



SPRING NEWSLETTER

MAR • APR • MAY • JUN

PARISHES WE SERVE

Acadia • Evangeline • Iberia • Lafayette
St. Landry • St. Martin • Vermilion

Contact Information

100 Benman Road
Lafayette, LA 70506

Phone: 337.984.3458

Fax: 337.984.3468

Email: info@fhfacadiana.org

Website: www.fhfacadiana.org

Office Hours

MONDAY - THURSDAY

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

FRIDAY

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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



2026 CALENDAR OF DISABILITY-RELATED DATES

March

- Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month (us)
- Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month (us)
- Essential Tremor Month (Global)
- Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month (us)
- Trisomy Awareness Month (us)

- 01:** International Wheelchair Day
- 03:** World Hearing Day
- 18:** National Trisomy 18 Awareness Day
- 21:** World Down Syndrome Day
- 24:** World Tuberculosis Day
- 25:** National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day
- 26:** Purple Day for Epilepsy (Global)

April

- Autism Awareness Month (Global)
- Limb Loss and Limb Difference Awareness Month (us)

- 02:** World Autism Day
- 06:** Bohring-Opitz Syndrome Awareness Day (Global)
- 08:** Cushing's Awareness Day (us)
- 11:** World Parkinson's Day
- 15:** National American Sign Language Day
- 17:** World Hemophilia Day

May

- ALS Awareness Month (us)
- Arthritis Month (us)
- Huntington's Disease Awareness Month (us)
- Lyme Disease Awareness Month (Global)
- Mental Health Awareness Month (us)
- Myositis Awareness Month (us)

- 05:** International 5p Syndrome Awareness Day
- 06:** World Asthma Day
- 10:** World Lupus Day
- 12:** International Fibromyalgia Awareness Day
- 15:** Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)
- 17:** World NF Awareness Day
- 18:** Porphyria Awareness Day (Global)
- 20:** World Autoimmune Arthritis Day
- 25:** World Thyroid Day
- 30:** World Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Day

June

- Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month (Global)
- PTSD Awareness Month (us)

- 18:** Autistic Pride Day (us)
- 19:** World Sickle Cell Day
- 21:** Global Day of Recognition of ALS/MND
- 23:** Dravet Syndrome Awareness Day (us)
- 25:** World Vitiligo Awareness Day



UPCOMING TRAININGS



Things I Wish I Knew

LOUISIANA RESOURCES FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES &
THEIR FAMILIES

 **March 24, 2026**

 **1 PM**

Come learn about the disability resource landscape in Louisiana and the importance of early navigation, empowerment, and connection.



It's Who We Are. It's What We Do.



Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/WishIKnew32426>



For More Information, Contact Us at
337-436-2570 or info@fhfswla.org

Tuesday
March 24, 2025
@ 1:00 PM

**REGISTER
HERE**

Hosted on the
Fourth
Wednesday of the
Month

@ 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

March 25, 2026

April 22, 2026

May 27, 2026

504 vs. SPED *webinar*



Students with disabilities will often qualify for either an IEP or a 504 Plan – but what is the difference, and is one better than the other? This training will take you through the eligibility process of both plans, the laws that regulate both, the differences in the plans, and parental rights.



REGISTER TODAY!

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

AUDIENCE: Parents, Caregivers, & Professionals of School-Aged Children/Students



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW ABOUT EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES

Did you know that data collected during the holidays often determine if your child will qualify for ESY (Extended School Year) Services? This training provides an overview of the ESY process including how children qualify and why, in many circumstances, the school uses the holiday breaks to determine if a child will qualify for ESY.

 Maryury Templet/Karen Scallan, FHF of GNO

 Brenda Bares, FHF of Acadiana

 Thursday, March 26, 2026

 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM



REGISTER NOW
<https://tinyurl.com/0326266>
SY



Tuesday
March 24, 2025
@ 11:00 AM

**REGISTER
HERE**

If there is a topic (or topics) that you would like to know more about, please email us with your request(s).

SUMBIT REQUEST

REQUEST A TRAINING



UPCOMING EVENTS



Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum (LAYLF)

LAYLF is a summer leadership experience for high school students with disabilities entering 10th–12th grade. Held **July 9–12, 2026** at **Louisiana State University Eunice**, LAYLF helps youth build leadership and self-advocacy skills, connect with peers from across the state, and begin planning for life after high school.

Applications are currently open, but the deadline to apply is at the end of this month.

To learn more or apply, visit layoutleadershipforum.org

LOUISIANA

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

July 9-12th, 2026
Louisiana State University Eunice



WHO ARE WE?
LAYLF is a summer camp for 10th-12th graders with disabilities.

WHAT DO WE DO?
We prepare youth with disabilities for their future post high school by teaching leadership, self-advocacy, and creating community.

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND LAYLF?
Campers leave LAYLF with a newfound sense of pride, new friends, and an ability to advocate for a future after high school!



LAYLF is hosted by
Families Helping
Families of Acadiana.

For more information:

layoutleadershipforum.org

 louisianaylf@gmail.com




9th Annual Easter Basket Donation Drive

WE ARE COLLECTING EASTER BASKETS TO DONATE TO THE FAMILIES WE SERVE!

THESE BASKETS CAN BE READY MADE, PURCHASED FROM ANY STORE, OR
HAND MADE FROM THE HEART. PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL BASKETS ARE
WRAPPED IN PLASTIC/CELLOPHANE TO SECURE THE CONTENTS.

DONATIONS CAN BE PROVIDED:
WHEN: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026 -
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026
8 AM - 4 PM, MON - FRI

WHERE: 100 BENMAN ROAD, LAFAYETTE,
LA 70506 OR
302 DULLES DRIVE, LAFAYETTE, LA 70506

FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS OR
INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
MS. NICOLE FLORES AT
NFLORES@FHFCADIANA.ORG

OR
MRS. KATHY THOMAS AT
KATHERIN.THOMAS@LA.GOV



**ACADIANA AREA
HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT**
Serving Acadiana with Quality Compassionate Care
Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

LAFAYETTE PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEPARTMENT
PRESENTS

FREE EVENT

FAMILY SUMMIT

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
MARTIN LUTHER KING RECREATION CENTER
309 CORA ST, LAFAYETTE, LA

EGG HUNT • DOOR PRIZES
GIVEAWAYS • FAMILY RESOURCES

SAVE THE DATE

FESTIVAL DE SUCCÈS
PRESENTED BY
LEADING HOME CARE

60A760 | **004760**

APRIL 18, 2026 | 10AM TO 1PM
206 LA RUE FRANCE, LAFAYETTE 70508

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share Your Voice!

FHF invites youth ages 14–21 with disabilities, along with their families and caregivers, to complete a **quick 3–5 minute survey** about transitioning from pediatric to adult healthcare.

Your feedback will help strengthen resources and supports for youth across Louisiana — **and participants can enter for a chance to win a gift card.**

[SURVEY LINK](#)



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS AGES 14–21 WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES, AND CAREGIVERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.

TAKE THE YOUTH HEALTHCARE TRANSITION SURVEY TODAY!
TAKES 3-5 MINUTES!!

Are You Between the Ages of 14–21 and Living in Louisiana?

Families Helping Families wants to hear from you! We are working to improve support for youth and young adults transitioning from pediatric to adult healthcare.

Your feedback will help shape resources, programs, and supports for families across Louisiana.

Contact Steven:
504-612-7586
snguyen@fhfotgno.org

[Bit.ly/YHTSurvey2026](https://bit.ly/YHTSurvey2026)

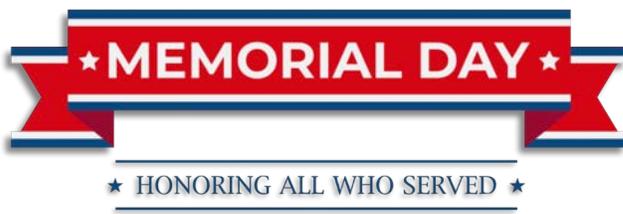


Changing Lives Every Day

OFFICE CLOSURES

Good
Friday

Friday
April 3, 2026

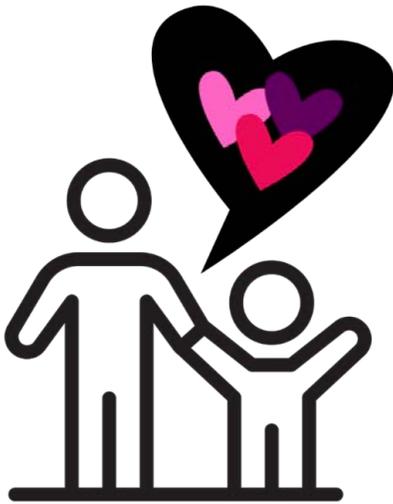


Monday
May 25, 2026



Friday
June 19, 2026

SUPPORT



Parents,
do you need someone
to talk to?

We're here to listen!

*Please call our office to
schedule an appointment.*

337.984.3458

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.

DONATE ONLINE

TODAY



IN THE COMMUNITY



Breakfast
with Santa
(2025)





In partnership with
**Acadiana Area Human Services District & D.R.E.A.M.S. Foundation of
Acadiana**

In the beginning of the year, our team attended the Impact Amplified Regional Conference hosted by the Louisiana Alliance for Nonprofits. The event brought together nonprofit leaders from across Southwest Louisiana for a day of professional development, workshops, and networking focused on strengthening nonprofit leadership, collaboration, and community impact.

We enjoyed connecting with fellow organizations, learning from experienced speakers, and gaining valuable insights that will help us continue supporting individuals and families in our community.



IMPACT AMPLIFIED

2026 Nonprofit Success Conference Southwest Louisiana

Tuesday,
January 13, 2026

8:00 AM-3:30 PM

Cecil J. Picard Hall
200 E Devalcourt St.
Lafayette, LA 70506

8:00 a.m. **Breakfast & Conference Check-In**

8:30 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Comments**
Scott Brazda, KADN-TV

8:45-9:30 a.m. **Opening Keynote | Building Bridges of Understanding & Strength**
Dianne Mouton-Allen, National Coalition Building Institute, Lafayette Chapter

9:45-10:30 a.m. **Smart Tech & AI Strategies for Mission Growth & Sustainability**
Ned Fasullo, Velocity Partners Group

10:45-11:30 a.m. **The Productive Board: Smarter Meetings, Stronger Impact**
Dr. Lise Anne D. Slatten, Administration and Quality at Moody College of Business Administration, Univ of Louisiana at Lafayette

11:45-12:45 p.m. **Lunch Keynote | State of the Nonprofit Sector in Louisiana**
Dr. Heather Carpenter, Institute for Nonprofit Administration and Research at LSU Shreveport

1:00-1:45 p.m. **Results Driven Strategic Leadership**
Helene Wall, Wall Consulting

2:00-2:45 p.m. **Leaders Don't "Should" Themselves!**
Julie Laperouse, Screaming Peacock Consulting

2:45-3:30 p.m. **Impact Fundraising: Turning Outcomes into Outpourings**
Beverly Brooks Thompson, Ph.D, CFRE, Carter, Advancing Philanthropy Worldwide



presented by: **LOUISIANA ALLIANCE FOR NONPROFITS**

scan here for full bios + event info:



LOUISIANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

WEBSITE

Camp is...

- focused on leadership, self-determination, and empowerment.
- hosted on a college campus during the summer.
- 100% free to those who attend, including lodging and food.
- accepting campers with an ADA-defined disability, which is inclusive of mental health conditions and neurodivergence.
- accredited through the American Camp Association, meaning we follow national best practices when it comes to safety and quality in camping.

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For more information:
layoutleadershipforum.org



louisianaylf@gmail.com

LACAN

LOUISIANA COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY NETWORK

JOIN LaCAN

Linking lawmakers,
individuals with
disabilities, and
family members to
make positive change
in systems serving
people with
disabilities.

- 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:

<u>Connection</u>	<u>Information</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Support</u>
Become a part of a regional team of advocates.	Receive current information on proposed policy changes and how those changes may affect you and others.	Learn skills to effectively advocate for systems change.	Receive assistance from a regional LaCAN Leader who will link you with your policymakers and support your advocacy efforts.

EMAIL

Families Helping Families of Acadiana (FHFOA) was proud to partner with the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (LaDDC) and the Louisiana Council’s Advocacy Network (LaCAN) to host the Region 4 Legislative Roundtable virtually.

Participants joined an engaging discussion about key issues impacting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families across Louisiana, including:

- emergency alert systems for people with disabilities;
- funding for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services;
- support worker pay and waiver rates; and
- continued funding for FHF centers.

Thank you to everyone who attended and shared their perspectives — your voices help strengthen advocacy efforts and drive positive change for families throughout our region.



Region 4 Roundtable *virtual*

Participate in meaningful conversation and hear directly from Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (LaDDC) staff about pressing issues shaping the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families across Louisiana!

Wednesday, March 4th
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Registration is required.
Scan the QR code or click on the link below to register today!



<https://tinyurl.com/R4roundtable>



LACAN
LOUISIANA COUNCIL'S ADVOCACY NETWORK



LADDC
LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL



Families Helping Families
of Acadiana

MEET THE TEAM



Nicole Flores

Executive Director,
Interim LaCAN Leader



Todd Fontenot

Financial Manager,
Information & Referral Specialist



Susie Dupont

Accounts Manager



Brenda Bares

Education Liaison



Danielle Ledet

Education Liaison,
Information & Referral Specialist



Harlon Cowsar II

Adult Program Coordinator,
Information & Referral Specialist



Lillian DeJean

Louisiana Youth Leadership
Forum (LAYLF) Coordinator



AnnMarie Bihm

Outreach Prep Specialist,
Education Liaison Aide, &
LAYLF Co-Coordinator



Month of March
Harlon Cowsar II

Month of April
Lillian DeJean

Month of June
Brenda Bares



Month of March
Todd Fontenot

*Thank you for all your hard
work and dedication!*

Meet Our
BOARD
of
DIRECTORS



Terrell Bergeron
Chair



Kisha Levy
Vice-Chair



Jessica Leday
Secretary



Rebecca Fruge'
Treasurer



Denise Auzenne
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Carmen Cetnar
Member

**Cherelle L.
Williams**
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Paul Ganucheau
Member

Angie LaBorde
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Jessica Ranken
Member

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

232 HELP



ACADIANA ADVOCACY NETWORK



SERVE . COMPASSION . COMMUNITY



Affiliated Blind
of Louisiana
TRAINING CENTER



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF ST. LANDRY-EVANGELINE, INC.



THE FAMILY TREE
INFORMATION, EDUCATION & COUNSELING CENTER



Goodwill



**LOUISIANA
VOAD**

Macaroni KID[®]
BY CertifiKID



PROGRAMS SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR CENTER



THE FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES NETWORK

The Families Helping Families Networks are individual, non-profit, family-driven resource centers. We are a group of families, who through our 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.

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

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

**Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans
(FHF of GNO)**

700 Hickory Avenue, Harahan, LA 70123
504.888.9111 or 1.800.766.7736 (Toll-Free)
504.353.2350 (Fax)
www.fhfogno.org



Region 2

Ascension, East & West Baton Rouge,
East & West Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee

Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge

2356 Drusilla Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70809
225.216.7474 or 1.866.216.7474 (Toll-Free)
225.216.7977 (Fax)
www.fhfgbr.org



Region 3

Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles,
St. James, St. John, St. Mary, Terrebonne

Bayou Land Families Helping Families

286 Highway 3185, Thibodaux, LA 70301
985.447.4461 or 1.800.331.5570 (Toll-Free)
985.447.7988 (Fax)
www.blfhf.org



Region 4

Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin,
Vermilion

Families Helping Families of Acadiana

100 Benman Road, Lafayette, LA 70506
337.984.3458 or 1.855.984.3458 (Toll-Free)
337.984.3468 (Fax)
www.fhfacadiana.org



Region 5

Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis

Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana

324 West Hale Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601
337.436.2570 or 1.800.894.6558 (Toll-Free)
337.4362578 (Fax)
www.fhswla.org



Region 6

Avoyelles, Concordia, Catahoula,
Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, Winn

Families Helping Families at the Crossroads of La.

2840 Military Highway, Suite A, Pineville, LA 71360
318.641.7373 or 1.800.259.7200 (Toll-Free)
318.640.4299 (Fax)
www.familieshelpingfamilies.net



Region 7

Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Desoto,
Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster

Families Helping Families Region 7

215 Bobbie Street, Suite 100, Bossier City, LA 71112
318.226.4541 or 1.877.226.4541 (Toll-Free)
318.742.7260 (Fax)
www.fhfregion7.com



Region 8

Caldwell, East & West Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln,
Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union

Families Helping Families of Northeast Louisiana

5200 Northeast Road, Monroe, LA 71203
318.361.0487 or 1.888.300.1320 (Toll-Free)
318.361.0417 (Fax)
www.fhfnela.org



Region 9

Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington

Northshore Families Helping Families

108 Highland Park Plaza, Covington, LA 70433
985.875.0511 or 1.800.383.8700 (Toll-Free)
985.875.9979 (Fax)
www.fhfnorthshore.org





Try email marketing for free today!