

## # 44 AJC Articles, Advocacy Needed and Other Information

Dearest Advocates:

Mary Yoder (Executive Director of Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities) wrote an excellent article in the Opinion Section of the AJC Newspaper today regarding use of the R-word and how words we use does reflect and reinforce what we believe in society.

Please take a moment and write a quick note to the AJC Newspaper letting them know how much this issue is a concern to those families and friends that have love ones with disabilities. Sent your emails to [letters@ajc.com](mailto:letters@ajc.com) and copy Cynthia Tucker of the AJC (Editorial Page Editor) [Cynthia@ajc.com](mailto:Cynthia@ajc.com).

Here is the AJC Article:

<http://www.ajc.com/print/content/printedition/2008/08/28/yodered.html>

Only through continued education are we going to “help” others understand why using of the R-word is inappropriate and disrespectful. PLEASE take a minute to write the AJC thanking them for their coverage of the issue.

Another **VERY** hot topic is the slow down in the economy and how this is going to effect services under Dept. of Community Health and Dept. of Human Resources. We must continue to unite our voices and speak up regarding these issues. The latest is they are proposing to cut already funded new and existing services, rate increase and disability training.

In addition, there is talk about proposed changes/cuts to the Katie Beckett Waiver. As I receive additional information on how we can help this advocacy effort, I will let you know.

Below are links to the latest from Unlock the Waiting Lists and how you can get involved with these efforts at the current time:

<http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/advocate.html>

<http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/2008proposedcuts.html>

Below is the Governor’s response to a letter written on behalf of Unlock the Waiting Lists. He states: “Just like Georgia families are tightening their belts on spending, state government is also focusing on living within our means....Our goal is to find spending cuts that have the least direct impact to Georgians, but it is just simply not possible to cut the budget without having some impact.”

Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities have already tightened our belts over the years and don't receive enough services to begin with!

**As you can see the budget is a VERY serious situation. We need to speak up for our children and those that can not speak for themselves.**

In addition, I have some links from various AJC newspaper articles in the last few days on the Dept. Human Resources restructuring, AADD advocacy update from Unlock the Waiting Lists, information on a free Bike demonstration for children and adults with disabilities, and Champions for Children/Katie Beckett Community Health Forums across the state.

Education is the key to helping those that are not impacted by disabilities understand how important services are for our children. Please get involved and help us "educate" those that don't understand. Either we get involved and speak up or we are going to lose our services. Get involved!

Will keep you posted.

*United... We Will Make A Difference!*

Sincerely, Heidi

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**AJC Newspaper Articles on the Reorganization of Dept. of Human Resources:**

Social service advocates back Perdue reorganization [CRAIG SCHNEIDER](http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/stories/2008/08/27/dhr_0828_web.html)  
[http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/stories/2008/08/27/dhr\\_0828\\_web.html](http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/stories/2008/08/27/dhr_0828_web.html)

Perdue pushes separate agency for mental health [Alan Judd, Andy Miller](http://www.ajc.com/search/content/news/stories/2008/08/27/mental.html)  
<http://www.ajc.com/search/content/news/stories/2008/08/27/mental.html>

DHR plan wins praise [Craig Schneider](http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/stories/2008/08/28/dhr.html)  
<http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/stories/2008/08/28/dhr.html>

**AADD Update – Advocacy Needed for Individuals with Disabilities:**

RIGHT NOW, HELP US ASK DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO SAY NO TO CUTS TO NEW AND EXISTING DD Services, the 3% RATE INCREASE, AND TO DISABILITY TRAINING!

As Unlock informed you in an earlier action alert last week, Governor Perdue has ordered the Department of Human Resources to reduce their current year's FY09 budget by 6% which translates to \$92 million.

DHR's Board met on August 20<sup>th</sup> to review the proposed cuts. These cuts could be a permanent step backwards for Georgia. Among other things, the cuts include important funding for unlocking services for persons with disabilities, a much needed 3% rate increase for DD providers, and funding for the disability training of professionals and families.

Georgia has over 6,160 people with developmental disabilities currently on community waiting lists. The waiting lists grow every year by over 1,000 people because individuals and families fall into crisis, or caregivers pass away. Over 700 students age out of the school system every year, needing supports. The multi-year funding plan called for 2,500 services last year, and we received only 500. This year the plan also calls for 2,500, and the current budget proposal includes only the 150 MRWP services we need to meet the requirement of the Money Follows Person initiative.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP CONTACTING THE DHR COMMISSIONER AND THE DHR BOARD BY AUGUST 29<sup>TH</sup>!**

**RIGHT NOW, ASK THEM TO SAY NO TO CUTS TO NEW AND EXISTING DD SERVICES, the 3% RATE INCREASE, AND TO DISABILITY TRAINING!  
TO ACT, GO TO <http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/advocate.html>**

Dave Blanchard  
Unlock the Waiting Lists Campaign

**Governor's Response to AADD- Unlock the Waiting Lists:**

STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ATLANTA 30334-0900

Sonny Perdue  
GOVERNOR

Dear Mr. Colyer:

Thank you for writing my office about Georgia's FY09 Budget. I appreciate your thoughts and concerns.

As Governor, it is my responsibility to work with the General Assembly each year to develop a budget for our state that balances our many needs and priorities. We are

experiencing a softening economy that is impacting our families and our government. Just like Georgia families are tightening their belts on spending, state government is also focusing on living within our means. We have built up a rainy day fund for times like these so we are better prepared than many states to weather a slowing economy.

While there are always programs that are favored by me, legislators and others that are not funded, our system is designed to end up with a budget compromise that accomplishes as much as possible with our limited funds. Spending reductions will have a significant impact on the services that Georgians receive from their state government. Our goal is to find spending cuts that have the least direct impact to Georgians, but it is just simply not possible to cut the budget without having some impact. Together with the General Assembly we are working hard to budget within our means. I appreciate your concerns about specific budget items, and I invite you to share your ideas with the members of the General Assembly who represent your district as well.

I appreciate your interest in the management of our state, and I hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you again for writing.

**Free Bike Demonstration for children and adults with disabilities:**

**Freedom Concepts BIKE DAY!!!**

Sept 21st from 2pm to 6pm  
at Body Pros Physical Therapy Facility in Alpharetta

We will be hosting the bike day at the Body Pros Physical Therapy facility in Alpharetta. The facility is located convenient to Georgia 400, Alpharetta Highway and minutes from the North Point Mall area.

We will have demonstrations and test rides in the rear parking lot located directly behind the building Body Pros is located in.

We'll have most of the Freedom Concept models available for test rides, including the Tandem.

Come out and join us for a fun ride on one of our awesome bikes, giveaways, and more information on Freedom Concepts Products!!

Please be sure to RSVP with Curtis Henry either via phone or email  
404.245.1259  
curtcannon86@hotmail.com

Address for Body Pros Alpharetta

**Alpharetta Location**

1750 Founders Parkway  
Suite 130  
Alpharetta, GA 30004-7600

Web Address: <http://bodyprospt.com/mx/>  
for more information, and [directions.map](#)

For more information on Freedom Concepts visit:  
[www.freedomconcepts.com](http://www.freedomconcepts.com)

### **Directions from GA 400N/S and Alpharetta Highway:**

#### **Directions to Alpharetta from GA 400 North**

Get off on the Mansell Road exit. Make a left turn at the light and head west on Mansell Road. At the 5th light make a right turn on to Old Roswell Road. Go down the hill to the stop sign. At the stop sign make a left turn (Do not go straight!) and stay on Old Roswell Road for 1 mile. Our office is in the Founders Park at Northmeadow office park. Turn into the parking lot when you see our street number of 1750 that is located on the street. We are in Suite 130.

#### **Directions to Alpharetta from GA 400 South**

Get off on the Haynes Bridge Road exit. Make a left turn at the light and head west on Haynes Bridge Road. At the next light make a left turn on to Lakeview Parkway. Drive a short distance to Morrison Parkway. At that light make a left turn. Drive to Hembree Road and make a right turn at that light. Drive a short distance through 1 light and then make a left turn onto Old Roswell Road. We are about a 1 mile on the left side of the road. Turn into the parking lot when you see our street number of 1750 that is located on the street. We are in Suite 130.

#### **Directions to Alpharetta from Alpharetta Highway 9**

(S. Main Street) If you are heading north on Alpharetta Highway (South Main Street) you will need to make a right turn onto Wills Road. If you are heading south on Alpharetta Highway (South Main Street) you will need to make a left turn onto Wills Road. Drive south on Wills Road and cross over Hembree Road and make a right turn at that the stop sign onto Old Roswell Road. We are about a 1 mile on the left side of the road. Turn into the parking lot when you see our street number of 1750 that is located on the street. We are in Suite 130.

### **Champions for Children/Katie Beckett Community Health Forums**

Parent to Parent of Georgia, in conjunction with local community partners, will sponsor community health forums on Katie Beckett/Deeming Waiver and the new Champions for Children health care financing option. Brian Dowd, Director of the Member Services and Policy Unit at Georgia's Department of Community Health (DCH), will provide a Katie Beckett/Deeming Waiver overview, and Easter Seal's regional Champions for Children Coordinators will provide details of their new program. Easter Seals Southern, North, East, Middle and West Georgia will be represented at the forums.

Beginning August 19<sup>th</sup>, and continuing through October, five informational sessions will allow families and professionals to learn more about the Katie Beckett/Deeming Waiver and Champions for Children Programs. The forums will take place in Albany, Augusta, Columbus, Dublin, and Fulton/Dekalb (Metro Atlanta). The basic eligibility requirements for the Champions for Children Program are as follows:

Children must be 21 and under with a physical, cognitive, developmental or medical disability. The child must currently live at home, and must not be eligible for Medicaid.

**Albany, GA (Dougherty County)**

**Tuesday, August 19, 2008 - 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**

*Easter Seals of Southern Georgia*

**3000 Palmyra Road Albany, GA 31701**

**Nicki Wilson - [enwilson@swga-easterseals.com](mailto:enwilson@swga-easterseals.com), Teresa Heard - [theard@swga-easterseals.com](mailto:theard@swga-easterseals.com), Kathy Sutton [Kathy@parenttoparentofga.org](mailto:Kathy@parenttoparentofga.org) or (229) 439-7061**

**Dublin, GA (Laurens County)**

**Saturday, September 6, 2008 – 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

*Dublin Mall (Turning Disabilities into Capabilities Health Fair)*

**2005 Veterans Blvd # A38, Dublin, GA 31021**

**Cynthia Spalding - [clspaulding@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:clspaulding@dhr.state.ga.us), Ralph Donaldson – [rdonaldson@ga-ml.easterseals.com](mailto:rdonaldson@ga-ml.easterseals.com)**

**Decatur, GA (Metro - Dekalb County)**

**Thursday, September 25, 2008 - 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**

*The Frazer Center*

**1815 Ponce de Leon Ave N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30307**

**Karmen Hughes - [khughes@esng.easterseals.com](mailto:khughes@esng.easterseals.com), Sabrina Gresham – [greshams@fulton.k12.ga.us](mailto:greshams@fulton.k12.ga.us)**

**Columbus, GA (Muscogee County)**

**Tuesday, September 30, 2008 - 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**

*Columbus Public Library - Synovus Conference Room*

**3000 Macon Rd, Columbus, GA 31906**

**Bradley Lawrence - [bhlawrence@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:bhlawrence@dhr.state.ga.us), Mae Evans-Lee - [maesilverpws@knology.net](mailto:maesilverpws@knology.net), Mindy Pace - [wesfranciemom2001@yahoo.com](mailto:wesfranciemom2001@yahoo.com), LaKisha Taylor – [lakisha@eastersealswga.org](mailto:lakisha@eastersealswga.org)**

**Augusta, GA (Richmond County)**

**Thursday, October 9, 2008 - 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**

*Warren Baptist Church*

**3203 Washington Road, Augusta, GA 30907**

**Sheila Thomas - [stthomas@esega.org](mailto:stthomas@esega.org), Sheryl Irwin - 706-729-2353/[sirwin@mail.mcg.edu](mailto:sirwin@mail.mcg.edu), Leigh Proctor - [Esevaluator@aol.com](mailto:Esevaluator@aol.com)**

**For more general information contact Sherry Richardson at [sherry@parenttoparentofga.org](mailto:sherry@parenttoparentofga.org) or 770-451-5484/800-229-2038.**