

The Family Resource Network is looking for people like YOU!

If you are reading our newsletter, it is a safe bet that you already make a positive difference in the life of someone with a special need and have attended one of the many conferences or workshops sponsored by The Family Resource Network. Have you ever wished for the opportunity to share your knowledge and/or help others? The board of directors at The Family Resource Network consists of members of our community who believe in the mission of the agency and we are currently looking for people to join our board of directors.

For more information regarding the Family Resource Network, our mission statement and the role of a board member please contact board president Rhiannon Ham at (607) 278-5758 or call the Family Resource Network at (607) 432-0001.



@familyrn



@family.resource.network

connections

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

November & December 2025
in this issue:

FRN is returning to Neahwa Park in 2026 for our 8th Annual Duck Derby and Family Fun Day!
Workshop: Advocacy Steps
Training: Power of Play and Socialization
Upcoming Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP Events



The Family Resource Network is excited to recognize some of the local businesses and their employees who have chose the Family Resource Network as the recipient of fundraising events they have held this Fall. Preferred Mutual recently hosted their annual "Putt Putt" fundraiser at their location in New Berlin, NY. Members of the winning teams visited our location in October to deliver their donation and learn more about the services and supports we offer. In addition, Preferred Mutual has also made an additional pledge to make a financial contribution to the Family Resource Network's 8th Annual Duck Derby and Family Fun Day, returning to Neahwa Park in June 2026. This makes them our first confirmed sponsor of our 2026 event!



The Family Resource Network would also like to acknowledge the employees of Country Club Chevy in Oneonta, NY who selected our agency as the recipient of their monthly fundraiser for September 2025. Together they raised and donated \$900.00 to FRN! We are honored that both businesses and their employees felt our cause worthy of their support and look forward to collaborating with them in the future.

If you or your business is interested in learning about how you can help support FRN's Mission through a monetary contribution or how you can become a sponsor of our 2026 Duck Derby and Family Fun Day please reach out to our Executive Director, Michelle by calling 607-432-0001 or via email at mzuk@familyrn.org.

The Family Resource Network, Inc. Mission & Purpose

Mission Statement:

Individuals with disabilities deserve every opportunity to achieve their unique potential. The Family Resource Network was founded by parents to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities 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:

Harlie Dumond: Family Peer Advocate
Mary Fralick: Family Peer Advocate
Robin Piefer: FSS Supervisor
Marcia Shaw: Bookkeeper
Kristin Winn: HR Supervisor/Program Coordinator
Michelle Zuk: Executive Director



Find us on Facebook:
@familyrn

Find us on Instagram:
@family.resource.network



Family Resource Network Programs:

Services for Families with OPWDD Eligibility

Education Advocacy
Intensive Advocacy Program
Support Groups
Family and Provider Trainings
Dragon Dates Program (Social Opportunities)
Service Access Program

Mental Health and Wellness Services

Family Peer Support
Residential Family Peer Support
Teen Scene
Monthly Parent Group
Southern Tier Chapter of Families Together in NYS

G & E Therapies

Summer Camp for Youth with Autism
After School Program for Teens with Autism-Social Skills Group (Geckos on the Go)

Legacy Resource Fund

Source of financial assistance

Please join the Family Resource Network and Starbridge for an upcoming training:
Advocacy Steps

Wednesday, November 5th
9:00am-11:00am
Online via ZOOM

Advocacy is the act of problem-solving with a purpose and a goal. A parent might engage in advocacy on behalf of their child; people who have a disability may advocate for themselves; a teacher may advocate on behalf of a student; groups of people may join forces in systemic advocacy efforts to change laws or policies. A step-by-step approach can guide us toward the desired outcome, regardless of the circumstance or scope. Participants will learn how to build a solid foundation of team members. Hands-on activities will reinforce the advocacy steps that lead to successful outcomes.

Our Presenter: 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.

*****Registration Required*****

To register, please go to familyrn.org and click on news and events and events calendar. For questions or help registering, please contact Robin at (607)287-6358.

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. Please contact Robin at 607-287-6358 for assistance adding this to your budget.

Please Join the Family Resource Network for Our Online and Phone Family Support Groups:

At Family Resource Network, we recognize that during these difficult times, families of individuals with disabilities are facing unique challenges and may feel even more isolated. While we can't meet in-person to support one another, we invite you to join us for online support groups. These will be conducted through Zoom Meetings, and families may participate online or by phone. We are offering these groups as an opportunity for families to form connections, support, and learn from each other.

In 2025, we will be offering one online support group per month.

These support groups will take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. Our support groups will meet on:

**Tuesday, November 18, 2025 6:30-7:30 pm
(Rescheduled due to holiday)**

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 6:30-7:30 pm

Registration is required.

To register, go to www.familyrn.org and click on "News and Events" and then "Events Calendar".

For questions, or to participate by phone, please call Robin at (607)287-6358.

Support Groups are funded by a grant from the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities. Self-directing families will need to add "training groups" to their budgets. Please contact Robin at (607) 287-6358 for assistance adding this program to your budget.

Join Family Resource Network for our upcoming training on the Power of Play and Socialization

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Online via ZOOM

Play is an important part of a child's life and essential to learning and development. Play allows persons to interact with others, learn new skills, and develop trust. It facilitates practice in decision making and conflict resolution, hones critical thinking skills, and above all else, provides opportunities to have fun in the company of others. Join Family Resource Network for this interactive workshop on play and socialization.

This workshop will discuss:

- The types and stages of play
- A parent's role in children's play
 - How to support play
- Socialization and inclusion

This is an interactive workshop and participants are encouraged to keep their cameras and microphones on during the session with the presenters. We do understand that everyone has different comfort levels when it comes to the use of video conferencing.

Our Presenter: Robin Piefer, Education Advocate and trained facilitator focusing on positive parenting of children diagnosed with special needs or health challenges.

The Nurturing Program for parents and their children with Special Needs and Health Challenges is designed to help families explore their hopes and fears, develop effective parenting skills, enhance communication, develop strategies for facing challenges and recognize opportunities for celebration and growth.

Registration is required

To register online go to our website at www.familyrn.org and click on Events. Then click on the Events Calendar and select the event you want to register for.

For assistance with registration or for questions, please call Robin at (607)287-6358.

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. Please contact FRN for assistance adding this to your budget.

New in 2025! **On Demand Trainings**

We recognize that families are busy and can't always make it to a training at the scheduled time. In 2025, we will be offering many of our training topics on demand!

Who is eligible? If you are the parent or family member of a child or adult who is eligible for services through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), you are eligible to request on demand trainings. If you have self-directed services, "Training Groups" must be added to your child's budget before scheduling. On demand trainings will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you, either in-person or via Zoom. If more than one parent is interested in the same training, we will schedule it at a time that works for all interested parents.

What if you do not have a child with OPWDD eligibility? Please reach out to us for your options. We may be able to accommodate you through one of our other programs.

Available Training Topics:

Understanding the NYS IEP
Preparing for Your Child's CSE Meeting
All About Assessments
Services and Supports in NYS for Children with Developmental Disabilities
Intro to Social Stories
Intro to Visual Schedules
Your Due Process Rights: What to do when you don't agree
Kid, Teen and Adult in a Book
Advocating for Your Medically Involved Child
The Nurturing Philosophy
Personal Power, Praise, and Positive Discipline
Stress: Coping, Calming, and the Brain
Helping Children Cope with Change, Grief, and Loss
Praise, Encouragement, and Family Rules
The Power of Play and Socialization
Communication and Advocacy

On Demand Trainings continued
In addition to single session trainings, the Family Resource Network also has the following multisession training opportunities available through our new On Demand Training program design.

Mind the Gap:

The Mind the Gap program is for families of children ages 0-18 with a developmental disability who live in Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga or Tompkins Counties. Families will be connected to a Peer Navigator. Peer Navigators have undergone thorough training through the University of Rochester and are parents of children with special needs themselves who have experience navigating the special needs service system. This short 4-6-month program offered to families includes 12 flexible coaching sessions with a peer navigator in which parents are guided and supported as they learn and understand their child's diagnosis and get access to resources and services.



Nurturing Parenting: Parents & Children with Special Needs & Health Challenges

This parenting curriculum is a 12 session program is designed to help parents and their children with chronic or life threatening medical conditions, developmental delays, life-altering disorders and disabilities add to their parenting toolboxes.



Nurturing Parenting®
Established 1983

Come join the Family Resource Network's Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP Programs for an afternoon at

ClarkSportsCenter

Sunday, December 14th, 2025
1:00pm-5:00pm

Clark Sports Center
124 County Highway 52
Cooperstown, NY



Enjoy an afternoon at Clark Sports Center with Family Resource Network! Registrants and their family will have access to many fun activities at the gym including Bowling and Swimming. Any youth ages 5-18 may participate in Kid's Climb and utilize the Rock Wall during our event as well. In addition, everyone will have access to the open gym, game room, ping pong tables and racket ball courts! This event is free for registered Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP participants and their family members. A pizza lunch will also be served.

Space is limited and registration is **REQUIRED**.
Please Register by December 12th

To register please visit our website @ www.familyrn.org and click on "News and Events" and then "Events Calendar". To register by phone or for additional information please call FRN @ 607-432-0001

The age range for **Teen Scene** events has been expanded and Teen Scene events will be open to any school aged youth in Otsego, Delaware and Chenango County.

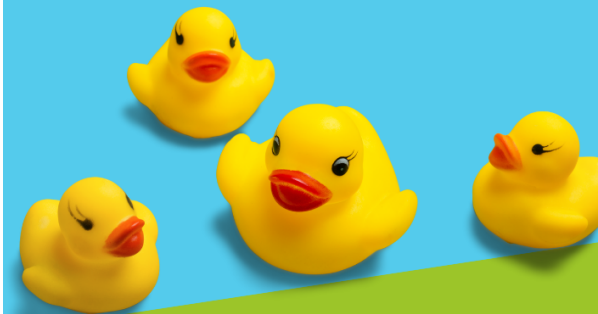
Dragon Dates events are for the families of individuals with OPWDD eligibility living in the family home in Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, Tioga or Tompkins County. Self-directing families will need to add "Social Skills" to their budgets before attending. Please contact Robin at (607)287-6358 for assistance adding this program to your budget.

The Rural Community Connection (**RCCP**) is a partnership between the Family Resource Network and HALo's. Funding has been provided by the United Way of Mid Rural New York. Families from Chenango, Delaware & Otsego Counties are eligible to attend.

****This is a family event. FRN is not responsible for supervision.****

The Family Resource Network is excited to announce we will be returning to Neahwa Park on Saturday, June 13th, 2026 for our **8TH ANNUAL DUCK DERBY AND FAMILY FUN DAY!**

Interested in being a part of
our event? Now is the time
to get involved!



***Ticket Sales have
already kicked off!***

***Get yours now for a
reduced cost . From
now until the end of the
year ticket sales are 2
for the price of 1!***

**The Family Resource Network is currently looking for
sponsors for our 2026 event! There is also a Resource Fair
the day of the event which is a great opportunity for local
agencies to share information about the services they
provide.**

For more information on how to get involved please call the Family Resource Network at 607-432-0001 and ask for Kristin. If your business is interested in being a sponsor or you would like to reserve a space for your agency to table at the event please send an email to kwinn@familyrn.org for more details!

Come join the Family Resource Network's Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP Programs for our upcoming event

Art for Wellness: Rebuilding/Regrowth

Saturday, November 8, 2025
10:00am-1:00pm

HUB
146 Main St.
Afton, NY 13730

Please join the Family Resource Network and HALo's for an Art for Wellness event. Participants will be doing a variety of mental health related art projects including a Mosaic of Self, Broken Bowl Project and Creating Gardens of Growth. In addition to these projects our Family Peer Advocates will also be discussing and sharing valuable information about the organization Care Compass. A pizza lunch will be provided.

Please Register by November 6th

Registration is required

To register please visit FRN's website @ www.familyrn.org and click on "News and Events" and then "Events Calendar". To register by phone please call 607-432-0001 and ask for Kristin.

The age range for **Teen Scene** events has been expanded and Teen Scene events will be open to any school aged youth in Otsego, Delaware and Chenango County.

Dragon Dates events are for the families of individuals with OPWDD eligibility living in the family home in Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, Tioga or Tompkins County. Self-directing families will need to add "Social Skills" to their budgets before attending. Please contact Robin at (607)287-6358 for assistance adding this program to your budget.

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****This is a family event. FRN and HALo's are not responsible for supervision.****

Come join the Family Resource Network's Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP Programs for our upcoming event

Art for Wellness: Working Together

Saturday, December 13th
10:00am-1:00pm

HUB
146 Main St.
Afton, NY 13730



Please join the Family Resource Network and HALo's for an Art for Wellness event. Participants will be doing a variety of mental health related art projects including creating a Group Imaginative World, Animal Games and a Round Robin drawing. In addition to these projects our Family Peer Advocates will also be discussing and sharing valuable information about Opportunities for Otsego, Delaware Opportunities, and Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango. A pizza lunch will be provided.

Please Register by December 11th

Registration is required

To register please visit FRN's website @ www.familyrn.org and click on "News and Events" and then "Events Calendar". To register by phone please call 607-432-0001 and ask for Kristin.

The age range for **Teen Scene** events has been expanded and Teen Scene events will be open to any school aged youth in Otsego, Delaware and Chenango County.

Dragon Dates events are for the families of individuals with OPWDD eligibility living in the family home in Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, Tioga or Tompkins County. Self-directing families will need to add "Social Skills" to their budgets before attending. Please contact Robin at (607)287-6358 for assistance adding this program to your budget.

The Rural Community Connection (**RCCP**) is a partnership between the Family Resource Network and HALo's. Funding has been provided by the United Way of Mid Rural New York. Families from Chenango, Delaware & Otsego Counties are eligible to attend.

****This is a family event. FRN and HALo's are not responsible for supervision.****

The Family Resource Network is hiring!

Job Title: Education Advocate

Location: Flexible: Work from home, from the office, or hybrid

Salary: \$21 per hour; \$22 with bachelor's degree

About the Role:

We are seeking a passionate and dedicated Education Advocate to join our team of passionate dedicated professionals. Empower families and ensure their voices are heard in planning their children's educational services. The ideal candidate will help families navigate the education system, connect them with vital resources, and support them in advocating for their children's needs. Full and part time positions available.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as a liaison between families and educational professionals
- Assist families in understanding and participating in the planning of their children's educational services
- Provide information and guidance about available resources and services
- Support families in advocating for appropriate educational accommodations and supports
- Facilitate workshops, support groups, and informational sessions for families
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of educational policies, resources, and community services
- Document and track family interactions and outcomes
- Meet with families in the office, in the community, or in their homes

Qualifications:

- Preferred: Lived experience as a parent or primary caregiver of a child with a disability
- Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Education, Social Work, or a related field (or equivalent experience)
- Experience working with families, children, or in educational settings
- Strong communication, advocacy, and interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of local educational systems and community resources
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Strong time-management skills
- Bilingual abilities are a plus

Benefits:

- Flexible work schedule
- Opportunities for professional development
- Supportive and mission-driven team environment
- Annual Retention Bonus

How to Apply:

Please send your resume and a brief cover letter outlining your interest in the role to kwinn@familyrn.org.

The Family Resource Network is hiring!

All applicants should submit a resume with a cover letter describing your personal lived experience of being a parent or guardian of a child with a social, emotional, behavioral, mental health or developmental disability to kwinn@familyrn.org. For more information please call the Family Resource Network at 607-432-0001 and ask for Kristin.

Family Peer Advocate

Family Resource Network is hiring a 40 hour per week Family Peer Advocate \$21.00 per hour, plus mileage reimbursement.

Family Peer Advocates have 'lived-experience' as the parent (biological, foster, adoptive) or primary caregiver of a child/youth with a social, emotional, behavioral, mental health or developmental disability. They receive training to develop skills and strategies to empower other families. They foster effective parent-professional partnerships and promote the practice of family-driven and youth-guided approaches. Lived experience is extremely valuable when working with families in need of resources, support and advocacy.

Applicant must:

- Possess excellent organizational and communication skills
 - Complete progress notes in a timely manner
 - Conduct home visits with families to identify need
- Submit to a background/fingerprint check (at no cost to applicant)
- Have experience advocating within the service systems (i.e. Mental Health, Special Education, DSS, Juvenile Justice, SPOA, Foster Care)
 - Have working knowledge of Microsoft Office software

High School Diploma or Equivalent required.

Benefits: Flexible schedule with frequent opportunities to work from home, Paid time off, Annual Retention Bonus

