

SELF

SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES



Winter Newsletter 2010

Happy New Year and welcome to SELF's first quarterly newsletter! I've always liked the idea of a new year, a fresh start full of exciting possibilities. I find the anticipation of achieving new goals and aspirations exciting and I'm intrigued by how each New Year will unfold.

This newsletter represents the accomplishment of a goal we set for SELF last year. Our goal was to increase our communication with partners and supporters. Each newsletter will highlight one of our 23 partners, starting with The Arc of Clark County. We will continue through the list in alphabetical order. You will learn more about great programs and resources available for children and families in our community.

As you know, we developed a new website this past year which went live the end of June. Since then, we've added more information and resources, so please check out www.selfwa.org. If you have any suggestions or information you want to add, please let us know. We want you to know how much we value your help in spreading the word about this valuable community resource.

We have a lot of exciting things on the horizon for 2010, one is an event you won't want to miss, SELF's "Through the Eyes of a Child" conference June 4 & 5. Be sure to save the dates. More information will be coming soon. I look forward to seeing each of you there.

As we begin this New Year, I want to thank you for your continued support of SELF as an organization and for your support of young children and their families in our community. We are looking forward to working together with you in 2010.

- Debbie Ham, Director

"Through the Eyes of a Child" Conference Dates

The dates for SELF's first annual conference, "Through the Eyes of a Child" are set for June 4 and 5, 2010 at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Vancouver, Washington.

The conference will kick off with a fundraising breakfast and continue through Friday and Saturday featuring educational strands that will benefit both collaborative partners, providers and the general public who seek to better understand early learning.

Registration for the conference will begin in late February. Save the date, and watch for updates at www.selfwa.org or join our email list at the bottom of this newsletter so you can receive updates about the conference.

Collaborative Partner Profile: The Arc of Clark County

The Arc of Clark County has provided advocacy and direct services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) throughout Southwest Washington for 74 years. In a recent interview, Jesse Dunn, Executive Director of the local Chapter, responded to questions about what The Arc is doing in our community and what the future holds.

Q: Most people recognize the name of The Arc of Clark County but don't know exactly what it does here in Southwest Washington. Who are you and what do you do?

Dunn: The Arc of Clark County is one of the oldest nonprofit organizations operating here locally. It started back in 1936 with a grassroots group of parents passionate about helping their children with developmental disabilities get the same opportunities to realize their full potential that everyone else have.

Since that time, the organization has grown and has served many tens of thousands of Southwest Washington residents living with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or a host of other developmental or intellectual disabilities, across the full lifetime of the individual.

Q: What programs does The Arc currently have for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)?

Dunn: The Arc of Clark County provides a variety of services along the lifelong continuum that help support the fullest expression of a person's interests and choices for a safe, healthy and secure life. The emphasis is on building family and other loving supports that optimize an individual's opportunity to succeed.

The Arc of Clark County's Family Center houses several services. The PRIDE for Kids program provides early intervention, early childhood education and a full range of therapies such as physical, occupational and speech therapy. Currently, we serve children from birth thru age 7 with parent support and education.

The Arc Family Center is also home to The Clark County Parent to Parent, The Clark County Parent Coalition, and SibShop which serves siblings of those with I/DD. Our large, sensory integrated therapeutic playground is also located at the Family Center.

Our range of services continue from our Fourth Plain office, where we provide several programs geared toward adults with I/DD that include jobs skills training, transition assistance, independent living support, opportunities for community participation, Representative Payee services and Guardianship Services. And we also have our Room To Grow community garden with accessible raised bed gardening.

From infants to seniors The Arc of Clark County provides services and support to over 1,500 individuals and their families each year.

Q: What does the future of The Arc of Clark County hold?

Dunn: We anticipate that the years ahead will bring magnificent opportunities for people with I/DD. Emerging technologies are rapidly closing gaps that will empower people to go through doors of employment and community living not previously available on a wide scale. Research into causes of I/DD also holds exciting promise.

Locally, collaboration and coordination between the organizations currently serving those with I/DD and their families will be more powerfully focused to achieve substantial results.

The Arc of Clark County's support of the SELF collaborative currently includes lending expertise and support to the Development and Communications Committee and the Ready Families Committee. "We are proud to be a part of this network of community members working together to serve the needs of children and families here in Clark County", said Jesse Dunn, Executive Director, The Arc of Clark County.

While much progress has been made since 1936, there are barriers that remain and challenges still to be faced.

The Arc of Clark County will continue to meet all of these optimistically, as we help people with I/DD achieve a lifetime of success by building capacity with respectful advocacy, direct support of individuals and their families and promotion of full participation in our community.

For more information about The Arc of Clark County, visit www.ArcofClarkCounty.org.

SELFVA.ORG - A Resource for Clark County

Over the past several months, SELF has worked to create a new, useful website to advance the mission of early learning. The site will continue to be updated and grow to meet community needs.

The website is conveniently segmented into Families and Neighbors, Providers and Community so that viewers can retrieve information quickly.

Log on at www.selfva.org to see our new site!