2026 Platinum Sponsors

KeyBank

Families Together in New York State

AAA Northeast

sfcu. banking. easier.

Community BANK

NBT BANK

Miller Financial Services

Dante's 607-432-3030

Gold

Benson Real Estate Agency

NYCM

The Peachin Group LLC

Casella Waste Systems

Oneonta Ford

Rehabilitation Support Services

Sunshine Counseling

Silver

Alicia Ross Photography

Hughson & Benson Insurance

Butler Auto Sales

East Main Lanes

Preferred Mutual

Five Star Subaru

Otsego Media

Beaver Valley Campground

Allied CPAs

CFBT

Bronze

Liquor Depot

Greens Greenery

Stewarts

Directive

Otsego County COC

House Of Consignment

Frances Day Travel

Approved Towing

Dj Cam

Here for a Bouncing Good Time

connections

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

Family Resource Network

November & December 2026
in this issue:

Workshop: Supplemental Need Trusts and Guardianship
Online and Phone Family Support Groups
Upcoming Teen Scene, Dragon Dates and RCCP Event-
Winter Celebration

Helping Every Child Thrive: Join the Family Resource Network's 2027 Campaign!

We're raising $40,000 for local children and families — and the ducks are coming back to Mill Creek!

The Family Resource Network (FRN) is excited to share that we are making a change to our fundraising campaign for 2027. Rather than sponsoring a single event, sponsors will now be able to support the agency as a whole, helping to fund programs and services that none of FRN's other funding sources cover. This year's campaign will focus on our Pathways to Thriving initiative and FRN's 9th Annual Duck Derby and Family Fun Day. Pathways to Thriving is a community-wide effort that helps families, schools, organizations and businesses give children what they need to grow into caring, confident and contributing members of our community. The Duck Derby, FRN's signature community-wide event, is free for the whole family and will return to Neahwa Park on Saturday, June 12th. FRN hopes to raise $40,000 by January 31, 2027, and every gift makes a real difference.

Through Pathways to Thriving, FRN gives families and the community practical tools to help children grow up safe, supported and successful. The initiative is built on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, research showing that the more of these building blocks a child has, such as caring adults and a sense of belonging, the more likely they are to thrive. FRN staff are trained to present this information, and trainings are already underway for any interested family, school, PTA, Rotary Club or business.

The campaign's second focus, the Duck Derby, brings that same spirit of community to a day of fun for the whole family. Children can enjoy activities, make-and-take crafts, face painting, music and, of course, a flock of rubber ducks racing down Mill Creek. While the children play, parents and caregivers can visit the Resource Fair to meet local nonprofits that support children and families. The 2026 Resource Fair was the largest yet, with over 30 local agencies taking part.

For more information on becoming a sponsor, bringing a training to your group or getting involved with the Duck Derby, check inside this edition of our newsletter or email Michelle Zuk at mzuk@familyrn.org.

The Family Resource Network was started by parents more than 30 years ago, and families are still at the heart of everything we do. We support individuals with special needs and their families, helping them live full, independent lives right here in our community. As we head into the new year, we invite you to join us. Your support helps us continue our mission of standing beside local families and helping every child thrive.

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:

Joanna Brach: Education Advocate
Skylar Collins: Social Media, Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator
Harlie Dumond: Family Peer Advocate
Mary Fralick: Family Peer Advocate
Ruth Modinger: Education Advocate
Robin Piefer: FSS Supervisor
Marcia Shaw: Bookkeeper
Cassandra Smith: Education Advocate
Kristin Winn: HR Supervisor/Program Coordinator
Michelle Zuk: Executive Director

Family Resource Network

UNITED WAY
Mid Rural New York

Family Resource Network Programs:

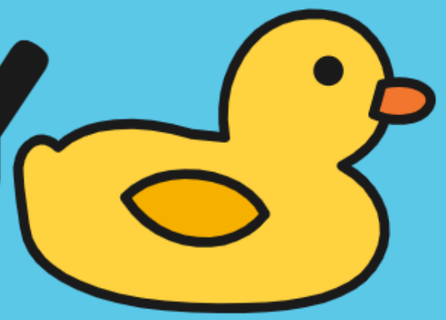
Services for Families with OPWDD Eligibility
Education Advocacy
Intensive Advocacy Program
Support Groups
Family and Provider Trainings
Dragon Dates Program (Social Opportunities)
Service Access Program

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

Legacy Resource Fund
Source of financial assistance

Save the date!

DUCK DERBY



& Family Fun Day

featuring a Community Resource Fair

SATURDAY

June 12

12:00–3:00 PM

Neahwa Park
Oneonta, NY

What's happening

- Rubber duck races down the Mill Creek
- Face painting
- Music
- Tons of make & take crafts
- **Free** ice cream social
- Food trucks on site

Community Resource Fair
Meet area non-profit organizations and learn about the wonderful programs they offer local families.

Family Resource Network

www.familyrn.org
607-432-0001

Please join the Family Resource Network for our upcoming Workshop:

Supplemental Needs Trusts and Guardianship

Presented by Greg Catarella, Esq.

Thursday, December 3rd, 2026
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Online via Zoom

Have questions about setting up Trusts for your loved ones? Need advice about setting up a plan for a Guardianship?

Join us for an informational workshop presented by Greg Catarella and gain valuable information pertaining to financial planning for the future of your loved one with a disability.

Greg S. Catarella, Esq., is licensed to practice law in the State of New York. He concentrates his law practice in the areas of Elder Law, Estate Planning and Administration, Trusts, and Guardianships. For over 20 years, Greg has been helping clients and their families find peace of mind in a world that is unnecessarily complex.

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.

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 2026, 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 10, 2026 6:30-7:30 pm
Tuesday, December 8, 2026 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.

On Demand Trainings

We recognize that families are busy and can't always make it to a training at the scheduled time. 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.

MiND THE Gap

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

FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK PRESENTS

Winter Celebration

Our last event of the year!

Please join the Family Resource Network's **Teen Scene**, **Dragon Dates** and **RCCP** Programs for our last event of the year! FRN will be hosting a Winter Celebration.

Lunch will be provided for all participants. Assorted pizzas from Dante's, salad and a special dessert.

Activities will include cookie decorating and a holiday themed craft.

As we approach the winter months, FRN feels emergency preparedness is especially important. **Each family that attends will receive an emergency preparedness backpack with important essentials!**

WHEN
Saturday, December 12, 2026
12:00 – 4:00 PM

WHERE
Elm Park United Methodist Church
401 Chestnut Street
Oneonta, NY 13820

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Deadline: December 10
Call 607-432-0001

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

Family Resource Network 607-432-0001 · www.familyrn.org

FRN WINTER CELEBRATION

Three programs, one table

Teen Scene

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

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.

RCCP

The Rural Community Connection (RCCP) is a partnership between the Family Resource Network and the United Way of Mid Rural New York. Families from Chenango, Delaware & Otsego Counties are eligible to attend.

DATE	TIME	PLACE	REGISTER BY
Saturday, December 12, 2026	**12:00 – 4:00 PM**	**Elm Park United Methodist Church** 401 Chestnut Street Oneonta, NY 13820	**December 10** Registration is Required.

How to register

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**

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

Family Resource Network 607-432-0001 · www.familyrn.org

For more than 30 years, the Family Resource Network (FRN), founded by parents, has helped individuals with special needs and their families lead productive, independent lives in our community. In 2027, we invite you to become a corporate sponsor of two efforts that carry this mission forward. Our combined goal is to raise **$40,000 by January 31, 2027** for programs that none of our other funding sources cover.

Pathways to Thriving builds partnerships across our community so that every family, school, organization and business knows how to help youth thrive. It is built on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, in which FRN staff were trained through a scholarship from Families Together in NYS, and paired with abuse prevention education from the Monique Burr Foundation for Children, The Mama Bear Effect and Bloom Safe. With partners such as the Otsego County Child Advocacy Center, the YMCA Preschool Program, RSS, Catholic Charities, the NYS Office of Mental Health and the OFO VIP Program, we bring these trainings to families, schools, PTAs, Rotary Clubs and businesses. Your sponsorship will help us reach many more people through workshops, newsletters, social media and the work of our Family Peer Advocates and Education Advocates.

The **9th Annual Duck Derby and Family Day** returns on **Saturday, June 12, 2027**. This free, family-friendly event features children's activities, crafts, face painting, music and rubber duck races down the Mill Creek. It also hosts a Resource Fair where child- and family-serving nonprofits share their services at no charge; our 2024 fair drew more than 25 agencies.

All 2027 sponsors will be recognized as both Pathways to Thriving and Duck Derby sponsors on our social media and in our newsletters, and we would be glad to bring a 40 Developmental Assets training to your workplace. While we are able to accept donations all year, sponsors received by **January 31, 2027** will be included on the Family Resource Network's 2027 annual T-shirts. To give, please return the sponsorship form on the next page with a check payable to **The Family Resource Network**. To learn more, visit FamilyRN.org or contact Michelle Zuk at mzuk@familyrn.org.
Thank you for helping every family we serve find its own pathway to thriving.

With warm regards,

Family Resource Network Board of Directors
Darcy McElligott, Board Chairperson · Manuella DiLuzio, Vice-Chairperson · Blake Stensland, Secretary · Rhiannon Ham, Treasurer
Kathleen Wenck · Caley Sharratt · Jacquline Truman · Sara Hanlon · Dorene Ireland · Amun Zo · Susan West

2027 Community Sponsorship Form

Family Resource Network – Pathways to Thriving and 9th Annual Duck Derby

Thank you for sponsoring the Family Resource Network in 2027. Please complete the information below, select your sponsorship level, and return this form with your check payable to The Family Resource Network. Platinum sponsors will be prominently featured on our social media. All sponsors will appear on our event sponsorship board, our website and our monthly e-newsletter.

Your Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Business Phone and Email: _____

Sponsorship level (select one and enter your donation amount):

☐ Platinum ($1,000+): $_____

☐ Gold ($500–$999): $_____

☐ Silver ($250–$499): $_____

☐ Bronze ($5–$249): $_____

To join our monthly e-newsletter, email kwinn@familyrn.org.

Family Resource Network