



SUMMER 2007



The Help A Little One Foundation

H.A.L.O. Reports

Serving children with neurological impairment since 1993

Family Circle Widens the Service Area

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The move puts *Family Circle* physically in the headquarters of Jewish Family & Children's Service/Boston, the professional non-profit that manages the program. It also provides better access to and coordination with JF&CS' Services for People with Disabilities department.

"The restructuring of the *Family Circle* program will increase the ability of JF&CS to offer families

practical, direct services, such as in-home and out of home respite. These services empower families and make their lives more manageable," said **Doreen Cummings**, Director of Individual Living and Working Supports at JF&CS.

Doreen will coordinate *Family Circle* initiatives and manage respite programs. **Pat Ludwig**, Assistant Director for Individual Living and Working Supports, will produce the *Family Circle* newsletter every two months during

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Infant Program Grows in New Hampshire

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Over the past three years, the Cedarcrest Center nursery has averaged six to seven medically complex infants and toddlers, peaking with nine children in the fall of 2006.

The Infant and Toddler Program was created in 2002 in response to a mounting demand for specialized care. Thanks to new technologies and research, survival rates continue to improve for babies with severe disabilities and multiple diagnoses. Infants may need care for vision or



The Infant and Toddler Program at Cedarcrest Center integrates therapy and play.

hearing impairments, respiratory complications, underdeveloped lungs, orthopedic deformities, tracheostomies, neurological

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Family Circle

at

Jewish Family & Children's Service
1430 Main Street
Waltham, MA 02451
Telephone: 781-647-5327

familycircle@halo.org

or

familycircle@jfcsboston.org

Doreen Cummings: Coordinator

Pat Ludwig: Newsletter &
Sunday respite

Sandy Slavet: Individual help
and
Disability
Resource
Network (DRN)



Growth is a natural progression

Dear Friends,

The expansion of our Family Circle program is important news for the children and families H.A.L.O. serves. The move from Boston's South Shore to the Waltham, Massachusetts headquarters of Jewish Family & Children's Service/Boston makes programs accessible to more families in more communities, and enables Family Circle to use more of the resources in the JF&CS network.

H.A.L.O. has extended its support for this program for another five years. Many thanks to Patty Reardon Starr for nurturing Family Circle to this point from her tiny office in Norwood, MA and best wishes in her future work.

This edition is devoted to growth. Our Family Circle is widening. The number of infants surviving birth complications and finding transitional care in a New Hampshire facility is increasing. Young adults in a Massachusetts nursing home are enlarging their lives by moving to group homes. Finally, kind people in Sudbury, Massachusetts are expanding horizons for kids with challenges by providing the opportunity to be on a baseball team.

H.A.L.O. is all about acts of compassion. I thank you again for your continued kindness and support.

*Sincerely yours, Alan Pinschaw
Founder*

Family Circle Adds Sunday Respite in July

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the transition period. Anyone who prefers to receive the newsletter by email should send a request to: familycircle@jfcsboston.org

One-on-one counseling continues free of charge. Information Specialist **Sandy Slavet** will answer calls and emails to Family Circle and utilize JF&CS's Disability Resource Network to connect families with more services. (See box).

Sandy is a parent of a child with special needs and brings extensive experience in disability services and services for the deaf/hard of hearing community. She will also coordinate the Parent to Parent Network which brings families together with others who share many of the same experiences.

Beginning Sunday, July 15, Family Circle will introduce Sunday afternoon respite programs for children with disabilities at the Sidney Leventhal Jewish Community Center in Newton, MA. There will be a nominal fee for swimming, art and recreation programs. Call Pat Ludwig for reservations or details.

Family Circle will continue to support families on Boston's South Shore, but also be more accessible to families North and West of Boston who provide care for children with neurological impairments.

Family Circle offers nonsectarian services and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, disability or any other status protected by law.

Everyone Plays Ball in Sudbury, Massachusetts

Baseball is a huge part of children's lives in Sudbury, Massachusetts. Kids get to play ball, make friends on the team, and learn how to win and lose.

When Carole-Ann Baer— mother of a 'typical' child — saw a TV program about a Virginia team for kids with disabilities, she realized kids in her own area were being left out — kids with disabilities.

"I thought. . . We have so much in this town, we need to do some thing." She approached the Town and Sudbury Little League and kicked off Challenger Baseball.

Carole-Ann, a dance teacher who once studied to be a special educator, says she is no baseball expert, but legions of volunteers are. "We've got 34 kids with challenges and probably twice the volunteers," she said. "So many people want to be a part of this — my friends, their kids, Little League players and coaches — we're all buddies helping players."

For the past three years, kids with

Down Syndrome, a wide range of autism and other conditions have flocked to Upper Featherland Field on spring Sundays from as far as 30 miles away. Carole —Ann and friends set up tees, pitch balls and push wheelchairs around the bases. The youngest player is 6, the oldest nearly 16; two kids are in wheelchairs. No one is allowed to strike out — everybody hits. "The kids' sense of pride is so pure. When you see their faces, it's just beyond words," said Carole-Ann. "In our first season we couldn't get through a game without someone crying we were all so overwhelmed with the beauty of it. They can be just like all the other kids."

Carole-Ann found her inspiration in childhood when her mother cared for foster children in their Brookline, MA home. "Children don't choose the situation they come into," she said. "I want to make a difference in a child's life."

For more information about Sudbury Challenger Baseball follow the prompts at www.sudburybaseball.com or email caroleannbaer@comcast.net



Typical and challenged children enjoy baseball on Sundays in Sudbury, MA. Carole-Ann Baer, center, organizes the sessions. John Morrissey, right, a teacher at Middlesex Academy, is head coach.

Cedarcrest Infant Program Brims with Love

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impairments, developmental delays or failure to thrive.

The Cedarcrest Center serves as a transition between home and hospital, providing sophisticated medical care for the child and extensive training for families around their child's unique needs. Care is supervised by the Director of Nursing, and includes physical, occupational and communication therapies integrated with play skills and age-appropriate developmental activities.

Although the services are "high tech," the Cedarcrest Center

takes pride in creating a setting "more home than hospital", brimming with love for the children. The staff helps families become comfortable with feeding, seizure management and tracheostomy and gastrostomy equipment.

"As we mark our 60th anniversary, the Cedarcrest Center continues to be dedicated to our founders vision of a special place where children with disabilities can be nurtured, and their unique needs and potential respected," said Cathy Gray, President/CEO.

Visit <http://www.cedarcrest4kids.org> to learn more about the Cedarcrest Center or call (603) 358-3384.



Volunteer buddies get satisfaction from teaching baseball basics at Challenger Baseball.