



RMU Trees Network December 2024 Newsletter

Evaluations and Independent Education Evaluations

January Parent and Family Meeting Monday, January 6, 2025 7PM - 8PM

Join us in the NEW YEAR for this family/parent meeting scheduled for **Monday, January 6, 2025 from 7:00 - 8:00 pm**. Dr. Eric Lauver, Fort Cherry School District's Director of Pupil Services/Technology, will be presenting on the purposes of special education evaluations. He will explain the differences of school evaluations and independent education evaluations (IEE) and how the assessment results are used to develop the appropriate accommodations and modifications in your child's least restrictive environment. Please contact contact Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu to register by email or register at [Google Registration \(https://forms.gle/ABtrPQ1fq1tXrxde6\)](https://forms.gle/ABtrPQ1fq1tXrxde6) Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.

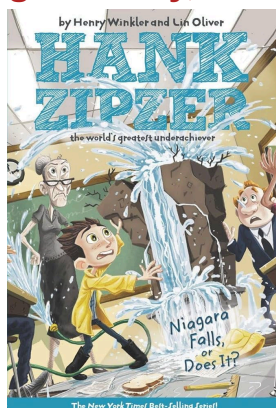


Assistive Technology Funding Workshop

On Tuesday, November 12, 2024 the RMU Trees Network hosted a workshop on how to obtain funding for Assistive Technology. Assistive Technology (AT) are the devices and/or equipment used by individuals with disabilities to improve their lives in education, employment, community recreation, and daily living activities. Since AT can be expensive, challenging, and overwhelming, we were graciously informed on how to get assistance from **Wendy Davis**, Director of Marketing and Outreach from PA Assistive Technology Foundation, **Jim Lilley**, Assistant District Administrator from PA Department of Labor and Industry/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, **Bekah Nesbitt**, Assistive Technology Coordinator from Community Living and Support Services (CLASS), and **Mary Evrard**, Community and Communications Liaison Coordinator, Allegheny County Department of Human Services (AC DHS) Office of Developmental Supports (ODS). Attendees were given a number of funding resources due to their shared experiences and expertise.

Virtual Book Club for Kids

Starting Tuesday, February 4



We have picked the book **Niagara Falls, Or Does It?** by Harry Winkler and Lin Oliver for our next book club. The book is inspired by true life experiences of Henry Winkler whose undiagnosed dyslexia made him a classic childhood underachiever. The Hank Zipzer series is about the high-spirited adventures of a boy with learning differences. In **Niagara Falls, Or Does It?**, Hank needs to write about his summer vacation. He loves science, but he hates writing reports. Join us to read about the adventures of Hank as he navigates school, hobbies (magic), and friendships. This book is recommended for children ages 8-12 but is a great read for all ages. We will meet for four weeks **virtually Tuesdays from 6:00 - 7:00 pm. A hard copy of the book will be provided to all participants who register by Wednesday, December 18, 2024.**

Sign up by emailing Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu

Goalball Clinic with Envision Blind Sports

On November 16 representatives from the Trees Network worked together with Envision Blind Sports to host a Goalball Clinic at the RMU North Athletic Complex. Goalball is a team sport designed for athletes with a vision impairment. Participants try to throw a ball with bells embedded inside into their opponents goal.

The ball is thrown, never kicked, and promotes ear-hand coordination. RMU and Slippery Rock students volunteered and even participated in the round robin play. Everyone that participated had an amazing time!



Upcoming Events Around the Area

The RMU Trees Network is a member of the Special Needs Consortium, a group of service providers in the Pittsburgh area. The consortium exists to provide a place where all service providers can network and opportunities can be shared, promoted, and advocated for to increase awareness of resources available to the community. The following is a list of events found through our contacts and/or were shared by members of the consortium. We hope you will find something of interest to you.

December 7th 11:00AM and 2:00PM Polar Express Event hosted by Glade Run

Join us at the Strand Theater in downtown Zelienople for a private screening at this charming historic theater, free refreshments and a visit from Santa. Showings will take place at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. This event is free to attend, but we ask each family to bring a gift or gift card for our annual Christmas Angel drive. Pajamas encouraged! This event fills quickly, and RSVPs are required at <https://forms.gle/GTP4q8ZAJmdmvL4R8>.

December 7th 10:00AM Sensory Sensitive Polar Express Event - Carnegie Science Center

Enjoy *The Polar Express* (2D) in a sensory sensitive environment. The film volume is lowered and the house lights in The Rangos Giant Cinema are raised. The event includes activities, and sensory backpacks are available to borrow. Get ready to visit the North Pole without leaving Pittsburgh! [Purchase tickets](#) on our website or by calling 412-237-3400.

December 8th 2:00PM - 5:00PM Band Together Christmas Party/Open Mic

2456 Tilbrook Rd 2456 Tilbrook Rd, Monroeville, PA

Register here:

<https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/live-autism-friendly-open-mic-band-together-clubhouse-17/>

December 9th 7:30PM Band Together: A Very Yinzer Christmas Live Show

Benedum Center for the Performing Arts 237 7th Street, Pittsburgh, PA

Register Here: <https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/a-very-yinzer-christmas-live-show-2/>

December 12th 6:30PM - 7:30PM PA Assistive Technology Foundation webinar

What is on your holiday wish list? Smart devices can make everyday life a little more manageable, especially if you or a loved one has a disability or health condition. Our three speakers will share how they use smart wearables and other smart devices to manage their everyday life including managing a child with autism elopement, managing anxiety at home and at work, and getting support for daily activities like cooking dinner and doing the laundry. Register is required to join this inclusive and accessible webinar. https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_peqi0-abRe-27fcHNo18A

December 13th-16th Exceptional Adventures - Oglebay Resort Holiday Excursion

Wheeling, WV. Guests will enjoy a holiday lights trolley ride, dinner show, private animal encounter at the Good Zoo, indoor swimming and holiday shopping!

https://travefy.com/website/ndvrxgjxbgjb6nqx24rznn-ywtar32qstnhzq2?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR1jI7zZ-O3DxffYohL7p1GqkzXyAx1OjWRiofptoz5LSH2nTgwAh5eAECI_aem_wPpA6D_xsHQWTWBOv16u2Q

December 14th 1:30PM - 3:00PM Sensory Friendly Santa at Cookie Cookie Ice Cream

1815 McKees Rocks Road, McKees Rocks

December 19th 1:00PM - 3:00PM Three Rivers Community Care Winter Party

Visit with Santa, Games, Music, Dancing, Crafts, Open sensory room. \$10 entrance fee, support staff fee is waived. Friends can RSVP for these events and view/register for regularly scheduled free and low-cost monthly activities at the following link:

<https://www.3riverscommunitycare.com/book-online> or by phone/email info@3rcc.net
(412) 206-9118

December 19th 4:00PM Three Rivers Community Care Winter Concert Carnegie Choristers

Friends can RSVP for these events and view/register for regularly scheduled free and low-cost monthly activities at the following link:

<https://www.3riverscommunitycare.com/book-online> or by phone/email info@3rcc.net
(412) 206-9118

December 20th 6:00PM - 8:00PM Holiday Dance

Blueberry Hill Park Activity Center, Franklin Park

For more information contact Zach Brower zbrower@franklinparkborough.us

To Register <https://ranp.recdesk.com/community/program>

December 22nd 12:00PM - 3:00PM Holiday Party - Exceptional Adventures

American Serbian Club, South Side

Wear your most festive attire and enjoy lunch, your favorite holiday tunes and the spirit of the season with your friends. Register here.

https://travefy.com/website/ndvrxgjb6nqx24rznn-ywtar32qstnhzq2?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR1jl7zZ-O3DxffYohL7p1GqkzXyAx1OjWRiofptoz5LSH2nTgwAh5eAEC_l_aem_wPpA6D_xsHQWTWBOv16u2Q

December 31st 11AM - 1:00PM Three Rivers Community Care New Year's Eve Party

Ball drops at 12 noon. Friends can RSVP for these events and view/register for regularly scheduled free and low-cost monthly activities at the following link:

<https://www.3riverscommunitycare.com/book-online> or by phone/email info@3rcc.net
(412) 206-9118

Caregivers' Yoga Tuesdays 10:30 - 11:30 AM at Open Up

Caregivers' Yoga class is an experience curated for those who dedicate their time and energy to caring for others. This class emphasizes mindfulness and rest, and provides a supportive space for caregivers to take care of themselves. In this class there are optional opportunities to share experiences and find support among fellow caregivers.

More than movement and mindfulness this class is a chance to pause, reflect, recharge, and nurture yourself. Through mindful awareness and community support, Caregiver's Yoga encourages self-exploration and personal growth, making it an ideal space for anyone looking to enhance their wellbeing. Register here

<https://www.open-up.org/schedule>

Fridays 1:00PM Art Class by Not Forgotten Home and Community Services in partnership with the Baierl Family YMCA

C-Art with Kristen –Join us each Friday for fresh, fun, art that will inspire you to keep creating! Free but you must sign up!

Located at the Baierl Family YMCA, 2565 Nicholson Road, Sewickley, PA 15143 All classes are free, but donations are happily accepted. **Please Register at www.nfhcs.org**

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](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>).

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. Below are some links to resources on assistive technology (AT).



ODP Gold Book - The mission of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives. The Gold Book is intended to be a guide to the system. The information contained in this publication was gathered from a variety of sources. <https://home.myodp.org/resources/odp-information/>

PA Tech Accelerator - The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, College of Education and Human Development is partnering with the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs and Office of Long-Term Living, Department of Human Services, and the University of Kansas Center on Disabilities' State of the States team on a statewide initiative called PA Tech Accelerator. The goal of the program is to expand the awareness of, and access to, assistive technology (AT), to build capacity of AT users and to measure effectiveness around AT use, access and service across the Commonwealth. <https://disabilities.temple.edu/assistive-technology/pa-tech-accelerator>

Supportive Technology - A resource created for assistive technology use. <https://home.myodp.org/resources/supportive-technology/>

TechOWL - TechOWL has many programs that can help you get assistive technology for different needs. It has a statewide lending library with over 1500 devices that anyone in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can use. They offer free demonstrations and consultations to help in the trial process. TechOWL provides free presentations and trainings for Pennsylvania organizations, universities, schools, groups, and more. <https://techowlpa.org/>

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[RMU Trees Website](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>)

[RMU Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/) (<https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/>)

