



# Uniting Parents' Newsletter

## Director's Note

Spring 2008

<http://unitingparents.cohs.net>



Dear Families,

Welcome to another addition of our newsletter. In this article, I would like to address guardianships, power of attorneys, and higher education options.

Prior to legal age, most parents start looking into guardianships and/or power of attorneys. However, some decide not to pursue either option. Recently, Region 16 Education Service Center provided training to parents about guardianships, wills, and trusts. Here are some tips from that workshop at the Region 16 ESC.

First of all, parents are encouraged to begin planning at least 6 months prior to their child's 18 birthday when contemplating acquiring guardianship.

Secondly, guardianship is probably the most expensive of the two. However, it also comes with a higher level of security. Guardianship requires that parents take away the rights of their children such as voting, signing contracts and making financial decisions. As the guardian, you take full responsibility for your young adult including giving the courts a summary of all expenses related to the care of our adult child on an annual basis.

Parents sometimes opt for power of attorney, if they don't want to take their rights away and feel their young adult can be held accountable for their choices. Your adult child has to however give you the authority to be their power of attorney. The cost is less and your young adult could revoke the power of attorney if he/she so decided to. There is no annual financial reporting with this type of option.

Other parents decide not to take action which leaves them clearly open to endure the pain of unscrupulous individuals taking advantage of their adult

child. Even so, some parents feel that they live in communities where they have close ties with everyone and having either power of attorney or guardianship is not necessary at age 18 but may consider it later in life. That is a parent's choice and the best decision is one that is made with proper education and plenty of information. Most professionals recommend that you take action prior to their legal age since their young adults do acquire the rights every other adult inherits at age 18.

In order to help you prepare, consider talking to other parents that have taken this journey already. Learn from their experiences. Here are a couple of other resources to help you through this journey: The Arc of TX at 800.252.9729 or contact attorney, Amy Shelhamer at 806.372.5569. Your case manager can also help you find additional information and resources.

Now, let's talk about higher education options. We have a couple of promising programs in the Panhandle. Where the Leaning Continues (WTLC) program located at WTAMU and Amarillo College (AC).

First of all, students with disabilities must self disclose that they have a disability and seek modifications when attending any higher education program or vocational program. No one will know that your child needs support unless they advocate for themselves. WTLC and AC both have disability coordinators that can assist students in acquiring modifications according to the regulations of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Secondly, WTLC offers continued academics for students who are independent and can navigate a college campus. Students from the education department and from the behavioral sciences department assist in acclimating students into college life and serve as mentors. Students pay enrollment fees just like other college bound students and enjoy the life of a college student. Contact Sammie Artho

at 651.5304 for further information.

Furthermore, Amarillo College has different vocational programs geared to students not seeking a 4 year degree. The disability coordinators and teachers provide support and modifications that are appropriate per ADA. Amarillo College also provides scholarship opportunities for students with disabilities through their LiTE scholarship. Contact Brenda Rossnagle for further information at 806.371.5436.

I hope this information has been helpful. If you have further questions contact your school counselor, diagnostician, or your case manager.

On another note, please send us a picture of your child if they are celebrating a special event or accomplishment. We would love to have them in our newsletter.

Have a great summer, join us for Wonderland on July 12th and congratulations to all of our graduating seniors!

Maria

Inside This Issue:	Pages
Director's Note	Cover
Kids As Self-Advocates	2
Where The Learning Continues	2
Web Sites	2
Medicaid/CHIP Programs	2
Networking List	2
Workshops & Events	3
Thank You-Gracias	3
Summer Fun Activities	4
Scholarships	4
Graduation & Prom Night	4
Wonderland Family Fun Night	5
PILC - Sock-Hop Fundraiser	5
PILC - Free Bus Training	5
Kids' Corner	5
Diaz's Thank You	5
Staff Phone Numbers	6

### KASA - Kids As Self-Advocates:

KASA is seeking youth between the ages of 12-24 to be on their Advisory Board and Task Force. The advisory board supervises projects, makes decisions and develops work plans. This requires a 2-4 hour/week commitment with regular conference calls and some in-person meetings, as funds allow. This board also helps create documents on the website, present at conferences and work with other national and local groups to get young people involved. The KASA Advisory Board can be a great way to learn how youth can lead a project and gain advocacy and leadership skills. Application deadline is May 30, 2008 and can be downloaded at: [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org).

### WTLC - Where The Learning Continues

The WTLC Program is a higher education experience for young adults with developmental disabilities. WTLC is a learning lab run through the Continuing Education Center at West Texas A&M University with the assistance of mentors from the education and behavior departments. Students do not receive college credits or financial aid; however, emphasis is centered around expanding their cognitive abilities and independence. If you are interested in this program for your young adult, please call Sammie Artho at 806.651.5300 or 655.7332 for information on Spring 2009 registration.

### Web Sites of Interest to Parents and Professionals:

- MD Anderson: Kids & Cancer: [www.mdanderson.org/topics/kids/](http://www.mdanderson.org/topics/kids/)
- Northwest Texas Autism Network: [www.nwtxautismnetwork.org](http://www.nwtxautismnetwork.org)
- Cystic Fibrosis: [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org)
- Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance: [www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org)



### Medicaid / CHIP Programs!

Summer is a great time to make appointments for your child's health check-ups and immunizations. Medicaid Transportation can help provide transportation or financial assistance so you can go to see your doctor, dentist, or pharmacy to get prescriptions. If you would like more information on Medicaid or CHIP insurance programs, call a counselor at the Coalition of Health Services at (806) 337-1700 or (888) 892-2273 ext. 217. Prevention is the Best Medicine.



View our newsletter on our **NEW web page:**

<http://unitingparents.cohs.net>

View staff information, workshops, events, photo gallery, & links to other resources on site.



### Uniting Parents' Networking List:

Amy Chapman / Aspergers	359-4009	Lynette Mixon / Marden Walker & Dandy Walker	353-9599
Alma Galvan / Leukemia**	935-9787	Maria Garcia/Down Syndrome **	337-1700
Betty Allison / Down Syndrome	373-6363	Marilyn Williams/Hearing Impaired	352-4124
Brenda & Robert Rodriguez / Cerebral Palsy	655-3300	Neysa Spurrier / Autism / Aspergers / CD & NACD Curriculum	359-3833
Dalia Ruiz/Mental Retardation / Seizure Disorder	535-1583	Norma Baeza / Spina Bifida	376-5104
Glendie & Roth Farra	355-0271	Peggy Easley / Down Syndrome	249-5190
ADHD / Tourett's	679-5709	Sherry Robinson /Autism	353-0229
JoAnn Taylor /Spastic Deplegia	934-2402	Stacey Campbell / Autism / Torticollis / Plagiocephaly	355-1198
Josephine Valadez / Prader Willie Syndrome**	966-3333	Hope Huerta / Diabetes **	935-8687
Lucerzia Coats / RETT's Syndrome	940-937-6584		

These parents are willing to support other parents whose child has similar disabilities. **\*\*Families that speak Spanish\*\***

Do you want to assist other parents ? Let us know. We will add your name and number on our networking list.

## Workshops & Events:

- Jun. 1 - **Northwest Texas Autism Network Support Group Meetings.** Held the first Sunday of every month at 2400 Lakeview Drive in Amarillo inside the Specialized Therapy Services offices from 2:30-3:30pm. For more information, call Lisa Mooring at 806.354.2381.
- Jun 3 - **The 2nd Biennial Autism Conference 2008.** This two-day event at Region 17 ESC on 1111 West Loop 289 will be held in Lubbock. Registration fee of \$50 will be waived for parents. For more information, call Dr. David Jenkins at 806.281.5855.
- Jun 12 - **Reducing Challenging Behaviors: Students with Autism/ASD Workshop.** Held from 9am until 4pm at Amarillo College, Polk Street Campus in Amarillo. For more information, call Melissa Hardy at 806.677.5192.
- Jun 15 - **Positive Schools, Positive Results: Linking Behavior and Achievement.** This three-day event to be held in San Antonio has limited stipends available. For more information, call Doug Maraffa at 713.744.6365.
- Jun 19 - **The ESC 17's 4th Annual Positive Behavior Support Conference: A Picture Perfect Event** will be held at Region 17 ESC on 1111 West Loop 289 in Lubbock. For more information, call Val Meixner at 806.281.5879.
- Jun 26 - **4th Annual Texas Parent to Parent Conference: We're All in This Together!** This event in Austin will have limited parent stipends available. For more information, call TxP2P at 866.896.6001.
- Jul. 11 - **The 36th Annual National Down Syndrome Congress conference** will be a three-day event held in Boston. For more information, call 800.232.6372.
- Jul. 16 - **American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 33rd Annual Convention** will be held in San Antonio. Stipends for registration and lodging are available. For more information, call Lisa at 512.483.5891.
- Jul. 22 - **The Statewide Conference on Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** will be held in Galveston. For more information, call 888.388.8484.
- Aug. 1 - **Wrightslaw Special Education Law and Advocacy Boot Camp** with Peter Wright, Esq. and Pamela Darr Wright will be held in Austin. For more information, call Texas Parent to Parent at 866.896.6001.
- Aug. 5 - **Region 17 At-Risk Conference** will be held at Region 17 ESC on 1111 West Loop 289 in Lubbock. For more information, call Marilyn Stone at 806.281.5831.
- Aug. 8 - **Texas Advocates 2008 Annual Conference** will be held in Austin. Stipends will be available for hotel and registration fees. For more information, call 800.252.9729.
- Aug. 18 - **Fifteenth Annual 2008 At-Risk Conference** will be from 8am until 3pm at the Amarillo Civic Center. For more information, call Gwen Hicks at 806.655.5310.

## Thank You-¡Gracias!

*Uniting Parents would like to "Thank" the Wal-Mart Distribution Center of Plainview for their generous donation of a 42 inch flat screen TV for the Amarillo College LiTE Scholarship Fund Raiser in April. This item provided great support to the scholarship program for students with disabilities wanting to pursue higher educational goals. The Wal-Mart Distribution Center has committed to assist our young adults with disabilities reach their higher education goals. Thank you for supporting our youth.*

*The Fraternal Order of Eagles provided a generous donation to the Uniting Parents office in Dumas. When the Dumas office computer broke down unexpectedly the Eagles generously purchased one so our case manager could continue the daily operations of her office including serving our families of children with disabilities. We "Thank" the Eagles for their support of our program in the Moore County area.*

*Would you like to volunteer at one of our special events or help us with clerical needs? Give us a call, you may just find how rewarding it is to volunteer. Call any of our offices listed in the back of this newsletter.*

## Summer Fun Activities:

**Special Olympics Aquatics** will start practice sessions May 30th through August 1st at the Amarillo Town Club on 4514 Cornell in Amarillo. There is no charge but athletes may not enter the water without coaches having their current medical form. Parents or guardians **must** stay for practice. Dates for swim meets will be announce at a later date. There will be a tournament in July in Hereford and the Regional meet will be in early August at West Texas A&M University Activities Center. If your athlete is eight year or older and interested in participating please contact any of these numbers: Sammie Artho at 806.651.5304 or 655.7332, Tammie Armstrong at 806.376.4183 or 622.0009, or Special Olympics at 806.374.7171.

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**Summer Adventure Camp!!** This camp for students with disabilities is offered by Texas Panhandle Mental Health and Retardation in Amarillo, Hereford, Dumas & Borger beginning June 2nd until the Friday before school begins; week-days from 7:30am until 6pm. Activities scheduled: Crafts, Water Play, Games, Movies, Field Trips and Much More. Cost based on family income and Medicaid patients pay nothing. Limited transportation available. Call Sheila Rios at 356.9238, Angela Richardson at 351.3478 or Becky Hill at 351.3456 to find out where in your area camps are offered.

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**Special Needs Art Workshop to be sponsored** by BUDS (Better Understanding Down Syndrome). Sessions will be held on June 21st, July 19th & August 12th at the Lubbock Garden and Arts Center on 4215 University in Lubbock. Supplies will be provided. Session fees are \$12 per session. For more information, call 806.767.3724.

## Scholarships Available! Act Fast!

*La Salud de la Mujer-National Women's Health Foundation* has provided funding for Hispanic children in the Panhandle to participate in summer camps and recreational activities. Uniting Parents still has funds to help with the cost of summer camps or activities your child may be interested in attending. Funds are limited so it will be on a first come first served basis. Call your case manager to learn more about our scholarship program! Thank You to the **Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health of Amarillo** for their generosity.

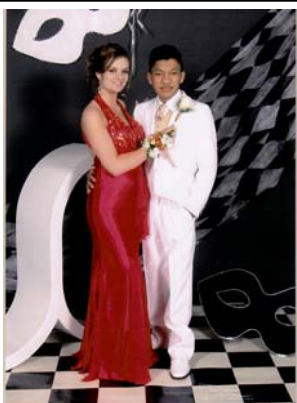


Noe Elias Diaz -Graduate - River Road High School  
Orthopedic Impairment / Dyslexia

We know it has been a long 12 years but you made it.

**Hooray for you!!** May the next steps in your life lead you to be a prosperous and successful veterinarian.

Bryan Ybarra  
Sophomore  
Craniosyntosis  
Chelsea Crawford  
Senior  
Plainview



Bryan and Chelsea were dressed to the max as they enjoyed a night of laughing and dancing. We can't wait to see what the next two years bring for Bryan.



Blake Elliot  
Senior  
Down Syndrome  
Nikki Camarillo  
Senior  
Ring Chromosome 22



Blake and Nikki are both attend Tascosa High School in Amarillo and went on their first date to the prom. This handsome duo enjoyed dancing the night away. Wonder if Cinderella lost her slipper so Prince Charming could return it?



# Uniting Parents

a program of the

Coalition of Health Services, Inc.



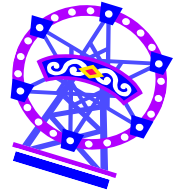
## Wonderland Family Fun Day!!

Where: Thompson Park in Amarillo - Area 12

When: Saturday, July 12, 2008

Time: 4:00pm – 5:00pm Registration

5:00pm – 10:00pm Wonderland  
open for Hand Stamps



**Hand stamps are \$11.00 per person . Gate passes are \$5 at the entrance to Wonderland.**

*Join us for refreshments. Please RSVP the number in your group to Anna Shores at 337.1700 or 1.888.892.22733 ext. 210 by July 07, 2008.*

### PILC - Sock-Hop Fundraiser :

PILC presents the **Second Annual "Back to the Oldies Sock Hop"** on **Saturday, July 12 from 6:30pm until 11pm at the Sunset Art Center Ballroom on 3701 Plains Boulevard in Amarillo.** Music by Fast Freddy and the Fairlanes, Masters of Ceremonies and Disc Jockeys Chris Albracht and Kyle Arrant. Meal catered by Cattle Call and there will also be a Live Auction, Dance Contest and Best Oldies Dress Contest. For more information and tickets, call 806.374.1400.

### PILC - Free Bus Training:

If you have a mental or physical disability and need help learning to use the city bus, these classes can help. Learn how to plan your trip, identify and board the right bus, exit at the proper stop, ride safely, and get help when needed all for free! Sessions will be held **June 4 - 3pm-4pm, June 10 - 2pm-3pm, and June 26 - 1pm-2pm.** For more information, call Joe Rogers, Transportation Coordinator at 806.374.1400.

### Kids' Corner:

- Lizbeth Hernandez
- 15 years old
- Bowie Middle School
- Amarillo
- Cognitive Delay



Lizbeth celebrated her Fifteen Birthday on May 17, 2008. This pretty girl today is blossoming into a lovely young lady. Happy Birthday!

- Shelby Williams
- 4 years old
- Lubbock



Congenital Hydrocephalus  
Selby attends Texas Tech University Child Development Research Center. There is nothing like water play to put a smile on a child's face.

### Diaz Family Thanks

Isabel,  
My sons and I would like to thank Uniting Parents and the Hispanic Women's grant program for approving Noe and Stephen for a grant to go to the Virgil Henson Activity center for summer activity sessions. This will help my kids stay active during the summer and they will benefit greatly mentally and physically.



**Uniting Parents**

a program of the

Coalition of Health Services, Inc.

301 South Polk, Suite 740

Amarillo, Texas 79101

<http://unitingparents.cohs.net>

[www.cohs.net](http://www.cohs.net)

**Wonderland Family  
Fun Day  
July 12, 2008  
JOIN the Fun!!!!!!!**

**Administrative Office:**

Coalition of Health Services, Inc.

301 S. Polk, Suite 740

Amarillo, TX. 79101

<b>Amarillo Office Numbers:</b>	
Office Number:	1-806-337-1700
Fax Number:	1-806-337-1702
Toll Free Number:	1-888-892-2273
Web Address::	<a href="http://unitingparents.cohs.net">http://unitingparents.cohs.net</a>

<b>Amarillo Office:</b>	
Program Director:	ext.
<b>Maria Garcia, M. Ed.</b>	212
Administrative Assistant:	
<b>Anna Shores</b>	210
Parent Case Managers:	
<b>Juanita Keadle</b>	215
<b>Alma Benavides</b>	214
<b>Isabel Camarillo</b>	213
CSHCN Respite Assistant:	
<b>Vanessa Santos</b>	211

<b>Dumas Office:</b>	
Parent Case Manager:	<b>Hope Huerta</b>
Ph: 806-935-8687	Fax: 806-935-3525
Toll Free: 800-442-7893	

<b>Lubbock Office:</b>	
Parent Case Manager:	<b>Earlene Bustillos</b>
Ph.: 806-785-5818	Fax: 806-687-0249

<b>Plainview Office:</b>	
Parent Case Manager:	<b>Olga Ybarra</b>
Ph.: 806-293-5667	Fax: 806-293-3213
Parent Case Manager:	<b>Belia Alvarez</b>
Ph: 806-288-9068	Fax: 806-288-9069