

KIDZ



ADVOCATES FOR KIDZ AND FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Volume 1, Issue 1

July/August 2004

About Us...

What is KIDZ?

KIDZ is a group of parents with special needs children who have joined together to provide support and information for other parents with special needs children.

What are the goals of KIDZ?

First, and foremost, is to provide support for you and your family. Notice our slogan says "for KIDZ and families with special needs." When one of your children is diagnosed with some form of disability, it affects your whole family, not just that child. Therefore, you are a *family* with special needs.

KIDZ has an organized meeting each month for families to meet and have a good time together. This is a great opportunity to learn from other parents as well as letting your children play with other kids with similar challenges. The siblings of your disabled child also benefit because they are able to connect with the other siblings of disabled children. A sibling of a disabled child deals with a whole extra set of emotions and situations that only another sibling in a similar situation

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Monthly Meeting Info

June 2004 Summary:

The kids had a blast! It's always fun as parents to watch our children have fun.

We discussed what articles need to be in the newsletters, ate a few brownies, received an update on the brochures, saw a sample of a banner that's being made, ate a few more brownies, talked about our upcoming raffle, and finished off the brownies.

Upcoming July 2004 Topics:

- Discussion on how to influence a handicap accessible park for the Spring Hill area
- Finalize raffle fundraiser details
- Finalize details on cookout social

Family Focus

This column highlights stories from different families.

By Jason & Amber Tinsley

In the summer of 2001, I was pregnant with our third child. It was a busy summer. This pregnancy was normal for me, except that the baby did not seem to move as much as my other two pregnancies, so the doctor checked the baby's heart and it was perfect. I quit worrying because I had so much going on and thought it was just a calm baby. On September 4, we had that sonogram that every expectant parent cannot wait for - we were



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can understand. Remember, you are a special needs family.

KIDZ also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, invites occasional guest speakers at our monthly meetings, and has special events such as cookouts and play days.

Another goal of KIDZ is to distribute brochures about our group to local pediatricians, hospitals, obstetricians, ECI, and others for them to give out to parents. The intent of this outreach is to be a positive first point of contact with parents whose child has been diagnosed with a disability.

How can I be involved in KIDZ?

There is no fee involved in becoming a member of KIDZ. You are always welcome to come to the monthly meetings and special events. If you'd like to receive the KIDZ newsletter, just let us know and we will put you on our mailing list. We also have many other exciting ideas and projects that are in the developmental stages that we would love to have you be a part of.

If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive our KIDZ newsletter, please call Amber at (903) 663-5936 or e-mail us at Advocates4KIDZ@yahoo.com

If you receive our newsletter through ECI, you can help us reduce postage costs by indicating this. We will keep your information on file in case we send out any special mailings.

Another area of involvement that we would like to encourage you to participate in is our KIDZ Support Line. The KIDZ Support Line is a way to connect families with similar diagnosis. This is a great way to bring another family under your wing and help them with encouragement or just an ear to listen. If you are interested in allowing a new special needs family to contact you or would like to contact a family for advice, please call or e-mail us. ■

going to find out the sex of our baby. It's A Boy!!! Then came the doctor's words, "We found a problem with the baby's spine!"

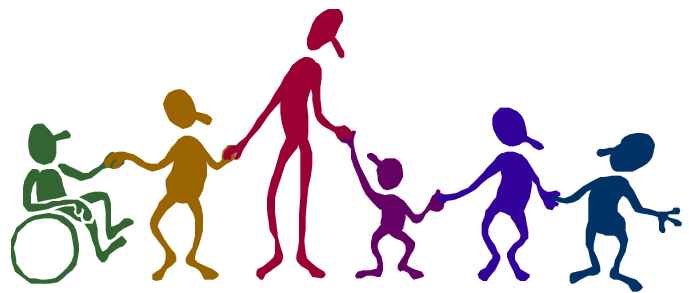
Our baby boy has Spina Bifida, which occurs in one of every 1,000 babies, but at the time we felt we were the only ones in the universe with this problem. Our hearts were crushed. Why was God allowing this to happen? We may never know the answer to that question, but we have learned that when things seem too hard for us to handle, God equips us with the

It's a boy!!!

Then came the doctor's words, "We found a problem ..."

strength we need, then He carries us through. We prayed that God would heal our baby. We came to realize that our prayers should not focus on God changing our baby but to change *us* and prepare *us* to meet the needs of this child. Connor was born October 29, 2001 paralyzed from the waist down. He spent 11 days in the NICU while healing from surgery to close the opening in his back. During this time we learned to take care of this beautiful baby God blessed us with.

These two years have not been the easiest. Yet, through all of this we have learned the importance of life and love. Connor has not met all of those "childhood milestones" on time, but we never let that hinder us. We take each day at a time and celebrate his achievements when they come. Connor has been a fighter since the day he was born. He will never walk on his own, but that did not stop him from finding a way to get on top of the kitchen table. ■



* RAFFLE *

KIDZ is holding a raffle to raise funds for our First Contact brochures. Through the generous donations of Cavenders and East Texas Angel Network, prizes have been donated so that we may raffle them off.

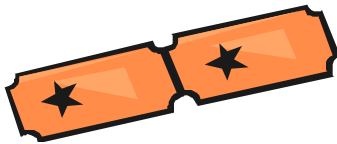
Each raffle ticket costs \$4.00. Prizes include:

- Larry Mahan smooth quill ostrich ropers (1 pr)
- Brighton purse, watch, earrings, sunglasses, beach towel and umbrella (1 ea)
- Neal McCoy autographed jeans (1)
- Neal McCoy CD's
- Boys Huffly bicycle (1)

Drawings will be held November 9, 2004 at our monthly meeting.

Tickets can be purchased at our monthly meetings or from Cavenders on the Loop in Longview.

Tickets will be available soon!



Encouraging Words

"Having someone who understands is a great blessing for ourselves. Being someone who understands is a great blessing to others."

- Janette Oke

FAST FACTS

Research into neural tube defects, such as Spina Bifida, "has shown that getting the right amount of **folic acid** before and during pregnancy can prevent most neural tube defects. The U.S. Public Health Service recommends that women of childbearing age get at least 400 milligrams of folic acid each day, through food sources and/or supplements. Health care providers recommend that women supplement their diets with folic acid for three months before conception, and then for at least the first three months of pregnancy."

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. "Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities", [Online] http://www.nichd.nih.gov/womenshealth/birth_defects.cfm, December 3, 2003.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

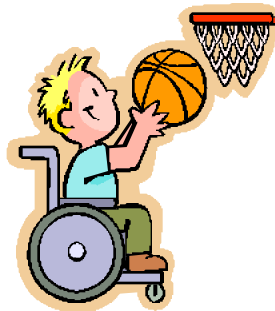
COOKOUT!!

PLACE: TO BE DETERMINED

TIME: A SATURDAY IN AUGUST

More details will be available soon!

Call Amber at 903-663-5936 for directions and to RSVP so we will know how many to feed.



KIDZ RAFFLE

DON'T FORGET TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR WAYS TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE RAFFLE TICKETS TO HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR OUR FIRST CONTACT BROCHURE!



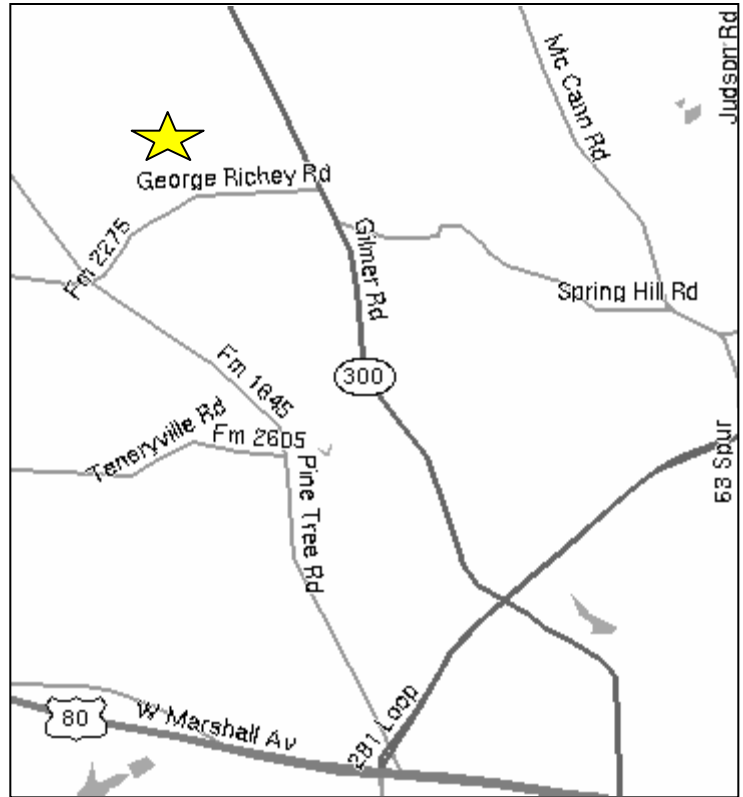
KIDZ would like to say a special "thanks" to *Rebecca Willbanks* for volunteering her time to watch the kids during our June meeting!

KIDZ MONTHLY MEETING

PLACE: NEW BEGINNINGS BAPTIST CHURCH
600 GEORGE RICHEY RD.
LONGVIEW, TX
(SEE MAP)

TIME: 2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
FROM 7:00 PM TO 8:30 PM

Childcare is available at no charge.
Please RSVP for childcare.
(903) 663-5936 (ask for Amber).



KIDZ is a bimonthly publication. As the KIDZ fiscal sponsor, New Beginnings Baptist Church oversees donations and disbursements on behalf of KIDZ in order for KIDZ to direct its efforts to the families in need.

KIDZ
P.O. Box 10015
Longview, TX 75608-0015

PLACE
PROPER
POSTAGE
HERE

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

KIDZ
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