

June 7, 2018

**For Immediate Release**



The Pinellas Autism Project is proud to announce that it has expanded its summer swimming program to include all children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and related disabilities. Prior to June 7, the program was offered solely for participants in “Summer on the Spectrum,” PAP’s summer camp.

The swimming lessons are offered on Tuesdays beginning on June 12 at the pool at Northeast High School in St. Petersburg from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Non-campers need to have a parent or guardian who can join them in the water. The lessons last about 30 minutes with about 90 minutes of free swim/play time. There are changing facilities at the NEHI pool. Children who are developing toileting skills are welcome with swimmy diapers or swimmy pullups. For kids developing toileting skills we recommend prompting bathroom breaks every 30 minutes. Bring your own towels, sunscreen and beverages. (No glass containers.)

To register, please text parent/guardian name, email, and the child’s name, gender and age to (727) 542-2520. You can also call Veva Scott, PAP secretary, at the same number.

Lessons are every Tuesday (weather permitting) at the NEHI pool, which is approximately located at 1801 54th Ave N; St Petersburg, FL 33713. The pool is just East of the 275 Exit for 54th Avenue N. PAP accepts credit cards, checks and cash. The cost is \$75 for the entire summer. The last lesson is Aug. 7. No refunds or credits for cancellation due to weather.

Non-campers can also join PAP on Thursday field trips. (Ask for a schedule.) You must provide your own transportation to and from field trips and non-campers need to have a parent or guardian with them at all times. Families must also pay for admission and miscellaneous costs to participate. (It’s generally about \$10 per person.)

All PAP’s programs are designed by ABA therapists. Programs emphasize building social skills, getting exercise and learning to be responsible for one’s own well being, which includes a camper’s sensory and behavioral deficits. Swimming lessons focus on safety skills, which include swimming or dog paddling, and pulling oneself out of the pool. Advanced swimmers learn to safely use diving boards and swim under water.

All swimmers are invited to our beach party Friday, July 27, from 10 am to 1 pm, where we will practice open water skills. A kid’s BBQ lunch will be served at noon. Cost is \$5 per person for lunch.

PAP’s mission is to “Transform the World for Families Affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder.”

Our goals are to:

- **IDENTIFY** — What is Autism Spectrum Disorder? Who is affected by Autism? What services and support do they need? How can we bring those services to Pinellas County?
- **ADAPT** — Help those affected by Autism (and the community as a whole) to discover ways to challenge kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder and eliminate barriers to their success.
- **ADVOCATE** — Make sense of the patchwork of insurance, therapies, education, laws and other resources. Become a champion for people with Autism, so they can thrive and contribute to the community.

**MORE**

## **Our Current Initiatives Include:**

- **Play Dates** — Monthly play dates in Clearwater and St. Petersburg for elementary-age kids
- **Teen Game Nights** — Monthly game night for teens in St. Pete
- **Support Groups** — Monthly meetings for parents, sibling and adults on the Spectrum
- **IEP Advocacy** — PAP staff will attend IEP meetings with families as requested.
- **Insurance Advocacy** — PAP staff and network of professionals will help find insurance
- **Pairing Families with Service Providers** — Help families find ABA, OT, PT providers
- **Summer Camp** — The only ABA-based camp in Pinellas County
- **Holiday Camps** — Therapy-based camp at Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Break
- **Parent Therapy Support** — Launching Fall of 2018
- **After School Program for six grade and up** — Launching Fall of 2018
- **After School Program for K-5** — Launching January 2019

*About the Pinellas Autism Project: Launched in April 2016, the Pinellas Autism Project serves families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder and related disabilities. PAP offers support groups for parents and siblings; holiday and summer camps for kids; advocacy for children with schools and insurance; and support for finding medical and behavioral services. PAP is a 501(C)3 organization funded by donations and service fees. To learn more, contact Executive Director Matt Wiseman by calling 727-483-1305 or emailing matt@pinellasautism.org.*