SEPTA Minutes

12/14/2017

Host Site: Sherman Elementary School

Kathryn Roberts welcomed the group. She informed us that she had attended an open house at Northwoods Elementary to tour their new Zen/Sensory Room. She was very excited about what was happening at Northwoods and congratulated them on their approach and attitude towards inclusiveness.

SEPTA officers are still looking for people who are willing to serve in advocacy and fundraising committees. The suggestion was made that the first advocacy effort could be directed towards looking at the new college and career ready IEPs and how to collaborate better. Fundraising is still up in the air as we determine needs and what funds would be used for.

Lauri Malnory suggested we take the time to watch a YouTube vide from DPI regarding the new IEPs.

Nancy Meyer from UCP was in attendance. She is their program coordinator. She previously was a sp ed teacher and is a resource available for families. She facilitates referrals and attends IEPs with families. UCP is launching two new programs:

1. Navigating the System – this group will help students and their families who are in transition. She is looking at addressing topics such as guardianship, long term care, SSI, etc. More information will come out soon.
2. Skills For Life – this also will be for older students. She is thinking the group would meet two Saturdays a month for life skills instruction in areas such as money skills, shopping, cooking, laundry, etc.

She will use Facebook and the UCP web page to promote. People do not need to have CP to participate in programs run by UCP.

Ann Brand, Professor of Psychology at UW Stout, addressed the group on the topic of Mindfulness. Mindfulness can strengthen the part of the brain that regulates emotions as proven by fMRI. It is a way of paying attention to the things we are experiencing right now which can benefit everyone. You work to pay attention to all of your senses and train yourself to notice when you are not present. Research shows the benefits of a mindfulness practice to be stress management, staying focused, being more compassionate. It is a mental training. Meditation is different because mediation is paying attention to one thing whereas in mindfulness we are paying attention to our body – our breathing and sensations. There is a wide body of research using mindfulness practices for help with depression and anxiety. It also is helpful for training yourself for sustained attention and retraining yourself to come back to task.

One parent mentioned the benefit of a podcast they use called Peace Out for Kids.