



November
December
2011

Friends of Different Learners

2011/2012 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.
Birmingham Covington School
(BCS)

1525 Covington Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301

Meetings begin with a brief business meeting followed by the Guest Speaker and topic presentation.

Informal Networking opportunities are available after every meeting to share ideas about how to help our different learners and to learn from each other.

Friends meetings and functions are open to everyone!

December 1 • 6-9 p.m.
*Groves H.S. Commons
Holiday Bazaar*

January 5 • 9:00 a.m.
*New Year's Resolutions
for Your Child's Education*

January 19 @ Groves H.S.
*Commons
Camp & Resource Fair*

February 2
*Impact of Executive Function
Deficits & AD/HD*

March 1
*Expecting a Diploma?
Understanding the Michigan
Merit Curriculum
Graduation Requirements*

April 12
Parent Information Exchange

May 10
Appreciation Awards

June 7
Wrap Up 2012 & Plan 2013

More meeting information
in the sidebars on pages 2 and 3.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

The first trimester finals are already over, if you can believe it! We've had three great district wide meetings. In September, Superintendent Larson and Special Education Director Lovik, told us about the Special Education Departmental Review conducted in the spring. In October, guest speaker Jennifer Greening, spoke about Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) and inclusion. In November we had a combination of a guest speaker, Aubry Dodge, and our own Kelly Lovik and Stefanie Hayes, discussing Functional Assessments of Behavior (FAB) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP).

The fall has seen so many wonderful building coffees led by building principals with the special education administrators and support from our wonderful list of building representatives (see side bar). While we wish all of you could know the wonderful parents, teachers, staff, and administrators that are supporting our different learners, these coffees are an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding legacy that provides all parents with an opportunity to connect to local programming. While some schools had high attendance and others had more creative snacks (like donuts, fresh apples, and cider for an afternoon "coffee") every meeting produced something special for the building.

But there's more! On December 1 we will be hosting a bazaar at Groves featuring hand made gift. Join us for coffee on the morning of January 5 at BCS as we focus on New Year's Resolutions for Your Child's Education. On January 19, we will be back at Groves for our annual Camp and Resource Fair. You can see a preview of some of the camps and service providers in this newsletter. In February, we will be at BCS, with a guest speaker discussing The Impact of Executive Function Deficits and ADHD. And March 1 we will focus on the Michigan Merit Curriculum Graduation Requirements as the impact planning from kindergarten through post high school.

We can't do all this without you! We thank you for your support of Friends, but we'd love it if you could do even more! We are still looking for someone to coordinate our Appreciation Awards in May, where we thank teachers and other staff members who make a difference in our childrens' lives. We are also looking for a Midvale Building Representative. This person would be a parent or staff member who is at Midvale, and would be a liaison between Friends and Midvale parents. If you are interested in getting involved in any way, we are sure that we can find a role for you!

Thank You!

*Diana Moak and Karen Selby
2011-2012 Co-Presidents
Friends of Different Learners*

Kids First. Understand their differences. Focus on their needs. Educate all.

Administrator's Letter

Greetings Friends!

As is always the case, the year seems to be flying by! One-third of this school year is already behind us and we are quickly approaching a very busy holiday season. As I contemplate this, it doesn't escape me that we have already accomplished many things in our department and have plans for many more things to come.

We have conducted all of our Special Education Building Coffees for this year and once again, they were a great success. There were many familiar faces in attendance but many new faces as well. At some coffees there were fewer people in attendance while at others there was standing room only, but the discussions held at each coffee were unique to each building and rich in content. Much networking among and between parents as well as staff took place and will hopefully continue for years to come. We will continue to plan these coffees in the coming years and I would like to personally thank Friends of Different Learners for collaborating with us and helping to make these a success. The treats were fantastic as well!!

On September 8th, I provided an overview of the department's 2011-12 goals, which were also shared at each building coffee. A copy of the September presentation may be found on our webpage under the Friends tab. Here you will also find a copy of the most recent presentation and attachments that Stefanie Hayes, ASD Supervisor and I had the pleasure of participating in with Aubrey Dodge, BCBA Behavior Consultant at the Friends meeting on November 3rd. The presentation focused primarily on the purpose of behavior and how behavior may impact educational success. Data collection sheets and case studies were shared to assist the audience with gaining "real life" knowledge on how to identify behaviors and collecting and tracking data to be used in the development of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and a subsequent Behavior Intervention Plan if necessary. The responses received from participants has been extremely positive and I am already hearing conversations about planning and preparation for a follow up meeting for next year...stay tuned!!!

The Special Education Supervisors, staff and I have been busy at work addressing the Special Education Department Review and developing an action plan that will span a 3-5 year period of time. This year already we have committees established to address the Accommodations/Modifications section and the identification of students for Special Education, primarily in the area of Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI). In addition, we are placing much attention on continued training and resources that will be provided to staff on Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans. The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) has also established sub-committees that are working collaboratively with our department addressing components of this review which will have a monumental impact on our efforts to address service provision/Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). The PAC has also established a sub-committee that will focus on communication and networking between parents and school personnel.

Please remember you may remain connected and receive ongoing updates from our department by signing up for the Special Education eNews. If you have already signed up for eNews but do not receive the Special Education version, you may sign up anytime by selecting the Special Education subscription. You may also visit our webpage anytime to learn more about the department and access a number of resources that are available to you including the Parent Handbook, IEP information and much, much more.

Happy Thanksgiving to all friends, families and staff!

Kelly Friedland-Lovik
Executive Director of Special Education

Disability Awareness Workshop

The Disability Awareness Workshop (DAW) is a hands-on, activity-based workshops whose main emphasis is to help students understand the challenges of daily living for individuals with disabilities. *Friends* presents the DAW annually to every fourth grader in the district (5/6 at BCS). To date more than 9,000 students, teachers, transportation staff, and parents have learned through this experience that people should be respected no matter how they look, act, walk or talk. If you are interested in helping to coordinate the DAW at your school, please contact JoEllen Schwartz at joellenschwartz@gmail.com.

Appreciation Awards

The May meeting is devoted to honoring our partners in education, BPS teachers and staff, who have made a significant difference in the life of a different learner. *Friends* members select up to two individuals who have gone the extra mile for a different learner and those education partners are honored at an evening reception that is filled with entertainment, heartwarming stories and an awards presentation. If you are interested in helping with the Appreciation Awards, or even in co-chairing this event, please contact TBA*.

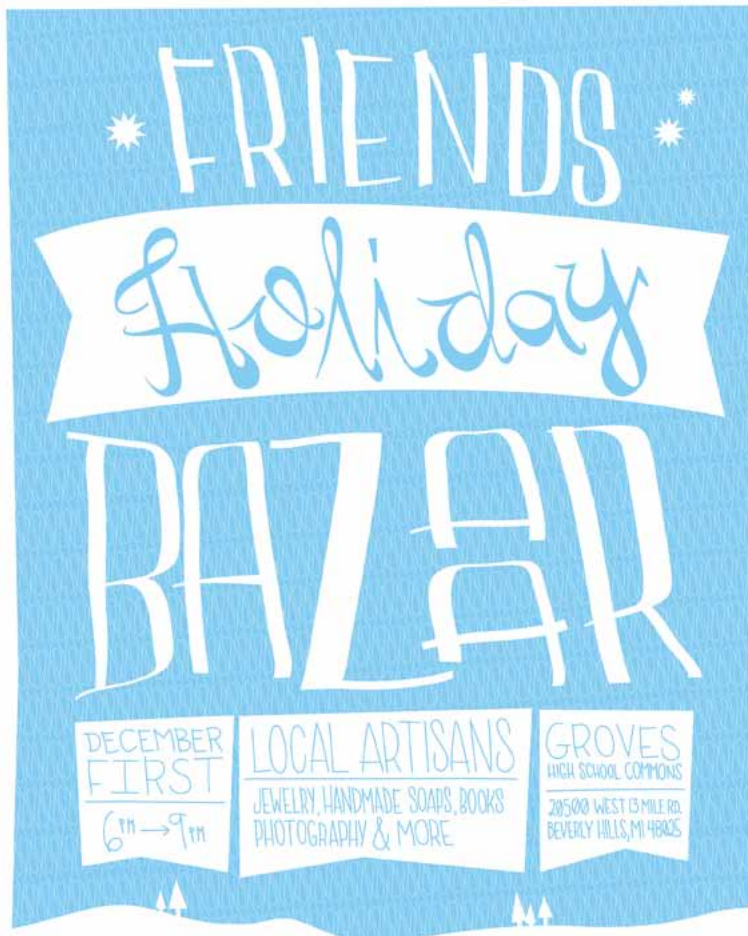
*Contact Diana Moak at 248-594-7245 or DPMoak@aol.com if you would be interested in helping *Friends* fill this open positions.

Friends Holiday Bazaar!

December 1, 2011 • 6:00-9:00 p.m. • Groves High School Commons

Our 3rd Annual Friends Holiday Bazaar has been redesigned to showcase local artisans featuring, jewelry, books, ceramics, handmade soaps, scarves, bags and much more. This year we have decided to focus on vendors who create their own work providing you with a unique shopping opportunity that cannot be duplicated. Additionally, we have invited Artisans that are affiliated with micro businesses supporting people with disabilities. There are a number of young entrepreneurs that we are proud to give you the opportunity to support. Their art ranges from photography to soap making. Proceeds support the work of Friends and the community of different learners.

<i>Midnight Creations</i>	<i>Buckle Up</i>	<i>Gemstar</i>
<i>Sunshine Friends</i>	<i>Annex4Creations</i>	<i>Amy Hiller Designs</i>
<i>Soulful Earth Herbs</i>	<i>FAR</i>	<i>Joanne Johnson's Knits</i>
<i>Dylan Yates Art</i>	<i>Carrie's Creations</i>	<i>Colors in Clay</i>
<i>Olive M'Lou</i>	<i>Glassology</i>	<i>Puzzle Beads</i>
<i>Dinkins Designs</i>	<i>JARC</i>	<i>Marjorie Russell Ornaments</i>
<i>Bowers Books</i>	<i>Stitch248</i>	<i>Fabric Fetish Interiors</i>
<i>Cheryl Stevens Studio</i>	<i>Smilegram Paper</i>	<i>and Accessories</i>
<i>Elegant Designs by Elizabeth</i>	<i>Girl Scouts Older Pathway</i>	<i>JTK Creations</i>



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Camp & Resource Fair January 19, 2012

Held annually in January, the Camp and Resource Fair is an information fair servicing families in Southeastern Michigan seeking summer and year round programs that accept children with special needs in both self-contained and inclusion environments. The 2012 Camp and Resource Fair will be at Groves High School Commons on January 19. If you are interested in helping to organize the fair, or in having a booth for your organization, please contact Diana Moak at 248-594-7245, DPMoak@aol.com or Karen Selby at 716-200-3687 selbykl@udmercy.edu.

The LINKS Program

LINKS is a peer-to-peer support program facilitated by BPS social workers and staff. Students are able to build new friendships as well as learn to relate to people with different needs and develop an understanding of individual differences. If you are interested in helping with LINKS, please contact Leigh Herbster at leigh-herbster@yahoo.com.

Holiday Bazaar December 1, 2011

The December Holiday Bazaar offers unique holiday shopping showcasing local artisans and handmade crafts by students and organizations that support students with special needs. Jewelry, food, cards and many other gifts can be purchased for teachers, friends, family and kids of all ages. Proceeds support the work of Friends and the community of different learners.

2011-2012

FRIENDS BOARD

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August Picnic

a Friends of Different Learners Social Committee Success

Our social committee is dedicated to providing members with opportunities to connect beyond our open meetings. We sponsor a book club, do nights out at local eateries, and have a Facebook page. The goal of the Social Committee is to offer members the opportunity to build a strong network of support as they raise their special learners.

This year we gathered at the Beverly Hills Park to share some chicken shack, games, and fun. It was an opportunity to have our students meet the Friends we often visit with as we join in the work of putting all kids first by understanding their differences, focusing on their needs and educating them. The picnic was a success of the Social Committee.

BCS Student Raises Funds for Fragile X Different Learners

Fragile X syndrome is the most common type of inherited intellectual disability (formerly called mental retardation). Symptoms of Fragile X syndrome are life long, but they range from mild to severe. Below is from Hannah Moreno on how she has worked to support people with this diagnosis.

"For my Bat Mitzvah project, I decided to help raise money and awareness for people who are diagnosed with Fragile X. I chose Fragile X as my project because I realized that not many people knew about it and I wanted to change that. When I first told my friends at school about my project, not one of them knew what Fragile X was until I told them. There are so many people out there that need to be educated and I am here to do that.

To accomplish this, I started a campaign at Hiller's Markets where any customer could make a donation either at the cashier or directly to me. I visited all seven store locations in Michigan and set up informational tables about Fragile X where I was able to talk to the customers face-to-face and educate them. By doing this, I not only raised over \$900.00, I also helped spread the word about Fragile X. This experience has been great for me. I learned that Fragile X is the most common form of inherited intellectual disorder and it varies in condition. I also learned that Fragile X gets its name from a broken X chromosome. Most importantly, I realized how important it is to know that you're making a difference in your community."

Thank you Hannah for your service to different learners. Moreno's goal was to raise \$1,000 to donate to the National Fragile X Foundation. If you would like to help her reach that goal the address for donations is Fragile X Association of Michigan, P.O. Box 1414, Troy, MI 48099-1414 or to find out more information, visit www.fragilex.org.

Who is a Different Learner?

Different Learner is an inclusive term. Some different learners have identified disabilities such as autism, AD/HD or dyslexia and others simply have unique learning styles that present challenges in the classroom. Topics addressed by Friends may be specific to students with special needs or may be relevant to all students.

Camp and Resource Fair

The Friends of Different Learners invites you to come out on January 19 to discover the range of support that is available both at home and abroad. The only event of its kind in Michigan, we encourage you to invite others beyond our district to take part in the informational evening. If you are aware of a great camp or a service provider who is not currently signed up, please encourage them to register by going to our website, www.friendsofdifferentlearners.org and clicking on the Camp Fair 2012 link. At press time, we have 25 registered participants for our 2012 Camp and Resource Fair.

PARTICIPANTS

Total Education Solutions

Friendship Circle

Camp Blue Sky

Early On Oakland

FAR Conservatory
of Therapeutic
and Performing Arts

Camp/Club Kodiak

Brain Core Therapy
West Bloomfield

Optiminds

Skyline Camp
and Retreat Center

Euro-Peds Center
for Intensive Pediatric PT

Lindamood-Bell
Learning Processes

Blue Leaf HomeCare, LLC

Ryan Ennis, M.Ed., M.L.I.S.

Michigan Chapter AG Bell
Association for the Deaf

Kids In Motion Pediatric
Therapy Services

SLC Therapy

Oakland Mediation Center

St. Francis Camp on the Lake

Judson Center
Autism Connections

SpringHill Camps

Andrea Harris-Peguese

Sensory Systems Clinic

Lepak and Associates

Macomb-Oakland
Regional Center, Inc

Easter Seals Michigan

Eton Academy

Be Involved with Friends!

Would you like to become more involved with Friends. We would love to have you. Our Executive Board consists of President(s), Vice President(s), Treasurer(s), Secretary(ies) and Past Presidents. Other positions include Building Representatives and Committee Chairs. We meet monthly for about two hours to plan Friends activities and discuss concerns that our members raise. We will agree on a time that is convenient for everyone once our board for the 2012-13 year is determined. If you are interested in running for office and would like to learn more about what the responsibilities of each position are, please contact Karen Selby at selbykl@udmercy.edu or 248-885-8213. Our slate of nominees will be announced at our May meeting, with voting at the June meeting.

Opportunities to Give

Here's how you can support Friends, a 501(c)(3) organization:

- Donate a vehicle through Charity Motors by choosing Friends as your charity
- Choose Friends as the organization to receive your Kroger community Rewards
- Write us a check
- Join Friends - it's only \$10.00
- Donate your time and energy
- Bring a friend to our next meeting or event

2011-2012 FRIENDS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Appreciation Awards • TBA*

Building Reqs.

Debby Suris • 248-645-0535
dfbsuris@gmail.com

Terri Haddad • 248-855-8335
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Camp & Resource Fair

Diana Moak • 248-594-7245
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Karen Selby • 716-200-3687
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Communication & Publicity

Jo Ellen Schwartz
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Community Relations

Diana Moak
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Disability Awareness Workshop

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LINKS

Leigh Herbster
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Kathy Sinclair Pearson
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*Contact Diana Moak at 248-594-7245
or DPMoak@aol.com if you
would be interested in helping Friends
fill these open positions.



Friends of Different Learners

2011-2012 Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

School(s) My Different Learner(s) Attend: _____

School(s) My Other Children Attend: _____

I would like to be listed in the Membership Directory for publication. Yes No

I would like to help on these committees:

- Appreciation Awards
- Camp & Resource Fair
- Disability Awareness Workshop
- Membership
- Building Reps
- Communication & Publicity
- LINKS
- Social

I am a: Parent Educator Other _____

2011-2012 Membership Dues \$ 10.00

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: "Friends of Different Learners."

Mail to: Friends of Different Learners

P.O. Box 233

Birmingham, MI 48012-0233

Friends is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization

2011-2012

SCHOOL & DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

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DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS

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