Nominate someone for April’s Autism Conference Community Awards and let them know how thankful you are!

As we make preparations for our 29th Annual Autism Conference, we are again asking you to honor those in your life that really make a difference. The Conference will be held on April 23, 2019 at The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, and is an excellent opportunity to thank the people who make our lives a lot better! Winners of each award and the person who nominated them will receive free admission to the conference.

Some award winners from last year

“You Are There for Me Award” is presented to a person who has demonstrated ongoing support and devotion to a family. Previous winners have included grandparents, neighbors, community helpers, and anyone else who makes that extra effort to be so supportive.

“Above and Beyond Award” is presented to a professional who has provided outstanding care and support to a person with autism and his/her family. Previous winners have included respite providers, para-professionals, PCA’s and other staff that work with a family or individual.

“Community Inclusion Award” is presented to a person or establishment that has been welcoming to a person with autism. Previous winners have included restaurants, retail stores and salons.

“Excellence in Advocacy Award” is presented to a parent, professional or person with autism who has demonstrated ongoing and effective self-advocacy or advocacy for people with autism. Parents, teachers, and people with autism have all won this award in the past.

“Collaboration & Connection” honors excellence in teamwork to effect positive change for people with autism.

If you would like to nominate an extra special someone for an award, download the form http://bit.ly/2019Nomination, or contact Danielle at 413-529-2428 x 115, or

Autism and the IEP

Tuesday, January 22, 2019
5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
Greenfield Public Library
Greenfield Room
402 Main Street, Greenfield MA

More info on page 9
Berkshire Activities

The Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County
January ACBC Meeting

The Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County (ACBC) will resume monthly meetings on January 18, 2019 from 10AM-12PM. This month’s meeting will be held at AdLib at 215 North St. in Pittsfield. Rebecca Cachat of Berkshire County ARC and Regina Mason, a consultant from Autism Connections will be discussing the topic of ASD and sexuality. ASD and sexuality has been a big topic among our families of young teens and adults as well as the service providers that work with them.

January’s meeting will review ways that Becky and Regina are teaching the skills of relationship building with their current classes, challenges to teaching these skills, navigating social nuances, and training opportunities for parents and professionals. ACBC meetings are open to the public. We welcome anyone who would like to learn more about autism resources in the community to attend. We encourage fellow services providers, educators, and families to bring information to share with the group or to display on our resource table. Download the meeting flyer HERE.

For more information, contact Erica Donovan at Erica.donovan@pathlightgroup.org. You can find out more about other Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County events at https://www.facebook.com/Autism-Connections-Berkshire-285842931599582/?ref=settings.

Social Skills Gym Class
Every Tuesday a group of 8-10 rambunctious boys get together with their instructor, Brian Putnam at the Patterson Fieldhouse at Berkshire Community College. They are working on social skills that are embedded within a workout routine and physical activity.

Each class the kids work on being a gracious loser and winner, giving praise to their teammates, taking turns, waiting for a turn, and following directions. This is the 3rd year of the Social Skills Gym Class and the start wasn’t so smooth. In the first year of this class we used a classroom model. The learned very quickly that having a group of boys sit and attend after being in school all day was a fruitless effort. With some tweaking and reworking of our goal, teaching social skills, Social Skills Gym Class was born!

The gym class has been a successful way to integrate social skills within fun, exercise, and practice of skills all at the same time. We are lucky to be working with Brian Putnam. He is a seasoned personal fitness trainer and runs fitness groups at Retro Fitness in Pittsfield.
Preparing for a medical appointment

Doctor’s appointments can be overwhelming for someone with autism. The change in routine, extended waiting periods, unfamiliar social scenarios and infringement on personal space can make a perfect recipe for a stressful day. Planning ahead and good communication with your doctor’s office can help make this a more positive experience.

Here’s a few tips to help make your child’s medical appointments a success:

♦ Depending on your loved one’s age and the best method that helps them process, consider reading them a picture book or watching a short video in which a favorite character goes to the doctor. Engage in a conversation with your child about what is occurring in the story, and draw comparisons as to what he/she will experience at the doctor’s office.

♦ Make a Social Story explaining what will happen when at the doctor’s. Ask your doctor’s office if they can provide photos of their office to include. Review this with your child frequently in the days prior the appointment so they know what to expect.

♦ Create a visual schedule that outlines the steps of a doctor’s visit (checking in at the front desk, sitting in the waiting room, getting on the scale, etc). Cross off or remove each task once it’s accomplished.

♦ Consult with your child’s support team (teacher, in-home therapeutic staff, etc) prior to the appointment to collaborate on the best way to help your child plan for the visit in advance.

♦ Think about your child’s preferences and challenges – does he/she find fluorescent lighting, touch, or certain sounds disruptive? Can you practice some of the tasks at home first? This could include getting on a scale, using a stethoscope or blood pressure (toy versions of some medical equipment are available for purchase).

♦ Think about the time of day that would work best for your child. Would a morning or evening appointment be less disruptive to their schedule? Don’t be afraid to ask your doctor’s office when they are least likely to have a longer wait time.

♦ Call your doctor’s office in advance to plan your child’s visit with them. Explain your child’s environmental sensitivities, any behavior challenges, and preferred communication style. Explain the approach your child responds to best. Is it a soft voice or a firm one? Should doctors and nurses limit themselves to one-step directions? How much time does your child need to process a statement? Should there be fewer people in the room?

♦ The Autism Collaborative at Cooley Dickinson Hospital has created an Autism Acute Care Questionnaire to help alert Emergency Medical personnel to an person with autism’s needs. This can also be useful as a reference point when discussing your child’s needs with any medical professional. To receive a copy, email Katie.drumm@pathlightgroup.org

♦ Prepare a list of questions or concerns you want to discuss at the appointment, whether or not you are able to talk to the nurse in advance. It’s hard to remember everything while supporting your child as well.

♦ Prepare a bag of fun, distracting activities and “comfort” items to bring to the appointment (for example, video games, DVD movie players, dolls, music, noise blocking headphones, or sensory stimulatory items). Be sure to bring any assistive communication methods your child may use, such as an iPad or PECs board.
Autism Connections was fortunate to host two amazing workshops this fall!

Cathy Boyle from Autism Housing Pathways shared her expert advice on how to maximize your resources for a fulfilling home life on November 27 at Pathlight’s Springfield office. The Autism Housing Pathways website has a great deal of useful resources at www.autismhousingpathways.org.

Amy Weinstock, Director of the Autism Insurance Resource Center and amazing presenter, explained the nuts and bolts of benefits afforded by the Massachusetts Autism Insurance law on December 11 at the Palmer Library. Learn more about ARICA and Amy’s important work at www.massairc.org

Autism Connections also provides private trainings to schools and organizations

Autism Connections’ Specialists enjoyed offering trainings for local organizations in November – we presented The Hidden Curriculum (Navigating the Social World) to teachers at Wahconah High School, and Understanding and Responding to Challenging Behaviors to preschool teachers at Chicopee Child Development Center. Contact Katie.drumm@pathlightgroup.org to learn more about the trainings we offer, or to suggest other training topics of interest to your group.

Autism and the IEP

**Upcoming workshop**

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019, 5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.**

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield Room

402 Main Street, Greenfield MA

Are you a parent or caregiver? Join Autism Connections’ Educational Advocate Nancy Farnsworth as she guides you through the basic IEP process. This free community workshop addresses needs for students of all ages, with a focus on the particular considerations to keep in mind for a student with autism. RSVP and more information: Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org.

Holiday Party

Autism Connections had a very merry time with the wonderful members of our community who joined us for our Holiday Party on December 14 at the event space here in our Eastworks office building.

We enjoyed being serenaded by carols from members of the Easthampton High School Chorus. It was a delight to have them share their time and talent with us!

Our gathering was made complete by an appearance from Santa Claus, who took time out from his busy pre-Christmas preparation to visit with us one and all. Thank you so much to John Richards (of Valley Marketing fame) for putting us in touch with the Jolly Big Guy himself!

Thank you for sharing your holiday with us!
Activities

Yoga Class with Paula Boyajian
Wednesday January 16—April 10, 2019
4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
For ages 16+ and adults; Free
Autism Connections, 100 North Street, Suite 322, Pittsfield

This is a wonderful new community partnership for Autism Connections! The goal of these free classes is to provide supported, guided yoga instruction to teens (16+) and adults with autism. Different types of relaxation methods using chair yoga and as well as floor yoga and breathing will be explored. Contact kellysummers@pathlightgroup.org for more information or to register.

Power Thru The Powder: An Adaptive Skiing Weekend for People of All Abilities
February 2nd and 3rd, 2019
Ski Sundown, New Hartford, CT

At this adaptive skiing event all equipment and a lift ticket will be included. Register online to participate or volunteer at www.powerthruthepowder.org. Email info@dollargiving.org or call (860) 966-0361.

Personal Training Sessions
Strides Human Performance Institute
39 Carlon Drive, Northampton, MA

Dennis Miehls at the Northampton Strides facility is offering personal training sessions for people with autism. Dennis is an experienced psychotherapist who has recently earned his personal training certification and a specialist certification in working with individuals with autism through continuing education with ACSM. Dennis will offer training sessions to children, adolescents and adults, individually or in small groups. Meetings with families are encouraged to determine the best plan of action. Contact Dennis directly at 413-320-3347 or miehlsd@gmail.com for more information.

Special Interest

Special Needs Family Alliance
First Wednesday of each month — 6:00 p.m.
Third Thursday of each month — 10:00 a.m.
Pathlight Office, 101 Munson Street, Greenfield, MA

The Special Needs Family Alliance is a new, very committed and welcoming group for anyone who is caring for a loved one with a disability, no matter the age. The group’s goal is to provide support, advocacy, education and resources.

For more information please call or email Caroline Wenck at 413-585-8010/carolinewenck@pathlightgroup.org.

Boston Sped PAC Special Needs Camp and Resource Fair
Thursday, January 24, 2019
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.
Leahy-Halloran Community Center, Boston

This free, public event is hosted by the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Boston SPEDPac) and the Office of Special Ed at Boston Public Schools. This is an opportunity for caregivers to speak directly with representatives from local groups who provide services to individuals with disabilities and their families.

Please contact bostonspecpac411@gmail.com or 617-297-7335 to RSVP or visit bostonspecpac.org website or facebook https://www.facebook.com/events/274206179916771/ for more info.

Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County
Friday, January 18, 2019, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
AdLib, 215 North Street, Pittsfield MA

Rebecca Cachat of Berkshire County ARC and Regina Mason, a consultant for Autism Connections will be discussing the topic of ASD and sexuality. The meeting will talk about relationship building, challenges to teaching these skills, navigating social nuances, and training opportunities for parents and professionals. ACBC welcomes all members of the community who would like to learn more about autism resources. Attendees are encouraged to bring information to share with the resource table. For more information, contact Erica Donovan at Erica.donovan@pathlightgroup.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Navigating Social Nuances 6:00pm-7:30pm Autism Connections, Pittsfield</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>New Year’s Day Autism Connections Will be closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Open Swim 2:30pm-3:30pm Berkshire Family YMCA North Adams</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Social Skills Gym Class 4:00pm-5:00pm Patterson Field House Berkshire CC</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Family Empowerment Get Organized Workshop 6:00pm-8:00pm Hadley</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Autism Connections Parent Support 5:30pm-7:30pm Holyoke</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Northampton Area Pediatrics Parenting Workshop 6:00pm-8:00pm Hadley</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Yoga Class 4:00pm-5:00pm Autism Connections Pittsfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Aspergers’ Support Group 5:00pm-6:00pm Autism Connections, Pittsfield</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day Autism Connections’ offices are closed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Social Skills Gym Class 4:00pm-5:00pm Berkshire CC</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Autism and the IEP 5:30pm-7:30pm Greenfield Public Library Greenfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yoga Class 4:00pm-5:00pm Autism Connections Pittsfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calendar for January 2019:**

- **1st Day**: Navigating Social Nuances from 6:00pm-7:30pm at Autism Connections, Pittsfield.
- **2nd Day**: New Year’s Day, Autism Connections’ offices will be closed.
- **6th Day**: Open Swim from 2:30pm-3:30pm at Berkshire Family YMCA, North Adams.
- **7th Day**: Social Skills Gym Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Patterson Field House, Berkshire CC.
- **8th Day**: Family Empowerment Get Organized Workshop from 6:00pm-8:00pm at Hadley.
- **9th Day**: Autism Connections Parent Support from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Holyoke.
- **13th Day**: Northampton Area Pediatrics Parenting Workshop from 6:00pm-8:00pm at Hadley.
- **14th Day**: Social Skills Gym Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Patterson Field House, Berkshire CC.
- **15th Day**: Yoga Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Autism Connections, Pittsfield.
- **16th Day**: Aspergers’ Support Group from 5:00pm-6:00pm at Autism Connections, Pittsfield.
- **20th Day**: Martin Luther King Day, Autism Connections’ offices are closed.
- **21st Day**: Social Skills Gym Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Berkshire CC.
- **22nd Day**: Autism and the IEP from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield.
- **27th Day**: Open Swim from 2:30pm-3:30pm at Berkshire Family YMCA, North Adams.
- **28th Day**: Social Skills Gym Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Berkshire CC.
- **29th Day**: Navigating Social Nuances from 6:00pm-7:30pm at Autism Connections, Pittsfield.
- **30th Day**: Yoga Class from 4:00pm-5:00pm at Autism Connections, Pittsfield.
### Coming Up

#### February 2019

**February 10, 2019**

**Focus on Disability: an evening of film and discussion (free)**

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

February 10, 2019

5:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

*The 2019 Film Screening of Dan Habib’s "Intelligent Lives" is hosted by Whole Children and Five College Realtors, and will be followed by a panel discussion. Call 413-585-8010 for more information.*

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#### April 2019

**April 23, 2019**

**Autism Connections’ Annual Autism Conference**

*The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel*

Keynote speaker and Breakout Sessions!

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Please help us go green. Contact Danielle at Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org if you are receiving a hard copy of this newsletter and would prefer an electronic copy.
WEBINAR

Planning for the Transition to Adulthood
Wednesday January 16, 2019 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.
Thearcofmass.org
Presenters:
Karen Mariscal, Esq. and Pat Nemia, M.A., P.T.

As students in special education prepare to enter adulthood, there are several areas that need to be addressed. One of the most important is for individuals with I/DD including Autism who are turning 18 years old to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. Join us for this informative presentation which will discuss why applying for SSI and Medicaid is important, the steps you need to take to prepare to apply, and then how to apply for this important benefit.

Clearing the Way to Employment
Wednesday, January 16, 2019, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
FREE
Presenters: Maria Paiewonsky, Institute for Community Inclusion; Jerri Roach, Worcester Public Schools and Sherry Elander, Westfield Public Schools

Learn how transition specialists and special educators are finding ways to build career development opportunities, utilize school and community resources, and build employment networks. This webinar has elements for both parents and professionals, so please contact Community Inclusion, at 617-287-4300 or visit the website at http://employmentfirstma.org/signup.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING OF ADULTS

Tuesday, January 29, 2019 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
AANE.org, $25

Brian Willoughby will talk on the subject of Executive Functioning for Adults. Description and registration will be communicated as soon as it becomes available.

To be notified when registration opens, please contact onlinelearning@aane.org.

WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

Northampton Area Pediatrics Parenting Workshop: Autism Spectrum Disorders from Toddlers to Teens
with David Kieval, Psy.D., BCBA, Peter Everett, MD, and NAP Care Coordinators Jill Quinn and Jacqueline Riel
Sunday January 13, 2019, 2:00 p.m.
Northampton Area Pediatrics
193 Locust St, Northampton, MA

The presenters will cover red flags to look for in your child’s development, the process of getting your child evaluated for autism, the services that are available in the community to children with autism, and an overview of intervention approaches. This workshop is intended both for parents of children diagnosed with autism and others interested in learning more.

Autism and the IEP
Tuesday, January 22, 2019, 5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield Room
402 Main Street, Greenfield MA

Are you a parent or caregiver? Join Autism Connections’ Educational Advocate Nancy Farnsworth as she guides you through the basic IEP process. This free community workshop addresses needs for students of all ages, with a focus on the particular considerations to keep in mind for a student with autism. RSVP and more information: Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org.

SSI and SSDI Workshop
Tuesday, February 12, 2019 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Family Empowerment, 41 Russell St, Hadley, MA

This free community workshop will help you determine when you should apply for each benefit, and learn about the important time frames. Filling out the paperwork properly can mean the difference in getting the services approved or denied, and can affect the amount of benefits you receive.

Please contact Michelle Mendes, to RSVP or for more information at michelle.mendes@pathlightgroup.org, 413.585.8010.
COMMUNITY/FAMILY EVENTS

UCP FREE Swim
Gladys Allen Brigham Center
Thursdays 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
165 East St, Pittsfield, MA

Berkshire Family YMCA
Sundays 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
22 Brickyard Court, North Adams, MA

Open and FREE to all individuals and families affiliated with UCP and Autism Connections. Registration is required. Please call the Gladys Allen Brigham Center at 413-442-5174 ext. 25 or the Berkshire Family YMCA at 413-663-6529.

Please note there will be no staffing at open swim. All children must be accompanied by an adult and all adults that will need personal care must come with a caregiver.

Be sure to sign-in when you arrive and indicate which agency you are associated with (UCP or Autism Connections).

Open House for Miracle League Baseball
Saturday, January 26, 2019  10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
Extra Innings, 340 McKinstrey Ave, Suite 250
Chicopee, MA

Come join the Miracle League of Western MA to register your child (ages 4-17 years old) for the spring season, or become a volunteer! This event is open to all current or prospective players and buddies. Please register in advance for the event by emailing us at miracleleagueofwesternma@gmail.com by 1/24/19.

Annual Autism Advocacy Day at the Statehouse with AANE
Thursday, April 11, 2019, 9:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.
Great Hall, The State House, Boston Massachusetts

Join families, self-advocates and providers to make an impact with your legislators for this important event. Contact Judy Zacek at 781-891-6270 x 6102 or visit www.afamaction.org for more information.

YOUNG ADULT

Potluck Socials and Video Game Nights
Milestones
Fridays: January 25, February 22, and March 8
6:30-8:30 p.m. (all ages)
41 Russell Street, Hadley MA

Whether you come to the monthly Potluck Socials to see old friends or to meet new ones (or a little of both), you are sure to have fun with the music to groove to, and a karaoke stage! If video games are more your thing, there is space for you and your friends. Remember to bring a nut-free appetizer, dish, dessert, or a drink to share. Free!

Tim Tebow’s Night to Shine
February 8, 2019, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Knights of Columbus,
1597 Memorial Drive, Chicopee

You are invited to participate in the Tim Tebow sponsored Night to Shine at Knights of Columbus in Chicopee on February 8th. Walk the red carpet and enjoy the royal treatment at this prom while you dance the night away! More info: Marylou@lifepoint.online

Milestones
Recreational programs for young adults in Hadley, more info HERE.

AANE Pizza and Game Night
January 24: Holyoke at MCS
All dates—6:00pm-8:00 p.m. $12

Have dinner, socialize, and play games (feel free to bring your favorite games). Please visit aane.org/events/2018-09/ to register at your preferred location, and call 617-393-3824 for more information.

Whole Children
Next session: January 7—March 9
41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA

The next session of classes starts on January 7, 2019 - see the catalog HERE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP NAME</th>
<th>GROUP DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>MEETING DETAILS</th>
<th>CONTACT/MORE INFO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMHERST</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical &amp; Support Options (CSO) Parent Support Group</td>
<td>For parents of children/youth with high functioning autism (Asperger’s). Come share your experience, learn about resources, and hear from experts in the field. Childcare available. This is a parent led support group.</td>
<td>Saturdays 10:00am-11:30am Bridge Family Resource Center 101 University Dr, Suite A3 Amherst, MA</td>
<td>Group meets on Saturdays. Childcare available, refreshments served. Please call 413.549.0297 with questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ATHOL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism Support Group</td>
<td>This is a monthly support group for parents, caregivers, grandparents and siblings of autistic children. RSVP is required. December’s meeting will be held on December 16th.</td>
<td>December’s meeting will be held on December 16th. 4th Sunday of the month Athol Memorial Hospital, The Hillis Conference Room, 2033 Main St, Athol</td>
<td>Please contact Amanda Gallant at <a href="mailto:Amanda.gallant@heywood.org">Amanda.gallant@heywood.org</a> with questions or to RSVP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United ARC, Caregivers’ Resource Group</td>
<td>Socialize with other caregivers and help support each other through all of the ins and outs of being a caregiver or parent to a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Join us to discuss ideas and gain valuable resources.</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of the month 10:00am-12:00pm 6:00pm-8:00pm 361 Main Street, Athol, MA</td>
<td>Refreshments will be provided. RSVP is not required, but is helpful for planning purposes. Call Karen Parker at 978-249-4052, x 1047.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CHICOPPEE</strong></td>
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<td>HOPE Autism Support Group</td>
<td>This group is designed for parents and caregivers of family members on the autism spectrum to meet and talk with others that are on the same journey in a positive and confidential environment.</td>
<td>Group will meet on the 2nd Friday of each month.</td>
<td>For more information or to RSVP, please contact Cathy at <a href="mailto:camorgado@verizon.net">camorgado@verizon.net</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>EASTHAMPTON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asperger’s Social Night for Adults</td>
<td>Autism Connections is happy to provide this social night twice a month for folks 18+ who identify as having Asperger’s.</td>
<td>Autism Connections 116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366 Easthampton, MA</td>
<td>This group will resume in the near future. Please contact Kimberly LaMothe at 413.529.2428 x118 with questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Discussion Group</td>
<td>This group is being offered by the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE). There is an attendance fee of $5.</td>
<td>Mason Library 231 Main Street, Great Barrington</td>
<td>For more information please contact <a href="mailto:stephanie.birkdale@aane.org">stephanie.birkdale@aane.org</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GREAT BARRINGTON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism Connections Western MA Support Group</td>
<td>This support group is open to all family members of children and young adults with autism. The group is designed for parents and other caregivers to come together for support and to share information.</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday of the month 5:30pm-7:30pm MCS 260 Westfield Road Holyoke, MA</td>
<td>Email Linda Wynne at <a href="mailto:wynne92@aol.com">wynne92@aol.com</a> for RSVP and more info. Childcare is offered and requires a reservation one week in advance. Call our office at 413.529.2428.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom’s Night Out</td>
<td>Moms of people with different abilities are invited to bring their problems, triumphs and their need to laugh. Jericho will supply drinks and refreshments. Bring something to share!</td>
<td>Jericho 537 Northampton Street Holyoke, MA</td>
<td>For meeting times and to RSVP contact Linda LaPointe at <a href="mailto:lindal@jericho.becca.org">lindal@jericho.becca.org</a> or calling 413.538.7450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Professional Advocacy League</td>
<td>Moving Forward: Our Journey. A group for empowering families through transition planning.</td>
<td>Please contact PPAL for locations and times.</td>
<td>For more information visit <a href="http://www.ppal.net">www.ppal.net</a> or email <a href="mailto:eszela@ppal.net">eszela@ppal.net</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainbow Support Group of Western Mass.</td>
<td>This group provides support and info to individuals with intellectual challenges who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or those who are questioning.</td>
<td>Western Mass Training Consortium 187 High Street, Suite 202 Holyoke</td>
<td>For questions or to find out meeting times contact Tammy Nothe-Hebert at 413.536.2491 x3036.</td>
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<td><strong>HOLYOKE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism Connections</td>
<td>This support group is open to all family members of children and young adults with autism. The group is designed for parents and other caregivers to come together for support and to share information.</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday of the month 5:30pm-7:30pm MCS 260 Westfield Road Holyoke, MA</td>
<td>Email Linda Wynne at <a href="mailto:wynne92@aol.com">wynne92@aol.com</a> for RSVP and more info. Childcare is offered and requires a reservation one week in advance. Call our office at 413.529.2428.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mom’s Night Out</td>
<td>Moms of people with different abilities are invited to bring their problems, triumphs and their need to laugh. Jericho will supply drinks and refreshments. Bring something to share!</td>
<td>Jericho 537 Northampton Street Holyoke, MA</td>
<td>For meeting times and to RSVP contact Linda LaPointe at <a href="mailto:lindal@jericho.becca.org">lindal@jericho.becca.org</a> or calling 413.538.7450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Professional Advocacy League</td>
<td>Moving Forward: Our Journey. A group for empowering families through transition planning.</td>
<td>Please contact PPAL for locations and times.</td>
<td>For more information visit <a href="http://www.ppal.net">www.ppal.net</a> or email <a href="mailto:eszela@ppal.net">eszela@ppal.net</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Support Group of Western Mass.</td>
<td>This group provides support and info to individuals with intellectual challenges who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or those who are questioning.</td>
<td>Western Mass Training Consortium 187 High Street, Suite 202 Holyoke</td>
<td>For questions or to find out meeting times contact Tammy Nothe-Hebert at 413.536.2491 x3036.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NORTHAMPTON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Strong Skills Training</td>
<td>The group is for children and their caregivers and will use the Attachment Regulation and Competency Framework to help children learn different skills.</td>
<td>Tuesdays 4:45-6:15pm CSO Outpatient Clinic 8 Atwood Dr, Suite 201, Northampton</td>
<td>For more information and to register please contact Dave at 413.582.0471 ext. 5080 or Kim ext. 5032.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley ADHD Parent Support Group</td>
<td>This group is for parents and caregivers to receive ADHD information and support. It is a place where you can be heard and not be judged</td>
<td>1st Monday of the month, 8:30-9:00pm Northampton Area Pediatrics 193 Locust St., Northampton</td>
<td>For more information contact <a href="mailto:ValleyADHDfamilies@gmail.com">ValleyADHDfamilies@gmail.com</a>.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## NORTHAMPTON

**Florence Women’s Support Group**
- Support group for women with Autism, ages 18+
- This free group is being offered by the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE).
- Third Thursday of the month, Lilly Library, 19 Meadow Street, Florence
- For more information or to join this group, contact Stephanie Birkdale at stephanie.birkdale@aane.org.

**Wire Monkey Mama’s Coffee Club**
- A bi-weekly meetup and solidarity circle for all mamas like grand, step, foster, and any mama who cares for a child.
- Every other Monday evening 6:00pm-7:00pm
- 1 Market Street, Northampton
- At The Roost in Northampton. For more information, text Yoshi at 413-347-2517

## PITTSFIELD

**Asperger’s Support Group of the Berkshires**
- This group is for individuals with Asperger’s syndrome to come together and offer friendship, fellowship and support.
- Wednesdays, 5:00pm-6:30pm
- Group will meet in various locations.
- Please contact Elizabeth Flaherty at 443.4780 x16 or Elizabeth Flaherty @pathlightgroup.org to RSVP.

**Berkshire Teen Group**
- This group is for teens and young adults who live in Berkshire County and are on the autism spectrum. The group meets regularly for conversation and community based activities.
- Will meet regularly, every other Friday evening, throughout the community.
- Please contact Ben Breton at benjamin.breton@pathlightgroup.org or 413.529.2428 x121 for monthly group schedule and outing details.

## SPRINGFIELD

**Impact Center Support Group**
- A monthly support group for parents and caregivers of youths’ with social/emotional/behavioral challenges. El Support Network en colaboración con Gandara ofrece un grupo de apoyo mensual para padres y cuidadores de jóvenes con problemas sociales / emocionales y de
- English Group: 1st Friday of the month
- 12pm-1:30pm
- Grupo Español - el tercer Viernes de 10am-11:30am
- 41 Taylor Street, Springfield
- For information and to RSVP, please contact Cynthia Santiago at csantiago@wmtcinfo.org or 413-218-5055
- Informacion de RSVP: Cynthia Santiago @ csantiago@wmtcinfo.org or 413-218-5055

## SOUTH HADLEY

**LGBTQ and the Autism Spectrum**
- This group is being offered by the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE).
- There is an attendance fee of $5.
- S. Hadley Public Library Conference Room
- 2 Canal Street South Hadley, MA
- For information or to join, please contact Stephanie Birkdale at stephanie.birkdale@aane.org.

## WESTFIELD

**Westfield Support Group for Adults with Asperger’s Syndrome**
- This group is an opportunity for support and discussion among adults on the autism spectrum. We provide a “safe space” and as such are not recommended for friends and family members except in a support role.
- Building Autistic Community, Inc
- 507 Southampton Road #1
- Westfield, MA
- For more information, contact the group at info@bacautism.org or call BAC at 413.359.0222.

## WILLIAMSBURG

**Families of Spirited Children (It Takes a Village)**
- This is a group for parents, grandparents and caregivers of children with special needs, autism, ADHD or physical, sensory, or medical challenges. Free childcare and refreshments provided.
- Tuesdays, 10:00am-11:30am
- Anna T. Dunphy School
- 1 Petticoat Hill Road, Williamsburg
- For more information, contact It Takes a Village at 413-650-3640 or Kat at info@hilltownvillage.org or www.facebook.com/hilltownvillage

## ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP NAME</th>
<th>GROUP DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>DATES/TIMES</th>
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</table>
| **Online Support Group for Parents of Teen Boys** | This online support group will focus on topics of particular interest to parents of tween boys. | 12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m., $120
We will hold our 29th Annual Autism Conference on April 23, 2019, at The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel. We are so excited to share our new event format and location with you.

Authors Gina Gallagher and Patricia Terrasi will present their keynote address, along with a very exciting selection of morning and afternoon breakout presenters who will share their knowledge about a range of autism related topics.

General Registration will open on our website January 18. We have new, interesting levels of sponsorship this year and an exciting new space for exhibitors. Please contact joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org with any questions if you would like more information about reaching our attendees through sponsorship opportunities or exhibitor tables in the Exhibitor Showcase.