



TREES NETWORK

August 2026 Newsletter

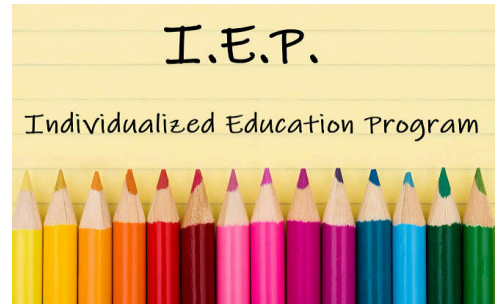
Parent/Family Meeting

Monday, September 14, 2026 7PM - 8PM

Navigating the IEP:

A Family Support Session

Join us virtually on **Monday, September 14, 2026 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm** for our first monthly family support meeting of the new school year. Catherine Hughes, Director of Family Support and Community Engagement from Achieving True Self will be joining us and discussing how parents and guardians can establish a collaborative relationship with their child's school. To support this goal, she will discuss what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) means in everyday practice, including progress monitoring, accommodations and modifications, and what parents can expect on a daily basis. She will also discuss communication between home and school, parent rights and procedural safeguards, community and school resources, and provide time for questions. Anyone interested in learning more can register for the meeting by contacting Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu or registering at [Google Registration \(https://forms.gle/Apwwfi41WiTh5Zr86\)](https://forms.gle/Apwwfi41WiTh5Zr86) Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.



Upcoming Special Education Conference



On Monday, October 12, 2026, the RMU Trees Network is holding its annual Special Education Conference. This year the theme is **Unstoppable Potential: Elevating Every Learner**. It is free and held virtually to allow for more participation from special educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and related service staff looking for professional development on important topics in special education. Register here:

<https://forms.gle/doqxinyhFfrzUBMDA>

SAVE THE DATE

Special Needs Consortium Disability Summit

Thursday, October 8, 2026 8:30am - 4:00pm

This full-day summit will feature a variety of knowledgeable presenters sharing valuable information for individuals, families, educators, and service providers.

There will be a vendor fair and many other opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Be sure to stop by the **RMU Trees Network** table to learn about our programs and resources, and discover ways to get involved. We look forward to seeing you!

Upcoming Events Around the Area

The RMU Trees Network is a member of the Special Needs Consortium, a group of amazing service providers in the Pittsburgh area. The consortium exists to provide a forum where all service providers can network and opportunities can be shared, promoted, and advocated for to increase awareness of resources available to the community. For a full listing of member events, visit their [website](https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events) (<https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events>). We hope you will find some of these highlighted events of interest to you.

August 3rd-19th (Monday/Wednesday) 5:30pm-7:30pm - Transition Aged Community Outing Course

A chance for transition aged individuals to learn, practice, apply and reflect on community, vocational and daily living skills. Inclusive.connections.now@gmail.com

August 13th 11:00am - 12:00pm Learning Basic Hygiene

Join the Beaver County Self-Advocates for a free group training designed for individuals with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and autism. Participants will learn basic hygiene, what it means to keep clean, and the importance of taking care of yourself. Located at the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit, 147 Poplar Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061 RSVP to Kaitlyn at kbayers@anrinfo.org

August 18th 12:00pm - 1:00pm - PA ABLE and Social Security Disability Programs

Experts will discuss how PA ABLE Savings Program and Social Security Disability Programs work together. Diana Fishlock, outreach specialist for the PA ABLE Savings Program, and Frank Magni, Social Security Administration public affairs specialist are presenting. The PA ABLE Savings Program gives individuals with qualified disabilities a way to save for disability-related expenses while maintaining important benefits and supporting health, independence, and quality of life. The Social Security Administration's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to adults and children who meet requirements for a qualifying disability and have limited income and resources.

The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program pays benefits to individuals and certain family members if the individual is "insured." While these two programs are different, the medical requirements are the same. Traditionally people receiving such benefits could only save a small amount, but ABLE accounts change the landscape, allowing people receiving these benefits to save for a house, a car, and other everyday expenses. If you require accommodations to participate in this webinar, please contact us at info@paable.gov.

August 21st 10:30am Summer Fun Day

Free summer themed music program for individuals in Beaver County with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities and autism. Located at the Beaver Valley Mall, PACC and Special Olympics Space. Break for lunch from 11:30am - 12:30pm. RSVP to Kaitlyn at kbyers@anrinfo.org

August 22, August 29, September 12, September 26, and October 3 10:00am - 11:00am - Bridges Adaptive Field Hockey

Registration is now open for the 2026 Fall Season. Bridges Adaptive Field Hockey is an inclusive program serving athletes with disabilities of all genders, ages 5–99, and all disability types in the greater Pittsburgh area. The 5-week season provides a welcoming environment where athletes can learn and enjoy field hockey with adaptive equipment, individualized instruction, and 1:1 support from local high school field hockey players and adult volunteers. No prior field hockey experience is required. Location: Brookline Recreation Center (1400 Brookline Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15226) Cost: \$75 for the 5-week season (*scholarships are available on an as-needed financial aid basis*)

For athletes with disabilities interested in participating:

https://glrfieldhockey.playbookapi.com/programs/more_info/class_package/71410

Band Together upcoming events:

- **August 9th 2:00pm-5:00pm**
The Harmar Pavilion at North Park
Register: <https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/btp-summer-picnic/>
- **August 12th 6:30PM-9:00PM**
Free Concert in Grandview Park
<https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/free-concert-in-grandview-park/>

DON'T FORGET TO THINK OF YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY FOR EVENTS

- **Allegheny Library Association Programs & Events**
(<https://aclalibraries.org/explore/library-programs-and-events/>)
- **Beaver County Library Systems**
(<https://www.beaverlibraries.org/system-wide-events>)
- **Butler County Federated Library Systems** (<https://www.bcfls.org/libraries>)
- **Washington County Library Systems** (<https://www.washlibs.org/>)
- **Westmoreland County Libraries** (<https://www.wclibraries.org/>)

Council Events

- The Pittsburgh/Allegheny County Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) is a group of families, professionals, and community members who work to improve the delivery of Early Intervention services for young children with developmental delays and disabilities. Their next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 26, 2026 at 9AM. To register, email strocheck@afit.org.
 - The Allegheny County Local Task Force runs monthly meetings on Wednesdays. As soon as we know the first date for the new school year, it will be posted on our Facebook page and included in the next monthly newsletter. To join, visit <https://www.ltf3.org/meetings>
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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 the Network and the previous newsletters are posted on the RMU website <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees>. In each newsletter we provide links to resources related to the 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 for returning back to school.**



- **The Ultimate Back-To-School Guide for Children with Disabilities-** The excitement of a new school year is in the air! For parents of children with disabilities, this time brings unique challenges and opportunities. Proper preparation can make all the difference in your child's growth and success. The Arc has some practical tips to help you and your child start the school year off right and carry that momentum throughout the year.
<https://thearc.org/blog/the-ultimate-back-to-school-guide-for-families-of-children-with-disabilities/>
 - **Students with Learning Disabilities: Back to School Tips** - Students are starting back to school for a new school year. Parents and teachers will be looking for tips to start the school year off right. This is a great opportunity for affiliates and local chapters to reach out to parents and educators with back to school tips for students with learning disabilities.
https://ldaamerica.org/lda_today/students-with-learning-disabilities-back-to-school-tips/
 - **Returning to School: Tips for Supporting Students with Disabilities** - As the summer winds down and a new school year begins, students with disabilities often face unique challenges as they transition back to school. The break and change in routine can sometimes be difficult to reintegrate back into the classroom and school environment. Here are a few ideas and strategies educators, parents, and caregivers can consider to help make this transition more smooth and set students up for success.
<https://www.schoolhealth.com/blog/returning-to-school-tips-for-supporting-students-with-disabilities/?srsltid=AfmBOopn6qBUP4TUx0hgbaUlopuiNiju6-L-Cpu-l9Suhls7jWFEACfO>
 - **Back-to-School Support Guide** - Going back to school can be exciting for kids and parents. It can also be full of stress and uncertainty. This guide can help you navigate everything from school anxiety and back-to-school routines to IEPs and 504 plans.
<https://www.understood.org/en/topics/back-to-school>
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RMU Trees Network Contact

6001 University Boulevard
335 Patrick Henry Trees Network Office Suite
Moon Township, PA 15108

Vicki Donne, RMU Trees Network Director
Department Head, Education Department,
School of Education and Social Services
College of Health and Human Science
donne@rmu.edu
412-397-5465

Deanna Hiltz, RMU Trees Network Outreach Specialist
Part-Time Faculty, Education Department
hiltzd@rmu.edu
412-397-6058

[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/>)

