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The Advocate

The Advocate is the free public newsletter of the Special Education PTA of South River.

Published monthly from August to June of each year by the Executive Board Members of the SEPTA - this newsletter is mailed directly to families of classified students of the South River Public School District from the Office of Special Education. Additional copies are available at the South River Public Library. Past editions of the Advocate can be downloaded from our website. Interested individuals may sign up for our electronic newsletter and a listing of other newsletters related to special education issues by visiting our website at:
www.specialeducationpta.org

Questions related to the Special Education PTA as an organization, the services we provide, and our calendar of events can be answered by telephone at:(732)651-7157 or by email at info@specialeducationpta.org

If you would like to submit letters or articles, post information or contribute pictures to be included in future editions of the Advocate please contact our newsletter by email at SRPTAAAdvocate@aol.com

The **Advocate**

*“Every Child is Born with Wings...
 Make it a Choice to Educate
 and Advocate for the Chances for
 All Children to Learn to Soar”*



SEPTA -Reading Incentive Program

Parent’s: Help your child improve their reading skills and “Be a Reader” while your child earns the rewards.

The SEPTA and the South River Public Library are pleased to announce a partnership to promote reading skills in our children.

The goal of this program, “Be a Reader”, is get our children exposed to and actively participating in reading.

Students will be given a reading log in which they are to record the title of the book, author, and give the book a “rating”. On your child reading log, indicate

your “books per week goal” that either your child will read or you and your child will read together (if your child is an “emerging reader”).

“Books per week goals” start at two books per week or higher (though parents may want to contact their child’s teacher for an idea of how many books a week may be appropriate for your child).

At the end of the month, simply return your child’s reading log to their teacher.

Your child will be issued a coupon good for one free entertainment VHS or DVD movie at the South River Public Library.*

For help in picking out books for your child please visit Dawn, the Children’s Librarian at the So. River Public Library or any of the library staff.

***Entertainment VHS and DVD rent for 3 days.**

Returning items late will result in late fee fines per day which you will be responsible for. You must have a South River library card (in good standing) to use the issued coupon. For information on getting a library card or the Library’s rental policy, please call them at (732)254-2488.

“Advocacy in Special Education”

free online course for parents of children with special needs

Now parents can ‘sharpen’ their advocacy skills without leaving their house!

“Advocacy in Special Education” is a free course designed to empower parents with the tools for:

- Successful advocacy by providing information on legal rights.
- Practical strategies for obtaining supports and

services

- Special Education Documentation
- Links to nationwide parent support networks and spec. ed. resources.

Course entails two surveys, 3 readings, self-study questions, and one short answer assignment.

Parents will receive a certificate upon completion, an extensive

resource list and be eligible for a drawing for a gift cert. at www.amazon.com

Participants must register by emailing:
advocacy@tc.columbia.edu

This course will be available through the fall of 2004

Reprinted with permission from

Exception Parent Magazine Aug.2004
 “What’s Happening” Section pg 14

NEWS FROM THE WEB:

For tips, activities and questions on how to help your child become a reader or a better reader visit:

www.trelease-on-reading.com

Offers parents the

“Read-A loud Handbook” on line which gives some helpful hints into helping your child become a reader for improving on their existing skills.

www.readingrockets.org

This great web site offers parents:

Get Ready to Read Screening Tool- a free online screening tool to determine if your child is “ready to read”.

A monthly recommendation list for books by theme for children ages 0-9 years of age.

A downloadable PDF files on skill building directed at parents and teachers.

Other web sites to visit:

www.getreadytoread.org

www.ncl.org

www.hubbardscupboard.org

Spook-tackler Halloween Events for the Whole Family to Enjoy

With the fall holidays fast approaching– even parents will want to join in on some of the fun events in our local area:

YMCA on Dunham’s Corner Road in East Brunswick is once again planning their **Annual Halloween Party** on **October 22, 2004** from 6-8pm.

Ticket Prices:

Tickets purchased prior to Oct. 22: \$3.00 ea. non members or \$1.00 ea. for YMCA members

To purchase at the door:

\$5.00 ea. non members or

\$2.00 ea. for YMCA members.

South River Dept. of Recreation Annual Halloween Parade will be held on **October 29, 2004** starting at 7pm at the South River High School Gym. There will be music and prizes so

come and enjoy the fun!

Fall Festival at Daley’s Pond Saturday, **October 30th** from 12-4pm at the Gazebo at Daley’s Pond off Prospect St. South River. Come enjoy the fall festivities with the rest of the South River Community.

South River Department of Recreation Annual Frost on the Pumpkin race will be on Sunday, **Oct.31st** starting at 9:30am. The **Lollipop race** will start at 8:30am and the **Health Walk** at 9am.

Please contact the South River Department of Recreation at (732)-254-4412 for more information and registrations forms.

What do you expect from us?

SEPTA has been trying hard to provide parents and our special needs students of the South River District with a variety of programs, supports and services over the last 4 years.

We have hosted a vast range of special guest speakers, we have instituted a scholarship program for our graduating seniors, have installed a “Parent Forum” portion

to our meeting nights to encourage parents to draw upon the experience and knowledge of other parents in the community and yet we still feel we are not “reaching” everyone’s needs.

What more would you like us to do as an organization to better serve you and your child’s needs?

What is your biggest “road block” to coming

out to the meetings?

Would you like more social /recreational events for your child or family?

Would you be interested in tuning in to an online chat hour?

Please email us at:

SRPTAAadvocate@aol.com

and let us know how we can help you more.

Learn How to Manage It All !

Having a Child in the Special Education System Can be Overwhelming at Times-

Using simple strategies and an effective system you can accomplish it, reduce your stress and help your child all at the same time!

October 6, 2004 6:30-8:30pm

South River Public Library

Registration Form:

**Registration deadline is
Sept. 27, 2004**

**The fee for this workshop is \$5.00
per person. **If both parents attend -second is free!***

Fee charged is to cover the cost of the
supplies /materials handed out at this
workshop.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ zip _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Email: _____

School Child Attends: _____

() If you do not have computer access please check here. Some materials will be provided in an alternate format for you.

**Please mail registration form and check made payable to :
SEPTA of South River**

Please mail your registration form to: SEPTA of South River

81 Johnson Place, South River, NJ 08882

At This Workshop Parent's Will:

- Receive a notebook filling system and be taught how to file paperwork to make it easy to track your child's educational growth and assess areas of need that should be addressed at your child's next IEP meeting.
- Learn how to write letters to effectively communicate to the school district your child's needs, discuss a problem or change in services or document a situation that has occurred. (Parents will be given samples of letters to use a reference as well as templates to use for future letter writing)
- Learn how to write IEP goals, objectives, and benchmarks using present levels of academic placement as a guide to writing child specific goals that are relevant and time line orientated.
- Learn how to write an agenda so items that need to be addressed- are at your child's IEP meeting and document the decision for future reference.
- Learn how to write a Master plan (vision and mission statements, goals, strategies and the use of timelines to help you as a parent be efficient.
- Learn how to identify different "personality" traits in dealing within the school district and use the "correct approach" to each type to deal effectively within the system.

Kool Kids Bowling League

Kool Kids Bowling League is a league designed especially for special needs children and their siblings.

**Registration for the 2004-2005 league season
will be held on**

October 2nd from 2-4 pm

at Mid State Bowling,

Mid State Mall, East Brunswick.

Registration fee is \$7.00 per child.

Choose to bowl either

1 game per week \$6.00 per child or 2 games per week \$8.00 per child

League bowling is on Saturdays from 2-4pm.

Kool Kids bowling league runs for 18 weeks- weekly bowling fees include shoe rental.

At the end of the league bowling season – a party will be held were a trophy and gift certificate will be awarded to each participate.

For more information contact

The SEPTA Information Line at

(732)651-7157

Child Care Resources

The Middlesex County-Special Child Health Services has a Parent's Information and Discussion Group will be holding a meeting on **October 7th at 6:30pm** at the East Brunswick Public Library.

Special Guest speaker, Ellen Whitford of Catholic Charities, will give a presentation on **Child Care Resources**. Following this discussion she will also give an overview of services offered by Special Child Health Services.

This meeting is free of charge and open to the general public. Refreshments will be served. Please call the Middlesex County

Special Health Services at (732)745-3180 or (732)745-3187 for further information and to confirm your attendance.

Please leave your name and phone number.

The Middlesex County Parents' Information and Discussion Group meets three times a year: October, March and May.

To be added to their mailing list to receive upcoming meeting notices please give them a call.

**Due to budget cuts and lack of government funding; the funding for this program was drastically cut and the program itself was in danger of being eliminated last year.*

As resources for parents with special needs are vital for them in finding information, solutions and providing a direction in which parents can seek help it is therefore important that we show our continued support for the limited resources we do have left to us.

To make you smile and let you know that you are appreciated.... **“Choosing someone special for a special job”**

Someone really wonderful recently gave me a old yellowed newspaper clipping. At first I wondered what type of article could have been so important to this person that they had taken the time to cut it out and hold on to it for such a long time that it had gained it's current appearance. When she handed me this clipping she explained that she saw this article in the newspaper way back when; when my child was first diagnosed with a disability and when we were first learning about the early intervention system, the special education system and just basically adjusting to this new "turn" in which all our lives had taken. While she had not thought that I could appreciate it's message then— as we were overwhelmed with a lot back then— she thought I could now.

It is a wonderful article written by Erma Bombeck that was originally printed in May 1980 and has since been reprinted several times now via the Universal Press Syndicate.

For those of you who do not have a copy, I would like to share it with you.

“Choosing someone special for a special job” by Erma Bombeck

Most women become mothers by accident, some by choice, a few by social pressures and couple by habit. This year, nearly 100,000 women will become mothers of handicapped children. Did you ever wonder how mothers of handicapped children are chosen?

Somehow I visualize God hovering over Earth selecting his instruments for propagation with great care and deliberation. As he observes, he instructs his angels to make notes in a giant ledger.

“Armstrong, Beth, son, patron saint, Matthew. Forrest, Marjorie, daughter, patron saint, Cecilia. Rudlege, Carrie, twins, patron saint...give Gerard. He's used to profanity.”

Finally, he passes a name to an angel and smiles, “Give her a handicapped child.”

The angel is curious. “Why this one, God? She's so Happy.”

“Exactly,” says God. “Could I give a handicapped child a mother who does not know laughter? That would be cruel.”

“But has she patience?” asks the angel.

“I don't want her to have too much patience or she will drown in a sea of self-pity and despair. Once the shock wears off, she'll handle it.”

“But, Lord, I don't think she even believes in you.”

God smiles. “No matter. I can fix that. This one is perfect. She has just enough selfishness.”

The angel gasps, “Selfishness? Is that a virtue?”

God nods. “If she can't separate herself from the child occasionally, she'll never survive. Yes, here is a woman whom I will bless with a child less than perfect. She doesn't realize it yet, but she is to be envied. She will never consider a 'step' ordinary. When her child says 'Momma' for the first time, she will be present at a miracle and know it! When she describes a tree or a sunset to her blind child, she will see it as few people ever do.

“I will permit her to see clearly the things I see. Ignorance, cruelty, prejudice...and allow her to rise above them. She will never be alone. I will be at her side every minute of every day of her life, because she is doing my work as surely as she is here by my side.”

“And what about her patron saint?” asks the angel, pen poised in midair.

God smiles. “A mirror will suffice.”

The SEPTA of South River

81 Johnson Place
South River, New Jersey 08882
Information Line: (732) 651-7157
E-mail: info@specialeducationpta.org

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We're on the Web!

www.specialeducationpta.org

"Every Child is Born with Wings....
Make it a Choice to Educate and
Advocate for the Chances for
All Children to Learn to Soar"

*The SEPTA of South River was founded by a group of parents who
wished to promote the education and advocacy rights of the special needs
children of their community..*

By providing parents with the tools and effective advocacy skills ~

We endeavor to keep this goal a reality so that

***Every Child Will Fulfill Their Dreams
and Learn to Soar.***

Interested in
obtaining a copy of the

**SEPTA of
South River's**

S. E. Resource CD-Rom?

Contact SEPTA

At (732) 651-7157

Or Email us at:

info@specialeducationpta.org

Cost: \$7.50

(includes ship/handling fees)

Help Wanted:

Would you like to help with our
Newsletter, or Website?

Have you come across an inter-
esting book, article or website
that deals with education, special
ed., or parenting that you'd like to
share with others?

Write a short summary and we'll
love to put it in our newsletter
and web page.

Up Coming Events:

October:

Oct. 2:

**Kool Kids Bowling
League registration**

*2-4pm Mid State Bowling
Lanes. Reg. fee \$7.00 per
child. League starts
bowling Oct.9th from*

2-4pm.

Oct.6:

**"Learn How to
Manage It All"**

7pm South River Public
Library

Learn the keys to

reducing your stress while
becoming a better ad-
vocate for your child.

Learn simple tools and
tricks to managing even
the most daunting tasks.

Fee: \$5.00 for supplies

Registration deadline:

September 27, 2004

Oct.7:

6:30pm East Brunswick
Public Library

Middlesex County Special
Child Health Services Par-
ent Information & Discus-
sion Group meeting

**Topic: Child Care
Resources**

November

Nov. 3:

6:30 pm Parent Forum
7pm SEPTA general
meeting –open to public
So. River Public Library

December

Dec.1

6:30 pm Parent Forum
7pm SEPTA general
meeting –open to public
So. River Public Library