



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 12, 2012

CONTACT: Dorie Flynn  
(410) 938-4413  
mansef@aol.com

**MANSEF ANNOUNCES NEW PARENTS GROUP TO SUPPORT MARYLAND  
NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

***Parent members to advocate for schools, education and services for special needs students***

BALTIMORE – The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) has announced the formation of a new parents group to support nonpublic schools that provide education and services to Maryland’s special needs students. Friends of MANSEF members represent a wide geographic range, with children of varying ages and needs.

The Friends of MANSEF serve in an advisory capacity to the MANSEF Board of Directors to address matters of family involvement and communication and act as a core group of advocates to help educate government leaders, policy makers and members of the public about the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Legislative advocacy and outreach are key for maintaining the nonpublic schools. For example, tuitions for MANSEF schools, which are funded jointly by the state of Maryland and local school systems, have been frozen for the last three years. In Governor O’Malley’s 2013, proposed budget, currently before the Maryland General Assembly, recommends nonpublic schools receive a one percent increase.

“We are gratified by the commitment that the parents have to the MANSEF schools and their passion for advocating for their children’s education,” says Dorie Flynn, executive director of MANSEF. “The Friends of MANSEF serve as the face and voice of our schools’ special needs students.”

Friends of MANSEF members have extensive backgrounds in special education, communications, legal and health issues and child advocacy. Parent members are:

- **Linda Carter-Ferrier**, of Severn is the co-chair of Friends of MANSEF. Her son attends Forbush at Glyndon in Reisterstown.
- **Laura Russell**, of Silver Spring, is the co-chair of Friends of MANSEF. Her son graduated from the Ivymount School in Rockville.
- **Chris Casey**, of Greenbelt. His son attends Chelsea School in Silver Spring.

-more-

- **Melissa Gordon**, of Pikesville. Her son attends St. Elizabeth School in Baltimore City.
- **Inge' Harris**, of Annapolis. Her child attends Forbush Therapeutic Preschool at Towson.
- **Deb Howard**, of Lauraville. Her son attends Harbour School in Baltimore.
- **Michelle Jarvis**, of Rockville. Her child attends the Frost School in Rockville.
- **O'Melia James**, of Bel Air. Her son attends Kennedy Krieger High School in Baltimore City.
- **J'Nay Jones**, of Baltimore. Her daughter attends Forbush at Glyndon in Reisterstown.
- **Janet Lee**, of Derwood. Her child attends the Frost School in Rockville.
- **Monica Phelps**, of Baltimore. Her son attends St. Elizabeth School in Baltimore City.
- **Carin Smith**, of Reisterstown. Her daughter attends St. Elizabeth School in Baltimore City.
- **Colleen O'Neill Yanchulis**, of Arnold. Her son attends High Road Academy in Laurel.

## **ABOUT MANSEF**

MANSEF is a not-for-profit organization of nonpublic special education facilities that promote quality services for children and youth with disabilities. The facilities serve more than 4,400 students between the ages of 3 and 21. Like public schools, the nonpublic facilities are highly regulated by the state of Maryland and are held accountable for the quality of the services they provide.

The nonpublic schools are part of the state's educational continuum for students with special needs. They provide a more intensive level of staff support and non-classroom services. A key goal of the nonpublic schools is to prepare students to be able to return successfully to the public schools. Each year, a significant percentage of students do return to the public schools to complete their education.

MANSEF members are the most appropriate choice for many Maryland students who are unable to have their needs met in the public schools. Nonpublic schools serve students with a range of disabilities who require the most intensive services such as students with emotional disabilities, autism, multiple disabilities, learning disabilities, and intellectual disabilities.

Thousands of Maryland families rely on the MANSEF schools to provide their children with services. The nonpublic schools are, in short, a critically important component of the state's educational system.

### ***Facts about Maryland's Nonpublic Special Education Schools***

- \* *There are 98 schools in 16 counties and Baltimore City.*
- \* *More than 4,400 Maryland students are served.*
- \* *They meet the state-mandated maximum class size of nine students per one teacher and one aide.*
- \* *Unlike public schools, nonpublic facilities often operate year-round.*
- \* *More than 3,000 Marylanders are employed in nonpublic special education schools.*