



Spotswood Public Schools

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SPOTSWOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT/TEACHER ASSOCIATION AND PARENTS OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN (POAC) ANNUAL WALK-A-THON AND RESOURCE FAIR

SPOTSWOOD, NJ - On Sunday, April 21, 2013 the Spotswood Special Education Parent/Teacher Association (SEPTA) partnered with Parents of Autistic Children (POAC) for their Annual Walk-A-Thon and resource fair. This year's theme was *Walk for a Difference* and it marked the first time Spotswood held the annual event in its community.

The day's events included the walk-a-thon, free rides, entertainment, activities and food for the whole family. The success of this event was a result of the many volunteers who gave of their time in support of the program. Spotswood School District employees and their families and township students and their families were just some of the volunteers who worked hard to make a difference. Fundraising by the Spotswood School District and the many volunteers resulted in donations totaling in excess of \$15,000.

Billy Smith, Spotswood Board of Education member and chair of the Special Education Committee was part of the planning team and recognized the hard work of so many others when he commented that, "Our POAC walk would not have been possible without Dana Giorgianni or MaryAnn Hager from the Special Education PTA in Spotswood believing that a walk could be successful in Spotswood and then reaching out to POAC to get it started. In addition, the work that Dan Silvia, our Director of Special Services, put in with SEPTA and POAC to make sure that everything came together was amazing. He was able to get his staff and the children in the district excited and motivated enough to help make the walk a community effort. Dan has wonderful people working with and around him and he pulled them all together for the benefit of children with autism in Spotswood and the rest of the state. POAC's Executive Director, Gary Weitzen and Training Coordinator, Simone Tellini, also made the walk very easy due to POAC's resources, experience, and organization. It was a fantastic first year effort and we hope to do even better in Spotswood next year."

All funds that were raised from this event will help provide free autism education training for parents and teachers, free recreational services for students and free autism awareness training for law enforcement officers throughout New Jersey.

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