



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

JUN • JUL • AUG • SEP

PARISHES WE SERVE

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

Contact Information

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Lafayette, LA 70506

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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 who have dealt with similar struggles — and it is within our nature to do so. A very powerful bond and commitment exist between families **who share like circumstances and travel a similar path.**

Families Helping Families has been developed to aid families in the search for the **support, information, and resources** that can help them. 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.**



[OUR WEBSITE](#)

[OTHER FHF CENTERS](#)

2026 CALENDAR OF DISABILITY-RELATED DATES

June

• Alzheimer's and 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

July

• Disability Pride Month (Global)

23: World Sjögren's Day

26: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary, also known as National Disability Independence Day

August

• Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month (US)

• Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS) Awareness Month (US)

• Psoriasis Action Month (US)

20: National Accessible Air Travel Day

21: National Senior Citizens Day

September

• World Alzheimer's Month

• Deaf Awareness Month (US)

• Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month (US)

• National Service Dog Month

07: World Duchenne Awareness Day

09: International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day

13: Celiac Disease Awareness Day (US)

15: World Lymphoma Awareness Day

19: Usher Syndrome Awareness Day (Global)

21: World Alzheimer's Day

23: International Day of Sign Languages

27: World Deaf Day

UPCOMING TRAININGS

Tuesday, June 16th @ 1:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Accommodations vs. Modifications

Do you know the difference between the two? Under which conditions do each apply? Join this training and find out!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Wednesday, June
24th

@ 1:00 PM



Parent Rights in Special Education

Be prepared *from the beginning* of a new school year! This training will provide an in-depth look at your parental rights under both a 504 plan and an IEP.

Wednesday, July
15th

@ 12:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



When Parents and Schools Disagree

What steps should you take when you and your child's school reach an impasse? Join us to learn about the dispute resolution options available in Louisiana.

Tuesday, July 7th

@ 1:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Louisiana's Bullying Law

This training is on Louisiana's bullying prevention laws which applies to all public-school students. However, there are some significant implications that need to be considered when a child with special challenges is involved.

Wednesday, July
15th

@ 12:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Planning for Adulthood: Your High School IEP Questions Answered

Come and get your questions answered about the transition process for young adults leaving high school. Learn what's available and what to put in the last IEP.

Wednesday, July
22nd

@ 2:30 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Transitions

Come and learn about the different transitions happening in school and how to help your child make it smoothly through them.

Wednesday, July
29th

@ 4:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Top Tips for Effective IEP Meetings

Join us for this *new* training as we go over some of the best IEP tips for organizing yourself for an effective IEP meeting. We'll break them down into three sections — before, during, and after the IEP meeting. Implementing our *top five tips* in each of these areas can help make your IEP meetings more productive and effective.

Wednesday, August 5th @ 12:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Special Education FAQs 1.0

Join us as we cover some of the most frequently asked questions by parents about the identification, referral, and evaluation process of special education.

As part of our FAQ series, 2.0 will cover the IEP process and 3.0 will cover the transition process.

Thursday, August 13th @ 12:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Special Education FAQs 2.0

Join us for this *new* interactive training on the most frequently asked questions about the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

Wednesday, August 19th @ 12:00 PM

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Special Education FAQs 3.0

Join us for this *new* interactive training on the most frequently asked questions about the transition process from high school to adult life.



Navigating the IEP - Part 1

Join us as we navigate the different sections of the IEP!

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

SUBMIT REQUEST

REQUEST A TRAINING



UPCOMING EVENTS

*The
countdown to
camp is on!*

LOUISIANA
**YOUTH
LEADERSHIP
FORUM**

WEBSITE

FLYER

We are excited to officially welcome the delegates (and staff members!) selected for the 2026 Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum (LAYLF)!

This summer, students from across Louisiana will gather at LSUE for a week of leadership, self-advocacy, connection, and unforgettable memories. We are incredibly grateful to every student who applied and appreciate the time and heart that went into each application.

Congratulations to this year's delegates — we cannot wait to see the friendships, confidence, and leadership skills that will grow throughout the week.

Lafayette Parish's Disability Disaster Preparedness Workshop

REGISTER
HERE

Saturday, August 29th
@ 10:00 AM — 2:00 PM
Robicheaux Rec. Center

Join us for a free workshop focused on disability-inclusive emergency preparedness. Participants will learn practical strategies for personal preparedness planning, understanding weather reports, sheltering considerations, local resources, and more. Enjoy lunch while connecting with community partners and exploring valuable local resources.

GOHSEP Lafayette Parish's
DISABILITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP

Saturday, August 29th
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Robicheaux Rec Center
1919 Eraste Landry
Lafayette, LA

Why Attend?

This workshop offers specific strategies — **designed by and for people with disabilities** — to navigate unique disability challenges of disasters before, during, and after they happen. Learn disability-specific strategies for emergency preparedness and recovery as we offer **real solutions** for our community's unique challenges.

Topics Covered:

- Personal preparedness planning,
- Disability-specific considerations,
- Understanding weather reports,
- Sheltering and pets,
- Lafayette Parish resources,
- & more!

Questions? Contact
info@disability-access-solutions.com

Enjoy lunch while exploring vendor tables with local resources and opportunities to connect!

In Collaboration With Local Partners:

- Families Helping Families of Acadiana
- QSLIC (Advocacy, Accessibility, Independence)
- Affiliated Blind of Louisiana Trading Center
- Helen Keller National Center for Deafblind Youth and Adults
- VOYUNTEER LOUISIANA
- American Red Cross
- OHSEP (Lafayette Parish)

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meet FHFOA's new LaCAN Leader, Erika Joseph!

Erika is a dedicated advocate and parent of a child with a disability. Her personal experiences have given her a deep understanding of the challenges, strengths, and needs of people with disabilities and their families. She is passionate about promoting inclusion and helping create systems that work better for everyone.

Through her involvement with schools and community programs, Erika has gained valuable knowledge and experience in disability advocacy. She currently serves on the Lafayette Parish School Board's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) and is a member of the Partners in Policymaking program (graduating Class of 2026).

We're grateful to have Erika as part of the Families Helping Families of Acadiana team! Her passion for advocacy, commitment to helping others, and dedication to



creating positive change make her a valuable resource for the families and communities we serve.



OFFICE CLOSURES



Friday

June 19, 2026



Friday

July 3, 2026



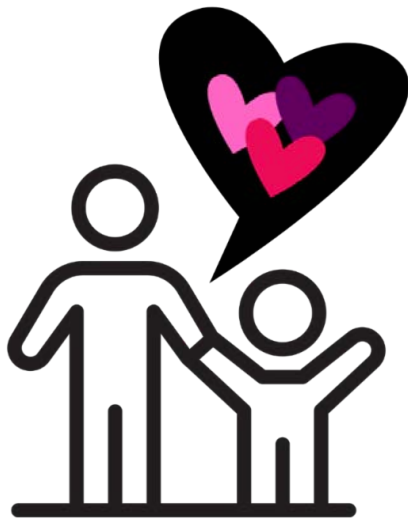
Monday

September 7, 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, over the 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

9th Annual Easter Basket Donation Drive
in partnership with
Acadiana Area Human Services District — AAHSD

↘ **Office Takeover**



**St. Thomas More Catholic
↘ High School Beta Club**



↗ **Eric Berken**
with Berken Insurance



➤ Sharon & Friend
Community Members



**Live Well Lafayette:
Community Resource Fair**



**Autism Acceptance
Day Celebration**

Autism Society of Acadiana





Celebrating All Minds
of All Kinds

Southern Louisiana
Behavior Consultants



Lafayette Hurricane Havoc





EMAIL R4 LEADER

JOIN MAILING LIST

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

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

when communication with state agency officials, legislators, or the Governor is necessary.

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.

[MORE INFO](#)

MEET THE TEAM



Nicole Flores
Executive Director



Todd Fontenot
Financial Manager,
Information & Referral Specialist



Susie Dupont
Accounts Manager



Brenda Bares
Education Liaison



Harlon Cowsar II
Adult Program Coordinator,



Erika Joseph
LaCAN Leader



Rowan DeJean

Louisiana Youth Leadership
Forum (LAYLF) Coordinator

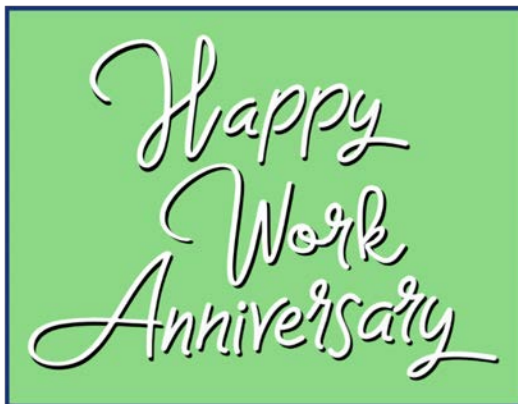


AnnMarie Bihm

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



Month of June
Brenda Bares



Month of
September
Nicole Flores

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Terrell Bergeron
Chair



Kisha Levy
Vice-Chair



Jessica Leday
Secretary



Rebecca Fruge'
Treasurer



Denise Auzenne
Member



Angie LaBorde
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Carmen Cetnar
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Paul Ganucheau
Member

*Photo
Coming
Soon!*

Jessica Ranken
Member

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

232 HELP



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF ST. LANDRY-EVANGELINE, INC.



Macaroni KID

BY CertifiKID



MAGNOLIA
SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING



**Nurse-Family
Partnership**
Helping First-Time Parents Succeed



PEDIA TRUST
Day Care for Medically Fragile Children



PROGRAMS SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR CENTER



The FHF Network

The Families Helping Families Network 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.

Discover the FHF Centers serving families throughout Louisiana below.

Region 1 & 10

Jefferson Parish & the State of Louisiana



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.fhfgno.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.fhfwla.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, 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



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