ages 5-18 with physical, developmental, intellectual challenges are invited to participate in this increasingly popular sport. Wheelchair users included! Sign up NOW! Flag Football and CheerLeading Registration forms at www.GoChallengers.org. Organized By: Central Coast Challenger Volunteers (Retta Slay) Phone: 805/681-9165

BEACH DAY AT LEDBETTER BEACH

May 31 and June 1, 2014 8:30 am - 1:00 pm: Ledbetter Beach. Surfing, bodyboarding, kayaking experiences and more for adventurous children with special needs. Volunteer life guards and experienced volunteers support your child in the water; adapted equipment for those with limited mobility too. Register RIGHT away for this popular program. www.bestdayfoundation.org/sba

ASASB SURF AND SAND BEACH DAY FOR ALL

August, 2014. Campus Point, Santa Barbara. Learn to surf, kayak, and boogie board. info@asasb.org

NEXT CHAPTER BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (SPONSORED BY DSASBC)

The Next Chapter Book Club offers weekly opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to read and learn together, talk about books, and make friends in a relaxed, community setting. Emergent Readers (non-

readers) welcomed! volunteer facilitators lead our book clubs. Contact 805-681-9165 for locations of book clubs in Ventura and SB County; and Volunteer Facilitator Trainings.

CHALLENGER SUMMER CAMP WITH THE SB FORESTERS

Girsh Park, June 2014. Enjoy three mornings of T-ball, baseball skills camp and fun games, relays and summer activities by our local baseball champions, the Santa Barbara Foresters. Camp is 10 til Noon. Challenger volunteers support our players, \$20. for snacks, and T-shirt! Dates and schedule online soon at www.GoChallengers.org.

CHALLENGER FALL BALL SKILLS CLUB

meets Sundays, 3-4:30 pm, beginning Sept 7 at Goleta Valley South Little League fields behind the Page Youth Center, 4540 Hollister Avenue, SB. www.GoChallengers.org.

BASKETBALL SKILLS CLINIC AT PAGE YOUTH CENTER

for kids and teens with special needs, indoor and outdoor courts. Six Tuesdays, every Spring and Fall from 3:45 - 5 pm. Check schedule at www.sbSNAP.org.

MONSTER BALL GAMES AND SPORTS AT GIRSH PARK

children 4 -age 22 can participate with MONSTER sized inflatable sports balls led by our volunteers - volleyball, basketball, soccer, baseball and MORE! Come ready to play - Saturday, October 25, 2- 4:30 pm at Girsh Park. www.sbSNAP.org.

Interested in Learning to Ride a Bike?

iCAN Shine Bike Camp 2014

Most Individuals 8 years and up will learn to ride a classic 2-wheeled bike in just five, 75 minute sessions in this specialized program.

Details and Registration forms online at www.sbSNAP.org; Enroll NOW in either of these 2 Central Coast locations:

June 9 - 13, Santa Barbara
info@sbSNAP.org or call 805-403-8855

July 7 - 11, Camarillo
jeri@pvrrpd.org; 805-482-1996, ext 10,12 or 13

\$135 fee; limited scholarships available. Volunteers needed to spot in each location.

San Luis Obispo County

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

email: php@ucp-slo.org

www.phpslo.org

San Luis Obispo Office

Atascadero Office

800.456.4153 x3277

805.461.7415 or 805.543.3277



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

PHP serves families of children with special needs throughout San Luis Obispo County. Two lending libraries, which cover a wide variety of special needs topics, are equipped with toys, games and a place for children to play while their parents browse. PHP has a network of experienced staff and parents available for mentoring and support. A reliable source of current information, referrals, and training, PHP regularly e-mails a Calendar of Upcoming Events to interested families.

Contact: 805.543.3277 (SLO) or 805.461.7415 (Atascadero) or php@ucp-slo.org
www.facebook.com/ParentsHelpingParentsSLO/

PHP SPONSORED EVENTS

CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS SERIES

Parents Helping Parents is presenting a series of monthly programs designed to provide parents information and resources to help them plan their children's transition to a more independent life. Please phone us if you would like to be placed on the interest list.

GET CONNECTED AT PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

Come into Parents Helping Parents Family Resource Center to meet other parents and PHP's resource specialists! Past events have featured tips and free resources for families as well as presentations from professionals such as a music therapist and a child life specialist. Parents are encouraged to bring their children. Get Connected occurs monthly. Call PHP at 805-543-3277

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE SUPPORT GROUP FOR SSI (SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME)

A monthly support group for Representative Payees. The purpose is to share information about record keeping, reports, disbursements and more. This month will have special guest Pedro Mendoza, TCRC Benefits Coordinator.

Friday, April 25, 10-11:30 am

PHP Library, 3450 Broad St, Suite 111, SLO
RSVP to php@ucp-slo.org or 543-3277

CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS

Spring topics will be SSI and a Transitional Fair. Look for an email, or check our Facebook page for specific dates.

UCP EVENTS

SIBSHOPS

Sibshops are fun-filled workshops just for brothers and sisters of children with special needs. This is a great opportunity for kids to meet other siblings, play games, do crafts, share experiences and have A LOT of fun! For upcoming Sibshop dates, please contact Elle San Juan at 408.348.3539 or email centralcoastsibshop@yahoo.com.

UCP KIDS CLUB FOR 6 – 12 YEAR OLDS & UCP TEEN CLUB FOR 13 – 17 YEAR OLDS

Community recreation activities and socialization opportunities for kids and teens with special needs, including transportation and supervision. For the most recent events, call Mandy at UCP Youth Services, 543.7102 or youthservices@ucp-slo.org.

UCP COMMUNITY INTERACTION PROGRAM: TOURS FOR ADULTS

CIP tours are supervised vacations for adults with special needs. Tour prices include transportation, lodging, meals, support staff, and all activities. For information on upcoming tours, please contact Kristine at 543.2039 or kristine@ucp-slo.org.

UCP LEISURE CLUB LOCAL OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS

Saturday afternoon activities and outings for adults with special needs. For upcoming events, please contact Kristine at 543.2039 or kristine@ucp-slo.org.

ARTS FOR LIVING - MUSIC CLUB

In SLO every other Thursday 4-5 pm and Atascadero every other Tuesday 6-7 pm. Call for exact locations and dates, Laura at 225-6101 or email Ldeloye@ucp-slo.org

ARTS FOR LIVING - GLEE CLUB

Wednesdays 5:30-6:30 pm at UCP, 3620 Sacramento St, Suite 201
Call Laura at 225-6101 or email Ldeloye@ucp-slo.org

SLO EXCURSIONS FOR 12-17 YEAR OLDS

Educational and social outings for teens under the supervision of a certified Behavioral Specialist.

For registration information please contact: Ellen Gruetzmacher : 543-2039, or ellen@ucp-slo.org UCP Family Services

THE THIRD ANNUAL HOE DOWN AT THE RANCH

Saturday, May 17th, 4 to 7 PM

This fun, family friendly event will feature food by Old San Luis BBQ, live music by Off The Griddle Band, Bounce House, Face Painting, and more! All proceeds to benefit "The Ranch", teaching employment skills to adults with disabilities in an agricultural setting.

ONGOING

ADVENTURE CLUB SLO

Adventure Club SLO is a fully vendored alternative day program serving over forty people each week. Operating year round in SLO county for the last six years, we focus on outdoor, nature based adventures and also encourage creativity (film making, art work, music) collaboration and connection with peers and the community. Adventure Club SLO is awesome!

Contact John@AdventureclubSLO.com or 805-471-7889. www.adventureclubslo.com

ADULT SOCIAL CLUB

An opportunity for adults with autism or Asperger's syndrome to get together, share information and life experiences, and meet others dealing with similar issues. First Thursday of every month from 6:30pm-8:30pm. United Methodist Church, Wesley Building, SLO. Call Central Coast Autism Spectrum Center at 805-763-1100.

San Luis Obispo County

CENTRAL COUNTY AUTISM PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

An opportunity to network and socialize with other parents of children (up to age 18) challenged with Autism Spectrum Disorders (including Asperger's Syndrome/HFA/PDD-NOS). Third Friday of every other month (even numbered months), 6:30 – 9:00pm. Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center Auditorium, San Luis Obispo
Contact: Trisha or David Oksner at 474.9750 or slosupport@autismspectrumcenter.com

FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES

Get to know other parents and their children while enjoying a fun activity. Contact John or Candace at 710.0404.

MOMMY AND ME LITTLE SWIMMERS

This parent and child class is designed for children ages 2 to 8 years with special physical needs to engage them in fun water activities that encourage both physical and social development. Class may be joined at any time and is offered year-round. Taught by Kay Heaton, B.S.M.S., Kinesio-Therapist. Fridays, 1:00pm – 2:00pm San Luis Obispo.
To register, call 805-547-1914 or email Mary at Jhh@jackshelpinghand.org.

NORTH COUNTY ADAPTIVE SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAM

This program, in partnership with Atascadero Parks and Recreation, provides weekly adapted sporting and social activities for anyone with special needs from 15 to 50+ years. Basketball, volleyball, kickball, swimming, line dancing, parties – these are just some of the activities provided. Most activities are held at the Colony Park Community Center in Atascadero. There is no charge for participation in this program. Call 238-0702 or 772-1806 for more information.

NORTH COUNTY AUTISM SPECTRUM PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Friday of every other month (odd numbered months), 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Becky, 471.1354 or nocosupport@autismspectrumcenter.com

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

San Luis Obispo County Region offers year-round sports programs and competitions for athletes countywide. Sports include Aquatics, Power Soccer (Motorized Wheelchair), Golf, Gymnastics, Bocce, Track & Field. Call 805-544-6444 to learn more.

SOUTH COUNTY AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

2nd Tuesday of each month from 12:00pm – 1:30pm. Grover Beach. Contact Leslie Barton, LMFT at 541-7908.

TEEN SOCIAL CLUB

Bi-monthly social and recreational activities for teens on and off the spectrum. Ages 11 to 17 years old. Contact Kim Richards, MFT-I at krichards@autismspectrumcenter.com or 530-321-0301.

THE 5 CITIES AUTISM PARENT SUPPORT GROUP DISCUSSION GROUP

For parents and families of children (0-17 years) on the autism spectrum. Last Friday of every month from 6:30 – 9:00pm Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, Annex Building. Email slosupport@autismspectrumcenter.com.

YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL CLUB

Bi-monthly get togethers for young adults on and off the spectrum. Contact Kim Richards, MFT-I at krichards@autismspectrumcenter.com or 530-321-0301.

CHILDREN'S DAY IN THE PARK

Bounce houses, piñatas, the Elk's Train & more! Saturday, May 17, 11am-3pm. Atascadero Lake Park. Call 470-3360 for more info

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA PADRES / PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Open forum support group in North County, facilitated in Spanish. Dates through May, 6:30-8 pm. Para mas informacion, llame a Pedro Inzunza Arroyo al 769-1000, x 30125. Gratis.

LOVE AND LOGIC FOR PARENTS

Love allows children to grow through their mistakes. Logic allows them to live with the consequences of their actions. Learn

the Love and Logic process of building relationships through discipline. 5/10-5/17, in SLO.

ACTIVE PARENTING

A collaboration with Parent Connection of SLO County. You will learn skills that will help you develop cooperation, responsibility and good character in your children. You will also learn positive discipline techniques so you can avoid those all-too-familiar power struggles.

5/5-5/19

For more information, go to www.parent-participation.org or call 549-1222. Pre-registration is required.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PERSON CENTERED THINKING

Tri-Counties will be offering a 3 day training that will help you and the people who work closely with your family to focus on your child and their wishes and needs. April 25, May 2 and 9, 8:30 am – 12:45 pm Tri-Counties Regional Center
For more information, contact Tina Caldero-Mendoza at tina@tri-counties.org



Ventura County



RAINBOW CONNECTION

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

email: rainbow@tri-counties.org

Oxnard Office: 2401 East Gonzales Road,
#100, Oxnard, CA 93036
Monday through Friday
9:00am to 5:00pm
(805) 485-9643 Main Phone
(800) 332-3679 Toll Free
(805) 485-9892 Spanish Line
(805) 278-9056 Fax

Simi Valley Office: 1900 Los Angeles Ave,
Simi Valley, CA 93065
Monday through Thursday and by
appointment
9:00am to 1:00pm
(805)823-2325 Main Phone
(805) 485-9892 Spanish Line and by
appointment

Website: <http://rainbowconnectionfrc.weebly.com> or find us at Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/RainbowConnectionFRC>.

Rainbow Connection provides support, information, training and activities for families. Here is a list of on-going support groups:

We encourage you to attend a support group at least once. You will be surprised at how much it will help you and how much you can help others. As there might not always be a support group available for a specific diagnosis, we try to provide a parent match upon request. Please contact us to register or for a copy of the current "What's Happening at Rainbow?" schedule of activities.

ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL TIME FOR ADULTS RECEIVING SERVICES (BILINGUAL) SANTA PAULA
Meets 2nd Sunday of the month. Come, bring a friend or just come meet new people, for conversation, playing games or for refreshments and some fresh air.

RAINBOW MOMS DAY OUT - OXNARD (SPANISH)
Typically meets 3rd week of the month. Come and enjoy time with other mothers of children with special needs and relax.

AUTISM SUPPORT

AUTISM PARENT SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH)
Meets 2nd Tuesday 7 - 8:30pm in Oxnard. Families meet to share the experiences they've had with their children with Autism and to learn about resources.

AUTISMO SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH)
Meets 1st Thursday of the month, 7 - 8:30pm in Oxnard Families meet to share their experiences, resources and information.

DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT

DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP - SPANISH
Meets last Tuesday of the month, in Oxnard 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm, Families have open discussions on issues related to raising children with Down syndrome.

SUPPORT FOR ALL SPECIAL NEEDS

ADULTHOOD (22YRS THROUGH LIFE, TCRC PERSON SERVED): THE JOURNEY CONTINUES "SPECIAL FAMILY NETWORK"
6:30pm - 8pm in Oxnard Meets 2nd Tuesday of every other month. English Parents/caregivers support group for families who have an adult family member ages 22 and older with special needs. Join us as we endeavor this journey together as well as share resources for our grown children.
*Registration Required.

NBVC (NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY) SPECIAL PARENTS NETWORK

2nd Wednesday of the month
Time & place varies, please contact us.
Parents Helping Parents Support Group for active and retired military families with children with special needs. For information and to RSVP please contact Rainbow.

SANTA PAULA SUPPORT GROUP - SPANISH
Meets 1st Monday of the month 5:30pm – 7:00pm. Families meet to share the experiences and resources.

SPECIAL FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP - SPANISH

Meets 1st Friday of the month 6:30pm – 8pm in Oxnard Families meet to share the experiences and resources.

SIMI PARENTS OF ADULT CHILDREN CONNECTION - SPANISH

Meets 1st Friday of the month 11:30am – 1pm. Families of adult children with special needs meet to connect & share information.

SIMI SPECIAL FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP - SPANISH

3rd Friday of the month 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. Families of school aged children (Under 18yrs) meet to share experiences and talk about raising children with special needs.

SANTA CLARA SUPPORT GROUP (FILLMORE, PIRU) - SPANISH

Meets 3rd Tuesday of the month 10:30am – 12 noon. Families meet to share the experiences they've had with their children with special needs and learn about resources.

SIMI SPECIAL PARENTS NETWORK - ENGLISH

9:30 – 11am, 3rd Tuesday of the month in Simi. Come and join us for a cup of coffee, learn about our resources and talk about issues related to raising children with special needs.

SPANISH SUPPORT GROUP PARTNERSHIP

These support groups are sponsored by Rainbow Connection in collaboration with professionals from community service agencies. Families of children with special

Ventura County

needs (0-3 yrs) have a Pot-luck & social time, followed by a guest speaker. Volunteers help parents watch children.

SIMI "APRENDIENDO JUNTOS" SUPPORT GROUP

5:30 – 7:30pm Meets 1st Wed of the month.

SANTA PAULA "FAMILIAS UNIDAS" SUPPORT

5:30 – 7:30pm Group Meets 2nd Wednesday of the month.

INFORMATIONAL

THE IEP BASICS – ENGLISH

Every second Monday of the month, 12 noon – 1pm, via Conference Call, Facilitated by Laurie Jordan, Director, Rainbow Connection F.R.C. Join us by phone to learn about the basics of IEP's (Individual Education Program) Different topics will be presented each time with the opportunity for discussion at the end. Please register to receive the phone number, access code and have any handouts sent to you in advance.

ALL ABOUT ME

Create your child's (or adult served by TCRC) Personal Profile. This is a great way to share valuable information. Simply give a copy of the Personal Profile to the people who will be interacting and working with your child – the teacher, aides, therapists, etc. Give us a call and we'll help you put together your child's very own Personal Profile. Individual Appointments can be scheduled upon request. For persons receiving services through TCRC.

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER EARLY START?

For Your Child with Special Needs Will your child be turning 3 years old and transitioning out of the Early Start Program? Changes can be confusing. Let's make the transition a little easier. Schedule an appointment today! You will receive a free booklet that has been helpful to other parents. Individual Appointments can be scheduled upon request. For persons receiving services through TCRC.

OTHER COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

The following support groups can be contacted directly.

CHALLENGER BASEBALL NOW IN VENTURA

Co-ed, ages 5-Highschool, registration starts Jan, Season runs from March-May. www.GoChallengers.org 805-681-9165.

BRANDON'S BUDDIES

A free play date for children of all abilities. 1st Sat of the month in Calabasas. To RSVP call Dina Kaplan 818 222-8118 brandons-buddies@pacbell.net

THE FUN CLUB

A social and recreational opportunity for persons 5 -15 and 16 yrs & older with special needs through the City of Oxnard Adaptive Program. Call 805 385-8019 for info.

CONEJO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT'S THERAPEUTIC UNIT

Children and adults from all over the county attend activities. It is a model program throughout the State. The Director is Cecilia Laufenberg. Thousand Oaks (805) 381-2739 <http://www.crpdp.org/parkfac/therapeuticrecreation/program/default.asp>

SPECIAL OLYMPICS VENTURA COUNTY

Special Olympics Ventura County offers training and competition opportunities in 10 different year-round sports at over 20 different training sites throughout Ventura County. The Ventura County program not only provides people with intellectual disabilities with physical fitness and athletic competition, but also social interaction and community involvement. (805) 654-7787. www.vcso.org

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Designed to foster a relationship between community teenagers and children giving them a chance to develop social skills and experience diverse activities. Programs offered are Sports Night, Friends at Home,

Gymnastics Programs, Sunday Circle, and a Winter Camp that includes Rock Climbing and Sibling workshops.

Agoura Hills (818) 865-2233
www.FriendshipCircleCa.org

AUTISM SOCIETY VENTURA COUNTY (ASVC)

ASVC holds Community Talk Nights usually on the third Friday of the month from 7-9pm in which guest speakers present on topics important to parents, and parents are able to mingle, socialize and network. Free onsite childcare is usually provided. <http://www.autismventura.org/events/> For more information call 805-496-1632 or www.autismventura.org

CENTER4SPECIALNEEDS

Organizes Mom's & Dad's Night Out events and events and trainings. Support for families with children with special needs. <http://center4specialneeds.org>

PAUSE4KIDS INC. – ENGLISH SUPPORT GROUP

For more info go to: <http://pause4kids.org/> or leave a message at 805-497-9596

THE TRANSITIONS SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children and young adults aged 10 – 28 and young adults who have special needs aged 18-28. Please contact Susan – susan@baukus.net

CONNECTING HIGH SCHOOL & POST SECONDARY PARENTS GROUP (BILINGUAL)

12/10 6:30pm-8pm in Oxnard 2nd Tuesday of every other month

*Groups meet separately in English and Spanish. An informal group of parents with students in high school and post secondary education who meet to share information and concerns on their children's future.

UNITED PARENTS

Assists families of children with Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders. Office (805) 384-1555

With each issue of the TriLine, we provide information on some of the resources available to families within the Tri-Counties area. Please call to confirm dates and times of events. Check with your Service Coordinator for information on other resources available to you in your area.



Advances In The Treatment Of Developmental Disorders: 3. Autism *(Third feature in a series)*

by James O'Hanlon, Ph.D., Psychopharmacologist

Autism has long been recognized as a heterogeneous disorder. It is generally accepted that autism develops from the interaction of multiple abnormal genes, though not necessarily the same set in every individual. Gene products in deficit or excess are thought to disrupt brain development, eventually producing a pathophysiological process that causes behavioral symptoms. The number and type of the genes involved as well as the variable disruption of brain development and mature functions determine the symptoms that likewise vary in kind and severity. These concepts pose problems for the rational treatment of autism with medication. By the time autism is diagnosed, it is usually too late to reverse a failure in brain development. An ongoing pathophysiological process that is common to all or most individuals with autism would be an attractive target for drugs. However, ignorance of what that might be led until now to the use of medication for reducing particular symptoms, like irritability, with drugs originally developed for other purposes. Foremost among them were antipsychotics, which indeed reduce irritability but at the cost of side effects; e.g., weight gain, drowsiness and involuntary movements.

That there may be better alternatives sprang from separate discoveries that the pathophysiological processes of oxidative stress and neuroinflammation consistently occur in people with autism. Oxidative stress occurs when the intracellular production of charged particles or 'free radicals' exceeds the neutralizing capacity of the cell's antioxidant system. Escaping free radicals bind indiscriminately to cellular components, disrupting their functions. Owing to its intricacy and limited antioxidant capacity, the brain is the organ most vulnerable to oxidative stress. The first indication that the deleterious process occurs in autism came from a comparison of a plasma levels of oxidized cellular debris in autistic children relative to their non-autistic siblings. Not only was the marker of oxidative stress higher in 87% the autistic children but also 84% of them had lower circulating antioxidant levels than their siblings.¹ Later studies have confirmed and

expanded the initial results, even to the point of showing evidence of long-term oxidative stress in brain tissue.

Neuroinflammation is a natural response of the immune system to injury or infection in the brain. Central to this process are cells known as microglia that normally reside in a quiescent state. Upon receiving a chemical signal of infection or injury, microglia change shape, become mobile and migrate to the site of injury. There, microglia ingest pathogens or cellular debris and secrete proinflammatory substances causing local vasodilatation and edema. Microglia normally participate in the first stage of an immune reaction and lapse into quiescence once it is over. But they may not deactivate if the source of their activation is chronic, low-level oxidative stress. Moreover, microglia may perpetuate oxidative stress in a vicious feedback loop. Though maladaptive when the cause of activation is oxidative stress, microglia respond as if they were combating microbes. They produce free radicals and disrupt the antioxidant functions of astrocytes, another species of glia. This concept of the connection between oxidative stress and neuroinflammation is hypothetical but the presence of neuroinflammation in the autistic brain is not. Combined results of three postmortem studies show unequivocal signs of neuroinflammation in most (86%) of the autistic subjects but in none of the matched controls.²

If oxidative stress and neuroinflammation are locked in a feedback loop, treating one should correct both. The simplest was to address oxidative stress is by increasing the efficiency of the body's antioxidant system. This approach was recognized by investigators in America (Stanford U.)³ and Iran (Shiraz U.)⁴ who independently undertook small but well-controlled studies to assess the effects of n-acetylcysteine (NAC) in children with autism. [NAC is a nutritional supplement that provides a key component for the synthesis of glutathione, the body's prime antioxidant.] Though the

doses used and the duration of treatment differed between the studies, the major results were the same: children receiving NAC became increasingly less irritable than others receiving placebo. Repetitious, stereotyped behavior also decreased more in the former than the latter children in both studies. Neuroinflammation has been more difficult to address because no drug has ever been specifically developed as an anti-inflammatory that only works in the brain. Nonetheless, several drugs developed for other purposes incidentally inhibit microglial activation and may possess that property. Pioglitazone, an anti-diabetic, was tested in an uncontrolled study with child and adolescent autistic patients.⁵ Their behavior improved during 3-4 months on the drug in all respects except verbal communication. Interestingly, the youngest children improved the most. Pentoxifylline, used for improving blood flow, had similar across-the-board effects in children with autism in a 10-week controlled trial.⁶



Illustration of neuroinflammation

Yet one of the most potent inhibitors of microglial activation, the antibiotic minocycline, failed to improve the behavior of children in a small uncontrolled study. But as the investigators admitted, the administered doses were very low (only 35% of those recommended for treating infection in children) so the results of their study are inconclusive. Oxidative stress and neuroinflammation do not cause autism. But these pathological processes may well contribute to its symptoms in the majority of cases. And, they are treatable, even with existing drugs and dietary supplements. One can reasonably expect continued research to confirm concepts expressed here. Once that is done, one can further expect more efficacious drugs, with fewer side effects, than any currently used for treating autism.

¹ Chauhan A et al (2004). *Life Science* 74: 2539-2549

² Vargas DI et al (2005). *Annals of Neurology* 57: 67-81

³ Hardan AY et al (2012). *Biological Psychiatry* 71: 956-961

⁴ Ghanizadeh A, Moghimi-Sarini E et al (2013). *BMC Psychiatry* 13:196

⁵ Boris M et al (2007). *BMC Journal of Neuroinflammation* 4:3

⁶ Akhondzadeh S et al (2010). *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology & Biological Psychiatry* 34: 32-36

Advances In The Treatment Of Developmental Disorders: 3. Autism, EDITOR'S SYNOPSIS

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator

Many experts believe that Autism develops when abnormal genes (DNA) interact. If a person's genes produce too much or too little of their particular protein products, the brain may not develop normally. Eventually this may produce a variety of behavioral symptoms at varying levels of severity depending on which genes are involved and how the brain's development and functions are impacted.

By the time doctors are able to diagnose Autism, it's usually too late to reverse the problems that the disease has caused in brain development. Because of this, the medications currently available don't treat the cause of Autism, they can only treat the secondary problems caused by the condition. Until recently, many of the drugs used to treat Autism were medications not specifically intended for use with Autism. These medications were designed to reduce behavioral symptoms such as irritability. Unfortunately these drugs have serious side effects, including weight gain,

sleeplessness, and uncontrolled movements. It may be possible however, to find new drug therapies to effectively treat some of the secondary effects of Autism.

Separate studies led to discoveries of the biological bases of disturbed behavior in Autism: oxidative stress and brain inflammation. Oxidative stress happens when the body produces more free radicals than the body's system can handle. The excess free radicals attach to structural components within cells and interfere with the way they function. Because the brain is so complex and has limited antioxidant capacity, it is the most vulnerable of the body's organs to oxidative stress.

Brain inflammation is the immune system's natural response to injury or infection in the brain. The key actors in this response are microglia. These are cells that are usually inactive until they receive a chemical signal of infection or injury. Once the body starts to recover, the microglia go back to

an inactive state. However, if the reason they are active is due to chronic, low-level oxidative stress, they may get stuck in a vicious cycle and not return to their inactive state.

New drugs, developed for other conditions, may treat inflammation in the brain. They include pioglitazone, pentoxifylline and possibly minocycline. The same is true for treating oxidative stress. For that n-acetylcysteine (NAC), a dietary supplement, has shown promise in two studies with children who have Autism.

Although their connection is not yet proven, oxidative stress and brain inflammation most likely contribute to the symptoms of Autism in most patients. Both of these conditions are treatable with existing drugs and dietary supplements. If studies continue to confirm these ideas, we should see drugs with fewer side effects coming on the market to better treat Autism.

Sharing and Learning at the California Gathering for Person Centered Practices

by Heather Wennergren, Media Coordinator

TCRC hosted the 6th Annual California Gathering in September. Organizer Tina Calderaro-Mendoza was pleased to have more persons served and family members join this year than ever before. The event aims to increase awareness and share learning around person centered practices, as well as promoting person centered system change. Attendees traveled from multiple states, and included staff and stakeholders from Regional Centers, Family Resource Centers, Schools, Service Providers, and the International Learning Community for Person Centered Practices. Scholarships were donated from Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center, CHOICES Supportive Living and TCRC.

Participating in an icebreaker, Cecilia Prado-Rangel posts her note to one of the state map posters. The purpose of this exercise was to understand where participants were from, what they wanted to contribute, and what they desired to learn. This is just one of the many ways attendees could share their knowledge and grow partnership.



Service Coordinator Cecilia Prado-Rangel posts her note



Greetings from the President

by Robyn Adkins, TCADD Board Director

Change may not always be welcome, but it is often a necessary ingredient for growth. The Developmental Services system has been in an environment of change over the past few years. Fortunately, there has been a stronger economic environment in California over the last year and the Regional Centers have received some relief from the budgetary constraint. The Regional Center has continued to face the implementation of change around such issues as SB 946 requiring insurance plans to cover certain services for autism. Other issues are on the horizon such as the statewide implementation of Self Directed Services. I'm confident that TCRC will continue to track impending influences, preemptively learning of potential changes and take a collaborative, planful approach to ensure that a positive impact can result for persons served by the regional center system.

The 2013-2015 Strategic Performance Plan is a good

example of the Regional Center gathering information and making decisions that support change. The three Strategic Focus Areas, 1 Family Support, 2 Autism and 3 Information and Communication embrace change in a positive and productive approach. Both Focus Areas 1 and 2 address the needs of transition for families. As families experience the transition into a part of the regional center system at the time of identification or diagnosis, as young children leave Early Start services and as young adults graduate from high school, the regional center works to provide support and information. Focus Area takes into consideration the need for communications to be available to all TCRC stakeholders in a form that is best for a particular person. This is a huge task but the fact that TCRC is undertaking this project demonstrates the continuing commitment to the optimal support for all persons served.

On page seven, read about one parent who doesn't shy away from a challenge. Her approach has contributed to the success of her son's transition to adulthood. Not

only did she bring together a "village" to support her son, but was creative in finding solutions to a unique set of issues. I have heard many similar stories from our stakeholders. The challenges that are met and surpassed by those in our community can be profound. I am often left in awe of so many of the people and families we serve.

As stakeholders, we have different roles, but our goal as a community is to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities remains the same. Together we can continue meeting challenges with ingenuity to create the best future for the people receiving services.

As TCADD Board members, the work of providing governance to the regional center is meaningful. We are actively recruiting new Board members. Learn how to apply in the announcement below. Join us!

In appreciation of your interest in the work of the Regional Center and the TCADD Board, with warm regards~

Bring Your Skills and Ideas to the TCADD Board

Contributing to the well being of persons served by TCRC is a rewarding experience. Many TCADD board members have served their terms and seats for these valued roles are opening. Family members are encouraged to apply, especially those with management, public relations, education or other non-profit experience. Please email BoardSecretary@tri-counties.org for more information. Or visit our website at www.tri-counties.org, select TCADD Board of Directors, then Membership / Role. We need your help to improve quality of life and protect the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Tri-Counties Regional Center Headquarters

520 E. Montecito Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
805.962.7881 Tel
800.322.6994 Toll-Free
www.tri-counties.org

Tri-Counties Association for the Developmentally Disabled Inc. (TCADD) Board of Directors

Robyn Adkins
President

Rachel Huff
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Michael Kaszycki
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Mani Gaur

Casey Hamlin

Donna Moore

Shanti Nadiminti

Susan Rasmussen

Robin Rosso

Ryan Wilkinson

2014 Upcoming Board Meetings

June 7.....10:00 am (Ven)
July 11.....6:00 pm (SB)
Sept 5.....6:00 pm (SB)
Oct 4.....10:00 am (SLO)
Nov 7.....6:00 pm (SB)

2014 Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

May 15..... Simi Valley
July 17..... Santa Maria
Sept 11..... Oxnard