



TREES NETWORK

September 2025 Newsletter



Parent/Family Meeting

Monday, September 8, 2025 7 PM - 8 PM

Local Task Force (LTF) and Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)

Join us virtually on **Monday, September 8, 2025 from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm** for our first monthly family support meeting of the new school year. Over the past few months, our newsletter has highlighted surrounding agencies' contact information. We have reached out to some of these local task force agencies and interagency councils to present on what they do and how they can support families. We have members from Pittsburgh/Allegheny County LICC, Preschool EI at AIU 3, a Parent Co-Chair, Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, and Pittsburgh's Local Task Force coming to talk with us about what they can do and how they can help. Anyone interested in learning more can register for the meeting by contacting Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna Hiltz at hiltzd@rmu.edu or registering at [Google Registration \(https://forms.gle/QFnFueZqcmDYfeUx6\)](https://forms.gle/QFnFueZqcmDYfeUx6) Upon registration, registrants will be sent a Google Meets calendar invitation.

Individual IEP Collaborations and/or Conferences



In previous years, we held personalized Individualized Education Plan (IEP) office hours in April and May. New this year, the RMU Trees Network has set aside hours on a continuous basis to virtually meet with individual parents who have IEP related questions. We recognize that IEP documents are fluid documents and issues arise throughout the school year so we thought this might be helpful to families. We are not attorneys, but we do speak the language of special educators and are available to listen and help you navigate the special education process. If you want to know more about what should be included specific to your child, timelines, how to read assessment data, goals, etc., we are here to help you. Email Vicki at donne@rmu.edu or Deanna at hiltzd@rmu.edu to set up a conference time.

Featured Artificial Intelligence (AI)

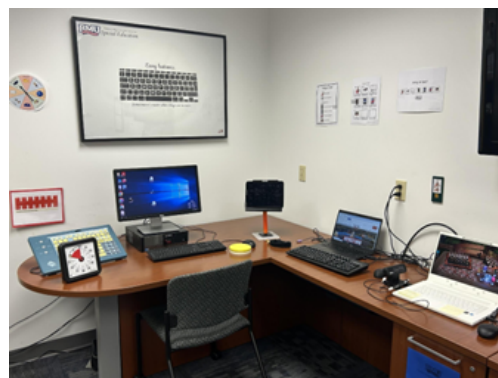
In our ongoing AI feature, we thought it might be helpful to highlight AI for IEPs and parents. AI is like a 'computer brain' that learns as more information is provided to it. Information related to IEPs has been analyzed by AI so that it can provide translations of technical IEP jargon, propose goals, and even suggest questions to ask at the IEP meetings. **One caution:** Don't provide your child's personal, identifiable information. AI's computer brain may take that sensitive data and use it elsewhere. Here are a few AI for IEPs and parents that you might want to check out.



- <https://www.arloa.ai/> Arloa provides personalized recommendations and insights based on your child's unique needs, helping you set meaningful goals and stay on top of their progress.
- <https://kidvokit.com/kidvokit-for-parents/> A smarter way for busy parents to manage IEPs—KidvoKit helps you organize, track, and advocate with confidence.
- <https://www.playgroundiep.com/> AI tools for IEP Writing, Progress Monitoring, and Caseload Management. Designed to increase student outcomes.

Trees Assistive Technology Device Center Open Lab Days

We maintain an Assistive Technology (AT) Device Center for use by students and families. AT is any item, piece of equipment, software or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). AT can range from low technology (such as a pencil grip) to high technology (speech recognition software). This semester, the AT Device Center will host Open Lab Days on Wednesdays from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The Device Center will be open to the public without an appointment. Visitors can explore a variety of AT, including adapted computer equipment, communication devices, and switch-friendly apps and toys. Staff will be available to answer questions; however, individualized support is dependent on the number of participants. Appointments are also available. Come to RMU, Patrick Henry 333 and check out the various devices.



Upcoming Special Education Conference



On Monday, October 13, 2025, the RMU Trees Network is holding its annual Special Education Conference. This year the theme is **Leading the Way: Innovation and Inclusion**. It is free and held virtually to allow for more participation from special educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and related service staff looking for professional development on important topics in special education. Register here: <https://forms.gle/vuq3xXvthG8FDdhc6>

Upcoming Events for Families at RMU

October 18th 10:00AM - 4:00PM

RMU Trees Network and Envision Blind Sports Clinic

Robert Morris University Recreation Center, 6001 University Blvd. Moon Township, PA 15108
If you are interested in attending the clinic or if you have any questions, please reach out to Jillian Stringfellow at jstringfellow@envisionblindsports.org or 251-610-3244.

October 25th 1:00PM - 4:00PM

**RMU Trees Network and Band Together Pittsburgh
Game Day and Halloween Bash**

The Basement in Nicholson Center at Robert Morris University, 6001 University Blvd. Moon Township, PA 15108.

For more details or if interested in attending the event, see <https://bandtogetherpgh.org/>.

Upcoming Events Around the Area

The RMU Trees Network is a member of the Special Needs Consortium, a group of amazing service providers in the Pittsburgh area. The consortium exists to provide a forum where all service providers can network and opportunities can be shared, promoted, and advocated for to increase awareness of resources available to the community. For a full listing of member events, visit their [website](https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events) (<https://www.specialneedsconsortium.org/upcoming-events>). We hope you will find some of these highlighted events of interest to you.

September 11th 6:00PM - 7:00PM [Music Therapy @ Moondog's](#)

Band Together Clubhouse (in Moondog's) 378 Freeport Rd, Blawnox, PA

September 14th 2:00PM - 5:00PM [Live Autism Friendly Open Mic @ Band Together Clubhouse](#) 378 Freeport Rd, Blawnox, PA

September 25th 8:30AM - Special Needs Consortium Networking Meeting

Community Living and Support Services (CLASS)

1400 Braddock Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15218 RSVP: snc@specialneedsconsortium.org

September 28th, October 26th 12:00PM - 4:00PM Accessible Asana Training Series

Open Up Studio

Join for the first session in August, led by Open Up's own Anea Michelle, or for all 3 sessions. This training is for those who want to develop inclusive approaches to practicing or teaching yoga poses, ensuring accessibility for all bodies. Register for all 3 sessions for a discount and earn the Open Up Accessible Asana certificate! <https://www.open-up.org/open-training>

OPEN UP Mindfulness Classes (free)

Open Up's mission is to teach mindfulness tools through movement practices and interactive arts while centering people living with disabilities. They believe that all people should be able to experience joy in community with others. They have inclusive movement classes at our studio and can be found in schools and community spaces around the city and beyond.

<https://www.open-up.org/>

DON'T FORGET TO THINK OF YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY FOR EVENTS

Allegheny Library Association Programs & Events

(<https://aclalibraries.org/explore/library-programs-and-events/>)

Beaver County Library Systems (<https://www.beaverlibraries.org/system-wide-events>)

Resources for Parents and Educators

The Network provides resources for parents and teachers and these resources can be found at the [RMU Trees Network Website](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>). Information on the Network and the previous newsletters are posted on the RMU website <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/provost/trees>. In each newsletter we provide links to resources related to the topics discussed in our parent meetings and workshops as well as other information that may be helpful to families, schools, and the community. **Below are some links to resources for going back to school.**



- **ADA Live!** is a free monthly show broadcast nationally on the Internet. You can learn about the rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is the link to episode 84, which is Resources for Back to School: Access for Students Receiving Special. <https://adalive.org/resources/episode-84-resources/>
- **School Safety** - SchoolSafety.gov provides one-stop access to resources and evidence-based practices on a range of school safety topics and threats. This PDF has resources to create a safe and supportive environment for students and educators returning for a new school year. <https://www.schoolsafety.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/Back-to-School%20Resources.pdf>
- **PBS Kids for Parents** - This resource has different back to school topics such as coping with back-to-school anxieties and emotions, creating daily routines, and common situations that arise at the beginning of the school year. <https://www.pbs.org/parents/back-to-school>

RMU Trees Network Contact

6001 University Boulevard
335 Patrick Henry Trees Network Office Suite
Moon Township, PA 15108

Vicki Donne, RMU Trees Network Director
University Professor, Education Department,
College of Health and Human Science (CHHS)

donne@rmu.edu

412-397-5465

Deanna Hiltz, RMU Trees Network Outreach Specialist
Part-Time Faculty, Education Department, CHHS

hiltzd@rmu.edu

412-397-6058

[RMU Trees Website](https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network) (<https://donne94.wixsite.com/rmu-trees-network>)

[RMU Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/) (<https://www.facebook.com/RMUtrees/>)

