

The Brain Injury Association of Arkansas'

Messenger

Disability Rights Center Launches ArPIE Website

In the fall of 2003, Disability Rights Center, the Parent Training Information (PTI) Center, the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), and other organizations began meeting once again to exchange information about the educational needs of children with disabilities in Arkansas.

Over the years, one of the continuing needs noted by members of the group was that of support groups for parents. Numerous discussions at meetings centered around the outreach efforts of each of the members of the group and the frustration that despite extensive travel across the state by all agencies represented, each had only been able to reach a fraction of the parents of children with disabilities. The rural nature of the state and lack of transportation, lack of child care during support group meetings, fear of retaliation by school districts, and gradual disbanding of support groups all contributed to the problem.

After a few meetings, the group selected a name for the informal coalition, Arkansas Parent Information Exchange (ArPIE). Although determined not to abandon traditional parent support group meetings, ArPIE members knew there must be a way to reach some of the parents who were not attending support group meetings. Coincidentally, several of the groups represented by ArPIE had noted a significant increase in contacts to their respective agencies in electronic form – usually by e-mail.

Since it appeared that more parents had access to the Internet, and Arkansas libraries were making Internet access available to their communities, the concept of an electronic message board was born. This would be a format that could be easily and inexpensively accessed by Arkansans who have access to computers and the Internet. Parents could sit at their computers at night, asking and answering questions of each other, with no need for babysitters or gasoline for the car.

From April to June 2004, several formats for electronic message boards were reviewed for attractive and simple layouts, as well as ease of navigation. In July 2004, ArPIE had a message board, attached to the website of Disability Rights Center. For the next 6 weeks, moderators, administrators and "seeder" members of the message board practiced posting, answering, deleting, moving, and splitting questions related to IDEA and Section 504 on the message board.

Disability Rights Center and ArPIE are very pleased to debut the electronic message board to the public, which we believe to be the first electronic message board hosted by a Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system.

The Internet address for the message board is <http://www.arkdisabilityrights.org/forum>. We encourage you to review the board and if you wish, to register as a user. Future development of the message board may include adding "forums" for other areas of P&A involvement, such as Medicaid Fair Hearings, Rehabilitation Act programs and services, as well as chat software which will allow ArPIE to host scheduled live chats on topics of interest to Arkansans with disabilities. As appropriate, we plan to enlist guest speakers for particular chat room topics – those who are recognized for their expertise in those topic areas.

The above article appeared in the December 2004 issue of *Disability Rights Center Brief*. Reprinted with permission.

(Editors' Note: This is a "general" issue message board for disabilities but should contain much information that relates to TBI.)

The **DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER (DRC)** is a private non-profit agency with offices in Little Rock, Arkansas. Since 1977 the Governor of Arkansas has designated the DRC as the independent rights protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in Arkansas. DRC operates under authority outlined in Federal law and is funded primarily by the Federal government. For more information contact DRC at:

Disability Right Center
1100 N University, Suite 201
Little Rock, AR 72207.

Phone: (501) 296-1775 V/TTY
Toll Free: (800) 482-1174 V/TTY
Fax: (501) 296-1179
E-mail: panda@ArkDisabilityRights.org
Website: www.ArkDisabilityRights.org

The Association's New Officers

Each December immediately following the Association's Annual General Membership meeting, the Board elects officers for the following year. Officers for 2005 are:

President: Jim Hamilton, LCSW (Little Rock)
Vice President Dana Gonzales, PhD (Little Rock)
Secretary Deborah Gangluff, ScD (Conway)
Treasurer Michael Bell (Little Rock)

Other members of the Board are:

Teresa Belew (Little Rock)	Bill Hartley (Hot Springs)
Shaun Best (Hampton)	Patricia Jackson, RN (Bull Shoals)
Rene Boucher (Bentonville)	Gary Low (Little Rock)
Theresa Driver (Fayetteville)	Tribble Moseley (Little Rock)
Ann Fullerton (Little Rock)	Mary Anne Sullivan (North Little Rock)
Diane Gutierrez, MEd (North Little Rock)	

Support Groups

The purpose of a support group is sharing with and supporting one another for the mutual benefit of the total group. Some essential elements of a support group are:

- ❖ Active and involved listening
- ❖ Being heard by others who care
- ❖ Meeting and accepting one another's needs
- ❖ An awareness of common needs and strengths
- ❖ Receive understanding and provide an opportunity for others to be understood
- ❖ A place to find courage and to take risks
- ❖ Providing an atmosphere to get in touch with oneself
- ❖ Positive and negative views can be expressed without judgment or labeling

There are several Support Group around the state.

Little Rock:

2nd Tuesday of each month, 6 - 7:00 p.m.
Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute
Therapeutic Recreation Room (Ground Floor)
Facilitator: Diane Gottspooner
(501) 202-7047

Fayetteville:

Survivors' Support Group, 3rd Friday, 2:00 pm
Caregivers' Support Group, 1st Wednesday, 4:00 pm
Quality Life Associates
Contact: Theresa Driver
(479) 571-4455

Fayetteville:

2nd Tuesday of each month, 10:00 am - 12:00 p.m.
Sources for Community Independent Living
Services, Inc.
Contact: Sherry Priestaf
(479) 442-5600 or Toll Free: (888) 284-7521

Bentonville:

Date, Time & Place to be announced
Contact: Rene Boucher
(479) 271-7764

Russellville & Clarksville:

Monthly in each town, at lunch time
at various restaurant locations
Facilitator: Jim Spragins (Russellville)
(479) 890-5751

Hot Springs:

Date, Time & Place to be announced
Contact: Bill Hartley
(501) 525-8463

Jonesboro:

Date, Time & Place to be announced
Contact: Lourindia Rufkahr
(870) 933-0420 or (870) 931-1170

Mountain Home:

1st Saturday of each month, 10:00 - 11:30 am
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Basement/Fellowship Hall
Contact: Dr Vann Smith, Neuropsychologist or
Patricia Jackson, RN
(870) 445-5941 or (870) 425-7096

More support groups are needed. Contact the office
if you are interested in starting a support group in
your area.

(501) 374-3585 (Little Rock)
(800) 235-2443 Toll Free, In-state only
Web Site: www.BrainAssociation.org
E-mail: info@BrainAssociation.org

Membership...

Like any organization, we need members. Members' dues help fund the organization by helping pay for newsletters and other efforts. In our organization, members are there to help others and provide points of contact in special situations. If you are not already a member, we hope you will consider becoming a member. We have several levels of membership available. To become a member or renew your membership, complete the following and return with your payment to our office address listed at the bottom.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City State Zip: _____

Email: _____

H Phone: _____ W Phone: _____

- \$5 Survivor
- \$20 Student (College)
- \$35 Family member of Survivor
- \$50 Professional - Individual
- \$75 Supporting - Individual
- \$100 Century Club - Individual
- \$200 Corporate
- \$500 Patron

Return Membership Application to:
Brain Injury Association of Arkansas
425 W Capitol Ave - Suite 1533
PO Box 26236
Little Rock AR 72221-6236