

Creative Options; Opening Doors to Respite Opportunities

Respite is a necessity for any caregiver, who is responsible for the support of an individual with disabilities or an elderly individual. Evidence based research substantiates that respite assists both the caregiver and the person receiving support and reduces abuse, neglect and social isolation. Unfortunately, many times in the United States policy does not support dollars to provide respite services as a mandated option within our social service delivery system. When there is money and the economy declines money allocated for respite services are the first to be reduced or eliminated. Creative options have to be explored in order to provide much needed respite to caregivers. This presentation will discuss strategies that include, recruiting high school and college students to provide respite. A student working as a respite provider can lead to an interest in pursuing a career in the health care profession later in life. Respite co-op models will be discussed as an option parents can use, to get free or low cost respite. Successful strategies in getting existing community child care providers or after school recreation or day care programs to include students with disabilities will be explored. For older adults with disabilities traditional respite options can be costly. Additionally, this presentation will examine and explain low cost community alternatives that include faith based organizations, volunteer organizations, and active senior citizens, can meet a families respite needs and increase community experiences and reduce social isolation for elders and people with disabilities.

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Biographical Information

Elizabeth is the Associate Director of Training and Community Support at the Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University where she also received her Master's degree in Social Work. She has worked extensively on projects that directly involve children with disabilities and their families. She is also an instructor at the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. Ms. Janks is an advocate that has extensive community connections to local and statewide associations that directly address the issues of families of children with disabilities. Ms. Janks brings a strong and sensitive dual expertise from her professional training and life experiences as a mother of a young man with intellectual disabilities.