

## PARISHES WE SERVE

**Acadia - Evangeline - Iberia - Lafayette - St. Landry - St. Martin - Vermilion**

Throughout history, families have been turning to other families that have dealt with similar struggles and it is within our nature to do so. Families Helping Families has been developed to aid families in the search for the support, information, and resources that can help them.

A very powerful bond and commitment exists between families who share like circumstances and travel a similar path.

An informed, educated, and supported family raises a strong, nourished, and capable child with a bright and successful future.

We believe access to this kind of support and resources should be available to everyone who needs it and Families Helping Families is here to help.

[Website](#)

### Office Hours

**Monday - Thursday**  
**8:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
**Friday**  
**8:00 am - 12:00 pm**

### Contact Information

**100 Benman Road**  
**Lafayette, La. 70506**  
**Phone: 337-984-3458**  
**Fax: 337-984-3468**  
**Email:**  
**[info@fhfacadiana.org](mailto:info@fhfacadiana.org)**

## WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Embracing the Sunshine**

We are excited to have made it through the frigid winter and made it to the positive potential of spring and summer to come. As the sun shines brighter and the days grow longer, we at Families Helping Families of Acadiana are thrilled to bring you our Spring Newsletter.

Despite the challenges we've faced this winter, the warmth of spring reminds us of the boundless possibilities that lie ahead. We look forward to continuing to help the families in Region 4 throughout 2024 and beyond.

**Nicole Flores**  
Executive Director

## 2024 CALENDAR OF DISABILITY-RELATED DATES

### March

Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month  
National Developmental Disabilities Month  
Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Awareness Month  
Brain Injury Awareness Month  
Trisomy Awareness Month  
International Wheelchair Day  
Dissociative Identity Disorder Awareness Day  
World Down Syndrome Day  
Purple Day for Epilepsy  
World Bipolar Day

### April

Autism Awareness Month  
Parkinson's Awareness Month  
National Deaf History Month  
World Autism Awareness Day  
Parkinson's Disease International Awareness Day  
National American Sign Language (ASL) Day  
ALS Awareness Month

### May

Better Hearing and Speech Month  
Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness Month  
Health Vision Awareness Month  
Mental Health Month  
Ehlers-Danlos Awareness Month  
Prader Willi Syndrome Awareness Month

Williams Syndrome Awareness Month  
Apraxia Awareness Day  
World Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Awareness Day  
Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month  
Aphasia Awareness Month

## June

Dravet Syndrome Awareness Month  
Tourette Syndrome Awareness Day  
CDKL5 Awareness Day  
Dravet Syndrome Awareness Day  
National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month

## July

National Fragile X Syndrome Awareness Month  
Disability Pride Month  
World Fragile X Syndrome Awareness Day  
American Disability Act (ADA) Day

## September

Deaf Awareness Month  
Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month  
National Service Dog Month  
Sickle Cell Awareness Month  
Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month  
Hydrocephalus Awareness Month  
Chiari Malformation Awareness Month  
Craniofacial Acceptance Month  
Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Awareness Month  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Syndrome Awareness Month  
Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Awareness - World Duchenne Awareness Day  
International Day of Sign Languages

## October

Dyslexia Awareness Month  
Down Syndrome Awareness Month  
Dwarfism Awareness Month  
Learning Disabilities Awareness Month  
National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)  
Spina Bifida Awareness Month  
ADHD Awareness Month  
Dysautonomia Awareness  
Rett Syndrome Awareness Month  
Mental Health Awareness Week  
World Cerebral Palsy Day  
World Mental Health Day  
World Blind Day / World Sight Day  
White Cane Awareness Day  
Invisible Disabilities Week  
World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day



## **November**

Diabetes Awareness Month  
Epilepsy Awareness Month  
22q Awareness Month  
World Diabetes Day  
World Ohtahara Syndrome Awareness Day

## **December**

International Day of People with Disabilities

# **MARCH 2024**

## **Special Education FAQ 3.0**

**March 18, 2024**

**1:00 pm.**

[Register](#)

# **APRIL 2024**

Co-Hosting: IEPs & Behavior & Discipline - Oh My!

**April 8, 2024**

**12:00 pm.**

[Register](#)

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## **Louisiana's Bullying Law**

**April 15, 2024**

**12:00 pm.**

[Register](#)

# MAY 2024

## Special Education Dispute Resolution Options

**May 6, 2024**

**12:00 pm.**

[Register](#)

# JUNE 2024

## Parent Rights in Special Education

**June 3, 2024**

**12:00 pm.**

[Register](#)

**If there is a topic that you would like to know more about, please email us with your requests.**

[Submit Requests](#)

[Join LaCAN](#)

LaCAN (Louisiana Council's Advocacy Network) furthers the Council's mission by advocating for policies and systems that support inclusion everywhere people

learn, work, live, and play.

LaCAN advocates for service systems that support children and adults with disabilities to live in their own homes and be fully-included and participating members of their local schools and communities.

LaCAN provides information and support to individuals wishing to effectively advocate for systems change in the areas of home and community-based services, education, and employment.

Regional LaCAN teams include individuals with disabilities, their family members, and professionals. These members are notified by email or phone when communication with state agency officials, legislators or the Governor is necessary.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Children, regardless of the severity of their disability, need families and enduring relationships with adults in a nurturing home environment to develop to their fullest potential.
- Adults with developmental disabilities should be afforded the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, live in typical homes and communities, and exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- People with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, should have the opportunity and support needed to gain and maintain competitive, integrated, individualized employment.
- All students, with or without disabilities, should be provided the same opportunities to be educated in neighborhood schools as their sisters, brothers, friends, and neighbors.
- All students, with or without disabilities, should be provided with the support to learn together effectively, involving family, school, and community.

### **Benefits to Membership**

**You can help improve the systems that serve individuals with developmental disabilities by joining the LaCAN and participating in its advocacy efforts.**

**There are no dues or fees to join and your activity level is up to you.**

**Here are just a few of the benefits to joining LaCAN:**

- CONNECTION – become a part of a regional team of advocates
- INFORMATION – receive current information on proposed policy changes and how those changes may affect you and others
- TRAINING – learn skills to effectively advocate for systems change
- SUPPORT – receive assistance from a regional LaCAN Leader who will link you with your policymakers and support your advocacy efforts
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**Linking lawmakers, individuals with disabilities, and family members to make positive change in systems serving people with disabilities.**

**Region 4 Legislative Roundtable TBD- mid-late February 2024**

**Legislative session begins March 11th!**

**LaDDC & LaCAN Legislative Agenda:**

- Funding for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers
- Increase Waiver Rate for Night Services
- Eliminate Flexible Family Fund Waitlist

If you are interested in sharing you or your family's story/testimony of how these issues affects you please contact your LaCAN Team Leader, Kristie Curtis.

Email

**Our staff would like to thank  
Tony Chachere's, Erath High School and Abbeville High  
School for catering this years LaCAN Roundtable.  
Very much appreciated and delicious.**

EMPLOYEE BIRTHDAYS!!!

**March**  
**Harlon Cowsar, II**

**April**  
**Lillian DeJean**

**June**  
**Brenda Bares**

**Thank you for your hard  
work and dedication.**

**Month of March**  
**Todd Fontenot**



**Month of June**

**Annette Fruge'**

# OFFICE CLOSURES

**Friday**  
**March 29, 2024**

**Monday**  
**May 27, 2024**

**Wednesday**  
**June 19, 2024**

## PARENT SUPPORT

### NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Every family is different, that is why we offer one-on-one individualized parent support.

These sessions can be held in person, phone or virtually.

Families Helping Families of Acadiana provides a comfortable, nonjudgmental and confidential environment that will allow you to be at ease when confiding with us.

**WE'RE HERE TO LISTEN!**



Please call our office to schedule an appointment.

Call Us!

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## GROUP

**We provide a holistic, all inclusive support group setting for our families. Multiple topics are discussed and everyone feels a sense of belonging.**

**All are welcome.**

Please continue to check our website and/or all our social media platforms for scheduled dates.

Visit our Website

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**If you are interested in finding out more information about Families Helping Families of Acadiana and the services we provide, please call our office and we will be more than happy to schedule an in person/virtual meeting or call with you!**

**We are striving to educate EVERYONE in the community about the services we offer, as well as express the importance of inclusion and empowering individuals with disabilities.**

**IN THE COMMUNITY**

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### PROGRAMS THAT ARE SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR CENTER

F2FHIC

**Annabelle Picou**  
**Intern**

**Attending:**  
**University of Louisiana at  
Lafayette**

**Major:**  
**Human Development**  
**&**  
**Family Science**  
**with a minor in Psychology**

**Scheduled to Graduate:**  
**May 2024**

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## **Thank You...**

**We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the hard work that you put in during your time here. It was a pleasure to work with you, and we sincerely hope that your experiences at our agency were both engaging and insightful.**

### **Nicole Flores**

Executive Director

### **Annette Fruge'**

Director of Family and Community Support  
Information & Referral Specialist  
Community Resource Specialist  
Peer Support Specialist

### **Todd Fontenot**

Financial Manager  
Information & Referral Specialist

### **Nicole Dejean**

Special Projects

### **Kristie Curtis**

EarlySteps COS  
LaCAN Leader

### **Danielle Ledet**

Education Liaison

### **Brenda Bares**



Information & Referral Specialist

Education Liaison

**Susie Dupont**

Accounts Manager

**Lillian DeJean**

Louisiana Youth Leadership  
Forum Coordinator

**Harlon Cowsar, II**

Adult Program Coordinator  
Referral Specialist

**AnnMarie Bihm**

Outreach Prep Specialist  
Education Liaison Aide

**Terrell Bergeron**  
Chair

**Kisha Levy**  
Vice-Chair

**Jessica Leday**  
Secretary

**Rebecca Fruge'**  
Treasurer

**Alvada Willis**  
Member

**Angie LaBorde**  
Member

**Ashley LaBorde**  
Member

**Cherelly L. Williams**  
Member

**The Families Helping Families Network**

Please see below to find the FHF Center located in your area of the state.

The Families Helping Families Networks are individual, non-profit, family-driven resource centers.

They are a group of families, who, through their own experiences, promote advocacy and are committed to reaching other families who have members with disabilities.

The term "disability" includes physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic needs.

The FHF Centers are directed and staffed by parents, self-advocates, or family members of individuals with disabilities. The Centers provide education and trainings, peer support, and information and referrals as part of their free services.

**Families Helping Families of  
Southeast Louisiana, Inc.**  
**Region 1 - serving Orleans,  
Plaquemines, St. Bernard**  
**2401 Westbend Parkway, Suite  
3090**  
**New Orleans, LA 70114**  
**504-943-0343 or 1-877-243-7352**  
**504-940-3242 Fax**  
**[www.fhfsela.org](http://www.fhfsela.org)**

**Bayou Land Families Helping  
Families, Inc.**  
**Region 3 - serving Assumption,  
Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James,  
St. John, St. Mary, Terrebonne**  
**286 Highway 3185**  
**Thibodaux, LA 70301**  
**985-447-4461 or 1-800-331-5570**  
**985-447-7988 Fax**  
**[www.blfhf.org](http://www.blfhf.org)**

**Families Helping Families of  
Southwest Louisiana, Inc.**  
**Region 5 - serving Allen,  
Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron,  
and Jefferson Davis**  
**324 West Hale Street**  
**Lake Charles, LA 70601**  
**337-436-2570 or 1-800-894-6558**  
**337-436-2578 Fax**  
**[www.fhswla.org](http://www.fhswla.org)**

**Families Helping Families Region  
7**  
**Region 7 - serving Bienville,  
Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Desoto,  
Lincoln, Red River, Natchitoches,  
Sabine, and Webster**  
**215 Bobbie St., Ste. 100**  
**Bossier City, LA 71112**  
**318-226-4541 or 1-877-226-4541**  
**318-742-7260 Fax**  
**[www.fhfregion7.com](http://www.fhfregion7.com)**

**Families Helping Families of  
Greater Baton Rouge, Inc.**  
**Region 2 - serving East and West  
Baton Rouge, East and West  
Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee,  
and Ascension**  
**2356 Drusilla Lane**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70809**  
**225-216-7474 or 1-866-216-7474**  
**225-216-7977 Fax**  
**[www.fhfgbr.org](http://www.fhfgbr.org)**

**Families Helping Families of  
Acadiana, Inc.**  
**Region 4 - serving Acadia,  
Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St.  
Landry, St. Martin, and Vermilion**  
**100 Benman Road**  
**Lafayette, LA 70506**  
**337-984-3458 or 1-855-984-3458**  
**337-984-3468 Fax**  
**[www.fhfacadiana.org](http://www.fhfacadiana.org)**

**Families Helping Families at the  
Crossroads of La., Inc.**  
**Region 6 - serving Avoyelles,  
Concordia, Catahoula, Grant,  
LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon and  
Winn**  
**2840 Military Hwy., Suite A**  
**Pineville, LA 71360**  
**318-641-7373 or 1-800-259-7200**  
**318-640-4299 Fax**  
**[www.familieshelpingfamilies.net](http://www.familieshelpingfamilies.net)**

**Families Helping Families of  
Northeast Louisiana, Inc.**  
**Region 8 - serving parishes of  
Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin,  
Jackson, Lincoln, Madison,  
Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland,  
Tensas, Union, and West Carroll**  
**5200 Northeast Road**  
**Monroe, LA 71203**  
**318-361-0487 or 1-888-300-1320**  
**318-361-0417 Fax**

[www.fhfnela.org](http://www.fhfnela.org)

**Northshore Families Helping  
Families, Inc.  
Region 9 - serving Livingston, St.  
Helena, St. Tammany,  
Tangipahoa, Washington  
108 Highland Park Plaza  
Covington, LA 70433  
985-875-0511 or 1-800-383-8700  
985-875-9979 Fax  
[www.fhfnorthshore.org](http://www.fhfnorthshore.org)**

**Families Helping Families of  
Greater New Orleans (FHF of  
GNO)  
Region 10 - serving Jefferson  
Parish and the State of Louisiana  
700 Hickory Ave  
Harahan, LA 70123  
504-888-9111 or 1-800-766-7736  
504-353-2350 Fax  
[www.fhfofgno.org](http://www.fhfofgno.org)**



Families Helping Families of Acadiana | 100 Benman Road, Lafayette, LA 70506

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