GALA TO CELEBRATE CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN AUTISM COMMUNITY

Members of the autism community in Howard County and beyond are making plans now to join with more than 300 guests at the Howard County Autism Society’s Fifth Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala on Saturday evening, April 24, 2010, at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City. The Hussman Foundation once again is generously supporting the gala as the title sponsor.

The unique theme of this year’s event is “A Celebration of the Arts.” Through special efforts to celebrate the arts, attendees will be delighted by a variety of arts performances and artwork prepared by and for individuals with autism.

A highlight of the evening will be a special program that will include a performance by Brandon Beck, a young man on the autism spectrum and a Peabody-trained pianist, as well as a dance performance by a troupe from the Ballet Royale Institute of Maryland. The dance, specially choreographed by Ballet Royale owner and former HCAS board member Donna Pidel, is meant to celebrate the individuality and beauty within the autism community.

Circling the Grand Ball Room, there will also be a display of paintings and drawings created by individuals ranging from young children to young adults on the autism spectrum.

“Creative expression has been known to open new worlds for individuals with autism,” says executive director Kim Manning. “We know guests at the gala will be enchanted by the creativity of these amazing artists.”

As always, the gala will feature the special touches that the Howard County Autism Society has offered to guests in past years: a spectacular menu accompanied by an open bar, dancing, and live and silent auctions featuring more than 100 items.

The celebration would not be complete without the opportunity to recognize friends who have actively supported and enhanced the work of HCAS. This year several individuals will be presented awards.

Tickets are priced the same as in previous years at $100, and are now available online at www.howard-autism.org.

Tables of 10 guests may be reserved in advance by contacting Jeanni Hines at 410-290-3466. For guests in smaller groups, there will be open seating in the ballroom.

Turf Valley Resort is renowned for its golf packages and luxurious spa treatments. Reduced room rates are available for gala attendees. Visit the website at www.turfvalley.com or call 410-465-1500. The special event code is 27O2W5.
“Lose the Training Wheels”
Bike Camp Sponsored by HCAS

The Howard County Autism Society and the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks will proudly sponsor a bike camp to teach children with disabilities how to ride a bike without training wheels. The program is run by Lose The Training Wheels™ and will be held June 28 through July 2. Riders will be assigned to a 75-minute session, each of the five days.

Lose The Training Wheels™ is more than just a bike-riding program. As noted on the Lose the Training Wheels website, “for many children with disabilities, it’s a seemingly impossible task they can typically master in less than a week’s time. Within days of learning to ride, many children exhibit independent behaviors for the first time ever. This achievement, in turn, creates a gateway of opportunity, helping them gain assurance and self-reliance in many other aspects of their lives.”

HCAS actively pursued the organization for more than two years to find an agreeable date. Since announcing the program’s upcoming visit to Howard County, HCAS has received numerous calls from local residents as well as those from neighbouring counties and states.

Susan Potts, manager of therapeutic recreation and inclusion services at the Department of Recreation and Parks, secured space for the program at the Glenwood Recreation Center.

The one-week program will accommodate 40 children. Participants must have a disability and be at least 8 years of age. Participants must be able to walk without an assistive device and must be able to side step quickly to both sides. They must be able and willing to wear a properly fitted bike helmet at all times when on the bicycle. The maximum weight is 220 pounds.

The registration application will be available on March 15, 2010. It may be downloaded in PDF format from www.howard-autism.org. Applications will be accepted beginning March 15, 2010, and will be time-stamped upon receipt. Members of the Howard County Autism Society as of January 1, 2010, will have priority access. The cost per rider is $150.

For more information on Lose the Training Wheels, the program and organization, visit www.losethetrainingwheels.org. For more information on the HCAS sponsored Lose the Training Wheels bike camp, email kim.manning@howard-autism.org or call 410-290-3466.
Winter Greetings!

You must truly be enjoying this winter if you are a cold weather/snow lover. If you are not, don’t despair—spring is just around the corner!

We are excited here at the HCAS Resource Center about 2010, and are off to a great start. We are busy planning the speakers and resources we will bring to Howard County to respond to your needs and concerns. As I have shared with you before, one of our priorities is to try and create more opportunities and collaboration around the issue of transition and adult services. To that end we will partner with Pathfinders for Autism to present a four-part series of workshops in the fall months around key topics of concern to parents and to individuals on the spectrum. The half-day workshops will be hosted in Howard County and will be free of charge. Details are coming together now. Look for more information in the coming months.

Additionally, I am very gratified to be a part of strategic thinking with a number of community partners around the issue of employment for individuals with disabilities. I believe that with continued advocacy and an unwavering commitment we will see significant progress in the area of employment opportunities. The only silver lining in the black cloud of state budget cuts is that key stakeholders are collaborating to ‘think outside of the box’ and are generating many great ideas. I want you to know that I consider it a great privilege and solemn responsibility to represent the needs of you and your family when I sit in various meetings. Always feel free to call or email me with ideas, needs, or concerns.

I was reminded recently of the great strides we have made in Howard County on behalf of families living with autism. A lovely lady from another county in Maryland came to the resource center and was about at her wits end. Her family is contemplating a move to Howard County and she wanted to find out what the county had to offer. As she began to share some of her family’s needs, I was able to point out a service, resource, or support that addressed most, if not all, of them. It was a wonderful meeting and by the time she left she had hope for a better future for her family. That’s what we are all about.

I want to thank you for the generous investment of your time, talent, and treasure in the mission of the Howard County Autism Society. We are touching lives one family at a time and together we ARE making a difference!

~Kim Manning

Holiday Campaign Donors Gratefully Acknowledged:

Heidi Abdehady
Richard and Mary Anderson
John and Selena Benevides
Melissa Bianchino
David and Lisa Booze
Lawrence and Alisa Chernack
Brian and Jenifer Gallagher
Christine Hanks
Elton Howard
Todd and Pamela Johnson
Daniel Lesho
Matthew and Marita Lesho
Michael Leumas
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Russell Meade and Jennifer Donahue-Meade
Karen and Johnny Nixon
Bernadette Olean
Sharen Pride
Carolyn Seaman
Sara and Martin Sommerville
Lloyd and Stacey Stirmer
Brian and Kathleen Stitely
Gary Terle
Thuy Than and Maria Ribaya-Than
Valerie Veise
Stephen and Pamela Wagner

HCAS CHAMPIONS
∞ $1000 or more raised ∞

In addition to the teams listed in the Fall 2009 newsletter, HCAS gratefully acknowledges:

The M Team
The February support group meeting at the Howard County Autism Society featured Dr. James Walsh, HCPSS Director of Special Education, and Patricia Daley, Coordinator of Special Education. Among the topics discussed was the following program that makes available free Facilitated IEP Meetings in Howard County.

Scheduling IEP team meetings that are facilitated by external, independent, trained “facilitators” is rapidly becoming a popular means for parents and school personnel to reach agreement in the educational decision making process for students needing or suspected of needing special education services. A facilitator may help parents and school personnel avoid misunderstandings or disagreements when it is believed that discussions at the meeting may become challenging. Using a trained facilitator has been found to be an effective means to keep IEP teams focused on the development of the educational program for the student while addressing some of the conflicts and disagreements that may arise from inadequate communication.

Who can request an IEP meeting be facilitated?
Parents or the school. However, both must agree to the use of a facilitator.

Who serves as a facilitator?
The facilitator is a trained volunteer from a community mediation center, generally located in the jurisdiction where the parent resides or another community close to where the parent resides and where the student attends school. The facilitator has completed a 50-hour training course in mediation skills, has experience mediating a variety of disputes, and has completed a 3-day training in IEP Facilitation. The facilitator is not a member of the IEP team and does not have a relationship with the school or the parents other than to assist in the meeting. The facilitator remains neutral and focuses on the process while the team makes the decisions.

How does facilitation differ from mediation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? While facilitated IEP team meetings are emerging as a means to avoid conflicts and/or to resolve conflicts prior to requesting mediation or filing a due process complaint, it is not required under the IDEA. Mediation may be used to deal with a broader range of issues in special education, including issues unrelated to the IEP.

What does the facilitator do at the meeting?
The facilitator can be expected to:
• Assist in establishing an agenda
• Guide the discussion and keep the focus on the student
• Help resolve disagreements
• Use communication skills to help parents and school personnel work together to make decisions about the program
• Help team members develop and ask clarifying questions about issues that may have occurred in the past
• Help keep the team on task and within the meeting time allotted
• Remain impartial, not take sides, place blame, impose a decision on the group, nor offer an opinion on the appropriateness of a decision.

What are the benefits of a facilitated IEP team meeting?
• Focus remains on the student
• Supports all parties in participating
• Positive working relationships between parents and school staff are maintained
• Opportunities for creative, win-win, solutions are possible
• Facilitation services are free to the parties and non-confrontational
• Effective communication and listening skills are modeled
• Points of agreement and disagreement are clarified
• Parents and professionals are encouraged to identify new options to address unresolved problems
• Is part of the regular IEP meeting; does not require a separate meeting
• All decisions are made by the team, rather than by a mediator or a hearing officer.

How is the confidentiality of the student and family maintained?
Parents must provide their consent to allow the school to share confidential information about the student with the facilitator. This is required under the Family Education Rights Privacy Act.

Who pays for the facilitator? There is no cost to the parent or the school.

Who do I contact if I want a facilitator to attend the IEP team meeting for my child? To find out how to request the service, it is suggested that you contact the Office of the Director of Special Education for the school system responsible for your student’s educational program or contact Community Mediation Maryland at 410-349-0080.

It is important to know that facilitated IEP meetings are the same as any other IEP meeting. The same expectations exist for compliance with legal regulations and any other requirements that govern the IEP process in Maryland. The only significant difference is the presence of a facilitator.

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~The Parent University~
provided by
Parents For Parents

Did someone ever give you advice or guide you to just the right resource that made all the difference in your family’s life? Did a friend, neighbor, or family member help you along the way? Do you wish you could ‘pay it forward’ or give back to other parents? If so, then Parent University is for you!

Parents for Parents, a cross-disability parent support organization, is building a parent-to-parent network of individuals willing to work with other families. Called “support parents,” these individuals will provide families with information, connect families to resources, and attend IEP meetings. You don’t have to know everything already—Parents for Parents provides the training at the Parent University. You just need a desire to help others!

Co-founders Julie Foley and Kim McKay will match you with families that can use your experience and expertise. Are you an elementary school family who just finished the RECC program and could help another RECC family? Are you now in middle school?—perhaps you could help a family through the often daunting and scary transition from elementary school to middle school? Are you a veteran family that has high school experience to share? Families of all ages, disabilities, and areas of the county, are needed. It is a unique opportunity to become involved and active, on your time and your schedule.

The 2010 training session will focus on older children—middle and high school. If you are a parent of a child in middle, high, or beyond, we want you!! Please contact Parents for Parents. The trainings are funded by the Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) Program Grant awarded to the HCAS by the Howard County Department of Citizen Services.

To learn more about the trainings or the parent-to-parent network, contact Julie Foley at julie@parentsforparents.org, Kim McKay at kim@parentsforparents.org, or call 410-465-1193.

ARE YOU ON THE DDA WAITING LIST?

The Maryland Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) is attempting to clean up its 19,000+ person waiting list. They have begun mailing letters to everyone in their system to verify the status of individuals in their database. DDA has said that if individuals (family or caregivers) do not respond to these letters, DDA staff will attempt to contact them by telephone before removing the individual from the waiting list.

If you or a family member are on the waiting list—or you believe you or a family member might be eligible for service—it is absolutely imperative that you contact DDA. Follow the instructions provided in your letter, or call your local DDA Regional Office. For assistance finding your regional office, call DDA at 410-767-5600. DDA has made assurances that a phone call is all that is needed to remain on the waiting list. Please confirm your status!

MSDE Extends Use of Categorical Option “Developmental Delay” to Age 9

The Maryland State Department of Education recently extended the use of the disability code “Developmental Delay” to the age of nine. Previously, the code could be used only until the age of six.

MSDE issued a clarification about the use of the disability code of Developmental Delay for children age (3) three through the age of (9) nine for students receiving special education services. In its clarification, MSDE emphasizes that the categorical option provides parents an extended timeframe in which to assess the learning needs of students, and to build a more complete profile of a child’s strengths, challenges, and individual approaches to learning. This is particularly applicable when the child’s IEP team has identified delays or specific conditions, yet the identification of a specific disability under IDEA is unclear based on the available information.

The use of Developmental Delay provides an opportunity for parents and service providers to proactively intervene through observing a child’s progress over time and collecting data on appropriate instructional approaches and learning needs. Use of the DD category may also help to prevent the over-identification of young children and students with learning differences as having a disability.

Information provided by the Family Support & Resource Center, Howard County Public School System
On Tuesday, January 12, the Maryland Commission on Autism held its second meeting. The commission, which was formed in response to a 2008 legislative bill introduced by Sen. Klausmeir and Del. Kipke, consists of 19 governor-appointed commissioners tasked with presenting recommendations in a number of key areas pertaining to autism. HCAS Executive Director Kim Manning attended the meeting and offers the following report.

The following data, requested by the commission from the Maryland State Department of Education, was presented by Marjorie Shulbank, Section Chief, Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, Preschool Services Branch:

- 7510 students in Maryland are diagnosed with autism; this number steadily increases each year
- 7.5% of students in special education have autism
- 919 students are enrolled in non-public placements financed by local school systems and the state
- 38 students are enrolled in non-public schools at parent’s expense
- 900 students receive services through the autism waiver
- 3200 students are on the autism waiver waiting list
- the last student to get the waiver had been on the waiting list since May 2004

The commission set up seven workgroups that will meet independently and then report back to all commission members. These workgroups will consist of commission members and individuals in the community with expertise.

The workgroups are:

- **Transitioning Youth**—will focus on all things pertaining to aging-out of the school system and navigating the world of adult services
- **Provider Workforce Development**—will work closely with area universities to analyze best practices for training and recruiting teachers and training a wide variety of providers
- **Research Partnerships**—will establish collaborations to support autism research in the state of Maryland
- **Evidence-based Practices**—will identify best practice pilot programs and determine how to implement them on a statewide basis
- **Funding and Resources**—will investigate creative ideas around the issue of sustained resources for the delivery of services in light of budget cuts
- **Health and Medical Services**—will explore a wide variety of issues, including early diagnosis, family supports, and the effective management of co-morbid conditions
- **Adult Service Systems**—will focus on the equity of services throughout the state, employment, transportation, long-term financial planning, and more user friendly navigation of the system

A presentation was made by Li-Ching Lee, PhD, ScM, Principle Investigator with the Autism Developmental Disability Monitoring Network (ADDM) and Assistant Scientist in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.

Maryland is one of eight states participating in the CDC-funded study to monitor cases of ASDs in order to make an accurate estimate of the prevalence of ASDs in a particular region. The regions covered in Maryland include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard Counties and Baltimore City. Dr. Li-Ching and Dr. Rebecca Landa of Kennedy Krieger are co-directing the study.

Preliminary results (through 2007) echo the national data that the number of individuals diagnosed with ASDs is rising at an alarming rate. Further study will identify ‘hot spots,’ environmental factors, and other variables that might account for the increase. More information can be found at www.cdc.gov/autism.

Del. Kirill Reznik (Montgomery County) announced he will, once again, introduce legislation on autism and insurance reform and asked that individuals contact his office to find out how to help with grass roots advocacy on this issue.

Upcoming commission meetings are scheduled as follows, with exact locations yet to be announced:

- April 20, 2010
  Eastern Shore
- July 13, 2010
  Western Maryland
- October 19, 2010
  Southern Maryland
Applebee’s Spring Breakfast

Applebee’s® Flapjack Fundraiser
to support Howard County Autism Society

NEW DATE: Saturday, MARCH 6

$7.00 per person

WHEN: 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Applebee’s Neighborhood Grill & Bar
8335 Benson Drive, Columbia, MD 21045

ORDER TICKETS ONLINE: www.howard-autism.org

Valid only at participating restaurant listed above. Tickets originally purchased for the Breakfast with Santa (December 19), which was cancelled due to snow, will be honored. Valid for pancake event only. Applebee’s menu items are not included as part of purchase.

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The Friendship Puzzle
Helping kids learn about accepting and including kids with autism

Written by Julie L. Coe * Inspired by Jennifer Maloni
Illustrated by Sondra L. Brassel

Book Signing at Barnes & Noble
April 22, 2010
7:00 p.m.

Julie L. Coe
Jennifer Maloni
Sondra L. Brassel

Meet the author, the mother who inspired The Friendship Puzzle, and the illustrator at a book reading/ book signing at Barnes & Noble (Long Gate, Ellicott City) ~ Thursday, April 22, 7 p.m.
Local Sensory Friendly Movie Events Extend to the Philippines

According to a press release issued by the Philippine Information Agency on December 17, 2009, the sensory-friendly movie events that originated in Howard County by parent and HCAS board member Marianne Ross have now extended to the Philippines.

Rheybie C. Nipas, officer of the committee on disability affairs of SM Supermalls, reported that the first screening was in Manila. Soon thereafter, the Autism Society of the Philippines-Davao Chapter received numerous requests posted on blogs and other social networking sites to host screenings in Davao. The SM Mall responded and opened its theater to a crowd of 150 for the second screening. Nipas said they will offer sensory friendly movies in all other SM Malls in the country for the benefit of children with special needs.

The press release referenced Marianne Ross and her daughter Meghan’s experience in 2007 that led to the creation of the sensory friendly movie events. Ross called the Columbia AMC Theater after her daughter Meghan, 9 years old, was asked to leave another local theater for “flapping” her arms and jumping up and down during a movie. Ross asked AMC manager, Dan Harris, to consider having special showings for families whose children are prone to overstimulation and her request prompted the theater management to come up with the very first Sensory Friendly film screening ever. Given the overwhelming success since then, the Autism Society of America and AMC have worked together to expand the program nationwide.
In Part 1 of this series (published in the Winter 2009 issue), I outlined the basic components of a trust such as the selection of a trustee to manage the trust funds, funding of the trust (e.g., source of funds), and rules regarding distribution. Since writing that article, I have noticed that the issue of finding a lawyer to assist with planning for a disabled child appears to be a challenge throughout the community. The various listservs that I belong to are replete with inquiries about referrals needed to locate a lawyer to help with this process. In addition, they also contain postings about the cost charged by many lawyers. As a practitioner and as a parent of an autistic child, I find these inquiries to be no different than requests for referrals for medical professionals and funding for treatment. If I had a choice to spend money to “address” medical/psychological issues before estate planning issues, I would likely choose the former due to the present nature of the service.

My goal of this article is to elevate the priority of estate planning, including the preparation of a will, trust, and other documents. In order to accomplish that goal, one of the responsibilities of the parents is to prepare for the initial meeting with their lawyer. In order to prepare for the meeting and make that initial meeting as productive as possible, completion of the following questions, in addition to a list of assets as follows, would make the meeting a success and possibly minimize some of your expense.

I hope that this helps readers check this project off their list of things to do in the coming year!

Alisa Kobrinetz Chernack, Esquire, practices law in Ellicott City. She can be reached at alisa@chernackelderlaw.com or 410-750-6112.

### Assets: Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank Name</th>
<th>Owner(s)</th>
<th>Value as of 1/1/10</th>
<th>Type of asset</th>
<th>Beneficiary, if any</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank of America</td>
<td>Alisa Chernack</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>Primary: Scott Chernack Secondary: ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trust
Who do you choose to manage your assets, make investment decisions, and determine how distributions are made to beneficiaries from any trust created under your Will (i.e., your trustee)?

**Trustee (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

**Successor Trustee (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

Who will receive the trust assets if your beneficiary passes without use of the funds?
__________________________________________________________________________________

### Will
Who do you choose to probate your Will, collect and administer your assets, and distribute your estate to your beneficiaries (i.e., your executor/personal representative)?

**Personal Representative (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

**Successor Personal Representative (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

If you have minor children, who should be given the responsibility of raising them if both parents should die before the children reach age 18 (i.e., their guardians)?

**Guardian (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

**Successor Guardian (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

### Power of Attorney for Parent(s)

**Agent (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

**Successor Agent (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Relation: ______________________

### Advance Health Care Directive for Parent(s)

An agent may be appointed by you to make medical decisions for you if you are incapacitated.

**Agent (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Phone: (H) ______________________
(C) ______________________
Relation: ______________________

**Successor Agent (s):**
Name: ______________________
Address: ______________________
Phone: (H) ______________________
(C) ______________________
Relation: ______________________
Brandon Beck will be an honored guest and featured performer at the April 24th Pieces of the Puzzle Gala.

Brandon Beck, a long-time resident of Howard County, is 25 years old and an accomplished rock-and-roll and classical pianist. He also is a young man on the autism spectrum, diagnosed at the age of 16 months.

Brandon first experienced the piano when he was just three years old. He stumbled upon a keyboard in his parents’ basement—a keyboard his grandfather had played and passed along to the family, and one that no one had played since its arrival.

Though non-verbal, Brandon began to express his fascination with music after watching the children’s movie “Beethoven,” which featured the adventures of a Saint Bernard dog and, significantly, Beethoven’s musical masterpiece, *The Fifth Symphony*. It was that famous tune that Brandon chose to pluck out on the keyboard all by himself one day.

That initial spark of fascination for the piano led Brandon’s parents, Pamela and Steve Beck, to encourage him to play other songs he knew, such as those he heard on Sesame Street. Before long, Brandon was playing many familiar songs and enjoying every moment!

Brandon has taken piano lessons for the past ten years at the Howard Community College (HCC) and has studied for the past four years at the renowned Peabody Preparatory in Baltimore. He is thrilled to play rock-and-roll anytime and finds many opportunities to do so as the keyboardist with an ensemble at HCC. He has performed at many of his friends’ and family’s special celebrations, and as well at senior citizen centers, the Howard County Library, and the grand opening of the Howard County Service Coordination office. In addition, he has played at formal recitals at the Peabody Institute and HCC.

The Howard County Autism Society is delighted to have Brandon Beck perform at its upcoming annual *Pieces of the Puzzle Gala* on April 24, at which autism and the arts will be celebrated.

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**Project Lifesaver Enrollment Opportunities**

The Howard County Autism Society and the county police department jointly sponsor Project Lifesaver, a tracking program that uses radio technology to locate vulnerable children and adults who wander.

Enrollment in Project Lifesaver is currently free to individuals with autism. If you would like more information or an application, please contact HCAS at 410-290-3466 or email info@howardautism.org. More information on Project Lifesaver can be found at www.projectlifesaver.org.

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**Expressions at Ballet Royale**

Express yourself through dance, exercise, painting, drawing, poetry reading and literature. Make new friends, enjoy music from classical to 70s, 80s, and Hip Hop.

For autistic students with moderate to severe cognitive delay, ages 20 and up.

Light snack included. Volunteers are needed. Students should be accompanied by a caregiver.

For session dates and times, please contact:

Ballet Royale
9747D Red Branch Rd, Columbia.
For more information visit www.balletroyale.com or call 410-997-8443
Winter Pool Party

On January 26, HCAS hosted its annual free winter pool party at Lifetime Fitness. HCAS members were splishin’ and splashin’ the winter blues (and blizzards!) away.

HCAS hosts two pool parties each year, with the summer party held in August. The pool and waterslides are reserved just for HCAS families, and lifeguards are present. Refreshments are also served.

Think summer(!) and look for more information on the summer pool party to come.

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Adult Language and Pragmatic Skills Group (ALPS Group)

The Group will meet on Wednesdays starting February 17, 2010 and ending April 28, 2010

No class on March 24, 2010

A communication group is forming for the Spring 2010 semester at Towson University for adults on the autism spectrum. The group will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 pm-7:00 pm. Come join Donna Long, an ASHA certified speech pathologist, and graduate student clinicians from the program of Speech Language Pathology, for a unique and interactive communication experience.

Sessions include brief presentations, small and large group discussion, video observation/analysis, role playing, and community based practice of skills. Topics of discussion will include:
- Fostering and maintaining relationships
- Socializing with the opposite sex
- Understanding emotions
- Determining your talents and goals
- Preparing for the workplace
- Communication on the job and in the community

Cost: $200 for 10 sessions
Location: Administration Building
Rm. 120
Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252

Please Contact Us:
Registration and Interview Required
Towson University Center For Adults with Autism
Donna L. Long, MS, CCC-SLP
Assistant Director, Faculty and Clinical Supervisor
Email: casd@towson.edu or dl@towson.edu
Phone: 410-704-4486 (TU-CA)

small changes...BIG IMPACT
for children on the autistic spectrum, and with ADD/ADHD
Wednesday, March 3, 2010
7pm-9 pm
Columbia, MD

What your ASD or ADD/ADHD child eats may be the number one thing that can begin to bring them to balance...and...
the BEST DIET may not be what you think!

Come learn why gluten-free/casein-free (GF/CF) diets may not be enough...they bring temporary relief and may lead to other issues.

Learn simple things to help bring your child to better functioning without drugs, and about the brain-gut connection and emotional well-being...

with holistic nutrition educator, whole food chef and alternative health practitioner
Missoula, Montana, Honorary Board, Weston A. Price Foundation
Grandparents are often the first to suspect that a child may have autism and they play a major role in caring for children once they are diagnosed, according to preliminary findings from what is believed to be a first-of-its-kind survey of grandparents of those on the autism spectrum.

[for the complete article, please visit “Disability Scoop” at www.disabilityscoop.com. Reprint permission was granted only for the print edition of the newsletter.]
Santa Night Pub Crawl Nets $2200 to HCAS

On December 11, a merry band of not-very-good singers caroled throughout Howard County raising money for children and families in need. These civic-minded merry-makers dressed as Santas or Elves, traveled by sleigh (bus) from establishment to establishment, and entertained patrons while collecting donations and spreading goodwill. Proceeds from this year's Santa Night benefitted the Howard County Autism Society and the Howard County Domestic Violence Center.

Special thanks to Reed Racette for coordinating this event.

Buy Joe Corbi’s Pizza, Cookie Dough, & Gifts and Support HCAS

The Howard County Autism Society and Joe Corbi’s Pizza have joined efforts to improve the quality and access to services and educational opportunities for individuals with autism and their families. Joe Corbi’s, a family owned local business that specializes in providing pizza crust, cookie dough and other gift items, has been a regular sponsor of our fundraising events.

This year, in addition to being a philanthropic supporter at our fourth annual gala and a silver sponsor at our third annual “One Step Closer...Autism Walk,” Joe Corbi’s is generously providing a special web page (www.joecorbi.com/HCAS/) to allow friends of HCAS to place orders for frozen items and gift items to benefit the fundraising efforts of the autism society. HCAS will receive $4.00 for every frozen food item purchased and $1.00 for every gift item purchased. The order will be shipped directly to your house.

GLUTEN-FREE, CASEIN-FREE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DOUGH available for purchase online at www.joecorbi.com/HCAS or at the HCAS offices. Special discount while supplies last: $10 per 3-lb tub (a savings of 30%)

Contact jeanni.hines@howard-autism.org or 410-290-3466 if you are interested in making a purchase of this special cookie dough at the HCAS offices. www.joecorbi.com/HCAS/
March 3, 2010 ~
Biomedical Group Meeting
7:00-9:00 p.m. at Faulkner Ridge. Monica Corrado, Holistic Nutrition Educator, will present “Small Changes . . . BIG Impact for Children on the Autism Spectrum and with ADD/ADHD.” Contact Jennifer Palmer at jenn_palmer@comcast.net or Remy Nirschl at mrnirschl@gmail.com.

March 6, 2010 ~
Pancake Breakfast at Applebee’s
8:00-10:00 a.m. Relax over a plate of hot pancakes and enjoy time with your family. Tickets $7. Applebee’s, 8335 Benson Dr., Columbia. Contact Jeanni Hines at 410-290-3466 or order tickets online at www.howard-autism.org.

March 11, 2010 ~
Howard County Asperger’s Support Group Meeting
7:30-9:00 p.m. Howard County Autism Society Resource Center, 10280 Old Columbia Road, Suite 215, Columbia. Contact Elaine McAuliffe, 410-730-0068 or elainemcauliffe@yahoo.com.

March 18, 2010 ~
Howard County Autism Society Support Group Meeting
7:00-9:00 p.m. Dr. Lana Warren, Director of Clinical Programs at KKI, will discuss KKI’s study of the use of acupuncture in autism treatment. Chris Hammon, Licensed Acupuncturist at Tai Sophia Institute, will talk about its benefits. Howard County Autism Society Resource Center, 10280 Old Columbia Road, Suite 215, Columbia. For more information call 410-290-3466, www.howard-autism.org.

March 20, 2010 ~
Sensory Friendly Movie
HCAS and AMC Columbia present a sensory friendly showing of “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” at AMC Theatres Columbia Mall. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Movie begins at 10 a.m. with no trailers. Tickets $6 each. Contact Marianne Ross for information at rossfda@hotmail.com.

April 7, 2010 ~
Biomedical Group Meeting
7:00-9:00 p.m. at Faulkner Ridge. Contact Jennifer Palmer at jenn_palmer@comcast.net or Remy Nirschl at mrnirschl@gmail.com.

April 8, 2010 ~
Howard County Asperger’s Support Group Meeting
7:30-9:00 p.m. Howard County Autism Society Resource Center, 10280 Old Columbia Road, Suite 215, Columbia. Contact Elaine McAuliffe, 410-730-0068 or elainemcauliffe@yahoo.com.

April 10, 2010 ~
Sensory Friendly Movie
HCAS and AMC Columbia present a sensory friendly showing of “How to Train Your Dragon” at AMC Theatres Columbia Mall. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Movie begins at 10 a.m. with no trailers. Tickets $6 each. Contact Marianne Ross at rossfda@hotmail.com.

April 22, 2010 ~
Howard County Autism Society Support Group Meeting—Special Event at Barnes & Noble Bookstore
Join us for The Friendship Puzzle book reading, discussion, and signing by local author Julie Coe. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Long Gate Shopping Center, Montgomery Road, Ellicott City. For more information call 410-290-3466, or visit www.howard-autism.org.

April 24, 2010 ~
Fifth Annual PIECES OF THE PUZZLE Gala
7:00-midnight. The theme of this year’s fifth annual gala is “A Celebration of the Arts” in the autism community. Please join us for our most festive evening of the year! Grand Ballroom, Turf Valley Country Club, Ellicott City. Tickets $100 per person, available at www.howard-autism.org. Please contact Jeanni Hines for additional information at jeanni.hines@howard-autism.org.

May 6, 2010 ~
Special Parents Book Discussion at Howard County Library
7:00-9:00 p.m. Central Library. The book club will discuss Parenting Your Complex Child: Become a Powerful Advocate for the Autistic, Down Syndrome, PDD, Bipolar, or Other Special-Needs Child by Peggy Lou Morgan. Please read the book in advance and join the discussion, or just come along to listen! For more information, contact Cindy Jones, Howard County Library, 410-313-7779.

Upcoming Events
For updated events information, visit the HCAS calendar at www.howard-autism.org/pn/calendar.html
In an effort to streamline our efforts with the national Autism Society of America, membership renewal is changing in 2010.

HCAS has joined with the Autism Society’s national headquarters to offer members a single, unified membership program. All current members will be offered the opportunity to join both the national society and our local chapter for one price of $25. Only one fee, one time a year will be paid, and that will ensure enrollment in both the national Autism Society and the local Howard County Autism Society.

You will continue to enjoy all of the information, newsletters, social opportunities, and local advocacy from HCAS. Plus you will receive national autism news, national level advocacy, and *Autism Advocate*, the quarterly journal published by the Autism Society.

By mid-March, you should receive membership renewal information from the national organization. When you renew, HCAS will be notified of your annual enrollment.

If you are a 2009 HCAS member and have not been contacted by the national Autism Society about renewing, please email info@howard-autism.org.

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Volunteers Needed!

**Share Your Time and Talent**

Interested in volunteering at the Howard County Autism Society? We could use your help! We have many active committees that are always looking for new members.

♦ Advocacy: Educational Issues
♦ Advocacy: Legislative Issues
♦ Biomedical Committee
♦ Gala Planning Committee
♦ Program Committee
♦ Public Relations Committee
♦ Transition & Adult Issues Committee
♦ Walk Planning Committee

If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, please email us at info@howard-autism.org (attn: committees) or call 410-290-3466.

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HCAS Welcomes New Administrative Assistant ~ Sandra MacMahon

Sandra MacMahon joined HCAS as Administrative Assistant in January. Sandra recently moved to Howard County from New York City where she worked as a fundraiser at an independent school and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

She is enjoying getting to know Howard County and is very excited to use her experience working with youth and families to serve the members of HCAS. Sandra is working in the office part-time.
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 autism, PDD, and related disorders, and how to effectively deal with these disabilities. 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 awareness of persons with autism, PDD, and related disorders.

HCAS provides:
- support for parents
- information and referrals
- advocacy on behalf of persons with autism/PDD and their families
- presentations by experts on autism/PDD, disability rights, etc
- monthly meetings
- social activities

Join the Yahoo e-Group
The HCAS e-group connects you with other parents online where you can post questions or share information about doctors, dentists, schools, family support services, etc.

To join:
(1) go to Yahoo Groups
(2) search for AutismSocietyHoCo
(3) subscribe

Or email:
AutismSocietyHoCosubscribe@yahoogroups.com

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