



Networker

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Rhode Island and Nebraska - A "Model" Friendship

Rhode Island and Nebraska may not seem to have very much in common. But, this summer RIPIN and the RI Department of Health (DOH) began a strong relationship between these two very different places through Rhode Island's **Pediatric Practice Enhancement Project (PPEP)**.



Shavon Smith, RIPIN Medical Homes Manager; Amy Gibson, MS, RN, Boys Town Institute for Child Health Improvement; Nina Baker, Health Information Coordinator, Parent Training Information Nebraska and Family Voices; Paula Reid, RIPIN Medical Homes Manager; Michelle Mertz, Grant Project Manager, Boys Town Institute for Child Health Improvement; and Laura Jones, RIPIN Director of Department of Health Programs

Boy's Town Institute for Child Health Improvement in Nebraska asked RIPIN and DOH to help create a similar program for their own state after attending the Association of Maternal & Child Health Program Conference, where they learned about the success and innovation of RI's PPEP.

"They wanted a model similar to ours where Resource Specialists, who are parents of children with special healthcare needs, offer support to other families in pediatric offices," explains **Lisa Schaffran, Associate Director at RIPIN**. "We were happy to assist Boys Town and Nebraska's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center in implementing their program."

Lisa and Deb Garneau, Chief of the Office of Special Healthcare Needs at the RI Department of Health went to Nebraska to present the PPEP Model at a day-long Medical Home Learning Collaborative, and representatives from Boys Town and Nebraska PTI also visited Rhode Island to see first-hand the work PPEP Resource Specialists do each day with families.

"Sharing our knowledge, resources, successes, and challenges gave the Nebraska team the tools, confidence and template to move forward," adds Lisa.

As of September 1st, the Nebraska program is up and running with Parent Resource Specialists in two pediatric offices. RIPIN and DOH will continue to help and consult with them as well as other states that have expressed an interest in the program.

RIPIN's own Parent Consultant / Resource Specialist program continues to flourish. Currently, there are 45 sites across Rhode Island with parents, family members and peers working as Resource Specialists.

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Now you can be a Fan of RIPIN on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and receive lots of great tips for you and your family.

It's easy! Just go to www.ripin.org and click on the facebook/twitter icon in the upper right corner and say you "like" RIPIN.

You can also "like" RIPIN by going on your own facebook account and search **RI Parent Info Network**.

You'll get updates about RIPIN events, important information on health, wellness and education in Rhode Island and great parenting tips too.

Go to www.ripin.org and join us today!



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RIPIN Networker

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Writer and Graphic Designer

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1210 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920
401.270.0101 401.464.3399
www.ripin.org info@ripin.org

A Letter From the Executive Director

Matthew Cox



Dear friends and supporters of RIPIN,

As RIPIN grows and changes to meet the needs of families and people across the Ocean State, so too grows our need for office and training space. During the dog days of August RIPIN expanded our office in Cranston and you can now find us on both the first and second floors of the Abacus Building off Pontiac Avenue. I have always dreaded moving, but RIPIN staff thrive on change, particularly if it involves getting new neighbors, an office with a window, or new accommodations for visitors. Our new space offers all of that and more. The second floor is also where you'll find our Family Leadership Development Institute.

I am also very pleased to share that on September 15th we hired employee #100! Amongst our newest employees are:

Anne Fartura, Parent Involvement Coordinator, East Bay
Emily Garthee, Statewide Parent Involvement Specialist
Margaret Greene-Bromell, Parent Consultant at Meeting Street
Beth Lamarre, Community Health Workers Association
Marguerite McCalsky, Human Resources Coordinator
Kelly McCorkle, Family Resource Specialist, Hasbro Children's Hospital
Monique Packer, Statewide Parent Mentor
Pam Petrarca, Parent Involvement Specialist for Military Families
Jessica Simes, Family Resource Specialist, Birth Defects program at the RI Dept of Health

We are thrilled to welcome you to RIPIN and hope that our readers have the opportunity to meet and work with you soon.

I am also pleased to congratulate and thank members of the RIPIN Board of Directors who continue to serve us so well. During our annual meeting in July the following slate of officers were elected: Max Arias, Chair; Kathleen DiChiara, Vice Chair; Stephen A. Furtado, Treasurer; and Rebecca Kislak Brown, Esq., Secretary. I look forward to our continued partnership in 2011.

In closing, I also want to congratulate all of our staff, board, community partners, and parent leaders who have helped make the RIPIN model of peer-to-peer support so successful. As noted in the cover article in this newsletter, cities and states from across the US are looking to RIPIN and Rhode Island for successful models of family engagement. We are very pleased to have had a hand in extending this model for the benefit of families in Nebraska and Washington, D.C. and many others.

In partnership,

Matthew B. Cox
Executive Director

Fall is the perfect time of year to support RIPIN through workplace giving. There are a number of ways you can support RIPIN through workplace giving including the United Way, Fund for Community Progress and SECA. Just write "RIPIN" in the space for where you'd like your donation to go.

Thank you for supporting RIPIN!



A Survey of RIPIN Networker Readers

After surveying RIPIN Networker readers over the last few issues, we've found readers want more parent tips and family stories as well as more information about RIPIN workshops.

Now in each issue we'll focus on how a RIPIN workshop has helped a participant. Did they learn something new? Did they use the information to help themselves or their family?

And also, we'll have a family success story submitted by a RIPIN Resource Specialist working out in the community. How did RIPIN help a family and make a difference in their lives?

To all our survey respondents ... thank you for your feedback! Bringing you the information, support and resources you need is our goal and why we are here.

Thank You
for your
feedback!

Become a Parents as Teachers (PAT) Family Today!

PAT program is currently accepting new families to participate. The best part is that it's free, and there are only a few requirements:

You must:

1. **Have a child under age 5**
2. **Have a desire to learn about your child's development**
3. **Want to have fun with your child, and add learning to your daily family life!**

RIPIN's nationally certified Parent Educators come to your home and help you make the most of your child's early learning years through play. Educators have fun activities to share with you and your child, and important information about child development.

PAT services also includes play-groups for socializing, developmental screenings, access to other community resources, and support for the child when they transition to kindergarten.

Parents as Teachers is a highly recognized nationally tested curriculum with proven results all across the country.

Contact Tammy Russo for more information at 401.270.0101 x116 or russo@ripin.org

“ a RIPIN Family Story

RIPIN Resource Specialists work with families and individuals every day throughout Rhode Island. Here's just one of many stories that shows how one call at the right time can help an overwhelmed parent realize she may need to make more time for herself, if she is going to be able to be the best mom for her children...

As a RIPIN Resource Specialist,

I help a lot of families through rough patches with their children. I help them find the resources they need, get them moving forward and then they are on their way. But, I still check in once in a while to see how they're doing. When I called one particular mom, she said she was feeling completely overwhelmed dealing with her child with autism and her typically developing child as well.



I convinced her to check out a support group with a guest speaker whom I'd heard was really good. We ended up going together. The guest speaker was a professional who had a lot of great practical information and funny stories about her children and her life. We laughed so hard that we both left feeling good. Sometimes when families face many challenges each day, they can become isolated, forget to laugh or have any fun at all. This little night out lifted the mom I was working with (and me too!)

I talked to her a couple weeks later and she said she joined a local gym to get out more. To me, this was huge step forward. It's important to replenish our own spirit and do enjoyable things for ourselves, if we want to be there emotionally and physically for our kids ... especially children with special needs who require, and deserve, so much from us.

— Resource Specialist in Providence

7th Annual Family Fun Day — *a perfect day for* Fun & Sun!

Children, youth and individuals with special health care needs and their families enjoyed a perfect day of summer fun at this year's annual Family Fun Day.

Getting healthy and staying that way was the theme of this year's event. Children and adults alike participated in lots of fun fitness activities including the limbo, aerobics, dancing, martial arts, bouncy balls, obstacle course, and more.

They also munched on healthy snacks and fruits - all while receiving important information about resources available to them in Rhode Island.



Meet RIPIN Intern Alysha ... Students Learn "on the Job" at RIPIN



This year RIPIN collaborated with the Rhode Island Transition Academy (RITA) to provide student internships for young people ready to learn important job skills as they enter the workforce.

RIPIN interns have assisted with data entry, reception desk duties, computer technology, and staffing of events.

Alysha DiBiasio was one of the students interning with RIPIN this summer. She helped with clerical duties such as answering the phones, workshop material preparation and special projects.

"Alysha was an asset to RIPIN this summer," said [Linda McMullen, Director of Administration](#). "With her assistance, we were able to complete all of our summer projects, and get up to date for the busy fall season."

Alysha will be back this fall to continue her internship, and gain more experience so she's ready for the world of work in the future!

Your Child & No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act requires states to set high standards for student achievement. The amount of improvement needed each year to meet educational goals is called **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**.

The goal is that all students be proficient in English language arts, science and math. In Rhode Island, proficiency is measured by the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) exams.

Each school receives a rating based on the scores. Parents should receive a School Report Card and be invited to a School Report Night every year to find out how their child's school is performing. If your child's school does not make AYP for two or more years, students may be eligible for educational options.

School Choice: If your child's school does not make AYP for two or more years in a row, parents have the right to send their child to another school. The new school must not be in need of improvement and must have space available. Parents are notified if their child is eligible for transfer, but parents should consider many factors before taking

advantage of this option, including how well their child is doing at the current school. Talking to your child's teacher is a good place to start.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES): Your child may be eligible for SES if the school has failed to meet AYP for two or more years and there is no eligible school to transfer to or you choose not to transfer your child. Your child must also qualify for free or reduced lunch and be educationally needy. Parents select a provider from an approved list.

To get more information on options available, call the **RIPIN Resource Center** at 401.270.0101



October is Parent Involvement Month in RI

For the 3rd year in a row, RIPIN is celebrating Parent Involvement during the entire month of October with our Parent Involvement Calendar.

More than 20,000 copies have been distributed to schools all over Rhode Island. The calendar (in English and Spanish) offers tips and activities for families to have fun together and for parents to get more involved in their children's lives.

For a downloadable copy of the calendar, go to www.ripin.org

just a couple of Tips

- At dinner, have family members talk about one new thing they learned today.
- When your child brings home school work, focus on what's right before noting what is wrong.
 - Read a book about your town today!
 - With your child, make a chart of the birds you see outside the window - by type of bird and time of day.

RIPIN NEWS..... and information

RIPIN & Friends at Ironman Triathlon



Volunteers:
Norma Seller and
Dwight Annese,
New York Life

Once again, RIPIN volunteers were out in force at the Ironman Triathlon in July. RIPIN staff and families manned the streets to keep the runners on course as they made their way to the finish line in Providence. A big thank you to our partners at New York Life and the Rotary Club of Chariho. The addition of their 20 volunteers enabled RIPIN to receive a \$1,000 grant from the Ironman Triathlon organization.

« Backpacks for Back to School



RIPIN participated in Rhode Island's 11th Annual Back to School Celebration in August. RIPIN staff passed out information at 11 schools and community centers as well as helped stuff backpacks full of school supplies for more than 20,000 students in need.

RIPIN Award Winner Barbara Torres

RIPIN is pleased to congratulate staff member **Barbara Torres** who was selected by her colleagues for RIPIN's



2010 Millie Hillman Award. Barbara was nominated because of her dedication to RI families as well as to RIPIN's mission to assist all Rhode Islanders achieve their goals. In her

six years at RIPIN, Barbara has worked as Asthma Resource Specialist, Resource Center Specialist, Support Group Facilitator, Family Voices Coordinator, and now as Medical Homes Supervisor.

Congrats Barbara!

Do YOU have Questions?

I don't think my son's school is meeting his needs ... What can I do?

Where can I get more support for my child's asthma?

Can the school suspend my daughter, even if I don't agree?

How do I apply for medical assistance for my child?

The RIPIN Resource Center can Help you!

Trained Professionals in RIPIN's Resource Center are here to answer your questions and steer you in the right direction in the areas of education, health and community resources in Rhode Island.

RIPIN's trained Resource Specialists can help you find the solution about **school issues, parent involvement, special education rights, housing, utility assistance, health care, and other community supports.**

Call the RIPIN Resource Center at [401.270.0101](tel:401.270.0101) or [800.464.3399](tel:800.464.3399) Monday through Friday, 8:30 am-4:30 pm or email at info@ripin.org.

Participate in a RIPIN Workshop *and start the school year off right!*



RIPIN invites you to learn something new with us this year at one of our Fall Workshops. Visit us online at www.ripin.org and click on Workshop Schedule where you can view our expanded workshop schedule and register for a workshop.

At RIPIN, there's a workshop to fit every stage of your family's life. This summer we debuted our Early Childhood Workshop Series with great success. Four workshops were held for parents, caregivers and professionals working with children ages birth to five.

Join us this Fall for another **Early Childhood Workshop Series**.

- Oct. 13: Transition from EI
- Nov. 3: Successful IEP Meeting

- Nov. 10: Ready for Kindergarten
- Nov. 17: Treats your Tots Will Love

RIPIN workshops are always free to families, and childcare is available for the Early Childhood Series.

Visit www.ripin.org, check out our schedule and learn something new today!

“My Voice Really Matters!” — Public Policy 101 Workshop



Sue Bishop, Warwick Policy 101 Workshop Participant

Mom of three children: ages 19, 14 and 10

Community Volunteer

Why Sue came to Public Policy 101 at RIPIN:

Sue had an interest in testifying at the Rhode Island State House, but wanted to be more comfortable speaking publicly.

What did she learn:

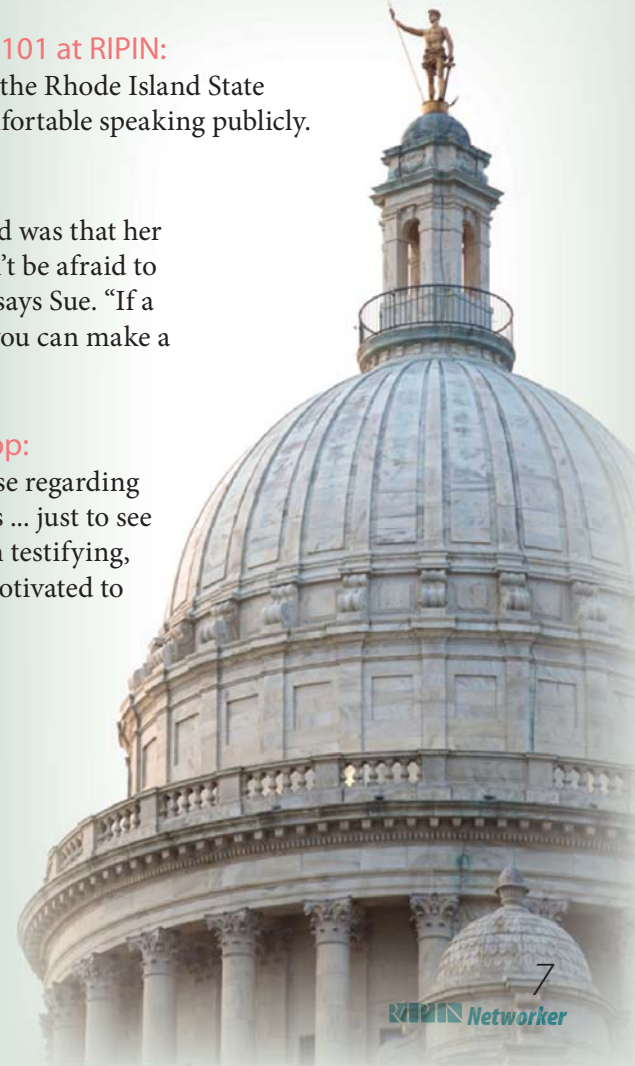
The most important thing Sue says she learned was that her voice really matters. “I realized that I shouldn’t be afraid to express my opinions to our elected officials,” says Sue. “If a cause is important to you, speak up because you can make a difference.”

What did she do after the workshop:

Sue went to a hearing at the State House regarding autism treatments and private insurers ... just to see what it was like. She hadn’t planned on testifying, but as she listened to others she was motivated to speak up.

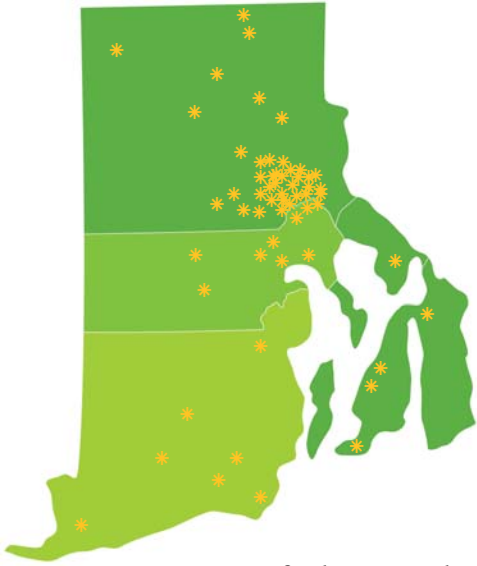
What’s next:

Sue says she’d definitely come to another RIPIN workshop, and that Public Policy 101 gave her the confidence to testify and she plans on doing it again real soon. Sue added with a laugh, “next time, I will prepare some notes ahead of time!”



Did you Know RIPIN

has Resource Specialists in all parts of Rhode Island?



You can find a trained specialist in Woonsocket, Westerly and everywhere in between...

Get the Latest Resources & Become a Family Leader with FLDI!



Family Leadership Development Institute (FLDI)

The Family Leadership Development Institute (FLDI), which debuted this past spring, is up and moving forward with new exciting opportunities for Fall.

Scheduling of a series of Community Information Sessions is currently underway. The full-day sessions offer the latest information and resources available to Rhode Islanders including health and education information for individuals with disabilities.

The target audience for the sessions is anyone supporting families in the community including:

- family liaisons
- peer mentors
- resource specialists

- community health workers
- parent consultants
- peer navigators

Deb Belanger, Training and Professional Development Manager, explains that RIPIN is excited to be leading this new training endeavor. "It's a great opportunity for training and professional development for anyone working with families in Rhode Island," says Deb. "If you missed any of the sessions, we plan to continue these information sharing sessions throughout the year."

To learn more about the daily agenda of presentations or to register online for October sessions, visit www.ripin.org/fldi.

