



HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

HCAS President's Report – 2018 Annual General Membership Meeting - December 14, 2018

HCAS Members,

Let me take this opportunity to first thank you for all of your continued support. HCAS had a successful 25th anniversary year supporting the Howard County autism community. From our new staff and programs, to our tried and true social events, to our enhanced awareness and advocacy efforts; we hope HCAS was able to play a small part in making your lives a little better. Of course, if we helped to create a memory with your friends and family, all the better.

The 2019 slate for the HCAS Board of Directors will be discussed and voted on later tonight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2018 Board for all its support and work over the last twelve months. They are a tireless group.

The October financial information detailing our current position is available for your review. Our financial stability, combined with the hard work and the dedication of the staff, Board and volunteers throughout the year have allowed our committees to continue many successful programs, events and partnerships to serve the community. The second page of this letter includes a sampling of the activities HCAS led throughout 2018.

As always, we hope to see you out at our many events. With your participation in and support of our committee activities, HCAS will continue to be a strong voice within the community for our friends, family members, and loved ones.

Theresa Ballinger
President, HCAS Board of Directors
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Providing Support • Promoting Awareness • Advocating for Change

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Howard County Autism Society
Partial List of HCAS 2018 Activities

Social Events held in 2018:

- Mom's Night Out events
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- Bi-weekly yoga classes for 10-18 year olds on the spectrum.
- 'Fitness First' events
- Semi-annual pool parties
- Sensory-friendly movie events
- Sensory-friendly Santa and Easter Bunny events
- Spirit Club Fitness Classes
- HCAS Volunteer Corps
- Adult Social Group
- Hosted the inaugural Shine In Your Own Light Showcase! Performances & Visual Art by Teens and Young Adults with ASD

General HCAS Activities from 2018:

- Hired a part-time Social Worker
- Held our 13th annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala
- Held our 12th annual One Step Closer ... Autism Walk and 5K Run
- Held our 5th annual Transition Symposium, providing a full day of presenters and workshops covering a wide variety of Transition topics including a self-advocate track
- Held our annual special needs camp fair providing information on summer camp opportunities.
- Held monthly meetings of the various support groups including the Asperger's Group and general HCAS support group
- Established the Monthly Speaker Series featuring guest speakers on a variety of topics of interest to the ASD community
- Continued execution of our Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) Grant, offering assistance to those with questions and issues surrounding the school system
- Continued updating our Special Education News Center with information and articles pertinent to special education advocacy and support
- Issued our eNewsletter, Perspectives throughout the year
- Conducted a Financial Review of HCAS 2017 990
- Held Brown Bag Series workshops in partnership with Pathfinders for Autism
- Held meetings with HCPSS Department of Special Education and Student Services leadership to continue work on improving the services and opportunities for those on the spectrum.
- Participated on HCPSS Special Education Strategic Action Plan workgroups
- Continued our work with HCPSS, Howard County Recreation and Parks and Howard County Department of Citizens Services on the Transition Outreach Partnership to increase outreach, programming and support of our children transitioning out of the school system in Howard County.
- Sponsored a second Career Self-Discovery Workshop
- The Howard County Autism Task Force launched a website and Request for Qualifications for the Patuxent Commons Housing Initiative
- Cohosted a Board of Education Candidate Forum on Special Education prior to the summer primary election
- Participated in 2018 Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature in Annapolis
- Partnered with the Arc of Howard County and Service Coordination to host a Legislative Breakfast and discuss concerns with the waiting list for the MD Autism Waiver and the Housing Initiative