

Teen Club

S.A.F.E., Inc. is pleased to offer our Teen Club program. Teen Club, a social skills/support group which meets monthly, is specifically designed to meet the needs of teens age 13 – 19 with Asperger's/PDD-NOS/High Functioning Autism.

Teen Club meetings emphasize sharing interests and interacting with age appropriate peers. Teen Club meetings and outings target activities that interest teens and provide a comfortable environment for participants to interact.

- *Providing support and raising self esteem.* Through regular meetings, participants develop relationships with one another while having fun. Meetings function as a platform to express difficulties and challenges and provide support to one another. Affected teens often enjoy unique and special interests and it is beneficial to look for a friend who shares this hobby or interest. Results can be a dramatic increase in self esteem.
- *Improving social skills.* Focus in a safe group setting on improving social skills such as public speaking, communicating without monopolizing conversations, sharing experiences and emotions with those around us, choosing appropriate topics of interest, taking turns talking and learning to overlook hurtful remarks. Improving these skills can be beneficial in reducing anxiety.
- *Mentoring.* An important component of Teen Club, typically developing, age-appropriate peers and siblings are invited and encouraged to attend meetings as mentors. Mentors who interact positively with affected teen(s) have proven to be an effective strategy to assist in learning or improving appropriate communication and social skills. Mentoring also provides an opportunity for our young people to meet, serve and provide support to affected teens, a fast growing population. Improving confidence can be the result of mentoring for both mentor and mentee.
- *Increasing awareness.* Many Teen Club meetings are scheduled activities and outings in the community, which provide opportunities to practice social skills in the natural environment and improve awareness in society.
- *Supporting families.* Parents are invited and encouraged to actively participate in planning Teen Club meetings. Families benefit by meeting other families facing similar challenges and rewards. Time spent at regular Teen Club meetings help to establish these

relationships, promote unity and provide for a built-in support network.

- *Sustainability.* A long-term goal of Teen Club is to enlist club members in fund raising activities to help sustain the Teen Club program and fund special events such as parties, outings or trips. Fund raising projects will provide opportunities to participate in a group goal, build camaraderie, and reinforce the very skills Teen Club is designed to address and improve.

The Teen Club program is ongoing and expected to increase dramatically in size based on the need in our schools and community. For more information, to sign up or get involved please call us at 570.822.7259.