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Harford County to Host Empowered Expo for Special Needs Youth on April 22

BEL AIR, Md., (March 30, 2023) – The 2023 Empowered Expo (formally the Expo for Transitioning Youth) will be held on Saturday, April 22 for Harford County teens and young adults with Individualized Education Plans (IEPS) and 504 Plans who are transitioning from high school to adulthood, higher education, and the workforce. Young people, family members, educators, and other professionals are welcome to attend this FREE expo and conference from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Bel Air High School, 100 Heighe Street, Bel Air. Over 40 exhibitors and representatives from vendors, agencies, organizations, and support groups will be on hand.

“It is never too early to start thinking about the future and the Empowered Expo will help individuals and their families develop a plan with support from the community,” County Executive Bob Cassilly said.

This biennial event is a partnership between Harford County Department of Community Services Office of Disability Services, the Harford County Commission on Disabilities, Harford County Public Schools Department of Special Education; The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region; and the Maryland Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services.

“The Empowered Expo addresses many questions that young people have as they transition to adulthood,” Rachel Harbin, manager of the Harford County Office of Disability Services said. “Students and families may wonder if college is right for them, how to get necessary benefits or a job after high school, and how to financially prepare for the future.”

Workshops for 2023 will include:

- Raising Independent and Self-Determined Teens – will provide tools and activities to boost independence in finances, education, employment, home life and more.
- Special Needs Financial Planning - designed to help parents and caregivers prepare for the future.
- Market Yourself to Get a Job? - a workshop about ways for students to build the skills they need to obtain a job.
- OWL Rock College - will assist parents and students with information on how to prepare for college life at Harford Community College.

Additional workshops will offer information on the Developmental Disability Administration (DDA), the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), self-advocacy, ABLE accounts, and more. For a complete listing of workshops and their descriptions and to register, visit <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/3530/Empowered-Expo>. Registration is free and strongly encouraged. To register by phone or to request a printed registration brochure for participants, please contact the Department of Community Services at 410-638-3389.

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