



News and Updates

February 2019



Greetings, VFN Family and Friends!

Hope you all have braved the snow and cold of January, and that February is promising to be a bit less challenging for our drives to school, work, appointments, etc!

Vermont and all its winter glories!

We have much to warm your hearts and minds this month, with a terrific Sibshop "sharing the love" of cake decorating on the 9th, Dine to Donate activities from now through Valentine's Day, a terrific webinar on the 13th, puppet shows throughout the month, and Dance Showcase on the 23rd, among many other things! We have been quite busy with planning for our April 3rd annual conference, as well as Disability Awareness Day and the Leadership Series graduation on the 27th. We continue to offer our "Meet the Family" tours to better acquaint folks with who we are, what we do, and why it matters---contact Claire, claire.giroux-williams@vfn.org for more information.

Through our work with the VT Coalition for Disability Rights (VCDR) and the VT Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance (VECAA), we have been keeping abreast of issues of importance to families of children and youth with disabilities/special health needs. If you would like to be involved with advocacy and/or record your family's story, we would love to hear from you! Contact me at pam.mccarthy@vfn.org or call 1-800-800-4005 and lift your family's voice!

From the heart,
Pam McCarthy

Annual Conference Registration Opens!

10 years Together

Please join us for our [Annual Conference](#) on Wednesday, April 3rd at the [DoubleTree by Hilton](#) in Burlington. Our keynote speaker is [Hasan Davis](#) whose talk "Don't DISmyABILITY: A Transformational Journey from Juvenile Delinquent to Juris Doctor" will surely inspire you!

We have a fabulous line-up of [10 workshops](#) on topics including: Anxiety in Children and Teens; Challenging Behaviors and School Success; Self-Care; IEP and Transition Planning; Special Needs Trusts & ABLE Accounts; and workshops geared specifically for transition-age youth (ages 14-26).

There will also be 40 exhibitors, a special lunch-time program to celebrate 10 years together, plenty of time to meet other parents, and of course, birthday cake.

The cost for this information-packed, all-day event is \$75 for parents and \$115 for professionals. We do offer scholarships for parents and family members on a first-come, first-served basis. Please fill out the [scholarship form](#) *before* registering for the conference.

And there is more! Right after our conference beginning at 3 pm is a free screening of the new documentary [Intelligent Lives](#) by award-winning filmmaker [Dan Habib](#). Dan will lead a panel discussion after the film. If you have any questions about this part of the day, please contact the host, the [Center on Disability and Community Inclusion](#) at UVM.

We look forward to seeing you on April 3rd!

[Register Today!](#)

Students with Disabilities and College There are no IEPs in College!

Colleges cannot discriminate on the basis of disability and must provide academic adjustments to students with disabilities. However, the responsibilities of post-secondary schools differ significantly from those of school districts and students will have responsibilities as a post-secondary student that they did not have in high school. [Know Your Rights and Responsibilities!](#)

Colleges typically have a student support office to help college students with the accommodations they need. There are also college programs specifically designed for students with intellectual disabilities and/or autism. The Vermont Family Network Transition Toolkit has [information](#) about college

options in Vermont for students with disabilities.

Dine to Donate

February 1 - 14 is the time for VFN's Annual Dine to Donate program and Restaurant Raffle! This year we have many restaurants who have donated gift cards to our raffle or are holding specials to benefit our organization. Check out the details and purchase your raffle tickets today!

[More Information](#)

Restraint and Seclusion Update

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in partnership with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will launch a [federal initiative](#) to address the inappropriate use of restraint and seclusion with children with disabilities in schools. According to the most recent U.S. Education Department [data](#), 122,000 students across the country were subject to restraint or seclusion during the 2015-2016 academic years. Kids with disabilities accounted for 71% of those restrained and 66% of seclusion cases. Rules on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools currently vary from state to state. Vermont passed a [rule](#) regarding the use of restraint and seclusion in Vermont schools in 2011. If you are concerned about your child being restrained or secluded, make sure you have a [no-consent letter](#) in your child's file.

The 9th Annual Dance Showcase - Stronger Together Through Dance to benefit Vermont Family Network

Saturday, February 23, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Main Street Landing Performing Arts Center, Black Box Theater
60 Lake Street, Burlington, VT

Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$28 at the door
Available at Vermont Family Network, (802) 876-5315 x247
or at the Flynn Theater Box Office and FlynnTix.org

Featuring: Bryce Dance Company of NYC, Liam Reddy and Di'Ahna Restry of Boston, Cult of Yes from Montreal, Kala Seraphin from Montreal, Marina D. Ray from Montreal, Ballet Vermont, Alison from Bohemienne Fitness, Arunima Dasgupta & Company, Haley Bradstreet & Robin Riley, Toby MacNutt, Champlain College Dance Team, Julie Peoples-Clark, Noah Witke Mele, Britten Leigh, PH Dance & ErS, Dream City Dance, Leanan Sidhe, Teen Jazz/Contemporary Dance & Fitness Studio, Blue Moon Company, Studio 3 Dance - Colchester & Swanton, Mathura, HIGHSTEPPERS, and Sarah Vogelsang- Card. Thank you to Sponsors: McSoley McCoy & Co, Heritage Toyota, The Law Offices of Fred V. Peet, Main Street Landing (Host Sponsor),

American Flatbread (Food Sponsor) & City Market (Food Sponsor). 100% of proceeds will support Vermont Family Network.

Packing a Healthy School Lunch

Thanks to Rebecca O'Reilly MS, RD, Vermont Department of Health, for submitting this article.

I don't know what happened to fall, but somehow here we are smack in the middle of the school year. The holidays are behind us and we've once again settled into a relative state of normalcy, or at least routine. Routine has its pros and cons. One area that always seems to end up on the con list is food. [Read more...](#)

Free VFN Webinar

Helpful Approaches to Navigating Sensory Sensitivities in the Community: Wednesday, February 13 from 12 - 1 pm. [Register Now](#). There are many considerations and approaches that can be helpful when introducing or re-introducing a child to a setting that is out of routine (e.g., medical appointments, hospitalizations, haircuts, etc.) These approaches can be especially helpful for children with sensory sensitivities. Child Life Specialists from the UVM Children's Hospital are trained to set up the environment, provide developmentally-appropriate education and support to children and families with a wide array of cognitive, emotional and physical needs in order to help process experiences in a way that is meaningful. We invite you to explore our toolbox of knowledge and encourage you to help us continue to fill it with the strategies that have been successful in your own journey. Please email your strategies and approaches to the presenters: Presenters from the UVM Children's Hospital: Jennifer Eddy, CCLS (Certified Child Life Specialist) - Comfort Zone (Outpatient Pediatric Sedation Center) Jennifer.C.Eddy@uvmhealth.org and Jennifer Dawson, CCLS - Baird 5 and PICU (Inpatient) Jennifer.Dawson@uvmhealth.org

Disability Awareness Day and More Vermont Leadership Graduates!

Please join us for [Disability Awareness Day](#) at the Vermont State House on February 27th. If you haven't been to this exciting event, it's a day full of spirit with hundreds of self-advocates, parents, and caregivers at the State House for events and testimony. This is the fourth year the annual graduation for the [Vermont Leadership Series](#) has been held on Disability Awareness Day, at 3:00 pm. Leadership graduates are recognized for their achievements and others learn more about the Leadership Series; some apply to participate in future years. Please consider joining VFN and many others on this exciting day of advocacy -- meet your legislators, tour the State House, and get to know a lot of great people! For more information please call a VFN Family Support Consultant at 1-800-800-4005.

News from the Puppets!

Upstate Chevrolet is the lead sponsor for the 2018-2019 school year, and this month we have been in many schools thanks to local dealerships. Through this partnership, which is in its second year, a participating Upstate Chevrolet dealer chooses a school to receive a free day of presentations of their choice plus a gift of ten puppets. Students and teachers alike have been thrilled with the day---it is often the first time we have been in their school. Since this school year began in September, VFN's Puppets have reached more than 3,700 people!

What kids are saying to the puppets and puppeteers:

"I get bullied because of my weight." 5th grader

"People on the bus call me stupid and it is really hurtful." 5th grader

"You should be kind to someone even if they look different than you."
2nd grader

"We are all different and should be friends with each other. We can learn from each other." 4th Grader

What teachers are saying about the puppets:

"The song 'My Body' that you sang with the students was very powerful for one student in particular. She is dealing with the fact that her abuser is being released from prison. The lyrics in the song give her strength."

Join Sibshop Fun February 9 for Love & Cupcakes

Sibs will enjoy a class on cupcake decorating and tasting. There will also be arts and craft activities and fun games. We will meet on Saturday, February 9 from 1 - 3:30 pm at the Howard Center, 60 Knight Lane, in Williston. For questions, scholarships, or to RSVP, please contact Jamie Rainville at Jamie.Rainville@vtn.org or call 802-876-5315 X 243. Space is limited so RSVP soon!

[Contact Jamie](mailto:Jamie.Rainville@vtn.org)

Meet the Family!

Join us for a 1-hour "Meet the Family" tour and overview of the work that Vermont Family Network does! For information on when tours will be held, contact Claire Giroux-Williams at claire.giroux-williams@vtn.org. You will be amazed!

Join VFN's Closed Facebook Page

[VFN's closed Facebook page](#) is for parents, family members, and people in a parenting role. The current membership is 350 and growing. This group shares ideas, asks questions, and offers support. You may also want to [join our Listserv](#) which is a closed email sharing list.

Did you know we have 90+ webinars on [YouTube](#)?



(802) 876-5315 or 1-800-800-4005
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