

The Sun

Newsletter

Summer 2021

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Our mission

To help people and families affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD)



As we all have experienced at one time or another, inconsistent messaging can create confusion and unintended problems. Sometimes, the inconsistency requires getting lost and finding our way back, as in the case of inconsistent road signage. But for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), inconsistency can stop them in their tracks, and getting them restarted takes a lot more than merely turning around at the next light.



This issue spotlights some examples of inconsistency and how the messages got turned around. Plus, an article beginning on page 8 describes flexible thinking.

To begin, Eric Endlich, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and founder of Top College Consultants®, answers questions about how he avoids or explains inconsistencies to his students. Endlich has created an extensive list of autism-friendly colleges, and guides teens on the spectrum nationwide through the college application and transition process (<https://www.topcollegeconsultants.com/autism-in-college/>).

Q Do you speak differently to students with ASD (like avoid metaphors)?

While some of us on the spectrum understand metaphors and idioms, others interpret speech very literally and struggle with this type of language. If the person you're speaking with finds such language confusing, it's best to say what you mean in a direct, literal way and avoid figurative speech.

In addition, some students I work with become very anxious in conversation, which makes it harder for them to follow what's being said. As a result, they may need to have questions or instructions repeated sometimes. They may also repeat themselves because routine and familiarity can be comforting.

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Autism DelawareSM

New!

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Inconsistency affects us all

All of us with family members or close friends on the autism spectrum know the effects of inconsistency. As we have learned from experience, people on the spectrum do well with routine and struggle with change. And the past year of COVID-19 saw a lot of change and struggle in the autism community!

For example, wearing a mask was much more than an inconvenience for many people with autism. The inability to cope with the strangeness of wearing a mask became a roadblock to work, friends, restaurants, the mall, and places of worship.

Also, some of Autism Delaware’s community partners have had to close their doors completely while others decided to stop employing participants in Autism Delaware’s adult employment and community resources program. Known as Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation (or POW&R, for short), the program relies on the support of community partners. The resulting loss of jobs has been extremely difficult for people and families affected by autism.

This loss certainly hit our family. Our 31-year-old daughter Lorraine, who is nonverbal and on the spectrum, volunteered three mornings a week at Wilmington Hospital for the past 10 years. With the help of a POW&R job coach, Lorraine delivered the hospital’s interdepartmental mail as well as the patients’ mail. She really enjoyed her job and looked forward to seeing familiar, friendly faces. And her schedule was consistent: Lorraine

knew where she’d be going and what she’d be doing every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning.

Then, last March, as the pandemic surged and Delaware shut down, Wilmington Hospital ended its volunteer program. Losing her job disrupted Lorraine’s routine. My daughter and her aides were left to their own devices. Some days it worked; other days, not so much.

Just like neurotypical people, folks on the spectrum often struggle with the sudden loss of a job. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, Lorraine was generally cranky, appearing to be a bit distressed. Because Lorraine is nonverbal, she cannot tell us what she’s thinking or feeling. But based on her actions, we can read her.

With the help of POW&R and a job offer from Delaware’s Public Defender’s Office (which I served as chief defender until my recent retirement), Lorraine is now responsible for paper shredding and document destruction twice a week. Obviously, the nature of her job is different, and it’s not nearly as social as her work at Wilmington Hospital. But it’s legitimate work on a routine schedule.

Continued at the bottom of p. 3



Brendan O’Neill
President
Board of Directors

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Inconsistent Messaging Continued from p. 1**Q What do you understand about their written and verbal communication processes?**

A Autistic individuals represent a wide range of language abilities, including those who speak minimally but understand spoken speech well and communicate effectively through keyboards or other means. Hari Srinivasan, a student at the University of California, Berkeley, who writes for his university paper and is a student instructor, is a well-known example.

People on the spectrum who are visual thinkers process information better in forms other than speech. Temple Grandin, perhaps the world's most famous autistic person, has written on this topic extensively. For an example, see her book *Thinking in Pictures* (<https://www.amazon.com/Thinking-Pictures-Expanded-Life-Autism/dp/0307275655>).

Likewise, I find that I have a much better memory for things I read versus things I hear. As a result, it can help to present information in more than one form, such as providing a written summary of the conversation afterwards or an illustrated social story about important concepts.

In addition, many autistic students struggle with aspects of executive function, such as organization and planning; as a result, writing can be one of the most difficult tasks for them. I spend many hours with students, helping them organize their ideas for essays on their college applications,

Eric Endlich's recommended resource

Is That Clear?: Effective communication in a neurodiverse world, by Zanne Gaynor, Kathryn Alevizos, and Joe Butler (2020). Acrobat-Global, publisher. Available at Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/That-Clear-Effective-communication-neurodiverse/dp/1916280021>

and we often go through many revisions. Just as with conversation, anxiety about writing can lead students to "freeze" and have difficulty getting started.

Q Do you give the students a list of steps to take if they get mired down in the written or verbal language of their college application process?

A It usually helps to break things down into smaller, simpler steps. My approach is to just take this one step now and we'll tackle the rest later. There's a lot of jargon in college admissions, and I take the time to explain terminology and direct students to useful articles.

Q Do you take any special steps with students on the spectrum to help them communicate better through the process?

A Patience and flexibility are key. I get to know each student to understand their unique style of connecting and communicating. I supplement my spoken words with written messages (for example, Zoom chat or email) and visual demonstrations (for example, showing them useful information online).

I know it will take longer for some students to understand a conversation, process my instructions, or write an essay. I'm here to help them for as long as it takes.

Inconsistency affects us all Continued from p. 2

And Lorraine has responded favorably to the change to a new routine. I think she has adapted so well because she has an excellent, caring, and patient job coach. POW&RSM direct support professional (DSP) Victoria Peh has eased Lorraine's transition back to work with gentle guidance.

Another reason Lorraine has responded favorably to the change: She was already experienced at shredding. Not only has she been doing that work at home for quite a while, but she is also personally familiar with the Public Defender's Office! (There wasn't much of a learning curve in performing the work to be done.)

The takeaway from all this: COVID-19 has affected us all. As an inconsistency in our everyday lives, it forced us to face difficult changes and adapt to them. It's been rough, but I can see light at the end of the tunnel.

The good news is, Autism DelawareSM remains a strong, robust organization. And POW&R continues to reach out to new community partners so that we can continue to provide help to families and people affected by autism.

If you need help or can offer help as a community partner, call us. The new statewide phone number is (302) 224-6020.

When inconsistent behavior is a matter of life and death

by Kyle Bryan, autism advocate, and Carla Koss (Ed.)

The day before my brother died, he was fine. His sudden death was shocking enough, but then my family learned he had ended his own life.

What!? Why?!

Colin had been so happy, in his relationship with his girlfriend, beginning a new career as a farrier (a craftsman in the care of horse’s hooves). He was also enjoying learning ancient languages, such as Latin. Only yesterday, he was playing video games, teasing dad with puns, enjoying a milkshake with his girlfriend. Nothing looked out of the ordinary....

It makes no sense to me. How does someone love life one moment and throw it away the next? How does a person do that?!

My therapist said this confusion is normal. I also felt numb in the first year following Colin’s death. I learned that numbness is the inability to show emotion and a form of shock.

In the second year following Colin’s passing, I got angry: How could my brother just leave me like that? Why didn’t he say anything to me?

My therapist assured me that numbness and anger are part of the grieving process. It takes time for the mind to accept what happened—and to understand that many people who are suicidal



These photos of Colin Bryan are courtesy of Kyle Bryan, who lives on the spectrum.



seldom reach out for help. They may live in denial that anything is even wrong, but they are definitely in pain.

The question then became “What’s to be done to manage my own pain?”

Fast forward 4 1/2 years: It’s still hard to grasp how a guy with so much energy and potential could throw it all away in an instant. But once acceptance came, so did the tears. My therapist explained the process as a journey: I was crossing unfamiliar ground. Like walking a path in a forest, I would eventually reach the end of my journey of grief.

One thing that helped me process the mixed emotions was a grief share class I joined with my dad. We worked through our grief with a community of people, all of us expressing our feelings and supporting each other in counsel, prayer, and the shared memories that brought us joy and laughter. This class made a difference for us.

My other forms of therapy included medications to manage mood and keeping a journal to help me express and let go of bottled-up emotions. And spending more time with friends and family helped, too, by redirecting my heart and mind to the future.

Lastly, the practice of meditation taught me how to calm my mind so I’m better able to manage the anger and sadness when they come up again. This tool has made a difference as well.

Too many moves made our grandson doubt our love for him

by Diane Isaacs, grandparent of adult with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

When my 20-year-old grandson, Jordan, arrived in Newark after his mother's death in November 2015, he stayed with me and my husband in our home. While Jordan has three brothers who live in Atlanta, Houston, and New York, none of them had a situation that would work. And Jordan's father had not communicated with his sons in years. I called and asked for his assistance, but he refused.

At the time, I was 76, and my husband was 88. To address the legal side of Jordan's move into our home, my husband and I met with a lawyer. To help all of us work with Jordan's diagnosis, we got involved in a social organization for young people with Asperger's syndrome (now known as autism spectrum disorder).

The lawyer said that we needed to get Jordan into a long-term residence with other young men with Asperger's syndrome—because we were too old. So, we moved Jordan into a group home.

After a while, Jordan mentioned that the guys in his social group made comments about the fact that he lived in a group home, and this made him uncomfortable. I explained to him why we had moved him into the group home.

I guess Jordan didn't understand me because his BA [behavior analyst], after listening to him, called me and asked why he couldn't live with me and my husband. Jordan thought we did not love him! Perhaps he had done something wrong and we were punishing him by putting him in a group home.



Jordan Jacobson and his grandmother, Diane Isaacs, of Newark, enjoying a July day at the Bronx Zoo: "It was a really hot day," says Diane, "and my husband was worn out, but Jordan asked me to accompany him on a ride to see dinosaurs." Forty animatronic dinos were featured on the zoo's Dinosaur Safari ride.

I explained to the BA what the lawyer had told us, that Jordan would be better off in a group home, even following his move so far from home and still reeling from his mother's death. When I next spoke with Jordan a few days later, he told me I should not have listened to the lawyer! But I think he was relieved that the move to the group home was not based on anything he had done wrong.

Jordan is now 26. I am 81, my husband is 92, and we think short term rather than long term. And I know Jordan knows we love him and are looking out for his best interests in the future—because he gave me the best Mother's Day card I could ever receive this year!

Diane Isaacs's recommended resource

Diane Isaacs responded to the responsibility of meeting her grandson's everyday needs as most people would: She asked a friend. Luckily, her friend is a retired guidance counselor with the Delaware public school system.

If you are responsible for a child with autism and need some help or direction, let Autism DelawareSM family services be your guide. Call (302) 224-6020, ext. 219. Or send an email to referrals@delautism.org.

Unlearning the pattern of frustration in inconsistency

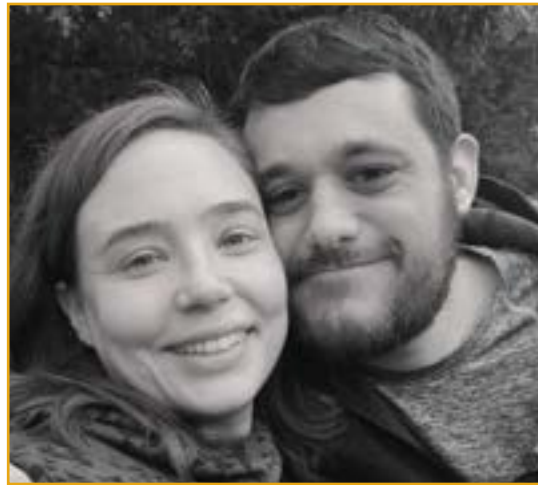
by Heidi Mizell, CPSS, Autism DelawareSM family navigator and mother of an adult son on the spectrum

My son started a new career at Christiana Care this past year. He joined a training class with two other people and learned a new skill for the new position. Having passed the national test, Shane is now a certified sterile processing technician.

He had a requirement of working 400 hours in different positions around the hospital, which meant learning new areas and working with new people in each area. This inconsistency in his work environment led to some friction.

Like many individuals with autism, Shane struggles with people who don't follow the rules. In work environments, Shane has to learn to adapt to the way other people want him to do things, and this may be in conflict with what he has actually been taught.

Also, other people may not be as diligent or have found short cuts, and Shane gets frustrated. He can get stuck in his frustration and become short with the people he sees



Shane Mizell with fiancée Bethany Alpaugh

as causing his frustration.

This pattern has been consistent in each of Shane's new positions. As his mother, I have a difficult time showing him not only that he will get used to the changes and new people but that he also has to learn to stop letting the frustration upset him. He will not always feel this way about his work environment.

Shane's ELP (essential lifestyle plan) allows for ongoing supports as needed with his direct support professional (or DSP, for short). Having access to his DSP has often been helpful. Access to people who understand autism thinking lets Shane vent his frustration, accept calming suggestions, and discuss

what options there are for support in place.

Changes are hard for everyone, but for our kids with autism thinking, we can put supports into place that teach calming techniques. In turn, they can unlearn the pattern of frustration in inconsistency.

Heidi Mizell's recommended resources

How to help your child get unstuck from negative thoughts

For people on the autism spectrum who prefer to use visuals

One of the techniques taught in Autism Delaware's Parent to ParentSM program is how to co-regulate a child who needs to learn how to self-regulate, including four breathing techniques.

For details on the Parent to Parent program, contact Autism Delaware intake coordinator Melanie Matusheski at (302) 224-6020, ext. 219. Or send an email to referrals@delautism.org.

For people on the spectrum who prefer something besides visuals

- The Breathe app for Apple Watch on the App Store website takes you through the process of slowing your breath and mind to regain balance—<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/breathe/id1459455352>
- *Hidden Curriculum: Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations*, by Brenda Smith Myles, Melissa L. Trautman, and Ronda L. Schelvan, is available at Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Curriculum-Practical-Understanding-Situations/dp/1931282609>.

Literal laughs



Sean Tuohy had a great time at his cousin's wedding, which took place at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, Connecticut, a few years ago.

When my son Sean was about 6 years old, he asked me "Mom, does money grow on trees or bushes?"

When I stopped laughing, I replied that money doesn't grow on either and asked him where he got that idea.

He said that someone at school had said "Money doesn't grow on trees." And Sean took that to mean that money grew elsewhere.

I told him that money is made at the U.S. Mint. To learn more about the U.S. Mint, Sean and I went to the public library and took out some books on the topic.

We also talked about other idioms. I explained that "spit it out" does not mean to actually spit, and "pulling your leg" does not mean to actually tug on someone's leg.

A year or so later, Sean came flying off the school bus at the end of the day, yelling "Mom! Mom! There's a new bridal shop across the street from Value City on Kirkwood Highway. We can go there to get you a husband!"

When I stopped laughing, I told him "They don't sell husbands at a bridal shop, Sean."

"Then, why do they call it a bridal shop?"

I told him that bridal shops sell everything that a bride might want to wear on her wedding day but that they don't supply the husband. And I reminded him that it's illegal to sell people.

We went to visit that bridal shop the following weekend just to assure Sean that husbands were not for sale.

—Karen Tuohy
Parent of two children
on the autism spectrum and
long-time Autism DelawareSM volunteer

I was teaching a student with autism about dating and how people meet someone they want to date. I explained that when you talk to a new person, it's good to ask questions that help you get to know that person better.

I suggested "You might want to ask 'Do you have any hobbies?' 'What movies do you like to watch?' and 'What music do you like to listen to?' This way, you can find out if you have similar interests."

We then moved into role-playing a conversation with someone the student might have just met. I asked him to start off the interaction.

So, he said "Do you have any hobbies, what movies do you like to watch, and what music do you like to listen to?"

Of course, this is exactly what I had suggested he say. So I explained that it's easier for people to handle one question at a time and to spend some time discussing each question before moving on to the next one.

It's so refreshing how literal people with ASD often are. It reminds us that we live in a world of assumptions and idioms, and how important it is to stop and think about what we are actually saying.

—Isabella Weber, M.P.H.
Vice President
Education and Training
Planned Parenthood
of Delaware

The Sun welcomes comments about the content of each issue.
Send your comment to carla.koss@delautism.org.



Flexible thinking

by Carla Koss

The term “flexible thinking” means being able to consider a range of consequences for your actions. Also called mental, cognitive, or psychological flexibility, flexible thinking is the opposite of being absolutely sure you’re always absolutely right.

“Really flexible thinkers can adjust their general tendency to be positive or negative on...which is more helpful in a given situation,” writes Alice Boyes, Ph.D. (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201409/become-more-flexible-thinker>). Author of *The Anxiety Toolkit* and *The Healthy Mind Toolkit*, Boyes translates social, clinical, and psychological research into tips that people can use every day.

In her September 14, 2014, blog on the *Psychology Today* website, Boyes offers several considerations for helping people test their assumptions about their viewpoints. “It’s important,” notes Boyes, “that you don’t assume that your way of looking at something is the way everyone looks at it. When you can see that other people look at situations different ways, it helps you not jump to inaccurate conclusions” (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201409/become-more-flexible-thinker>). Obviously, this result could be helpful in every-

day life, yet many people struggle with the concept.

The ability to consider another viewpoint falls under the group of skills called executive function, which is disabled in many people on the autism spectrum.

“When faced with a problem, kids who struggle with flexible thinking might freeze or do nothing,” writes Gail Belsky, executive editor at Understood, a nonprofit that serves families with children who learn and think differently. “Or they might try the same strategy over and over, even if it’s not working.

“This rigid way of thinking can show up during conversations. For example, kids may not understand that some words have two meanings. It can also show up in schoolwork, like when kids use a math strategy that works for one type of work problem but not with another” (<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/executive-functioning-issues/flexible-thinking-what-you-need-to-know>).

As a one-size-fits-all strategy, this cognitive bias was labeled “the law of the hammer” after psychologist Abraham H. Maslow wrote “I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were

Helpful resources to consider

5 Ways to Help Your Child with Autism Learn Flexible Thinking Skills, by Kari Dunn Buron, in **Autism Parenting Magazine**, Nov. 17, 2019—<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/learn-flexible-thinking/>

Flexible Thinking, on the Sesame Street in Communities website—<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/activities/flexible-thinking/>

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Flexible thinking Continued from p. 8

a nail" (1966. *The Psychology of Science. A Reconnaissance*. New York: Harper & Row—Amazon has this book available at <https://www.amazon.com/Psychology-Science-Abraham-Harold-Maslow/dp/0060341459>.)

How do you convince a child on the spectrum that not everything is a nail?

When 19-year-old Jacob "Jake" Mackie was a toddler, he experienced meltdowns like many children who feel frustrated when told "No," "Wait," or "Later." "No" frustrates any child, but "wait" and "later" are concepts of time and present an abstract concept of thinking that baffled the child on the spectrum.

Of course, mom Karen Mackie (who is also an Autism DelawareSM family support provider in Kent County) wanted to help her son, and points out a hard-earned lesson from 16 years ago: "Our guys can't predict, and sameness is important to them. That's one reason they have meltdowns.

"When dealing with inconsistency in life, you need to be accepting and flexible, especially when dealing with concepts that are not concrete, like 'wait' and 'later.'" So when Jacob was 3 1/2, Karen took him to the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore.

Before learning a process of accepting inconsistencies, though, Jacob first had to learn what "wait" meant.

"Some social modeling teaches our children 'expectation,'" continues Karen. "You have to teach your child 'waiting' before teaching 'no' or 'not available.' An expert can help you with this type of non-concrete idea. A BCBA [board-certified behavior analyst] at the Melmark School designed a 15-step protocol in which Jacob had to perform at a mastery level before moving on to the next step.

"With the help of Dr. Steve [Steven Lindauer, Ph.D.] at Kennedy Krieger, we created a home visual schedule that we call 'structured chaos,'" explains Karen. "Jacob learned to go over his wall schedule first thing every morning so he knew what to expect on that day. He knows he always does this at this time

and that at that time. We then threw off his day by inserting a Surprise icon. Dr. Steve told me to always introduce something Jacob liked as the Surprise icon.

"We took Jacob with us everywhere," continues Karen, "and worked through the meltdowns. Gradually, Jacob learned that the Surprise icon meant something new or different was about to happen. And no matter what it was, it would end in something he liked. And the number of meltdowns gradually lessened.

"We then paired the Surprise icon with other things that life threw at us, like new events or new places. And they always ended with a surprise he liked."

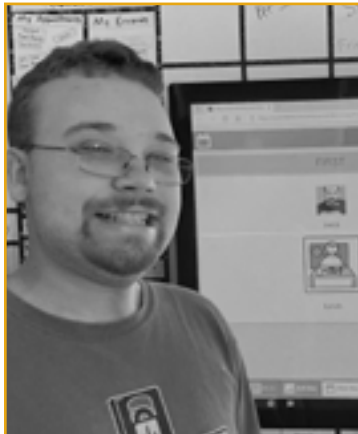
The Surprise icon was slowly replaced with the new events and then faded out. Since Jacob's visual schedule went digital, it travels with him in the community.

"Things always pop up, the schedule can be changed on the fly, and Jacob doesn't mind," adds Karen. "Jacob now enjoys going out. Good things happen in the community—even if he has no idea where we are going!"

Epilogue: Using his new tools—As a young adult, Jacob volunteers at the SPCA and must wear a uniform that includes long pants. "And he hates long pants!" laughs Karen.

"So I chose grey pants because he likes grey. But once he got used to wearing grey pants, I mixed it up by buying brown pants and not washing his favorite grey ones. When he complained that he couldn't find his favorites, I said 'Sorry, Buddy. The grey ones are in the laundry. You need to wear the brown ones because they're clean.'

"And he wore the brown pants," smiles Karen.



Jacob "Jake" Mackie smiles after confirming on his digital schedule that it's now time for lunch and next is laundry, library, and speech.

Karen Mackie's sources for support

- **Your family doctor and a hands-on board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA). Look for a BCBA in Autism Delaware's resource directory—<https://www.autismdelaware.org/services-resource-directory/>**
- **If every recommended therapist offers only to put you on a waiting list, look into Pyramid Educational Consultants—<https://pecusa.com/>**
- **To help teach your child life skills and how to use visual schedules for abstract concepts, look for a behavioral psychologist in [Autism Delaware's resource directory](#), or check out the Swank Autism Center—<https://www.nemours.org/services/swank-autism-center.html>**

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Flexible thinking Continued from p. 9

Is flexible thinking taught in school?

// In preschool, we use the Conscious Discipline curriculum to build a foundation for flexible thinking," notes Cari Phillips, who worked for 20 years in the Red Clay Consolidated School District as a classroom teacher and then as an educational diagnostician before becoming assistant principal of The Early Years program. "This social-emotional learning program teaches children to recognize their emotions and then provides coping strategies. For example, a teacher may model 'I see you are feeling angry. Let's try some balloon breaths. Or do you want to sit in the calm corner?'

"Teachers reinforce these strategies throughout the day," continues Phillips, "while we have BCBA's [board-certified behavior analysts] and school psychologists that consult in each classroom."

Until Red Clay pushed for an inclusive pilot program during the 2010–11 school year, there was no autism program. Any student with an educational classification of autism (which is different from a medical diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder) was referred to the Delaware Autism Program (or DAP, for short) and received autism programming at the Brennen School in Newark.

The other two countywide DAP centers are the Sussex Consortium in Lewes and the Charlton School in Camden. Created in 1991, DAP "provides educational services to students between 2 and 21 years of age. They emphasize direct teaching in community and

natural environments, guided by the techniques of applied behavior analysis," notes Brennen's website (<https://www.christinak12.org/domain/256>).

"Historically, it was heartbreaking to refer a preschooler to Brennen," admits Phillips, "but 10 years ago, we worked with Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health to create in-house services for children 2 1/2 and older.

"Today," adds Phillips, "we meet weekly with our preschool teachers and discuss each child's needs. If there's an issue, we have a team brain-storming effort that relies on a strategy or protocol to address the student's need. The student's therapists sit in on each meeting and may include a speech language therapist, occupational therapist, or physical therapist. We also have a consulting psychologist or behavior specialist for each classroom. And we maintain a program for staff development.

"I'm proud of this program," declares Phillips.

On the pandemic and inconsistency in expectation

"The pandemic has been hard on all children and families," notes Phillips, "so I've been surprised at how well our families coped while in quarantine. Our program provided remote services; a lot of families are on Zoom. We had

a unique opportunity to do a lot of parent consulting, to teach classroom strategies for parents to use at home.

"And we were ready for transi-



Clip Art

tional difficulties when we reopened for in-person services in the fall, but the students stunned us with the ease at which they fell right back into the school routines," says Phillips.

"This year has actually yielded the least amount of behavioral incidences."

Cari Phillips's recommended resource

A statewide program offers a parent-training series on Zoom. No registration or fee is required.

For details, call the Delaware Office of Statewide Autism Programs at (302) 292-5421, or send an email of interest to DOSAP@christina.k12.de.us.

Autism DelawareSM recommendation

Are you concerned about your child's flexible thinking? Share it as a parent concern on your child's individualized education program (IEP). And make sure it's added as a goal or an accommodation to address the development of this skill.

Sellout crowd celebrates Drive's 20th anniversary, welcomes new jobs program

On Thursday, May 13, Autism Delaware celebrated the 20th anniversary of its premier golf event and fundraiser, the Drive for Autism Celebrity Am Golf Outing. Adhering to COVID safety requirements at the DuPont Country Club, the sellout crowd of golfers played a scaled-down course while also enjoying good

weather, good food, and good friends at the first Autism Delaware event since the COVID shutdown.

"This event," notes Autism Delaware director of fund development and engagement David Woods, "was the first time many of the participants—whether golfers, volunteers, or sponsors—have been able to break out of their isolation, and we all felt the excitement in the air.

"Plus," emphasizes David, "we raised close to \$240,000 to support Autism Delaware programs. Over the last 20 years, Autism Delaware has benefited to the tune of \$7.5 million thanks to the efforts of golfers, volunteers, and sponsors of the Drive for Autism."

Long-term play for jobs program

The first annual Drive for Autism raised enough funds to provide seed money for a jobs program for adults on the autism spectrum.

Called Productive Opportunities for Work and RecreationSM (or POW&RSM, for short), the program today has the resources to support 175 adults with autism in the community.

"But hundreds of individuals living on the spectrum are asking for support every day," adds David. "At the Drive for Autism, we announced the creation of a new program that will fund the gap between reimbursable supports and the actual cost of running POW&R. It's called POW&R Job Sponsorship. And Autism Delaware is asking generous individual donors to financially support a year's worth of employment for a hardworking individual. Each donor will be matched with a specific POW&R participant and receive updates on the participant's progress and journey."

For more information, turn to page 12.

Congrats, Pat Murphy, the 2021 Going the Distance Award winner!

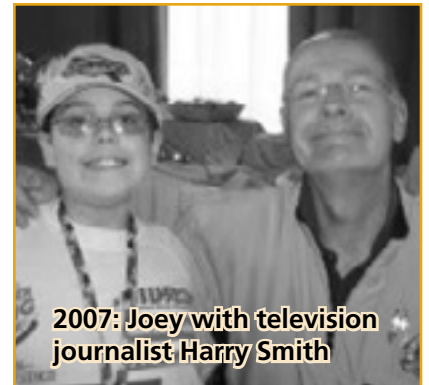
For 20 years, Pat has been co-chair of the Drive for Autism Celebrity Am Golf Outing.



"When Pat Murphy...suggested we do a golf event," writes Autism Delaware co-founder and longtime board member Artie Kempner in his letter to this year's golf participants, "none of us could imagine the impact that it would have on our autism community and our families. We knew that we needed to provide adult services to go along with our advocacy, family support, and social events. We created POW&R with the money that we raised at The Drive. [POW&R is short for Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation.] And now POW&R is serving over 175 clients...."

Drive through the years

Autism Delaware tournament manager Deanna Principe has enjoyed rubbing elbows with celebrities and sports figures at the Drive for Autism—and so has her son Joey! Proud mama recorded many of her son's meet-and-greet moments through the years. Here are three.



2007: Joey with television journalist Harry Smith



2009: With NASCAR Hall of Fame member Jeff Gordon



2019: With former professional stock car racing driver and commentator for NASCAR on Fox, Clint Bowyer

INSIDE AutismSM Delaware

The new POW&RSM Job Sponsorship program

POW&R Job Sponsorship creates new networks in which a generous individual donor sponsors one full year of Autism Delaware’s adult services for a POW&R participant.

As a POW&R Job Sponsor, you will be matched with a specific POW&R participant and follow the participant’s employment journey throughout the year of your sponsorship. One full year of sponsorship, costing \$2,500, also covers community resources for the individual, including social and wellness activities, so your sponsorship will affect the individual’s entire community.

“Also,” points out Autism Delaware director of fund development and engagement David Woods, “one POW&R Job Sponsorship equals three jobs: Each POW&R participant is supported by a DSP [direct support professional] who functions as the individual’s personal job coach. Plus, when an adult with autism is employed, his or her primary caregiver can reenter the work force and be gainfully employed.”

About POW&R

This Autism Delaware program is called Productive Opportunities for Work and RecreationSM (or POW&R, for short).

It was named a nationally recognized effective program for adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) because it focuses on the needs and interests of an adult on the spectrum who wants to work and volunteer in the community while supporting the individual toward a positive outcome.

To this end, Autism Delaware’s community-based vocational service offers consultation and training for employees on the spectrum. POW&R staff members teach each POW&R participant how to do a job the way the employer wants it done, and then they provide ongoing supports for quality assurance. POW&R also provides day-habilitation and personalized supportive living services.

For more information

To learn more about the new POW&R Job Sponsorship program, contact David Woods at (302) 224-6020, ext. 206. Or send an email of interest to David.Woods@delautism.org.



POW&R
PARTICIPANT
SINCE 2010

Lorraine

VOLUNTEERS AT
STATE OF
DELAWARE
ATTORNEY'S
OFFICE

Introduced at the 2021 Drive for Autism, the POW&R Job Sponsorship program addresses the ever-growing number of adults on the spectrum who want to work and the cost of maintaining the high-quality support each needs for a successful outcome.

As Autism Delaware’s adult employment and community resources program, POW&R was started with seed money raised at the first annual Drive for Autism 20 years ago. Today, POW&R supports 175 participants and their choices for how they live, work, and play in the community. Here are two: Lorraine, who volunteers at the state’s attorney’s office in Delaware, and Nygel, who is employed at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children.



POW&R
PARTICIPANT
SINCE 2019

Nygel

EMPLOYED BY
AI DUPONT
HOSPITAL