

In This Issue

- Pay It Forward
- A Parent's Influence
- Dreaming Big Dreams
- Paving the Way for a Son



Coming Up

Everything You Ever
Wanted to Know About
Nevada Partners in
Policymaking... **Topical Call**
Monday, November 16, 2009 at 7:00PM.

SAVE THE DATE! Youth
Transition Jamboree
Coming February 12th **Register**
online or call **Family TIES** for details,
866-326-8437.

Making a Difference!

*Nevada Partners in
Policymaking equips and
motivates parents to be
community leaders in
improving outcomes for
Nevada's children and their
families.*

*Many of the graduates of
Nevada Partners in
Policymaking Program are
parents of young children
with developmental
disabilities. Throughout the
years, these parents have
become Nevada's change
agents in increasing new*

Pay It Forward!

When we asked you, the Nevada Partner graduates to share your stories of how the training influenced your lives we expected a lot of responses. But many of you have gone above and beyond – like Tiffany Hunter, Class of 2007 who tells us about a number of her experiences advocating in our state legislature. Today we share three of these stories with you and ask that you “pay it forward” by sharing our stories with three other people you know who might be a good candidate for our new class that starts in February.

A Parent's Influence



*Mary Bryant, parent
Class of 1999*

My relationships with elected officials, school personnel and other policy makers have become more positive because I am more positive since I took the Partners training. Early in Partners the "light bulb" went off in my head when I realized that there was nothing wrong with my daughter. Once I realized that and stopped apologizing for her differences, my role changed to positively educating people about the value of people's differences and the fact that equal access is a civil rights issue, not a doing-something-nice-for-the-poor-"handicapped"-person issue.

Since my training, I've helped start the People First of Nevada organization. I've also joined and become the chair of Nevada's Council on Developmental Disabilities, which this year is awarding grants to organizations specifically to fund innovative projects to assist people with disabilities find employment. I was recently named to Nevada's new Disability Services Commission, and I'm also on the board of the Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada. Now, at my job at the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, I am working to establish a postsecondary education program for people with intellectual disabilities in Nevada.

early intervention opportunities and services for Nevada's youngest children.

Their enthusiasm and impact endure for years.

Janelle Mulvenon, Chief
Bureau of Early Intervention Services
Nevada State Health Division



Partners is a process where an individual with a disability or a parent transforms into a member of the community with a strong, powerful and collective voice. They then move on to become mentors and inspirations to every person they come in contact with.

Janice Lee
Consultant,
Creative Educational Approaches, LLC
Statewide Trainer,
Positive Behavior Support, Nevada



Parents who learn advocacy skills are then in a better position to encourage their children's self-advocacy skills.

Ann Bingham
Professor of Special Education
University of Nevada, Reno



Dreaming Big Dreams



*Tiffany Hunter, Self-advocate
Class of 2007*

I work for AmeriCorps VISTA which is like the Peace Corps but we work in the States. My project is People First of Nevada the Carson City chapter, a self-advocacy group for adults with disabilities and developmental differences who want to work together to control their own lives. When I signed up for this class I had no idea what to expect. After completing it, I've learned how to advocate for myself and others, how to testify at a legislative hearing, how to run a meeting with parliamentary procedure, and the importance of inclusion in the schools and community and much, much more. But, no one told me that I would have to be in class by 8:00 o'clock in the morning, or that they would feed us so well, and I would make a lot of great friends.

A few years ago I used my self-advocacy skills when I supported a bill to refer to people with disabilities as a person first and their disability second. I originally heard about the Person First Language at the People First meeting in Carson City. I learned a lot more about the importance of this bill at the Partners in Policymaking class.

Last year as part of the Legislative Subcommittee for the Governor's Council for Developmental Disabilities I helped track legislative bills including SB 491 which mandates the use of Respectful Language in all future laws. I was very interested in the outcome of this bill so I attended Committee hearings where I handed out Respectful Language posters to Senators and Assembly Members asking for their support and, at the last minute, decided to testify in support of SB 491.

Partners has taught me self-determination, increased my confidence, and shown me how to advocate for what I believe in. They have shown me that small dreams make small changes and big dreams produce big changes. Thanks to the Partners class - I now have the knowledge and inspiration to dream Big.

Paving the Way for a Son



*Cheryl Schumacher, Parent
Class of 1997*

I graduated from the first Nevada Partners in Policymaking class in 1997. Because of Partners I have become a life-long advocate for including my son in society as a whole and for other people with developmental



Contact Us

1-866-326-8437

info@familytiesnv.org

<http://www.familytiesnv.org>

disabilities. I have asked the questions "Why not be included..." or "How can my son be included..." instead of asking for permission or feeling it is a favor to be included in all aspects of our community.

As a result he is now a young adult who sees himself as a person first and having a disability as a challenge verses having a problem. He is attending a post-secondary program for students with cognitive disabilities at a Big Ten University and is fully included in the campus community, even serving on the Campus Activity Board with many other typical university students. He has goals for his life and fully expects and demands to be a part of our society as a whole.

I believe those things may not have happened if I had not had the good fortune to connect with others who saw people with developmental disabilities as people first and having a disability as a part of life, not as some problem that could not be overcome.