

# Building Social Connections

Making and maintaining social connections is important to developing meaningful relationships. Meaningful relationships and positive social experiences are crucial for facilitating social inclusion and contribute to one's quality of life. These are resources in the Northern Virginia area that offer social and recreation opportunities to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many of the programs are offered in-person and virtually.

## Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic Recreation Services provides opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to develop the skills that enable them to participate in the recreation and leisure programs of their choice. TR Services are currently being offered as a mix of virtual and in-person opportunities.

- Fairfax <https://tinyurl.com/mry2wbaw>
- Arlington <https://tinyurl.com/r6rzktw7>
- Alexandria <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation-programs/therapeutic-recreation>

## Art Stream

<https://www.art-stream.org/>

ArtStream teaches acting techniques and communication skills in inclusive classes designed for people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Class subjects may include comedy, music theatre, improv, public speaking, role-play, party dancing, and social skills. Open to adults 18+.

## Autism Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV)

[www.asnv.org](http://www.asnv.org)

ASNV offers three different social opportunities for individuals on the spectrum. TAP is a life and social skills support group for ages 20+. Teen Time is for youth ages 13-19 to meet and discuss topics of interest. Autism Social Club meets in person the first Saturday of the month.

## Best Buddies Citizens Program

[www.bestbuddies.org/capitalregion/](http://www.bestbuddies.org/capitalregion/)

The Best Buddies Citizens program is a one-to-one adult friendship program for adults with and without disabilities to connect with one another in meaningful friendship. It is created for those ages 18 and up who are not already connected in one of our other Best Buddies friendship programs. Once a month, Best Buddies will fully plan and host a group event open to all matched and unmatched Citizens in the program.

## Endependence Center of Northern Virginia

<https://www.ecnv.org/>

The Endependence Center offers three social groups. The ENDependents is a monthly social group that meets at the ECVN office located in Arlington. The TGIF Group is a chance for local non- disabled and disabled people to relax together after a long week. The Young Adult Knights is for people between the ages of 18-30 living in Herndon, Reston, Chantilly, Clifton, Fair Oaks, Centreville, Burke, Fairfax/Springfield. The group meets once a month for a meal and fun activity.

[www.TheArcofNoVA.org](http://www.TheArcofNoVA.org) and ask questions at [www.thearcofnova.org/answers](http://www.thearcofnova.org/answers)

3060 Williams Dr., Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22031

## Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (The J)

<https://www.thej.org/specialneeds/classes-and-social-clubs/>

The J offers a variety of social clubs and other events for young adults with developmental disabilities. Going Places! Teens is for students in 8-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Going Places! Young Adults & Adults is for 18+. Virtual activities like Bingo, Trivia, and Cooking are also offered.

## Our Stomping Ground

<https://ourstompingground.org/>

Our Stomping Ground builds inclusive residential communities that also offer a variety of programs including book clubs, games nights, art and fitness classes and more. Some events are only open to residents of a specific community, but others are open to anyone in the Northern VA area. Explore their event calendar to see what opportunities are available.

## Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia (POAC)

<https://poac-nova.org/resources/>

POAC maintains a resource list of adapted sports, recreation, and travel opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

## Social Grace LLC

<https://socialgracellc.com/>

Offers virtual and in person social learning groups for middle school and high school students, ages 11 to 19. These groups support students to improve skills in making and keeping friends, working with others, conversation, managing anxiety, flexibility, compromise, self-awareness, problem-solving, conflict resolution, perspective-taking, self-advocacy, self-regulation/coping strategies, and more.

## Special Olympics of Northern Virginia (SOVA – Area 26)

<https://www.novasova.org/>

SOVA offer 23 sports to more than 2500 athletes year-round. Virtual opportunities are also offered.

## SPIRIT Club

<https://www.spirit-club.com/>

SPIRIT Club offers a range of inclusive exercise services: virtual online training classes, community group classes, private fitness classes for your organization, and personal & partner training. They offer all versions of their services online.

## Young Life Capernum

Young Life Capernaum gives young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the chance to experience fun and adventure, to develop fulfilling friendships and to challenge their limits while building self-esteem through club, camp and other exciting activities.

Fairfax <https://cap.younglife.org/>

Arlington <https://ylcarlinton.younglife.org/about-2/>

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