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Parent Network of Western New York launches “Guide and Connect” Campaign

*Outreach program to serve individuals and families affected by
developmental disabilities in Erie and Niagara counties*

May 30, 2018 | Buffalo, New York: The Parent Network of Western New York has launched its “Guide and Connect” campaign with the mission to educate families of individuals with disabilities, as well as community organizations, about changes to healthcare and disability services. The campaign, executed by the Parent Network collaboratively with the Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY), will serve individuals throughout Erie and Niagara counties through 2021 and is being funded by a \$120,000 grant awarded by The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation.

“Guide & Connect” will be facilitated through a free subscription-based program which will inform individuals and community organizations about changes in the way developmental disabilities services are provided, such as the changes from Medicaid Service to Care Coordination, assessment types and service provision. Information shared will be delivered using various communications methods including print, video and auditory formats to ensure end users have options that fit their individualized needs. Updates will be disseminated through social media posts; videos; podcasts; email and text campaigns; paid advertisements; and traditional mail, among others.

“Unfortunately, the information available about the changes to services is often lengthy, complex and ever-changing, leading to major confusion among families and the professionals who serve individuals with developmental disabilities,” said Susan Barlow, Executive Director of Parent Network of Western New York. “It is vital that all involved in the disability community have clear and current information about procedures, services and policies. We strongly believe the Guide and Connect campaign will be instrumental in providing the most accurate and timely updates to our many stakeholders, helping them successfully navigate this ever-changing body of information.”

Guide & Connect will include information from New York State and the federal government about changes to services, specifically regarding Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Health Home (IDDHH) and Care Coordination Organizations (CCO). Each month, a series of topics will be addressed including Care Coordination, The Coordinated Assessment System (CAS), Life Plans and more.

“Navigating the web of evolving laws, services and information can be confusing and frustrating,” said Congressman Brian Higgins. “This effort, led by the Parent Network of Western New York, will raise awareness about the tools available and help pair the resources provided by dedicated local agencies with the families that could benefit from the support and services.”

“One of the Foundation’s goals is to support initiatives that help families understand intellectual disabilities and secure needed supports,” said Charles Colston, program officer at The Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation. “Parent Network’s Guide and Connect project is important work that provides families and community members with key information that allows them to feel more confident and capable in obtaining appropriate services. The Foundation looks forward to partnering with Parent Network on this initiative.”

For additional information about the Guide & Connect program, visit www.guideandconnect.org.

About Parent Network of Western New York

Parent Network of WNY is a not-for-profit agency that provides education and resources for families of individuals with special needs (birth through adulthood) and for professionals. Parent Network of WNY provides 1-on-1 Support and education through resources, workshops and support groups to assist families of individuals with disabilities to understand their disability and navigate the support service system. The majority of Parent Network of WNY’s staff and board members are parents of children with disabilities, which provides a unique perspective, personal experience and empathy to the families we reach. Since the reorganization in 2001, Parent Network of WNY has served around 10,000 people a year. For more information about Parent Network of WNY, visit parentnetworkwny.org.

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