

There are many organizations geared toward helping individuals with disabilities. Some help raise funds. Others help raise awareness. Others try and help make their lives a little easier. One of those organizations is The World Congress on Disabilities.

For the past twelve years, The World Congress on Disabilities (WCD) has brought together professionals in many areas; including, medicine, education, research, technology, adaptive physical sports and recreation, and product development, along with scientists, researchers, caregivers, and families, to educate, inform, and provide a useful exchange of ideas for people with disabilities and special health care needs and those involved with their care and development.

“Uniting professional and consumer interests within one conference is a logical extension of today's current health care climate,” said William Schwaninger, managing director of the WCD Foundation for Education, Inc.

“The WCD is the only forum in existence today whose expressed mission is to bring together people with disabilities and special health care needs, families, caregivers, physicians, nurses, allied health care professionals, teachers, and education administrators in a single event to share ideas and experiences and to collaborate on improving the quality of life for people of all ages with disabilities and special needs,” said Schwaninger.

This year, The World Congress on Disabilities Exposition & Conference will be held September 23-24 at The Atlantic City Convention Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The exhibit area will feature non-profit companies and organizations presenting their products and services designed to help those with disabilities.

“People will see conversion vans, wheelchairs, lifts, special education products, schools, financial companies, Gaming, Technology, Travel, and much more,” says Schwaninger.

The conference portion of the event will feature educational seminars given by professionals in their respective fields. Topics include: “Assistance Dogs: What are their benefits? What you should know before applying for an Assistance Dog? Canine Companions for Independence Program Overview & Demonstration;” “ Simple Solutions: Activities for Adapted Physical Education;” “ How Video Games Can Unleash the Hero in You;” “ Basic Rights in Special Education;” “Hope Happens, The Road of Adversity to Triumph;” “ Trauma, Recovery and Transcendence;” “Pain Treatment and the Role of Muscles;” “ Keep Your Kids Active – Pediatric Bracing for Function;” “Autism and Umbilical Cord Blood Stem: Cell Therapy;” and “A Lifetime of Advocacy: What Individuals and Families Living with Turner Syndrome Need to Know.”

“The lecture [A Lifetime of Advocacy: What Individuals and Families Living with Turner Syndrome Need to Know] is intended to provide families with children and individuals living with Turner Syndrome (and other special needs) with a lifetime guide on how and when to advocate for services over one’s lifetime,” said Valerie A. Powers Smith, legal advisory board member of Turner Syndrome Foundation,

Inc. , a non- profit organization geared toward bringing awareness and support to Turner Syndrome patients, a chromosomal condition affecting 1 in 2000 girls.

“I have been a legal advocate for people with disabilities for 14 years with a particular emphasis on the health care needs of children with special needs. Over the past 8 years of my practice, I have focused on providing families with children and individuals with disabilities with information required to effectively advocate for the love one’s needs, access needed services, and plan for the future,” said Smith.

Smith has also authored an advocacy guide booklet for Turner Syndrome Foundation, Inc., which will be distributed at the conference and the focus of her lecture.

“Because many individuals feel overwhelmed and uneducated about the disability benefits and health insurance systems, [the booklet discusses] health care coverage, supports & services for individuals (birth through age 21), entitlements for adults with disabilities (state and federal), and future considerations (i.e., estate planning, special needs trusts, guardianship),” says Smith.

If you are interested in attending or finding out more information about the World Congress on Disabilities Exposition & Conference, please visit <http://thewcd.org/>