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SPRING 2021

FAMILY RESOURCE ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER



FRA Cares



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SPRING 2021

NEW at FRA

FRA is excited to offer new therapeutic services to adults with disabilities, in response to requests from within the community. In the past year, we began to hear from families requesting more intensive therapies among the adult population we were serving. Administrators and staff realized FRA was in a unique position to provide therapeutic services to adults because FRA already had a base of highly qualified practitioners, who were accustomed to working with people with disabilities and who were eager to take this on.

Occupational and Speech Therapy will now be available for one-to-one sessions or in group settings to meet the needs of the individuals. Remote services work well too. Adults are eligible to use their DDD budget or private pay for these services. This is a wonderful complement to FRA's ongoing adult learning classes and another way for people to gain more independence.

Did you know Occupational Therapy offers adults the opportunity for personal growth and independence by setting personally meaningful and relevant goals? "When people hear 'OT' they often think it is physical therapy from the waist up but the scope is actually very broad, focusing on the whole person and their individualized and functional goals. Under the umbrella of OT services, we can address the various factors that impact functional independence within the daily tasks that occupy one's time, including but not limited to areas such as daily living skills, functional task, coordination, sensory processing, visual perception, interpersonal skills, psychosocial activities and so much more!" said Chrissy D'Amico, Licensed Occupational Therapist. As a result FRA can now offer individual and group sessions for acquiring life skills, travel training, coping skills and any aspect leading to personal growth.

There are many reasons why adults seek expertise of a



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”

speech language pathologist to improve their communications skills. Particularly for adults with developmental disabilities they may seem to speak less clearly, lack conversational skills, or can't remember words as readily as when they were in school. "It's a misconception that adults only seek the help of a speech pathologist after an accident, injury or illness. Many adults seek help to improve memory, fluency, word finding, and clarity of speech, cognitive functioning, voice disorders and intelligibility," said Karli Goebel, Licensed Speech Pathologist.

FRA practitioners like Karli work closely with their clients and their families. "We reached out to FRA when we noticed our son's stuttering was getting worse. Karli is wonderful with Mark. She always has positive feedback and activities we can do with Mark at home," said John, Mark's father. To learn more about the Occupational and Speech Therapies offered at FRA please reach out to frontdesk@frainc.org and request a registration packet.

OUR MISSION

Family Resource Associates (FRA) helps children, adolescents and people of all ages with disAbilities to reach their fullest potential. FRA connects individuals to independence through specialized therapies and advanced technology. Acknowledging the powerful influence of the family, we remain committed to them by offering both support and education.



DONATE TODAY!

Help us create possAbilities for people with disAbilities.
frainc.org/donatenow



ED Note

By Nancy Phalanukorn
Executive Director

It's officially one year since our lives were closed down at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. I remember thinking that this will be gone in a few weeks! Instead, life has dramatically changed by this unexpected situation. A year later, as with anything unexpected, we learn from this and look forward to new opportunities it presents. Fortunately, we have learned to be more effective in our remote services and we can offer new ways to help our community. Remote services will become part of the regular offerings at FRA as options for those who are unable to attend in person services, infants through adults. Families and individuals have learned more computer skills and have also realized their new individual strengths in using technology.

During this time, we have made improvements in our adult curriculum and are working on new program offerings. The results from the Strategic Planning survey and sub-committee meetings have

generated interesting ideas as we chart our course for the next 5 years of growth. New individualized therapies are now open for adults to get speech therapy (with Stephen Hunt "MA, CCC, SLP") or occupational therapy (with Chrissy D'Amico "MA, OTR/L"), under their DDD budget. Both Steve and Chrissy are exploring new life skills, social and conversational groups as well. Possibly by fall, new movement and activity programs will be available for school aged children. Requests for new family support services are being considered as well.

Project SEARCH is seeking interns for their third year at Monmouth Medical Center and we will look to expand to other counties moving forward. We have seen how employment can be a real life changer for many of our adults, and FRA will look to make that happen in new ways for more people. FRA is most excited that staff are currently in the process of becoming certified as Benefits Counselors for Social Security to further help working adults be successful and maintain their money and benefits.

New ways of doing things, new visions and progress towards the future are all exciting outcomes of a year that has seen such sadness and disruption. FRA looks ahead with anticipation and enthusiasm to welcome everyone back into the center, as soon as we are all cleared, and to the many opportunities ahead. Happy Spring!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS/ PROGRAMS



40th Annual FRA Golf Classic

Navesink Country Club
Monday, June 21st

EXCITING SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE!



Project SEARCH

Success Story

Robert always desired to work and to have a full life. Until last year he filled his days with Adult Education and Karate classes at FRA. In 2019, when FRA partnered with Monmouth Medical Center to launch Project SEARCH, Phill Duck, Director of Employability, knew Robert was a good candidate for the program. "We recognized Robert as a person who always showed initiative and a willingness to help, so when we set out to recruit interns for Project SEARCH, he immediately came to mind," said Phill.

Robert graduated Project SEARCH in June 2020, at the height of the global pandemic. According to Robert, in Project SEARCH "I learned how to organize my workspace and day. It's important to be friendly and keep my work area neat. I also learned that

you have to stay with the task until it's done. I was able to do many practice job interviews and worked with several different supervisors. The different jobs helped me to learn what I liked."

The persistence of Robert and Project SEARCH staff eventually paid off, with Robert landing his first job at BJ's in Oakhurst. Upon getting the position, FRA job coaches provided Robert with training until he learned all of the job responsibilities and tasks so that he could complete them independently and be a benefit to his employer. Today, Robert is enjoying his success and is working 20 hours per week. Robert offered a bit of advice to anyone considering applying for an internship at Monmouth Medical Center Project SEARCH. "The people at MMC Project SEARCH were nice and

helpful, everyone cares about you. It's a nice place to learn and work. The classroom was great and Monmouth Medical Center was an interesting place. You'll learn a lot about what you like to do and about getting a job with this program."

30 Years of Service



FRA
50/50
RAFFLE



>> Purchase by June 18th! The winning ticket will be pulled the 21st at the FRA Golf Classic. Win up to **\$6,250** <<

\$25 PER TICKET

to purchase tickets:
Alexis at 732-747-5310 ext. 120

Join us as we congratulate Joanne Castellano on her retirement at the end of May, having had an exceptional career at FRA! In 1989, Joanne came on board to help start the **TECHConnection**. At the time, computers were new and Assistive Technology was just beginning. Joanne led FRA to the forefront of assistive technology by her involvement with national tech developers, bringing recognition to FRA as one of the first 30 technology centers in America. Her hard work, skills, caring and dedication built the **TECHConnection** to be a major resource for the tristate area. Joanne also brought assistive technology into all of our schools for an amazing impact to change education for students with disabilities. Serving the public for so many years Joanne understood the potential impact this computer technology could have on our adults with disabilities and 15 years ago the FRA Adult Computer Program became a reality. Under her leadership, what started as one class of 4 students, grew to serve 180 students a week within 40 different computer-based learning classes, expanding (as allowed by DDD) to teach job skills and life skills as well. Joanne leaves behind a tremendous legacy, and her impact on FRA will be forever present. While we are very sad to see her leave, we wish her fulfillment and happiness in her retirement!

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