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SibNews

News for individuals concerned about sisters and brothers with special needs.

Volume 13, Issue 1

February – March 2015

H.U.L.K. Sibshop

For boys 6-12 and their dads or big brothers.

Sat

FEB 14
1-4 PM

Fat Tues
FEB 17
6-9 PM

Wisconsibs
Mardi Gras

Casino games, pizza, fun for all abilities. Proceeds benefit sibling summer programs.

Focus Sibshop

Focus on siblings ages 6-12 of children with mental illness.

Sat

FEB 21
1-4 PM

Sat
MAR 14
9-noon

SPA Sibshop
For girls 6-12 and their moms or big sisters. (note date change)

Sib Supper Seminar

Potluck followed by discussion about The new **ABLE Act** allowing people with disabilities to save up to \$100,000 without jeopardizing public support. FREE

Thurs
MARCH 19
5:30-7:30 PM

Sat
MARCH 28
9 AM-1 PM

Wisconsibs
Journey Forward

First of two half-day sessions for adult siblings and their guests concerned about the journey ahead for themselves and their siblings with disabilities.

Coming up!

May 30-31
Sibling Conference
Louisville, KY

SIBLING LEADERSHIP NETWORK

For more information about any of these events, visit www.wisconsibs.org or contact the Wisconsibs office.

It's About the Journey

Welcome to Wisconsibs and our first SibNews issue of the year. Our transformation from Fox Valley Sibling Support Network is an exciting move forward.

As year after year our board of directors analyzed if the time had come to open our organization to more possibilities and more siblings, I recall thinking, "when the time comes, it will feel right."

Our journey that started with a vision by a small group of pioneers in 1998 now has a following of siblings and their "fans" throughout Wisconsin and beyond.

More importantly, we are

helping sisters and brothers of people with disabilities find a path to one another and resources or information.

We are honored to be part of their lifelong journeys and remain committed to helping them with programs for children, teens



Siblings from throughout Wisconsin celebrate their unique journeys with one another at Sib Camp.

and adult siblings in the Fox Valley and beyond.

We are also honored that the Wisconsin Board for

People with Developmental Disabilities granted us funds to start actively building a state-wide network, making presentations, offering consultation and building partnerships throughout Wisconsin.

As the Wisconsin chapter of the national Sibling Leadership Network, Wisconsibs will work together with other state chapters to connect siblings in Wisconsin and throughout the United States.

SIBLING LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The important thing isn't the degree of difficulties but the path chosen to surmount them. It's about the journey.

R.J. Palacio
author of the best seller, *Wonder*

Welcome Stephenie



We are pleased to announce that Stephenie Noggle has joined the Wisconsibs staff as Fund Development Coordinator.

Stephenie joins Wisconsibs with four and a half years' experience in fund development and grant writing.

Stephenie is excited to embrace this new position. She says, "As one of four siblings and the only family member with a

physical disability, I view this job as my chance to pay it forward for my siblings and others. To get the word out, not only about what we do, but why we do it. I believe in Wisconsibs and I will work to help them achieve their mission."

ABLE Act Offers Hope for Better Future

Some people call it the most significant legislation to positively impact people with disabilities since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990.

The ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act which President Obama signed into law December 19, 2014 is aimed at easing financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses.

Basically, Section 529 of the tax code was amended to create a specific account for people with disabilities.

Why is this good news? Since 1974, to qualify for public support such as Medicaid, people with disabilities could only have \$2,000 in assets and earn \$700 a month.

As many families unfortunately learned, if assets grew to be more than those limits, a child or adult became ineligible for benefits.

That's a real disincentive to employment and a nightmare if a well-meaning relative gifted money to an individual thinking that they were being helpful.

ABLE Act accounts allow savings to accumulate for long-term expenses that Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income don't cover, like education, housing, a job coach or transportation.

Adult siblings will have an opportunity to discuss the ABLE Act at their [Sib Supper Seminar on March 19](#) 5:30 pm at the WisconSibs office, 211 E Franklin St., Appleton. FREE—bring dish to pass.

Visit wisconsibs.org for more information about upcoming [Sib Supper Seminars](#) and the [Journey Forward](#) future planning workshops for adult siblings.



Congressman Reid Ribble listening to WI parents and siblings discuss the value of the ABLE Act. Ribble returned to Washington voting in favor of the bill as a co-sponsor.

“The summer camps and Sibshops have really helped my son with self-esteem. He has strongly attached to this group! It's so nice to see.”

Mom of 12 year-old who has sibling with Down Syndrome

Help Needed



Several volunteer jobs are now open for teens and adults. For more information and application, call 920-968-1742.

Openings for adults:

- Board of Directors
- Committee members with skills in
 - Marketing
 - Fundraising
 - Program or strategic planning
- Mardi Gras volunteers
- Santa Celebration Planning Team
- Celebrate Sisterhood Team
- Human Race Team
- Seamstresses
- Greeting card makers/senders
- Student intern
- Adult Sibling Panel members
- WisconSibs Advisory Group

Openings for teens:

- SibDays of Summer (age 14+)
- Santa Celebration Sign Project
- Human Race Team
- Sibshop volunteers
- Greeters for programs
- Greeting card makers/senders
- Student intern
- Teen Sibling Panel members

Sib Sightings



Young siblings, adult siblings and other sibling “fans” participated in Sibshop Facilitator training with Don Meyer in October 2014 sponsored by WisconSibs to help grow more Sibshops in WI.



To see more photos and learn how to register as a WisconSib or a WisconSib Fan, visit www.wisconsibs.org

Sibs Rule



Siblings participating in our Shawano Sibshop in November had fun with shaving cream discussing “when life gets messy”.



Volunteers at Santa Celebration 2014

Prescription for a Healthy Summer

It's no secret that summer can get boring and can sometimes be pretty difficult for kids, especially when siblings are home together 24/7. Breaks from one another, the couch, and electronic toys is the prescription for a healthier, happier summer vacation.

Camp is a place to make lifelong friends; a place to discover passions and develop character and try new things. According to the American Camp Association, 63% of children who learn new activities at camp will sustain an interest in those activities well after camp is over.

A WisconSibs camping prescription comes with the opportunity to play



SibDays of Summer campers

freely with other children outdoors, but that's not all.

WisconSib Campers gain self-confidence. Make lifelong friends. Learn new skills. Enjoy a sense of independence. All with others who share the con-

cerns and joys of growing up with siblings who have special needs.

Thanks to individuals attending fundraising events like our Mardi Gras February 17, and the generosity of funders like WI King's Daughters and Sons within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, WisconSibs makes camp affordable.

Watch for information about WisconSibs camps, including available scholarships, on our website and Facebook.

Thank You for Donating

Your donations to WisconSibs help continue a wide range of programs serving sisters and brothers of all ages who have siblings with special needs.

We depend on generous donations, sponsorship and grants for 90% of program and operating expenses, allowing our participants to focus on what matters most – the needs and resiliency of their families.

Your tax-deductible donations contribute to the success of our programs and the lifelong success of the siblings. Thank you for your generosity.

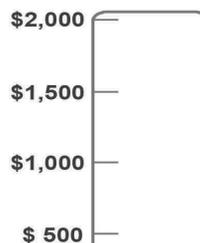
Looking for a simple way to support WisconSibs for free?

Visit United Communities Mission at www.ucmission.com and select

WisconSibs

How it works:

1. 160 area businesses are offering cash back to our organization.
2. 0.5 - 10% of the purchases you make is contributed to our org.
3. You simply need to register for FREE at www.ucmission.com



WE NEED YOUR HELP TO REACH OUR GOAL

Sib Summer Dates

July 18
Canoe the Fox River—Neenah
9:30 am—12:30 pm

July 20-24
SibDays of Summer
Campers ages 6-12
Plamann Park—Appleton
10 am—3 pm

August 10-13 & 13-16
Sib Camp ages 9-16
Door County



TEEN Sibs!!

Looking for opportunities for leadership?

Sib Teen Leadership Day
June 25, 2015



Leaders in Training
July 7-10, 2015

SibDays of Summer
(for sib teen leaders)
July 20-24, 2015

Call or email for application.

Want to talk with other teens?
www.facebook.com/groups/SibTeen/



wisconsibs

Sisters & Brothers of People with Disabilities

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- We are Wisconsin siblings of people with disabilities.
- We are role models to our siblings, our peers, our friends, and our community.
- We are caregivers and companions. Even the very youngest of us help care for our siblings with special needs.
- As we grow, we play a vital role in the quality of life of our siblings.

We are proud to be WisconSibs!

Celebrate All Abilities at Mardi Gras!

Siblings love to have fun together with others in their community. That's the whole idea for this community event that has been growing in popularity every year.

This event is accessible fun for all abilities. Plus pro-

ceeds help fund sibling summer camps.

This year guests will not only enjoy casino games, bingo, cake walk, and the Community First Credit Union cash cube, but also the new tasty PIZZA CHALLENGE!

Will you be able to match the pizza with the restaurant?

Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door. Group and sibling rates available.

For information or to purchase tickets, visit wisconsibs.org, call 920-968-1742 or click [here](#)



Take the PIZZA CHALLENGE!

Featuring:

- Stuc's Pizza
- Sal's Pizza
- Glass Nickel
- Marco's Pizza
- Topper's and more!

NEW

It's time to celebrate Mardi Gras

Tuesday, Feb 17, 2015

6:00-9:00 pm

Grand Meridian - 2621 N Oneida, Appleton, WI

Bring your sibling. Bring your friends.

It's a good bet you'll have a great time!