



# I WANT YOU!

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

Volume 1, Issue 1

This Newsletter Is A Project Of The Family Café

October 2017

**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.

## Disaster Preparedness – What You Need to Know!

This hurricane season has battered the Gulf and Atlantic coasts with several hurricanes. Florida is no stranger to these storms and has been hit by many natural disasters over the years which have displaced many families and some have lost not only their possessions but also their lives.

The Family Café recognizes the needs of those we serve. Each year the Annual Family Café has nine tracks. They include Military Families, Smart Money, Mental Health, Employment, Disaster Preparedness, Advocacy, Youth, Recreation, and Birth to Age Five.

One of the sessions on Disaster Preparedness has been presented by Linda Carter, CEO of the No Person Left Behind organization. The workshop focuses on resources to “Get a Plan, Build a Kit, and Be Informed.” They have established a centralized website, [www.nopersonleftbehind.org](http://www.nopersonleftbehind.org), for information and links to other resources around the state.

Did you know that more than one-third of Florida’s 6,341,130 households include at least one person with an *access and functional need*? Over the last two years with multiple hurricane threats in various counties, it became even more evident that dedicated support for emergency preparedness for persons with *access and functional needs* of all ages is critical. Those who have medically stable conditions but need a source of power, specialized personnel or equipment may not have considered all their options related to being able to shelter-in-place or needing to evacuate. There is no standardized template for pre-registration, nor an easy-to-understand state information source for who should consider going to special care units or special needs shelters. Hospitals may not have the space, personnel or supplies to care for a large number of shelter persons, and face liability issues and a lack of reimbursement for services provided. For more information about this topic, go to: [www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/index.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/index.html).

Floridians, especially Floridians with *access and functional needs* who may need assistance with evacuation or while in a shelter, should plan ahead.

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Preparing while things are safe and calm will help you cope better when disaster or emergency happens. Planning ahead includes learning about your rights and responsibilities as well as your options for shelter.

Whether you plan to evacuate, go to a shelter, or just shelter in place, everyone must have a disaster Go-Kit with items they need for personal use for up to 3 days and 7 days is recommended. In addition to your personal go-kit, you also need to have a medical go-kit, such as a respiratory go-kit for respiratory issues. If you have mobility issues you need to have a kit with tools and other items if your device breaks down and you have to make self-repairs. If you have a medical issue, you will need to have what you use and backups to your medical supplies with you in case you're not able to return to your residence. Always make sure you have up to 4-6 weeks of medications with you when you evacuate from your home prior to a disaster or when instructed to leave by local authorities.

Whether to evacuate or stay in your home or at your current location is a very important decision. Your disaster plan should include options for both situations - evacuating or staying. Because no one knows your specific needs as well as you do, we recommend you consider your unique circumstances and the nature of the emergency. Also, contact local officials and watch the news to learn if the danger is imminent. If you or your doctor feel that you need to be in a special needs shelter during a disaster please contact your local emergency operations center for instructions on how to register in your county of residence.

Above all, disaster preparedness for you, your family, and your love ones is an individual responsibility. And at No Person Left Behind provides the information on how to, what is needed, disaster go – kits for you to learn to be prepared and by doing this you will be empowered and will be able to help spread the word about being prepared for and during a disaster.

Please feel free to contact them at [MsLinda@nopersonleftbehind.org](mailto:MsLinda@nopersonleftbehind.org) for more information, or to try and get an answer for your questions. **Be Safe, Have a Plan, Be Prepared—as you never know when a disaster will strike.**

## My FEST 2017! A HUGE Success!





A possible impending hurricane, a rival football game and several competing events could stop us. Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> marked the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual My Fest in Florida's Capital City. The event in downtown Tallahassee and hosted approximately 700 attendees throughout the day, featured 27 exhibitor organizations, and a wide variety of inspirational entertainment and activities. The youth, staff, volunteers, exhibitors and attendees did an amazing job creating an event that was a glowing example of some of the great work being done to inspire and empower young people in Florida.

MY Fest is a music, art, entertainment and youth empowerment festival sponsored in large part by Magellan Health to help MY LIFE youth and community partners raise awareness about mental health, substance use, foster care and other important issues facing youth and young adults.

This event would certainly have not been possible without the great work and generous support of MY Fest Florida sponsors and partners - Magellan Complete Care of Florida, Family Café, Carter's Corner, Palmer Munroe Teen Center, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Vocational Rehabilitation, Made By Us, Stop the Violence Against Our Youth, Florida Youth Council, Prime Meridian Bank, Two 24 Entertainment and James Moore Associates.

Magellan Health contracted with The Family Café partnered with a group called MY LIFE to organize an event designed to empower youth and families in Tallahassee and surrounding areas.



MY LIFE is an inspiring group for youth between the ages of 13 and 23. Through regular meetings, local and national presentations, performances and special events, MY LIFE is having a tremendous positive impact on the youth involved and their communities. The MY LIFE Tallahassee group has been meeting monthly at the Palmer Munroe Teen Center since January 2013 with an average of over 30 youth attending each meeting. The youth are assisted the Café's staff with planning the MY Fest event with the support of an array of community partners.

These events take place in various locations across America. The children and families are offered a fun time while also being provided information about local programs and resources in the area that are able to assist with a variety of issues from health care to afterschool programs. To see photos of the event go to The Family Café's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL](http://www.facebook.com/TheFamilyCafeFL).

## October Brings Celebrations of Disability History and Employment

The month of October brings about several celebrations of people with disabilities, including one that came about as a result of work by The Family Café's own Florida Youth Council.

In 2008, after much time, effort, and advocacy by the Florida Youth Council and several key partners, along with support from several state law-makers, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 856. This legislation, titled Disability History and Awareness, passed and was signed the bill into law by the Governor, designating the first two weeks of October as Disability History and Awareness Weeks in Florida. During these weeks, schools throughout the state are encouraged to share information on how people with disabilities have contributed to society, and how people with disabilities continue to be an important part of our schools, workplaces and communities today.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Education held a reception at their headquarters in Tallahassee to mark Disability History and Awareness Weeks. In addition to comments from state agency leaders, the FYC's own Derek Carraway had a chance to talk about the Council's ongoing efforts to promote inclusion and youth leadership as he addressed attendees from the podium.

In addition to Disability History and Awareness Weeks, October also marks the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Originally signed into law by Congress in 1945 and envisioned as a week-long event in the first week in October, disability employment is now recognized with an entire month that brings more awareness to citizens regarding the value that employees to disabilities bring to our economy, and the sense of pride and purpose that accompanies meaningful work for people with disabilities.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Exceptional Employer Awards event was held on October 4<sup>th</sup> at City Hall in Tallahassee, where 10 companies from across the state who have done particularly well employing individuals with unique abilities were recognized. Barbara Palmer, Director of the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities, which hosted the event, stated "a top priority of the agency is helping people with developmental disabilities find meaningful jobs and that many other state agencies and partners are supporting that mission and goal." To see a full list of the companies who received awards, [www.floridajobs.org/news-center/DEO-Press/2017/10/04/exceptional-employers-honored-by-state](http://www.floridajobs.org/news-center/DEO-Press/2017/10/04/exceptional-employers-honored-by-state).

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is also a priority for the US Department of Labor, which will be engaging in a variety of activities to educate our citizens on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. This year the theme is "Inclusion Drives Innovation" [www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/2017PosterEnglish.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/2017PosterEnglish.pdf)) to view or download the poster.

# See You Next Year!

AT THE

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<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL

# Family Café

JUNE 15 - 17, 2018 • ORLANDO

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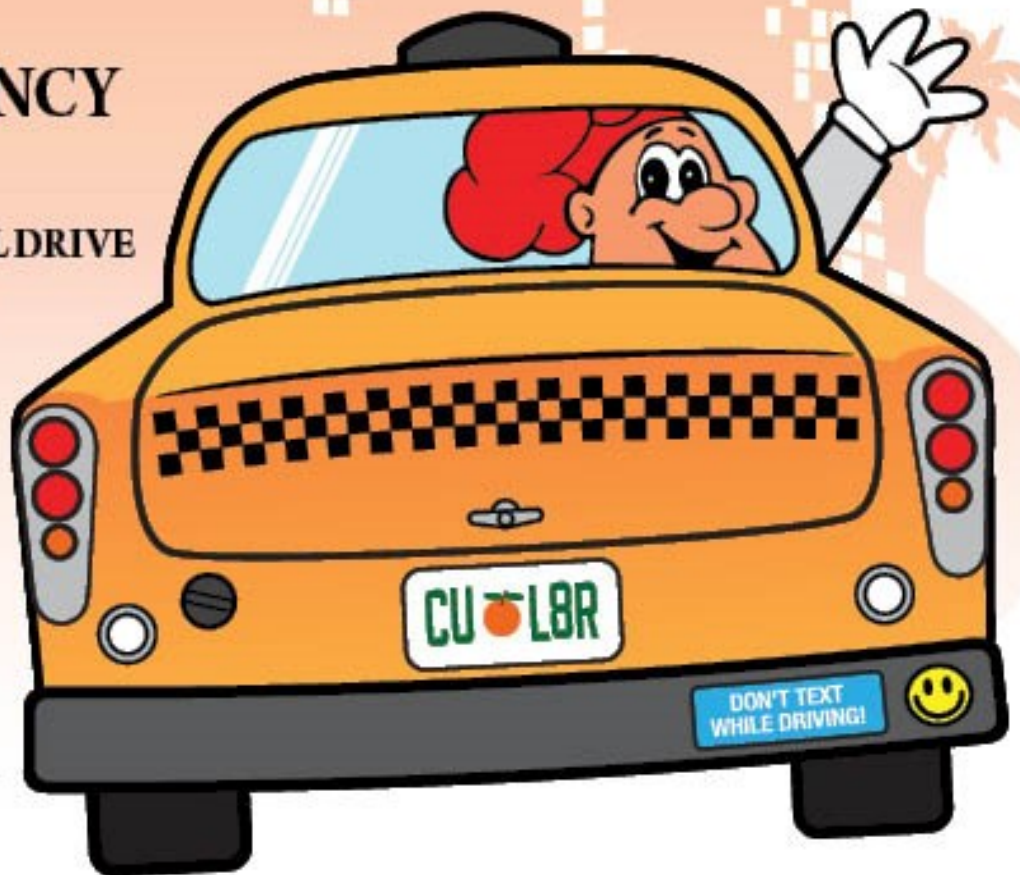
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