

## Upcoming Events

WY School Psychology Assoc. Fall Conference  
Autism Spectrum Disorders—Diagnosis, Treatment and What Works  
Featuring John Constantino  
Sept 22 & 23, 2008 in Casper  
For more info call Dr Bob Bayuk  
(307) 347-2435

MEGA Conference  
Oct 15-17, 2008, Parkway Plaza in Casper  
Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Call 1-800-438-5791

Breaking the Bonds of Seclusion and Isolation  
A conference for families on inclusive classrooms with no restraints  
No registration costs for families  
Nov 7 & 8, 2008 Hilton Garden Inn, Laramie WY  
Call PIC toll-free at 1-800-660-9742  
or register online at [www.wpic.org](http://www.wpic.org)



Information & Referral for  
Parents of Children  
with Disabilities

Parent  
Information  
Center

5 N. Lobban Ave Buffalo, WY 82834  
1-800-660-9742 or (307) 684-2277

A Project of Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc.

NONPROFIT  
ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BUFFALO, WY  
PERMIT #3

# PICs -n- Pieces

Parent Information Center & Parent Education Network Wyoming State PIRC  
Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc.



Sept/Oct 2008

## In This Issue:

The R-Word is No Joke	2
WY Hands and Voices	3
Early On Conference	4
Hearing Screening & MEGA	5
Family-School Partnerships	6
National PTA Standards	6
Career Readiness	7
What's Happening in WY	8
Parent Engagement Tips	9
New Additions at PIC & PEN	10
National Youth Risk Data	11
Vote for Kids	12
Bullying Prevention	13
Subscription Information	15

## Helping your Child Succeed in School

Every child has the power to succeed in school and in life – and every parent, family member and caregiver can help.

We know that children tend to do the same things as their parents. What we say and do in our daily lives can help them to develop positive attitudes toward school and learning and to build confidence in themselves as learners. Showing our children that we both value education and use it in our daily lives provides them with powerful models and contributes greatly to their success in school.

As children's first and most important teachers, it is important that all parents build strong ties to their children's schools. When parents and families are involved in their children's schools, the children do better and have better feelings about going to school.

Although school is very important, it does not really take up much of a child's time. In the United States, the school year averages 180 days; in other countries, the school year can last up to 240 days and students are often in school more hours per day. Parents, families and caregivers can do a great deal outside of school to help a child acquire the skills to be successful in school. These include:

**Encourage your child to read** – Helping your child become a reader is the single most important thing that you can do to help the child succeed in school – and in life. The importance of reading can't be overstated. Reading helps children in all school subjects and is the key to lifelong learning.

**Talk with your child** – Talking and listening play major roles in children's school success. Children who do not develop good talking and listening skills often have trouble learning to read, following directions and paying attention in class.

**Monitor homework** – Let your child know that you think education is important and that homework has to be done.

**Limit TV viewing and video game playing** – American children on average spend far more time watching TV or playing video games than they do completing homework or other school-related activities.

**Encourage your child to use the library** – Libraries are places of learning and discovery for everyone. Helping your child find out about libraries will set him on the road to being an independent learner.

**Help your child learn to use the Internet safely and effectively** – For children to succeed today, they must be able to use the Internet, however it is important that parents and caregivers teach children safety measures and monitor use.

**Encourage active learning** – Active learning involves asking and answering questions, solving problems and exploring interests, as well as participating in sports, having fun with friends, acting in school plays, playing a musical instrument or visiting museums and bookstores.

(*Helping Your Child Succeed in School*, Helping Your Child Series, US Department of Education, Office of Communications and Outreach, [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))

## The "R-Word is no joke" Maria Shriver perspective

This has been a year filled with teachable moments. Racism, sexism, ageism and "change" have been debated at kitchen tables and water coolers across America. But this last week, those gathered around my kitchen table have been consumed with another discussion, one that is not Democratic or Republican— it's the "r-word" debate.

The "R-word" stands for "retard". For the 6 million to 8 million Americans with intellectual disabilities and their families, this word and it's hurtful use is equal to the effect of the "N-word" on a black person.

The reason it's kitchen-table fodder is because of the Dreamworks "Tropic Thunder," which topped the box-office charts when it opened last weekend and that will attract many more movie-goers this weekend.

In this R-rated film, which I've seen, a character named Simple Jack is a caricature of a person with a developmental disability. In one of the scenes, the character played by Robert Downey Jr chastises Ben Stiller's character for "going full retard" and the "R-word is repeated many times.

As a journalist, I respect the right to freedom of speech, and my kids will tell you I laugh the loudest when we see a comedy. But as the niece of someone who had a developmental disability, and as a member of the Board of Directors of Special Olympics International, I know how hurtful the "R-word" is to someone with a disability. I know why "Tropic Thunder's opening was met by protests on behalf of the intellectually disabled.

Listen to actor Eddie Barbanell, who serves on the Special Olympics board with me, and he will tell you in very emotional terms how the use of that word has made him feel rejected, stupid, demeaned.

Or, you can talk to Special Olympic athlete Loretta Claiborne, who speaks on behalf of millions when she describes how the "R-word" has been used to mock and degrade her. She asks all of us to stop using this word without regard to its effect on the hearts and minds of people with disabilities. There is an old saying: "sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Even when I chanted it as a child, I never believed it. Words do hurt— they break people's spirits, they break people's dreams, they break people's hearts.

Kids will see "Tropic Thunder" no matter the rating, and when they leave the theater and go out to their homes and their communities, they'll call each other the "R-word" because they will think it's funny. They'll do it without any idea or regard to how it makes a person with a disability feel.

Too many in the intellectually disabled movement cannot speak out for themselves. It is up to their families and those of us who advocate on their behalf to explain that calling someone the "R-word" is no longer acceptable and is anything but funny.

It's not acceptable in a movie theater; it's not acceptable on a playground. It's not acceptable that college coaches use it to chastise athletes. It's not OK to use it in a classroom or a boardroom.

"Tropic Thunder" is giving Claiborne, Barbanell and many other individuals and organizations that serve those with special needs—the Special Olympics, the National Down Syndrome Society, the Arc, the American Association of People with disabilities, Parent to Parent-USA—a teachable moment.

They are ready to join with the entertainment industry to change minds. Dreamworks decision to include a public service announcement with DVDs of "Tropic Thunder" is an important first step, but far more needs to be done.

Just as important, parents must talk to kids at our kitchen tables about how we have felt when someone called us stupid, idiotic or lame. Because once we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, certain names just aren't that funny anymore.

I often quote the Hopi prayer that tells us not to look outside ourselves for a leader.

It tells us that we are the ones we have been waiting for. We can exchange on "R-word" for another: respect. We can teach our children that name-calling hurts.

Let's make the "R-word" as unacceptable as the "N-word." Think of all we can accomplish if we work together.

It's one thing in this political season that shouldn't require a water-cooler debate.

*Maria Shriver is the first lady of California. This column originally appeared in the Los Angeles Times, then the Casper Star Tribune Aug 08*

***"There are two primary choices in life; to accept conditions as they exist, or accept responsibility for changing them."***

Denis Waitly

**Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc. (PHP)**, because of rising mailing, production costs, and our increased distribution number to more than 5,350 parents and professionals, must charge a \$20/year subscription fee to professionals and other interested individuals.

**The newsletter remains free to parents, however any donation is appreciated.**

**Please complete and return the form below so that we may update our mailing list:**

I am a parent of a child with a disability and a Wyoming resident. Please keep me on/add me to the list.

If your child has a disability, please list disability: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's age \_\_\_\_\_

I am a parent leader in my child's school \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school).

I am a professional, teacher or other interested person. Enclosed is \$20 for a one year subscription.

My organization/school name is \_\_\_\_\_ My role/ position is \_\_\_\_\_

I am the parent of a child with disabilities, but do not live in Wyoming. Enclosed is \$20 for a one year subscription.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

This is my:  Home address  Work address (Please check one) E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Donation amount \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank you!**

**Please Send PHP A Change of Address If You Move. The Post Office Does Not Forward or Return Bulk Mail.**

Mail to: Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc.  
5 N Lobban Ave  
Buffalo, WY 82834

For more information  
Contact PIC at 1-800-660-9742  
(307) 684-2277  
[tdawson@wpic.org](mailto:tdawson@wpic.org)

**About us:**



**Parent Information Center, PIC:**

**Outreach Parent Liaisons (OPL)** provide local information and support to families of children with disabilities, on their rights under special education law, IDEA. PIC also provides workshops and trainings on IDEA, IEPs, and specific disabilities such as attention disorders, autism and down syndrome. If you are interested in a workshop in your community or making contact with an OPL, call PIC at 1-800-660-9742 or (307) 684-2277, or call:

**Betty Carmon**, Powell, 754-3430, [bcarmon@wpic.org](mailto:bcarmon@wpic.org)  
Serves Cody, Powell, Greybull, Worland, Lovell & Thermopolis area

**Janet Kinstetter**, Moorcroft, 756-9605, [jkinstetter@wpic.org](mailto:jkinstetter@wpic.org)  
Serves Moorcroft, Gillette, Sundance & Newcastle area

**Anita Schwartz**, [aschwartz@wpic.org](mailto:aschwartz@wpic.org) or **Jan Jones** [jjones@wpic.org](mailto:jjones@wpic.org)  
Cheyenne, 635-3536 Serves Cheyenne, Laramie, Wheatland & Torrington area

**Michele Pena**, [mpena@wpic.org](mailto:mpena@wpic.org) or **Marcy Elton-Meeks**, [melton@wpen.net](mailto:melton@wpen.net), 247-0075 or 265-6884 or tollfree 1-877-265-6884  
Serves Casper, Douglas, Glenrock & Lusk area

**Parent Education Network, PEN:**



As the Wyoming State PIRC, PEN provides technical assistance to schools about family friendly practices in education. PEN works with schools to help families understand the provisions of No Child Left Behind, and how to be more actively engaged in their children's learning and education.

For more information call **Krista Sweckard**, Outreach Coordinator at (307) 684-7441 or e-mail [ksweckard@wpic.org](mailto:ksweckard@wpic.org) or contact the Outreach Parent Liaison closest to you:

**Brenda Hatanelas**, Cheyenne, 635-3536, [bhatanelas@wpen.net](mailto:bhatanelas@wpen.net)  
Serves Cheyenne, Laramie, Wheatland and Torrington

**Marcy Elton-Meeks**, Casper, 265-6884, [melton@wpen.net](mailto:melton@wpen.net)  
**Kelly Rogers**, [kr Rogers@wpen.net](mailto:kr Rogers@wpen.net)  
Serves Casper, Douglas, Glenrock and Lusk

**Lisa Heimer**, Cody, 899-1443, [lheimer@wpen.net](mailto:lheimer@wpen.net)  
Serves Cody, Powell, Lovell, Greybull and Basin

**Crissy Lucas**, Lander and/or Riverton, 857-1337, [clucas@wpen.net](mailto:clucas@wpen.net)  
Serves Lander, Riverton, Dubois and Wind River Reservation

**Tammy Goich**, Rock Springs, 382-9482, [tgoich@wpen.net](mailto:tgoich@wpen.net)  
Serves Rock Springs, Green River, Evanston, Kemmerer

**Carol Mackenzie**, Pinedale, 217-2244 [cmackenzie@wpen.net](mailto:cmackenzie@wpen.net)  
Serves Pinedale, Big Piney and Jackson

PEN also provides home-based services for children, prenatal through age five, and their families with the *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* program. Certified PAT parent educators are:

**Erin Swilling** (307) 635-3536 Cheyenne [eswilling@wpen.net](mailto:eswilling@wpen.net)  
**Samantha Crawford** (307) 742-6528 Laramie [js Crawford@wpen.net](mailto:js Crawford@wpen.net)  
**Loretta Erickson** (307) 203-2027 Pinedale [lerickson@wpen.net](mailto:lerickson@wpen.net)  
**Blanca Moye** (307) 690-8149 Jackson [bmoye@wpen.net](mailto:bmoye@wpen.net)

For more information about PAT, call **Dara Johnston**, PAT Coordinator at 1-877-900-9736 or (307) 684-7441 or e-mail [PATinfo@wpen.net](mailto:PATinfo@wpen.net).

PICS -N- PIECES is published by:

**Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc. (PHP)**

5 N. Lobban Ave  
Buffalo, WY 82834

**Director: Terri Dawson**  
[tdawson@wpic.org](mailto:tdawson@wpic.org)

**PIC & PEN** are projects of  
**Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc.**

**Parent Information Center**

[www.wpic.org](http://www.wpic.org)  
(307) 684-2277  
Toll free 1-800-660-9742 (WY)  
PIC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, grant # H328M040011.

**Parent Education Network**

Wyoming State PIRC  
[www.wpen.net](http://www.wpen.net)  
(307) 684-7441  
Toll free 1-877-900-9736 (WY)  
PEN is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation & Improvement, Parent Options & Information, grant # U310A060160.

This newsletter reports items of interest about education, parenting, and disability issues. PHP does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatments, etc. PHP will not endorse any particular political or religious view. Individuals or organizations referred to are not necessarily sanctioned by this publication or its editor. The editor reserves the right to make corrections as are appropriate and in accord with established editorial practice in materials submitted for publication. Views expressed in PICS -N- PIECES do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Education.

**Board of Directors**

Terry Kenny, Chairperson  
Nancy Vreeland, Vice Chairperson  
Tanya Knell, Secretary/Treasurer  
Carole Justice  
DJ Yocom  
Tanya Knell  
Lisa Weigel, past Chairperson  
and ad hoc member

*Materials from this newsletter may be reprinted. We ask only that Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc. and PICS -N- PIECES be credited.*

**Support Continues for Families with Wyoming Hands and Voices**



Since being established in the fall of 2006, Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices has continued to develop into a vital support for families with deaf and hard of hearing children in Wyoming.



This support is provided through unbiased parent/professional collaboration and advocacy efforts aimed at assisting this population in reaching their fullest potential.

Their primary function is to assist families by connecting them to resources through parent connections, their website, and other state agencies. These resources include but are not limited to: general deaf education; parent advocacy; IFSP and IEP support; and state trainings.

A recently created "Kid Connection" is a pen-pal program for school aged children to connect deaf and hard of hearing students across the state. In January 2008, WY



Hands and Voices started the "School to School" program in which students were signed up by their Teachers of the Deaf. To date they have had two activities that the participants have done an excellent job using their creative talents to share information about themselves with their pen pal.

In the pen pal program, they currently have 47 students enrolled, and all have felt the program has been successful in helping the children to connect and increase their literacy skills. Registration for the "school to school" program for the 2008-09 year began in late August. Contact Deb or Wendy for more information regarding Kid Connection.



Funding for Hands and Voices has been provided by the Parent Information Center, Early Hearing and Detection Intervention (EHDI), and Wyoming Department of Education State Improvement Grant. Some funding also comes from membership. With membership comes a quarterly newsletter, and *The Communicator*, a quarterly newspaper published by the Hands & Voices National organization. If anyone is interested in becoming a member or to learn more about this program, contact Wendy Hewitt, Co-Director at (307) 782-3276, [wendy@wyhandsandvoices.org](mailto:wendy@wyhandsandvoices.org), Deb Hovde, Co-Director at (307) 782-3228, [deb@wyhandsandvoices.org](mailto:deb@wyhandsandvoices.org), or visit their website at [www.WyHandsAndVoices.org](http://www.WyHandsAndVoices.org).

**2008 Atta Girl VISION AWARD Goes to Linda Barton**

This summer, the Equipoise Fund presented one of the 2008 Atta Girl Visions Award to Linda Barton of Lander, for her passion in establishing the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance. The Alliance has been instrumental in promoting and supporting quality afterschool care so that children are safe and well cared for while their mothers make a living. The Afterschool Alliance is made up of partners from across the state who believe in quality afterschool programs for children. This past year it received funding from the Mott Foundation to provide technical assistance to all

programs across the state. Just recently, WYAA was awarded funding for an additional project through the Mott Foundation for Linking Early Care and Afterschool Efforts. Wyoming was one of five states to receive this award, which will allow WYAA to learn from other states and link to more programs. For more information on the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance contact Linda at (307) 335-WYAA (9922) or visit [www.wyafschoolalliance.org](http://www.wyafschoolalliance.org)



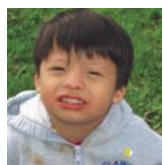




## Wyoming Early Intervention Council

**"WORKING TOGETHER TO EXTEND THEIR REACH"**

*The Early Intervention Council's mission is to provide statewide direction and support to insure exemplary coordination of community based early intervention services for children with developmental needs and their families.*



**Photos from  
"Early On" Parent  
Conference & family BBQ  
June 7 & 8, 2008 in Buffalo**



## Standing up to a Bully!

If your child is verbally bullied, teach him or her how to respond effectively. Discuss the following strategies with your child. Practicing the strategies with you or another trusted adult will help develop the confidence to end the bullying. If the bullying is happening at school, speak to your child's classroom teacher or advisor so they can help.

### Ignore the Bully

Teach your child to ignore the bully. Your child should not make faces, cry, sigh, or make any gesture signaling distress. Often, when bullies don't get a reaction, they stop.

### Walk Away

Your child can choose to walk away in a confident manner - head up, back straight and with a normal walking pace. Your child needs to be aware of being followed and walk to a safer place, usually near adults. If the bully says mean things, continue to ignore them and walk away.

### Tell the Bully to "Stop"

Keeping a distance of 1½ to 2 arm lengths, have your child say, "Stop!" or, "Cut it out!" Teach your child to:

1. Make eye contact.
2. Express confident body language; head up, back straight, arms down in front or on the side of the body and feet at shoulder width. No fidgeting!
3. Speak clearly - a steady tone, not too loud, too soft, whiny or sarcastic.
4. Make short statements such as, "Stop!" or "Cut it out!"
5. Then turn and walk away.

### Go to a Trusted Adult

When other strategies fail, or there is immediate danger, tell your child to go to a trusted adult. This is not tattling; this is requesting assistance with a serious problem.

©2008 [www.BalanceEducationalServices.com](http://www.BalanceEducationalServices.com)

Permission is granted to use this article.

## PAWS Writing Reviews Scores Changes 37

**Cheyenne** - A review of over 88,000 PAWS writing results has revealed an error in the scoring for 37 students, the Wyoming Department of Education announced today.

These 37 student responses to one of the two writing prompts were scored as having no response, when in fact the student had responded. This problem has been linked to a single scorer within the Pearson Assessment, the company that delivers and scores the PAWS assessment. This affected students in only 11 schools within 9 of the state's school districts.

The review of writing scores was prompted by a contact directly to Pearson Assessment from a Wyoming educator. Pearson then undertook a review of all writing responses that did not show a score on one or both of writing prompts according to Lesley Wangberg, Assessment Director for the Wyoming Department of Education. Pearson Assessment has rescored the assessments for all 37 students.

"We strive to have a transparent process. We understand that each student deserves an accurate result for the hard work they do, and the WDE extends an apology to the 37 students and their families affected by this mistake," Wangberg said. "We are currently

working with Pearson on the processes and procedures that will be put in place for the scoring of the 2009 PAWS writing assessment to ensure that this inaccuracy does not occur again."

The revised scores will only maintain or improve writing results for students, their schools and possibly the districts involved. WDE is reviewing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for the following affected districts: Campbell #1, Carbon #1, Carbon #2, Converse #1, Fremont #1, Natrona #1, Platte #1, Platte #2, and Weston #7.

Wangberg said that WDE is also responding to Wyoming educator concerns by establishing a Wyoming Assessment System Task Force, consisting of Wyoming educators and citizens. This group, to be appointed by Dr. Jim McBride, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, will meet to review all aspects of the statewide assessment system and provide advice to WDE.

The Department has received other comments about writing assessment, which will also be considered by the new task force, as well as the state's Assessment Technical Advisory Committee, consisting of state and national assessment experts.



## Vote for Kids

### Step Up for Kids Day- September 16 Every Child Matters Advocacy Tips for Families

There are 125,000 children in Wyoming and every one of them should have the right to health, safety, and to opportunities that will allow them to achieve the American dream.....

- Most Wyoming kids are in situations not of their own choosing. Unlike children, we as voters make choices at the polls and those that we elect will

make important policy choices.

- As families, we must make sure candidates at all levels of government will, if elected, make choices that will enhance the potential for all children to succeed.
- As families, we should be sure our elected officials will make Wyoming kids a top priority, not an afterthought.. Many children, including infants, live in poverty. Some children from all walks of life are abused and neglected, are home alone afterschool, and many have no health insurance —it does not have to be this way!
- If we invest in our kids, especially at an early age, they will pay us back by making Wyoming strong. This investment will result in citizens who are responsible, innovative and productive, children who will grow up in Wyoming, and in turn will help Wyoming to grow and flourish. It means reductions in crime, reductions in teen pregnancy, reductions in the abuse of drugs and alcohol, fewer dropouts, and greater educational success.

It also means fewer children who are bruised, battered and neglected, fewer children with rotten teeth and fewer children suffering unnecessarily because they are excluded from the health care system. Abundant research proves that solutions are available to reduce these problems and that we are capable of enhancing healthy human growth and development.

- Yet, as a percentage of the federal budget, spending for children is down sharply and the long-term trend is projected to decline. The elected officials that we put into office should understand they have an amazing potential to make positive changes in the lives of children.
- As families, we need to make sure they do not only pay lip service to the needs of children. Now is the time to stand up and ask candidates what they actually plan on doing to make that future brighter- and then hold them to it.
- As families and providers, we need to make sure our friends and families register and vote for the candidates who say they will support our child and family friendly budgets.
- All of our children matter—every one. *Our elected officials should acknowledge all of our children—every one of them!*

#### Some Wyoming Facts:

*At least 10,000 children are without health insurance.*

*Nineteen children died due to abuse from 2000-2005.*

*In 2007 there were 1,392 children in out of home care.*

*17,800 (approximately 20% of school aged children) are responsible for caring for themselves after school.*

*There is shortage of opportunities for early care and for children of working parents.*

*Some 14,000 live in poverty, and many low-income working families do not have the money to cover essentials or invest in their children's future.*

*Approximately 2,500 children have a parent who is incarcerated .*

## Save the Dates!

**Jackson, WY**  
**September 22-23, 2008**  
Workshop Site:  
First Interstate Bank  
820 West Broadway  
Jackson, WY 83001

**Casper, WY**  
**November 6-7, 2008**  
Workshop Site:  
Wyoming Library for the Deaf  
539 South Payne Avenue  
Casper, WY 82609

**Laramie, WY**  
**November 13-14, 2008**  
Workshop Site:  
UW Beta House  
Medicine Bow Room  
Laramie, WY 82071

## HEARING SCREENING...

**To Infinity & Beyond:**  
Obtaining, Interpreting, Referring, &  
Following-up on Hearing Screening Results!

Registration and information is available at [www.wyomingehdi.org](http://www.wyomingehdi.org)

Sponsored by the Early hearing Detection and Intervention (EDHI) program,  
WY Dept of Health— Developmental Disabilities Division and the  
WY Dept of Education-Outreach Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



**October 15-17, 2008**  
**Parkway Plaza**  
**Casper, WY**

MEGA, the largest cross-disability conference in the state of Wyoming is right around the corner. This years conference covers topics like: education, self determination, self-advocacy, employment, assistive technology, relationships, positive behavior supports and much, much more. One of the speakers this year will be Dale Dileo, author of *Raymond's Room* and an national disability advocate “working to end segregation of citizens with disabilities. Another event at the MEGA this year will be the MEGA Hoedown on Thursday night.

This year the MEGA will be held at the Parkway Plaza and Convention Center in Casper, October 15-17, 2008. Rooms are \$56.00 plus tax and are listed under the MEGA Block.

If you are ready to hitch your wagon to a star and come to MEGA, you can register online at <http://ddcouncil.state.wy.us>.

You can also call the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities at (307) 777-7358 or by e-mail at [GPCDDinfo@state.wy.us](mailto:GPCDDinfo@state.wy.us)

## PEN's Family-School Partnership Connections...

The 2008-09 Family-School Partnership Contracts are available for the 2008-09 school year! Last school year the Parent Education Network worked through contracts with parent leaders and educators in 35 schools across the state. The dynamic and creative parent activities these groups have coordinated engaged hundreds of families in their children's learning while linking to Wyoming content standards. Take a look at the numbers of involved partners below:

**64** Activities that included:  
**4806** students  
**2808** parents  
**580** teachers  
**1315** others

### Good Apple Spotlight Award

Late this summer, Lisa Heimer, PEN's Outreach Parent Liaison brought it to our attention that Cody Middle School's Principal Larry Gerber had created a wiki page. We thought that the Wiki itself was very technologically savvy—however, what was linked to that page has earned Mr. Gerber our Good Apple Award for our summer months!



**Way to go Mr. Gerber**—providing your parents with an easy link to our fact sheets is one of the many creative ways you are expanding your goal on parental engagement at your school!! You, too, can check out this great space at <http://cmsannouncements.wikispaces.com/>. We would love other Wyoming schools to link to our resources and fact sheets!

## PTA's National Standards for Family– School Partnerships

**Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community**— Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff and to what students are learning and doing in class.

**Standard 2: Communicating effectively**— Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way and meaningful communication about student learning.

**Standard 3: Supporting student success** —Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students learning and healthy development both at home and at school and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

**Standard 4: Speaking up for every child** —Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

**Standard 5: Sharing power** — Families and school staff are equal partners in decision that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

**Standard 6: Collaborating with community** — Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, communities services and civic participation

For more information about the National Standards and PTA programs that promote family-school partnerships, visit [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

## National Youth Risk Data Released

**Cheyenne** – According to a national comparison, there are some at-risk behaviors that Wyoming students are at a greater risk of being subjected to than the rest of the nation.

The National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, released this month, takes the responses from the states that administer the survey and compiles a national average.

Data shows that Wyoming students are at a greater risk of rarely or never wearing a seatbelt, with 15.4 percent of students in Wyoming at-risk, compared with 11.1 percent on a national level.

Two of the highest risks, when compared to national data, is smokeless tobacco use and the percentage of students who have ever carried a weapon.

In Wyoming, 14.7 percent of students are at-risk of using smokeless tobacco at least once in a 30 day period, while the percentage of use on a national level is 7.9 percent.

In addition, 26.8 percent of Wyoming students said they had carried a weapon at least once in the past 30 days, compared to 18 percent on a national level.

Other behaviors that Wyoming students were at greater risk of being subject to, than the rest of the nation, included lifetime methamphetamine use and inhalant use. "It is a continuing battle of education and intervention to help our students avoid these at-risk behaviors," Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jim McBride said. "We have to make sure we do everything we can to protect and encourage healthy and safe lifestyles for our children in Wyoming."

Additional information on the Wyoming comparison to the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey is available on the Wyoming Department of Education website at [www.k12.wy.us](http://www.k12.wy.us).

## Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities says goodbye to Brenda, Hello to Shannon



Brenda Oswald, Executive Director for the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities for the past ten years, has moved onto another adventure in her life. Last spring, Brenda left this role to pursue her dreams

and ambitions of self-determination for people with disabilities in Wyoming.

Some of the accomplishments Brenda made in her ten years with the Council include the Youth Leadership Forum in which over 9 years 175 young adults with disabilities have gained leadership skills and developed new friendships across the state. Another accomplishment was the Crossroads Media Campaign, which includes a weekly radio show and magazine. Brenda also worked with self-advocates to help them speak for themselves about their choices and what they want for their lives. She raised awareness across the state

to public policy makers. Her passion and enthusiasm for life will be missed on the Council.

As Executive Director, Brenda maintained that the Council and supporting agencies should work for people with disabilities, not the other way around. "bottom line...people with disabilities and their family members are the people we represent. The service system should work for them, not the other way around."

Recently, a new Executive Director was hired by the Governor's Planning Council. Shannon Buller, a former U.S. Marine, comes to the Council from the Wyoming Youth Challenge Program where she taught social studies, science and responsible citizenship core components to at-risk youth who were working towards their GED's. Before then, she spent 12 years teaching at St. Joseph's Children's Home in Torrington, WY. Shannon also has a background rich in media and communications. The Council, families and self-advocates welcome Shannon and look forward to working with her in the coming years.

*Taken from Crossroads, Summer 2008 issue*



## New additions to PIC and PEN:



**Samantha Crawford, PEN Parent Educator in Laramie.**



Samantha has lived in WY for over 9 years. She received her BS in Elementary Education from University of Wyoming and has worked with children and parents for over 6 years. She believes strongly in the Parents as Teachers philosophy "You are your child's first and most important teacher" and feels privileged to be part of a program that empowers parents. As a PAT parent educator, Samantha can be reached at (307) 742-6528 or scrawford@wpen.



**Jan Jones, PIC in Cheyenne.**

Jan is the parent of an adult child with multiple disabilities. She has many years of experience with the "process" of educating and providing for her daughter. With a degree in Sociology, Jan has helped people in different walks of their lives. Helping families is her present goal, helping them empower themselves in the right direction.



**Anita Schwartz, Cheyenne,** and is mother of a teenage daughter and 6 year old son, who was born with the metabolic disease, phenylketonuria (PKU). Anita also raised 3 now-grown "daughters." The birth of her

son and the realization that moms (and dads) occasionally need a helping hand to understand and provide the best life possible for their children encouraged her to get her Bachelors in Family and Community Service, and Special Education certification from the University of Wyoming. Anita comes with a background in case management working with adjudicated youth. She is looking forward to putting her diverse background to work PIC.



**Michele Pena, Outreach Parent Liaison in Casper**

Michele and her husband recently moved to Wyoming from Michigan and settled in Casper. They have four children between the ages of 1 and 15 years old, the oldest, Tyler, has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS). Since Tyler was born, Michele has been a strong advocate and educated herself to actively pursue medical treatment and educational programs for her son. She has been involved in Special Olympics and other special education athletic programs. Michele is currently an awareness coordinator for the National CdLS foundation.



**Marcy-Elton-Meeks, PIC in Casper.**

Marcy has expanded her role within our organization. She is splitting her time part time between the Parent Information Center and the Parent Education Network. She is the proud parent of an 8 year old daughter. As a University of Wyoming graduate with a Bachelors of Art in Elementary Education and Special Education certification, Marcy comes to PIC with over 11 years of experience in education and advocating for families. This includes 9 years of teaching special education from grades 6-12 in Powell, Cody and finally Casper. As an adult growing up with depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder, Marcy brings a passionate voice from personal experience on disabilities and special education supports to this position in supporting families.

### New Website in Development for PEN

In the next month, the Parent Education Network will be launching a new website. The URL will be the same at [www.wpen.net](http://www.wpen.net), and will be updated with a fresh clean look that is more family friendly and accessible. Keep a look out for it in the next few weeks!

***Together We Make a Difference!***

## Career Readiness Certificate

By Brian Hickman, *Rehab Roundup*- WY DVR e-newsletter July 08

On July 9, 2008, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Development Services joined 15 other states in offering a Career Readiness Certificate.

The Career Readiness Certificate is an assessment of a person's skill level in read for Information, Locating Information and Applied Mathematics. The person receiving the assessment will receive a certificate stating that her or she has tested at the Gold (highest) Level, Silver level or the Bronze (lowest) Level.

The person can then take his or her certificate to an employer indicating that he or she has a certain level of skills. The employer then will have an idea as to how much back training a potential job candidate will need in order to be up to speed at the job her or she is applying for.

For those that test low on the WorkKeys Assessment, there will be the opportunity for remedial assistances. DWS is currently coordinating with the local community colleges to provide the testing and assist with the remedial assistance.

*If a consumer of DWS wishes to take the assessments, but is unable to pay the \$50 fee, there are a few options for payment*



If the consumer is a client of DVR, the fee can be paid as a Diagnostic & Assessment service. The client will need to be eligible for VR services before the fee can be paid. For individuals that are not with VR, he or she may be able to qualify for the fee to be paid under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). If for some reason the person does not qualify for either VR or WIA, there is a limited fund that has been made available to pay the fee. More information on this and how many fee "vouchers" that will be available will be shared at a later date.

For more information please visit this website: [www.wyomingworkforce.org/crc](http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/crc)

## Are you an Employer?

Find out how workers with Career Readiness Certificates can benefit you at [wyomingworkforce.org/crc](http://wyomingworkforce.org/crc) or call 1-877-WORK-WYO

# An Untapped Workforce

## They do it all!

Wyoming Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities



## What's Happening in Wyoming

### **Breaking the Bonds of Seclusion and Isolation: Strategies and Best Practice for students with Difficult Behavior Challenges**



**Nov 7 & 8, 2008  
Hilton Garden Inn,**

**Laramie, WY**

The Parent Information Center and Protection and Advocacy are sponsoring a conference for

families of children with disabilities ages birth to 26 years of age. National speakers are Calvin and Tricia Luker of Michigan, Respectability Law Center, Michigan and Heather Hebdon, Director of STOMP- Strategic Training of Military Parents, Tacoma WA .

Topics will include:

- INCLUSIVE EDUCATION- When ALL really means ALL
- POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS- The Truth about Consequences
- PREVENTING RESTRAINT, SECLUSION AND USE OF AVERSIVES: Creating truly safe schools
- PERSON CENTERED PLANNING: Captain of my ship, Master of my fate.

There is no registration costs for families of children with disabilities. Mileage stipends will be available for families. Lodging expenses at the Hilton Garden Inn will be covered by PIC for families. Lunch available both days with registration. The conference begins Friday, Nov 7 at 10:00 until 4:30 pm, then again on Nov 8, 9:00 am and ends at 3 :00 pm. Educators and other providers are welcome to attend, with the registration cost of \$75.00

For registration, go online at [www.wpic.org](http://www.wpic.org) or call PIC at 1-800-660-9742 .

### **Wyoming School Psychology Assoc. Annual Fall Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders of Behavior and Attention** **Sept 22 - 23, 2008** **Parkway Plaza- Casper, WY** **Presenting Dr John Constantino**

Dr Constantino will be the main keynote presenter from the University of Washington, St Louis. Other speakers will be: Dr. Bruce Bennett, a psychiatrist from Wyoming Behavioral Institute in Casper, WY; Dr. Diane Edwards, a pediatrician, who specializes in the treatment of autism with a practice in Casper, WY; and Dr. Steen Goddik, a psychiatrist at the Central WY Community Health Center in Casper, WY.

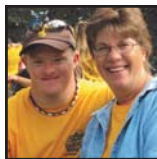
Registration for families of children with be waived. For more information or for registration call Dr Bob Bayuk at (307) 347-2435, or 388-2120 or at [bbayuk@tribsecp.com](mailto:bbayuk@tribsecp.com)

Everyone of us is neurologically unique and suggests that, much like ethnic, cultural or other types of diversity, each of needs to be recognized, respected and celebrated as invaluable and unique individuals. The purpose of this training is to introduce and help clarify a number of conditions – some well-known, others less familiar, that continue to emerge in our school settings as opportunities to challenge us each day.

Through lecture and discussion we will examine the differences and similarities among a number of rare and related conditions and emerging syndromes, in a effort to provide a clearer understanding of these challenging patterns of neuro-developmental expression.

Courtesy of Encana Oil and Gas USA, participants will enjoy a tailgate lunch and tickets to the UW football game against Bowling Green State University.

For more info or for registration, call Bob Sell at (307) 742-6641 or [sell@arkregionalservices.org](mailto:sell@arkregionalservices.org).



### **WY Down Syndrome Associations 8th Annual Buddy Walk in Laramie Sept 28, 2008**

Beginning at 9 am with fun in Washington Park, this years Buddy Walk will begin at 11:00 , Saturday Sept 28, 2008 and walk to the University of Wyoming football game for recognition awards and lunch.

## Parent Engagement Tips for Middle School

Middle school can be a confusing time, for parents as well as for their kids. Your child is becoming more independent yet still needs your support as much as ever. While you may decide to allow your child more autonomy in some areas, be sure to stay actively involved in your child's school. Research shows that children whose parents are engaged in their education are more likely to achieve academic success. Here are some tips for getting involved in your child's middle school learning experience.

**Get to know the teachers.** It's a good idea to meet each of your child's teachers. Ask about their expectations. Find out how much time your child should spend on homework each night. Find out whether there will be regularly scheduled tests and if so, when. Ask about the best way to get in touch if you have questions. If the teachers use email, be sure to get their addresses.

**Find a niche for yourself at your child's school.** Unlike in the lower grades, middle school classrooms don't need extra adults on hand. But you can volunteer in other ways. Serve as an adviser for an extracurricular activity such as the school paper, chess club, or science fair. Help out in the computer lab. Being in the school is a great way to get a feel for what goes on there.

**Do behind-the-scenes work.** If you can't be in school during the day, ask teachers and other school personnel to pass along some work that you can do on your own. Photocopy homework assignments; collect recyclables for a science or art project; serve on a parent-school advisory council; join your middle school PTO or PTA.

**Volunteer to chaperone school dances and drive kids to school sports competitions.** You'll meet other parents, school staff, and your child's classmates.

**Go to school meetings and events.** Attending concerts, plays, assemblies, meetings, and other activities is a good way to become familiar with your child's school community.

**Find out about homework assignments and school tests.** If your school has a website where teachers list homework assignments, get in the habit of checking it regularly. If not, contact your child's teachers and ask them to alert you when there's an important project or test coming up.

**Talk to your child about school.** Ask specific questions to draw out your child. Ask "How do you think you did on the math test?" "Did Mr. Phipps say anything funny today?" "What games did you play in PE?"

**Give your child a quiet place to study and do homework.** Find an area in your home that is free of distraction where your middle schooler can concentrate on homework. Be available to help if your child has a question.

**Check your child's homework, but don't do it for her.** Offer to check math problems, proofread written papers, and look over spelling words. If you find a mistake, point it out to your child and help her figure out the correct answer.

**Post a family calendar in a central place.** Write down important school dates, including parent meetings, due dates for projects, and tests. Encourage your middle schooler to add to the calendar and to check it daily.

From [schoolfamily.com](http://schoolfamily.com)

### Coming Soon to a School Near You!

The Parent Education Network, Wyoming State PIRC will be mailing every school in Wyoming a cd of the PDFs of all our "PEN notes" and "Education Extra's" for easier access and dissemination!



Families, educators and providers can call and request additional copies at 1-877-900-9736, or e-mail us at [tdawson@wpic.org](mailto:tdawson@wpic.org).