

The Voice of One -The Power of Many!

As we all know, the Ohio Department of MR/DD has had to cut their budget drastically. These cuts in services throughout the state will be difficult, and many may have negative consequences to important supports and services to our sons, daughters, and friends with disabilities. We must not sit back and wait until these cuts are made to "see what happens" -our voices must be heard!

March 31st and April 1st will not only be the last day of MR/DD Awareness Month and the first day of Autism Awareness Month, but it will be a two-day opportunity for the Ohio Disability community to join together as never before.

"The Voice Of One -The Power Of Many" will be held at the Hyatt on Capitol Square in Columbus and the West Lawn of the Ohio State house. This is a FREE event for Ohioans with disabilities and their families, and a very modestly priced quality training for professionals. Registration is required for the March 31st training and legislative reception so that we can plan for meals and refreshments. You may register online at www.thearcofohio.org, or if you have any questions or need assistance with registration, please call Kraig Walker at 393-2891.

The Disability Budget Rally on April 1st requires no registration. It is open to all those who support Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. The rally will be held on the High Street side of the Ohio Statehouse from 11:00 AM to Noon on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. Speakers will include Michael Richards from Highland County, Senator Jimmy Stewart, sponsor of the bill to eliminate the words "mental retardation" from Ohio law; Representative Kevin Baron, parent and sponsor of legislation to simplify the MR/DD Waiting List; Representative Ted Celeste, sponsor of the Autism Parity Bill; Gabe Spiegel, Columbus *Fox!* ABC News anchor and parent of a child with Down Syndrome, John Martin, Director of Ohio Dept. of MRDD and parent of a son with a disability. Groups who will be joining the rally include the Autism Society of Ohio, Autism Speaks, People First of Ohio, the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, Ohio Provider Resource Association, the Ohio Assoc. of County Boards of *MR/DD*, The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, the Arc of Ohio, and many others. Please join us for this special training and rally!