

**MEDFORD SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEDFORD SEPAC NEWSLETTER**

**April 2011**

Dear Reader,

To make finding information easier, we have created links to most websites listed in this newsletter. Links have blue letters and are underlined.

Note: Some browsers may automatically block email links. If you attempt to click on a link and it doesn't work, you may need to change a browser setting.

I hope you find this useful.  
~ Kathy Aluia

**In this Issue...**

[Disability Awareness Month](#)

[This Month in Medford](#)

[SEPAC Contacts](#)

[SEPAC Business Meetings](#)

[For Parents and  
Our Adult Children](#)

- Events
- Training Seminars
- Support Groups
- Research

[For Children under 18](#)

- Sports
- Student-to-Student
- Summer Camp

[Resources](#)

- Tutoring Services
- Medford Special Education School
- Special Education Guides

**April is National Autism Awareness Month**

**To learn more about Autism...**

**Read more at ~** Click on the organization's name to visit any of these websites: [Autism Speaks](#), [Children's Hospital](#), [Sound Advice on Autism](#), [Autism Society](#), [National Center for Medical Implementation and the American Academy of Pediatrics](#), or [The Maternal and Child Health Library Knowledge Path about Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)

**Attend ~**

Transition to Adult Services Workshop Series ~ By ARC Family Resource Center  
Malden High School, Cafeteria, 77 Salem Street, Malden

**April 13 "Adult Services-What, How and When?"**

Registration is required. Cost is \$10 for the series.

Contact Michelle at 781-942-4888 ext 4018 to register.

**April 17 "Autism: Coming of Age"**, a PBS documentary will be aired on WGBH, Channel 2 at 3pm. The film explores the challenges to those diagnosed with autism and the impact on their families. Several Massachusetts families are highlighted in the documentary.

**May 10 "Trends in Autism Research: What the data does and does not tell us":**  
Presented by William H Ahearn, PhD, BCBA. Located at The New England Center for Children, 33 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA. To register, contact Andrea Strickland at 508-481-1015 ext 4030.

**Participate in Research ~** Several organizations conduct research on the causes, treatment, and prevention of intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as understanding typical development. Often they look for children and adults with and without disabilities to participate in a variety of research programs.

Shriver Center: For a current list of studies recruiting participants, follow link to [Shriver Studies](#). You may also call the Shriver Center Human Studies Office at 781-642-0047 or send email to [shriver.recruit@umass.edu](mailto:shriver.recruit@umass.edu).

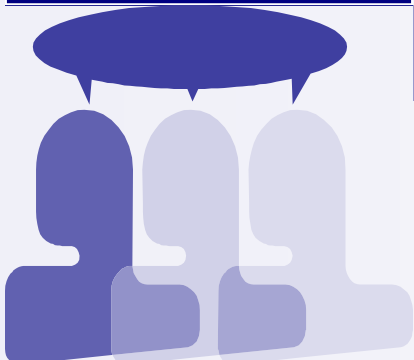
Autism Consortium: Visit [website](#).

**Apply for a grant ~** Interested in enrolling your child in a "Social Skills" program? Funding is available for children aged 6-18 years of age enrolled in programs from April to June 2011. ASC is offering up to \$240 per child towards the enrollment for a social skill program. Participation is limited to Autism Division eligible candidates registered with ASC. For info, call 978-777-9135.

**Additional Resources ~**

Online Book Sale: In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, they are having a sale from now thru April 30 that features 25% off over 30 books. Visit [Woodbine House](#)

Autism Housing Pathways: Visit [website](#).



## This Month in Medford

**April 12 “Budget Forum” hosted by Senator Pat Jehlen:** Speakers: Noah Berger, Exec Director of Mass Budget & Policy and Thomas Kochan, Co-Director of Institute of Work & Employment Research at MIT.

This year’s budget promises to be the worst yet. So what can we do this year? Where will the cuts come from? Can we preserve safety net services? Held at Brooks Elementary, 388 High Street, Medford, MA from 7pm-9pm. For info, call 617-722-1578.

**April 16 JUMBO-OPOLY ~ Kid’s Day:** Tufts University ~ Medford Campus Sponsored by Leonard Carmichael Society of Tufts University More info [here](#).

**April 26 SEPAC Meetings:** Held at Curtis-Tufts High School. Coffee & Discussion of “Special Education Resources” from 6:30-7:00pm & the Business Meeting from 7:00pm to 8:30pm.

## Upcoming SEPAC Business Meetings

**Medford SEPAC General Business Meeting:** The purpose of a general meeting is to plan, review, & discuss SEPAC initiatives, events & activities and to vote on agenda items that come before the board. Next meeting: April 26 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm Future Meetings: May 18

Location change to Curtis-Tufts High School, Main Street, Medford.

(Use side door located on lower level and on Tufts Pool side of building.)

Contact Kathy Aluia by [email](#) or call 781-956-8770 for more information.

## Have questions about Special Education? Contact us!

### School Contacts for SEPAC Board Members

For Early Childhood,  
Brooks Elementary,  
Roberts Elementary,  
Curtis-Tufts,  
Medford High School, &  
Medford Vocational School

**Contact: Kathy Aluia at [kaluia@comcast.net](mailto:kaluia@comcast.net) or 781-956-8770**

McGlynn Middle School,  
Medford High School,  
Medford Vocational School, &  
Out-of-District Students (Privately placed by parents or district)

**Contact: Mary Finn at [maryfinn@comcast.net](mailto:maryfinn@comcast.net) or 781-391-2353**

McGlynn Elementary

**Contact: Kathie Hunt at [kevinihunt@aol.com](mailto:kevinihunt@aol.com) or 781-391-6148**

Andrews Middle School & Columbus Elementary

**Contact: Jen Maunsell at [falcomaunsell@yahoo.com](mailto:falcomaunsell@yahoo.com), 339-221-2002 or 781-391-8856**

## Parent-to-Parent...

### Fiscal Budget Cycle

It occurs every year from now until the end of June. Are you aware that this year’s budget threatens many cuts in our public education funds?

Although special education guarantees services to children in special education, most of our funding is derived from the general education budget. Parents of children in special education need to bear in mind, the backbone of all public education is our “general education system” and **we need to support all our children and all learning differences.** On April 12, parents will have an opportunity to learn more about the budget process. We encourage you to attend!

### Reminders!!!!

**~It’s time to apply to Summer Programs!**

### **~Plan for Next Year**

Thinking about your child’s program for next year?

If not, you should be. Planning for any transition in your child’s life takes preparation. The transition from one academic year to the next is no different. Consider these things...

- Speak to your child’s

## For Parents/Guardians & Adult Children

**April 12 "What's next for the Common Core":** Presented by Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy and Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE). Held at Suffolk University Law School, 131 Mount Auburn Street, 1st flr, Cambridge, MA from 8am to 10:30am Register at through [here](#).

**Life Quest: The Journey to Adulthood:** Northeast ARC, 6 Southside Road, Danvers  
All events held from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Cost of each workshop is \$5. Dates & topics:

**April 12** "Stand Up for Yourself! Self-Advocacy"

**May 10** "Financial Planning for Every Stage"

**June 14** "Hear it from Others!"

Contact Aymee at 978-624-2381 or Nicole at 978-624-2380

**OTA Wakefield Information Sessions:** Free for OTA Wakefield families. A \$20 fee for all others. Location: 607 North Avenue #14, Wakefield, MA  
Call 781-245-4446 ext 20 to register or [email](#).

**April 12** "Social Skills Group Information Session"

**May 4** "Incorporating Sensory Strategies within the Home and Community"

**June 8** "Using Pictures to Increase Receptive Language Skills"

**April 14 "Basic Rights in Special Education"** Hosted by Stoneham SEPAC & Woburn SEPACs. Held at Joyce Middle School, 55 Locust Street, Woburn. To register, call Kerstin Lochrie at 781-932-7944.

**April 26 "Think Kids":** Based on the book, Treating Explosive Kids: The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach. Held at Ottoson Middle School, 63 Acton Street, Arlington, MA Note: Park in the upper parking lot at the end of Acton St; near the main entrance. Register through Kathy Aluia by [email](#) or call 781-956-8770. Note: Medford SEPAC is taking registrations for Medford residents for this event.

**Down Syndrome Allen C. Crocker Speaker Series at Children's Hospital in Boston:** All events held from 6:30pm-8:30pm in Enders Auditorium at Children's Hospital in Boston. Dates & topics include:

**April 26** on Mental Health and Down Syndrome

**May 24** on Feeding and Swallowing

Contact Angela at 857-218-4329 or via [email](#).

**April 30 Unipolar and Bipolar Depression ~ Advances in Diagnosis & Treatment by Massachusetts General Hospital Dept of Psychiatry:** Mass General Hospital, The Starr Center Auditorium, Charles River Plaza, 185 Cambridge St, 2nd flr, Boston from 9:15am-3:15pm. Program is free. Registration required. Call 617-724-8318.

**April 30 "Early Connections, Taking Care of Our Children...Taking Care of Ourselves"** is the 28th annual conference for families of children with visual impairments. Held at Perkins School for the Blind, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA from 8:15am to 3pm. To register, visit [website](#) or call 617-972-7393.

**May 3 Transition Session, "Is your Child Transitioning from Early Intervention this Year?":** Meet our Early Childhood staff; tour classrooms, learn about the transition process & more!!!! Sponsored by Medford Early Education Program (MEEP) & Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Medford SEPAC). Held at Medford High School Library, 489 Winthrop Street, Medford, MA from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. To register, contact Kathy Aluia at 781-956-8770 or [email](#).

**May 12 For Parents of Children in Early Childhood ~ "Similar Differences" Support Group:** For more information or to register, contact Marie Cassidy, Medford Family Network Coordinator, at 781-393-2106.

current teacher. Know what your child's needs are now, what does he/she suggest your child's placement focus on for next year.

- Schedule classroom observations through your ETL. You want to visualize your child in the setting, so you can speak to what your child's specific needs may be.
- Meet with the IEP team.
- Invite next year's teacher to your IEP meeting.
- Work with the IEP team to prioritize the list of accommodations/supports. These lists can cover an entire page on an IEP or 504. Think about what really works for your child and write a note to next year's teacher highlighting what works for your child. Note: As your child goes through developmental stages, you may find that what works for your child changes over time.

### Congratulations to Medford's Department of Special Education!

Almost 100 parents & students attended The "1st Annual Transition Fair: Life After High School" held at the Medford High School Library on Tues, 3/29. Positive feedback was received from both vendors & attendees. Watch for it again in Spring 2012!!!!

### Are you...

- 1) **New to Special Education?**
- 2) **Been through the basic IEP process, but don't know where to look to learn more about special education information or resources?**

Annual Basic Rights meeting on Feb 10, 2011.

What we have learned was that not everyone who wanted to attend was able to make that date.

As a result, we will be holding a monthly "Coffee & Discussion of Special Education Resources meeting.

We will review the IEP process and share resource information with you.

Join us on April 26 at the Curtis-Tufts High School from 6:30pm-7:00pm.

Please note: Registration is required. Copying costs money. Call 781-956-8770 to register now.

### **May 17 "Negotiation Skills" for Parents/Guardians of Children with Special Needs:**

Facilitators from the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School and Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program. Co-sponsored by Arlington SEPAC & Medford SEPAC. Register by May 6. Contact Kathy Aluia at 781-956-8770 or [email](#).

### **Therapro, Inc Seminar Series:** Seminars are free and held from 9am-11am

Location: 225 Arlington St, Framingham, MA Register by [email here](#).

**May 21** Creating Pathways with Integrated Sound Therapy: Assessing skills thru integration of OT and integrated sound therapies Speaker: Kathy Carley, MS, OTR/L Executive Director, PROJECT CHILLD

### **June 10 Parent/Professional Advocacy League 20th Anniversary Celebration & Conference:**

Best Western, Marlborough For tickets, call 508-767-9725 or [email](#).

### **July 13-15 2011 Massachusetts Youth Leadership Forum:**

Youth with disabilities who are in their last two years of high school or are Class of 2011 graduates can apply to be a YLF Delegate. YLF Delegates cultivate leadership, plan career goals and build a network of supports. To apply, visit [application here](#).

### **Dream Day on Cape Cod at Camp Nan-Ke-Rafe:**

There are still openings available for a free, one-week stay to families having children with life threatening illnesses. For more info and to apply, visit [application here](#).

### **October 27 Wrightslaw Special Education Law and Advocacy Conference:**

Four Points Sheraton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA For info, visit [website](#).

### **Research Opportunities**

#### **Attention Parents or Professionals! New England Genetics Collaborative**

wants to add a family member of an individual with a genetic disorder, an individual with a genetic disorder, or a family advocate to their "Newborn Screening Translational Research Network (NBSTRN) Information Technology" workgroup. The group typically meets by phone monthly or every other month plus in person twice a year. For more info, visit [www.nbstrn.org](http://www.nbstrn.org). Interested parents/professionals, should contact Monica McClain at 603-862-2962.

#### **Adult Language Study at MIT:**

The Gabrieli lab at MIT is conducting research on reading and reading difficulties. They are seeking adults aged 18-60 with and without reading difficulties. Participants are compensated \$20/hr for the psycho-educational testing session and \$30/hr for scanning sessions. For info, [email here](#).

## **For Children (In Medford & Local Cities)**

### **Outdoor Explorations**

Contact Valerie at 781-395-4999 For more info, visit [site here](#).

### **National Kids As Self Advocates (KASA):**

Is seeking youth aged 12-24 for their Advisory Board and Task Force. KASA provides peer-support & training to young people with disabilities. Contact Naomi Ortiz at 520-792-1665 or visit [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org).

### **EMARC Teen Sibling Group (Ages 13-19):**

EMARC coordinates a support group for teens who have a brother or sister with special needs. Group meets every other Wednesday at the West Medford Community Center. Full and partial scholarships are available to cover the fee of \$5 per night (includes dinner). For registration and information, contact Chenine at 781-942-4888 ext 4036 or by [email](#).

### **Soccer Program (Lexington):**

For children aged 6-16 with any type of disability. Begins Saturday, April 30 and runs for 6 weeks. Ratio of teacher to students is 1:1. For info, email Danielle at [dasoccer8@gmail.com](mailto:dasoccer8@gmail.com).

### **For Children with Down Syndrome aged 16-21: Team Up for Fitness (TUFF)**

is a research project which aims to test the effectiveness of a YMCA-based exercise program TUFF is being conducted by researchers at UMMS/E.K. Shriver

Center and is funded by the National Institute of Health. The exercise program will take place at the Waltham Family YMCA starting in February 2011. For more details, contact Heidi Stanish at 781-642-0292 or [email](#).

**Sensory-friendly films at Chunky's in Haverhill, MA:** Visit the [website](#) or call 978-374-2255.

**Kartwheels in Motion Recreational Swimming:** Located at Waltham/Boston Sports Club off Winter Street, Waltham, MA from 6:30pm-7:30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. While this is not an instructional program, it provides children with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy some recreation and practice social skills. Students are matched with a swim buddy, so it is one-to-one who is typically a high school student fulfilling community hours. For more info, contact Jeannie Watson at 781-893-6516.

**Somerville Top Soccer & TopHockey Sports:** Interested? Contact John by [email](#).

**Power Kids Summer Program:** Summer enrichment program for children ages 6-11 during the month of July. Located at St. Joseph's School, 132 High Street, Medford the program runs from 9am-3pm w/morning and extended day options. Contact Michael Coates, Program Director, by [email](#) or 781-507-0144. Visit [website](#).

## Educational Resources

**Trusted Tutors** is an academic tutoring service that provides one-on-one remedial and/or enrichment instruction by highly motivated, professional staff. It has a network of over 100 local educators. Visit [www.trustedtutors.net](http://www.trustedtutors.net) for more info or contact Michael Coates, Director & Founder at [trustedtutors2@yahoo.com](mailto:trustedtutors2@yahoo.com) or 781-507-0144.

### Special Education in Medford Public Schools:

For contact listing, service information, 504 or Title II resources? Visit this link.

Site link: <http://www.medfordpublicschools.org/departments-programs/special-education-pupil-services/>

### List of National and State organizations & government agency websites:

Link: <http://www.medfordpublicschools.org/departments-programs/special-education-pupil-services/links/>

### Looking for information on MCAS?

Overview of MCAS: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/overview.html?faq=8>

**“A Parents Guide to Special Education”:** Written in collaboration between the Federation of Children with Special Needs and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Link: <http://www.fcsn.org/parentguide/pguide1.html>

**Federation for Children with Special Needs:** Offers training, resources and information to families and individual with special needs. The Parent Training Center has trained consultants who will respond to questions specific to your child's issues and information about educational advocates. Phone 617-236-7210 or visit [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)

**Consumer Empowerment Funds:** Reimburses expenses for training of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Prior approval is necessary. Call or visit website for contacts, program guidelines and application. Phone: 617-770-7676 or visit [www.mass.gov/mddc/cefp/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/mddc/cefp/index.htm)

**Tuesday Vision Clinic for Students with Special Needs:** Cotting School, 453 Concord Avenue, Lexington, MA Does your child have a physical, communication or learning disability? If so, the Cotting School invites your student to receive a fully funded vision assessment; voucher for eyewear, and transportation provided by the Cotting School for each student. Call Dr. Nancy Carlson on a Tuesday for an appointment at 781-862-7323 extension 136. This service is made possible through the John Alden Trust Fund and the New England Eye Institute and New England College of Optometry.

**Get Help with Universal Home Design:** HomeFreeHome, Inc., provides free and low cost architectural design services to people with permanent disabilities who need to remove barriers and open up access in their homes. To apply for these services, fill out the questionnaire on HomeFreeHome's website at [www.homefreehome.org](http://www.homefreehome.org). Applications will be reviewed and evaluated for feasibility of your proposed project and (if you are selected), assign a local volunteer architect.

**Executive Function Skill Development with Sarah Ward M.S., CCC/SLP:**

Registration is open for spring workshops.

For info, visit [www.executivefunctiontherapy.com](http://www.executivefunctiontherapy.com)

**The Kindle Center** located in Burlington, MA provides behavioral services and parent workshops to families with children diagnosed with ASD and related disabilities.

See website at [www.kindlebehavior.com](http://www.kindlebehavior.com)

**Become a Special Education Surrogate Parent:** SESPP (Special Education Surrogate Parent Program) is seeking volunteers to provide a voice for children who don't have a parent to speak for them in the special education process. Volunteers will attend a training session in which special education laws and regulations, the IEP process, and the role of the Special Education Surrogate Parent will be reviewed. For more info, call 508-792-7679, email [sespp@earthlink.net](mailto:sespp@earthlink.net) or visit [www.sespprogram.org](http://www.sespprogram.org).

To request that an event be posted, contact [kaluia@comcast.net](mailto:kaluia@comcast.net).  
Posting requests are subject to review of the SEPAC Board.



















