

COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVITED TO UPCOMING HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT AT HIGGINS EDUCATION CENTER



Community members are invited to a Halloween-themed event that not only allows children to “trick or treat,” but also provides valuable information about community resources.

This year’s Halloween Trunk or Treat event will take place on Oct. 20 at the Higgins Education Center, 1030 W. Higgins Rd., from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The event is hosted by the Higgins Education Center in partnership with the Palatine Opportunity Center, and admission is free for both children and adults.

The event is a great opportunity to learn about the programs and services offered through District 211. Individuals and families can tour the Higgins Education Center as well as gain information about social agencies that serve the Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, Palatine and the surrounding communities. Roughly 12 agencies will be on site at informational tables. Many of the agency representatives are bilingual, and will offer information in both English and Spanish.



In addition, the agencies will be passing out candy and other treats to children dressed up in Halloween costumes. There will be trick or treating opportunities both inside and outside of the building.

For more information about the Halloween Trunk or Treat event, please contact (847) 755-5945

ANNUAL DIRECTIONS 2016 EVENT APPROACHING FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



What is the Directions College and Career Fair?

This event is co-hosted by High School District 211, Township High School District 211, Barrington Unit District 220, Harper College, and St. Viator High School, and is aimed specifically towards students with special needs. Representatives from colleges and post-secondary institutions will be available to distribute literature and discuss their programs.

The goal is to provide every student access to an academic and/or a career-oriented opportunity after high school, and equip every student with the knowledge they need to succeed after graduation.

Where/When is the event?

Where: Tuesday, September 27, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Location: District 214 Forest View Education Center, 2121 S. Goebbert Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Event details

6:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. Planning/Student Registration

6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Michael S. Southern

The Transition of Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education
Mr. Southern is the Director of the Disability Services Office at the University of Cincinnati.

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. College and Career Fair

Additional Information

For further information, please visit our website: <http://directionscollegecareerfair.org/>
or contact Diane Hines, CCIJ Transition Specialist, at dhines@GSLI.org/847.755.1351, or Patrick Abraham, CCIJ Transition Services Coordinator, at pabraham@GSLI.org/847.755.1346.

In an effort to help encourage and provide guidance for parents transitioning their students out of high school and into vocational or collegiate opportunities after graduation, District 211 is part of a team of local educational institutions participating in Directions College and Career Fair 2016.

The event, which will take place on Sept. 27 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the District 214 Forest View Educational Center, 2121 S. Goebbert Rd., in Arlington Heights, is sponsored by Township High School District 211, High School District 214, Barrington Community Unit School District 220, St. Viator High School, William Rainey Harper College, and Northwest Educational Council for Student Success.

All students who have received any type of special education programming, as well as their families, are encouraged to attend. Representatives from colleges and post-secondary institutions will be available to distribute literature and discuss their programs.

The evening will begin with a keynote from Michael S. Southern, the director of Disability Services at the University of Cincinnati. Parents and students are encouraged to attend the College and Career Fair that will take place during the event.

To obtain further information or for special accommodations, please visit the [website](http://directionscollegecareerfair.org/).

DISTRICT 211 ATP PROGRAM CHANGES LIVES THROUGH CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



Allison Meehan poses with her parents at their home in Palatine, Ill.

Three days a week Allison Meehan goes to work. She runs through her morning routines and makes sure she gets herself to work at the local police department on time. Allison, or “A-Team” as her coworkers call her, is always interested in learning new tasks and starts the day’s projects with a smile on her face. Her hard work and love for her community show as she enthusiastically jokes around in the office while breezing through her work. While Allison’s day sounds similar to many, it is how she got there that is truly unique.

Allison also has an intellectual disability that challenges her in her day-to-day life, but she has developed skills to compensate for her challenges through the opportunities and experiences she had while at Palatine High School and in the Adult Transition Program (ATP). The ATP in District 211 does more than teach students important life skills – it creates opportunities for them to experience life through a more independent lens. The focus is on developing student’s self-determination skills so they can live as independently as possible, access community resources, and become full participating members of society. Students participate in a variety of experiences that promote skill development in the areas of recreation and leisure, functional daily living, accessing and navigating their communities, and vocational experiences.

“We are very thankful that there is a program like this to provide different experiences and exposure for her,” said Allison’s mother Amy Meehan. “For her to learn what she likes as a work experience and environment and what she is comfortable with, she really ran the gamut on her experiences.”



Allison (center) works at the Palatine Police Department. She poses with Palatine Police Chief Alan Stoeckel and his assistant Kathy Lesselyoung.

Since 2009, ATP has provided specific instruction and community-based experiences to 18-21 year old students like Allison, who have intellectual disabilities. Between District 211's two ATP locations, an average of 60 students per year, or roughly five percent of the District's total special education population, are served. For many parents of students in ATP, where their child will go or what they will do when they leave the program is of great concern. Ultimately, the goal in ATP is for students to seamlessly transition from high school to leading adult lives, as independently as possible, with an individualized plan in place.

"We knew ATP was in place when she was in high school," said Michael Meehan, Allison's father. "We knew after she graduated she would be in ATP, which was great. We were hoping for a number of experiences she ended up having so she could find her way and see what she was capable of doing. She rose to the top. I believe we could have been a little lost without the support she received."

The two ATP houses are located at Higgins Education Center in Hoffman Estates (ATP-South) and on the grounds of Palatine High School. The newly constructed building, ATP-North at Palatine High School, was built by District 211 Building Construction students and District 211 maintenance staff in a joint effort. An open house will be held on August 19, 2016, from 4:30-6:00 p.m.



[Click to enlarge](#)

“We are so excited for our students to move into the brand new Adult Transition Program-North building at Palatine High School,” said District 211 Transition Services Coordinator Patrick Abraham. “The construction of this new home for our students is extra special because it was built in partnership by our own D211 Building and Construction classes. By being directly involved in the building of the new ATP at Palatine, these students have in turn helped pave the way for future ATP students to gain an even greater experience each day at school in working towards their individualized Transition goals so they can become contributing members of our local community within which they live.”

Work Experiences and Independence

The opportunities provided in ATP through various in-district and community-based work experiences allow students to work towards becoming individuals who are ready for employment. Prior to the 2009-2010 inception of the program, post-secondary outcomes for this population showed that approximately 25 percent of students exited District 211 with competitive employment or having established linkages to community-based services and resources. Approximately 75 percent exited the school system with no plans for working within the state’s limited work capacity or linkages to post-secondary adult-based community agencies.

Since the inception of the Adult Transition Program, the number of students of this population who have exited District 211 with competitive employment or having established linkages to community-based services and resources has increased significantly. Currently, over 75 percent of ATP students exit the school system with community-based volunteer placements, adult day program placements, supported work placements and/or competitive employment opportunities.

The program’s innovative and individualized curriculum helps students like Allison gain exposure to different aspects of adult life. The Adult Transition Program provides students exiting the program to experience as seamless of a transition as possible and access to linkages for adult services such as Community Alternatives Unlimited (CAU), Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), community volunteering, adult day programs, supported work placements and/or competitive employment opportunities.

The ATP facility and program are designed to simulate an independent student’s full

day. Some additional learning opportunities ATP students have include participation in work experiences such as the coffee cart service, delivering mail within the school and greeting school visitors at the front desk. Additionally, each student participates in a community-based work training experience. Staff works to align those experiences to students' areas of interest, as they prepare for their transition from the school setting to adulthood. District 211 has many community business partners, which enables the program to offer a wide array of experiences tailored to individual students' interests and abilities in industries such as hospitality, retail, fitness, community services and food service.

"The Adult Transition Program helps our students in District 211 with intellectual disabilities and other related disabilities to have opportunities in a variety of work experiences in our community as well continue to develop their daily independent living skills each day," Abraham said.



Allison works at her desk at the Palatine Police Department.

In Allison's experience, she excelled in ATP and was a very quick learner. With opportunities such as work experiences, practicing independent living skills, and social interactions, she has skills that allow her to be more independent in several aspects of her life. During her time in ATP, Allison participated in community-based work experiences at locations such as Innovative Components in Schaumburg, Ikea, and The YMCA. She also learned her likes and dislikes, as well as her strengths, in the work setting. Allison discovered she really likes working with people and would thrive in situations where she had interaction with others. Allison also identified her interest in police work. As Alison prepared to exit the program, a volunteer clerical position with the Palatine Police Department was coordinated as a work experience, which has since led to a paid intern position, where she works three days a week for four hours each day.

Practicing Skills in ATP Houses

A typical day in ATP consists of several different activities and opportunities located at the two ATP locations. In large, the ATP space is an environment that supports the transition from high school student to young adult. The ATP building space allows students to develop and practice skills that are necessary to lead as independent of lives as possible in a supported and safe environment. Students then work to generalize these skills in community-based settings, as they prepare for

young adulthood and leading independent lives. Each of the buildings are handicap accessible, including all kitchen appliances, making it is far easier for students who struggle with mobility, gross motor skills and navigating smaller spaces.



ATP-North Campus is on the grounds of Palatine High School. The newly constructed building will be completed by the start of the school year. An open house will be held on August 19, 2016, from 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Students in ATP spend a portion of their week engaged in recreation & leisure activities. They are encouraged to participate in healthy recreation and leisure activities and to develop lifelong healthy living habits. This is achieved through accessing community-based fitness centers, nature centers, and public libraries. Additionally, connections are made with community-based special recreation programs that offer recreation and leisure activities that are age-appropriate and encourage the continued development of healthy living skills into adulthood.

Students also work on functional daily living skills. Developing functional daily living skills is a fundamental step toward independent adult living. To accomplish this, students participate in a wide-range of activities in the ATP house on a daily basis. Functional daily living skills activities include meal preparation, which in addition to cooking includes meal planning, budgeting, preparing a grocery list, and shopping for groceries.



Higgins Education Center

Students also work to develop household skills, such as vacuuming, washing dishes, doing laundry, taking out the trash, and light home maintenance type tasks such as changing a light bulb or hanging a picture on the wall.

Allison's mother said she is confident in her daughter's skill base and abilities to

do several tasks around the house. Right now, Allison can make foods such as Ramen Noodles, and she is learning to make grilled cheese sandwiches. She also has helped prepare food for a family gathering.

“Any skill we want her to do, she can do,” said Allison’s mother. “Since Mike and I leave for work, she really is on her own to get herself up. We pick out her clothes the night before, and she has some milk, packs snacks for work, takes her backpack and sweater – even now she is more independent than when she came out of the program.”

To practice various life skills, each ATP house has state of the art amenities and rooms that can simulate an independent living home such as:

- Group Instruction Area

Students use the instructional area for small group pre-and post-community trip planning and review. Students who may need to first learn how to complete a task or job for their community-based work experience might use this space to first learn the skill before generalizing to community-based work experiences. This space also is used for computer-based tasks and small group social skills instruction.



Student kitchen at Higgins Education Center

Student Kitchen

Students have weekly opportunities to plan, purchase and prepare breakfast or lunch. Students also complete regular household chores such as washing and drying dishes, putting away groceries, and sweeping the floor.

- Laundry Room

Students in ATP work on the life skill of using a washer and dryer. In developing this skill, students engage in the activity of laundering a variety of items, including clothing worn during community-based recreational activities, kitchen towels and washcloths. Additionally, some students utilize the ATP laundry rooms as an in-house work experience, as they launder a variety of items for the school, such as athletic uniforms and student work shirts.

- Dining Room

Students use this space each day for breakfast and lunch, which they may prepare on their own, bring from home, or purchase from the student cafeteria. When not in use for breakfast or lunch, students use this space for pre- and post-planning for larger community outings, for full-program meetings and presentations, and for small group work.

- Leisure Area

Students in ATP are not only working on developing their vocational and community skills, but also independent and interactive leisure skills. The leisure skill development occurs both in the community and in-house. Students might choose to engage in leisure activities such as reading a magazine, searching for information on the Internet, socializing with peers, or playing a game.

- Sensory Room

Students are working on learning to use “real life” sensory supports when they may become anxious or upset in any setting. Physical exercise is encouraged not only for healthy living, but also as a practical way to relieve feelings of anxiety, excitement and/or frustration.

Accessing the Community

Outside the ATP house, students are immersed within their communities as they develop skills for independence. Students learn to be better consumers through shopping trips to purchase items for weekly cooking lessons, supplies for the ATP coffee cart, and for their personal needs. While in the community, students develop soft-skills needed for interacting with others in their communities. They rehearse steps needed to access community resources, such as public transportation, the local township office, the post office, and volunteer opportunities. Additionally, students participate in various activities out of school, such as game night or trips to a movie theater, that provide a more collegiate feel to ATP.

“Many students leave Palatine High School and go to work or Harper College, and take the next step,” Abraham said. “Facets of the program allow ATP students to hang out together and do things that young adults their age do.”

Moving Forward



Allison, or "A-Team" as her coworkers call her, is always interested in learning new tasks.

District 211 continues to work with local communities to create supports that help students with intellectual disabilities prepare to live more independent lives. The goal is to continue fostering relationships with local businesses to provide more work experiences for students, as well as create a more accessible community. For instance, public transportation is a possible growth area within the community because many students need extra supports while traveling independently.

In the meantime, students who leave the program are continuing to grow their own skillset. Allison's family hopes that parents who have children with disabilities learn about the ATP program and get their children involved.

"We take a lot of pride in the program and from my lens it is cutting edge what we are doing in our community," Abraham said. "The Board of Education and Superintendent Cates strongly support students with disabilities, and this program exemplifies that commitment and dedication to our students' needs. Someone told me this a long time ago – I have adopted it since – I want the first day of every student's young adult life to look like the last day of their day of their transition. That's what it's all about."

PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL'S CUPCAKES FOR A CAUSE EVENT SEEKS VOLUNTEERS, BAKERS

Palatine High School is gearing up for its annual Cupcakes for a Cause fundraiser hosted by the Special Education Department.

The event will take place on March 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the PHS cafeteria, and all proceeds from this event will go to special education clubs, activities, and

programs, including Special Olympics, Best Buddies, PAC Club, LLS Program, SPED Art Club, On Our Own club, PEP Squad, SCED Program, and additional donations will be given to ELS families in crisis.

The event is open for the entire family. At Cupcakes for a Cause, cupcakes, coffee, water, and milk will be available for purchase. There will be free children's entertainment, including face painting. Anyone who volunteers to bake cupcakes will also be eligible for the cupcake contest, in which awards will be given in various categories. Local businesses are providing gift basket raffles, and there is also a 50/50 Split the Pot.

Anyone interested in baking cupcakes can register by March 4 on the PHS Cupcakes for a Cause [website](#). All cupcakes must be dropped off on March 5. Drive around to the west side of the building, Entrance 3, and students will help unload the car. Please have your cupcakes in box lids or disposable containers with labels on each type of cupcake and/or container.

For more information, please visit the Cupcakes for a Cause [website](#), view the [Facebook event invite](#) or follow on Twitter @PHS_Cupcakes.

DISTRICT 211 HIGGINS EDUCATION CENTER OFFERS CENTRALIZED LOCATION FOR MULTIPLE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



The District 211 Higgins Education Center, 1030 W. Higgins Rd., is undergoing renovations to house programs that were either outside of District 211 boundaries or did not have a permanent structure. The

building will offer greater efficiency of support, administration, transportation services, and utilization of the District's facilities.

District 211 offers several special education programs that meet the needs of its students and community, and for the first time many of those programs will be housed in one centralized building.

The District 211 Higgins Education Center, 1030 W. Higgins Rd., is undergoing renovations to house programs that were either outside of District 211 boundaries or did not have a permanent structure. The building will offer greater efficiency of support, administration, transportation services, and utilization of the District's facilities.

"The centralized location of the Higgins Education Center will allow us to serve our students within the District and local community, as well have access to a greater number of District resources," said Renée Erickson, director of Special Education at District 211. "We are grateful for the District's commitment to providing educational opportunities and transition programming to students, as locally as possible."

In August 2015, the building will be home to the Adult Transitions Program-South program, currently located on the grounds of Hoffman Estates High School, District 211 Academy-South, and New Endeavors, a new program designed to serve students who demonstrate behaviors and characteristics along the autism spectrum.

Relocating these programs to the newly renovated building will provide added space and offer multiple benefits as a result of the proximity to the facilities at Hoffman Estates High School. The Academy-South program is currently housed in a leased facility outside of the District 211 boundaries. The ATP Program-South has been accommodated in a pair of repurposed trailers in the east parking lot of Hoffman Estates High School since 2009. Many of the students who will enter the New Endeavors program may have previously been educationally placed outside the District, into either the Miner School program through Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO) or private therapeutic day schools.

"We are very excited about the opportunity before us to build upon our existing practices and programs and to bring multiple programs under one roof," Erickson said. "While each program within the Higgins Education Center will serve a specific population of students, the opportunity to bring students together as part of a new and unique school community is just thrilling."

BUSINESSES HONORED FOR PARTNERSHIPS, WORKSITES PROVIDED TO D211 STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Several community businesses were recently recognized for their partnership with District 211 to provide worksites for students with special needs.

The businesses were honored by the Board of Education at its Feb.12 meeting. There are 23 local businesses that partner with District 211, and through these partnerships the District is able to provide students with true-to-life work experiences that help prepare students for their lives after high school.

“The transition from high school to young adulthood can be nerve-racking and complex for students with disabilities,” said Renée Erickson, director of Special Education at District 211. “To assist these students, the District provides an individualized service that often involves the District’s transition services team, led by Patrick Abraham. The transition services team works to develop partnerships with many local businesses and create extraordinary opportunities for students to engage in real-life work experiences, where they can learn, practice, and master workplace skills.”

Erickson said that over the past five years, more than 2,000 students have benefitted from these business connections. This school year, opportunities were created for more than 250 District 211 students.

“It is with deepest gratitude,” Erickson said, “that District 211 recognizes and thanks our local business partners for their partnership and commitment to our students.”

The following businesses received Board recognition: ·

- Buehler YMCA
- Cintas
- Countryside Association
- eWorks
- GFS Marketplace
- Good Shepherd Health & Fitness Center
- Harper College – Food Service Training Program
- Home Goods of Schaumburg
- Home Goods of Palatine
- IKEA
- Learning Loft
- Lifetime Fitness
- Nordstrom Rack
- Renaissance Hotel & Convention Center
- Richelieu Hardware
- Rosewood Care Center

- Savers
- Subway
- T.J. Maxx of Palatine
- T.J. Maxx of Hoffman Estates
- Transition Industries
- Walgreens
- Willow Creek Care Center

PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL'S CUPCAKES FOR A CAUSE EVENT SEEKS VOLUNTEERS, BAKERS



Palatine High School is gearing up for its second annual Cupcakes for a Cause fundraiser hosted by the Special Education Department. The department is looking for volunteers to bake cupcakes, donate items for raffles, and volunteers for the day of the event.

The event will take place on March 8 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the PHS cafeteria, and all proceeds from this event will go to special education clubs, activities, and programs, including Special Olympics, Best Buddies, PAC Club, LLS Program, SPED Art Club, On Our Own club, PEP Squad, SCED Program, and additional donations will be given to ELS families in crisis.

This is a family event and is free to the public. At Cupcakes for a Cause, cupcakes, coffee, water, and milk will be available for purchase. Student entertainment will be

provided, as well as free activities, such as crafts, tattoos, and face painting. Anyone who volunteers to bake cupcakes will also be eligible for the cupcake contest, in which awards will be given in each category from "Most Creative" to "Most PHS Spirited Cupcake."

Local businesses are providing gift basket raffles, and there is also a 50/50 Split the Pot sponsored by the On Your Own club. Those winners will be randomly drawn at 1:45 p.m., and the winners do not need to be present.

Anyone interested in baking cupcakes can register by visiting the PHS Cupcakes for a Cause [website](#). All cupcakes must be dropped off in the PHS Special Education office, Room 127, on March 7 at any time. For more information, please visit the Cupcakes for a Cause [website](#), view the [Facebook event invite](#) or follow on Twitter @PHS_Cupcakes.