



HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

Providing Support
Promoting Awareness
Advocating for Change

Perspectives

HCAS Newsletter

February 2017

Stop Waiting and Start Planning 4th Annual Transition Symposium Saturday, March 18

Save the Date

Transition Symposium 2017

Saturday, March 18 / 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Cedar Lane School, 11630 Scaggsville Road Fulton, MD 20759

Howard County
RECREATION + PARKS

[Register online today.](#) Tickets are \$25 for general admission (\$35 after March 10) and \$10 for youth ages 14-24.

Are you interested in impacting the lives of youth with disabilities ages 14 and older? Are you a youth with a disability between the ages of 14 and 24? Join us for the 4th Annual Transition Symposium to gain the knowledge, skills, and resources needed for a successful transition to post-high school employment, education, and independent living.

The day-long conference offers parents, caregivers, professionals, and transitioning youth an opportunity to learn about a wide variety of transition-related topics. The symposium will be held on Saturday, March 18 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Cedar Lane School in Fulton.

The transition symposium is an event of the Transition Outreach Partnership -- a collaborative effort of HCAS, Howard County Public School System, Howard County Government, and Accessible Resources

EVENTS

MAR 4

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

MAR 9

[Asperger's Support Group](#)

MAR 16

[General Support Meeting - HCPSS Dept. of Special Education & Student Services](#)

MAR 18, 2017

[Transition Symposium](#)

MAR 25, 2017

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

MAR 25, 2017

[Fitness First! at Lifetime Fitness](#)

There will not be a Transition and Adulthood Group meeting in March.

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

[How to Know if Your Student is Making Progress](#)

There are a variety of data parents can use from special and general education sources to find out if your student is making progress.

[Help Your Teen Develop Self-Advocacy Skills](#)

Role play questions your teen can ask in real-life situations such as the classroom, IEP meetings, employment, and more.

for Independence, Inc. The symposium is sponsored, in part by the Governor's Interagency Council for Youth with Disabilities.

[Learn more.](#)

Middle School Workgroup on Autism Publishes Final Report

The recently published report is the culmination of two plus years of collaborative effort between Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and parents of children with autism. The workgroup was formed in 2014 to address concerns from parents that were brought out in listening posts co-hosted by the Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC) and the Howard County Autism Society (HCAS).

Co-chaired by Joyce Agness of HCPSS and Beth Benevides of HCAS, the purpose of the workgroup was to evaluate the program needs of students with autism and related disabilities in middle school and to make recommendations for systemic change aligned with the HCPSS Vision 2018 strategic plan and the Bridge to Excellence Act.

The workgroup was comprised of 19 members representing families, special educators, instructional team leaders, administrators, resource teachers, and psychologists from a variety of middle schools across the county. The workgroup's charge was to:

1. Collect comprehensive data on the current middle school landscape;
2. Determine barriers to a successful middle school experience for students with autism;
3. Formulate recommendations for systemic change that are evidence-based and feasible.

Extensive input was also received from the broader community through interviews with middle school-based staff, a survey of Middle School Instructional Team Leaders, and a survey of families of middle school students with autism.

Notably, there were many common themes among parents, school-based staff, and central office personnel in terms of the ideal middle school experience, and the current barriers to that ideal. In all, ten final recommendations were developed and put forward by the workgroup. To see these recommendations, as well as the rationale and data supporting them, please read the full [Middle School Workgroup on Autism Report and Recommendations](#).

Special Needs Summer Camps

HCAS hosted a Special Needs Camp Fair in partnership with the Cedar Lane School on Jan. 30. Summer camp opportunities included day and sleep-away camps and ranged from horseback riding and nature camps to STEM and social skills camps. See the [complete list](#) of camps represented and contact information.

[SECAC Report to the Howard County Board of Education](#)

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee makes several recommendations to the Howard County Board of Education in its winter 2017 report.

Do you have questions about special education services and rights?

We are here to help. Call 410-290-3466 or email AskusSpEdquestions@howard-autism.org.

Pieces of the Puzzle Western Gala

Saturday, April 29 at 7 p.m.
Turf Valley Resort



[Registration is Open!](#)

HCAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HCAS is delighted to welcome two new board members, Heather Stanley and Lisa Wilson.

We express our sincere appreciation to former board member Christi Hanks for her 10 plus years of service on the board of directors.

For a complete list of HCAS board members and officers, visit the [HCAS website](#).

Howard County Autism Society

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