



**AUTISM ALLIANCE**

*Empowering Families for 30 Years*

a program of  **Advocates**



## March Newsletter

### What is an Autism Welcoming Business?

Autism Welcoming businesses make simple, but impactful accommodations to support individuals and families with autism. They are trained by **Autism Alliance** staff and partner together to create a supportive environment. Learn more about our [Autism Welcoming Initiative](#).



## NEW AUTISM WELCOMING BUSINESS

**DAVE &  
BUSTER'S**

**Dave & Buster's Natick** is a newly certified Autism Welcoming Business. They are ready to help your loved ones and family members that are autistic have a great time when you visit. They have everyday accommodations including sensory kits with noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses to help with bright and flashing lights, and fidgets to help ease the sensory experience. Be sure to speak to a staff member to see when sensory-friendly store times are available. For more information click on the link: [Dave & Buster's Natick Mall | Autism Alliance](#)

# March Parent Trainings and Clinics



## Autism Alliance Brain Chat featuring Coach Allison Marean Tuesday March 21 12:00 noon

Our virtual, monthly Brain Chat is for parents and caregivers of school age children who want more strategies and an opportunity to ask specific questions to expert Coach Allison H. Marean, M.Ed., CLY. from Successfully Social New England. This is a virtual community call that meets once a month for an hour is **FREE** and sponsored by the Autism Alliance. **It is an opportunity to ask questions**, be a part of our community and/or just listen and learn from others. After you sign up, a few days before the group you will receive the Zoom link.

Submit a question.



## "Housing 101" Thinking about Housing Tuesday March 28 6:30pm -8:00pm | Virtual

In this FREE virtual workshop, Cathy Boyle from [Autism Housing Pathways](#), will introduce families to the range of public funds available to pay for housing and supportive services (including for those without DDS supports). Some examples are given of how these can be combined with private funds to create housing. Please register below. You will receive the Zoom link the week before the event.

Register

# March Support Groups



Autism Alliance support groups are for families who have children with an autism spectrum disorder. Our groups are a safe and relaxed space for parent and caregivers to feel more confident and less isolated. Click below for Zoom links.

Just for Dads

March 1

Parents of children  
age 10 and under  
March 15

Portuguese Speaking

March 27

## What is Sibshop?

Sibshops provide young brothers and sisters with peer support and information in a lively, recreational setting.

Sibshops are lively events where they will:

**Meet** other sibs (usually for the first time); **Have** fun; **Talk** about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sib with special needs with others who “get it”; **Play** some great games.

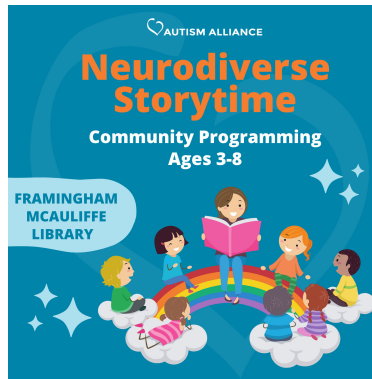
**Explore** how other brother and sisters handle sticky situations sometimes faced by brothers and sisters; **Laugh! Learn** about the services their brothers and sister receive; and **have** some more fun!

**NEXT Sibshop**  
**Saturday March 11**  
**Click on the link to register!**



Register

## **NEW Neurodiverse Storytime for ages 3-8**



**Neurodiverse Storytime | Framingham McAuliffe Library**  
**Saturday March 11th**  
**10:00am-11:00am**  
**Ages 3-8**

In partnership with the [McAuliffe Library](#), the Autism Alliance presents STORYTIME for neurodiverse children - Autism Specialist Katie Casavant will be onsite to help support parents and children at this fun FREE sensory-friendly program. **Registration is required by calling 508-532-5636 X4.** Hope to see you there!!

## **Special Art for Kids**



**Special Art for Kids**  
**Virtual | Tuesdays**  
**5:45pm-6:45pm**

Art can help kids improve their learning processes, hand eye coordination, and communication skills. This weekly online high-school student led virtual art program is for young artists. Projects have included: drawn cartoons, Mother's Day cards, origami

cranes, birds, and more. Classes are Tuesday nights from 5:45 to 6:45 PM EST. All you need is colored pencils and markers; any colors are fine. Siblings are welcome.

To Register

# After School Club | ALL AGES & ABILITIES



**Autism Alliance After School Club ~  
Tuesday March 7 - May 2  
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Each week we meet virtually and will learn about some fantastic zoo critters and follow up with brainstorming and voting on what we would include in our own perfect zoo. Endless possibilities for all of us to use our imaginations and connect through our common interest in animals. All ages, levels, and siblings are invited to participate. We would like to thank the [Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation](#) for sponsoring this program.

Zoom Link

# March Sensory-Friendly Community Events



**Apex Sensory-Friendly Hour  
Sunday March 5  
10:00am - 11:00am**

The first Sunday of each month from 10am-11am friends and families can come visit [Apex Entertainment](#) for some fun in a sensory welcoming environment! If you are interested in a sensory friendly birthday party or social event, please contact us at (508) 251-8666



**Especially for Me:Free Autism-Friendly Evening**  
**Saturday March 18**  
**5:00pm - 8:00pm**

Cost: Free with pre-registration

Registration required: [Register Now](#) Please visit us at the [Especially for Me page](#) for resources to prepare for and support your visit. **These Especially for Me events are offered in collaboration with Autism Alliance of MetroWest.**



**Plaster FunTime Sensory-Friendly Hour**  
**Sunday March 12**  
**10:00am - 11:00am**

[Plaster Fun Time Marlborough](#) will host a sensory-friendly autism welcoming hour from 10:00am -11:00am on the second Sunday of every month. For more information call 508-251-1592



**Burttons Grill and Bar, Shrewsbury Sensory-Friendly Dining**  
**Tuesday March 7**  
**3:00pm - 6:00pm**

We're partnered with Autism Alliance for this event as part of their Autism Welcoming Initiative. We turn down the lights, turn off the music, hand out visual menus & more. Enjoy a delicious meal from Burttons Grill in a delightfully calm atmosphere.

[\*\*RESERVE A TABLE\*\*](#)

**nickelodeon.**  
**THE**  
**SPONGEBOB MUSICAL**



**Open Door Theater**  
**The SpongeBob Musical!**

Sensory Friendly shows running March 24-April 2 at the Dragonfly Theater, Raymond J. Grey Jr. High School, 16 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720. [LEARN MORE](#)



**Tuesday April 4**  
**7:00pm - 8:45 pm**  
**Film Screening: Autism goes to college.**  
[Register in person](#)  
[Register via Zoom](#)

## Important Massachusetts Announcements

**The DESE/DDS Residential Prevention Program Open Interest Period is now through March 31st!**

Open to DDS-eligible students, the program offers in-home supports and skills training. Submission of an interest form does not guarantee program entry, but new participants are added from the interest list as spaces become available.

To Apply



An illustration of five diverse people (three women and two men) with various hairstyles and clothing, set against a dark blue background. In the top left corner, there is a white heart icon with a checkmark inside, followed by the text 'Act now. Stay covered.' in white. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom half of the illustration, containing the title 'MassHealth Eligibility Redeterminations' and a short paragraph of text.

Act now.  
Stay covered.

### MassHealth Eligibility Redeterminations

MassHealth needs to renew coverage for all members to make sure they are still eligible and receive the best benefit they qualify for

MassHealth Members! Due to the COVID-19 emergency, MassHealth has been maintaining your health coverage, but soon we will be returning to normal eligibility renewal processes. This means **we must renew all members** to make sure they still qualify for their current MassHealth coverage. Make sure to check all mail from MassHealth. You may need to take action to get the best benefit you qualify for. Here's what you can do now to make your renewal process easier.

[Learn More](#)

## SafetyNet Federal Grants Available

The Framingham Police Dept. has received a federal grant for SafetyNet and will support any family in Framingham with a child at risk on the SafetyNet program at no cost. Other towns may also apply for grant. Click on the link to learn more.

[SafetyNet](#)

**SafetyNet**  
Tracking Systems





Did you miss seeing one of our featured guest speakers? If so, click on the link and you will see the recordings on the Autism Alliance of MetroWest YouTube Channel.

YouTube

*Please submit requests for accommodations, including ASL interpreters, at least 2 weeks prior to the event date to [AutismAlliance@advocates.org](mailto:AutismAlliance@advocates.org) or call (508) 652-9900*

## Connect With Us



[www.AutismAlliance.org](http://www.AutismAlliance.org) | (508) 652-9900 | [AutismAlliance@Advocates.org](mailto:AutismAlliance@Advocates.org)

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### Our Contact Information

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