

Stepping Stones

SPRING 2012

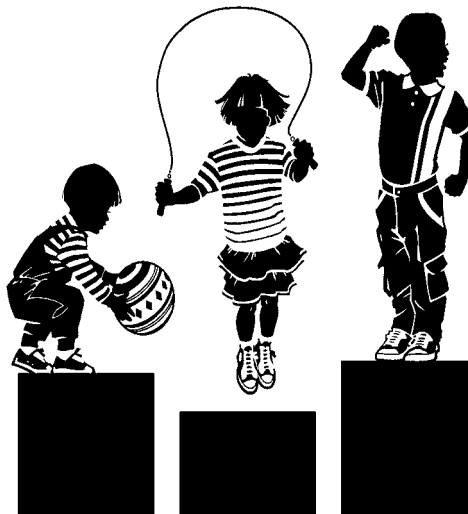
Building strong foundations and a brighter future for Howard County children with special needs and their families

BUILDING BLOCKS A Conference for Parents of Children Birth - age 5

Do you have a child, from birth to age 5 years old, who is receiving Early Intervention services? Are you looking for support and/or answers to questions pertaining to everyday life issues for your child, such as toilet training, communication and dealing with challenging behaviors? If so, you will want to attend our Building Blocks parent conference on Saturday, March 24, 2012 from 8 am-1 pm (location TBD). This conference, presented by the HCPSS Office of Early Intervention and the Family Support and Resource Center, will address a variety of topics to increase parents' confidence and competence in building their child's success!

If you are interested in registering for this free conference or have any questions, please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.

Registration is free, and registrants will choose three sessions to attend throughout the conference. The following sessions are being offered:



Artsy Smartsy: Addressing communication, sensory needs, and motor skills through fun and easy art activities.

Bedtime Bootcamp: Strategies for successful bedtime routines to improve sleep.

Challenging Behavior: Practical strategies for addressing challenging behaviors at home and in the community.

Promoting Independence: Promoting your child's independence through the use of visual supports.

Purposeful Play: Fostering communication and socialization through everyday play.

Sign Language: Learn basic signs that will reduce frustration and help your child communicate.

Toilet Training: Learn research-based methods and tips for developing an effective toileting plan for your child.

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SECAC RECOGNITION NIGHT

The Howard County Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC) invites you to nominate a teacher or other staff member who you think has most significantly enhanced your child's educational experiences by providing excellence in teaching and related services. This is specifically for students receiving special education services. Nominees may be teachers, bus drivers, guidance counselors, psychologists, administrators and occupational, physical and speech therapists or other staff

members. SECAC will accept nominations from parents, guardians or students. You may nominate up to two individual staff members per child, or your child's team.

If you are nominating an individual staff member, please describe in 50-200 words some action, attitude or approach that you feel made that individual stand out in making a difference to your child's educational experience.

SECAC Recognition Night . . . continued on page 3

Family Support and Resource Center

Howard County Public School System

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

As we enter the new year in 2012, we would like to begin by thanking parents, staff and family members for their collaboration and hard work on behalf of each of our students with disabilities. We are halfway through the school year and gearing up for the March administration of the Maryland School Assessment. As we visit schools we see exemplary instruction taking place, thoughtful support for students by caring adults, high expectations, collaborative planning of lessons and co-teaching, and teachers being very thoughtful about exploring every opportunity for students with disabilities to learn side-by-side with their grade level peers.

Department of Special Education staff, school-based staff members, along with elementary and secondary curriculum staff have been working hard to learn about the new Common Core State Standards. During the 2011-12 school year, the HCPSS is focused on argument writing and mathematical practices associated with the Common Core. The Maryland State Department of Education continues to develop model lessons related to the new curricular standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). These lessons are shared with leadership teams of teachers and administrators across the state. Go to <http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html> if you are interested in reading about the new frameworks related to the Common Core State Standards.

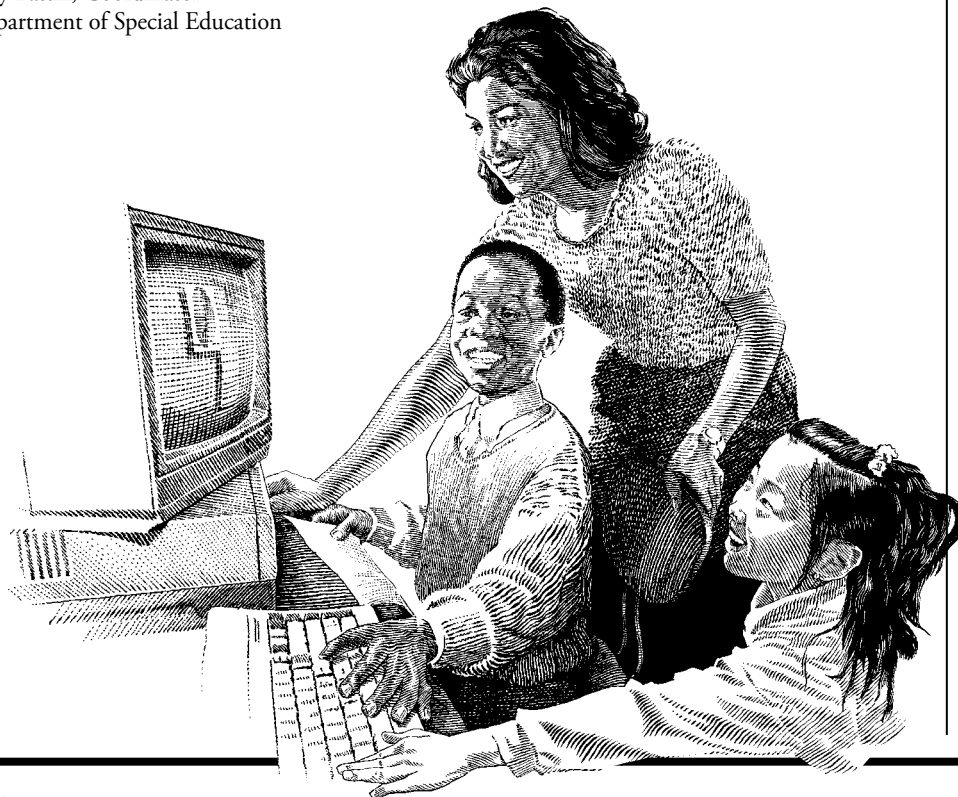
Department of Special Education staff have been busy providing professional development to instructional team leaders, teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals. Developing Quality Inclusive Education (DQIE), Best Practices for Reading, Mathematics and Writing, Presuming Competence of all Learners and the 7 Tenets, are examples of key professional development sessions being offered to school-based staff members.

We hope you choose to take part in an upcoming training being offered by the Community Mediation Maryland on March 13, 2012, 6-9 p.m. See page 10 for details. Department of Special Education staff will be taking part in this training over the next couple of months.

Wishes for a happy and peaceful new year.

Patty Daley, Director
Department of Special Education

Judy Pattik, Coordinator
Department of Special Education



Port Discovery Supports Children with Special Needs

Port Discovery, a fun and interactive children's museum located in Baltimore, is offering several special days and programs for children with special needs:

Discover Me Days:

For Children of ALL Abilities
Discovery Me Days are uniquely focused for inclusion groups.
Tuesday, February 28, 2012
Tuesday, March 20, 2012

PortAbility Days:

For Children with Autism
Tuesday, May 8, 2012 (for all ages)
Admission is limited.
Advance Registration is required!

Discovery Days:

For Children with Special Needs
Wednesday, May 9, 2012
(preschoolers to 2nd grade)
Thursday, May 10, 2012
(3rd grade and up)
Admission is limited.
Advance Registration is required!

Be A Part of the Art Days:

For Children of ALL Abilities
Friday, May 11, 2012
Admission is limited.
Advance Registration is required!

Port Discovery Social Stories

Check out Port Discovery Social Stories at portdiscovery.org under Educator Resources. Port Discovery Social Stories script out various situations and environments that children may encounter during a museum visit.

For more information on any of these special events, please call 410-864-2727. You can also check out the website at www.portdiscovery.org.

POSSIBILITIES:

A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities

When your child is diagnosed with a disability, it can be overwhelming—emotionally and financially—on you, and perhaps your child and family as well. You realize that you must modify plans for your child's future. Even the most stable of families face financial challenges. In caring for your child with special needs, those challenges can make for urgent situations.

Considering the reality of this can be very difficult. That is why the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) Center and the National Endowment for Financial Education® (NEFE®) collaborated on a new publication. Through "Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities" you will find ways to create a sense of order in your life and maintain control over your finances as you care for your child and prepare him or her for adulthood. This simple, straightforward resource can help you manage your money and plan for you and your child's financial future and overall well-being. The financial management techniques can help you, not just in times of crisis, but for the rest of your life.

There is an overwhelming amount of information available on caring for children with disabilities. Making your way through it all consumes too much of your precious time. "Possibilities" will accomplish several things:

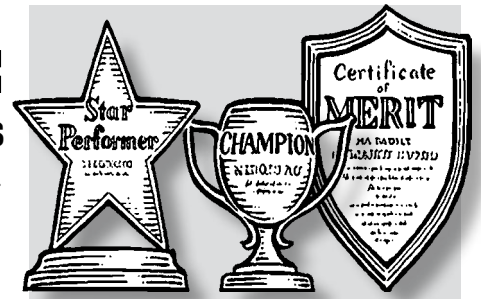
- To be your starting point—to give you a broad outline of important issues you'll deal with in caring for your child.
- Provide you with basic knowledge of these issues.

- Give you tools to create your own action plan.
- Point you in the right direction to get more detailed information.

Woven throughout the publication are possible answers to a nagging question you probably wonder about, "Who will care for my child after I'm gone?" The answers are displayed in suggested actions to take so you can, ultimately, do the four things that matter most:

- Protect your ability to make wise decisions as you care for your child and family.
- Create an environment of financial well-being for you and your family.
- Ensure continuation of your child's important benefits and care for the rest of his or her life.
- Through your own actions, demonstrate to your child how to be determined in accomplishing goals, and how to advocate for the best possible outcome in all endeavors.

Developing your child's self-determination and self-advocacy skills will help create a solid foundation for your child's journey to adulthood and a life of happiness and fulfillment. To access "Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities" please visit www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/. If you do not have access to a computer or would like to borrow a hard copy of this information from our library, please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.



SECAC Recognition Night

Continued from front page

For team nominations, please describe in 50-400 words how the team has worked together to provide an exceptional educational experience for your student. Kindly avoid writing a separate citation for each individual in team nominations. The deadline for nominations is Friday, March 30. Please e-mail your nominations to secanomination@yahoo.com or fax to 410-872-4946.

You will receive a confirmation of receipt within one week of your nomination.

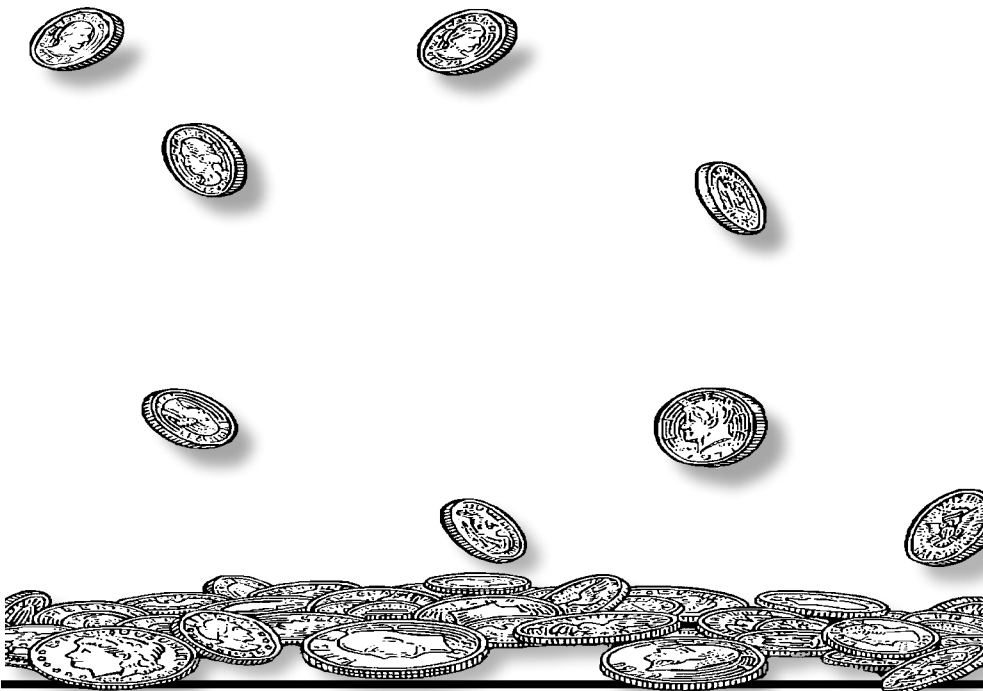
All nominees must include:

- First and last name of all nominees with correct spelling.
- Staff position and school.
- Your name, address, e-mail and phone number.
- Bus company where applicable.

If you have pictures of your child (with our without the nominee) and would like to contribute them to our Recognition Night presentation, please forward them with your nomination letter.

All nominating families, the nominees and administrators are invited to join us as we recognize these outstanding individuals. The celebration will take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Monday, May 7 at Centennial High School, 4300 Centennial Lane, Ellicott City. There is no first, second or third place - we believe that all nominees should be recognized for their work!

For more information please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.





Lose the Training Wheels

Lose The Training Wheels™ is more than just a bike-riding program. For many children with disabilities, riding a two-wheeler is a seemingly impossible task, but when they attend this day camp, kids can typically master the bike in less than a week's time. Within days of learning to ride, many children exhibit independent behaviors for the first time ever. This achievement, in turn, creates a gateway of opportunity, helping them gain assurance and self-reliance in many other aspects of their lives.

Learning to ride a two-wheel bicycle has many benefits, some obvious and some not so obvious including:

- Increase in self-esteem and self-confidence
- Inclusion
- Positive change in family dynamics
- Improved quality of life through recreation
- Independent transportation

This popular bike camp will return to Howard County this July. Watch for the Howard County Recreation and Parks summer camp catalog for registration details. For more information, please contact Susan Potts (Recreation Manager, Therapeutic and Accommodation Services) at spotts@howardcountymd.gov or call 410-313-4628.

Lose The Training Wheels... and see where they go!

What is LISS Funding?

Low Intensity Support Services (LISS) is a statewide program for individuals with developmental disabilities. LISS can help individuals improve their quality of life, remain in their own homes, increase or maintain independence and participate in their communities.

What can I use LISS for? Adaptive equipment, assistive technology community supports, home modifications, respite and therapeutic services.

How is the program funded? The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) funds this program with state only funding.

Who can apply for LISS? Maryland residents who have a developmental disability or their family can apply.

Does every person with a developmental disability get help? No, because there is a limited amount of funding available each year.

Is there an application? The program uses a "request form" to gather the necessary information about the person and the services they are seeking.

Do I have to provide information about my income? The information is optional and does not impact eligibility or service decisions. The data collected allows DDA to report to Legislators how these funds benefit people with disabilities and their families.

For more information about LISS in Howard County, please visit www.ddamaryland.org or call one of the two organizations that provide funding for our county: Humanim, Inc. 1-877-230-4951 or www.humanim.com Penn-Mar Human Services 1-877-282-8202 or www.penn-mar.org

If you do not have access to a computer, please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161 for a request form or more information.

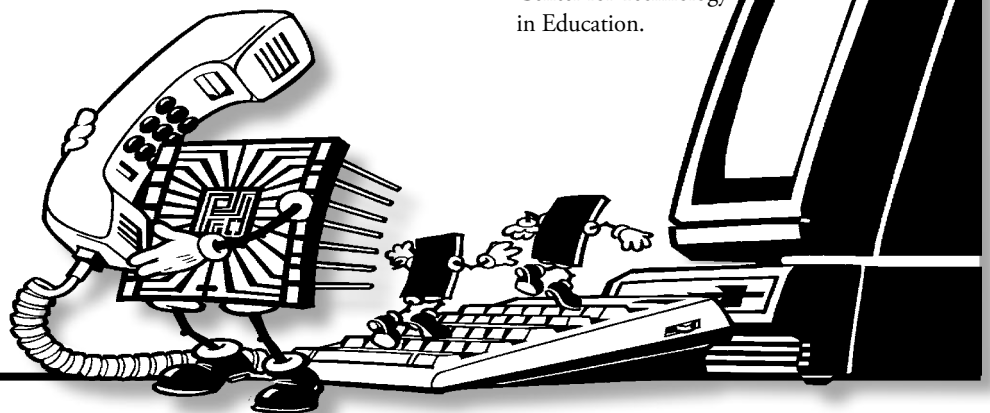
MarylandLearningLinks.org One Stop Path to Essential Information

Families and educators interested in early intervention services and special education information and issues now have a user-friendly resource at their fingertips. MarylandLearningLinks.org is a unique, dynamic website providing information about the Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes, family involvement and other topics and trends related to special education. The site features a number of interactive tools, blogs, and newsletters aimed at administrators, teachers, service providers, and parents.

"We know that students thrive when their support system is equipped with the best information," said Interim State Superintendent Bernard Sadusky. "MarylandLearningLinks.org provides users with critical ideas and resources, all free-of-charge and available just a click away."

MarylandLearningLinks.org offers helpful information for families and educators working with children with disabilities, birth through age 21. The website offers users the benefit of an online community. Parents and educators can join, participate, and share in an ongoing conversation, all designed to strengthen student learning.

Developed through Maryland's State Improvement Grant (H323A070003), MarylandLearningLinks.org is a partnership of the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, and the Johns Hopkins University/School of Education/Center for Technology in Education.





IEP FACILITATION

Having IEP team meetings facilitated by an external, independent, trained “facilitator” is a means for parents and school personnel to reach agreement in the educational decision-making process for students receiving special education services. The purpose of IEP Meeting Facilitation is to help IEP team members communicate effectively and to assure meaningful involvement of all participants in the IEP process. Independent facilitators from community mediation centers are highly trained in fostering positive communication and are experienced in the IEP team process. Facilitators do not serve as advocates and are not employees of the school system.

When the relationship between parents and school personnel becomes strained, or better yet, before the relationship has the opportunity to fray, parents and school personnel are finding

that using external facilitators can assist the IEP team process. A facilitator may help parents and school personnel avoid misunderstandings or disagreements when it is believed that discussions at the meeting may become challenging. Using a trained facilitator has been found to be an effective means to keep IEP teams focused on the development of the educational plan for the student while addressing some of the conflicts and disagreements that may arise from inadequate communication. The facilitator will create an environment in which parents and school-based personnel can listen to each other and work together to develop an appropriate high quality education plan for student.

If you would like more information about IEP Meeting Facilitation, please contact the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.

Yes . . . Another Feedback Form!

At the end of your next IEP or IFSP meeting, you will be given a 5-question feedback postcard to fill out and send back to the Family Support and Resource Center. This new questionnaire is a way to get information on how Howard County IEP/IFSP teams are doing in including families in the IEP/IFSP process. Please be honest in your response, and feel free to include any other information that the Department of Special Education could use to improve services throughout the school system. Your anonymous comments are appreciated and will help build a better foundation for family and school partnerships. It's still important to fill out the

MSDE State Family Survey when you get it in the mail. If you have any questions about the new survey, please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.



College Website

Created by a mother and son, the website www.disabilityfriendlycolleges.com provides a list of schools that are friendly to students with physical disabilities, taking into consideration their unique needs.

Tommy and Chris Tiedemann created interactive charts of more than 75 disability-friendly colleges and their services for their website, which also features a blog and information about visiting colleges and preparing for colleges. This resource goes well beyond ADA requirements by featuring personal stories, disability friendly links and more.

Additional IEP Team Member

The Fall 2011 issue of Stepping Stones provided a list of members of the IEP Team. Unfortunately, social workers were mistakenly left off the list.

School social workers offer insight on the general emotional/behavioral factors involved with the specific student and how they pertain to that student's education. The social worker meets with the student over the course of the IEP to discuss issues relating to psychoeducation, social interactions, interpersonal skills, family dynamics, and academic success.

The social worker can also provide insight on the student's social skills and awareness of others and its effect on the student's ability to learn. If the student has significant behavioral problems, then the social worker may have a role in designing and implementing a Behavior Intervention Plan specific to the student.

School social workers also assist families in finding resources in the community.



Spotlight on Health Care

A new brochure from the Children's Medical Services Network, "When You're 18-A Health Care Transition Guide for Young Adults," provides information to help transition-age youth and young adults understand what it means to be legally in charge of their health care and how to stay healthy as they get older. Included in the information are a series of activities touching on being an adult with special needs, life as an adult, talking with doctors, and Internet resources on college and work. To download the information please visit www.disability.gov/viewResource?id=13895711.

The health care reform legislation currently being implemented on a rolling basis brings its own set of questions and need for information for families raising children with special needs. The federal government has set up a website to deal with one facet of the reform legislation covering insurance for those with pre-existing conditions who may have found it impossible or cost-prohibitive to have health care coverage previously. Visit www.PCIP.gov to find out everything you need to know regarding the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, including eligibility, rates and information on applying for the plan.



TSA LAUNCHES HELPLINE FOR PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES from the Autism Society

The Transportation Security Administration has announced the launch of TSA Cares, a new helpline number designed to assist travelers with disabilities and medical issues, prior to going to the airport. Travelers may call TSA Cares toll-free at 1-855-787-2227 prior to traveling, with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint.

"TSA Cares provides passengers with disabilities and medical needs another resource to use before they fly, so they know what to expect when going through the screening process," said TSA Administrator John Pistole. "This additional level of personal communication helps ensure that even those who do not travel often are aware of our screening policies before they arrive at the airport."

TSA strives to provide the highest level of security while ensuring that all passengers are treated with dignity and respect. The agency works regularly with a broad coalition of disability and medical advocacy groups to help understand their needs and adapt screening procedures accordingly.

TSA recommends that passengers call approximately 72 hours ahead of travel so that they have the opportunity to coordinate checkpoint support with a TSA Customer Service Manager located at the airport when necessary.

All travelers may ask to speak to a TSA supervisor if questions about screening procedures arise while at the security checkpoint.

The hours of operation for the TSA Cares helpline are Monday through Friday 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. EST, excluding federal holidays. After hours, travelers can find information about traveling with disabilities and medical needs on TSA's website at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/index.shtm>.

All travelers can contact TSA using Talk To TSA, a web-based tool that allows passengers to reach out to an airport Customer Service Manager directly, and the TSA Contact Center, 1-866-289-9673 and TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov, where travelers can ask questions, provide suggestions and file complaints.

ABOUT ALLIED SPORTS

Allied Sports is an extracurricular activity that enables students with and without disabilities to participate in competitive sports with other Howard County high schools. This program is designed for students who are interested in playing a sport, but may not possess the level of skill required for a varsity or junior varsity team. There are four Allied Sports offered in Howard County, including soccer in the fall, bowling in

the winter, and golf and softball in the spring. All activities are co-ed with appropriate rule modifications to ensure a safe and successful experience for all students. If you have a high school student who may be interested in participating in this amazing new program, please see the Athletic and Activities Manager at your school or call the HCPSS Office of Athletics at 410-313-6631.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Allied Sports was truly a lifesaver for our son. Marcus transferred to a new high school in the fall and was very upset about leaving all his friends and the familiar environment. He would often say he missed his old friends, so when Allied Sports was offered we jumped at the opportunity. It was the perfect chance to not only help Marcus build friendships in his new school, but also a great way to have him connect back with his old friends. Marcus no longer says he misses his old friends because he often sees them during competitions. Additionally, he

has made even more friends and appears truly happy in the warm environment with all the staff and peers he meets and competes with through Allied Sports. Without question Allied Sports has raised Marcus' social experience and growth to a new level. We are truly grateful to be able to participate in this fantastic program. There are certain things you just can't teach, but you can set the stage.

Thank you.

Chris and Kelly Warren



Sign Up to Get News You Can Use

Would you like to receive e-mails about upcoming workshops and news from the Family Support and Resource Center? Visit www.hcpssnews.com to sign up. If you are a new member, go to "subscribe" and check the box marked "HCPSS Office of Special Education" towards the bottom of the subscription page. You can also sign up to get information from your child's school. If you are already a member, please log onto the site and choose "account manager" then mark "click here if you want to receive news from the Howard County Office of Special Education." We promise not to bombard you with e-mails, just occasional communications about upcoming workshops and news you can use in supporting your child. Please call us at 410-313-7161 with questions.

Sibshops

Sibshops is a celebration of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special health or developmental needs. It's a safe place to talk about the good and not so good parts about having a sibling with special needs while taking part in fun games, activities and art projects. Come out and connect with other kids in a safe and fun environment.

The dates for Howard County are March 18, April 22, and May 20. There will be sessions for 4-7 year olds from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and a session for 8-13 year olds from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. For more information or to register call 410-578-5169 or email sibshops@maryland@yahoo.com Sponsored by Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital and the Arc of Howard County.



New Pathfinders for Autism Web Site

After years of planning and months of meetings with parents, educators, agency representatives, government experts, and other professionals, Pathfinders for Autism is pleased to introduce a new and improved website!

- View and printout “Autism by Age” Lifespan Checklists.
- Research the “Book Nook” for resources on Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Search our Provider Database for medical professionals, social skills programs, camps, adult life planning and more.
- Scroll through an Online Calendar to see what’s going on around the state.
- Register for Free Workshops on ASD Lifespan topics.
- Read Parent Tips on topics ranging from “Explaining Autism Using Everyday Examples” to “SSI: The Application Process.”

To see the new site, please visit www.PathfindersForAutism.org.



AUTISM STUDY

The EARLI study (Early Autism Risk Longitudinal Investigation) is recruiting women who have a biological child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and who are up to 28 weeks pregnant -- or may become pregnant in the future.

The research study is a national collaboration led by Drexel University in Philadelphia, with collaboration by Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, the University of California-Davis, and Kaiser Permanente in northern California. EARLI is inviting the help of up to 1,200 pregnant women who live near the four study locations.

EARLI’s purpose is to look for the causes of autism, focusing on the interaction between environmental factors and genes, starting in fetal life through the child’s early development. The observational study is minimally invasive; researchers simply want to collect data on these pregnancies and babies. Some of the samples researchers seek are blood, hair and dust from the home.

Babies born during the study will receive three years of free developmental assessments by researchers at Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, and that information is shared with parents after every research clinic visit. Much of the study is conducted by phone, mail and home visit. When a clinic visit is necessary (six times over three years), families are compensated for travel expenses. Additionally, they are compensated for their time, up to \$605.

To find out more about EARLI, please visit www.earlistudy.org, or find us on Facebook and YouTube. To ask questions or enroll, call Carmen Berry at 410-502-0890 or email EARLI@jhsph.edu.

SSI INFORMATION

Interested in finding out more about the Social Security programs and current proposals to make changes to the programs? The Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities has posted recordings and slides from two recent webinars on Social Security, featuring The Arc’s Marty Ford and other presenters. “Social Security 101” explains the basics of the social insurance safety net that is created by the Social Security retirement,

disability, and survivors programs. “Current Social Security Reform Proposals: How They Would Affect People with Disabilities” explains the specific reforms that have been proposed by organizations and commissions, and their impact on people with disabilities, the elderly, and families who rely on the Social Security safety net. The link is www.disabilityandsocialsecurity.org/resources.html.

BEST BUDDIES

Best Buddies is dedicated to creating opportunities for one-to-one friendships for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the high school level, students with intellectual disabilities are paired with another student at their school. They typically meet during the school day, and then after school to watch movies, hang out, cook or go to school events together. It’s a great way for students with intellectual disabilities to develop relationships with other students at school, crossing the invisible line that too often separates those with disabilities from those without. You can never have too many friends!

Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies is a vibrant, international organization that has grown from one original chapter to more than 1,500 college, high school and middle school

campuses across the country and internationally.

Best Buddies programs are available in several Howard County high schools including Atholton, Centennial, Hammond, Howard, Mt. Hebron, Oakland Mills, Reservoir, River Hill and Wilde Lake. Other high schools in the county have peer buddy programs not affiliated with Best Buddies. There is also a program at Glenwood Middle School. Talk to your school Special Education Instructional Team Leader to find out if your school has a peer program. For more information about Best Buddies programs in the state, go to www.bestbuddiesmaryland.org. Paige Hulsizer, a Program Supervisor in Maryland, can be reached at 410-327-9812 ext. 34 or PaigeHulsizer@bestbuddies.org. Paige is always thrilled to talk to people about Best Buddies!



BRAINY CAMPS ASSOCIATION **A subsidiary of Children's** **National Medical Center**

Brainy Camps Association is a non-profit organization that provides residential summer camps, family retreats, leadership training and transitional youth programs for children with chronic health issues. The camp began its mission in 1994 with a camp for children with epilepsy. Seventeen years later, they have expanded to include camps for youngsters with Asperger's syndrome, Tourette syndrome, neurofibromatosis, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, congenital heart disease, heart conditions that require pacemakers, ICDs or transplants, Down syndrome, hemiplegia and childhood obesity.

The campsite is located in Harrisonburg, VA, at the Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center, just minutes from Rockingham Memorial Hospital. Physicians and nurses are on-site 24/7.

Brainy Camps offer campers a safe, fun experience where they can meet other campers with similar

experiences, often for the first time in their lives. Not only do campers swim, dance and play, they gain knowledge about their issues from medical experts in the field and learn to be independent, self-reliant, and effective partners with their medical providers in the management of their health. Campers can choose from a variety of activities including swimming, fishing, boating, archery, arts and crafts, pottery, team sports, challenge course and camp Olympics. Support groups and educational programs promote knowledge, skill development and interpersonal connections.

Through their time at Brainy Camps, campers gain a sense of who they are, what they have to offer and where they want to go in the future.

For more information please visit www.brainycamps.com or call 202-476-5142 or 3181.



Sensory Friendly Films

Going to the movies is a rite of passage for most children, but for some children with disabilities, it can be an overwhelming experience. That's where the Sensory Friendly Movie comes in. This movie showing has no trailers. The volume will be kept down and the lights will be kept on (but dimmed). Audience members are free to get up, dance, walk, shout or sing during the showing. Bring the family and enjoy a fun morning at the movies in a safe and accepting environment. Sponsored by Howard County Autism Society and AMC Theatres, Columbia Mall.

Doors open at 9:30 a.m.; the movie starts promptly at 10 a.m. Tickets are \$6 a person at the door. Upcoming showings at the AMC Theatres Columbia Mall include:

February 25: *The Secret World of Arrietty*

March 10: *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*

April 7: *Pirates! Band of Misfits*

*Please call the theater at 410-423-0510 prior to the showing, as dates and films are subject to change. You can also visit www.howard-autism.org/ or www.amctheatres.com/SFF/ to find out more about the program.

Workshops and Seminars



Interpreters are available for all workshops sponsored by the Family Support and Resource Center. To request an interpreter, please call 410-313-1591 for Spanish, 410-313-1592 for Korean and 410-313-1589 for Chinese.

MARCH 2012

COLLEGE FAIR FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Saturday, March 3, 2012

Howard Community College • Burrill Galleria

Participants will learn about the provision of Disability Support Services available at individual colleges. There will be several workshops on topics related to transitioning from high school to the postsecondary level. For more information about this free event, please contact Project Access, Howard Community College at www.howardcc.edu/students/academic_support_services/project_access/index.html or call 443-518-4628. Specifically for high school students who are seeking a diploma and are planning to attend a two-year college, four-year college or technology/ trade school.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSITION

Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Cedar Lane School

11630 Scaggsville Road • Fulton

This Assistive Technology Fair will address the needs of students ages 14-21. Topics will include funding sources, AT for transition, low tech and high tech strategies and much more. HCPSS encourages families to attend if their child is 14 or older. Advance registration is not required. For further information, please see the transition coordinator at your school, or call 410-313-5640.

MEDIATION WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 13, 2012, 6-9 p.m.

Location to be determined

Parents are now invited to take part in an exciting training being offered to HCPSS staff. Mediation training will improve on strategies for effective meeting facilitation, listening skills to foster understanding in challenging conversations, techniques for speaking to be heard in ways that move toward problem solving, and skills that build positive relationships. Training is done by Community Mediation Maryland, an organization that is grant-funded through the Maryland State Department of Education. For more information or to register, please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161. Sponsored by the Special Education Community Advisory Committee.

WHAT SPECIAL EDUCATION CAN (AND CAN'T) DO FOR YOUR CHILD

Thursday, March 29, 2012, 1-2:30 p.m.

Howard County Autism Society

10280 Old Columbia Road #215 • Columbia

Presented by Julie Foley and Kim McKay, Parents for Parents, Inc. Participants will gain knowledge of special education laws, and how they play out in local school systems. Emphasis will be on working with your child's team to develop effective partnerships when developing strategies for success for your child in an inclusive academic environment. To register for this free session, please call 443-330-5370 or visit www.pathfindersforautism.org. This is part of the Brown Bag Seminar Series sponsored by Pathfinders for Autism and the Howard County Autism Society.

APRIL 2012

NAMI BASICS EDUCATION COURSE The Fundamentals of Caring for You, Your Family and Your Child with Mental Health Issues.

Mondays, April 16-May 21, 2012, 7-9:30 p.m.

9151 Rumsey Road, Suite 150 • Columbia

NAMI Basics is an education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness that provides resources and practical insights for families. The course consists of six, 2-1/2 hour classes that meet weekly. The course content covers: (1) Introduction to the basics of mental illness, including the biology of mental illness, the challenges of getting an accurate diagnosis, and the latest medical research and advancements in treatment. (2) An overview of treatment options for your child. (3) Strategies to cope with the impact of a child's illness on the rest of the family, including caring for the caregivers. (4) Tools for success: effective communication and problem solving skills, record keeping, and navigating critical support systems (school, mental health care, etc.). The course is free of charge, but pre-registration is required! Please call the NAMI office, 410-772-9300, or email Susan Helsel, shelsel@nami.org by April 1, 2012.

APRIL 2012 CONTINUED

TOURETTE SYNDROME ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE

April 19-22, 2012
Hyatt Regency Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia

The conference offers sessions for parents, individuals, and teens on a variety of topics that are grouped by track. There will also be networking opportunities, allowing attendees to connect with one another to share information, stories, and inspiration. For more information or to register please visit www.tsa-usa.org.

PROJECT ACCESS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday, April 20, 2012, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Howard Community College

Richard G. Luecking, Ed.D., president of TransCen and author of numerous publications on topics related to employment of people with disabilities, school-to-work transition and career development, will be the keynote speaker. In his address, "The Way to Work: Preparing Students with Disabilities for Post-Secondary Educational Experiences that Lead to Careers," he will discuss state and national research that tells how close we are to providing secondary and post-secondary education that culminates in productive and meaningful employment and careers for all students. For more information or to register please call 443-518-4625 or e-mail lschnapp@howardcc.edu. There is a cost associated with this event.

HELPING YOUR ADHD TEENAGER THRIVE INTO ADULTHOOD

Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 7-9 p.m.
Ellicott City Senior Center
9401 Frederick Road • Ellicott City

Presented by Rick Silver, MD, Director of THRIVE Center for ADHD and Comprehensive Mental Health Care of Central Maryland, Inc. The transition to independent adulthood can seem endless, trying, frustrating and futile for many parents and children. Explore factors contributing to this delay in development and

treatment options to help your teen or young adult transition to a productive, fulfilling independent life. There is a \$5 fee for non-CHADD members. For more information please visit www.chadd-mc.org. and click on Howard County Meetings.

MAY 2012

JOHN ELDER ROBINSON

Tuesday, May 1, 2012
Location TBD

John Elder Robinson is the author of "Be Different, Adventures of a Free Range Aspergian" and "Look Me in the Eye." Robinson is a frequent lecturer about his life with Asperger's. He blogs for *Psychology Today* and is an adjunct faculty member at Elms College in Massachusetts. Sponsored by Individual Difference in Learning and the Howard County Public School System. For more information or to register, please visit www.gifteddifferentlearners.org.

SEXUALITY AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES

Thursday, May 31, 2012, 1-2:30 p.m.
Howard County Autism Society
10280 Old Columbia Road #215 • Columbia

Janet Palmer, MA, M.Ed., Advocates for Success, will discuss ways to protect and promote appropriate social behavior in 'tweens, teenagers, and adults with regard to sexuality and the emotional, physical and legal concerns facing both individuals on the spectrum and their families. To register for this free session, please call 443-330-5370 or visit www.pathfindersforautism.org. This is part of the Brown Bag Seminar Series sponsored by Pathfinders for Autism and the Howard County Autism Society.

JULY 2012

NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS

July 20-22, 2012
Washington, D.C.

Each year, thousands of people from across the globe attend the National Down Syndrome Congress Annual Convention. For most, it's to hear the latest information from world-renowned experts. For others, it's a great vacation. But, for nearly all, there's the one-of-a-kind NDSC family reunion feeling that permeates the convention weekend. The 40th Annual Convention will be heading to our Nation's Capitol in Washington, DC. From your house to the White House, it will be an opportunity to share in the milestones of the last 40 years, advocate for continued progress through a Day on the Hill, and embrace all individuals with Down syndrome as they live the dream. For more information please visit www.ndsccenter.org.



WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

There is a wealth of information available for parents of children with special needs. Our responsibility is to provide a variety of resources so you can make informed decisions for your family. The Family Support and Resource Center and the HCPSS do not endorse any group or point of view. We do recommend, however, that you sample workshops and seminars that may be of interest to you and browse the following resources to further add to your knowledge of children with special needs. Please feel free to provide us with feedback on any of the events or resources listed in this publication. Thank you.

ABILITIES NETWORK: Abilities Network provides customized services to children, adults and families of differing abilities that focus on one-on-one support to foster broadened, more inclusive communities through education, training and advocacy. Call 410-828-7700 or 1-800-492-2523 or visit www.abilitiesnetwork.org.

ABILITIES NETWORK SPEAKER SERIES AND DISCUSSION GROUP: Monthly discussions on disability related topics. This group is recommended for individuals with disabilities, as well as their families and caregivers. For more information, please call Cassandra Hitchcock at Abilities Network, 410-828-7700.

ARC OF HOWARD COUNTY: The Arc of Howard County works to improve the lives of children and adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities and their families. Visit www.archoward.org or call 410-730-0638.

ASPERGERS SUPPORT GROUP, HCAS: Second Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. Howard County Autism Society Resource Center, 10280 Old Columbia Rd, Suite 215 in Columbia. Visit: www.howard-autism.org. For more information, call 410-290-3466 or email elainemcauliffe@yahoo.com.

BIOMEDICAL GROUP: Discussion of biomedical/integrative treatments for autism. Meets every other month on the second Wednesday from 7-9 p.m. Nourishing Journey, 10440 Shaker Drive Suite 105, Columbia. Contact Jennifer Palmer at jenn_palmer@comcast.net or Remy Nirschl at mrnirschl@gmail.com for more information.

CHADD PARENT SUPPORT GROUP: The Howard County CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder) Parent Support Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Ellicott City Senior Center. There will be no meeting in March. For more information please visit www.chadd-mc.org. The meeting is open to the public. Monthly topics and more details can be found at www.chadd-mc.org or by contacting krenzi@norbelschool.org. All families with children who have learning differences are encouraged to attend.

CHESAPEAKE DOWN SYNDROME PARENT GROUP: Serving families of and persons with Down syndrome by providing information and support. A bimonthly newsletter includes information about upcoming workshops and conferences, a calendar of local, state and national activities, articles submitted by members, listings of resources, advocacy information, book reviews, and more. Call 410-321-5434 or visit www.cdspg.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: The Community Connections is a project of the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goals of this project are to increase opportunities for young children with special needs to participate in the community, promote awareness of persons with disabilities, and provide support to people and organizations. Visit www.communityconnections.umd.edu.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER: Depression and Related Affective Disorder Association meets every second and fourth Sunday, 3-5 p.m. in Ellicott City. Call 410-740-2618 or 410-750-0811.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER: Howard County General Hospital Wellness Center offers hope to people with depression and bipolar disorder. Meets every second and fourth Friday, 6:45-8:45 p.m. for people to share their experiences and coping skills. The center is located at 11055 Little Patuxent Parkway. Call 301-536-8262 or 443-956-8494.

FAMILY ADVOCACY AND PARENT EDUCATION: FAPE of Howard County offers one-on-one training and assistance regarding special education questions or concerns. They offer support for families in understanding the IEP process, writing IEPs, complaint resolution, and referrals to other agencies or support groups. They also offer a wide variety of free workshops that focus on Special Education. To subscribe to e-mail workshop announcements, please e-mail julie@parentsforparents.org with "subscribe" in the subject line. To find out more about the organization, call Julie Foley, 410-465-1193.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Accelerating the achievement of underachieving student groups through comprehensive programs of school, family and community partnerships. Jean Lewis, 410-313-6794; Jean_Lewis@hcpss.org

HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA: Support group meets every third Thursday, 7-9 p.m. at 10280 Old Columbia Road, Suite 215, Columbia, MD 21046. Call 410-290-3466 or visit www.howard-autism.org.

HUMANIM: Humanim has five core service areas: Mental Health, Vocational, Neuro-Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities and Deaf Services. Services are available to children, adolescents, adults and older adults. Humanim seeks to develop access to quality care for those in greatest need regardless of age, gender, geography, ethnicity or human service requirements. Call 410-381-7171 or visit <http://www.humanim.com>.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING ASSOC., INC.: Information and support for parents and teachers of highly able children with learning disabilities. Meets every second Monday, 7 p.m., Linden-Linthicum United Methodist Church, Clarksville. Visit www.gifteddifferentlearners.org or contact them at info@gifteddifferentlearners.org.

KIDS TOGETHER INC.: The mission of Kids Together Inclusion is to discuss and share information on inclusive education using technology, adaptations, modifications, and problem solving to make general education classrooms accessible to all children. Visit www.kidstogether.org or www.freelists.org/webpage/kidstogether to sign up for the listserv.

LEARNING DISABILITY ASSOCIATION: The Howard County chapter of the Learning Disability Association invites parents of children with learning disabilities to join their e-list. The list is used to send information on meetings, seminars and updated information on LD. To be added to the list, e-mail howard@ldamd.org or call 888-265-6459.

LOCATE: ENHANCED SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES: Locate helps parents find child care or summer camp for children with special needs. A trained special needs counselor can assist you in finding inclusive, regulated childcare programs. Call 410-625-1113 or 800-390-3372.

MARYLAND COALITION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH: Dedicated to improving services and building a network of information and support across Maryland for children with mental health needs and their families. Call 410-730-8267 or visit www.mdcoalition.org.

MOMS NIGHT OUT: Moms Night Out meets for dinner the first Tuesday at a local restaurant. The group offers support and networking opportunities for parents of children with special needs in Howard County. To be added to their e-mail list send a note to HoCoMoms@yahoo.com.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS: NAMI is a national non-profit organization that endeavors to bring a better understanding of mental health issues to families and other members of society through advocacy, support and education. Visit www.nami.org or www.namihcmd.org. NAMI offers a new support group for parents of children and adolescents with mental health issues. Meets every second Monday 12 p.m., and every last Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church, Columbia. Call 410-772-9300 or visit www.nami.org/sites/namihowardcounty.

OUTREACH TO SPANISH SPEAKING FAMILIES: Family support and resources are available at Parents Place of Maryland in Spanish. A staff member is available to help families understand their rights in special education and to assist organizations in supporting Spanish-speaking families. Call 410-768-9100.

PARENTS FOR PARENTS: Parents for Parents, Inc. (P4P) is a private, non-profit organization founded by parents, for parents. We believe in the power of sharing what we've learned and continuing to learn from other families' experiences. We've been there that moment the doctor or teacher says something is not quite right. No matter the diagnosis, whether it's juvenile diabetes, autism, or a learning disability, where do you turn for help? We can guide you to the services, supports and resources your child needs. Call 410-465-1193 or visit www.parentsforparents.org.

PARENTS' PLACE: Parents' Place of Maryland is a parent organization that offers training and assistance to families on special education and health care issues. They provide one-on-one support to help families navigate the special education maze, and help them advocate for the health care needs of their children. All support and information is offered in Spanish. Visit www.ppm.org or call 410-768-9100 for workshop information. To subscribe to their e-mail newsletter please e-mail info@ppmd.org with "subscribe" in the subject line.

GRANDPARENTS AS PARENTS (GAP): Are you raising a relative's child? Are you a grandparent raising a grandchild? Have you had a child placed with you by an agency? Are you filling a gap in a child's life? For Grandparents as Parents information, call the CARE Center at 410-313-CARE (2273).

THE RESOURCE FINDER: The Resource Network provides information and resources on developmental disabilities for parents and professionals such as: specific developmental disabilities; local, state and national associations; educational, recreational and child care resources; service providers; and specialists. Call 1-800-390-3372 or visit www.resourcefinder.kennedykrieger.org.

SECAC: SECAC is an independent group of parents, community partners, service providers and educators that provide feedback to the Department of Special Education. Being involved in SECAC enables you to collaborate with the department on local issues and has the potential to facilitate positive changes in the delivery of services and the achievement of all students with disabilities. For more information, please e-mail chair@howardsecac.org, visit www.howardsecac.org, or call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410-313-7161.

