



# I WANT YOU!

*The Family Café*  
**CHANGE AGENT NETWORK**  
**THEY NEED YOU!**

Volume 1, Issue 3

This Newsletter Is A Project Of The Family Café

February 2018

The Change Agent Network is a project of The Family Café and offers an opportunity for advocates and change agents to work collaboratively to transform the system by: combining abilities, skills, ideas, and talents; standing together for meaningful system reform measures; taking the lead in our communities and neighborhoods; sharing information to help families become effective players within their communities; developing statewide networks to organize and discuss the issues that are most important to families and persons with disabilities; and creating a united position on critical disability policy issues.

## The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Café “Registration Day”

February is always an exciting time at The Family Café, and it’s not just because we get to tell all of our Family Café families how much we love them! It’s because the day that most people celebrate as Valentine’s Day is better known as “Registration Day” here at The Family Café office.

Beginning on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, you will be able to register for The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Café on our website. It’s easy! Simply visit [familycafe.net](http://familycafe.net) and follow the online registration link on our homepage to get the process started. If you attended last year, our system will remember your information, and give you a head start on submitting the required information.

Of course we will be continuing our practice of connecting people with disabilities and their families with information, training, and networking opportunities at no cost in 2018, so there’s no need to worry about paying a registration fee when you complete the

online form. (Professional attendees are asked to pay a \$150 fee.)

We’re also once again offering limited financial assistance to cover the cost of hotel accommodation at the event. Make sure to note your request for assistance when you register! Recipients will be selected through a lottery process and notified of their status in late April.

With this being our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we are especially excited to be bringing everyone together in Orlando

this summer. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Café is set for June 15-17 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando, and we can’t wait to see you there!



[WWW.FAMILYCAFE.NET](http://WWW.FAMILYCAFE.NET)

## Superheroes And Their Weaknesses And Disabilities

As you can tell from the cover of this year's registration brochure, for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Family Café we have chosen the theme of "Superheroes." That because we believe that there is a Superhero inside all of us. We just need the courage to put on the Cape!

When you think of the average comic book hero, you might imagine someone that has been somehow transformed to gain a superhuman power. There's something that makes them extraordinary, and unique. The same can be said of people with disabilities. In fact, there's a real, documented connection between our comic book heroes and those with disabilities.

Since the early comics of the 1930's, superheroes always had to have a weakness to even out the odds and the playing field. If those heroes would have been too powerful, their stories would have been over too quickly. Just think of Superman and kryptonite. That single weakness made him less than perfect, and gave readers a way to connect to his more human side.

In later decades, Marvel comic books translated superheroes' weaknesses into regular disabilities real people might face. As Stan Lee stated, "The characters would

be the kind of characters I could personally relate to. They'd be flesh and blood, and they'd have their faults and foibles; they'd be fallible and feisty."

Lee had found the formula to ensure that all his heroes possessed the originality he sought. The key lay in the idea of a flawed hero. Lee and his collaborators moved on to develop heroes who were more subtly impaired, either by common issues of disability or spiritual unease.

Thor needed a walking stick which turns into a hammer. The Daredevil was blind, with a cane that became his weapon. Dr. Strange was a surgeon until a car accident destroyed his hand nerves. Iron Man had a weak heart. The Hulk and the Thing were both disfigured by experimental mishaps. Even Spider Man once visited a psychiatrist!

These comic books heroes have taken over the movies, but the fact that they are heroes whose disabilities become the source of their heroic powers isn't always recognized. But if you think about it, that might be why people with disabilities can connect with superheroes. We know what it's like to have something that makes us different. But we also know how to turn that difference into superpower!



**We would love your support!**

Buy your Valentine's Day gifts at  
[smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and Amazon donates.

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## Things to Keep in Mind as We Approach the Last Half of Session

This is when the lion-share of legislative work on the House and Senate floors begin in earnest:

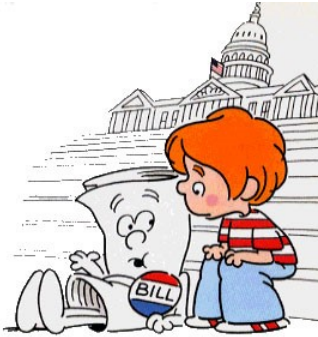
Now that most of the Committee work (bills being considered in their first stops in their respective committees) has taken place, the legislative focus will shift to the floors of both of both chambers. A bill has two stops on the floor: the "Special Order Calendar" is the first. This is the time when bills are brought up, questions are asked, and amendments are offered and voted on. After a bill has been considered on the Special Order Calendar it is "rolled over" to "Third Reading." On Third Reading a bill is debated and voted on for final passage. House and Senate rules require that bills are not considered on the Special Order Calendar and rolled over to third reading *on the same day*. Generally speaking, a bill will be on the Special Order Calendar one day and on the Third Reading Calendar the next. This rule exists to ensure that legislators (and the media) have at least a 24 hour period to review bills amended on the floor. As session comes to a close and bills start to pile up, it's important that everyone is aware of exactly what they are voting on.

It's not too late to advocate:

Bills can change substantially as they move through the legislative process. By the time it's on the floor, a bill can end up looking very different than when it was filed. This is a very common occurrence. It's important not to take our collective eyes off the ball. It can be very difficult during this time of the year to keep up with the weekly, and even daily, changes made. If you are making calls or visits to legislators on bills, it's a good idea to double check that the subject matter of your communication is still relevant. Otherwise, as mentioned in our previous articles, the same general rules still apply: Be factual, be respectful, and focus on legislators from your region of the state. Do your homework, and while making sure that you do your best to have the facts right, be brief

and respectful of their time. Always remember to thank legislators for their support of your issue or concern.

Taking the time to write a personal note is an effective way to say thank you. Be quick to say thanks and slow to criticize. If you are opposed to a bill be prepared to explain why, or to provide alternative solutions. Never forget that someone who is opposed to a particular position today may support our position tomorrow, so leave those bridges intact!



Budget Budget Budget:

This time is particularly important as it relates to the budget. A great deal of time is spent unofficially discussing budget items and preparing for conference committee. Leadership will begin discussing "allocations" which must be agreed to before conference can begin. Allocations are agreed to amounts of money broken down by subject matter: education, health care, criminal justice, etc. Once they agree how much money they will have to spend in each of the appropriations subcommittees, they can begin the process of reconciling their differences. Once conference starts, we will see several late nights of brief subcommittee meetings to announce their areas of agreement. As the few days progress, issues that cannot be resolved by the subcommittee chairs will be "bumped" to the full appropriations chairs, and ultimately (if necessary), to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House.

Looking Ahead:

As you can see, even though we are halfway through the legislative session, there are still a lot of decisions to be made. Things will start to happen fast in the second half of session, and it's important for advocates to stay on top of the action. Remember, the legislature works for you, and your voice can make a difference for people with disabilities, so don't be afraid to use it!

## The Family Café Proudly Houses the FAAST Northwest Regional Demonstration Center (RDC)

As many of you are aware The Family Café proudly houses the FAAST Northwest Regional Demonstration Center (RDC). The focus of this project is to provide greater access, knowledge, and training as it relates to assistive technology for those residing in the northwest region of Florida. The Northwest RDC serves individuals in **Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington counties**. For those residing in these areas, assistive technology can be particularly essential. It connects them with resources, allows them to interact remotely, and facilitates their mobility. The Family Café continues to move forward addressing the unique challenges that families in these rural areas face.

The Northwest Regional Demonstration Center provides a variety of services, including:

- AT Assessments
- AT Evaluations
- Device Demonstrations
- Device Loans
- Refurbish Repair of Equipment
- Presentations
- Info & Assistance Trainings

With the New Year we now have new items in our inventory as well; these items include a multitude of adapted toys, Magnification devices, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) devices, Assistive Speaking devices and more!

The Family Café has held a long standing

friendship and association with FAAST and we continue to work together connecting individuals with disabilities in northwest Florida with assistive technology. If you or anyone you know is in need of any of the services that we offer as the FAAST Northwest RDC please contact us so we can provide those services that our community needs. It has always been an honor to serve the many individuals in our community and we thank you for all that you do! Please remember that we are #here2help!

The Northwest RDC can be found at 820 East Park Avenue Suite F-100, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. We have 2 designated accessible parking spaces with a built in ramp and a large and easy to access demonstration area. We have lots of additional parking which allows us to host large groups of individuals, such as large classes of students as well. The FAAST Northwest RDC holds regular demonstrations. These demonstrations can be both informal, as visitors are touring through the Center, and formal, with planned demonstration days. If you would like to schedule a visit to the FAAST Northwest RDC please contact Jesse Hansen directly at [jhan-sen@familycafe.net](mailto:jhan-sen@familycafe.net) or via phone at 850-224-4670.

### Regional Demonstration Center Virtual Tour

<https://youtu.be/hbRI2iAeEDg>

<https://www.faast.org/programs/regional-demo/northwest>

<https://www.familycafe.net/the-faast-northwest-regional-demonstration-center>



# See You in June!

# 20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL Family Café

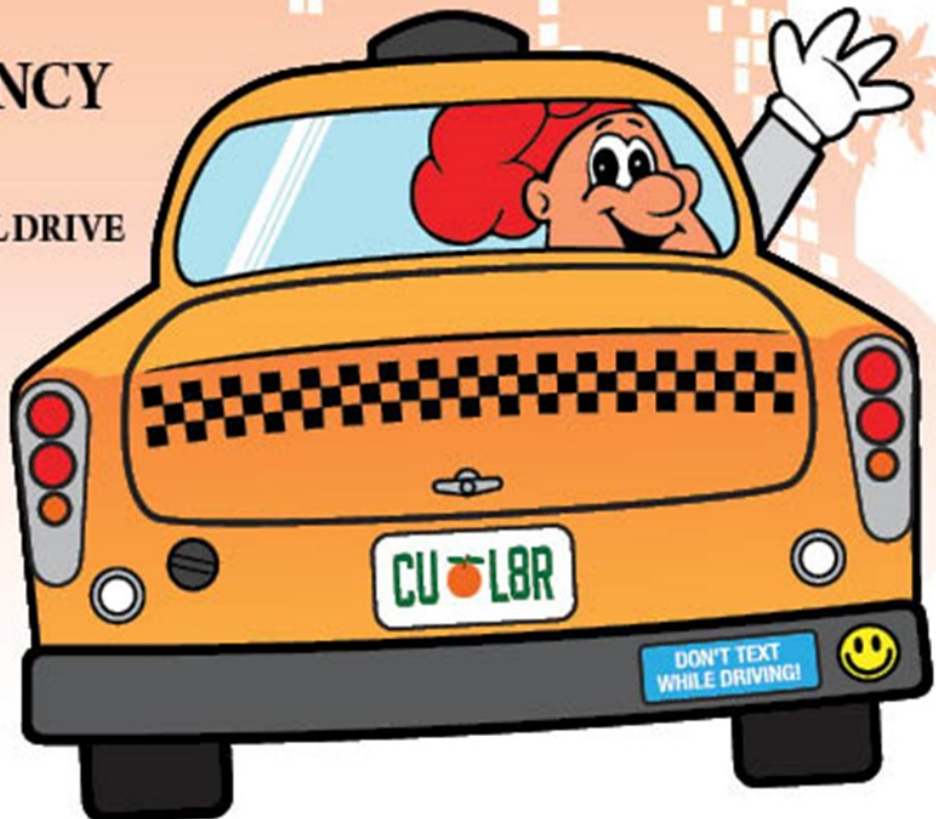
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