

## **Christy S. Blakely**

Christy Blakely is currently the coordinator for Family Voices in Colorado. The Family Voices Chapter advocates on behalf of Children with Special Health Care Needs throughout the state. Over the past three years, Christy has contributed to NICHQ's Parent Partnership model through several Learning Collaboratives. Christy worked as a Parent Advocate at Health Care Policy and Financing, from July 1998-Aug. 2000, through a grant funded by Robert Wood Johnson, Health Care Strategies. The parent advocate position was unique in placing the parent, of a child with a disability, within Medicaid. Christy's other positions include: JFK Partners working on, Project Participate, a grant to bring about inclusion for children with significant disabilities through the use of assistive technology and Assistive Technology Lab at Easter Seal Colorado under the Assistive Technology Project. Christy has a Master's of Science in Special education and taught special education.

Christy is the parent of a young adult with significant disabilities. Lauren, now 24 years of age, was born prematurely. Christy has learned more as a parent than getting her degrees in education. Over the years, Christy has teamed with insurance companies, doctors, schools, advocates, professionals, therapists, hospital staff, and state agencies to improve policies and practices on behalf of children with disabilities. She has learned and shared her learning in assistive technology, service systems, insurance, policy, law and most importantly resources and funding with many people around the State of Colorado and the country.

Christy and her husband, Todd, are the proud parents of Lauren (24) currently attending Metro Community College pursuing a certificate in Not For Profit Management and Allison (23), a graduate of Northwestern University, currently employed by CNN in Atlanta in journalism. Todd is an attorney at Sheridan Ross, PC in Denver, specializing in intellectual property law.