The Dance of Partnership: Why do my feet hurt?

Strengthening the Parent-Professional Partnership

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Janice’s keynote is designed to assist participants to better understand the challenges of forming and maintaining partnerships between parents who have children with delays and disabilities and professionals who work with families. Drawing from both her social work and her parenting experiences, Janice explores the unique dimensions which complicate and enhance this working relationship---from both the parent and the professional perspectives. Some of the questions she explores are: Can there truly be a partnership? What does each partner bring to the relationship? What strengths? What constraints? What strategies promote the partnership?

Learning Objectives of the Keynote Training

- Enhance our understanding of the complexities and possibilities of forming partnerships.
- Identify practical strategies which promote partnerships.
- Renew a personal commitment and appreciation to forming & maintaining partnerships.

Janice Fialka is a nationally recognized social worker, author, and speaker on issues related to parent-professional partnerships, disability, advocacy, and inclusion. In 2007 she was honored as the Social Work of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers-Michigan Chapter and in 2009, she and her family received the Family Voices Lifetime Achievement Award for their work in disability advocacy.

Her publications include: It Matters: Lessons from my son, a collection of her poems and essays which focus on the range of feelings and experiences of being a parent of a child with disabilities. Her writings deal with inclusion, use of labels, the power of support groups, and ways professionals can support families. She co-authored Whose Life is it Anyway? How one Teenager, Her Parents, and Her Teacher View the Transition Process for a Young Person with Disabilities (2005)—a book that invites the reader into the internal thinking and emotions of parents, educators and teens as they support youth involved in transition planning for life and learning post high school. Janice has published numerous articles and poems including articles in Young Exceptional Children. She has produced a CD of three of her poems set to music and powerful photos titled, From Puddles to PRIDE: A mother’s poems about her son, his disability, and her family’s transformation. In 2006, Janice and her family produced a 25 minute documentary about their son, Micah’s inclusive education on a college campus. This film, Through the Same Door: Inclusion Includes College was awarded the 2007 TASH Image Award for the Positive Portrayal of People with Disabilities. In 2012, Corwin (www.corwin.com) published Janice’s newest co-authored book Parents and Professionals Partnering for Children with Disabilities: A Dance that matters. It has been highly praised by national leaders for its unique and creative approach in providing refreshing insights, opportunities for reflection, and practical strategies for cultivating strong partnerships. It is full of real-world stories, heart, and humor and was recently nominated for a “Distinguished Achievement Award from the Association of Educational Publishers.”

For more information & to order her publications, contact Janice at:

www.danceofpartnership.com or www.throughthesamedoor.com