HCAS Explores Housing Options for Adults on the Spectrum

“We felt there were no good housing options out there for our sons and daughters on the spectrum,” says Eric Adler who is a member of the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) Housing Subcommittee. This reality became the impetus for parents to form a committee and apply for a grant from the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council for the purpose of creating housing opportunities for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.

With the grant funds, consultant Diane Dressler, senior associate, Community Life Resources, was hired to help facilitate research of existing housing models from across the country that might form the basis of future development and advocacy. The committee identified and reviewed 16 housing models and conducted a comparison evaluation using criteria geared toward creating an inclusive community setting and offering flexibility to meet the diverse needs of people on the spectrum.

The committee identified two housing models, satisfying the criteria, for further exploration: Generations of Hope in Rantoul, IL, and Jeremiah Village, in Zelienople, PA. Both of the models are “intentional communities,” where neighbors are provided opportunities to meet one another and to support one another through organized volunteer service and community functions. These models include a small percentage of units specifically for people with disabilities; typically fewer than 25 percent. People with disabilities hold a lease, choose roommates, and are able to choose whether and from whom personal supports are provided. The subcommittee recognizes that significant resources and partnership would need to be obtained to implement either of these models in Howard County.

An additional outcome of the research resulted in further advocacy efforts to impact existing housing programs in the area. Pam Beck, of the HCAS Housing Subcommittee, has joined forces with housing and community leaders in Howard County to advocate for an alternative compliance strategy. “This strategy would set aside a small number of housing units affordable to citizens with disabilities who live on a Social Security Income while meeting affordable housing quotas without additional burden on the housing developers,” explains Beck.

The research and work of the HCAS Housing subcommittee identified the importance of engaging young adults and teens early to discuss housing and living options to help them grow accustomed to the idea of living on their own.

With the recent submission of the final grant report to Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the HCAS Housing Subcommittee will be merged back in with the Transition and Adulthood Committee to allow housing topics to be made part of the larger committee agenda as needed. A separate, smaller housing workgroup will continue on in focused efforts to push forward with the potential housing options that have been identified.
Save the Date

One Step Closer... Autism Walk & 5K Run
Sunday, November 1
Centennial Park, Ellicott City

The 9th Annual HCAS “One Step Closer” walk and 5K running race event will feature a timed 5K run around Centennial Lake, a “Lake Walk” of the same distance, and a shorter three-quarter mile “Piece of Cake Walk." There will be children’s activities, including face painting, princess and Star Wars costume performers, and two moon bounces. A complimentary continental breakfast will be available for runners and walkers.

9 a.m.  Registration and packet pick up, complimentary breakfast
9:40 a.m.  Welcome and introductions
10 a.m.  Starting time for the 5K race participants
10:05 a.m.  Starting time for the walk participants
11:15 a.m.  Awards and closing remarks

Go to howard-autism.org to register and start your team. Online registration is open through October 28.

A New Format for HCAS Perspectives
This is our last print issue. HCAS Perspectives will be a completely online publication beginning in January 2016.

Our goal is to deliver brief, more frequent newsletters to your inbox. The online format will not only allow us to make information available to you on a more timely basis, it will allow us to shift the costs of printing and mailing toward other HCAS programs.

We want to hear from you. What news and features are relevant to you? Send suggestions to Sara Sommerville at sara.sommerville@gmail.com.
Greetings from HCAS! As I sit down to write this article and update everyone on HCAS activities over the past several months, I once again am finding it difficult to summarize all that we currently have going on. This newsletter contains articles providing summaries of recent noteworthy activities like our Summer Pool Party and the year-long work of our Housing Subcommittee. In addition to these, however, there is much more happening behind the scenes in all of our committees to further our efforts in advocacy, awareness, and support.

We have recently joined forces with the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and the Howard County Government’s Department of Citizen Services, and Department of Recreation & Parks to form the Howard County Transition Outreach Partnership. This partnership is an exciting one, as it brings together several key organizations serving the Transition and Adulthood community. Already, this partnership has brought in nationally-recognized speakers such as Dwayne Ross and Kathie Snow, and is in the process of planning for the annual Transition Fair in November, and our annual Transition Symposium notionally slated for March of 2016.

Our Program Committee is working hard to plan the next set of offerings to the community. This includes the continuation of our Fitness First events, the planning for the 2015-2016 Brown Bag seminars with Pathfinders for Autism, speaker offerings for our monthly meetings, sensory friendly events in Columbia, and social events that will keep our calendar full well into 2016.

Our Governance Committee continues to look for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our board, and is currently looking for candidates for our 2016 Board of Directors slate. Our Education Committee continues to advocate for our children on the spectrum through a variety of activities and efforts. Many of these involve collaboration with other organizations such as HCPSS, SECAC, The Arc of Howard County, and RISE for Autism, allowing for a broader reach throughout the community.

Speaking of education advocacy, the Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) grant for 2015-2016 began in July, and marks the fourth straight year we are facilitating this grant in house. If you have an issue or question related to special education services you may be receiving, please don’t hesitate to contact us. When I add the many ongoing efforts of our Asperger’s, Legislative, Transition and Adulthood, Development, Finance and Public Relations Committees to this list, I can’t help but feel excited about our past, present, and future offerings to the community.

These activities cannot happen without the support and dedication of our volunteers and committee members. Thank you to all of you who have assisted us throughout the year to make a difference in our community.

Please take a look at our events calendar in this newsletter for a listing of many of our upcoming activities, and check our website often for updates and new additions. As always, we hope to see you out at our many events.

Finally, feel free to reach out to us anytime with ideas, feedback or questions. We are here to help. And if you’re interested in volunteering, we’d love to have you. With your participation in and support of our committee activities, HCAS will continue to be a strong voice within the community for our friends, family members, and loved ones.

Roger Thibaudeau
president@howard-autism.org
Community Fundraisers for HCAS

Waverly Woods Lemonade Stand

This past summer 9-year-old friends Isa and Awurabena decided to take their favorite play activity, restaurant, to the next level with a lemonade stand. When the girls approached Isa’s mom, Carolina Musters, with the idea of setting up a lemonade stand for charity, Musters was thrilled and supportive. The girls decided to split the proceeds of their stand with the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) and Johns Hopkins.

The friends set up a lemonade stand in their Waverly Woods neighborhood. In all, there were nine children who participated, ranging in age from 4 to 9. Neighbors and passersby contributed while enjoying a refreshing drink and cookie. The kids found a creative solution for customers who were not interested in cookies—they expanded their offerings to include homemade soaps.

The children donated the proceeds from their sales to HCAS in honor of Musters’ son, Ollie (8), and to Johns Hopkins in honor of their friend who suffers from Type 1 Diabetes. “One of the boys literally emptied his money box to support the causes, which almost brought me to tears,” says Musters.

Champps in Columbia Gives Back to HCAS

Champps Kitchen + Bar at The Mall in Columbia hosted a restaurant night for the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) June 3. More than 200 people participated. Customers bid on sports-themed silent auction items and Champps donated 10 percent of the evening’s sales to HCAS. In all over $1,000 was raised for HCAS.

“It was a fun event for all,” says Heather Saffield, Champps general manager. “Customers enjoyed free tastings of signature dishes and we had corn hole and other games for families to play.”

The evening was especially meaningful for Saffield; her teenage son has autism. “The staff and I were delighted to celebrate individuals with autism and do our part to raise money for programs that support them,” says Saffield.
HCAS Gratefully Acknowledges Recent Donors

MAY—AUGUST

$35,000+
Howard County Department of Citizen Services

$5,000
DART Group

$1,000
Champps Kitchen + Bar at The Mall in Columbia

$250 - $499
Ryan Dworski
Efrain Larenas of E Class Fitness

$100 - $249
Charlotte and Emil Bernhardt
Ridgelys Run Community Association
Rebecca Jane Torrance
Lisa Wright

Up to $99
Beth Benevides
Erin Cassell of Roll Up N Dye
Saundra Fellerman
Connie R. Heath
Alice Lao
Randy Malamphy
Carol L. Messerly
Carolina Musters
Leif Olson
Marcella T. Schwartz
Andrea Skantar
James Taylor of Fuddruckers in Columbia
Brown Bag Seminar Series

October 12  ABA Techniques in the Home and School
Alicia Inglosi, BCBA
This talk is designed to teach the basic concepts of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and to provide insight as to how these concepts relate to the instruction of children in the home and in school. Topics will include ABA as a science, types of instructional strategies, goal mapping, antecedents and consequences of behavior, behavior shaping, reinforcement systems, data collection and visual analysis of data and planning for the future.

December 7  Supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs) for Children and Teens on the Autism Spectrum
Laura Mirkin, CNS, LDN, LCPC
Learn how evidence-based supplements and herbs may help the functioning and behavior of children and teens on the spectrum. Supplements covered include Vitamin B6, magnesium, zinc, DMG, bacopa, and several others. Types, brands and forms and amounts will be covered for each supplement along with precautions to be aware of. Basics of the biomedical approach to helping autism will be discussed. References to studies in the medical/scientific literature will be provided where indicated.

Spring 2016 TBD  Guardianships: To Do or Not to Do? That is the Question!
Alisa Kobrinsht Chernack, Esquire
Please join us to learn if you need to seek the appointment of a guardian of the person and or property for your child when they turn age 18. Information will be provided as to the court process, the timeline and the estimated costs. Alternatives to guardianship will also be discussed.

Pathfinders for Autism does not endorse any treatment, service or provider. We strive to provide accurate, up-to-date information to individuals, families and professionals to assist them in making informed decisions about what best suits their unique needs.

Seminars will be held at:
Howard County Autism Society
10280 Old Columbia Road, #215
Columbia, MD 21046

Seminars are free, but registration is required for each session at 443.330.5370 or www.pathfindersforautism.org.

This workshop series is sponsored by Pathfinders for Autism and the Howard County Autism Society.

Mondays from 1:00 - 2:30 pm

2015 - 2016
Do you have questions about special education services and rights? We are here to help.

The Howard County Autism Society provides advice and support on special education issues and services in Howard County through consultations, workshops, and seminars. If necessary, free phone consultations with the Maryland Disability Law Center can be arranged.

- Attend one or our special education workshops.
- Visit the Special Education News Center website, specialed.howard-autism.org.
- Contact us for answers and advocacy at 410-290-3466 or AskUsSpecialEdQuestions@Howard-Autism.org.

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As with many children on the spectrum, my son struggles with fine motor skills. While he has worked hard over the years and has shown vast improvement in handwriting and finger strength, he has not yet been able to conquer the task of shoe tying. And at times, his struggles have become a source of frustration that can quickly spread to other areas.

Last year, this frustration led to us receiving a call from his classroom teacher. He was upset in PE because his shoelaces got untied and he couldn’t fix it. Needless to say, it wasn’t a good day. But, while discussing the incident, his teacher happened to mention LOCK LACES, which a couple of her former students had previously used. After doing some online research, I thought this was the perfect solution. I ordered some and put them on Ryan’s shoes, and it has been fantastic! There is no more stress about untied shoe laces or loose shoes.

Created in 1999, LOCK LACES are an elastic no-tie shoelace that come in a variety of awesome colors and they are also a one-size-fits-all for both children and adults. According to their representative John Riddle, LOCK LACES are worn by athletes, senior citizens, and individuals with special needs in over 60 countries. The laces have made a positive impact in improving the quality of life for millions by turning any shoe into a slip-on and by creating extra comfort and support.

When I called the company to thank them and get more information, I talked at length with John about our community and the benefit this type of product could bring. John was very supportive, and has agreed to offer HCAS members an opportunity to buy LOCK LACES at a discounted price. You can purchase them online at:

www.locklaces.com
Coupon Code: AUTISM20
20% off entire store purchase
Expires 12/01/2015

For us, this was one thing that was an easy fix for Ryan. It decreased his frustration with his shoes, and as Ryan says, “My shoes look awesome, Mom!”.
HCAS Summer Pool Party

Nearly 100 HCAS members joined us for our summer pool party at Lifetime Fitness on July 19. Families socialized, cooled off in the outdoor pool, and enjoyed an Italian meal catered by Three Brothers Restaurant. Thank you to Lifetime Fitness for their hospitality and supportive staff who were great with the kids.
Upcoming Events

For updated events information or additional information about events listed below, visit the HCAS website howard-autism.org or call 410-290-3466.

Thursday, October 15 ~
Kathie Snow: Leadership, Self-Direction, Inclusion, and Dreaming Big Starts Today!
9 a.m.-4 p.m., Roger Carter Community Center, 3000 Milltowne Drive, Ellicott City. Learn strategies to ensure children with disabilities have the tools, accommodations, supports, and modifications they need to succeed in all areas of life. You’ll also learn about the importance of effective communication and creating proactive, positive relationships to generate awesome outcomes for children with disabilities.

Thursday, October 15 ~
HCAS General Support Group Meeting
6:30-9 p.m., The Bain 50+ Center, 5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia. Guest speaker is Kathie Snow, parent, author, and motivational speaker. When children and adults with disabilities have important tools for success, including assistive technology and more natural forms of assistance, they can enjoy self-directed lives, be included in their communities, and live the lives of their dreams. Everyone can live a real life included in the real world.

Saturday, October 17 ~
Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism
3:30-4:30 p.m., The Yoga Center of Columbia. These classes are a wonderful way to help reduce anxiety and challenging tactile sensitivity issues. Parents are encouraged to participate as well. No need to register, just mark your calendar and join HCAS at the Yoga Center.

Saturday, October 17 ~
Sensory Friendly Showing of “Pan”
10 a.m., AMC Theatre, Columbia Mall. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Lights will be turned up, sound will be turned down. Tickets: $6.75 each.

Saturday, October 24 ~
Mom’s Night Out
7 p.m., Goldszmidt residence, Ellicott City. The 9th Annual HCAS “One Step Closer” walk and 5K running race event will feature a timed 5K run around Centennial Lake, a “Lake Walk” of the same distance, and a shorter three-quarter mile “Piece of Cake Walk.” There will be children’s activities, including face painting, princess and Star Wars costume performers, and two moon bounces. A complimentary continental breakfast will be available for runners and walkers. Go to howard-autism.org to register and start your team. Online registration is open through October 28.

Wednesday, November 4 ~
2015 HCPSS Transition Fair
6-8 p.m., Wilde Lake High School, 5460 Trumpeter Road, Columbia. Learn about options available to young adults receiving special education services and transition planning for life after graduation. Agencies will be onsite to provide information on the services that are available to you and your child. HCPSS will provide a road map to guide you through the process based on your child’s age and whether or not he/she is earning a diploma or certificate of completion.

Saturday, November 7 ~
Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism
3:30-4:30 p.m., The Yoga Center of Columbia. These classes are a wonderful way to help reduce anxiety and challenging tactile sensitivity issues. Parents are encouraged to participate as well. No need to register, just mark your calendar and join HCAS at the Yoga Center.

Saturday, November 7 ~
Fitness First
7:15-9:30 p.m., Columbia Gym, 6151 Day Long Lane, Clarksville. HCAS will host our popular, free family fun night at the Columbia Gym for members only. Please check with the HCAS Office at 410-290-3466 to confirm whether your membership is current. We are pleased to collaborate with The Children’s Spot during gym time, which begins at 7:15, to provide structured activities. Activities include stretching, stations for various exercise activities, basketball, kickball, scooter boards, and the popular parachute activity. An alternative to gym time, is to use the Game Room with a pool table, ping pong, and toys for young children. At 8 p.m. there’s swimming and socialization in the indoor pool (towels are provided by the gym). There will be light snacks in the atrium at 9 p.m. In keeping with the theme, fitness first, our new snack menu will consist of healthy, light snacks and water. This is for the whole family to take part in—parents wear your sneakers!

Saturday, November 14 ~
Sensory Friendly Showing of “The Peanuts Movie”
10 a.m., AMC Theatre, Columbia Mall. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Lights will be turned up, sound will be turned down. Tickets: $6.75 each.

(Continued on page 11)
Thursday, November 12 ~
Asperger’s Support Group Meeting
7:30-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center.
For information, contact Jennifer May, jennmay91@gmail.com.

Thursday, November 19 ~
HCAS General Support Group Meeting
7-8:30 p.m., MACPA, 10280 Old Columbia Road, Ste. 245, Columbia.
Spend an evening with board certified music therapist Kerry Cornelius, MT-BC, of Annapolis Music Therapy Services. Learn how music therapy can benefit individuals on the autism spectrum. We’ll talk about why music therapy works, how to find a music therapist, and learn ways music can be used at home to influence your child’s mood. Participants will also experience basic music therapy interventions such as steady beat drumming, self-regulatory songs, and writing piggyback tunes to teach a range of concepts.

Saturday, November 21 ~
Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism
3:30-4:30 p.m., The Yoga Center of Columbia. These classes are a wonderful way to help reduce anxiety and challenging tactile sensitivity issues. Parents are encouraged to participate as well. No need to register, just mark your calendar and join HCAS at the Yoga Center.

Saturday, December 5 ~
Sensory Friendly Showing of "Good Dinosaur"
10 a.m., AMC Theatre, Columbia Mall. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Lights will be turned up, sound will be turned down. Tickets: $6.75 each.

Saturday, December 5 ~
Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism
3:30-4:30 p.m., The Yoga Center of Columbia. These classes are a wonderful way to help reduce anxiety and challenging tactile sensitivity issues. Parents are encouraged to participate as well. No need to register, just mark your calendar and join HCAS at the Yoga Center.

Save the Dates for Family Fun
HCAS has many family fun winter activities planned. Watch your eblasts or check howard-autism.org for more information.

Sensory Santa
December — Date TBA
The Mall in Columbia

Winter Pool Party
Sunday, January 17, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Lifetime Fitness
7220 Lee Deforest Dr., Columbia

Stephanie Maric, J.D.
301-379-9493
Visit my website at: www.stephaniemaric.lnf.com

Long & Foster – Columbia
Direct: 301-379-9493
Office: 410-715-2721
email: stephanie.maric@longandfoster.com

DONATION COMMITMENT:
I will donate $250 to the Howard County Autism Society for every member referral that results in a sale
($500 if I sell your home and help you buy a new home)

HCAS Board Member (2003-2010)
About the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS)

The Howard County Autism Society (HCAS) is a chapter of the Autism Society of America, which was founded in 1965 to help parents, family members, professionals, and caregivers learn about and effectively deal with autism, PDD, Asperger’s, and related disorders. We are one of about 200 chapters across the country.

HCAS is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. The national society and HCAS share the common goals of providing information and education, supporting research, and advocating for programs and services for people with autism spectrum disorders. HCAS works in Howard County to advance acceptance of persons with autism, PDD, Asperger’s, and related disorders.

HCAS provides:
• support for parents
• information and referrals
• advocacy for persons with autism/ PDD/Asperger’s and their families
• presentations by experts on autism/ PDD/Asperger’s, disability rights
• professional development for educators, service providers, employers
• autism 101 trainings for community members
• monthly meetings
• social activities

Join the Social Network
The HCAS social network connects you with other parents in a private, online forum where you can post questions or share information about doctors, schools, family support services, etc. www.howardcountyautismsociety.org

Receive the Semi-Monthly e-bulletin
Twice monthly, HCAS sends emails with upcoming events, area news, and community events pertaining to autism-related issues. To sign up, email info@howard-autism.org.

Like HCAS on Facebook
Friend us on Facebook to stay current on HCAS news, area events, and the greater autism community.

Newsletter Submissions

Perspectives welcomes articles and contributions from parents, siblings, professionals, and people with autism spectrum disorders. Submit your article, book review, meeting notice, or photo by emailing info@howard-autism.org.

Advertising rates are available on the HCAS website at www.howard-autism.org.