



**FAMILY  
ACHIEVEMENT  
FOUNDATION**

Building Community and Connection

# Family Achievement Foundation

March 2026

## Third Annual Parent/Caregiver Retreat to Take Place in April

Family Achievement Foundation will offer its third annual Parent/Caregiver Retreat. This will be a one-day event focused on connection, respite, and education for parents and caregivers on Saturday, April 25. The vision for our retreat continues to be respite, connection, and resources for families. The retreat is open to parents and caregivers who would benefit from connecting with others on a challenging journey. Foundation founders, Tom Hoel and Sarah Mason, will host the retreat at their home on the bluffs of the St. Croix River in Hudson, Wisconsin surrounded by natural beauty, walking paths, and peaceful views of the St. Croix River.

CONTINUED ON PG 02



## In This Issue:

Third Annual Retreat  
PAGE 01-02

Family Meetup  
PAGE 03

National Sleep Month  
PAGE 04

Upcoming Events  
PAGE 05

Move to Your Own Groove  
PAGE 06

Journey Award  
PAGE 07

Traveling with Disabilities  
PAGE 08-09



## PARENT/CAREGIVER RETREAT CONTINUED FROM PG 01

Tom and Sarah know firsthand the often chronic stress in caring for children, and are hopeful of creating an informational, fun, and restful day away for our parents. The retreat will offer multiple different experiences, speakers and activities. Retreat cost is \$50 dollars and includes all meals.

Retreat will offer:

- Connection with other parents and caregivers
- Educational tools and resources for both your parenting, as well as self-care delivered by trained professionals and business owners
- Breakout sessions with group time and/or individual time
- Social activities including nature walks and Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing pottery
- Meals filled with good food and laughter

Visit our website using the link below to view the full agenda. Few spots remain, so register today by emailing Sarah Mason at [smason@familyachievement.com](mailto:smason@familyachievement.com).

[familyachievementfoundation.org/parent-caregiver-retreat/](http://familyachievementfoundation.org/parent-caregiver-retreat/)



## Speakers & Special Guests



Rachel Everson Fink,  
CCC-SLP  
Wellness & Self Care



Chef Manny  
Saturday Night Dinner



Tahni Cullen  
Managing Family Dynamics



Tom Hoel & Sarah Mason  
Founders of Family  
Achievement Foundation



# We Rock the Spectrum Family Meetup

Family Achievement Foundation hosted a free family meetup at We Rock the Spectrum in Woodbury last month. Over 100 people joined in the fun at this inclusive, all-abilities indoor play space. Caregivers and parents were able to connect while supervising their children on the play equipment, which included swings, slides, ziplines, and more.

We Rock the Spectrum also has another location in Eagan. Join us on May 9 from 2-4 PM for another free family meetup.



# Peer-to-Peer Support Program

Last fall, 18 families joined Family Achievement Foundation's Peer-to-Peer Support Program. This program works best when groups begin together, and our next large group enrollment will take place later this year. Stay tuned to our social media channels and upcoming newsletters for details.

If you'd like more information in the meantime, you're welcome to email [peersupport@familyachieve.org](mailto:peersupport@familyachieve.org).

# March is Sleep Awareness Month

Sleep is one of a human's basic needs. A good night's sleep is foundational to health and well-being and can impact the lives of children and adults alike. Adequate sleep not only supports a child's physical health, but also their cognitive function, mood, and behavior. There is an important connection between sleep and your overall health and well-being.

Sleep is important for helping your brain function in so many ways and good sleep improves clarity, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Sleep significantly helps our ability to manage emotions. Effective emotional regulation is crucial for working through challenges without becoming overwhelmed or discouraged. Not getting enough sleep also impairs attention, memory, and executive function. Insufficient sleep also increases the risk for mental and physical health problems.

How much sleep should my child be getting?

<u>Age range</u>	<u>Recommended sleep</u>
Babies (4 to 12 months)	12 to 16 hours, including naps.
Toddlers (12 to 24 months)	11 to 14 hours, including naps.
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	10 to 13 hours, may include a nap.
School-aged kids (6 to 12 years)	9 to 12 hours.
Teenagers (13 to 18 years)	8 to 10 hours.

Below are four habits to improve sleep:

- 1. Activity:** Make sure your child is getting enough mental and physical activity throughout the day. Be sure to decrease rough play approximately 1 hour before bed to help your child start to relax.
- 2. Keep bedtime routine similar:** This routine can include calming activities like reading a book, taking a warm bath, or listening to soothing music.
- 3. Screen Time:** Eliminate screen time 1 hour before bed. Blue light emitted by screens can interfere with the production of melatonin which is the sleep hormone.
- 4. Environment:** Make your/your child's sleep environment comfortable with the temperature and lights. Adding a calming background noise can also be helpful. White, pink and brown noise are the most calming sounds and will help create relaxation.

Happy Spring & Happy Sleep Awareness Month!



# Upcoming Family Achievement Foundation Events

Check out pages  
1-2 for more  
details on our  
Parent/Caregiver  
Retreat

## Parent/Caregiver Retreat

Saturday, April 25th  
Hudson, WI  
\$50

## Free Family Meetup

### We Rock the Spectrum- Eagan

Saturday, May 9th  
2:00-4:00 PM  
1020 Discovery Rd, Eagan, MN 55121  
Email [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org) to register

## Free Caregiver Education Event

### Water & Swim Safety with SwimPossible

Tuesday, May 19th  
Virtual on Zoom  
6:30-7:30 PM  
Email [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org) to register

## Free Caregiver Education Event

### Breaking Down the Systems After a Diagnosis

Tuesday, June 16th  
Virtual on Zoom  
6:30-7:30 PM  
Email [info@familyachieve.org](mailto:info@familyachieve.org) to register

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK TO STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL OF OUR EVENTS!



# Important Save the Dates

## Family Achievement Center's Move to Your Own Groove

ALL ABILITIES RUN, WALK & ROLL

Sunday, September 13th

Colby Lake Park

Woodbury

9:30 AM

Register: [FACMTYOG8.eventbrite.com](https://FACMTYOG8.eventbrite.com)

All proceeds from  
Move to Your Own  
Groove will be  
donated to Family  
Achievement  
Foundation!



If you or your business are interested in a sponsorship, please contact [kgavin@familyachievement.com](mailto:kgavin@familyachievement.com) or learn more by visiting: <https://familyachievement.com/move-to-your-own-groove-sponsorship/>



# Journey Award Recipients

Congratulations to Jess , who was recently awarded Family Achievement Foundation's Journey Award. Her nomination was submitted by her mother who states "After a year of multiple appointments and tests their daughter, Kaelyn, received a diagnosis of Rett Syndrome. On top of receiving her diagnosis, Jess and her husband had multiple things go wrong in their home and daycares unexpectantly close while both trying to manage working full time. I am beyond proud of my daughter and son-in-law. They are managing the sleepless nights, appointments, the financial burden and everything that goes along with Rett Syndrome. They work together to give their kids the happy and loving environment they deserve. They find time to do fun things with their kids and extended family and keep their 4-year-old son engaged and happy. They are taking it one day at a time and climbing each new mountain with true character to do what is best for their entire family."

Congratulations Jess!



Congratulations to Jody, who was nominated by her friend for Family Achievement Foundation's Journey Award. "I'm so grateful to have met Jody. Jody is a momma of 5 and has her plate just full. She's currently dealing with some very hard medical news for one of her kids. Jody is a strong advocate, very resourceful and highly educated. Jody gives her all pushing through all the hard days to give her children what they need in life. Jody is kind and thoughtful. She's an amazing momma who deserves so many good things. She, like other special needs moms, needs a pat on the back to remind her she is a good, hard working momma. We are making a difference in the world!"

Congratulations Jody!



## The Journey Award

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 \$500 check, a custom-made heart stone, and an award certificate explaining why they were nominated!

To nominate a deserving parent or caregiver for the Journey Award visit:

<https://familyachievementfoundation.org/journey-award/>



# TRAVELING WITH A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

BY KRISTI KARGEL

After flying to Seattle for a medical study related to my daughter's diagnosis, we decided that traveling was something we really wanted to do as a family. Before we knew it, we were booking our next big trips which included both road and plane travel. I would like to share with you some tips that I hope will help you in your journeys with your own families!

## Tips for Traveling

**Tip 1:** First and foremost, lower your expectations of the outcome of the trip.

**Tip 2:** If you are traveling by plane make sure to reach out to the airline you are flying on to talk with one of their agents about your child's needs.

- <https://www.delta.com/us/en/accessible-travel-services/overview>
- <https://suncountry.com/help-center/special-services>
- <https://www.aa.com/i18n/customer-service/contact-american/special-assistance.jsp>

**Tip 3:** When traveling by plane, you are allotted an extra carryon that will hold all of your medications, medical equipment and even water if it is medically required for your child on the flight and/or destination.

**Tip 4:** TSA allows you to bring both pre-drawn medications and bottles of medications on the plane. If the medications are less than 3 oz, TSA does not need to open, check, and test them. However, if the medications are fluids and over 3 oz, then TSA will need to open the bottles (even if new and sealed) to test them.

**Tip 5:** Contact TSA Cares at least two weeks before you travel to arrange for a TSA Agent to assist you through security with ease. Not all airports offer the same level of service, but Minneapolis/St. Paul has a great team of TSA agents that will meet you at the entrance of security.

**Tip 6:** When you are within 30 days from your travel, I recommend contacting where you are staying to request mailing excess supplies to them like: briefs, formula, pre-package tube feeding meals and supplies, and anything else that may lighten your packing.

**Tip 7:** If your child is too large for a car seat and you are flying but they need assistance with sitting, there is a great harness you can purchase and use with approval from the FAA.

TRAVELING TIPS CONTINUED ON PG 09



## TRAVELING TIPS CONTINUED FROM PG 08

**Tip 8:** When you arrive at your destination, do you need a modified van? There are options for so many domestic locations! We have rented modified vans in both Seattle, WA and Sarasota, FL. Many more cities are now also offering Lyft and Uber with wheelchair accessible options too.

- <https://wheelersvanrentals.com/>
- <https://www.wheelchairvanrentals.com/>
- 

**Tip 9:** If traveling to a beach location, there are many beaches that offer the use of a Beach Wheelchair. Some beaches also have a Mobi Mat that allows a wheelchair to roll over the sand. I usually do a search via the internet to get more information about the beaches that I would like to travel to.

**Tip 10:** Does your child have a hidden or non-visible disability? There is a program for air travel that helps airline employees recognize when someone has a hidden or non-visible disability. You can stop by the Customer Service or Information desk at most airports and pick up a sunflower lanyard free of charge for your family member to wear. The Sunflower is globally recognized as a symbol for non-visible disabilities, also known as hidden disabilities or invisible disabilities.

**Tip 11:** Do you have a child that is just too big for an infant changing table? There are now some airports, including Minneapolis/St Paul, Chicago O'Hare, and Seattle, that have added a full size changing table to accessible restrooms. In a pinch, I have used one of the lactation pods at the airport. Mamava Pod has an app that you can download to unlock these pods that are located in many airports and public places. They typically have two benches and also a counter space that can be used as a changing table.



To help us continue our mission, please consider donating to our 501(c)(3) nonprofit at <https://familyachievementfoundation.org/donate/>

Join Family Achievement Foundation's online closed group for parents/caregivers on Facebook!

