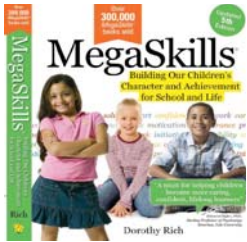


Networker

visit online at
www.ripin.org

Introducing...

the *MegaSkills National Education Center* at RIPIN



RIPIN is thrilled to announce that on July 1st we became the **MegaSkills National Education Center!** MegaSkills is an evidence-based training series for parents and educators that help them impart the skills, qualities, and behaviors that help a child's achievement in school and in life.



Members of the MegaSkills Team at RIPIN include (from left to right): Kristin Campbell, Deb Meiklejohn, Dr. Harriett Stonehill, along with Matthew Cox, RIPIN's Executive Director.

Developed more than 20 years ago by Dr. Dorothy Rich at the Home and School Institute in Washington, DC, the MegaSkills curriculum is used by more than 4,000 schools and community organizations across the US. RIPIN thanks the Rich Family Trust, and the late Dr. Rich's daughters Rebecca and Jessica for their support and partnership to ensure that Dorothy's legacy of research and quality programming will live on.

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Join Us to Celebrate *Twenty Years of Excellence*

September 15, 2011
Kirkbrae Country Club
Lincoln, Rhode Island
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Join the RIPIN Family as we celebrate 20 years of excellence through education, advocacy, and empowerment! Enjoy an elegant dinner, signature wines from Wines & More of Rhode Island, and an exciting range of auction items to tempt all of our guests. Meet the Founders of RIPIN, and current leaders of our board and staff. Reminisce with old friends and make new ones!

Tickets - \$70 single
\$120 for two
\$600 for table of 10

For more information & tickets please contact Linda McMullen at 401.270.0101 x104
mcmullen@ripin.org



Board of Directors 2011

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A Letter From the Executive Director

Matthew Cox



Dear friends and supporters of RIPIN,

Inform – Support – Educate – Advocate – Empower: These are the basic elements of our mission that have defined RIPIN since our founding as a grant-funded, state-wide organization 20 years ago. As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary this year we have much to be proud of and thankful for: the vision of our Founders, the commitment of our Board, our partnerships in the community, the skill and excellent work of our staff, and especially the success of our service model, which is recognized nationally as best practice. As a member of the extended

RIPIN family we hope you will celebrate with us: attend a workshop or training, volunteer, donate, or attend our 20th Anniversary Celebration on September 15th!

In this edition of the Networker, you'll read about many recent events that empowered parents and families, family-serving professionals, students, and members of the community. You'll also read about the pilot of our Family Leadership 101 Training, part of the Family Leadership Development Institute, the 7th Annual Partnerships Conference, 3rd Annual Dare to Dream Conference, and our 1st Annual Walk to Stop Bullying in RI.

We are also thrilled to announce that on July 1st, RIPIN became the MegaSkills National Education Center! MegaSkills is a training series for parents and educators that helps them impart the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that help determine a child's achievement. The workshop series shows parents how they can work with their child at home to directly impact their academic success through developing skills needed in school and in life. Used by more than 4,000 schools and community organizations across the US, Mega Skills is a great way to effectively engage parents and educators. We hope to not only train families and educators, but also train other trainers to increase the capacity to reach more families. (See article on pages 1 and 3.)

Last, I am very pleased to congratulate the new Officers of the RIPIN Board of Directors: Kathleen DiChiara, Chair; Rebecca Kislak, Esq., Vice Chair; Louis Simon, CPA, MST, Treasurer; and Dale Longworth, Secretary. Their enduring commitment to our work is key to our successes past, present, and future. It is also my pleasure to welcome two new members to the RIPIN Board of Directors: Ammala Douangsavanh and Anthony Fiano. Their energy and passion will be terrific additions to our team!

In partnership,

Matthew B. Cox
Executive Director



RIPIN is pleased to introduce two new members to our Board of Directors:
**Ammala Douangsavanh and
Anthony Fiano**

RI Students Dare to Dream at Leadership Conference

600 high school and middle school students from all over Rhode Island gathered together at the University of Rhode Island in May for the 3rd Annual Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conference.

This was Rhode Island's largest Dare to Dream Conference to date, with students experiencing a wide variety of sessions and speakers at three buildings on the URI campus. There were 35 workshop options to choose from - all created for students by students. Topics ranged from *Steps to a Successful College Experience*, *Taking Charge of Your Finances*, to *Finding Your Voice*, and *Creating a Dare to Dream Club at Your School*.

According to Deb Golding, Adolescent Health Transition Coordinator, the keynote speaker Jeff Yalden, and the closing presenters, *The Spectrum Unplugged*, made quite an impact on students and faculty.



"Jeff Yalden's use of humor and his own life story really brought home his message of self-respect and the importance of making good choices. The Dare to Dream students related to presenters from The Spectrum Unplugged that also used humor to talk about autism and their lives.

It was a very inspirational and empowering day!

*-Deb Golding, Adolescent Health Transition Coordinator
RIPIN/ RI Department of Health*



MegaSkills

Continued from page 3

We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Harriett Stonehill to our team. As the former director of the Home and School Institute in Washington, DC (home to MegaSkills for more than 20 years), Harriett will join us as Senior Consultant for MegaSkills. Her knowledge, experience, and relationships across the country and internationally will be invaluable to our work. Welcome! Dr. Stonehill is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of the District of Columbia and an accomplished author, educator, and administrator.

For more information about [MegaSkills](#) trainings, publications, and other materials, please contact [Deb Meiklejohn](#) at 401-270-0101 x 108 or meiklejohn@ripin.org

MegaSkills are our children's inner engines of learning:

Confidence
Motivation
Effort
Responsibility
Initiative
Perseverance
Caring
Teamwork
Common Sense
Problem Solving
Focus

Create a Dare to Dream Club at Your School!



RIPIN and the RI Department of Health are hoping students will keep on reaching for their dreams throughout the school year by creating Dare to Dream Clubs at their schools. A packet with all the information schools need is available at RI Department of Health. To learn more about how to bring this leadership, empowerment and self advocacy club to your school, contact Deb Golding at deb.golding@health.ri.gov or 401.222.5954.

Save the Date...



1st ANNUAL Walk to STOP BULLYING! RIPIN & Partners WALK to STOP BULLYING!

On a misty morning at Roger Williams Park in Providence, RIPIN and more than 400 community members walked together in solidarity to end bullying in the Ocean State at the 1st Annual Walk to STOP Bullying.

Matthew Cox, Executive Director at RIPIN, believes that it is the responsibility of groups like RIPIN to create awareness, come together and develop tools to help combat bullying in Rhode Island. "Walks and events like this are an important way to expose this problem to the light of day, and show the effects of bullying - how it can destroy lives. As a community, we can make a difference and promote positive change for the well being of all our children."

RIPIN would like to thank everyone who participated on this special morning including: Channel 6 and Mark Curtis, Morning News Anchor and Master of Ceremonies at the Walk; the 50 community sponsors; student groups; organizations that raised money, and of course everyone who told their story and shared their own experiences at the Walk. Together we raised nearly \$20,000. Proceeds from the walk will be given to school and community groups.

To apply go to <http://www.ripin.org/pdfs/bullyingminigrantapplication.pdf>



Rhode Island 5th Graders Making a Difference!

Project Citizen is a national program that challenges middle school students across the country to create change in their school communities by coming together as a group around an important issue.

This year RIPIN proudly played a role in two 5th grade Project Citizen civics projects: *Cyberbullying Awareness* at Rhodes Elementary in Cranston and *A More Welcoming School* at Deering Middle School in West Warwick (see page 8 of this publication for more information about the project at Deering Middle School).

RIPIN offered support and assistance to both 5th grade classes as they looked at a problem, created new school polices and developed an action plan. Rhodes Elementary participated in RIPIN's Walk to STOP Bullying. The fifth grade class raised money at their school, created bullying awareness T-shirts, developed a website, and led a school assembly about cyberbullying.



5th graders from Ms. Theresa Manera's class at Edward S. Rhodes Elementary School present a check to Matthew Cox, RIPIN's Executive Director, at May 21st Walk to STOP Bullying. Money raised will go towards mini-grants for bullying awareness programs.

2011 Partnerships Conference *A Focus on Health Care Reform*

At the 8th Annual Partnerships Conference, over 250 families of children with special health care needs and the professionals working with them came out to learn about the impact of Health Care Reform on Rhode Island children and youth with disabilities.

Congressman Jim Langevin opened the day by discussing his work in Washington regarding health care reform and on behalf of people with disabilities. Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts presented about the current health care situation in Rhode Island. Two panels of national and state experts were also on hand to discuss health care in detail and field questions from the audience.

The information-packed event included an exhibit area made up of over 50 local and national agencies offering information about services and options for all ages - from infancy to post-high school.

Julie and Katie Beckett, the mother and daughter behind the Katie Beckett Medicaid provision, capped off the day with an inspiring and poignant presentation of Katie's journey from a child with significant medical needs to an independent young woman, living with significant medical needs.

More than 20 years ago the Beckett family successfully petitioned the government to help them care for Katie at home instead of in an institution, leading to the creation of the Katie Beckett Provision in Medicaid which has helped thousands of families. Before the Katie Beckett eligibility, there was no federal assistance for families choosing to care for children with complex disabilities at home, and institutional care was the only option. *Thank you, Katie Beckett!*



Be a Support Group Leader - We Can Show YOU How!

If you'd like to start your own support group or find out how to become a support group leader, join **Family Voices** at RIPIN for a **Support Group Facilitator Training** on Tuesday, August 23, 2011 from 9:30 am - 2:30 p.m.

Facilitating a support group is a great way to connect with families and the professionals who work with them. This training will provide a comprehensive look at how to start, maintain and expand parent support groups.

**To learn more, please contact :
Tara Townsend, Family Support Coordinator, at
townsend@ripin.org or 401.270.0101 x 139**



RIPIN News & Information

■ **Involvement at Schools Goes Beyond the Bake Sale**

At RIPIN's 4th Semi-annual Parent Involvement Summit, nationally known Harvard Researcher Dr. Karen Mapp challenged educators and parents to create strong school / home partnerships throughout the state.

■ **RIPIN Parent Consultant Joins the Katie Beckett Medicaid Unit**

Carla Russo (pictured at left) RIPIN's new Parent Consultant at the Katie Beckett Unit at the RI Department of Human Services, meets the actual Katie Beckett (right) for whom the federal Medicaid provision is named. Katie and her mother Julie visited RI DHS the day after speaking at RIPIN's Partnerships Conference. Carla offers support and resources to families.



■ **Awarded by the Cranston School District**

Deb Meiklejohn (pictured at right), Parent Information Resource Center Director (PIRC) and Kristin Campbell (pictured on left), Parent Involvement Coordinator, received Community Partner Awards from the Cranston Family Center and Child Opportunity Zone (COZ), which offers school linked services to families in Cranston.

■ **Awarded by the Providence Transition Academy**

Joanna Cruz, Special Education Parent Involvement Coordinator for Providence, recently accepted a certificate of appreciation on behalf of RIPIN as a community based partner by the Providence Transition Academy. RIPIN was recognized for our support of students in gaining work experience and developing employment skills. In her role at RIPIN, Joanna works closely with the her Regional Transition Coordinators and Transition Advisory Committees.



■ **Awarded by West Bay Collaborative Transition & Vocational Services**

Alan Birch (center), RIPIN's Technology Coordinator, recently accepted an award on behalf of RIPIN from the RI Transition Academy at CCRI and West Bay Collaborative Transition and Vocational Services for RIPIN's commitment to provide meaningful and inclusive opportunities in the community for students. Alan is pictured with our interns who assisted RIPIN staff members with numerous projects this year.

■ **Awarded by Providence Business News**

RIPIN's Executive Board Treasurer, Louis J. Simon, CPA, MST, of Sullivan & Company CPAs LLP, was recently named one of 2011 40 Under 40 by Providence Business News for his success in business and commitment to social change.



Do YOU have Questions?

The RIPIN Resource Center is here to help you all year long!

Our trained Resource Specialists can help answer questions about:

- School issues
- Special education rights
- Finding day care
- Health care

We can also help you find resources for housing, utilities, and other community supports.

Call the RIPIN Resource Center,
Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
401.270.0101 800.464.3399
or email questions at info@ripin.org



The RIPIN Resource Center can **Help** you!

Parent Consultants
are available to assist **YOU**
across **RI!**



RIPIN is pleased to welcome **Lynne Simmons** to the Early Intervention (EI) Parent Consultant program. Lynne will be working with families at the **James L. Maher Center** in Newport.



RIPIN has teamed up with **Women and Infants Hospital** to expand the Pediatric Practice Enhancement Project (PEPP) to include parent consultants in three areas of the hospital. Parent consultants are available to assist families in the **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the Neonatal Follow-Up Clinic, and the Hearing Assessment Program**. We are pleased to introduce **Rosalie Morretti** as the parent consultant of the Hearing Assessment Program. Rosalie is available to support families of children recently diagnosed with hearing loss.



Upcoming Events

- **20 Years of Excellence Fundraiser**
September 15, 2011
6:00 - 9 :00 pm
Kirkbrae Country Club, Lincoln, RI
Celebrate RIPIN's 20 year anniversary at Kirkbrae Country Club. It will be an evening of fine dining, auctions and a celebration of RIPIN's 20 years of service to Rhode Islanders.
- **Special Education Advisory Network (SEAN) Fall Meeting**
November 17, 2011
Chelo's, 2225 Post Road, Warwick, RI
SEAN is a network of parent leaders from Rhode Island school districts' local special education advisory committees, the RI Special Education Advisory Committee, and representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Education. These stakeholders meet together to map out future goals and share ideas to improve outcomes for students with disabilities across our state.
- **Transition 101 for Parents**
December 2nd, 2011
Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI
This conference is intended as an introduction to the transition to adulthood process for students in Rhode Island schools. This conference is for families of students age 14 – 21 with disabilities who are entering or involved in transition.
- **8th Annual College Planning Forum**
March 2012
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Providence College Campus, Providence, RI
Developed for high school students with disabilities, 504 plans and other challenges, parents and high school personnel, this forum puts students on the road to success by informing them of supports available at the college level.
- **RIPIN Family/Professionals Partnerships Conference**
April 25, 2012
1:00 - 7:00 pm
The Crowne Plaza, Warwick, RI
This conference provides information and educates families and professionals on the available programs in Rhode Island for children with special health care needs. Families and professionals are able to share resources and work together to improve outcomes for children.
- **2nd Annual Walk the Walk to Stop Bullying in Rhode Island**
May 5, 2012
9:00 am -noon
Roger Williams Park, Providence , RI
Join RIPIN to raise awareness about bullying in our state. Everyone can participate - families, students, friends, parent/teacher groups, office groups, youth groups and faith based groups are welcome to attend.
- **4th Annual Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conference**
May 22, 2012
University of Rhode Island Campus, Kingston, RI
Middle school and high school students are invited to this youth leadership conference. Youth are empowered to become leaders and share their experiences in fun and engaging ways. If you would like more information about programming or how to become a presenter, please contact Deb Golding at 401.222.5954 or via email at deb.golding@health.ri.gov.

RIPIN's Commitment to FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

A new twist on *Family Friendly Assessments*

From West Warwick to Westerly

For their Project Citizen assignment, fifth graders in Mrs. Kershaw's class at Deering Middle School in **West Warwick** wanted to find out how welcoming their school was for students and visitors. This past school year was the first time fifth graders joined the middle school community. Mrs. Kershaw's class utilized RIPIN's Family Friendly Assessment to take a closer look at their school. The class surveyed 75% of the student body at Deering. The class also took a tour of the building looking for evidence of a friendly atmosphere.

After presenting their findings to district administrator Mr. Townsend, the class made an action plan. Some of the ideas for change included planting a community garden, adding new carpet to the foyer, and hanging directional signs for key areas like the nurse's office. Because of the class's efforts, plans have begun to start the garden in the fall and new carpeting will be installed this summer.



Top: RIPIN's Kristin Campbell leads Mrs. Kershaw's fifth grade class (pictured above) through the family friendly assessment at Deering Middle School in West Warwick.



Westerly Public Schools' Mary Kay Patton displays new signage for visitor parking at State Street Elementary School.

A school team at State Street Elementary School in **Westerly** utilized the Family Friendly Assessment to enhance their school environment. By looking at their school's physical plant, the team developed an action plan to address areas of need. School improvements have already been completed, including: new signs for the main office area, a sign on the main door specifying school hours, new visitor parking signage, and signs were added to each hallway specifying classrooms.

For more information on how RIPIN can help your school or organization with **family engagement** efforts, please contact **Deb Meiklejohn** at meiklejohn@ripin.org or 401.270.0101 x108

RIPIN hosts the first

PTO University

for Parent Teacher Organization Leaders



On June 6th, in conjunction with the Cranston Child Opportunity Zone (COZ), RIPIN hosted parent group leaders from Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) in Cranston Schools. As part of the programming, parent leaders were given individualized training on their specific positions. Attendees developed leadership skills, learned techniques on running effective meetings, and gained tips on how to collaborate with members of the school community.

Attendees enjoyed networking with other parent leaders from their district and learned new strategies from each other to bring to their respective schools. Asst. Superintendent Judith Lundsten, pictured at left, recognized parent leaders for their participation and commitment to assisting in student success.

RIPIN will host the next **PTO University** in two 2 1/2 hour sessions on Mondays this fall on **September 26th** and **October 3rd** from 6-8:30 pm at RIPIN.

To register please contact

Deb Meiklejohn at meiklejohn@ripin.org or 401.270.0101 x108



Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Training for Parent Leaders

In the fall, school districts will have the opportunity to build their SEAC groups and train parent leaders at RIPIN's SEAC Strategies for Success: Building Special Education Advisory Committees.

The 15 hour training curriculum includes recruiting and retaining members, developing a mission, disseminating information, leadership, and more. RIPIN's Parent and Training Information Center (PTIC) has provided technical assistance such as this to districts for almost 20 years. "Parent involvement and parent/professional collaboration have long been recognized as key factors in improving outcomes for students with disabilities," explains Deb Belanger, Training and Professional Development Manager. "



"This training is the perfect way to build a districts' current parent leaders as well as increase new parent involvement on SEAC committees."

***- Deb Belanger, Training and Professional Development Manager
RIPIN***

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

Peer to Peer Support at RIPIN

RIPIN has several successful programs that provide peer support services throughout Rhode Island. Our programs are recognized locally and nationally for setting high standards for parent/individual engagement and involvement, and parent/individual support in health and education.

Pediatric Practice Enhancement Program (PPEP)



In October, 2010, Title V of the Social Security Act celebrated its 75th Anniversary in Washington, DC with a grand celebration. Rhode Island's Pediatric Practice Enhancement Project (PPEP) was highlighted as one of the most successful and innovative programs nationwide. The Maternal and Child Health Bureau commissioned a "digital story" by the Catalyst Center of Health Care Financing to recognize PPEP's success and bring its story to life.

Visit RIPIN's website to view this wonderful video that highlights partnerships and the positive impact of peer support in delivering high quality family-centered care. We are proud that RIPIN's Parent Consultants are highlighted throughout the video.

Visit

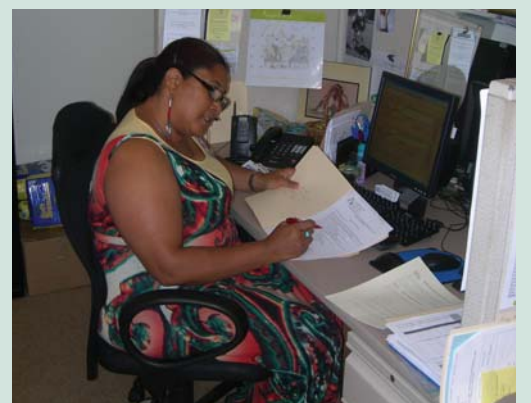
<http://www.ripin.org/parentconsultant.html>

Communities of Care Program : *New Partnerships and Success for Members*

The Communities of Care (CoC) Program was launched less than 12 months ago, but this new Department of Human Services (DHS) initiative is already showing great success. Over 6000 Medicaid members have benefited from the CoC program that offers intensive clinical and social care management for 90 days, in an effort to assist members to proactively seek health care and stay healthy. On June 1, 2011, RIPIN contracted directly with RI's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI (NHPRI) and United Health Care (UHC), to continue and expand the services of CoC Peer Navigators.

RIPIN's CoC Peer Navigators reach out to individuals helping them to better access: community resources; appropriate, timely and proactive medical care; and consistent primary care that can meet their unique needs. Their goal is to explore the needs of the individuals and connect them with information, resources, social supports, and primary care if needed.

The partnership with DHS, NHPRI and UHC is a natural one for RIPIN as we believe that positive outcomes for families and individuals start with strong relationships with the state and community.



RIPIN's CoC staff members include (top photo) Bettina Brothers, Emmanuel Echevarria, and (bottom photo) Lisa Letang.

Family Support Groups

Join us the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10:00-11:30 am at RIPIN for our Parent Support Group for Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs

The next support group meeting on Saturday, September 17th, 2011 will feature guest speaker, Financial Planner Robert Killian discussing *Planning For The Future*. Refreshments and childcare will be provided.

For questions or more information, please contact Tara Townsend at 270-0101 ext 139 or email townsend@ripin.org.

Visit www.ripin.org for a list of support groups held at various locations around our state.



Please help us welcome our newest staff members to RIPIN:

Brenda Andino, Peer Navigator, Communities of Care

Lori Bettencourt, Peer Navigator, Communities of Care

Monica Cardoso, Peer Navigator, Communities of Care

Julie Lambert, Early Intervention Parent Consultant, Family Service

Nelson Lau, Network Consultant

Victoria Letourneau, Peer Navigator, Communities of Care

Carla Russo, Parent Consultant, Family Resource Specialist, Katie Beckett Unit at the RI Department of Human Services

Family Leadership Development Institutes cultivates new LEADERS



More potential Family Leaders will soon enhance their skills of family leadership through a new training developed by the Family Leadership Development Institute (FLDI). The Family Leadership Development Institute (FLDI) is a collaborative initiative created to develop a network of Family Leaders in Rhode Island who will be trained to make a positive impact on schools, communities and in health care arenas. The Family Leadership Training 101 is designed to be the foundation and prerequisite training for further interest level training and although our pilot training has come to an end, we are very excited to share that it was a huge success!

"Before taking the Family Leadership Training 101, I had no idea how to join or become an integral part of an advisory group. The FLDI training has given me the methods and tools necessary to accomplish this."

-Nevin Beighley, parent participant

Look for the official roll out of this 30 hour training opportunity coming in the Fall 2011. For more information, please visit the RIPIN website for current FLDI information at:

www.ripin.org/fldi.html



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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!

Learn Something New this Fall at a RIPIN Workshop



All summer long RIPIN will continue to present the information you need to help you and your family!

At RIPIN, there's a workshop to fit every stage of your family's life. This summer is the debut of the Transition to Adulthood for Students with Disabilities Workshop Series. The four workshops in this series take parents, caregivers and professionals through some of the big transitions high school students and teens face as they near adulthood.

For families raising children under five, this fall RIPIN once again offers the Early Childhood Workshop Series for parents and professionals on Wednesday throughout the month of October.

- *October 5th - Transition from Early Intervention*
- *October 12th - The Successful IEP Meeting*
- *October 19th - Ready for Kindergarten*
- *October 26th - What's in that Box: Making healthier food choices*

RIPIN workshops are at no cost to families. Visit www.ripin.org to check out our workshop schedule

and learn something new today!