



Sensitive Santa

HCAS is partnering with The Mall in Columbia to host two sensory friendly Santa events this holiday season. The first event was held Dec. 4 and the next event will be **Sunday, Dec. 11, from 8:30-9:30 a.m.** No pre-registration is required.

Families enjoy time with Santa without the noise and lights, before stores open to the public. HCAS has holiday-themed activities for the children to take part in and [Yogibo at The Mall in Columbia](#) is making their cozy chairs and pillows available to families to while they wait for their turn with Santa.



HCAS Welcomes New Executive Director

Melissa Rosenberg comes to HCAS with over 15 years of experience in nonprofit management. She spent 10 years with the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts in Howard County, developing a Theater Outreach Program that served Baltimore City Public School students and individuals of differing abilities in Central Maryland. Following that, she worked with Joe's Movement Emporium, a performing and community arts center in Prince George's County, to build a solid development program. Most recently she ran a consulting business that provided an array of affordable services for growing businesses and nonprofits.

Melissa received an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in nonprofit management from the University of Maryland University College.

EVENTS

10 DEC

[AMC Sensory Friendly Movie "Moana"](#)

11 DEC

[Sensory Friendly Santa at The Mall in Columbia](#)

15 DEC

[HCAS Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck Dinner](#)

17 DEC

[Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism](#)

21 DEC

[Dad's Night Out at Kloby's](#)

26-27 JAN

[Great Wolf Lodge, Williamsburg, VA](#)

30 JAN

[Special Needs Camp Fair](#)

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

[Maryland Statewide IEP Process Guide](#)

Learn the intent of each section of your student's IEP, how the IEP decision-making process works, and frequently asked questions.

[A Parent's Guide to Assessment](#)

Get a better understanding of the assessment process and how to use assessment outcomes to improve services and interventions for your student.

[School 411: Transition Resource/Work Study](#)

[Coordinators](#)

management from the University of Maryland University College. She and her husband, Jim, both avid Terps fans, live in Silver Spring, MD. They have two grown children.

HCAS Holds Discovery Workshop on Preliminary Housing Concept

Over the next five years approximately 600 high school students with autism or an intellectual disability will transition out of Howard County schools. For many of these individuals, one of the only long-term options will be to live with their parents. In response to this growing need, the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) Housing Committee has researched housing models from across the country to identify viable, supportive housing options. Earlier this year the committee contracted with [Generations of Hope Development Corp.](#) to conduct a feasibility study for Howard County, based on its [intentional neighboring model](#).

As a result of the study, a Discovery Workshop was held on October 28-29, hosted by the [Hussman Institute for Autism](#). Specially selected community members, stakeholders, and advocates were invited and encouraged to listen, learn, and provide input in this process. "Together we were able to discuss what our envisioned housing community could be," says Cynthia Schwanz, HCAS Housing Committee member. "In particular, we parents shared our insights as to the many differences among people on the spectrum and the challenges that would be faced in planning a community for them."

"Generations of Hope offered us a chance to begin scoping out their unique housing model and apply its principles to our young adults," says Eric Adler, HCAS Housing Committee member.

"By creating an intentional, inclusive community, which encompasses neighbors helping neighbors, we then reduce the vulnerabilities of those who struggle with more challenges and adopt the multi-cultural, inclusive vision that was set by Jim Rouse for Columbia 50 years ago," explains Pamela Beck, HCAS Housing Committee member. "Furthermore, this concept of intergenerational living solves more than one problem--it supports not only a vulnerable group but also seniors who might want an opportunity to give back in some way and benefit from sharing that within their own community."

The workshop was a first step in forming a better understanding of the complex needs of adults on the autism spectrum living in Howard County; how they might not only just be housed and supported, but of service to others in the community.

Three Ways to Support HCAS

When you support HCAS, you become part of a collective vision to create a community in which difference is embraced, uniqueness is valued, and opportunities are abundant. There are three ways to support HCAS this holiday season:

[Make a tax-deductible, online donation to HCAS today!](#) Your gift will enable HCAS to

[Coordinators](#)

Every HCPSS high school has a transition resource/work study coordinator. Find the coordinator assigned to your high school.

Do you have questions about special education services and rights?

We are here to help. Email AskUsSpEdQuestions@howardautism.org or call 410-290-3466.



Save the Date

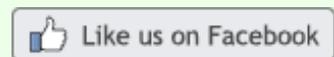
Pieces of the Puzzle
Country Western Gala
April 26, 2017

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Howard County Autism Society

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provide support, resources, and advocacy to individuals on the autism spectrum, their families and caregivers.

LIVE UNITED



United Way
of Central Maryland

Designate your United Way of Central Maryland contribution to HCAS. There are two ways to search for HCAS:

- Howard County Autism Society, Inc.
- Agency code: 46730



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