2015 Transition Symposium:
Don’t Panic. Plan Now.

For parents of students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, planning for their student’s transition to adult life can feel like an insurmountable task with few certainties. Thankfully early planning, careful consideration of the student’s strengths and needs, and proper support can ease the transition from school to a more independent life and a career.

With this in mind, the Howard County Autism Society and the Cedar Lane School are hosting their second annual Transition Symposium titled: Don’t Panic. Plan Now. The daylong conference will be held on Saturday, February 21, at the Cedar Lane School in Fulton.

Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D., will offer the keynote address. Dr. Gerhardt has more than 30 years of experience utilizing the principles of applied behavior analysis in support of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders in educational, employment, residential, and community-based settings. He has authored and co-authored articles and book chapters on the needs of adolescents and adults with ASD and has presented nationally and internationally on this topic.

Dr. Gerhardt will discuss adaptive behaviors; skills that enable an individual to achieve personal independence across a variety of life domains. He will review effective adaptive behavior intervention techniques, and the relevance of resilience training, and he will discuss where, when, and how to incorporate adaptive behavior intervention into the IEP process.

Diane Dressler, HCAS consultant to the housing subcommittee, will discuss the work of the subcommittee. She is a senior associate with Community Life Resources, a consulting firm that provides technical assistance, training, and consultation to governments, service providers, community organizations, and consumers regarding the development and provision of supportive services and affordable housing for people with disabilities. Dressler will share information on how to prepare for the transition to supportive housing.

The symposium begins at 8 a.m. with registration, coffee, and a light breakfast; the plenary will take place from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. A complimentary boxed lunch will be served from 12:30-1:30 p.m. There will be networking with more than 20 organizations. Attendees can choose from two of nine workshops offered from 1:30-3 p.m. and again from 3:30-5 p.m.:

- Resource Coordinators in Maryland
- How to Support Your Child in His or Her Journey
- Transitioning Youth
- Special Needs Trusts
- SSDI & SSI
- Person-Centered Planning
- Employment
- Housing
- Self-Advocates Panel

The symposium concludes at 5:15 p.m. with a drawing for an iPad Mini.

To register for the symposium, call 410-290-3466 or complete and send in the registration form on page 10. Registration is $30 per person. Stipends are available; please call for information. The snow date is February 28.
Welcome to 2015! We are excited to begin another year supporting you, your families, and your children with autism. Our regular programming will be continuing, but we have many exciting events that are being planned!

- Social Groups for Young Adults Ages 16-23
- Peter Gerhardt Workshop on Sexuality Instruction for Individuals with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities
- The Second Annual Transition Symposium
- 2015 Pieces of the Puzzle Gala

See more detailed information in the calendar of events on page 14 or call the office with questions.

Now that we are almost halfway through the school year, I want to remind you about our grant with the Howard County Government, Office of Citizen Services, which enables us to answer your questions about special education. We can answer your questions about IEPs, school services, modifications, accommodations, and regulations under state and federal law. We can also offer guidance on how to request additional help from your school. Call us at 410-290-3466 or email AskUsSpecialEdQuestions@Howard-Autism.org to get answers. And, don’t forget to visit our Special Education News Center, specialed.howard-autism.org.

If we can be of service, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are here to help.

Judy Grusso
judy.grusso@howard-autism.org
A Message from the HCAS President
Roger Thibaudeau

As I begin my second term as HCAS president, I want to thank all of our volunteers, board members, and staff who worked tirelessly during 2014 to support our community.

As anyone who has been following our events either online or through these newsletters knows, this past year was a busy and productive one here at HCAS. We continued work on our three major objectives by providing support through our social events and monthly meetings, promoting awareness through our sensory-friendly events and partnerships with other organizations and businesses, and advocating for change through the tireless efforts of our education committee and transition and adulthood committee.

Even though we accomplished a lot, we know there is more that can be done. A look through our activities and events list over the next couple of months is just a sampling of what HCAS has planned. In the coming year, we will remain focused on fulfilling our core mission through our strategic plan and the feedback received from all of you throughout the year.

The committees will be meeting early in the year to develop their 2015 goals. We welcome your continued input on areas where you believe our services and supports can be modified or expanded. In addition, one of our broader goals for this year is to increase participation from our membership on our various committees. If you have an idea you’d like to pass along, or would like to be a part of one of our many committees, please contact the office at 410-290-3466 or at info@howard-autism.org.

As always, we hope to see you out at our many events. 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

Save the Date

2015 Pieces of the Puzzle Gala
A Mardi Gras Celebration

Proudly Sponsored by the Hussman Foundation

Saturday, April 18, 7 p.m. - Midnight
Turf Valley Hotel, Ellicott City

- Photo Booth
- Silent and Live Auctions
- Dinner and Keynote Speech
- Dancing

Tickets: $100 per person
$125 after March 31
Get Involved!
HCAS Welcomes Board Members

We are delighted to welcome four new members to the Howard County Autism Society Board of Directors.

Francesca Basso-Landsteiner is originally from Peru and has been living in Howard County since 2000. She is the mother of two boys and her oldest is on the spectrum. She is a part-time student in the visual arts department at UMBC.

Alisa Kobrinetz Chernack lives in Howard County and is a mother of two boys, one of whom has autism. She has a law firm located in Ellicott City, which concentrates in areas relating to the elderly and individuals with disabilities. She sought to serve on the HCAS Board to help families navigate the maze as Howard County children age out of the public school system. She has been a member of HCAS for many years and looks forward to continuing her involvement as a board member.

Emily Russell is an attorney and founding partner of McCabe Russell, PA, a family law firm based in Howard County. Emily takes great pride in assisting individuals with complex family law matters. When she is not practicing law, Emily is a chauffeur, short-order cook, finder of all lost toys, and avid bedtime story reader to her five wonderful children.

Janice Ulrich is a play therapist in Ellicott City and Lutherville with an extensive background in disability and education advocacy. Her specialty is helping families with young children experiencing behavior challenges find relief and ways to create an optimal growth climate. She and her family have lived and been actively involved in Howard County for nearly 20 years.

Share Your Energy and Ideas with HCAS
There are many ways for you to contribute your unique expertise, experience, and perspective to HCAS. We are seeking members who are interested in serving on the board of directors or one of our committees:

- Asperger's
- Development
- Education
- Finance
- Governance
- Legislative
- Program
- Public Relations
- Transition and Adulthood

Self-advocates are welcome and encouraged. If interested, send an email to info@howard-autism.org.
My name is Laurie Adler and I am part of the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) co-ed service fraternity at Salisbury University. I am currently a senior majoring in biology and minoring in psychology. My goal after college is to work in marine biology rehabilitation.

I have an 18-year-old brother with autism who is a high school senior. He has been on his school’s soccer, robotics, and bowling teams while developing skills in construction management. His plans are to attend a community college next year and maybe get a part-time job.

In October, I led our APO fraternity in a walk to raise money for autism in Howard County. While the rain tried to put a damper on our plans, my mom, fellow students, and I walked the perimeter of our campus in a 5K. There were about 30 students who participated in our first walk for autism on the Salisbury campus.

I decided to coordinate this walk in Salisbury because of my brother. We raised about $1100 before expenditures.

As we walked around the campus and promoted the walk for this day, participants shared why they helped with this cause. We even had one participant whose brother was also on the spectrum. After the walk was finished, I was warmed by the students’ support to help a good cause. It is my hope that the campus will continue to spread awareness and support the cause, even after I graduate.

Laurie Adler (front left) and her Salisbury University fraternity organized a campus-wide walk and 5K run to raise funds for HCAS and promote autism awareness.

HCAS Gratefully Acknowledges Recent Donors

**OCTOBER - DECEMBER**

- **$1,000 +**
  - Intelligent Fiscal Optimal Solutions
  - Kristopher & Lori Krausz

- **$500-$999**
  - Clara Chu
  - Judith & Edwin Cohen Foundation

- **$250 - $499**
  - Don and Carolyn Floyd
  - Pat & Dave Thomas
  - Tino’s Italian Bistro, LLC

- **$100 - $249**
  - John & Deborah Clutts
  - Tom & Martha Di Ilenno
  - Steve & Miriam Dubin

- **$50**
  - Ellen Flynn Giles
  - Jessica Hong
  - Rachel Maher
  - Janet Meirelles
  - Brian O’Mara
  - Somnath Sengupta
  - Edward & Jean Stamm
  - James Trout
On a cold but clear day, the Howard County Autism Society held its 8th Annual Autism Walk and 5K Run at Centennial Park in Ellicott City. With more than 600 runners and walkers, more than 100 volunteers, and 31 providers, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit companies as exhibitors, it was a great day for all.

This year there were a few new attractions. The Subway Man joined us to give out coupons to attendees, live bands from the Let There Be Rock School in Columbia played old fashion rock-n-roll, and this year two Star Wars troupes from the Old Line Garrison and the 501st provided an entertaining light saber show.

Many of our loyal friends also joined us; face painting by Laura Betz, visits with horses from the Howard County Police Department’s Volunteer Mounted Patrol, an ambulance provided by the Howard County Fire Department, two moon bounces, and a chance to interact with everyone’s favorite Star Wars heroes. Runners and walkers alike were treated to a continental breakfast.

Teams with the Most Members

- Project Mayhem
- Ryan’s Troop
- Aaron’s Army
- Trey’s Train
- Jon Lewicky

Team Records

- Project Mayhem $4,495.00
- Team BOXALL $3,170.00
- Ryan’s Troop $2,766.00
- Reese’s Runners $2,225.00
- Matts Mavericks $1,765.00
More than 600 participants showed their support for loved ones with autism. The walkers and runners were entertained by Star Wars characters, live music from the Let There Be Rock School, moon bounces, face painting, and more.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

**GOLD SPONSOR** $1,500
The Lisa Higgins-Hussman Foundation

**BRONZE SPONSOR** $500
Stephanie Maric at Long & Foster
Alisa Kobrinetz Chernack, LLC, an Elder Law Practice

** FRIENDS $250**
Ballet Royale, Institute of Maryland
John and Selena Benevides
BracketEars
Crafton Dental
Crossroads Psychological Associates
Guardian

Intelliforce
Kennedy Krieger Institute – Pediatric Developmental Disabilities Clinic
LeCheval Stable
NeuroBehavioral Associates
Road Runner Sports
Subway
Verbal Beginnings

**EXHIBITORS $125**
Alliance Pediatrics
The Children’s Guild
Columbia Presbyterian Church
Gutter Helmet
Howard County Recreation & Parks

Jamberry
Kaleidoscope Family Solutions, Inc.
Kennedy Krieger Institute, Center for Autism and Related Disorders
Let There Be Rock School Lighthouse
Little Red Car Services, LLC
The Pediatric Center, LLC
Salvere Fitness
Sheppard Pratt Health Systems
Stand Up HoCo
Summit Camp
Taylor & Associates
Trellis Services Inc.
The HCPSS Family Support and Resource Center offers several playgroups for children who receive Early Intervention Services (ages birth through preschool). Join other parents and children for an informal morning of play and conversation.

Playgroups are located throughout the county. Stop by a playgroup closest to you, or come to the one that works for your schedule.

All playgroups are held from 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**Infants & Toddlers Playgroup**
Second Tuesday of the Month
Oakland Mansion
5430 Vantage Point Rd.
Columbia, MD
Use lower-level entrance

**Infants & Toddlers Playgroup**
Third Tuesday of the Month:
North Laurel Community Center
9411 Whiskey Bottom Rd.
Laurel, MD

**Infants & Toddlers Playgroup**
Fourth Monday of the Month:
Dayton Oaks Elementary
4691 Ten Oaks Rd.
Dayton, MD
In Recreation & Parks room

**Down Syndrome Playgroup**
First Wednesday of the Month
Oakland Mansion
5430 Vantage Point Rd.
Columbia, MD
Use lower-level entrance

Siblings are always welcome. Please call the Family Support and Resource Center at 410 313-7161 with questions.

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**Special Education Answers and Advocacy**

**Do you have questions about special education services and rights?**

Have questions about IEP hours, school services, modifications, accommodations, regulations under state and federal law, or other special education issues? Need guidance on how to request additional help from the school system? Unsure about documents received from the school?

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.

We are here to help. Contact us for answers and advocacy.

410-290-3466
AskUsSpecialEdQuestions@Howard-Autism.org
With what seems like mountains of technical bulletins, news reports, and websites to navigate, how can parents effectively advocate for their student’s special education rights? The Special Education News Center offers current, reliable resources for understanding and succeeding in the world of special education.

Maintained by the Howard County Autism Society and funded by a grant from the Howard County Department of Citizen Services, the website provides a warehouse of useful information, especially for Howard County.

Though information specific to autism is included in the site, the majority of the information applies to the broad special education community.

The site includes key documents translated in Spanish and Korean.

If you haven’t visited the Special Education News Center recently, here is a sampling of some of the articles and resources.

**PARCC Accessibility and Modifications**
Learn about accommodations for PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments, and how they will impact your student with an IEP.

**Discipline, Restraint, and Seclusion Video**
A Special Education Law Workshop by the Maryland Disability Law Center

**Basic Special Education Rights: A Legal Tour of the “Parental Rights Handbook” Video**
A Special Education Law Workshop by the Maryland Disability Law Center

**Positive Behavior Support Strategies: Finding and Using Effective Reinforcement Video**
Pathfinders for Autism Brown Bag Series by the Kennedy Krieger Institute

**Important Contacts in HCPSS Special Education**
- Regional Early Childhood Center Locations and Programs
- Resource Teachers: School by School Assignments
- Behavior Specialists
- Work-Study Coordinators

**IEP Boot Camp**
Must-read advice for anyone headed to an IEP meeting. Disability Scoop’s original series, *Scoop Essentials*, features a Q&A with a special education attorney on the rights of students with disabilities.

**Independent Educational Evaluations**
Parents and school personnel are often confused about what constitutes an independent educational evaluation (IEE) and how the evaluation is to be used. What constitutes an IEE, what is its value, and what does the law require of school districts.

**Parent Involvement in Placement Decisions**
Decisions about placement are to be made after the child’s IEP is developed. Parents are members of any team that develops the IEP and decides on placement.
2015 Transition Symposium

Don’t Panic. Plan Now.
For Parents and their Students with Intellectual Disabilities
Saturday, February 21 (Snow Date 2/28)

SCHEDULE

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Registration, Coffee, Light Breakfast; NETWORKING
9:00-12:30 p.m. Plenary with Dr. Gerhardt and Ms. Dressler
12:30-1:00 p.m. Boxed Lunch
1:00—1:30 p.m. NETWORKING
1:30-3:00 p.m. Concurrent Workshops — Session A
3:00-3:30 p.m. NETWORKING and Snacks
3:30-5:00 p.m. Concurrent Workshops — Session B
5:05 Drawing for Apple I-Pad Mini
5:15 Conference Concludes

REGISTRATION

REGISTER TODAY: $30/PERSON (includes breakfast and lunch)
(Scholarships are available, please call 410-290-3466 to apply.)

I would like to attend the following workshops. Please check two.

☐ (1) Resource Coordinators in Maryland ☐ (4) Special Needs Trust ☐ (7) Employment
☐ (2) How to support your child in their journey ☐ (5) SSDI & SSI ☐ (8) Housing
☐ (3) Transitioning Youth ☐ (6) Person Centered Planning ☐ (9) Self-Advocates

NAME ____________________________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________________________
CITY/ST/ZIP ____________________________________________
PHONE ____________________________________________
EMAIL ____________________________________________
PAYMENT AMOUNT: $________
PAYMENT METHOD: ☐ CHECK (payable to HCAS) ☐ CREDIT
☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEX ☐ DISCOVER
ACCT # ____________________________________________
EXP ___________________ CVC ___________________
SIGNATURE ____________________________________________

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS, OR IF ACCOMMODATIONS ARE NEEDED.

Registration and payment can be mailed to: The Howard County Autism Society
10280 Old Columbia Road, Suite 215, Columbia, MD 21046

Registration and payment can be e-mailed to: shana.wienecke@howard-autism.org
Sponsored by the Howard County Autism Society and The Mall in Columbia, Sensory Friendly Santa events in December offered families opportunities to visit with Santa at times when sensory inputs were at a minimum. Lights and sounds were muted and families took numbers to reduce the anxiety of standing in line. HCAS volunteers had many holiday activities to entertain the children while they waited for their turn with Santa.
Supported Decision Making
Everyone Has the Right to Make Choices
by Jonathan Martinis

Jonathan Martinis, legal director of the Disability Rights Bar Association, has over 20 years’ experience representing people with disabilities in cases under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Medicaid, and the Constitution of the United States.

What if someone said you’re not allowed to go home today? Or you can’t go to work? Or visit your friends? All because someone else doesn’t want you to. That’s what can happen to older adults and people with disabilities when someone else has the power to say where they live, what they do, and who they see, or when they’re put in a guardianship.

We believe that everyone has the right to make choices, to make their own decisions and direct their own lives to the best of their abilities, without the “need” for guardianship. This article talks about one way to use your Right to Make Choices, called Supported Decision Making. A fancy name for something you’ve been doing all your life, isn’t it?

How do older adults and people with disabilities make decisions?

When the doctor says you have a “somatic injury” or a “brachial obstruction,” or says something else that sounds like a foreign language, what do you do? When you don’t know the difference between “itemized” and “standard” deductions, how do you do your taxes? When the mechanic says your car has a “blown head gasket,” how do you know whether to pay to get it fixed?

You probably ask a friend or family member what to do or if they know someone who can help you cut through the jargon so you can understand what’s going on and what you need to do. It’s just common sense, right? When you don’t know enough to make a good decision, you find people who can help you. It could be going to your brother the accountant with tax questions or talking to your friend the nurse when you need medical information – you make sure you understand your situation, so you can make the best, most informed decision.

This process is called Supported Decision Making. A fancy name for something you’ve been doing all your life, isn’t it?

How does Supported Decision Making work?

So how do you use Supported Decision-Making in your life? The most important thing to do is understand that we all have the right to make choices to the best of our abilities. And, even if a person...
needs some help to make decisions, it does not mean he or she needs a guardian. Once you make that commitment:

- Think about the type of decisions you or the person you support need help making, and the type of help needed.
- Talk to people who can help and discuss what type of help is needed and when.
- You may want to, but don’t have to, create a written plan saying the people who will provide support, when they will provide it, and how. And you may want to share that plan with others.

- So, if you want your sister to support you in making medical decisions, you’d write up a plan between you and your sister saying she’ll help you do that and how. Then you could share that plan with your doctor, so the doctor knows that your sister is a part of your health care “team.”

Need support? Have questions? Ask us!

The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making can help you find information on Supported Decision-Making, help you create Supported Decision-Making plans, connect you with resources, and answer questions. For more information, see our website, SupportedDecisionMaking.Org.

This project was supported, in part by grant number HHS-2014-ACL-AIDD-DM-0084, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC 20201.

Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.
Upcoming Events

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

Thursday, February 5 ~
**ASD Brown Bag Series:**
Maximizing Nutrition and Healthy Food Choices for Children and Teens on the Autism Spectrum
1-2 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. Lauren Mirkin, C.N.S., L.D.N., L.G.P.C., will discuss how to make better food choices and possibly eliminating or reducing certain food groups or chemicals to help improve the functioning of children and teens on the autism spectrum. Seminars are free, but registration is required. Call 443-330-5370 or go to pathfindersforautism.org.

Thursday, February 5 ~
**Project SEARCH Parent Information Meeting**
7-8:30 p.m., HCPS Board of Education Building. Project SEARCH provides real-life work experience to help youth with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. Program specifics will be discussed, including information about internships and the upcoming application process.

Wednesday, February 11 ~
**Transitioning Youth/Adults Support Group Meeting**
7-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. For more information, contact Pamela Beck, pammyb582@hotmail.com.

Thursday, February 12 ~
**Asperger’s Support Group Meeting**
7:30-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. For more information, contact Jennifer May, jenmay91@gmail.com.

Saturday, February 14 ~
**Sensory Friendly Showing of “SpongeBob Square Pants: Sponge Out of Water”**
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: $6.50 each.

Saturday, February 14 ~
**Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism**
3:30-4:30 p.m., The Yoga Center of Columbia, 8950 Route 108, #109, 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.

Monday, February 16 ~
**Housing Subcommittee Meeting**
7-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. Where will your child live as an adult? Join the Transition/Adult Housing Subcommittee to develop a strategy for affordable, sustainable housing in Howard County. Contact Pamela Beck, pammyb582@hotmail.com for information.

Thursday, February 19 ~
**HCAS General Support Group Meeting**
7-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. Dr. Emily Kinsler, instructional facilitator for Countywide Services with HCPS, will discuss the visualizing and verbalizing language comprehension program. She will give an overview of the program, discuss how it is used in HCPS schools, and give ideas on how parents can practice some of the elements at home. This workshop will be interactive so come ready to do some of the exercises.

Friday, February 20 ~
**Peter Gerhardt, Ed. D. Workshop ~ Sexuality Instruction for Individuals with ASD and Their Families**
1-4 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. Persons with ASD are sexual beings. However, individual interest in sex or in developing an intimate sexual relationship with another person varies widely across individuals at all ability levels. Unfortunately, despite much discussion about decision making skills in the self-determination literature there continues to be lack of evidence [supporting the] effectiveness of sex education and training for persons with developmental disabilities in general, and autism spectrum disorders in particular. This workshop will provide an overview of sexuality education, from the professional and personal points of view, in ASD with an emphasis on safety, knowledge, values, and social understanding. This workshop is $20 per attendee. Please RSVP to info@howard-autism.org by February 6.

Saturday, February 21 ~
**HCAS Transition Symposium**
8 a.m.-4 p.m., Cedar Lane School, 11630 Seagoville Rd., Fulton. Don’t panic. Plan now for your student’s transition from school to adult life. Registration is $30. To register, call 410-290-3466 or complete and send in the registration form on page 10. The snow date is Feb. 28.

Saturday, February 28 ~
**Free Yoga for Children and Teens with Autism**
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Thursday, March 19 ~
HCAS General Support Group Meeting
7-9 p.m., HCAS Resource Center. Presentation by Patty Daley, HCPSS Executive Director of Special Education.

Saturday, March 28 ~
Sensory Friendly Showing of “Home”
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: $6.50 each.

Saturday, April 18 ~
Sensory Friendly Showing of “Underdogs”
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: $6.50 each.

Saturday, April 18 ~
2015 Pieces of the Puzzle Gala
7 p.m.-Midnight, Turf Valley Hotel, Ellicott City. Join us for a Mardi Gras Celebration. Tickets are $100 per person or $125 per person after March 31.
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.