

# The CIDSO News

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 10

JANUARY 15, 2009

## "A Brighter Tomorrow"

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## Happy New Year!

With the new year come new opportunities for self education. There are several different workshops available over the next few weeks that emphasize inclusion and advocacy. Here are just a few conference opportunities.

- On January 17, 2009 there is a conference entitled "Meeting Us With Open Doors". The guest speaker is Dr. Erik Carter and it will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Washington. This conference runs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The goal of this program is to learn how to increase the inclusion of persons with special needs in all areas of church and parish life.
- Wednesday, January 28th in Peoria, the Illinois Mentor Network offers "Illinois Voices". Illinois Voices is a state-wide self-advocacy initiative designed to empower people with developmental and other disabilities to make their own decisions, stand up for their rights and speak for themselves based on their strengths and desires. Registration is encouraged for this event, so contact Susan Urquhart at 217-875-8891 or [surquhart@maconresources.org](mailto:surquhart@maconresources.org) if you are interested.
- Another Self-Advocacy Workshop is being presented on Saturday February 7th at Bethel Lutheran Church. This event is sponsored by HOIDSA and addresses self-directed services, what's happening nationally with self-directed services and current possibilities for self-direction in Illinois.

Workshops and conferences are a proactive way to stay involved and informed. Attendance is always encouraged.



## Legal Changes

On December 1, the U.S. Department of Education issued final regulations amending several important rules relating to special education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Two changes are of particular importance for all parents and for educators. First, for the first time in the history of special education, parents now have the right to revoke consent at any time to their child's participation in special education. The revocation must be provided to the school district in writing. The parent must be provided with a notice from the school district indicating that the revocation constitutes a change of placement/status and explaining the parents' rights. The parents or the school may at a subsequent date request that the child be reconsidered for special education again. for the failure to provide a free appropriate education.

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## *The View from My Shoes*

*Continued from the December Newsletter*

I go to school not far from my house. I think they call it "Main Streaming" and I am not sure how I feel about that. Mom works while I am at school. I have some friends I am closer to than others, but my best friend is my older brother. I think it comes from the trust I have in him and the fact that we sort of understand each other. He helps me sometimes with my book bag, but mostly my Mom makes me handle it on my own. I need to be self-sufficient.

Mom is very clever. She tries to keep our family busy doing things that do not necessarily revolve around my extra chromosome. Kinda neat huh?

We vacation as a family in a huge forest up North. My grandpa has a cabin with just the bare necessities and we have so much fun in the woods by the lake. If I am quiet, which is a little hard for me, nature comes out of its cover and reveals secrets. I think that is how others should act around me. Not the quiet part, but let me have a chance to reveal my secrets. We need to have an awareness of each other, but in "olden days" people with my condition had actually been hidden. Up until recent years I may not have had an opportunity to tell you about how I feel and the things I like. There are pioneers we need to thank, and those same pioneers are counting on me, and my new friend, to pave the way for others to come.

Not all of us with Down Syndrome are the same. Some of us are happy all the time and some not so happy. Some of us like to hug and kiss everyone, some don't. I am one of those who are not too "touchy feely". I like most everyone, but I am not fond of a big hug from anyone but my closest family. This is the result of days in the hospital with all those people poking and prodding. I am still a little afraid of anything having to do with medicine.

Gotta go, my brother just swiped Willie.

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However, if the parents revoke the consent for special education, the school is not responsible. The new regulation addressing this issue is 34 Code of Federal Regulations 300.300(b). If the parent revokes consent, the school district may not pursue a due process hearing or other legal measures to overturn the parents' decision.

The second major change involves representation at due process hearings. Previously, prevailing interpretation of the IDEA provided that the parents could be assisted at due process hearings by non-lawyers, regardless of the state's rules regarding unauthorized practice of law by non-attorneys. Under the new IDEA regulations, the rules as to whether a non-lawyer may represent either the parent or the school at a due process hearing will now be governed by state law. It will now be necessary for parents to investigate the rules in their state regarding unauthorized practice of law. 34 CFR 300.512 (a)(1). In Illinois, state law already permits non-lawyer advocates to assist parents in IEP meetings and due process hearings. The new Federal regulations can be found at the following website, which also includes lengthy comments and department commentary:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-28175.htm>. These regulations take effect on December 31, 2008.

### Mark the Date:

#### January 19:

CIDSO Board Meeting  
5:30 pm at Jean's house.

#### January 28:

Illinois Mentor Network in Peoria. 9:00—2:00pm free training day.

#### February 7:

Self Advocacy Workshop in Morton. 9:00—11:00am

#### February:

CEC will begin more bowling opportunities. Dates coming soon.

#### March 15:

Deadline for grants to be submitted.

#### Disclaimer Policy

The editor of this newsletter writes as a non-professional. CIDSO does not promote any therapy, treatment, institution or professional system, etc. Please discuss specific concerns with your health care professional.