

NON-PROFIT CALENDAR

save the DATE ...

CPRF RIVER CITY ROLL

June 2, 2007, 6 p.m.

Wichita Country Club

Cocktails, dinner, auction, and local band "Three Ring Circus" in the spirit of the World's Fair. Proceeds will benefit the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation wheelchair program. Tickets are \$100. (\$65 tax-deductible.)

SISTERHOOD OF THE DIVINE MAKEOVER

Saturday, June 2

Wichita Marriott Hotel

A luncheon to benefit Dress For Success Wichita. Register on site for a makeover from Eric Fisher, Beau Monde, Kate Lane, and lia sophia. For more information call Dress For Success at 945-8779.

FAMILIES TOGETHER: 25TH ANNIVERSARY FAMILY CELEBRATION
Saturday, June 2, 2007, 8:30 - Noon
Wichita State University Area

Free event for families who have a child with a disability, but you must register to attend. Donations and volunteers are welcome. Various activities are being planned. Call 945-7747 or e-mail anita@familiesaltogetherinc.org to register and get updates as they unfold.

4TH ANNUAL KANSAS MASTERS BBQ CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturday, June 9, 2007

8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Old Cowtown Museum

Round up the kin folks, hit the trail to Cowtown and rustle up some mouthwatering BBQ. Register for your chance to win a 2006 Dodge Stratus. Proceeds will benefit the Center for Health and Wellness, Inc. Call 316.612.6880 for more information.

23RD ANNUAL WALK WITH WILDLIFE

Saturday, June 9, 2007, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Chisholm Creek Park
 6232 E 29th Street North

This is the Great Plains Nature Center's biggest event of the year, sponsored by Spirit Aero Systems. See over 50 varieties of native Kansas wildlife at stations posted along the 1/2 mile trail loop of Chisholm Creek Park. Trained volunteers will be at each station to answer questions. Admission \$2.

rainbows UNITED



"I love Rainbows United," says Marci Patterson. "They have cutting edge services and support for the whole family. Anything you can get in a larger city or state, you can get from Rainbows United."

Marci's two year-old son goes to the Kids Cove Center twice a week where he gets speech, occupational, and physical therapies specially designed for his development needs.

"It's a structured program that allows my three year-old daughter to be involved, too." Marci said. "I can see what's being done in the classroom so I'm able to do the same with them at home. The whole family is involved."

"My kids are a year apart and when John was fifteen months old, I noticed subtle differences in his behavior," Marci added. "The pediatrician suggested a 'wait and see' approach, but I knew something was wrong."

She did her research and made an appointment with a specialist. John was diagnosed with autism May 30, 2006; he was twenty months old. "I felt very alone," Marci admitted. They immediately began investigating services. "Everything I read said early intervention was critical; that up until age 3, the brain can be retrained. I called Rainbows United and was on the phone for an hour. They sent out a specialist to show us how to respond and communicate with John at home."

More than 600 children currently receive services from Rainbows United in their homes or at the centers. Last year they helped 1,363 children with special development needs, from birth to age 5. There are before and after school programs, summer camp, and respite care services for individuals ages 6 to 21.

"Every child and therapy is different," said Michelle Eastman, Director of Marketing and Communications. "We monitor the effectiveness of our services regularly. On-site children are evaluated every nine weeks.

Detailed records are kept, especially with regard to goals that are met."

The professional staff members are certified therapists who are encouraged to continue their education and maintain their certification. Rainbows United also offers internal training for staff and parents.

"It's a challenge for families with children who have special needs. We offer parenting classes and the support of other families so they know they are not alone," said Michelle.

Rainbows United has a presence in over 40 community preschools, family day care homes and child care centers. Thousands of children have been helped since this organization was founded in 1972.

"The number of children served increases every year," said Michelle. Their services have had to increase accordingly. The majority of their funding comes from federal and state sources, along with Sedgwick County, United Way, private grants and donations. The proceeds from the spring fashion show and golf fund-raisers help pay for the autism program.

Camp Wood Chuck, a day camp for older children, is another way Rainbows United raises funds while serving older children with special needs. The community can get involved by volunteering at the camp or at any of the area locations. For information about Rainbows United, or for ways you can help, call 267-5437 or visit www.rainbowsunited.org.

~B.D. THARP

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 KEYWORD

ORGANIZATIONS