

# FASD News and Views



A Michigan Coalition for Fetal Alcohol Resources, Education and Support (MCFARES) Newsletter











Established in 2003

## Questions We Are Asked

**Question:** *Our son is almost 16 years old. We want to be prepared for his needs after high school but we don't know where to start. Please help.*

**Answer:** It's generally a good idea to plan ahead. For many of our kids, though, we don't know what we're planning for making the planning more challenging. Will our child be able meet the requirements for a high school diploma or will a certificate of completion be more appropriate? Will our child be able to live independently or are we looking at a supervised living situation? The questions and scenarios are endless. Here are a couple thoughts to get you started:

**DIAGNOSIS:** If you have not yet received a diagnosis from a State-recommended clinic, consider doing so before your son is 18. You also might want to consider getting evaluations to document all co-occurring disorders. The documentation that you receive should also have a list of recommendations for both educational and community services. Seek evaluations and diagnoses for any medical or psychological challenges that may affect your child. Keep copies of the results of each evaluation.

	Questions We Are Asked	1
	Things our Kids Say	2
	Rising Stars	3
	Super Kids / Smart Choices	4
	Braggs	5
	Project Safe, Service Dogs	6
	Donate	8
	Support Groups	9

**VOCATIONAL EVALUATION:** Starting in middle school or no later than early high school, your child should participate in vocational evaluations and assessments. Help your child to prepare a plan for post-high school activities (i.e., college, vocational

school, employment). Re-evaluate the plan regularly and adjust his high school program as necessary. Learn about the educational and vocational services available to your child for after high school. In your child's last year of high school, request educational and psychological testing so that you can have recent test scores available in the event that you are applying for specialized assistance.

**FINANCIAL:** As your son approaches his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, begin to assess whether or not he'll need on-going financial assistance. Research the qualification for receiving public assistance. If you'll be applying for government funding, begin collecting necessary documentation such as evaluations that document a permanent disability, a list of contact information for professionals who have evaluated your son and copies of these reports.

**SUPPORTS:** We all need supports in our lives. Many of us find these supports from family members or through our jobs or our social activities. Our children may have a more difficult time finding supports who will help them make appropriate choices. We can help point our children to supports who are interested in helping them succeed. Prior to your son's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, begin to assess whether or not he might benefit from a legal guardian. Consider working your way through this book with your son: *Preparing for Your Future: Transition Workbook* <http://www.hayskids.org/documents/preparing%20for%20your%20future%203-23-11.pdf>. This will help your son to develop some goals for his future and assess areas where he may need assistance.

Most decisions you make can be altered if necessary. The important thing is to do what you can to have information available to help you make informed decisions and to involve your son as much as possible.

*If you have an FASD-related question that you'd like answered, please submit it to: [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org). You may find your question answered in our next newsletter.*

## Things Our Kids Say

Yesterday Marissa left a light on when she left a room and I asked her if she would please turn out the light. She was 2 feet from me and has no hearing issues. She looked right at me and said "It's because of the game." She had her DS in her hand at the time so I know it had something to do with her video game, but the incongruity was amazing. I just reached over and turned out the light.

## Rising Stars

### Life Skills & Culinary Arts Academy

#### WHO WE ARE

Rising Stars Academy is located in Centerline and is for students with special needs, ages 18-26 who have exited high school with a certificate of completion. These students possess disabilities ranging from cognitive impairments to autism, do not have a diploma upon exiting high school and are offered an education through the State of Michigan until they reach the age of 26.



#### THE VISION

All students prepared with the skills to be employable and functioning as productive citizens in our community.

#### THE MISSION

Learning for all children, to achieve success in school, the workplace and life.

#### THE PROGRAM

The Focus of Rising Stars Academy is the world of food and concept of “farm to plate”. The program includes a community garden and greenhouse, along with a commercial kitchen a fully functional restaurant open to the public for meals and bakery items. Students learn where food comes from; how

they can grow their own produce; prepare meals for consumption; and serve these meals to the public; as well as other aspects of the food industry, such as agriculture, food production and service. All of these skills will be accomplished while reinforcing academic programs such as Corrective Reading and Corrective Math.

The school is housed in a previously-vacated elementary school. The former playground has been transformed into a farm, complete with garden plots, hoop houses and a chicken coop! Inside, the students grow vegetables and micro grains in aquaponics and hydroponics systems funded by Rising Stars Foundation. In addition, the students learn to prepare food in both an industrial/commercial kitchen and what they refer to as the “demo room,” a classroom that houses stainless steel work stations and residential-style cooking stoves. On most Wednesdays through Fridays, the school cafeteria opens to the public as the All-Star Café and serves lunch prepped by, cooked by, and served by the students.



## ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

Enrolling at the Rising Stars Academy is a simple process. We encourage all prospective students to visit the school to see the learning environment, the state of the art equipment and other important amenities designed to encourage learning and promote a healthy educational environment. You can also visit our website at <http://www.rising-stars-academy.org> and learn a little bit more about the forms that will need to be completed prior to enrollment and important registration deadlines.

## NEW PROGRAMS COMING SOON

Rising Stars Academy is in the process of adding such programs as Drivers' Training and Music.



23855 Lawrence

Centerline, MI 48015

586-806-6455

586-806-6967-Fax

[www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org)

[Check us out on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram](#)

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## Super Kids

### Smart Choices

The Super Kids/Smart Choices summer socialization program will run again this year from July 14 through July 24, Monday through Thursday of each week. It will be held at a school in the Fraser School District. Students, ages 5 to 17, who are on the fetal alcohol spectrum or who are suspected to be on the spectrum are eligible to attend. The cost is \$30/child for Macomb County students and \$60/child for out-of-county students. The fee includes camp t-shirt, daily snacks and bowling trip.

Please contact Charisse Cossu-Kowalski at [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org) for more information.

## GoodSearch

Please consider using [GoodSearch](#) for your internet searching needs and designate MCFARES as your charity of choice. Also check out other ways to earn funds for MCFARES by using [GoodShop](#) when you shop on the internet and [GoodGames](#) when you want to play on-line games. Funds raised will help MCFARES to continue providing resources, support, education and prevention information to the community.

## Braggs

### Megan

Megan has been skating for 4 years, working very hard to overcome her "crossing midline" issue. She watches videos trying to figure things out and has volunteers who help her at practice. Keeping involved through Special Olympics has helped her in many ways, but most important to her parents is the friendships she develops through the program and her increases in self-esteem. She just competed in the State Summer Games where she took 1st place for singles and 2nd place in doubles, where she bested her average (84) by 30 pins in both matches. She really gets the competition adrenaline.

### Gabby

Gabby, age 11, made dinner for all 4 of us on her own a few weeks ago: Ambrosia salad (minus coconut because we don't like it), grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup, which the kids discovered they do not like! She did a great job and has continued to make her own lunches on weekends.



### Watch Megan Solo On Youtube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3H5ibcXck4&feature=youtu\\_gdata\\_player](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3H5ibcXck4&feature=youtu_gdata_player)



### Jacob

Jacob K. decided to delay his training at Michigan Career and Technical Institute until the Fall. Why? So that he could work in food services at Cedar Point and stay in the employee apartments during the Summer.



## Project S.A.F.E. (Supportive Activities for Everyone)

Project S.A.F.E. is a monthly pot-luck activity for families who are living with FASD. Our families come together for a meal, play time for the children and time for support for adults. Project S.A.F.E. is held at Fellowship Chapel at 12875 14 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48312. Our scheduled dates are: February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10. We meet from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. If you're able to join us, please contact Charisse at [charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:charisse@mcfares.org) (unless other arrangements are made, these meetings are reserved for family members only).



## Service Dogs: The Pawsitives

Dennis Calaj, Acorn Staff Reporter

A dog is a man's best friend. Service dogs, however, elevate this age-old saying to a new level. Chances are some of the dogs we see on a day-to-day basis may very well be service dogs. According to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service dog is classified as an animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. What sets service dogs apart from regular dogs? According to Assistance Dogs International, a service dog must undergo roughly 180 to 360 hours of rigorous training with a daunting 80%



Anna Perantoni (above) and her service dog, Barkley (G. St. Onge)

failure rate and meet strict qualification requirements. Service animals in schools, for instance, have to be very well-trained and adept. However,

it is important to realize that service dogs are working animals; they are not pets while they're on the job, despite how adorable and friendly they appear.

ROHS social worker Phil McPeck works with students who require assistance with service dogs and understands the intense training that these dogs have to undergo. "The training that dogs undergo to be certified as a service dog is astonishing. They must also be extremely well-behaved and have a safe temperament," McPeck said. By this point in the school year, most ROHS students have seen the service dog that belongs to student Anna Perantoni, who is very familiar with the rigorous training that service dogs have to undergo.

"This specific dog was trained for a couple of months, but most dogs start training at around 8 weeks old. The training varies, depending on where the dog is bred, but from

what I know, dogs from organizations could be more problematic in terms of training and bonding with their owner than, say, dogs from a shelter,” she said. According to the United States Dog Registry, any breed can be trained to be a service dog, but the most common are Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, and Labradoodles. Under the ADA, service dogs can also accompany their owner to any public facility, such as movie theaters or restaurants. “Service dogs can go anywhere that regular dogs can go, with the inclusion of public places, like beaches, that would normally prohibit dogs on the premises,” McPeek said.

Many schools, including our own ROHS, have already accepted service dogs into the educational environment. “The benefits of having service dogs in schools shows that handicapped students are evident and that they’re a part of the student body, as we sometimes tend to forget that this is the case,” said McPeek. “This outweighs the possible disadvantages, such as the student caring for the dog and being responsible for its maintenance.”

Perantoni explained that the pros associated with service dogs in schools overshadow many of the cons. “My dog, Barkley, is especially helpful in calming me down and helping me focus in class. He’s a major stress reliever,” she said. Conversely, there are several challenges associated with having service dogs in schools. “Along with the responsibilities associated for tending to the dog, students will want to approach the dog out of instinct. In this regard, the dog serves as a distraction, but students need to refrain from approaching it and remember that, once the vest is on, it’s ready to work and no

distractions can be present,” said McPeek. “And while they may be very bright and people-friendly, any sort of distraction could hinder the dog’s ability to perform tasks that the student relies on,” said McPeek. When everything is said and done, opting for a service dog is no easy undertaking for a student or the educational environment.

“In addition to the veterinary and maintenance costs associated with having a dog in a public and crowded setting, there’s always a possibility of something not going the way it should and the dog being unable to respond to this. Since some service dogs are trained for the individual’s particular disability or impairment, this is very often not the case. But, as with important decisions like these, there are always going to be challenges,” said McPeek. Altogether though, McPeek feels that the advantages associated with service dogs outweigh any possible downsides. “More service dogs would be beneficial and should be evident in schools nationwide,” he said. Overall, service dogs are highly beneficial to students suffering from any sort of disability—be it a visual, cognitive, or mobility impairment. They can perform important tasks that people take for granted, such as opening doors or simply picking up a pencil, for students who may have a difficult time doing these themselves. In addition, the level of self-discipline service dogs demonstrate ensures that they do not pose any sort of distraction to the learning environment of a classroom. “You hardly even know that they’re there,” McPeek said.

*Originally published in Royal Oak High School Acorn Newsmagazine - February, 2014*

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## \* \* Donate \* \*

### Stamps & Things

MCFARES could use your help. Please consider donating stamps so that we might be able to mail information to those interested in learning more about FASDs. We could always use more printer paper so that we might be able to print brochures that provide information about our services. HP 564 printer cartridges are also needed.

### Time – Work with Us!

Do you have a few hours to spare? We have several different opportunities to help you put your spare time to good use. Do you like kids? Maybe you can enjoy Project S.A.F.E. with us and supervise the children after dinner so that parents have some time to talk. Do you have website-building skills? We'd love your help re-designing and updating the MCFARES website. Do you have newsletter-designing skills? We could use your help putting the quarterly MCFARES FASD News and Views newsletter together (we'll develop the content and you can organize it into the newsletter).



*Michigan's Tahquamenon Falls in the Summer*





## Support Groups for FASD in Michigan

### (not all groups are specifically for FASD support)

(Please phone or email contact person prior to attending to ensure that group is still meeting. If information has changed, please email Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org)).

#### Alpena County

FASD Family Support Group, Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month; 6:30 – 8 p.m., Thunder Bay Transportation Authority, 3022 US23 S, Alpena. Contact Mary Schalk at [maryschalk@frontier.com](mailto:maryschalk@frontier.com) 989-734-2877 for more information.

#### Eaton County

Eaton County Foster Adopt Support Group, Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday monthly, 6 – 8:30 p.m. Pot-luck dinner at 6:00 p.m. Group/training at 6:30 p.m. Childcare available. Eaton Intermediate School District, 1790 Packard Highway, Charlotte, MI 48813. Located right next door to Walmart. Contact Michelle for more information at [besa\\_93@yahoo.com](mailto:besa_93@yahoo.com).

#### Kent County

West Michigan FASD Support Group, Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Westminster Presbyterian Church, 47 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Contact Sandy Kezenius, 616-874-9522; Corry Tait, 616-550-4273; or Barbara Wybrecht, 616-241-9126 or [bmwybrecht@gmail.com](mailto:bmwybrecht@gmail.com) for more information.

Self-Advocates with and FASD in Action (SAFA), generally meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. The meeting is for adults age 18 and up who have an official FASD diagnosis. Contact Rob Wybrecht for more information, [rob1195@yahoo.com](mailto:rob1195@yahoo.com).

### Macomb County

Project SAFE (Supportive Activities for Everyone), Generally on a Friday or Saturday evening from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at various locations in Macomb County. Families meet for pot-luck dinner followed by supervised play for the children and support group time for adults. Contact Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org) or 586-329-6722.

Brunch Bunch, Monthly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., In Clinton Township, Contact Charisse at [Charisse@mcfares.org](mailto:Charisse@mcfares.org) or 586-329-6722 for location details.

### Washtenaw County

Ann Arbor Support Group, Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month except November (meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday) and December (no meeting), 7 -9 p.m. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Education Center, Classroom #5, 5305 East Huron Drive. Contact Betsy for more information, [betsysoden@juno.com](mailto:betsysoden@juno.com).

### On-line Support

Families and Supports Affected by FASD: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FaSAFASD>

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MCFARES is the Michigan NOFAS Affiliate

# Night Under the Stars

Thursday, June 19, 2014  
6-10 p.m.



[www.rising-stars-academy.org](http://www.rising-stars-academy.org)

Eastern Market - Shed # 3  
2934 Russell Street  
Detroit, MI 48207

★ \$50.00 per person  
Includes: Beer, Wine, Food Tastings  
Entertainment - Raffle

★ Tickets On Sale NOW!  
★ Contact: Rising Stars  
Academy  
586.806.6455

Proceeds benefit Rising  
Stars Academy

**FEATURE**  
**Chopped Cooking**  
**contest**  
**With Area**  
**Chefs**

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## MCFARES Member Agencies

Arc Services of Macomb  
(fiduciary)

Macomb County Office of  
Substance Abuse

Family members of affected  
individuals

Oakland University School of  
Nursing

Macomb Intermediate School  
District, Early On

Macomb County Community  
Mental Health

Fraser Public Schools

Macomb Family Services

Macomb County Health  
Department

Madonna University



***MCFARES needs you.  
Call us at 586-329-6722  
to find out how you can  
help.***

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## MCFARES

44050 N. Gratiot  
Clinton Township, MI 48036

RECIPIENT  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
Address Line 4

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