



Dear Family Member,

Family participation and engagement are key components to the success of the Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Project. Through PaTTAN, the PA Deaf-Blind Project Initiative offers a variety of training, technical assistance and resources to assist educators and families in the areas of assessment, instruction and family involvement activities. The Project has a history of providing targeted training and technical assistance to families.

The Project has employed parents or family members of children and youth who are deaf-blind in these efforts. The two statewide Family Consultants with the PA Deaf-Blind Project are Molly Black and Patti McGowan. Both family consultants have a passion to support other families by providing information, connecting families directly to one another for support and networking opportunities, as well as promoting leadership and advocacy skills so that families are informed, supported, and can advocate for the needs of children who are deaf-blind.

Meet Molly and Patti:

Molly Black is the parent of three children, one of whom lived for 22 years with deaf-blindness due to the etiology of Cornelia de Lange Syndrome. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Partnership for the Deafblind (PPDB), a non-profit, family support group. She is a past Board Secretary of The Parent Education Advocacy and Leadership Center (PEAL), the Commonwealth's Parent Training and Information Center. She has coordinated and facilitated several study groups of parents and professionals around topics concerning deaf-blindness. Molly has led and participated in leadership, advocacy, family engagement and transition training activities of the Project. She continues to be passionate and motivated to support families who live the daily struggle and joys of raising a child with deaf-blindness. She is assisting to spearhead a national effort to support families adjusting to the loss of a child. Molly resides in Irwin, a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA and has been a Family Consultant with the Project for many years. Please feel free to contact Molly at mblack@pattan.net, by phone at (724) 863-1283, or by cell (412) 719-9370.

Patti McGowan is the parent of a young adult who is deaf-blind (Usher Syndrome). She and her family live in North Huntingdon, PA. As a parent of a son who is deaf-blind, she is skilled in supporting other parents and families who are facing challenges. Patti is the moderator of the Pennsylvania Family Listserv which is used across the commonwealth to network, share resources, and educate families and interested professionals.

Patti has been a family consultant for the Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Project since 2005. Currently, she holds the position of President to the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) and general board member to the State Affiliate to NFADB known as PPDB, Pennsylvania



Partnership for Deafblind. Patti is a regular contributor to the Paths to Transition site through Perkins School for the Blind. She blogs about family-related issues and provides consultation about the parent perspective.

In addition, Patti took part in the writing team for the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) *Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Modules* as a module creator, contributing concepts, ideas, resources, and videos to sculpt the open-access modules. Patti has worked as a consultant assisting the NCDB in the development of content for a national website on advocacy and leadership for families. She has had years of experience in training parents and families in all aspects of advocacy and leadership. Please feel free to contact Patti at pmcgowan@pattan.net, by phone at (724)-864-2553, or by cell (724)-989-4640.