

# AUTISM

## TEEN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

-Autism, Aspergers & other related disabilities-



### Focus Activities:

- Social & Life Skills
- Bullying Techniques– “take the power away from the bully”
- Build Relationships, Friendships
- Board Games (engage communication; learn judgment calls)
- Money Exchange
- Computer Technology
- Homework Assistance
- Music Recreation
- Human Services college interns: MXCC; Albertus Magnus; CCSU; UConn
- Peer Mentors: Xavier & Experienced Community Volunteers
- Indoor Basketball
- Field Trips
- Basic Yoga Breathing
- Job Coaching / Placement in Super Walmart-Cromwell, CT Walmart-Rocky Hill, CT

The goal of our program is to link these exciting activities with school curricula and bring another dimension of learning to Connecticut's teens with Special Needs

### Our Mission Statement

The mission of the RWF is to provide information to parents helping them to better understand the barriers and challenges of ASD people. Our foundation provides an after-school /summer program; parent support, fundraising and educational events to work toward the goal of leading full and productive lives. We are committed to raising public awareness about autism spectrum disorders, and devoted to empowering families and lessening the isolation.

### History of the RWF

The organization was informally started in 2008 by a grandparent of a child with PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified). The foundation began as a fund-raising group in the City of Middletown to raise money for Autism Speaks through a music festival, co-sponsored by the City of Middletown and other private donors. This was repeated four years. Parents wanted more:

1) my child needs somewhere to go after-school to enhance his/her social and life skills; build relationships with friends (peer mentors and other children like him/her); 2) there are no Parent Support meetings nearby to voice parental concerns and get information regarding resources; advocates; PPTs; IEPs. The City of Middletown Board of Education donated two classrooms to our foundation to hold our after-school programs and we met at a local church to hold our Parent Support Meetings for two years. The meetings quickly became more than support with families having the need to be educated about how better to work with their child. We began to offer workshops and presenter events. Soon it became evident we needed a space. Summer 2010, a local masonic temple donated us space to hold our summer program with the understanding that we would have to move by the beginning of the next school year (2010-2011). Finally, September 2010, we have moved to what we hope is our permanent home here in Middletown. We work closely as possible with other organizations and individuals to bring about the best possible outcome for our folks on the spectrum.

### Who is RWF?

RWF is a 501(c) (3), non-profit, charitable foundation based in Middletown, Connecticut that serves individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their family members, and the professionals who work with them. We accept college interns from CCSU; UConn; SCSU; Quinnipiac; MXCC who are Human Services majors. So far, four (4) college interns have graduated after their internship with RWF, all going on for their Masters Degrees with the intention of returning to RWF for full-time employment. We allow high-school, AP students from Xavier to be peer mentors during the summer and in some cases during the school year. There is one community volunteer who has Aspergers, works full time at Walmart and attends college on our team as well.

Donations are essential in helping us pay for services we provide including:

Continuing our after-school program; field trips during the summer program and financial aid to those parents in the community who are unable to pay the full tuition.

We host fundraisers that include:

Bowling4Autism, a loved-by-all family outing held every other month; cultural events; collaborate with community-related workshops and expos and apply for and receive grants from the public and private sector.

Provide Spanish, French translation to our community residents.

Host Parent Support Group (soon to come - Sibling Support) meetings monthly to improve knowledge about autism spectrum disabilities.

If you are interested in any of the above-listed programs, please contact RWF at the contact information found below.

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