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**MEETING WITH SENATOR KING
BY PHILIP PEARSON**

On August 13, 2008 wife, Sandy, son, Bill, and I piled into the car and headed to Jacksonville to meet with Senator King. Fortunately we had the GPS which helped navigate all of the streets.

We got there early and fortunately, he had a cancellation so we didn't have to wait too long.

I had emailed him a "powerpoint" presentation about a week before so he had a chance to go over it before we met.

I started by introducing myself and our family and right away pointed out that the single most important item for families that have a dis-

abled child is knowing that the child will be properly cared for when the caregivers die. I said that many young folks might not agree with that statement, but they would when they grew up.

He seemed to resonate with this priority.

ELECTIONS 2008

I know that we are all excited about the fall elections, what with such a diverse selection of candidates. That's all well and good but I ask that you think about focusing on our



state elections. That is where our folks are either helped or hurt..

A while back, I sent an email to all of the folks running for office in Flagler County and only received one reply—from the Democratic candidate for District 26 legislator, Barry Flynn. And he just indicated that he didn't know enough to comment although he was sympathetic with our cause. Very disappointing. It illustrates that we are not even on their radar screen.

Please contact your candidates and ask them about the waiting list and cuts in your programs.

Please see your candidates on the following pages.

ADULT EDUCATION

Bill, our son, has been working at the weigh station on 95 for almost a year now. When he first started, his boss's boss would occasionally ask if he was going to school. We didn't think anything of it when Bill mentioned it.

She kept asking, however, and we decided to follow up. We subsequently found out that Daytona Beach Community College offered free adult education to folks with devel-

opmental disabilities (DD). We spoke with Clarence McCloud from the adult ed. Program at DBCC and enrolled Bill right away.

Of course, transportation would be the next issue. Upon calling Flagler county transportation (we live in Palm Coast) we were told that they weren't taking any more customers. After pointing out that they already had a bus going down there and that we

would be paying cash, they agreed to take Bill.

Boy, what a relief! For 2 days a week, Bill would be picked up by a bus, taken to school where he might learn something, and brought home that afternoon. 2 days where we didn't have to worry about him. 2 days of respite! What a great thing.

Of course, in the back of my mind, I was asking myself

MEETING WITH SENATOR KING (CONTINUED)

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I talked about our local family care council and what we did and that we had about 1500 families that we communicated with.

I said that our focus now must be on the legislature and that we needed a champion to help us with our cause. Senator King said that he would like to help but that this wasn't his niche. He did, however, recommend another senator from Jacksonville who was, in his opinion, quite expert on this issue. That was Senator Wise. I contacted his office and plan to meet with him sometime in November.

I listed my own opinion about what the current situation was:

- That the waiting list is way to big to provide hope for families
- That APD seems to set its direction depending on the director that they have at the time
- That APD has so narrowed its focus that nothing is provided for the folks on the waiting list

- That there is no clear vision for ALL DD folks

I provided some of my own suggestions for solutions including:

- Prioritize the wait-list based on need not time and date of sign-up
- Use an alternative approach to setting APD's direction like maybe a Board of Directors (including families, of course)
- Broaden the scope of services, providing some basic services to the folks on the waiting list.
- Create and pass a constitutional amendment mandating some minimal level of recognition and support for folks with DD
- Create and over-arching vision for how APD will provide supports and to whom.

I asked him to review and comment on the Florida Family Care Council's list of brainstormed questions at his leisure. He said that he would. You can see these questions at <http://www.fccflorida.org/Elections%202008.htm>

Overall, I thought that this was a good first meeting and that he was supportive, although not pro-active. The visit reinforced my feelings that we need to go out and visit these legislators constantly. In addition, our folks and families need to be continuously writing letters stating and supporting our positions.

PLEASE DO THAT! Write some letters!

Flagler County Candidates	
District	Candidate
State Senator (Flagler County)	
1	Hill, Sr., Anthony C. "Tony" (DEM) *Incumbent
	Tart, Louis J. (CPF)
State Representative (Flagler County)	
20	Courtney, Doug (DEM)
	Proctor, Bill (REP) *Incumbent
26	Flynn, Barry (DEM)
	Patterson, Pat (REP) *Incumbent

ADULT ED (CONT.)

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why didn't APD tell us about this program when we first got on the waiting list. But that's another issue.

Well, this was going great!

We then got a call a few weeks ago asking when we were going to pick Bill up. I asked why and they indicated that because of budget cuts, school is being let out at noon and not 2:30 pm and that he couldn't hang around the school waiting for the bus which was to pick him up at 3pm.

Upon further investigation, they told me that since he was from Flagler County that he couldn't attend Volusia County Adult Ed. Boy, what a let-down. To go from 2 days of total respite to nothing in the space of about 20 minutes! I was annoyed to say the least. I got home and immediately sat down at the computer and fired off a whole bunch of emails to everyone that I could think of. Re-

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Our DD folks should always be attending Adult Education programs. The contacts are:

Volusia—Clarence McCloud
(386) 506-3979

Flagler—Mary Gilbert
(386) 447-7612 or George Valentine 386-446-6740

(Adult Ed. Continued from page 2)

sponses were, of course, very sympathetic, explaining that the Florida department of ed, who provides the grants, cut funding to the point where DBCC could no longer do the program themselves. The went out for bids with the result being a few organizations put up the program. Of course, only for Volusia County folks.

One thing that I did find out, however, was that Flagler County was also getting funds for adult ed. After a few calls, I talked with George Valentine and I made an appointment to sign Bill up for their adult education program. It is free, 2 days a week, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at the "Step-up" location in Palm Coast.

Admittedly, it isn't 2 days of respite but it is Adult Ed for Bill, and close to home!

So for all of you caregivers who have DD kids hanging around the house just watching TV, or whatever, contact Adult Ed in your respective counties and enroll them.

Your FCC

I did a lot of "soul search-ing" this summer about your Family Care Council. Not only do I put a lot of time into it, but few people attend the meetings or contribute. So, I needed a break and took the summer off.

Meetings that I held in Flagler yielded a bigger turn-out and interest. The thing is that the APD office is farther than folks want to drive for a meeting. I then proposed and received a confirmation vote to split the meetings between the 2 counties. As a result, the meetings on the odd numbered months will be in Volusia and the meetings on the even numbered months will be at the Florida Hospital Flagler in Palm coast.

Now back when I talked

with Senator Lynn, she really wanted to talk with someone from Volusia. Also my adult ed issue made it clear that that is also county-based.

As a result, I am thinking that we need co-chairpersons for Flagler and Volusia Counties. That way, we each can focus on our own counties.

What do you think? Email me at phil@fcc12.org

Volusia County Candidates

District	Candidate
State Senator (Volusia County)	
1	<u>Hill, Sr., Anthony C. "Tony" (DEM) *Incumbent</u>
	<u>Tart, Louis J. (CPF)</u>
7	<u>Dembinsky, Richard Paul (NPA)</u>
	<u>Lynn, Evelyn (REP) *Incumbent</u>
State Representative (Volusia County)	
21	<u>Myers, Linda (DEM)</u>
	<u>Van Zant, Charles (REP)</u>
25	<u>Hays, Alan (REP) *Incumbent</u>
26	<u>Flynn, Barry (DEM)</u>
	<u>Patterson, Pat (REP) *Incumbent</u>
27	<u>Monahan, Maureen (NPA)</u>
	<u>Taylor, Dwayne L. (DEM)</u>
28	<u>Hukill, Dorothy L. (REP) *Incumbent</u>
	<u>Smalley, William (DEM)</u>
33	<u>Acosta, Robert (DEM)</u>
	<u>Adams, Sandra "Sandy" (REP) *Incumbent</u>
	<u>Perez, Franklin (NPA)</u>

FCC UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

- 10/9/08: 7—9 pm, Florida Hospital, Flagler, 60 Memorial Medical Pkwy, Palm Coast, FL.
- 11/13/08: 3-5pm , APD office, 210 N. Palmetto Ave., Suite 312 Daytona Beach, FL 32114
- 12/11/08: 7—9 pm, Florida Hospital, Flagler
- 1/8/2009 3-5pm , APD office
- 2/12/2009: 7—9 pm, Florida Hospital, Flagler
- 3/12/09
- 4/9/09: 7—9 pm, Florida Hospital, Flagler
- 5/14/09
- 6/11/09: 7—9 pm, Florida Hospital, Flagler
- 7/9/09

Area 12 Family Care Council
210 N. Palmetto Ave., Suite 312
Daytona Beach, FL 32114