



A COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS OF  
NEW YORK  
NEWSLETTER

# Get Connected!

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## Family Voices Podcast

Everybody has a story....and everybody's story matters. Often times we, as members of a larger community, learn the most through hearing the stories of others. We want to help record and share our local community stories of success and triumph, lessons learned, troubles and life experiences.

### What is it all about?

**The heart of the project is about people sharing stories that are important to them:**

- a son asking a caregiver about their childhood,
- a father talking to his daughter about decisions she has made,

- an individual sharing their journey towards a healthier lifestyle,
- or a mentor asking a youth about their relationship.

**"We want to help record and share our local community stories of success and triumph, lessons learned, troubles and life experiences."**

Inspired by the national Story Corps project, Community Connections of NY is hoping to create a library of stories about the experiences of Western New York families.

**We hope these stories create an opportunity for discussion and learning, a moment of connection, and shared respect for other peoples experiences.**

When people listen to these stories, we want them to hear the strength and determination, humor, struggles, pride and celebrations of Western New York families.

### What is this for?

If you choose to participate, the recording of your story will be available in podcast format on a website dedicated to Western New York families.

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## Parent Resource Book

It was an often reported fact that many of the parents we serve within our Erie County System of Care were lacking a solid understanding of a) what services were available to them, b) how different agencies county wide could provide them those services, and c) that they, the parents themselves, had the right to choose and prioritize which services they would use, and from which agency.

Families' Children Advocacy Network Director Vicki McCarthy had long been an advocate of providing families more direct access to this kind of information, in a simple to use and readily-accessible format, but ideas on how best to deliver on this need were not explored enough to be made a reality.

When the need resurfaced through various discussions in recent months, CCNY assigned the concern to its UB School of Social Work intern Michael Lynch, and he immediately went to work on the project. Michael used all the resources available to him through CCNY to create a very visual and easy to use code book that will help families identify what their

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## Michael Lynch Needs a New Challenge

We are proud of Michael Lynch finishing both his internship with us, and his Masters in Social Work with University of Buffalo. Michael was our first intern; so, he had to be patient as we learned together how to best structure the work, and communicate. He was the perfect intern for this situation: a self-directed learner, willing to take on projects that required new skills, and persistent. We appreciate the opportunity

to reflect on and share Michael's achievements over the past year.

Michael's first priority was to assist us with the L.I.N.K.S. project. He entered almost all of the assets that were generated by CCNY. He diligently worked to grow the number of community groups, institutions, and programs on LINKS to over 750 in 6 months. His work will assist families, care coordinators, and policy makers with evaluating not only what

strength-based services are available in Erie County, but also what gaps exist.

Early in our history, we envisioned a Parent Resource Book that would assist families in understanding the choices available to them within the vendor network, describe how those choices match their needs, and guide them in discussing natural supports and services with their care coordinator.

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## Family Voices Podcast (Cont.)

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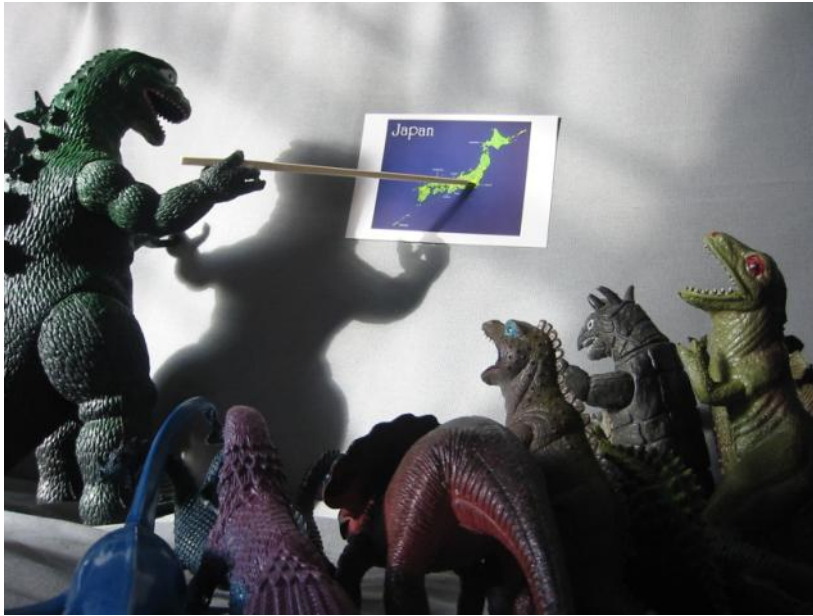
**If you wish to record a story without sharing your name, we can do that too.**

If you are interested in joining this exciting project please call: David Monroe  
716-430-3395  
[dmonroe@comconnectionsny.org](mailto:dmonroe@comconnectionsny.org)

**How do I get involved?**



*Want to discover, add and share the community resources in WNY?  
~ Use CCNY's [L.I.N.K.S.](http://links-ccny.org) program @ <http://links-ccny.org>*



We would prefer more pro-social sharing. (cc) [Futuristmoves.com](http://Futuristmoves.com)

**SOCIAL SKILLS GROUP**



For boys and girls ages 12 to 15 who have difficulty with social interactions and making friends including but not limited to children with High-Functioning Autism, PDD, Asperger Syndrome or related challenges.

**When:** 8 Consecutive Tuesday Evenings  
(May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1, 8, 15, 22)  
**Time:** 5:30pm-6:30pm  
**Where:** People Inc.  
3131 Sheridan Drive,  
Amherst 14226

**Weekly sessions include learning activities and role plays to help your child:**

- \*Improve communication skills with family members and peers.
- \*Identify feelings in self and others.
- \*Develop the skills for appropriate friendship building.
- \*Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate boundaries and interactions with others.

**Curriculum and activities used in this program:**

**Super Skills:** A Social Skills Group Program for Children with Asperger Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism and Related Challenges. Coucouvanis, Judith.

**Playing It Right:** Social Skills Activities for Parents and Teachers of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Including Asperger Syndrome and Autism. Bareket, Rachael.

If interested in reserving a spot for your child please call: Shannon Bianco (880-3826) or Rob Pfalzer (880-3811)

## Share Your Expertise with Others

We know that both clinical and non-clinical vendors have areas of expertise that would be useful to others. In order to promote mutual beneficial learning, we would appreciate your sharing with the network your expertise. Please contact David Monroe, our Community & Technology Development Specialist, about what articles you would be interested in writing for the newsletter. He will coordinate generating this with you.

Email [dmonroe@comconnectionsny.org](mailto:dmonroe@comconnectionsny.org) or call 716-430-3395.

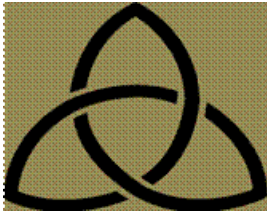
## Resource Book (Cont.)

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needs are, and which services can best address those needs.

Next, the code book—which FC AN aptly dubbed “Parent Resource Book”—was presented around to various groups within the SOC for feedback, and it was an instant success. The result was that not only did Family Support Advocates welcome the new tool at an in-service, but many of the parents present at the round table discussion this past March wanted to keep the draft copies prepared for their presentation! Parents noted that if they had access to something like it during their own wraparound experiences, they would have been better able to make decisions regarding their child’s needs.

Now that all needed changes have been saved and sent to print for mass production, expect that these Parent Resource Books will be available to families through one of several process points: 1) at Intake, 2) at Orientation, and 3) through their Care Coordinators. CCNY will be distributing these new resources in early May.



## Vendor Spotlight: Trinity Counseling and Family Services

Trinity Counseling & Family Services (TCFS) provides professional counseling services to individuals, families, groups, children and couples in the Western New York area. In addition, they have joined the Family Voices Network as a vendor in April. TCFS was founded and is lead by Chris Brown in order to better bridge the gap between ecumenical and community service work. To that end, he has partnered with Resurrection Lutheran Church (located on 1609 Genesee Street, Buffalo) to provide housing and in-kind assistance for the program.

### Trinity Counseling and Family Services provides the following:

- 4656 - Skill Building
- 5000 - Outpatient Diagnostic Assessment
- 5100 - Individual Mental Health Therapy
- 5110 - Family Mental Health Therapy
- 5121 - Group Therapy
- 5160 - In Home & Community Behavior Services
- 5240 - Behavior Management Services
- 5523 - Tutoring
- 5530 - Community Supervision

In addition to the service codes provided, TCFS is currently partnering with the Buffalo Board of Education's Title One and Non Public School Programs; plans are being developed to work with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's Alpha Male Mentoring Program; and Jeremiah road Medical Center's Sudanese Post Traumatic Stress Counseling Program. All of the Trinity

Counseling and Family Services counselors are trained, certified, and licensed. TCFS counselors provide services within in the home of the family, within schools, and are available at their offices. For more information or to request services,

please call Chris Brown at 716-316-2411.

## Intern Success (Cont.)

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Michael took this idea, and made it reality (see the Parent Resource article on page 1). His new perspective on the Wraparound process was his strength. He questioned us on various unfamiliar concepts we took for granted, organizing the information logically, and designed it quickly. His collaborative attitude, willingness to learn new skills (Microsoft Publisher), and diligent work ethic were essential in completing this project.

Finally, he worked with Christa, the Director of Quality Improvement, and Brian, our Senior Evaluator, on developing quality improvement process diagrams; creating reports on evaluation data; and presenting L.I.N.K.S. to various community groups and area stakeholders. We know that these experiences will assist him during his job search. His contributions to our organization were extremely valuable and he will be missed.

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