CPF Contacts

CP Friends Program Director:
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Big Sibling / SACK:
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Massachusetts Hosp. School:
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Toby Tsai (ttsai@fas)

Mentoring, afterschool, and adult programming serving individuals with cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities.

An informational meeting will be held in PBH at 8:00pm on Sunday, Sept. 26. Come and learn more!

The Taco family at a SACK event.

The Future of Cerebral Palsy Friends

Interested in making a big difference in the future of CPF? We're always looking for enthusiastic individuals who would like the chance to help lead our program! A Cerebral Palsy Friends Advocacy Initiative aims to find ways to improve the accessibility and integration of all of PBHA's programming — after all, most of the kids we serve don't have much of a chance to interact with their non-disabled peers. We're looking for people interested in initiating and implementing a long-term plan to gradually reduce the extent to which all PBHA programs, including our own, provide a non-inclusive experience. Contact Toby (ttsai@fas) for more information!

We're also looking for a coordinator for a SACK Teen program. Some of our kids have outgrown the regular SACK activities, and would rather just hang out and do “teen stuff.” Contact Toby (ttsai@fas) for more information!

As the senior members of our leadership get ready to leave Harvard, we're always looking for individuals willing to lead Cerebral Palsy Friends in the future. More information regarding these leadership opportunities will be available later in the year.
So many different ways to have fun!

Cerebral Palsy Friends is an umbrella program consisting of the Big Sibling Program (and the accompanying Saturday Activities for Creative Kids (SACK) program) the Massachusetts Hospital School program, and the United Cerebral Palsy program, plus an Advocacy Initiative. Read on and discover the CPF program for you!

Big Sibling (and SACK)
The Big Sibling program matches up Harvard students with elementary-school-age children, (usually around the age of 6-12). Once matched with a “little sib”, you are free to meet with your child on your own time. Take him or her out for ice cream, to the movies, or to the park—it’s up to you! If you’re looking for things to do, we also run the SACK program. These are optional activities run on Saturday afternoons (usually meeting twice a month,) which provide an opportunity for other big and little sibs to meet and have fun! Past SACK activities have included a trip to the Harvard-Yale game, a trip to the Boston Aquarium, a trip to the Children’s Museum, and a trip to the Cultural Rhythms festival! Because of the nature of a mentorship relationship and the responsibility involved, we require mentors to make a minimum of a one-year commitment to the program. For more information, contact Chi (cyen@fas) or Heidi (mason@fas).

Massachusetts Hospital School (MHS)
The Massachusetts Hospital School, located in Canton, MA, is a school for children and young adults from elementary-school-age through 22 years of age who have physical disabilities. Our program allows Harvard students to go to the MHS campus once a week to help out with recreational activities from 3:30pm-5:00pm. The Massachusetts Hospital School is fully equipped for recreational pursuits, so some of the activities you can expect to help with include wheelchair basketball (try out the sport chairs and try to avoid tipping over!), animal care (MHS has a barn with several horses, goats, and chickens) photography, pet therapy, track, and arts and crafts. Because it takes some time to travel to Canton, volunteers will depart Harvard by van around 2:40pm, and can expect to return around 6:00pm. For more information, contact Mien (chyi@fas) or Jon (jpwill@fas).

United Cerebral Palsy
Our United Cerebral Palsy program allows Harvard students to volunteer at the United Cerebral Palsy Community Experience Center in nearby Watertown, MA.

What is Cerebral Palsy (CP)?
Cerebral Palsy, or CP, is a disorder of movement and balance caused by damage to the immature brain. People with CP tend to have muscles that are tighter than normal, since the part of the brain that controls inhibition of electrical impulses to their muscles has been damaged. This may make it difficult for them to walk. Depending on the individual, it may be difficult to speak as well. Many individuals with CP possess average if not above-average intelligence, although some may have accompanying mental retardation. Because of their differences, individuals with cerebral palsy may often be ostracized by their peers. The aim of the CP Friends program is to work to alleviate this problem.