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## History of CSC

### The History of Celebrating Special Children

The Founding Editor of Celebrating Special Children resource guide, Fran Nickey M.S, was unselfish in sharing the information she gained advocating for her own child with special needs. She wrote many articles about children with disabilities and published a number of special needs resource handbooks. Partnering with New Town Publications of Reston, Virginia, in 2002 Ms. Nickey received an innovated grant award from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities to publish a resource guide for Virginia parents of infants with disabilities. The first edition was published as a supplement to Northern Virginia Parent, listing resources in the Northern Virginia area and was just over 64 pages. Approximately 50,000 copies of the first edition were printed and distributed. Prior to publication of this supplement, information for individuals with disabilities had never before been put together in quite this way.

The Northern Virginia resource guide was so well received by the community the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities awarded additional funding in 2003 for the publication of local resource guides for the remaining three regions in the Commonwealth. Resource guides for four distinct regions, covering the entire Commonwealth began annual publication in late 2003. The publication quickly expanded to over 120 pages, and since 2004, has been made available to every corner of Virginia. Since those first days, over 750,000 copies have been printed and disseminated throughout the Commonwealth, at no charge to the end user. Particular distribution points include targeted locations such as schools, parent resource centers, Infant/Toddler Connections, Headstart locations, Departments of Social Services, Community Service Boards, hospitals and libraries.

To ensure continued publication of the resource guide and to better serve Virginia's disability community, Celebrating Special Children, Inc. was formed in 2003. Celebrating Special Children became a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization in 2004. Virginia House of Delegate member, Kenneth Plum began his tenure as the first Chair and President of the Board of Directors in 2003. In Del. Plum's words, "from the beginning, CSC has always maintained an open ear to parents, professionals, and advocates on ways to improve its services and be more useful to consumers. Comments from parents and readers indicate a high level of support for the Resource Guide and for the usefulness of the information it provides".

In 2006 Celebrating Special Children launched an internet disabilities resource database. The website contains all the information in the print resource guide, as well as an archive of all previously published articles. Through our home page, readers can request a print copy of CSC, access archived articles, view calendar events throughout the state and search for services. In October of 2006, CSC was honored to be nominated for the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' 2006 Outstanding Achievement Award. Over 200,000 resource guides were distributed in 2006 to 675 locations throughout the Commonwealth, reaching approximately 175,000 parents, professionals and individuals with disabilities.

The earlier editions of Celebrating Special Children focused primarily on infants and younger school-age children and the cover of the resource guide reflected the focus. As we have grown, our vision has expanded to include life beyond the school age years and the 2007-08 edition's cover reflected our growth. The 2007-2008 edition also marked our first single, statewide edition, produced and distributed to all parts of the Commonwealth, simultaneously. The statewide edition continues to cover all the services and topics as the regional editions.

A pivotal year for Celebrating Special Children, 2009 saw the award of a "Capacity Building" grant from the Institute for Youth Development. The Board of Directors revisited the mission, vision and value statements, as well as developed a five year strategic plan. The Board committed itself to refreshing and building out the database and updating the website to create a more user-friendly interactive website. The Board also committed to continuing the mission of Celebrating Special Children; to provide the necessary information to ensure that individuals with disabilities realize their fullest potential of development, independence and quality of life.

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### Celebrating Special Children

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