



RMU Trees Network June 2025 Newsletter



Parent and Family Meeting Employment Options & Opportunities Monday, June 2, 2025 7 PM - 8 PM

Join us virtually on **Monday, June 2, 2025 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm** for an exciting workshop on employment options. George Edwards, Program Manager - Employment Services, April Klein, Program Coordinator of Workforce Development Center, and Clare Hann, Transition Services Coordinator at Goodwill of Southwestern PA, will be discussing various employment opportunities and options for individuals with disabilities. To register, please complete the form at [Google Registration \(https://forms.gle/kj7qgU73FDXgk66T9\)](https://forms.gle/kj7qgU73FDXgk66T9). Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.

SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming Special Education Conference

On Monday, October 13, 2025, the RMU Trees Network will be holding its annual Special Education Conference, **Leading the Way: Innovation and Inclusion**. It is being 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. We hope to see you there!



Special Needs Consortium Networking Meeting

The RMU Trees Network hosted the Special Needs Consortium on Tuesday, May 13th. It was a great morning of networking, collaboration, and sharing disability awareness resources and advocacy. If you would like to attend future networking meetings like this or would like to become a member, please contact snc@specialneedsconsortium.org.



Featured Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We have seen a lot of information in the news about artificial intelligence. There are various software applications and websites that utilize artificial intelligence programming. Many of these applications have the potential to support individuals with disabilities. We thought it might be helpful if we highlighted one of these AI applications each month. This month we are highlighting AI for setting tasks and generating videos for those tasks. While the AI tools are meant to help and supplement task analysis skills, they are not considered to be a replacement for modeling and scaffolding skills. Please consider its use and function appropriately.

- **Magic ToDo - goblin.tools** (<https://goblin.tools/>) **goblin.tools** is free and available to all. It is a collection of small, simple, single-task tools, mostly designed to help neurodivergent people with tasks they find overwhelming or difficult.
- **KAPWING** - (<https://www.kapwing.com/ai-video-generator>) Kapwing's AI Video Generator crafts multimedia-rich videos from scratch. Users enter a short text description and it transforms into a detailed video complete with voiceover, images and videos, subtitles, background music, transitions, and even an AI Persona (human presenter).



Local Task Forces on the Right to Education

A Consent Agreement on the Right to Education was signed in 1972 as part of the resolution of the PARC v. Commonwealth of PA case. It established a state task force and 29 local task forces (one in each intermediate unit). The goal of the task forces is to support parents through training, resource sharing, and networking so that they can work with their school or Local Education Agency (LEA) in a positive, proactive manner. It is a parent/family network group for families of a child with a disability. Each Local Task Force (LTF) is composed of the intermediate unit executive director or designee, a representative school district superintendent or designee, a county mental health and intellectual disability administrator(s) or designee(s), a local chapter of the ARC representative, consumer representative(s) and any other private citizen or agency representative needed to accomplish the purposes of the group. Membership consists primarily of like-minded parents of school aged children that wish to support their sons or daughters as they navigate through the special education process. Meetings are held 5 or more times/year. Any interested person or parent of a student with a disability may attend any of the regularly scheduled Local Task Force meetings. It is not necessary to be a member to attend, and no advance notice is necessary.

Below is contact information for several of our area local task forces (LTF).

- **Washington County (LTF1)** - 724-938-3241 ext. 205
<https://www.iu1.org/departments/special-education-services/local-task-force>
- **City of Pittsburgh (LTF2)** - (412) 323-3996
<https://www.pghschools.org/departments/pse-special-education/pse-special-education/pittsburgh-local-task-force-on-the-right-to-education>
- **Allegheny County (LTF3)** - (412) 394-5930 <https://www.ltf3.org/>
- **Butler County (LTF4)** - 724-458-6700 www.miu4.org
- **Beaver County (LTF 27)** - 724-774-7800 x7800 <https://www.bviu.org/>

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 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 something of interest to you.

June 6th-8th PA Tourette Syndrome Alliance Family Camp

BlackRock Retreat Center in Quarryville, PA

Open to those that have a tic disorder or Tourette Syndrome and their family. Special Guest this year: Tourette's Cop (Craig Elgin) <https://www.facebook.com/tourettescop> To get more information, to apply for a scholarship, and/or to register:

<https://patsainc.org/events/ts-family-camp/>

June 8th 2:00pm-5:00pm Live Autism Friendly Open Mic at Band Together Clubhouse

378 Freeport Rd, Blawnox, PA

<https://bandtogetherpgh.org/event/live-autism-friendly-open-mic-band-together-clubhouse-30-7/>

June 29th 2:00-3:00pm Azure - Summertime Serenades - Autism Pittsburgh

Come celebrate the start of summer and let Azure serenade you into the new season! Cozy up in your camp chairs or lounge across your picnic blankets for an afternoon of songs, featuring artists on the autism spectrum from Band Together Pittsburgh. ALL BEHAVIORS WELCOME! <https://www.autismpittsburgh.org/azureevents>

June 30 - July 29 Summer Program for the Education of Autistic Kids (S.P.E.A.K.) Saint Therese of Lisieux School, Munhall, PA

S.P.E.A.K. provides Extended School Year (ESY) services to children with autism, thus preventing summer regression and ensuring their smooth transition into the upcoming school year. Curriculum places emphasis on strengthening social skills through Community Based Instruction. The goal of S.P.E.A.K is:

- Develop and maintain community awareness and interaction through structured community based experiences.
- Develop and maintain recreation and leisure skills.
- Develop appropriate social and behavioral skills and interactions.
- Provide art and music enrichment activities.
- Provide CBI language experiences that correlate with classroom CBI.
- Provide classroom instruction based on individual ESY and transition goals.

S.P.E.A.K. applications can be found here: <https://www.autismpittsburgh.org/speak>

If you have any questions, please contact SPEAK@autismpittsburgh.org

The Woodlands 2025 Summer Camps

The mission of The Woodlands is to enrich the lives of children and adults with disabilities and chronic illness. They provide year-round recreational, social, and wellness opportunities in a barrier-free environment which encourages everyone to safely explore what's possible and discover new levels of independence. To find out more contact Kristen Link, Sr. Director of Operations at klink@woodlandsfoundation.org or by calling 724-935-5470 ext. 225

July 29 - August 1 ICAN Talk AAC Summer Camp

ICAN Talk AAC Summer Camp is a 3.5 day program of interactive, fun-filled activities designed specifically for children and adults who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems to communicate. Their program gives these individuals opportunities to communicate with other AAC users, develop their language skills, and use their AAC devices in new and exciting ways. The camp includes an AAC training seminar for parents, excursions to local attraction, and optional one-on-one consultations with clinical experts in AAC. For questions please contact Chistine at clepore@aacinstitute.org. Camper applications are also posted online at www.aacinstitute.org

July 28th – August 8th 10:00 AM - 3:30 PM Monday-Friday

Evolve Coaching - Future Camp

A two week, creative and performing arts summer camp for autistic and neurodivergent individuals, ages 12+. Registration: <https://www.evolve-coaching.org/arts-programming>

FREE August Summer Camp - Open Up

Mondays-Thursdays 8:30-11:30AM

Session 1: August 4-7; Session 2: August 11-14; Session 3: August 18-21

Students in grades K-5 will participate in an inclusive and engaging yoga class, play imaginative games intended to promote mindful social interactions, and make crafts they can use to help support a mindfulness practice at home. Visit their website to learn more and apply: www.open-up.org/club-camp

Studio Forget-Me-Not!

Studio Forget-Me-Not! actively cultivates perspectives, both within ourselves and within our community, by fostering artistic expression and growth. They provide an inclusive art space where individuals with diverse abilities can engage in boundless artistic exploration through a wide array of classes. At Studio Forget-Me-Not!, they prioritize celebrating abilities over limitations, offering the necessary support for everyone to thrive. Dedicated to surpassing traditional artistic norms, they embark on vibrant and joyful explorations across various mediums, ensuring a dynamic and enriching experience for all. studioforgetmenot.org

OPEN UP Mindfulness Classes (free)

Open Up's mission is to teach mindfulness tools through movement practices and interactive arts while centering people living with disabilities. They want all people to be able to have ease of access in finding avenues for increasing their sense of overall well being. They believe that all people should be able to experience joy in community with others. They have inclusive movement classes at our studio and can be found in schools and community spaces around the city and beyond. <https://www.open-up.org/>

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 and a few additional resources about Extended School Year (ESY), which was the topic of our May meeting.**



- **ESY Eligibility** - The Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) policy on ESY details timelines and other issues related to Extended School Year services for children with disabilities. It is based on the Pennsylvania Code (22 Pa. Code Chapters 14 (14.132 Extended School Year) and 22 Pa. Code 711 (§711.44 Extended School Year)), relevant federal regulations, and court decisions.
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/resources/policies-acts-and-laws/basic-education-circulars-becs/pa-code/extended-school-year-eligibility.html>

- **ESY in PA** - PaTTAN has two great ESY references. One guide contains a comprehensive compilation of documents that will provide information, responses to questions, and a guide to parents and local education agencies in making determinations about ESY services. The other is a Teachers' Desk Reference that explains the process the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team utilizes to determine the eligibility for ESY services for students with disabilities who receive special education services.
<https://www.pattan.net/>

- **ESY Essentials** - An article explaining ESY, eligibility, and considerations.
<https://www.pealcenter.org/extended-school-year-esy-essentials/>

- **Standards for ESY** - WrightsLaw compiled the ESY standards discussed by various federal courts throughout the country. These ESY standards could become part of the school district's comprehensive staff training on this issue.
https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/esy_standards_barlev.htm

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