The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed into law March 23, 2010. The Health Care & Education Reconciliation Act, which was signed by President Obama on March 30, 2010. The provisions of the new law will phase in over a number of years, until full implementation in 2014.

Parents of children with disabilities will need to become smart consumers, educating themselves about the law and how it can benefit their child. We will all be learning together. Health care will change from what we know, the details will be developed through the setting of regulations and policy. It is important for families to ask questions.

Key elements of the law take effect this year that families should become familiar with, for instance: (the items below are effective 6 month after enactment)

- Prohibits new health plans in all markets plus grandfathered group health plans from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions.
- Prohibits health insurance companies from placing lifetime caps on coverage.
- Requires new health plans and certain grandfathered plans to allow young people up to their 26th birthday to remain on their parents’ insurance policy, at the parents’ choice.
- Ensures consumers in new plans have access to an effective internal and external appeals process to appeal decisions made by their health insurance plan.

There are many ways to become a smart consumer, check with your insurance company, discuss your concerns with your health care providers, talk with your employer, and review information from trustworthy web sites. To help us all learn more Nevada PEP has added a page to our web site for families; we are adding links to articles and information about health care reform almost daily.
2009 RRR Conference

The 4th Annual Relationships, Rules and Results Conference was held in Las Vegas October, 2009. The statewide conference gave parents and professionals the opportunity to learn side by side how to build and sustain quality parent/professional relationships and gain information on understanding the rules of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Most of all, the conference illustrated how focusing on the unique strengths of each student and having high expectations can produce quality results.

This year’s guest speaker, Logan Olson, is a glowing example of quality results from high expectations. Logan suffered a massive heart attack at age 16 and lapsed into a coma. Lasting symptoms of the damage to her brain include short-term memory loss, difficulty with fine-motor skills and lack of balance. Throughout Logan’s recovery she refused to give up, refused to stop being exactly who she was: a young lady with a zest for life and a flair for fashion. Logan, finding no resources available to help her with her unique day to day lifestyle/fashion needs, set out to create Logan Magazine. Logan refused to take no for an answer having high expectations. Logan’s recovery she refused to give up, refused to stop being exactly who she was: a young lady with a zest for life and a flair for fashion.

Today, Logan Magazine inspires teens with disabilities to celebrate fashion and a productive lifestyle instead of giving up on it, and most of all as Logan says, “Keep living!” Living is exactly what Logan does daily with working on layouts and shopping for new outfits to feature in the magazine being her individualized therapy. Logan’s goal is to motivate young people to live, work, play, dream big and look great while experiencing all life has to offer. Way to go, Logan!

Once again our favorite speakers Ann Alexander, Art Cernosia, and Eric Hartwig left us all wanting more. This trio of speakers is an amazing team sharing information with a touch of humor. Ann delivered up-to-date data in a manner that is easily understood and makes you feel like you are sitting in your living room having a conversation with a close friend. Art presented real life examples of court findings related to the rules of IDEA and explained the reasoning behind each ruling, helping us all to better understand not only the laws but how using “best practices” helps everyone win in the long run. Eric wrapped up the conference with a thought provoking presentation that encourages dialogue that is free of blame and focuses on the issues rather than the emotions people bring to the table. Eric has a unique way of delivering information that makes you laugh out loud while, at the same time, makes you think about the relationships in your life and how you communicate with others.

Dorithia Coleman, one of the parents who attended this year’s conference, said the number one thing she walked away with was how to bridge relationships between parents and school staff and how to make that relationship stronger. Dorithia stated, “It doesn’t have to be a fight. You can come together as a team for the benefit of the child”.

Senator Reid meets with Nevada PEP Board Members Sam Lieberman and Trish Leavitt, Executive Director Karen Taycher and PEP Supporter Clifton Whitehurst
For dates, times and locations of Nevada PEP Trainings; or to request a workshop in your community:
Southern Nevada – (702) 388-8899
Northern Nevada – (775) 448-9950
Rural Nevada – (800) 216-5188.
You may also view dates, times, locations and register for trainings online at www.nvpep.org.

Resource Library Video Review
By: Kiara Estill
Through the Same Door – Inclusion Includes College is a “must see” 25 minute documentary of Micah Fialka-Feldman, a 21-year-old college student, and his journey to experience every aspect of college. The documentary shows what family, friends and mentors had to say about Micah’s courage, determination, and positive attitude. Through the Same Door is an inspirational testimony about how a motivated student can, will, and does make a difference.

In this video, you can see the different activities that Micah has participated in to promote his independence and self-advocacy skills. He is making his dream come true and inspiring many more youth to follow their dreams.

The DVD version of Through the Same Door – Inclusion Includes College can be checked out through the Nevada PEP Resource Library.

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System of Care Update  By: TJ Rosenberg & Lynne Windle

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Nevada PEP held Wraparound 101 training in Nov/Dec. The Wraparound process is a way of delivering supports to families that have children in the service system(s) who are diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance. In this training, the Wraparound Facilitators and Nevada PEP Family Specialists attended to learn the importance of getting to know the families and the principles of Wraparound. A great benefit of this training is the opportunity to learn how it feels to be interviewed and having to discuss some very personal things. I think this exercise will help them value the family’s feelings and be more aware of any cultural differences. It is also important that they let other providers know about their roles in Wraparound. This is a great training for the service delivery of Wraparound to our families statewide.

In November and December there were some moves for the East and Central Neighborhood Family Service Center Sites in Southern Nevada. Thanks to everyone’s hard work in making this transition as smooth as possible for our families. The new addresses for the sites: East- 4180 S. Pecos, Las Vegas, NV 89121; Central – 121 Martin Luther King Blvd, #172, Las Vegas, NV 89106-4309

Behavior Basics: Getting an Early Start  By: Flo LaRoy

Regardless of a child’s age, problem behaviors present challenges to families, teachers and communities. When a child has a disability or is at risk, challenging behavior may be recognized in early development. Addressing behaviors early prevents them from becoming chronic and more severe. Leaving challenging behaviors unchecked increases the risk of school failure, thereby increasing the potential of adolescent delinquency, social isolation and adult incarceration. “Facts About Young Children with Challenging Behavior” is a sobering reminder of the need for intervention.

Positive Behavior Tip:

Focus on teaching your child what to do instead of punishing your child for what he or she didn’t do. State your expectations clearly, demonstrate each step, and praise your child for completing your request.

Instead of saying, “pick up your toys,” demonstrate how and where to put away toys. Work with your child and praise each successful attempt. Use labeled bins to reduce clutter and teach your child to put one bin away before getting out another. Remember organizing is a life-long skill!

Resources:

- “When Should Parents Be Concerned?” (PACER.org, PHP-c106) – This is an excellent tool to help identify atypical behavior.
- www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/handouts.htm - Practical Tips for Families with Young children

Patty Cake  By: Portland Neola

You can occupy your children by making easy and inexpensive pipe cleaner figures.

Pipe cleaner creations are an easy and inexpensive way to enjoy time with your children. The entire family can enjoy making stick people and creative creatures with the use of pipe cleaners, poms, and colored felt. You and your kids can start by gathering sheets of colored felt. Cut out funny shapes for hands, feet, ears, noses, eyes and mouths. Together, you can make insects, spiders, centipedes, caterpillars, butterflies, birds, dogs, teddy bears and pompom creatures.

To make a spider, start by cutting two pipe cleaners in half. To make the eight spider legs, twist the four cleaners together in the middle. After twisting the pipe cleaners together, spread them apart. Then, glue two poms to the middle where all the spider legs meet. Use a small pom for the head and a bigger one for the body. After the glue dries, bend all the legs so that they look like spider legs.

This beautiful spider or any other creatures you create are a wonderful way to pass the time on a cold, windy day, and they make an excellent activity during sleepovers as well.
Focus on IDEA/NAC

Educational Update
Questions and Answers on Transportation

By: Robin Kincaid

U.S. Department of Education has developed question and answer publications to help parents understand special education topics. A recent release is on transportation can be helpful in understanding how transportation can be provided for students with disabilities. Some of the topics covered are:

- Travel Training (instruction on helping a student become aware of their surroundings and learning skills to move effectively and safely in their environment)
- Behavioral Aides on the bus
- Integrating children with disabilities into general education bus routes
- Bus personnel using Positive Behavioral Supports with students while on the bus
- Bus Stop Monitors
- Training bus personnel on keeping student information confidential
- School Districts paying reimbursement to parents who transport their child who is IEP eligible for transportation services.
- Bus Suspension guidelines and how they relate to IDEA discipline procedures

The student’s IEP team is responsible for determining both if transportation is required to assist the student with a disability to benefit from special education and related services and how the transportation services should be implemented. This type of clarification from the Office of Special Education can help parents be informed about how transportation can meet each student’s needs.

For a complete copy of this document visit the following site: http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home under the news section on the home page.

The Nations Report Card

By: Natalie Filipic

From January 25 through March 5, 2010, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered the national assessments in civics, geography, and U.S. history at grades 4th, 8th, and 12th to 70,000 students in more than 1,600 public and private schools across the country.

Instead of reporting individual scores, NAEP combines all student responses to provide information on the performance of groups of students. NAEP reports overall results for the nation, the states, and for groups of students, such as males and females.

The Nations Report Card website is a great resource for parents, students and educators looking for more in depth information on the national assessments. Many questions are answered including “How was my child selected?” “Are children with disabilities included?” and “how does my state measure up?” You can even select a subject and test yourself using actual NAEP questions.

Adapted from: http://nationsreportcard.gov/
Micah’s Success

By: Robin Renshaw

When people go to college, they expect to enjoy all the aspects which college-life has to offer - not only the academic part, but the social side of it as well. There are several ways in which a student can participate socially in college such as: joining a social club, attending rallies, volunteering, or even living in the dormitory.

Micah Fialka-Feldman was looking for a rewarding college experience when he decided to attend Oakland University. Micah is a twenty-five year old with multiple impairments and has been attending classes at Oakland University since 2003. He also has been enrolled in the University’s OPTIONS program since the fall of 2007. OPTIONS is a three-year program which allows students to audit classes and participate in campus life in a non-degree track. In addition, he applied to live on-campus in a dormitory but was denied. The denial was based on the university’s policy of only allowing degree-seeking students to live in dormitories. Micah saw the decision by the university as unfair and began challenging it through the court system.

In November 2009, Micah sought a summary judgment and also filed a permanent judgment to be allowed to live on campus this semester. A hearing was held on December 17th. On December 23, 2009, at the Federal Court level, Micah was granted an injunction ordering the university to provide on-campus housing for him during his final semester at the University.

By challenging this decision made by the university, Micah was the teacher. He showed us how to be an advocate when implemented policies are unfair. The ruling that Micah received was a positive step in the right direction for persons with disabilities because it creates a pathway for others to seek equality. We are proud of you Micah!

Thank you Piero’s Italian Cuisine Restaurant

By: Stephanie Vrsnik

Nevada PEP would like to thank Piero’s Italian Cuisine Restaurant for helping Nevada PEP families. This year Piero’s Turkey Gobble helped over 80 of PEP’s families with a delicious Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. Some of our families are struggling this year a reflection of the economic downturn. Many families took the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful festive feast free of charge. Families commented that the atmosphere and service was outstanding, and it was a great to get dressed up and have a family dinner together. Piero’s has been opening their doors to Nevada PEP’s families for over 6 years. Adding to the aura of the feast were the many volunteers, community leaders and politicians. The list included Clark County Commissioner Steve Sisolak and Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman. We are so thankful and privileged to be included in their charitable giving for our families in the community.

Local Fraternity Wins National Award

By: Daniel Clark

The Theta Omicron chapter of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity at the University of Nevada, Reno worked diligently last year to help people with disabilities in the Reno community. This effort comes as part of a dedication to the causes put forth by Pi Kappa Phi’s national Philanthropy, Push America. Within the last year, the men of Pi Kappa Phi held fundraising and awareness events as well as volunteering their time for the Marvin Picollo School in Reno, Nevada. Their largest event held by the brothers was a 72 Hour Cycle-A-Thon paired with a pledge-drive inspired by the Special Olympics asking our peers to resolve not to use the r-word in conversation. These events came as part of what they called No Boundaries Week which encourages all members of our community to live their lives without boundaries. During that week collectively our members cycled on stationary bikes for a full 72 hours to mirror a similar event held nationally, the Journey of Hope, an approximate 3,000 mile trek across the United States stopping in cities to bring awareness to the abilities of people with disabilities. PiKapps at UNR were recognized nationally for their dedication to service earning the Innovators Award from our national organization for collecting pledges to change the conversation about people with disabilities and inspiring other chapters around that nation to adopt the same program. For more information check out www.nevadapikapp.com.
Students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private elementary and secondary schools may be eligible for Special Education and Related Services, such as speech and occupational therapy, among other services. A services plan describes specific services that the Local Education Agency (LEA) or nearest public school to the private setting will provide to the child. This plan is developed to meet the child’s unique educational needs. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the services plan must be developed, reviewed, and revised, according to the requirements in place for the IEP process. The services offered must be developed after a timely and meaningful consultation regarding the types of services, amounts of services, as well as the location at which these services will be provided. The local education agency located near the private school is responsible for consulting with private school representatives and the parents of the child whose needs are being considered. If your child is enrolled in a private school and you think he might benefit from a services plan, you can contact the public school nearest to the private setting your child is attending to obtain more information.

Diferentes Maneras de Monitorear El Progreso Educatiional De Su Hijo
Por: Angélica Ramírez

Hay diferentes maneras de saber si su hijo está progresando en la escuela. El progreso que su hijo está demostrando puede ser visto al:

- Establecer comunicación efectiva con los maestros para asegurar que haya cooperación entre el maestro y el padre de familia.
- Revisar el reporte de calificaciones de su hijo. Este reporte muestra las áreas de fortaleza del estudiante. El reporte también muestra las áreas que pueden ser más difíciles para su hijo.
- Atender a conferencias de padres y maestros. Estas conferencias ayudan al padre y a los maestros a hacer decisiones apropiadas sobre el programa educacional de su hijo.
- Observar si su hijo ha utilizado lo que han aprendido en la escuela en diferentes sitios en la comunidad o en la casa.
- Revisar las evaluaciones hechas por profesionales afuera de la escuela puede mostrar que tipo de progreso ha hecho el niño/a. Las evaluaciones pueden ser herramientas útiles para compartir con el maestro.
- Expresando cualquier pregunta o inquietud que usted tenga al maestro del niño.
- Para niños que tienen un IEP, los reportes de las metas anuales son otra manera de ver el progreso que ha hecho el niño, e identificar las áreas que el niño necesita practicar.

Estas son algunas de las estrategias que le ayudarán a monitorear el progreso educacional de su hijo durante el año escolar.

Adaptado de: Como Sabré si mi hijo está progresando y Conferencias de Padres Y Maestros del Centro PACER

I first heard about Nevada PEP through my mom who was coming to some of the trainings they offer. One day my mom suggested becoming a volunteer at Nevada PEP. At first I was not sure, but then I decided to start this new experience. Once I started, I worked on many projects and helped in the office. I really liked and enjoyed my volunteer experience. I learned good office skills that will help me later in life. During my experience at Nevada PEP, I felt much appreciated by all the staff members and the families they help. They were always happy to see me and they loved the help.

By: Angela Stansberry

YES
I'd love to help!

I'd love to help!

Volunteer Corner

The Advocate

What is a Services Plan?

By: Katherine Stansberry

I first heard about Nevada PEP through my mom who was coming to some of the trainings they offer. One day my mom suggested becoming a volunteer at Nevada PEP. At first I was not sure, but then I decided to start this new experience. Once I started, I worked on many projects and helped in the office. I really liked and enjoyed my volunteer experience. I learned good office skills that will help me later in life. During my experience at Nevada PEP, I felt much appreciated by all the staff members and the families they help. They were always happy to see me and they loved the help.

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Coming Soon….

THE FAMILY SUPPORT 360 CENTER

Nevada PEP recently received a five-year, $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The funds will be used to create a “360 Center” that will provide support and assistance to families of children with co-occurring developmental disabilities and behavioral health care needs. PEP will implement this program in partnership with the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities; Nevada Office of Disability; Nevada Division of Child and Family Services; Nevada Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services; the Nevada Disabilities Advocacy Law Center; Clark County School District; and Clark County Juvenile Justice Service. Through this partnership, PEP will develop a system that improves interagency collaborations, empowers families, and enhances access to community based, individualized and culturally appropriate services and supports to produce better outcomes for children. The Nevada PEP 360 Center will begin serving families in July, 2010. There will be more details on the 360 Center Project in the next issue.

Chairperson Sam Lieberman introduced Nevada’s newest Congresswoman, Dina Titus to disability advocates and families at the National Reception in January.

Family Story

By: Eve Whitehead
My family has been involved with both Nevada PEP and Challenger Little League Baseball for the past three years. My nine year old son with autism has been given the opportunity to experience being part of a team, sportsmanship, and having fun. I am very thankful to Nevada PEP for the many services that they provide for families of children with disabilities.

iPhone App for Special Education

By: Monica Zapata
IEP Checklist is a new iPhone application (app) that the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) developed. PEATC is the parent training and information center in the Commonwealth of Virginia that serves families of children with disabilities and professionals. This free app is a very useful and valuable tool available for parents, professionals, and others who are interested. The IEP checklist shows different categories related to the Individualized Educational Program (IEP), and it provides references to the federal regulations associated with these categories. In addition, this app also gives you the opportunity to write and save notes relevant to the IEP process. These and other apps related to special education are tools that educate, encourage, and empower children and families to become the best advocates. If you would like more information about this app, please visit www.peatc.org or www.apple.com.
In 2008, a sample of 25 schools selected to participate in a national study called “Higher Education and Disability: Education Needs a Coordinated Approach to Improve Its Assistance to Schools in Supporting Students.” The purpose was to collect data on postsecondary education. As a result of a substantial increase in the number of students with disabilities pursuing postsecondary education, the focus of this study was to determine the demographics of students accessing postsecondary education, how schools are supporting them, and what challenges schools face.

The study accomplished two objectives: 1) identifying different trends regarding student with disabilities pursuing postsecondary education; and 2) recognized several challenges that schools face in supporting students with disabilities.

To overcome these challenges, the study recognized a great demand for information to flow from secondary schools to postsecondary schools. It was recommended, accepted, and agreed to that there should be a mechanism in place linking the 3 offices together which are responsible for education policy regarding students with disabilities – Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE). The intent of this collaboration would be to facilitate sharing of information between offices to improve services.

By going to http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1033.pdf, students with disabilities who want to go to college and who are concerned about what kind of services they will receive can learn about what schools have been doing in the past to provide accommodations. Highlighted in the report was a particular school that helps students with learning disabilities transition to meet college-level reading and writing requirements. The report identifies examples of colleges providing services yet it also emphasizes that there are still improvements to be made, especially for those who have intellectual disabilities.

Did you know that every ninth grade student enrolled in a Nevada school is required to have a 4-year academic plan? The 2007 legislature created a Nevada Revised Statute (388.205) regulation that affects all students in high school. The school counselor works with the student and his parent/guardian to develop specific educational goals that the student intends to achieve prior to graduation from high school. The academic plan should become a guide to plan, monitor and manage the student’s educational and occupational development. This academic plan is to be reviewed with the counselor and signed by the student and parent at least once each school year and should be revised as necessary. It is an opportunity for the parents, student, and the school to share information about the plan to graduate from high school. If a student enters a Nevada high school after the ninth grade, a plan must be created to be appropriate to the grade level of the student.

The 4-year academic plan is not a replacement of the required transition pieces of an IEP. If the goals in the academic plan are not reached, it is not intended to keep a student from receiving a high school diploma. As long as students have met all the requirements for a high school diploma and are eligible to graduate, they should receive their diploma even if they did not achieve all the goals established in their 4-year academic plan.

If you do not have a copy of your child’s 4 year academic plan, contact your child’s high school counselor for more information.

By: Kathy Treants
Self-determination becomes important to students with disabilities as they transition out of high school. Whether students are pursuing postsecondary education, employment or being an active community member, self-determination skills will play a role in their success. If self-determination is introduced early and the skills learned are applied, the student will more likely make a successful transition to life as an adult.

At each of the transition trainings provided through Nevada PEP we review seven components of self-determination.

**Self-Awareness**
Helping individuals to know themselves; what do they like, dislike; what are they good at and what do they find challenging.

**Self-Advocacy**
Learned ability to have a say in one’s life; learning to ask questions; learning to express one’s choices. Self-advocacy is a part of the People First movement. The foundation of this belief is “Nothing about me without me”.

**Self-Confidence**
Being comfortable with who you are; believing in yourself; understanding that everyone experiences insecurities at sometime. It takes time to learn to be confident.

**Self-Informed**
This is especially important for individuals with disabilities as they leave high school and begin to access adult services, continue their education, and/or pursue areas of employment or volunteer services. Individuals need to be knowledgeable about their disabilities and the challenges that the disabilities present to have a better idea of which accommodations assist them in their learning process. Understanding the impact of having a disability will also help a student to determine when or if to disclose that they have a disability and to whom.

**Independence**
We hope that students will know when to ask for help and who would be the best person to ask. This is when we should be cautioning students about signing agreements or documents before asking someone to help review them.

**Self-Evaluation and Adjustment Skills**
In the adult world, mistakes are bound to happen. Youth with disabilities need to be prepared to accept that they may need to make some changes in order to be successful.

For more information on self-determination consider attending one of the Nevada PEP transition trainings. A new, updated version of the “Where Am I Going? How Will I Get There?” guide will be available in the spring.
Welcome to our newest edition of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program! This program honors and recognizes the extraordinary people who have made a difference in our lives and in the lives of our children with special needs. We have wonderful and truly devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children. So sit back and enjoy these heartfelt stories!

Mateen Barekzai
Mr. Mateen Barekzai, of United Studios of Self Defense, has helped make that a place where every child has an IEP. He has taken challenged students that other places of learning couldn’t, or wouldn’t. With firm caring hands, elbows and feet, he embraces their challenges and guides them to success. Karate’s 360 degree movement addresses a whole host of issues for the out-of-sync child. Don’t know if Mateen has read any books on the autism spectrum, but he could write one...

Trina Boring
Rose Warren Elementary
Trina has worked with very hard with my son. She puts 100 percent in every day and has shown him so much love, God Bless Trina for all she does. Thank You Trina!!!!

Melanie Altman
Mother

Rachel Brown
Speech Therapist
My son and I owe our lives to one incredible woman, Rachel Brown. About 2 years ago we lived on the East Coast, living in an emotionally unhealthy situation. Rachel and her husband Todd heard about our situation and took it upon themselves to help us out. They invested hundreds of dollars and countless prayers to help us come to Nevada to start a new life.

She directed me to the resources that my son & I needed to start living a healthy life. Rachel gave me encouragement and helped me realize that this was our new home and that I no longer had to be afraid. Now we are living a changed life, a happier, healthier life.

Our family is not the only family that Rachel, a Speech Therapist, has changed. I have witnessed children who come to see her go from not being able to talk to being able to communicate.

When Rachel was close to death last year, some of her “kids” (as she calls her clients) decided they would rather go without speech therapy for a few months rather than leave her practice. One of the parents told me that, because of her, their son feels more confident and self assured. Rachel is considered a member of their family. She is a member of my family too. Rachel Brown is my sister and I am nominating her for the Hand in Hand award because she changes the lives of children every day.

Scott & Ariel Linker
Parents

Janet Citron
Special Ed Teacher
When we were trying to get an IEP for our daughter, the best friend we had, even before we met her, was Special Education Teacher, Janet Cintron, at Piggott Elementary. When I expressed the frustrations for our daughter, I saw the same tears fill her eyes. Her knowledge, care and professionalism made such a difference between the problems before our IEP and the solutions after. All the love and care in the world isn’t enough without the kind of help Janet Citron gave us.

Scott & Ariel Linker
Parents
Elizabeth Castro  
Aunt

The most significant thing for me is that ever since my daughter was born, my sister in law, Elizabeth Castro has supported me financially and morally by providing good advice. In times of emergency, she provided her assistance unconditionally. For that reason and much more, my family and I would like to thank her for all of her support.

Lo más importante para mi es que desde que América nació, mi cuñada Elizabeth Castro me ha apoyado económica y moralmente con buenos consejos. En el momento de emergencias, no ha reparado en gastos. Por eso y muchas cosas más, le doy las gracias y mi familia también.

Leticia Nava  
Mother

Kimberly Fincher  
Nevada PEP

Kimberly spent her Saturday with a group of parents needing information for their children. She was very informative and knows the importance of educating families. Her IEP clinic gave me a wealth of information and her dedication to helping others truly shows.

Angela Dryden  
Parent

Mark Kenny  
School Psychologist, Piggott Elementary

Mark Kenny, School Psychologist at Piggott Elementary, might not have guessed I’d be writing this. We had several meetings before our daughter even started and many more after the school year had begun. He thought a 504 plan was more appropriate. We, parents, teachers from before and our daughter’s O.T., felt we needed more. It’s even more powerful to have someone who doesn’t completely agree with your assessment help you anyway. He has continued to illuminate the path ahead of us. His dedication to our most precious gifts, the ones that come with the complicated operation instructions, is to be loudly applauded.

Scott Linker  
Parent

Ms. Carolyn Lewis  
Special Ed Teacher

Getting started with our IEP we briefly met Ms. Carolyn Lewis, Special Ed Teacher at Piggott Elementary. Just one look and you could see all the love, warmth and humanity in her eyes. I’ve never made a quicker or better judgment.

She explained last year that she’d be working with us this year and next. She has already been a big help with our daughter and us. Her face is the very picture of why a parent would gratefully trust the teaching of their most precious gift.

Scott & Ariel Linker  
Parents

Connie Lustig, RN  
Canyon Springs High School

Connie era la enfermera de la escuela Arturo Camberio. Cuando mi hijo empezó con la diabetes, tuvimos la dicha de conocer a Connie. Ella nos buscó toda la información que necesitábamos para que mi hijo estuviera mejor atendido. Su inteligencia siempre me sorprendió. La semana pasada me la encontré después de tres años que no la veía. Hoy es maestra y como siempre, ella es muy atenta. Le estoy muy agradecida, ya que es muy difícil encontrar personas que tienden la mano y tienen todo el tiempo necesario para uno. Ella es una persona muy especial en nuestras vidas y nuestra familia. Gracias.

Connie was the nurse for the school, Arturo Camberio. When my son started having diabetes, we had the pleasure of meeting Connie. She helped us find all of the information that we would need so that my son would be better assisted. Her intelligence always impressed me. Last week, I spoke with her again. It had been three years since I had seen her. Now, she became a teacher and as always, she is very attentive. I am very grateful to know her, since it is very difficult to find people that lend a helping hand and provide all of the time necessary to meet our needs. She is a very special person in our lives and to our family. Thank you.

Graciela Castrejon  
Mother/Madre

Katie Navrides  
Teacher

Miss Katie was open to my son’s difficulties and abilities from the very beginning. She was willing to listen to suggestions of things that have worked in the past. She also had new ideas. Miss Katie has always been available for questions. She cares very much about my son and his progress. She has made my son feel confident and comfortable at school. He really enjoys being a part of her class. She has also made me feel like a very important part of his education “team.”

Jolene Stever  
Parent

Carla Santana  
Teacher’s Aide

Miss Carla has been my son’s teacher’s aide for the last 2 years. She has been a necessary part of his success in school. She has helped him feel more confident in the classroom. She was an integral part of his transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten. She truly cares about my son. She has had a large impact on his ability to feel comfortable so he can learn.

Jolene Stever  
Mother
PEP Staff Anniversaries

Nevada PEP has a wonderful team. Their dedication and longevity to Nevada PEP is truly admired and recognized. The following staff members have made their anniversaries in the past months: Stephanie Vrsnik-9 years, Cynthia Escamilla-4 years, Lynne Windle-2 years, Kimberly Fincher-1 year, Tamara Grubaugh-1 year.

Nevada PEP Volunteers

I take great pleasure in recognizing Nevada PEP’s volunteers of 2009 for a Hand in Hand award. This past year our volunteer center was graced with some of the most extraordinary people I have ever met. We had record number of hours in volunteerism. Individuals with a genuine love for giving continue to return each and every week even into the New Year. There was outstanding help on every possible level. Scores of volunteers gave their time and energy at PEP events. They did everything from maintaining resource tables at back to school fairs and other community events to helping with mailings. I am humbled by the growing interest of the caring people in this community who lend a hand for our great organization. I want to express my deep gratitude to every one of our volunteers. Because of you the PEP family is stronger and more capable of strengthening the many families which we serve.

Nevada PEP

Sarah Zita
Zita Group

Nevada PEP would like to recognize Sarah Zita for our prestigious Hand in Hand award. Sarah has spent countless hours designing our newsletters. Her tireless dedication has given our PEP POST and CFC Communiqué newsletters their very own “PEPPY” look. Thank you Sarah for all of your expertise and creativity. Your hard work is truly appreciated by all of us. You are awesome!

Nevada PEP

Chefs for Kids Brightens the Holiday Season

By: Stephanie Vrsnik

Thank you Chefs for Kids for making the holiday season so special for seven of our families. Chefs for Kids is a non-profit program that educates Clark County schools about nutrition. Chef, Christopher Johns, the chairman of Chefs for Kids, delivered the gifts to our office. This is the 5th consecutive year that Chefs for Kids has helped our families. When families received their gifts, they were so happy and very appreciative for the generosity. Some of the comments were: “Thank you so much. We don’t have any gifts this year” or “Wait till they see their gift. We are so happy.” We truly appreciate the partnership with Chefs for Kids. We know that some families had a brighter holiday because of the kindness of Chefs for Kids.

Chefs For Kids
Hand in Hand Sponsors

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Bernice Linker
Scott & Ariel Linker
Harry & Patty Merrifield
Walmart #2106
William Filipic

You make a life by what you give.
— Winston Churchill

Hand in Hand Sponsors
Thank you to all of our amazing Hand in Hand Sponsors for their generous support. Their contribution continues to make it possible to honor and recognize the extraordinary people who support Nevada’s children and families. For more information on becoming a Hand in Hand sponsor contact Nevada PEP or go to www.nvpep.org

“’
No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.
— Calvin Coolidge
The “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program recognizes those individuals who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. Nevada PEP would like to help you give recognition to a special person for their outstanding efforts. You may nominate a teacher, professional, therapist, family member or someone whose efforts have had a positive impact on a child’s life. All nominees will be honored with a uniquely designed lapel pin and a certificate of recognition. Their “story” will be featured in our quarterly newsletter, as well as appear in Nevada PEP’s Annual “Hand in Hand” Yearbook. Please limit your entries to ONE nominee per form and no more than three nominations a year, per family. Please limit each story to one hundred words or less.

Your Name: _________________________________________________________
Your Address: ________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code: _________________________________________________
Your Phone, Email, Fax (optional) ______________________________________

Your permission to use your name and print your story: □ yes □ no

Name of Honoree: ____________________________________________________
Honoree’s Address: ___________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code: _________________________________________________
Honoree’s Phone Number: ____________________________________________

Please write your story about this special person here:

2101 South Jones Blvd Suite 120, Las Vegas, NV 89146
Fax: (702) 388-2966 / Email: pepinfo@nvpep.org
Mission Statement
To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

Annual Membership Information
Annual membership dues are $25.00 per family, organization or professional.

Please provide the following information

NAME

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

PHONE email

CHILD’S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

☐ I am a parent/caregiver.

☐ I am a professional working with children.

☐ I am a concerned member of the community.

☐ Enclosed is a tax deductible donation in the amount of $_____________ to help support the efforts of Nevada PEP.

☐ I would like to be a member of Nevada PEP, please waive the annual dues.

☐ I would like to volunteer.

☐ I would like to receive E-POST updates.

Nevada PEP, Inc. is an independent non-profit tax exempt organization. #88-0301113

Please make checks payable to: Nevada PEP

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• Hand in Hand - Together We Can Stories

“If I could reach up and hold a star for every time you have made me smile, the entire evening sky would be in the palm of my hand.”

~ Anonymous

Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:

United Way of So. Nevada
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VISIT US ONLINE AT www.nvpep.org