

First In Families of North Carolina

Holiday 2009

Assisting people with disabilities and their families
to achieve their goals and realize their dreams since 1996.



At First In Families we try to do a lot of listening before we act. We regularly experience deeply moving conversations, and are thanked for taking the time to listen. Or for calling back quickly. We try to transform "quality of service" to "the building of relationships" one person at a time. In relationship, we get to see the best of families, and they regularly impress us with their offers to help back and their unique inspired gifts.



Our local chapters and First In Families of North Carolina are governed largely by people with disabilities and family members, and this grassroots governance is at the heart of First In Families. Thanks and happy holidays to all our partners, friends, donors, Board members, staff, Management Teams and families!

Betsy MacMichael, State Director

News and Updates

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Got Electronics? Donate your old cell phones, ink jet cartridges, MP3 players, laptops, GPS systems and other items to help FIFNC and our 12 Chapters statewide raise money for education and training to enable Chapter staff and local Management Teams to better serve families in their areas. For more details, visit <http://www.fifnc.org/funding/donate.html#green> or contact Karen Carlton, kcarlton@fifnc.org, 919-251-8368, Ext. 101

Congratulations to First In Families of the Sandhills for expanding their coverage area to include three new counties, bringing their total to eight counties: Anson, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph and Richmond!

Freedom for Titus

Titus, a 6-year-old who lives in Wilkesboro, needed a van with a wheelchair lift so that he could take his electric wheelchair home from school and have more freedom to go to all the places he loves to go, including his grandmother's house.

Without a van, Titus' family had to take the wheels off his manual wheelchair in order to get it in the car, then lift Titus in. Titus' family contacted Michelle Wyatt, Resource Consultant for High Country First In Families. With the help of Rainbow Center, the host agency for the High Country Chapter, the community pulled together and was able to donate a van to

Titus' family. For Titus, the van means freedom and more time spent in his community!

If you are interested in helping families like Titus', please donate to FIFNC and designate a local Chapter or FIFNC's Lifeline Project.



www.fifnc.org/funding/donate.html

New Programs

- FIFNC is providing family support and respite information and/or vouchers to families or individuals experiencing disability or traumatic brain injury (TBI) in two new counties (Orange & Chatham), with specific outreach to National Guard and Reserve families. ***Support for this expansion has been generously provided by the Home Health Foundation of Chapel Hill Endowment Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation.***
- As part of North Carolina's federal HRSA grant, First In Families of North Carolina is providing community bridging to people with TBI in the Triangle region. This support includes the formation of networks of support as well as educational presentations and workshops about planning for the future. We have a particular interest in people who are serving or have served in the Military. For more information, visit our web site: <http://www.fifnc.org/funding/tbi.html>.

What is a network of support?

A community connector is hired to gather people together who are currently in a person's life as well as bring new people into the network. The network provides support, advocacy and friendship in a number of ways to assist the person with any life situation.

In the Triangle region, we are seeking:

- Locations/groups interested in hosting an educational presentation or workshop
- People with TBI who are interested in having a network of support

To find out if you or your family is eligible for either program, contact Gail Dupre at 919-251-8368, Ext. 102 or gdupre@fifnc.org.

Impact of First In Families

July-September 2009:

591 Families Served

176 Children Under 10 Served

\$98,500 in Private Funds
& In-Kind Donations

1,613 Volunteer Hours Donated

Meet Kate!



Kate at the Wheel!

Kate is 21 years old and lives in Raleigh with her Mom, Dad, siblings Kirsten and Joey, and two dogs, Marley and Tyler.

Kate is part of Voices Together chorus and the DYP Collective, takes an environmental science class at Wake Tech and rides at Helping Horse Stables. You may wonder why Kate needs a personal network.

Kate's Mom Debbie heard about personal networks in the "7 Steps In 7 Sessions: Creating Peace of Mind for the Future" class offered through Lifetime Connections. When she heard that FIFNC develops networks for people with traumatic brain injury, she contacted Gail Dupre. "Despite her injury, Kate has been able to lead a pretty active life," Debbie said. "Her dad and I want to make sure she continues to give to others and gets the most out of her life."

Gail met with Kate, Debbie and Marley in their home to explain how a personal network could bring together people currently in Kate's life and new people to help Kate achieve her goals and dreams. The network meets once a month to brainstorm, and network members volunteer to help out in ways that interest them. They also get together individually or in smaller groups just to have fun as well!

A community connector coordinates the network. Kate chose Ryan as her community connector and they get together regularly so Ryan can learn more about Kate. They have developed a list of potential

network members and may have Kate's first network meeting after the holidays.



Kate is excited to reconnect with old friends and make new ones as she moves forward in her life. "I would like to be as independent as I can be," Kate said. "I would like to draw and paint and go to parks and go kayaking and fishing."



Kate, Joey & Marley

Interested in becoming a member of Lifetime Connections? Contact Gail Dupre at gdupre@fifnc.org or 919-251-8368.

Watch for our upcoming workshop—"7 Steps In 7 Sessions: Creating Peace of Mind for the Future" beginning in February!

7 Steps In 7 Sessions provides a small group setting in which you will be guided through reading, exercises and discussion resulting in a personal future plan. The future planning process helps you create a safe and secure future for your family member with a disability. Discussion is based on the book *A Good Life* by Al Etmanski, co-founder of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN, www.plan.ca) who believes that: "Planning for the future changes the present." Topics include: Building Relationships, Creating a Vision, Making Your Contribution. Gail Dupre, Coordinator of Lifetime Connections, will facilitate the class. Other speakers will also present in some of the sessions. Contact Gail Dupre, gdupre@fifnc.org or 919-251-8368 x102 for more info.

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See us
on the Web at:
www.fifnc.org

First In Families of
North Carolina, Inc.
is a 501(c)3 tax-
exempt organization.

FIFNC Luncheon & Giving Club Launch!

First In Families of North Carolina held its first Annual Information and Fundraising Luncheon on November 5, 2009. The FIFNC Board of Directors thanks Board Member Melanie Mattingly, who spearheaded the effort, as well as all who attended, including the families who shared their unique stories of how First In Families has assisted them AND allowed them the opportunity to give back. In all, 96 people attended!

The First In Families Connector Society was launched at the luncheon. This giving society provides three levels of membership for multiple year pledges. Members of the Society will be recognized in the FIFNC Annual Report. If you are interested in joining, please contact Betsy MacMichael, betsym@fifnc.org, 919-251-8368, Ext. 100.

Community Bridging Update

Emmanuel attended a workshop on micro-enterprise development (based on his interest in setting up his own business) and is engaging in follow-up activities and further exploration of this possibility.

FIFNC's Community Bridging initiative builds personal networks for and with individuals leaving the state institutions and embarking on life in the community for the first time; provides outreach to families whose sons or daughters with disabilities are aging and who are not yet connected to community services of any kind and, in various other ways strengthens the social connectedness of individuals experiencing disability.

WorkSmart
Information Technology Consultants



Our major funding for Community Bridging in Durham was cut last year due to the budget crisis and we reached out for help. FIFNC would like to thank **WorkSmart Information Technology Consultants** and the **Lamb Foundation** for their generous sponsorship of FIFNC's Community Bridging program, which has helped

us keep it going despite the budget cut, but volunteers and additional donations are still needed. If you can help, contact Gail Dupre, 919-251-8368, Ext. 102 or gdupre@fifnc.org.

Get Involved with FIF!

Are you...

- ❖ Someone who could help Janie identify volunteer and paid work opportunities in Durham, as she approaches transition out of school?
- ❖ A crafty person who could work on crafts with Maryam at the Scrap Exchange in Durham?
- ❖ An active person who could go swimming with Karen?
- ❖ A Duke fan who would enjoy attending Duke basketball games with Emmanuel?

Could you give...

- \$30 to purchase a monthly bus pass?
- \$50 to buy a refurbished laptop for a student?
- \$100 to pay for a nebulizer for a child?
- \$200 to purchase a mattress set and frame?
- \$325 for software for a child with autism?
- \$400 for tuition at Wake Tech?
- \$500 to build a fence for a family with help from Lowe's?
- \$1,000 for 28 hours of facilitation for a Community Bridging participant?

If so, please contact Betsy MacMichael, 919-251-8368 or betsym@fifnc.org or visit www.fifnc.org to find out more!