

GEORGIA ADVOCACY OFFICE

THE PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR GEORGIA

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VOICE AND TDD

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PARENT LEADERSHIP SUPPORT PROJECT VIII

*Sponsored by the State Bar Foundation, private donations,
and the Georgia Advocacy Office*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead

November 8, 2007

Dear Applicant:

We invite you to apply for the Winter 2008 advocate course known as the **Parent Leadership Support Project (PLSP)**. This program was founded by the Georgia Advocacy Office, the protection and advocacy system that protects the rights of persons with disabilities in the state of Georgia. As part of its commitment to helping all children in Georgia to have the benefit of knowledgeable and effective advocates, the Georgia Advocacy Office is proud to invite you to apply for the Parent Leadership Support Project.

This is the eighth Parent Leadership Support Project to be offered in Georgia. Since its inception in 2003, the Parent Leadership Support Project has seen 180 dedicated advocates graduate from the program. The Georgia Advocacy Office is now proud to invite interested individuals to apply for this 11-week training experience, especially citizens who are currently involved in advocacy issues or have the competency and compassion to be involved in advocating for others.

You are receiving this letter because you have inquired about this project and/or you were referred to the Georgia Advocacy Office by one of your peers. Information outlining the project and expectations follows. An application form is included.

PLSP OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To assist and enable concerned citizens to master information and negotiate systems in order to help secure the educational opportunities that are a civil right and legal mandate for students with disabilities

- ◆ To provide trainees with the best information on the complex issues surrounding Georgia's educational system to raise competency levels of people advocating on behalf of students with disabilities
- ◆ To present professional speakers who educate trainees and give the project a hands-on, in-depth view
- ◆ To develop long-standing relationships between concerned citizens and parents
- ◆ To understand how valued social roles lead to a full life

WHO SHOULD APPLY

- ◆ People with disabilities or people with family members who have disabilities
- ◆ Citizens who receive no financial support from a school district or State Board of Education
- ◆ Persons of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- ◆ People with the passion and time to lend to advocating for others

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

The participants will attend 11 sessions, most of which will be held on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The first and last sessions will be held on Saturdays. The first session will take place on Saturday, January 12, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The last session will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All sessions will be held in Atlanta, Georgia.

WHAT WE EXPECT

- ◆ Each participant is expected to attend all sessions. If a participant is absent on two (2) occasions from the course, then the participant will be excused from this course and will be able to attend the next and/or future courses.
Attendance is the single most important expectation of a participant.
- ◆ Each participant will participate in the Yahoo Listserv dedicated to PLSP participants for at least one (1) calendar year starting from the first day of training. All previous PLSP graduates are also subscribed to this Listserv and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.
- ◆ Each participant will complete all homework assignments, designed to prepare participants for each session.
- ◆ Upon completion of training, each participant will attend a minimum of six Individual Education Plan meetings for a student other than their own and/or impact the educational system in a significant manner.

FREE TRAINING AND MATERIALS

- ◆ Each participant will receive the following materials:

Wrightslaw Special Education Law

From Emotions to Advocacy

Georgia Special Education Rules Manual

Other handouts

- ◆ Each participant will receive:

Thirty five (35) hours of direct instruction presented by top-notch professionals working in the advocacy field

Priority Access for Technical Assistance from an attorney at the Georgia Advocacy Office

SESSION TOPICS (additional topics will be determined)

- ◆ Social Role Valorization
- ◆ Advocacy Strategies
 - When working with Families
 - When working with private professionals
 - When working with School Systems
- ◆ Communication and the School
- ◆ Understanding School Thinking and Culture
- ◆ Transition Issues
- ◆ Inclusion
- ◆ Knowledge of the Law
- ◆ Venues for Resolution
 - How to Write Effective Letters
 - Georgia State Complaints
 - Mediation
 - Georgia Due Process Hearings

DEADLINE

Applications received by December 10, 2007, will be most welcome. We will receive completed applications via fax at (404) 378-0031, Attention: PLSP, or mail your application to the Georgia Advocacy Office, 150 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite 430, Decatur, GA 30030. Alternate formats of this application are available per request, or simply e-mail plsp@thegao.org. If you have questions or would like to speak with a graduate of the project, please call Donna Champion at the Georgia Advocacy Office at (404) 885-1234.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed to ensure eligibility requirements are met and applications are submitted completely. All applicants will be notified of selection by December 17, 2007.

The Parent Leadership Support Project is not just a class. It creates an advocacy community between past graduates and speakers that does not end with graduation from the project. If you find that this particular Parent Leadership Support Project is not the best fit for you, we have included an interest questionnaire. By filling this out and returning it to us, we will be able to keep you informed of future sessions and locations of the project. Feel free to share the questionnaire and/or the application with others who may be interested. If we already have your application on file, please fill out and return only page 5 of the application, Your Personal Commitment.

The Georgia Advocacy Office is delighted to invite you to apply for this training and hope that you will join us. Please do not hesitate to call us with any questions about the project or the commitment expected of you. We look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Leslie K. Lipson, JD
Parent Leadership Support Project Director

Donna Champion
Outreach Coordinator

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