

Writing to Legislators - effective strategies.

BY KORRI WARD, PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING GRADUATE, CLASS 2007 & PARENT CONSULTANT FAMILY TIES OF NEVADA

Writing to legislators can be difficult, especially when it is a personal story. You have so much to say and want to share your story. To be most effective, focus on a few talking points while telling your story. Talking points are succinct key messages you want your legislator to remember.

As the bills you are tracking pass from committee to committee, new legislators will be voting on the bills. Submit your testimony to all the committee members each time the bill is heard in a new committee. Committee meetings are broadcast over the internet, you can watch by clicking on "live meetings" on the legislative home page. This session the

legislators have a very difficult mission to develop a budget with the new economy. All departments are experiencing budget reductions. It is important that you inform your legislators of the impact of their decisions on your family.

If you are interested in learning more about policy development consider applying for Family TIES Partners in Policymaking classes. Partners in Policymaking teaches parents and self advocates about state and federal advocacy, as well as available programs and services.

mission

Increasing the hope, confidence and independence of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions of all ages, and their circle of support, through training, information, emotional support and advocacy.



Para asistencia en Español favor contactar a Yasodara Cabrera, Coordinadora de Recursos. En las Vegas marque al (702) 740-4200 y en Reno (775) 823-9500 Ext. 232.

How Can I Follow the Legislative Process?

BY KORRI WARD, PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING GRADUATE, CLASS 2007 & PARENT CONSULTANT FAMILY TIES OF NEVADA

The Nevada Legislature meets in Carson City every two years. The session begins in February and ends in June. Currently, the 2011 Legislature is in session. Many of the budgets, policies and laws being developed involve Health and Human Services and Education. If you are interested in voicing your opinion, **now** is the time to take action. Here are some steps to follow to help you navigate the legislative session.

- The first step is to find out who your legislators are. Follow the "Who's my legislator?" link on the right side of the main page of the Legislative website at www.leg.state.nv.us/. Enter your street address and zip code and both your Nevada and U.S. Representatives will be displayed. For their contact information and biographies just click on their names.
- It may be interesting to discover which bills your legislators are sponsoring. From the main page click on "session info" and then "76th session (2011)", "Bill information" and "bills by primary sponsor". In the drop down window select your legislator.
- You can also search for a bill that is of a topic of interest to you. Choose "76th session (2011)" and then either "assembly bills" or "senate bills". Then enter the text in the search window.
- To learn more about the bills go to the "76th (2011) session" page and click on NELIS. NELIS provides an overview, exhibits and committee action for each bill.
- Once you know the bills you want to follow, you can set up personalized bill tracking. From the main legislative page select "Personalized bill tracking". Create your 2011 session account. Scroll down to Option 5 and follow the directions.

If you have additional questions on this process call us at Family TIES of Nevada and we can help you find your way.

We Offer...

TRAINING

▶ **Be a Peer Mentor:** Join our workshop and learn how to effectively provide emotional support to other parents who have children with special health care needs and disabilities. The following are tentative dates and locations for our upcoming **FREE** Parent to Parent trainings:

Elko:

Friday, May 6, 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Head Start, Family Room, 1280 Golf Course Road, Elko, NV 89801

Reno:

Friday, May 13, 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Family TIES of Nevada Office
3100 Mill Street, Ste 117, Reno, NV 89502

Las Vegas:

Saturday, May 21 (Spanish)
Saturday, June 4 (English)
10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
HealthInsight Community Room
6830 W. Oquendo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Registration is required. Please call Melissa Krutsinger, Training Coordinator at 1-866-326-8437
Or register online: <http://familytiesnv.org/training/events>

INFORMATION

▶ **Toll-free parent support and information/referral line 1-866-326-8437** is available to families of children and youth with special health care needs. In partnership with Nevada State Health Division Bureau of Family, Child, and Community Wellness, Family TIES of Nevada offers Family Centered Outreach and Support AND Up-to-date Information on Resources.

▶ **Join the festivities during Nevada Infant Immunization Week April 23–30!**

Southern Nevada Immunization & Health Coalition and Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition are hosting many fun-filled fairs, free clinics and educational events in Reno and Las Vegas to increase awareness, highlight the benefits and importance of infant/childhood immunization. Ongoing community activities throughout the week include no cost immunization clinics for children aged 0-6 years (child's shot record required). To find out what's happening in your neighborhood access our website for dates and location.

www.familytiesnv.org

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

▶ *Whether in-person, by phone or e-mail, Family TIES offers referrals and assistance with a kind understanding from families who have "been there".*

The Hall Family Story:

"Scott and I have been married for six years and are the parents of two children, one living. Ezra, our four-year-old, is energetic, inquisitive, and loves life. When Ezra was two years old, he received a tentative diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome which was later confirmed at age four. We went through the (Family TIES) referral process and the many resources we received gave us hope and showed us that Ezra *does* have a bright future ahead! Now I can assist and share with other families all I have learned. My entire paradigm has shifted in how I look at disabilities, and I will be *forever* grateful to Family TIES for facilitating that change."

ANNE HALL, PARENT AND NEVADA PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING GRADUATE, CLASS 2010

"I am feeling more motivated to have goals and high expectations for my son."

-A PARTICIPANT OF THE YOUTH TRANSITION SUMMIT HELD MARCH 17/18, 2011 AT UNLV

Nevada Family Leader Honored with National Award

BY MARCIA O'MALLEY, BOARD MEMBER, FAMILY VOICES

For eight years, Polly Arango led the Family Voices organization as its founding Executive Director to a widely respected national model of family leaders who were committed and dedicated to serving children and youth with special health care needs. Through Polly's vision and foresight, many families have become health leaders within their own communities or states, including a number of family members in Nevada. She was a true inspiration to me and others who helped grow the Family TIES of Nevada organization over the past decade.

Last February, during the Family Voices/Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs national conference, I was presented with the Family Voices Polly Arango Leadership Award, which recognizes individuals and/or families who have shown exemplary leadership within their community or state and is a tribute to the legacy of Polly.

Leadership development through mentoring was a long-standing passion of Polly's. Following her death last summer, Family Voices created the Polly Arango Memorial Fund and is using those funds to establish a mentoring program. The vision is that this mentoring program will support the continued growth of the Family Voices organization through the identification, development and support of emerging family leaders.

For over 30 years, Polly dedicated her life's work to ensuring that children and families remain at the center of healthcare. Her commitment to families with CYSHCN has inspired countless family advocates, MCH state programs and partner agencies, and her legacy will live on through their continued efforts.

Although I stepped down as the Executive Director of Family TIES last fall, I continue to serve on the Family Voices board of directors where I stay connected to national public policy issues and best practices in family-centered care and leadership development. I'm taking my leadership development to the next level with this training opportunity and intend to share my new found knowledge in creative ways back home. As a final project, I plan to develop new online resources for youth with special health care needs in partnership with youth leaders and organizations and agencies that serve youth in some capacity. If, through my work in Nevada, I in any way have emulated Polly's authentic spirit, than I have done well! She paved the way for me and showed by example how to support families and foster leadership.

Family TIES - Family Voices of Nevada

For many years Family TIES of Nevada has served as the state chapter of Family Voices. Through this partnership Family TIES supports the Family Voices mission, whose purpose is to: 1) make systemic change for children and youth with special healthcare needs, 2) develop collaborative partnerships with community and state leaders, and 3) develop innovative, family-friendly materials for families to access better healthcare services. Family TIES is the Nevada Family to Family Health Information Center and under this project continues to infuse the Family Voices Principles in its activities.



board of directors

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"Let us remember as each of us makes decisions that will affect children- whether we are parents, educators, health professionals, or government officials-it is our duty to consider if that decision either affirms or denies a child's most basic human rights."

Polly Arango, 1942-2010
Co-Founder, Family Voices



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www.familytiesnv.org

volunteer...

to be a support parent, serve on our Board of Directors, or organize a fundraising event.

assist...

with contacting families when we have Action Alerts.

contribute...

by making a financial contribution. Visit our home page at www.familytiesnv.org and click on the "Make a Donation" button.



Become a friend on facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/familytiesnv>

Help Us Help Our Community

For the past several years Family TIES of Nevada has relied almost exclusively on grants and in-kind support to fund critical services. In order to continue these valuable programs for Nevadans we need your help! Please send in your tax-deductible contribution today to our N. Nevada Office at 3100 Mill Street, Suite #117, Reno, NV 89502, and become a **Friend of Family TIES**.

I would like to help Family TIES of Nevada provide Trainning, Information, and Emotional Support for people with disabilities and special health care needs.

Please add me to your mailing list.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I am making a donation of __ \$25 __\$50 __\$75 __\$100 __\$Other

Enclosed is my check made payable to **Family TIES of Nevada**.

For donations by credit card please visit our website at www.familytiesnv.org and click the **Make a Donation** button on the upper right side of the page. All donations made by credit card will be transmitted through *Network for Good*.

Your donations will be used for many activities at Family TIES - you can view our 2011 funding priorities on our website at www.familytiesnv.org/aboutus/funding.