



NEWS FROM PATHFINDER

BY MELISSA FORTSON

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder has phone, Web, and print resources in English and Spanish to connect the Tennessee disability community with service providers. Referral services, free of cost, are provided to persons with disabilities, family members, service providers, and advocates. Pathfinder is a joint project of the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development.

PATHFINDER PREPARES FOR 2007 DIRECTORY

Pathfinder publishes the *Tennessee Disability Services & Supports Directory*, a statewide directory in three regional volumes (East, Middle & West Tennessee). We are currently preparing to publish a 2007 edition and want to make sure the resources we include are useful to people around the State. Please let us know if you are aware of a particular resource you think should be added to the directory. We will formally update these resources at least once a year, and, in addition to their inclusion in the print directory, they will also be maintained in the Pathfinder database, which is available free of charge on the Pathfinder Web site at www.familypathfinder.org. If you have disability-related resource information to share with Pathfinder, contact our Disability Resource Specialist at 615-936-5121.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO PATHFINDER

Pathfinder recently added a Disability Awareness & Etiquette section to its collection of local and national resources at www.familypathfinder.org. This section, found on the Advocacy, Law & Voting page, compiles general information about disability, etiquette and interaction tips, and People First language guidelines. We are especially pleased to offer the Tennessee Disability Coalition's excellent brochures, "Disability Etiquette: How to Interact with People Who Have Disabilities" and "Talking About Disability: A Guide to Using Appropriate Language."

Pathfinder also has expanded its offerings on Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education. Appropriate education gives people with disabilities the information they need to develop meaningful relationships and protect themselves from abuse. Pathfinder offers tools to help caregivers provide reproductive health and sexuality education that recognizes the needs of people with disabilities.

Web site users can also access the Pathfinder Database, which lists statewide disability resources, social service agencies, and other services. Agency information is organized by service area and keyword service category; there are over 50 categories of services

listed. A recently added service category, Dual Diagnosis, designates programs that serve individuals with both developmental disabilities and mental illness. Agencies listed under Dual Diagnosis may provide behavioral services, employment supports, residential or other services.

Pathfinder also continues to maintain the Pathfinder Disability Calendar, a list of disability-related trainings, meetings, and other events. Organizations post events to this calendar, Tennessee's most comprehensive listing of disability-related events. To add events to the calendar, contact Pathfinder.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder now sponsors a monthly support group for Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities. This group meets on a Monday from 6 to 7:30 pm at the Pathfinder office, and provides a forum for parents to feel supported and talk about their worries and concerns with other parents. Child care is provided. For more information about the group, please contact Carolina Meyerson at 615-400-4422 or eva.c.meyerson@vanderbilt.edu.



Ashley Coulter



Suzanne Ezell

NEW FACES AT PATHFINDER

Pathfinder continues to grow with the recent addition of two new staff members: Ashley Coulter, disability resource specialist, and Suzanne Ezell, Access Nashville coordinator. Ms. Ezell comes to Pathfinder having worked at Nashville area nonprofits for over 20 years. A disability-rights advocate for over 30 years, Ms. Ezell also has an adult daughter who uses a wheelchair. Immediately after joining the Pathfinder program, Ms. Ezell coordinated the fun and successful Access Nashville Day. Access Nashville, a volunteer effort to identify accessibility-friendly locations in downtown Nashville, is made up of

volunteers from the business and disability communities. Following a training session, volunteers survey restaurants, entertainment attractions, and hotels, and the results are posted online. Attracted to the project's positive philosophy, Ms. Ezell likes that Access Nashville is "positive and supportive in our advocate role, making friends with the folks we survey to foster a good and positive change."

NEW DISABILITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS DIRECTORY AVAILABLE IN EARLY 2007

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder publishes the Tennessee Disability Services & Support Directory, a statewide directory in three regional volumes (East, West, and Middle Tennessee). A new edition of the directory will be available in early 2007. To receive notification when the directory is available, please send your name, e-mail address, and phone number to tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.edu or contact Pathfinder at 800-640-4636.

New disability resource specialist Ashley Coulter learned about Pathfinder during a public policy internship at the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. A graduate of Auburn University, Ms. Coulter holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education with a focus in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies. Ms. Coulter says that she has "always been interested in working with the disability community, especially in the advocacy realm. I have a brother with a disability and have seen the victories one can achieve with the right information and appropriate supports, and it is empowering to know that I can help someone achieve victories in his or her life." Among other duties, Ms. Coulter is responsible for the maintenance of Pathfinder's database and Web site, which contain information about local, State, and national resources. She will also coordinate the production and distribution of the *2007 Disability Services and Supports Directory*. Ms. Coulter welcomes the opportunity to provide "up-to-date information in regards to the disability community and assist persons with disabilities in becoming more independent."

Mss. Ezell and Coulter join program director Carole Moore-Slater, Hispanic Outreach Program coordinator Claudia Avila-Lopez,

information & referral specialist/program coordinator Melissa Fortson, and Hispanic Outreach Worker Carolina Meyerson.

STAY CONNECTED WITH PATHFINDER

Pathfinder publishes *The Pathfinder*, an e-newsletter containing information about program activities and other disability-related resources in Tennessee. Past issues of the publication are archived on the Pathfinder Web site (under Pathfinder Features, click on "*The Pathfinder: News from Tennessee Disability Pathfinder*"). To receive future news from Tennessee Disability Pathfinder via e-mail, please contact us at tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.edu.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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

Melissa Fortson is information & referral specialist/program coordinator with Disability Pathfinder.

COMPASS AND PARTNERS TRAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT

BY PATTI TOSTI

In October, 2004, Compass Coordination, Inc, a private, non-profit organization, was awarded a two-year grant by the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. Compass, which was founded in 1996 by Randall Moore and LaWanna Edwards, partnered with the University of Memphis, Memphis-Shelby Crime Commission, and the YWCA of Greater Memphis to devise and deliver training to law enforcement officers on how to respond to individuals with disabilities and the elderly who are victims of sexual assault or domestic violence. The need for such training is based on research that suggests that persons with disabilities are at a higher risk of being victims of crime than the general population, and are often victimized multiple times.

A skills-based curriculum was developed utilizing national experts in the area of sexual assault and domestic violence affecting vulnerable populations, and the training was approved by Tennessee's POST (Peace Officers' Standards & Training) Commission. The concept was to teach about communicating effectively, collecting evidence, and legal and liability issues when responding to individuals with disabilities or the elderly. In addition, participants received continuing education credits at the University of Memphis.

"Didn't realize the impact that abuse of the elderly and people with disabilities was having on the law enforcement community and society in general."

Eight two-day trainings were conducted in the rural and urban areas of West Tennessee and North Mississippi. Over 200 law enforcement

officers and others were trained prior to the close of the grant in September of 2006. The training was highly recommended by the participants and received high marks on their evaluations.

The most informative and vital part of a training session was the Round Table discussion, which occurred at the end of the second day. The Round Table fostered communication and collaboration between the law enforcement officers and representatives from various agencies, such as Adult Protective Services, the Commission on Aging and Disability, the Division of Mental Retardation Services, the Alzheimer's Association, local Mental Health Agencies, Independent Living Centers, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Sexual Assault Resource Centers.

"Good source of information and will be able to work cases with this training."

As a follow-up to this successful project, Compass applied for and received a three-year grant to deliver training specifically designed for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges. This training will extend Compass's partnership with others in Memphis and Shelby County, and provide an opportunity to improve the response and support to victims of sexual assault or domestic violence.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project, or how it may benefit your organization, please contact Patricia Tosti, project manager, in the Memphis office of Compass Coordination, Inc. at (901)682-0500 ext. 263, or via e-mail to patti.tosti@compasstn.org.