



(File photo) The Learning Tree and The Learning Tree's Little H.A.P.I.E Tree Preschool in Auburn are preparing for the annual Boots and Bow Ties fundraiser. The organization serves more than 600 children, ages 2 ½ through 21, from across Alabama with developmental disabilities, including autism.

The Learning Tree's Boots and Bow Ties fundraiser set Feb. 16



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It's time to dust off the boots and get the bow ties ready as The Learning Tree's Residential School in Tallassee and The Learning Tree's Little H.A.P.I.E Tree Preschool in Auburn prepare for the annual Boots and Bow Ties fundraiser.

This year the event will be at Ag Heritage Park Pavilion in Auburn beginning at 6:30 p.m. with dinner and cocktails provided by the Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center. There will be live entertainment, a silent auction and door prizes.

"You do not want to miss out on this fun night with friends," said Stephanie Weldon, resources development coordinator at The Learning Tree in Tallassee. "We will have a DJ from Fade to Black Productions. He will keep the event moving along and dancing."

With a number of well-known sponsors, there will be several great prizes up for grabs, as well as many items up for bid in the silent auction.

“The silent auction will have a variety of items for kids and adults,” Weldon said. “We usually have bikes, massages, wine baskets, jewelry, guided fishing trips, a Mary Kay basket, and an Essential Oil basket. This is a great event to take your significant other for Valentine’s Day and get him or her a nice gift from the silent auction.”

This is the fifth annual Boots and Bow Ties fundraiser and it is fundamental to The Learning Tree and the Little H.A.P.I.E Tree because without it children with autism, especially preschool aged children, would not be able to receive the needed support from the organization and it’s dedicated staff.

With no known cause, the number of children with autism continues to climb. While there is no cure and the cause is unknown, there are some very beneficial treatments that can make a great difference in an autistic child’s life.

In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) reported that approximately 1 in 68 children in the United States has been identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This rate remains the same as in 2014, which is the first time it has not risen. However, with respect to older data, this new estimate is roughly 30 percent higher than the previous estimate of 1 in 88 children reported in 2012. In the 1980s, autism prevalence was reported as 1 in 10,000. In the 90s, prevalence was 1 in 2500 and later 1 in 1000.

The Learning Tree serves more than 600 children, ages 2 ½ through 21, from across Alabama, with developmental disabilities, including autism. The educational and residential programs provide educational instruction and training in a nurturing and supportive environment. The Learning Tree programs have proven to be highly successful in managing the behavioral, physical and cognitive challenges that interfere with learning. Programs are located in Tallassee, Auburn, Jacksonville and Mobile.

For more information about how you can help this organization please call Stephanie Weldon at 334-415-9372 or email at sweldon@learningtree.org.

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