



Winter 2006

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY at F.A.C.T.

Matthew D. Cohen is well known for his work in special education law and has extensive experience in health care and mental health law. He has been the principal litigator in a number of important special education cases, most notably the Max M. v. Thompson, Lavon M. v. Turlington, McManus v. School Dist. 39, Joey T. v. Azcoitia, District 130 v. ISBE and Cara B. cases. He is the primary or collaborating author of several amendments to the mental health and special education laws of Illinois. In 1997, he was invited to the White House to participate in the signing ceremony for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, in recognition of his participation in the process leading to passage of that legislation. Mr. Cohen has lectured nationally on a wide variety of topics, including special education and mental health and confidentiality law and has authored numerous articles on these subjects. He has represented or consulted with hospitals, residential treatment centers, community mental health centers, agencies, police social workers and private health care, social services and education practitioners. Mr. Cohen is an adjunct professor of law at Loyola University Law School.



Mr. Cohen is President-Elect of the Board of Directors of the national Children and Adults With Attention Deficit Disorders organization, as well as on the Professional Advisory Boards of the Northwest, Hyde Park and Northshore Illinois chapters of CHADD. He is a member of the Illinois Attorney General's Advisory Council on Disability Rights, where he chairs the Special Education Committee. He also is a founding board member of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, (COPAA), a national special education advocacy organization. He is the co-chair of the Long Range Planning Committee for his local elementary school. He served as a convener for the Friends of Special Education, an advocacy colloquium, located in Chicago, for many years. He is a member of the editorial boards of Ed-Law Briefing Papers, and the Disability Rights Compliance Bulletin.

While engaged in private law practice continuously since 1981, Mr. Cohen served as the Executive Director and Corporate Counsel of a large psychiatric services corporation from 1985 to 1990. Mr. Cohen received his law degree from the University of Minnesota (1981) and his bachelor's degree from Grinnell College (1977).

Family Advocacy & Community Training is proud to welcome Matt to our office for a 1 day seminar for parents on February 1 from 7-9 p.m. If you would like to register for this seminar please call Jennifer Brooks at 636.949.2425 ext. 255 to reserve your seat. Seating will be limited so you must call to insure your seat.

3rd Annual "Music of Our Hearts" Karaoke Fundraiser Update

Well, who would've thought that Red October would bring the St. Louis Cardinals to the World Series?? We certainly were not anticipating for the World Series to begin the same evening as our scheduled fundraiser and most definitely did not think that the Cards would be in the game. But....we trudged forward, made the most of the evening and hit it out of the park. We raised \$6,400.00 for the evening, raised new awareness about what the agency does in the community and a good time was had by everyone. The evening would not have been as successful without the great sound/visual effects by Gordon Montgomery, Andy Garrett for his tremendous auctioneering and BrewskeeZ for their great hospitality and flexibility. We also have to thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard to bring everything together. If you were not able to attend this year, be sure and make it to the 4th annual. It is a fun evening with a raffle, live auction and as always surprise "celebrities". We look forward to seeing you next year.

SAVE THE DATE!!

April 14th, 2007
12th Annual "Hopes and Dreams"
Dinner Gala
"An Enchanted Evening"

For more information:
call 636.949.2425 ext. 255

F.A.C.T. Holiday Schedule

The office will be closed beginning December 25th and we will return on January 2, 2007. Everyone here at F.A.C.T. wishes you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season.



New F.A.C.T. Employee

My name is Salita Gales-Dease; I am the proud mother of 3 beautiful children. My oldest has a diagnosis of ADD as well as Psychosis NOS. As a caring parent I have struggled long and hard for understanding of parents rights in the areas of IEP's and also Mental Illness, and the obstacles/stigmas associated with the illness, what resources/services are available as well as what's in the best interest of my child.

After 10 years of living with a cloudy overcast, we finally found a ray of sunshine. Now I have a new mission in life, to ensure that all families receive adequate information as well as support to become better advocates for what is in the best interest of their child/children.

As a parent partner I will continue to be as compassionate for all children and families as though they are my children or family. I could not ask for a better bunch of co-workers to work with in my new found career.

No Hunger Holiday

The program began 16 years ago by Frank & Kathy Conard with the intention to make Thanksgiving Day in St. Charles County a “No Hunger Holiday” for our community. Community agencies assist in identifying the families in need. Each family is provided with the necessary food to prepare a complete Thanksgiving dinner, in their own home with their family. This project is funded by the Harvester Knights of Columbus with contributions from caring citizens, businesses and organizations. The first year 120 families were fed; today over 1200 families were helped. This year more than 30 agencies were involved; F.A.C.T. distributed 70 dinners to families in our PARTNERship with Families Program which is almost double from 2005. A huge thanks to Frank & Kathy Conard and Knights of Columbus.

Harmon Foundation

We are very pleased and proud to have been awarded a Harmon Foundation grant for 2007. The grant will be used to further the education of our staff. It is essential that we have all of the latest information to better serve our customers. It has been difficult to afford this education in the past. Lynn Morrell, a member of the Harmon Foundation Board, presented the check and shared the wonderful news with staff on November 30, 2006. We look forward to sharing our new found knowledge in working with the children and families of St. Charles County with developmental disabilities and/or serious emotional disorders.

Thanks again for the very generous opportunity afforded to us through the Harmon Foundation!



2006 Family PARTNERship Celebration

PWF families are invited for a night out to celebrate all that the program has done for their families as well as socialize with others. A nice sit-down dinner is provided to 2 significant adults in the child’s life while the child and their siblings have dinner and enjoy a movie at the cinema. Respite care is provided so the adults can relax knowing their children are in safe and experienced hands. This is an opportunity for the families to fully participate in a community activity. As stresses increase for families they sometimes can lose that connection with extended family and community supports. It is our hope that this program meets one of the family’s life domains such as spiritual, family, social, community etc. This year on December 7th, the adults enjoyed a meal at Grappa Grill while the kids had pizza and watched a movie at Wehrenberg. We hope everyone had a great evening; we all enjoy spending the time with your families and look forward to seeing you next year.



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The mission of Family Advocacy & Community Training is to enhance the opportunities and quality of life for children and youth with disabilities.

Consider making a difference in the life a child with disabilities by making your tax deductible contribution.

F.A.C.T. is funded by the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board and The Children and Family Services Authority Board of St. Charles County

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Executive Director's Corner

The holidays can be full of joy but they can also be an immense challenge. There are a lot of demands on a typical family at the holidays in terms of time, commitments and the tradition of giving. For families that have unusual or difficult circumstances to add to the list it can become overwhelming. My hope for each of you is that you can see through these challenges and simplify your holidays so you can celebrate YOUR family and the traditions that bring you comfort and joy.

Denise Gould

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM F.A.C.T.