



Kid-to-Kid Mentoring Program

Butler PEC begins to establish its group of youth mentors.

Butler PEC is launching its mentoring program for our community's children this spring/summer. The "Kid-to-Kid Mentoring" is a volunteer program that gives kids ages 8 and up a chance to provide a community service by helping children with special needs participate in sports, activities, or even just friendships. Modeled after

Kid-to-Kid, will bring friendships and hope to children with special needs and their families, and bring a sense of accomplishment to those who volunteer.

Montville's very successful mentoring program, this will be a wonderful experience for all the children who choose to join. Kid-to-Kid, will bring friendships and hope to Children with special needs and their families, and bring a sense of accomplishment to those who volunteer. Butler PEC mentor training will begin this spring. We are selecting our first group of kids to be mentors, and will hold our training on June 5th 2005. •



Summer Play & Swim

Fun in the Sun for special needs children

This summer Butler PEC and the Butler Recreation Department will offer a swim and play program at Stony Brook Pool. Running from July 9th to August 13th, it will focus on skills in water, sand, and in the playground. Children will have the opportunity to learn water safety, work on sensory integration in the sand, and build and maintain gross motor strength in the playground. It will also be a wonderful way to build social and play skills during the summer. This program will be run and supervised by a certified water safety instructor, and lifeguards. Our child mentors will provide the opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers •



1st Annual Bunny Breakfast

We raised awareness of our children and our guests had a blast!

On March 13th, Butler PEC held its First Annual Bunny Breakfast. With over 300 in attendance and everyone having a grand time, it was an unqualified success. The support we received from local businesses and organizations was outstanding. Everyone unified for the cause - a testament of how supportive our community can be. We would like to offer special thanks to the Butler Fire Department (*who donated use of the fire hall, ran the kitchen and cooking all the food*),



Applebee's of Butler (*who ran the dining room, serving all our guests*), and the North Jersey Women's Club (*who helped organize and publicize our first public event*). In the garage area of the firehouse we offered arts and crafts activities, games and pictures with the Easter bunny. Our DJ played children's favorites for dancing and enjoyment. With lots of prizes and giveaways, everyone was a winner. Although this was primarily a public relations and fundraising event, we demonstrated that **all** children can have fun together no matter how "disabled". We look forward to next year, making this an even bigger and better event. •



Life is like a Box of Chocolates

You never know what you're going to get

The walk of life does not always go the way we plan. Like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get. Six years ago, my wife, Grace, and I had a little boy. He was the perfect little boy. He slept through the night and was quiet in restaurants. We believed this little boy was going to be a breeze to raise.

At the age of 2 ½, Michael was diagnosed with autism. Autism? We didn't know what that meant. Quickly we found out that the road ahead was going to be a difficult one. We struggled with this new obstacle. We found ourselves trying to work a system that didn't make sense in a world that doesn't make sense half the time. We had a decision to make and realized that if it was a struggle for us, it must have been a struggle for others.

The decision was made to start a support group for families in the Butler community and surrounding areas. This group would be different than others that preceded it. We wanted to be a positive force in the community but didn't know exactly how to do this. At first, we figured we could share information over a cup of coffee. After our first meeting about a year ago, we learned that more had to be done. You know, **"Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get!"**

Shortly after this first meeting, a good friend had put us in contact with an incredible individual who was doing great things in our neighboring town of Montville. After several phone conversations, Melinda Jennis, president of the Montville Parents of Exceptional Children (PEC), put into words what we felt and could not put into words ourselves. Immediately, we adopted this philosophy of "becoming the change we wanted to see". Butler Parents of Exceptional Children was born.

We have become a "child-centered" group that focuses on the needs, not only of children with special needs, but on the needs of all children. With events like our Mentoring Program, Summer Fun at Stonybrook, and more, we plan to continue to make headway into the future and strive to make the changes that need to be made for the benefit of all children.

We've come a long way, but still have a long road ahead. We urge all who are interested to contact us. Together we can move mountains and make Butler and the surrounding area a much better place for our children.

Frank Rivera
President, Butler PEC

**ARE YOU AN EXCEPTIONAL PARENT
AND WANT TO MAKE EXCITING
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE QUALITY OF
LIFE FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL
CHILDREN IN BUTLER?**

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT MEETING!

**Butler PEC meets twice a month on
Thursday evenings from 7pm to 9 pm at
The Butler Public Library located at
1 Ace Road Butler NJ**

**Please Join us at our
IEP Workshop on June 15th
at the Rec. Center on
Mabey Lane
From 7 pm to 9 pm.**

**Contact Us by E-Mail at
butlerpec@optonline.net**

or

Visit us online at www.butlerpec.org