



Special Kids...Special Families Newsletter

UPDATE on Our Fall 2007 Request...

Some of you have been so faithfully praying and asking for updates on how we are doing and whether our requests for financial help have been answered. We want to let you know the latest on our situation.

In our minds, we set a deadline of January 1 to know whether we would have the funds to continue our work in 2008. Our reason for setting that date was that we thought all our conference invitations come after then. We may not have been remembering accurately, but that was our reason.

After the letter we sent out this fall (late October / early November), we received about four donations totaling about \$2000. We also have commitments for \$300 per month through the end of 2008.

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Volume 3, Issue 1, January 2008

Visit our Website at:
www.TxSpecialKids.org
 Or Write us at:
P.O. Box 151335
Arlington, Texas 76015



Upcoming Events

- Friday February 8, 2008, 7-9 PM An Evening with NATHHAN/CHASK**
Mid-Cities Bible Church, 3224 Cheeksparger Rd., Bedford, Texas
TSK will be speaking during this one-evening conference hosted by the nationally known special needs support group, NATHHAN/CHASK.
- April 4-5, 2008 Nebraska State Homeschool Convention and Bookfair**
Lincoln, Nebraska sponsored Nebraska Christian Home Educators Assoc.
- May 9-10, 2008 Hearth and Home Ministries Annual Home School Bookfair**
Arlington, Texas
- May 16-17, 2008, San Antonio, Texas; Family Educators Alliance of South East Texas (FEAST) Conference and Bookfair.**
- August 15-16, 2008, The Woodlands, Texas; THSC State Convention**

How We Can Help You

Write Texas' Special Kids from our website anytime you have a question. We will write a specialized response, tailored to your family's needs. TSK is also available to speak for your homeschool support group or church on a variety of topics. Email or write us at the website.

The Heart of the Matter

Milestones...God's Stepping Stones

by Patsy Arnold

"I've cried every day this week. Why can't I stop crying? I feel so overwhelmed." Four days after Christmas, this mom from my church whose daughter has special needs stood crying, leaning against the wall, wondering what was wrong with her. Actually, there's probably nothing wrong with her. In fact, if she were never sad, I might wonder why not. Do you feel sad at Christmas? Maybe that's not the time of year when it happens for you. Maybe you remember the date of your child's diagnosis, and that day is always reflective for you. Maybe your child's birthday is a hard day for you.

How can a special needs parent cope from year to year, when there are milestone days that mark the passage of time and remind us of what has not happened in the past year, or remind us of how much longer it takes our child to do things that other kids do? Here are some things I've done that help me when I get overwhelmed. Know this — those days are farther and farther apart as your child gets older.

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How You Can Help Us... Earn Passive Income for TSK!



What if the ministry of **Texas' Special Kids** earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

Please go to page 3 of the newsletter for details!

To remove your name from our mailing list, please email: doug@txspecialkids.org

Update on Our Fall 2007 Request... (Cont. from page 1)

In the meantime, the invitations to conferences began coming in. In fact, every major conference that we attend sent its invitation before the end of November. So, in faith we responded and agreed to attend the ones that we can. We will not be able to attend the conference in Austin this year, so if you usually see us in Austin, please consider coming to one of the other conferences. We have agreed to attend four conferences in Texas – the homeschool book fairs/conferences in Arlington, San Antonio, and The Woodlands, as well as an autism conference that will be held in Pasadena, Texas in August. We'll let you know more about that one as information develops.

The other invitation we have accepted is a return trip to speak at Nebraska's state conference in Lincoln in early April. We can't wait to see all you wonderful Nebraskans whom we met in 2006!

When we met with our Board of Directors in early December, we were not sure what all of this meant to us. They pointed out that the Lord had, indeed, met our deadline. The work needs to be done. Aha! Okay, so it took us some time to catch on. At that point, we realized that 2008 would be a reality for us, that Texas' Special Kids would continue.

The week between Christmas and the New Year was a total surprise and a huge blessing to us. In those few days, ***we received just under \$8000 in donations to the ministry.*** Keep in mind that this is a considerable sum of money for us. We'd have to check the records, but we don't think TSK has had that much money – total – in the four years we have been in ministry. We are immeasurably excited, and we will share with you in months to come the ways this will change our work.

Thanks so much to all of you who have contributed and prayed. Please don't stop praying for us! We need you to speak our names before the throne of God on a regular basis. *Blessings! Patsy and Doug*

The Heart of the Matter... **Milestones...God's Stepping Stones** (cont.)

You may never stop crying from time to time, but more and more tears will be for joy, as time passes. Try these:

1) Keep a diary of your child's milestones. One of the best gifts that we were given when our son was young was a stack of print copies of all the emails we sent telling of his successes. We sent lots of email updates back then, and someone printed them all and gave them to us. Now, I journal from time to time to keep up. More importantly, when I am down, I read those journal entries, to remind me of how far we have come.

2) Fellowship with other parents. Knowing you are not alone helps. In the beginning, our son's diagnosis was so devastating, I did not want to talk to parents whose kids had his disorder, for fear of what they would say. Once the seizures stopped and we could move on to the autism diagnosis, though, I was ready to talk. I wanted to be with other moms who understood meltdowns, TV talk, and nonverbal kids who bang their heads to communicate. We're past the meltdowns and head banging now, but fellowship is still precious to me.

3) Ask the Lord for wisdom, and ask Him to give you Scriptures to hang onto. When you come across a verse that helps, write it on an index card and post it somewhere that you stand still (not often for me!), like over the washer, or beside the sink, or on the vent-a-hood. Then read it as you cook/wash, etc. Memorize that verse, and repeat it to yourself often.

I'd appreciate hearing your suggestions for what you do to relieve the sadness. Go to our blog page to respond to this story: <http://txspecialkids.wordpress.com/new-what-we-are-thinking-about/>. Please don't expect that all will post. I may create a composite follow-up later. I want to put current thoughts on there, something to apply from time to time, but I don't have time to maintain the blog at normal speed. Please pray that the Lord will provide the funds to release me from my job at UTA so I can devote more time to blogging and serving, writing articles and books, and meeting and emailing with families like yours and mine. I appreciate your feedback, so please don't feel discounted. I just can't keep up! **TSK Weblog Address:** <http://txspecialkids.wordpress.com/new-what-we-are-thinking-about/>



TSK and America's Giving Challenge

Texas' Special Kids has learned about a contest, *America's Giving Challenge*, that could lead to a grant of anywhere from \$1000 to \$50,000. Here's how it works:

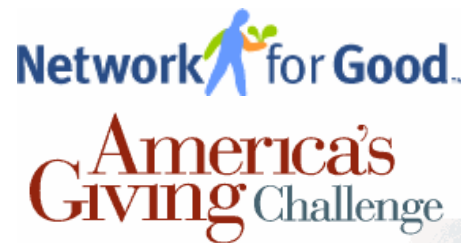
Click on the link below to donate to TSK through a web site sponsored by Parade Magazine.

<http://www.networkforgood.org/pca/Badge.aspx?BadgeId=108796>

- Each individual donor counts toward TSK's total.
- Each donor can contribute as little as \$10, but it does not help for one person to give multiple times.
- Parade counts the total individual donors who give by January 31, 2008.
- The 8 charities with the most individual donors will receive grants of \$50,000.

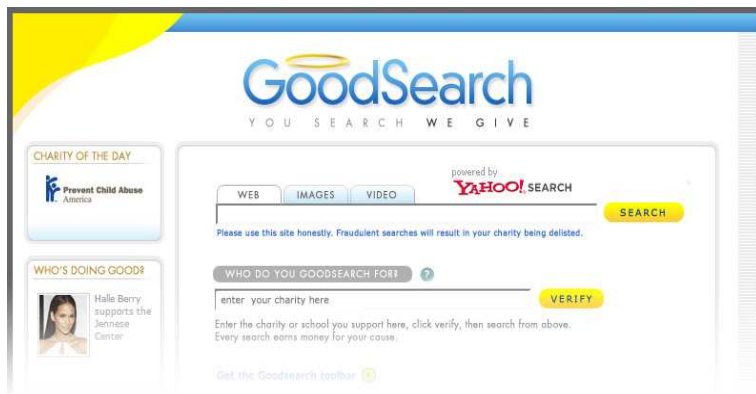
Additionally, 100 other charities will receive \$1,000 each for having high numbers of donors.

This is a way that you can help TSK if you have thought, "I can't give much, and would my small donation matter anyway?" Yes! It will!



Two Ways You Can Help TSK Raise Funds

HELP US... EARN PASSIVE INCOME FOR TSK!



GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and you can watch the donations add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop, and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter **Texas' Special Kids** as the charity you want to support. Bookmark the **Goodsearch** search engine site. Then, when you would normally go to Google or Yahoo to conduct a search for something on the web, please use the **Goodsearch**-Yahoo search engine and help **TSK** earn passive income. You can even download a special search window that will be added to your toolbar at the top of your browser to help you remember to use GoodSearch when you need to surf the net.

Thanks for helping Texas' Special Kids earn funds that will allow us to help families with special needs kids, and please...spread the word!



NEW FEATURE Coming Soon!

We want to hear **YOUR** stories. You may know our story, but we want to share your stories with our readers. In a new section of the newsletter titled *Parent to Parent*, we want to share your story as a source of encouragement to our readers. If you would like to submit your story to be reviewed for possible inclusion in a future edition of the *Special Kids...Special Families* Newsletter, send your text in an email to Patsy@TxSpecialKids.org. Please limit your story to approximately 300-400 words at a 12 point font.

TSK Launches a BLOG Site

In an attempt to better serve the families we minister to, Texas' Special Kids has developed and launched a blog site (<http://txspecialkids.wordpress.com/>). Our blog site has five pages:

“About Texas' Special Kids“, to learn more about us,

“TSK Resources” for links to our most requested resources and seminar PowerPoint presentations,

“TSK Newsletter Archive” for past editions of the E-Newsletter

“What We Are Thinking About”, Come back here from time to time for some food for thought and some encouragement in issues that may be on your mind.

And after you have viewed the resources on our blog, please visit the

“Feedback” page and let us know if this blog was a help to you.



THIS IS NOT A TRADITIONAL BLOG PAGE. If you leave a post attempting to start a thread of conversation, it will be read by Texas' Special Kids moderators, but it will not be posted. We are using this blog to post our most requested resources designed to help you find the resources you need to help your family.

If you feel a need for further consultation after viewing the available resources, please visit our website's Contact Page and write us. Writing us through the TSK Contact Page will help us gather information vital to our attempt to individualize our suggestions for your family. We hope you find this Blog page helpful in your search for answers and support.

The most significant change this has made for us is that we are no longer receiving large numbers of new web contacts every day. In fact, before the blog, we had 3-5 new ones every day. In the first six weeks that the blog was up, we had 5 new contacts total. This has reduced our personal stress level greatly.

Please don't feel like you can't write us if you need to, of course. Follow-up emails are much shorter and easier to work through than the initial ones. If you've ever received an initial email from us, you know what we are talking about! However, the blog has provided a way for folks to find what they need online without having to write, which means we are still serving and helping without having to devote as much time to emails – that was the most significant stress-producer in our lives. We can handle the traffic so much better now that people can “help themselves” to the information we have posted online.

The Biggest Way You Can Help Us... We covet your prayers for the following things...

Wisdom and Energy for Patsy and Doug as they strive to meet the needs of the families who contact them either by email or in the planning for next year's convention season.

Finances for the Ministry of Texas' Special Kids—The Arnolds see such a great need in the home school special needs community that the desire of their hearts is to have the funds sufficient to meet their family's needs and allow them to work the ministry of TSK on a full-time basis. Right now, Doug works full-time as a special education teacher and Patsy home schools and teaches part-time at a local university in the evenings. *Please lift up these needs for TSK.*