

The Family Resource Network, Inc.  
46 Oneida Street  
Oneonta, NY 13820

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## SAVE THE DATE!!!

*Ashley Westbrook from Legal Assistance of Western NY, Inc. will be presenting on:*

### **Bullying and Students with Disabilities: A Legal Perspective**

**Date: September 11, 2018**

**Time: 9:30 am -12:00 pm**

**Ithaca, NY- Location TBD**

If you are interested in attending this training, please watch your email for additional information. To be added to our email list or to receive updates by phone, please call Robin at (607)432-0001.

\*\*\*This workshop is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Self-directing families will need to add "Intensive Advocacy" to their budgets prior to attending. This small flat rate allows you to attend all events in this category and receive individualized advocacy services for this calendar year. \*\*\*

# connections

Information, Resources, and Updates from **The Family Resource Network, Inc.**



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### **Back to School**

*By Robin Piefer*

It's that time of year again. In just a few days, the school bus is going to roll up and the new school year is going to begin. If your child has any kind of disability, the start of the school year may bring with it an additional set of worries. So, how do you prepare?

### **Re-read your child's IEP or 504 plan:**

You were present at the meeting, but when the IEP arrived in the mail, did you take time to read it? If not, now is a good time. It's important to know what your child's IEP really says. If you find a mistake or if your child's needs have changed significantly from the time of the meeting, contact the school's CSE Chair. Some changes can be made with only an amendment, but others will require a full CSE meeting.

### **Visit the classroom:**

If your child will have a new teacher this year, it might be helpful to visit the classroom before school starts. Keep in mind that teachers have a limited amount of time to prepare their classrooms for the year, so call first and keep your visit brief. This visit can be used to:

- Introduce yourself and your child to the new teacher
- Start the year off on a positive note—this is not the time to air grievances!
- Allow your child to see the classroom
- Communicate the most important information about your child (things that the teacher needs to know to get him safely and successfully through the first few days, such as medical needs, extreme fears, safety concerns)
- Drop off a list of "Ten Things You Should Know about Me" with your child's picture attached for the teacher to read before school starts
- Make sure that physical accommodations, such as appropriate seating or sensory objects, are (or will be) available in the classroom

### **School supplies:**

While most parents are shopping for pencils and notebooks, your child's list of back to school supplies may include additional items. You may need to supply diapers and wipes for a child who is incontinent or send in a piece of equipment that you have been using at home. These items can be bulky and aren't always easy to send on the bus the first day of school, so come up with a plan ahead of time. If you will be sending an item that takes up a lot of space, make sure you contact the bus garage to make sure there will be room on the bus.

Don't forget about medications. If your child will take medication at school, you will need to send a supply to school in the original bottle. Most pharmacies will give you an extra prescription bottle with a label, so ask when you pick up the next refill. Make sure that the school nurse has a note from your child's doctor stating that the medication is to be given at school. Check with your school's policies to find out if your child can bring the medication to school or if you need to drop it off.

*Continued on Pg. 8*

## The Family Resource Network, Inc. Mission & Purpose

### Mission Statement:

Individuals with special needs deserve every opportunity to achieve their unique potential. The Family Resource Network was founded by parents to enhance the lives of individuals with special needs and their families, empowering them to lead productive independent lives within the community.

### Purpose:

We want to make our community a better place through education and the enlisting of our citizens to bring services to those in need. We accomplish our mission through our core values.

We have been a vital part of our community for a number of years. We were founded to serve a growing segment of our community in need of inaccessible services. We have continued to grow with the help of our donors and volunteers that make our mission possible. Through all these years our purpose still remains the same: bring services to those in need.

### Family Resource Network Staff:

Executive Director: Michelle Zuk



### OPWDD Program:

FSS Program Supervisor/Education Advocate: Robin Piefer

Resource Center Coordinator: Kristin Winn

Service Access Liaison: Renee Walker

### Youth Programing:

Program Coordinator: Blake Stensland

### RFPS Program:

Senior Family Advocate/RFPS Program Supervisor:

Barbara Finkelstein

Residential Family Peer Support Partner:

Valerie Harris

### CCSI Program:

Senior Family Advocate/CCSI Program Supervisor:

Barbara Finkelstein

Otsego Parent Partner: Lisa Vantassel

Chenango/Delaware Parent Partner: Terry DiLuzio

Youth Peer Advocate: Chelsey Mead

### Chenango County High Fidelity Wraparound Program:

Family Peer Advocate: Malissa Martinez-Vega

Youth Peer Advocate: Amber Giles



### Families Together in NYS Credentialed Family Peer Advocates:

Michelle Zuk

Terry DiLuzio

Barbara Finkelstein

Valerie Harris

Renee Walker

Jessica Morton

## New York State Launches Innovative Care Management Program for People With Developmental Disabilities

### *New Care Coordination Organizations Incorporate Planning of Health, Wellness and Behavioral Health Supports in New Care Management Program*

07/12/18-Reprinted with permission from [www.opwdd.ny.gov](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov)

The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) announced the start of an improved way to coordinate services for people with developmental disabilities. As of July 1, a comprehensive service coordination program called Health Home Care Management replaced Medicaid Service Coordination.

Health Home Care Management services are now being coordinated by Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs), new entities formed by existing providers of developmental disability services. Health Home Care Management will continue to provide the service coordination that people with developmental disabilities previously received through Medicaid Service Coordination, but will now also integrate coordination of other services, such as health care, wellness, behavioral and mental health services through a single individualized Life Plan for each person.

"Over the past several years, OPWDD has worked to offer New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and their families more control, flexibility and opportunities for innovative supports customized to their abilities and needs," said OPWDD Acting Commissioner Kerry A. Delaney. "Health Home Care Management provides people with developmental disabilities and their family members with the opportunity to coordinate all of their supports in one place, relieving them of the burden of accessing multiple service systems, and ensuring that their needs are met more efficiently and effectively. This new program will help New York better address people with more complex needs, provide consistency in planning and allow for better information sharing across service systems."

Approximately 100,000 people already receiving service coordination from OPWDD successfully transitioned to this new program over the past several weeks and seven new Care Coordination Organizations across the state, overseen by OPWDD and the NYS Department of Health, began providing Care Management services as of July 1:

Advance Care Alliance

Care Design NY

LIFEPlan

Person Centered Services

Prime Care Coordination

Tri-County Care

Southern Tier Connect

"Care Coordination Organizations offer the promise of enhancing the quality of life for New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families by providing better planning and holistic care management," said Nicholas Cappoletti, CEO of LIFEPlan CCO NY, LLC. "Care managers will connect people to the resources they need to lead healthy and inclusive lives in our communities. As a parent and as a leader of a CCO, I am excited about the future of comprehensive care management and what it offers people and their families."

The new organizations are staffed by Care Managers, and to ensure the continuity of care, in many cases the new Care Managers are former Medicaid Service Coordinators who have received additional training for this new role. Care Managers will help coordinate services across systems, including OPWDD, the Department of Health, Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services, and the Office of Mental Health, providing people with developmental disabilities, and their families, with one place to plan all of their service needs.

There will be no changes to a person's supports and services as this transition to Care Coordination Organizations takes place, unless changes are requested by the individual receiving services.

## Upcoming Workshop: Self-Care for Caregivers

Caring for a child or adult with special needs is rewarding, but it can take its toll on the caregiver. Join Family Resource Network for an evening learning about self-care for the caregiver. Learn techniques for managing your own mental and physical health while caring for a loved one. We will have parents and community members demonstrating:

Yoga  
Meditation  
Quick and easy home exercise routines  
Mindfulness  
Essential Oils  
Journaling  
...and more!

Healthy snacks will be served. Families are welcome to join in the activities or just observe. Wear comfortable clothes, and bring a yoga or exercise mat if you have one. We will have mats available for those who don't. All attendees will receive a gift bag of "tools" to help with their self-care efforts at home.

### About our Presenters:

**Robin Piefer** is an Education Advocate at Family Resource Network. Robin was a full time caregiver to her son, who was born with Hunter syndrome, a rare genetic disease.

**Lisa Depperman** is a Registered Nurse currently working as a school nurse at the Oneonta High School. Lisa is also lucky enough to be the parent of 2 amazing children, one of whom has Down syndrome, ADHD, hearing impairment, and asthma.

**Date:** October 24, 2018  
**Time:** 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm  
**Location:** Foxcare Center Classroom 1  
1 Foxcare Dr., Oneonta NY

*Registration is required.*

To register online, go to [www.familyrn.org](http://www.familyrn.org) and click on the News & Events link and the Event Calendar. To register by phone, call Robin at 432-0001.

\*\*\*This workshop is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Self-directing families will need to add "Training Groups" to their budgets prior to attending. This small flat rate allows you to attend all events in this category for the calendar year.\*\*\*

## Teen Scene:

**Teen Scene** is a group of youth, ages 12-19, who meet once a month and participate in a variety of activities. Discussion topics can include dealing with bullying, dating, conflict resolution, communication, and leadership. The group also attends community events and participates in community service projects.

### Upcoming Meetings & Events

**Monday, September 24 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Elm Park United Methodist Church**  
*POUND: Rock Out. Work Out. With Zoe Curtis.* We had such a fun time with Zoe last time we did POUND we decided to bring it back! POUND is an alternative group exercise format inspired by drumming! Zoe will provide teens with weighted drum sticks that will be used to pound to the beat of the music! And what better way to take out some frustration and stress that the beginning of school can cause than to participate in a fun workout with friends?

**Monday, October 22nd 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Elm Park United Methodist Church**  
*Pumpkin Painting and Hot Cocoa Bar.* Pumpkins will be provided by FRN for teens to paint and decorate to get ready for Halloween. We will have a variety of snacks associated with Halloween to get us in the spirit! Any teen that would like to dress up is encouraged to do so, dressing up is not required.

Dinner is provided so **please RSVP** by the day before the group. Want more information on Teen Scene? Contact FRN at 607-432-0001. To register, e-mail Blake at [bstensland@familyrn.org](mailto:bstensland@familyrn.org) with your contact information in the body of the email.

### Family Resource Network Support Group:

The FRN Support Group works to support and empower families. This Bi-Monthly meeting is an opportunity for families to get together, network and share their experiences in a safe, friendly environment. If you have any suggestions for presenters/discussion topics you are interested in coordinating please contact FRN at 607-432-0001. Dinner is provided, as well as childcare (if requested before the meeting).

### Upcoming Meeting:

**Monday, September 24 5:30pm-7:30pm @ Elm Park United Methodist Church**

**As always, please register prior to the date so we can ensure dinner will be provided for all attendees! To register, call Blake Stensland at 432-0001 or e-mail [bstensland@familyrn.org](mailto:bstensland@familyrn.org)**



Please Join The Family Resource Network for Our Fall Conference on Autism.  
**Brain Gym: An Approach to Using the Building Block Activities**

This presentation will provide methods and techniques for parents, teachers and therapists. Participants will walk away with the ability to immediately use the **Building Block Activities** at home, in classrooms, and during one-to-one therapy sessions.

- The concept of **movement-based learning** is a way for us to begin to understand and apply the methods and techniques taught in this workshop.
- The methods and techniques practiced **in this workshop** are known as “**The Building Block Activities**.”
- The Building Block Activities, developed by **Cecilia Koester, MEd**, create a foundation for us to return to our natural, normal curious state of learning.
- These Building Block Activities are designed to **enhance brain development** and improve everyday life skills, behavior and functioning.

**About our Speaker:**

*Cecilia Koester, MEd, founder of Movement Based Learning, Inc.* Cecilia Koester is internationally known for her work with children and adults who are differently-abled. She has worked since 1979 with people of all abilities from typically functioning to those diagnosed with severe challenges. The wisdom and knowledge that she brings into a school setting, a workshop or a private home, opens the hearts and minds of every person she has the honor of meeting.

Cecilia has written two books, *I Am the Child* (1998, 2011) and *Movement Based Learning For Children of All Abilities* (2006, 2011). The courses offered by her corporation, Movement Based Learning, Inc. have grown to include two manuals, titled *Interfacing Brain Gym with Children Who Have Special Needs* (2004, 2013) and *A Manual for Using and Teaching Developmental Movement Patterns: The Building Block Activities* (201, 2017). All of her work clearly demonstrates how to use movement to address developmental needs thereby improving daily life skills, emotional well-being, and academic skills. In addition to authoring books and manuals, Cecilia now mentors others in how to teach the life-changing workshops that she has developed over the past 20 years.

**This Conference will be held in two locations:**

<p><b>Thursday, October 11, 2018</b>  <b>Check in begins at 8:30am</b>  <b>Morning Session: 9am to 12pm</b>  <b>Buffet lunch included: 12pm to 1pm</b>  <b>Afternoon Session: 1pm-4pm</b>  <b>The Quality Inn</b>  <b>(formerly known as the Holiday Inn)</b>  <b>5206 State Highway 23</b>  <b>Oneonta, NY</b></p>	<p><b>Friday, October 12, 2018</b>  <b>Check in begins at 8:30am</b>  <b>Morning Session: 9am to 12pm</b>  <b>Buffet lunch included: 12pm to 1pm</b>  <b>Afternoon Session: 1pm-4pm</b>  <b>Owego Treadway Banquet Center</b>  <b>Terrace Room</b>  <b>1100 Route 17 C</b>  <b>Owego, NY</b></p>
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*Registration is required.*

This conference is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. Parents of individuals with OPWDD eligibility living in their family homes in Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, or Tompkins Counties may register for free at familyrn.org. Self-directing families will need to add "Autism Training" to their budgets prior to attending.

There is a \$30 fee for all other parents and providers to help cover the cost of food and materials.

To register online, go to [www.familyrn.org](http://www.familyrn.org) and click on the News & Events link and the Event Calendar. For any questions or to register by phone, please contact Robin at (607)432-0001.

Family Resource Network and Chenango County Public Health present:  
**The Impact of Technology on Language Development**



**Date:** October 18, 2018  
**Time:** 6pm-8pm  
**Location:** Morrisville State College  
 Norwich Campus  
 20 Conkey Ave.  
 Norwich, NY



**About our Speaker**

*Ann Blanton, PhD CCC-SLP*, is a Speech and Language Pathologist who received her PhD at the University of Nevada, Reno. Ann has worked in Early Intervention and in the public schools as a Speech and Language Pathologist. She is currently the Chair of the Communication Disorders and Sciences Department at the School of Professional Studies at SUNY Cortland.

**The Following will be Covered:**

- The importance of face to face communication
- How technology affects attention span and learning
- How dependence on technological devices can cause stress and anxiety

Registration is required.

To register online, go to [www.familyrn.org](http://www.familyrn.org) and click on the News & Events link and the Event Calendar. To register by phone, call Robin at 432-0001.

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Parent Technical Assistance Center and Family Resource Network present:  
**Diploma Options for Students with Disabilities**

Learn about the Diploma and credential options available to students with disabilities in NY.



**Date:** September 19  
**Time:** 10:00-12:00  
**Location:** Delaware Opportunities  
 35430 NY-10  
 Hamden, NY



To register online, go to [www.familyrn.org](http://www.familyrn.org) and click on the News & Events link and the Event Calendar. To register by phone, call Robin at 432-0001.

\*\*\*This workshop is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Self-directing families will need to add "Training Groups" to their budgets prior to attending. This small flat rate allows you to attend all events in this category for the calendar year.\*\*\*

*Back to School, Continued from Pg. 1*

### Prepare your child:

Returning to school after a summer off (or even a few weeks off if your child attended summer programming) can be stressful for any child and even more so for a child with special needs. Depending on your child's needs, you may prepare her in different ways.

- Count down calendar: have your child cross off (or put a sticker on) each day to visually show how much time is left
- Social Stories: Social stories are a great way to help a child prepare for a change. If possible, include photographs of your child's school and teacher, but general pictures or clip art can work too. Your social story should talk about what to expect on the first day of school and can address specific concerns your child has (such as, "if the room is too loud, I can put on my headphones.") For more information about social stories, visit: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>
- Communication: If your child uses a communication system or device, make sure it is updated for the new school year. You might include the teacher's name so your child can say hello when he gets to school. You might include some vocabulary to help answer the question, "how was your summer?"
- If your child can understand, talk to her about the accommodations that are in her IEP or 504 plan. If she knows that people are prepared to help, she might feel less anxious.

### Stay Positive!

It's a brand new year and a fresh start for you and your child. As long as your child is safe and his most significant needs are being met, give him a few weeks to settle in.

## A Day of Family Empowerment: Understanding Behavior and Communication

*Please join Starbridge, Inc. and The Family Resource Network for a full-day advocacy training.*

### The following topics will be covered:

- Effective Communication Strategies
  - Advocacy Tips
  - Self-Awareness
- Functional Behavior Assessments
  - Behavior Intervention Plans

**About our Speaker:** Kara Georgi is the Parent Education Specialist for Starbridge Parent Training and Information Center. She offers support and information for families and professionals navigating the special education system in Cayuga, Tompkins, Onondaga, Cortland, Broome, Madison, Chenango, Otsego and Delaware Counties.

**Date:** Monday, October 1, 2018

**Check In:** 9:15 am

**Morning Session:** 9:30 am to 12pm

**Lunch:** 12 pm to 12:30 pm, FREE PIZZA LUNCH INCLUDED

**Afternoon Session:** 12:30 to 3:30 pm

**Location:** George F. Johnson Library 1001 Park St., Endicott, NY

*Registration is required.* Deadline to register is Thursday, September 27, 2018. For questions or to register by phone call Robin at (607)432-0001. To register on-line go to [www.familyrn.org](http://www.familyrn.org). Click on the Event Calendar and the News and Events link.

\*\*\*This workshop is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Self-directing families will need to add "Intensive Advocacy" to their budgets prior to attending. This small flat rate allows you to attend all events in this category and receive individualized advocacy services for this calendar year. \*\*\*

## Join the Family Resource Network, Inc. for Our Upcoming Dragon Dates Events:

### Apple Picking

Middlefield Orchard  
2274 State Highway 166  
Cooperstown, NY



Saturday, September 15, 2018  
1:00pm-3:00pm

Enjoy an afternoon at Middlefield Orchard, picking apples and participating in other fun fall activities. Family Resource Network will pay for up to 10lbs of apples per family and provide apple cider and donuts.

\*\* Rain date: Saturday, September 22\*\*

Please register by September 11th

### Paint & Dip Night

The ARC Otsego Oneonta Day  
Services Location  
63 Lower River Street  
Oneonta, NY



Wednesday, October 17, 2018  
5:30pm-7:30pm

Back by popular demand is a Paint & Dip activity! Join us for a night of painting with a local artist directing the class! This gives every participant the opportunity to enjoy painting while putting their own spin on the same pattern.

Please register by Monday, October 15th.

These events are for individuals with OPWDD eligibility living in the family home in Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, Tioga or Tompkins County. Parents/Caregivers must attend the events. Siblings are encouraged to come too!

\*\*\*Dragon Dates is funded through a grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Self-directing families will need to add "Social Skills Group" to their budgets prior to attending. This small flat rate allows you to attend all events in this category for the calendar year.\*\*\*

Registration for both events is required.

To register please call Blake at (607)432-0001. Please have name, age, and TABS# of the individual with OPWDD eligibility, and total number of participants joining us. If leaving a message please provide a phone number that we can contact you at.

**\*Family Resource Network, Inc. is not responsible for supervision.\***



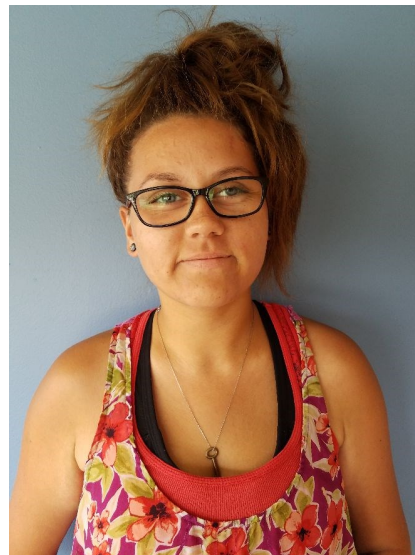
## The Family Resource Network Staff is Growing!

### The Family Resource Network is Excited to Welcome Our New Youth Peer Advocates!



Hey guys! My name is **Chelsey** I am beyond excited to become a part of the Family Resource Network Team as a Youth Peer Advocate. I cannot wait to see what this position as well as the company can teach me! Every day is a new learning experience. I also hope that I can get positive changes in my employment opportunity.

As a struggling teen/ young adult I have had personal experiences with an IEP accommodation while I was in high school. During late high school I also had many personal experiences with mental health issues. With all of these obstacles in life I have been able to gain valuable experience with the systems that help youth and families work through these struggles. In addition to my personal experience, I worked at Springbrook prior to joining the FRN team. Again I am so very excited to be a part of the FRN team and hope it's all up from here and things go smoothly from here on out!



Hello, my name is **Amber Giles** and I'm overwhelmed with how excited I am about joining the Family Resource Network team. I graduated from SUNY Delhi with an associate's degree in Social Sciences with every intention of continuing into the realm of social work. During my college career, I had the opportunity to get to know FRN on a personal level. I spent time at Teen Scene getting to know many personalities and digging into what FRN really does for their families. It has always been my goal to work with teens and youth, so it's a perfect fit for me here. I'm grateful to have this opportunity and hopefully I can showcase how helpful I can really be. I know there are families out there that need my help. I'm really excited to become a youth peer advocate.

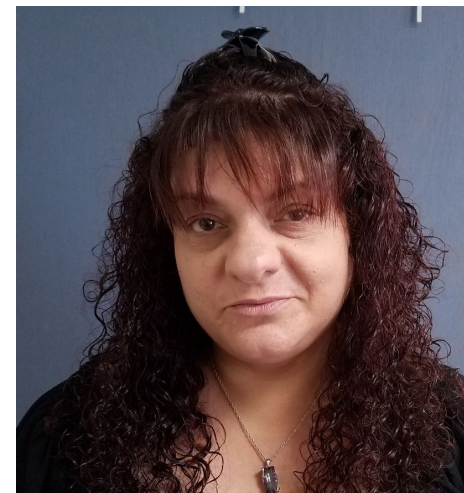


## The Family Resource Network is Excited to Welcome Our New Family Peer Advocates!

**Malissa Martinez-Vega** is a full time student at Monroe Community College in New York, majoring in Criminal Justice. Malissa has her degree in Automated Office Systems Processing from Worldwide Education Service in New Jersey. Before joining our team at the Family Resource Network, Malissa worked as an Executive Office Administrator for over 20 years. She has also worked as a 1:1 Special Education Teachers Aide and a Special Education Spanish substitute/Testing Proctor. She worked with a variety of children and adults with disabilities for 10 years, and worked for Brookhaven Memorial Hospital doing Mental Health Intakes.



Malissa is a mother of two adult children, one child having classifications of his own, and a new grandson. Malissa has been a strong advocate for her son for 20 years. Now, both of her children are leading wonderful, well-rounded, independent lives.



**Lisa VanTassel** is a single mother of three children. Lisa navigated through the special education system and worked closely with her local school district to be sure her children received the necessary supports to be successful in school and at home. Her daughter recently graduated high school, which means the effort she put in to her children's education and overall care was well planned out and produced a positive outcome.

Lisa previously worked as a Case Manager and Advocate for Opportunities for Otsego in their Housing program. Lisa assisted individuals who were homeless or pending eviction to access supports and services within their community.

Lisa is looking forward to working for Family Resource Network in helping to make a difference in the lives of families we assist!