



The Beacon



**The NC Family to Family Health Information Center
A project of The Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
Home to Family Voices of NC**

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Welcome from the NC Family to Family Health Information Center (HIC)!

This monthly electronic newsletter is designed to provide parents with links, resources, information and activities of particular interest to the issues of children with special health care needs.

To be added or removed from "The Beacon" mailing list <mailto:hic@ecacmail.org>

Are you ready to "CHAT" about health care transition?

CHAT = Carolina Health and Transition

The CHAT project is up and running and we are scheduling workshops across the state for parents of children and youth with special health care needs. To schedule a workshop in your area please call (800) 962-6817 ext. 35.

We have produced a DVD on health care transition and are working on duplication efforts. To pre-order your copy please call us (above) or write to hic@ecacmail.org. These DVDs will be available at no charge to families in NC.



Previous Editions

Click on the month:

July 2009
June 2009
May 2009
April 2009
March 2009

The NC Family to Family Health Information Center

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Lifeline for Parents: paws4people



How can a dog change the life of a child with disabilities? With the help of **paws4people™** nonprofit organization the possibilities are truly endless. The mission of **paws4people™ foundation** is to enhance the lives of special and regular education students, seniors, and the seriously ill or disabled, by utilizing the "Special Powers" of canine companionship displayed by highly trained Assistance Dogs; including Service, Educational Assistance K-9s, Rehabilitative Assistance Dogs and Social Therapy dogs in specialized educational, private placements and therapeutic visitation programs. In North Carolina **paws4people™** has various ways to help if you have a child with special needs. From an Educational Assistance dog to a Service Dog your child's life can be changed.

NIKKI is a Rehabilitative Assistance dog that works each day with students who receive physical therapy services. Her handler is Sharon Antoszyk, Physical Therapist with Cabarrus County Schools. Sharon takes NIKKI with her daily to visit her students. It is amazing how hard the students will work when NIKKI is involved. She is able to motivate students to do things such as walking, kneeling, or simple head control. Many times teachers will build their lessons around NIKKI coming. Students enjoy making dog biscuits, reading stories to NIKKI, or just brushing her as part of their reward for working hard. Rehabilitative and Educational Assistance Dogs within the school is the key to bridge the gap between students with special needs and their typical developing peers.

CAMDEN is a Service Dog being trained for Alex. Alex was diagnosed with Mitochondria Encephalomyopathy. He has no head control and cannot sit or stand unsupported. Speaking and eating are very difficult for him due to his movement disorder. There are many benefits we see to having a Service Dog for Alex. The main benefit for Alex is the companionship and social improvements, especially on walks around our neighborhood. Alex's dog will also help him cope with hospital visits and different doctor's appointments. We know that CAMDEN will enable Alex to be more independent. The dog could pick things up that Alex drops, intentionally and unintentionally. There are so many possibilities with a **paws4people™** dog for Alex.



CAYLIE is working hard to finish up her training to be ready for Jack. Jack is an intelligent and vibrant six year old who was a victim of Shaken Baby Syndrome. He was shaken when he was nineteen months, had brain surgery to relieve the swelling and suffered several strokes as a result. His prognosis was very poor, but he survived and has improved. Jack needs a Service Dog to help him walk with a special harness that has a handle. His mobility is limited, so he needs a dog to help stabilize him as he goes up and down stairs, help him walk safely in public and most importantly, to assist with seizures. Jack has violent seizures and the dog that has chosen him is sensitive to the sudden change that occurs. Over time we hope to teach Jack's dog to support him and ease him to the ground during a seizure and also to alert his parents of seizure activity.

For more information on **paws4people™** and the services it provides please go to www.paws4people.org.