

SPEAK OUT

NEWS FOR COLORADO FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITES

The Importance of Friendship



porting genuine, typical friendships means more than superficial, occasional contacts that are “arranged,” i.e. peer tutoring or so-called “special friends.”

Friendship Issues

1. People need to share ordinary situations with ordinary people for relationships to

“People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.” Think how important family and friends are to you. Relationships for children and youth with disabilities are also critical to have fulfilling lives. For parents and teachers, students’ developing friendships is more than teaching social skills. It means providing opportunities for young people to interact frequently, intensively, and with supports when needed. It also means letting children interact, play, and work together without constant adult presence.

Because developing and maintaining friendships is a life-long process rather than a one-time event, it is a goal that must be always be a priority. There are no concrete recipes that work for all children. Hopefully, some of the ideas and strategies below will create new ways of thinking about true friendships for children with disabilities.

Friendships typically come from common bonds, experiences, or interests that draw people together. Therefore, sup-

develop.

2. People need to work on developing relationships.
3. People need to see the gifts, talents, and contributions that each person can make, and use those to help develop friendships.
4. Friendships come and go; they change; are unpredictable; are “loose” and hard to get your hands around.
5. Friendships are two-way streets – both parties must give and take in the relationship.
6. Friendships are freely given. (In other words, people are not paid to be with you; they are not getting extra credit for a project; they are not getting a Girl Scout badge or the Mother Teresa Humanitarian Award of the Year. Friendships are not the same as peer tutors, special buddies, helpers, and the like).
7. Friends come in a variety of different packages.
8. Most people are interested in having many different friends from many different “walks of life.”

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La Importancia de la Amistad

“Las personas que necesitan a otras personas son las personas con más suerte en el mundo.” Pienses qué tan importantes son para ustedes su familia y sus amigos. Para los niños y jóvenes con discapacidades, las relaciones son también muy importantes para que ellos tengan vidas plenas. Para los padres y maestros, es más importante que los estudiantes desarrollen relaciones, que enseñarles habilidades sociales. Esto quiere decir ofrecer oportunidades



para que los jóvenes interactúen frecuentemente, intensamente y con apoyos

cuando lo necesiten. También quiere decir dejar que los niños interactúen, jueguen, y trabajen juntos sin una presencia adulta constante.

Debido a que desarrollar y mantener amistades es un proceso de toda la vida y no un evento de una sola vez, es una meta que debe abordarse continuamente. No existen recetas concretas que funcionen con todos los niños. Esperamos que algunas de estas ideas y estrategias fomenten nuevas manera de pensar acerca de las verdaderas amistades para los niños con discapacidades. Las amistades se originan de algún lazo común o interés que hace que se atraigan las

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About PEAK Parent Center

PEAK Parent Center helps families and educators see new possibilities for their children with disabilities. PEAK's mission is to provide training, information and technical assistance to equip families of children from birth through 26, including all disability conditions,

with strategies to advocate successfully for their children. As a result of PEAK's services to families and professionals, children and adults with disabilities live rich, active lives participating as full members of their schools and communities. PEAK helps families make informed decisions about early childhood, education, transition, employment, recreation, and other services for their children.

• What does PEAK provide?

PEAK provides a toll-free hotline staffed by trained parent advisers, statewide workshops, an annual Conference on Inclusive Education, a statewide calendar of disability-related events and parent support activities, SPEAKout newsletter, a website, books and videos on inclusive schooling, a family library, and customized in-service trainings. PEAK's conference sessions, workshops, and publications are available in English, Spanish, and Hmong to support families across Colorado. Translation to other languages is available as well.

• How much do these services cost?

PEAK is a non-profit organization and most of its services are free to Colorado families of children with disabilities. PEAK's books and videos are available at low cost.

• Where is PEAK Parent Center?

PEAK operates offices in Colorado Springs and Denver. PEAK also has Parent Mentors located in eight regions across the state.

• How do I contact PEAK?

You can call, email or fax PEAK at any time. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Voicemail is available when PEAK offices are closed. (See map.)

PEAK Available in Every Region

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Self-Advocate's Corner: Kevin Wagner



From left, Ellen, Kevin, and Annie stop for a quick camera shot on their vacation, aboard a houseboat.

Author's note, Bronwen Buswell: I have known self-advocate Kevin Wagner for about twenty years now. We met when we were young kids because our parents were strong advocates for people with disabilities in Colorado. When I was five years old, Kevin invited me to attend a summer camp called Cabin Camp with him. Since I lived in Colorado Springs and the camp was outside Denver, Kevin and his family invited me into their home for the week of camp. Each day we rode the bus together up to the mountains and were avid campers and got to be great friends. We both attended this incredible summer camp, first as campers and eventually counselors, for as long as the camp existed. Kevin and I lost touch, like friends can do when they're not together much. These things happen with friends, but a true test of friendship is the capacity to re-connect, and the wonderful feeling that even after not having seen one another for many years, when you finally do, it's as if no time has passed. We were able to rekindle these bonds when we sat down for this interview. We were also joined by Ellen, one of Kevin's best friends.

Kevin Wagner has lived in Denver for his whole life. Growing up Kevin enjoyed participating in typical activities such as school, soccer, summer camps, and vacations with family and friends. Kevin attended Stanley British Primary School (BPS), an accredited independent day school in Denver, from kindergarten through 6th grade. BPS fosters a unique and innovative learning community striving "to challenge and educate children within a diverse, supportive environment that values their distinct contributions and abilities, and to promote our innovative approach to education in the larger community." Kevin, who happens to have Down syndrome, was fully included with his typical peers at BPS and developed life-long

friendships with several of his schoolmates as well as being successful academically.

When I asked Kevin about how he developed friendships in his life, his answers mirrored the way most anyone would describe friendship development – common interests and a mutual feeling of enjoyment when with each other. Sometimes, friendships can even begin from less than ideal, but nonetheless memorable, interactions.

The first time Kevin met Ellen, for example, was in elementary school at BPS. One winter, Kevin decided to try flushing Ellen's mittens down the toilet, clogging the entire plumbing system. As consequence for his actions, Kevin spent his Saturday learning about plumbing and helping the janitor to remove the clogged mittens. At the time, Ellen was upset about losing her mittens, but today the two reflect about this memory with laughter and joy. In fact, Ellen still has the mittens Kevin bought for her in replacement and remembers the new mittens being much more cool than the ones that clogged the toilet.

Kevin forged strong bonds with individuals like Ellen, her little sister Annie, and other friends Brad and Scotty when he was very young either in school, or through family friends. Today, Kevin is still close to each of them. These friendships have lasted even though they didn't always attend the same school, and through both difficult, and amazing times. Kevin and these life long friends learned at a young age to be friends with whomever they wanted, with kids who shared interests and experiences, transcending differences that may exist, as long as they liked one another. This is a simple but profound message about friendship.

After 6th grade, Kevin was faced with a tough decision. While Kevin and most of his friends had planned to attend their neighborhood high school, that school had a more segregated model of special education services. Kevin had always been fully included with his friends and peers and learned successfully but if he attended this neighborhood school he would have had to attend in a separate special education classroom away from his friends and lose access to the rich and meaningful general education curriculum. So, Kevin decided to attend Jeffco Open School for middle and high school, a school known for being inclusive and having a more flexible curriculum design for all its students. This decision was positive for Kevin's education but difficult socially as making new close friends in a whole new group of



Ellen (left) and Annie (right) proudly pose with Kevin (middle) and his diploma.

people was hard. Kevin was successful at Jeffco Open School, and for one of his final school projects he created a documentary video called "Inclusion is Good for Everybody" that provides insight on the benefits of full inclusion of people with disabilities in all walks of life. Kevin continues to use this video today when he does public speaking.

Building on his school and extracurricular experiences, after high school Kevin attended community college and

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9. People need to have a common bond, whether that is popular music, or shopping for clothes, or eating pizza, or hanging out in the mall, or riding horses.

(adapted from Strully and Strully, 1989)

Parents' Checklist to Help Children to Make Friends:

- Have we considered what other children the same age like to do, eat, have up in their room, listen to, etc.?
- Have we thought about where children this age like to go and what activities they are involved in?
- Have we included neighborhood peers?
- Do we structure activities that promote equality?
- Have we made our home a "magnet" where kids like to come?
- Have we considered unobtrusive, respectful ways to assist our child to participate in activities with other children?
- Are we in touch with parents of other children in the neighborhood?
- Have we checked what activities the local park and recreation offers?
- Have we explored what local clubs exist in the community?
- Do we encourage our children to go to school events and activities?
- Do our children have ways to contact their friends (phone numbers, email addresses)?
- Do we believe our children can have genuine friendships?

Judith Snow, a self-advocate from Canada once said, "The only disability is having no relationships."

La Importancia de la Amistad
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personas. Por lo tanto, apoyar amistades genuinas y típicas para niños con discapacidades significa más que los contactos ocasionales y superficiales que se "arreglan," como por ejemplo, tutorías con compañeros o los llamados "amigos especiales."

Asuntos de la Amistad

1. Para que se desarrollen relaciones, las personas necesitan compartir situaciones ordinarias con personas ordinarias.
2. Las personas tiene que hacer un esfuerzo para desarrollar relaciones.
3. Las personas tienen que ver los dotes, talentos y contribuciones que puede ofrecer cada persona, y usar estos para desarrollar amistades.
4. Las amistades van y vienen; pueden cambiar; son impredecibles; son "imprecisas" y difíciles de comprender totalmente.
5. Las amistades son calles de dos sentidos – ambos lados tienen que dar y recibir en la relación.
6. Las amistades se dan gratuitamente. (En otras palabras, a la gente no se le paga para que esté con uno; no se le dan créditos extras por un proyecto; no se les da un parche de Girls Scout ni el Premio Humanitario Anual de la Madre Teresa. Las amistades no son lo mismo que tutores compañeros, amigos especiales, y otros similares).
7. Los amigos vienen en una variedad de paquetes diferentes.
8. La mayoría de la gente está interesada en tener muchos amigos diferentes con muchos diferentes intereses y formas de vivir.
9. La gente necesita tener un lazo común, ya sea la música popular, o ir de compras, o comer pizza, o ir a caminar al centro comercial, o montar a caballo.

(adoptado de Strully and Strully, 1989)

Lista de control para ayudar a los niños a hacer amistades:

- ¿Han considerado qué les gusta hacer, comer, tener en su cuarto, escuchar, etc., a otros niños de la misma edad?
- ¿Han pensado a donde van y en qué actividades participan los niños de esta edad?
- ¿Han incluido a niños vecinos de la misma edad?
- ¿Estructuramos actividades que promueven la igualdad?
- ¿Hemos hecho que nuestra casa sea un "imán" que haga que los niños quieran venir?
- ¿Hemos considerado maneras respetuosas y discretas para ayudar a nuestro niño a participar en actividades con otros niños?
- ¿Estamos en contacto con los padres de otros niños en el vecindario?
- ¿Hemos visto qué actividades ofrecen los parques y centros de recreación locales?
- ¿Hemos explorado qué clubes locales existen en la comunidad?
- ¿Alentamos a nuestros niños a que vayan a eventos y actividades de la escuela?
- ¿Tienen nuestros niños la información y la manera de contactar a sus amigos (números de teléfono, direcciones de correo electrónico)?
- ¿Creemos nosotros que nuestros niños tienen amistades genuinas?

Judith Snow, una activista Canadiense, escribió una vez, "La única discapacidad es no tener relaciones."

received a certificate in Multimedia Graphic Designs. Kevin is emphatic that he is not done with college yet and hopes to go back and take classes on music and acting.

Today, Kevin has two jobs and is also active in the disability community as a self-advocate and public speaker. He works in the Education and Marketing departments at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and helps with the youth acting classes, plans for special events, and does agency mailings. He also works for the Dardanos School of Gymnastics and is an instructor of preschoolers who take gymnastic classes there.



Kevin proudly dips his great friend Ellen before a black tie event.

Kevin lives independently in his own condo and is happy, although he does admit to sometimes being lonely. Frustrated with these feelings of being lonely and realizing that other young adults with and without disabilities may feel the same way, Kevin and Ellen decided to try to change things. Together they began the Junior Arc of Denver to try to create an inclusive social environment that typically does not exist for young adults with disabilities. The Junior Arc is a group of young people ages 21-35 who come together to create an environment where people with and without disabilities can form new friendships. They do everything from visiting Denver bars, to Karaoke, to Rockies games, concerts, and barbecues. This is not community service but an opportunity for young people to get involved in making the world more open-minded and inclusive. They have found that by coming together and meeting different and diverse people, stereotypes can be unlearned and everyone's lives can be enriched.

What about the future? In the future, Kevin hopes to have a job and eventually get married. He wants to meet a girl with similar interests who likes to keep as busy as Kevin does. Kevin plans to go back to college and study music and acting. He wants to learn to drive a car and ride a motorcycle. When Ellen and Kevin save up enough money (a hard thing to do for two people who enjoy having fun), they have plans to go skydiving together, continuing their life-long friendship built upon common interests, fun, and adventure.

Friendship has been an essential ingredient in Kevin's life, like with most anyone. Kevin has friends with disabilities and friends without disabilities. Some friends, like Ellen, have become so close that they commonly refer to each other as family. There was no special arrangement that brought Ellen and Kevin so close. Instead it was two individuals with common interests, open minds, and two pairs of mittens.

Author's concluding note: I feel lucky to have re-connected with these two friends and am reminded that you never know where or how you will meet friends but there are opportunities to re-kindle old bonds and light new fires of friendship all around us.

Learn more about Kevin and Ellen's project, the Junior Arc of Denver by visiting www.juniorarcdenver.org.



Ask A Parent Advisor

Q. How can I promote friendships for my son who has a disability?

A. The question might as well be, how do I promote friendships for my son? My daughter? Me? Friendships are a universal concern. I would suggest you take a look at your own friendships and how they were developed over the years. Many children find their first friends through their parents. Children of the parent's friends, are 'captive playmates' because the parents want to visit. Friendships develop from acquaintances, and from those many exposures to different people. A few click, and friendships are made.

There are many websites that help give friendships ideas. To sum them up, here are some universal tips:

1. Check your own circle. Who are your friends? Do they have kids?
2. Involve your child in activities with other children. Does your child enjoy art? Drama? Baseball? Movies? Pizza?
3. Make it fun to be at your house. Invite a few children at a time to your house, and then have something supervised to do that's FUN.
4. Be age appropriate with your child. Dress your child in age appropriate clothes. You may need to seek the advice of a child near your own child's age (peer tutoring for you).
5. Investigate local church youth groups, or your own church. Talk with the youth pastor and get your child involved.
6. Check out the local YMCA, Parks and Recreation, and after-school clubs and activities.
7. Practice friendship and social skills with your child.
8. Help your child develop his or her own interest and find others with a similar interest.
9. Present your child to others in a positive way, and others will respond. Remember he is a child first and foremost. His disability is an interesting part of him, but not the whole of him.
10. Talk with your child about friendships. Try not to impose your need on your child. Sometimes the parent sees the friendship situation differently than the child.

Positive Behavior Support in the Home: Simple Steps for a Successful Summer

As summer vacation is quickly upon us, students from over 600 schools in Colorado have been working to identify and teach students behaviors which promote a safe and positive learning environment. These expectations are often framed in an acronym, three to five words which students readily identify and remember: SOAR, PRIDE and PAWS. School staff (ALL staff including the bus drivers and lunchroom folks) support students to be Safe, Responsible and Respectful by teaching what safe behavior is on the bus, how to resolve conflicts with a friend in a respectful way and where to place completed work. Research shows when we recognize and acknowledge positive behavior more than focusing on what students are doing wrong, they are more likely to respond! Research also tells us that it is critical to explicitly teach these "desired behaviors" not just put up colorful posters and assume students will follow. Positive tickets, phone calls, or notes home are just a few of the ways to acknowledge students. For older students a preferred parking space, "Get out of an assignment free," or an extra five minutes of lunch increase student buy-in.

These same techniques can help parents support appropriate behavior in the home or out in the community over the summer. Take some time as a family and think about what seems to be going well and what do you spend much of your time correcting, complaining and yes, nagging! If your school has already established a PBS acronym, think about what that might look like at home. If not, think about what is important in your HOME. Let's say you adopt RESPECT, RESPONSIBLE AND SAFE. This can work equally well for preschoolers and teenagers and can be adapted for your children with special needs.

- **SAFE** for your four year old is holding your hand crossing the street and for the teenager is having her cell phone and calling when she gets to her friend's (and wearing that bike helmet!). SAFE for a child in a wheelchair is keeping the seat belt buckled and for your "thrill seeker" is asking for help before climbing on a chair.
- **RESPONSIBLE** for the preschooler is putting toys in the toy box while the teenager needs to hang the wet towel up on the rack after the shower! These can be conveyed by a written schedule or a picture schedule on the fridge or can be put on communication devices or used in picture systems.
- Lastly **RESPECTFUL** means asking before you change the station, using words like please and thank you or calming down in your room when asked instead of a tantrum.

Sounds great and will definitely make life run smoother...but identifying these positive expectations and posting them in a way children can see and understand them is just the first step. It is the 3 step process of Prevent, Teach, and Reinforce that puts it into action.

As a parent I had a rude awakening when I began to teach "Behavior Change is a Family Affair" to parents and staff. I was not part of the solution at home, but indeed part of the problem. I used to come home as a single parent and "pick up" after my



children who got home from school hours before me. I moved backpacks, picked up shoes and Mountain

Dew cans while nagging about what a mess the house was and why I shouldn't have to do this when I came home. I was frustrated and they tuned me out but continued to wait for me to come home and clean up. Not the best scenario for a calm, positive family dinner.

So I set my expectations: when I walk in I want shoes, backpacks and snack trash cleaned up. I knew they were physically able so instead of cleaning up, I took a deep breath before I walked in the door, and calmly said, "let's take a few minutes and take care of this." I heard a few gripes which I tried to ignore because I know change is a process and when we hold children accountable, behavior may get worse before it gets better. But the stage was set and the routine got a little smoother. I thanked them for helping and I was much more pleasant to spend the evening with! That is "teach and reinforce." But "prevent" is even better. I began to call 20 minutes before arriving home and would ask how they were, how school went and by the way, could you please pick up shoes, put backpacks away and be sure snacks are cleaned up. My younger son asked, respectfully, "could you do a reminder when you are 10 minutes away." What a difference! It reframed our evening interactions in a more positive way and it was much more pleasant to come in, have a cup of coffee, and read the paper after a full day of work.

This is just one example with older children but the same strategies work for all ages: preschooler putting toys away or clothes in the hamper, elementary children getting homework done and the table cleaned up for dinner and teenagers filling up the gas tank and picking up those wet towels after a shower!

The rule of thumb is that it takes a little work up front (about a month for each year the behavior has been happening) but the benefits go on and create a calmer, more positive household. Remember to adjust for the child's age, communication needs and level of understanding.

Change is a process and it helps if we look at small changes toward our goal. Keep some simple data: how many times have I asked, how long did he tantrum, how many times did she wake up and have to be put back in bed. Without some data, it's hard to see that in 3 weeks we went from having to ask 3 times with fussing to one time without, or that the tantrum has gone from 15 minutes to 7, that's half! And think about how we can set up our routines and outings to be preventative and proactive: picture schedule for the bedtime routine, grocery shopping in the morning or right after a nap, a tap on the door to remember to hang up the towel, and a phone call home that you are on the way. Have a great summer and check our more parent resources at www.cde.state.co.us/pbs.



PEAK Parent Center Workshops

Parents and educators alike have found PEAK Parent Center's workshops informative, useful, and of high quality. **"I am a parent of a kindergarten and soon to be educator. I found this workshop helpful in both realms."** –Colorado Parent

PEAK is interested in collaborating with organizations to better meet the needs of Colorado families. During this time of limited resources it is important to join together and help make a difference for children and youth with disabilities. PEAK is seeking regional workshop co-sponsors in order to bring free interactive trainings and information to families, educators, service providers, and community members.

The past two years we have collaborated with advocacy and support groups, Community Center Boards, school districts, Regional Professional Development Councils (RPDCs), and BOCES in presenting a variety of workshops where participants have learned how to support all learners in school and community settings.

PEAK is currently scheduling regional workshops for the 2008-09 school year. The list below gives frequently requested trainings we offer. Please contact Charmaine Thaner at 719-531-9400 extension 110 or cthaner@peakparent.org and we will arrange for a workshop for families and community members in your region.

NEW!

Access to General Education Curricula: What Does It Mean, How Can It Be Achieved?

Participants will increase their knowledge of how students can be included successfully in general education classrooms and also meet their IEP goals. Assistive technology devices, teacher training, and built in curriculum alternatives are a few of the examples that will be discussed.

Accommodations and Modifications to Curriculum: Assuring Meaningful Participation in General Education Classrooms

Parents and educators will explore real examples of accommodations (changes in how a student learns and shows what he/she knows) and modifications (changes in what a student will learn). Learn how to include individualized accommodations and modifications on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Advocacy 101

The benefits of parent/professional partnerships and positive, assertive advocacy strategies will be shared. Strategies to address the implementation of IEPs are included.

Cultural Competency

This workshop will focus on a strengths-based approach to cultural differences in order to provide a foundation for positive parent and professional partnerships.

Friendship Building Strategies

Families, educators, and advocates will explore the nature and types of relationships they have personally and strategies they can use to assist children to develop friendships.

From Bullying to Belonging

The workshop is focused on strategies to help families and educators promote acceptance and healthy peer relationships.

IDEA 2004:

New Law, New Expectations— What Do the Changes Mean for Students with Disabilities?

Participants will learn the changes in IDEA 2004 and in federal and state regulations. How parents can ensure their child is receiving an effective and appropriate education with individualized services and supports is emphasized.

Key Ingredients for Effective IEPs

The student's IEP is the cornerstone of their education. This workshop offers an in-depth look at the many components that must be addressed in the IEP document. Participants bring an IEP to review at the workshop.

NEW!

Response to Intervention: The Roles of Families

One goal of Response to Intervention (RTI) is to create positive learning outcomes for students with a variety of academic and behavioral needs. Explore ways families and educators can collaborate with problem-solving strategies and making instructional decisions.

The Whys and Hows of Behavior

Behaviors are a form of communication. Learn about Functional Behavioral Assessments, how to reinforce positive behaviors as well as how to develop a Positive Behavior Support Plan.

Transition from Infant Services to Preschool Services

Various educational options available to children after age 3 will be discussed and information given on making a smooth transition from Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) services to IEP services.

Transition – Grade-to-Grade, School-to-School: Planning for Success

Families and educators do not want to "reinvent the wheel" every time a student changes grades or schools. Learn how to collect and share information so teams can build on successes the student has already experienced.

Transition: Life After High School

This workshop is for students, families, educators and community members. It provides an introduction to the planning process and action steps needed so students can achieve goals outside of school.

Which Plan is for Your Child: IEP or 504?

The focus of this workshop is to understand how a student is determined to be eligible for an IEP or a 504 plan. Learn about the rules and regulations of a 504 Plan and practical uses of accommodations.

Working Together to Resolve Disagreements

Participants will learn the importance of working collaboratively to solve problems. Tips and strategies will be given to help families and educators develop effective communication styles, listening skills, and conflict resolution techniques.

Making Sense of Dispute Resolution

(For participants who have already attended Working Together to Resolve Disagreements) This workshop provides a more in depth discussion of the resolution process included in the special education law and regulations.



Inspiration, Empowerment, and Instruction: Themes from the 2008 Conference on Inclusive Education

PEAK Parent Center hosted its 21st annual Conference on Inclusive Education this past February and it was another huge success! Over 600 participants were in attendance representing 25 states. The sessions inspired participants and provided them with best practice educational strategies that benefit all diverse learners using principles of Universal Design. Here are just a few of the glowing comments from participants of the 2008 Conference on Inclusive Education:



“This [conference] was the first place I really understood what it meant to look at everyone’s strength and gifts rather than their deficits. Every year I get new ideas to take back and use both in my job and my community to help push, push, push toward true belonging for everyone. Dream on!”

Parent and Early Childhood Provider, Colorado

“It was so encouraging to be surrounded by families and professionals who truly care about all kids. The conference gave me hope for education.”

Related Service Provider, California

“It was my first [conference] and an amazing experience, both because it inspired and equipped me to be an advocate not only for my daughter, but for all the kids coming after her who need to feel welcomed into and inclusive educational environment. All of the sessions I attended were well-taught and extremely relevant and absorbing, and I was able to talk to general educators, special educators, and other parents about all the issues I am addressing.”

Parent, Colorado

“My whole perspective for my son has been changed. The self-advocates here speak for him until he can speak for himself. Life changing is putting it lightly. Thank you seems so insufficient.”

Parent and Part C Outreach, Colorado

Self-advocate LeDerick Horne presenting to a room of young people about self-advocacy and his experiences navigating life with learning disabilities.



Self-advocate Jonathan Mooney speaks to a packed house about reevaluating society’s concepts of disability and normalcy (right).

Excited shoppers at the 2008 Silent Auction (above). All proceeds from the auction benefit future conferences.

Thank You to our 2008 Conference Co-Sponsors!

PEAK would like to extend sincere appreciation to the following organizations for their collaboration and financial support of the 2008 Conference on Inclusive Education. The conference would not be possible without their contributions.

Visionary Level Sponsor

Exceptional Student Leadership Unit, Colorado Department of Education

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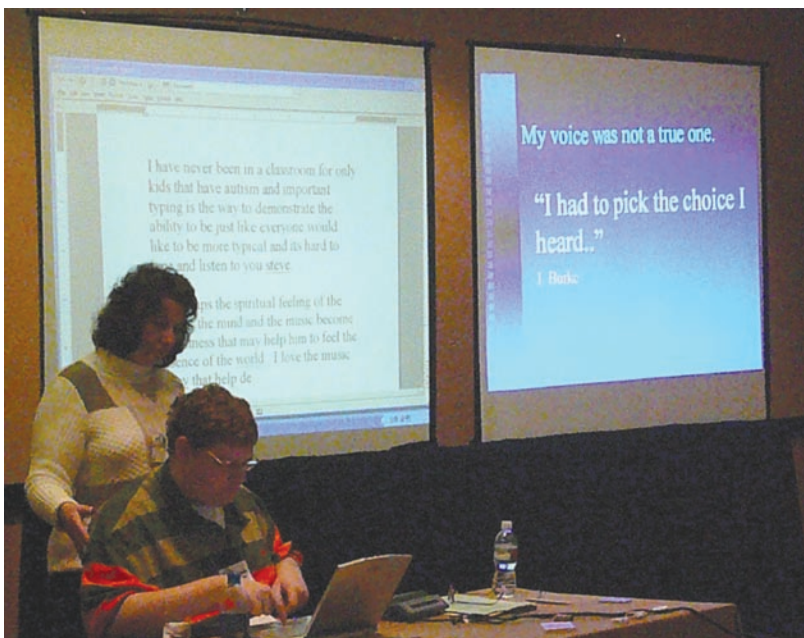
From left, Barbara Buswell, Executive Director of PEAK Parent Center, with Anne Donnellan and Barbara Ransom, two outstanding presenters from 2008, pose for a quick snapshot.



Start Planning for 2009 Today!

The 2009 Conference on Inclusive Education is set to be held **February 12-14, 2009** in **Denver, Colorado.**

This annual conference is nationally-recognized for continually presenting cutting edge educational techniques to parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals. With school and personal budgets tighter than ever, begin planning today. Talk to agencies in your local communities and inquire about how they might support you or someone you know to attend. And, as always, PEAK is working diligently to allocate scholarship funding. keep updated by visiting www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp. A brochure with full details will be available in the fall of 2008.



Jamie Burke, a college student with Autism, using Facilitated Communication to present to his audience.



PEAK PARENT CENTER CALENDAR

STATEWIDE

Bresnahan-Halstead Summer Institute:
Session I: July 14-July 18, 2008
Session II: July 21- July 25, 2008
The Charter at Beaver Creek
120 Offerson Road, Beaver Creek CO
Phone: 970-351-1667
Contact: UNC Bresnahan-Halstead-
Kephart-Centers
Email: lorae.blum@unco.edu

Camp Big Tree

July 8-July 12, 2008
Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center
PO BOX 697, Breckenridge CO
Claire DiCola: 800-383-2632 Ext. 16
Email: wildassist@boec.org

Education Reform and Children with Developmental Disabilities: A Critical Dialogue

4th Wednesday, 5:00 PM-9:00 PM
and 4th Thursday, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM
Community College of Aurora Rotunda
16000 E. Centretch Pkwy, Aurora CO
Phone: Darla Stuart 720-213-1420
Email: disarcaurora@aol.com

Jr. Adventure's Camp

July 28-July 30, 2008
Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center
PO BOX 697, Breckenridge CO
Claire DiCola: 800-383-2632 Ext. 16
Email: wildassist@boec.org

Wilderness Camp

July 21-25, 2008
Ruby & Horstthief Canyon, Colorado
PO BOX 697, Breckenridge CO
Claire DiCola: 800-383-2632 Ext. 16
Email: wildassist@boec.org

DENVER METRO

DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS CELEBRATES PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME

August 3, 2008
1005 York Street, Denver, CO
Contact: Will Jones 720-865-3552
jonesw@botanicgardens.org or
Michelle Root/Anna and John J. Sie
Foundation: 303-468-6663,
mroot@ajsfoundation.com
General admissions for adults is
\$10.50. \$7.50 for seniors 65+ / mili-
tary. \$6.00 for youth 4-15 / students
and Free for children 3 and under. Ask
us about need-based vouchers!

Addressing Core Social Deficits in Autism (For Parents/Grandparents)

2nd, 3rd Saturday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
1st Bank Building, 550 S. Wadsworth
Lakewood CO
Phone: Stacy Goresko 303-652-4950
Email: stacy@help-autism.com

Adolescents-Young Adults Toilet Training Strategies

1st, 2nd, 3rd Tuesday at 5:00 PM
Developmental Pathways
11111 E. Mississippi Ave., Aurora CO
Phone: 303-858-2359

Adult/Parent Support Group

Arc in Jefferson County
4th Thursday, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM
8725 W. 14th Ave, Suite 100
Lakewood CO
Louise Todd-Stoll: 303/232-1338, x207
Email: louise@arc.org

Boyfriend Girlfriend Series

Every Thursday from 6:00 PM-7:30 PM
The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas
7430 E Caley Ave #130, Centennial CO
Phone: Pam 303-220-9228
Email: pam@arcarapahoedouglas.org

Brain-Injury Support Group

2nd Wednesday, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Mediplex Rehab Hospital, 8451 Pearl
St., North Denver CO
Phone: Joan McNeill 303-286-5061

Cadre of Parent Volunteers Training

2nd, 3rd Tuesday, 5:30 PM-8:00 PM
Cerebral Palsy of Colorado
801 Yosemite St., Denver CO
Phone: Annika Johnson 303-365-2772
Email: annikaj@denvermetroprc.org

Cheerleading Club

Every Friday, 5:00 PM-5:00 AM
Garrison St Complex
9101 Ralston Rd, Arvada CO
Phone: Rachel Wysuph 303-231-1342
Email: rwysuph@ci.wheatridge.co.us

Colorado Special Hockey

Every Sunday, 6:20 PM-7:20 PM
The Edge Ice Arena
6623 South Ward St, Littleton CO
JoAnn Stephenson: 303-423-5729
Email: JStephe887@aol.com

Cooking Up Some Fun

Every Wednesday, 4:00 PM-6:00 PM
Wheat Ridge Recreation Center
4005 Kipling St, Wheat Ridge CO
Phone: Rachel Wysuph 303-231-1342
Email: rwysuph@ci.wheatridge.co.us

Dances for Adults with Disabilities Ages 16 to Adult

3rd Friday, 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
Clements Community Center
1580 Yarrow St, Lakewood CO
Phone: Jo Burns 303-987-4866
Email: joabur@lakewood.org

Denver West Mental Health Peer Support Group

Every Tuesday, 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
Lutheran Medical Center
3400 Lutheran Parkway, Denver CO
Phone: Terry 303-429-5950

Depression-Bipolar Recovery Group

4th Thursday at 7:00 PM
Messiah Lutheran Church
1750 Colorado Blvd., Denver CO
Phone: 303-377-3040

Discovery Club

3rd Saturday, 9:00 AM-4:30 PM
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
8817 S. Broadway, Highlands Ranch CO
Contact: Easter Seals of Colorado
Phone: (303) 233-1666, ext. 237

EL GRUPO VIDA Support Group

3rd Thursday at 6:30 PM
3995 Irving St., Denver CO
Phone: 720/932-1428

Empower Summer Picnic

Sunday, September 14, 2008
10:00 AM-3:00 PM
E.B. Rains Park
11701 Community Center Dr.
Northglenn, CO
Darcy Callies: 303-691-9339 Ext. 1125

Exceptional Kids Club Meeting

1st Saturday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Grace Chapel, 8505 S. Valley Highway
Englewood CO
Phone: Ken 720-733-9509
Email: ken@exceptionalkids.org

Fit for Fun

Every Thursday, 5:00 PM-5:45 PM
Special Needs Office
1849 Emerson St., Denver CO
Phone: Brooke Taflinger 720-865-823
Email: special.needs@ci.denver.co.us

Foothills Park and Recreation Adaptive Swimming

Every Saturday, 9:30 AM-10:30 AM
Ridge Rec. Center
6613 S. Ward St., Littleton CO
Phone: Kim Maxey 303-309-2508

FREE Activity: First Tuesday Nights at Denver's Children's Museum

1st Tuesday, 4:00 PM-8:00 PM
2121 Children's Museum Dr., Denver
Caryn Gracey Jones: 303-561-0111

FREE Day at the Denver Art Museum

Every Saturday from 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
100 W. 14th Avenue Parkway, Denver
Phone: 720-865-5000
Email: info@arcjc.org

Friday Coffee: A chance to meet and chat about our children with special needs. Every Friday

Park Hill neighborhood, Denver, CO
Call Karen Roberts at 303-329-8950

Jumping Bean Gymnastics

Every Monday, 10:15 AM-11:00 AM
Cook Park Recreation Center
7100 Cherry Creek S. Dr., Denver CO
Phone: Andrea Riggins 720-865-824
Email: andrea.riggins@ci.denver.co.us

People First, Arc in Jefferson County

3rd Thursday, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM
call to confirm location, Lakewood
Jeanne Weis: 303/232-1338, ext 204

Respite Evenings - Night Owls

1st, 3rd Friday at 6:00 PM
Fisher Early Learning Center
1899 E. Evans Ave., Denver CO
Phone: 303-871-2095
Email: NightOwlsDenver@gmail.com

Saturday Morning Story Hour

Every Saturday, 10:00 AM-11:00 AM
Graham-Bible House in City Park
21st and York Streets, Denver CO
Email: info@cityparkalliance.org

Single Parents of Kids with Disabilities Support Group

2nd Thursday at 7:00 PM
Arc in Jefferson County
8725 W. 14th Ave, Suite 100,
Lakewood CO
Phone: Carrie 720/963-1236
Email: carriesonneborn@yahoo.com

Watch Our Words Monthly Meeting

3rd Thursday, 6:00 PM-7:30 PM
Developmental Disabilities Planning
Council conference room
3333 Quebec, 6th Floor, Denver CO
Phone: 720-941-0176
Email: marnaaires@state.co.us

Youth Bowling Night

4th Monday, 5:30 PM-7:30 PM
Elitch Lanes Bowling Center
3825 Tennyson Street, Denver CO
Marcee Peterson: 303-377-9774 x26
Email: marcee@epilepsycolorado.org

NORTH CENTRAL

EMPOWER Colorado Support Group

4th Thursday, 6:30 PM-8:30 PM
DREAM Office
3800 Automation Way, Ft. Collins, CO
Phone: 970/226-4058
Email: fc@empowercolorado.com

Family Support and Sharing Group

2nd Thursday, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Harmony Presbyterian Church
400 E. Boardwalk Drive, Fort Collins CO
Phone: Brenda Tuttle 970-267-8705
Email: brenttuttle@yahoo.com

FREE Activity: Music Therapy for Children with Special Needs

Every Thursday, 10:00 AM-10:30 AM
Harmony Presbyterian Church
400 Boardwalk Dr., Fort Collins CO
Megan Steifken, MT-BC, NMT
970-308-8779
Email: mderven@hotmail.com

Front Range Autism Support Group

4th Wednesday, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM
Bacon Elementary School
5948 Timberline Rd., Ft. Collins CO
Phone: (970) 223-2688
Email: scottvan4@msn.com

Fun Fusion Therapeutic Summer Session

2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesday, Thursday from
8:30 AM-2:30 PM
It's All About Communication LLC
6107 Ashton Court, Fort Collins CO
Phone: Catherine Bladow 970-420-578
Email: allaboutcom@comcast.net

Please visit www.peakparent.org
for more listings in your area!

Mile High Down Syndrome Association Larimer County Parent Group
3rd Friday, 6:30 PM-8:30 PM
Plymouth Congregational Church
916 W. Prospect Rd., Fort Collins, CO
Wanda or Larry Werth: 970-498-9519
Email: sirwerthlat@earthlink.net

Mom's Night Out

Every Monday, 6:30 PM-10:00 PM
Borders Book Store Coffee Shop
2863 35th Ave., Greeley CO
Michelle Leonard: 970-454-2580
Email: michelleleonard@slbbi.net

Northern Colorado Playgroup

1st, 3rd Friday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Respite Care Center
6203 S Lemay Ave, Fort Collins CO
Phone: Heather Schichtel 970-669-5007
Email: heather.schichtel@gmail.com

Open Meeting For People With Disabilities

1st Saturday at 11:00 AM
Smiling Moose Restaurant, Greeley CO
Group: 970 330-5326 Michelle Sauder
or 970 330-0626 Sue Zamora

Parent Education Class for Parents of Toddlers and Preschoolers

Every Wednesday, 12:00 PM-1:00 PM
Every Thursday, 6:00 PM-7:00 PM
Children's Speech and Reading Center
1247 Riverside Ave, Suite 4, Fort Collins
Phone: 970-419-486
Email: csrckids@gmail.com

Parents of Children with Special Needs Support Group

4th Monday, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Location: Evangelical Free Church
1325 3rd St., Eaton CO
Phone: Dianne Stille 970-454-3023

South Weld County Parent Support Group

1st Friday, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM
Location varies, Ft. Lupton CO
Larry Mc Dermott: 970-353-5219
Email: arc@arcweldcounty.org

Special Needs Book Club and Support Group

4th Sunday at 2:00 PM
Reader's Cove
1001 E. Harmony Rd., Fort Collins CO
Phone: 970-377-8540
Autism Society of Larimer County
Email: aslc@autismlarimer.org

Special Needs Yoga

Every Saturday, 9:00 AM-9:45 AM
Yoga Kids Studio
1632 N. Overland Trail, Fort Collins CO
Phone: Vickie Dunn 970-498-490

NORTH WEST

EMPOWER-Colorado Support Group

3rd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
Pioneer Hospital Board Room
345 Cleveland, Meeker CO
Phone: Lisa: 970-878-4305; Trula:
970-878-5923; Annie: 970-878-5272

EMPOWER-Colorado Support Group

3rd Thursday at 6:00 PM
Library House next to the Library and
Community Center
Steamboat Springs, CO
Phone: Susan 970-871-1678

PIKES PEAK

"The Early Years" – Family Support

Every Friday, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
Colorado School for the Deaf and the
Blind
33 N. Institute St., Colorado Springs
Phone: Dana Ryan 719-578-2156
Email: dryan@csdb.org

Autism Society of America- Pikes Peak Chapter

2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
Otis Park Community Center
731 N. Iowa Ave., Colorado Springs CO
Phone: Janet Strutton 719-473-5421

Colorado Springs Tourette Syndrome Support Group

3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM-8:30 PM
Downtown at the NAMI Office
510 E. Willamette, Colorado Springs
Phone: Rachel 719-266-8477
Email: tsacospgs@bolenbaugh.net

Colorado Springs Down Syndrome Association Annual Summer Picnic

July 27, 2008, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Monument Valley Park
Colorado Springs, CO

Colorado Springs Down Syndrome Association Annual Buddy Walk

August 23, 2008
Memorial Park, Manitou Springs, CO
Phone: Julie Harmon 719-633-1133
Email: info@csdsabuddywalk.org

Empower Colorado

2nd Saturday, 9:00 AM-11:00 AM
Mosaic Foundation
1785 N. Academy Blvd. #127
Colorado Springs CO
Phone: Crystal Morris, 719-559-7679
Email: wcm1994@yahoo.com

Exceptional Kids Club - Co. Springs

2nd Saturday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
290 Woodmen Road, Colorado Springs
Phone: Katie Garvert 719-388-4948
Email: katieg@exceptionalkids.org

Family Support Group, Arc/Pikes Peak Region

3rd Wednesday, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Arc/Pikes Peak Region
12 N. Meade, Colorado Springs CO
Phone: Teddi Roberts 719-471-4800

Independent Living Skills

Every Friday at 12:00 PM
Independence Center, Colorado Springs
Phone: Vickie Skoog 719 471-8181

Mighty Kids Sports - Mighty Hoopsters Basketball Clinic

3rd, 4th Saturday, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM
Gym at First Presbyterian Church
219 E. Bijou St., Colorado Springs CO
Phone: The Link at FPC 719-884-6206

My Gym Children's Fitness Center Open Gym

Every Tuesday, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM
5773 N. Academy Blvd., Co. Springs
Phone: Joe Cunningham 719-528-5437
Email: csmgyg@yahoo.com

Project Bloom Family Involvement Meeting

2nd Tuesday, 12:30 PM-2:30 PM
CPCD (headstart main office)
2330 Robinson, Colorado Springs CO
Phone: MaryLynn 719-572-6168
Email: MaryLynnS@ppbhg.org

The Arc's Fancy Dance

July 19, 2008, 6:00 PM-9:00 PM
Crown Plaza Hotel
2886 South Circle, Colorado Springs
Jackie Corley: 719-471-4800 Ext. 101
Email: jackie@thearcppr.org

The Arc's Summer Block Party

August 1, 2008, 3:00 PM-6:00 PM
The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region
12 North Meade Ave, Colorado Springs
Jackie Corley: 719-471-4800 Ext. 101
Email: jackie@thearcppr.org

SOUTH EAST

Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder Support

Group, Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado
1st Tuesday, 7:00 PM-8:30 PM
301 N. Main St., Pueblo CO
Phone: Veronica Valdez 719-583-8233

Family Support Meeting

2nd Monday at 7:00 PM
Southeastern Developmental Services
1111 S. 4th St., Lamar CO
Phone: Kim Engsborg 719-336-3244
Email: KimEngsborg@aol.com

Foster/Adopt/Kinship Care Support Group

1st Tuesday from 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
Boys & Girls Club
202 S Main, Rocky Ford CO
Phone: 719-254-7776
Email: tricountysda@hotmail.com

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Alliance, Fremont County Family Center

1st Tuesday from 6:00 PM-7:30 PM
Fremont County Family Center
1401 Oak Creek Grade Road,
Canon City CO
Phone: 719-269-1523

Positive Partnership Autism Spectrum

3rd Friday at 6:00 PM
District 60 Administration Building
315 W. 11th Street, Pueblo CO
Phone: Heather Norton 719-545-928
Email: heathen753@msn.com

SOUTH WEST

Family Support Council Meeting

1st Wednesday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Developmental Opportunities
601 Greenwood Ave., Canon City CO
Nancy Harris 719-275-1616 ext 212

K.I.N.D. Family Support Group

4th Monday, 5:30 PM-7:00 PM
Fremont County Family Center
1401 Oak Creek Grade Rd.,
Canon City CO
Phone: 719-269-1523
Email: info@starpointco.com

Preschool Playgroup

Every Thursday, 10:00 AM-11:00 AM
Fremont County Family Center
1401 Oak Creek Grade Rd.,
Canon City CO
Phone: 719-269-1523

Toddler Playgroup

Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 AM-11:00 AM
Fremont County Family Center
1401 Oak Creek Grade Rd.,
Canon City CO
Phone: 719-269-1523

Understanding and Shaping the Behavior of an Individual with a Developmental Disability

4th Tues., Thurs., 9:00 AM-12:30 PM
San Luis Valley BOCES
2261 Enterprise St., Alamosa CO
Phone: Sam Towers 720-554-1886
Email: sam@towersbehavior.com

WEST CENTRAL

Brain-Injury Support Group

1st Wednesday from 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
Ratekin Tower
875 Main St., Grand Junction CO
Phone: Derek Sheley 970-523-6041

EMPOWER/Federation of Families

Every Monday from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM
Hawthorne Community Church
4th and Hill, Grand Junction CO
Phone: Janice Curtis 866-213-4631
Email: jcurtis@frontier.net

EMPOWER-Colorado, Montrose Support Group

2nd Thursday at 12:00 PM
Methodist Church
1st and Park, Montrose CO
Phone: Sabrina 970-249-7606

PHP - Parents Helping Parents of Western Colorado

3rd Monday from 4:30 PM-6:00 PM
Delta County Memorial Hospital
1501 E. 3rd Street, Delta CO
Phone: Canase 970-856-7019
Email: justmom97@earthlink.net

Special Needs Resource Group

1st Monday from 6:00 PM-7:30 PM
Location varies, Clifton CO
Phone: Simone Herrera 970-208-7614
Email: simoneherrera@yahoo.com

Understanding and Shaping the Behavior of Your Child with a Developmental Disability

3rd Saturday, 9:00 AM-12:30 PM
Delta-Montrose Voc-Tec Center
1765 Highway 50, Delta CO
Phone: Sam Towers 970-554-1886
Email: sam@towersbehavior.com

Get the word out about your upcoming event using PEAK's online, Statewide Calendar. You can submit your event to the online calendar by clicking on "Submit an Event" from the "Statewide Calendar" link at www.peakparent.org!



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Opening Doors: Connecting Students to Curriculum, Classmates, and Learning

By Barbara E. Buswell, C. Beth Schaffner, and Alison B. Seyler

This innovative text contains practical how-to's for including and supporting all students in general education classes, both elementary and secondary. It explores the processes, thinking, and approaches that successful implementers of inclusion have used. An essential title for anyone looking for effective ways to make inclusion work. 1999, 52 Pages, \$14



Connecting Students: A Guide to Thoughtful Friendship Facilitation for Educators and Families

By C. Beth Schaffner and Barbara E. Buswell

This guide offers readers real-life examples of how friendship facilitation can be implemented in natural ways in schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Perfect for anyone working to build classrooms and schools that ensure caring, acceptance, and belonging for all students. 2002, 45 Pages, \$11



My Friend Isabelle By Eliza Woloson

This beautiful picture book tells of the friendship of Isabelle and Charlie. They both like to paint, dance, slide, and play, but they also are different. Isabella has Down syndrome and Charlie doesn't. The story and bold illustrations help young children to appreciate their similarities and differences. After the story, the author briefly introduces the real Isabella and why friendships like her's and Charlie's make the world a more tolerant place. 2003, 28 Pages, \$15

Purchase these and more titles today! Visit our online store at www.peakparent.org or call (800) 284-0251.

You Can Help PEAK Families!

The PEAK Parent Center has accomplished so much with the help of friends and supporters like you. Together, we have witnessed many lives improve as individuals with disabilities are more successfully included in schools and communities. Your contribution helps PEAK build on this progress, expanding programs to reach more families and make meaningful differences in their lives.

Donate securely online at www.peakparent.org!

YES, I want to help PEAK help families with a contribution:

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Check enclosed. Charge my: AmEx Visa MC

Acct. # _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to: PEAK Parent Center

Check here to keep your donation confidential.