

NEWS FROM PATHFINDER By Melissa Fortson

HURRICANE KATRINA RESOURCES AT WWW.FAMILYPATHFINDER.ORG

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, many people with disabilities were not able to leave the Gulf Coast and are still being affected by power outages. Some are scattered and still unaccounted for, and others may be cut off from needed supports and services—for example, Katrina devastated the local chapter of United Cerebral Palsy in New Orleans, virtually ceasing services to many in need of 24-hour supports. Here in Tennessee, where emergency management officials estimate the total number of evacuees to be approximately 20,000, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder has developed a collection of resources to help them at www.familypathfinder.org.

"Pathfinder created this Web-based collection of resources because of evacuees who have contacted us needing services," said Carole Moore-Slater, Pathfinder director. "Pathfinder can provide evacuees with information they will need during their time in Tennessee, from where to find specialized equipment, such as wheelchairs, to what kinds of adult day services are available and how to enroll their children in special education programs."

By going to www.familypathfinder.org and clicking on "Hurricane Resources," users can access information that includes emergency management agencies and education, employment, equipment,

financial assistance, health care, insurance, long-term care, shelter, social security disability, transportation and more. Pathfinder's Hurricane Resources page is updated frequently, and additions, corrections, or suggestions may be sent to tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.edu. Tennessee Disability Pathfinder Staff is also available to provide telephone assistance (see "For Further Information" below).

HEALTH CARE SERVICES: THE PATHFINDER CONNECTION

Due to the recent changes in TennCare, a health insurance program for certain people who live in Tennessee, many people are currently struggling as they face the reduction or loss of their health insurance coverage. Tennessee Disability Pathfinder can help TennCare disenrollees and others without health insurance by connecting them with helping resources. Some of these helping connections include:

- Low-cost primary care clinics
- Local health departments
- Programs that provide medical, dental, mental health and substance abuse services for uninsured persons
- TennCare advocacy
- Transportation to medical services
- Prescription assistance programs
- Insurance assistance programs

To be connected to a resource in your area, contact Tennessee Disability Pathfinder (see "For Further Information" below). Users may also search for Health Care Services using the Pathfinder database at www.familypathfinder.org.

FACES OF PATHFINDER

Melissa Fortson has joined the Pathfinder staff as its disability resource specialist. A *magna cum laude* graduate of The University of the South (Sewanee), Melissa is certified as an Information and Resource Specialist by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). As Pathfinder's resource specialist, she is responsible for activities associated with the Tennessee Disability Services and Supports Directory and maintains the Pathfinder database and Web site, which include over 1600 agencies and 4000 Tennessee and national agencies. Immediately prior to joining Pathfinder, she served as the information & resource specialist at the Greater Nashville Area Agency on Aging & Disability (GNAAAD).



Melissa joins Christina Jensen, part-time social work student, Mayra Yu Morales, part-time disability community outreach worker, Claudia Avila-Lopez, bilingual social worker, and Carole Moore-Slater, program director.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder
 (615) 322-8529 (Nashville area)
 (800) 640-4636 (toll-free)
 (800) 273-9595 (TTY)
www.familypathfinder.org
tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.org

2004-2005 DIRECTORY DISCOUNT: NOW ONLY \$15

2004-2005 *Tennessee Disability Services & Supports Directory*, published by the Tennessee Disability Pathfinder Office, is a source of information regarding state and local programs and services. The newest edi-

tion is available by geographic region (East, Middle, and West Tennessee). Order forms are available online at <http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/devents/order.html>

