



329 Route 73 Voorhees, New Jersey 08043

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FIFTH ANNUAL ABILITIES AWARENESS WEEK IS COMING TO VOORHEES
TOWNSHIP APRIL 5TH THROUGH APRIL12TH**

(Voorhees, NJ – March 19, 2014) SPEAK (Special needs Parents, Educators And Kids of Voorhees) invites the entire community to participate in a week-long celebration of abilities during its Fifth Annual Abilities Awareness Week, to be held from April 5th through April12th, 2014. SPEAK will offer programs and activities throughout the area and in the schools to promote understanding and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. The 2014Abilities Awareness Week to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by the disabled in their daily lives is sponsored by the Center for Neurological and Neurodevelopmental Health (CNNH), the Voorhees Pediatric Facility, and Rosenblatt Roofing.

“This event is about awareness and acceptance” says Dr. Karen Scardigli, Abilities Awareness Week founder. “Although great strides have been made to increase and improve on programs for people with special needs, we still have a way to go in changing attitudes and getting rid of stigma and misunderstanding.”

“This program promotes community awareness and acceptance of the unique abilities that all our children have whether they have special needs or are typical,” observes Dominic Luzi, this year’s Abilities Awareness Week Chair. “We reached a five-year high in the number of children entering our school poster contest last year, and the interest at the middle school level continues to climb.” The theme of this year’s school poster contest is “Adventures with Abilities.” Entries are due on March 31st and instructions can be found on SPEAK’s website at www.southjerseyspeak.org. SPEAK will announce the winning posters during Abilities Awareness Week.

Abilities Awareness Week will approach the finish line on Saturday morning April 12th with SPEAK’s Third Annual All Abilities 5K Run and One Mile Run/Walk/Wheel at the Eastern Regional High School, 1401 Laurel Oak Rd, Voorhees Township, NJ 08043. This fundraising event is for both serious and recreational runners. Families are

welcome to participate. Online registration is available until April 10th at <https://runsignup.com/Race/NJ/VoorheesTwp/SPEAKAllAbilities5K1Mile>. For more information on registration or sponsorship, or if you would like to make a donation, please contact event chair, Jaime Friedman at Jaime.friedman@icloud.com. All proceeds benefit SPEAK. SPEAK thanks lead 5K sponsor, the Center for Neurological and Neurodevelopmental Health (CNNH), Gold Medal Sponsor Rosenblatt Roofing, Silver Medal Sponsors, Hardenbergh Insurance, and the Ewing Cona Group of Merrill Lynch, and our T-Shirt Sponsors Friedenthal Financial and the Law Firm of Adinolfi & Lieberman. HealthSource of Sicklerville will be on hand with information on how to lead an active and healthy lifestyle as well as provide attendees with giveaways.

On Saturday April 5th at 5pm, St.Andrews RCC welcomes those with special needs and their families to a Mass of Inclusion, followed by a meet and greet with refreshments.

Beginning on April6th, Voorhees Township Public Schools will offer a week of programming to their students about people with disabilities. The elementary schools will present age-appropriate information on the disabled and encourage understanding and inclusion. Voorhees Middle School offers sixth graders the opportunity to experience the challenges of their disabled peers first hand on designated "Abilities Awareness Days," as the popular interactive exhibit, now expanded to two days, returns to the school on Wednesday, April 9thand Thursday 10th. In addition to the hands on event we will be joined by Dr. William Ziegler an Apple Distinguished Educator who will demonstrate how he uses leading edge educational technology in his classroom. This presentation will include iPads, phones and best of breed applications developed for the special needs classroom. Exhibitors include Voorhees Pediatric Facility, Just 2 Moms, The Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Learning Resource Center, PATH and Voorhees Township Public Schools Special Services. With the help of these individuals and organizations, the students face physical challenges by performing tasks with assigned disabilities, and confront familiar learning skills through the eyes of a child with various learning disabilities. SPEAK thanks these individuals and organizations for their valued participation.

Eastern Regional High School is planning a week of instruction on what it is like to live with disabilities. Local parents of children with special needs are invited to the school on Tuesday, April 8th to speak with twelfth grade students, share experiences and answer questions. Any parent interested in participating in these presentations should contact SPEAK at speak@southjerseyspeak.org

This year, for the first time, SPEAK will be having a FUN RAISING progressive raffle for a premium basket of gift items including a Kering Coffee maker, coffee and

various other treasures. Entry into the raffle is **FREE of CHARGE** and available at many local Voorhees businesses, the Township Office and online at SpeakSouthJersey.org/fundraiser/. Everyone is welcome to enter as many times as they like and are encouraged to invite their friends, family and coworkers to get in on the action as the value of this basket will grow as the raffle proceeds. Follow the raffle on Facebook and the SPEAK website for updates as we get closer to the drawing on April 12th at the 5K.

Additional community programming is in the planning stages. More information, including teaching resources, fundraisers and sponsorship information is available at SPEAK's website, www.southjerseyspeak.org. Please contact SPEAK at speak@southjerseyspeak.org if your organization would like to celebrate Abilities Awareness Week with us.

SPEAK is the parent-faculty association for families with children of special needs in the Voorhees Township Public School District. Founded in March 2009, SPEAK seeks to raise awareness of children with special needs and promote their acceptance through educational and social programs in our community. In 2010, SPEAK won the Community Service Award from the Camden County Board of Freeholders. SPEAK is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.