



One Voice Brevard



1 October 2025

One Voice Brevard's One Year Anniversary

by Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice Brevard



Looking back at our first ever published newsletter to now, it's incredible to see not only how far we've come, but also how much our world has changed. It's amazing to me to see the first words we published, our intent, our focus; and see the growth and expansion.

Our mission remains the same. For those of you who aren't familiar with me, I am a disabled veteran with two ASD children. My husband and I settled in Brevard roughly six years ago, and our advocacy journey really began with for our children – not for ourselves. Ironically, even though we are both disabled; we never really saw ourselves through that lens. It was when my youngest was diagnosed, and a provider said to me not to expect "any quality of life for my child;" that my path drastically changed – bringing us to this moment.

Originally, the idea of this newsletter began as a vehicle to share information, resources and bring awareness to disability-related issues in our county. With so much going on in our world and with so many different organizations and nonprofits in this space, it was perhaps naïve, but our intent, to try to bring down some of those "silos," to share resources, and build a collaborative community moving forward together.

So, while we still have the same focus, it's interesting to see the what we first thought of fairly narrowly to the broad community coalition we have today. Of all our goals, our first priority was an attempt to begin and expand this "community" to as many voices as we could get to in an effort to bring together all for ONE VOICE.

We want to thank our partners, our community and our policymakers for being a part of our collaborative family! Here's to another year of fantastic advocacy, friendship, and community!

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you will find

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Anniversary

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Uncorked

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& Alliance for
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2025 Brevard Uncorked

By Dr. Joseph Werner, OTD, OT/L, Director

On November 7th, 2025 the Brevard Autism Coalition, partnered with the One Voice Florida Coalition will present the 12th annual Brevard Uncorked Wine Tasting and Gala at the elegant Grand Manor on Sarno Road in Melbourne.

The event aims to broaden awareness of Autism while also showcasing the amazing programs and support that our Coalition aims to provide for our community. It brings the Brevard community together for a celebration of fine wine, gourmet food and live entertainment provided by Alfie Silva. Proceeds from the event support families and individuals dealing with Autism and other developmental disorders in Brevard County.

Events include the Adventure Coffee Camp, a one-week camp for young adults and teenagers teaching prevocational skills, Camp-2-Can, a 6-week summer camp, a once-a-month golf program at U.S.I Golf, a sensory sensitive play partnering with the Cocoa Village Playhouse, and free seminars and educational events for families and young adults such as the Helping Hands Resource event held each year in August. Brevard Uncorked features:

- Live entertainment by Alfie Silva
- Wine tasting and gourmet food
- Silent Auction featuring local arts and unique items
- “Sip & Sparkle” Diamond Raffle event by Sullivan’s Jewelers
- 50/50 Raffle, raffle baskets, and games
- General Admission and VIP seating

So come out for fun, and join the Brevard Community in raising our glasses to the power of coming together in order to build a brighter, diverse and inclusive future for everyone.

Sponsorships are welcome and appreciated. Tickets can be bought through Event Bright. For additional information see the flyer on the last page, check out the Brevard Autism website at Autism.Com or call Child and Family Consultants at 321-768-6800.

Delegation Meetings and the Alliance for Disability Unity

by Nicole Grabner

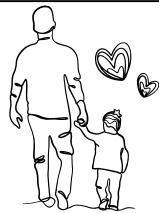


Our Delegation Meeting season has begun! These meetings serve as a critical public forum where residents and organizations can speak directly to their state senators and representatives before the legislative session begins. These meetings are important because they allow communities to advocate for local priorities—such as funding, policy changes, or services—and help shape the legislative agenda in Florida's state government. In Brevard County, our Delegation Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 30 September at the County Commission Chambers. To see where your county delegation meeting is being held and information about how to participate in your county, make sure you check the Arc of Florida's website (<https://www.arcflorida.org/delegation-calendar>). If you have signed up to speak, please make sure you send in a photo of yourself for a chance to win a T-shirt and Gift Card (flyer below)!



Dad's Corner

by Guest Author Christopher Grabner



Hi, I'm Chris, a veteran, husband, and father. Welcome to the inaugural Dad's Corner. This space is meant to serve as a "safe area" for fathers to discuss their concerns. As an Autism dad and problem-solving-focused dude, I struggle to come to grips with my children's autism. More specifically, I sometimes feel helpless that I can't fix "it", and that tears me apart inside. I spent 20 years in the military fixing F-16s, and over 5 years now as an engineer designing upgrades for the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye's Mission Systems, so problem-solving is where I thrive. The trouble is, my children's Autism is not a problem to be solved, it is a situation, or really a series of situations that require adjustment and flexibility based on their stages of life, and needs.

This problem-solver mindset is challenging for me to shake off, and because of this, I've historically looked at the situation through a microscopic lens. Son can't talk...see a doctor and get a referral; see a specialist; problem "fixed"; proceed to next "problem". I struggle to shake off this mindset, but one thing I'm trying to do is take time to revel in the wins, and stop focusing on the negatives, and most certainly do NOT compare my child's development to that of others because comparison truly is the thief of joy.

Here's an example, a few weeks ago my son became fascinated with black holes, so we're deep diving YouTube, watching videos on black holes. My 6-year-old starts peppering me with questions, "Daddy, where's the singularity? What's the event horizon? Can we see a black hole?". I replied as best I could, in as simple a way as possible, but being sure not to lie or placate him, otherwise his PDA (pervasive demand avoidance) would be set off. After this scenario, I really took some time to reflect on the positives, and how impressive his mind works, and how intensely he latches on to his interests.

It's all too easy to focus on the "problems" and negatives as something to "fix", but dads... try to step back from time to time and look at your child's uniqueness from a different light, and angle. In what ways have they affected your outlook on life and the world around you? I feel like a fundamentally different person because of my two children.

One final point, do you feel like you need to armor-up when you get home from work, or put a game face on before you walk through the door? Do you feel like you must be stoic and "man up" but find yourself borderline crumbling and want to run and hide? Do you feel like a failure because you slipped up, yelled at your kid, or spouse, or didn't feel able to give your 110% 24/7/365 (which is impossible, mind you)? Do you feel isolated and not sure what to do? You are NOT alone! We all feel that way from time to time. Always remember that you're not an island, and the strongest thing we can do is ask for help. Reach out to a loved one, a friend, seek counseling (I do), but if you find the darkness encircling you, and that there's no way out, please call 988. Don't let the hard days win!



Employing People with Disabilities

by Dianne Dixon, Autism Center for Development and Behavior

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and this year's theme is "Celebrating Value and Talent." People with disabilities contribute to the workforce in many meaningful ways, and they deserve to be recognized and celebrated. Let's also take this opportunity to reflect on the progress that we—as parents, providers, and caring community members—have made, and to recommit ourselves to doing more, helping more, and employing more individuals.

In 2025, there are many reasons to be hopeful and encouraged. Progress has been made legislatively, with increased emphasis on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and expanded access to funding. In Florida, changes to the high school diploma versus Certificate of Completion rules will require high schools to offer multiple pathways to a full diploma, encouraging school districts to build stronger workforce training for our young graduates. At the same time, technological advances are opening new doors: Virtual Reality training in various trades can level the playing field for students with disabilities—especially for those who struggle in traditional learning settings or whose IEP requirements or safety concerns might limit access to conventional technical education programs.

We, as advocates and caretakers, must stay vigilant and vocal in pushing for better training and robust workforce preparation for our youth. Strong training pipelines are a catalyst for well-paid jobs in growth industries—and they offer a real pathway to quality of life for our loved ones. If you'd like to learn more about how National Disability Employment Awareness Month is observed or find additional resources, here are two national websites you might explore:

- The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) maintains the official NDEAM site, with campaign materials and observance guidance. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam>
- The AbilityOne Program also highlights NDEAM annually and offers insights into federal employment opportunities and the work they do for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.
https://www.abilityone.gov/media_room/ndeam.html

Interested in learning more about career training delivered through Virtual Reality platforms? Please reach out to Diane Dickson or Dr. Dixie Riepl at the Autism Center for Development and Behavior, <https://acdbfl.org/contact-us>. You may also visit promisingpeople.com to see the training in action.

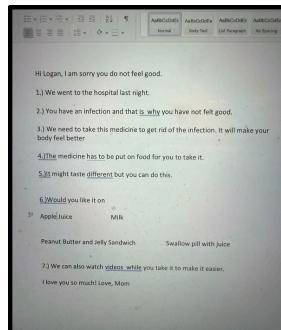


Wins and Polarization

by Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice Brevard

Since the beginning, I have been meaning to have a monthly article of “wins” for our community - something that gives us hope and maybe even spreads a bit of joy in our darkest moments. Recently, there has been a lot of “fighting behind the lines” and I really feel that all of this negativity not only stalls all of our efforts, but destroys the foundations of our community. It is my hope that moving forward we remember who and what we are fighting for - as a family, a community, and as a nation.

To that end, for our first “win” article, I would like to share a story from one of our coalition partners, named Stephanie. Her son Logan, who is nonspeaking, struggles with routine changes. He recently contracted an infection that would require medication to be taken multiple times a day.



As many of our family members can empathize with, this was a daunting task. Frequently, families struggle with having their children take medication and Stephanie in this instance was sure this would overwhelm everything. However, a friend suggested that maybe she should try to explain this process to her son using a narrative method - explaining what was happening and why the medication was necessary.

Stephanie was skeptical but decided to try. She was happy to report that not only did this method work, but Logan, her son, seemed almost calm with taking his medication! It feels as though saying simply “congratulations” is not enough; however, it is wonderful to share this story with families and in case you think this might be helpful with your children, we wanted to make sure you had this information.

Photos from the Brevard County Delegation Meeting





Monthly Art Submission



This month's art submission was provided by Angels Bridging Gaps. This stunning piece will be available for purchase at our Brevard Uncorked event on 7 November.

The 26-year old artist's name is Brittany.

Bill Buzz

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard

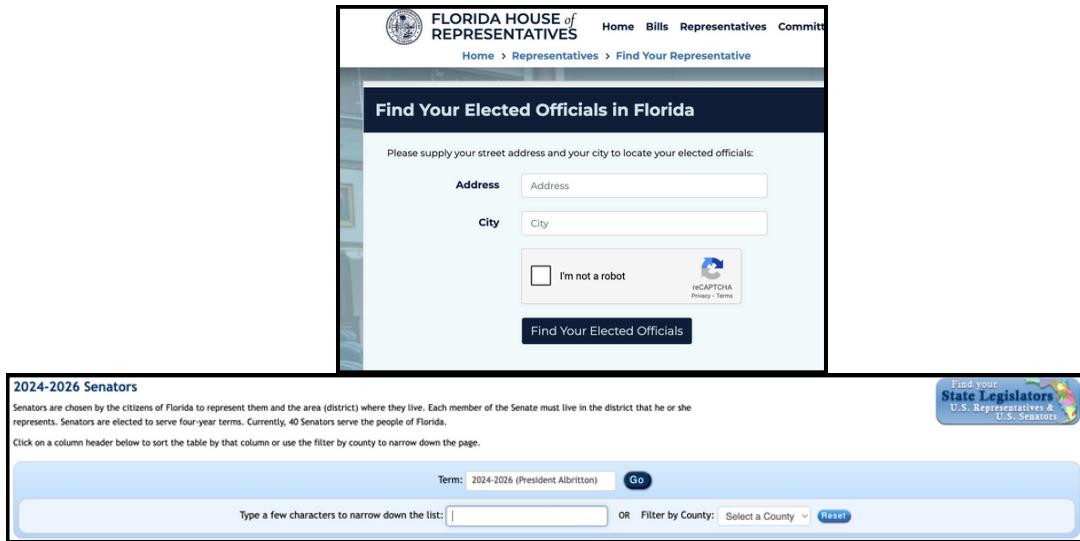
Legislative season has officially kicked off! Delegation Meetings have begun and starting in October, Committee weeks (different committees will begin meeting) will begin.

Interim Committee Weeks are scheduled as follows:
October 6-10, 2025
October 13-18, 2025
November 3-7, 2025
November 17-21, 2025
December 1-5, 2025
December 8-12, 2025

At the time this newsletter is published, there have been roughly 100 bills already filed for the upcoming Legislative Session. We will begin tracking and sharing that information (for bills related to disability) here in November.

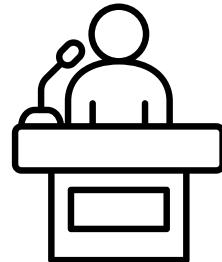
Now is the ideal time to schedule meetings with your local legislators to discuss any areas of concern that you might have; while they are in district and before session - and maybe before the holidays begin.

*To find who your State Legislators are, please see the Florida House and Florida Senate websites.



The image shows a screenshot of the Florida House of Representatives website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Bills, Representatives, and Committees. Below this, a sub-navigation bar shows the user is on the 'Representatives' page, specifically the 'Find Your Representative' section. The main content area is titled 'Find Your Elected Officials in Florida' and contains fields for 'Address' and 'City', a reCAPTCHA box, and a 'Find Your Elected Officials' button. Below this, there is a table titled '2024-2026 Senators'. The table includes a header row and several data rows representing senators. At the bottom of the table, there is a search bar with the placeholder 'Type a few characters to narrow down the list:' and a 'Go' button. To the right of the table, there is a small graphic for 'Find your State Legislators' which includes links for U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators.

*For the schedule of all county delegation meetings, see the Arc of Florida's website at:
<https://www.arcflorida.org/delegation-calendar>



Currently, there has been discussion of the following bills be filed for this session:

(*this list is not exhaustive; if you have heard of any other bills and would like to share that information, please reach out)

- Cameras in Special Education Classrooms
- Communication Bills of Rights (honoring any chosen method of communication for someone with a disability)
- Updating the legal definition of "Autism" in state statute
- Special Needs training for Law Enforcement
- Free Kill Law
- IEP timeline updates
- Step Therapy protocols for Mental Health
- ER healthcare for Pediatric Open Assessment



2026 Legislative PLATFORM

FUNDING PRIORITIES



Provider Rate Adjustments

Rising operational expenses, including wages, insurance, training, and compliance requirements, are straining our providers. The Arc of Florida supports sustained rate adjustments to ensure that families continue to have access to high-quality, safe and person-centered services.



Transportation Reimbursement Rate Increase

Transportation is a foundational service for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) enabling access to healthcare, employment, day programs, and access to community life. The Arc of Florida supports increased and equitable funding for safe transportation services.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Standardized and Sustainable Rate Methodologies



The Arc of Florida recommends establishing a uniform transportation reimbursement methodology to ensure safe access to the community for individuals with I/DD.



The Arc of Florida supports adoption of a monthly/daily billing structure for Adult Day Training (ADT) services to help families experience more consistent day services.

SYSTEM-WIDE PRIORITIES



Reducing the Waiting List – More than 22,000 individuals with I/DD in Florida remain on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' (APD) Waiting list. The Arc of Florida strongly supports reducing the Waiting list and ensuring timely access to supports and services.



Managed Care for Individuals with I/DD – With the statewide expansion of the Managed Care Pilot beginning in October 2025, Florida has the opportunity to design a family-centered, person-focused delivery system. The Arc of Florida supports long term safeguards that sustain quality programs and services to avoid reductions in provider rates.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Summer Pfeiffer, The Arc of Florida CEO
summer@arcflorida.org

2898 Mahan Drive Suite 1 • Tallahassee, FL 32308 • 850.921.0460 • www.arcflorida.org

Resources and Contact Information

- Brevard Autism Coalition; <https://brevardautismcoalition.com/>
- Angels Bridging Gaps; <https://angelsbridginggaps.org/>
- The Parker Foundation; <https://www.theparkerfoundation.com/>
- S.O.A.K.; <https://www.soakautism.com/>
- Down Syndrome Association of Brevard; <https://www.dsabrevard.org/>
- UCF CARD; <https://ucf-card.org/>
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council; <https://www.fddc.org/>
- Project 10; <https://project10.info/>
- Vocational Rehabilitation; <https://www.rehabworks.org/contact/area3.html>
- FLAPSE; <https://apse.org/chapter/florida/>
- The Arc of Space Coast; <https://www.arcofsc.org/>
- Promise in Brevard; <https://promiseinbrevard.com/>
- Brevard Resource Center for Disability Solutions; <https://rcdsfl.org/>
- The Family Cafe; <https://familycafe.net>
- Family Liason Project; <https://familyliasonproject.com>
- Early Steps Space Coast; <https://spacecoastes.org>
- Family Care Council Area 7; <https://fccflorida.org/area-7-fcc.html>
- Bright Feats magazine
- Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Mobil Response Team 24/hour line (321) 213-0315



For more information or questions, please see our Facebook page.

Resources and Extras

Inclusion Isn't Scary

W	B	T	V	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	D	B	H	
C	R	U	Y	R	F	V	X	I	J	C	I	X	Y	
E	O	Y	T	G	U	E	C	U	C	H	G	O	C	
M	O	C	L	H	W	W	M	L	A	O	T	L	K	
E	M	O	P	O	F	I	B	I	N	N	W	Z	K	
T	S	S	O	S	K	T	X	Z	D	Y	W	T	G	
E	T	T	L	T	Z	C	H	A	Y	U	H	O	Y	
R	I	U	T	S	B	H	L	D	B	L	G	M	M	
Y	C	M	C	R	R	H	A	U	N	T	E	D	B	S
Y	K	E	A	W	A	L	K	I	N	G	Y	S	P	
N	U	N	T	S	K	E	L	E	T	O	N	T	I	
E	Y	V	O	V	W	L	X	I	B	N	H	O	D	
A	Z	K	O	B	A	T	E	P	K	Z	F	N	E	
N	I	G	H	T	U	E	R	T	I	O	D	E	R	



Take the time to read

Self-care for October



Go for a walk with a friend



Spa Night Bath



Watch an old Halloween movie



For more information or questions, please see our Facebook page.



October Events

Disability Employment Awareness Month

OCTOBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- The Parker Foundation presents “Speak Through the Arts” fall session, Wednesday, October 1st, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., at the Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club in Indian Harbor Beach. This is a FREE event. See flyer for additional details.
- UCF CARD presents “Caregivers of Soon-To-Be Adults with ASD” Zoom on Wednesdays in October, starting on October 1, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. See flyer for additional details.
- UCF CARD presents “Adults with ASD Forum”, Thursday, October 2, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m and Thursday, October 16th, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. These forums will be offered every first and third Thursday of each month. See Flyer for additional information.
- The Brevard Association for the Advancement of the Blind presents Sprint for Sight, a 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, October 4th, 7:30a.m. at Gleason Park, Indian Harbor Beach. Register to participate or volunteer. See flyer.
- The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia presents “Echo Autism: Navigation Family Expectations”, Friday, October 10th, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. This is an on-line presentation. See flyer for registration information.
- Angels Bridging Gaps Fall Session Adult group, beginning Tuesday, 5 August through Thursday, the 18th of December. Events are scheduled from 11:00 am to 2 pm. For more information, contact Angels Bridging Gaps.
- EmpowerU!, an 8-week hybrid course presented by the University of Florida IFAS Extension, beginning September 15th through November 8th. Check the flyer for registration costs and additional information.
- Be A Buddy 5K, Family Health and Fitness Expo. held on Saturday, October 18th, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free Family Health and Fitness Expo after the race. The 5K and Expo are to be held at the Space Coast Field of Dreams. See Flyer for registration and more info.
- Save the Date: The 12th Annual Brevard Uncorked, Friday, 7 November, from 8pm to 10pm, The Grand Manor, 1450 Serno Rd, Melbourne
- Save the Date: Santa’s North Pole Outlet for Kids and Adults, Saturday, December 5th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Held at the Space Coast Field of Dreams in West Melbourne. See flyer for more info.
- Orlando Health presents Boo at the Zoo. Weekends in October, 1- a.m. - 3 p.m. A family-friendly Halloween celebration filled with fun for all ages. All activities are included with Zoo admission.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Event Flyers



Event Flyers

CAREGIVERS OF ADULTS AND SOON-TO-BE ADULTS WITH ASD

Resource and discussion group via Zoom
6:30PM-8:00PM

Free monthly resource and discussion group for parents of adults and late teens (16+) on the autism spectrum. Open forum for parents to discuss concerns, seek resources, and gain support in assisting their adult children.

NOW ON WEDNESDAYS!

TO REGISTER: scan the QR code or copy the link below:
<https://coa4654.eventbrite.com>



Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



ECHO Autism: Navigating Family Expectations

WHEN:
Friday, Oct. 10, 2025 | 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

ECHO Autism: While You Wait is an evidence-based virtual community that allows family members of a child awaiting an autism evaluation or access to developmental services to learn about what they can do while they wait for those appointments.

Session: Navigating Family Expectations
Each session is 75 minutes. Registration is required.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://tinyurl.com/55xrmw52> to register.





Speak Through arts
Fall Session

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1ST 5:30PM - 7:00PM
KIWI RACQUET AND FITNESS CLUB
30 TRADEWINDS DRIVE
INDIAN HARBOUR BEACH, FL 32937

FREE art clinic, all materials provided. Collaborative and individual projects with Buddy Ambassadors and team - Individual Art station, holiday votive holder, rock painting and more!

Open to children, teens and young adults with ASD's and special needs and their siblings. Parent/caregiver must stay on site. Space is limited: Register through Eventbrite separately for each session; please cancel registration if you are unable to attend.



Community Pathways for Kids' Teddy Bear PICNIC
SPONSORED BY: WEST MELBOURNE COMMUNITY PARK

15 DONATION PER CHILD

FOODS - GAMES - FUN

Pack a Blanket, bring your favorite teddy, and come play with us in the park-an event packed with fun, friendship, and friends!

SATURDAY
15 NOVEMBER
FIELD OF DREAMS PARK
AT 1PM-4PM
3053 FELL RD, WEST MELBOURNE, FL 32894
QUESTIONS: INFO@COMPATTHEKIDS.ORG



SPACE COAST FIELD OF DREAMS
Minton & Fell Roads in West Melbourne

There will be a special kids-only area where they can go shopping for gifts and have fun with their parents. Children will be escorted throughout the special kids-only area by our Angel Elves, who will help with their decision-making and gift wrapping as well as the Local Cub Scout pack.

Family members and caregivers can browse over 20 home-crafted vendors. There will be live music, as well as of course, SANTA!

Please contact that forgotten elf, "Uncle Phil", for more information on becoming a vendor, musical act, or to volunteer at: ABG.marketingdirector@gmail.com or (321)324-1643

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 6TH, 2025
10 AM UNTIL 2 PM**



#BEABUDDY5K FAMILY HEALTH & FITNESS EXPO
YOUTH PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION

10/18/25

SPACE COAST FIELD OF DREAMS
FREE EXPO 9AM TO 11AM AFTER THE RACE
PLEASE JOIN US FOR A MORNING OF FALL FAMILY FUN AND HAVE YOUR CHILDREN TAKE PART IN ADAPTIVE SPORTS WITH BUDDIES AROUND THE PARK AND TRICK OR TREAT WITH RACE SPONSORS AND VENDORS!
MUSIC/EMCEE TIMMY VEE

FAMILIES REGISTER THROUGH EVENTBRITE TO ATTEND THE FREE EXPO AND ADAPTIVE SPORTS FUN!
<https://buddyexpo2025.eventbrite.com>

Questions:
info@theparkerfoundation.com

Be a Buddy!
October is Bullying Prevention Month!



