



There is a new program in town!

The Get Connected Family Resource Center has opened in the Carroll Nonprofit Center. An official ceremony to mark the opening was held on October 1, 2007.

The center will serve as a single point of access for families with children who have developmental disabilities, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, interpersonal violence experiences or other concerns. This special team of Family Navigators has personal experience with searching for services for their own children and understands the frustrations families experience when they need services for their children but don't know where to look. Navigators will help parents identify their needs and strengths, utilize a large data base of services to help find services, and help empower parents to become their family's best advocate.

The www.getconnectedcc.org website is finally live - check it out!!! If you know of any community activities for parents, children or families, feel free to send us the info on our community calendar! We are still building the resource list, too.

This is a free program for any Carroll County family and anyone (including family or service providers) can call for information on any issue.

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New resource center helps connect families *By Erica Kritt, Carroll County Times Staff writer*
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The Get Connected Family Resource Center is a new program that has helped a child with autism find a place to get his hair cut, helped a mother with depression and provided a family with social networks to join. The service is free to all Carroll County children and adults up to age 25 and their families. Alyssa Taylor-Free of Hampstead needed to find something for her 9-year-old daughter Alivia to do this summer. "I was at wit's end," Taylor-Free said. "I felt she needed to get out of the house and be around people her age." Taylor-Free contacted Get Connected, and the employees found a camp for Alivia to attend. The employees at the center are called family navigators, and they work with each family to provide resources to meet their needs. "The idea is to make it so that they are not doing all the running around and getting doors closed in their faces," family navigator Rhonda Johnson said. The navigators have dealt with difficulty in their own lives. For example, one of the employees dealt with depression in her family, while another has raised a child with a developmental disability. "You feel like a failure as a parent and you think that people are going to judge you," program director Laura Rhodes said. "We won't do that here because we've all been through that ourselves." In the past two weeks, Johnson estimated the center has received 30 calls. Get Connected came about from a growing complaint in the county, Rhodes said. "Parents were getting very frustrated when they were trying to find services for their children, and there are lots of services out there, but parents have no idea where to look, who to call," Rhodes said. The Local Management Board, which promotes the well being of children, got funding from the state to provide a grant for the program. Granite House was awarded the contract to implement Get Connected as an independent program. The organization is slated to receive \$118,286 for this year, according to Mary Scholz, manager of the Carroll County Local Management Board. Get Connected also has a computer station available for parents and children to use, a lending library and a culture navigator to help foreign parents learn what is available. "What they are used to from their home countries is a lot different from what's available here," Rhodes said. "[The cultural navigator] will help explain anything to them, yes you can call the school system and challenge them, yes you can call the police for this or that issue or how to open a checking account."