

Summer Fun !



This Summer
Make An
Ocean of Memories
With



Southwick's Zoo



Center members can register on our website
www.autismresourcecentral.org



Wild About Wine



When was the last time you enjoyed a visit to the zoo after hours? You have to come experience it! The zoo closes to the public at 5pm, its quiet and you can take a walk and see the animals and/or you can go on the Skyfari and see the animals from an aerial view. If that is not enough, you can back to the Daniel's Room and enjoy a delectable mix of different wines, hor d'oeuvres, try your luck at the Wine Grab, participate in the raffle and silent auction, listen to music and enjoy an evening at the zoo. All while raising much needed funds to support families challenged by autism.

So plan it as a date night with your significant other or grab a few friends and have a TGIF!

Tickets are \$50 per person and \$350 for 8

Must be 21 years of older to attend.

<https://www.autismresourcecentral.org/wild-about-wine-2/>

Support this event with a raffle donation, sponsoring the event, attend or donate to the event. For more information contact Wanja Kiraguri at wanjak@hmea.org or 508-298-1607

NEW BALANCE FALMOUTH ROAD RACE August 18th, 2019

This will be a busy week with our team of 7 participating in the New Balance Falmouth Road Race on Sunday August 18th. For some fun facts about the runners and how you can support them visit

<https://www.autismresourcecentral.org/new-balance-falmouth-road-race/>

Tee Up for Autism



FRIDAY
AUG 23, 2019

TEE UP FOR AUTISM

REGISTRATION 8AM
SHOTGUN STARTS 9AM

\$130 PER GOLFER

**INCLUDES GOLF FEES, LUNCH & 2 COMPLIMENTARY
ROUNDS AT CYPRIAN KEYES GOLF CLUB, BOYLSTON, MA**

**REGISTER
NOW!**

LUNCH SPONSOR

BOI DISCOVER MORE.
LEARN MORE.
BE MORE.

email: Wanja Kiraguri at wanjak@hmea.org
Call: 508-298-1607 for more information
Register: <http://www.autismresourcecentral.org/fundraising/golf/>

Do you or someone you know like to golf? Last year this golf tournament sold out! So hurry up and register for the 2019 Tee Up for Autism golf tournament on Friday August 23rd is for you.

Contests

- Hole-in-One contest win \$10,000
- Double Your Money
- Longest Drive Men
- Longest Drive Women
- Putting Green contest
- Closest to the line
- Mulligans & String

\$130 per golfer or \$520 for a foursome. Each golfer will receive:

- **Complimentary round of golf on the 18-hole golf course**
- **Complimentary round of golf on the Par-3**
- **\$5 Cyprian's Restaurant voucher**
- **Cigar**

<https://www.autismresourcecentral.org/fundraising/golf/>

Support this event with a raffle donation, sponsoring the event, attend or donate to the event.

For more information contact

Wanja Kiraguri at wanjak@hmea.org or 508-298-1607

Autism... not Obstacle by Robert Papazian

Imagine my surprise last month at our Autism Superhero 5k Walk and Run when a young man approached me wearing a Bravehearts hat and polo shirt and asked "You don't remember me do you?" It took me a few seconds but then it hit me, this self assured young man from the Bravehearts was none other than Rob Papazian, who I first met when he was about 8 and his family joined the Center. The Papzians were fixtures at the Center as Rob & his Brother Dan grew up. They were at every walk, summer camp and family fun events. Dan was a Sibshop member as he grew up. Steve their Dad was a member of the Golf Committee for a number of years. It is wonderful to watch our kids grow and come into their own. Seeing Rob made my day that Sunday.



The last Sunday of April used to be one of my favorite days of the year. There were two reasons for that. First, the Autism Resource Center's annual walk/5k happened that day and second, Little League baseball season

usually started that day. At the walk/5k, I would get to see my friends Walter, Tom, Mike, Corey, and so many others. I would get to see my brother Danny run the 5k in my honor, and not to brag, he went from being one of only three kids running in the first year of the 5k, to finishing 3rd overall years later; he is pretty awesome.

After the end of the 5k, I would go to work. You see, I wasn't playing in those Little League games, I was actually umpiring them! I started umpiring when I was 13 years old, and I have gotten pretty good at it. I like to attribute that to my autism. For a long time, I only saw things as black or white, there was no gray. So, umpiring came pretty easily. It was either a strike or a ball, fair or foul, safe or out. There is no in between with baseball. Like most people with autism, I have that topic or hobby that I wanted to know, actually needed to know, everything about. For some it is animals, dinosaurs, music, or something else. For me, it was baseball. Ten years after umpiring my first game, I got certified to do high school games, and have even been inducted into the American Youth Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

For my senior year of college, I needed to get an internship to be able to graduate. I applied to a few places, but the one I really wanted was the one with the Worcester Bravehearts. Getting that internship actually all started with a hat. Again, I am infatuated with the sport of baseball, and as I got older, particularly minor league baseball. I started to collect minor league baseball hats. One day, the General Manager of the Bravehearts, Dave Peterson, came into one of my classes, and it just happened that the hat I wore that day was of a team he mentioned in his presentation. In the middle of the class,

he and I had a conversation about the Savannah Bananas. I turned that conversation into an interview, and later into an internship. During that internship, I learned what it is like to be part of a team. Prior to this, my only work experience had been as an umpire. I was the boss of the game, others listened to me. So, this was a new and very different experience for me. It was also one I am so



grateful for, as it taught me so much. I was in charge of the Kids Club, for kids 12 years old and younger. Joining allowed them to get into Sunday home games for free, and I was in charge of getting more people to sign up for it. I am very proud to say that I increased membership by 50% in the 2018 season. But that isn't all I did for the team. I was also the mascot, Jake the Lion, on occasion. Sometimes it was on less than an hour's notice. I would show up for work, and they would be like, "We need a mascot for an event in 30 minutes, can you do it?" I would say yes. As someone who usually struggled with last minute schedule changes, I learned to be more willing to adapt.

When the season ended, so did my internship. So, I embraced my inner mascot, and told the Bravehearts I would do as many mascot events as possible.

Autism... not Obstacle

I wanted to still be as much a part of this great organization as possible. I also began applying to graduate schools, and I am happy to say that this August, I will be starting my Master's in Sports Administration at what has always been my dream school, Boston College. I have also since been brought back by the Bravehearts in a different and bigger role, in charge of Sponsorship and Promotion Activation. This role involves a lot of out-reach to our sponsors, and making sure the team is fulfilling what we promised. I have also written things for the team website, and during this upcoming season,



I have performed all these different roles, and never know what I will be doing each day, which shows just how much I have changed and matured from the kid who could not deal with even the slightest bit of an unknown or slight change in routine.

I have come so far from the little kid who used to attend the Autism Resource Central's summer camps. Last summer, I spent three weeks travelling Europe, just me and my brother. Ask anyone who knew me from those camps and I'll bet they would say, "never in a million years!"



To end, I will share one more thing. I am a third-degree black belt in karate, testing for my fourth-degree in June, and have been taking classes for over 17 years. When I was 11 years-old, I tested for my first-degree black belt, and was asked, "What would it mean to you if you were to achieve the rank of black belt?" I responded with, "It would prove to me that just because I have disabilities, it doesn't mean I can't do anything I put my mind to." Just because you have autism, it doesn't mean you can't do things. It might mean taking more time, or having to work harder at things, and there will still be plenty of obstacles to overcome.

But, just keep working at it, and sometimes, you will even surprise yourself with what you can accomplish.

P.S. Make sure to come to the Worcester Bravehearts game on Monday, July 29th. That night, our on the field fundraiser proceeds will benefit HMEA's Autism Resource Central.

Good Bye & Thank You

It is with great sadness for us ,but with the best of wishes for her that we bid Donna Boucher, the Senior Vice President of Adult Services ,adieu. Donna is retiring from HMEA after a lifelong career of working to improve the lives of those with disabilities.

Donna joined HMEA in 2012 after a 30 year long career at the Department of Developmental Services. Those who live in the North Central Area of DDS knew her to be resourceful and compassionate in her role as Area Director prior to coming to HMEA. Her extensive knowledge of disabilities services has been so very helpful to the Staff at the Center, her leadership has helped us grow the Center over the past seven years to be what we are today, The Center of the Autism Community . We wish her all the best as she begins her retirement. Her career more than fulfills Horace Mann's directive:

"Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."

The world is a better place, thanks to Donna's efforts.



Donations & Memorial Gifts

DONATIONS

Francis Breen
Timothee Rodrique
Jeffrey Terrace
Rich Bertone
Billy Watkins
David Tannenbaum

MEMORIALS

In Memory of
Steven Patrick Rupert
Jean Sullivan
Lorraine Moreno
Sandra McElroy
Marilyn & Lewis Allinson

CARS FOR AUTISM

You can donate a used car and support your Center.

A professionally licensed, bonded and insured towing company will pick-up your car donation and provide you with a vehicle donation receipt. **Car Donations are accepted at**

<http://www.donateacar.com/>

or call

800-240-0160 to speak to a representative of Car Program LLC

Our Thanks to the following who donated their vehicles

Luke Stevens
Nuriya Homarac

UNITED WAY DONORS

Ruben D. Cortes– Torres
Stacy Stephenson
Meredith Blakely
Jordan Marks

To designate the Autism Resource Center as the recipient of your United Way Donation use the name Autism Resource Central and the code UN 00365

GIVE WITH LIBERTY

Brittany Tirozzi
Michael Couturier
Yari A Ayala
William F. Maher
Jigar Gada



The run/walk season is almost over (***fundraising pages and the Autism Super Hero Calendar raffle are open till June 30th***) and we are thankful for your patience and encouragement as we moved to a new location and a new registration//fundraising website.

The organizing committee members became an extension of each others' family after the many evening meetings, text messages, calls and social media communication as we figured out new processes and logistics. They are my Super Heros and I am truly thankful for the work they did especially under pressure from the weather forecast.

The week before the walk especially Thursday and Friday, a group of you encouraged us so much by registering or calling to let us know that you had your raincoats and umbrellas ready for Sunday. The clouds and rain were no match to your enthusiasm on Sunday and it was amazing to see all of you on Sunday May 5th.

We had an army of volunteers who did an incredible job making sure all stations were running efficiently. Thank you Autism Super Hero Volunteers!

Our work is not done I urge you to send in a donation, if you have a fundraising page ask family and friends to donate, or buy an Autism Super Hero Calendar raffle. Thank you—Wanja Kiraguri



Calendar

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

JUNE



June 3, 2019

**Ask The Experts
Picky Eating**

Michelle Masson MS BCBA, LABA

7-9 PM

June 4, 2019

**CANDO /HARC Series
Planning for the Future**

Christopher Sharry Esq.

6:30-8PM

June 5, 2019

**Parents of Adults
Support Group
PARENT NIGHT OUT**

99 Restaurant
900 West Boylston Street
Worcester MA
7-9 PM

June 12, 2019

**Parents of School Aged Kids &
Twins Support Group**
7 -9 PM

June 16, 2019

**Family Fun
Aerial Course at Ramblewild
Tree To Tree Trail**

*For children ages 7 and up and at least
55 inches tall & Adults under 265 lbs*

110 Brodie Mountain Road
Lanesborough, MA 01237

1PM -5PM

Fee: \$10:00/pp doing course

June 19, 2019

**Support Group for
Parents of Teens**

**Teen Group runs concurrently
FAMILY GAME NIGHT**

6:30—8:30 PM

June 25, 2019

Family Fun at Southwick Zoo

2 Southwick St ,Mendon MA

9:45 AM Fee: \$6.00/pp

JULY



July 4, 2019

CENTER CLOSED

July 13, 2019

**Plastic City Comic Con
Wallace Civic Center**

1000 John Fitch Highway

Fitchburg, MA

Fee: \$2.00/pp

Meet at 11 AM

July 21, 2019

Breezy Picnic Grounds

520 Northwest Street

Douglas, Ma

9:45 AM -1 PM Check In

\$8.00 for 5 and older \$5.00 2-4

July 29, 2019

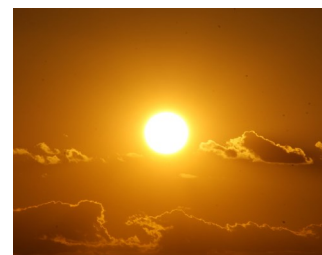
**Family Fun at
Worcester Bravehearts**

6:45 PM Fitton Field

Worcester Ma

Fee: \$8.00/pp

AUGUST



August 4, 2019

Family Fun at Edaville Railroad

5 Pine Street , Carver MA

Meet at the gate at 10:30 AM

Fee: \$13.00/pp Under 2 free

August 13, 2019

**Extreme Craze Laser Tag
For Teens & Young Adults**

166 Milk Street Westboro MA

5:45 PM Fee : \$15.00 /per player

**Parent Night Out at
Spices Punjabi Dhaba**

Next Door to Extreme Craze



712 Plantation Street
Worcester, MA 01605

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

Email: autism@HMEA.org

www.autismresourcecentral.org

SUMMER HOURS

Monday through Thursday 9 AM – 5 PM

Friday 9 AM–3 PM

Evening Hours as noted in the Calendar

We are the *CENTER* of the autism community



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

HMEA's Autism Resource Central does not endorse any treatments, programs or products. Articles, announcements and resources are provided for information purposes only.

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