



**FAMILY  
ACHIEVEMENT  
FOUNDATION**

*We can do this together*

# Family Achievement Foundation

February 2023

## Support the Siblings

BY JANA SMITH, CCC-SLP  
FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER

The next time you're at your child's therapy clinic, stop for a moment and look around the waiting room. Who do you see? The siblings, the ones who wait in the lobby week after week alongside their caregivers while their brother or sister spends hours each week in therapy. These are the siblings who walk along side their brother/sister every single day while often wondering why are we here, how much longer, am I the only one who has to do this because my friends don't, what is my brother or sister doing here?



Siblings will most likely be in the lives of family members with special needs longer than anyone. Siblings will be there after parents are gone and special education services are a distant memory. If they are provided with support and information, they can help their siblings from childhood to their senior years.

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[info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org)



## SUPPORTING THE SIBLINGS CONTINUED FROM PG 01

Throughout their lives, siblings share many of the concerns that parents of children with special needs experience, including isolation, a need for information, guilt, concerns about the future, and caregiving demands. Siblings also face issues that are uniquely theirs including resentment, peer issues, embarrassment, and pressure to achieve.

A support group for siblings known as Sibshops is being launched by Family Achievement Foundation in Woodbury in Spring 2023. Currently, Minnesota has two registered Sibshops, located at Mayo Clinic and Children's Hospital. In the United States, there are over 32 million people who have disabilities and/or mental health concerns. Most of these people have typically developing brothers and sisters. Siblings want to be heard and validated and it's time to support the sibs!

Sibshops are opportunities for siblings of children with disabilities to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context. They reflect the agencies commitment to the well-being of the family member most likely to have the longest-lasting relationship with the person with a disability.

The goals of Sibshops are to meet other sibs while having fun and playing games, talk about the good, and not-so-good parts of having a sibling with special needs with others who get it, learn about the services their sibs may receive, and learn how other siblings handle sticky sibling situations.

Who attends Sibshops? Siblings and just the siblings.

Want more information on this opportunity? Follow Family Achievement Foundation on Facebook to get updates on this group. We are currently in the planning stages and will officially announce the launch of our Sibshop this spring!







## AUTHOR READING & BOOK SIGNING

FINDING US: A MOTHER'S MEMOIR OF BRAVING MENTAL ILLNESS WITH HER YOUNG DAUGHTER

Family Achievement Foundation will be hosting local author, business owner and mother, Kristin Rohman Rehkamp for a book reading and signing. Her new book, *Finding Us: A Mother's Memoir of Braving Mental Illness with her Young Daughter* is available for purchase Amazon or at Kristin's new boutique in Lake Elmo, La Vie Est Elle.

In *Finding Us*, Kristin Rohman Rehkamp shares her story to educate and bring visibility to what living with a child braving a mental illness looks like and feels like. Her hope is that her memoir normalizes the mental health conversation, while providing others comfort and support in knowing their unique challenges and journeys are understood.

Family Achievement Foundation will be giving away five signed copies of *Finding Us*.

## JOIN US

MONDAY, APRIL 6TH  
6:30 PM

FAMILY ACHIEVEMENT CENTER-  
WOODBURY  
2101 WOODDALE DRIVE  
WOODBURY, MN 55125

EMAIL [INFO@FAMILYACHIEVE.ORG](mailto:INFO@FAMILYACHIEVE.ORG)  
TO SAVE YOUR SEAT





## SPOTLIGHT ON MIRACLE LEAGUE

BY ELENA MCDONALD

Looking for a fun summer inclusive activity for your child...and for yourself too? Miracle League is an organization that removes barriers that keep children (3-18 years old) who have cognitive and/or physical disabilities from experiencing and participating in baseball. It is also about making friends and boosting self-esteem. The league uses a “buddy system” which pairs players up with volunteers, although you or a family member are also welcome to be your child’s buddy. Not only do the children benefit, but it is a welcoming environment for the parents to meet other parents while cheering not only your own child, but the entire field of players!

Miracle League started in Georgia about 23 years ago. Currently, there are over 240 Miracle Leagues across the USA and in other countries. Our local branch is called East Metro Miracle League. It recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary. Participation continues to grow as it started with 65 players in 2012 and last summer over 100 players took part in the league.

Our local East Metro Miracle League plays games at a specially designed Woodbury Rotary Miracle Field at M Health Fairview Sports Center. To learn more about the program and/or to register, visit the [Woodburymn.gov](http://Woodburymn.gov) website and search Adaptive Recreation. If you live outside of this area, contact Stephanie Davis at the corporate office to find a league in your area. [Stephanie@miracleleague.com](mailto:Stephanie@miracleleague.com). Other Miracle League locations in Minnesota include Lakeville, St. Cloud, Chaska, Rochester, Blaine, Mankato and Duluth.



Woodbury Parks and Recreation also offers other adaptive sports and activities including a very popular sports sampler program, craft and social hour, music exploration, and bowling. To find more information about registering, visit the City of Woodbury Parks and Recreation website. The programs are always looking for volunteers, so if you or someone that you know is interested in being a part of this fun organization contact Joe Vaughan, Recreation Program Specialist, 651-714-3585.



# Upcoming FREE Parent Education Events

## The CALM Compass

### Positive and proactive parenting strategies to use on your Autism Parenting Journey

Join licensed social worker, Mitch Leppicello, for a free parent education event titled the CALM Compass. This presentation will help you better understand ASD to take the best action and supports with your child. These strategies are considered best practices for parenting children, teens, and young adults with ASD. This presentation is intended for parents and caregivers of all types of kids with ASD from ages 5-25 with some verbal abilities.

March 7th

6-7 PM

FAC- Woodbury (2101 Wooddale Drive)

Register today by emailing [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org)

## Author Reading & Book Signing

### Finding Us by Kristen Rohman Rehkamp

April 6th

6:30 PM

FAC-Woodbury (2101 Wooddale Drive)

Email [Info@familyachieve.org](mailto:Info@familyachieve.org)

Check out page  
3 for more  
details on  
Finding Us

## Lack of Sleep Running You Down?

Join sleep expert, Sarah Moe, for an informative and fun event discussing COVID's impact on our Sleep and Mental Health, signs and symptoms of sleep disorders, "Do's and Don'ts" to get more restful sleep, and much, much more. This fun, interesting class will leave you with the tools you need to get you rested, so you and your family can get through 2023 as healthy, happy and productive as possible.

Tuesday, May 2nd

6:30 PM

Zoom- email [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org) to get Zoom link





## New Parent Support Group

Do you feel alone, discouraged, or stressed due to your teen or adult child with mental health issues? You are not alone with these feelings!

Join our parent support group to share your struggles, gain new insights, and find community. This group will be a standing, four-month long group held the third Thursday of each month February - May 2023 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m on Zoom.

February 16, March 16, April 20, and May 18.

There will be no more than 12 participants so register today by emailing [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org).

Visit our website and follow us on Facebook for all event updates!

All Family Achievement Foundation events are free & open to all!

EMAIL  
[INFO@FAMILYACHIEVE.ORG](mailto:INFO@FAMILYACHIEVE.ORG)  
TO RSVP





## The Journey Award

Do you know a parent who deserves recognition for all that they give to their family?

The Journey Award was created with the hope of touching a parent on a challenging journey. While they may not see what they are doing as special because they love their children, those around them see the caretaking, tireless advocacy, and unconditional love for their children. The individuals selected will receive a custom-made heart stone, an award certificate explaining why they were nominated, and \$500.

The Journey Award is in honor of Jack and Nancy McCue (one of our founding board members). Nancy lost Jack at the age of 15 by suicide. Jack was a person who cared more for other people than he did for himself. Our goal is to honor people like Jack who do not realize how special they are!



To nominate a deserving parent or caregiver for the  
Journey Award visit:  
<https://familyachievementfoundation.org/journey-award/>