

TEE UP FOR AUTISM

Friday
August 26
2016

Highfields Golf
& Country Club
42 Magill Drive
Grafton, MA

9 am REGISTRATION
10 am SHOTGUN START
\$125 PER GOLFER

Register at : www.firstgiving.com/arccm/tee-up-for-autism

Recognizing Our Guiding Stars

Outstanding Educators

Deb Hackett

Nominated by Mia & Patrick McDonald- Deb is tireless in her devotion to the children in her care. As an educator and an ABA therapist she presses forward with a big smile and a lot of determination. At a time when Liam's challenges were growing she helped us navigate those difficulties and she did so with grace and strength of character. Even though it has been almost two years since Deb was Liam's ABA therapist, she still works in the school that my four other children attend, and she still greets each of them with a big smile or a hug. She is someone who truly cares, has a big heart, and is willing to work tirelessly for these kids.

Cathy Cranston

Nominated by Lisa Thompson
Cathy Cranston is a Special Education Teacher in West Boylston, but to Erica and I she is so much more! Cathy has been working with Erica since the summer of 2012. She immediately took a shine to Erica. Over the years Cathy has been instrumental in helping Erica feel like a member of the school community, and to gradually increase her inclusion into the regular education classroom. Erica had a tough year in Kindergarten, and Cathy became Erica's sub separate classroom teacher in grade 1. She made her room a place where Erica felt appreciated and loved. Cathy used structure and consistency as well as positive feedback and true understanding of Erica's anxiety to guide Erica in her learning, and to gradually get Erica back into the regular education classroom. Erica is now in Grade 3, and is spending most of her time in the regular education classroom. I credit this to Cathy and her hand in everything. She has worked hard to ensure Erica had the best fitting classroom

teacher and aide support. She worked toward developing the best possible peer make up of the class for Erica's success. She has kept open and honest communication with my husband, and I and loves to share photos, stories and experiences from Erica's day with us. She always looks out for Erica's best interest. She has attended Erica's fundraisers for the Autism walk each year, and I have seen her at other students' recitals, plays and important moments. She gives me encouragement when things are tough, always focuses on the good in my child, and has compassion for the struggles. There was a week this year when Cathy was at training and was not at school. Erica had a tough week. One of the days she was out Erica said, "I know it's just one person, but not having Mrs. Cranston at school makes a big difference." That says it all for me. Cathy Cranston makes a big difference for the children and families she works with. I am grateful for her every day.

Lauren Carchidi

Nominated by Stephanie Madrigal
Lauren has impacted so many children with autism and deserves recognition herself. She goes above and beyond what is required of her in order to make certain her students and their parents are getting the support they need.

She is an active member of the community outside of school as well. She recently organized a CrossFit open gym for kids with different abilities She donated her time to bring this wonderful opportunity to the community and it was well attended.

Pat Siimes

Nominated by Amy Smith
Pat Siimes is a Guiding Star. She has become a trusted friend, someone my boys know they can go to if they need help or if they are having trouble. Pat is excellent at her job and has helped me with all of my boys. Pat helped me to get my son Jacob back onto an IEP in 4th grade after he had come off in 2nd. He struggled with the transition to a new school with the change up to Shaw school. Pat has helped Jacob to come out of his shell, has improved his verbal skills and helped him to be able improve his social skills. He even has a best friend now, which would not have happened if we had not had Pat helping us for the last 3 years. As if that is not enough, she also works with my son Brandon, who is not on the spectrum but is deaf and uses a cochlear implant and hearing aid. he uses an FM system at school to allow him to access sound and his curriculum. Pat has been the lead person for Brandon's 504 plan since 4th grade and has been there to calm him down through several occasion of full equipment failure. School can be scary enough, never mind doing it unable to hear anything. The first time it occurred, he panicked a bit but she calmed him, kept him with her in her office for an hour until I could get to the school. After that experience, whenever he has had a problem, he does not panic, he simply goes to Mrs. Siimes' office and she calls me. Pat is a wonderful woman who helps so many children and is definitely a Guiding Star to everyone. Thank you Pat

Recognizing Our Guiding Stars

Outstanding ABA Providers

Nassim Aoude—ABS

Nominated by Stacy Lavelly

You came into our lives
 When all hell had broken loose
 Our spirits shattered everywhere
 Around our necks a noose
 The road ahead looked bleak
 Days and nights stretched on
 I barely dared to speak or peek
 Not knowing if I'd see dawn
 You showed up at this time
 Assessing our whole life
 Love brewing under the surface
 Along with all the strife
 You put a plan in place
 You checked in quite often
 You helped restore peace
 The blows began to soften
 We felt so blessed you took
 Time to match Jagger so well
 With our talented techs
 In love we both fell
 These angels you sent to us
 Brought my son back to me
 All because you took the time
 To learn our family
 With those days left behind
 Now there are hugs and high fives
 You will never fully understand
 Just how you saved our lives

Ann Gawle—HMEA

Nominated by Shakira Gonzalez

Ann has been a part of my life since I first found out my son had a diagnosis of ASD. She is excellent at what she does. She's always made sure I had the right supports and always did her best when it comes to helping achieve the goals I have set for my son. I feel Ann has always gone above and beyond to do her job.

When Ann first came into our lives my son was completely nonverbal. He was a shy little boy with so much personality.

Ann saw his potential and his will to learn from the start. There were days when I thought he would never talk and she always reassured me he would. She's always taken her time and listened when I had concerns and never made me feel as though any of my concerns were not valid. My son has progressed and regressed but Ann never gave up and never stopped pushing him. Now he is talking and I finally heard him say "I love you mommy" for the first time not long ago. Thanks to all the hard work and dedication she has put into my family I heard my son's voice. Now he can read at the age of 4 years old. I feel like the sky is the limit for my son now. With all the tools Ann has given me I am able to not only help my son but I also see a brighter future for him as well.

Tony Palacios—BCI

Nominated by Kristen Saad

My son Trevor's BCI therapist is a Guiding Star. He has been with my family for some time now. He has helped in so many ways. When Trevor needed some help with clippers for getting his hair cut, Tony would use clipper pieces in his hair and make pretend clipper sounds to help make hair cutting easier. Finger nail and toe nail clipping has always been a challenge, again Tony worked with Trevor and clipping has gotten so much better. He is truly a caring dedicated person. He is always willing to work through any challenge Trevor puts in front of him. As well as being understanding and helpful with my other son Bradyn. He's even tried singing which isn't his strong point, sorry Tony. He really has become a team member that is always a positive thinker and has more patience than me even on my best day.

Outstanding Care Giver

Denise Messier

Nominated by Heidi Robbins

My son Ben is 14 and severely impacted with autism. I was in search of a caregiver AGAIN for Ben for after school hours as the turnover for this position occurred mainly due to college students moving on with their life! Denise was recommended to me from Colleen Munson a fellow mom affiliated with the center – my sister was helping me spread the word and happened to mention to Colleen at the UU church – and led us to today. I am extremely grateful! Denise is a caring, accepting and loving woman. She has embraced both my sons as her own and has let me cry on her shoulder many times as well. She deals with bathing, changing pull ups, meals, safety, behaviors...and also with the ABA techs who come in a few days a week. She stayed overnight at my house while I was in Germany on business and last minute when I needed to go to Austin to be with my sister when her husband passed away. She herself is a breast cancer survivor and a mom of twin teenage boys. I celebrate Denise because she is a life line for me every day while I struggle along this journey of autism. She is a true guiding star to both Jake and Ben.

Outstanding Adult Service Providers

Sandra Flowers

Nominated by Vicki Freilich

I have nominated Sandra Flowers, Jason's van driver. As a special needs parent also transitioning with their young adult, I was quite anxious about transportation to and from the Aspire!

Recognizing Our Guiding Stars

Program. When we finally got transportation, we found out that Sandra would be Jason's van driver. We were so relieved because Sandra and her son, Darryl were on the Shrewsbury Special Olympics Track team together for many years. What a small world! I knew that Sandra would take care of Jason like her own and she would "get it" from a Mom's perspective. We felt like we won the lottery! From Jason's perspective, he says that Sandra is a very patient driver, knows what she is doing and doesn't switch the routes. Jason says that he can talk to her about anything because she's easy going and she "gets him"- his punny sense of humor, his logical brain, his spirit and his needs. I like that she talks with her young adult passengers as young adults. She lets them know of any changes and what to expect as well as letting their parents know too. As we all know, this is the exception and not the norm. We thank Sandra for making a difference in our lives and touching our hearts forever.

Sebastian Nimo

Nominated by Rudolph Williams

Sebastian Nimo deserves recognition as an excellent Direct Service Provider for adults. Sebastian has displayed consistent willingness to provide care and supervision for Adrian Williams in a residential Setting. Sebastian is compassionate and patient when it comes to giving service at home and in the community while working with Adrian over the past five years. The communication provided to family and all support systems put in place for Adrian helps to strengthen other service providers care throughout the state by being a shining example of how to do the job.

David Aroujo

Nominated by Jason Freilich

Hi! My name is Jason Freilich. I'm 22 years old and I go to the Aspire Day Program at

7 Hills. Turning 22 and going to a different program, I didn't know what to expect or who I was going to meet. I started taking some classes and met this teacher who teaches the Employment Class. His name is David Aroujo. He just "gets me" and my learning style. He is nice, friendly and easy to talk to. Some things that make him a good teacher is that he is very professional and takes his job seriously. He is always prepared and organized. I like that a lot. He teaches me life lessons and his goal for the class is to get a job. He teaches his class safety skills and how to behave in class and on the job. We are also working on my resume together. One day he came into class with a suit on to show us how to dress for an interview. How many teachers would really do that? David talks about how he loves his job and likes to help people forever. He's a really good guy who makes a difference in my life. I just wanted to tell him that.

Outstanding Therapist

Mary Minalga LICSW

Nominated by Kelly & Wayne Carey

Mary Minalga, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and a Guiding Star. We have known Mary for at least 13 years. Mary has been a therapist to 2 of our 3 sons with Autism. Wayne 16 and Joel 12. Mary has always been a staunch supporter of our boys. I cannot count the times that I have called Mary in an absolute panic over an Autism crisis (which is quite frequent for us). She has always been there for us, no matter what time of the day it is. There has never been a time that I have not received a return call from Mary. I often speak with her outside of what other people would consider "normal business hours." She will give her best suggestions as to a course of action and will then follow-up with additional discussion at the next therapy session. Mary has always been available to help us with our crisis,

lend support and give her expertise on dealing with complex Autism issues with many moving parts. Mary is an integral part of our Autism village. We work as a team to resolve situations. She is a great listener along with having a mountain of patience and a heart full of compassion and understanding. She does not just treat our boys she treats us as a family to work through this unique life together. We depend on Mary's support to help us on our Autism journey. By definition a "Guiding Star is a luminous point in the sky to lead the way for us," Mary is truly a luminous light that guides the way for us, the Carey Family's "Guiding Star." Thank you Mary for your enduring support.

Outstanding Teacher

Sensi Michael Agbay - MJA Martial Arts

Nominated by Thadius & Diane Dubsy

Thadius and Zachary Dubsy found their Guiding Star in Sensei Michael Agbay of MJA Martial Arts. Sensei Mike treats each student as an individual, allowing them to advance at his own pace. All students are taught in harmony with their learning style and needs. Thadius and Zachary have made personal gains in focus, concentration, self-control, discipline, respect, and self confidence, while learning self-defense, gaining physical strength and flexibility, as well as coordination and balance. What began as an extra-curricular activity to aid with socialization, has become an integral part of their lives. Under the guidance of Sensei Mike, Thadius and Zachary have been encouraged to focus on what they can do regardless of disabilities. He teaches them to set goals, and plan ways of achieving these goals. Sensei Mike not only teaches these values, he leads by example.

Recognizing Our Guiding Stars

Outstanding Volunteers

Kristen Saad &

Stelios Athanassiades

Nominated by Wanja Kiraguri

There is nothing as challenging as reporting to work on your first day and being told you are in charge of the events and Oh Yes! The major event is in two months. So here is your desk, familiarize yourself with the organization, learn how to use this software called Firstgiving and learn about the event. Good luck! Well, I wanted to wish the event away and I did try a few times especially when Sue Loring told me she knew more about the walk than the run. Then she introduced me to Stelios the Run Chair. He was very welcoming and gave me a detailed synopsis of the event. I remember Stelios telling me, "I have done this event for several years, we have a very good committee and we will work with you to make sure the event is a success." He was right, he had a well oiled machine for the 5K from logistics to timing the runners. As he showed me the ropes, I learned to rely on his wisdom and guidance on things that needed attention. Any email from Stelios was opened ASAP as I knew I needed to learn what he know and learn it fast. As the Run Chair, he worked very well with other committee members. On the day of the event, Stelios did everything that needed to be done for a successful 5K and yes, the event was a success. Thank you Stelios for the years you have volunteered and the successful 5Ks.

Kristen Saad is the Walk Chair and the most cool, calm and collected Walk Chair I have ever met. My first meeting with Kristen, she assured me that she knew all aspects of the walk and she then continued to give me details of the event. By the time our meeting was over, I knew I liked her and I knew I could rely

on her to guide me and the event would be a success. Did I mention that she is such a calm person? Whenever I seemed in doubt and asked her a question, she has always guided me and told me many times, "Relax, the event will be a success." On the day of the event, Kristen shows up with an army of volunteers, needless to say they are related to her and they give their all to make sure that the event is a success. Thank you Kristen for your wisdom, your guidance and your kindhearted nature to be of help and recruit others to help the center succeed.

Outstanding Parent Leaders

Lisa Thompson

Nominated by Michelle Kaelin

When my son was diagnosed on the autism spectrum, Lisa was one of the first people I turned to. She is always ready to listen and offer advice, understanding, and support. She truly has traveled alongside me as a Mom on this journey. In her roles as parent, SEPAC President and CFCE Grant Coordinator, Lisa works so hard every day to give her best, continually pushes herself to learn more, do more and grow. Whether it is attending conferences, arranging for speakers, or developing a creative new program, Lisa gives with her whole heart. Spend even a short amount of time in Lisa's presence and you will see and hear her enthusiasm and energy for her work. She is a fighter and holds herself to high standards to do right by her children and her community.

Linda Cournoyer

nominated by Brenda Waleski

Linda is the quintessential parent leader. She has helped me become a better advocate for my children and others and makes sure that I am taking care of myself, because sometimes I forget to. She is

the only one who understood when Austin could no longer live at home because she has been there, even though I was devastated. When Jacob was struggling in school she was the one who came to his aide even though he doesn't have disabilities, he was a sibling that needed help. She's an asset not only to me and my family but to the entire community.

Brenda Waleski

Brenda saw my son playing in her backyard in his underwear. Instead of being shocked or horrified she engaged him until I could find her and she walked us back home. That's not where it ended. She saw bruises on my arm that I was trying to keep covered. She didn't pry, she just said she'd been in my shoes and she knows. Over the next few months she babysat for me gave me resources, emergency numbers and became a good friend. I was torn between as abusive marriage or being alone with two children with autism. One night after the abuse escalated I called Brenda and she picked us up and brought us to a battered women's shelter. Thanks to her my children and I have a future.

Outstanding Autism Professional- Kristen Finne-Gregoire

nominated by Mary Johnson & Sue Loring

I came to appreciate her strong work ethic, professionalism & creativity when I began working on the children's waiver team about 2 years ago when I quickly came to realize that Kris knew the waiver program rules and guidelines as well if not better than some of us at DDS. She is a strong advocate for the families we serve and we are lucky to have her as part of the waiver team. Thank you Kris for all the hard work you do - on behalf of the DDS waiver team please know we appreciate you.

Register for Events @ www.autismresourcecentral.org or call 508-298-1610 Fees for Events are as stated on site

JUNE**June 1 2016****Parent Night Out**

99 Restaurant

900 West Boylston St 7 PM

June 4-5, 2016**Mother's Retreat**

Registration Closed

June 6, 13, 20, 27**July 11,18, 25****August 1, 8, 15, 29, 2016****Family Fun & Fitness**

6-7 PM

Walking at DCR Quinsigamond State Park or St V's Atrium (rain)

Strength Training with Julie O'Mara
3 Bartlett Pond Way Sterling

Healthy Eating

6-7 PM

Check registration page for details

Vacation Family Fun**June 27, 2016****Roger Williams Zoo**1000 Elmwood Avenue,
Providence, RI

Meet at Gate at 10:30 AM

Fee: \$5.00/PP

June 28, 2016**Drawbridge Puppet Theater
Puppet Show & Workshop**Pack a picnic for lunch in the garden
1335 Massachusetts Ave,
Lunenburg, MA 01462
10 AM Fee \$2.00/pp**June 29, 2016****Eric Carle Museum**Pack a picnic for before entering at
12 Noon
125 W Bay Rd Amherst, MA
Fee:\$2.00/pp**June 30, 2016****Skyzone**

290 Turnpike Road , Westboro

11 AM Fee: \$5.00/per bouncer

Worcester Bravehearts Game

Fitton Field

1 College Rd Worcester

7 PM Fee: \$2.00/pp

JULY**July 1, 2016****Family Fun at Dunn Park**

289 Pearl St, Gardner, MA

Pack a picnic & bring swim gear

Parking is \$8.00

11 AM

July 4 2016**CENTER CLOSED****July 8, 2016****Friends & Family Movie**

West Boylston Cinema

Rt 12 West Boylston

10 AM Fee: \$2.00/pp

July 17, 2016**Family Fun Day****Breezy Picnic Grounds**

520 N W Main St,

Douglas, MA 01516

Enter between 10 AM -2 PM

(park is open until 5)

\$5.00/pp

July 20, 2016**Meet & Greet Ice Cream Social****Newly Eligible Adults with ASD****MEOLA's Ice Cream Stand**

165 W Boylston St,

West Boylston, MA 01583 6:30 PM

July 22, 2016**Family Fun—Ice Cream Social****MEOLA's Ice Cream Stand**

165 W Boylston St,

West Boylston, MA 01583

1:30 PM

Then Play in the Park at
Major Edwards Playground
\$2.00/pp for ice-cream**July 29, 2016****Friends & Family Movie**

Cinema World

John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg

10 AM

AUGUST**August 5, 2016****Fun at Douglas State Park**

107 Wallum Lake Rd.

Douglas, MA 01516

Pack a picnic & swim gear

Parking \$9.00 11 AM

August 11, 2016**Paint Night**

Turner Hall

60 Branch St Clinton

6:30 PM Fee: \$35.00/pp

August 12, 2016**Family Fun**

Pizza & Bowling at Bayberry Lanes

326 Main St Spencer 10:30 AM

Fee: \$2.00/pp

August 19, 2016**Friends & Family Movie**

Elm Draught House

35 Elm Court, Millbury, MA

1 PM Fee: \$2.00/pp

August 21-25th**Family Fun Days at Camp**

See page 7

August 26, 2016**Tee Up for Autism****CENTER CLOSED**

Come join friends and families for a week of summer fun, designed to fill the gaps in your school's summer program. Parents, grandparents, and siblings may accompany a child with autism for a day or a week of family fun. (One to one aides are welcome for families with multiple children on the spectrum but may not substitute for the presence of a parent; all children must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian).

Once again, we will offer a week of Community Day Trips the last week in June, as opposed to a camp, Check the Calendar for details for details. We've trips planned to the Roger Williams Zoo, Drawbridge Puppet Theater, the beach at Dunn Park, Eric Carle Museum in Amherst, Skyzone and a Bravehearts Game.

In August a full week of camp activities is scheduled, although parents may choose to attend as little or as much as their child prefers. We've a brand new location which offers us some new opportunities, Camp Marshall in Spencer. We'll offer swimming, crafts, games, archery, kayaking, pony rides and entertainment for the children. It also offers a chance to network and visit for the adults. Starting camp on a Sunday allows families who have working parents to join the fun for a day. Wednesday evening there will be a cookout and swim that can also include parents who are away from home during the day. An optional overnight, for those families that are ready for the experience, follows the extended day. Family Fun Days is a great way to entertain the entire family in a safe and supportive environment. Come spend time with old friends and make new ones.

Complete, detach and mail in with payment or register online at www.autismresourcecentral.org

August Camp August 21-25, 2016

Name

Address

Names & ages of children

Phone

Sign up for:	Cost	total
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday 8/21 # of participants X	\$2.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday 8/22 # of participants X	\$2.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday 8/23 # of participants X	\$2.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday 8/24 # of participants X	\$2.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wed cookout 8/24 # of participants X <small>Parents bring a side dish</small>	\$2.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wed Overnight 8/24 # of participants X	\$5.00/pp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday 8/25 # of participants X	\$2.00/pp	
		Total

Visa MasterCard

Check American Express

Make Checks payable to HMEA's Autism Resource Central & mail to 71 Sterling St, West Boylston, Ma 01583

Credit Card #

Exp. date CV

Signature



71 Sterling Street
West Boylston MA

Phone: 508-835-4278 Fax: 508 -835-3723

Email: autism@HMEA.org

www.autismresourcecentral.org

Sue Loring RN - Director

Cid DeLeo - Assistant to Director

Donmarie Smith - Autism Information Specialist

Kris Gregoire - Autism Waiver Supervisor

David Iborra & Priya Tikku - Autism Waiver Support Broker

Dianne Crossley LICSW - Autism Adult Services Specialist

Wanja Kiraguri- Event & Development Coordinator

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM- 9 PM Tuesday 9AM -5 PM

Friday 9 AM-3 PM Summer Hours M-Th 9AM-5PM Fri 9-3 PM

We are the Center of the autism community



The Resource CONNECTION is a quarterly publication of HMEA's Autism Resource Central

The Autism Resource Center does not endorse any treatments, programs or products. Articles, announcements and resources are provided for information purposes only.

Wrightslaw

HMEA's Autism Resource Central presents:

Wrightslaw Special Education and Advocacy Conference With Pete Wright, Esq.

Learn the tools you'll need to advocate for your child in the classroom



Pete Wright, Esq.

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Brian Kovalski (Clinton)

Kelly Carey (Shrewsbury)

Lisa Thompson (West Boylston)

Mia McDonald (Worcester)

Herb Cabral (Bolton)

Thursday, October 27, 2016 Sturbridge Host Hotel

Save the date of October 27, 2016 for a full day of learning which will enable you to become a better advocate for your child. Nationally acclaimed attorney Pete Wright will teach you all you need to know to obtain the services your child needs and is entitled to under law. Register on our website.