

Jennifer Carroll  
CT Family Support Network  
1074 Main Street  
South Glastonbury, CT 06073

Dear Ms. Carroll,

As you know from our exchanges, we are Trinity College students working on a community engagement project in our Child Development class. The main reason we have sought out your assistance is because our specific interest is in helping parents facilitate the care of their autistic children, their typical children, and themselves. One of the most important things we have learned that parents need is a comprehensive single outreach organization, which provides easy access to a wide scope of basic information they can use. We thought it most appropriate to submit our proposal to the Connecticut Family Support Network, as it is an already-established statewide organization that is set up to facilitate such an undertaking.

Our proposal is to standardize the types of resources offered in every support group across Connecticut. This would include a more organized source of names of support teams, references, and other reading materials for each group. In order to create this format, there needs to be an agreement about its essential components. We have extensively researched the needs of parents and families affected by an autistic child from many perspectives; we talked with community members in many fields as well as read relevant literature regarding needs of families with autistic children. People often underestimate the effect this disorder can have on the lives of people surrounding the child, especially the caregivers. The most poignant research we read showed how the success of the child is directly depended on the mental and physical wellbeing of his or her caregivers.

We understand and respect the uniqueness of each support group, and are in no suggesting that any of them change the format or organization of their groups. Rather, we want to help each group be as effective as possible, and in turn help each affected family function to the their highest and happiest ability.

Based on our research, we have identified six specific areas of interest that seem to be essential to a family's success. While we are sure there are other resources that would be helpful to parents, our research suggests 6 critical categories for information that should be included in support groups throughout Connecticut, which are described on the attached sheet. In addition to these categories, we created a model for one organization in West Hartford. We hope that the following proposal will benefit the families in Connecticut that are affected by Autism.

For more information or if you have any questions about the proposal please feel free to contact us.

Lydia Turner  
Trinity College Box # 700630  
300 Summit Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 297-2636

Kelly Mearns  
Trinity College Box # 701302  
300 Summit Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 297- 3445

## **Six Categories of Information for Parent Support Groups**

The following categories are those that we have determined to be necessary for families affected by Autism. The information that each support group will provide will vary depending on its location. The emphasis of our proposal is to create a single comprehensive source for parents and families in a certain area. Each category in our proposal is equally important to the successful treatment and care of an autistic child and his or her family.

### **Clinical**

This category would be comprised of reference and connections to physicians, psychologist, psychiatrists, and other clinicians that have some sort of expertise or experience regarding autism; this includes the care of the child, parents, and siblings.

### **Financial and Legal**

This information would provide references to professionals and organizations that are familiar with insurance forms, loans, national health care, and legal counsel. Also, connections and references to advocacy agencies as well as legal and legislative committees that are active in their area would be provided.

### **Education**

This information would include schools, homes, and assisted living facilities in the area, as well as programs outside of their direct region. Each child is different, and the needs of an autistic child vary greatly. Connections and assistance in facilitating entry into other schools and programs would be provided. This would help parents decide where and how they need to care for their child.

### **Respite**

Caring for a child with autism is a full time job that can incur ongoing stress for parents, siblings, or other caregivers. Respite care is identified as a basic need for families affected by autism. Respite care provides a short-term break for family members to alleviate stress of the daily routine. Information regarding access and assistance in finding respite care in their area would be provided.

### **Young Adult Transitions**

Autism is a lifelong disability, and what your child will do when they get out of high school is important for parents to consider. There is no state agency for teens with autism that provides training and support in a work setting. This category seeks to help parents network and find resources in their own communities that will facilitate this step in their child's life.

### **New Treatment Information**

This is information that would update parents on the newest and most effective modes of treatment/care/teaching that available or being researched.

## **Model of Standardized Basic Information Offered in Support Groups Across Connecticut: West Hartford, CT**

This is a model we have created for specifically what kinds of information each support group should offer. Our model applies to families in West Hartford and the surrounding areas.

### **Clinical**

1. **Dr. Robert Sahl** – Psychiatrist, Hartford, CT. Institute of Living
2. **Dr. Lisa Namerow** – Psychiatrist, Hartford, CT. Institute of Living
3. **Dr. Ken Robson** – Psychiatrist, West Hartford, CT.
4. **Dr. Jackie Alexander** – Psychotherapist, Avon, CT.
5. **Dr. Wilbur Nelson** – Psychologist, Bloomfield, CT.
6. **Dr. Michael Greenstein** – Psychiatrist, St. Francis Hospital, Hartford, CT.
7. **Dr. Michael Powers** – state expert, psychologist. Glastonbury, CT. Runs the Center for Children with Special Needs.
8. The following are Primary Health Care Services, can refer doctors and clinics
  - a. **Charter Oak Health Center, Inc.**  
21 Grand Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860)-550-7500
  - b. **Community Health Services, Inc.**  
500 Albany Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) -808-8701
9. **Yale Child Study Center**  
Celine Saulnier  
Associate Research Scientist in the Child Study Center  
Celine.saulnier@yale.edu  
<http://info.med.yale.edu/chldstdy/autism/>  
A leader in medical and behavior research.

### **Financial and Legal**

1. **James McGaughey**  
Executive Director  
Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities  
60-B Weston Street  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860)-297-4300  
Can provide a wide variety of information about insurance, health care, legal representation, and other advocacy matters.

**2. Laura Gold Becker**

Becker Law Offices, LLC  
968 Farmington Avenue Suite 206  
West Hartford, CT 06107  
Specializes in Insurance Defense, Litigation, and Disability Insurance

**3. Andrew W. Krevolin**

Krevolin, Roth & Connors, LLC  
433 Main Street Suite 303  
West Hartford, CT 06110  
Specializes in Insurance Coverage

**4. Center for Children's Advocacy**

Jay Sicklick, Esq.  
Director, Medical-Legal Partnership Project  
(860)-714-1412  
The MLPP is a non-profit organization out of the University of Conn. School of Law. It is a program focused on protecting and enhancing the rights on low-income families and children in Connecticut.

## **Education**

1. **River Street School/Autism Program** – Serves 2-8 year olds with 1-1 teacher child intense behavioral intervention. Paid for by school district. Individualized.  
<http://www.crec.org/ss/divisionunits/rss/autism.php>
2. **Intensive Education Academy** – Five to One student/teacher ratio provides an excellent learning environment for children with learning disabilities. Grades K-12. West Hartford, CT.  
<http://www.intensiveeducationacademy.org/index.htm>
3. **Ben Bronz Academy** – Day school for students with learning disabilities. Grades 2-12. Behaviorally Oriented Teaching. West Hartford, CT.  
[http://www.learningincentive.com/TLI\\_BBA1.html](http://www.learningincentive.com/TLI_BBA1.html)
4. **High Road Student Learning Center** – Day school for students with learning disabilities. Grades K-12. Wallingford, CT.  
<http://schools.privateschoolsreport.com/Connecticut/Wallingford/HighRoadStudentLearningCen.html>
5. **The Allen Institute** – A residential school for students with learning disabilities.  
<http://www.thealleninstitute.org/testimonials.htm>
6. **Chapel Haven** – Residential school for students with learning disabilities.  
[http://www.chapelhaven.org/\\_about\\_/index.html](http://www.chapelhaven.org/_about_/index.html)
7. **Franklin Academy** – School for students with learning disabilities.  
[http://www.franklinacademy.org/info\\_hours.asp](http://www.franklinacademy.org/info_hours.asp)

## **Respite**

### **1. Health and Home Care Resources**

Provides skilled nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, masters of social work, and home health aide services to the pediatric population.

### **2. Connecticut Office of the Healthcare Advocate**

Toll Free – 1 (866) 466-4446

### **3. SARAH Inc.**

A collection of private, nonprofit, community agencies that help people and families affected by disabilities. Provides respite care to families across Connecticut, as well as many other services.

<http://www.sarah-inc.org/>

### **4. Kris' Camp**

Summer Camp for Children with Autism.

<http://kriscamp.org/index.html>

## **Young Adult Transitions**

### **1. WAAVE – West Hartford Applied Academics & Vocational Experience**

An individualized program to help students integrate into their own community and have a successful independent adulthood. West Hartford. Ages 18-21.

(860) 523-3500

### **2. Farmington Valley Transition Academy**

Located at the University of Hartford, providing a variety of transitional experiences for students with learning disabilities.

(860) 658-3873

### **3. Leslie Aversa, Associate Commissioner**

Bureau of Special Education

CT Department of Education

(860) 638-4242

## **New Treatment Information**

Upcoming Talk @ the Institute of Living in Hartford

April 12, 2007

*The Current State of Brain Research on Autism Aspergers*

By Michael Assaf, MD.