



# Community Connection

# Newsletter

Autism Connections: a Pathlight program

## Happy Halloween!

### IT'S AN OOGIE BOOGIE HALLOWEEN!

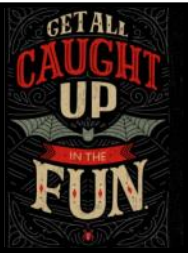


Calling all pumpkins, princesses, pirates and more! It's time for our Halloween party! Show us you spookiest, silliest or just plain wild styles, or come as your awesome self. Sink your teeth into our pizza and snacks, get in the spirit with our fun and games, or howl your heart out on karaoke! Mad Science will be toiling and troubling to help you brew up a ghoulish concoction at their Slime Station. Don't miss out on the hocus pocus!

Our Halloween Party will be held on Friday October 26th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Eastworks Event Space at 116 Pleasant St, Easthampton, MA.

Register with Danielle at [Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org) or 413-529-2428 x115.

### Autism Connections partners with Berkshire County Arc for their Family Support Halloween Harvest event



Autism Connections is proud of the many partnerships we've been creating over the last few years, particularly with Berkshire County ARC. Last year, we were able to help out with their annual Halloween Harvest Party, and it was so enlightening to see how much we all have in common - including many of the people who are served in one way or another by both of our organizations. This year, we're up to our old tricks (and treats) again, and will be collaborating with BCARC for the second year in a row.

The Halloween Harvest Party will be held on October 9th, 2018 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at 65 Depot St, Dalton, MA. There will be prizes, snacks, and lots of dancing -so don't be left out! RSVP to [Benjamin.Breton@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Benjamin.Breton@pathlightgroup.org).



**HALLOWEEN JOSES!**

(Answers on page 12)

1. Why did the vampires cancel their baseball game?
2. How do you tell twin witches apart?
3. Why did Dracula take cold medicine?

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Halloween Parties.....1
- Staff directory..... 2
- ACBC and Berkshire activities.....2
- Center News.....3-4
- Conferences, Webinars, Workshops/  
Trainings.....5
- Calendar of events.....6-7
- Community/Family events, Young Adult,  
Sensory Friendly.....8-9
- Support groups.....10-11
- Let's Dance, Autism Waiver.....12

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Easthampton Office

**¡Hola! Hablamos español**  
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027  
413.529.2428

#### Berkshire Office

100 North Street, Suite 322  
Pittsfield, MA  
413.443.4780

*Our Mission: To help families, schools, professionals, agencies, and communities understand autism, promote the well-being of individuals with autism, and foster their inclusion in the community.*



### Deadlines

1. Waiver Open Request Application: **October 31,** (pg 12)
2. Transition Fair Panel RSVP: **October 16** (pg 12)



**Voter registration deadline is October 17!**

## STAFF DIRECTORY

- Karen Serra** (x123)  
*Director*
- Ben Breton** (x121)  
*Autism Specialist*
- Lora Cortis** (x124)  
*Autism Specialist*
- Amber Curry** (x122)  
*Autism Specialist/Support Broker*
- Erica Donovan** (413.443.4780 x19)  
*Berkshire Program Manager*
- Carla Doyle-Florence** (x119)  
*Autism Support Broker*
- Katie Drumm** (x111)  
*Easthampton Program Manager*
- Nancy Farnsworth** (x113)  
*Educational Advocate*
- Elizabeth Flaherty** (413.443.4780)  
*Autism Specialist*
- William Liverpool** (x112)  
*Autism Support Broker*  
**Habla español**
- Joanne Lucey** (x116)  
*Development & Communications Coordinator*
- Kimberly Marchese** (x118)  
*Behavioral Specialist*
- Joyce Paige** (x110)  
*Office Coordinator*
- Danielle Plasse** (x115)  
*Office Coordinator*
- Gaby Santiago** (x125)  
*Bilingual Autism Specialist*  
**Habla español**
- Rhonda Setkewich** (x117)  
*Autism Specialist / IFFS Coordinator*
- Tanya White** (413.585.8010 x127)  
*Autism Specialist*
- Kim Wyckoff** (x127)  
*Autism Support Broker*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Betsy Benton**
- Lisa Crouser**
- Paula Fredericks**
- Bill Loomis**
- Pamela Sandler**
- Michael Wilcox**
- Jeanne Zobel-Lachiusa**

## Berkshire Activities

### The Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County



September 21<sup>st</sup> kicked off another season of the Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County's monthly meetings. Our presenter, Stephanie Krantz of the Disability Law Center, covered two very important topics: Voting Rights for people with learning differences and information on IEP rights and responsibilities for students that are entering the transition phase of their schooling. She gave a wonderful overview of both then transition process and information from an organization called RevUp, who's mission is to increase the disability vote in Massachusetts. Attendees shared many resources, events, and programs that will be beginning this fall for both individuals and families in Berkshire County.

**Next month's meeting will be held on Friday, October 19th from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** This meeting will be held at Hillcrest Academy, located at 400 Columbus Ave. (the Old St. Mark's school). October will focus on Fire Safety and a. Our Spotlight Speaker will be Lili Dwight, the founder of Fireguide. Fireguide is a fire safety program designed for the 21st century, by a team that understands what it takes to corral loved ones and get them out of a burning building ... quickly.

*ACBC is always looking for Spotlight Speakers. Spotlight Speakers are welcome to talk about their programs, topics of interest to the autism community, events, and/or initiatives that affect our families and individuals we work with. Please contact us at [emailacbc@gmail.com](mailto:emailacbc@gmail.com) if you are interested.*

### Adult Social Group In Pittsfield

Fall is here! With the new season upon us, our Adult Social Group in Pittsfield is gearing up for some new and fun activities! The Adult Social Group is for people ages 18 and up who are looking for a judgement free zone where you can discuss current successes and challenges in a group setting



with peers who understand. The group is led by Regina Mason. She has a great understanding of Autism/ Asperger's and has taught classes for many years. Regina is also the owner of Little Puppet Studio. Last year the Adult

Group worked on writing, producing, and performing a play for all ages. We currently have openings for this group, if you are interested in attending, please contact [Erica.Donovan@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Erica.Donovan@pathlightgroup.org).

### John Krol Show



Autism Connections' team member Erica Donovan was featured on The John Krol Show, the Facebook Live channel, where she

discussed the great work that is being done by the Autism Collaborative of Berkshire County. Check out the clip [here](#).



## Fire Safety Week in October

### Fire Safety

Fire Prevention Week is this month and we would like to review some tips to help you prepare a fire safety plan.



Some child or adult behaviors that cause safety hazards during a fire include: retreating to a favorite hiding place to escape the sound and commotion, backing away from a firefighter whose appearance with a mask and full uniform can be unfamiliar and frightening, being unfamiliar with the sound of the home smoke alarms and retreating from that sound, and returning to a burning dwelling to retrieve a special object or pet.

Here are some tips to help you with fire related safety plans to avoid the above behaviors, and keep your family as prepared as possible.

#### Preparation tips

- **Visit your local fire department** to see firefighters in full gear, experience the sound of sirens and give your child the chance to see and touch fire trucks. This would also be a good time to share an emergency profile sheet ([sample sheet](#)), exchange information, and answer any questions specific to your loved one's needs. Call ahead to ensure they will be able to give you the time and attention your child will need.
- **Use visuals** to explain what a fire is and why it can be dangerous, utilizing photos of your actual home to help your child understand any exit plans.
- **Install the right number of smoke alarms**. Test them once a month and replace the batteries at least once a year.
- **Teach children what smoke alarms sound like** and what to do when they hear one. (This link mimics an actual smoke alarm sound, so please be prepared for it if you decide to click on it.) Family members who are very sensitive to sound can benefit from the installation of specialized smoke/fire alarms that use voice or other more sensory friendly means to influence an action. Here is an example of a company with a voice activated product <http://www.galacticSMARTIES.com/>.
- **Ensure that your family knows how to exit from every room** of your home and know the family meeting spot outside of your home.

- **Practice a fire drill** at least twice/year. Press the smoke alarm test button or yell "Fire" to alert everyone that they must get out. All family members should be able to exit within 2 minutes.
- **Establish a family emergency communications plan** and make sure all household members know who to contact if they cannot find one another.

**If possible, assign someone to be with your family member with sensory issues.** They may become overwhelmed by the commotion and attempt to flee. Try to choose a meeting spot which is at a neighbor's home, rather than the street (or a mailbox). The street could interfere with the firefighters duties, and may still be a location that is very busy and loud.

#### What to do in the event of a fire

- **Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1**, or think about alternative means to communicate an emergency if a call would be difficult for anyone.
- Teach your family how to **STOP, DROP and ROLL** if their clothes should catch on fire.
- If you can see smoke in the house, **stay low to the ground as you make your way to the exit**. In a fire, smoke and poisonous air hurt more people than the actual flames do. You'll breathe less smoke if you stay close to the ground. Once you are out, do not return to retrieve any items.

If a fire occurs, your best way to stay safe is thorough preparation. Please contact your fire department if you have more questions about protecting yourself and your loved ones, and stay safe.

*Resources supplied by [autismva.org](http://autismva.org), [NFPA.org](http://NFPA.org), [safekids.org](http://safekids.org), [FEMA.org](http://FEMA.org) and [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)*

***The North Quabbin Autism Taskforce "A Spectrum of Difference" is currently in search of serious and sincere individuals from our community to join us in our journey. It is our mission to raise awareness and develop a healthier and more supportive community for individuals with autism and families. If you are a positive and proactive individual who is tolerant, patient and understanding please contact Ariella at [aschwell@servicenet.org](mailto:aschwell@servicenet.org) for information and meeting times.***



## Center News

### Welcome Amber!



Autism Connections is growing! We're excited to announce our newest Autism Specialist, Amber Curry! Amber will be providing supports in both the Waiver program and in the DESE/DDS Grant program. She has her degree from Bay Path University in Health and Human Services, and several years in the human services field, supporting children

and adults with autism, developmental disabilities and acquired brain injury. Amber also has a background in Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC). Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself to Amber at our community events!

### Our summer picnic



Autism Connections said aloha to end of summer and the start of the school year with our Annual Picnic on September 8<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed a fun-filled luau theme to remind us that summer wasn't officially over... yet! Brianna Rzeznik serenaded us with

relaxing tunes on her ukulele, and everyone enjoyed the flamingo ring toss, hula hoops, and the playground. Mahalo (thank you) to everyone who attended and contributed delicious potluck treats – we hope to see you again soon at our Halloween party!



## Upcoming Events

### CONFERENCES

#### The 25th Silver Anniversary Shared Living and AFC Conference

Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 8:45 am

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel

181 Boston Post Rd, Marlborough, MA

This conference will include different workshops and discussions. The Shared Living & AFC Conference is a program of Pathlight's vision is to provide and exchange practical information and innovative ideas that promote community living as model of choice where people can live in a dignified, normative arrangement. Go to <https://pathlightgroup.org/25th-annual-afc-shared-living-conference/> for more information.

#### Assistive Technology Conference of New England

November 29 and 30, 2018

Crowne Plaza, Warwick, RI

This conference is Rhode Island's only conference dedicated to technology, people with disabilities, families and professionals. Pre-Conference workshops will be held on November 29th, and the Conference will be held on November 30th. To register go to [www.assistivetechconference.com/general-registration/](http://www.assistivetechconference.com/general-registration/).

### WEBINARS

#### Simple micro self-care practices for a calmer you and a happier family too!

AANE/Kendra Wild presenter

November 8, 2018 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. \$25

The number one predictor of child well-being is parent well-being, yet parents like us often think of self-care as indulgent, or occasional. In this webinar you will discover some simple, science-based, life-tested techniques you can use at any time to feel grounded, calm and connected. **REGISTER**

## Upcoming Events

### WEBINARS

#### Service Dogs 101: From Puppy Steps to Training and Family Integration

October 22, 2018 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. \$25

Katy Harrison Ostroff, manager of Client Services at NEADS World Class Service Dogs will be joined by Maria, her son, and his service dog Brody. They will provide information about the role a family dog, a therapy dog, or a service dog can play in the lives of children with Autism. The discussion will include the differences between each type of dog and public access issues associated with each. Register at [aane.org](http://aane.org).

#### The insurer said “no”. What happens now? Insurance denials and appeals

October 24, 2018 10:00 p.m.– 11:00 a.m.

Wells Wilkinson, JD., Senior Staff Attorney at Health Law Advocates will give an overview of his extensive experience in appealing denials of autism treatments. Topics include insurance denials, how to appeal, common issues with autism claims and resources for providers and families. There will also be time for Q&A. Contact [angelica.aguirre@umass.med.edu](mailto:angelica.aguirre@umass.med.edu) for more information and to register.

### WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

#### DDS 101, Family Empowerment Workshop Various locations in Western MA. FREE

This Family Empowerment workshop was previously held for a full house at Hadley Farms Meeting House. Due to the large interest, Autism Connections will hold more workshops in western MA. A panel of DDS professionals will review the self-direction service model, family support services and autism services. Topics include self-direction, family support, and information about autism services. Please email your interest to [Katie Drumm](mailto:Katie.Drumm).

#### Transition Resource Fair

Wednesday, October 17, 2018

Hadley Farms Meeting House, 41 Russell Street, Hadley

5:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m. Panel Discussion

6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. Exhibitor Fair

For ALL students 14-22  
with autism, learning  
differences or special needs.



The Transition Resource Fair addresses the needs of students with a broad range of abilities and learning differences, aged 14-22+. The Fair highlights options and supports for all students with learning differences who want to explore post secondary education and employment possibilities. This is a **free** community event.

The Panel Discussion will highlight college and career opportunities for students who have graduated from high school with a diploma and are looking for full time jobs and careers. **Please RSVP to Michelle at [michelle.mendes@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:michelle.mendes@pathlightgroup.org) for this presentation. The room fills up fast!**

Exhibitors will be available to discuss topics related to the transition process for students 14-22+. Exhibitors include programs for college and post-secondary education options, job training, career investigation, day and recreation activities, living options, and special needs financial planning. **See the [FLYER](#) for a full list of the 40 exhibitors.**

For more information about attending or exhibiting, call Donna or Michelle at 585.8010. The Transition Resource Fair is co-sponsored by Family Empowerment and the Franklin/Hampshire area DDS office.

SUN

MON

TUES

WEDS

# OCTOBER 2018



**Aspergers' Support Group EVERY WEDNESDAY** **3**  
 5:00pm-6:00pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

**Open Swim** **7**  
 2:30pm-3:30pm  
 Berkshire Family YMCA  
 North Adams



**Halloween Harvest Party** **9**  
 5:00pm-7:00pm  
 Dalton

**Autism Connections Parent Support Group** **10**  
 5:30pm-7:30pm, Holyoke

**Aspergers' Support Group EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
 5:00pm-6:00pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

**Open Swim** **14**  
 2:30pm-3:30pm  
 Berkshire Family YMCA  
 North Adams



**The 25th Silver Anniversary Shared Living and AFC Conference** **16**  
 8:45am  
 Marlborough

**Transition Resource Fair** **17**  
 5:00pm-8:00pm  
**Hadley Farms Meeting House, Hadley**

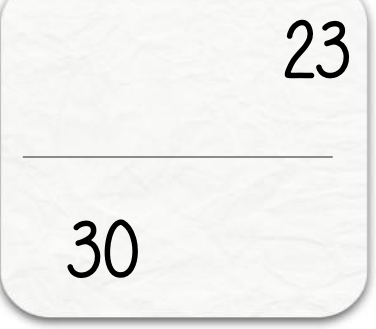
**Aspergers' Support Group EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
[Register to vote deadline](#)

**Open Swim** **21**  
 2:30pm-3:30pm  
 Berkshire Family YMCA  
 North Adams

---

**Open Swim**  
 2:30pm-3:30pm  
 Berkshire Family YMCA

**28**



**Aspergers' Support Group EVERY WEDNESDAY** **24**  
 5:00pm-6:00pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

**31**





THURS FRI SAT  
**AUTISM CONNECTIONS**  
**CALENDAR**

**Open Swim** 4  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
 Pittsfield

**Adult Social Group**  
**EVERY THURSDAY**  
 4:00pm-5:30pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

5  
*A Social Group (all) or  
 Hiking Group (men only)  
 every Friday in Pittsfield,  
 with Autism Connec-  
 tions. Contact Benja-  
 min.Breton@pathlightg*

6

**Athol United Arc  
 Caregivers' Resource  
 Group** 11  
 10:00am-12:00pm or  
 6:00-8:00pm, Athol

**Open Swim**  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
 Gladys Allen Brigham  
 Center, Pittsfield

12

13

**Open Swim** 18  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
 Gladys Allen Brigham  
 Center Pittsfield

**Adult Social Group**  
**EVERY THURSDAY**  
 4:00pm-5:30pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

19  
**ACBC Monthly  
 Meeting:  
 Fire Safety  
 10:00am-12:00pm**

20

**Open Swim** 25  
 6:00pm-7:00pm  
 Gladys Allen Brigham  
 Center Pittsfield

**Adult Social Group**  
**EVERY THURSDAY**  
 4:00pm-5:30pm  
 Autism Connections' office  
 Pittsfield

26  
**Autism  
 Connections  
 Halloween Party  
 6:00pm-8:00pm  
 Easthampton**

27

**Coming Up**

**November**

**November 17**  
 Let's Dance! 2018

**November 27**  
 Autism Housing Pathways  
 workshop with Cathy Boyle  
 Springfield (Autism Connections  
 workshop)

**November 29-30**  
 Assistive Technology  
 Conference

**December**

**December 11**  
 Autism Resource  
 Insurance Center  
 with Amy Weinstock  
 Palmer (Autism Connections  
 workshop)

**December 14**  
 Autism Connections'  
 Family Holiday Party

**April 2019**

**April 23, 2019**  
 Autism Connections'  
 Annual Autism Conference

# EVENTS & CLASSES

**Voter registration deadline  
is October 17!**

## WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

### DDS Commissioner Town Meeting

November 7, 2018 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Holyoke Community College

303 Homestead Ave, Holyoke, MA

This commissioner meeting will focus on the topic of DDS turning 22 services. The anticipated audience is those individuals and families heading into the transition years of 17-21.

## COMMUNITY/FAMILY EVENTS

### UCP Open 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.

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

### Family Support Halloween Harvest

October 9, 2018 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

65 Depot St, Dalton Free

This year, we're up to our old tricks (and treats) again, and will be collaborating with BCARC for the second year in a row. RSVP to [Benjamin.Breton@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Benjamin.Breton@pathlightgroup.org).

## COMMUNITY/FAMILY EVENTS

### Autism Connections Halloween Party

Friday, October 26th, 2018 5:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

Eastworks Building

116 Pleasant St. Easthampton, MA

Calling all pumpkins, princesses, pirates and more! It's time for our Halloween party! Show us your spookiest, silliest or just plain wild styles, or come as your awesome self. Sink your teeth into our pizza and snacks, get in the spirit with our fun and games, or howl your heart out on karaoke! Mad Science will be toiling and troubling to help you brew up a ghoulish concoction at their Slime Station. Don't miss out on the hocus pocus! Register with Danielle at [Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org](mailto:Danielle.plasse@pathlightgroup.org) or 413-529-2428 ext.115

### Let's Dance! 2018

Saturday, November 17, 2018, 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel



A night of dancing and celebration to support enrichment programs for people with intellectual disabilities! Your ticket guarantees an evening of joyous entertainment, delicious appetizers, and a cash bar. More info [HERE](#).

## YOUNG ADULT

### AANE Pizza and Game Night

October 3 at East Longmeadow Congregational Church

October 4 at UMASS Amherst Campus Center

October 25 in Holyoke at MCS

6:00pm-8:00 p.m. \$12

Have dinner, socialize, and play games (feel free to bring your favorite games). reserves the right to cancel this event if the minimum number of registrants is not met by the deadline. Please go to [aane.org/events/2018-09/](http://aane.org/events/2018-09/) to register at your preferred location, and call 617-393-3824 for more information.



## PATHLIGHT PARTNER CLASSES

Whole Children: Programs for school age children and teens (ages 3-16). Visit [www.wholechildren.org/](http://www.wholechildren.org/) for more information.

Milestones: Enrichment classes for older teens and adults. Visit <https://www.wholechildren.org/milestones-classes/> for more information.

*Highlights of the classes for young adults below:*

### Yoga Dance (Ages 18+)

**Mondays, 5:15pm—6:15pm**

**Milestones, 41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA, \$50**

Move to the sounds of fabulous music at your own pace to improve flexibility, strength, and balance. Experience a reduction in stress in a warm and welcoming environment.

### Boundaries & Relationships (Ages 18+)

**Wednesdays, 5:45pm—7:00pm**

**Milestones, 41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA, \$50**

This class is for adults who need help navigating the world of relationships. Part of having a healthy relationship is learning how to respect boundaries of other people in your life. Please call 413-585-8010 to register. Online registration is not available.

### Potluck Cooking (Ages 18+)

**Fridays, 5:15 p.m. -6:30 p.m. Potluck to follow**

**Milestones, 41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA, \$50 plus \$20 for materials**

This class will focus on preparing practical, inexpensive and delicious dishes to serve at the Potluck social following each class. The free potluck social will run from 6:30pm-8:00pm.

### Joyful Chorus (Ages 8+)

**Mondays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Potluck to follow**

**Whole Children, 41 Russell Street, Hadley, MA, \$25**

Encapsulating the spirit of Whole Children, our Joyful Chorus is a truly inclusive and (of course) joyful opportunity for people to come together in song. Kids, teachers, and volunteers all sing together.

## SENSORY-FRIENDLY

### Sensory Friendly Day at Connecticut Science Center

**October 3, 2018**

**10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**Connecticut Science Center, 250 Columbus Blvd. Hartford, CT**

*Tickets are \$14 online, in advance, or \$16.95 at the door (1:1 aides are free)*

CT Science Center will be lowering the volume and dimming the lights for those with sensory disabilities.

All are welcome! There will be plenty of activities, arts and crafts, and live Gallery Science Demonstrations with out the usual lights and sounds.

For more information, contact Brit Montmeat at [bmontmeat@ctsciencecenter.org](mailto:bmontmeat@ctsciencecenter.org) or (860) 520-2112.

### The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

**Sunday, October 21, 2018 2:00 p.m.**

**Black Box Theater, Ryken Center**

**Saint John's High School**

**378 Main St, Shrewsbury, MA**

Pilgrim Soul Productions presents an adaptation of the best-selling novel by Mark Haddon. This autism and sensory-friendly performance will include modified lights and sound, plenty of breaks, snacks and the permission of silent electronic devices.

Tickets are \$25 for regular admission, \$22 for seniors and students, \$20 for groups of 10 or more. Please call 508-296-0797 or email [pilgrimsoulproductions@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimsoulproductions@gmail.com) to inquire.

### Sensory-Sensitive Sundays at Chuck E. Cheese

**First Sunday of the month, 9am-11am,**

**Chuck E. Cheese**

**1716 Boston Road, Springfield**

Chuck E. Cheese in Springfield now offers a sensory-sensitive experience on the first Sunday of every month.

# SUPPORT GROUPS

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	MEETING DETAILS	CONTACT/MORE INFO
<b>AMHERST</b>			
<b>Clinical &amp; Support Options (CSO) Parent Support Group</b>	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.	Saturdays 10:00am-11:30am Bridge Family Resource Center 101 University Dr, Suite A3 Amherst, MA	Group meets on Saturdays. Childcare available, refreshments served. Please call 413.549.0297 with questions.
<b>ATHOL</b>			
<b>Autism Support Group</b>	This is a monthly support group for parents, caregivers, grandparents and siblings of autistic children. RSVP is required.	4th Sunday of the month 6:00pm-7:00pm Athol Memorial Hospital, The Hillis Conference Room, 2033 Main St., Athol	The first meeting will be held on August 26th. Please contact Amanda Gallant at <a href="mailto:Amanda.gallant@heywood.org">Amanda.gallant@heywood.org</a> with questions or to RSVP.
<b>The United ARC, Caregivers' Resource Group</b>	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.	3rd Thursday of the month 10:00am-12:00pm 6:00pm-8:00pm 361 Main Street, Athol, MA	Refreshments will be provided. RSVP is not required, but is helpful for planning purposes. Call Karen Parker at 978-249-4052, x 1047.
<b>CHICOPEE</b>			
<b>HOPE Autism Support Group</b>	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.	Group will meet on the 2nd Friday of each month.	For more information or to RSVP, please contact Cathy at <a href="mailto:camorgado@verizon.net">camorgado@verizon.net</a> .
<b>EASTHAMPTON</b>			
<b>Asperger's Social Night for Adults</b>	Autism Connections is happy to provide this social night twice a month for folks 18+ who identify as having Asperger's.	Autism Connections 116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366 Easthampton, MA	This group will resume in the near future. Please contact Kimberly LaMothe at 413.529.2428 x118 with questions.
<b>GREAT BARRINGTON</b>			
<b>Adult Discussion Group</b>	This group is being offered by the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE). There is an attendance fee of \$5.	Mason Library 231 Main Street, Great Barrington	For more information please contact <a href="mailto:stephanie.birkdale@aane.org">stephanie.birkdale@aane.org</a> .
<b>HOLYOKE</b>			
<b>Autism Connections Western MA Support Group</b>	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.	2nd Wednesday of the month 5:30pm-7:30pm MCS 260 Westfield Road Holyoke, MA	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.
<b>Mom's Night Out</b>	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!	Jericho 537 Northampton Street Holyoke, MA	For meeting times and to RSVP contact Linda LaPointe at <a href="mailto:lindal@jerichobeca.org">lindal@jerichobeca.org</a> or calling 413.538.7450
<b>Parent/Professional Advocacy League</b>	Moving Forward: Our Journey. A group for empowering families through transition planning.	Please contact PPAL for locations and times.	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> .
<b>Rainbow Support Group of Western Mass.</b>	This group provides support and info to individuals with intellectual challenges who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or those who are questioning.	Western Mass Training Consortium 187 High Street, Suite 202 Holyoke	For questions or to find out meeting times contact Tammy Nothe-Hebert at 413.536.2401 x3036
<b>NORTHAMPTON</b>			
<b>Growing Strong Skills Training</b>	The group is for children and their caregivers and will use the Attachment Regulation and Competency Framework to help children learn different skills.	Tuesdays 4:45-6:15pm CSO Outpatient Clinic 8 Atwood Dr, Suite 201, Northampton	For more information and to register please contact Dave at 413.582.0471 ext. 5080 or Kim ext. 5032
<b>Valley ADHD Parent Support Group</b>	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	1st Monday of the month, 6:30-8:00pm Northampton Area Pediatrics 193 Locust St., Northampton	For more information contact <a href="mailto:ValleyADHDFamilies@gmail.com">ValleyADHDFamilies@gmail.com</a> .

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	MEETING DETAILS	CONTACT/MORE INFO
<b>NORTHAMPTON</b>			
<b>Florence Women's Support Group</b>	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 <a href="mailto:stephanie.birkdale@aane.org">stephanie.birkdale@aane.org</a> .
<b>Wire Monkey Mama's Coffee Club</b>	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
<b>PITTSFIELD</b>			
<b>Asperger's Support Group of the Berkshires</b>	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 <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Flaherty@pathlightgroup.org">Elizabeth.Flaherty@pathlightgroup.org</a> to RSVP.
<b>Berkshire Teen Group</b>	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 <a href="mailto:benjamin.breton@pathlightgroup.org">benjamin.breton@pathlightgroup.org</a> or 413.529.2428 x121 for monthly group schedule and outing details.
<b>SPRINGFIELD</b>			
<b>Impact Center Support Group</b>	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-Y el tercer Viernes de 10am-11:30am 41 Taylor Street, Springfield	For information and to RSVP, please contact Cynthia Santiago at <a href="mailto:csantiago@wmtcinfo.org">csantiago@wmtcinfo.org</a> or 413-218-5055 Información de RSVP: Cynthia Santiago at <a href="mailto:csantiago@wmtcinfo.org">csantiago@wmtcinfo.org</a> or 413-218-5055
<b>SOUTH HADLEY</b>			
<b>LGBTQ and the Autism Spectrum</b>	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 <a href="mailto:stephanie.birkdale@aane.org">stephanie.birkdale@aane.org</a> .
<b>WESTFIELD</b>			
<b>Westfield Support Group for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome</b>	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 <a href="mailto:info@bacautism.org">info@bacautism.org</a> or call BAC at 413.359.0222.
<b>WILLIAMSBURG</b>			
<b>Families of Spirited Children (It Takes a Village)</b>	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 <a href="mailto:info@hilltownvillage.org">info@hilltownvillage.org</a> or <a href="http://www.facebook.com/hilltownvillage">www.facebook.com/hilltownvillage</a>

**ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS****NEW**

GROUP NAME	GROUP DESCRIPTION	DATES/TIMES
<p>Before formal registration for the below groups, a 1-1 informational meeting with the facilitator is required. The purposes of the informational meetings are for you, the participant, and facilitator to get to know one another, to discuss the format of the group, and gain a sense of the needs and interests of the participants. This meeting can take place virtually via Skype, FaceTime or Zoom. Email <a href="mailto:events@aane.org">events@aane.org</a> for call 617-393-3824 x 32 for more information and to schedule a meeting with the facilitator.</p>		
<b>Weekly Support Group for Adults</b>	Join other adults on the spectrum in an environment of support and understanding. This group will provide a forum for increasing self awareness and connection.	<b>September 25, 11am –12:30pm. \$80</b> 9/25, 10/2, 10/9, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13
<b>Weekly Support Group for Young Women (18-22)</b>	This group provides an opportunity to meet other young women in an environment of support and understanding. Group limit is 12 and a strong internet connection as well as a computer with a camera and a microphone are required.	<b>September 28, 11am –12:30pm. \$80</b> 9/28, 10/5, 10/9, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16

2018 October Edition

**Voter registration deadline  
is October 17!**

# Community Connection Newsletter

Autism Connections: a Pathlight program

## Alex and Jossie are representing Autism Connections in Pathlight's Let's Dance fundraiser!



Please help support Alex, Jossie, and Autism Connections by donating or voting for them!

Let's Dance! pair Alex Campurciani and Holyoke City Councilor Jossie Valentín are coming to spice up the competition! You'll definitely want to witness their amazing moves to Ricky Martin's "Por Arriba Por Abajo", choreographed by Dawn Larder! Get your tickets and vote for team #Sazón here: <http://bit.ly/Sazón>.

## autism waiver

### Autism Waiver Open Request Application Period October 17-31

The Autism Division will begin accepting new application requests from families interested in the Autism waiver program. The Open Request Period will last from October 17th to October 31st. Find an Open Request application [here](#).