

SEPTA would like to thank

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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"*



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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

Assisted Technology Act of 2004 Passes!

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passes legislation authored by 21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon to expand access to technology for individuals with disabilities. The bill, the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 (H.R. 4278) is now awaiting President Bush's signature.

"This bill shifts the focus of the program to provide greater benefit to individuals with disabilities. Our goal is to help states get more assistive technology directly into hands of individuals with disabilities," said McKeon. "I know this will help states continue to make progress in their efforts to expand access to assistive technology, and that increasing numbers of individuals with disabilities will be able to participate in society more fully everyday."

The bipartisan bill, approved by the U.S. Senate, will strengthen assistive technology programs by refocusing resources to provide more direct aid to individuals with disabilities. By requiring states to spend the majority of their assistive technology grants on activities that directly benefit individuals with disabilities, the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 will help guarantee individuals will have greater access to assistive technology. The bill encourages states to invest in the programs that have been shown the most effective in providing assistive technology devices.

Rep. John Boehner, chairman of the Education & the Workforce Committee, praised the bill's reforms. "This bill is a milestone for Americans with disabilities who depend on assistive technology to improve their

quality of life," said Boehner. "We are devoting fewer resources to building bureaucracy, this bill will expand access to needed technology for American of all ages living with disabilities."

The Assistive Technology Act primarily funds state programs that provide assistive technology (AT) devices and services to individuals with disabilities. Some of the features of H.R. 4278 include:

- The 60/40 and 70/30 split in funding for state activities
- Minimum state grant of \$410,000.
- A sunset provision is waived, so that AT will now be regularly reauthorized.

President Bush signed this bill into law on October 25, 2004.

For more information/summary of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 visit: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/108th/education/at/bills/summary.htm>

**This announcement appeared on the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) Listserv: QIAT@LSV.UKY.EDU*

NJCART Meeting

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Computer Access

The NJCART will be hosting a meeting on December 6th from 3:30 to 6:30 pm at Lakeview School in Edison, NJ (Located in Roosevelt Park).

The topic of this meeting will be Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Computer Access. There will be a mini information session about this

topic followed by a demonstration from various AAC equipment vendors/representatives on how their equipment can be interfaced with the computer. For more information and confirm your attendance (dinner will be served) call Travis Tallman at (732)549-5580 ext.109

List services on the Web that provide more information on Assistive

Technology:

NJCART

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/njcart>

QIAT

QIAT@LSV.UKY.EDU

NEWS FROM THE WEB:

Interested in learning more about ADA?

The ADA Game is a fully accessible online game that is easy to play and a powerful training and advocacy tool for anyone interested in disability policy, personal advocacy, or community leadership.

Log on today at

www.adagame.org

The South River Christmas Tree Lighting

will be held at 7pm
Dec. 3rd
at Daley's Pond.

Come enjoy the sights and sounds of the holidays season.

National PTA starts a "Special Education Listserv" for Parents.

Great news for parents of Special Education students!

The National PTA has incorporated an easy way for parents of special needs students to correspond with "other" parents across the country .

This new National PTA listserv provides parents with the opportunity to discuss all aspects of special education, special education issues students and parents face. With the aspect of "confidentiality" in special education making it difficult to connect with other parents the National PTA has provided parents a means in which they can clear the confidentiality hurdle and provide support and interaction among the parents of special education students across America.

Thank you National PTA!!!

National PTA press release:

Realizing that PTA members with children with disabilities are often geographically dispersed and, in some cases, isolated from other parents facing similar issues, Nation PTA has created a listserv to facilitate the sharing of information and resources. The listserv also will provide National PTA a public forum to keep PTA members informed on issues affecting students with disabilities and will help National PTA staff

effectively respond to issues facing this segment of our membership.

This Listserv is the most recent development in local and National PTA efforts to provide support to families of children with disabilities. There are 172 local PTAs dedicated to special education issues nationwide, including units in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan , New Jersey , New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas.

To join the listserv, go to

<http://pta.org/specialed> and fill out the required field.

National PTA is requesting that those who utilize this listserv be members of the PTA organization; your membership to SEPTA will qualify you as a member of PTA.

If you have any questions regarding this listserv, contact Melina Wright, National PTA's federal lobbyist on disability issues, at mwright@pta.org, or Shahenaz Chhipa, the listserv administrator, at schhip@pta.org

Don't forget...
If you are looking for a gift for that "hard to shop for person" on your holiday shopping list
Why not give them a **KIDSTUFF Discount Coupon Book !**
*Each book cost \$25.00 Buy 5 books get 1 free!
They will get one years worth of discounted shopping at over 500 merchants in the Middlesex County Area and Pennsylvania.
Contact SEPTA at (732) 651-7157 to place your order today!

To Inspire You...

A new way to look at the famous adjective we all hear "SPECIAL"

As a parent of a child with a disability, we often hear the term "special" in connection with our child;

- special education
- special needs
- special services

Yet, we tend not to view the word "special" as a "positive" term.

Maybe it is time we reevaluate "special" in connection to our children.

"Special" is a word that is used to describe something one-of-a-kind

like a hug or a sunset or a person who spreads love with a smile or kind gesture.

"Special" describes people who act from the heart and keep in mind the hearts of others.

"Special" applies to something that is admired and precious and which can never be replaced.

"Special" is the word that best describes you, my child.

-Author Unknown

Better IEP's

SEPTA will be hosting a free public workshop on

Wednesday, February 2, 2005 from 7-9pm

at the South River Public Library (downstairs meeting room)

This workshop will focus on how parents can take an active part in helping provide pertinent information at their child's annual IEP meeting which will allow all participating members at the IEP meeting to write a "Better IEP".

**This workshop will include the showing of the video, "IEP Success Basic Underlying Principles of IEPs" featuring Dr. Barbara Bateman. Additional handouts, tips and resource sheets will be given to participants who attend. Children are always welcome to attend with their parents.*

**Coffee and refreshments will be served.*

For more information on this workshop please contact the SEPTA information line at (732)651-7157

or email the Advocate at SRPTAAAdvocate@aol.com

*Ask the Advocate Day

Ask the Advocate Day at The Arc of New Jersey

Make an appointment with Stephanie Kramer, Education Advocate, she will answer your questions and concerns regarding your child's educational plan.

December 3rd 2005 from 9:30 am -3:30pm

The Arc of New Jersey

985 Livingston Ave.

North Brunswick, New Jersey 08902

**Call Stephanie Kramer at 732-246-2525 ext.20 to schedule your half hour appointment.*

The Arc of New Jersey also provides a quarterly newsletter that is sent out to those with an interest in special education. The will be switching over to an electronic version next quarter so please call or e-mail Joyce Walker with your email address. She can be reached at 732-246-2525 ext.33 or jwalker@arcnj.org. Etitle email "special ed mailing list".

E. Brunswick Buddy Baseball Registration Dates Announced for Spring 2005 League

Open registrations will be held on

***Nov. 20th & Dec. 4th from 9am -12pm**

***Dec. 9th from 7-9pm**

at Managers Hall on Dunham Corner Rd., E. Brunswick, New Jersey

Registration fee is \$40.00

Buddy Baseball League is a league open to all children ages 5-18yrs with disabilities.

For more information contact EBBL at (732) 254-5911.

The SEPTA of South River
www.specialeducationpta.org

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

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Newsletter: SRPTAAdvocate@aol.com

**"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.**

Upcoming Events:

December

December 1:

6:30 pm Parent Forum Meeting
7 pm SEPTA Meeting
South River Public Library
(Upstairs meeting room)

December 3:

***Ask the Advocate Day:**

9:30 am to 3:30 pm at the

Arc of North Brunswick.

*Call to schedule your half hour
appointment with Stephanie
Kramer at 732-246-2525 ext.20

December 11:

Don't forget to bring your tickets
and join us aboard the "Polar Express"
for the SEPTA Holiday Party!

(Sorry tickets will not be available the at
the party location.)

January:

January 5:

6:30 pm Parent Forum Meeting
7 pm SEPTA Meeting
South River Public Library
(Upstairs meeting room)

February:

February 2:

6:30 pm Parent Forum Meeting
7 pm SEPTA Meeting
South River Public Library
(downstairs meeting room)
topic: **Better IEP's**

This workshop will focus on how parents can
take an active part in helping provide pertinent
information at their child's annual IEP meeting
which will allow all participating members at
the IEP meeting to write a "Better IEP".

*For more information please contact SEPTA
Information Line at (732)651-7157 or email
SRPTAAdvocate@aol.com*

March:

March 2:

6:30 pm Parent Forum Meeting
7 pm SEPTA Meeting
South River Public Library
(downstairs meeting room) topic:

"Learn How Your Child Can Benefit From Assistive Technology"

Join us for a "hands on" presentation utilizing
assistive devices and technology available to
help children with learning and cognitive
disabilities.

For more information please contact SEPTA Information
Line at (732)651-7157 or email SRPTAAdvocate@aol.com

March 22:

SEPTA 2005 Scholarship Applications Available:

Those interested in applying contact
the Office of Special Education for
eligibility requirements and an
application form.

April:

April 6: 6:30 pm Parent Forum
SEPTA Meeting 7pm topic:

Preventing Abuse of special needs children.

How to talk to your special needs child about the
different types of abuse and recognize the signs if
your child maybe use if he or she is being abused.

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)