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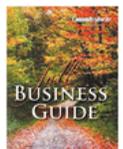
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Hudson SEPAC 'clicks' with parents

By Sarah Freedman Contributing Writer

Hudson - Since 1995, the Hudson Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) has helped parents of special needs children navigate the educational system and find support.

In 2006, the organization, which was founded by Barbara Rose, filed to become a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization and thus is able to raise funds.

SEPAC Chair Jorge Teixeira has led the organization since 2010; he became interested in participating because of his own children. He is the father of 12-year-old triplets, two of whom receive special education services through an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

"Our thanks to the leaders before us," Teixeira said. "Securing services can be a struggle," he said. "We want to assist parents by bringing systematic issues to the school administration and School Committee attention."

Teixeira found that SEPAC provided "answers and a sounding board from other parents and families" with special needs children in the Hudson school system. His goal is to increase SEPAC participation.

"We are trying to get the word out to parents who [are] not aware SEPAC exists," he said.

According to Teixeira, the traditional way the organization publicizes events and meeting dates, as well as recruits new members, is through the Pupil Services office. Hudson services an estimated 500 students with special needs.

Now that they have a website, at www.hudsonsepac.com, and a Facebook page at H-SEPAC, the organization can reach parents "that normally we would not be able to reach. Being able to publish information on the site and on Facebook is awesome, as people share the links with one another." He called it a "great feeling" to be able to research information and share it.

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According to the website, SEPAC offers many resources for parents like parent-to-parent support, an e-mail group and educational forums, such as workshops that also function as monthly meetings.

Workshops are held at Hudson High School and topics will range from ADHD, testing your child, basic rights and behavior management. The next workshop will take place Wednesday, Oct. 6 at 7p.m. "Testing: What Does it Mean and How Can it Help my Child?" These workshops are one key way that SEPAC supports parents and keeps them well informed. "[Ultimately] our main goal will be to ensure that parents understand that they are not alone and that they have a place they can come to and count on for support," Teixeira said.

Hudson SEPAC can be reached at 978-212-9651 or hsepac@hudsonsepac.com. If interested in receiving e-mail from SEPAC, include your name, e-mail address and the message "add my e-mail address to the list."

The website, www.hudsonsepac.com, outlines the organization's mission and provides information about upcoming educational workshops and links to other online resources.

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