



Reaching Out

A quarterly newsletter for families raising individuals with FASD.

MCFARES (Macomb County Fetal Alcohol Resource & Support Coalition) - (586) 541-0033 - www.careofmacomb.com

Siblings of Special Needs Children

Most children respond well to being the brother or sister of a child with special needs. Research on siblings indicates that there are positive aspects in being the sibling of a brother or sister with a disability. Researchers have found that children in families where a sibling has a disability can become more responsible, patient, self-confident, mature, and independent. These siblings can also become more charitable, more sensitive to humanitarian efforts and have a greater sense of closeness to family.

In any family, positive and negative feelings may develop between siblings or because of siblings. Here are a few issues siblings may face:

- ☺ Guilt about not having a disability. Some siblings will even feel they are to blame.
- ☺ Embarrassment of the sibling's behavior or appearance.
- ☺ Anger or jealousy over the amount of attention the child with the disability receives.
- ☺ Isolation.
- ☺ Pressure to achieve in

order to "make-up" for a brother or sister's disabilities.

- ☺ Caregiving, especially if it conflicts with plans with friends or the responsibility becomes overly burdensome.

Many of these feelings affect children as they are growing up, but siblings often continue to have concerns even as adults. For example, siblings who do not have a disability may be concerned about the future of their sibling after the parents die, especially if this brother or sister still lives at home.

www.downs-syndrome.org



Winter 2007

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Special Points of Interest:

- ☺ Winter Fun
- ☺ FASD Humor
- ☺ Gap Funds

Inside this issue:

Parent Tips for Siblings

- ☺ Treat the child who does not have the disability as a child, not just another caregiver.
- ☺ Remember that children have feelings too. Take time to ask them how they feel about things. Encourage them to express their feelings openly even if you don't like what you hear.
- ☺ Provide siblings with choices and include them in decision making.
- ☺ Give them information about their brother or sister's disability.
- ☺ Spend regular time with your child - have a special time for him or her each day.
- ☺ Celebrate your child's achievements, even the small ones.

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New Year Resolutions for 2007

Here are five suggested FASD resolutions to help make this a great year.

1. Educate yourself

Read the book "Damaged Angels." If you have not read it yet, go and get it now and you will find the best book ever on FASD, one that you will relate to and learn a lot from.

2. Educate your child

Print out the ABC's of FASD: <http://fasteen.com/ABCFASD.htm>. Sit down with your child, read it, discuss it and answer any questions truthfully. Too many parents have learned everything about FASD but failed to help their child understand their disability, with disastrous results. If you want your child to succeed, then they need to accept the reality of their disability.

3. Educate others

Do something to raise awareness on one day, September 9th, or everyday (because everyday is FASD awareness day).

4. Support other parents

Join a local support group and attend the meetings. If you don't have one, start one. Join an on-line group as well.

5. Take care of yourself

Are you eating right and getting enough exercise? Sleeping? Laughing? Go to Fasaholics Anonymous for a chuckle. <http://come-over.to/FAS/Resolutions2006.htm>

Book of the Month

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome & ME

This 2-booklet series was designed to encourage and build self esteem in children who have disabilities from prenatal alcohol exposure. Their cheerful educational message is rooted in the common behavior pattern unique to FASD, with a strong focus on the endearing qualities which make affected kids so lovable. The words are phrased

in the gentle language of childhood and expressed by a happy little cartoon elephant.

The two booklets are entitled:

- ☺ *What's a Diagnosis?: Identifying a Disability ; and*
- ☺ *Free to Just Be Me: Understanding My Strengths and Weaknesses*

Cost: \$3.00 U.S. per set
All prices are U.S. funds only and include postage and handling. Send check or money order payable to:

FAS*FRI Publications
P.O. Box 2525
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Website of the Month

The Sibling Support Project of The Arc of the United States is pleased to announce SibNet and SibKids. These listservs are for and about brothers and sisters of people with special health, developmental, and emotional needs. Both SibKids (for younger brothers and sisters) and SibNet (for older siblings) allow brothers and sisters an opportunity to

share information and discuss issues of common interest with their peers from around the world.

Anyone who has email can subscribe. For a no-cost subscription and to learn more about it, please visit the Sibling Support Project's Web Page www.thearc.org/siblingsupport/



Winter Fun

- Sledding
- Ice Skating
- Make paper snowflakes
- Making a Snowman
- Making Snow Angels
- Spray snow with food coloring
- Take a winter walk
- Have a potluck movie night
- Take time to listen to a young heart
- Work on a puzzle
- Play a board game
- Wrap up and read
- Bake together

FASD Humor

An FASD Mom's Playpen



Reprinted from The Funny Times / PO Box 18530 / Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
phone: (216) 371-8600 / e-mail: ft@funnytimes.com

www.come-over.to/Fasaholics Anonymous

Gap Funds

To receive a gap fund request form, please contact your parent liaison, Melissa Sienkiewicz at (586) 541-0033 ext 236 or online: msienkiewicz@careofmacomb.com

A review panel will process all requests within ten working days.

All families are encouraged to submit their requests.

Yahoo to You

Play Date

Four families met at St. John Lutheran School in Fraser, MI on November 25th for some food, fellowship, and fun. Watch the Yahoo postings for the next time we meet. You won't want to miss it!



For on-line support, join Families and Supports Affected by FASD by visiting:

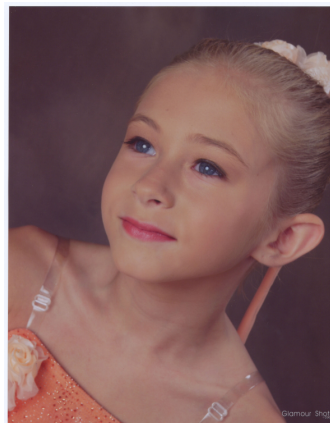
groups.yahoo.com/group/FaSAFASD/

From a Mother's Heart

Hats off to Heather!

This beautiful and talented young lady performs with the Macomb Ballet Company. Her credits include the Nutcracker Ballet, and most recently, she danced with the Macomb Symphony Orchestra.

We applaud you, Heather!
Follow your dream!



If you have something to share, please submit it to:

Melissa Sienkiewicz
FASD Parent Liaison

MCFARES

31900 Utica Rd.

Fraser, MI 48026

msienkiewicz@careofmacomb.com

Calendar of Events

FASD Support Group
Raising children with FASD
2nd Monday of every month
6:30—8:30 PM
Meetings at CARE

January

National Mentoring Month
www.whomentoredyou.org

February

National Parent leadership Month
www.parenthood.com

20th—Roscoe and his Read To Me Magic!

Clinton-Macomb Public Library
Call for details (586) 226-5080

March

National Parenting Awareness Month
3rd—CARE's 12th Annual Parenting Conference
"Building a House of Hearts"
Registration deadline is 2/26/07
Call for details (586) 541-0033

**Congratulations to
MCFARES
for receiving a
2nd consecutive
Prevention Network
Model Minigrant
Project Award for
involving teens in its
FASDay.**

Siblings:

I Can't Live With Them; I Can't Live Without Them

PAC Parent Information Night

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Registration and dinner- 5:30 to 6:00 PM

Presentation- 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Monroe County Intermediate School District

1101 South Raisinville Road

Monroe, Michigan 48161

This workshop will explore the range of feelings, thoughts, and experiences common to many brothers and sisters who have a sibling with a disability. Effective ways for parents to talk, listen, and support their children will also be discussed.

Register online @

http://www.misd.k12.mi.us/sp_ed/pac/parentnights/feb2007.html

MCFARES Maçomb County Fetal Alcohol Resource, Education, and Support Coalition

Charisse Cossu-Kowalski, MSW, Chairperson, Co- Founder, Parent of individual with FAS ~ Gayle Gregorczyk, Co-Founder, Grandparent of FAS individual

Agency members: Arc Services of Maçomb, Inc. ~ CARE ~ CAUSE ~ Down to Earth ~ Easter Seals of Michigan ~ Maçomb County Health Department ~ Maçomb County Department of Human Services ~ Maçomb County Mental Health, Office of Substance Abuse ~ Maçomb Family Services ~ Maçomb Family YMCA ~ Maçomb Intermediate School District's Early-On Program ~ Maçonna University School of Nursing ~ New Haven Community Schools~ Oakland University School of Nursing ~ St. John Health - St. Joseph's Healthcare

CARE (Community Assessment Referral and Education) is dedicated to the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use disorder. Federal and State, and local funding have been provided through Maçomb County Community Mental Health/Office of Substance Abuse to support project costs. Recipients of substance use services have rights protected by state and federal law and promulgated rules. For information, contact CARE Recipient Advisor, 31900 Utica Road, Fraser, MI 48026, (586) 541-0033 ext. 116 or State Recipient Rights Coordinator, P.O. Box 30664, Lansing, Michigan 48909.



If you would like to receive this newsletter via email instead, please send your email address along with your name to msienkiewicz@careofmacomb.com and we will add you to our list!

www.careofmacomb.com

Fraser, MI. 48026

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Maçomb County Fetal Alcohol
Resource, Education, & Support

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