

**Family Resource  
Center for  
Disabilities &  
Special Needs**

# The Coalition

**Parent Training  
& Resource  
Center (PTRC)**

**December 2013**

**Start Building Your New Year Calendar by Saving These Dates!**

**January 14 2014**

## **Tackling Transition Workshop**

Learn how to start preparing for that important transition to post-secondary life. Presented by PTRC staff & sponsored by the Parent Training & Resource Center (843-26-1318). Join us at 5:45 - 6:45 PM - Family Resource Center Office 1575 Savannah Highway, Suite 6, Charleston. Questions? Call: 843-266-1318. Each attendee will receive a copy of the "Transition Toolkit for Parent & Students" compliments of the Exchange Club of Charleston.

**January 21 2014**

## **Berkeley County School District Presents "Parent University"**

Structured Teaching Principles (EDU 102)

Morning Class - Westview Elementary School  
9:00 am - 10:30 am

Evening Class - Berkeley High School  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm\*

\*Please call the Berkeley County Special Services Office at 843-899-8890 to reserve childcare.

**February 18 2014**

## **What to Expect When You're Expecting.....an IEP Meeting**

Do you think you need a better understanding of the IEP process as well as your rights & responsibilities? This IEP Fair is presented by PTRC Staff & Sponsored by the PTRC. (843-26-1318) Bring your IEPs & your questions for this "hands on" training. Join us from 5:45 - 6:45 PM at the Family Resource Center Office, 1575 Savannah Highway, Suite 6, Charleston.



**February 7 & 8, 2014**

## **20th Annual Hopes & Dreams Conference in Columbia**

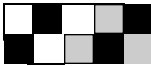
First Baptist Church, 1306 Hampton St

This two-day conference for parents of children with special needs, and professionals who care for them, is an opportunity to explore the issues and challenges faced by families caring for children with developmental disabilities, chronic illnesses and long-term health needs. For more info call Les Barker 800-578-8750 x126

**March 5, 2014 - 25th Annual Disability - Advocacy Day at the Statehouse**

Celebrate a Quarter of a Century of Advocacy with your friends & colleagues

Sponsored by the SC Partnership of Disability Organizations. For more info call (803) 748-5020



## Scholarship Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

### The Gavalas Kolanko Foundation (GKF)

In 1999, Nicholas B. Gavalas and Dr. Ronald Kolanko established the GKF after becoming aware of the costly requirements for students with disabilities wishing to attend college. The Foundation strives to assist students with their secondary educational costs and increase support and awareness of their needs.

In order to support that lofty goal, the GKF founders realized that a major event was needed to fund scholarships. They wanted to create an event that would not only bring to the forefront of the public's mind the needs of students with physical disabilities, but also assist the Foundation's mission of helping those students obtain a college education. So, in the Fall of 1999, the GKF organized the 1st Annual Charleston-James Island Connector Run. In the spring of 2003, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., awarded the Gavalas Kolanko Foundation a proclamation naming the first Saturday of each November as "Students with Disabilities Day." Later that year, the Charleston-James Island Connector Run evolved into the city's flagship event marking Students with Disabilities Day and honoring the special students in our area who continue to thrive in the classroom despite their special needs.

Since its inception, the Gavalas Kolanko Foundation has awarded more than \$100,000 dollars in scholarship money to 61 deserving recipients at the College of Charleston and Charleston Southern University. The GKF is proud to award scholarships to students with physical impairments (sight, hearing, movement) at the College of Charleston and Charleston Southern University. The scholarship can be renewed for up to a total of four years. Scholarship recipients must be willing to serve as a representative of the Foundation and participate in GKF-related functions during the scholarship year.

The application process is relatively simple and fully explained on the website. In addition to academic records, the application calls for a personal

letter, organization memberships, extracurricular activities, and a minimum of 2 letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a former teacher. In the past, applications have been due around mid-June. Applications are available on line at the GKF website: [gkfoundation.org](http://gkfoundation.org). Also, you may contact the Center for Disability Services / College of Charleston (843) 953-1431; TDD: (843) 953-8284. For information from Charleston Southern please call the Student Success Center, at 843-863-7159 or Email: [awatson@csuniv.edu](mailto:awatson@csuniv.edu)

### Postsecondary Scholarships for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

On July 17, 2013 the College Transition Connection (CTC) announced that the South Carolina budget for fiscal year 2013-2014, approved by the General Assembly and the Governor, includes funding for needs-based grants to South Carolina resident students with intellectual disabilities. The students must be enrolled at a public institution of higher education in an established college transition program that serves students with intellectual disabilities. The grants have been made possible through funds that had been provided to CTC and are now directed through the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. CTC works in consultation with the Commission in establishing award guidelines for students in South Carolina's transition programs.

In his remarks announcing the scholarships, Don Bailey, Executive Director of CTC, notes that "South Carolina is a leader in postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities, with outstanding programs at five colleges and universities in the state. This funding will make it more affordable for South Carolina students to attend inclusive college programs and to prepare for gainful employment and independent living."

## Postsecondary Scholarships

*Continued-*

The CTC works with select colleges and universities in South Carolina to design, create, and fund transition and postsecondary opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Private donors and the SC General Assembly provided pilot funds to develop inclusive programs at: Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, University of South Carolina, Columbia, and Winthrop University. CTC administers the funding and provides ongoing technical assistance as the programs develop. For more information on the scholarships and application process you should visit the CTC website: [www.collegetransitionconnection.org](http://www.collegetransitionconnection.org) and click contact.

### Pilot Program for Tuition Grants to Private Schools

Beginning January 1, 2014, students in South Carolina with special needs can apply for scholarships to attend certain private schools across the state. Scholarship amounts would be for \$10,000.00 or the cost of tuition, whichever is lower.

More than 50 S.C. private schools have been cleared to enroll students with special needs who will be paying with tuition grants made possible through the state's first school-choice program.

"That list will grow," said Melanie Barton, director of the state Education Oversight Committee, the state agency tasked with approving schools for participation in the program.

The law limits participation to private schools that are members in good standing with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the S.C. Association of Christian Schools or the S.C. Independent Schools Association. And is limited for only one fiscal year. Continuation will need to be approved by the legislature each year.

So far, schools accepted to take part in the program, in the Charleston area include Charleston

Day School, Trident Academy, St John's Catholic School, and Bishop England. Even more are pending approval.

Participating schools must submit documentation to the state showing they meet certain standards, including having programs serving students with special learning needs and regularly testing students to gauge their progress, said Dana Yow, the Oversight Committee's communications director.

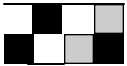
In the state budget starting July 1, lawmakers approved up to \$8 million in tax credits for donations made to organizations that give private-school scholarships to special-needs students. *The program will have to be approved again next year to continue.*

So far, three organizations plan to take donations and offer grants.

- Columbia-based Advance Carolina will provide grants to students to attend schools belonging to the S.C. Association of Christian Schools, said Edward Earwood, executive director of both organizations.
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston is forming a scholarship-funding organization to assist students in attending Charleston-area Catholic schools, said Jacqueline Kasproski, the diocese's associate director for secondary education. At least six or seven Catholic schools provide services for special-needs students, she said.
- Palmetto Kids First Scholarship Program of Mount Pleasant plans on filling another niche, said Jeff Davis, a consultant working with the group and a tax attorney who helped similar organizations in Georgia. The organization plans on providing grants to students to attend schools who are not members of the Catholic Diocese or Association of Christian Schools.

**Eligible children:** The law currently only provides scholarships for "exceptional needs" children to attend an independent school. An "exceptional needs" child is defined as a child who has been designated by the South Caroli-

*Continued on Page 6*



## Support Groups Can Help Lift You Up When You Feel Low Check These Out:

**Trident Head Injury Support Group:** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:00, at Westwood Plaza (intersection of Hwys 7 & 61), Suite 6, next to Hancock Fabrics. For more info: Debbie Schneider at 852-5550 ext 226.

**Down Syndrome Association of the Low Country:** sponsors four Information Programs and four Social Events each year - in addition to Mothers Night Out. Check their website at: [www.dsalowcountry.org](http://www.dsalowcountry.org) for a complete calendar of events or email Glenda Crain at: [crainclan@comcast.net](mailto:crainclan@comcast.net)

**Parent & Guardian Association of the Coastal Center:** This group supports those with a family member residing at the Coastal Center. General meetings are held four times a year. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan 27th at 4 PM. For details call Linda Bodiford at 821-5809 or Suzanne at 276-1001.

**Rett's Syndrome Support:** Families in need of a contact person to access support services for girls with Rett's Syndrome may call Nancy Banov at 556-4632 after 3 PM.

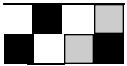
**Trident Spinal Cord Injury Peer Support Group:** This group is open to any person with a spinal cord injury or other mobility difficulties. The meetings provide a forum for the members to discuss issues and concerns and receive immediate feedback. Some members use the meetings to brainstorm possible solutions to ongoing problems. In addition, the group provides members with opportunities to develop a social network. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday evening of every month (6:00-8:00 PM). *Meetings are no longer held at the Golden Corral.* For more information and to confirm the location for the next meeting, contact Barb Delia at 843-572-8600.

**Grief Support Group for Children** - Bereavement group for children ages 8-12 (1 group) and 13-15 (2nd group) sponsored by Heartland Hospice, 1064 Gardner Rd, Suite 204, West Ashley, Charleston. For more information contact Kimberly at Heartland Hospice, 766-7646.

**Sickle Cell Sisters** (for teenage girls with sickle cell disease) is a therapeutic support group for teenage girls between the ages of 13 and 18. The group meets every other month at MUSC Children's Hospital and focuses on psychosocial aspects of living with sickle cell disease. For more information about this group call Melissa Hale or Lauren Stump at 843-792-1968.

**The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)** of the Charleston area offers support group meetings for individuals who suffer from a brain disorder and for family members and caregivers of those who have severe and persistent mental illness. The meetings are 6-7:15 p.m. the second Monday of every month at the Jewish Community Center, 1645 Wallenberg Blvd. in West Ashley Client member support group will meet in the senior lounge. Family member groups will meet in the JCC program directors conference room. On the Third Monday of each month the group meets at Bethany United Methodist Church, 118 West Third South Street Summerville. The fourth Monday of each month the group meets at The Church of the Holy cross, 299 Seven Farms drive, Daniel Island. Education meetings will begin again September 10th. For more information, call Yancey wise at 884-7547 or [yanceyk2@aol.com](mailto:yanceyk2@aol.com). or visit [www.namicharlestonarea.org](http://www.namicharlestonarea.org).  
*Faith and Light Community no longer meets.*

**A Place for Me:** no longer meets monthly but does schedule special events and topics of interest. Contact Brooke Hartig on Facebook at A Place For Me for more information.



**Summerville Autism Support** - Mom's Night Out meets at 5:00 PM for dinner at a local restaurant usually the last Saturday of each month. The location and date varies due to holidays and other events. To find out when and where the next meeting will be, contact Jodi Hortman at 870-3485

**These Groups No Longer Meet:**

HIPS (Head Injury Support Group for Survivors)

Can Teen (for teen agers with cancer)

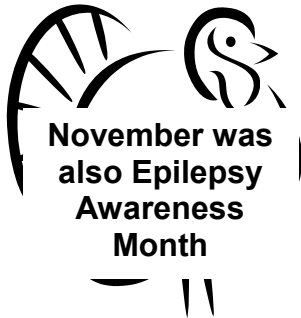
Faith & Light Community (spiritual organization for persons with ID, their families and caregivers)

**We try our best to keep this list current. If your group is listed here and no longer meets or if you have a group that should be listed but isn't, please call us: 843-266-1318**

**New Support Group in Summerville**

**WE ARE HERE:** For families and caregivers of individuals with Disabilities and Special Needs. Describing the group, organizer and parent of a child with a disability, Shawnetta Lewis describes WE ARE HERE as a support group that understands that what we do is very unique, different, and sometimes very difficult. She encourages people to come and talk and share their knowledge and experiences. WE ARE HERE meets the third Wednesday of every month at the Baum Temple AME Zion Church, 943 W 1st N St, Summerville, SC (843) 873-2475. Participants are encouraged to bring refreshments (but NOT required.) A format for the meetings will include introductions and time to share, a specific topic may be discussed or relevant information presented, such as how to handle family visits and vacations, and/or a fun activity such as cooking or crafts. For more information or if you wish to share specific information, plan an activity, or teach a craft or skill please contact Shawnetta at 843-695-8262 or 843-801-7421.

**Another New Support Group**



A new support group for children with epilepsy meets on the second Monday of each month at the Veterans Administration Hospital at 109 Bee Street in Charleston. Free parking is available. For more information contact Karen St. Marie at 843-991-7144 or at Karen@scepilepsy.org.

Additional information about epilepsy is available on the South Carolina Advocates for Epilepsy website at [www.scepilepsy.org](http://www.scepilepsy.org).

**Support Group for Spanish Speaking Families:** 4th Friday of each month from 6-8 PM at the MUSC Northwoods Clinic, 2070 Northbrook Blvd., Suite A-16, N. Charleston. For more info call Saritta at 843-817-9384.

**Un grupo de soporte para familias de habla Hispana se reune el cuarto Viernes de cada mes de las 6 a las 8 en la Clinica MUSC Northwoods 2070 Northbrook Blvd, Suite A-16, North Charleston. Para mayor informacion llame a Saritta al (843)817-9384**

**Think Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Occurs Only in Adults?**

Not necessarily. MS can occur in children as young as preschool age according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. If you know a child or teen with multiple sclerosis, a local support group is available. For information contact Sharon David at [shrdav8@aol.com](mailto:shrdav8@aol.com) or call 291-1052. For more information regarding diagnosis, treatment and accommodations in the school setting contact the National Multiple Sclerosis Society at 1-800-344-4867 or at [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org).



## Pilot Program for Tuition Grants

*Continued*

na Department of Education to meet the Federal eligibility requirements outlined in 34 CFR Part A Section 300.8 and the child’s parents or legal guardian believe that the services provided by the school district of legal residence do not sufficiently meet the needs of the child. Prior to the funding of any scholarship, families must provide Palmetto Kids FIRST proof of eligibility.

**Application Process:** The Palmetto Kids FIRST Scholarship Program works closely with participating partner schools to recommend eligible students to receive a scholarship. Each school has its own financial aid and scholarship application process. Parents or guardians should therefore contact one of the participating schools to inquire whether their child would be eligible to receive a Palmetto Kids FIRST Scholarship. School officials will then submit a scholarship recommendation to Palmetto Kids FIRST for final approval.

For more information, please contact Palmetto Kids FIRST at [info@palmettokidsFIRST.org](mailto:info@palmettokidsFIRST.org)

## Take a Break !! Local Respite Opportunities

**Lean on Me:** Meets at Christ Episcopal Church, 3304 N. Hwy 17, Mt. Pleasant, SC the third Sunday of every month from 5:30-7:30 PM. For questions or more information call Laura Nagelburg at 847-1568 or email: [imagesbylauralynn@gmail.com](mailto:imagesbylauralynn@gmail.com)

**Breathe Respite:** The Summerville Branch of Seacoast Church has a respite program for families of special needs children. Respite is provided the second Friday of every month from 6:00-9:00 PM. For more information contact Seacoast Church in Summerville at 843-881-2100

**Parents Night Out:** Crowfield Baptist Church, 100 Hunters Lane, Goose Creek, provides respite at 6 PM on the 3rd Friday of every month for parents of children with disabilities. Advance registration is required. To get more info contact Crowfield Baptist at 843-569-6745.

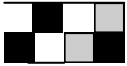
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## Learn More About the Affordable Care Act and How to Apply for Insurance

By now, most everyone has heard about the Affordable Care Act (ACA), sometimes referred to as “Obamacare”. Whether you agree with the law or not, there is a lot to learn about your health care options. The Affordable Care Act is a set of health insurance reforms that started in 2010 and will continue to roll out in 2014 and beyond. For the ACA, 2014 is an important year. The Health Insurance Marketplace will offer a new way for people without insurance to get coverage and to find out if they can get lower costs for private insurance. They can also find out if they qualify for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). If you have access to the Internet, there is a helpful website with information and electronic application capability: [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov). That’s the website with all the problems that has been making the news. Even if you are unable to apply on line at this time (and that capability seems to change from day-to-day) you can still get some good information when you visit. Once on the website you can browse various topics to further your understanding of this new health care law.

Even though the website’s dependability is still in question, there are other ways to apply prior to the deadline by March 31, 2014. In addition to applying at the on-line website, there are 3 other ways to apply.

**Apply with a paper application:** You can fill out a paper application and mail it in. You’ll find out whether you’re eligible for lower costs on private insurance, Medicaid, or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Once you get your eligibility notice, you can either go online to compare, choose, and enroll in a plan or contact the call center. A customer service representative will



## Help with the Affordable Care Act

*Continued*

help you. If you or someone on your application is eligible for Medicaid or CHIP, a representative will contact you to enroll.

**Apply by phone or with an in-person assister:** To apply by phone, call 1-800-318-2596, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (TTY: 1-855-889-4325). A customer service representative will work with you to complete the application and enrollment process. You can also apply with the help of an assister who can sit with you and help you fill out a paper or online application.

**Find in-person help:** In all states, there are people trained and certified to help you understand your health coverage options and enroll in a Marketplace plan. They're known by different names, depending on who provides the service and where they're located. All can provide the help you need with your application and choices:

- Navigators
- Application assisters
- Certified application counselors

Government agencies, such as State Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Offices

- Insurance agents and brokers can also help you with your application and choices.

**To find local help with application assistance, contact:**

**Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center,  
51 Nassau Street, Charleston SC 29403**



**Phone: (843) 722-4112 (main)**

**Office Hours: 8:30AM To 5:30PM**

**Web: <http://www.fcfetter.com>**

**Email: [virginia\\_king@fcfetter.com](mailto:virginia_king@fcfetter.com)**

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U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

## Saritta Vann

### “PTRC Radio Personality”

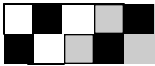
For the last several years, Saritta K. Vann, a Peer Parent Mentor for the Parent Training & Resource Center (PTRC), has been providing support to Spanish speaking families with loved ones with disabilities or special needs. For three Friday mornings in September, she was given the opportunity to reach out to the community from the airwaves through the radio station “El Sol” 980 AM WAZS in North Charleston.

Saritta, a wife & mom, talked about her experiences as a parent of a child with autism and took questions on the air about the broad spectrum of disabilities and special needs and the services available through the Family Resource Center's Parent Training & Resource Center (PTRC). She fielded questions about special education and the school system and promoted events offered in the community such as the Lowcountry Autism Consortium's Autism Forum and the PTRC's 15<sup>th</sup> Conference on Disabilities.

Saritta, who was born in Chile, is available for bilingual training workshops, Peer Parent Mentoring and interpretation from Spanish to English and vice versa. For more information on these services, contact the Family Resource Center at (843) 266-1318. En Espanol: (843) 817-9384.

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 \* **Winter Wonderland Camp at CML** \*  
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Children's Museum of the Lowcountry/CML (25 Ann St, Chas) is inviting children ages 3 - 10 to partake in oodles of holiday cheer with this winter vacation camp opportunity. Some of the fun includes making tie-dyed snowflakes, crafting gingerbread houses & designing holiday wrapping paper! Kids will also be busy with hands-on exploration of Antarctica and all the snow & ice that is found there! On December 31, they'll be bringing in 2014 with Noon Year's Eve! Camp days are: December 20, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31 (1/2 day only); Jan 2 & 3rd. For more information, prices and scheduling, please visit [www.exploreqml.org](http://www.exploreqml.org) or call Kendra McCabe, Camp Director, at 843-853-8962



1575 Savannah Highway - Suite 6  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407  
Phone: 843-266-1318  
Fax: 843-266-1941  
www.frdsn.org

family resource center  
FOR DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS, INC.

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### Saritta K. Vann: Radio Figura Destacada

Desde algunos años Saritta K Vann ha sido mentora para las familias de habla hipana con familiares con discapacidades y necesidades especiales y recientemente ella ha tenido la oportunidad de estrechar aun mas los lazos con esta maravillosa comunidad gracias a los amigos de la radio "El Sol" 980 AM Wasz en North Charleston.

Saritta tuvo la oportunidad de hablar acerca de el amplio espectro de discapacidades que afectan a la comunidad, ademas de mencionar algunos de los servicios disponibles en el sistema escolar y de promover algunos eventos ofrecidos en la comunidad tales como; El consorcio por el Autismo del Lowcountry, donde fueron ofrecidos algunos talleres en nuestra lengua y ademas de la Quinceava Conferencia de Descapacidades organizada por el Centro de Recursos para Padres (FRC).

Saritta esta disponible para entrenamiento, talleres, asistencia e interpretacion , si usted requiere de estos servicios gratuitos por favor contacte al (843)266-1318. Saritta es esposa ademas de madre de dos hijos uno de ellos en el espectro del Autism.

(See page 7 to read this story in English)



**A Special Thanks to Edgar Angel Gonzalez at WASZ (980AM) for Helping Us Help Families**

