



Family Driven Family Support Services

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Thanksgivings and Misgivings

*For the homes that with purest affection are blest,
For the season of plenty and well-deserved rest,
For our country extending from sea to sea,
The land that is known as the "Land of the Free"
Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!*

It seems apropos that we mark the beginning of the holiday season with Thanksgiving Day. It is good for the soul to have an interlude of thanksgiving as a prelude to the excitement that will fill the days until we welcome a new year.

Our Thanksgiving Day is a celebration of the bonds of family and friends coming together at table to feast and revel in kinship and friendship.

Schools and colleges are on holiday, many businesses and government offices are closed. That Thanksgiving weekend is traditionally one of the busiest travel weekends of the year attests to the importance we attach to the day.

We think of our present day Thanksgiving as a re-creation of the First Thanksgiving in Plymouth. In reality, there are many misgivings surrounding the first Thanksgiving. We visualize Pilgrims in formal black and white attire -- men and boys wearing oddly shaped hats adorned with big, bright buckles, women and girls wearing frocks with crisply starched white aprons -- dining at a long groaning board overflowing with pumpkin pies, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce. The reality was much different.

The Pilgrims of 1620, who were lucky enough to survive their first winter in America, would learn how to plant and harvest corn and other vegetables under the tutelage of Native Americans. With the first successful fall harvest, the Pilgrims and Indians gave prayerful thanks with a shared meal of fowl, venison, fish, and vegetables. There was no pumpkin pie with whipped cream, mashed potatoes or cranberry sauce at that first harvest celebration. That traditional menu would evolve over time.

Just as we have misgivings about the first Thanksgiving, there are a multitude of other misgivings, some with tragic results. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has issued guidelines that call for screening pregnant women for Down syndrome. While there are astonishing treatments available to babies in the womb, there is no cure for Down syndrome. Tragically, a very high percentage of in utero babies with Down syndrome are aborted.

Children and adults with and without Down syndrome and with and without other developmental disabilities and conditions are beloved treasures to families and the communities. Our community, our society, and our civilization would be the less without their presence amongst us.

It is a self evident truth that the extent to which we care for, and care about, the needs of each child and adult with a developmental disability is the extent to which we may measure our own dignity and honor.

Joyce Krahe McDonnell, M.A.

Newsletter Editor

FSS Grandparent Support Group

The FSS Grandparent Support Group for Grandparents of Grandchildren with Developmental Disabilities meets regularly at the Gertrude A. Barber National Institute. The meetings feature professionally presented Educational Topics of Interest. The group also has opportunity to enjoy camaraderie and sharing personal experiences about their grandchildren.

Upcoming meetings are scheduled for Thursday, November 12th and Thursday, December 10th.

Meetings are held in the Breakout Rooms (from 6:00-7:30pm) at The Barber Institute, 100 Barber Place. Entrance is off the Bayfront Parkway – North Lobby Door.

Registration is requested to Diane Sanfilippo, FSS Office @ 814-878-5961. To learn more about the FSS Grandparent Support Group, please call Joyce Krahe McDonnell @ 814-878-5905.

ESO Dance

- **November 6th ‘Hoe Down Dance’ at Gannon University Waldron Center from 7-9pm.**
- **December 4th ‘Christmas with Santa Dance’. Please call the FSS Office @ 878-5961 for location.**

ESO Dances (Expanding Sociability Opportunities) expand sociability opportunities for 18-35 year olds with developmental disabilities and their college age peers in a social setting. ESO Dances, sponsored by Family Support Services, Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute, are held on college campuses.

For more details about ESO Dances, please contact Joyce Krahe McDonnell, M.A., FSS Community Organizer @ the Barber National Institute @ 814-878-5905.

To place the name of someone who would be interested in attending the dances on the mailing list, please call Diane at the FSS Office @ 814-878-5961.

Choosing Safe Toys

When buying children’s toys, safety must be at the top of everyone’s list. Choose age-appropriate toys and games. While some toys are perfectly safe and acceptable for older children, they can be

dangerous in younger children’s hands. Children age 3 or younger should not have any toys with sharp edges or points, but older children may be able to safely handle such objects.

If you decide to avoid buying toys altogether, choose one of the following alternatives instead:

- Gift certificate for a water or theme park.
- Pedometers, jump rope, exercise DVD, gift certificate to a bowling alley.
- Gift certificate to camp next year.
- Craft and art supplies.
- Books and magazine subscriptions.

S: Ohio State Univ. Extension.

Diabetes Basics

Just what is diabetes? There are two types of diabetes. When you eat, your body breaks down food into glucose (sugar) for fuel. To help your body use glucose, your pancreas produces insulin. Diabetes occurs when your pancreas can’t make insulin (Type 1), or your body can’t use insulin properly (Type 2).

TYPE 1 (formerly called juvenile diabetes) usually begins anytime from birth to your late 30s. With Type 1 diabetes, you must take supplemental insulin.

TYPE 2 Diabetes (90-95% of cases) usually occurs in people over age 35, but is increasingly common in children and teens. Risk factors include age, obesity, and family history of diabetes, pregnancy-related diabetes, high blood sugar, smoking, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, sedentary lifestyle, certain medical conditions and certain ethnicities. Type 2 can often be managed with medication, diet, weight loss and exercise. Both types require monitoring to help restore normal blood glucose levels.

SYMPTOMS of diabetes may be excessive thirst or hunger, frequent urination, unintended weight loss, blurred vision, slow healing of infections and severe fatigue – although sometimes there are no symptoms at all.

With proper medical treatment and self-care, people with diabetes can live long and healthy lives. Ask your health care provider to evaluate and help you reduce your diabetes risk.

S: TOPHEALTH.

Stairway Safety

According to the Home Safety Council's national report on home injuries, falls account for nearly one-third of all unintentional home injury deaths each year. The second leading cause of death due to falls is falls from stairs and steps.

Following is a Safe Steps Checklist:

- Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps.
- Have lights at top and bottom of stairs.
- Keep stairs clear.
- Paint the bottom basement step white to make it more visible.
- For young children, use safety gates at top and bottom of stairs
- Hold onto handrail and carry small loads up and down stairs.
- Tape to floor or do not use small rugs.
- Keep outside steps free of ice and snow.

S: Home Safety Council

Asthma Fact Sheet

Asthma is a respiratory disease that causes lungs to be hyper sensitive to different triggers. When children have symptoms from asthma, they cough and sneeze. During an asthma episode, the child has difficulty exhaling (breathing out).

Things that trigger a child's asthma are colds, exercise, pets, pollens and cigarette smoke. Other triggers are:

- Allergens such as pets, dust mites, cockroaches, pollens, molds, grass.
- Sudden changes of temperature.
- Smoke from cigarette, pipes, fireplaces or wood stoves.
- Odors from paint, aerosol sprays, cleaning materials, perfume.
- Strenuous exercise in cold or damp weather. Do not limit exercise unless the child is sick with asthma. A child who is physically fit has stronger lungs.

S: American Academy of Pediatrics.

Family and Community Support Services Support Groups

Monthly Meetings

Family and Community Support Services offer a variety of support groups for individuals with special needs, and parents and caregivers of children with special needs. Parent/caregiver support groups provide members with opportunities to meet with other parents both of younger children and adult children with special needs in an atmosphere of emotional support, education, and friendship. FSS also facilitates groups specially designed to meet the needs of children and young adults with developmental disabilities.

The 21+ CLUB

♠ **November 4th, 2009:** The 21+ CLUB will welcome Kathy Lesko, Partnership Trainer from ACHIEVA, member of the PA Training Partnership for People with Disabilities and Families. Guests will hear an overview of the MR System followed by an interactive discussion guided by topics of interest to attendees.

The meeting will take place at the Barber National Institute in the North Lobby Break-Out Rooms beginning at 6:30pm. Please make reservations by calling the FSS Office @ 814-878-5961.

♠ **The 21+ CLUB will be on winter break until Spring 2010.**

THE 21+ CLUB is an advocacy group of parents, caregivers, and other persons who are interested in the needs of adult children (over the age of 21) with developmental disabilities. Membership is open to anyone interested in services for adults with developmental disabilities. Parents of younger children are invited to join now to help ensure that services will be in place for their children as they mature.

The goals of THE 21+ CLUB are threefold: (1) Educate local, state and national legislators to the unmet needs of adults with developmental disabilities. (2) Educate parents/caregivers on issues affecting adults with disabilities. (3) Develop sociability opportunities for adults with disabilities.

For more information about the group, please call Joyce Krahe McDonnell, Family Support Services @ 814-878-5905 or the FSS Office @ 814-878-5961.

Asperger's Support Group

The Erie Chapter of GRASP, the support group for adults with Asperger's Syndrome, meets monthly on the 4th Saturday of each month at the Barber National Institute.

The group, facilitated by Mark Haller, will meet November 28th and December 26th in the Emerald Room, located in the back of the cafeteria, from 1-3pm. Guests are asked to enter from the gated lot on East 3rd Street. Please contact Mark Haller to check the most current information for scheduled meeting dates, reservations, and information. You may reach Mark Haller @ 814-864-8770 (between 10am & 1:30pm). You may also email mentatmark@gmail.com.

Autism Support Group

The Autism Society of America Northwest PA Chapter (www.nwpa-asa.org) Support Group meets to discuss issues related to children with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The group will meet in the Emerald Room, Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place, Nov. 17th and Dec. 15th from 7-8:30pm. Sitter services will be available in Room #120. For information, please call Jennifer Dennehy, FSS office @ 814-878-4117. Make reservations with Diane at FSS office 814-878-5961.

Down Syndrome

The Down Syndrome Support Group of Erie County will meet Nov. 10th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 3108 Sterrettania. The group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 6:30pm.

In place of the regular December meeting, the group will hold a Christmas Party. For information about the Christmas Party, please call Jackie Lupo @ 833-2143 or email DownSynErie@yahoo.com

Grandparent support group

Family Support Services offers regularly scheduled meetings for grandparents and other caregivers to better understand how a developmental disability affects their grandchild. Grandparents also share personal experiences in an atmosphere of support and friendship. Meetings are scheduled the 2nd Thursday of each month in the Breakout Rooms, Barber National Institute, from 6-7:30pm.

Meetings are slated for Thursday, November 12th and Thursday, December 10th.

For details about the meetings, please contact Joyce Krahe McDonnell @ 878-5905.

Reservations for meetings are requested by calling the FSS office @ 878-5961.

SIBSESSIONS

Family Support Services offers monthly SIBSESSIONS for brothers and sisters of individuals with developmental disabilities.

♥ **November 21st SibSession Swimming Party at the Barber Pool.** For information on time for this event, please call Jennifer Dennehy @ FSS Office @ 814-878-4117.

♠ **December 19th SibSession Christmas Party and Santa Visit .** Sessions will include time for sharing, lunch, games. From 10:30am to 1:00pm. For more information, please call Jennifer Dennehy @ FSS Office @ 814-878-4117.

SibSessions offer a supportive setting for the expression of feelings and concerns and the development of new friendships for siblings ages 5 to 16. Participants share the positive aspects of having an affected sibling. Participants enjoy activities in arts and crafts, recreational events, sharing time, and a free lunch.

Sessions are offered free of charge. Most sessions take place at the Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place. For more information about SibSessions, please call Jennifer Dennehy @ FSS, 814-878-4117.

Time for Me

"Time for Me" participants will gather November 14th and December 12th at the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute from 1:30 to 4:30pm. "Time For Me" is a unique program offered to children ages 4 to 10 who are developmentally disabled. Participants engage in structured activities including swimming, arts & crafts, and gym.

This program also provides parents with their own "Time For Me" knowing that their children are in a safe environment, having fun and are well supervised by trained staff. TSS are welcome to attend.

Space is limited to 12 children per session and registration is required. Sessions take place the 2nd Saturday of the month. Reservations may be made until the Wednesday prior to the session. For further information regarding dates, fees, and registration, please call Jennifer Dennehy, FSS office @ 878-4117. Guests are asked to please enter through the gated parking lot on E. 3rd St.

Janet's Jokes

Question: Where do you go to weigh whales??

Answer: To a whaleweigh station!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Things To Do, Places To Go

Friendship Ministries

The Friendship Ministry Groups share God's love with teens and adults with developmental disabilities. Guests may attend any of the meeting locations.

- **FIRST ALLIANCE CHURCH**

First Alliance Church, 2939 Zimmerly Rd., Monday evenings from 7-8:30pm. Contact Alex and Mary @ 734-8553.

- **ST. JOSEPH CHURCH**

St. Joseph Church, 147 W. 24 St., the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month. Contact Diana @ 899-6194.

- **TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Trinity United Methodist Church, 3952 Pine Ave., the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month. Contact Diana @ 899-6194.

November

ST. VINCENT FESTIVAL OF TREES

Visit the Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center. Professionally decorated Christmas trees, holiday entertainment, vendors and Santa. For dates contact 814-452-5302 or www.saintvincenthealth.com/festivaloftrees.

November 21

WATSON-CURTZE MANSION

Victorian Holidays today to Dec. 31st. Concerts, teas, brunches and more! www.eriecountyhistory.org. 814-454-1813.

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

'Imagining Nature' workshops at Ridge Environmental Center. Info @ 814-833-7424.

November 26

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

Turkey Trot starts @ 9am. Sponsored by Erie Runners Club. Info @ 814-833-7424.

December 1

WATSON CURTZE MANSION

Victorian Holidays (Dec. 1-Dec.31) multi-faceted celebration of the season. Concerts, teas, brunches and more. 814-454-1813. www.eriecountyhistory.com.

ERIE ART MUSEUM

Main Gallery will feature Edinboro University of PA Collection from permanent art collection. Show runs Dec. 1- Jan.4, 2010. 814-459-5477. www.erieartmuseum.org.

December 4

DOWNTOWN ERIE

Downtown d'Lights festivities begin this evening (6-8pm). Vendors, horse drawn sleigh rides & entertainment. Schedule @ www.erieiedowntown.com 814-455-3743.

December 5 – 7

BLASCO LIBRARY

Erie Dance Conservatory presents 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' in the Hirt Auditorium 7-8pm.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

The Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc.
136 East Avenue
Erie, Pennsylvania 16507

MOVING?
PLEASE NOTIFY FSS @ 814-878-5961.

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