

## *Benefits of Yoga for Children with Special Needs*

What is yoga? "Yoga is a practice consisting of physical postures and breathing exercises that help to unite the body and mind."

Why yoga for kids with special needs?

As a children's yoga teacher, I have noticed that a growing number of parents of children with special needs are turning to yoga as a form of therapy. Parents are noticing the physical, mental and emotional benefits yoga has to offer their kids. Many of the children I work with have attention, anxiety and learning disorders, as well as cerebral palsy and Asperger syndrome. Yoga therapy is very beneficial because it taps into neurological systems. The focus on breathing helps with attention, focus and longer memory skills. There are postures that help stretch tight muscles while weight bearing poses build strength for those that have low tone. Yoga focuses on all the parts of a child- not just one area of child development like most traditional therapies do. It also helps children develop more conscious thinking- more awareness of those around them and how they relate to others. It is a multidisciplinary approach to therapy. Yoga works with both fine and gross motor areas, speech and language, and helps improve respiration.

Although there are a number of yoga exercises to be addressed throughout a session, the following are extremely beneficial for a child with special needs:

-core poses- it's critical to strengthen the core muscles. This will help with balance both physically and mentally. Many kids with special needs are weak in the core area.

-crossing the mid-line- having the child cross hands and touch opposite sides of the body helps to enhance brain development.

-breathing exercises- learning proper breathing techniques

help ease anxiety, open up the lungs and bring oxygen into the brain making one more alert.

-eye exercises- these "tracking" exercises help build the muscles behind the eyes.



The practice of yoga can have a significant impact on the symptoms that many of these special needs children struggle with on a daily basis. It is our responsibility as teachers, parents and caregivers to provide opportunities for these children to lead happy and productive lives. Why not start with yoga?

*Jennifer Hill has been teaching yoga to children for the past ten years. She lives in Katonah with her two sons, Christopher and Jonathan. She currently teaches yoga to a number of students in and out of the district. She conducts private sessions as well as classes. For more information, please contact Jennifer at [jenniferhill65@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferhill65@gmail.com).*

### WHAT IS SEPTA?

The Katonah-Lewisboro Special Education PTA (SEPTA) is a district-wide Parent Teacher Association organized to provide information and support to students, parents, faculty and staff involved in the special education process. SEPTA exists to help all families of children with a wide range of special needs. Parents of all children across the range of needs are welcome to participate as SEPTA members. SEPTA serves the special education community by providing:

- A chance for parents to meet and network with other special needs parents
- Evening programs with speakers on topics of interest to special needs families and faculty
- A forum for communication with the special services personnel and administration
- Newsletters and mailings to keep the special education community informed

### What's Inside:

- A Letter From the New Director of Special Services
- Presidents' Letter
- Member Benefits: *Sponsor List*
- Conscious Parenting Speaker
- Membership Form *Please Join*
- Calendar of Events

## *A Letter from Connie Hayes, Director of Special Services*

I am writing to introduce myself as the Director of Special Services. I have been working since August 1, 2011, learning about Katonah-Lewisboro and all of the services that are provided on behalf of the children and families in the district. I am eagerly looking forward to meeting all of you in person and ensuring that you continue to have the support you need from my office to ensure the needs of your children are met.

A little about me:

I am originally from upstate (all the way upstate – Massena, NY, a small town on the border of Cornwall, Ontario and yes, some of my speech definitely has a Canadian twist, although less so over the years). I was previously employed by the New Paltz Central School District as an Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services. I am a wife and mother of three children (now adults) and

am living in this area during the week, commuting from Kingston on the weekends. I am a child advocate and am committed to ensuring that needs are met and resources are used in the most efficient manner possible. My door is always open and I invite you to share your ideas and suggestions to ensure that we are continuously considering ways to improve the services we offer on behalf of children.

As we go forward:

I will be attending all SEPTA meetings and hope that you will participate as well to maximize the resources we collectively represent. In the words of Margaret Mead “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” I invite you to join the “small group” and help ensure children are prepared for all our world has to offer.

**Connie Hayes, Director of Special Services**

### **KATONAH-LEWISBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL SERVICES**

**Phone: 914-763-7024 • Fax: 914-763-6703**

<b>Director</b>	Connie Hayes	chayes@klsd.lhric.org
<b>Special Education Supervisor</b> (secondary)	Dr. Catherine McNulty	cmcnulty@klsd.lhric.org
<b>Special Education Supervisor</b> (elementary and preschool)	Cindy Greenberg	cgreenberg@klsd.lhric.org
<b>CSE Chairperson</b>	Barbara Milone	bmilone@klschools.org

## ***SEPTA Membership Benefits Sponsors for 2011-2012***

*Shop locally with your SEPTA membership card and receive discounts!*

**Bagel Boys Café**, Cross River Shopping Center, (914)763-6800, 25% off purchases of \$15 or more M-F

**Elaine Esposito/Arbonne International**, 10% off Pure Swiss Skin Care, [www.evdiva.myarbonne.com](http://www.evdiva.myarbonne.com)

**Fine Lines**, 141 Katonah Ave., Katonah: 10% off excluding special orders

**Katonah Paint and Hardware**, 180 Katonah Ave., Katonah: 10% off purchases (excl. special items)

**Michelle Blum Photography**, 15% off all services: (914)763-9082

**Satori Spa**, 171 Katonah Ave., Katonah: \$10 off any service \$90 or more. (914)767-3303



## *A Message from the SEPTA Presidents*

Now that December is here, we hope that everyone is finding this school year to be fulfilling and productive. The 2011/2012 school year has already been filled with much change. There are many new faces at both the Office of Special Services and on the SEPTA board. We extend a warm welcome to KLSD's new Director of Special Services, Connie Hayes, and look forward to working with her for many years to come.

We wish to give a huge thank you to past co-President Jerri-Lynn Galgano, and past Vice President of Speakers Dawn Visconti for the dedication, leadership and boundless energy they have given to SEPTA. This year Jerri-Lynn Galgano continues to support SEPTA in the roles of Secretary and Differences Day Chairperson. We warmly welcome our new co-President Naomi Hefler, our new KES SEPTA Representative Laura Beth Gilman, our new Newsletter Editors Bernadette Vega and Gretchen Goodall, and our new Webmaster Rebecca Bourla.

We also thank our other continuing SEPTA Board members. Kathy Lin is in her second year as co-president, and Alyssa Cohen and Nicole Vicente have switched positions, thus bringing new ideas and energy to Treasurer and Vice President of Fundraising, respectively. Judie Frantz, formerly Secretary, has taken on the role of Vice President of Speakers, and has already overseen a successful first lecture on teaching social skills to children.

As the Special Education PTA, we are here for all parents and teachers of children with special needs, from preschool all the way through high school and beyond, from Katonah to Vista. We can answer questions, help with problems and issues that may come up or just lend a helping hand or listening ear. We encourage all to come to our events, so that we represent the full range of parents and teachers of special needs students. Regardless of whether your child receives extensive services or is mainstreamed with no services, parenting and teaching a child with special needs is easier with the camaraderie, support and collective knowledge that SEPTA provides.

Last year SEPTA was involved in funding several events and activities that furthered the education, training, and awareness of staff, parents and students. We funded the tuition for ten teachers to attend a daylong conference on behavioral

challenges at Manhattanville College, sponsored four evening speaker events, and contributed to a field trip for an elementary school life skills class. Every fall, we present Differences Day to elementary school children within our district. As we plan for the best use of our resources in the coming year, we always welcome your ideas.

Our next meeting will be held on December 5th. Please come to catch up with friends, welcome new members and learn about new ideas. Our featured speakers, Wendy McLean and Ellie Kirk, will be offering an introduction to Conscious Parenting Seminars which help parents take advantage of everyday challenges to cultivate the deeper connections that empower children to thrive. It should be a stimulating evening, and we hope many of you can attend.

Please help SEPTA represent our entire community of parents and teachers of special needs students by participating in our events, becoming a SEPTA member, and contributing ideas and energy. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

**Naomi Hefler and Kathy Lin**  
*SEPTA co-Presidents*





# **Introduction to Conscious Parenting**

**Parenting from the Center - More Relaxed, Positive and Effective**

presented by

**Ellie Kirk and Wendy McLean**

Conscious Parenting Seminars help parents take advantage of everyday challenges to cultivate the deeper connections that empower children to thrive. Wendy McLean and Ellie Kirk will share their three-step process and the role of energy dynamics within everyday parenting situations. This free event will be particularly helpful in parenting a child who learns from, engages with or offers gifts to the world in unique ways. This approach is just as creative as they are by offering the practical tools and flexibility you need to be more relaxed, positive and effective in raising your children!

- Discover the meaning and power behind being a conscious parent
- Learn the simple 3-step process that is flexible, easy-to-use and shifts any situation into one that's positive
- Experience HeartMath™ tools clinically proven to reduce stress and create emotional mastery
- Gain insights into pressing issues including anxiety, communication, transitions, & discipline
- Receive a list of resources for both parents and children to help deepen and support this new approach
- Practical methods can be applied immediately and provide the foundation for lasting change with any age child

**Monday, December 5, 2011**

***(Snow date December 12)***

**7:15 PM Refreshments**

**7:30 PM Program begins**

**John Jay Middle School Library**

For more information, please visit us at [www.klsepta.org](http://www.klsepta.org).

Please rsvp online to [rsvp@klsepta.org](mailto:rsvp@klsepta.org)

## Join the Special Education PTA (SEPTA) to...

**Build friendships:** The parents you meet through SEPTA unite for a common purpose. It's a comfort to talk to other parents who you can relate to, who know what you are experiencing, and who can exchange helpful advice. It's never too late to start building new friendships.

**Educate yourself:** The latest thinking, trends, and discoveries in special education are brought to you through guest speakers, organized programs, detailed hand-outs, and informative videos and books. These are all free of charge once you join!

**Support a worthy cause:** Your dues support all our educational efforts, including guest speakers and Differences Day, and our ability to enrich a variety of special needs programs/projects for our District's special needs children.

## SEPTA Membership Application/Renewal

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

\*Email:

Age(s) and School(s) of children with/without special needs:

IM

KES

LES

MP

JJMS

JJHS

No children in district (this is important for us to know for mailings)

\*Note: We will periodically send email reminders. Please clearly write email to ensure receipt of SEPTA notices!

**Please make your \$10 (for an individual) or \$15 (for a family) check payable to:** Katonah-Lewisboro SEPTA (Special Education PTA) and mail, along with this application, to:

SEPTA  
P. O. Box 475  
Goldens Bridge, NY 10526



# SEPTA Calendar of Events

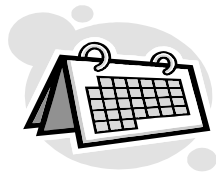
**Introduction to Conscious Parenting:** Parenting from the Center - More Relaxed, Positive and Effective  
Presented by Ellie Kirk and Wendy McLean

**December 5, 2011 (Snow date December 12, 2011)**

7:15 PM Refreshments, 7:30 PM Program begins

John Jay Middle School Library

Please RSVP online to [rsvp@klsepta.org](mailto:rsvp@klsepta.org)



**Meeting for Families Transitioning from CPSE to CSE**

**Jan 9, 2012 7:30-9pm** (snow date: Jan 10)

For parents of children entering kindergarten in fall of 2012.

**SEPTA Fundraiser - A Musical Concert for Children!**

Saturday, January 28, 2012

4:00-4:30pm DOORS OPEN, 4:30-5:30pm CONCERT

Location: John Jay Middle School Theater

Description: Graham Clarke will be performing LIVE!

Admission: \$30 per family/\$10 per person

(SEPTA members: \$25 per family/\$8)

**UPCOMING SEPTA SPEAKERS - SAVE THE DATES:**

**March 5, 2012** (snow date March 12) and **May 7, 2012**

## Events in Surrounding Areas

**Wednesday, December 7, 2011**

7:30 p.m.

**PARENTS, CHILDREN, & ADHD: GETTING FAMILIES BACK ON TRACK**

Presenter: Mark Bertin, MD, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, Professor & Author

Dr. Bertin will discuss pertinent research and accessible strategies for parents, including techniques for managing common executive function related difficulties in children, and interventions that include parenting, behavioral, educational, and medical supports.

Location: Yorktown High School Library, 2726 Crompond Road, Yorktown Heights, NY

For more information: Contact Melissa Cancro at

[yorktown.septa@gmail.com](mailto:yorktown.septa@gmail.com)

Sponsored by: Yorktown SEPTA

**Thursday, December 29, 2011**

10:00am - 12:00pm

**Stress Management for Parents of Special Needs Children: Understand and Manage stress to make life better for you and your loved ones.**

Dr. Leonora Rhodes from the Neurofeedback Coach, offers a unique perspective on Stress and the Special Needs Family. Held at the Waveny House, Waveny Park, New Canaan, CT.

Refreshments served. Sponsored by SPED\*NET, Special Education Network of New Canaan.

This talk will include understanding the origins of stress and how it affects the mind, brain and body and how to effectively manage stress to help you be calmer, more content parent and a great role model for your family and will finish with teaching you a fast effective technique to manage your stress. For more info on Dr. Rhodes, check [www.theneurofeedbackcoach.com](http://www.theneurofeedbackcoach.com). Please RSVP to Becky Duplock at [duplock007@mac.com](mailto:duplock007@mac.com). For more info on SPED\*NET New Canaan, check [www.spednet.org](http://www.spednet.org).

**Wednesdays, October 26, 2011-February 1, 2012**

7-8:30pm

WJCS is offering a 12 session Parent Management Training group for parents of children with developmental disabilities or autistic spectrum disorder. This group will help parents learn skills to manage their children's oppositional and aggressive behaviors. It will be held at the WJCS Hartsdale office, located at 141 North Central Avenue in Hartsdale. For more information, parents should contact: Kari Phillips, LCSW (914) 949-7699 ext 377 or [kphillips@wjcs.com](mailto:kphillips@wjcs.com). An assessment with your child is required prior to attendance in this group. Please call to schedule an assessment before the group begins. This group can be billed through many commercial insurances as well as Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, and Child Health Plus, or at a self-pay fee. Bonnie Graham, LMSW, Program Coordinator, Autism Family Center (914) 761-0600 ext. 228.

## SEPTA BOARD

Co-Presidents:	Naomi Heftler Kathryn Lin	<a href="mailto:copres1@klsepta.org">copres1@klsepta.org</a> <a href="mailto:copres2@klsepta.org">copres2@klsepta.org</a>
Vice-President - Speakers	Judie Frantz	<a href="mailto:vp@klsepta.org">vp@klsepta.org</a>
Vice-President - Fundraising	Nicole Medina	<a href="mailto:vp2@klsepta.org">vp2@klsepta.org</a>
Treasurer:	Alyssa Cohen	<a href="mailto:treasurer@klsepta.org">treasurer@klsepta.org</a>
Secretary:	Jerri Lynn Galgano	<a href="mailto:secretary@klsepta.org">secretary@klsepta.org</a>

## SEPTA REPRESENTATIVES

Increase Miller:	June O'Neill	<a href="mailto:imsepta@klsepta.org">imsepta@klsepta.org</a>
Katonah Elementary:	Laura Beth Gilman	<a href="mailto:kessepta@klsepta.org">kessepta@klsepta.org</a>
Lewisboro Elementary:	Jerri Lynn Galgano	<a href="mailto:lessepta@klsepta.org">lessepta@klsepta.org</a>
Meadow Pond:	Lorey Leddy	<a href="mailto:mpsepta@klsepta.org">mpsepta@klsepta.org</a>
John Jay Middle School:	JoAnne Ehnes	<a href="mailto:jjmssepta@klsepta.org">jjmssepta@klsepta.org</a>
John Jay High School:	<i>position open</i>	

## SEPTA COMMITTEES

Differences Day:	Jerri-Lynn Galgano	<a href="mailto:differencesday@klsepta.org">differencesday@klsepta.org</a>
Lending Library:	<i>position open</i>	<a href="mailto:lendinglibrary@klsepta.org">lendinglibrary@klsepta.org</a>
Member Benefits:	<i>position open</i>	<a href="mailto:benefits@klsepta.org">benefits@klsepta.org</a>
Outreach Newsletter:	Bernadette Vega & Gretchen Goodall	<a href="mailto:newsletter@klsepta.org">newsletter@klsepta.org</a>
Sports Coordinator:	JoAnn Ehnes	<a href="mailto:sports@klsepta.org">sports@klsepta.org</a>

## HELP WANTED

### SEPTA Board Members, Representatives and Committee Chairs:

Want to get more involved in your child's education? Please contact Kathy Lin at [copres2@klsepta.org](mailto:copres2@klsepta.org) to discuss the many informative and fun options available in SEPTA.



## Read Any Great Books Lately? Write a Review for SEPTA Outreach.

If you have read any great books about special needs topics, SEPTA Outreach readers would like to hear about it. Please share what you have learned to help us all better understand the issues of those with special needs. Write a book review and get published here in an issue of SEPTA Outreach.

Send your book reviews to [newsletter@klsepta.org](mailto:newsletter@klsepta.org).

