



AUTISM ALLIANCE

Empowering Families for 30 Years

a program of  **Advocates**



February Newsletter



Great News! We just received an Autism Community Impact Grant from the [Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism](#) that will support all our February vacation week programs at the Natick Collection. These include sensory, fitness, social activities, **exclusive** teen programs, and big bear hugs!! All programs are private events and exclusive for Autism Alliance families. You must be on our mailing list to register. You will be notified directly if you receive a slot. We will have a waiting list.



Jam Time EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE Sensory Play
Tuesday February 21
8:30am - 10:30am
Ages 12 and under

Natick Mall

We will have the entire indoor play center just for us, for an unforgettable fun-filled party! Kids can explore, jump, play, stim and have a wonderful time being themselves. We will have healthy snack time courtesy of [Wegmans](#) and lots of special goodies and surprises!

To Register

Tuesday, February 21



Dave and Busters – EXCLUSIVE TEENS and YOUNG ADULTS ONLY
Tuesday February 21
11:30am - 2:30pm
Ages 13-21

Natick Mall | Suite 3201

Let's meet new friends and have some fun at Dave and Buster's, with unlimited video game play and a fun buffet lunch in our private dining room. This event will have a limited number of slots available. We will let you know if you have successfully registered and received a slot. No drop-offs, adult caregiver **must stay** with teen guests.

To Register

Wednesday, February 22



Adaptive movement and Dance
Wednesday February 22
11:00am - 12:00noon
Ages 12 and under

Natick Mall | The Vibe

Join Jessica Spaman, LICSW, certified fitness trainer, and owner of Emotions in Motion at **The Vibe inside the Natick Mall** for a fun and engaging fitness and wellness event for kids of all ages and abilities and their caregiver. The first 45 minutes will be movement based followed by a 15-minute talk where Jessica will share practical, age-appropriate self-care strategies both kids and adults can implement immediately to support their physical and mental health. Stay after to socialize and enjoy healthy snacks provided by [Wegmans](#). YOGA mats provided courtesy of our friends at [FABLETICS](#).

To Register

Thursday, February 23



LUSH In-store PRIVATE PARTY– EXCLUSIVE TEENS and YOUNG ADULTS ONLY
Thursday February 23
9:30am - 11:00am
AGES 13-21

Natick Mall | Suite 11

Join us for our very first LUSH Party. Celebrate in store with exclusive party favors and products handmade by you. What happens when you mix good times, great people, and gorgeous one-of-a-kind goodies? You get one spectacular day! Everyone will learn how to make-your-own bubble bar or bath bomb. This party will include a product making kit and exclusive party goodies. We have a limited number of slots, and you will be notified directly if you receive a slot. No drop-offs, please. An adult caregiver must stay with our teen guests. Healthy snacks provided by [Wegmans](#).

To Register

Friday, February 24



Build-A-Bear EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE PARTY

Friday February 24

9:00am - 10:00am

Ages 12 and under

Natick Mall | Suite 2126

Let's finish this incredible 30th anniversary vacation week off with a private Build-A-Bear party! Our event will be full of hands-on activities and games. Everyone creates the best party favor ever — their own furry friend to bring home and love! We have a limited number of slots, and you will be notified directly if you receive a slot. Snacks on-the-go provided by [Wegmans](#)

To Register

February FREE Parent Trainings and Clinics



Autism Alliance Brain Chat featuring Coach Allison Marean

Tuesday February 28

12:00 noon

Our virtual, monthly Brain Chat is for parents and caregivers who want more strategies and an opportunity to ask specific questions to expert Coach Allison H. Marean, M.Ed., CLY. from Successfully Social New England. This is a virtual community call that meets once a month for an hour is **FREE** and sponsored by the Autism Alliance. **It is an opportunity to ask questions,** be a part of our community and/or just listen and learn from others. After you sign up, a few days before the group you will receive the Zoom link.

Brain Chat

Guest Speaker
Jill Vetstein LICSW, MSW, CEIS
Psychotherapist for Children, Parents and Adults



What Makes Your Child Tick? Understanding How Sensory Input Impacts Your Child's Behaviors

Tuesday February 28
6:30pm -7:30pm | Virtual

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Tuesday February 28

6:30pm - 7:30pm | Virtual

This training will give you an in-depth understanding of all seven senses, the ability to identify how senses impact everyday behaviors, discovery of why children may have puzzling behaviors, directions on how to create home and classroom structures that include sensory integration theories, skills to assess impact on children and identify if it has become problematic, tools in working with children who are significantly affected by their sensory system and self-discoveries about yourself.

[Zoom Link](#)

February Support Groups



 **AUTISM ALLIANCE**

Parent Support

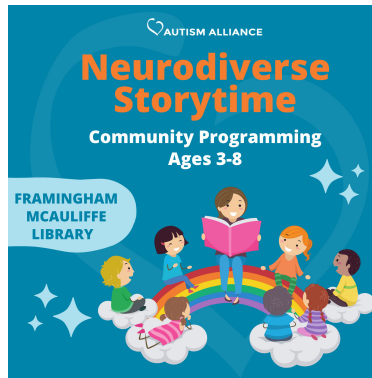
Autism Alliance support groups are for families who have children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our groups are a safe and relaxed space for parent and caregivers to feel more confident and less isolated. Click below for Zoom links.

[Just for Dads](#)
[February 1](#)

Parents of children
age 10 and under
February 15

Portuguese Speaking
February 27

NEW Neurodiverse Storytime for ages 3-8



Neurodiverse Storytime | Framingham McAuliffe Library
Saturday February 18
10:00am - 11:00am
Ages 3-8

In partnership with the [McAuliffe Library](#), the Autism Alliance presents STORYTIME for neurodiverse children - Autism Specialist Katie Casavant will be onsite to help support parents and children at this fun FREE sensory-friendly program. Registration is required by calling 508-532-5636 X4. Hope to see you there!!

Special Art for Kids



Special Art for Kids
Virtual | EVERY Tuesday 5:45pm - 6:45pm

Art can help kids improve their learning processes, hand-eye coordination, and communication skills. This weekly online high-school student-led virtual art program is for young artists. Projects have included: drawn cartoons, Mother's Day cards, origami cranes, birds, and more. Classes are Tuesday nights from 5:45 to 6:45 PM EST. All you need is colored pencils and markers; any colors are fine. Siblings are welcome.

Apply for a grant from The Fred Gaspari Fund for Families!

If you or someone you know is caring for a loved one with an intellectual or developmental disability at home, [apply for a grant from the Fred Gaspari Fund for Families](#).

Caregivers in the MetroWest area can receive up to \$500 to use for anything that will help make caregiving a little easier. Previously funded awards included therapeutic horseback riding classes, sensory items, respite care, and home improvement projects. [Apply now](#) through **February 15**, and please encourage caregivers you know to apply.

SNEAK PEEK NEXT MONTH | ALL AGES and ABILITIES



Autism Alliance After School Club ~ Winter/Spring Session Begins March 7 | Meets Tuesdays through May 2

(With the exception of April vacation)

4:00pm - 4:30pm

Each week we will learn about some fantastic zoo critters and follow up with brainstorming and voting on what we would include in our own perfect zoo. Of course, this will include animals, but can branch into other interests as well. What type of souvenirs would our dream zoo sell? What would the snacks at the food stand look like? Would zookeepers drive leopard print trucks and wear zebra print uniforms? Endless possibilities for all of us to use our imaginations and connect through our common interest in animals. All ages, levels, and siblings are invited to participate. We would like to thank the [Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation](#) for sponsoring this program.

[Zoom Link](#)

February Sensory- Friendly Community Events



Apex Sensory Friendly Hour
Sunday February 5
10:00am - 11:00am

The first Sunday of each month from 10am-11am friends and families can come visit [Apex Entertainment](#) for some fun in a sensory welcoming environment!

We want to ensure that everyone feels included and welcome at Apex Entertainment! Through the guidance of the Autism Alliance, we have created our Sensory Friendly Sundays! Every first Sunday of the month, we offer special accommodations such as: reduced lighting and sound, sunglasses, sensory toys, and quiet rooms. We are excited to share these experiences with our community and look forward to seeing you there! If you are interested in a sensory friendly birthday party or social event, please contact Apex at (508) 251-8666



Autism-Friendly Afternoon

Tuesday, February 7

1:30pm - 4:30pm

Cost: Free with pre-registration

Registration required: [Register Now](#)

Come play and explore in the accessible and universally designed Discovery Museum and Discovery Woods during this special, free afternoon for children and adults with sensory sensitivities. This event is inclusive: the Museum will be open to the public, but we do not schedule any group visits to avoid crowding. We also take steps such as lowering lights and turning off hand dryers to make the museum environment more comfortable for those with sensory sensitivities.

Be sure to visit the Discovery Museum's website, specifically the [Especially for Me](#) webpage for more information and resources to prepare for your visit. ***These Especially for Me events are offered in collaboration with Autism Alliance of MetroWest.***



NEW Sensory- Friendly Hours - Walk-in's Welcome

Sunday February 12

10:00am - 11:00am

Plaster Fun Time is a newly certified Autism Welcoming Business. Staff has been trained and we now have everyday accommodations to help make your visit more enjoyable and successful. Be sure to ask us about our visual supports and other materials we have available for your visit.

Plaster Fun Time Marlborough will host a **sensory-friendly autism welcoming hour from 10:00am -11:00am on the second Sunday of every month.** This hour features accommodations such as reduced lighting and noise, customized visual support, and a quiet area that is available for anyone needing private space should things get overwhelming.



Did you miss seeing one of our featured guest speakers? If so, click on the link and you will see the recordings on the Autism Alliance of MetroWest YouTube Channel.

YouTube

Please submit requests for accommodations, including ASL interpreters, at least 2 weeks prior to the event date to AutismAlliance@advocates.org or call (508) 652-9900

Connect With Us



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