



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Registration Open for Harford County's First "SibShop" for Siblings of Children with Special Needs April 21

BEL AIR, Md., (April 4, 2018) - Siblings of children with special needs have special needs themselves. To help families address these needs, the Harford County Office of Disability Services, under the administration of County Executive Barry Glassman, is excited to offer the county's first "SibShop" from 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Bel Air. Specially trained staff from Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital will facilitate the program. Registration is \$10 including lunch; the registration deadline is Friday, April 13, 2018.

SibShop is a national program under The Sibling Support Project that brings together children ages 6-12 who have a brother or sister with a serious illness, unique health concern, or developmental need. Children at a SibShop play high-energy games in a safe and fun environment, and talk about the joys and challenges of having a sibling with special needs.

Children who have special-needs siblings often develop many wonderful qualities including patience, compassion, dependability, and acceptance of differences. But they may also have conflicting feelings or difficulty coping. They may feel anxiety, guilt, jealousy, fear, or feel pressured to do what their sibling cannot do. Meeting and talking with their peers can be very beneficial.


"While every sibling and family is different, siblings of children with special health care needs can struggle with feeling understood," said Rachel Harbin, coordinator of the Harford County Office of Disability Services. "We want to offer them a place to express themselves, develop peer support systems, and, most importantly, to feel special."

To register for the Harford County SibShop, contact Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital at sibshops@mwph.org or 410-578-5169.

For more information, or to learn about other programs available to individuals with disabilities and their families, please contact Rachel Harbin, coordinator for the Harford County Office of Disability Services at 410.638.3389 or raharbin@harfordcountymd.gov.

To learn more about The Sibling Support Project, please visit <https://www.siblingsupport.org/>.

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