

## Parent Finds Disability-Related Resources for Family

By Meredith Aalto & Maria Garcia

Maria Garcia of Chelsea signed up for Family SupportNet lessons in April, 2002, and found resources on the Internet that helped her family. Maria is the mother of three children, age 13, 6, and 5 years old. Her 6-year-old son has autism, is highly allergic to many foods, and has acute eczema. Because her son cannot communicate easily with teachers and caregivers, Maria wanted to find websites that could give advice to her and the people who take care of her son when she is working or going to school. She also became familiar with email and is able to email questions to professionals regarding her son's health issues.

"The websites are filled with good information and up to date allergy alerts. Many sites have Spanish versions, too. That helps me pass the information on to my son's grandmother. Some of the sites email allergy alerts on a daily basis. I am also using email more to communicate with teachers and professionals for all my family." Maria found websites on a variety of disability and allergy issues, including autism and eczema. On the next page are the allergy websites she found most helpful. (Visit the Family SupportNet Project website for more resources on autism and health issues: [www.ici.umb.edu/family](http://www.ici.umb.edu/family))

Call or email Meredith Aalto for more information about upcoming basic computer classes!

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## Family Summer Fun—Good Sources of Boston Activities

(emailed in by a FSN family member)

The **Metropolitan District Commission** (MDC) website lists family activities around the Boston area. Many of these places can be reached by public transportation.

The **Boston Parents' Paper** is a free monthly publication that you will find stacked inside the door at the children's branch of Wordsworth, inside some supermarkets, and at day care centers. It has great articles and listings of children's events in the greater Boston area for every day of the month.

Another good source of activities is the **Calendar section** of the **Boston Globe** Thursday edition.

## Children's Favorites

### The New England Aquarium

Near South Station, the aquarium has a four-story fish tank, penguins, special exhibits, a sea lion show, and otters, and launches whale watch tours in good weather from its dock (always bring a jacket).

### The Children's Museum

Educational and fun "hands-on" exhibits for kids of all ages. A favorite is the two-story climbing maze.

### The Science Museum and Omni Theater

Lines can be very long for both the museum and the Omni. You can order your tickets ahead of time via their website. Also, membership allows you to bypass lines and stop by as often as you'd like.

### The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and the Harvard Museum of Natural History

These museums are back-to-back in the same building on Divinity Ave. They are perfect for children with their creaky wooden floors, anthropological exhibits, permanent life-size stuffed animal exhibit (some of which are extinct now), famous glass flowers and dazzling mineral collection. There are also special kids' programs. The gift shops are great to browse in as well.

### Saturdays at the Sackler Museum at Harvard

Offered during the fall and spring. Programs are free and are geared to children ages six to eleven; children must be accompanied by an adult. For more info, call (617) 495-4402.

### Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum

Kids can climb aboard a working replica of one of three ships, the Beaver II, involved in the Boston Tea Party. (Closed Dec. 1 - March 1.)

### Charlestown Navy Yard

USS Constitution is the oldest commissioned naval vessel afloat in the world and there is a good museum next to it made for kids. The USS Cassin Young, refitted and modernized in the yard's dry-dock, represents the type of ship built in the yard during World War II.

### Franklin Park Zoo

A 72-acre zoo accessible by public transportation.

### Puppet Showplace Theater

A nonprofit performing arts organization committed to excellence in puppetry for all audiences located at the Brookline Village T-stop on the green line.

## Website Resources for Allergies

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease,  
National Institutes of Health

[www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/allergens/title.htm](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/allergens/title.htm)

This website provides a wide selection of possible allergy precipitators, from the various seasonal allergies to animal- and chemical-induced. There are also suggested treatments, a section on allergy research, and a page listing additional resources.

### The Food Allergy Network

[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)

This website provides regularly updated information regarding food-related allergies. There is also a selection of research reports and an application procedure for receiving food allergy alerts via email.

### National Institutes of Health

[www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/allergies.htm](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/allergies.htm)

Factsheets on different aspects of living with allergies, including food allergies, airborne allergens, and poison ivy. Also includes helpful hotline numbers and current research by state.

### Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

[www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

Statistics, FAQs (available in Spanish), quiz game for kids/teens, resource catalogs for teachers, CE for allied professionals.

### American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

[www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)

For patients, fast facts about allergies (food, latex, pet, childhood), asthma, and other respiratory conditions. Physician referral system, prescription access help. Info available in Spanish. Educational resources & links for professionals.

*(Excerpted from eHealth Connection.com <http://ehealthconnection.com>)*

*(Sent in by Maria Garcia)*

## The Walnut Street Center Has an Author!

By Meredith Aalto & Evelyn Moreno

A student who recently finished Family SupportNet Project lessons is also an author! Evelyn Moreno, a participant at the Walnut Street Center in Somerville, has written a short story. A couple of years ago, Evelyn hand-wrote the story, titled "The Farmer and His Wife." "It is a children's story. I love to write children's stories. I wrote it for my son," said Evelyn. "I even drew some pictures to go with it. Then I just kept it for a long time. After the computer lessons, I knew how to use a computer at the library and I wrote it out there. I sent it to my son's email address from my email address. I did that on Mother's Day!"

Evelyn hopes to keep writing children's stories. She hopes to be published someday. "I'll look up how to get published on the Internet." The Family SupportNet Project congratulates Evelyn on completing her lessons and writing her first book!

## Look for Upcoming Family SupportNet Project Classes in New Places!

Over the summer months, Family SupportNet Project will begin holding classes in new locations. In Brockton, the Brockton Area ARC and Family SupportNet Project instructor are gathering names of interested students. Classes will be held in local libraries as well as computer centers located in neighborhoods that are easy to access. The registration period is continuing through July 22. Classes are expected to start July 29.

The Oak Grove YMCA in Brighton has scheduled Family SupportNet Project classes on Thursday evenings beginning July 11. They are scheduled to run six weeks, 6-8 p.m. The Oak Square YMCA is located at 615 Washington Street, Brighton.

Spaulding Hospital of Boston is working with five area Boston libraries to bring them assistive technology. Family SupportNet Project will join with Spaulding Hospital to hold classes in these locations. Plans are still being developed so there are no firm dates to start those classes yet.

For information on any of the new classes and their locations, please call Family SupportNet Project instructor Meredith Aalto at 617-287-4331 or email her at [meredith.aalto@umb.edu](mailto:meredith.aalto@umb.edu).

## Visit the Family SupportNet website at [www.ici.umb.edu/family](http://www.ici.umb.edu/family)

Resources include information and links about Disability Resources, Global Communities, ESL, Healthcare, Family Activities, FSN Newsletter, Listservs and more!

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