April 16, 2010

Dear Colleagues:

First, we would like to welcome Emily Levine to the Steering Team as co-chair of the Community of Practice. She joins Sharon Fleischfresser and Steve Cash in this key leadership role. Emily has been involved in parent training, disability rights activism, and volunteer work on behalf of individuals with autism for over 15 years. In her current position as Executive Director of the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin, she oversees programming for families, educators, and interested community members including basic autism training, special needs parenting workshops, and conferences. Ms. Levine is the parent of a young adult son who has an autism spectrum disorder.

Second, we hope that you will be able to join us for what will be an educational and interesting Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities (CoP ASD/DD) meeting on May 20th. Our meeting will focus on Resources. We hope that participants will gain an increased understanding about the work our Regional Core Teams have been doing and will be introduced to some state-wide resources and programs.

We are roughly at the half-way point of the Connections Initiative Grant and we want to update you, our statewide partners, on the process of Community Resource Mapping and the development of our Regional Core Teams. Each Regional Center Liaison and Regional Core Team has been invited to share highlights from the last year. Our morning together also features an innovative model for parent and family education presented by Dr. Deb Oluufs from Gunderson Lutheran in La Crosse. The end of the morning gives you a chance to take part in a new feature of the CoP ASD/DD--two round table discussions around your choice of resource topics. We are anticipating conversations around Professional Development, New Grants in Wisconsin, Parent Supports, School-based Physical Education and Community-based Sport and Recreation Programs, New Emerging Resources and Advocacy Resources. Details will be posted on our web portal as they become available. Remember, the morning begins with registration at 8:30 and introductions at 9:00. Lunch is scheduled to be at 12:30 and then Practice Groups meet in the afternoon.

We will be meeting at the Sheraton Madison Hotel. You can get directions from www.sheratonmadison.com/directions. Parking is free.

Attached is a registration form for the CoP ASD/DD meeting on May 20th. You can also register at www.waisman.wisc.edu/connections. We will need reservations returned by May 12th. Please share this with your partners as well. If you have any questions, please contact us.

We look forward to seeing you in May.

Sincerely,

Sharon, Steve and Emily

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