



April, May, & June 2023

Newsletter

Hello, Spring

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Families Helping Families of Northeast Louisiana, Inc. is a family-directed resource center whose mission is to provide information, referrals, and peer to peer support to individuals with disabilities and their families.

Board of Directors:

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Funding Acknowledgements:



These agencies provide the core funding to support programs and services provided by the network of Families Helping Families resource centers across the state of Louisiana. These agencies also work hand-in-hand with FHF Centers to support various collaborative initiatives, as they too believe that families are a vital component in the array of services provided to individuals with disabilities.

Who We Are:

Families Helping Families is one of the lead resource centers serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in Northeast Louisiana. Eligible disabilities include physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities.

Caring for individuals who have disabilities takes a wealth of support, knowledge, and information. The Families Helping Families Center is uniquely committed to empowering individuals who have a disability. Each staff member at Families Helping Families is personally connected to the disabled community.

Families Helping Families utilizes a parent-driven, coordinated network of services to assist families in achieving the ultimate goal of full inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

Families Helping Families has successfully assisted thousands of families in connecting them to services, understanding their rights and responsibilities which allow individuals to live, work, and play in our communities.

WHAT WE DO...

Information and Referral

- We provide information about developmental disabilities and direct you to the resources you need for services or additional information.
- We also have an extensive lending library with topics ranging from education to health issues. This library is available to you, your child's educators, and health professionals.

Education and Training

- Workshops are coordinated and presented on topics relevant to the issues facing persons with disabilities and their families. Call our office or visit our website today for topics, times and locations.

Family to Family Support

- We will link families with similar experiences who can provide emotional support, specific information, and guidance.
- Our Family to Family Support program can help families navigate through difficult times and also share the joys of our children's ABILITIES.





LINCOLN PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANNOUNCES ITS NEWEST PROGRAM "THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM"

The Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office has announced its newest program "The Special Needs Program." Residents can visit the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office starting on March 27, 2023, to obtain up to 3 stickers for each of their vehicles that will help First Responders better serve the public.

First Responders will be able to quickly identify that there might be a person with Autism, Down syndrome, dementia, deafness, PTSD, etc. in the home or car in the case of an accident or encounter and can react accordingly.

This is a free service provided to the citizens of Lincoln Parish. To get your sticker, stop by the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office and fill out the form. For more information, you can contact 318-251-6440 or iwinston@lpsheriff.org.



www.lacanadvocates.org

Join LaCAN and learn how to be an effective advocate for policies and systems that support inclusion everywhere people learn, work, live, and play.

Become a Member. As a member you can participate in various advocacy activities throughout the year.



**ACTION ALERTS
YELLOW SHIRT DAYS
LEGISLATIVE VISITS**



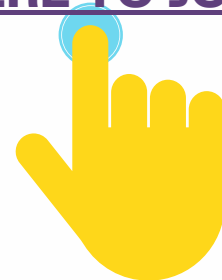
Connect with your Regional Advocacy Leader. Get information, assistance, and training from a leader who will link you with your policymakers and support your advocacy efforts.



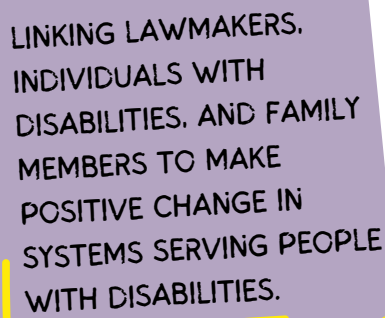
REGION 8 LEADER
Serving Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll Parishes

KONSTANCE CAUSEY

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN NOW..](#)



GET INVOLVED!



LINKING LAWMAKERS,
INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES, AND FAMILY
MEMBERS TO MAKE
POSITIVE CHANGE IN
SYSTEMS SERVING PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES.

What to Do When You Get an Action Alert?

Action Alerts **provide information on proposed changes to policy** that may affect individuals with developmental disabilities and the services they receive. They tell you what specific action you can take to advocate regarding these changes. Included in each alert is detailed information on which legislators to contact and deadlines to take action.

Alerts MAY BE FREQUENT on certain agenda items as they navigate the legislative process through varying committees in the House & Senate.

You can take action by **sending e-mails or letters** with a specific message to your legislators or other policymakers.

"Whether you're a person with a disability, a parent or family member of someone with a disability, a professional supporting people with disabilities, or just your average citizen....everyone can be an **ADVOCATE**."

It only takes a couple of minutes to respond to Action Alerts and legislators indicate these contacts provide insight into how the laws they create impact people with developmental disabilities and their families. **Legislators NEED TO HEAR from you** to know that their constituents are concerned about these issues.

BE SURE to send a confirmation to your LaCAN leader, Konstance Causey, and let her know you have taken action. Call (888) 300-1320 or email kcausey@lacanadvocates.org

Share with **FRIENDS & FAMILY**. Get others involved in advocacy.

Communicating with Your Legislator

Need help finding out who are your legislators?
Visit: <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/findmylegislators.aspx>



WRITING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Letter writing, both physical mail and e-mail, enables you to directly express your position on an issue to your Senators or Representative. A quick and factual message will demonstrate to your legislators and their staff that you are a well-informed constituent who means business. Thank you notes are also a great way to keep your issue at top-of-mind.

CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Be professional. Identify yourself as a constituent (not to mention a voter). Legislators are concerned with multiple issues. A quick and factual call not only saves time but is easily absorbed and remembered by legislators and their staff. And remember, always say thank you.



SCHEDULE A MEETING

Meeting with your legislator or staffers in the legislator's district or at the Capitol in Baton Rouge is an excellent way to voice your position. An in-person visit will give you a chance to look them in the eye and voice your concerns on the issue. Providing fact sheets or handouts is a great way to explain your stance on the issue.



USE WHICHEVER MEDIUM IS MOST COMFORTABLE AND CONVENIENT FOR YOU. WHETHER YOU VISIT IN-PERSON, CALL OR WRITE, BE SURE TO ALWAYS GIVE YOUR LEGISLATOR YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER, SO THEY KNOW YOU ARE ONE OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS (IT MAKES YOU A BIG DEAL IN THEIR EYES).

Special Education Services



Do you have any questions about the...

- ✓ The special education process?
- ✓ Special education policies and procedures?
- ✓ Resolving disputes?
- ✓ Modifications & Accommodations for students with IEPs?

At the end of the day,
the most overwhelming
key to a child's success
is the positive
involvement of parents.
-Jane Hull

Families Helping Families is here to support and empower parents to become effective advocates for their children receiving special education services. For questions, concerns, or just more information about the IEP process, or other special education topics, please call us today!

Available Services:

- One-on One support and consultation
- In-person and Virtual Workshops
- Technical Assistance
- Resource Library

Have Questions? Get Assistance at:

edspecialistregion8@fhfnela.org
Ph: 318.361.0487
Fax: 318.361.0236

Quick Tips & Tricks for Getting Effective IEPs

- Knowledge is power. ...
- Prepare for the IEP meeting. ...
- Request any evaluations the school gave your child. ...
- Carefully review the IEP. ...
- Create a paper trail. ...
- Use expertise from other professionals. ...
- Tape record meetings. ...
- Make sure your child's teachers have a copy of the IEP.




MEDICAID MEMBERS

Don't risk losing your health coverage.

Keep your contact information up to date, including your address, phone number, cell phone number and email. Choose the way that is easiest for you:

Online at  mymedicaid.la.gov

By email  mymedicaid@la.gov

By calling  Louisiana Medicaid
toll-free at 1-888-342-6207,
or by calling your health plan

(your plan's number is on your insurance card)

Don't miss important updates about your health insurance. If you do get a letter in the mail, follow the instructions and respond to Medicaid.



www.healthy.la.gov



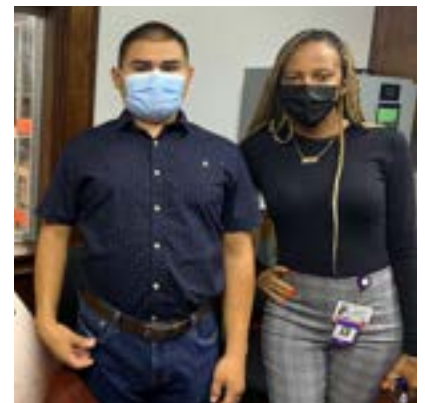


Be a part of the work-readiness **success story** for high school students with disabilities!

Become a **PAY Check** Host

About PAY Check Hosts and Employers

Help young adults with disabilities develop work skills and gain employment experience by joining the PAY Check program as an Employer Partner.



EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES:

- 01 Worksite Visits**
Help participants understand how your business runs.
1-2 hour visits with 2-3 participants at a time.
- 02 Job Shadowing**
Allow participants to shadow your employees on a typical work day. *Participants accompanied by PAY Check Transition Specialist.*
4 hour visit with 1 participant at a time.
- 03 Paid Internship**
Hire a participant for an internship.
20-25 hours/week up to 10 weeks or 240 hours.
- 04 Job Placement**
Hire a participant as an employee!
Part or full time.

Employer Perks

- Wages paid to interns are **fully reimbursed**.
- PAY Check **Transition Specialists** are on-site for one-on-one assistance as needed.
- PAY Check partnership has the potential to provide your business with **fully trained, long-term employees**.
- Form a lasting **community partnership** to demonstrate your commitment to an **inclusive** and **diverse workforce**.

Learn more on the next page!





About PAY Check

Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth

PAY Check seeks employers in the New Orleans Metro Area to host high school students for a 10-week internship.



Host an intern and be a part of the work readiness success story for high school students with disabilities!

PAY Check is an innovative collaboration between

Delgado Community College

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

Public School Systems

Employers in the New Orleans Metro Area

Previous PAY Check employers include:

- University Medical Center
- Maaco Autobody
- Gambino's Bakery
- Andrea's Restaurant
- And more!

Wage Reimbursement

PAY Check interns are paid a wage with employers receiving wage reimbursement for 240 hours over ten weeks.



Wage reimbursement is **equal to the student's salary** + 9.33% for social security, Medicare, and unemployment taxes.

PAY Check Student Criteria



- Aged 18-22 years
- Enrolled in high school
- Enrolled with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)

PAY Check Skills Trainers provide on-site training to help student interns improve job skills while meeting the expectations and standards of the host business.

PAY Check Staff

Carmel Polk, MRC, CRC, CESP
Transition Specialist

Brenna Nopenz, BFA
Transition Specialist

Sue Killam, M. Ed., CWIC, CESP
Project Director



2023 GUMBO Delta Games

The 2023 GUMBO Delta Games include track & field competition for youth and adults, including veterans, with physical, visual, hearing or intellectual impairments.



(Examples: amputee, cerebral palsy, stroke, traumatic brain injury, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, arthrogryposis, dwarf, blind, visual, hearing intellectual impairment, etc.)



GUMBO Delta
Games Saturday,
April 29, 2023

700 University Ave.
ULM-Brown Stadium
Monroe, LA 71209



Racing Events: 20m, 60m, 60m weave, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m
Field Events: discus, shot put, javelin, long jump

For more information contact: Pam Carey 1-800-259-7200 or 318-452-7771 or

carey33452@aol.com

La. GUMBO Inc. [LOUISIANA GUMBO \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com)

In Remembrance of Ms. Betty Brown



Families Helping Families of NELA is deeply saddened to announce the passing of longtime Board Member, Ms. Betty Brown who served our organization faithfully for 12 years. She was an illustrious light and made great contributions in service to our community. We wish to extend our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and loved ones on this tremendous loss.



Newk's 2023 Summer Camp Guide

Welcome to the Newk's 2023 Summer Camp Guide. Summer camp can be beneficial for all children by keeping them moving through playtime activities, encouraging critical thinking and decision-making skills as they become more independent, how to work as a team, and make new friends.

[Read More](#)

2023 Summer Fun Digital Magazine



[Summer Digital Magazine](#)



Summer Camps

MedCamps of Louisiana holds a series of one-week, fun-filled camps each summer free of charge for children in Louisiana facing the challenges of a variety of physical and mental disabilities. These include spina bifida and orthopedic conditions, cerebral palsy, asthma, sickle cell anemia, autism, epilepsy, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment and those developmentally disabled.

Children battling these disorders are often unable to participate in normal childhood activities. Consequently, they are often "left out" because they have special needs. With MedCamps that is no longer the case. Every week during the summer a different camp is held. Each camp is designed specifically for a particular type of disability – and that includes appropriate health professionals, specially trained staff and tailored activities. (Prior to camp, each parent or guardian is responsible for providing the camp office with the details of the camper's medical management program as prescribed by the camper's physician.) The focus is on what campers can do, and all campers are encouraged to reach their full potential. In the safe environment of MedCamps, surrounded by other children with similar challenges, these special campers discover they are not alone and gain a genuine sense of belonging, accomplishment and self-worth.

[Click here for Summer Camps List](#)

UNDERSTANDING SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST

- What is a trust?
- How does a special needs trust operate to protect families?
- Who can establish these trusts?
- Methods by which the trust can be established.

Guest Speaker
Addison Goff
Estate Planning Attorney

Registration Link:
<https://tinyurl.com/dpcayvhe>



For questions or more information, please call 318.361.0487 or email edspecialistregion8@fhfnela.org.



Presented by
Families Helping Families
Region's 7 & 8

Friday
MAY 19th

11:00am - 12:00pm

FHF of Region 7
318-226-4541 or 1-877-226-4541
www.fhfregion7.com

FHF NE Louisiana
318-361-0487 or 1-888-300-1320
www.fhfnela.org



GUEST SPEAKER:
OTIS MARSHALL
LOUISIANA
REHABILITATION
SERVICES

**WEDNESDAY
MAY 10TH**

12:00PM - 1:30PM



**VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION:**

**WHAT SERVICES
ARE
AVAILABLE?**



Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/3zm3ap86>

Presented by Families Helping Families of NE LA,
for more info please call 318-361-0487



FHF NE Louisiana
318-361-0487 or 1-888-300-1320
www.fhfnela.org



Have you registered yet?
Have you created a team yet?
We are still looking for sponsors if
you know of someone, send them
our way!

Online Registration is now open for our 9th Annual Superheroes For Autism 5K! We are planning to be back in person this year on May 6th! We have made some changes so make sure you read all the event info on Eventbrite! Spread the word and let's make this the best year yet for our superheroes!

[Register Here!](#)



6th Annual

TOUCH-A-TRUCK



Presented By

Families Helping Families Of NELA

**SAVE THE
DATE**



**Saturday,
October 21, 2023**

**Touch-A-Truck
&
Trick or Treat
RETURNS**

Come Explore & Climb on a variety of firetrucks, police cars, construction trucks and big rigs!

Wear your Halloween costume & *Trick or Treat* at each vehicle!

If you have a truck or piece of equipment and would like to participate or if you need additional information regarding the event, please call Families Helping Families, 318.361.0487 or email sguidry@fhfnela.org.

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, October 21, 2023



NEDHSA is the single point of entry into the developmental disabilities system and oversees public and private residential services and additional services for those who have a developmental disability.

Services Offered:

- Flexible Family Fund
- ICF/DD Residential Services
- Individual and Family Support
- Support Coordination
- Supported Living
- Transition Services
- Vocational and Rehabilitative Services



The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council was founded in 1970 as a result of the passage of the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The Louisiana Council was established in 1971. Councils were created to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities and contribute to a coordinated, consumer- and family-centered, and consumer- and family-directed comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, productive, and integrated and included in all facets of community life.

Bureau of Family Health

BFH works to ensure that Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) in Louisiana have access to services are designed to minimize their disabilities and maximize their ability to live as independently as possible.

Children and youth who have special health care needs either have or are at increased risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions. They require services beyond what other children require.

FHF Community Resource Specialists are available to help families connect to resources and services that can help them. They have the knowledge and skills to work families of children with special health care needs. Community Resource Specialists can help you and your child by providing:

- Tips for accessing services
- Peer and emotional support
- Referrals to medical and support services
- Connections to other parents with children and youth with special health care needs



“We are family members ourselves, with first hand knowledge of raising a child or youth with special health care needs.”

The Louisiana Family-to-Family Health Information Center Provides:

- Assistance to families and professionals in navigating health care systems
- Finding resources
- Peer to peer support
- Information, education, training, support and referral services to families with children and youth with special health care needs



In partnership with the LDOE, Families Helping Families Education Specialists provide support to school districts and families with children in Special Education in Region 8.

These parishes include: Morehouse, Lincoln, Union, Madison, West Carroll, East Carroll, Tensas, Jackson, Caldwell, LaSalle, Concordia, Catahoula, City of Monroe, Richland, Franklin, Ouachita.



LaCAN provides information and support to individuals wishing to effectively advocate for systems change in the areas of home and community-based services, education, and employment.

LaCAN advocates for service systems that support children and adults with disabilities to live in their own homes and be fully-included and participating members of their local schools and communities.

TRAINING AVAILABLE!

Does your agency or business service families that have children or adults with disabilities?

Contact us today for an informational presentation for your staff on current programs and services to help you better serve your clients.

Call 318-361-0487.

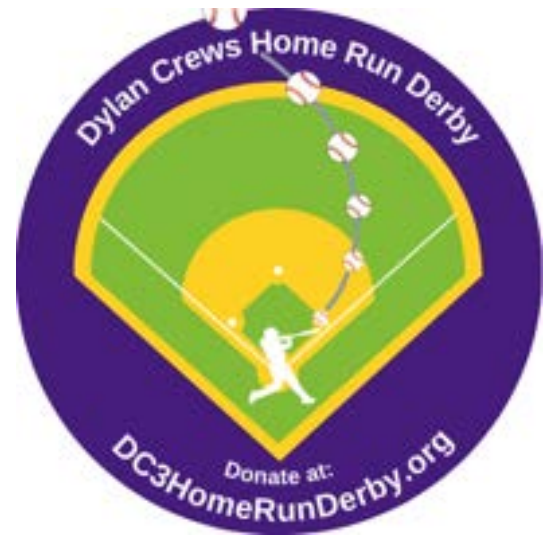


HAVE NEWS, EVENTS, OR AN UPDATE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INCLUDED IN OUR NEXT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER?

SEND AN EMAIL INQUIRY TODAY TO INFO@FHFNELA.ORG.

#3 Dylan Crews Challenges You to Donate to Families Helping Families

Dylan Crews, Outfielder for LSU Baseball, joined forces with the Network of Families Helping Families Centers to Support Kids with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs. For every home run he hits during the 2023 season, he will personally donate \$100 to Families Helping Families. For every home run his teammates hit during the 2023 season, his family will personally donate \$100 to Families Helping Families.



Number 3 led the LSU Tigers with 22 of the 114 Home runs in the 2022 season and hopes to continue his hitting streak into the 2023 season. This junior from Longwood, Florida, has stolen the hearts of many families of children with disabilities or special health care needs by inviting and giving them tickets to LSU baseball games. For some families, it's the first time they have ever attended a game in Alex Box Stadium.

Dylan and his family hope YOU will join in on the Home Run Derby fun by donating any amount every time Dylan or one of the LSU Tigers hits a home run.

You can choose to Pledge and Pay Later or Donate Now.

Pledge and Pay Later: This option allows you to pledge a specific dollar amount per home run hit for a specific number of games, and then we will bill you for your tax-deductible donation.

Donate Now: This allows you to make one or more online donations at any time.



You can do either of the above options and learn more by visiting dc3homerunderby.org.

Hurricane Season Tips:

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



BE INFORMED

Be ready for hurricane season. Today you can determine your personal hurricane risk, find out if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone, and review/update insurance policies. You can also make a list of items to replenish hurricane emergency supplies and start thinking about how you will prepare your home for the coming hurricane season. If you live in hurricane-prone areas, you are encouraged to complete these simple preparations before hurricane season begins on June 1.

[Click Here For More Information](#)



Upcoming Holidays

Cinco De Mayo - May 5, 2023

Mother's Day - May 14, 2023

Memorial Day - May 29, 2023

FHF Office Closed

Fathers' Day - June 18, 2023



[Earth Day Craft Ideas](#)



[Mother Day Craft Ideas](#)



[Father Day Craft Ideas](#)

*A Message In Honor of Our Heroes:
On this day, we express our
gratitude and remember with honor
and pride all those fallen soldiers to
whom we owe a debt we could never
repay.*

