

STEPPING Stones

December 2023

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

MANSEF News

MANSEF has a new website and new membership directory for the 2023-24 school year.

Our recently redesigned website is more streamlined and easier to navigate. There you will find our most recent MANSEF membership directory filled with school profile descriptions and 5 pages of website resources. This comprehensive directory of member programs and educational advocates and attorneys provides important information

beneficial to parents, professionals and local education agencies concerned with meeting the unique needs of students with special needs.

We believe that this directory will be a valuable resource and tool in locating appropriate programs for students needing a more individualized educational setting. For those needing a hard copy email the MANSEF office with your request at: mansef@aol.com.

MANSEF continues to strongly advocate for students with special needs and their families. Our schools make up an essential part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and remains a leading voice supporting the full continuum of school placements.

Check out our newly revamped website and follow us on Facebook!



Get in Touch! (410) 938-4413 | mansef@aol.com

mansef.org

MANSEF
Maryland Association of
Nonpublic Special
Education Facilities



MESSAGE FROM THE President

Dear Members of the MANSEF,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health and high spirits as we move into MANSEF's 48th year. I am honored to serve as President of the Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF). I have been a member of MANSEF for over 20 years, and I am proud to be associated with an organization that values diversity and equity in education. As we navigate these challenging times, I am grateful for our members' unwavering dedication and commitment to providing exceptional education and support in the least restricted environment for all Maryland children and youth with disabilities.

MANSEF plays a vital role in ensuring that every child with special needs, regardless of their abilities, has access to quality education and the necessary resources to thrive. The advocacy efforts have significantly impacted the lives of countless students and their families. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of special education and the need for specialized facilities that cater to the unique needs of students with disabilities. MANSEF has been at the forefront of this movement, working tirelessly to promote awareness, collaboration, and innovation in special education.

Together, we have made significant strides in creating an educational landscape that embraces the strengths and potential of every student. Our schools have empowered students with special needs to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential by providing specialized programs, services, and resources.

As we look toward the future, we must continue to advocate, collaborate, and share best practices to enhance the quality of special education and raise awareness about the unique needs of students with disabilities and the importance of specialized facilities in Maryland. MANSEF provides a platform for non-public schools to come together, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. I encourage each and every one of you to actively participate in the association to stay updated on the latest developments so we all can continue to be the best in servicing our students.

Your passion for education and tireless efforts in supporting students with special needs are commendable and demonstrated throughout the newsletter. Together, let us strive for excellence in special education, ensuring that every student has access to the opportunities they deserve. Our collective efforts can continue to create a brighter future for all students with special needs and their families in Maryland.

We again thank you, on behalf of the Board of Directors and our Executive Director, for your invaluable contributions.

Sincerely,

Gina James
MANSEF President

Inside This Issue

- 2 | **President's Letter**
- 3 | **School News**
- 8 | **Student Success Stories**



Maryland Association of Nonpublic
Special Education Facilities

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SCHOOL News

A photo of the club room for the new 3rd Grade Groundbreakers Club.



BLS Lower School Guests enjoying refreshments at Founder & Friends Day.



BLS Lower School students, (first row) Tamlin B., Preston W., Matthew M., Alex P., Kingston D., (second row) Luchi L., Yusif A., Davol L., Natalie P., Tristan B., Dawn M., (third row) Sergio G., Hope H., Kai E., Stevie M., Daniel R., and Eric V. performing "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong.

Baltimore Lab

During the last week of September, Baltimore Lab School hosted its annual Founder & Friends Day events. Students from Lower, Middle, and High School invited a guest to visit and learn more about our multi-sensory, arts-integrated program. To start the event, each division performed the song, "What a Wonderful World," by Louis Armstrong, vocally directed by Marissa Muro and Amy Weishaar, BLS Music Teachers. Then, guests joined their student in class and participated in a lesson using our hands-on, experiential approach. During the Lower School Founder & Friends Day, BLS unveiled two new Academic Clubs: Heralds of History Club and Groundbreakers Club. Our founder, Sally L. Smith, was a remarkable visionary who recognized that the arts and the engaging immersion of the Academic Club methodology ignite wonder and natural inquiry in our students. At Baltimore Lab School, our Academic Club Classes are fully aligned with the Maryland State Social Studies Standards in grades 1-6, which happened to change last year. These standard changes necessitated the creation of the two new clubs that were "opened" at Founder & Friends Day. Students participated in a ceremony that dedicated these clubs as part of Sally L. Smith's legacy and her extraordinary mission and vision. Honored guests at the Lower School Founder & Friends Day included Elizabeth Embry, Maryland State Delegate, and Dorie Flynn, Executive Director of MANSEF.

BLS students Natalie P., Hope H., and Yusif A., participating in a ribbon-cutting ceremony and dedicating the new 5th Grade Heralds of History Club to Sally L. Smith.

SCHOOL News

Chelsea

Chelsea School Visits A Wider Circle

On Thursday, November 9th, Chelsea School's Leadership Core and members of the senior class visited **A Wider Circle**, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance equity in the greater Washington, DC region by fostering the exchange of goods, skills, and connections from neighbor to neighbor, and by engaging in advocacy to address the root causes of poverty. For many of those served by AWC, the journey out of poverty starts with a furnished home, often after leaving homelessness or fleeing domestic abuse. Through the Essential Support program, AWC provides 10-15 families each day with beds, dressers, dining sets, couches, and more — all free of charge. During the Chelsea School student's time there, they helped sort donations, build furniture, conduct quality control, and stock the showrooms. Because of this work, A Wider Circle was able to furnish homes for neighbors in need.



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The Children's Guild Schools

The Children's Guild School of Baltimore opened a Career Center where students are acquiring amazing skills through hands-on projects. Students are exposed to future possibilities and pathways and recently built Bluetooth speakers. This new center gives the students a chance to see beyond their circumstances and surprise themselves when they realize what they CAN do and how to embrace learning and creativity through appropriate channels.

The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County received funding for assisted learning devices for students who need additional resources in the

classroom. These assisted learning devices will help students overcome any barriers they have to learning this school year. The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County students are excelling in the classroom with the help of these devices.

The Children's Guild: Transformation Academy honors Louise G. Goldberg, a former dedicated teacher and board member of The Children's Guild, and through her legacy gift to the organization, helped create a vocational room at The Louise G. Goldberg Vocational Room offers students pathways to skill development and job

readiness, enhancing their employability and overall quality of life. Students have already taken advantage of this new space and have mastered skills that they didn't know they could. Louise's decades of passion for the teaching profession and her students culminated with her role as a Board Member, impacting the educational experience of The Children's Guild students on a larger scale. Louise's commitment to education and her influence on students' lives remains her legacy. The room was dedicated in her memory with her family in attendance to celebrate the grand opening.



Foundation School

Students with autism at The Foundation Learning Center are cultivating valuable life skills in our new student-run Design Center. Thanks to a generous grant from our new partners at the Jake Cassell Fund, our students are practicing their teamwork, leadership, creativity, and financial literacy skills. In the Design Center, students are learning how to use a heat process and are designing and producing t-shirts, tote bags, and mugs for their families who place online orders. All the while, students are busy learning how to keep track of orders and revenue collected. In October, all product revenue was used to support our fundraising efforts for the 2023 Autism Speaks Walk in Washington, D.C.



Check Out Our Page and Give Us a Follow!



High Road Schools

On Thursday, Oct. 12th, High Road Academy of Howard County hosted its annual Open House for local education agencies and current and former students and their families. This year's event not only celebrated the school's 25th anniversary but also the recent relocation to a new campus in Maple Lawn/Fulton. The

school was delighted to welcome more than 60 guests, including representatives from seven local school systems, who were greeted and presented with guided tours of the new school building from 12 currently enrolled students. The Open House provided an overwhelmingly successful opportunity to create

personal connections between HRA's educators and the community. The school team is grateful to all those who were able to attend and participate in this year's event and extends an open invitation to anyone interested in scheduling a visit and tour in the future.





Ivymount

Ivymount Organization recognized its founding in 1961 by bringing together students, families, alumni, staff and community partners from across the years at the Memories and Momentum Gala held at the Washington National Cathedral on October 14. The event featured remarks from **Ahnya**, an alumni student who just began marine biology studies at McDaniel College, and announcements from current student **Greydon**, who wants to pursue voice acting. Ivymount was thrilled to have MANSEF Executive Director Dorie Flynn and Secretary Carol Beatty of the Maryland Department of Disabilities among the many honored guests. Ivymount also launched an online series of Six Decades Stories featuring student, staff, volunteer, and partner successes at www.ivymount.org/six-decades-of-ivymount/.

Ivymount School fall events included a Back-to-School Night information fair, a PTA family movie night, apple picking at Butler's Orchard, Halloween parties and a Music for Autism concert featuring Argentinian tango music. In October, Ivymount School celebrated National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) by recognizing the jobsites and community partners who help prepare students for a successful transition from school to adult life. In November, Ivymount held a month of IvyCares activities to practice gratitude, value relationships, embrace diversity, and make positive changes to the community.

Ivymount School's Endeavors and Aspire program models introduced new curricula in the fall to support students with reading, writing, math, coding and 3D printing, cooking and other life skills. Vocational and community-based programming continues to expand with the resumption of jobsites, an updated pre-vocational skills program, and renovations to the school's kitchen and laundry spaces.

More!

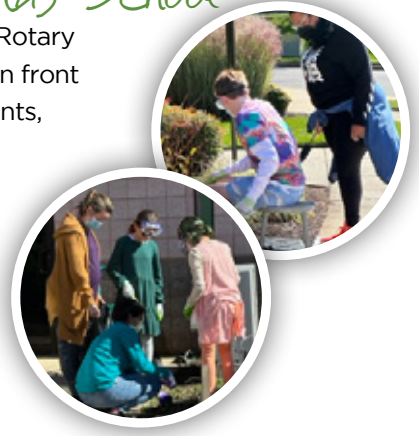
SCHOOL

Katherine Thomas School

This summer, the Rockville Rotary planted a bountiful garden in front of KTS, filled with native plants, pollinators, and vegetables.

The high school has a new horticulture class, and the students are eagerly studying the plants in the garden; the biology classes will be studying them as well. Experiential lessons!

Furthermore, the culinary classes will be able to use the vegetables in creating healthy and mouthwatering bites. We are grateful for the support from Rockville Rotary for this new educational initiative.



Kennedy Krieger

Amidst a season full of fall activities, the Kennedy Krieger School: Fairmount Campus held its second annual BINGO on November 3rd. The evening event is a time for students, families, staff, and community members to come together to support our school and to cheer on our students. Approximately two hundred bingo players and volunteers attended the event. Eager bingo and raffle winners snapped up prizes of all types, including Ravens tickets, various baskets, purses, and cash. The enthusiasm of the crowd was contagious. Our gym rivaled the feeling of M&T Bank Stadium on a Sunday afternoon.



Brooke Shivers, Julia Shivers and Valerie Moscoso enjoy an evening of BINGO.

News

Linwood School

"Bee Your Best" at the Linwood School

The Linwood School has begun its second year implementing our school wide positive behavior interventions and supports program. This initiative was created by several staff members who wanted to engage our students in a character development program that they could understand and succeed in.

"Bee Your Best" raises up one character trait a month. Students and staff receive a presentation on that character trait and an opportunity to contribute to our monthly school wide project. "Bee your Best" (BYB) utilizes visual and hands on activities to create meaningful learning opportunities for the students and staff. Each month, staff and students vote on a "Bee of the Month" and "Beekeeper of the Month" to acknowledge the student and staff member that best demonstrated that month's character trait. During the month of October, students and staff focused on kindness with our "Kindness is Sweet" project. Each student chose an act of kindness to add to their cupcake topper and put on display in the lobby for all to see.



"Bee your best" has created quite the buzz at the Linwood School!

Congratulations to our "BEE of the Month," Max! Max demonstrates kindness to his classmates and teachers every day. He checks on peers that are upset, makes sure classmates don't lose their things, and knows everyone's name. He loves to read the bulletin board that says, "In a world where you can be anything, be kind," because he prioritizes kindness to others.

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Villa Maria School

Middle School students at Villa Maria School had an amazing field trip to Cromwell Valley Park to culminate our Geology Unit in Environmental Science class. For many of our students this was the first trip off site since before the pandemic! Each student hiked the park and gathered specimens of Maryland rocks and made a unique personal rock collection that they got to take home. Staff at Cromwell Valley congratulated our school on the attentiveness and engagement of our students, and we can't wait to plan another adventure this spring!



student SUCCESS

John Medeiros, BLS sophomore, participating in the Maryland Zoo Teen Volunteer Program. ▶

Baltimore Lab School

This summer, **John Medeiros** (BLS Class of 2026), competed against over 90 applicants to earn 1 of 41 spaces in the Maryland Zoo Teen Volunteer Program. This amazing year-long volunteer program requires at least 8 hours of volunteer time per month and includes a week-long summer boot camp. Along with his fellow volunteers, John is learning about animals, zoos, and conservation, as well as exploring career opportunities, gaining leadership skills, earning service learning hours, assisting and engaging with guests, and making a difference! John continued his busy summer by also participating in the AG Bell LOFT program at Georgetown University. LOFT is a leadership program designed for high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This week-long program guides teens in developing or strengthening skills in individual leadership, teamwork, group dynamics, public speaking, and self-advocacy. Congratulations, John! We are so proud of your accomplishments.



▶ John Medeiros, BLS sophomore, arriving at Georgetown for AG Bell LOFT program.

Foundation School

Graduation is a special time at The Foundation Schools, as students with disabilities are less likely to graduate compared to their general education peers. Last spring, high school senior **Atiya** celebrated the culmination of her hard work and dedication as the speaker for her Class of 2023 graduation ceremony. This fall, she's attending the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and building her future! "At first the transition was difficult, I was missing home and the city, it was a big culture shock for me being in a completely different environment than I'm used to but I managed to pull through and meet new people and try new things. My classes have been going well too, I just finished midterms and I received 4 A's and 1 C, which was great motivation for me to show I can succeed in college and I am doing just fine."

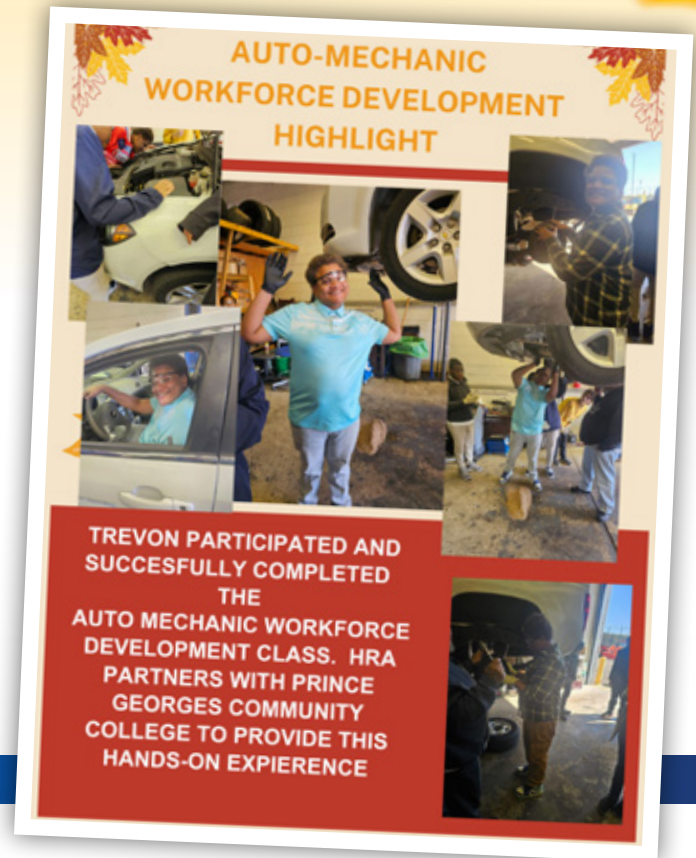


Stories

High Road Academy of Prince George's County

Trevon is a 12th-grade student at High Road Academy of Prince George's County. He is a strong-willed young man who sets his sights on his goals and has the ambition to achieve success. He has a strong community of support in school and outside of school. Trevon has participated in our Partnership with Workforce Development at Prince George's Community College in the Auto Mechanic class this quarter. Trevon's knowledge and interest grew in this field and will continue to pursue this career field after graduation!

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Ivymount

Recent Ivymount School and Project SEARCH graduate **Kyle** received an exemplary employee of the month recognition from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he works in the Building 10 Cafeteria. In addition to his job duties, Kyle is also mentoring and training another intern in the current Project SEARCH class at NIH.

Prior to the Project SEARCH program, Kyle gained employment skills by interning at a clothing retail store. Ivymount school staff provided coaching on self-advocacy skills, particularly around accommodations he would need to be successful in a work environment. Kyle participated in a mock interview to help him feel confident in sharing his strengths and areas of weakness with novel people. Lessons also covered professionalism, employee-supervisor interactions and understanding unwritten rules around workplace etiquette. Having recently transitioned to the world of adult work, Kyle is making the Project SEARCH and Ivymount School community proud. Congratulations to Kyle on his NIH award!

Follow Us! 

student SUCCESS

Kennedy Krieger High School

The Young Marines is a youth education and service program for students ages 8 through high school. The Young Marines promotes the mental, moral, and physical development of its members. The program focuses on character building, leadership, and promotes a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Each year, every Young Marine Unit honors one member within the unit with the title of "Young Marine of the Year". This is presented as recognition of the Young Marine's personal achievement while serving as a positive example to their peers.

KKHS is pleased to announce that under the leadership of 1st Sgt. Vivian Price-Butler, Unit Commander, YM Corporal **Madison Wilkes** has been selected as "The Central Maryland Young Marine of the Year". Madison has been a member of the unit for four years and has participated in numerous Young Marine activities at school and in the community.



KKHS Young Marine of the year,
Corporal "Maddie" Wilkes

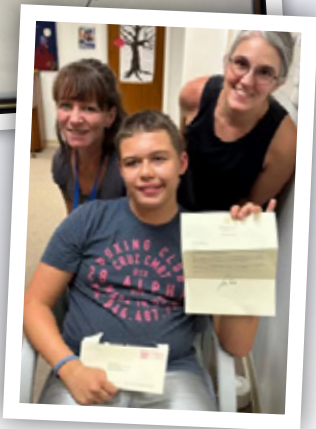


LEAP student Parker Langston.

Kennedy Krieger Schools

At the end of October, students and staff arrived in costume for Fall Activity Day at Kennedy Krieger LEAP School, a life skills and education program that serves a population of students aged 5-21 with autism, intellectual disabilities, speech and language impairments, other health impairments, and multiple disabilities. Throughout the day, students, like Parker, had opportunities to practice social interaction and hands-on activities by transitioning with their classmates and aids to numerous fun fall activities! Students stopped in the art room for candy apples and a popcorn and candy corn craft, the gym for pumpkin decorating, fall coloring pages, and obstacle courses, and finally, around to the 10 classrooms and numerous offices in our program for trick-or-treating fun! Throughout the day, students used total communication through words, signs and gestures, expressions, and voice-output devices to greet others with a "hello," say "trick-or-treat," "thank you," and leave with a "goodbye."

Kennedy Krieger LEAP student **Parker Langston** transitioned around the school on Fall Activity Day and participated in the many fun activities.



Pathways

Pathways and MANSEF students can speak up and make a difference!

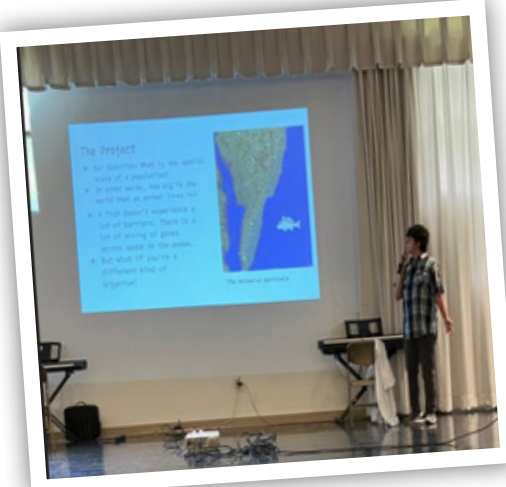
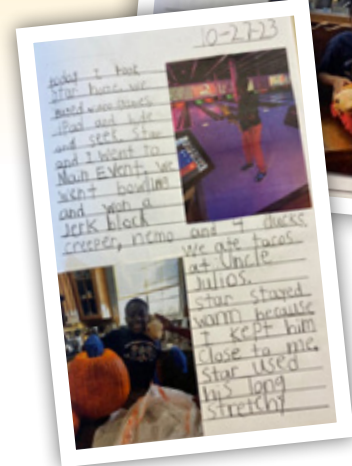
Creating a sense of civic responsibility is an important part of the education our students receive. The Pathways School - Anne Arundel student, **Rex**, wrote to President Biden about concerns with environmental issues. Rex is very passionate and knowledgeable about the presidents, U.S. government, and the environment. He often talks about being a nature helper and enjoys making a difference in the community by cleaning up trash along the park trails. As a lover of the outdoors, he spends much of his school day learning in park settings. Recently, Rex told the staff that he'd met President Biden and he'd love to meet him again, so Community Support Specialists, Nikki and Jamie, encouraged him to write a letter to the President about his concerns.

And President Biden responded! He said, *"Thank you for writing to me about our environment. Vice President Harris and I are so proud of you for taking a stand to help protect the planet. . . It is important that you continue to use your voice to speak out on this issue. Because of students like you, I am more confident than ever in our country's ability to overcome any challenge we face. Always remember--when you make your voice heard, adults listen. I know that you have a bright future ahead. Study hard. Keep challenging yourself. And be good. Sincerely, Joe Biden."*

Stories continued!

St. Elizabeth School

Last month, St. Elizabeth School was excited to bring back its classroom pet, Star the Crested Gecko! Students have been taking turns as “zoo keepers” to help keep up Star’s habitat, and they follow a schedule each week for feedings. As an additional enrichment activity, one elementary or middle school student gets the opportunity to take a plush gecko home each weekend. **Jordan Jones** did a spectacular job during his weekend with the gecko! He used his knowledge of science and writing to compose a super imaginative journal entry (complete with photos) about his weekend with the plush gecko. SES is so proud of Jordan and all of the students who have participated so far in keeping their classroom pet healthy and safe.



Sheppard Pratt School Glyndon

Henry completed a summer internship in the Evolutionary Ecology Lab at Towson University studying the hydroids that live on the backs of hermit crabs. Henry presented a review of his summer experience to the Sheppard Pratt School in Glyndon’s high school program. Henry’s mentor in the program is interested in continuing internships with other Sheppard Pratt school students!

Sheppard Pratt School Lanham

Joshua Sunshine has been a student at the Sheppard Pratt School in Lanham since 2017. Upon his arrival, our team assessed Joshua and discovered his interests were related to cleanliness.

To help Joshua focus, we conducted an extensive Functional Behavioral Assessment and created a Behavior Intervention Plan tailored to his preferred activities of cleaning and organizing. With the help of our Related Services department, Joshua was provided with an Assistive Technology to communicate his wants and needs. Additionally, he received embedded program support, including a high staff-to-student ratio, positive reinforcement for appropriate replacement behaviors, and extinction procedures.





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MANSEF is committed to creating optimum educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all Maryland children with disabilities through: **ADVOCACY, NETWORKING, COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION/RESOURCES.**

Mental Health Matters

The Children's Mental Health Matters Campaign is back! The initiative, a collaboration between the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMd) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health—Behavioral Health Administration, has united partners, schools, non-profits, and agencies for over two decades. Its objectives include boosting public awareness of children's mental health and substance use, diminishing mental health stigma, facilitating connections between children and families with prevention and support resources for mental health disorders, showcasing the creative efforts of local Maryland communities, and offering opportunities for all Campaign partners and Champions to serve as role models. Just like in previous years, this campaign will shine a spotlight on the incredible artistic talents of children and youth with mental health challenges. One exceptional piece of artwork to take center stage on the Campaign's 2024 poster! It's an opportunity to make a lasting impact, raising awareness and breaking down barriers surrounding children's mental health. More information on the campaign and the poster art contest can be found at childrensmentalhealthmatters.org.

Children's
Mental
Health
Matters.org
A MARYLAND PUBLIC
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



**SAVE THE
DATE!**

In Person!
**MANSEF Conference
May 3, 2024**

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