

A PUBLICATION OF THE SEVEN HILLS FAMILY SERVICES
MAKING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Expanding Our "Family" to Broaden the Benefits of Our Supports

As we welcome in the new year with anticipation for the opportunities to come, Seven Hills Family Services (SHFS) has a special welcome for families in the Central and Northeast Massachusetts: new Family Support Centers (FSCs) in Lowell and Athol.

SHFS has 10 years of success in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in the Worcester, Sturbridge, and Fitchburg areas with specialized expertise in navigating resources for individuals to identify and pursue a rewarding and fulfilling lifestyle.

The Lowell and Athol FSCs will be centrally located in fully accessible facilities with ample parking and close proximity to public transportation. The centers will

operate Monday through Friday and accommodate evening and weekend activities. Each location will have an open reception area ideal for networking, a large training room, and private meeting rooms. Additional events will be offered at other locations and online. Staff will be available to meet with individuals and their families, caregivers, and guardians where it is most convenient: their home, at the FSC, or in the community.

The focus of SHFS Family Support Centers is to make community connections tailored to each individual's needs. We welcome our new families beginning with this issue of *PRIDE*. To learn more, visit sevenhills.org/programs/family-support-centers.



Halloween Tricks and Treats with The Rockin' Robin

On Friday, October 30, Seven Hills Family Services "Zombies" tuned in for a first-ever Virtual Halloween Dance with Seven Hills fan-favorite, The Rockin' Robin.

Broadcast from Seven Hills headquarters in Worcester, the SHFS participants, families, friends, and staff donned their costumes and Zoomed into the "spirit" of the evening with special SHFS guest gHOSTs, Robin Foley and Bradley Ayotte.

The Virtual Halloween Dance was held in lieu of the Annual Holy Cross Dinner Dance, for which we had to press the pandemic "pause" until next year.

Thank you to The Rockin' Robin for his generosity of time, talent, and energetic enthusiasm!



FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER TRAININGS

REGISTRATION: Registration is required to receive the ZOOM meeting link. Due to the virtual nature of all events, you may attend trainings outside of your typical geographical region. For more information, please contact the event's Family Support Center Host.

Join us Monthly For Family Trainings

Charting the Life Course

Jan. 25, Noon - 1:30pm



bit.ly/FSCChartLife

Robin Foley will present an overview of Charting the Life Course, which was created by families to help individuals with disabilities and families of all abilities and ages develop a vision for a good life. Learn how to utilize tools to create a life vision for the future of your loved one: think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find and develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the life they want to live. The training is geared toward helping make choices, explore options, and life experiences to consider as you "pilot a course to a full, meaningful life."

For more information or to register, contact Ida Avoryie at iavoryie@sevenhills.org or Eliana Agudelo at Eagudelo@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by North Central and South Valley Family Support Centers.

RCAP Loan Modification Presentation

Feb. 17, 4:00 - 5:00pm



bit.ly/FSCrcap

Lovette Chisolm, Carlos Lopez, and Maureen Martinez from RCAP Solutions will provide an in-depth presentation on the Home Modification Loan and Section 8 Housing programs. The Home Modification Loan provides financing to people with cognitive, developmental, environmentally sensitive, and neurological disabilities, and their families. Over 3,000 low-income families throughout Massachusetts receive Section 8 mobile vouchers from RCAP Solutions through a contract with DHCD and HUD.

For more information or to register, contact Jayne Bowler at jbowler@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by the South Valley Family Support Center.

Understanding the IEP Grid and Advocating for Your Loved One

Feb. 22, Noon - 1:30pm



bit.ly/FSCiepGrid

The IEP is a powerful document that allows students with disabilities and their parents to enter into a partnership with the school to ensure that the academic day is structured around each student's needs. Join us on Zoom as Gayle Green helps us understand the IEP grid and gives us strategies to advocate on behalf of our loved ones. Gayle has been a practicing professional and special needs advocate for more than fifteen years, serving much of that time as director of advocacy and community services for a local affiliate of ARC. Ms. Green began her private practice in 1999, with the focus on assisting families in exercising their rights and entitlements under Chapter 766 and the IDEA. Ms. Green provides parent and professional trainings throughout Massachusetts.

For more information or to register, contact Ida Avoryie at iavoryie@sevenhills.org or Eliana Agudelo at Eagudelo@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by North Central and South Valley Family Support Centers.

Transition Training

Mar. 29, Noon - 1:30pm



bit.ly/FSCTransitionTrain

Presented by Johanne Pino, project coordinator at Massachusetts Advocates for Children, this workshop will focus on the transition special education planning and services needed to prepare youth with disabilities, aged 14-22, for employment, independent living, and further education. Guidance and strategies to address transition needs during the pandemic will also be addressed. Using case examples, parents and professionals will learn strategies to help students receive important transition services mandated by special education laws and prepare youth to live, learn, and work in the community when they exit special education. Attendees will gain an understanding of Chapter 688, the federal law that helps plan for youth with disabilities after they leave school and transition to the adult human services system.

For more information or to register, contact Ida Avoryie at iavoryie@sevenhills.org or Eliana Agudelo at Eagudelo@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by North Central and South Valley Family Support Centers.

Guardianship and Alternatives

Mar. 2, 6:00 - 8:00pm



bit.ly/FSCGuard

Betsy Johnson from DDS will discuss health care proxies and guardianship alternatives with families and caregivers. Topics will include the explanation of a health care proxy document and the protection it offers, as well as identifying the key differences between a health care proxy and a guardian. This is an interactive session and questions are welcomed.

For more information or to register, contact Jayne Bowler at jbowler@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by the South Valley Family Support Center.

Mary Rubenis Presents "The Massachusetts ABLE Savings Plan"

Apr. 14, 6:00pm

Through the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Attainable Savings PlanSM, sponsored by mefa, individuals with disabilities can save in a tax-advantaged account for qualified health and personal expenses while keeping benefits such as Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid. This webinar will discuss the basics of an ABLE account as well as some of the tax advantages it provides.

For information about registration please contact Jayne Bowler at jbowler@sevenhills.org or 774.241.2505. A link will be provided at registration.

Hosted by the South Valley Family Support Center.

Healthy Sexuality and Relationships

Apr. 26, Noon - 1:30pm



bit.ly/FSCHealthyRelationships

Pat Carney from DDS will lead an insightful conversation on strategies for talking to our loved ones with disabilities about sexuality, healthy relationships, and living a productive adult life. Pat began her career as a direct support professional, gaining more than thirty years of human services experience working with people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Pat is a trainer and advocate with a focus on sexuality education for individuals served, staff development in the areas of sexuality, and human rights of people with I/DD. Pat believes that sexuality and human rights are inseparable parts of a larger discussion acknowledging the humanity and personhood of individuals with I/DD. Pat has published articles in national disability publications, and presented on sexuality and rights to regional, national, and international audiences. Pat has an M.Ed. in Health Education and is a matriculating Ph.D. candidate at the University of Massachusetts Boston School of Global Inclusion and Social Development.

For more information or to register, contact Ida Avoryie at iavoryie@sevenhills.org or Eliana Agudelo at Eagudelo@sevenhills.org.

Hosted by North Central and South Valley Family Support Centers.



FAMILY TRAINING VIDEOS

Seven Hills Family Services Family Support Centers are pleased to have received funding from the Health Foundation of Central MA to purchase audio visual and video production equipment to record and post family training videos on our website for families who are unable to attend in person. More trainings will be added to our website as they become available.

scan to watch
the videos



sevenhills.org/family-training-videos

RECREATION DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS

We welcome individuals of all abilities to join our programs!

Just Us Girls

Saturdays, 2x/month, January – May 2021, Ages 10-14, 10:00am-Noon; Ages 15-19, 1:00-3:00pm
Join us for fun, skill-building activities on Zoom that focus on social growth and development. **COST:** \$50. This private program is funded through the United Way's Women's Initiative Grant. Space is still available! Contact Bradley Ayotte at bayotte@sevenhills.org or 508.796.1861, for more information.

Re-Create Art Group

Every Tuesday, January – April, 3:00-4:00pm, all ages. This Zoom is a group open to all who have an interest in creating a new work of art each week. Whether it's drawing, painting or you just like to doodle, join us to recreate a work of art while we chat about our days amongst friends. bit.ly/Rec_Recreate

Movie Night

Every Tuesday, January – April, 6:00-7:00pm, all ages. Come gather for a movie with us! Grab a snack, a drink, get comfy and settle in to a movie. We will be showing Pixar movies from Toy Story to Shrek and every silly creature and robot in between. bit.ly/Rec_Movie

Writer's Corner

Every Wednesday, January – April, 3:00-4:00pm, all ages. Together we will use our experiences and conversations to lead us down a path of creativity, weaving new ideas on the page as a poem or short story. bit.ly/Rec_WritersCorner

Health and Fitness Q&A

Every Thursday, January – April, 11:00am-Noon, all ages. We will discuss many topics and techniques to exercise better and how what you eat affects your overall health. Chat with us about what you can do to make positive choices in your everyday life. bit.ly/Rec_HealthFit

Dance Party

Every Thursday, January – April, 6:00-7:00pm, all ages. Get your moves dialed in because we are going to get down to some funky sounds while we reminisce over music videos of the past and compare them to some of today's hits. Get ready to move to music with us. Come join the fun. bit.ly/Rec_DanceParty

Weekend Outlook

Every Friday, January – April, Noon-1:00pm, all ages. Let's get our weekend started early with a group to discuss our interests, past experiences, and goals for the week ahead. bit.ly/Rec_Weekend

 **For questions or more information for events on this page, please contact: Bradley Ayotte**
at 508.796.1861 or bayotte@sevenhills.org

When Can I Get the COVID-19 Vaccine?



PHASE ONE

In order of priority

- Clinical and non-clinical healthcare workers doing direct and COVID-facing care
- Long term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities
- Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- Congregate care settings (including corrections and shelters)
- Home-based healthcare workers
- Healthcare workers doing non-COVID-facing care

December - February



PHASE TWO

In order of priority

- Individuals with 2+ comorbidities (high risk for COVID-19 complications)
- Early education, K-12, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works and public health workers
- Adults 65+
- Individuals with one comorbidity

February - April



PHASE THREE

Vaccine available to general public

April - June

VIRTUAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER EVENTS

REGISTRATION: Registration is required to receive the ZOOM meeting link. Due to the virtual nature of all events, you may attend groups outside of your typical geographical region. For more information, please contact the event's Family Support Center Host.

Join Us for Weekly Virtual Events!

Our Family Support Centers in Fitchburg, Sturbridge, Lowell and Athol will each offer fun and informational virtual activities such as dance parties, painting, sing-a-longs, cooking together, poetry, drum circle, self advocacy, COVID-19 discussion, coping with grief, and more. Since these groups are held virtually, all are welcomed to attend. Please register with one or all of the Family Support Center contacts listed, so that we can meet up with you as often as you choose. Once registered, you will receive a weekly email announcing the topics for each upcoming session.

Our Virtual gatherings will take place using Zoom. To learn more about Zoom or to download the app onto your phone, computer, or preferred device, visit: zoom.us

Stay Up To Date

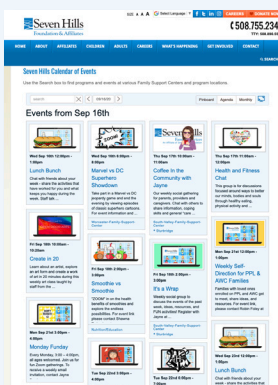
Information at the Family Support Centers is changing daily, so please be sure to check out our Facebook page or Events Calendar:



[facebook.com/
SHF.FamilySupportCenters](https://facebook.com/SHF.FamilySupportCenters)

Seven Hills Events Calendar:

sevenhills.org/whats-happening/calendar



The Seven Hills Family Support Centers are funded by and work in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Development Services (DDS).

VIRTUAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER EVENTS



North Central Family Support Center

1460 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg, MA • 978.632.4322 • For questions or more information, please contact:
Kathy Black, 978.602.8697, kblack@sevenhills.org or Gina Bernard, 978.602.8711, gbernard1@sevenhills.org

Equipment Challenge **Every Monday, January 4 - April 25, 10:00-10:30am** Do you have workout equipment at home? Let's do some social distancing workout routines together. You can use any equipment you have for 30 minutes while we cheer you on.
bit.ly/NCEquipment

Wrestling Club **Every Monday, January 4 - April 25, 7:00-8:00pm** Do you enjoy watching wrestling? Our friend and host Kevin invites you to talk with him about your favorite wrestling moments.
bit.ly/NCWrestling

Self Advocacy 18+ **Every Tuesday, January 5 - April 26, 10:00-11:00am** Connect with other Self Advocates about community events.
bit.ly/NCSelfAdv

Lunch Bunch All Ages **Every Wednesday, January 6 - April 27, Noon-1:00pm** Chat with friends about your week—share the activities that have worked for you and what keeps you happy during the week. Talk about healthy choices and schedules in a relaxed atmosphere. Maybe share your favorite songs or movies.
bit.ly/NCLunchBunchSocial

Trivia Night - Game Night **Thursday, January 7, February 4, March 4, April 1, 4:00-5:00pm** Movies, Music, Books, Current Events, what is your knowledge in? Join friends in answering questions that are created with you in mind.
bit.ly/NCFriendsSocial

Friends Social: Social Cognitive Specialist **Thursday, January 14, February 11, March 11, April 8, 4:00-5:00pm** An opportunity to increase one's understanding of how to engage in conversation to make meaningful connections with others. By helping individuals improve their social thinking skills and competencies, they can utilize new strategies such as social observation, to better navigate their social world as they shift from friendly conversation to more meaningful connections.
bit.ly/NCFriendsSocial

Friends Social: Dance Party with DJ Eddie **Thursday, January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, 4:00-5:00pm** Time to Dance and Listen to some fun music—email us early with your song request and our DJ will be sure to play your song for all to enjoy. Practice your electric slide or sing loud for a fun night with friends.
bit.ly/NCFriendsSocial

Friends Social: Exploring the Arts **Thursday, January 28, February 25, March 25, April 22, 4:00-5:00pm** A way for us to check out all different types of ART in the community by taking virtual tours or supporting local artists in the area. Create some masterpieces of your own and share with friends.
bit.ly/NCFriendsSocial

Creative Dance and Movement **Every Friday, January 8 - April 30, 10:00-11:00am** Do you like to dance? Come dance and move with friends to some fun tunes. NO wrong way to dance, so come listen and tap your toes or just follow along.
bit.ly/NCCreativeDance

Parent Voices - Parent Social **Wednesday, January 6 - April 28, 2:00-3:00pm** A time for families of transition-age loved ones to come together and talk about community access, IEP, and the Transition Timeline of events. If you are a caregiver of a child, age 14-22, this group is here for you.
bit.ly/NCParentVoice

Parent Coffee Social **First Saturday of the month, February 5, March 5, April 3, 10:00-11:00am** A Coffee/ Tea time to support other parents—casual conversation about how things are going and share ideas along the way.
bit.ly/NCParentSocial

Parent Happy Hour **Every Thursday, January 6 - April 29, 5:00-6:00pm** Are you missing talking to other parents about your week? Join other adults for our Winning hour—Let's make each other laugh for one hour a week.
bit.ly/NCParentHappy



In Loving Memory

Michael Zlody

1967 - 2020

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Michael Zlody. Michael loved life and found joy in so many things; including all of the sports he participated in with Special Olympics. Mike was a friend to all of his fellow athletes, teammates and coaches. His Bocce coach Ann Marie Dawes remembers him fondly "On the court, he would roll the unexpected and would win the game. Sometimes I would get him to try a new technique, but in the end he would go back the way 'he wanted' to play the game. I will miss him reminding me of the rules and how I should try 'his way'."

VIRTUAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER EVENTS



South Valley Family Support Center

208 Charlton Road, Sturbridge, MA • 774.241.2500 • For questions or more information, please contact:
Jayne Bowler, 774.241.2505, jbowler@sevenhills.org or Elizabeth Carroll, 774.241.2504, ecarroll@sevenhills.org

Moving Forward, Ages 14-22 **First Monday of each month, January - April, 4:00pm** Join us each month. This group aims to help parents and providers of transition-age individuals (14-22). These monthly meetings will serve as a roundtable to get to know one another, discuss parenting a child with special needs, figuring out how to help your child transition into adult services, and share advice between one another as parents and as caregivers. bit.ly/SVMovingForward

Monday Funday: Mad Lib **Monday, January 4, February 1, March 1, 3:00 - 4:00pm** Join us for Mad Lib fun, be prepared for madness and mayhem. bit.ly/SVMondayFun

Monday Funday: Music **Monday, January 11, February 8, March 8, 3:00 - 4:00pm** Join us each week for our Music Monday for everything music, Name that Tune, Dessert Island Discs, and guest appearances from Mike Leo. bit.ly/SVMondayFun

Monday Funday: Bake-Off **Monday, March 15, 3:00 - 4:00pm** Jayne's take on British Bake-off; join in or watch the fun. All recipes will be provided ahead of time. bit.ly/SVMondayFun

Marvel vs DC Trivia **Every Wednesday, January 6 - April 28, 6:00pm** If you are a Superhero and villain fan, join us for this Jeopardy-style trivia and then a cartoon to follow. bit.ly/SVMarvel

Brave Yoga **Alternate Wednesdays, January 13, 27, February 10, 24, March 10, 24, 6:30pm** Lisa Irvine from Brave Yoga joins us for Mindfulness and Yoga. Lisa is committed to sharing the practice of yoga in an adaptive and nurturing way to improve the well-being of ALL individuals. We do this by practicing yoga in group Zoom sessions, educating others about these many benefits of yoga and mindfulness. Ages 12+ bit.ly/SVBraveYogaLisa

Toolbox Series **Alternate Wednesdays, January - April, 6:30pm** Join us to create crafts with therapeutic uses and learn about subjects like identifying problems, making a schedule, and staying organized from the comfort of your own home! Please RSVP by noon on the Wednesday BEFORE with your mailing address to make sure your kit arrives before the workshop. Quantities are limited, so be sure to register before the deadline! bit.ly/SVToolbox

Coffee in the Community **Every Thursday, January - April, 10:00 - 11:00am** This is a weekly social gathering for parents and providers. Chat with others to share information, coping skills and everyday "Care in the Community." bit.ly/SVCoffeeComm

Self Direction for Active PPL & AWC Families **Every Monday, January - April, Noon** Opportunity for families already enrolled as well as those new to the program get together to share ideas and resources. bit.ly/FSCSelfDirect

Girls Aloud **Alternate Thursdays, January - April, 3:00 - 4:00pm** Join us for our new "Girls Aloud" group, which focuses on making friends and building friendships through fun activities like music, art, baking and other fun interests for girls. Ages 18 & above. bit.ly/SVGirlsALoud

It's a Wrap **Every Friday, January - April, 2:00pm** Thank goodness it's "Friyay!" Join us to wrap up the week. We'll chat about how our week has been and end our sessions with everyone's favorite, "Jeopardy" Ages 16+. bit.ly/SVWrapwJayne

Autism-Specific Events

Designed for individuals with high-functioning Autism supported by DDS.

Terrific Tuesday Trivia **Every Tuesday, January - April, 2:00pm** Jeopardy-style trivia featuring topics of interest. bit.ly/SVTerrific-Trivia

Fun Friday **Every Friday, January - April, 3:00pm** Join us weekly for a series of different fun-themed events: *January 8 - February 12*: Bring on the "Drama"! Using the PEERS curriculum, we will be role play different social situations in a fun, engaging way. *February 19 - March 5*: Using games such as "Life," "Monopoly," and trivia, we will have fun "adulting" with topics such as; housing, college, employment, etc. *March 12 - April 30*: Games including Pictionary, Scrabble, and cards Against Humanity (PG-Style) bit.ly/SVFun-Fri

CREATIVITY & CONNECTIONS

A Meetup Group for Adult Survivors of Brain Injury

Monthly Jam Sessions & Social Art Experience

To learn more and to access the schedule, please contact Heather Poulos at hpoulos@sevenhills.org

meetup.com/Creative-Minds-for-ABI-Survivors



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A PUBLICATION OF THE SEVEN HILLS FAMILY SERVICES FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

Winter 2021: What's Inside: Expanding Our "Family" to Broaden the Benefits of Our Supports, Family Support Center Trainings, Recreational Happenings, Virtual Family Support Center Events, and more!



PRIDE Winter 2021

PRIDE is a newsletter published by the Seven Hills Family Services Family Support Centers. Please direct all content requests, comments, and questions to:

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President
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Thank you for Your Support!



A glorious fall day set the stage for the **32nd Annual New Beginnings Charity Golf Tournament** as more than 100 golfers teed up to benefit the Seven Hills Community Connections program. The collective participation of our golfers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers provides over 1,800 families with access to opportunities in the community for their loved ones with disabilities. During these uncertain times, they needed your support NOW more than ever—and you turned out to WOW us all with your energy and enthusiasm. Seven Hills is profoundly grateful for your unwavering connection to the people we support and the New Beginnings they experience because of you.

Save the Date for the 33rd New Beginnings on May 27, 2021!