



# all Abilities Celebration Connection

SPRING 2014

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*In a little bit of self-plagiarism, I wrote this article as part of a final paper for one of my Master's courses at GMU. It seemed to fit perfectly with what I wanted to say today so I've reprinted it here.*

## Time to Take the "Dis" Out of Disabilities

Little did Alfred Binet know, when he and Theodore Simon, created the first intelligence test in 1904, how this test would be used, transformed and misused for the next hundred years. Binet had absorbed the hopeful and forward-thinking ideas of the late 19th century world around him and applied it to the study of the human intellect. He started by observing his daughters, asking them questions and considering how they solved them. He came to believe that intellectual abilities were different for different people and that "lack" of a particular ability did not necessarily connote an illness. In 1904, he was commissioned by the French government to find a method to differentiate between children who were intellectually normal and those who were inferior, for the purpose of putting the latter into special schools. There they would receive more individualized attention and more importantly, they wouldn't disrupt the educational day of the "normal" student." In 1905, Binet developed a test in which he had children do tasks such as follow commands, copy patterns, name objects, and put things in order or arrange them properly. He gave the test to Paris school children and created a standard based on his data. For example, if 70 percent of 8-year-olds could pass a particular test, then success on the test represented the 8-year-old level of intelligence.

However, according to Binet, intelligence should not be described as a single score; the use of his Intelligence Quotient (IQ) as a definitive statement on a child's intellectual capability would be a serious mistake. In addition, Binet feared that IQ measurement would be used to condemn a child to a permanent "condition" of stupidity, thus negatively affecting his or her education and future.

Binet's work never really caught on in France. But in America, Henry Goddard, Director of Research at the Vineland Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys, the first known American laboratory set up for the study of mental retardation (MR), translated Binet's test for use in the U.S. In 1910, he proposed a system of classifying or sorting individuals with MR, using the terms "moron" for those with an IQ of 51-70, "imbecile" for those with an IQ of 26-50 and "idiot" for those whose IQ was lower than 26.

Goddard also believed that these people should be segregated from society through institutionalization, sterilization, or both. In 1911, he helped to write the first U.S. law requiring special education for children who were blind, deaf or mentally retarded, and in 1914, he became the first American psychologist to testify in court that criminals with "subnormal intelligence" should not be held criminally liable for their actions.

In the hundred years that has followed, we've tried hard to change our way of thinking and speaking about, not to mention, educating, those with differing abilities. Clearly, we no longer use words like "moron" to describe people! And in 2008, the Virginia legislature changed the official state terminology of "Mentally Retarded" to "Intellectually Disabled."

But maybe it's time now to try to completely take the "dis" out of disabilities and understand that we are all on a continuum of abilities, having unique talents in some areas, and deficiencies in other areas. And that's just fine because all types of abilities are what is ultimately important and makes life interesting!

Laura Nelson, Editor



## THANK YOU SO MUCH!

*A great big thank you to our readers who made a contribution to CSC via the Virginia income tax check off.*

*It is through the generosity of our donors we are able to continue to offer our on-line newsletter and services directory.*

*If you have completed your taxes for 2013 and forgot to include CSC, you can still make an on-line Paypal contribution through the DONATION button on [www.celebratingspecialchildren.org](http://www.celebratingspecialchildren.org) or mail your check - made out to CSC to Celebrating Special Children, C/O Bonita Pennino, 101 Niblick Dr., SE, Vienna VA 22180*

*For more information, see page 27 of*

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## THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO FOLLOWS US ON FACEBOOK!

*d*Abilities Celebration Connection and Celebrating Special Children can be found at [www.facebook.com/CelebratingSpecialChildrenInc](http://www.facebook.com/CelebratingSpecialChildrenInc) Our next goal is to double our "LIKES" and "Followers" before the next newsletter comes out in July!

I look forward every day to hearing from you!

Look for the next issue of *disAbilities Celebration Connection* to be posted during the month of July, 2014. Send us story ideas, interesting links, and events. We can't do it without you!

Questions? Comments? Use the CONTACT US form at [www.celebratingspecialchildren.org](http://www.celebratingspecialchildren.org)

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# Anyone Can Do Yoga!

by Carrie Smoot

Growing up in northern India, Seema Dabas remembers taking long morning walks with her mother. When she had difficulty keeping up, her mother would leave her with a group of people who were practicing yoga. Dabas says these traditions are customary in India. She enjoyed the group so much that she explored yoga in depth over the years.

## *Adaptive/Seated Yoga*

Today, Dabas teaches yoga to various audiences. One of her classes, Adaptive/Seated Yoga, takes place on Tuesday mornings at Arlington's Virginia Hospital Center. The hospital began offering seated yoga in 2007 and the more specialized adaptive class in 2008. A second adaptive class was added in 2012.

"Your body is a gift, and it is designed to move," Dabas says. "I work with a lot of people who have MS, arthritis and back issues. Some people may have difficulty raising their arms over their heads, while others have a hard time getting up and down from the floor, so we use chairs. Changing poses to fit the person's abilities is important. Downward dog can be done behind the chair as a modified version, and so can [the] tree [pose]. The chair is used to help balance in the pose." Dabas says she has not yet had wheelchair users as students, but that they can do it.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning "to yoke, or to bind." Dabas emphasizes that yoga has spiritual, mental, and physical aspects that all work together. "It's not just exercise," she says. "Yoga relieves stress, strengthens muscles and the core, improves balance and flexibility, and increases confidence. Over time, it can relieve pain." She has seen all this happen with her students, who often tell her that they come to class hurting, but feel much better by the end.

"There's also a sense of community," Dabas observes. "Everybody has a lot of fun. Some people sign up for multiple sessions, particularly in the warmer months because it's often harder for some people to get around in winter." Even though in-person classes are valuable, Dabas encourages students to practice at home in quiet, clutter-free places.

Dabas begins each class with setting an intention for that day, and asks students to do the same. The first part of class is the Nidra. The subconscious mind remains aware

during this period. But the physical body relaxes completely. It lowers blood pressure and anxiety, and results in better sleep patterns. Soothing music plays in the background throughout the class.

## *Practicing Yogic Breathing*

Breathing is a critical element of yoga practice. "Keep your mouth closed and breathe in and out through your nose," she advises. "Go slowly and be aware of each breath. Breathe from your lungs, not your chest. Let your belly expand like a balloon, and push out from your back." She describes three-part breathing, which focuses on lower belly, lungs and chest breathing.

## *Doing the Poses*

In the next section, each student concentrates on doing the poses to the best of his or her ability. "It's a good idea to have a focal point somewhere in the room so that you won't get distracted by other things on your schedule," Dabas suggests. "Also, leave your ego at home. Concentrate on what you are doing, not your neighbor."

## *Getting Centered through Meditation*

The last five minutes of class are devoted to meditation. Dabas prefers that students use positive phrases instead of mantras. "It's normal for your mind to wander. We're not all swamis," she says, laughing. "Let the thoughts flow in and out, but try to bring your mind back to the meditation as soon as possible." Dabas encourages students to respect their bodies for what they are now, and that they may not be able to do the moves they could at age 20.

Sometimes, the best way to see whether adapted yoga would work for your own disability is to visit a class. Loretta DiGennaro teaches the Sunday afternoon adaptive yoga class at Virginia Hospital Center. The small class of eight gathers in the conference room. They greet one another and catch up on the week. DiGennaro helps them arrange the metal folding chairs in a semicircle, allowing enough space for everyone. They will need it as they move their arms during the practice. They help each other arrange the Versa-Discs—the rubber cushions used for balancing, core strengthening and maintaining posture.

————— *continued next page*

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DiGennaro turns on the music, and everyone begins, doing the moves in their own way and at their own pace. "Let's see where your body is going today," she says, inviting everyone to stretch and move their arms in any way they feel comfortable. "That's the intention of yoga." In the background, the performers on the tape sing: "Bountiful am I. Blissful am I. Beautiful am I." She leads them in more twisting and stretching. Hinging from the hips and some footwork prove more difficult for many and somewhat painful at first, but she encourages them by saying: "Listen to your body. Feel the breath." One student observes that she has developed more flexibility since starting the class.

Another is amazed to discover how much rolling a tennis ball with her foot relieves aching feet. Even while they are discussing how the body works, people are moving for the whole hour, and they leave energized.

"There is so much yoga you can do in a chair," DiGennaro says. She teaches regular classes, but realized quickly that many people cope with various health conditions. Making specific adaptations became natural for her.

"Sometimes, yoga involves just sitting and being aware of your breath," she says. "A friend came to class one day very upset about things going on at work, and she was also grieving a loss. When I asked her to focus on her breath, she was stunned to realize that she had been holding her breath all day. Once she focused on becoming calm, she felt better." ■

For more information about these and other classes at Virginia Hospital Center, please call 703-558-6859 or visit [www.virginiahospitalcenter.com](http://www.virginiahospitalcenter.com) and search for "adaptive yoga."

*Carrie Smoot is a Northern Virginia freelance writer.*

## Physical Health Classes in Northern Virginia - 2014 Schedule

### **Arlington County**

#### ☼ *Adaptive/Seated Yoga*

Tuesday, 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
VHC Carlin Springs Campus  
601 S. Carlin Springs Rd • Arlington, VA  
Cornelia Lesh, Program Coordinator  
703-558-6740  
[clesh@virginiahospitalcenter.com](mailto:clesh@virginiahospitalcenter.com)

### **Fairfax County**

#### ☼ *Adaptive Yoga*

Tuesday/Friday, 11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.  
Sun & Moon Yoga Studio  
9998 Main Street • Fairfax, VA  
Noralea Dalkin • 703-525-9642  
[ndalkin@yahoo.com](mailto:ndalkin@yahoo.com) • 703-525-9642

#### ☼ *MS Water Exercise*

Friday, 12:30 – 1:25 p.m.  
Audrey Moore ReCenter  
8100 Braddock Rd • Annandale, VA  
LeeAnn David, Program Coordinator  
703-222-4664  
[Leeann.David@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Leeann.David@fairfaxcounty.gov)

#### ☼ *Balance and Beyond*

Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Oak Marr ReCenter  
3200 Jermantown Rd • Oakton, VA  
Barb Eason • 703-856-6638  
[befir4pe@aol.com](mailto:befir4pe@aol.com)

#### ☼ *Balance and Beyond*

Thursday, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Audrey Moore ReCenter  
8100 Braddock Rd • Annandale, VA  
Barb Eason • 703-856-6638  
[befir4pe@aol.com](mailto:befir4pe@aol.com)

#### ☼ *Balance and Beyond*

Thursday, 1 – 2 p.m.  
Providence ReCenter  
7525 Marc Dr. • Falls Church, VA  
Barb Eason • 703-856-6638  
[befir4pe@aol.com](mailto:befir4pe@aol.com)

#### ☼ *Water Aerobics - Arthritis, Fibro & MS*

Tuesday/Thursday, 11 – 11:50 a.m.  
Reston Community Center  
2310 Colts Neck Rd • Reston, VA  
Vicki Shackford • 703-476-9500  
[vicsf@verizon.net](mailto:vicsf@verizon.net)

#### ☼ *Yoga for Multiple Sclerosis*

Wednesday, 6:45 – 7:45 p.m.  
Body Kinetic Rehab Center  
7617 Little River Tpke • Ste LL - 110  
Annandale, VA  
Jessica K. To-Alemanji, Clinic Director  
[jt@bodykineticsrehab.com](mailto:jt@bodykineticsrehab.com)  
703-639-0950

#### ☼ *Yoga for Multiple Sclerosis*

Friday, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
East Meets West Yoga Center  
8227 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 310  
Vienna, VA  
Lynne Valdez • 703-356-9642  
[lynnevaldes@gmail.com](mailto:lynnevaldes@gmail.com)

### **Prince William County**

#### ☼ *Gentle Pilates*

Monday, 10 – 11 a.m.  
Workhouse Arts Center  
9601 Ox Road • Lorton, VA  
Lesley Spalding • 703-584-2965  
[lesleyspalding@workhousearts.org](mailto:lesleyspalding@workhousearts.org)

#### ☼ *Gentle Yoga*

Wednesday, 10 – 11 a.m.  
Workhouse Arts Center  
9601 Ox Road • Lorton, VA  
Lesley Spalding • 703-584-2965  
[lesleyspalding@workhousearts.org](mailto:lesleyspalding@workhousearts.org)

### **Loudoun County**

#### ☼ *H2O Low Gentle*

Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 – 11:20 a.m.  
Ida Lee Recreation Center  
60 Ida Lee Dr. NWLeesburg, VA  
Jane Johnston • 703-203-2264  
[fitoverforty@jesed.com](mailto:fitoverforty@jesed.com)



# National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

*For more than two decades, NICHCY has been the center providing information to the nation on disabilities in children and youth • programs and services for infants, children, and youth with disabilities; IDEA, the nation's special education law; • research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities. Our special focus has been on children and youth with disabilities (birth to age 22).*

Regrettably, on September 30, 2013, our funding from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education ended. Our website will remain available until September 2014. Note that the new Center for Parent Information and Resources will be the new home of NICHCY resources. Visit [www.parentcenterhub.org/resources](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/resources). Now that NICHCY's funding has ended, we are no longer available to respond to your individual questions via phone or email. We encourage you instead to explore our website, which is rich and deep and offers a great deal of information potentially relevant to your concerns. For additional information, contact Elaine Mulligan at [emulligan@fhi360.org](mailto:emulligan@fhi360.org). Feel free to download our publications and share them with others. Find fact sheets on specific disabilities, state resource sheets, parent guides, resource lists, and more. All of our publications on our website are free!

## ***All about the Law, Early Intervention, and Special Education***

Visit the "Disability and Education Laws" section of our website to learn more about IDEA (and other important federal legislation affecting individuals with disabilities). Visit Babies and Toddlers for information about early intervention services for children until their third birthday. If you're looking for guidance with respect to educating school-aged children with disabilities, you'll find easy-to-read explanations in Children (3-22). And last but not least, detailed training materials on IDEA are available as part of NICHCY's Building the Legacy training curriculum.

## ***Other Sources of Information***

Use the website to identify and connect with disability organizations around the country, parent groups, state agencies, and others who can offer you yet more assistance and information. On the website, you can search for organizations addressing your areas of interest, find resources in your state, identify available materials, and much, much more. To start, we recommend that you take a look at the State Resource Sheet for your state and use the SEARCH box at the top of every page.

## ***Effective Dissemination Practices***

In 2008, NICHCY began the Dissemination Initiative to spread the word about effective dissemination practices among other projects like ours. An entire section of this website is devoted to discussion and resources that can help you excel as a disseminator.

Now that NICHCY is no longer funded, we recommend that you utilize the disability-related projects within the Technical Assistance and Dissemination network, otherwise known as the TA&D network. The network consists of more than 40 projects funded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education. These projects offer information and technical assistance on a broad range of disability and special education issues.

## ***Why was the National Dissemination Center called "NICHCY"?***

Our organization served as a resource for families and educators for many, many years. Over those years, our name changed several times, as the national dialogue about disabilities changed. The acronym NICHCY was coined in the 1980s, when federal law used the term "handicapped children and youth" to describe children with disabilities. At that time, our name was the National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth—hence, NICHCY. It's true that NICHCY doesn't match the first letters of our official name anymore and hasn't for some time. But we didn't want to lose the history and community that we had built around the name "NICHCY" over the years. It has truly been our honor and privilege to serve you, and we hope that you can use our website well to find the information and connections you seek. ■



# CVS/pharmacy Now Offers “Talking” Prescription Labels for Individuals with Vision Impairments Through its Online Pharmacy

*New service on CVS.com is the result of a collaboration with state and national organizations for the blind.*

Woonsocket, Rhode Island (March 18, 2014) –

CVS/pharmacy announced today that it now provides ScripTalk talking prescription labels for prescriptions ordered for home delivery through its online pharmacy, CYCAS.com. The ScripTalk labels provide a safe and convenient way to access information on prescription labels for individuals who cannot read standard print. The ScripTalk labels are free to CYCAS.com pharmacy customers who are blind or visually impaired. Customers can also obtain a free ScripTalk reader from Envision America that will enable them to listen to the information on the ScripTalk label.

“We are pleased to offer the ScripTalk service to our online pharmacy customers who are visually impaired,” said Josh Flum, Senior Vice President of Retail Pharmacy at CYCAS Caremark. “Enhancing access to important information about prescriptions is in keeping with our purpose of helping people on their path to better health.”

Today’s announcement is the result of collaboration between CYCAS/pharmacy, the American Foundation for the Blind, American Council of the Blind and California Council of the Blind. These groups applauded CYCAS/pharmacy’s actions.

“The lack of accessible labels on prescription drug containers

puts people with vision loss at serious risk of medication mishaps,” said Paul Schroeder, Vice President of Programs & Policy at the American Foundation for the Blind. “We applaud CYCAS/pharmacy for taking steps to provide speech access to label information for customers with vision loss along with its willingness to evaluate methods to improve large print labels.”

“This agreement is a positive step that allows for a greater level of privacy, safety, and independence for blind and visually impaired Americans of all ages who take prescription medications,” said Kim Charlson, president of the American Council of the Blind.

“The California Council of the Blind applauds CVS’s willingness to offer access to the information on prescription medication labels. As a result of this initiative, persons who are blind or visually impaired who use CYCAS mail order to fill their prescription needs will have the same direct, and independent access to label information as do sighted customers,” stated Donna Pomerantz, President, California Council of the Blind.

To request the labels with a prescription ordered through cvs.com, the number to call at cvs.com is 888-861-4363. Questions about the ScripTalk system should be directed to Envision America at 800-890-1180. It is recommended that you call cvs.com first. ■

## About CVS/pharmacy

CVS/pharmacy, the retail division of CVS Caremark Corporation (NYSE: CVS), is America’s leading retail pharmacy with more than 7,600 CVS/pharmacy and Longs Drug stores. CVS/pharmacy is reinventing pharmacy to help people on their path to better health by providing the most accessible and personalized expertise, both in its stores and online at CVS.com. General information about CVS/pharmacy and CVS Caremark is available at <http://info.cvscaremark.com>.

Mike DeAngelis • CVS/pharmacy  
[michael.deangelis@cvscaremark.com](mailto:michael.deangelis@cvscaremark.com)

## About American Council of the Blind (ACB) and California Council of the Blind (CCB)

American Council of the Blind is a national consumer-based advocacy organization working on behalf of blind and visually impaired Americans throughout the country with members organized through state and special interest affiliates. California Council of the Blind is the California affiliate of the ACB. Both are dedicated to improving the quality of life, equality of opportunity and independence of all people who have visual impairments. Visit [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org) and <http://www.ccbnet.org>.

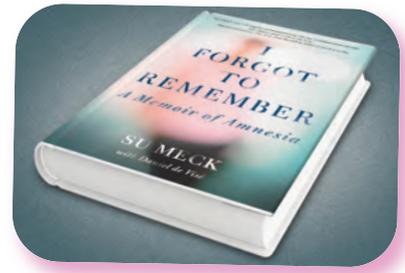
Kim Charlson • President, ACB  
617-501-5853 • [kim.charlson@perkins.org](mailto:kim.charlson@perkins.org)

## About American Foundation for the Blind

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is a national nonprofit that expands possibilities for people with vision loss. Priorities include broadening access to technology; and promoting independent and healthy living for people with vision loss by providing them and their families with relevant and timely resources. AFB is also proud to house the Helen Keller Archives and honor the over forty years that Helen Keller worked tirelessly with AFB. For more information visit AFB online at [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org).

Adrianna Montague-Devaud  
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# I Forgot to Remember: A Memoir of Amnesia



*“I don’t remember any of what I’m about to tell you.”*

Review by Carrie Smoot

With that matter-of-fact statement, Su Meck draws readers in, making them curious about her experiences.

Though she never set out to be a writer, she says in the introduction that she hopes the book will do some good for others who have had traumatic brain injuries—and be of help to their families and friends who are also deeply affected by all the profound changes.

Washington Post readers may recall Daniel de Visé’s May 2011 feature on Meck and her family as she graduated from Montgomery College with an associate’s degree in music. Afterward, she and her husband moved to Massachusetts, where Meck is continuing her studies for a bachelor’s degree at Smith College. Meck and de Visé collaborated on *I Forgot to Remember*, told entirely in Su’s voice and through her eyes. A music lover who plays the drums, each chapter has a song title that she enjoys. She also shares family photographs.

Meck does not remember anything about the first 22 years of her life. What she does know she has learned from talking a lot with family and friends to fill in the huge gaps. Even studying a photo album that her mother made after her accident did not help her with recall. Today, Meck realizes she is very different from her younger self in personality and temperament, and that she doesn’t have anything in common with that person.

Meck’s life changed in 1988. Twenty-two and married, with two baby sons, Meck was cooking dinner one evening when she decided to take a break and give her son a hug. As she lifted him high in the air, his foot

hit the ceiling fan, and it fell on her head. As a result, she suffered a closed head injury and anterograde amnesia.

Meck started all over again in intensive rehabilitation to relearn how to do basic tasks, such as bathing, dressing, and feeding herself. She worked with speech therapists to learn new words, keeping track of them in a notebook. Dr. Seuss’ *Hop on Pop* was the first book she learned to read—and remembers reading. She progressed well physically because she was in good physical shape before the accident. She enjoyed riding a bicycle on the hospital roof, with some assistance. But dealing with the medical community was sometimes very difficult.

And every day, she woke up to strangers. It was some time before she remembered her husband and children. Her husband Jim felt like she had died. A systems engineer, he christened her “Su 2.0” because she became so different from the person he once knew. No one liked the vacant look in her eyes. For a while, she had trouble making new memories.

For many years, it was difficult for Meck to make sense of the world. As she says on page 110: *For many years I have taken “blending in” to an Olympic –class level...But the pressure was always on, and I felt extremely self-conscious. I could never really relax and be me because I didn’t know who that was.*

As her sons grew older, she depended on them and Jim for many things. She was a homemaker, while Jim traveled extensively for his job. She became an aerobics instructor. The family would make several

moves as his career progressed, including living overseas for a while in Egypt. She did have help, but had no idea what it truly meant to be a wife and mother—at least for a while. Her daughter Cassidy, born after the accident, is the only child she remembers giving birth to. As her children grew and progressed through school, she learned with them as they did homework. Along the way, she learned a bit about how memory works, and she includes explanations and definitions in the book.

When Meck found herself facing an empty nest as her children began college, she had no idea what to do. She scoffed at suggestions from her mother and other family members to go back to school—something she had failed at earlier because it was too soon after her injury. But as Meck says, “Once the seed is planted, it continues to grow.” She credits Montgomery College and the people there with saving her life and teaching her the why of learning. Slower to process information, it took her much longer to complete assignments. But she worked very hard to reach her goals.

Slowly, she felt comfortable enough to share her story, and she spoke to various classes about traumatic brain injury. She also spoke to her daughter’s college class about her experiences. Cassidy’s professor taught her to cherish the memories she has now, rather than grieving over the ones she has lost.

In this memoir, Su Meck wanted to write truth. She has done so in a powerful and moving way. ■

*Carrie Smoot is a Northern Virginia freelance writer.*



## ***Upsee Harness: Mother's invention to give disabled son chance to walk will help countless other families following worldwide launch***

*Reprinted with thanks from the March 24, 2014 edition of The Independent. Visit [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)*

*by Adam Withnall*

**The  INDEPENDENT**

**D**eby Elnatan, a music therapist whose son Rotem has cerebral palsy, said the idea for a support harness came from her own "pain and desperation", but will go on to make lives easier for countless families across the world struggling with disability. It was designed to enable Rotem to stand upright and, by attaching it to herself, Ms Elnatan and her son could take steps together.

Now, a company in Northern Ireland has taken Ms Elnatan's invention and prepared it for an international launch. The manufacturer, Leckey, has a track record of producing equipment for children with special needs, and after successful trials in the UK and North America the Firefly Upsee has been rolled out worldwide.

"It is wonderful to see this product available to families across the world," said Ms Elnatan, who was at the official unveiling at the Leckey factory in Lisburn.

"When my son was two years old, I was told by medical professionals that 'he didn't know what his legs are and has no consciousness of them'.

"That was an incredibly difficult thing for a mother to hear. I started to walk him day after day, which was a very strenuous task for both of us. Out of my pain and desperation came the idea for the Upsee and I'm delighted to see it come to fruition."

The Upsee allows infants and small children to stand and achieve repetitive walking training with the support of an adult. It includes a harness for the child, which attaches to a belt worn by an adult, and specially-engineered sandals that allow the parent and child to step simultaneously, leaving their hands free for play and other tasks. Designers, engineers, textile experts and therapists from Leckey's Firefly team have been working on the project since 2012.

Maura McCrystal, mother of five-year-old Jack from Draperstown in Northern Ireland, has been one of the first UK parents to use the product.

"Last Sunday was a significant one for us as a family as it was the first time our son Jack was able to play football in the back garden with his dad, his brothers and our little dog Milly," she said.

"To see Jack playing like any other five-year-old boy made me very emotional. Jack and his brothers so enjoyed it." Firefly's clinical research manager and occupational therapist, Clare Canale, said the product could help families across the world.

"Short-term, the Upsee improves special needs family participation and quality of life, while research suggests it has the potential to help with physical and emotional development in the longer term," she said.

"It has been humbling to see the progress and happiness the Upsee is creating; watching children to do simple things for the first time such as kicking a ball or playing with a sibling is wonderful for everyone involved, but especially the families." ■

For more information, visit the Firefly website at [www.fireflyfriends.com](http://www.fireflyfriends.com)



*(Left - right) Claire and Daniel Smyth, Louise and Bethany Watson and Cameron and Charlotte Taylor using a Firefly Upsee (PA)*



COME ONE, COME ALL TO OUR



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Autism Resource Fair!

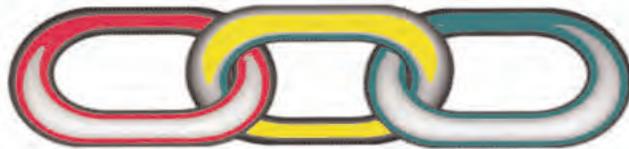
Are you the parent, caregiver, family member or friend of a child with autism?

This is the place for you! Free childcare provided! Breakout information sessions will be provided free of charge! And, Katie's Place farm animals will also be there for families to enjoy!

- WHEN:** Saturday May 10, 2014
- WHERE:** BRAAC (Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center: 312 Whitwell Drive, Roanoke, VA 24019)
- TIME:** 10:00AM – 2:00PM
- COST:** FREE ADMISSION FOR FAMILIES, exhibitors will be selling goods, items to be raffled as well!
- RESPOND:** Preregistration: Email Lissa Hoprich at [abcsofaba@gmail.com](mailto:abcsofaba@gmail.com)

This fair is a fundraiser for BRAAC and all proceeds will go to BRAAC! Sponsored By:





## Editor's note:

*As the vacation traveling time of year approaches, it seemed appropriate to take a look at websites that assist travelers who have mobility and other issues. The resources listed here are for informational purposes only. Inclusion does not indicate an endorsement by Celebrating Special Children (CSC). Likewise, omission of a program does not indicate disapproval of that program. CSC makes no judgment on the standards of operations of services that are listed here.*

## ✪ Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Cares Help Line

Assists travelers with disabilities and medical conditions. TSA recommends that passengers call 72 hours ahead of travel for information about what to expect during screening. Travelers may call TSA Cares toll free at 1-855-787-2227 prior to traveling with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint. TSA Cares will serve as an additional, dedicated resource specifically for passengers with disabilities, medical conditions or other circumstances or their loved ones who want to prepare for the screening process prior to flying. Travelers may also request a Passenger Support Specialist ahead of time by calling the TSA Cares hotline at 1-855-787-2227 or visiting

[www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/travelers-disabilities-and-medical-conditions](http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/travelers-disabilities-and-medical-conditions)

## ✪ tripadvisor Traveling With Disabilities Forum

Website shares information from users about their travel experiences. Look for Top FAQ about traveling with disabilities.

[www.tripadvisor.com/ShowForum-g1-i12336-Traveling\\_With\\_Disabilities.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowForum-g1-i12336-Traveling_With_Disabilities.html)

## ✪ Travel.State.Gov - A Service of Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Dept of State

Information about planning ahead including a warning that each country has its own standards of accessibility for travelers with disabilities, and many countries do not require accommodations similar to what you might find in the United States.

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/disabilities.html>

## ✪ Independent Traveler.com

Practical advice for traveling for many situations.

[www.independenttraveler.com/travel-tips/senior-travel/disabled-travel](http://www.independenttraveler.com/travel-tips/senior-travel/disabled-travel)

## ✪ Gimp on the Go

Travel tips, reviews, resources, industry updates, and bulletin boards. Owner and Editor, Adam Llyod, a quadriplegic since 1983, states that his is the Internet's premier travel publication.

[www.gimponthego.com/index.htm](http://www.gimponthego.com/index.htm)

## ✪ DisabledTravelers.com

a resource dedicated to accessible travel information and provides information about businesses from around the world that specialize in disability travel. A comprehensive listing of accessible travel specialists: Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Adventure Travel Companies, Accessible Cruise Specialists, Accessible Van Rentals & Equipment, Travel Companions, Home Exchanges, and Access Guides for wheelchair users and other disabled travelers.

[www.disabledtravelers.com](http://www.disabledtravelers.com)

## ✪ Flying Wheels Travel

A division of Travel Headquarters, Inc., the first and most experienced travel agency for people with physical disabilities, chronic illness or difficulty walking.

<http://flyingwheelstravel.com>