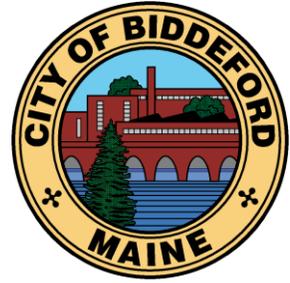


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FINDING THE PIECES

Biddeford forms Summer Camp for Autism Awareness with help from Autism Society of Maine, UNE

BIDDEFORD, ME February 21, 2017 - The City of Biddeford and City Councilors are delighted to announce a new summer camp in Biddeford for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Councilor Robert Quattrone, who spearheaded the pilot program, stated, “The idea arose in August 2016 as a complete collaboration between the Biddeford School Department, the University of New England (UNE) and the Autism Society of Maine (ASM) and nothing happens without all parties on board.”

Mayor Alan Casavant praised the work of Councilor Quattrone for his “diligence and persistence in putting all of the pieces together. What he did is remarkable.”

UNE has developed an academic course for undergraduate students in the Health, Wellness and Occupational Studies program about Autism. Students are currently enrolled in the course and will serve as the camp counselors, providing 1:1 care and support for the children. The UNE students receive course credits as well as valuable “hands on” experience with the children. The camp concept was developed and is being implemented with the help of the UNE Occupational Therapy Department and Community Therapy Center.

This camp experience is modeled after Camp Summit at the University of Farmington (UMF), a successful program that has been working with children with ASD for 14 years. It was developed with the UMF Department of Psychology and the Autism Society of Maine (ASM).

Biddeford Schools will provide the use of John F Kennedy Memorial School (JFK), the same place where the City holds its Safari Camp summer recreational programs. Safari Camp and Finding the Pieces will run concurrently, providing a chance for children to commingle in a safe, fun and inclusive setting. The City will also provide transportation for field trips, which will be extended to include some children from Dayton to attend, as an added benefit to the community.

The Sanford Elks will provide the majority of the funding for the camp. Its Autism Fundraising Committee works throughout the year to raise monies for Autism and has been looking for an appropriate beneficiary in York County. ASM is providing 501(c)3 status for the camp. Donations earmarked for the Finding the Pieces summer program will go toward supplies, field trips and up to three paid camp employee positions.

The camp will be held August 7 – 18, 2017 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., during the two weeks immediately following the Extended School Year program.

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For additional information contact Jim Bennett, City Manager at phone (207) 284-9313 or by email at jbennett@biddefordmaine.org.