



30th Annual Education Conference

Saturday, January 21, 2017

Dunwoody United Methodist Church - 1548 Mt. Vernon Road, Dunwoody, Georgia

Co-Sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta

Conference Overview: After a child is diagnosed with a significant developmental or physical disability, families need resources and information. The annual FOCUS Education Conference invites professionals to speak on various topics to help parents (and other professionals) find the information they need! Representatives from community agencies will exhibit so participants can learn about services, such as respite care, therapy groups, assistive technology, and adapted equipment. Parents enjoy a day of networking with professionals, community agencies, and other parents and learn valuable information to help their child.....and their family.

About FOCUS: FOCUS understands and supports the unique needs of families with children who are medically fragile or have significant developmental or physical disabilities. FOCUS offers comfort, hope and information to parents; accessible recreational and social programs for children and teens; and fun, inclusive activities for the entire family. A nonprofit founded by parents in 1983, FOCUS continues to embrace and strengthen metro Atlanta families.

Agenda:

Registration and Exhibits Open	8:00-9:00 am
Keynote Address <i>The Gift of Rest – Dr. Zarat Boyd</i>	9:00-10:00 am
Exhibits Open	10:00-10:30 am
Workshops <i>IEPs – Janet Haury</i> <i>Staying Connected With Your Spouse – Debra McElhaney</i> <i>Potty Training – Dr. Sara Mahen</i> <i>Seizures 101 – Dr. Robert Flamini</i>	10:45 am-12:15 pm
Lunch (provided), Exhibits Open, AADD Ambassadors	12:30-1:20 pm
Workshops <i>Behavior Management – Rebecca McDonald</i> <i>Wills & Special Needs Trusts – DJ Jeyaram</i> <i>Yikes... My Child is Becoming an Adult! – LuRae Ahrendt</i> <i>Cannabis & Latest Development in Ga. – Sebastien Cotte</i>	1:30-3:00 pm

Conference Registration: Please register by January 16, 2017. Late registrations are accepted on a space-available basis. Sorry, no childcare is available.

Registration Fees – [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Parent - \$15
Couple - \$20
Professional - \$50

Exhibitor Fees – [CLICK HERE TO EXHIBIT](#)

Nonprofit Exhibitor - \$50
Corporate Exhibitor - \$100

Questions? Contact Elizabeth at 770-234-9111 or Elizabeth@focus-ga.org

8:00-9:00 am	REGISTRATION & EXHIBITS OPEN
9:00-10:00 am	<p>KEYNOTE ADDRESS</p> <p>The Gift of Rest - Dr. Zarat Boyd</p> <p>Parenting any child in a busy world can be difficult. If you are a parent or caregiver for a child with special needs, life can be even more hectic, isolating, and paralyzing sometimes without regular relief. Layers of extensive care, torn attention, intense schedules, and a dangerously fast pace are normal. But, the one thing that typically suffers is you. Choose to reverse this trend. Discover how REST is a gift to experience and explore REGULARLY. Learn 7 practical strategies for building healthy rhythms of rest and renewal in this busy life.</p> <p><i>Dr. Zarat Y. Boyd has over 17 years of experience empowering people to discover, develop, and maximize their full potential. She serves as President & Chief Learning Officer of MaxLife, Inc. www.themaxlifesolution.com, a consulting practice for leaders & leadership teams, since 2003. Dr. Boyd has a Bachelors degree in International Relations from Spelman College, Masters in Leadership from Bellevue University, Masters in Human & Organizational Systems, and a PhD in Human & Organizational Systems from Fielding Graduate University. She & her husband, Damian Sr., have been married for over 16 years. She is mom & advocate of Damian Jr., 12-year-old gifted child with complex medical conditions. This couple founded Vertical Church www.verticalATL.com in Southwest Atlanta in 2011. She also serves as President of Vertical City, Inc., a 501c3 community impact organization revitalizing underserved communities. As a family, they treasure the beauty of life that God has provided and committed to helping as many people possible to do the same.</i></p>
10:00-10:30 am	EXHIBITS OPEN
10:45-12:15 pm	<p>WORKSHOPS</p> <p>IEPs - Janet Haury</p> <p>Building an IEP team is a challenging task. The IEP process is often overwhelming and confusing for parents. How does the system work? What rights do parents have in determining services for their children? How do you create an IEP that addresses all areas of need for your child? Janet Haury will give tips on how to navigate the IEP process and assist parents in developing an appropriate educational program for their special needs child, including how to prepare and overcome obstacles when presented in the IEP process.</p> <p><i>Janet Haury serves as an attorney with the Zimring Law Firm with a primary practice in education law. Janet received her undergraduate degree with honors from Emory University and a law degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law where she served as an editor on the Vanderbilt Law Review and received the Dean's Award. Janet speaks in a variety of venues regarding special education law and regularly presents to parent groups. Her special education experience includes representing students with all disabilities, as well as lobbying and litigation. Janet has specific expertise in developing programs for students who require maximum services in the LRE. She is also the proud mother of three children, ages 22, 19, and 16.</i></p> <p>Staying Connected With Your Spouse - Debra McElhaney</p> <p>Debra McElhaney will discuss ways to help you stay connected in your marriage while caring for your child with special needs.</p> <p><i>Debra F. McElhaney, M.Ed. is a licensed marriage and family therapist who has been working and playing with individuals, couples and families for over 25 years. Debra serves on the FOCUS advisory board. She is the mother of two, including a special needs daughter.</i></p> <p>Potty Training - Dr. Sara Mahan</p> <p>Dr. Sara Mahan, PhD, will discuss various issues surrounding toileting with a focus on giving caregivers a guide and tips for toilet training. Specific topics include: Preparation for toilet training / Tips and Tools for toilet training / Realistic goals in toilet training / Possible schedule for toilet training.</p> <p><i>Dr. Sara Mahan is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Dunwoody, GA who specializes in the assessment and treatment of various disorders and concerns that arise among infants, toddlers, and children. She provides assessment for Developmental Disorders including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Delays, and/or Intellectual Disability and provides comprehensive developmental and psychoeducational evaluations for toddlers, children, and adolescents. She provides treatment to toddlers and children for various concerns. She also provides parent training. Dr. Sara Mahan loves working with people to help determine strengths to build on, weaknesses to improve upon, as well as helping children and families feel better about themselves, their achievements, and relationships. She earned her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Louisiana State University, completed predoctoral and postdoctoral training at Marcus Autism Center (Children's Healthcare of Atlanta) and Emory University School of Medicine, and has extensive experience helping people and their families in a private practice setting.</i></p>

	<p>Seizures 101 - Dr. Robert Flamini <i>Dr. Robert Flamini completed his Medical Degree and Pediatric Residency at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Columbia. He then completed a Visiting Fellowship in Pediatric Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School in Boston, followed by a residency in Neurology at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, where he stayed for a Pediatric Neurology fellowship. He subsequently completed two additional years of pediatric residency at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, where he was chief resident in his final year. Dr. Flamini has practiced in the Atlanta area since 1995. He has served as the Medical Director of the Children’s Epilepsy Center at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta since 1995. Dr. Flamini was also the Medical Director of the Tuberos Sclerosis Clinic, the only one of its kind in the State of Georgia. Dr. Flamini continues to practice Child Neurology with special interest and skills in the medical and surgical treatment of epilepsy and seizure disorders</i></p>
12:30-1:20 pm	LUNCH (provided), EXHIBITS OPEN, AADD AMBASSADORS
1:30-3:00 pm	<p>WORKSHOPS</p> <p>Behavior Management - Rebecca McDonald Struggles between parents and children are normal but can also be frustrating, often causing desperate and exhausted parent to “give in” to child’s inappropriate behavior just to have “peace.” If you struggle with your child’s behavior then this workshop is for you! In this workshop, you will learn some REAL life tools to help you and your child succeed! <i>Rebecca McDonald is a passionate, innovative and progressive Child Development Specialist with a strong background in Child Development, Education and Health. She has practical knowledge and 19 years’ experience with managing programs and staff in early education settings, including special needs children, diverse cultures and children with behavior issues and/or trauma. Rebecca has a M.S. in Child Development and a B.S. in Child Health and is a Certified Professional Life Coach. She is very committed to the success of every parent and child, regardless of circumstances!</i></p> <p>Wills & Special Needs Trusts - DJ Jeyaram A common sense presentation on how to protect benefits and prepare for the future. You will leave with an understanding of what you need to have in place and what those things do to protect your loved ones today and forever. <i>DJ Jeyaram is a proud FOCUS dad and a 1997 graduate of Emory University School of Law. DJ’s experience includes serving as the Deputy Director for Legal Services with the Georgia Department of Community Health and as a Georgia Administrative Law Judge with the Office of State Administrative Hearings. After his time with the State, DJ worked for a large law firm but for the last ten years he has had his own practice specializing in special needs estate planning and healthcare law. He also currently serves as a Magistrate Judge in Gwinnett County. Mr. Jeyaram is admitted as an Attorney and Counselor of the United States Supreme Court and has also been recognized by his peers with the “AV Peer Review Rating”, which identifies a lawyer with “very high to preeminent legal ability . . .” Further, Mr. Jeyaram has been recognized in Georgia’s Legal Leaders’ magazine as a “Top Rated Lawyer”.</i></p> <p>Yikes... My Child is Becoming an Adult! – Panel hosted by LuRae Ahrendt Panelists: Dr. Thomas G. Burns, Mike McCord, Anne Ladd Medical, educational, and rehab specialists will discuss various issues in transitioning from pediatrics to adulthood. <i>LuRae Ahrendt is an RN certified in rehabilitation nursing and life care planning. She has over 40 years of nursing experience, including 30 years of experience working as a case manager for children and adults with physical, psychological, and behavioral impairments around the country. Ms. Ahrendt serves on the Advisory Board of FOCUS, and the Board of Side by Side Clubhouse. She is the Co-Director for Camp BIAG for the Brain Injury Association of Georgia.</i> <i>Thomas G. Burns, Psy.D., ABPP/ABCN is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory School of Medicine. He is the Director of Neuropsychology and Clinical Operations in the Division of Neurosciences at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Dr. Burns received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Pennsylvania with a major in the Biological Basis of Behavior. He went on to obtain his Masters and Doctoral degrees in Clinical Psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology in Atlanta, Georgia. Specialty training in Neuropsychology was completed at Hahnemann University Hospital/Medical College of Pennsylvania and St. Christopher’s Children’s Hospital in Philadelphia, PA. Following completion of a postdoctoral residency at Scottish Rite Children’s Medical Center, Dr. Burns was licensed as a Psychologist in Georgia in 1996. He is board certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) within the specialty of Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology. He also carries board certification through the American Board of Professional Neuropsychology. For the past twenty years, Dr. Burns has pursued research and clinical interests involving neuropsychological evaluations for patients diagnosed with intractable epilepsy (Wada and Cortical Mapping),</i></p>

traumatic brain injury, and birth trauma. Dr. Burns has been married to his wife Jennifer for 25 years and he has four daughters – 2 in college and 2 at St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School.

Anne Ladd, Family Engagement Specialist, Georgia Department of Education

Anne Ladd is the Family Engagement Specialist for the Division for Special Education Services and Supports at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) where she oversees the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership (GaPMP). The GaPMP is an initiative of the GaDOE that works to increase family engagement to positively impact student outcomes. Anne, her husband Paul and their two sons, Nate and Matty, became a FOCUS family in the late 1990's and Anne's work as an advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families began after her participation in Partners in Policymaking in 1997. Before coming to the GaDOE, Anne was a parent mentor in Gwinnett County where she used her experience as a parent of a child with a disability to support other families. This year will be a big year in the Ladd family as Matty will transition from high school in May!

Mike McCord has been practicing as a vocational rehabilitation and career counselor since 1989. His focus is on helping people find meaningful work. He has worked in the fields of brain injury rehabilitation at local area hospitals and co-founded a program providing lifelong services to adults with brain injury. He has also worked as a career counselor in urban non-profits, and has maintained a private career counseling practice providing services to students and adults. He completed a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Georgia State University in 1988. His prior work included managing job training services in underserved areas of Atlanta and building homes for families transitioning into the community from local shelters. He has been married to Nancy for 30 years and has a 15-year old, Caspar. He is a certified guitar addict, and makes joyful noises on the mandolin, banjo, and accordion.

Cannabis and Latest Development in Georgia – Sebastien Cotte

Workshop will cover the basic of medical cannabis and the latest updates on the Georgia low THC registry (including the 2017 Georgia legislative session)

Sebastien Cotte became actively involved in the field of medical marijuana in 2013 while seeking alternative treatments for his son Jagger's, rare terminal Mitochondrial disease. In 2014, with his wife Annett, they became medical refugees in Colorado to access cannabis oil for Jagger.

Sebastien received a bachelor degree in international business from the University of Indianapolis and has over 15 years of business experience at several Fortune 500 companies. His areas of expertise include: human resources, training, process improvements, sales management, customer care, marketing, brand building, etc. Sebastien also took a Medical Marijuana certification program offered by American for Safe Access and is in the process of finishing a few more industry certifications. He serves as an ambassador for the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation and is one of the co-founder of Georgia's Hope, the leadership parent group that was successful in getting a Medical Cannabis law passed in Georgia. (HB1 Haleigh's Hope).

Sebastien is the national business/education director and a board member for the Flowering Hope Foundation (a 501c no for profit that provides education and patient support for Haleigh's Hope-Cannatol products). He is also on the board of advisor of MDherb, a cannabis education website and the VP of the "Talk to the 6630507 hand" campaign which aim at de-scheduling cannabis. In his free time, Sebastien is a guest host of the Cannatics political show on Millennium Grown Broadcast Network.