South Carolina Respite Coalition

Start-Up Process
• The SC Respite Coalition (SCRC) grew out of two small respite projects, both run by parents of children with special needs. One was funded by the SC Developmental Disabilities Council and the other by U.S. Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Sharing a State Advisory Committee, these projects conducted a respite needs assessment/environmental scan and invited 40 key stakeholders to address the identified needs. In 1999, these stakeholders, including family caregivers, state agencies, respite providers, non-profit organizations and University researchers, founded the SCRC.
• The SCRC was launched with in-kind support from the two original organizations, Family Connection of SC, a parent-to-parent network organization, and the Center for Disability Resources, a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.
• The SCRC developed as a program of Family Connection until 2000 when a grant from the SC Developmental Disabilities Council enabled it to incorporate as an independent 501(c)(3) entity.

Structure
• The SC Respite Coalition is the ONLY statewide organization focused solely on respite for ALL age groups in South Carolina, including families caring for someone with mental illness, midlife illness, aging and disabilities.
• The SCRC serves the entire state, though most activity has been in Columbia, the state capital, and surrounding counties.
• The SCRC is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of up to 14 members with a majority being current or former family caregivers. By-laws have a provision for a non-voting advisory committee to ideally represent more constituencies than the Board can encompass.

Staff
• In 2000, the SCRC began with a part-time Director who oversaw incorporation. A full-time Executive Director was employed in 2001 and has remained in the position. With reduced funding, the Executive Director was employed part-time (and sometimes volunteered) for several years, but in 2011 returned full time.
• A part-time Program Coordinator was employed in 2010 to work on the Lifespan Respite Project. This position oversees the Family Caregiver Respite Voucher Program funded by both state and federal dollars. Three Program Assistants work full-time to assist family caregivers across the state in accessing respite services.

Funding
• The SCRC began with a 3-year grant from the SC Developmental Disabilities Council and in-kind support from Family Connection of SC.
• It has continued to operate with state and private foundation grants from the NORD Foundation, Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, Alzheimer’s Resources Coordination Council, the Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence; in-kind support from the University and state agencies; donations through annual campaigns and events and volunteer support.
• The most recent funding (2009–2017) for the SCRC is through the Lt. Governor’s Office on Aging (LGOA) which was fortunate to receive 4 federal Lifespan Respite grants. The SCRC is a partner in the development of the Lifespan
Respite network, along with Family Connection of S.C., Inc.

- SCRC also receives funding from the state budget thru the LGOA to give to family caregivers in the form of vouchers.
- SCRC contracts with the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN) to provide on-line training and document background screenings for respite providers in the Family Selected Respite Waiver program.

Membership

- The Respite Coalition currently does not have formal membership or dues, although people from all walks of life are involved with, or receive information via, the SCRC as part of the Board of Directors, sub-committees, annual conference, email alerts and website.
- A majority of the Board are current or former caregivers. The State Committee on Respite (SCOR) has representation from major state agencies, respite providers, University Centers, disability and aging consumer groups for children and adults, non-profits, faith community members, and family caregivers.

Meetings and Communication

- Monthly Board meetings through physical and conference calling methods and conference planning meetings.
- Periodic newsletters disseminated through the mail and email networks.
- Email alerts, recently through Constant Contact.
- Monthly partners meeting and Quarterly meeting of the State Committee on Respite for the Lifespan Respite project.

Major Activities

- Outreach to faith communities continues with education about respite and opportunities for coaching and assisting family caregivers to accept offers of help, ask for respite, arrange and fund it.
- Fosters new respite models and efforts through small grants to faith communities across the state.
- Had role in influencing the Lt. Governor to request and obtain $3 million for respite in 2013–2014 for family caregivers of elders and also older caregivers of adult “children” with disabilities.
- Issue $500 vouchers directly to family caregivers to arrange for respite. Focus is on families ineligible for Family Caregiver Support Funding: younger parents of individuals with disabilities, midlife families and those in hospice or on the community-based long-term care Medicaid waiver program. A key element of the voucher program is teaching family caregivers about respite, linking them to other resources and coaching them to find providers and create their own “circles of support.”
- Respite Summit held June 18, 2014.
- Held five annual Respite Solutions for the Faith Community conferences attended by approximately 125 people each year. Regional faith community conferences will be planned with help of regional advisory councils.
- Advocacy, increasing awareness about the needs for respite and increasing respite options for family caregivers. Cross training between the Family to Family Health Information Network and ADRCs is a specialized focus.
- Updating and expanding information, focused strictly on respite, available through our website: www.screspitecoalition.org
- Collaborating with other agencies, organizations and family caregivers to establish a coordinated lifespan respite system in SC.
- Developing regional advisory councils.

Documents/Resources Available

- Mission statement: The mission of the SC Respite Coalition is to expand quality respite opportunities in SC throughout the lifespan for families who have a member with special needs. The Coalition’s goals are to:
  - Educate the general public & specific groups about need for respite care.
  - Develop strategies to provide and improve respite services for families.
  - Provide support for families and providers through coordinated information resources.
  - “What you Need to Know About Me” A Notebook for Family Caregivers.
  - “Family Caregivers in Your Faith Community Need a Break!” brochure.
  - “Take a Break” brochure.
  - Coalition brochure and by-laws.
  - State respite plan “TAKE A BREAK SC! – Sustaining South Carolina’s Family Caregivers through respite” was released in May 2013 by the Lt. Governor and will be updated/revised in 2018.
  - How to start a respite co-operative – linked to partner organization, Family Connection of S.C., Inc.
  - How to establish a respite benevolence fund at your faith community.
  - Most SCRC products available on the website at: www.screspitecoalition.org, which also provides links to other resources in SC and across the country.

State Contact Information

Janet B. Altman
Executive Director
P.O. Box 493
Columbia, SC 29202
803-935-5027
janet@screspitecoalition.org