



**Utah  
Parent  
Center**

Special needs,  
extraordinary potential



*The Family to Family Network  
A Volunteer Network Supported by the Utah Parent Center*

**The Mission of the Network**  
*is to educate, strengthen, and support  
families of persons with disabilities.*

The **Family to Family Network** is a statewide organization of Local and Region Networks with a state-level Advisory Board. The Board members are all volunteers, and a majority of members are parents of children with disabilities. Other Board members represent agencies and professional partners. Local Networks are run by volunteer family members who help other families locate and access disability services in their area. Families in the Networks support and educate one another, work to improve the quality of disability services throughout the state and raise community awareness about disability issues. The statewide Network is currently comprised of **11 Local Network** groups throughout the state of Utah.

The Family to Family Network is a continuing movement founded more than 19 years ago by families. This movement was originally supported financially through a partnership between the family organizations and the Utah State Department of Human Services/Division of Services for People with Disabilities, with donations, and in-kind contributions. Technical assistance to and support for the Network is currently administered by the Utah Parent Center as an essential resource for families.

## The Utah Parent Center

The Utah Parent Center (UPC or Center) is an award-winning, statewide, nonprofit organization founded in 1983 by parents of children and youth with disabilities to help other parents facing similar challenges throughout Utah. For more than 35 years, the caring competent staff of the UPC has utilized a parent-to-parent and family-to-family model to help many thousands of parents and to represent a wide variety of disabilities, ages, and families in many systems-level activities.

UPC staff have built collaborative networks with education, health and human service professionals, agencies, and organizations. The Center promotes partnerships to affect change within the community through several projects and activities serving thousands of families and the professionals who serve them. The mission of the UPC is to help parents help their children with disabilities to live included, productive lives in the community. We accomplish this by providing accurate information, empathetic support, valuable training, and effective advocacy based on the concept of parents helping parents.

Our activities to support the Family to Family Network are to ensure a viable and effective resource for families across the State. We believe that this partnership is one of the most important activities we are involved in to help us help more families. More information about the UPC can be found online by visiting [www.utahparentcenter.org](http://www.utahparentcenter.org).

## HISTORY

### THEN...

Since February 1, 2006, the **Utah Parent Center** (UPC) has been directly supporting the **Family to Family Network** (Network). We first provided technical assistance and support under a 3 ½ year contract awarded by the Utah State Department of Human Services (DHS or Department), Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD or Division). When that contract ended on July 1, 2009 the UPC assumed ongoing support of the Network as an activity of the Center at the request of the Network leadership. However, our partnership with the Network – and its predecessor, the State Family Councils – dates back at least 18 years!

Between 2009 and 2013, the UPC continued to support the efforts of the Network Leaders using various funding sources to provide small operating budgets, leadership training opportunities, resources, and connections. The Network was impacted over time by the lack of resources and local leadership changes. However, through the heroic efforts of Leaders

who persevered, thousands of families received support and information through a wide range of creative activities as summarized in this report.

## NOW...

Beginning September 1, 2013, the Utah Parent Center entered into a new contract with DSPD to develop, train, support, inform and educate the Family to Family Network Leaders and Networks. This five-year agreement (2013-2018) represents a great “re-investment” by the Division. This partnership will continue to build upon the success achieved on previous funding that was sustained by the Network and UPC in the meantime. Families on the waiting list or in services through DSPD are who the Network was designed to support. Local Networks welcome any family who can benefit from the connection to other families and the resources offered.

The Network accomplishes its mission by achieving the following goals:

- ★ Collaborates with State and Local DSPD personnel to build and maintain Networks.
- ★ Maintains a website.
- ★ Provides training and support for leaders of Networks.
- ★ Collaborates with and supports other agencies and organizations in the State who serve individuals with disabilities and their families.
- ★ Provides information and education to communities about disability awareness and issues.
- ★ Advocates for improved services, programs, and facilities that serve individuals with disabilities.
- ★ Provides training for families in becoming better advocates for themselves and the individuals for whom they provide care.
- ★ Provides training and education in how to access the services that are available in the State of Utah.
- ★ Serves as a positive voice for change in improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families...and help people live the best life possible!

# Summary of Accomplishments September 2013 – February 2018

To date a few key accomplishments of the Family to Family Network Project are as follows:

- ★ We currently have 11 active networks throughout the state which includes 5 Urban areas and 6 Rural areas with a total of 18 volunteer local network leaders
- ★ 390 total network activities and meetings were provided and/or attended by network leaders and staff
- ★ We have reached over 111,543 (duplicated) families through 607 individualized mailing and emails from the Utah Parent Center
- ★ Local Network Leaders and staff provided 1,484 One-to-One Consultations
- ★ We started with 333 Facebook Followers on our main Network Page to currently 759 as well as an additional 1148 followers on 15 local/community-based network pages.
- ★ To date volunteers have logged over 7,415 volunteer hours valued at approximately \$111,225

## Local Network Activities included:

- ★ One-on-one consultations with families to provide information, education and parent to parent support
- ★ Monthly meetings for families with presenters on a wide range of topics
- ★ Dissemination of electronic newsletters (information, upcoming events, etc.) to local listservs
- ★ Meeting with representatives of various agencies and organizations to obtain information to be shared with families
- ★ Participating on Boards and Committees
- ★ Development of materials for DSPD
- ★ Assistive Technology Meetings
- ★ Transition Fairs
- ★ Agency Fairs
- ★ Support Groups
- ★ Sibling Support
- ★ Buddy Walk for Down Syndrome
- ★ IEP trainings
- ★ Back to School Information
- ★ Navigating Services workshops

- ★ SSI presentations
- ★ ABLE accounts presentations
- ★ Special Needs Funding workshops
- ★ Emergency Preparedness workshops
- ★ Provider Panels and presentations
- ★ Transition workshops

### **Privately funded events included:**

Due to the involvement of each of the volunteers in their local communities, they are able to raise funds to do networking activities for families above and beyond what funding they are provided through the Family to Family Network funding, a few key examples are:

- ★ Annual Picnics
- ★ Couple's Dinner and Speakers
- ★ Special Needs Easter Egg Hunts
- ★ Mom's Night Out
- ★ T-Ball for Children with Special Needs
- ★ A Mother's Day Luncheon
- ★ Get-to-Know You Meetings
- ★ A Corn Maze Activity
- ★ A Family Movie Night
- ★ Custom Santa

### **Summary of UPC's Administrative Accomplishments:**

- ★ Prepared and disseminated a monthly newsletter to leaders.
- ★ Ongoing updates and information to the Facebook pages.
- ★ Ongoing updates for the Network Leaders about any calendar of events.
- ★ Technical assistance was provided in response to requests from Network leaders at all levels. UPC staff responded to questions and provided assistance as needed.
- ★ Information pieces were disseminated as requested by Network leadership (publicity materials, etc.).
- ★ Monitored email communications and participated in listserv.

- ★ Financial records were established and maintained for all levels in the Networks; unused budget allotments were carried forward from the previous year. Reimbursements were made for approved expenditures.
- ★ As an activity supported by the UPC, Networks were able to utilize the UPC's nonprofit status and fundraise under our Charitable Solicitations Permit.
- ★ Network records were maintained (Board agendas and minutes, financial documentation, training material, etc.).
- ★ Reporting procedures continued, and quarterly reports were prepared. Leaders entered activity information using an online reporting system or through verbal reports to the UPC Volunteer Coordinator.
- ★ Recruitment of families for focus groups, surveys and special projects.
- ★ DHS steering committee involvement



An additional benefit in leveraging some capacity for the Family to Family Network, is Utah Family Voices, the federally recognized Family to Family Health Information Center (UFV) funded by HRSA Maternal & Child Health Bureau which is also housed under the Utah Parent Center. UFV provides in-depth consultation, healthcare and financing resources and related services navigation to families of children, youth and individuals with special needs. **UFV provided further intensive support and information to 568 individuals regarding DSPD throughout this time period as a collaborative partner in the efforts and outreach of the Family to Family Network leaders and staff.**

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