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220 Brookdale Drive  
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Pittsfield, MA 01201



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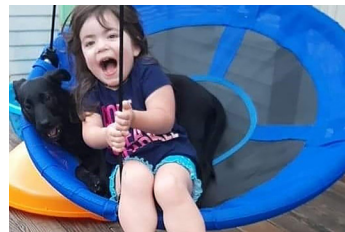
220 Brookdale Drive  
Springfield, MA 01104

Email Joanne.Lucey@  
pathlightgroup.org with questions  
or comments about the newsletter.

## THE PATHLIGHT COMMUNITY

All of Pathlight's programs have been very active during the pandemic, continuing to provide essential supports and information and resources to the families within our network. Family Empowerment is the Pathlight Program Highlight this week.

### Pathlight Program Focus: Family Empowerment



**Family Empowerment** is the Family Support Center for Hampshire County. They have continued to support a large network of families in the county, as well as share information and resources

with many more families since the onset of the pandemic. They are now more creative than ever in keeping up contact with families. Family Specialists have always connected where it is the most convenient and safe for families. When socially distant, in-person, exterior visits were not possible or recommended, they've expanded into Zoom virtual family meetings as a way of maintaining support, along with phone calls and emails.

Last spring, Family Empowerment made a very quick transition from offering in-person trainings for families and professionals to a full schedule of Zoom webinars. They continued to partner with their network of expert presenters from across the state to meet the informational needs of the community. The virtual format has proven to be especially helpful to participants who had difficulty attending previous in-person workshops due to child care obligations or very busy schedules. Check [here](#) for more information about upcoming webinars and to view PowerPoint presentations and meeting recordings of past webinars.

Family Empowerment also supports The Special Needs Family Alliance, a welcoming group of parents and others who care for a loved one with a disability in the Franklin county area. The group has continued to meet twice per month on Zoom and has also invited expert speakers on special interest topics to the meetings. If you are interested in joining the group, view the flyer [here](#) for more information.

The situation of many families has changed during these difficult times, and those that did not previously qualify for the support of resources such as SNAP, MassHealth,

housing programs, and fuel assistance are now in need, and Family Empowerment is there to help in any way possible.

Family Empowerment believes *Knowledge is Power* and is available to help you navigate the New Normal for you, and for a family caring for someone with special needs. Email the team at [familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org) if you have questions about their services, or visit the Family Empowerment [website](#).

## MASSACHUSETTS STATE UPDATES

**Stop The Spread** testing sites are now available across the state. You do not need to have symptoms to access the free tests. Holyoke and Springfield have sites for western Massachusetts.

**Recommendations** on how to celebrate the holidays with your loved ones who reside in a care setting such as a nursing home, residential treatment program or group home, from The Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

The Department of Developmental Services is encouraging everyone in the DDS community (individuals,

family members, providers, and staff) to get a flu shot this season. Visit the [DDS Flu Resource page](#) for more information. November 18

- [Limits on gatherings](#), November 2
- [Stay at Home Advisory](#), November 2
- [Early Business Closures, Revised Gatherings, Mask Orders](#) Announced to Disrupt Growth of COVID-19 Cases, November 2
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Toolkit](#). The 66 page booklet features examples of how states have expanded home and community-based services and decreased reliance on institutional care. November 2020
- Massachusetts [Travel Order](#).
- [COVID-19 Eviction Diversion Initiative Overview](#): a comprehensive set of resources to support tenants and landlords, including information about the [CDC Eviction Moratorium](#), which is in effect until December 31, 2020.

## EMPLOYMENT RELATED [More](#)

- [Humanitarian Food Relief Employment Program from MassHire, Franklin Hampshire Career Center](#). This program helps job seekers gain temporary employment at local Food Relief Programs to give needed assistance to our communities in response to the Covid-19 emergency.
- [Pathlight Job Opportunities](#)

## HEALTH RESOURCES [More](#)

- [Stop The Spread](#) testing sites are now available across the state. You do not need to have symptoms to access the free tests. Holyoke and Springfield have sites for western Massachusetts.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES [More](#)

- [Handhold](#) was created by a team of mental health and child development experts in partnership with parents who have gone through what you are going through. Our goal? To guide you in caring for your child's mental health and emotional well-being.

## HEALTH DISABILITY RIGHTS [More](#)

### IF YOU ARE SICK, OR SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR IS SICK [More](#)

- [What to do if a student is sick or exposed](#), from Northampton Pediatrics

## SELF ADVOCATES [More](#)

### FLU INFORMATION [More](#)

- The Department of Developmental Services is encouraging everyone in the DDS community (individuals, family members, providers, and staff) to get a flu shot this season. Visit the [DDS Flu Resource page](#) for more information. November 18

## FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- [Serving Adults: 10 Tips for Doctors Who Want to Have More Autism-Friendly and Neuro-Inclusive Visits](#), from Autism Housing Network

## SOCIAL STORIES [More](#)

## RESOURCES IN OTHER LANGUAGES [More](#)

## FOOD PANTRIES & OTHER RELATED SUPPORT [More](#)

- Find a food bank or food distribution site near you [HERE](#), or contact the Food Bank of Western MA at 413-247-9738.

## HOMELESS INFORMATION [More](#)

## HOUSING [More](#)

## FINANCIAL SUPPORTS [More](#)

- [Findhelp.org](#): Find food assistance, help paying bills, and other free or reduced cost programs, including new programs for the COVID-19 pandemic - search by zip code.



## VETERAN SERVICES [More](#)

## HEAT AND ELECTRIC SERVICES [More](#)

- [Fuel Assistance information and application process for 2020/2021 season](#)

## INTERNET/PHONE [More](#)

- [Find an Xfinity hotspot for public internet access](#)

## GENERAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

[More](#)

- [Northern Berkshire Resource Guide](#), October 2020

## LEGAL RESOURCES [More](#)

## TRANSPORTATION [More](#)

## CHILDCARE [More](#)

## ADVOCACY [More](#)

## EDUCATION RELATED [More](#)

- MA COVID-19 Compensatory Services: Is your child a "high needs" special education student who has shown regression or lack of progress due to insufficient/ineffective remote services? Are they eligible for COVID-19 Compensatory Services? The determination deadline for this cohort of students is **December 15th, 2020**. Be sure to communicate with your team and create any plans by the deadline. Learn more [here](#).
- [DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update](#), November 30
- [DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update](#), November 23

## WEBINARS: UPCOMING

- Tuesday, December 1, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. [Understanding the Mental Health System](#)
- Tuesday, December 1, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. [MA Sibling Support Group in English and Spanish](#), from Massachusetts Sibling Support Network.
- Tuesday December 1, 7:00 -8:30 p.m., Insurance

Coverage for Behavioral Health Treatments with Amy Weinstock, from the Autism Insurance Resource Center. [Meeting Link](#). Password: 612005

- Tuesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., [Coordinating Your Special Needs Financial & Estate Plan](#) with Caleb Harty. View [Flyer](#).

## WEBINARS-PREVIOUS

- [Family Empowerment/Autism Connections recent Webinar archive with PowerPoint Presentations and Recordings to view.](#)

## SUPPORT GROUPS [More](#)

- **Special Education Forum, Families Helping Families** meets every other Wednesday evening from 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Nancy Farnsworth, Education Advocate for Autism Connections, and Karen Serra, Director of Family Empowerment/Autism Connections will facilitate the online conversation. Please [register](#) if you would like to join the discussion. Read the [flyer](#) for more information. Remaining dates this year are December 2 and December 16.

## ACTIVITIES AND SELF CARE [More](#)

### YOUNG ADULT ATIVITIES

- [Whole Children/Milestones Rec activities](#)

### HOLIDAY AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- **Saturday December 12, 10a.m. - 2 p.m. -Drive Up Sensitive Santa Party** from the Bureau of Exceptional Children and Adults at Jericho, Holyoke. First Stop: drive up to Letter to Santa Mail Box (bring your own or get an easy to fill out copy); next stop - visit with Santa in your car or in front of the Christmas Tree - socially distant pictures with Santa; Last Stop - tractor pulled Sleigh Ride (Sleigh Sanitized Between Rides). Registrations in advance only - RSVP today at 413-538-7450. We will not be able to accommodate cars/families who have not signed up in advance, please RSVP today.
- [Bright Lights](#), Forest Park, Springfield, November 25 - January 6.



Autism Connections, Family Empowerment, Whole Children, Milestones, Whole Selves, Adult Family Care, Shared Living

- [Look Park Holiday Lights](#), Northampton, November 27 - January 3.
- [NightWood](#), A light and sound experience at The Mount, Edith Wharton's Home, Lenox. November 19 - January 2, Thursdays - Sundays.

## CONTACTS

This is an abbreviated list of contacts. See the full team list [here](#).

### FAMILY SERVICES

**Karen Serra**, Director Family Services  
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**Katie Drumm**, Assoc. Dir. Family Services,  
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### AUTISM CONNECTIONS

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**Rhonda Setkewich**, IFFS Program  
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### FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

**Donna Kushi**, Program Manager,  
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### ADULT PROGRAM

**Danielle Scibelli**, Adult Program  
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585-8010

### WHOLE CHILDREN & MILESTONES RECREATION

**Maggie Rice**, Whole Children and  
Milestones Recreation,  
Julie.Hooks@pathlightgroup.org

**Chris Harper**, Program Manager -  
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Teacher - Whole Children and Milestones,  
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### FAMILY BASED LIVING

**Terri Presby**, Assistant Vice President,  
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**Darlene Giroux**, Program  
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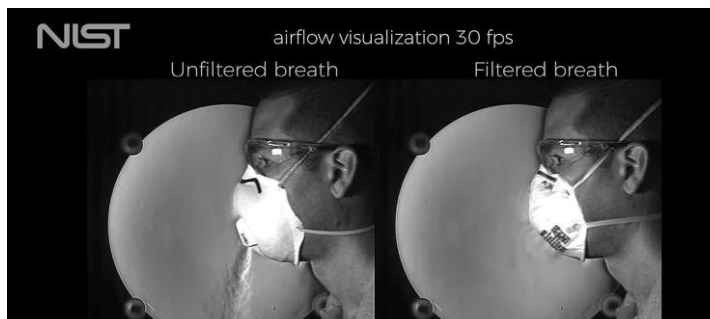
**Suzanne Laba**, Program Director,  
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**Lakesha Ruth**, Program Director  
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### FAMILY BASED LIVING PITTSFIELD

**Catharine Dollase**, Program Director,  
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## New Airflow videos show why masks with exhalation valves do not slow the spread of COVID-19.



You can do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a well-fitting face mask that does NOT have an exhalation valve, and this video shows why.

Masks that the CDC recommends for slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus are mainly meant to protect people other than the wearer by catching exhaled droplets that might contain the virus. But masks with exhalation valves allow that breath (and its respiratory droplets) to escape unfiltered.

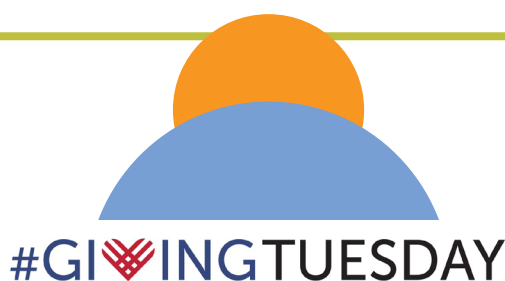
With advanced imaging techniques, NIST researcher Matt Staymates gives you a look into the stark difference between masks with and without valves (from the NIST website).

## How can we help you?

Contact any of us at the Pathlight programs and we will do our best to help you with your requests and needs. Email [info@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:info@pathlightgroup.org), [familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:familyempowerment@pathlightgroup.org) or [autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:autismconnections@pathlightgroup.org). If you prefer to call, the numbers for program managers are listed in our CONTACTS section, and the linked full team member team list.

Life can be tough,  
but so are you,  
and we can help.

*This newsletter is for informational purposes only; it does not constitute legal, medical or other advice. All resources are subject to change as the situation evolves. Contact Editor Joanne Lucey at [joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:joanne.lucey@pathlightgroup.org) if you have difficulty accessing a link in the newsletter, if you would like to suggest a resource or if you have any general comments.*



December 1

Would you like to help the greater Pathlight community?

