



## FAMILY LINKS



Walla Walla Parent to Parent  
Walla Walla Valley Disability Network.

### MY BROTHER, MATTHEW By Micah Vawter, age 12



One summer afternoon, we all smiled as my 10-year-old brother Matthew cheerily yelled "Merry Christmas!" to the family sitting at the table next to us as we were leaving a restaurant. At first they were bewildered because it was nowhere near Christmastime. But then we all laughed and they started smiling too. I giggled and put my arm around him, holding his soft

little hand. I wondered how my life and the lives of the people around us would be different if we didn't have Matthew in our family. While my mom was pregnant with Matthew, he was diagnosed with Down syndrome and heart defects so severe that the doctors told Mom that he probably would die before birth. If he lived to be born, he would probably only live a couple of minutes, or maybe a few weeks, but he would definitely not live until his first birthday. The doctors tried to convince my mom to abort Matthew, but Mom refused. The doctors pressed, but Mom's answer was the same. Matthew was born weighing only four pounds, too weak to eat or even cry. Our family took him home to love him for as long as we had him. After six months, Matthew was growing stronger and not weaker as the doctors had thought he would. When we took him back to the hospital, the cardiologist found that Matthew's heart had grown and fixed itself in ways that the doctors had never seen. Only one surgery was needed to repair his heart completely. The surgery worked, and now Matthew is a bundle of joy with four siblings and a heart that works perfectly.

To the doctors who suggested abortion, Matthew's life had no value. That is exactly what Jesus is talking about when He says "Whatsoever you do to the least of these, you do to me." He is saying that the least of these are the disabled, the elderly, the "unwanted" children, and people such as Matthew, who have no value in the eyes of society. But Jesus says we should all care for and love the least of these, not disregard them. I care for Matthew by giving him a little extra help with everyday tasks, such as putting his shoes on or helping him put his clothes on in the morning. He  
**(continued on page 2)**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### MARCH

- 3, 10, 17, 24 – Family Bowling, 10-noon
- 09 P2P Mamas Especiales
- 10 Coffee w/Angie, Child. Mus., 1pm
- 11 Sibshop, Valley Residential 1-4pm
- 16 Dayton, WA, Caregiver Dinner, 5:30
- 21 Transition Expo, Marriott, 6:30-8pm
- 31 P2P Easter Egg Hunt/Potluck 11:00
- 31 Sensory Movie – Sherlock Gnomes, 10:30

#### APRIL

- 07 Coffee w/Angie, Hot Mama's, 1pm
- 13 P2P Mamas Especiales
- 13 Challenger Baseball, Pacific LL begins
- 13 Unified Softball, City of WW, begins
- 15 Sibshop, Valley Residential 1-4pm
- 18 Senior P2P Dinner (Smith's Rest.)
- 20 Dayton, WA, Caregiver Dinner, 5:30
- 21 Sensory Movie – Sgt Stubby: An Ame. Hero

#### MAY

- 5 Coffee w/Angie, Hot Mama's, 1pm
- 6 Sibshop, Valley Residential 1-4pm
- 8 P2P Volunteer Recognition, 7pm
- 11 P2P Hispanic Support Group
- 16 Senior P2P Dinner (Smith's Rest.)
- 18 Dayton, WA Caregiver Dinner, 5:30

#### JUNE

- 9 Family Picnic/Potluck, 6-7:30pm

### FOR MORE DETAILS...



Angie Witt, P2P Coordinator  
#(509)540-9880 [p2p@wwvdn.org](mailto:p2p@wwvdn.org)  
Ysabel Fuentes, Hispanic Outreach  
#(509)525-9435  
[p2pespanol@wwvdn.org](mailto:p2pespanol@wwvdn.org)

## MY BROTHER, MATTHEW (continued from page 1)

also takes a little longer to learn things. Sometimes I have to take a moment to slow down and explain something to him. However, the benefits that he brings us far outweigh the small sacrifices that we have to make for him. Matthew is a window into the love and joy of God. He has an unconditional love for everyone and forgives everyone quickly. Just giving him a hug or a word of encouragement can change his mood entirely. He constantly prays and loves to go to church. Matthew can't hide his emotions, so I can always tell if he is feeling sad or lonely or excited or happy. People with Down syndrome like Matthew have incorruptible, pure souls. They are valuable and needed in this world as an example of how to live our lives with a childlike faith.

Every baby should have a chance to live a full and happy life. Abortion takes away that chance. Jesus says that however we treat the disabled and unwanted is how we are treating Him. He is telling us to care for His people and help them. Babies with Down syndrome or other disabilities have just as much of a right to life as we do, but 90-93 percent of parents who discover their baby has Down syndrome choose abortion.

These babies who are precious and loved by Jesus are cast out, unloved, and hated by the world. All they need is love, a home, and a family, just like the rest of us. Everyone can do something in life to help. People can vote for candidates who support pro-life legislation and volunteer for or donate to pro-life organizations. Everyone can also help in little ways, such as becoming friends with someone with disabilities.

Standing up for 'the least of these' means showing the world their value and seeing the inherent value in every human being. Jesus teaches us that every person in the world is priceless in the eyes of God. We should all try to help in whatever ways we can to carry out God's plan to help these people. They have many things that they can teach us and show us about loving God with all of your mind, heart, and soul. We need to show society that all of the people on earth are precious and that the people they consider the least might be the most valuable of us all.

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Walla Walla Valley Disability Network and/or Parent to Parent.*

## PARENT TO PARENT CAREGIVER DINNER MEETINGS – NO HOST IN WALLA WALLA



### WALLA WALLA COUNTY

#### No Host Dinner

**(no March meeting, attend Transition Expo, March 21), April 18, and May 16**

**6:00-7:30 PM**

#### Smith Family Restaurant

April's Topic: Talking with your Kids: Sexuality and Developmental Disabilities – follow up on online course.

**RSVP to Angie Witt, (509)540-9880**

SAVE THE DATE



COLUMBIA COUNTY  
No Host Dinner  
March 16th, April 20, and May 18th  
5:30-7:00 PM  
Location: Noble Hunt

This month's Topic: Talking with your Kids: Sexuality and Developmental Disabilities. RSVP to Angie Witt, (509)540-9880

**What is a Sensory Friendly Movie at Grand Cinemas WW?**

Once a month we show a Family friendly movie (rated G or PG) with:

- The auditorium lights are turned up.
- The volume is lowered slightly.
- The audience is welcome to get up and move around if they need to.
- Admission is \$5.50

**Sensory Friendly shows start at 10:30 am**



- March 31 – Sherlock Gnomes
- April 21 – Sgt Stubby: An American Hero
- May 26 – Show Dogs
- June 23 – Incredibles 2
- July 21 – Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation

**P2P EASTER POTLUCK AND EGG HUNT**  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 31ST**  
**11:00AM-2:00PM**  
**WILDWOOD PARK**  
**7 S. DIVISION, WALLA WALLA**

If your last name begins with A-K bring a main dish

If your last name begins with L-T bring a side dish

If your name begins with U-Z bring a dessert

Please call Angie Witt at (509) 540-9880 or Ysabel Fuentes at (509)525-9435 to RSVP (Kids bring a basket to collect eggs in)



**DAYTON, WASHINGTON**

TRAINING ON SEXUALITY & DD  
– LEARN MORE AT THE  
CAREGIVER DINNER ON  
**MARCH 16 AT 5:30 PM**

Talking With Your Kids:  
Developmental Disability and  
Sexuality Online Course with  
Katherine McLaughlin

**ABOUT THE COURSE**

Talking with our young and grown children about sexuality can be a daunting task. As parents and guardians, we often worry that talking about sexuality gives permission and we wonder whether our children can actually have safe, satisfying relationships. This course will educate you, and provide the skills you need to be more comfortable and confident discussing this topic.

**YOUR GUIDE**



**KATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN**

Katherine, an expert on sexuality and developmental disabilities, has taught sexuality education to people with developmental disabilities and trained them to be peer sexuality educators themselves. She has trained nationally at conferences and workshops, has developed and led many parent workshops. She has lots of experience working with parents, and also working directly with people with developmental disabilities. She is also a mother of two adolescents.

Community Event celebrating **THE WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES**

\*for children (age 10 & older) and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their parents/caregivers!

# TRANSITION EXPC<sup>W</sup>



WALLA WALLA VALLEY  
**Disability Network**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

THE BLUE'S BALLROOM, COURTYARD MARRIOTT  
550 WEST ROSE STREET, WALLA WALLA

**LOCAL RESOURCES! SPEAKERS FROM AGENCIES! CUPCAKES!**

A **FREE BAG** to the first **100 FAMILIES!**

**OVER 20 LOCAL AGENCIES SERVING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) | Valley Residential Services | Walla Walla Valley Disability Network | Parent to Parent | Valley Transit | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) | Goodwill | Lillie Rice Center | The Place | Service Alternatives | Opportunity Services | Community Options | The Noble Hunt | Department of Community Health, Developmental Disabilities Program | Walla Walla Public Schools | Functional Behavior Solutions | Social Security Administration | Blue Mountain Therapeutic Riding | Walla Walla Community College | Housing Authority | Amerigroup | DD Endowment Trust Fund

For more information contact:

Cyndy Knight, Walla Walla Valley Disability Network, #(509)386-2356, [admin@wwvdsn.org](mailto:admin@wwvdsn.org)



## WHAT ARE SIBSHOPS?

Sibshops are fun, action-packed workshops where siblings (ages 8-15) of children with special needs are encouraged to share challenges and celebrate joys with brothers and sisters in similar situations. It's a celebration of the many contributions siblings make.



FACILITATORS:  
**NANCY RIGGLE, &  
JULIO JIMENEZ**

## WHAT HAPPENS AT SIBSHOPS?

Fun times and connecting with others happens! Based on the Children's Hospital program model designed by Don Meyer, each Sibshop mixes information and discussion activities with new games, active play, and art projects!

**SNACK WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED**

**SUNDAY, March 11**

**SUNDAY, April 15**

**SUNDAY, May 6**

**1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Valley Residential Services  
240 Bush Street, WW

**RSVP:**

**Angie, #540-9880**

# MEET LOCAL PARENT TO PARENT FAMILIES



## Mamas Especiales

(support group for mothers of children with special needs)

P2P Hispanic Outreach Coordinator Ysabel Fuentes has been with Parent to Parent locally for over 20 years. Last spring she met her parents every morning for walks, and hosts a support meeting monthly in her home.

Ysabel helps mothers who speak Spanish who also have children with disabilities and/or special needs. A typical meeting is a chance to share food, share stories, and find strength in the support of each other. Thank you Ysabel for opening up your home and for sharing invaluable information and support.

For more information on joining Mamas Especiales, contact **Ysabel Fuentes, P2P Hispanic Coord. (509)525-9435**



## COFFEE WITH ANGIE – SUPPORT GROUP



### COFFEE WITH ANGIE

Would you like to meet another mother with a child with a disability? Angie, Parent to Parent Coordinator would like to meet you and find ways to help you access services, resources, connect with other families and find support in our community. Bring your questions and your stories.



March 10 – WW Children's Museum, 1pm

April 7 – Hot Mama's Espresso, 1pm

May 5 – Hot Mama's Espresso, 1pm

**To RSVP, contact Angie Witt, P2P Coordinator, (509)540-9880**

**FOR SALE:  
TORKER TRISTAR (RED)  
3-wheeled BIKE**



A local family (Milton-Freewater) is trying to sell their daughter's three-wheeled bike. The bike was bought new for \$600 at Allegro and they hope to get \$250. It was used 18 months and is in great shape. It is a [Torker TriStar](#), and still has the manual. Red. It worked really well for their daughter's balance issues and she felt much safer on it.

If you are interested in purchasing this bike, please contact:

**Sheila, #(509)629-0407**

**AREA RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**



Be looking for "Oh, the Possibilities" a chance to try Zumba, Archery and more. Look for more information soon. April 10-May 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Blue Mountain Therapeutic Riding**

6 week Spring Session starts April 17<sup>th</sup>!  
Look them up on Facebook.

**In-Step Dance Studio – Rhonda#525-2920**

February 28-April 5, Spring Session  
DD Youth Ballet (7-17), 6-6:45pm, T & Th  
DD Adult Ballet (18 & up), 8-8:45pm, T & Th

**The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council is seeking candidates to fill open positions on the Governor-appointed Council.**

**Who Can Apply?**

- Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, and
- Parents/Family Members/Guardians of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

The Council is especially interested in candidates from the diverse geographic, ethnic and cultural communities in Washington and the Native American Nations.

Candidates will be interviewed by the DDC Membership Team, however, final selection of members is made by the Governor's office. Members will hold a three-year term and are eligible for reappointment for a second term. The Council covers all expenses, including travel to meetings, meals and lodging.

**The Work of the Council**

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council mission is to advocate, promote and implement policies and practices over the life course to create pathways to meaningful, integrated and productive lives for people with I/DD.

**To Apply**

Go to the <https://www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/boards-commissions/apply-serve-board-or-commission> and click on Apply to a Board or Commission. **Application deadline is April 30, 2018.**

**The Work of the Council**

The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council mission is to advocate, promote and implement policies and practices over the life course to create pathways to meaningful, integrated and productive lives for people with I/DD.

**For More Information**

For more information, contact Ed Holen or Linda West at 800-634-4473.

## PARENT TO PARENT FUN IN PICTURES

### HELPING PARENT TRAINING 2018

The Helping Parent Training on January 13 was a great chance to reconnect and share the triumphs and trials in raising children with disabilities. Parents came together to be trained on how to better mentor new parents to a diagnosis. Thank you Carla Nibler for hosting and to Tiffany Auxier for the awesome massages.



PEER MENTOR TRAINING 2018



### PARENTS NIGHT OUT Feb 11

Valentine Card-Making and cookie decorating stations were set up as well as the movie "Trolls" for the kids to enjoy.



CHALLENGER BASKETBALL 2018

# donate today



Your gift to the Walla Walla Valley Disability Network supports Programs that directly benefit families with children and adults with disabilities. [www.wwvdn.org](http://www.wwvdn.org)

#### Your donation supports our ongoing programs and activities:

- \$100 provides a gas/food card to a family traveling to see a specialist
- \$50 provides a week of summer camp for a child/teen w/disabilities
- \$25 covers the fee for the basketball program
- \$10 provides a new parent with a resource binder
- \$5 provides five sensory toys for elementary children

Checks, made payable to WWVDN, can be mailed to the following:

**WWVDN, PO BOX 1918, Walla Walla, WA 99362**

# amazon smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

Wrap-up your holiday shopping at [smile.amazon.com/ch/47-1298237](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-1298237) and Amazon donates to **Walla Walla Valley Disability Network!**

CHECK FACEBOOK AND WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

BASEBALL STARTS **APRIL 13!**



**CHALLENGER BASEBALL  
Pacific Little League**

April 13, 20, 27, and May 4, 11, 18

For ages 7-18 older

Cost: \$25.00

Sign up online through Pacific Little League at [www.w2pacificll.com](http://www.w2pacificll.com) for questions call Karen Zodnick at (509) 520-8447

BOWLING continues in **MARCH!**

Join us at **BOWLAWAY LANES** for...  
**BOWLING (Middle school & up)**  
March 3, 10, 17, 24

Cost: \$3.00 per day (includes rental of shoes and game)  
\$15 Donation toward end of the season party is requested.



Contact Reese Bentley to sign up: (208)310-0125  
All participants need to fill out Participation Form on-line at: [www.wvvdn.org](http://www.wvvdn.org)

IN THE COMMUNITY

**DYNAMIC DEVILS CO-ED SOFTBALL**

This is for persons with and without a disability ages 16 and older to come out and play against other softball teams through the Parks and Recreation League!

Practice will begin in **April**

Cost is \$35.00 per person and players must have their own mitt

Games are played on Monday and Wednesday Evenings from May to middle of June

For more information and to sign up contact Amy Harris at #(509) 200-2605



TIP



The Walla Walla Emergency Management Citizen Alert system is able to alert residents severe weather, fires, floods, toxic environmental issues, radiological events and other emergencies. Messages can be sent to residents on any communication path desired; cell phone, home phone, email, text messaging, fax, pager, PDA and more – ensuring that residents receive life-saving emergency information and important public service announcements in minutes.

FOLLOW LINK to CITIZEN ALERT:

<http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/departments/emd/index.shtml>



**Parent to Parent Coordinators**

Angie Witt, (509)540-9880

E-mail: [p2p@wvvdn.org](mailto:p2p@wvvdn.org)

Ysabel Fuentes, (509)525-9435

E-mail: [p2pespanol@wvvdn.org](mailto:p2pespanol@wvvdn.org)



**Executive Director**

Cyndy Knight, (509)386-2356

E-mail: [admin@wvvdn.org](mailto:admin@wvvdn.org)

**DONATE TODAY** at [www.wvvdn.org](http://www.wvvdn.org)