

Autism Society of Florida

Susan Vallee, Board Member & DeFuniak resident

<https://www.autismfl.org/current-events>

Our ongoing (virtual) events: These are all free!

Movie Night

Yoga classes

Drawing and art classes

Parent Support Group

Military Parent Support Group

Peers for Adults

We also provide hurricane kits, free training to LEO and emergency responders, drowning prevention courses (and discounts on swim lessons), and actively work with state legislators to advocate and pass education/safety measures for children and adults on the spectrum.

Link to law enforcement training information:

<https://www.autismfl.org/first-responder>

Margi Hedelund, first responder trainer

margi@autismfl.org

The Autism Society of Florida is a nonprofit 501(c)(3). Our board of directors are all volunteer parents of people with autism and adults with autism. We are an affiliate of the Autism Society of America. For 34 years, we have been working to ensure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for people across the autism spectrum. We work every day to empower lives by opening avenues of self-advocacy and advocating on behalf of others in a way that values equity, respect, dignity and diversity in all communities.

Special Olympics of Walton County

Mike Schumacher

mikeschumacher@sofl.org

<https://www.specialolympicsflorida.org>

Mike has an ongoing walking club, there's basketball and bocce going on

right now (and bowling I believe). He'd LOVE to get a book club/monthly parent support group together for DeFuniak Springs. He has secured some funding through Special Olympics for this.

Westonwood Ranch (located in Freeport)

<https://www.westonwood.org>

Westonwood Ranch will offer a unique learning curriculum to improve life skills and pre-vocational skills to young adults with developmental differences. Program participants will have the opportunity to engage in a vast variety of skill sets and activities. Similar to a "college model" the participants will have direct input into their unique learning curriculum by selecting from and participating in an array of diverse "life classes." The end result of our programs is to increase independence, gain self confidence, obtain gainful employment in the community and successfully transition into adulthood.

Grace Rides

<https://www.gracerides.net>

Secured an Impact 100 Grant to help fund a 9,000 square foot barn. They are located here in DeFuniak and it's a beautiful facility.

Grace Rides was started in 2008, with a small core of volunteers, working out of the Oak Heaven Stables equestrian facility in Niceville. Our aim was to continue the good work of RACE ("Riding for Adults and Children With Exceptionalities"), RACE was Okaloosa County's first therapeutic riding program. Mary Ellen Mayer, Helen Steels, and Linda Smith from RACE were great inspirations and we are truly grateful for the help they provided in launching Grace Rides. In addition to the support from RACE, we also had great help from Storybrook Farms, Opelika, AL, Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding, Lenoir City, TN, and Leaning Post Ranch, Molino, FL.

Since 2008, we have grown from a pilot program of 4 riders per week to over 35 rides per week in 2017. Last year, more than 5,800 hours were invested into our program by devoted volunteers, and we provided at least 890 rides for program participants.

Walton County Arc

Walton County Arc is a volunteer-based membership organization made up of individuals with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities, their families, friends, interested citizens, and professionals in the disability field.

Contact information

Walton County Arc

PO Box 813

Defuniak Spgs, FL 32435-0813

kim@panhandle.rr.com

(850) 892-5013

<https://autismnow.org/local/walton-county-arc/>

Great Gains Behavioral

<http://www.greatgainsaba.com>

In DeFuniak Springs. Offers ABA, assistance with IEPs, and more.

Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)

www.fsucard.com

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at FSU (CARD-FSU) in the Autism Institute was established in 1994 and is one of 7 centers funded by the Florida Legislature and coordinated as a grant program through the Florida Department of Education. The FSU CARD serves 18 counties in the panhandle of Florida with offices in Tallahassee, Panama City, and Pensacola. CARD has extensive experience serving individuals with ASD and provides direct services for communication, social, and behavior problems, as well as provides information, consultation, and technical assistance to families and professionals associated with CARD clients. The Center also offers partnerships to professionals and pre-professionals who serve, or are preparing to serve, the client population. FSU CARD currently serves over 5,300 individuals ranging from infancy to adulthood, and has excellent working relationships with the early intervention system, school system, and healthcare providers in the 18-county catchment area and the network of 7 CARD sites across the state of Florida.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation,

Florida Department of Education

<https://rehabworks.org//>

Provides career counseling, job training, job placement assistance, assistance with educational funding, and more.

Defuniak Springs Unit 02AB

908 US Hwy 90 West

Building 2, Suite 207

Defuniak Springs, FL 32433

Phone: (850) 200-4110

Fax: (850) 892-8099

Diane Jackson, Supervisor

County: Holmes and Walton

Mission Statement

To help people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence.

Vision

To become the first place people with disabilities turn when seeking employment and a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

Organizational Structure

The Division has 900 employees with staff in a Tallahassee headquarters office, seven area offices, and 89 field locations where VR customers can get services across the state.

The program is administered through the Office of the Director and four Bureaus: the Bureau of Field Services, the Bureau of Operations and Support, the Bureau of Planning and Performance, and the Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services.

Project 10

<http://project10.info>

Planning for life after high school is essential for students with disabilities. Florida supports post-secondary transition through working with districts and via the **Project 10** discretionary project specifically focused on providing districts with post-secondary transition supports and training. The information contained on this page is an effort to support that

work, and to help ensure parents using this site can effectively connect with post-secondary supports.

Walton County does not have a post-secondary transition specialist designated (unlike all surrounding counties).

Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

https://fcsua.org/Find_FPCTP.php

Search for postsecondary education programs available to students with intellectual disabilities in Florida. This site includes videos of programs, along with brief summaries about what each offers. Sites are marked according to whether or not they are an approved Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition program. Students who attend a Federally approved Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) may be eligible for Federal financial aid.

Pensacola State College

The Student Resource Center for ADA Services is located on the Pensacola Campus in Building 6, Room 603, and can be reached by telephone at (850) 484-1637. A student with documented disabilities is enrolled in classes for inclusion in the educational experiences common to all students.

When necessary, course substitutions can be made pursuant to s.1007.264, F.S., and 6A-10.041, F.A.C. Accommodations for the GED and other standardized tests are available.

For more information, please contact Student Support Services at (850) 484-1637 or visit <https://www.pensacolastate.edu/current-students/student-services/student-resource-center-for-ada-services/>

NW Florida State College

The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC) at Northwest Florida State College is committed to providing equal access and opportunities for educational success to all students with disabilities as guided by the American Disabilities Act and other disability-related laws.

Northwest Florida State College does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in any of our programs, services, or activities based on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Visit <https://www.nwfsc.edu/accommodations/> to connect to the Northwest Florida State College website for additional details and contact information.

Florida Shines

FloridaShines is our state's Student Hub of Innovative Educational Services, offering an array of FREE online tools and resources designed to help students succeed in school, earn a college degree, and embark on a rewarding career. FloridaShines works with the state's K-12 school districts, public colleges, and universities to develop tools that benefit students, parents, and educators alike.

FloridaShines is provided by the Florida Virtual Campus [FLVC], located at <https://www.flvc.org/>. FLVC is funded by the state of Florida, making all of the tools and resources available at no cost to students.

The University of West Florida

Argos Autism Program (AAP) is a Beyond Access service offered by Student Accessibility Resources (SAR) that provides academic, social, life skills, and career planning support to students with autism who attend the University of West Florida. The goal of AAP is to enhance the college experience by providing assistance with making connections on campus and navigating Argo life.

For additional information, please contact SAR at (850) 474-2387 or sar@uwf.edu or stop by the SAR offices in Building 21, Room 110, or visit <https://uwf.edu/academic-engagement-and-student-affairs/departments/student-accessibility-resources/argos-autism-program/about-the-program/>