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Center for Persons With Disabilities

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RECOGNIZING COMMUNITIES THAT ARE FRIENDLY TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

November 30, 2009 by JoLynne Lyon

The Star Communities program is recognizing inclusive communities that are doing a good job serving the families of children and youth with special health care needs. So far, 13 cities and counties have been identified, including Utah County and Yakima, Washington. Both are featured in the CPD’s NewsFlash newsletter for November.

Star Communities are good models of community-based service systems. They facilitate the integration of services and supports by encouraging a variety of programs to work together to meet the many, varied needs of children, youth, and families in the community.

ChampionsInC is sponsoring this recognition program because its mission as a national center of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau is to support communities in organizing services for families of children and youth with special health care needs. As a project at the Center for Persons with Disabilities’ Early Intervention Research Institute at Utah State University, ChampionsInC realizes that there are communities throughout the nation – probably even where you work or live – who are doing an excellent job with family-driven services. But they need you to help find them.

Some guidelines to look for in the community:

• Families are partners in decision making;
• Medical homes work in coordination with other services;
• Children receive early and continuous developmental screening services;
• Adequate financing ensures that families receive needed services;
• Services and supports are easily accessed, coordinated, and culturally competent;
• Transitions throughout life happen smoothly.

If you know of a community that that is meeting some, or even all, of these guidelines and you would like them to receive the recognition they deserve, contact Cora Price at ChampionsInC: 800-887-1699.