

Michigan Family Connections Newsletter

FALL 2022

New Leadership Series for Parents

Do you have an interest in developing your skills as a Parent Leader?

Parent Leadership in State Government (PLISG) and **Michigan Family to Family (MI F2F)** have partnered together to offer **Growing as Leaders**, a new online educational leadership series.

PLISG and MI F2F recognize the importance of parents having the knowledge and skills to function in meaningful leadership roles and provide the “parent voice” to help shape the direction of programs and communities.

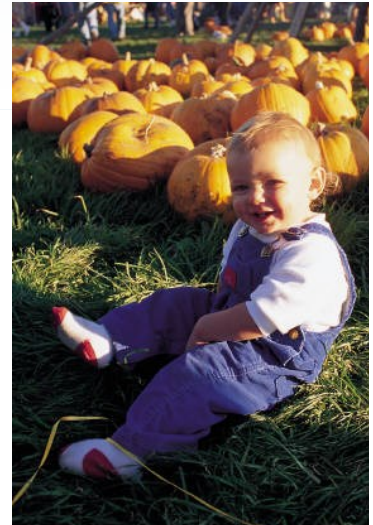
This series is designed to support the development and engagement of emerging family leaders in Michigan to work toward meaningful parent leadership in our state. You do not have to have any prior experience to attend the Leadership Series.

The one-hour virtual learning sessions are free and open to any parent in Michigan with an interest in developing their leadership skills. The series began on October 12th and will be offered every other month.

You can attend all the sessions, or just the sessions with topics you are interested in. Registration is required, and there is no charge for you to attend.

The second webinar in the series, **Knowing Your Why**, will be on December 14, 2022 from 12 noon to 1 pm. For a detailed description and registration link, see page 6 of this newsletter.

For more information and upcoming dates and topics, please visit the [Parent Leadership in State Government website](#), or the [Michigan Family to Family website](#).



A newsletter for families of children and youth with special health care needs, and the professionals who care for them. Connecting you with information and news you can use.

A virtual publication brought to you by the Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center

Get to Know the Momentum Center

The Momentum Center is a non-profit grass roots movement to create a stigma-free community. They offer programs and events that nurture, educate, and inspire individuals to work together to address issues of social justice and human rights. The Momentum Center's initiatives include Momentum Center for Social Engagement, Community Conversations, and Cultural Immersion Experiences.

The Momentum Center for Social Engagement is a social and recreational program for individuals with mental illness, addictions, and disabilities.

There is an adult program and a teen program that begins at age 11. Membership is just \$1 per year. No formal diagnosis or referral is required. Activities include exercise, meditation, yoga, nutrition, cooking, bingo, arts and crafts, and more. There are outings at least once a week at both the Grand Haven and Holland locations.



The Momentum Center also offers a monthly meeting for Parents/Guardians, Young Adults with Disabilities and Foster/Adoptive Parents.

They encourage young people with disabilities to get involved at the Momentum Center early and create relationships there so that when they age out of the public school system, they have a community of support that will continue outside of their school relationships.

Finally, the Momentum Center hosts Community Conversations that often feature concerns and resources for individuals with disabilities and those who love them.

For more information visit [The Momentum Center website](#).

Paving the Way to Self Determination

Disability Network Southwest Michigan has introduced a state-wide 3-year initiative for children with developmental disabilities (birth to age 12) and their families. *Paving the Way to Self Determination* is a program being offered to families throughout Michigan to assist them in raising the expectations family members have for their children with developmental disabilities.

Paving the Way to Self Determination provides interactive, online trainings for families on topics such as disability rights, accommodation requests, supported decision-making, benefits, and disability pride. The program also provides information and referral services to families

throughout the state and gives them access to the *Charting the LifeCourse* program.

While every situation is as individual as the people are, for many people with developmental disabilities a self-determined and independent life can be a reality.

For more information or to register for any of the classes, visit [Disability Network Southwest](#)



Sibshops Offer Support for Siblings

Sibshops are best described as opportunities for brothers and sisters of children with special health and developmental needs to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context.

Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some a good thing, for others a not-so-good thing, and for many somewhere in between. They reflect a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another if they are given a chance.

Sibshops can be “therapeutic” for kids to attend, but they are not therapy. The Sibshop model uses a wellness perspective. They are a celebration of the many lifelong contributions made by brothers and sisters of people with special health and developmental needs.

In 2005, University of Washington colleagues Amanda Johnson and Susan Sandall conducted



an online survey of adults who participated in Sibshops as children and confirmed that when it comes to the lasting impact of Sibshops, there's lots of good news to share.

Here are just a few of their findings:

- Over 90% of the respondents said Sibshops had a positive effect on the feelings they had for their siblings;
- Sibshops taught coping strategies to over two-thirds of respondents; and
- 94% said they would recommend Sibshops to others.

To locate a Sibshop in your area, visit the [Sibling Support Project Website](#).

How To Find a Therapist For Parents/Caregivers

Being the parent or caregiver of a child with a medical or behavioral health condition can be stressful. The chances that you will experience a mental health concern increases when you have a child with a medical or behavioral health condition.

It can be hard to find the time or resources to take care of your mental health, but taking care of yourself is important for both your wellbeing and your child's.

The Caregiver Wellbeing website from the Society of Pediatric Psychology Special Interest Group offers a tip sheet for parents to assist them with locating a therapist to help improve



their mental health. Therapists are licensed mental health professionals who can listen to your concerns and help you solve problems. Seeing a therapist can help you manage stress, worries, sadness, anger, grief, and more.

To find this helpful resource and others, visit the [Caregiver Wellbeing Resource](#) website.

Introducing Our New Youth & Young Adult Page

Hello, my name is Elizabeth Stout. I am a young adult from Kalamazoo, MI with epilepsy and type one diabetes. Currently I am a graduate student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health studying health behavior and health education.

I advocate for children and youth with special health care needs through positions with the Family Center, American Academy of Pediatrics, Michigan Medicine, and others. I am planning to continue my dedication to this area after completing my degree.

I work on a variety of projects, including the Pediatric Epilepsy Project for the state and development of the Health Care Transition Toolkit for the AAP National Coordinating Center

for Epilepsy. In these roles I help share the youth perspective with the teams and projects.



When reading the Family Connections Newsletter earlier this year, I noticed it did not include a section focused on information for youth and young adults. Because of this, I shared my idea to start a page in the newsletter for youth and young adults.

In the future this page will contain a variety of resources that can help assist with the sometimes challenging situation of living with a disability or special healthcare needs.



Young Adult Voting Resources

Voting is an important right in our country. With so many key issues at stake, it

is important that everyone exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately, many young adults don't feel prepared to vote, or that their vote doesn't matter. Nothing could be further from the truth. Young adults have a voice, and it is important that they vote.

This is especially true for young adults with disabilities. Voting is key to making sure your voice is heard about things that matter to you!

Voting, whether it is your first time or not, can feel overwhelming. We have gathered some resources to help you.

- **Vote for Access** offers a five-part video series addressing the problems with voting for people with disabilities, and some solutions that everyone should know about. [Vote for Access Video Series](#).
- **MichiganVoting.org** is a nonpartisan resource designed to help voters navigate Michigan's voting laws, so everyone can successfully cast their ballots. Visit their site for their [Know Your Rights Guide](#), and other resources.
- **Vote411.org** is brought to you by the League of Women Voters and offers personalized information on what is on the ballot, help finding your polling place, checking your voter's registration, and more. Visit the [Vote411 website](#).

FLN Member Ann Livingston from Region 6

In this edition, we would like to introduce Family Leadership Network member, Ann Livingston. Ann represents Region 6 (Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer and St. Clair Counties).

Tell us a little about yourself and your family?

I am a mother to 7. I lost my first child to cancer when he was a baby. I now have five adult children and one in junior high school. My children have had many different mental and health issues.

Why were you interested in serving on the Family Leadership Network?

I wanted to be able to help a parent (or family), feel like they are not alone on this path of having a child with special needs. To feel all alone is a horrible feeling.

What are some of your interests/passions?

I love to be at a beach listening to the waves, I find it so relaxing. I love to help others. I work with domestic violence victims and child abuse victims. And my "thing" is being a photographer taking lots and lots of pictures of everything.

What started you on your parent leadership journey?

I knew I had some experience raising kids with different needs and wanted to use my



experience to help others so they don't feel so alone.

What advice would you give to parents of a newly diagnosed child?

I know it's hard but you are doing your best. I know it hurts, please know you don't have to be strong all the time. You will have the strength to get through this and you are not alone!

What do you see are the biggest needs or challenges for parents of children with special health care needs in your area?

I feel one of the biggest challenges in my area is there are not enough resources. Sometimes it feels like some people really don't understand the issues and aren't as helpful as they could be.

For more information on the Family Leadership Network, visit the [F2F Website/FLN](https://www.f2f.org/FLN)



"Never let a problem to be solved become more important than a person to be loved."

~Barbara Johnson

Trainings and Other Events

Parent Connect Calls

- Topic: IEP vs. 504, Wednesday, November 9, 2022, from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

[Parent Connect Call: IEP vs. 504 Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

- Topic: Camp Scholarships Wednesday, December 7, 2022, from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.

[Parent Connect Call-Camp Scholarships Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

Professional Connect Calls

- Topic: Children with Special Needs Fund (CSN), Thursday, November 17, 2022, from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

[Professional Connect Call: CSN Fund Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

- Topic: Family Center 101, Thursday, December 14, 2022, from 11:00 am — 12:00 pm.

[Professional Connect Call-FC 101 Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

Parent Mentor Trainings

Weekday Virtual Parent Mentor Trainings:

Tuesday and Wednesday, 9 am — 11:30 am and Thursday, 9:00 am — 12:00 pm.

- November 15-17, 2022

[Virtual Parent Mentor Training Tickets Nov 15-17 | Eventbrite](#)

- December 6-8, 2022

[Virtual Parent Mentor Training Tickets Dec 6-8 | Eventbrite](#)

Saturday Virtual Parent Mentor Trainings:

Saturday from 9:00 am — 3:30 pm on Microsoft Teams.

- November 5, 2022

[Virtual Parent Mentor Saturday Training Tickets Nov 5 | Eventbrite](#)

Growing As Leaders: A Parent Leadership Series

Topic: Know Your Why

Date/Time: December 14th, 2022 from 12 noon — 1 pm.

- Knowing your why can give you a clear sense of purpose and help you focus on what is most important to you. Join this interactive workshop to learn how your past experiences, life lessons, and values shape your why and learn how to channel it to achieve your leadership goals.

These events are free, registration is required. To register for December 14, 2022 use this link:

[Know Your Why Leadership Series Registration](#)



Who We Are:

The Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center (MI F2F) is a federally funded project. They share resources and information on disability and health issues with families of children and youth with special health care needs.



MI F2F also works with health and other professionals. MI F2F helps families make educated decisions and supports families to partner with various professionals. They work to make services for children and youth with special health care needs better.

For more information and helpful resources, look for us on Facebook or visit our website

[MI F2F Website](#)



Like us on [Facebook](#)

The Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (Family Center) is the statewide parent-directed center within Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).



The primary role of the Family Center is to offer emotional support, information and connections to community-based resources to families of children and youth with special health care needs, including all children who have, or are at an increased risk for physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions.*

Family Center Direct Line (517) 241-7630

CSHCS Family Phone Line (800) 359-3722

[Family Center Website](#)

*Children do not have to be enrolled in CSHCS to receive services from the Family Center.

Disclaimer: The Family Connections newsletter includes information and links to the internet and other resources. These resources are for your consideration only and are not endorsed by the Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center, or our funders. The Michigan Family to Family Health Information Center is a project of the Michigan Public Health Institute. It is funded by Health Resources Services Administration Maternal and Child Health Bureau under Grant H84MC26214. The information or content and conclusions of the author should not be construed as the official policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. Furthermore, the information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, and is not a substitute for professional care. Please direct any questions through the Family Phone Line or MI F2F website listed above.