

Parents and Advocates for Slow Learners P.A.S.L.

A Brief History and Mission Statement

As you may know, at least 12% of the general population of our metropolitan communities fall into the category of the mildly disabled; i.e., Slow Learners (IQ between 70 and 90). These are individuals whose disabilities, although mild, do prevent them from becoming fully engaged in all aspects of 'normal' life. The arenas of living which we all consider as foundations for a full and rewarding life ... the social, recreational, educational, vocational, and community interactive fluencies ... which are so meaningful and necessary for all of us ... are frequently out-of-range for the adult who is a "slow learner".

Twenty years ago, when our organization was formed, we served 6 young adults. This original group of families discovered that although their kids had graduated and were employed, they were also socially isolated, bored, and lonely. So, at first, we gathered together informally once a month in our homes; but soon found that the group was outgrowing our dens! We also came to realize that these young people needed more lively and age-appropriate activities than we were able to provide. In our search for an established community resource we fell almost immediately under the welcoming umbrella of the **Richardson YMCA**. Through their sponsorship, articles in the newspapers, and word-of-mouth the word got out ... and the group grew by leaps and bounds. The young adult membership has grown to 45 or 50 today. We welcome newcomers!

Our goal is to provide a setting in which the adult slow learner can find an effective and personalized social life. The range of activities include: cook-outs, West End trips, museums, art galleries, Deep Ellum, Dinner Theater, movies and hamburgers, shopping, eating out at the "in" places, dancing, and so on the list goes (see the Activities photos on the *PASLgroups* web-site). At least once a year, there are supervised weekend "away-trips" ... such as: Galveston, Port Isabel, Padre Island, San Antonio River Walk, and Cancun. In almost every case, these are the first vacation trips the kids have ever had without their parents! Yea for independence!

The **PASL** organization contracts with the **Richardson YMCA** to structure and implement this social program. Through the efforts of the **YMCA**, these young people now take part in the gamut of community activities with newfound friends who are their peers. The group of adult slow learners (*The Y Connection*) meets once a week, at the **YMCA**, to enjoy planned activities. Additionally, two or three times a year we all get together, families and slow learners, for a big old-fashioned "pot-luck" supper with entertainment.

There is much more to be said about our organization and the successes of its objectives, however I hope this overview will give you a snapshot of just what it is we are 'up to'. For more information, please call any one of the following **PASL** members:

Rowena Freefield	(President, PASL)	972-235-0578
Jean Walling	(Past President: PASL)	972-495-3595
Joanne Campbell	(Membership: PASL)	972-414-1575
Wade Mercer	(Social Director: YMCA)	214-762-6348

Jean M. Walling
Charter Member, **PASL**

