

PODS NEWSLETTER

Parents of Down Syndrome Support Group OF NEPA

A Division of The Arc of NEPA

May 2009

Prepared by: Kristen Finnerty

The countdown for the 2009 Buddy Walk is on. The group needs your help in making this year's walk a success. The Buddy Walk will be held at Scranton School District's Memorial Stadium on September 27th at 1pm. If you would like to help out, please come to the next meeting or contact Steve Finnerty at 570-585-2962 or steven_finnerty@comcast.net. We would love to get help in donations, fundraising, event coordination and other areas that will be discussed at the meeting.



NEXT MEETING

Sunday, May 31st at 6pm

(Board to meet at 5pm)

This meeting will be entirely focused on the upcoming Buddy Walk. Please come out to lend your support and to share your ideas.

I Can Do It!

My name is Ryan Elizabeth Finnerty. I will be five years old in August and I cannot wait for my birthday. I love to sing "Happy Birthday" to just about anyone who will listen. I am a great big sister. I love to give my brother hugs and kisses everyday, as long as he stays away from my toys.

One of my favorite things is Sesame Street. I can tell you about Elmo and all of the characters. I love to go swimming on Thursdays with my daddy. I start asking him to go on Monday, just in case he forgets. I also love to go to ballet and dance with Miss Liz and Miss Nicki. I have a pretty tutu that I will be wearing for my recital this weekend.

You should hear me sing. My new favorite song is "Baby Bumble Bee," I learned it at school. I am trying to teach my brother "Patty Cake," but he just claps and laughs.

I can't wait for the summer when I can go outside and play. I am going to try and learn to ride a bike this year. I have one with training wheels so I don't fall. Have a great summer!



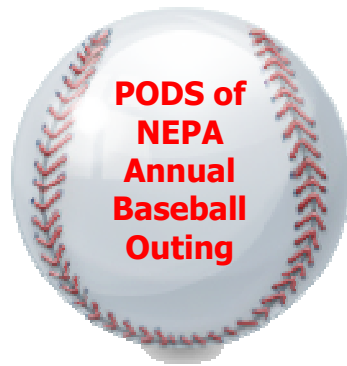
Thank you to Kelly Carey and Eileen Rempe for all of their hard work in getting the PODS of NEPA webpage setup. Be sure to check it out: It is a link on The Arc of NEPA's website. The link is: www.thearcnepa.org/pods.html



On Saturday, September 26, 2009 NDSS will kick off Down Syndrome Awareness Month and the New York City Buddy Walk® in the heart of Times Square with a video presentation featuring more than 200 individuals with Down syndrome from across the world. You can submit a photo for this one-of-a-kind feature presentation! You can find more information about the contest on the [Buddy Walk](http://www.buddywalk.org) website. The contest will take place from May 1-July 15, 2009 and winners will be contacted the week of August 3, 2009. To submit a photo:

<http://www.buddywalk.org:80/index.cfm/fuseaction/tsv.photoAdd>

**source: NDSS newsletter*



SWB Yankees vs. Indianapolis Indians

When: Sunday, June 21st

Time: 1 PM

Where: Bud Light Party Deck (near Stadium Club)



**RSVP by May 30th to Linda Coleman
97 Lincoln Ave. Carbondale, PA 18407
*Please make checks payable to:
Parents of Down Support Group of NEPA**

Price: \$10.00 per person/ *PODS child and siblings are free.

All children under age 2 are free. Includes food & drinks!

Family Name: _____ # of tickets _____

Payment enclosed \$ _____ Phone# _____

PODS child's name & siblings _____

*Tickets will be at the Will Call Window at the stadium under a family name. The person who will be picking up the tickets must have a picture I.D. Seating capacity is 100. Call me: 282-2660 or e-mail me: LinCol97@aol.com with any questions! If you would like your son or daughter to have a chance to throw out the first pitch, call or e-mail me! Age 10 & up-Thanks!!!!

Dear Parents,

I want to encourage everyone to sign up for the Action Alerts on The Arc of PA website at www.thearcpa.org, if you have not already done so. It is important that as parents of children with special needs that we use our voices to advocate for them. Once you sign up, you are sent e-mail alerts such as the one listed below. If you do not have time to write a letter yourself, there is a template where you can add your name and e-mail to your local politicians.

Please don't think that your child is too young or too old for you to be worrying about certain funding or support cuts. These are things that need to be protected and expanded upon in the special needs community. There is still so much work to be done. Thank you in advance for taking the time to sign-up on behalf of your child.

Kristen Finnerty

The Arc PA Action Alert - Oppose SB850 Right Now!

SB850 Budget Plan Devastating to People with Intellectual Disabilities

Rendell Budget Not Good - Senate Republican Budget MUCH WORSE

The Pennsylvania Senate is considering a state budget plan for fiscal year 09-10 that will be devastating for citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Senate Bill 850 was unveiled to the public only days ago and is considered to be the Senate Republicans' alternative budget proposal to the one proposed by Governor Rendell in early February. Republicans are in the majority in the PA Senate and will have a great deal of influence in whatever plan is finally adopted before June 30th.

The Senate is expected to vote on SB 850 as early as this week. Not only would SB850 eliminate any new money to serve people either on the emergency waiting list or at risk of institutionalization, but it goes further by cutting funding for some people already in service.

The following is taken from a May 5th email from ODP Deputy Secretary Kevin Casey, which included an analysis of SB850's impact on ODP programs:

"Community Base Dollars- Reduced by \$12,117,000- This would require us to cut approximately 3000 individuals from service. As you know, base dollars are frequently used to give families and consumers who are without waiver services a small amount of service dollars to help them get by.

Waiver Services- Reduced by \$32,720,000 (state and federal)- This would eliminate the emergency initiative for next year (You will recall that we had planned to serve 760 people with those dollars in 2009/2010.), and require us to cut an additional 550 who are currently in service. This number is based on taking the cuts from the Consolidated waiver. If we took any of them from the PFDS waiver, the number would be much higher.

Autism services-Reduced by \$15, 286,000 (state and federal)- This would essentially gut both the Autism Waiver, and the ACAP program. We would have to cut 245 of the 500 people we had planned to serve."

As you can see, if SB850 gains any traction whatsoever, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be harmed. Please call, write, fax, or email your elected officials in Harrisburg immediately and urge them to oppose SB850's budget cuts for programs serving people with disabilities.

**Source: The Arc of PA Action Alert e-mail*