

# Alternatives For Children



[www.alternativesforchildren.org](http://www.alternativesforchildren.org)

SPRING 2016

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET UPK SWEET BRIAR FARM VISIT



The children in our East Setauket UPK class had a visit from some interesting characters in January, and not of the human kind. Live mammals, birds and reptiles were brought to the classroom by the Sweet Briar Nature Center. The presentation focused on teaching children the characteristics that make each wildlife family unique. We met a scaly snake, an ancient turtle, a curious chicken - who almost escaped into the hall - and a furry rabbit.

Although the children thought it was just a cool, fun thing to do, we adults know that through this hands-on experience they were gaining a better understanding and respect for the natural world. Additionally, this interactive presentation aligns with the Common Core Standards for Science.

**Who knew learning could be so much fun?**



## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN EAST SETAUKET QUALITYSTARSNY 5 STAR ACTIVE RATING



In March, Alternatives For Children East Setauket received notice from QUALITYstarsNY congratulating our program on receiving a 5 Star Active Rating. This rating recognizes our work thus far and honors our ongoing commitment to providing young children with rewarding early learning experiences and opportunities. "Your hard work ensures that children get the best possible start in life."

**The QUALITYstarsNY program states  
that the four key areas of a quality early childhood program are**

**Learning Environment** - In a quality program, spaces are clean and inviting. Children look happy and busy. Equipment, materials and planned activities stimulate learning. Adults are listening to, talking with, and enjoying interacting with children.

**Management & Leadership** - In a quality program, the leadership sets the vision and establishes policies to make sure that the program functions properly.

**Staff Qualifications & Experience** - In a quality program, staff have strong backgrounds in child development and early education and respond to children's need to enrich their learning.

**Family Engagement** - In a quality program, families and staff work as partners. Family members feel respected, welcomed, and invited to participate in decisions that affect their child.

**WE CONGRATULATE AND THANK ALL OUR HARDWORKING STAFF WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE!**

# Alternatives for Children

## Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality special and regular education programs and services to children with disabilities and typically developing peers. Education, medical, pediatric rehabilitation, and support services are integrated to ensure the comprehensive needs of the child and family are met.

14 Research Way  
East Setauket, NY 11733  
631-331-6400  
Preschool Programs  
Child Day Care  
Early Intervention Services  
Universal Pre-K  
Administrative Office

1116 Main Road  
Aquebogue, NY 11931  
631-722-2170  
Preschool Programs  
Child Day Care  
Early Intervention Services  
Universal Pre-K

600 South Service Road  
Dix Hills, NY 11746  
631-271-0777  
Preschool Programs  
Child Day Care  
Early Intervention Services

168 Hill Street  
Southampton, NY 11968  
631-283-3272  
Preschool Programs  
Child Day Care  
Early Intervention Services

**Executive Director**  
Marie E. Ficano, Ed.D.

Board of Trustees  
Frederic Mendelsohn, MD  
Chairman

Tina VanVort, Esq.  
Secretary

James Buzzetta  
Anjali Jamdar  
Peter Lessing  
Vivian Mirza  
Michael Russell

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In our last newsletter, I spoke at length about our longstanding Chairman of the Board, Mr. Vincent O'Leary. Shortly after that newsletter went to print we received the news of the passing of our dear friend Vince. It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the loss of this man who provided longstanding stewardship, guidance and support for our organization. Mr. O'Leary was a guiding force not only for Alternatives For Children, but for many civic and community organizations who will also feel his loss. We extend our love and sympathy to Vince's family.

At this time I am pleased to welcome two new members to our Board of Trustees. Mr. Peter Lessing, C.E.C., is Director of System Analytics for Lessing's, Inc., a family owned Long Island business spanning six generations and one of the leading companies in the catering and dining industry for the New York region. Mrs. Vivian Mirza, together with her husband Dr. Ather Mirza are long-time supporters of Alternatives For Children. We are delighted that Peter and Vivian have chosen to serve as Trustees and share their unique abilities and perspectives with the Board as Alternatives For Children continues the important work of fulfilling our mission. Thank you for your time and the sharing of your many talents.

Speaking of our mission, I am proud to say that the many distinct and different needs of our children and families continue to be met. The children who graduate from our program are given the tools they need to be ready to learn and be successful as they transition to the kindergarten environment. We continue to grow in program quality, services provided, and fiscal responsibility and viability. It is all possible because of your continued generosity! Together we *Make a Difference* in the lives of children with special needs. Thank you!

*Marie E. Ficano, Ed.D.*

## ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Each year, Alternatives for Children is required to notify parents of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations (FERPA) to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records.
- Seek amendment to the student's education records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records.

Alternatives for Children will comply with a request for access to records within forty-five days of a received request and respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of records. If a parent believes the education records relating to the student contain information that is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights of privacy, he or she may ask Alternatives for Children to amend the record.

**For More Information on FERPA and your rights as parents visit our website**

[www.alternatives4children.org/confidentiality-parents-rights.html](http://www.alternatives4children.org/confidentiality-parents-rights.html)  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>



Alternatives for Children will work together with families to answer any questions, and help access information needed.



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN RECEIVES DONATION  
OF BOOKS FOR CHILDREN WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS

Back in December, Alternatives For Children East Setauket welcomed some very special visitors, members of the Philobiblian Book Club. Lee Morris, one of our Music Therapists, is a member of the Book Club and when her fellow book lovers heard about the work we do with visually impaired children, they wanted to do something to share with them their love of books and reading.

Children with visual disabilities and impairments have very limited access to books that they can effectively enjoy. The best books for visually impaired children are print Braille books or books with tactile representations of pictures. In tactile books, to touch something that is bumpy and associate the word "bumpy," introduces the meaning of bumpy. Simply saying the word without the experience will not establish the connection. Touching is the glue that brings the word and the concept together as a meaningful experience.

These wonderful women made it their mission to find some of the best tactile books for visually impaired preschoolers and get them into the hands of Jan Milusich our teacher for the visually impaired. Twenty-two tactile board books are now available for learning experiences for our children to help them map a network of meaning and understanding about their expanding world.



Thank You Philobiblian Book Club Members  
Vivian Fisher, Claudia Dunmire, Linda Mikell, Colleen Rudamn, and our own Lee Morris

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
ADVOCATING FOR OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

On World Down Syndrome Awareness Day, families and staff joined the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. This campaign is an ongoing effort by Special Olympics, Best Buddies and world-wide supporters to inspire respect and acceptance through raising the consciousness of society about the R-word, and how hurtful words can be toward people with special needs and intellectual disabilities.

**Over 400,000**  
people in the U.S. are living with  
**Down syndrome.**

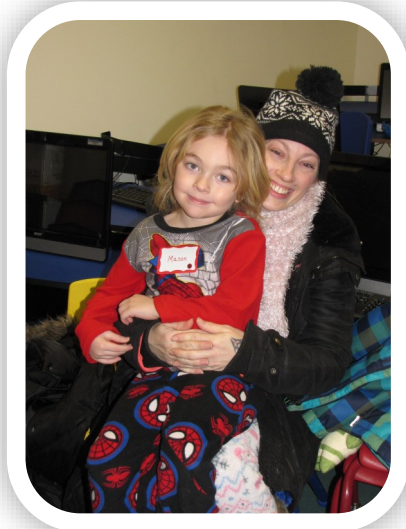
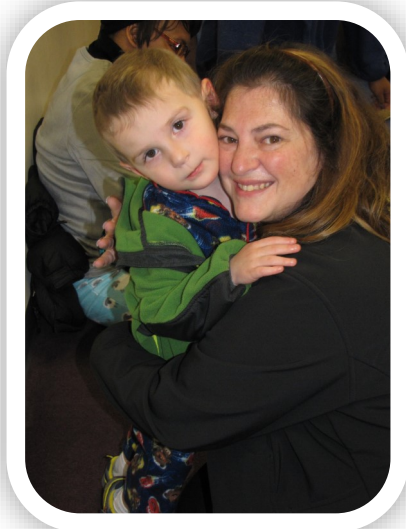
Learn about their **ABILITIES** and **ACHIEVEMENTS**



Making a Difference  
One Child at a Time

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN PICK A READING PARTNER  
WE LOVE READING!

PARP is a New York State PTA program designed to foster the love of reading in children by asking parents and other family members to set aside fifteen minutes each day to read with their children. One of the most important skills our children learn is reading. The daily activity of reading together strengthens reading and communication skills in the child and also strengthens the parent/child relationship. Reading creates a strong, positive influence and builds a foundation for a lifetime of learning and enjoyment.



In February, hundreds of families from across all four Alternatives For Children locations participated in our annual two week long Pick A Reading Partner (PARP) 2016. The theme this year was We Love Reading. Reading books - drawing pictures of things we love - writing thank you notes to people we care about - sending in pictures of family reading time. An educationally sound and fun experience! Our families certainly LOVE READING!

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN ALUMNI NEWS  
THANK YOU CAITLIN!

Caitlin was a student at Alternatives For Children more than twenty years ago, and for the past five years has been sharing her love of young children and her many talents as a volunteer in Room 17 at Alternatives For Children East Setauket. Caitlin enjoys going to music class, playing with play-doh with the children and reading them books. She helps them with daily living skills such as putting on coats and back packs. Caitlin is also a great helper to the staff; she organizes books, cleans tables, and loves to make sure that toys are put back where they belong.

Caitlin is such a positive role model for our students. Caitlin's dedication, reliability and nurturing personality is an inspiration to all of us here at Alternatives For Children. It is with great pleasure that we recognize Caitlin's efforts and her choice to give back to the place that was her school family for so many years.



We are honored to have Caitlin as part of our team.  
Thank you Caitlin!

YOUR TALENT  
+ HELPING PEOPLE  
PURPOSE



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD – BUGS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES



In April, Alternatives For Children participated in the nationwide celebration of the Week of the Young Child, an annual event sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early education association. Its purpose is to recognize that the early childhood years lay the foundation for a child's success in school and later in life.

The NAEYC theme of Early Years are Learning Years was incorporated with our theme of Bugs, Bees and Butterflies. We also used this week to celebrate Earth Day and share with the children the 3 Rs: Reuse - Reduce - Recycle.

Throughout the week the children learned about insects, made all sorts of insect projects, participated in music and creative expression inspired by insects, and experienced a multitude of sensory activities using insects. All of our WOYC activities were connected with the Creative Curriculum and the Common Core Standards for science.

**Exploring - Observing - Learning - Creating - Growing!**



ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
CELEBRATING THOSE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Thank you for all you do  
for the children!

**Huntington Crescent Club  
Thursday, June 2, 2016**

**15 Washington Drive • Huntington • NY 11743**

**Sponsorship Opportunities**

**Platinum Sponsor - \$5,000**

**Awards Dinner Sponsor**

- ◇ Golf foursome with caddy
- ◇ Prominent corporate signage at venue
- ◇ Sponsor Board
- ◇ Hole Sign
- ◇ Four additional guests for dinner
- ◇ Affinity Membership
- ◇ Donor Wall, Newsletter Mention

**Gold Sponsor - \$2,850**

**Barbeque Lunch Sponsor**

- ◇ Golf foursome with caddy
- ◇ Prominent corporate signage at venue
- ◇ Sponsor Board
- ◇ Hole Sign

**Silver Sponsor - \$1,500**

**Registration Sponsor**

- ◇ Play for one golfer
- ◇ Prominent corporate signage at venue
- ◇ Sponsor Board

**Hole in One Sponsor - \$500**

- ◇ Company name on Hole in One Sign

**Hole Sponsor - \$325**

- ◇ Company name on Hole Sign

**Day's Events**

- 11:30 am Registration
- 12:00 pm Brunch
- 12:45 pm Target Golf
- 1:30 pm Shotgun start - Callaway Scoring
- 6:00 pm Cocktail Hour & Dinner to Follow

\_\_\_\_\_ I will bring a foursome to this year's outing,  
\$1,600 foursome entry fee enclosed,  
\$620 tax deductible. Includes brunch, dinner,  
greens fee, cart, caddy, putting contest for four.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will play in this year's outing, \$400 individual entry  
fee enclosed, \$155 tax deductible. Includes brunch  
dinner, greens fee, cart, caddy, putting contest.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will play in this year's tennis tournament, \$275  
individual entry fee enclosed, \$95 tax deductible.  
Includes brunch, dinner, tennis play, use of equipment,  
one-hour clinic with the club's 2 tennis pros.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will sponsor a hole in this year's event,  
\$325 enclosed per hole sponsorship,  
fully tax deductible

\_\_\_\_\_ I will sponsor a Hole in One in this year's event,  
\$500 per Hole in One sponsorship, fully tax deductible

I will be an event sponsor for this year's Outing  
\_\_\_\_\_ Platinum Sponsor \$5,000  
(\$3,720 tax deductible)

\_\_\_\_\_ Gold Sponsor \$2,850  
(\$1,950 tax deductible)

\_\_\_\_\_ Silver Sponsor \$1,500  
(\$1,275 tax deductible)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dinner only @ \$125 per person = \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend, but please accept my donation of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks payable to Alternatives For Children 14 Research Way East Setauket, NY 11733

Credit Cards accepted - Visa, Master Card, American Express

REGISTER ONLINE on or before May 20th at [www.alternatives4children.org/golf](http://www.alternatives4children.org/golf)

Card Type \_\_\_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Golfer #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Golfer #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Golfer #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Golfer #4 \_\_\_\_\_

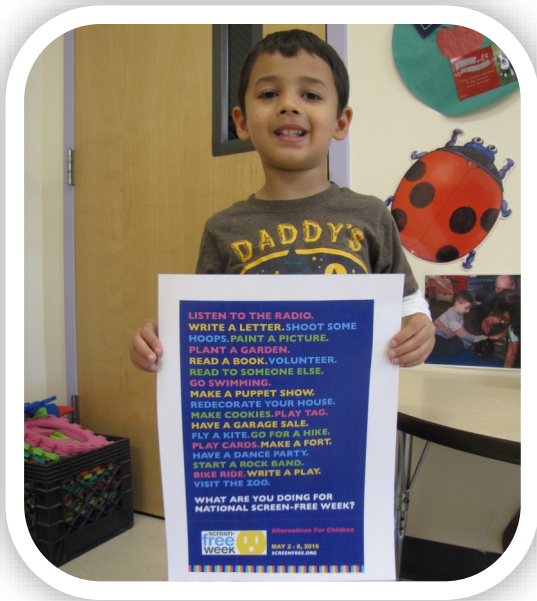
ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN CELEBRATES  
SCREEN FREE WEEK



In May, Alternatives For Children participated in Screen Free Week and encouraged all our families to turn OFF the electronics and turn ON their imaginations. Screen Free Week is a nationwide event sponsored by the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood and celebrated by schools, families, and community groups each year. During Screen Free Week, millions of children and adults pledge to spend seven days screen free. Instead of watching TV or playing video games, they tend to read, play, think, create, get physically active, and spend more time with friends and family.

Our families were given a list of 101 Screen Free Activities to engage in as a family during the week in place of electronics. Those families who chose to participate filled out daily Activity Logs for what they did to replace the electronics in their day. A Certificate of Achievement was given to families in recognition of their participation.

The benefits of children spending less time attached to electronics are well documented; when you unplug you connect with the people around you forming nurturing relationships; unplug and you will be presented with opportunities to explore and learn from the world around you; children who spend less time with screens fall asleep faster, sleep longer, eat healthier, and get more exercise; when screen time is limited children naturally create their own fun.



No app or program is as interactive as a parent, teacher, care giver or playmate.  
Remember to Unplug to  
Connect - Learn - for Health - and to Play!

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
AFFINITY MEMBERS

Thank You

Alternatives For Children  
20th Annual Classic & Sports Car Rally



Save The Date  
Saturday October 15th





Alternatives  
For Children

14 Research Way  
East Setauket, NY 11733  
Phone 631-331-6400  
www.alternativesforchildren.org  
Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EAST SETAUKET, NY  
PERMIT No. 5

***SAVE THE DATE***  
***11th Annual Golf Outing***

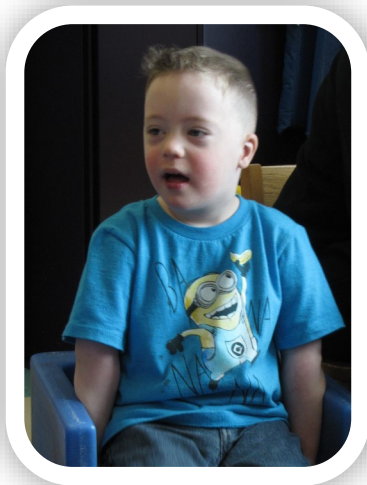


***Thursday, June 2, 2016***  
***Huntington Crescent Club***

Providing the highest quality special and regular education programs and services to children with disabilities and their typically developing peers.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN  
WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

We are so pleased with our son's progress since beginning Alternatives For Children last year. We are so lucky to have found this program and are pleased with every aspect of the academics and services provided.



All of my child's teachers are amazing in helping my child learn and develop in the classroom. They help me by writing daily notes in his agenda book. The Speech Therapist writes so descriptively I feel like I attended his session. I love feeling a part of his daily activities.

We love Alternatives For Children!