

## FED EXPRESS Spring 2004

### From the President

My lilac bush is covered with buds and the robins are back at the bird feeder so I guess we really are heading towards spring. After a cold and snowy winter it will be nice to get back outdoors as well as on the road, traveling around the State.

This spring issue of Fed Express includes the schedule for a series of trainings that will be held throughout Idaho. These trainings will include useful information for ALL who work and live with a young person labeled with an emotional, behavioral and/or mental disability. I would encourage you to check out the schedule and see when the IFFCMH will be coming to your community.

I look forward to meeting many of you as we continue to build this blossoming statewide network of families and the friends who work with our children with a SED.

-- Kathy Berg

### May is Mental Health Month: Celebrate Children's Mental Well Being

Children are our greatest assets and investments in life! Chances are a child or adolescent you know has a serious mental health need. In fact, mental health problems affect one in five young people. According to the Idaho Council on Children's Mental Health Community Report of December 2003, there are approximately 18,452 children with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) in Idaho.

Green Ribbon



SED problems can be painful – emotionally, spiritually, socially, and economically for all members of the families – especially the children and adolescents. Feelings of shame, guilt, inadequacies, low-self esteem, rejection, isolation, and loneliness are just a few of what the child feels. For the child with a SED, the stigma is often the barrier to living a complete and satisfying life. Parents, caregivers, teachers, friends, and families can help. There are many things you can do to support children's emotional health and well-being. Make a commitment to help the children and adolescents you know who are experiencing a SED.

May is officially recognized as "Mental Health Month." Since 1949, U.S. Congress has recognized that mental health is important to everyone. You may see green ribbons worn to celebrate. May is the perfect time to start your commitment to focusing on children's mental health. Wear a green ribbon and demonstrate your support for Mental Health Month by:

- Learning more about mental well-being in children
- Celebrating the accomplishments and strengths of children
- Fostering self-worth and independence in children
- Helping children express their feelings without repercussion or judgment
- Promoting mutual respect and trust
- Recognizing the strengths in all children
- Appreciating each child's uniqueness

Encouraging individual talents

- Helping children set goals based on their abilities and interests
- Showing confidence in their ability to handle problems and new experiences

Children's mental well-being is for everyone – the child, families, schools, communities and our future. Learn more about what you can do for the mental well-being of a child by calling 1-800-789-2647 or visit the website at [www.mentalhealth.org/child](http://www.mentalhealth.org/child).

## Board Development

The Federation is building a strong work team in serving families. As part of that team, we need your help. We would like to take the month of April for outreach to find volunteers who would like to serve the Federation. If anyone is interested in serving on the Board of Directors for the IFFCMH, please obtain an application by contacting us at 1-800-905-3436.

BOARD MEMBERS can really help by recommending three names that would be good candidates for working as part of the Board team. Contact your local community leader, banker, businessman and/or another family member and ask them if they would be willing to be part of a team of leaders in strengthening family voices for families of children with an SED. Areas of expertise are welcomed in fund raising, legal advice, system building, community leadership, and much, much more.

Great news for Board members! As a result of your request for a Board retreat, we now have the funding and the trainer available. Let Judy know your availability for the month of July and we can put together a great 2-day retreat. Bring the family to Boise as there is a lot to do during the beautiful summer months. While you're in the retreat, they can relax or go play. Hopefully we'll have some new board members to join us. See you at the next board meeting on April 14, 2004.

## Training Opportunities

### **Idaho Children's Mental Health Conference**

May 3-4, 2004

Doubletree Riverside, Boise

The statewide conference is set in Boise. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn up-to-date information on issues impacting children's mental health. This year's conference features the ever-popular Wellness City Simulation, and workshops on strength based training, System of Care 101, juvenile justice, the Federation's "Families Matter" and more. This conference is free but registration is a must as seating is limited to first-come, first served. Professionals and families are invited. You may register at (208) 334-5722.

### **Developing Local Systems of Care for Children and Adolescents with Emotional Disturbances and their Families:**

**Early Intervention**

June 23-27, 2004

Hilton San Francisco

Over 30 workshops available for families, youth, policy-makers, providers, educators, or anyone interested in improving services for children with a SED and their families.

Information and registration forms may be obtained at

## Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

FAMILY SPECIALIST (Part Time Contract)

Coeur d'Alene/Lewiston or  
Idaho Falls/ Pocatello

- Help in the development, implementation and supervision of an effective regional System of Care in Idaho. Facilitate a family support network, community outreach and promote family advocacy efforts for children and youth with emotional, behavioral or mental disorders and their families. Assume a leadership role, provide trainings, develop strong community partnerships, develop support groups, oversee Family Partners, participate and serve on boards and committees as needed. Solicit membership and involvement in IFFCMH.
- Must be a family member of a child who is/has received services for mental health related issues. Maximum of 15 hrs per week, \$10/hour. Must have good skills in negotiation, public relations and training. Ability to work independently and travel as necessary.
- To apply, send a resume by e-mail to [idffcmh@idffcmh.org](mailto:idffcmh@idffcmh.org) or by fax to 208-433-8337 or mail to 3173 N. Cole Rd., Boise, ID 83704.

YOUTH COORDINATOR (Full Time Salaried)

Boise

- Recruit, train and support youth by providing information, referral and education to youth currently accessing services in the mental health system. Develop and facilitate youth advocacy support groups, build collaboration between public agencies and youth, families and communities, encourage youth in achievement of personal goals.
- Prefer two year degree plus knowledge of mental health program/issues. Must have ability to recruit and motivate adolescents. Salary: \$20,800 + partial benefits. Extensive travel and dependable vehicle required.
- To apply, send a resume by e-mail to [idffcmh@idffcmh.org](mailto:idffcmh@idffcmh.org) or by fax to 208-433-8337 or mail to 3173 N. Cole Rd., Boise, ID 83704.

FAMILY PARTNERS (Volunteer)

Throughout Idaho

- Provide information to find and access resources, build confidence in those mentored and supported, teach strategies to deal with difficult situations. May serve on boards and committees, provide trainings, and establish or participate in support groups.
- Must be a parent with experience with emotional, mental and/or behavior problems and have a desire to help other families. Guidance, training and support provided. Time commitment is based on availability, interest and community need.
- To apply, call Jessica at 1-800-905-3436 or go to [click here](#) and download an application.

## Be Part of Our Family Support Network

We are in full swing recruiting our Family Partner volunteers throughout the state and need your help to continue building our Family Support Network! This is a network of family members who provide support, education and advocacy to children and youth with severe emotional, mental and behavioral disorders and their families. This is no small task -- our success depends on the dedication and commitment of all.

Our volunteers encapsulate the qualities of the characters from the Wizard of Oz: the Tin Man, the Lion, the Sarecrow, Dorothy and even Toto. It takes courage, brains and lots of heart to be willing to help other families through their own long personal journey through services and systems. All Dorothy wanted to do was get

back home to “normalcy.” Toto found help and provided some direction and understanding. The Federation is Toto to many families. Anything is possible with the motivation and commitment of our volunteers. Getting help may not be as simple as clicking your heals three times, but you don’t have to feel like you are trapped in a strange land all by yourself.

Contact us if you need information or would like to get involved. There is safety and strength in numbers...together we can make changes!

## A Mom's Eye View

I enjoy high school awards programs about as much as a tooth extraction. Both require a little something to ease the pain. When they hand out awards for academic or athletic prowess, I’m faced with the reality that my daughter will never be a Rhodes Scholar. Colleges won’t be sending her scholarship acceptance letters.

But that’s fine. At least she revised her original goal to survive high school and never look back. She is considering a two-year extension of what has been, for her, an excruciating education process.

My daughter has attention deficit disorder, which affects the processing of visual and auditory information to her brain. Despite above-average intellect, she struggles with math, reading, English, spelling, writing and abstract concepts.

I wondered how she would survive 12th grade with her self-esteem intact. More importantly, she wondered how she would survive my expectations of her, as my dreams for her did not include mediocrity.

I learned that grades don’t make the person. If she struggles for a ‘C,’ it has to be just as important to me as an ‘A.’ Her success in life will not be determined by the letter values on a piece of paper, but by her determination to achieve attainable goals, despite obstacles.

Apparently the members of Citrus County’s five Rotary clubs feel the same way. At a recent breakfast banquet, they honored Upward Bound students, my daughter included.

The ceremony recognizes noticeable improvement in students who are not usually noticed for their academic achievements. This program fills a void that has existed from the moment I led an excited, inquisitive child into kindergarten.

At the end of that year, her “star chart” stood vacant. It was a public reminder that she couldn’t remember her telephone number and address, couldn’t tie a bow, and though wildly creative, couldn’t color within the lines.

But on that morning, I sat in an awards program honoring my daughter and 73 other less-than-perfect students.

One boy charmed me with his individuality. He wore a letterman’s jacket over a black T-shirt with a heavy metal design. He sported two dangling earrings in his left ear and admitted to being the class clown. Though he had been suspended several times for smoking in the bathroom, he was trying to keep his record clean so he wouldn’t have to take end of semester exams determined by school attendance records.

“Without your daughter’s help, I’d have never made it through biology,” he said.

Was I hearing him correctly? My daughter was helping someone in biology – one of her worst subjects?

I thought of the days when she would mumble that her homework was done. Later, I would discover she was several assignments behind. When she did the work, her papers swarmed with red marks and scribbled messages such as, "Messy!" or "I know you can do better." She gave up trying for a while and vowed she would never step foot inside a classroom after high school.

Those failures carried over into her social life. I remember telling a stubborn 9-year-old that she needed to go outside and make some friends. She paused in flicking through the channels. "I don't need any friends. The TV is my friend." It sent chills down my spine.

Today she is on the honor roll for the first time in her life. She has maintained a B-average. I'm profoundly proud of my daughter. I know how hard it has been for her to maintain commitment in school. I'm grateful for community leaders and teachers who recognized her improvement and excellence within.

We should honor the scholars and athletes, but don't forget to applaud the individual who struggles to overcome physical or emotional barriers. Praise the child who has been told he'll never amount to anything. Celebrate the student who shows improvement despite limitations.

*-- adapted from an article by Marti Wiser*

## Call for Entries

"Driving Force" is a national juried exhibit for young artists with disabilities, ages 16-25.  
Sponsored by VSA Arts & Volkswagen of America, Inc.  
Postmarked deadline: Friday, August 6, 2004. 15 Finalists. \$30,000 in cash awards.  
No entry fee.

This is a national art competition to identify promising young artists with disabilities. Selected artwork will be part of an exhibit in Washington, DC during October of 2004 that will then tour throughout the United States for the following two years. To learn more visit: <http://www.vsarts.org/programs/vw/> or call 1-800-933-8721 x 3877.

## Dr. Seuss on IEP's

I do not like these IEP's,  
I do not like them, jeeze Louise!  
We test, we check, we plan, we meet,  
But nothing ever seems complete.  
Would you, could you like the form?  
I do not like the form I see,  
Not page one, not two, not three.  
Another change, a brand new box  
I think we have all lost our rocks.  
Could we all meet here or there?  
We cannot all fit anywhere.  
Not in a room, not in a hall,  
There seems to be no space at all.  
Could you, would you meet again?  
I cannot meet again next week.  
No lunch, no prop, please hear me speak.  
No, not at dusk. No not at dawn.  
At 4 p.m., I should be gone.

Could you hear while all speak out?  
Would you write the words they shout?  
I could not hear, I would not write,  
This does not need to be a fight.  
Sign here, date there, mark this, check that,  
Beware the student's advocate.  
If you will let me be,  
I will try again, you'll see!  
I almost like these IEP's, I think I'll write 6,003.  
And I will practice day and night  
Until they say, "You got it right."

-- Author Unknown, Reprinted from Indiana Family Action Network  
Newsletter

## Family and Online Resource Center (FORC)

At the Boise IFFCMH office, we have a Family Resource Center available. The Center has books, education manuals, regional resources and videos on a variety of subjects pertaining to children and youth with emotional, behavior and mental disorders and their families. Internet access is also available for families who wish to research information related to children's mental health. Please contact our Administrative Assistant, Judy Repp, for more information at 208/433-8845.

## A Special Thanks to Our Recent Contributors:

Larry & Penny Fisk  
Alvin & Sally Shoemaker  
Jennifer Norton  
Clayton Diggie  
Brenda Sanger  
Angela Hicks

John & Marti Wiser  
NAMI—Southeast Idaho  
Kenneth & Elaine Leventhal Family Trust  
Wynn Wildeman  
Kathy Johnson

If you would like to help the Federation and make your tax deductible contribution [click here!](#)

## IFFCMH Board of Directors

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**Region II**  
- Christina Lymberopoulos

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- Cheryl Leben  
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- Kathleen Berg, President

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**Judy Repp,**  
Administrative Assistant

**Region VII**  
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