

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The Nemasket Group



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CRAIG'S LIFE AND VISION

By: Sandra Kinney

I am writing this on behalf of my son, Craig Kinney. Craig was born on May 30, 1987. He has lived in Marion all of his life. Our vision for Craig was typical of any child - to go to school and grow-up in our community. Craig began preschool at the age of three. We had a choice between our local integrated preschool or a collaborative. We chose our local preschool. Craig attended preschool for two years and continued at our local elementary school for the next 7 years. Craig was fully included from kindergarten to sixth grade, he did receive the support of a 1x1 paraprofessional, special education teacher, SLP, and OT, but they went into Craig's classroom. I was very adamant that Craig be included in every aspect of school. Craig

joined the school band, plays, field trips etc. As a result of our efforts Craig was treated with respect and as just another member of his class. He learned how to read, write, add, subtract and gained a great interest in Science. Craig enrolled in karate class, swimming lessons and participated at our local YMCA camps in the summer. There was never a time when I or Craig believed that he needed a special program due to his disability.

Craig began Junior High and a new school in 2000. Again, he was fully included. In February of that year, Craig developed strep throat. By May of 2001, Craig became a medically involved child. He no longer could speak, required a 1x1 nurse, medical equipment and relied on a tracheotomy

tube to breath. He did miss a great deal of school that year but continued to be involved by the outreach of support by his classmates. When he returned to school I again insisted that Craig be fully included. It would have been very easy to have separated Craig from many everyday activities and classes in general. He did require suctioning at a moments notice. The school, community and fellow classmates welcomed him back. We did spend additional time planning "what if" and there were numerous times that "911" was called. Craig's recovery was greatly enhanced by being included and continuing the school routine he knew best.

Craig had successful reconstructive surgery on his trachea in January 2005. He can talk again, go out without

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his cart of medical supplies and not require a nurse at all times. It is wonderful to hear him sing.

Craig attended High School as a senior. He was fully included in all classes and has been supported in finding a wonderful job. Craig began working over four years ago. He worked after school two days a week and more hours during the summer time. His title is Duplicating Screening Machine Operator. Lockheed Martin Sippican Inc. welcomed him into their working community and values his work. He has been able to develop and enjoy friendships with classmates by going out to movies, wrestling events, shopping and other interesting events.

Craig, at the age of 19, participated in graduation with his class. He will continue to receive funding from the school until he is 22. He continues to work at Lockheed Martin Sippican Inc. 4 hours a week. He is enrolled in Bristol Community College and is taking a photography class. His week days are filled with work, college classes, working out at Healthtrax and learning to do more things for himself like cooking, shopping, banking, and cleaning. Craig's vision has been to be just like anyone else his age. We do have to plan and work at helping

Craig achieve his goals, but it is Worth It!

At the age of 22 Craig and I will pursue exactly what his childhood opportunities have been - to be an active and fully included member of society - to work, live, pursue his education in a fully inclusive environment.

Our family has been supported by the Department of Mental Retardation through the use of Family Support. Family Connections has supported our family since Craig was 5 and Family Partnerships of Southeast supported our family during Craig's intensive medical involvement. The Department has been a wonderful asset to enable Craig to reach his goals of being fully included.

I am aware that The Department of Mental Retardation's Turning 22 funding has not been adjusted to meet the needs of all the individuals turning 22. Craig's life is the most important thing to our family. Dad, Mom, and two sisters are dedicated to supporting Craig to aspire to the most productive life possible. Craig's support needs and how the supports are delivered will decide his future. We feel very strongly that his future supports will need to be individualized to meet his needs. A Day program would not be the future he would desire. Craig has shown everyone that with individual supports he can do anything anyone else can do. We as a family would not settle for anything less. I hope that we could work together to make effective changes to the Turning 22 funding to enable our children to succeed in the future.

"We do have to plan and work at helping Craig achieve his goals, but it is Worth It!"



An Act To Address The Special Education Needs Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders & DOE's Advisory Memo

On Friday August 25, DOE issued an advisory memorandum to discuss and amplify the legislation enacted in the spring and effective on July 1, 2006 to require certain types of services for students identified as having an autism spectrum disorder.

The memorandum is well-written and contains much useful guidance for school districts and others involved in developing educational plans for such students, though it does *not* address certain important issues such as:

- the extent to which services should be considered for delivery outside of school hours and in unstructured or less structured periods of the school day;

- the extent to which services should include extended year programming; and

- the question of whether and when to continue services to a student who has ostensibly met academic requirements for graduation but for whom significant IEP goals and objectives in the areas of social and behavioral skill development remain substantially unmet.

The need to provide extended services

outside of the typical academic school day and year and beyond a possible graduation point remain among the most frequently contested issues in special education due process and such services ought to be actively supported by the Department of Education.

The DOE memorandum and the legislation that it considers ought, however, to go a long way toward removing from the "most-contested" list of special education issues the question whether school districts need to offer significant special education and related services to address the social/communication and behavioral needs of students with autism spectrum disorders.

The DOE advisory can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/07_1.html.

In July 2006, Chapter 57 of the Acts of 2006, entitled *An Act To Address The Special Education Needs Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders*, took effect. This law, which amends M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3 (<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/71b-3.htm>),

requires that IEP Teams consider and address in the IEP discussion certain specific needs of students with disabilities on the autism spectrum. The full text of Chapter 57 is as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 71B, Section 3 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting at the end of paragraph six the following sentence:

Whenever an evaluation indicates that a child has a disability on the autism spectrum, which includes autistic disorder [autism], Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rhetts Syndrome as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV, 2000), the IEP Team shall consider and shall specifically address the following: the verbal and nonverbal communication needs of the child; the need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies; the needs resulting from the child's unusual responses to sensory experiences; the needs resulting from resis-

tance to environmental change or change in daily routines; the needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements; the need for any positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address any behavioral difficulties resulting from autism spectrum disorder; and other needs resulting from the child's disability that impact progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development.

The DOE Advisory can be found at:

**Http://
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/
advisories/07_1.html**

To view M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3

**Go to:Http://
www.mass.gov/legis/laws/
mgl/71b-3.htm**

**Article received through
arcmass.org email—
forward by Bob Crabtree
of Kotin, Crabtree &
Strong.**

Chapter 171 of The Acts of 2002

An Act Providing Support to Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families

“ Chapter 171 is not just about respite care!”

After almost 11 years of advocacy by members of Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change (MFOFC), Chapter 171 of the Acts of 2002, *An Act Providing Support to Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families*, was passed into law on July 26, 2002.

Chapter 171 is not just about respite care! It's about giving individuals with disabilities and their families a voice in crucial decisions being made about their lives. It's about providing a variety of flexible home and community supports that help families stay together and help people with disabilities or chronic illnesses live outside of institutions.

The main components of Chapter 171:

Agencies need to provide **flexible supports** – flexible supports are supports that are individualized for each individual and family's needs and should not be pre-determined or decided upon without input from individuals and families.

Agencies need to obtain **substantial consultation** – substantial consultation should be a combination of outreach to individuals, families and representative groups – to give the agencies input on needed supports and services as well as a review of proposed annual agency family support plans. Individuals and families should have opportunities throughout the year to give input.

Agencies need to develop an **Annual Individual and Family Support Plan** after substantial consultation has been obtained. The plan needs to address how the agency will provide flexible supports for families and individuals. The plan needs to include goals on how the agencies will coordinate with other agencies to enhance and expand individual and family supports during the fiscal year. Each agency shall seek creative and innovative ways, within its existing authority and mandate for serving individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses, to provide flexible support.

Once the plans are written by each agency they are submitted to the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the legislative committee overseeing disability services, and the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees for review. The date for final submission for the plans is August 1 of each year.

Once individuals and families have a *general* understanding of the Chapter 171- Flexible Support Law, it is our responsibility to get involved with its implementation.

(To access a copy of the law and Agency Annual Plans, please visit MFOFC's website at www.mfofc.org)

Getting involved with the implementation of Chapter 171 means providing “substantial consultation”.

“**Substantial consultation**” is a main component of the Chapter 171 Law. It is each agency's responsibility to obtain substantial consultation before writing their Annual Agency Action Plan. There are many different ways for agencies to receive substantial consultation and many ways for individuals and families to get involved in providing it. Below are a few examples of ways substantial consultation can be obtained.

1. **Advisory Boards** - Advisory boards should have members from a cross section of constituents including but not limited to– individuals and family members as well as ethnically diverse members that represent populations served by the agency. Advisory boards must have significant conversation around and about individual and family supports. Advisory boards that are used as a method of substantial consultation need to have access to the draft Agency Action Plan and may distribute the draft to other family members for review. The Advisory Board members can then get feedback from the families and present it

Chapter 171 (Continued from page 4)

at the Advisory Board meeting.

2. Surveys - When individuals and families receive surveys from their service providers they should take the time to fill them out and return them. It is also important to make sure you comment when given the opportunity on the survey about what is working as well as what is not working or what you would like to see done differently.

3. Focus Groups - Members of the focus groups should be provided with a copy of the Chapter 171 law. Focus group members need to understand that they are being asked to provide input on a program or policy that is in the development stage or about a program or policy that is being reexamined. At this stage of any process there is room for out-of-the-box

thinking and ideas that may not be in line with the current service delivery models.

4. Meetings with Individuals and Families - Meetings between staff members of the agencies and individuals and families can be a very useful way for agencies to not only connect and build a bond of trust but to receive great feedback on the needs of the individual or family. This process offers agency staff the opportunity to have a connection with individuals and families to help keep the importance of the job they are doing in the forefront of their mind.

State Agencies Impacted by Chapter 171:

Dept. of Mental Retardation, Dept. of Mental Health, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Division of Medical Assistance, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and Dept. of Public Health

Chapter 171 - The Next Steps

What to do to get involved? Who to contact with questions?

Once individuals and families have reviewed the law and the agency action plan and have a general understanding of substantial consultation it is time to get involved.

The next steps to get involved with the implementation of Chapter 171 are:

1. Review this year's Agency Action Plan (plans can be found at www.mfofc.org).
2. Follow up & participate in providing substantial consultation
3. Get involved legislatively ~ get on the ARC Mass email alert list -www.arcmass.org (Know what is going on in our state around disability issues, budgets, and legislative priorities.)
4. If you have not already done so, participate in a Family Leadership Series sponsored by MFOFC.

Have questions about any of the above? Call Family Connections @ 508-999-0077

OR Contact Tanya Wheeler @ 413-562-7395 or email @

Tanya.wheeler@comcast.net

The Governor's Commission on Mental Retardation is pleased to announce:

A Public Hearing

On issues affecting individuals with Mental Retardation

This public hearing will provide all system stakeholders— self-advocates, parents, professionals, providers and public officials an opportunity to provide feedback on obstacles, solutions and recommendations for system improvement.

Date: Tuesday November 14, 2006

Time: 5:00-7:30 PM

Place: Worcester Public Library, Worcester, Massachusetts

Please share your insights, opinions or questions with Commission members on such relevant issues such as employment, housing, day or vocational programming, recreation and leisure activities, family support, transportation, children's services, aging or other related human service areas. *(This is a unique opportunity for all stakeholders especially those located in the central and western part of the Commonwealth to dialogue with Commission members).*

For more information and/or directions, please contact Family Connections @ 508-999-0077

What's Happening In The Home Ownership Project?

Currently less than 1% of all people with developmental disabilities own their own homes compared to the overall nationwide homeownership rate of approximately 67%.

Initial funding for **Nemasket's Home Ownership** project was provided by three local banks (Compass Bank, FIRSTFED Charitable Foundation and Citizens Bank). This enabled the Nemasket Group to hire Mr. George Tripp a "Home Ownership Counselor" to assist people with disabilities and families with children with special needs through the complex home buying process. In recent years Citizens Bank has continued to provide financial support to enable the Nemasket Group to hire George Tripp.

Since the start of the Home Ownership Project in March 2002, Ross Hooley and George Tripp have met with fifty individuals with disabilities and families with children with special needs who had expressed an interest in home

ownership. In that time ten people have been assisted to become homeowners.

Several factors have prevented these numbers from being higher: (1) even though real estate prices have leveled off they still remain above the average price that most people can afford; (2) people with disabilities have limited income resources; (3) difficulty in budgeting and poor or no credit history; (4) limited marketing and participation by Housing Authorities in the Section 8 for Homeownership Program; (5) difficulty paying down payment and closing costs - CHAPA's decision to end its involvement in coordinating the Federal "Home of Your Own Funding" program was a significant loss of a resource for down payment grants; (6) similarly the take over of local banks in South-eastern Massachusetts have led to a discontinuation of a number of easily obtained mortgage products (e.g. Compass Bank being taken over by Sovereign Bank leading to the discontinuation of the - "Compass Affordable Mortgage Program").

**What's happening in the home ownership program?
(Continued from page 6)**

Further reluctance was often due to a general belief and frustration on the part of the person or family that purchasing their own home would be unattainable.

The referral process has continued to be as streamlined as possible. George Tripp (Home Ownership Counselor) and Ross Hooley (Nemasket Group) will meet with a family or individual to determine if they qualify for the project. At this meeting, further action steps to be taken by the individual, family or Home Ownership Counselor would be determined. Depending on the needs of the prospective homebuyer, follow up is done by the Home Ownership Counselor either in person or via telephone and email.

People supported through the project have had a range of disabilities including those who: have a developmental disability, were visually impaired, were hearing impaired or physically challenged.

	2002 – 2006
Number of information meetings held with families and individuals.	50
Current active participants.	11
Number of families and individuals who have purchased a home.	10

TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE PROJECT

Assistance with:

- Identifying Credit Counseling Agencies
- Identifying Home Buyer Counseling Agencies
- Providing specialized one on one home buyer counseling
- Helping person to become pre qualified by a lender
- Finding properties to meet individual needs
- Informing Realtors of Program on behalf of buyers
- Applying for grants
- Applying for mortgages
- Maintaining regular contact with buyers, realtors, lenders and support agencies
- Reviewing Language in Purchase and Sale Agreement
- Recommending Home Inspection Options
- Attending closings

**What's happening on the home ownership project?
(Continued from page 7)**

Goals for the project for 2006-2007

1. To assist at least three participants in the project to purchase their own homes.
2. To have individual meetings with at least ten people with disabilities/families with children with special needs to explore the possibility of homeownership.
3. To conduct evening information workshops for individuals and families interested in obtaining more information about homeownership.
4. To continue to publicize the project through appropriate media.
5. To continue to seek out suitable funding sources, grants, and special mortgage products that will assist participants in the project.

In the last fifteen years, homeownership in America has become a reality for hundreds of people with disabilities historically excluded from what is perhaps the most sought-after American dream. Through the efforts of many individuals and organizations, a great deal has been learned about overcoming obstacles, capitalizing on opportunities, and navigating the process of purchasing a home.

If you have any interest in pursuing homeownership please call Ross Hooley at the Nemasket Group at 508 999-4436 ext. 126 to set up an appointment.

**FAMILY CONNECTIONS WOULD LIKE TO THANK
CITIZENS BANK**

FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR HOMEOWNERSHIP PROJECT.

This project continues to be successful in helping people with disabilities and families who have children with special needs to purchase their own home.

INTERESTED IN BUYING YOUR OWN HOME?

Contact Ross Hooley

Ph: 508 999-4436 ext. 126 Email: rosshooley@aol.com

to find out if we can help.

Building A Home

A Conference on the Complex Issues Families face in Securing Supportive Living Arrangements for their Children

Saturday, November 4, 2006 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Boston University Conference Center Tyngsboro, MA

Keynote speaker: Jay Klein, Director of Center for Housing and New Community Economics (CHANCE) and the National Home of your Own Project

10 great workshops: Making it happen, Empty Nest-Letting go and getting out, Home Control and Ownership through proper Estate Planning, Blue Print for Public and Private Partnership, Leaving a legacy - Brothers and Sisters and their lifelong relationship, Alternatives to Group Homes, From Dreams to Reality- trailblazers tell their stories, Pouring the Foundation-Friends, Family and Building Community with a network of support, Caulking, Duct Tape and Insulation- what it takes to fill the Gaps (SSI, PCA, food stamps and more) The Bricks and Mortar to community development- all types of local, state and federal housing resources and how to access them.

In collaboration with Ma Families Organizing for Change, Arc of East Middlesex, Governor's Commission on MR, Autism Support Center, DMR Northeast Region

INTERESTED? CALL FAMILY CONNECTIONS @ 508-999-0077 FOR A BROCHURE



Upcoming Hispanic Support Group Meetings 2006-2007

October 31, 2006 (Family Sharing)

December 14, 2006 (Holiday Celebration)

February 15, 2007 (Training on Special Education Basic Rights)

April 19, 2007 (Family Sharing)

June 28, 2007 (Summer Picnic – location to be announced)

For additional information, please call 508-999-0077 Gloria Villalobo X 118 or Jorge Pagan X 106

Upcoming Autism Spectrum Parent Support Group Meetings

Oct.26, 2006 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Nov.30, 2006 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Dec.21, 2006 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

If you have any questions, please call Sherry Amaral at 508-999-0077 X 125.

*ABOVE MEETINGS HELD AT THE NEMASKET GROUP IN FAIRHAVEN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Updated Listing of Dentists Accepting MassHealth

At the following website there is a list, organized by region, of dentists statewide who accept MassHealth.

The website is : <http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/masshealth/memlibrary/dental-listing.pdf>

SALVATION ARMY ASSISTANCE

THE SALVATION ARMY will be accepting **Christmas applications** starting on Monday November 13 through November 17 and November 27 through December 8. Applications will be taken on those days from 9:30-11:45AM. **FOR WORKING INDIVIDUALS ONLY** evening hours will be on Thursday November 16 and Friday December 1 from 6:00-8:00PM Portuguese and Spanish individuals will be available for the application process. Anyone wishing to apply for food assistance and toys for their children will need to bring documentation. (Contact the Salvation Army or Family Connections for information on needed documentation.

All applications will be taken at the **Salvation Army office at 619 Purchase Street, New Bedford**. For more information, contact the Salvation Army at 508-997-6561.



Please Join Us...

The Nemasket Group's 16th Annual
H*O*L*I*D*A*Y* B*A*Z*A*A*R*

Saturday, November 18th

9:00am to 4:00pm at

The Nemasket Group

56 Bridge Street in Fairhaven

Blown Glass * Woodcarvings * Jewelry

Gift Baskets * Paintings * Ornaments

Raffle * Chinese Auction

Visit us for
Breakfast & Lunch!!

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



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