

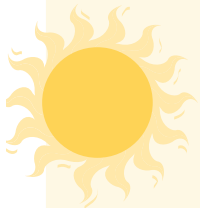
The Sun

Newsletter

April-June 2012

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Our mission

Autism Delaware™ works to create better lives for people with autism and their families in Delaware.



The DSM-V debate

The American Psychiatric Association is updating its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), and a great deal of buzz surrounds the proposed changes in



the fifth edition. The changes collapse the four disorders—autism, Asperger’s syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder—not otherwise specified (PDD–NOS)—into one: autism spectrum disorders (or ASDs, for short).

While DSM-IV called for three areas of evaluation, commonly called domains (communication, social interaction, and repetitive behavior), DSM-V reduces the domains to social/communication deficits and fixated interests/repetitive behaviors and has more stringent criteria. DSM-V also calls for diagnosticians to note the amount of support the person needs within each domain: support, substantial support, or very substantial support.

Implementing these new criteria creates questions for researchers, service providers, and families and individuals with ASDs. The answers are complicated by the autism community’s inability to see how the new criteria will impact us in the future. From Autism Delaware’s experience with POW&R, we know that support needs are difficult to predict and can change very quickly, so we question any prediction of support needs at the time of diagnosis.

How will DSM-V affect individuals who are higher functioning? We

know that the diagnosis as *is* doesn’t work very well for people at the high end of the spectrum. Diagnosis is not an exact science; it depends on the tools being used, the diag-

nostician’s knowledge and experience with ASDs, and how the diagnostician interprets the standards: Were the right questions asked? Did the family provide the correct information? Has the child been seen in more than one setting?

According to Dr. Dan Hoover, formerly of the Delaware Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services and currently with the Kennedy Krieger Institute, children with Asperger’s syndrome are as likely to be under-diagnosed as over-diagnosed. This is unacceptable. The key to effective treatment and supports is good diagnosis, so this issue must be addressed.

The DSM-V standards are more stringent around social interaction and communication criteria and include sensory-processing criteria for the first time. Individuals with sensory issues may now receive an ASD diagnosis. This leads the autism community to be cautiously optimistic.

How will this change affect services? The concern is that people on the high end of the spectrum won’t be included in the diagnosis and, thus, won’t be eligible to receive the services they need. It’s an issue that’s already pervasive in Delaware. Every year, about 100 families with children with high-

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The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware™

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Autism Delaware™ is interested in a variety of viewpoints about autism and emerging research, but reference to any treatment, therapy option, program, service, or treatment provider is not an endorsement. We publish information only for informational purposes and assume no responsibility for the use of any information. You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for your specific needs.



Theda Ellis
Executive Director

hard to put systems into place, to make sure that everyone knows who we are and what we stand for, and to begin to offer services. Still, as a teenager, we are not "there" yet.

Why am I writing about this? Because we are on a journey to become the organization that we want to be—a full-service program—yet even with all the progress we have made, we have a long way to go to address everyone's concerns. Some of you have concerns that we pay too much attention to adults and not enough to children. Others feel we should pay more attention to our folks who are high-functioning. And some of you want to know why other counties always have more activities—or at least why it seems that way.

The point is, we are a small group of people, working mostly part-time, who are doing the best we can to meet the statewide need. We are blessed to have had the support and resources to grow as quickly as we have, but we're in a period where we're trying to ensure high quality for the services we currently offer while implementing planned growth.

The teen years

Autism Delaware™ is now 13 ½ years old! We are teenaged in terms of both actual age and in our life journey. We have worked

As we start any new service, we start with a few strengths—and some needs. For example, we started POW&R™ solely in New Castle County, primarily for individuals with classic autism, despite the fact that we couldn't offer behavioral supports. We worked with the available human and financial resources. The journey has been a challenge because of the growing need.

We continue to work to expand services to all people with autism in all Delaware locations. Because of this effort, POW&R is available in all three counties today. Just as POW&R started small, our new clinical services will be small at first, starting with behavioral supports for individuals who have classic autism. Long term, we plan to offer clinical services across the spectrum—and across the state as travel time allows. Eventually, both POW&R and Autism Delaware's clinical services will change as we grow and can add more resources... Someday, we hope to add residential services as well!

To help us in this growth spurt, Autism Delaware is currently looking for a new associate director for autism services, specifically someone who is knowledgeable about autism and has program development and operational skills. This unique combination of knowledge and development and operational skills is needed to help Autism Delaware move forward.

We have a marvelous history, but we need to think about what we need to be successful in the future. Please join us. It will be a great journey!

Theda M. Ellis

A service of Autism Delaware



PRODUCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK AND RECREATION

Katina Demetriou, POW&R Director
katina.demetriou@delautism.org
Bus: 302.224.6020 Ext. 206 **Cell:** 302.824.2252

Karen Anderson, N. Delaware POW&R Coordinator
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Melissa Martin, S. Delaware POW&R Coordinator
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Bus: 302.644.3410

Legislative corner



Legislative Hall, Dover

A lot can change between the time this article was written and when you receive it, so track the bills mentioned here at www.legis.delaware.gov. To see what's new, visit the advocacy pages at www.delautism.org.

Former Delaware State Representative William A. Oberle, Jr., has joined Autism Delaware's legislative team to help us keep up with business in Legislative Hall. *Welcome, Bill!*

In legislative news, House Bill (HB) 245 will amend the Delaware Criminal Code to use people-first language. Similar bills revising regulations and Delaware's other laws were successful last year, so we expect HB245 will succeed as well.

Bills were also introduced to give schools more flexibility in reporting minor incidents to police (HB243) and to create a procedure for assessing a child's competence to stand trial (HB253), including assessment of

developmental disabilities, such as autism. Autism Delaware™ has done an early review of these bills and expects that both concepts will benefit children with autism by ensuring more ways for school or court authorities to take the disorder into account during decision-making.

Insurance update—Autism Delaware continues to press for insurance coverage of autism therapies (SB22)—a bill that, to pass, needs YOU! Even if you've already contacted your state legislators, remind them that medical insurers should not be allowed to refuse coverage of medical needs. Make your views known with phone calls, emails, and letters to your local newspaper editor.

Find out who your state legislators are at www.congress.org.

Whether you help make a success of Autism Delaware's spring event as a volunteer or, as a walker, fundraise in support of Autism Delaware's many much-needed services, you exemplify our commitment to working to create better lives for Delawareans with autism and their families.



'Not yet registered to volunteer or walk?

Call (302) 224-6020.

PARENT PARENT

The rising rate of autism is a problem that needs a solution—fast. Insurance companies, school districts, and parents are more likely to invest time and money in strategies that are proven to work, say parents Jen Nardo and Cory Gilden, so one solution is to help supply personal data through research studies or clinical trials.

“As families with children who are struggling,” says Cory Gilden, “we need to help find these solutions. We shouldn’t just wait around for someone else to figure it out.

“My son and I,” continues Gilden, “have participated in studies involving everything from parent questionnaires to investigating how kids on the spectrum problem-solve. Each research study is unique and focuses on a certain aspect of [life with autism]. One study I participated in was interested in creating a better hospital experience for kids on the spectrum. In another study, my son took part in testing the visual memory of kids with autism.

“We’ve been compensated,” adds Gilden, “with gift cards, cash, mileage reimbursement, free evaluations, and sometimes just a simple *Thank you*. Families can also get things like free therapies, free travel expenses across the globe, and even free toys or supplies.”

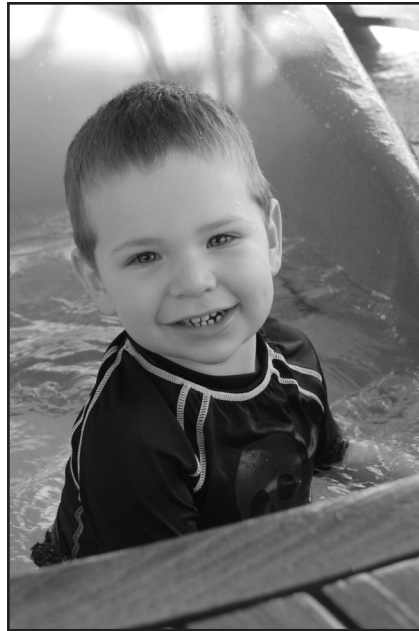
To participate

Research studies may involve making long phone calls or car rides, completing prescreening questionnaires, looking up old medical records, or maybe subjecting your child to discomfort and aggravation. Prepare yourself for the investment in time. In the long run, it’s worth it, assures Gilden, because you benefit not once but twice—first, with any up-front compensation for participating and, second, when the research comes out and tells everyone how to treat our children more effectively or help the autism community as a whole.

“We’re motivated,” says Gilden. “We have the life experience—and we want free stuff!”

Research studies—If you’re interested in participating in a research study, here are some good places to start:

- **www.autismMatch.org**—Enter your information in The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s database for the Center for Autism Research. When a research study arises that you fit the criteria for, you will be contacted.
- **www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-pervasive-developmental-disorders/**



Cory Gilden’s son Casey

nih-initiatives/taart/index.shtml—The National Institute of Mental Health leads the Studies to Advance Autism Research and Treatment (STAART) program, a network of five institutes around the country contributing autism research in the areas of causes, diagnosis, early detection, prevention, and treatment.

- **www.kennedykrieger.org/research-training/participate-in-research**—Here is a listing of the current research studies at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Md.

Clinical trials—“Participating in clinical trials or other research studies,” notes parent Jen Nardo, “provides priceless information to the researchers. We all want to see better treatments for autism; we all dream of a cure.

The research can only be furthered if we take part in it.” To find a clinical trial that your child could participate in, go to www.clinicaltrials.gov. This site lets you search first by condition and then by state to find something close to home.

Type “autism” in the search bar. A list of studies will come up. Across the top of the list is a Refine Search tab where you may choose the states you are willing to travel to, your child’s age range, and other criteria necessary for an appropriate match. The new list that comes up lets you know which studies are recruiting participants. To read the details of a specific study, click the study’s title. Details could include inclusion or exclusion criteria, contact information, medication, blood draws, or pen and paper surveys.

In January, a search for clinical trials in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey listed 35. Some clinical trials were completed, but many were still recruiting. Here’s a sample:

- Study of Arbaclofen from the Treatment of Social Withdrawal in Subjects with Autism Spectrum Disorders at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) with Seaside Therapeutics—seeking males and females, 5–21
- Treatment of Sleep Disturbances in Young Children with Autism at University of Pittsburgh—seeking males and females, 24–72 months old
- Intranasal Oxytocin and Learning in Autism at CHOP—seeking males only, 12–17 years of age
- Safety and Efficacy of AFQ056 in Adult Patients with Fragile X Syndrome at Suburban Research Associates in Media, Penn., with Novartis—seeking males and females, 18–45 years of age



Photos of Autism Delaware's 2011 summer day camp



Summer vacation?!

Do you often wonder how to fill the summer with enriching and enjoyable activities for your child with an autism spectrum disorder? 'Ever wonder what other families do?

Wonder no more! We asked some parents, and here's what they told us:

- I take my child to the county park and library playgrounds, Delaware Children's Museum, Pump It Up, and to swim lessons at the YMCA. I also like Delaware Park because, on Saturdays, they have free moonbounces and pony rides.
- I prefer play dates and church functions. I also take my two children to the Please Touch Museum as well as to parks and playgrounds.
- We have no opportunities beyond school or therapy for social interaction. When other kids are back in school (early spring and late summer), [we go to] Jungle Jim's.
- We go to the beach a lot in the summer and try to get together with other families.

Does your family enjoy a summer activity not mentioned here? Post it on our Facebook page!

A few favorite places

- Cape Henlopen State Park
- Killens Pond
- Lewes Beach
- Funland
- Restaurants
- Jungle Jim's
- Clayton Theatre
- Movies at Midway
- Milford Bowling Lanes
- Autism Delaware's summer day camp at the Children's Beach House
- Camp Fairlee Manor, Chestertown, Md.
- DelTech's Kids on Campus

Family-approved activities

- Swim, camp, ride bikes
- Go to the beach
- Get together with other families
- See a movie with family and friends
- Enjoy the back yard pool
- Take day trips to Baltimore or Washington, D.C.

Welcome new members!

Your membership supports our mission. In other words, you help Autism Delaware's effort to create better lives for Delawareans with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and their families.

Anthony & Jennifer Angotti
Paul & Sheila Chisholm
Mr. Blair Hains
Michael & Cynthia Headman
Mr. & Mrs. John Humphrey

Ms. Bermuda Jones
Bill & Karen McKinnon
Mark & Dianne Prengle
Christine K. Stang
Greg & Susan Wills

Did you know?

Autism Delaware™ is The First State's preeminent autism agency.

Members of Autism Delaware enjoy access to a range of information and services.

For details, visit us at www.delautism.org.

INSIDE **Autism** Delaware™



The new DDDS director, Jane J. Gallivan, listened to examples of family struggles at the January 19 meeting with Autism Delaware.

The Autism Delaware Adult Issues Committee hosted an evening on January 19 with Jane J. Gallivan, the new director of the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), at the Autism Delaware Newark office. A packed house of about 25 parents, Autism Delaware staff, and self-advocates attended as well as a few via video conference from the new Autism Delaware Milton office.

The committee is taking a hard look at residential options

for Delaware's adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Parents shared their stories about struggling with the care of their loved ones with ASDs and making tough decisions on how to provide for their loved ones' needs, including an appropriate level of independence. As those around the room discussed the future of residential services, Gallivan listened carefully and talked candidly about the challenges her office faces, emphasizing a commitment to working in partnership to improve services statewide for individuals in the disabilities community.

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf announced Gallivan's appointment last October. The new director of DDDS comes to Delaware with more than 30 years' experience in disabilities services.



Chuckles and Ben and Jack Stomieroski

At the southern Delaware holiday party, children enjoyed the clown as well as Santa. Special thanks to Margaret Haas for attending and talking to families about DDDS.

Adding clinical services

For Delaware's school districts, Autism Delaware™ is creating and will implement a system for assessing and evaluating what's needed for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) to receive the best education available. Included will be functional behavioral assessments (FBAs); psycho-educational, clinical, and behavioral evaluations; and independent educational evaluations (IEEs). Further clinical services will include parent training for the whole and extended family and school consultation services, either for one child or the entire classroom.

For Delaware's parents, Autism Delaware will also provide home consultation services as well as FBAs, IEEs, and psychoeducational, clinical, and behavioral evaluations.



Why should you try Autism Delaware's clinical services?

Because the new clinical director in charge of creating and implementing these services is Susan Peterson, Ph.D., BCBA-D, a doctoral-level board-certified behavior analyst with 30 years' experience working with people

with ASDs. Because of this experience, Peterson brings a unique view into the needs of the whole person with an ASD.

Plus, Peterson is a Delaware-certified school psychologist who knows how to listen!

Autism Delaware™ needs you!

Autism Delaware™ fundraisers—such as the statewide auctions and Walk for Autism—need volunteers to make them happen.

Please volunteer your time and talents!

Either send an email of interest to volunteer@delautism.org. Or call (302) 224-6020.

Expanding into Sussex County

POW&RTM accepted its first Sussex County participants this January. With this step, adults with autism spectrum disorders statewide are now able to receive adult services from a nationally recognized Effective Program that provides vocational services; competitive, supported, and self-employment; and social and recreational opportunities.

"This expansion allows POW&R to provide transition and traditional vocational supports in Sussex County," says Katina Demetriou, director of POW&R. "We are excited not only to bring these services into Sussex but also to add services in the final county of our expansion, completing our goal of providing services that are truly statewide."

Networking contacts needed

"POW&R's expansion into Sussex County means that a lot of networking will need to occur up front in our communities so that POW&R can develop relationships with community business partners in the industries that our participants desire to find work," notes Melissa Tice Martin, the southern Delaware POW&R coordinator. "We are looking for internship and training opportunities based on our assessments of our participants' abilities as well as secure, paid employment in the job each participant likes best."

Suggestions and leads are appreciated as POW&R seeks opportunities for young adults on the spectrum across Sussex County. Here are just a few examples of the type of businesses we are seeking to partner with and the type of work our participants want to do:



Hard at work are POW&R participants Mark Rowland and Melissa Chong.

- Horse farms (stall cleanup, horse feeding, saddle and blanket cleaning)
- Bait and tackle shops
- Sporting goods stores
- Automotive maintenance (vehicle washer and detailer, parts clerk, automotive store clerk, car lot assistant)
- Food service and preparation
- Stock and inventory
- Light clerical (filing, shredding, data entry)
- Retail (all varieties)

Please let us know if you have any ideas, leads, or connections that would benefit our POW&R participants in Sussex County. Send an email to melissa.martin@delautism.org.

Newark office
(302) 224-6020

Milton office
(302) 644-3410



Jaclyn Dotson and her family came to POW&RTM seeking supports that would allow her to use her computer and clerical skills in a real-world setting while also helping her to navigate the community safely and successfully. Beginning her transition from the Charlton School-Wesley College Extension Program a day or two a week, Dotson eventually began an internship in the Dover Downs ticket office, which then turned into a paid part-time job. With continued help from POW&R, Dotson now also interns at United Way of Kent County and works as a paid employee at Central Delaware Speech Language Pathology, Inc.

Dog therapy helps children with ASDs

by Janet Luke

Smiles, curiosity, and focused interaction: This is the idea behind PAWS for People's Autism Initiative. And what a difference it has made to more than 150 children helped last year!

For details, visit www.PAWSforpeople.org, or call (302) 351-5622.

PAWS for People is a nonprofit pet therapy organization. Each PAWS therapy team—consisting of a person and his or her dog—works with educators and parents to help children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) meet their individualized education plan (IEP) goals. The friendly PAWS dogs are trained and certified to work spe-

cifically with children with ASDs. Most visits take place in the classroom, but home visits are available.

PAWS team member Val Allen starts a visit by having the children feed carrots and dog biscuits to her Pekingese-Pomeranian, Louie.



PAWS volunteer Lynne Robinson walks Sunny with Brennen School student Andrew Herbert.
Reprinted with PAWS permission

This activity is followed by petting and grooming. Verbalizing and reading come next. Soon, the children give Louie commands on their own. Children take turns hooking and unhooking Louie's harness, a task that

helps their motor skills. Sometimes, Allen asks children to read stories to Louie while others take turns combing Louie's coat. "We use the dog as a motivational bridge," says Allen.

"The children practice some skills and don't worry about making a mistake. It's a motivator," notes teacher Sue Davis, who has seen improvement in her students' verbal and communication skills since the PAWS initiative began.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

April

- 4, 18, 25**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 P.M. *Registration:* Karen Tuohy at karen.tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us. Or call (302) 633-3316.
- 10**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 9:00 A.M.
- 19**—Parent Coffee Hour. Holiday Inn Express. Dover. 9:00 A.M.
- 20**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration:* Send email of interest to delautism@delautism.org.
- 27**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Milton office. 6:00–7:45 P.M. *Registration:* Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.
- 28**—Sensory friendly movie: *Disney Chimpanzee*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. DuPont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 A.M.
- 28**—Skating party. Christiana Skating Center Roller Skating Rink. 801 Christiana Rd. Newark. 5:15–7:15 P.M.
- 29**—Children's Theatre: *Snow White*. Schwartz Center for the Arts. 226 So. State St. Dover. 2:00 P.M. *Registration:* Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.

May

- 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 P.M. *Registration:* Karen Tuohy at karen.tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us. Or call (302) 633-3316.
- 8**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 7:00 P.M.
- 15**—Parent Coffee Hour. Georgia House Restaurant. Milford. 9:00 A.M.
- 18**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night:
Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration:* Send email of interest to delautism@delautism.org.
Autism Delaware Milton office. 6:00–7:45 P.M. *Registration:* Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.
- TBD**—Speakers Series: Special Education. Special Olympics. 619 So. College Av. Newark. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Information:* Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020.

June

- 6, 13, 20, 27**—Bowling night. Bowlerama. 3031 New Castle Av. New Castle. 5:30–7:00 P.M. *Registration:* Heidi Mizell at heidi.mizell@delautism.org. Or call (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.
- 9**—Sensory friendly movie: *Madagascar 3*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. DuPont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 A.M.
- 12**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 9:00 A.M.
- 15**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Newark office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration:* Send email of interest to delautism@delautism.org.
- 16**—Picnic at Blue Rocks. Frawley Stadium. 801 So. Madison St. Wilmington. 5:15–7:00 P.M. *Registration:* Deanna Principe @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 213.
- 28**—Parent Coffee Hour. Holiday Inn Express. Seaford. 9:30 A.M.
- TBD**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Milton office. 6:00–7:45 P.M. *Registration:* Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.



Parent Coffee Hour

Panera Bread

3650 Kirkwood Hwy.,
Wilmington
Apr. 10 @ 9:00 A.M.
May 8 @ 7:00 P.M.
June 12 @ 9:00 A.M.

Join us!

Holiday Inn Express

1780 N. Dupont Hwy.,
Dover
Apr. 19 @ 9:00 A.M.

Georgia House Restaurant

18 S. Walnut St., Milford
May 15 @ 9:00 A.M.

Holiday Inn Express

24058 Sussex Hwy.,
Seaford
June 28 @ 9:30 A.M.

The coffee is free!



2012 Drive for Autism Sponsorship opportunities available!

Sponsorship opportunities are now available for the 2012 Drive for Autism. Help support Delaware's preeminent autism agency by sponsoring Autism Delaware's premier golf event.

For details, visit www.delautism.org.

Teen/Tween Asperger's game night

For 9–19 year olds
with Asperger's syndrome

Place: Autism Delaware™
Newark office

Dates: April 20
May 18
June 15

Time: 6:30–8:30 P.M.

Cost:
\$30 per season
Must be paid
at registration

To register:
(302) 224-6020
delautism
@delautism.org

For 9–14 year olds
with Asperger's
syndrome

Reservations:
Dafne Carnright
(302) 644-3410
dafne.carnright@delautism.org

Spring 2012 season

Place: Autism Delaware™
Milton office

Dates: April 27
May 18
June TBD

Time: 6:00–7:45 P.M.

Lego® Club

For children who have
good communication
skills and can follow
directions.

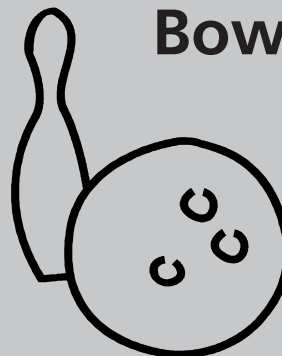
Evaluation required.

Call Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.

Or send an email to heidi.mizell@delautism.org.



Spring 2012 session



Bowling night

Every Wednesday
5:30–7:00 P.M.

Bowlerama
3031 New Castle Av.
New Castle, Del. 19720-2297

Registration info: See the
Calendar of Events on pg. 8.

The DSM-V debate Continued from page 1

functioning autism contact Autism Delaware™, looking for help in getting needed education or services.

Too often, no services are available. And education for teachers and school psychologists is only starting to catch up with high-functioning spectrum disorders, so schools struggle with how to diagnose and educate. Children who might be eligible for mental health services from the Delaware Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services lose this eligibility when they turn 18, and the adult system does not recognize the same eligibility standards.

We are fortunate that, about four years ago, the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services changed

eligibility to accept individuals with Asperger's syndrome. Unfortunately, few services were available. Providers are now starting to step up to this population, but no insurance typically covers these services. As a result, the entire cost is borne by the family, education system, and state agencies.

What will Autism Delaware do? We must be vigilant and active as the standards in the new DSM-V continue to be developed and implemented. We are hopeful that better understanding and more specific diagnosing criteria will improve the landscape for people with autism, but we will be monitoring the process to make sure that Delaware's children and adults with ASDs who need services do not lose eligibility. In other words, we need to keep advocating and working to ensure that services are available for all who need them, regardless of diagnosis.

Why a Walk and not a Race



Last April, the Walk-Race for Autism enjoyed a wonderful spring day in Lewes with about 500 walkers and runners. Autism Delaware™ is planning another equally wonderful event this year—with a few changes: After careful consideration, Autism Delaware's board and staff decided to continue the Walk without the Race component. Realizing we did not adequately share our reasons for this change, we want to now.

The Walk for Autism is a family event.

The Walk has several purposes, but first, it is an event that includes families. Yet several of our families told us they would like to participate but bringing the entire family to Lewes at 8:00 A.M. on a Sunday morning isn't feasible, especially when the family lives outside the Lewes area. Families come from the western part of Sussex County, as well as from Kent and even New Castle County, to enjoy the beach community and the inclusive event.

Yes, the Sussex loca-

tion attracts families from all three counties! So, we are moving the Walk to Cape Henlopen, adding more family activities, and holding the event later in the day.

The Walk for Autism is a fundraiser.

The key purpose of the Walk is to raise money while having fun with family and friends. The Walk helps pay for skating parties, holiday parties, speakers, conferences, scholarships for professionals, and the events that ensure our children have social opportunities and that families can have fun in a supportive atmosphere. The Walk also pays for the advocacy that ensures that graduating students have services at the end of school and that individuals with Asperger's syndrome are eligible at the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. And as of this year, the Walk for Autism pays for adult services in Kent and Sussex Counties,

too! Furthermore, the Walk is how we pay for that live voice on the phone that gives families information, referrals, and support. Last year, we offered support to 258 callers across Delaware—more than 100 phone calls alone were in southern Delaware.

You who have worked a party, wedding, or big event know that an event of this size takes a lot of time, money, and human resources to pull off. When we reviewed the 2011 Walk-Race, we found that the Race was very expensive to operate. It required much more staff and volunteer time than the Walk component. It paid for itself—but not much more. Sadly, we cannot justify continuing to support the high cost and time commitment of the Race, and we hope those of you who love to run understand our decision. As an organization, Autism Delaware is responsible for meeting our mission: working to create better lives for people with autism and their families in Delaware. In the final tally, we realized that the Walk for Autism meets our mission in a more effective and inclusive way: Everyone can participate.

For runners who may want to continue to fundraise, we are working on some alternatives. Anyone who is interested in supporting Autism Delaware through running or other athletic pursuits should contact Kim Siegel in our Newark office to discuss the options.

Thank you!

This year will be one of great change for Autism Delaware. Having begun adult vocational services in Sussex County and a statewide clinical services pilot program, we will soon hire an associate director and begin exploring residential services. As we expand and grow, we thank every one of you for your dedication and support, and we hope you'll stay with us during the exciting days ahead.

And we thank all the runners who have participated in the Race over the years. We appreciate the time and effort you put into our event. You exemplify the drive to excel and to create a better life. Please know that we will continue to help you find other running venues so you can continue to support Autism Delaware in our mission. *Thank you!*

A few tips for a successful evening at the prom

- If your child does better with a coach, talk to the prom committee and school principal about assigning a young college student to shadow your child and his or her date.



- Is food part of the program? Find out if what's being served is on your child's menu. Your child may need to eat before attending the prom. **Remember:** Hungry people are grouchy people.
- Are formal photos being taken? If your child doesn't like being photographed, skip the formal shots. But if your child doesn't mind the flash or being the center of attention, buy the small photo package. (You can always order more later.)
- Know what to expect. Do you know where the prom is? What's the layout? What type of music will be played? Will strobe lights be flashing? Will the music be too loud for your child? Acclimate your child with ear planes, plugs, or in-the-ear headphones.
- Is a tux or a cocktail dress required? Formalwear can be a challenge. Your child should practice wearing formal clothes before the prom.

Dancing

Depending on the music being played at the prom, does your child need to learn some dance moves? Consider dance lessons. 'No time for lessons? Explain to your child:

- When a song starts, stand to the side until you can feel the beat. Then, start moving to the beat, and step onto the dance floor.
- As much fun as dancing alone can be, you'll probably enjoy yourself more with a partner. If your partner feels the beat easily, hold his or her hands to help you feel it.
- Once you've got a dance move down, add another. Look at what others are doing around you—especially if you join a group on the floor for a line dance or a song with patented moves, like YMCA.
- Talking to your partner while you dance will help you to relax and distract you from feeling self-conscious. No deep conversation—just a little small talk. Begin by complimenting your partner's prom dress or tuxedo.

This article is a composite of data from www.prettyforprom.com and Heidi Mizell's research.



The Sun survey

What do you think about the newsletter?

Give us your feedback. We want to hear from you! Either fill out this form, and mail it to us at Autism Delaware, 924 Old Harmony Rd., Suite 201, Newark DE 19713. Or give us your thoughts in an email; send it to delautism@delautism.org. In the subject line, write "Newsletter feedback."

1. Please rank how much your family values the information you get from *The Sun*.
(Circle your response.)
 1 Little to no value 2 Some value 3 Good value 4 Excellent value
2. What is the number-one reason you read *The Sun*? (Please check one.)
 Updates on what's happening at Autism Delaware
 Information on upcoming events and social or recreational opportunities
 Advice from other parents
 The latest on advocacy efforts at the state and local levels
 Other _____
3. What topics would you like to see covered in upcoming issues? _____
4. Other comments _____

Would you like to help us publish *The Sun*? We're always looking for volunteers to join the newsletter committee. Send an email of interest to the newsletter's Editor at carla.koss@delautism.org.



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Becoming a silver, platinum, or lifetime member will make you a part of a select group of individuals who have demonstrated special leadership and a commitment to helping us meet our mission. As a leader in the support of autism services and research, you will receive special recognition in our newsletter or other materials.

Yes! Please add my name to the mailing list to receive *The Sun* through DAP distribution. (This option is only for families who do not receive *The Sun* through DAP distribution.)

I am a: Parent Family member Service provider Educator Medical professional Individual with autism Other (Please describe): _____

Name(s): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____ Email: _____

I am a new member. I am renewing my membership.
 Individual \$20 Family \$25 Professional \$50 Silver \$100 Platinum \$300 Lifetime \$500

Enroll me in the following category:

Annual membership application