

D62 SEPAC Special Education Parent Advisory Council

5th
Grader
Julissa

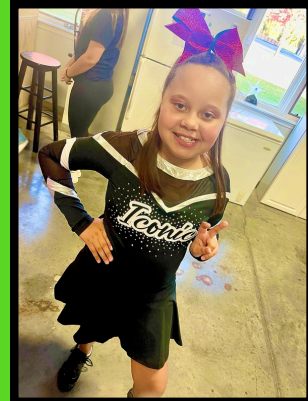
MARCH 2025 - Issue 3



Family
Highlight



STUDENT
SPOTLIGHT



MEET D62 STUDENT JULISSA

10 year old **Julissa** is a 5th grader at Terrace Elementary School preparing to embark on a new journey into Junior High at Algonquin Middle School in the Fall 2025. Julissa's mom, Julie, is a SEPAC Co-Leader. Julissa is an only child who loves meeting new people, socializing with friends, she enjoys math, science, reading, and she loves music. She is very busy with cheer, orchestra, chorus, and swimming! She is looking forward to D62's Special Olympics, and she hosted the Variety Show at school last month! Julissa is "Unstoppable," just like her favorite song by Sia!

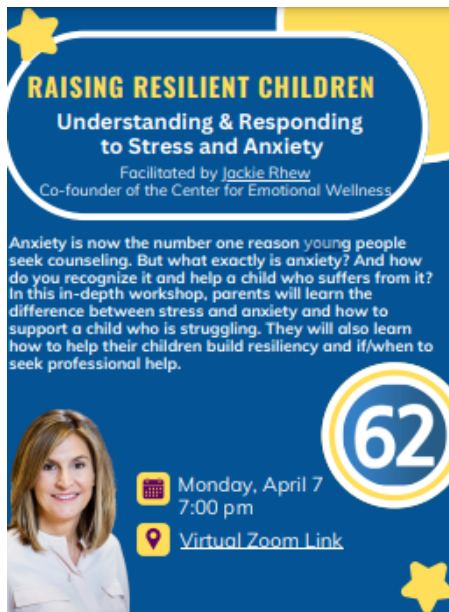
When Julissa was 6mo old she was diagnosed with hip dysplasia. She had surgery on her left hip at 9 months and wore a hip spica cast that covered the whole lower half of her body. At age 2 she was diagnosed with Autism and also Juvenile Arthritis. She did early intervention and then went into special education, and she had ABA therapy along with personal speech and occupational therapy.

Julissa began speaking full sentences by 2nd grade, and now here she is preparing to transition into Middle School next year! To help prep for next year she does Coffee Cart on Fridays where she serves coffee to teachers and staff using a checklist to help her complete her tasks and get used to visiting different classrooms. **JULISSA IS UNSTOPPABLE!!**

*To the world you may be one person; but to one
person you may be the World
- Dr. Seuss*

UPCOMING EVENTS

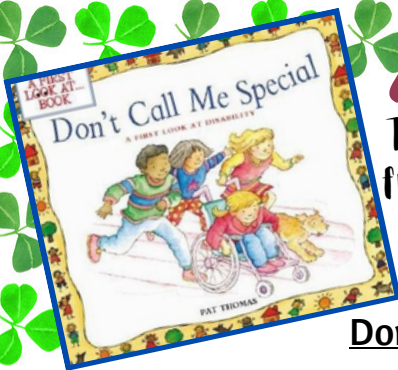
APRIL 7: "RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN"
Understanding & Responding to Stress & Anxiety
7:00 PM (Virtual-Zoom -- click here!)



MAY 7: FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
Disney's "Out of My Mind"
6:00PM - 8:00PM
Westerhold Early Learning Center



BASED
ON THE
NOVEL
BY
SHARON
DRAPER



This Month's Rec:
from Roza B (Co-
Communication
Chair)

Don't Call Me Special
by Pat Thomas

The author discusses how everyone is unique and how we all have our own individuality. We should not make assumptions about other people but get to know them instead. All people have strengths and weaknesses; and we have a lot of similarities with each other. We have shared interests and feelings. Some people don't want to be called special because it could hurt feelings and make them feel different from other people. However...these differences make our world much more interesting!

Reading age range 4-7



This Month's Rec:
from Roza B (Co-
Communication Chair)
The Running Dream
by Wendelin
Van Draanen

Jessica is a teenage star track athlete, and her greatest passion in life is running. Following a tragic accident her leg must be amputated. Jessica has to adjust to her new normal, overcome various struggles, and find a way to continue living her running dream despite challenges. This story is about inspiration, determination, friendship, resilience, inner strength, community, and hard work--how will she ever run across a finish line again?

Reading age range 12-17

Contact Us!
✉ d62sepac@gmail.com



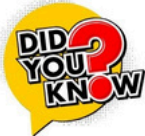
D62 SEPAC

SEPAC
Website
(click here)



RARE DISEASE DAY
28 FEBRUARY

WITH AWARENESS, EQUITY AND RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITLESS



1 IN 10 AMERICANS HAVE A RARE DISEASE.

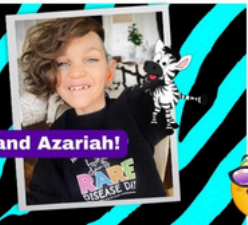
30 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE A SERIOUS, LIFELONG CONDITION

MORE THAN HALF ARE CHILDREN

80% of Rare Diseases are genetically based.

90% of people with Rare Diseases are seeing up to 10 specialists

7,000 Rare Diseases exist, with less than 500 FDA approved treatments

Meet Bella and Azariah!

The zebra is the official symbol of rare diseases because it's used as a metaphor to represent the unexpected diagnosis.

"Bella was born rare—with brain abnormalities that have no known genetic cause. At 9 months old, she had epilepsy surgery, and her brain tissue was sent to the University of Washington for a 10-year study. The results? Bella is even rarer than expected. Typically, if no genetic mutation is found, abnormalities appear in brain cells—but Bella's were completely normal. She is truly one of a kind, in every way. Rare Disease Day is a reminder that some journeys have no clear answers. We may cope in unconventional ways, but we navigate this rare life with love, resilience, and a little bit of humor."

-Susan Chavez
D62 SEPAC Co-Communication Chair

"Azariah was born with several rare chromosome deletions: 7q34-q36.3, 8q21.3, and 8q24.22-q24.23. These deletions have caused five different significant medical conditions, and Azariah sees seven different specialist doctors multiple times a year. There are only ten children worldwide known to have the same deletions, so Azariah is literally one in a million. Despite his challenges, nothing stops Azariah. His joyful spirit, loving heart, and desire to have a deep connection with others in his life bring such beauty and purpose to our world. We celebrate all those who have a rare condition today and every day!"

-Angela Smilovici
D62 SEPAC Community Outreach & Membership Co-Chair

Just for you



D62 SEPAC wants you to show your stripes!
Enjoy this zebra cake and send a photo to D62SEPAC@gmail.com to be featured in our next newsletter!

Visit <https://www.d62.org/get-involved/special-education-parent-advisory-council> to learn about our mission and become a member to help support our children in special education.

JOIN US



A Future for Every Child **D62 SEPAC**

SPREADING AWARENESS ON RARE DISEASE DAY ACROSS D62 SCHOOLS



2025



March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 International Wheelchair Day & Self harm/injury awareness
2 World Teen Mental Wellness & Read Across America / Dr. Seuss Day	3 Dyscalculia Awareness & World Hearing	4 International HPV Awareness	5 Dissociative Identity Disorder Awareness	6	7	8 International Women's Day
9 World Glaucoma Week Patient Safety Awareness Week	10 ICS Spring Break 10-31	11 World Kidney Day	12	13	14	15 World Panic Day
16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring Equinox	21 World Down Syndrome Day	22
23 D62 Spring Break 24-31 (10month schools)	24	25	26 Purple Day for Epilepsy	27	28	29
30 World Bipolar Day	31 D62 No School (All Schools)	Awareness Month for: Developmental Disabilities Women's History National Nutrition Multiple Sclerosis National Bleeding Disorder National Kidney National Traumatic Brain Injury Brain Tumor Awareness Brain Injury Ovarian Cancer National Cerebral Palsy Deep Vein Thrombosis Endometriosis Awareness National Social Work National Trisomy				

