

# CONNECTIONS



*A Newsletter from  
United Cerebral Palsy of Illinois Prairieland, Inc.*

Winter 2008

## GREAT CHEFS TASTING PARTY & AUCTION

Join UCP of Illinois Prairieland, Inc., the Louis Joliet Chapter of the American Culinary Federation, The Herald News, and 1340 WJOL for the Great Chefs Tasting Party and Auction. This year's party is Sunday, March 1, 2009 in The East Room at the Bolingbrook Golf Club in Bolingbrook.

The Great Chefs Tasting Party and Auction showcases the best chefs, caterers and restaurants in Chicago's southwest suburbs. While you taste the chef's fares, enjoy the live and silent auctions and raffle.

The evening begins at 4:00 pm with a wine and cheese tasting and auction preview and wraps up at 7:30 pm after the awards presentation and raffle drawing.

**The following establishments have already confirmed their presence at the party:**

- Empress Casino - Hotel
- Giovan's Restaurant & Pizzeria
- Great Harvest Bread Company
- Harrah's Joliet
- Heroes West Sports Grill
- Joliet Junior College - Epicurian & Catering Club
- Kozol Brothers, Inc.
- M & M Specialties, Ltd.
- Milano Bakery, Inc.
- Nest Bar & Grill at Bolingbrook Golf Club
- Renaissance Center
- The Cakebox, Etc.
- The East Room at Bolingbrook Golf Club
- The Public Landing
- Trattoria No. 10



There are several ways in which you or your business can participate in the party.

- Your restaurant can participate as one of the 22 establishments showcasing their cuisine.
- You may donate an auction item for the silent and/or live auction.
- Champagne Sponsor - \$1,300  
-seating for 10 and special recognition
- Caviar Sponsor - \$650  
-seating for 4 and special recognition
- Chocolate Sponsor - \$350  
-seating for 2 and special recognition
- Tickets - \$80 per person
- Tables of ten - \$800

For more information visit our website, [www.ucpilprairieland.org](http://www.ucpilprairieland.org), or call 815/744-3500 today.

**1340-WJOL**  
THE VOICE OF JOLIET



## The Herald News

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# 10 CONSIDERATION WHEN BUYING TOYS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Holiday time is exciting for all children, and children with disabilities are no different. There are nearly 6 million children with disabilities (including 12.7% of school children) who will receive holiday gifts this season. Yet because gift givers are afraid of selecting the “wrong” toy, many children with disabilities find pajamas and socks wrapped up in those brightly-colored boxes. Not the toy of their dreams.

The National Lekotek Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to making play and learning accessible for children with disabilities, has recently debuted the AblePlay™ toy rating system and website that provides comprehensive information on toys for children with special needs so parents, special educators, therapists and others can make the best choices for the children in their lives with disabilities.

Choosing toys for children with disabilities can be difficult. AblePlay’s independent toy reviews and detailed information help you get “beyond the box” to understand each toy’s unique features, creative ways each toy can be used with children with special needs and skills that will be enhanced as a result. Search for an AblePlay-Rated Toy today and unlock the magic of play for your children with special needs at [www.ableplay.org](http://www.ableplay.org).

The National Lekotek Center recommends the following Top Ten Things to Consider When Buying Toys for Children with Disabilities:

1. Multisensory appeal: Does the toy respond with lights, sounds, or movement? Are there contrasting colors? Does it have a scent? Is there texture?
2. Method of activation: Will the toy provide a challenge without frustration? What is the force required to activate? What are the number and complexity of steps required to activate?

3. Where the toy will be used: Can the toy be used in a variety of positions such as side-lying or on a wheelchair tray? Will the toy be easy to store? Is there space in the home?
4. Opportunities for success: Can play be open-ended with no definite right or wrong way? Is it adaptable to the child’s individual style, ability and pace?
5. Current popularity: Is it a toy most any child would like? Does it tie-in with other activities like TV, movies, books, clothing, etc.?
6. Self-expression: Does the toy allow for creativity, uniqueness, and choice-making? Will it give the child experience with a variety of media?
7. Adjustability: Does it have adjustable height, sound volume, speed, or level of difficulty?
8. Child’s individual characteristics: Does the toy provide activities that reflect both developmental and chronological ages? Does it reflect the child’s interests?
9. Safety and durability: Consider the child’s size and strength in relation to the toy’s durability. Is the toy and its parts sized appropriately? Does the toy have moisture resistance? Can it be washed and cleaned?
10. Potential for interaction: Will the child be an active participant during use? Will the toy encourage social engagement with others?

For additional information on toys, play, and technology for children with disabilities, please call the Lekotek Toy Resource Helpline at 1-800-366-PLAY, or visit the Lekotek Web site.

Additional resources for finding adaptive toys:

Toys “R” Us - Guide for Differently-Abled Kids  
<http://www.toysrus.com/category/index.jsp?categoryId=2257808>

Let’s Play! Projects  
<http://letsplay.buffalo.edu/>

Disability Resources Monthly Guide  
[www.disabilityresources.org/TOYS.html](http://www.disabilityresources.org/TOYS.html)

Alliance for Technology Access  
[www.ataccess.org/resources/wcp/defdefault.html](http://www.ataccess.org/resources/wcp/defdefault.html)

Laureate Learning  
[www.laureatelearning.com](http://www.laureatelearning.com)

Dr. Toy  
[www.drtoy.org](http://www.drtoy.org)

The Dragonfly Toy Company  
[www.dragonflytoys.com](http://www.dragonflytoys.com)

Toy Directory.com  
[www.toydirectory.com/specialneeds.htm](http://www.toydirectory.com/specialneeds.htm)

Center for Creative Play  
<http://www.cfcplay.org/>

Flaghouse Special Populations  
[www.flaghouse.com/special.htm](http://www.flaghouse.com/special.htm)

Oppenheim Toy Portfolio  
[www.toyportfolio.com](http://www.toyportfolio.com)

Sportime Abilitations  
<http://www.abilitations.com>

Worldwide Games  
[www.swww.com](http://www.swww.com)

Leap Frog  
[www.leapfrog.com](http://www.leapfrog.com)

Come Play With Me  
[www.comeplaytoys.com](http://www.comeplaytoys.com)

Source: [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org)  
Adapted from the National Lekotek Center

# SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS!

As the seasons change, so do the faces of staff and students at UCP's Reedswood School. Each year we make new friends and say good-bye to friends both new and old. We have two students who will be leaving our program this fall and we wish them the best in their future.

We currently have thirty students ages fourteen to twenty-one. One of our goals is to provide as many opportunities for these students to be as independent as possible when they are ready to leave the Reedswood School Program. We consider what each student is capable of doing for themselves and what their families want them to accomplish when they graduate from the program. This requires close collaboration between the families and staff at UCP.

At age twenty-two, students and their families will make a transition into an adult program. This is a huge step for families and it is very time consuming. We work with families starting at age fourteen to ensure they are as prepared as possible in their choices.

Every student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is unique to their interests. During IEP meetings we address the following four areas: employment, education, training, and independent living skills. Each year we revisit the plan and make changes to the student's IEP to help them accomplish the goals that they and their families have set.

Students are taught a variety of skills to help them become as independent as possible. One student may be able to use a switch in order to operate a shredder. Another student may be able to clean the table after they are done eating. Others are able to sort clothes and objects into categories.

Students use assistive technology to study and experience the world around them. They use the internet to find information about their community, as well as other states and countries. This assistive technology helps provide the student with information to make choices.

Independent living skills are necessary for every student in the program. The amount of independent living skills that each student learns varies with their ability level. Some of the students are able to accomplish daily tasks with reminders while others may need one-on-one assistance.



**Adriana is brushing her hair.**



**Nick is brushing his teeth.**



**Robbie is preparing food.**



**Jennifer is sorting.**

# FAMILY SUPPORT & RESPITE HAPPENINGS

## Growth in the Medicaid Waivers

As we face the prospect of painful budget cuts around the state for most of the DHS funded programs, two areas where there have been steady increases are the Home Based Support Program for Adults and the new Children's Waiver.

These programs are consumer-directed. Participants and their families structure the programs to meet their individual needs. There is a specific funding level per month of \$1,911 for adults and \$1,274 for children. Using this money, families can choose among an array of programs, providers, and services based on unique circumstances.

Under the Family Support Program, we provide service facilitation in these two waivers. We assist families in linking them with the services they feel best meet their needs. In the past year, we have tripled the number of families we are working with in these DHS programs.

UCP is committed to responding to increased areas of need to the fullest extent possible. We have been able to meet the growing need for service facilitation by adding an additional full-time service facilitator to our Family Support staff. Kari Gaedke has joined our staff as a service facilitator. She comes to our agency with previous experience in case-management, as well as a history of providing direct care as a personal support worker through the HBS waiver. We are happy to have the opportunity to have Kari as a part of the UCP team.

To be eligible for one of the waivers, you must be enrolled on the statewide PUNS database. There is currently a waiting list for these services. For information on how to get on this database, please contact Stephanie Bergner at (815) 744-3500, ext 209.

## Annual Holiday Respite

This year, we will be holding our annual holiday respite on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Reed Street building. Each year UCP provides respite workers in a group setting to families enrolled in the Respite Program. Siblings are welcome to participate. Children will have crafts, games, or other activities to keep them busy while their parents have an opportunity to shop for the holidays.

Space is limited. Contact Allison Williames at (815) 744-3500, ext 201 to reserve spots for your children.

## Upcoming Events

Options Center For Independent Living in Bourbonnais is holding a training to help with the paperwork and requirements of participating in the Circuit Breaker Program. The last class of this year is December 16<sup>th</sup>.

## HARLEY RAFFLE FOR UCP

On Tuesday, August 26, Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar in Bradley, Orland Park, Frankfort and Tinley Park teamed up with Conrad's Harley-Davidson and Kozol Brothers, Inc. of Joliet to raffle two Harley Davidson motorcycles to benefit the UCP Reedswood Day School Program. The afternoon event at Conrad's in Shorewood featured refreshments, fellowship and fun. Special thanks go to Brad Fralich and Emie Neugebauer of Buffalo Wild Wings, as well as Conrads and Kozol Brothers for their wonderful generosity.

## BOX TOPS

### Our October collection raised \$230 for the Reedswood School Program!

Reedswood School is continuing to collect Box Tops for Education, the fundraising program sponsored by General Mills. Our school can earn up to \$60,000 (maximum of \$20,000 per program) this school year. Our goal for the next collection is \$250. Keep clipping! The money raised through collecting Box Tops coupons will be used to purchase needed supplies for our school.

Here are three ways to collect Box Tops:

1. Clip Box Tops for Education Coupons.
2. Shop online through the Box Tops for Education Marketplace (sm).
3. Charge with the Box Tops for Education Visa Card.

Visit [boxtops4education.com](http://boxtops4education.com) for more information.

