

**MEMORANDUM**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**  
**LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909-7979**

DATE: February 2005  
TO: Families of Children with Special Needs  
FROM: Mary Marin, Executive Director, Parent Participation Program (PPP)  
Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Division  
SUBJECT: Heart-to-Heart Information Updates

We in the Parent Participation Program (PPP) are organizing next fall's *Relatively Speaking* conference. That's our every-other-year conference for siblings of children with special needs. *Relatively Speaking* gives siblings of young brothers and sisters with special needs the rare opportunity to be together, have fun, talk and connect heart-to-heart. Once again, we thank the *Children with Special Needs Fund* for supporting this very special event.

For adults, siblings expert Don Meyer, director of the *Arc's National Sibling Support Project*, will address parenting issues. (Click to his site at [www.thearc.org/siblingsupport](http://www.thearc.org/siblingsupport).) We've also lined up a keynote speech by Geri Jewell. (Read about her in the box below.)

*Relatively Speaking* will take place Nov. 3 - 5 in Grand Rapids. As soon as all details are firm, we will mail a conference flier to readers of this memo and to those on our *Relatively Speaking* mailing list. To join the *Relatively Speaking* mailing list, families may phone Jeannie on our CSHCS Family Phone Line at 1-800-359-3722 or send email to [renniejea@michigan.gov](mailto:renniejea@michigan.gov).♥

Audiences praise Geri Jewell as a motivational speaker and trainer. Reviews note her uncanny ability to change attitudes about disabilities through thought-provoking humor. You may know her as "Cousin Geri," her groundbreaking role in NBC's sitcom *The Facts of Life*. That part was national television's first recurring character with a visible disability (cerebral palsy). During its long run, the show broke new ground by addressing issues of disability. This season on TV, Geri is "Rose" in CBS's soap opera *The Young and the Restless* and "Jewel" in HBO's adult western *Deadwood*. She also entertains nationwide as a stand-up comedienne.

### ***PPP Update***

Eight out of ten families rate our new **Family Guide to Michigan's CSHCS Program** "good" to "excellent." That's shown by the first 140 report cards in. However, 11 persons complained about the light blue ink, caused by a production problem.

A postage-paid report card is part of the guide. Readers may grade the guide's ease of reading, ease of finding information, thoroughness, direction to CSHCS help, and referral to other special health services. The guide is

available at CSHCS offices or by phone at 1-800-359-3722.♥

PPP has a file of resources from parents who attended conferences related to their child's special need. The newest set is on the *Ehlers-Danlos National Foundation* conference. A mother wrote, "*It was such a supportive experience . . . the opportunity to learn new information and gather many resources from other people...exploring the same uncharted path...*"

The parent's report and conference handouts may be borrowed from PPP. The site [www.ednf.org](http://www.ednf.org) also lists resources. ♥

### ***CSHCS Update***

Consumers who want to give input into the way CSHCS works may apply to join the *CSHCS Advisory Committee*. The group has openings for consumer members to serve a three-year term, beginning in August. Consumer members must be parents or guardians of a child in, or formerly in, the CSHCS program or adults currently enrolled in CSHCS.

The group meets quarterly in Lansing for two to four hours. Consumer members are eligible for a stipend to cover their time, plus

reimbursement of expenses of mileage, meals and childcare.

To start the application process, request an *Interest to Participate-New Member* form at 1-800-359-3722. ♥

CSHCS continues to develop resources for youth who are transitioning into adult medical care.

The next **Guardianship Training** starts at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, **Feb. 2**, in **Allegan**. Guardianship is an issue for families of teens with special needs who at age 18 cannot care for themselves. Training co-sponsor is *Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc.* To sign up, phone 1-800-359-3722.

PPP has added seven books about transition to adult life to its *Lending Library*:

**Full Life Ahead** is a workbook and guide to adult life for students with disabilities and their families.

**Mapping Your Dreams; Making the Transition Team Work** gives tips for community, education, employment, home living and recreation.

**My Future, My Plan** helps students with disabilities and their families plan life after high school.

**Stories of Postsecondary Education: Students Speak** has self-reports by students with intellectual disabilities who are in college or planning to attend.

**Transition and Your Adolescent With Learning Disabilities: Moving from High School to Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Employment** is a parent handbook.

**Transition Planning for Adolescents with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities: A Guide for Health Care Providers** details issues faced by adolescents as well as state, federal, and other resources available to help address each of them.

**Transitions to Adult Life for People with Mental Retardation-Principles and Practices** examines independent living, community participation and productive employment.

Families of children with special needs may borrow any item by phoning Leah at 1-800-359-3722. ♥

## FSN Events

In addition to activities below, FSN parent-to-parent volunteers are available across Michigan. To be matched with a support parent, phone FSN Coordinator Randy Krause at 1-800-359-3722.

In Howell, the **Feb. 9 Mom's Night Out** is an opportunity for parents (dads, too) of children with disabilities to chat.

Also in Livingston County, *Understanding Your Child's IEP* workshops are set. Topics are *Assistive Technology (Feb. 7, Brighton)*, *MEAP and other testing (Feb 15, Howell)* and *Transition (Feb. 24, Pinckney)*. For details, reach Livingston County FSN Coordinator Kathy Maher at 1-800-359-3722 or kmaher2@sbcglobalnet. ♥

## Resource

A scholarship for students with disabilities leaving high school can cover special equipment and more. Read details at [www.cenmi.org/NewsView.asp?id=313](http://www.cenmi.org/NewsView.asp?id=313). The application (due April 10) is available from Jan Cheeney at (517) 241-3509 or cheeneyj@michigan.gov. ♥

## Dose of Humor

From humorist Steven Wright

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

The Parent Participation Program (PPP) is a section of the Children's Special Health Care Services Division (CSHCS) of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

CSHCS is part of MDCH's Bureau of Children and Family Programs. CSHCS primarily provides medical specialty care to children with a qualifying diagnosis. PPP serves families of all children with special needs. The Family Support Network of Michigan (FSN) is PPP's parent-to-parent support arm.

**Mary J. Marin**  
Executive Director

**Lisa Cook-Gordon**  
Transition Consultant

**Linda Lyles Daniels**  
Parent Communications Consultant

**Randy Krause**  
FSN Coordinator

**Jean Rennie**  
Administrative Assistant

**Dianna Rigato**  
Information & Resource Specialist

**Rebecca Start**  
Program Specialist

**Nelinda Treviño**  
Phone Line Operator

**Leah Waters**  
Secretary

Early On Liaison to CSHCS  
**Penny Verran**

CSHCS Family Phone Line  
**1-800-359-3722**  
8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday – Friday

CSHCS online  
[www.michigan.gov/cshcs](http://www.michigan.gov/cshcs)

Events and Resources are compiled by PPP from a variety of sources. A listing does not denote endorsement.

If you receive multiple copies of this memo by mail, please let us know. To add your name to our postal mailing list or to remove it, *families* may call our toll-free CSHCS Family Phone Line. Others, please phone (313) 456-4381.