



Autism Awareness Month

Join HCAS this April in celebrating our friends, family members, and loved ones on the autism spectrum. In addition to our full calendar of advocacy and educational seminars and forums, we have fun events planned for all ages, including a Sky Zone Party and our annual [Pieces of the Puzzle Gala](#).

Although every day is an opportunity for us to promote autism awareness in Howard County, April is a good time for us to spotlight programs that foster acceptance and equality in our communities, schools, and workplaces. One example is the [Be Safe the Movie Interactive Movie Screening](#) later this month, a collaborative effort between HCAS and the Howard County Police Department to teach individuals with special needs how to advocate for themselves and be safe in emergency situations.

As always, we are here to help. Call or email our office with questions, ideas, and for support and resources. Happy Autism Awareness Month!

11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala



EVENTS

13 APR

[Sky Zone Party](#)

13 APR

[Transition and Adulthood Support Group Meeting](#)

14 APR

[Asperger's Support Group Meeting](#)

18 APR

[BROWN BAG Guardianship: To Do or Not to Do? That is the Question.](#)

21 APR

[Be Safe Interactive Movie for Self Advocates](#)

23 APR

[Sensory Friendly Showing of "The Jungle Book"](#)

30 APR

[11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala](#)

The Out-of-Sync Child

Sensory Challenges and Sensible Solutions

Presented by [Carol Kranowitz, Author of The Out-of-Sync Child](#)

Saturday, May 14

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Owen Brown Interfaith Center, Columbia



You will not want to miss the '80s themed [11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala](#), presented by the Howard County Autism Society in partnership with the John P. Hussman Foundation. Saturday, April 30 from 7 - 11 p.m. at [The Hotel at Arundel Preserve](#).

The evening will include dinner, a live and silent auction, a photo booth, '80s trivia, and '80s music by MegaByte. **Tickets are on sale through April 15.** No more tickets will be sold after April 15. Tickets are \$150 per person and \$1500 for a table of ten. [Purchase your tickets](#) today.

Make sure your individual on the spectrum is included in the gala slide show. Send one or two fun photos to galaphotos@howard-autism.org by April 15.

BE SAFE Interactive Movie Screening: Promoting Safe Interactions with the Police



Be Safe the Movie (Official Trailer)

HCAS and Howard County Police Department (HCPD) Academy Class 40 recruits are hosting a screening of [Be Safe the Movie](#) on Thursday, April 21 from 6 - 8:30 p.m. [Be Safe the Movie](#) shows teens and young adults with disabilities what to do and say in everyday encounters with police. The

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) gets in a child's way and in their families' and teachers' ways too. This presentation is perfect for parents, educators, therapists, and other professionals and will review how SPD plays out at home and school, and how to recognize underlying sensory issues.

General participant cost is \$35 and the OT CEU participant cost is \$50. The fee includes the cost of lunch. [Register online](#).

News and Resources from the **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWS CENTER**

[Presentation from HCAS's Annual Meeting with Nancy FitzGerald](#)

The executive director of HCPSS Department of Special Education and Student Services spoke with HCAS families and gave an update on special education in the county.

[Put Social Skills on the IEP](#)

Challenges with social skills impact learning. Learn how to incorporate social skills in the IEP.

[Promoting Inclusion Through Education](#)

A mother shares tips on how to ensure that a child with autism is fully included in school and community life.

Do you have questions about special education services and rights? We are here to help. Email AskUsSpecialEdQuestions@Howard-Autism.org or call 410-290-3466.

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SENSORY EASTER BUNNY

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HCPD Academy Class 40 is [partnering with HCAS throughout the year to enhance recruit training on autism](#).

During the movie, crucial safety skills are demonstrated in seven episodes, ranging from following instructions to the right to remain silent. The movie was created by and for teens and adults with special needs such as autism. Each scene shows an individual with a disability interacting with real police officers.

Prior to the screening, HCPD recruits will attend an overview and training. They will assist throughout the movie by explaining their tools and uniforms, leading hands-on activities, and working alongside individuals attending the training.

"Officers and individuals on the spectrum are learning together," says Shannon Majoros, director of programming for [RISE for Autism](#), who is facilitating the program for HCAS. "For many participants, it is the first time they have been near an officer, and officers learn how to approach and respond to individuals with autism. The program gives participants the tools necessary to advocate for themselves and safely navigate emergency situations."

Space is limited to 20 individuals and one caregiver per individual. To register, call 410-290-3466 or email info@howard-autism.com.

Transition Symposium 2016 a Success

Parents, caregivers, educators, and youth attended the Transition Symposium 2016 on March 19 and the Cedar Lane School. In addition to workshops on transition planning, employment, and post-secondary education, there were workshops specially designed for youth with developmental and physical disabilities on topics ranging from meal preparation and safety to self-advocacy and planning for the future.

The symposium was a collaborative effort of the Howard County Autism Society, Howard County Public School System, Howard County Government, and Accessible Resources for Independence, Inc.

Thank you to our Transition Symposium 2016 sponsors.

Plenary Sponsors

Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (IATC)
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC)

Workshop Sponsor

My Life Learning Center, Inc.

Partners

First Maryland Disability Trust

Howard County Commission on Disability Issues



Families of children with special needs enjoyed time with the Easter Bunny on March 20 at The Mall in Columbia. Sensory impulses were kept to a minimum and families were given numbers instead of waiting in line for their special visit with the Easter Bunny.

Howard County Autism Society

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