



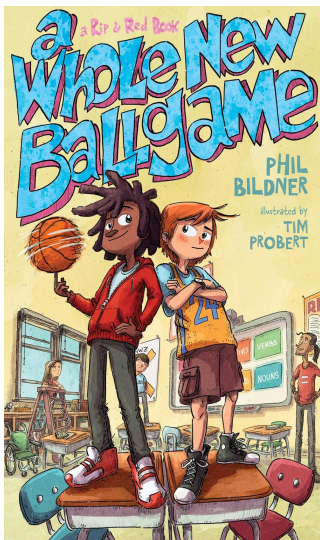
## RMU Trees Network December 2023 Newsletter

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### January Family/Parent Support Meeting

Our January **virtual** family/parent support meeting is scheduled for **Monday, January 8th from 7-8 pm**. Based on parent surveys, families were interested in additional information on services provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). We have asked Mr. Jim Lilley, the Assistant District Administration of OVR, to speak with our families. He will explain the services OVR provides, when to apply, and how their services differ from service coordination. Anyone interested in learning more can register for the virtual meeting by contacting Vicki Donne at [donne@rmu.edu](mailto:donne@rmu.edu) or Deanna Hiltz at [hiltzd@rmu.edu](mailto:hiltzd@rmu.edu) or completing the following form: [Registration Form](#)

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### Virtual Book Club

**Starting Tuesday, January 9 from 6 pm - 7 pm**

We have selected the book **A Whole New Ballgame** by Phil Bildner for our next book club. The main characters, Rip and Red, are 5th grade best friends. They have a new teacher and basketball coach who is a bit unconventional. Rip is out of his comfort zone, and Red, who has autism, doesn't like change and likes things done in a certain way. Let's read to find out how these two friends help each other find ways to make a difference in this fun book about school, sports, and friendship. This book is recommended for children ages 8-12 or grades 4th-6th but is a great read for all ages.

We provide illustrated read-alouds that families/students can read throughout the week. Then each week, on Tuesday evenings 6 pm - 7 pm from January 9th to February 20th, the Book Club will meet virtually. RMU scholars, Deanna, and myself, and students in the book club meet to talk about the book, do some fun activities, and socialize. Last year, this was a fun activity for everyone and we are excited to do another book club this winter.

**Sign up by emailing Deanna Hiltz at [hiltzd@rmu.edu](mailto:hiltzd@rmu.edu)**

**\*\*\* A hard copy of the book will be provided to all participants who register by Wednesday, December, 20, 2023.**

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Monday, February 5, 2024**

### **IN-PERSON Assistive Technology and AAC Open House at RMU**

Plan to join us, along with Marleah Herman-Umpleby and Stephanie Ekis of Interact Therapy, to learn about different types of augmentative alternative communication (AAC) and check out some of the different forms and devices.



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## **Exciting Holiday Events**

Band Together Pittsburgh announced "**A Very Yinzer Christmas**," an amazing holiday concert featuring many of Pittsburgh's rockers and Band Together Pittsburgh performers! Visit [www.yinzerchristmas.com](http://www.yinzerchristmas.com) for details and to receive an MP3 download of last year's album release.

Sensory-friendly Performance of the Nutcracker at Pittsburgh' Benedum Center [Pittsburgh Ballet Theater](#) on Sunday, December 17, 2023 – 4:30 PM.

The Children's Museum has monthly Sensory Friendly afternoons on select Tuesdays from 1PM-5PM. The lights and sounds in the Museum are turned down and trained staff is on hand to assist. The Museum also has sound blocking headphones, weighted vests and blankets, and wrist assistance cuffs available on any visit. There are social stories available on their website. <https://pittsburghkids.org/visit/accessibility>

The Carnegie Science Center has Sensory Friendly hours and accommodations. Accommodations include lower lights and sounds, special exhibits, assistance from trained staff, calm down areas, fidgets, headphones, sunglasses, and more. The Science Center is open to the general public during Sensory Hours but crowds are usually lower on Sunday mornings.

<https://carnegiesciencecenter.org/events/sensory-sensitive-science-hours/>

The AMC Theater at the Waterfront has Sensory-friendly showings of the most popular Family films on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month plus a showing of a "more mature" film on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Accommodations include a lower sound level, lights that stay on in the theater (not full lights but enough to see), plus guests are welcome to get up and move around, even dance, to the movie.

For more information, check here:

<https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films>

Flight has a Sensory Friendly Jump on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 6PM-8PM. The sound is kept on low and the lights are dimmer. There is trained staff monitoring the jumpers. Flight is open just for individuals with special needs during these times. For more information, check here:

<https://www.flightfitfun.com/locations/pittsburgh/>

Sensory Friendly: Holiday Pops Concert. Get in the holiday spirit with the entire family in an environment that is welcoming to all. Festive fidgets, a quiet room, hearing protection and ASL interpretation available.

<https://pittsburghsymphony.org/production/84783/sensory-friendly-concert-holiday-pops>

Make your season sparkle at [Kennywood's Holiday Lights](#). Take a stroll among more than two million twinkling lights and marvel at the tallest Christmas tree in the state. There are rides for the kids and special entertainment for all. Select nights starting November 24!

Pittsburgh Botanic Gardens promises to immerse you in the wonder of the holidays for their [Dazzling Nights](#) event, perfect for families. Have fun stepping on interactive lights, explore a forest of light and fog, and journey through a 65' tunnel of light.

The Pittsburgh Zoo transforms into a winter wonderland for the [Zoo Lights Drive-Thru](#). You never have to leave your car to enjoy more than 100 animal lights with new displays, festive music and holiday treats.

[Light Up the Night](#) - Dec. 13 at Miracle Mile Shopping Center. Menorah lighting, carnival games, donuts, treats, Gateway choir performances and fire truck chocolate gelt drop.

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## December 4 Individual Support Plan (ISP) and Prioritization of Need (PUN) Meeting Summary



On Monday, December 4 our RMU Trees Network held its monthly parent/family meeting. Mary Evrard, Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Supports Community and Communications Liaison, joined us and had conversations about Individual Support Plans (ISP), Prioritization of Need (PUN), and the different types of waivers and how they are delivered and provided. We are so appreciative for Mary taking the time to speak with families and for sharing such wonderful information. Thank you!!!

## Resources for Parents and Educators

The Network provides resources for parents and teachers and these resources can be found at the [RMU Trees Network Website](#) . Information on RMU Trees is also posted on the RMU website and the previous newsletters can be read and viewed at <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees>. In each newsletter we provide links to resources of topics discussed in our parent meetings and workshops as well as other information that may be helpful to families, schools, and the community. These were some of the websites shared at our December 4th meeting.



*The Gold Book is intended to be a comprehensive guide for families as they enter and navigate the ODP service system.*

<https://home.myodp.org/2023/07/14/odp-reissues-the-gold-book/>

**Introduction to Allegheny County Office of Developmental Supports (ODS).**

[www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Offices/Developmental-Supports.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Offices/Developmental-Supports.aspx)

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[RMU Trees Website](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/>