



11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala

Wait, is that Richard Simmons? He was among a few of the '80s celebrity lookalikes who attended the HCAS 11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala on Saturday, April 30, at The Hotel at Arundel Preserve.



This year's '80s theme was whole heartedly embraced by the attendees. In fact, a clap off was needed to determine the best costume winner. Richard Simmons (of which there were two) beat out Eric and Ponch of "CHIPS" by a hair. Our DJ kept the dance floor hopping with '80s classics such as "Sweet Child O'Mine," "Electric Slide," and "Safety Dance." The evening aptly ended with Prince's subdued "Purple Rain."

John Hussman delivered the [keynote address](#), speaking of the power of courage and presuming competence for our loved ones on the autism spectrum. HCAS celebrated partnerships with the Howard County Police Department Academy Class 40 and The Children's SPOT. We recognized outstanding volunteer, long-time board member, supporter, and this year's gala chair, Madhu Thibaudeau. HCAS parent Heather McCabe shared a heartwarming [open letter to her daughter](#), leaving very few dry eyes in the house. We are grateful for our many supporters and [gala sponsors](#).

Join us at next year's gala when we head back to the The Hotel at Turf Valley on April 29, 2017.

EVENTS

19 MAY

[HCAS Monthly Meeting - Maryland Autism Waiver](#)

28 MAY

[Sensory Friendly Showing of "Alice Through the Looking Glass"](#)

28 MAY

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

8 JUNE

[Transition and Adulthood Support Group Meeting](#)

9 JUNE

[Asperger's Support Group Meeting](#)

11 JUNE

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

16 JUNE

[HCAS Monthly Meeting - LISS](#)

25 JUNE

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

SAVE THE DATE

"Offer Them Courage"

Remarks by John P. Hussman

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"When I was growing up," said my friend Jamie Burke, "speaking was so frustrating. I could see the words in my brain, but then I realized that making my mouth move [was needed to] get those letters to come alive, they died as soon as they were born. What made me feel angry was to know that I knew exactly what I wanted to say and my brain was retreating in defeat."

My brain was retreating in defeat. Imagine how that must have felt.

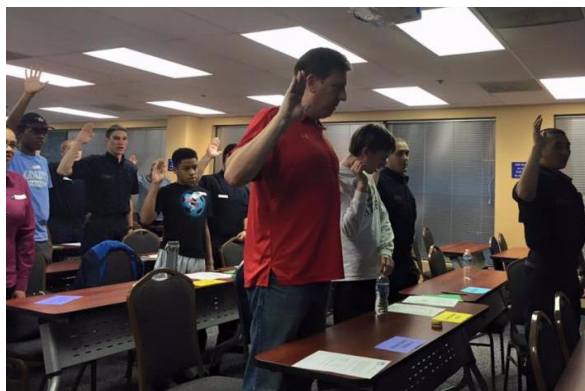
I've been thinking about two words all week: Courage and Discourage.

In all of the teaching strategies, behavioral supports, picture schedules, and other tools that we pick up over time and stuff into our bag, as parents, teachers, and friends of people with autism, one of the things we can miss is that one, simple, powerful idea: courage.

[Read more.](#)

Be Safe the Movie Screening

HCAS collaborated with [Rise for Autism](#) and hosted "[BE SAFE The Movie](#)," an interactive movie event, designed to teach safe exchanges with law enforcement on April 21 at the HCAS Resource Center. Eight teens and young adults with disabilities were led through seven video episodes, modeling what to do and say when meeting police in everyday encounters.



Police recruits, young adults, and parents and caregivers take the safety pledge at the "Be Safe The Movie" interactive screening.

As part of the ongoing [partnership with HCPD Academy Class 40](#) recruits joined with participants and worked through the facilitated exercises that demonstrated crucial safety skills, ranging from following instructions to the right to remain silent.

"I learned that police help keep people safe," said participant Chase May. "If they ask you questions, you should answer them. You shouldn't touch a police officer and you shouldn't run away."



HCAS Summer Pool Party

July 17 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Life Time Fitness Columbia

News and Resources from the SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWS CENTER

[How to Create a Parent Input Report](#)

Beyond test scores and assessments, write a parent input report for your student's IEP team that documents her strengths, struggles, and successes.

[Understand the Important Difference Between Accommodations and Modifications](#)

If understood and used correctly, these words can greatly impact the success of a student's educational program.

[Written Opinions: A How-To Manual](#)

A written opinion can help you communicate to your IEP team what happened at a meeting from your perspective.

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

Email AskUsSpEdQuestions@howard-autism.org or call 410-290-3466.

**HCAS Perspectives
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**The Lisa Higgins-Hussman
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Howard County

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For more information about the movie, visit <http://www.riseforautism.com/be-safe-the-movie.html>. HCAS has a copy of the "Be Safe The Movie" DVD in its lending library.

Help Plan the 2016 One Step Closer Walk/Run

The 10th Annual HCAS One Step Closer Autism Walk and 5K Run will be held Saturday, Oct. 1. From team building and sponsorships to the light saber show and horses, ever wonder how this event comes together?



Help us plan this important community building and fundraising event. For more information about the Walk/Run Planning Committee, email info@howard-autism.org or call 410-290-3466.

Thank You to Our Gala Sponsors

"Greatest Love of All" (\$15,000)

The John P. Hussman Foundation

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"Sweet Dreams" (\$1,500)

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Verbal Beginnings

In-Kind Contributors

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