

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The Nemasket Group



Issue # 40

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GOOD NEWS!

Bigby Announces Governor's Decision to Appeal Tauro Order and Close Fernald

BOSTON – On September 12, 2007, EOHHS Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, joined by EOHHS Assistant Secretary for Disability Policy Jean McGuire and DMR Commissioner Elin Howe, announced Governor Deval Patrick's decision to appeal US Judge Tauro's order, issued last month, that would have prevented the state from closing or consolidating the Fernald Developmental Center.

Secretary Bigby told a small crowd of stakeholder groups that if the Judge's order was not challenged, "it would not allow the state to serve people in the right way with the right resources."

Bigby said that with so many pressing needs, the state needed to invest where the best services are available, and that the community is the most appropriate place to allocate limited resources.

Bigby made clear the Administration's appeal was the first step in "moving towards the closure of Fernald."

Bigby said that all members of EOHHS would be working closely with the guardians of the Fernald residents to insure that peoples' preferences would be respected - and that moving to

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Family Connections Staff:

Sandra Kinney, *Program Director*

Ross Hooley, *Family Advisor*

Jorge Pagan, *Family Advisor*

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Sherry Amaral, *Family Advisor*

Emily Murgo Nisenbaum, *Associate Executive Director*

Louis Nisenbaum, *Executive Director*

GOOD NEWS! (Continued)

another of the state's other institutions would be an option. When asked, Bigby stated the Administration had no plans to close any other institutions at this time.

Community advocates, including Leo Sarkissian, Ed Bielecki of M.A.S.S., Susan Nadworny of MFOC, Gary Blumenthal of ADDP and Michael Weekes from the Mass. Council of Human Service Providers, spoke and pledged to provide families of the Fernald residents information and counsel in making informed decisions about future placements.

Mary Lou Maloney said that "as someone who rode in the bus with Judge Tauro, touring the state schools back in 1979, I've seen this story evolve over time and want to extend my deep thanks to Governor Patrick for making such a difficult but necessary decision."

The Arc would like to extend its gratitude and deep admiration for not only the Governor's decision, but the deliberate manner in which he arrived at a very difficult decision. The Governor did not shy away from listening to people on all sides of this controversial issue. We applaud the Governor for soliciting and using advice from some of the most capable people in their profession, who he appointed to join his new Administration. In the end the decision was his, but everyone in the disability community can feel good about the manner in which he arrived at it.

As Dan Shannon, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council aptly put it: "I've worked under more than a few Governors. It's refreshing to serve one who demonstrated he truly cares enough about people with disabilities by engaging in a thoughtful inclusive process before making up his mind on this difficult policy decision."

From www.arcmass.org

Boston Herald Editorial in support of Patrick's plan to close Fernald

Fernald appeal the sensible choice. Boston Herald Editorial September 17, 2007

By appealing a judge's ruling that the Fernald Developmental Center in Waltham remain open as long as the guardians of its 180 residents want them to stay, Gov. Deval Patrick risks a lengthy legal battle - not to mention alienating the families of some of the commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens.

Painful as it may be, however, this is a struggle worth pursuing.

Let's set aside the legal principle for a moment. (The Patrick administration argues only the commonwealth may decide whether to close a state institution; it was a federal judge, Joseph L. Tauro, who has supervised Fernald for three decades, who ruled it must remain an option for residents.)

Better to recall that neither Tauro nor U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan, appointed as a special investigator, determined that residents who were transferred from Fernald between 2003 and 2005 to community-based settings received substandard care.

Boston Herald Editorial (Continued)

In addition, the administration has pledged that the families of the most profoundly disabled - whose families insist they could never be adequately cared for in a community setting - would be given the option of placement in one of the state's five other institutions. Family members would be closely consulted in planning any transition from Fernald.

Some family members, convinced the planned closure is one big excuse to make a real estate deal, are angry the administration won't consider the so-called "postage stamp" approach they favor - keeping the institution operational on a small part of the campus, and selling off the rest.

But the administration makes a case that even that approach is far too costly. And while the care of residents must be the absolute priority, the cost factor simply can't be ignored. Fernald is the most expensive of the state's six remaining institutions to operate, at \$239,000 per resident per year. The cost per resident in a comparable community setting, the administration says, is \$102,000.

Family members who care deeply about their relatives - many of whom have lived at Fernald since childhood - worry the administration doesn't care nearly enough. We don't share their view. But the administration also has a duty to consider the thousands of others in state care who confront a regular shortage of resources. A successful appeal would allow a gradual transition from Fernald - sensitive to each individual resident's needs. And those resources can be distributed evenly among all those in need.

DMR Commissioner Elin M. Howe's Invitation to the DMR Community

In the weeks since I assumed my position, I have had the pleasure of meeting with many individuals, families, providers, DMR staff and others. There is much that I have learned and there is much that we can do together in helping DMR achieve its mission of creating innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals to participate fully and meaningfully in, and contribute to their communities as valued members.

One of my priorities as commissioner is to ensure effective and timely communication with our greater DMR community. I have visited DMR offices and heard from our regional, area and facility staff about the rewards and challenges of their work. I have also met with representatives from our provider community. Over the next several weeks I will be convening town meetings and asking individuals and families to share with me their thoughts, ideas, hopes and concerns about the Department and our service delivery system. Stakeholder input and feedback are important to me. Service improvement cannot happen in a vacuum.

Please join me and the Department as we work to promote independence and self direction by creating services and supports options that are more responsive to the needs and preferences of individuals and families. Please be sure to RSVP to the person identified for the meeting. Space is limited and we want to be sure that we can accommodate as many interested persons as possible.

Town Meeting with Families in the Southeast:

Monday, October 22, 2007 at 6:30 PM Holiday Inn, Taunton

RSVP to Jennifer Bruce at 508-866-5000 X 314 or Email @ Jennifer.Bruce@state.ma.us

Family Connections Satisfaction Survey Results

1. Are the supports and services you receive centered on your family and the person needing supports?

- ◆ 31 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: Some of the time.

2. Has Family Connections staff helped you to find or access community resources?

- ◆ 29 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: Some of the time.
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Does Not Apply

3. Does staff help you figure out what you need as a family to support your family member with a disability?

- ◆ 31 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Some of the time
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: No or not at all
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Does not apply.

4. Does the program staff recognize that you know your child best, acknowledge your strengths and respect your choices and opinions?

- ◆ 30 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 3 Individuals answered: Some of the time.

5. Do the supports offered meet your family's needs?

- ◆ 30 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 5 Individuals answered: Some of the time

6. Are supports available to your family in a timely manner?

- ◆ 32 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 2 Individuals answered: Some of the time.

7. Has Family Connections staff helped you to access and use the health care system?

- ◆ 20 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 2 Individuals answered: Some of the time.
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: No or not at all.
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Don't know.
- ◆ 7 Individuals answered: Does not apply.

8. Are you satisfied with the cash assistance you receive?

- ◆ 25 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 5 Individuals answered: Some of the time.
- ◆ 2 Individuals answered: No or not at all.
- ◆ 3 Individuals answered: Does not apply.

9. Do you feel less isolated since your involvement with Family Connections?

- ◆ 21 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 3 Individuals answered: Some of the time
- ◆ 6 Individuals answered: No or not at all
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Don't know.
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: Does not apply.

10. Have you learned new information as a result of working with people from Family Connections?

- ◆ 29 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: Some of the time.
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: No or not at all.

Family Connections Satisfaction Survey Results (Continued)

11. Has the quality of life for you and your family member improved since your involvement with Family Connections?

- ◆ 28 Individuals answered: Yes or most of the time.
- ◆ 4 Individuals answered: Some of the time.
- ◆ 2 Individuals answered: No or not at all.
- ◆ 1 Individual answered: Does not apply.

12. I need more information on (please give us your name if you'd like us to get back to you):

- ◆ Housing: 6
- ◆ Education: 7
- ◆ Rights: 8
- ◆ Recreation: 8
- ◆ Adult Services: 4
- ◆ Turning 22: 2
- ◆ Other: 0

13. Are you interested in participating in any of the following support groups (please give us your name if you'd like us to get back to you)?

- ◆ ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) Support Group: 5
- ◆ Hispanic Family Support Group: 2
- ◆ Transition (from school to adult life) Support Group: 4
- ◆ Dinner Club (gathering with other families over dinner): 8
- ◆ Other: ADHD Support Group

14. I would like Family Connections to sponsor a training or workshop on:

- ◆ Education: 8
- ◆ Advocacy: 4
- ◆ Community Resources: 2
- ◆ Stress Management: 6
- ◆ Transition: 4
- ◆ Specific Disability-ADHD: 3
- ◆ Other-CPR/First Aid, Health Insurance: 2

15. Are there any other supports your family would benefit from?

Behavioral Management, meeting other families, PDD Programs, Driver Test Info, more Respite Dollars.

16. I would be interested in learning more about serving on the Family Connections Advisory Council.

- ◆ Yes: 6
- ◆ Not at this time: 17

Comments: *The Hispanic Vacation Camp was great.. FC Wonderful helpful program. I appreciate all the help from Sandy. Gloria & Sherry, Gloria is excellent help with working with the school. I would like to have more families get together and talk. I think Sandy has been outstanding and has helped me & my son tremendously in the past year. Thank you for all your support.*

MFOFC Massachusetts Families Organizing For Change

A statewide conference: Creating the Possibilities

One Voice for Individual and Family Support

Time: Saturday, October 27, 2007 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Place:** Holiday Inn - Marlboro-265 Lakeside Ave.

Directions: I-495 North or South, Exit 24A, Route 20, Marlboro. At end of ramp, get in left lane and take your 1st left up the hill to the hotel.

Conference Overview

Morning Workshops 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM

1. Everything in Life is a Transition

Presenter: Anne Hurst

This interactive workshop will assist in creating techniques that will make transitions and future planning easier and more organized.

2. Many Voices – Many Choices

Presenters: Chrissie Knight, Lea Morais, Deb Winters

Families receiving services from a variety of state agencies named in the Chapter 171 law discuss the successes and challenges with making it possible and getting their voice heard

3. Endless Possibilities

Presenters: Laura Casey-Black, Kathy Black, Dana Dansereau & Laura Dansereau

Creative thinking about family support – Where do I begin?

Afternoon Workshops 1:45 PM to 3:00 PM

4. Legislative Advocacy

Presenter: State Representative Tom Sannicandro

Advocating for Change leads to Policy Change.

5. More Voices – More Choices

Panel: Keith Jones, Lauri Medeiros, Anna Tolentino

Individuals and families receiving services from a variety of state agencies named in the Chapter 171 law discuss the successes and challenges with making it possible and getting their voice heard.

6. A “Part” not “Apart” of Our Community

Presenter: Lynn Tonkin

Exploring what it takes for our families to be a part of our community and who is there to help us.

Registration Information

FREE Registration Deadline is **October 16, 2007**. SPACE IS LIMITED-Register as soon as possible.

To register online go to **www.MFOFC.org** OR contact Family Connections for a brochure.

If special accommodations are needed, please RSVP no later than October 10, 2007

Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong

10th Annual Anniversary Conference

“A Celebration of Self-Advocacy: Looking Forward by Looking Back”

Keynote Speaker **ELIN HOWE Commissioner of DMR**

Saturday, November 3, 2007 8am to 4 pm

Crowne Plaza Hotel

10 Lincoln Square

Worcester, MA 01608

11:30 Workshop Sessions We are proud to offer these workshops with some of our partners

- 1. Chapter 171 Law-Why it is important to us—MASS Families Organizing for Change**
- 2. Awareness and Action Project—Building Partnerships Initiative (BPI)**
- 3. Self-Determination/Self-Direction—Advocacy, Education, Inclusion (AEI)**
- 4. The Olmstead Case: What is it and the right to Fair Housing in the Community—Disability Law Center**
- 5. Self Advocacy Leadership Series—MA Developmental Disabilities Council**

Lunch will be provided

Recognition Awards

Announcement of Newly Elected Board Members

Raffle Winner \$2,500

At 2:00

Party Time and many surprises!!!!!! 10 Conferences!!!!

Dance, Dance, Dance Let them eat cake Friends old and new

Sing along Check out art Win a prize!!

For more information and a registration form, contact Family Connections at 508-999-4436

Needed – Effective Advocates!

There is work to be done! Do you know how to advocate for your family member with your state legislators? Do your State Representative and Senator know your family? Do they know how much you depend on their actions for services for your family and family members?

Join us for...LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY TRAINING

Mary Lou Maloney - Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council

Date: November 14, 2007

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Place: The Nemasket Group, 56 Bridge Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719

Learn effective strategies for building relationships with your state legislators and how to effectively lobby for change.

Great training for anyone interested in legislative advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities!

For more information contact Sandra Kinney, Director Family Connections @ 508-999-4436 x128

ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Support Group

The next meeting will be on:

Date: October 18th, 2007

Time: 9:00am—11:00am

Place: The Nemasket Group

56 Bridge Street

Fairhaven, MA 02719

If you will be attending please RSVP with Sherry Amaral

By Monday October 15th, 2007 at

508-999-4436 ext. 125



Please Join Us...



The Nemasket Group's 17th Annual
HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Saturday, November 10th

9:00am to 4:00pm at

The Nemasket Group

56 Bridge Street in Fairhaven

Blown Glass * Woodcarvings * Jewelry

Gift Baskets * Ornaments

Raffle * Chinese & Silent Auctions

This year in addition to our usual events, we are also selling \$5.00 Raffle Tickets. Winners will select the prize of their choice. Prizes include a two week campership at YMCA Camp Massasoit, Original artwork from local artists including Chuck Hauck, Richard Vanesse & Joe Rapoza, and much more. Raffle will be drawn at 3:30 pm at our 17th Annual Holiday Bazaar. Please call Jessica at extension 127 to purchase advance tickets.

All proceeds to benefit The Nemasket Group, Inc.

Visit us for Breakfast & Lunch!!

For more information please call 508-999-4436 or e-mail Bazaar@NemasketGroup.org

Lesley University: Center for Special Education Presents:

Educational Opportunity for Professionals and Parents!

Saturday workshop series

Keeping Students Included: Strategies for Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom

Management

Saturdays - October 13 & 27, 2007

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

This two-part series will focus on techniques that support students with significant disabilities to stay included and to participate in meaningful ways in general education (pre-K through 12) classrooms. Curricular, behavioral, social, and functional ideas will be explored.

Part 1 topics include differentiating curriculum and lesson planning, embedding functional skills, and collaborating with general educators, support staff, and other IEP Team members. Ways to encourage student self-advocacy skills and family involvement will be discussed. Part 2 will provide practical examples of positive behavioral supports and classroom management strategies, the development of social skills, and facilitating an inclusive community within the classroom. This session will conclude with a dialog on particular issues, concerns, and questions that participants raise.

Alan D. Ripp, M.Ed., is an inclusion specialist and elementary teacher for Newton Public Schools. He has served as a staff trainer on non-violent crisis prevention and as a teacher liaison to the School Council. Alan continues to serve as mentor of new teachers in the district. His forte is in conveying inclusive educational strategies that support students with significant disabilities, including students with autism spectrum disorders, to be fully included in general education classrooms.

University Hall, Room 3-094

Conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments and Writing Behavior Support Plans:

Demystifying the Process

Saturdays - November 3 & 17, 2007

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

This two-part series will provide participants with a clear understanding of the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) process, an enhanced ability to design and implement Behavior Support Plans (BSPs), and proactive ways of dealing with students who have challenging behaviors.

Part 1 will provide an overview of IDEA key provisions and focus on describing the critical steps involved in conducting an FBA, including how to define behaviors operationally, collect and summarize data, and develop hypotheses about the function of behaviors. Part 2 will focus on the essential components of a behavior support plan and case studies of students with challenging behaviors will be presented.

Dina A. Traniello, Ed.D., works with schools and families to support students with challenging behaviors in general education settings, conducting functional behavioral assessments and designing positive behavior supports.

Individual attendees are welcome; however, Dina especially recommends this series for teams of three or more (e.g., administrators, instructional assistants, general educators and special educators, school psychologists, behavior support professionals, and counselors).

University Hall, Room 3-094

Educational Opportunity for Professionals and Parents! (Continued)

Teaching Self-Advocacy: Youth Take the Lead in Educational Planning and Developing Inclusive Postsecondary Options

Saturdays - January 26 & February 9, 2008

9:00 am-3:00 pm

This two-part series will discuss integrating self-advocacy and leadership skills into transitional planning activities as youth move from middle school to high school and beyond. IEP/ITP development and DOE's newly mandated Transition Planning form will be discussed.

Part 1 will present the concept of youth development and the importance of teaching self-advocacy, self-determination, and leadership skills to middle and high school youth as part of a comprehensive transition process. State and Federal initiatives and national standards will be discussed. Part 2 will address the significance of student-directed IEPs, along with promising practices in career development and inclusive postsecondary education. Examples will highlight how schools and community agencies can prioritize self-advocacy and youth development to promote personal leadership.

Maria Paiewonsky, Ed.D., is an education specialist at the Institute for Community Inclusion/UMass Boston. She works with school-based teams to develop inclusive secondary and postsecondary options that support student and family preferences. Maria has pioneered the use of "photovoice," an evaluation method combining photography, narrative, and discussion to promote the concerns and interests of transition-aged youth with significant intellectual disabilities.

Nancy Hurley, M.S., is also an education specialist at ICI/UMass Boston, currently exploring inclusive postsecondary education options for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She works with various state and community agencies to align services for all youth as they transition from school to adult life. Nancy conducts trainings on curriculum adaptation, differentiated instruction, alternate assessment, person-centered planning, and resource mapping.

University Hall, Room 3-094

Preventing Harassment, Bullying, and Hate Crimes in Schools: A Comprehensive Approach to Transforming School Climate

Saturdays - March 1 & 15, 2008

9:00 am -3:00 pm

This two-part series will provide participants with a clear understanding of how to recognize, respond to, and prevent harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, and hate crimes in schools.

Part 1 will provide an overview of the increasing problem of harassment, bullying, and hate crimes in K-12 schools and the relationship between school climate, safety, equity, social inclusion, and learning. Issues contributing to school conflicts, incidents of violence, and significant inter-group tensions will be highlighted. Part 2 will focus on the critical steps needed for transforming school climate. Case studies and practical steps in promoting positive race and ethnic relations, educational equity, and the social inclusion of all students will be discussed.

Richard W. Cole, Esq. is a nationally known civil rights attorney, and former Assistant Attorney General and Civil Rights Division Chief in the Massachusetts Office of Attorney General. Richard has worked with schools across the U.S., providing training in recognizing, responding to, and preventing harassment, bullying, and hate crimes.

University Hall, Room 3-094

For more information contact Susan Kando, 617-349-8260 or skando@lesley.edu

Or go to www.lesley.edu/info/workshops

**Coming in the next issue of the FAMILY
CONNECTIONS newsletter...**

**FACTS ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS
2006 HEALTH REFORM**

**Frequently Asked
Questions and More!**



**the
nemasket
group**

Family Connections

Joint Project of The Nemasket Group and DMR

56 Bridge Street

Fairhaven, MA 02719

Phone: 508-999-0077

Fax: 508-997-9239



Creating a network of family support

For individuals with developmental

Disabilities and their families