



AUTISM ALLIANCE
Empowering Families for 30 Years

a program of **Advocates**



September Newsletter



Social Programs and Recreation



THEME
Designing our dream zoo!

Autism Alliance Virtual After School Club

4:00 - 4:30pm | Ages 5-12
8- weekly classes

The very successful After School Zoo Club is back! We will meet virtually each week and we will learn about some fantastic zoo critters. We will create our VERY OWN virtual zoo which will include animal preferences and voting from everyone in the club. This club is for ages 5-12 that have a special interest in learning and talking about animals. You must [REGISTER](#) and you will be sent the zoom link before the first meeting in September.



Art For Kids
Starting Tuesday September 12th
5:45 - 6:45pm | Ages 5 and up

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. All you need is colored pencils and markers; any colors are fine. Siblings are welcome. This program is led by students from Acton, Boxborough, Brookline, Lexington, and Concord Carlisle High School in Massachusetts. These students have experience and siblings with autism and ADHD and wanted to help children with special needs. This program was founded in 2021 by a class of young artists to foster communication and growth. You must [REGISTER](#) and you will be sent the zoom link before the first meeting in September.

Let's Build a Village Mom's Meet Up



"Let's Build A Village" Mom's Meet Up: Self-Care Workshop
Thursday September 21st
6:30pm - 8:30pm

Christa McAuliffe Branch Library
746 Water St, Framingham, MA 01701

Join Penny and Katie in welcoming Jessica Spaman, LICSW, Fitness & Wellness Coach, 200HR yoga teacher, and owner of [Emotions in Motion](#) for an empowering experiential self-care workshop. Participants will learn how to cultivate greater self-compassion to alleviate stress, enhance well-being, and help prevent caregiver burnout. Cost is \$10 at the door. This workshop will run for approximately an hour, with refreshments and conversation to follow. [REGISTER](#)

Autism Alliance & DDS Middlesex West Programs
Must be eligible through the DDS Middlesex
WestArea Office



New Friends ~ Social Group

For ages 11-14 years old



New Friends Social Skills Group (Virtual)

[must be eligible through the DDS Middlesex West Area Office](#)

This social skills group is for children ages 11-14 with autism. This program is co-facilitated by the Autism Alliance and Successfully Social New England. This group is limited to 8 participants and is held 2x a month on Wednesday's from 4:00pm-4:45pm. We have a limited number of slots available to ensure that social goals are met for each participant. **Consistent attendance is required**, so please plan accordingly. Program inquiry at this link: [New Friends Social Skills Group | Autism Alliance](#)



NEW

Teen Social Club

AGES 15-19

*The Autism Alliance in partnership with
Dept of Developmental Services is offering a
new monthly social group.*

*Must be DDS
eligible in
Middlesex West*



Teen Social Club (Community)

must be eligible through the DDS Middlesex West Area Office

New monthly Social Club for teenagers 15-19 with autism. Group will focus on building new friendships, shared interests, and community recreation skills. This group is limited to 10 participants and will be held 1x a month on a Friday night from 6pm-8pm at [Dave & Buster's](#) at the Natick Mall and will include dinner. We have a limited number of slots available to ensure that social goals are met for each participant. **Consistent attendance is required**, so please plan accordingly. Program inquiry at this link: [New Teen Social Club 2023-2024 | Autism Alliance](#)

Family Support Programs



Autism Alliance Support Groups

for mom's, dad's, siblings, and all who ❤️ a child with Autism



Just for Dads Support Group

*First Wednesday of Every Month
Next Date: September 6th
6:30pm-8:30pm*

Location: Morse Institute Library
14 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760

Our Just for Dads support group is where fathers can meet and talk about fatherhood as it relates to raising a child or children with autism. Our group is open to new fathers, experienced

fathers, and single fathers where they can speak to men in the same position and learn from men with experience as dads. This group is facilitated by Rob Sutherland, dad of two boys on the spectrum.

Drop-in's welcome



[Grief and Loss Support Group](#)

First Thursday of Every Month
Next Date: September 7th
12 noon-1:30pm

Location: Virtual

This is a group for family members raising a loved one on the Spectrum. Caregiving can be an all-consuming process and we don't always take the time to reflect on our own experiences and emotions as we care for others. In this group, we will discuss caregiving through the lifespan and through the lens of loss and grief, and we will discover ways to take care of our emotional and physical health in the process. Facilitated by Jennifer Wiles, LMHC, BC-DMT, HEARTplay Program, Good Shepherd Community Care

Contact [Allison Daigle](#).



[Autism Support Group for Parents of children aged 10 and under](#)

First Wednesday of Every Month
Next Date: September 6th
12 noon-1:00pm

Location: Virtual

Family members meet to share the common experiences, challenges, and joys of raising children on the autism spectrum. This group focuses on caregivers and provides an opportunity for parents to connect with others facing a similar experience. Participants are welcome to zoom during a noon lunch break at work/or home. Many topics will be discussed, and parents are welcome to bring questions; this program may also include guest speakers via parent special requests. No pre-registration necessary. This support group is facilitated by Katie Casavant, Autism Specialist.

Drop-in's welcome



[Let's Build a Village: MetroWest Moms Self-Care Group](#)

Third Thursday of Every Month
Next Date: September 21st
12noon to 1pm

Location: Virtual

Our "Let's Build a Village" program is growing! This is for MetroWest moms who would like to grow their "village" by connecting with other moms. This program is fun, fabulous, and free and is sponsored by the Autism Alliance. It is an opportunity for moms of children with autism within the MetroWest area to bond with other moms by sharing laughs while lifting each other up. What will we talk about this month? Books? Favorite TV show? Favorite recipe? Sign up to find out.



[Portuguese Educational Autism Family Support Group](#)

Fourth Monday of Every Month*
Next Date: September 25th
6:30pm-8:30pm

Location: Virtual

Come Join us for our monthly Portuguese Educational Autism Support Group. This is a chance to meet with other Portuguese speaking families to share the joys and challenges of raising children on the autism spectrum while also hearing about the latest autism information, including new techniques, methods and other useful information.

*Group meets the fourth Monday of each month except for the months of December and May when it meets on the third Monday - December 18th & May 20th.



[Sibshop Program for Academic Year 2023-2024](#)

Sibshop is a support group for the siblings of children with autism. This program meets monthly during the school year beginning Saturday, September 30, 2023, through May 18, 2024. We are partnering with the YMCA in Hopkinton to provide an exceptional year of sibshop enrichment. In addition to traditional sibshop curriculum we will also be participating in additional activities such as archery, orienteering, navigational games, snowshoeing (weather permitting), animal tracking and survival skills. To learn more about this amazing program

[APPLY HERE](#)

Fall Into Fitness

Turning the calendar to September means it's time to get back to routines. If exercise is not part of your, or your loved one's daily routine, perhaps you should reconsider. It's widely well-known that exercise is good for us - both mentally and physically. Those diagnosed with ASD can reap the same benefits. Exercise offers increased social opportunities without such an emphasis on verbal communication. It increases strength. It improves balance and coordination. Exercise can boost energy, build confidence and social awareness, while decreasing anxiety. Below are businesses offering fitness opportunities for individuals with autism, including Fitness Together, an Autism Welcoming certified business.

Guest Speaker

Bob Savin, Owner of Fitness Together



Physical Fitness & Teens with Autism
Tuesday September 19th
12noon - 1pm | Virtual
6:30pm - 7:30pm | Virtual

Join guest speaker Bob Savin, owner of [Fitness Together](#) in Ashland, as he discusses his experience working with teens with autism and the impact their sessions have had on both the teens and their parents. It's more than just physical fitness. It's about mental fitness as well. Bob prides himself on really getting to know his clients so he can create a custom workout program that works for them. Fitness Together offers private suites, each with individual music and lighting control where Bob or one of his staff members will work with the individual. Bob will explain his methods, his program and results he's seen - all within a safe, sensory-friendly space. Fitness Together is a certified Autism Welcoming certified business.

[Click Here for Link](#)



A.I.M. Therapy
10 Charles Street Needham, MA

[Adaptive Inclusive Movement \(AIM\) Therapy](#) is a neuro affirming physical therapy and functional fitness practice that works with kids, teens and adults of all abilities, from novice to elite, with all learning and communication styles. They offer one-on-one physical therapy, functional fitness, fitness and friendship classes, adaptive CrossFit and inclusive CrossFit classes, and communication and support.



LOWERING BARRIERS

RAISING THE BAR

Inclusive Fitness
1665 VFW Parkway
West Roxbury, MA

[Inclusive Fitness](#) helps create healthy lifestyles for neurodiverse people, their families, and communities. They do this by lowering barriers - with highly trained and experienced coaches, adaptive programming, and by providing an accessible and sensory-friendly location. They offer small groups and one-on-one sessions, both virtually and in person. Their programs are designed to build functional fitness and create healthy, lifelong habits.



Intuitive Wellness
436 Boston Post Road
Weston, MA

The team at [Intuitive Wellness](#) is trained to work with Neurodiverse and Neurotypical individuals alike. The goal is to get individuals moving and feeling confident. Every session is catered to each person's specific needs. They work closely with VoiceColors Yoga. VoiceColors Yoga is a visual yoga experience meant for neurodiverse individuals. Coaches have been trained to use their actions and pictures rather than verbally explaining each step.

Community Happenings

SOCIAL CIRCLES

PURPOSEFUL CONNECTIONS
Nurturing Independence and
Social Interaction Groups
WITH MICHELLE GAUDET,
M.Ed, LABA

TEENS, AGES 14 - 18
SATURDAY MORNINGS
10:00 - 11:00AM



**Purposeful Connections at
We Breathe Wellness Center**
55 West Street, Ste 2F
Walpole, MA

Purposeful Connections is offering a weekly social group for teens (**ages 14 - 18**) that will focus on social interactions, emotional regulation, independence, advocacy, executive function, and self-help skills. The group will be held at 10am on Saturday mornings at [We Breathe Wellness Center](#). It will be led by Michelle Gaudet, an Elementary Education Teacher, School Counselor, Parent Coach, and a Licensed Applied Behavior Analyst. She works with children, teens, young adults and families offering an array of social, emotional, behavioral, and executive functioning therapy services and coaching. Cost is \$95 per person, per session. For more information, call or text 617-686-1499 Michelle directly.

SOCIAL CIRCLES

PURPOSEFUL CONECTIONS
Nurturing Independence and
Social Interaction Groups
WITH MICHELLE GAUDET,
M.Ed, LABA

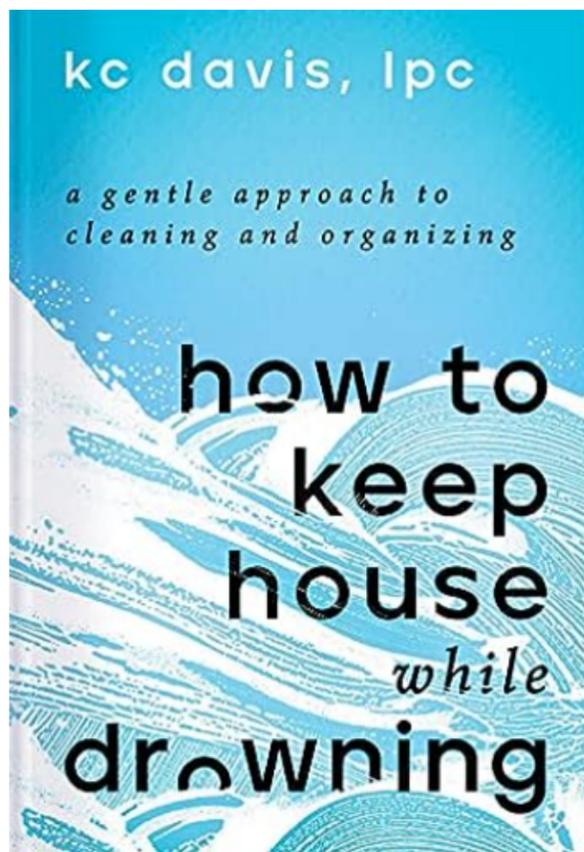
EMERGING ADULTS, AGES 17-22
SATURDAY MORNINGS
11AM - 12NOON



**Purposeful Connections at
We Breathe Wellness Center**
55 West Street, Ste 2F
Walpole, MA

Purposeful Connections is offering weekly social group for emerging adults (**ages 17 - 22**) that will focus on social interactions, emotional regulation, independence, advocacy, executive function, and self-help skills. The group will be held at 11am on Saturday mornings at [We Breathe Wellness Center](#). It will be led by Michelle Gaudet, an Elementary Education Teacher, School Counselor, Parent Coach, and a Licensed Applied Behavior Analyst. Michelle works with children, teens, young adults and families offering an array of social, emotional, behavioral, and executive functioning therapy services and coaching. Emerging adults are considered ages 17 to 22 years old. Cost is \$95 per person, per session. For more

Fall Into Reading



Book of the Month Recommendation

How to Keep House While Drowning by KC Davis

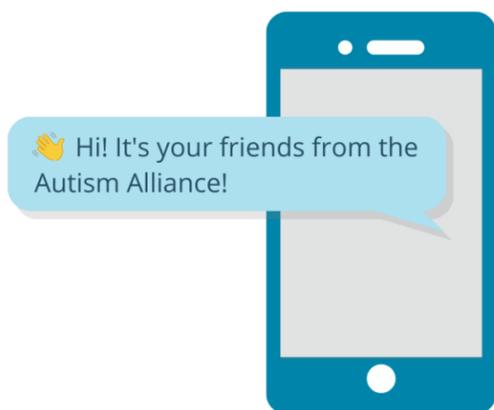
This month's recommendation comes from our very own Katie Casavant. This revolutionary approach to cleaning and organizing helps free you from feeling ashamed or overwhelmed by a messy home. For therapist KC Davis, the birth of her second child triggered a stress-mess cycle. The more behind she felt, the less motivated she was to start. She didn't fold a single piece of laundry for seven months. One life-changing realization restored her sanity—and the functionality of her home: You don't work for your home; your home works for you.

In other words, messiness is not a moral failing. A new sense of calm washed over her as she let go of the shame-based messaging that interpreted a pile of dirty laundry as "I can never keep up" and a chaotic kitchen as "I'm a bad mother." Instead, she looked at unwashed clothes and thought, "I am alive," and at stacks of dishes and thought, "I cooked my family dinner three nights in a row."

Building on this foundation of self-compassion, KC devised the powerful practical approach that has exploded in popularity through her TikTok account, @domesticblisters. In this book, you'll learn exactly how to customize your cleaning strategy and rebuild your relationship with your home.

Available from [Amazon](#)

Join Autism Alliance NEW text messaging!



We are thinking about ways to improve our communication with families and caregivers. If you would like to receive text messages from the Autism Alliance, please click the below button to sign-up and opt-in. Sign Up for Texts: [CLICK HERE](#)



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 or call (508) 652-9900

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