



## RMU Trees Network January 2025 Newsletter



As we welcome in a new year, all of us at the RMU Trees Network wish all of you a happy, healthy new year!

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### Evaluations and Independent Education Evaluations

#### Virtual Parent and Family Meeting

**Monday, January 6, 2025 7PM - 8PM**

Join us virtually in the NEW YEAR for this family/parent meeting scheduled for **Monday, January 6, 2025 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm**. Dr. Eric Lauver, Fort Cherry School District's Director of Pupil Services/Technology, will be presenting on the purposes of special education evaluations. He will explain the differences of school evaluations and independent education evaluations (IEE) and how the assessment results are used to develop the appropriate accommodations and modifications in your child's least restrictive environment. To register, complete the form [Google Registration](https://forms.gle/ABtrPQ1fq1tXrxde6) (<https://forms.gle/ABtrPQ1fq1tXrxde6>) or email either Vicki Donne at [donne@rmu.edu](mailto:donne@rmu.edu) or Deanna Hiltz at [hiltzd@rmu.edu](mailto:hiltzd@rmu.edu). Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.





## Save the Date!

Monday, February 3, 2025 7PM - 8PM

## Parent and Family Meeting

### Related Services:

## Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT)

Join us virtually on **Monday, February 3, 2025 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm** for our monthly parent and family support meeting. Melody Ovitsky, Manager and Occupational Therapist at AOT Inc., will be presenting on the differences of home and school based Occupational and Physical therapies. She will discuss how students get released from services and how to build and establish a good school to home therapy relationship. Please contact contact Vicki Donne at [donne@rmu.edu](mailto:donne@rmu.edu) or Deanna Hiltz at [hiltzd@rmu.edu](mailto:hiltzd@rmu.edu) to register by email or register at [Google Registration \(https://forms.gle/QmiFyWVzF3WPaUUQ6\)](https://forms.gle/QmiFyWVzF3WPaUUQ6) Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.

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## AT Device Center - Open Lab Days

We maintain an Assistive Technology (AT) Device Center for use by students and families. AT is any item, piece of equipment, software or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). AT can range from low technology (such as a pencil grip) to high technology (eye gaze communication device). Beginning in February, the AT Device Center will host Open Lab Days on Mondays from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The Device Center will be open to the public without an appointment. Visitors can explore a variety of assistive technology, including adapted computer equipment, communication devices, and switch-friendly apps and toys. Staff will be available to answer questions; however, individualized support is dependent on the number of participants. Come to RMU, Patrick Henry 333 and check out the various devices.



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## Upcoming Events Around the Area

The RMU Trees Network is a member of the Special Needs Consortium, a group of service providers in the Pittsburgh area. The consortium exists to provide a place where all service providers can network and opportunities can be shared, promoted, and advocated for to increase awareness of resources available to the community. The following is a list of events found through our contacts and/or were shared by members of the consortium. We hope you will find something of interest to you.

### **Caregivers' Yoga Tuesdays 10:30 - 11:30 AM at Open Up**

Caregivers' Yoga class is an experience curated for those who dedicate their time and energy to caring for others. This class emphasizes mindfulness and rest, and provides a supportive space for caregivers to take care of themselves. In this class there are optional opportunities to share experiences and find support among fellow caregivers. More than movement and mindfulness this class is a chance to pause, reflect, recharge, and nurture yourself. Register here <https://www.open-up.org/schedule>

### **Fridays 1:00PM Art Class by Not Forgotten Home and Community Services in partnership with the Baierl Family YMCA**

C-Art with Kristen –Join us each Friday for fresh, fun, art that will inspire you to keep creating! Free but you must sign up!

Located at the Baierl Family YMCA, 2565 Nicholson Road, Sewickley, PA 15143 All classes are free, but donations are happily accepted. **Please Register at** [www.nfhcs.org](http://www.nfhcs.org)

### **Include Me Connection Club - Last two Tuesdays of each month from 5:30-6:30 PM.**

Designed for 3rd – 5th graders of diverse abilities and interests, these virtual club meetings will offer creative opportunities for students to connect through games, activities, and student-driven discussions. Each club meeting is facilitated by Include Me's engaging and energetic staff. Themes and topics change monthly and are curated to meet kids where they are. Registration is on a rolling basis and can register here: <https://thearcpa.org/imcc-registration-form/>

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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 RMU Trees Network and the previous newsletters are also posted on the RMU website <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees>. In each newsletter we provide links to resources of 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 on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans.**



### **504 Accommodations Guide**

<https://www.psea.org/contentassets/ac6695903bd94d27aa14e85c3a12d90e/504-accommodations-guide.pdf>

**Developing an IEP** - This guide explains the basics of the special education process and gives you information on how to be an effective partner with your child's school. <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/pa12/>

**Development and Implementation of IEPs in the Least Restrictive Environment** - The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) at the U.S.

Department of Education issued this Q&A document that highlights IDEA requirements related to the development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs).

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/return-to-school-roadmap-development-and-implementation-of-ieps-in-the-lre/>

### **How to Read an IEP: Specifically Designed Instruction (“SDI”)**

[https://www.pafamiliesinc.org/resources/how-to-read-an-iep%3A-specifically-designed-instruction-\(%E2%80%9CSDI%E2%80%9D\)](https://www.pafamiliesinc.org/resources/how-to-read-an-iep%3A-specifically-designed-instruction-(%E2%80%9CSDI%E2%80%9D))

**IEPs vs. Service Plans: Everything You Need to Know** While public schools are required to offer special needs education, private schools aren't. Public schools provide special needs learners IEPs, whereas private schools may offer learners Service Plans. But what is the difference between the two? Here is an overview:

<https://www.thetechedvocate.org/ieps-vs-service-plans-everything-you-need-to-know/>

**PaTTAN's Family's Quick Start Guide to Special Education Bundle** - Do you or someone you know have a child that qualifies for special education, but doesn't know where to start? This bundle includes several different publications that provide essential, comprehensible information to families who are new to special education.

<https://www.pattan.net/Publications/Familys-Quick-Start-Guide-to-Special-Education>

**Section 504** - Section 504 helps ensure students with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities. Learn more about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/individuals-disabilities/section-504>

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## **RMU Trees Network Contact**

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[RMU Trees Website \(https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network\)](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network)

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