

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The Nemasket Group

Issue # 48

March—April 2009

**NEWSLETTER**



## **STATE BUDGET** **FAMILY SUPPORT** **UPDATE**



**January 2009**—Governor Patrick's Budget cuts result in the elimination of the Department of Developmental Services Family Support programs as of July 2009.

**March 2009**—Governor Patrick (using Federal Stimulus Funds) restores \$22.5 million to the Family Support budget line. (Plans for this funding are to restore special projects statewide—Medically Fragile, Intensive Family Supports, Clinical Services, Multi-Cultural and Information & Referral.)

THANKS TO THE ADVOCACY OF FAMILIES AND ALLIES THROUGHOUT  
THE STATE:

**April 2009**—The House of Representatives budget **RESTORES** the rest of the Family Support funding (except for \$500,000), **BUT** eliminates \$7.4 million from day/employment supports.

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**April 2009**—The Department of Developmental Services mails termination notices to approximately 9,000 families, informing them that they will lose most of their family support services—planned respite, stipends and flexible funding, as well as case management, as of July 1, 2009.

**April 2009**—Amendments filed to the House of Representatives budget for consideration the week of April 27th:

**AMENDMENTS:**

1. Employment/Day (5920-2025): needs \$7.45 million to be restored—Rep. Scibak
2. Transportation (5911-2000): needs 2009 increase annualized \$3.6 million—Rep. Peisch
3. Turning 22 (5920-5000): funded at \$7.7 million, but language needs to be inserted for 2011 annualization of \$18.6 million—Rep. Harkins
4. Salary Reserve (1599-6901): needs \$23 million to be restored—Reps. Khan, Coakley-Rivera, & St. Fleur
5. Community First (4000-0650): needs \$3 million—Rep. Keenan
6. DPPC (1107-2501): needs \$71,500 to maintain current level of services—Rep. Calter
7. Early Intervention (4513-1020): needs \$9.2 million—Rep. Kafka

**April-May 2009**—Continued ADVOCACY is necessary with state senators about the need to keep the restoration of family support alive in the Senate Budget!

**IF the restoration of family support funds is not in the finalized budget signed into law by the Governor sometime late in June or early in July, Family Support WILL BE TERMINATED for most Massachusetts families currently receiving it.**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- If possible, attend the May 6th Family Advocacy Day at the State House (see flyer in this newsletter)
- Call, e-mail, or write to your State Representative to thank them for restoring Family Support in their budget
- Call, e-mail, or write to your State Senator to ask them to do the same—restore Family Support funding in the Senate Budget

*If you have any questions about the above, or need help in contacting your legislators, please call Family Connections @ 508.999.0077*

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Listed below is contact information on Greater New Bedford legislators. E-mail is a great way to be in touch, as are phone calls. Letters can be mailed to the Legislator along with the Room Number, followed by "State House, Boston, MA 02133."

**Senator Mark Montigny, Rm. 109-D**  
**617.722.1440**  
[Mark.Montigny@state.ma.us](mailto:Mark.Montigny@state.ma.us)

**Senator Joan Menard, Rm. 215**  
**617.722.1114**  
[Joan.Menard@state.ma.us](mailto:Joan.Menard@state.ma.us)

**Senator Marc R. Pacheco, Rm. 312-B**  
**617.722.1551**  
[Marc.Pacheco@state.ma.us](mailto:Marc.Pacheco@state.ma.us)

**Rep. John F. Quinn, Rm. 527-A**  
**617.722.2020**  
[Rep.JohnQuinn@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:Rep.JohnQuinn@hou.state.ma.us)

**Rep. Robert Koczera, Rm. 448**  
**617.722.2582**  
[Rep.RobertKoczera@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:Rep.RobertKoczera@hou.state.ma.us)

**Rep. Stephen R. Canessa, Rm. 443**  
**617.722.2460**  
[Rep.StephenCanessa@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:Rep.StephenCanessa@hou.state.ma.us)

**Rep. Antonio F.D. Cabral, Rm. 466**  
**617.722.2017**  
[Rep.AntonioCabral@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:Rep.AntonioCabral@hou.state.ma.us)

**Rep. William M. Straus, Rm. 473F**  
**617.722.2210**  
[Rep.WilliamStraus@hou.state.ma.us](mailto:Rep.WilliamStraus@hou.state.ma.us)



## ON APRIL 17, DDS SENT NOTICES TO MORE THAN 9,000 FAMILIES THAT THEY WILL LOSE FAMILY SUPPORTS!

*The Legislature's latest budget restored cuts to Family Supports, but we're*  
**NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET!**



**FAMILY ADVOCACY DAY  
WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2009  
11am-1pm  
STATEHOUSE ~ BOSTON  
(exact location to follow)**

The latest budget also includes critical cuts to:

**Employment/Day services** – 1,000 people losing services

**Transportation** – 1,000 people losing services

**Turning 22** – 600 students not getting services after their first post-graduation year

**Salary Reserve** – Thousands of already underpaid employees left out of budget

**Early Intervention** – As many as 10,000 infants, toddlers losing services

**Join us as we rally at the Statehouse to both thank our Legislators for their good work and remind them of the serious unmet needs that remain.**

***"NOBODY IS SAFE UNLESS WE'RE ALL SAFE!"***

For more information on the budget, please visit The Arc of Massachusetts website, [www.arcmass.org](http://www.arcmass.org) (go to State House/Policy tab). For information about Mass.

Families Organizing for Change, go to [www.mfofc.org](http://www.mfofc.org)



**THE ANNUAL JURIED STUDENT ART & DESIGN SHOW  
AT BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
APRIL 23, 2009**

**CRAIG KINNEY, ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER SANDY KINNEY,  
POSE WITH HIS PHOTOGRAPHY AT BCC'S ANNUAL STUDENT  
ART SHOW. CRAIG'S WORK WAS CHOSEN FOR EXHIBITION  
AT THIS JURIED ART SHOW AND HE AND HIS FAMILY  
ATTENDED THE OPENING RECEPTION ON APRIL 23RD, 2009.**

**CRAIG'S WORK IS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE.  
TO VIEW HIS PHOTOGRAPHY AND FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT SANDY AT FAMILY CONNECTIONS.**

# Announcing the Opening of the Short-Term Device Loan Program ONLINE!

Ever want to try out an assistive technology device at home, school or work before you decide to buy? Do you sometimes need a loaner while a device is out for repair? Short-term device loans are available from MassMATCH AT Regional Centers (Easter Seals-Boston and UCP Berkshire).

And now you can search the combined inventory of the Centers online at

[www.massmatch.org/inventory](http://www.massmatch.org/inventory)

## **Who borrows?**

People with disabilities, their family members, educators, employers, therapists and service providers.

## **What is available?**

Over 465 devices are listed. Everything from portable ramps to communication equipment, software to magnifiers.

## **What will it cost?**

Device loans are free unless you cannot pick up or return the equipment and need to pay for delivery.

## **How long can I use the equipment?**

Up to 4 weeks at a time

## **How many devices can I borrow?**

Up to 5 devices at a time.

## **How can I get started?**

Visit [www.massmatch.org/inventory](http://www.massmatch.org/inventory) and fill out a request online!

*About MassMATCH...*

*MassMATCH is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. It is managed by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. MassMATCH is one of 56 state-level AT initiatives in the United States. Our mission is to promote the use of assistive technology and assistive technology services to enhance the independence of people with disabilities, enabling equal participation in all of life's activities.*



## National Down Syndrome Congress Convention July 31- August 2, 2009 Sacramento, California

The NDSC conducts its national convention annually, providing world class information, support and education for individuals with Down syndrome, their parents, siblings and the professionals serving them. This convention brings together approximately 2,000 people affected by Down syndrome from around the globe, features a Spanish-language track and concurrent sessions for self advocates, siblings and families/professionals.

The 2009 NDSC convention will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center on Friday, July 31 - Sunday, August 2. As convention host, the DSIA will be responsible for providing 350 volunteers to staff the event. We will also be raising funds to provide sponsorships for local families and professionals to attend the event at a discounted rate.

For a glimpse of the 2009 convention offerings log onto

[www.ndsccenter.org](http://www.ndsccenter.org).

## MASSACHUSETTS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MINI-LOAN PROGRAM

*The MA AT Mini-Loan Program gives people with disabilities access to the low-cost devices they need to live more independently.*

**Q: What is the Mini-Loan Program?** A: The AT Mini-Loan Program, operated by Easter Seals Massachusetts, is a new long-term equipment loan program that is now part of the MA AT Loan Program. The AT Mini-Loan Program provides; free of charge, low-cost assistive devices to residents of Massachusetts. "Low-cost" means anything with a total cost of under \$500.00.

**Q: Who can get the free equipment through the Mini-Loan Program?** A: If you are a Massachusetts resident with a disability or are acting on behalf of a relative with a disability, you may participate in the program. This program is specifically for those with low household incomes, so certain financial need has to be demonstrated.

**Q: Is this really free?** A: Absolutely! This program is designed to allow those with a demonstrated financial need to have the access to the low-cost devices they need to live independently. You can keep the device for as long as you need it! The MA AT Loan and Mini-Loan Programs are dedicated to helping those with disabilities and their families to live more independent lives.

For more information, please contact:

**Jason M. Luciano, Ph.D**

**Director of the AT Loan Program**

**800-244-2756 X 428 or 431**

the  
**nemasket**  
group

### Family Connections

Joint Project of The Nemasket Group and

DDS (Greater New Bedford Department of Developmental Services)

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Fairhaven, MA 02719

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Creating a network of family support

For individuals with developmental

Disabilities and their families