THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPITE

When a child has special needs, handing over responsibility can be a real challenge. Parents and caregivers may feel as if they are the only ones who can do the job, and doubt that anyone else could meet all of their child's needs. Caregiving requires work and patience and there is only so much someone can give before feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically drained. That's why it's a necessity to take breaks from time to time. Families need to take time off to recharge so they can give more and enjoy doing it. At Zach’s Place respite and childcare center, children learn that they can count on others for help, form new friendships, experience new environments and people, and have fun!

“Our only child has special needs, including being unable to communicate if something is wrong. This challenge with speech made finding a safe place for him so important. We wanted to make sure there was excellent supervision and care, while also encouraging socialization and independence. At Zach’s Place, we found a safe environment for our son where his therapy and development goals are also supported. Not only do we have a place we trust to care for our son, he also gets a whole crowd of cheerleaders who want to see him succeed!” The Lichlyter-Klein Family

INTEGRATING PERSON CENTERED PLANNING

To change the way we support the individuals we serve

New ideas and new legislation is transforming the way we work in our daily activities at our Adult Services Programs. Person centered planning is a continuous process of problem solving that helps individuals with disabilities plan for their future. Person centered thinking values are based on supporting the ability for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to build relationships in their own communities that can be long standing for the individual. The health and wellness of people have a strong correlation to whether the individual has connections to others. It is a balancing act of the concepts of what is important FOR the person and what is important TO the person. These concepts are helping us change our planning process to be mindful of those people, places, events, wishes and dreams that are important to the person. It is important for people to have the ability to have as much control over their lives as possible. It offers opportunities for people to have increased community connections. Currently our staff are participating in various trainings and they are coming up with great ideas for changing our own internal culture to be more person centered. For more information on our Adult Day Programs, please see our recent video on the home page of our website - SKSFcolorado.org.

“Being a parent is a hard job and when you add in special needs, parenting becomes even harder.”
STATE OF CAREGIVING

Thursday, August 1st
10:00am - 1:00pm
Penrose Library, 20 N Cascade Ave

The Southern Colorado Respite Coalition presents this gathering to bring together community partners to address the gaps in respite care and caregiving supports. Contact Elle Billman at (303) 233-1666 x225 or ebillman@eastersealscolorado.org for more information.

OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, September 12th
3:30pm - 7:00pm
1915 Aerotech Drive, Suite 100

Special Kids Special Families Admin office has moved! We are excited about the extra space and ability to grow our organization! Stop by to visit - refreshments will be provided.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: SKSFcolorado.org

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

This past year, Special Kids Special Families was fortunate to be the recipient of funds from several committed businesses and organizations that support our mission. Through their fundraising efforts, they have raised thousands of dollars to help provided families with valuable respite care to allow them a break from everyday caregiving.

We’d like to thank the following organizations for their outstanding fundraising efforts: Unified Title, Colorado Springs Country Club, Rocky Mountain Roosters, The Knights of Columbus and the Fraternal Order of Eagles just to name a few. We look forward to the continued relationships with these amazing organizations.

PHOTO (Left): Zach’s Place Program Director, Dianna Manz accepts a check from the St. Patrick’s Knights Council #9993. The Knights Council raises money from their Tootsie Roll fundraising drives. Their continued donations throughout the years are truly making a difference in the program!

S KSF Zach’s Place staff, Brandi Jordan accepts a check of over $4,000 from Rebecca Armenta, EastSide Eagles #3260 Fraternal Order of Eagles member and other members. She raised money specifically for the SKSF Zach’s Place program through monthly pizza dinners, bingo, and writing grants to their national organization!
Volunteers enable us to minimize costs and maximize the valuable services we offer families and caregivers in need. We thank the individuals and groups that have joined our volunteer family by generously giving their time and talents.

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

Children enter foster care through no fault of their own, because they have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. SKSF’s Foster Care Program encourages the achievement of every child’s full potential by providing a stable and nurturing alternative family environment. At the same time, we implement specific treatment plans for foster children and their families while working towards the best permanent outcome for everyone involved.

“The staff at Special Kids Special Families cares about both the children placed in our home and about us as individuals. Our home supervisor has a great relationship with the kids and has been a helpful resource in assisting us in meeting their needs. The staff has helped us navigate through rough waters when we’ve had challenges and they celebrate milestones and breakthroughs with us. We love being foster parents and we’ve been very thankful to have SKSF on our team!”

Kristen Longshore

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH SKSF?
Call us at (719) 447-8983.

RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEER GROUPS

SIBLING SUPPORT WORKSHOPS

For the past six years, Special Kids Special Families, in partnership with Julie Hudak-Salvat, LCSW, and the Arc Pikes Peak Region, have worked together to bring Sibshops to the Pikes Peak Region. These fun filled monthly workshops cater to elementary school aged children that have a sibling with a special need. They can share the good and the not so good parts of having a sib with special needs, play games and have fun. The youth can find out they are not alone and that other children have similar experiences. The group will start back again in the fall 2019. This project has been important to the participating youth to recognize, understand and embrace their unique role as being the longest lasting relationship with the person who has special needs.

For the summer, Special Kids Special Families and Julie Hudak-Salvat will be leading Sibshops groups at the Colorado Springs Marriott hotel for 40+ youth for the 26th Annual Chromosome 18 Registry & Research Society. This conference is scheduled July 22nd - July 24th. We are thrilled to support the family members in such an impactful manner.

For more information about upcoming Sibshops or to be added to our email list, visit our website at: www.SKSFcolorado.org/event/sibshops

FOSTER TO ADOPTION

Raymond and Tiana have been in the Martinez home for 2 years 9 months and recently became official members of the family. “It’s wonderful and the whole family is glad the fight is over,” said Mrs. Martinez. “It’s like a weight has been lifted and all the stress went away.” The family emphasized the importance of having a strong Child Placement team at SKSF to support them during the past years. Knowing they are a part of a bigger family gives them comfort!
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

The barriers to accessible transportation can affect the lives of people with disabilities in very important ways. Even when wheelchair accessible transportation is available in our areas, it isn’t always available when it is needed. In a survey done by the National Organization on Disability - Harris Interactive (2004), the more severe the disability was the more serious were the reported transportation problems. The most frequently cited disability is that of ability to walk. With this in mind, over 70% of the people served through our adult day programs are transported using our accessible vehicles. Our transportation services focus on the medically fragile population who require curb side assistance with a trained staff to assist while en-route.

As a result of this growing need in our community to have day programs that can provide quality care for medically fragile individuals, and provide specialized transportation services, we have joined the Pikes Peak Area Council on Governments Mobility Coordination Committee. We are not only learning how we can interface and support our area’s fine organizations who are involved in providing transportation services; but also how we can best work together to meet our community’s growing needs. For more information about our transportation services, you can contact Shkak Yousuf at (719)287-4332 or Jon Karroll at (719)447-8983 ext 42.

GROWTH IN SKSF TRANSPORTATION

- Last year, 11,999 rides were given using our wheelchair accessible vehicles providing transportation to 45 clients in our Adult Program.
- SKSF received a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation in addition to individual donors to purchase a NEW 2019 Ford E-350 accessible vehicle with wheelchair lift.
- SKSF runs 56 bus routes per week that go anywhere from Fountain to Falcon and everywhere in between!

NEW ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Maria Berger, MBA, LPC, CAC III recently joined Special Kids Special Families as the Assistant Executive Director. Maria is a Licensed Professional Therapist and in 2010, received a Master’s Degree in business administration from University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Maria launched her career as a direct care provider which led to leadership positions in behavioral health. Maria is passionate about serving individuals in need and has many years of clinical and operations management experience.

At SKSF, Maria is responsible for all aspects of agency operations, including operations and program management, administration, and human resources and will strengthen existing and new community partnerships in support of our mission. We welcome her to the team!

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Jon Karroll carries a strong presence in Southern Colorado as he has had a long career as a news anchor with KRDO Newschannel 13 since 1993. After retiring from the station this past year, Jon has been hired by SKSF as the new Development and Communications Manager, a role that perfectly suits his skills and experience.

“I didn’t know how much fun work could be! As I’m settling in, I’m engaging with many people and talking comfortably about SKSF’s mission. During my TV news days, I tried to accept as many volunteer opportunities as I could, like being a bell ringer for the Salvation Army. It was through those relationships that I began to consider a career outside of broadcasting. I focused on nonprofits because the people involved with these various organizations seemed to find their work so rewarding and that’s what I was looking for.”

“I am very pleased with the level of transportation service that my son receives to and from the Adult Day Program. The drivers are courteous and timely and the staff is caring and helpful. It takes special people to work and play with our precious families. Thank you for the service your team provides.” Linda Henry