



Newsletter Highlights

It's Autism Awareness Month
Month of the Military Child
Expanding Services Through Collaboration
Denver Human Services Community Forums
...and more!



Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability, which refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication ([Autism Speaks](#)). We now know that there is not one autism, but many subtypes, and each person with autism can have unique strengths and challenges. Most are caused by a combination of genetic and environmental influences, and many are accompanied by medical issues such as GI disorders, seizures and sleep disturbances.



Signs of ASD typically appear during early childhood, and can affect a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) estimates 1 in every 68 children is on the autism spectrum. However, there are tools to help parents identify early signs in their child, such as the [Red Flags](#) by First Signs, or [Learn the signs of Autism](#) by Autism Speaks.

It can also be helpful for parents to understand the developmental milestones children are expected to exhibit at each age. View the Centers for Disease Control's checklist of [developmental milestones](#).

Always remember that exhibiting one or more red flag behaviors does not necessarily mean that a child has autism. However, if a child is demonstrating these behaviors, it is recommended that they should be screened or evaluated to help ensure that their development is progressing appropriately.

Even though ASD is one of the most common developmental disorders, there are still many myths and misconceptions about the diagnosis. Read more here: [11 Myths About Autism](#).

RMHS' Children's Clinical Team

RMHS' Children's Clinical team consists of psychologists, behavioral therapist, speech therapists, and occupational therapists specializing in ASD. They provide research-based interventions found to achieve positive outcomes for children with a wide range of developmental needs, as well as comprehensive assessment, consultations and intervention in the home or at the RMHS office.

[Meet our team here.](#)

If you have concerns or questions about your child's development, see [How We Can Help](#) or [Get Started](#) here!



April is also the month of the military child, designated to celebrate the important role military children play in the armed forces community. Military children are some of the most resilient youth in our communities due to the challenges from

frequent moves to coping with their parent's deployment.

[Learn more about the month of the military child, how you can support and celebrate, and more resources for military families here.](#)

Other Resources:

[Sesame Street for Military Families](#)

[The Exceptional Advocate: A newsletter for military families with special needs](#)

[Autism Resources for Military Families](#)



Expanding Services Through Collaboration

RMHS has recently partnered with fellow organization, Firefly Autism, to improve supports for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). [Firefly Autism](#) is a non-profit organization transforming the lives of children with autism by creating life-long relationships through thoughtful, innovative, empirical learning treatment programs. Providing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and direct services for children with autism, Firefly Autism offers specialized professionals and resources to the partnership, while RMHS' interdisciplinary-based clinical team offers a broader range of services, diagnostic assessments and evaluations, and staff.



The first steps in this collaboration commenced with bridging gaps within both organizations. Although Firefly is able to provide direct services to children with autism, they do not have a psychologist on-staff, which is required for many children to meet with as listed in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). In response, RMHS signed a contract with Firefly for two of our psychologists to provide psychological services within their center to these children. Additionally, we identified an unmet need for training in areas in which Firefly has expertise and experience. In response, RMHS has also signed a contract with Firefly for their specialized staff to conduct two trainings to the people we serve, including a training group for parents with children with autism and their siblings, and a first responder training to help first responders learn how to safely respond to situations with people with autism.

Future plans are already in the works to further expand collaboration of resources within this partnership, and we look forward to sharing as they develop!

Autism Family Night



DENVER
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Denver Human Services Community Forums

DPS Autism Family Night

Kristen Siracusa, Family Support Trainer, represented RMHS at the DPS Autism Family Night with the Denver Public Schools (DPS) Early Childhood Autism Team on March 9th, 2017.

Kristen connected with families with children with autism to share RMHS' Family Support program information, resources, and case management opportunities.

The Denver Department of Human Services will be hosting two community forums focusing on the use Denver County Mill Levy funds. The forums are an opportunity for all Denver residents to provide DHS feedback.

Dates and times:

Tuesday, April 18, 6pm - 8pm
Saturday, April 22, 9am - 11am

Each forum will be held at the Department of Human Services headquarters, located in the Castro Center at 1200 Federal Blvd., just a few blocks south of the Sports Authority Field.

RSVP by April 14 to:

Brenda Lechunga

Brenda.Lechuga@denvergov.org

720-944-2670

You can also submit written feedback to Brenda Lechunga.

Get Involved!

Are you interested in getting involved at RMHS? Check out some options below!

Or visit our [Board of Directors and Councils](#) page for more information!

Together we can support people to define their individual path as they create a life filled with independence, success, and joy!

[**Donate Now**](#)

Upcoming Events

Check out our [Online Calendar](#) and stay up-to-date on all upcoming RMHS events!



Community Advisory Council Meeting on Veteran Homelessness

April 21, 2017

9:30 am
@RMHS Veteran Resource Center
320 East Fontanero Street, Suite 100
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907

This meeting is open to community partners and stakeholders who are interested in learning about the community's efforts to end Veteran homelessness. No RSVP required.

Purple Up! For Military Kids

April 21, 2017

"Purple Up! For Military Kids" will be celebrated across DoDEA on Friday, April 21st. This is a day for DoDEA Communities to wear purple to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices. Purple symbolizes the combined colors of all branches of the military-Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red, and Navy blue.



Community Advisory Council Meeting

May 16, 2017

All meetings are open to the public. Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at:

Rocky Mountain Human Services
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

For more information, please contact [Kris Kogan](#).



Board of Directors Meeting

May 24, 2017

All RMHS Board meetings are open to the public. If you're unable to attend the Board Meeting in person, you can also join the meeting by calling our general conference line.



Shopping on Amazon? Did you know that when you shop on Amazon you could be giving back? Amazon will donate a portion of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to RMHS! [Click here to learn more!](#)

Tell Us What You Think!

We want your feedback! Your comments and concerns are important to us. Contact our Stakeholder Liaison, [Becky Miller](#), at (303) 636-5897 or through our Comment Line at (303) 636-5624.

Have a Suggestion?

We welcome your ideas for upcoming features in the newsletter! Please email [Danielle Uhl](#) with your suggestions.



Contact Us!

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