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Our Mission

Autism Delaware is a community of people with autism, their family members and friends, and professionals who work in the autism field.

Our mission is to improve the lives of people with autism and their families. We will educate, advocate and raise public awareness in order to promote lifelong opportunity and acceptance for people with autism in their communities.

We serve the entire state of Delaware.



The Sun

Newsletter

April - June 2009



It's Time to Walk for Autism

As we all know, Autism Delaware is committed to fundraising so that we can sustain our vitality. Without our fundraisers, we would be hard pressed to offer the services our members value so highly. We need to continue to be able to offer support for the parent of a newly diagnosed child, to provide family social events, and to make sure that teens have Game Nights to enjoy. With fundraisers like Walk for Autism, we can help ensure the many services and information our members count on. In fact, without our funding, chances are likely that you would not be reading *The Sun*, ranked by our members as their favorite Autism Delaware service.

Autism Delaware is still mailing Team and Walker packets to anyone who wants to participate in the Third Annual Walk for Autism on April 25. We anticipate 1,000 Walkers who will raise awareness as well as money. Our goal is to exceed the \$100,000 raised last year. The *News Journal* will join us

as our print media sponsor. Be sure to look for both print and online banner ads, to listen to WJBR, and to keep an eye out for billboards.

This level of promotion raises awareness about the Walk, attracting Teams and Walkers. It also shines a spotlight on a cause so important to more than 800 Delaware families of children with autism.

To receive your Walker or Team materials, call or email Autism Delaware with your name or Captain's name, Team name (if you have one), the number of expected Walkers, phone number, email, and mailing addresses. In each packet, you will find instructions for creating a personalized website to receive donations at

www.firstgiving.com/adwalk. As

a special incentive to use online giving, the three Teams whose Walkers raise the most online by April 25 will receive 10 tickets to the May 31st NASCAR Sprint Race. While there is no minimum fundraising required, Walkers who raise \$100 or more will be eligible for prizes.



Consider how autism has affected your life and the people in it. Those people may be your fellow Walkers and donors. Invite them to join you on April 25. Please contact us today for your Team or Walker packet.

The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware

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Robin Ireland Jen Nardo
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Cheryl Frampton Deanna Principe

Director's Column

By Theda Ellis, Executive Director

Many thanks for your input about our new format. While most of you like it, some brave souls expressed their concerns. I'd like to share my responses with all of you.

It's shorter and has less information. I miss all that information.

Many of you found 20 pages too long, so we shortened the newsletter but maintained content. Articles are now limited to 500 words. *Word Count* is my new best friend, helping to improve articles by making the writing tighter. The days of padding term papers to meet a word count are long gone. In January we were delighted to find that we could cover everything without having to leave out anything.

It looks more expensive.

Our printer, Dan of Sir Speedy, works closely with us to monitor costs. Glossy or matte costs the same. What a surprise! Also, note that color appears only on the outside. The inside remains black and white. Our goal is to use monies saved to expand the distribution. Mary Kelleher, our office volunteer, has called every school in Delaware to find out how many students with autism are enrolled so that we can distribute *The Sun* to them. We are also sending it to more doctors' offices, donors, and others in our extended autism community. Thus, the print cost remains the same. We exchanged more copies for a reduced number of pages and one fewer issue.

Why are there only four issues now instead of five?

Add up the hours spent planning, writing, organizing, editing, and doing the desktop publishing; you will come up with the unseen high cost of *The Sun*. In addition to many

hours of staff and volunteer time, consider the nearly 25 hours that Cheryl Frampton and I spend on each issue. Multiply these efforts by five times a year to get a clear understanding about why we reduced the number of issues.



The Sun was the major program of Autism Delaware when I came more than six years ago, so it received the majority of our time. Today Autism Delaware's programs and services have expanded to adults and to individuals with Asperger's Syndrome. We also provide a much higher level of advocacy and public awareness and respond to a greater number of calls about information and referrals. We have expanded social and recreational opportunities throughout the state and have assumed more responsibility for fundraising, once an all-volunteer effort. *The Sun* remains a high priority, but we want to make sure our issues retain our high standard for quality information, so we chose to publish quarterly.

I want to thank those of you who took the time to send your comments and concerns. That takes courage, and it helps us understand how important *The Sun* is to you. We appreciate your confidence and vow not to let you down.

Sincerely,

Theda M Ellis

A Service of Autism Delaware



PRODUCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK AND RECREATION

Katina Demetriou (302) 824-2252 (cell)
Project Director (302) 224.6020, ext 207
katina.demetriou@delautism.org

Karen Anderson (302) 824-2253 (cell)
Community Specialist (302) 224.6020, ext 207
karen.anderson@delautism.org

Downstate News...

Dafne Carnright has been traveling throughout Kent and Sussex to meet with families and schools to talk about Autism Delaware's services and support. And the word is certainly out. In her first 60 days as Downstate Coordinator, Dafne has responded to more than 20 calls for information, referrals, and support.

you'd like to chat, volunteer, get involved, ask questions, or share recommendations regarding downstate services. You can also reach Dafne at Dafne.Carnright@delautism.org. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Dafne's Comments on Coffee and Support

Several parents met for our first downstate Parent Coffee Hour in January. It was exciting for us to meet and have time to chat. Now we understand what all the fuss was about upstate! We met again in February at the Georgia House in Milford and look forward to continuing the popular monthly coffee hour for downstate families by rotating the location up and down Kent and Sussex Counties. Be sure to check your e-group news and website calendar for dates and locations.

Facilitated by Deb Wright, the Kent County Support Group is still going strong and meets once a month at the Campus Community High School in Dover. Deb is a teacher at the Sussex Consortium and a master's level counselor, so we are indeed lucky to have her.



Autism Delaware
Dafne Carnright
Downstate Coordinator
P.O. Box 153
Milford, DE 19963
Phone: (302) 422-2255

Other Events

Autism Delaware has renamed chapter meetings as Speaker Series. Member Kate Stomieroski worked hard to bring Dr. Janelle Love, a Defeat Autism Now doctor, to speak at the Dover meeting on April 4 at 10 a.m. We would also like to thank Mark Rossi of Dover Downs who provided a room and refreshments for this special event.

Other things in the works are a downstate bowling night and a recreation committee. Please call the Milford office at 425-2255 if

Email: Dafne.Carnright@delautism.org

Diane Black

"Challenging Behaviors: Do I Have to Live With This?"

April 21, 2009, 7:00 pm

Special Olympics Office

619 S. College Avenue, Newark, DE 19716

Childcare will be available

Come and join other parents and family members to learn more about the following:

Identifying what is causing certain behaviors; what you and your family can do together to help your child; the home/school connection; tools you can use.

Diane Black has a Master's in Education, experience in at both DAP and Pyramid Education Services as an autism and behavioral specialist. She has extensive experience in Applied Behavioral Analysis and setting up classrooms for students on the autism spectrum.

This seminar is FREE to members of Autism Delaware, \$8.00 for non-members.



Development and Direction - by Kim Siegel

Recent events are making all of us watch our expenses more carefully to make sure we receive good value for our money. So, we are pleased that so many of you are finding Autism Delaware to be that "good value" for you and your family. Thank you. We deeply appreciate what that means.

During over our 10-year history, our members and families have expressed their wants and needs several times, and we work hard to meet them. We created more social events and seasonal social events based on requests. We also created social opportunities for young people with Asperger's Syndrome, work and recreation opportunities in the community for adults, and we also opened an office in southern Delaware, expanding activities there. We launched an ambitious legislative advocacy effort to protect and expand current services, and we continue to provide speakers, conference stipends, scholarships, and this newsletter to the entire autism community. Our ability to do all these things is affected by potential cuts in corporate, foundation, and

government funding. As you might expect, we have already seen existing supporters reduce or eliminate their gifts. Thus, more than ever, we are counting on our families and supporters to pitch in to support the programs so many participate in.

You can help by doing what you can. Every donation makes a difference. Become a member. Join the Walk. Give on the Autism Delaware website with its new options to make giving easier. Donate auction items or supplies for events. Ask friends and family to donate in lieu of gifts for a special occasion (see page 7 for the story of a sister to a boy with autism that did just that for her birthday). Regardless of what you give, please know that it is very much appreciated and that it adds value to the lives of children and adults with autism in both clear and unseen ways.

Thank you for your support.

Autism Delaware Conference Stipends

Autism Delaware offers stipends up to \$200 to assist individuals to attend autism related-conferences. There is a limited supply of stipends set as side each year, so it is a first come, first serve basis.

To qualify for a stipend, you must be an active member of Autism Delaware. If you are not, there is an application on the back of this newsletter. You must also agree to write a brief article (under 500 words) about the conference. The article can describe the conference or your personal experiences at the conference.

For more information on our stipend program, contact us at
(302) 224-6020 or delautism@delautism.org

Autism Delaware Day at the Blue Rocks June 6, 2009

Wilmington Blue Rocks VS. Lynchburg

Game Time: 6:05 pm

3rd Base Picnic Area

(This area will be block off for Autism Delaware only!)

Cost: \$15.00 per person for Autism Delaware members and \$22.00 per person for non-members

Includes: Ticket to the game, picnic dinner (hot dogs, hamburgers, BBQ chicken, sides, ice cream and drinks.)

Picnic will be served from 4:45 to 6:35 pm, so get there early! The enclosed picnic area, at third base, offers a great space for kids to move around freely while staying safe, plus it's close enough to make you feel like you are part of the action.

This has always been a very popular event and tickets are limited.

Reserve your tickets today. (302) 224-6020

Tickets will be mailed out at the end of May.

What's Up in Legislative Hall

Joint Finance Update

In January *The Sun* addressed potential cuts in services for new grads due to the economic crisis. People across the state testified at the recent Joint Finance hearing for DDDS. Liz Allen, Carol Donahoe, and Pat Mallory, parents who helped get initial adult services for autism 20 years ago, spoke eloquently about how their children might be affected if services are cut. Autism Delaware was well represented by members Karen and Ben Bashkow, Kevin, Susan and Melissa Chong, Pat Swanson, and Artie Kempner. Melissa Martin of LDAF and Theda Ellis also spoke about the issues. Thanks to everyone for being there. Initial reports are positive.

Our next legislative effort will be Cookie Day on April 1 to declare Autism Awareness month and to thank the legislature for all its past efforts on behalf of individuals with autism and their families.

Finally, we are re-convening the Delaware Disability Coalition to work together on common issues of funding for adults and new graduates. Melissa Martin of LDAF is taking the lead on that effort, so please consider participating to ensure your child will have services when the time comes.

Health Insurance for Children

Health insurance coverage for children is another priority. Children with autism should have the right to receive standard therapies paid by insurance, including speech, occupational and physical therapy, and applied behavioral analysis. Insurance coverage will help all families, particularly those whose children are not eligible for the DAP and who are bearing the cost alone. It helps the state by sharing the cost of services with insurance providers, and most of all, it helps children get those vital early intervention and therapeutic services required at very young ages. Member Chris Flannery is working with Autism Speaks to draft legislation which we plan to introduce later in this session.

Autism Office

In 2008 the Legislative Task Force for Adults with High Functioning Autism called for an

Office of Autism to provide comprehensive training and technical assistance across the state. In early March, DDDS released a feasibility study that calls for a "Delaware Resource Center" that would be internal to DDDS, using its current resources to provide the coordination and consultation needed to expand the capacity of state government and the provider community. DDDS is inviting a few key people to review the findings of the feasibility study and to consider how they might be able to implement the Resource Center. With more than 800 children with autism in Delaware's public schools, now is the time to be thinking about making sure that children and adults across the spectrum have access to adequate services and supports. We will keep you updated as these discussions progress.

School Issues

The Governor's Advisory Council on Exceptional Children has put together an ad hoc committee on needs-based funding. Twelve districts are part of the pilot, including Cape Henlopen and Caesar Rodney. Our community's concerns are that needs-based funding, which is great for many students, may open the Code for the Delaware Autism Program, allowing districts to set their own specialists' staffing levels and even affect the extended school year. We'll keep you advised as we learn more. Additionally, our community is increasingly concerned about the many openings for speech therapists throughout Delaware schools—another structural issue that must be addressed to adequately educate our children.

Upstate Downstate Collaborations

We are working with the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation to schedule sessions with state representatives and senators to discuss all these issues and more. Please keep in mind that if you are unable to attend face-to-face appointments, you can still have an impact by calling or emailing. We need



your continued help. We are stronger in numbers; by joining our families, our staff, and our friends at LDAF, we can present in greater number to the folks who really need to know our issues- our senators and representatives.

Please consider joining our Legislative Committee to address these very critical issues. Your child's future depends on our success.

Make Your Voice Heard!

Even just five or six communications let a legislator know an issue is important to his or her constituents, so your calls, letters, and emails really do make a difference!

Contact information for Delaware legislators can be found at:

www.legis.delaware.gov

If you need to find out who your state representative and senator are, call your county's department of elections (phone numbers below) or visit:

www.congress.org

Enter your address to pull up your state and federal legislators.

County Department of Elections

New Castle County: (302) 577-3464

Kent County: (302) 739-4498

Sussex County: (302) 856-5367

PARENT PARENT

written by parents for parents

Change

by **Melanie Matusheski**

Change – it is the word of these times. Change has brought us a new president and a new economic plan. Delaware has a new governor and a new Secretary of Health and Social Services. Autism Delaware has a new name, a new office, a new downstate coordinator, and new looks for our website and this newsletter. Change has also brought major budget cuts that will most likely affect adult services and the elimination of Brennan’s recreation program for younger children. Unfortunately, more budget cuts are likely to come.

Change can mean so many different things and can raise so many different emotions in us – excitement, anxiety, fear, enthusiasm. In spite of the abundance of bad news and doomsayers out there, we have a unique opportunity to focus on the positive and to reshape some of our support programs, particularly our support groups and coffee

hour. To do this, we need the ideas and participation of as many parents, caregivers, and educators as possible.

Recently at the New Castle County coffee hour, we focused on one or two topics. Our topics have included how parental friendships are affected by having a child with autism and how best to deal with our children’s sexuality issues as they make their way through adolescence. Come join us at coffee hour, and let us know what you’d like to talk about. (You can even suggest a topic anonymously if you prefer.) Coffee hour is a great way to support each other, network with other parents, and seek answers to our many concerns.

Down state, Dafne Carnright is coordinating support groups, coffee hour, and speaker events for Kent and Sussex. Some of these programs are just getting started, so it’s a

great time for you downstate parents to come out to support each other and help Dafne organize these programs to best serve everyone. She’s currently looking for volunteers to form a recreation committee. Let her know what activities your family would like to participate in.

The attendance at speaker events in all three counties varies, so let us know which topics you’d like to hear about and what times are most convenient. Also, check our website for a list of all events as well as a list of online support groups.

More than ten years ago, a small group of parents created what is now Autism Delaware with the motto: Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have. Let’s go forward through these uncertain times with that same optimism and determination.

Heroes

by **Deanna Principe**

Over the years, I have become a bit jaded against shows that feature the stories of families of autistic children. Oprah, Dr. Phil, The View and others have all dedicated their shows to autism. When my daughter was first diagnosed just over six years ago, I watched every single show, hanging on every word. Don’t get me wrong; I’m all for heightening awareness, but it seems that all the shows say the same thing over and over again.

While flipping through the channels a few nights ago, I discovered “Autism Heroes”. It made me think of a Disney show my

children sometimes watch called “Higglytown Heroes,” where everyone is a hero. The librarian is a hero for finding your book, and the pizza guy is a hero for getting your pizza delivered on time. The show, in a news story format, featured several families dealing with the everyday struggles of life with one or more autistic children. Their stories were both touching and inspiring, but I kept thinking to myself, who are the heroes? Was the producer referring to the children or the parents when he named this show?

When it was over, I was left with the feeling that something was missing. That some-

thing, I figured out, was the children. The show focused all its interviews on parents. Not one of the children spoke for the entire hour, and it was clear that many of them could have. I couldn’t get the name of the show out of my head... “Autism Heroes”. We all know it’s hard work being a parent of a child or children with autism. And some days (or nights) are harder than others. But I don’t feel like a hero. I am a mom who loves her children no matter what. Whether Sami ever speaks or Joey ever lives independently, I’ll always be their mom and love them

(Continued on page 8)

INSIDE Autism Delaware

Fundraising Surprises

Our cold, dark winter thawed in February and March with some surprises for Autism Delaware. Young Kayla Sorbello celebrated her birthday by asking her friends and family to make a donation to Autism Delaware in honor of her brother, Justyn Burgos, who attends Brennan School. Her grandparents drove her from her New Jersey home with a \$380 donation. This is an amazing gift from a very generous young girl. Thank you so much, Kayla, for your truly inspiring generosity.

In the same vein, member Liz O'Neill asked her friends and family to donate to Autism Delaware in honor of her recent special birthday (one of those with a zero at the end). Thank you, Liz. We appreciate your generosity of \$1,070 as well.

For several years, Mitch Williams, the former Wild Thing of baseball, has been coming to our golf event. Mitch's personal interest in autism led him to Autism Delaware. He hosted a Texas Hold'em at McFadden's in the Citizens Bank Park in February, raising almost \$10,000 for us. We certainly appreciated this fun-filled evening. We also want to thank Ellen Barkann and Mark Maggi for their assistance with this event.

And finally, Valero called us once again to award a gift of \$15,000 from its Texas-based golf outing. Valero funds many non-profits in Delaware that help children, and we're honored to benefit from its efforts. We have earmarked the Valero gift for students with autism who are not funded through the Early Start to Support-employment Project. The funds enable us to provide transition services for those students during their final year of school.

Autism Delaware works hard to raise funds to support our many services and programs, so when these gifts come our way, we really appreciate them.



POW&R

Dollar Tree in Stanton recently hired two young men for a few hours each week. What started as a three-day vocational assessment turned into a longer community work experience, giving Dollar Tree a chance to get to know the guys. The Dollar Tree staff valued their commitment and quality of work and realized that these two young men added to their bottom line, no easy task in these challenging economic times. Congratulations to our consumers and to our great staff who helped make this happen.

Because of the state of our economy, the POW&R staff is working hard to expand community volunteer opportunities. We are adding Wilmington Hospital and the Hagley Museum to our volunteer sites to show the many ways adults with autism contribute to the community. This is indeed cause for celebration.



Board Retreat

The board held a retreat over the weekend of February 7th in Rehoboth to look at what the future might hold for Autism Delaware. New board member Tom Forrest and his wife, Twiggy, welcomed us to their home where board members worked diligently updating by-laws and setting priorities. We invited the board and staff of the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation to join us for cocktails and solicited their votes on our priorities as well. Part of the fun was getting to know each other by guessing the "lies" from amongst the truths that we all revealed about ourselves. But as they say, "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas"—so all secrets are safe.

Creating Social Opportunities

A major goal for the future is to expand social opportunities for people of all ages throughout the state. Heidi Mizell is the point person in New Castle, and Dafne Carnright is gathering volunteers to help in southern Delaware. Heidi recently held a focus group of parents and young adults to learn more about what they would like to do.

(Continued on page 8)

INSIDE Autism Delaware

PARENT PARENT

(Continued from page 7)

Autism Speaks awarded \$19,000 to expand recreational opportunities available through the Brandywine Social Club (BSC) for adults. We are working with Kathy Ward of the YMCA to kick this project off on May 1. Autism Delaware will train BSC staff on autism. The grant will be used to expand total activities and to provide support to adults on the spectrum so they can fully participate in all the activities they choose.

Robin Delaney and Kim Herbert make up our wonderful social

committee for ongoing Autism Delaware events. Check our new calendar at <http://www.delautism.org/Events/events.html> to always have current information.

If you have an interest in having fun, please join the Social Committee. Contact Heidi, Dafne, Robin, or Kim about your special interest. We want to make sure that everyone has something enjoyable to do.

(Continued from page 6)

unconditionally. There's nothing heroic about that.

When you choose to become a parent, you assume the roles of caregiver, chef, chauffeur, nurse, banker, etc., regardless of your child's abilities or limitations. It's just what you do.

Without a doubt, there are heroes in the autism community. Those who go above and beyond our expectations. Those who do what they do to benefit not only their own children but also the autism community as a whole. I do what I can but still

consider myself just a mom.

The word "hero" should be reserved for people like Dr. King, Mother Teresa, police officers, firefighters, and the men and women fighting and dying for our freedom. The prompt pizza delivery guys are not heroes nor are the parents doing what they are supposed to do...love and care for their children, autistic or not.

Tough, determined, tenacious? Yes, I most certainly am. Heroic? Not me.

Game Night Happenings

By: Deanna Principe

As the facilitator of Game Night, I am endlessly fascinated by our great group of kids and enthused about their participation. I always encourage but never force cooperative play. Some warm up more gradually than others as they feel their way into the group and eventually jump in and have fun. The kids wind up feeling empowered, making new friends, and trying new things when parents accept my invitation to drop them off and leave them in my care.

It's intriguing to see interests change as time goes by. Some kids are hyper-focused on Yu Gi Oh! cards for months and then suddenly switch to board games.

With kids on both ends of the spectrum, I know that socialization is vital to the programming of someone with Asperger's, HFA, or PDD. This group allows for that social interaction with individuals who understand their social awkwardness and sometimes different behaviors in an environment free of judgment.



Asperger's Teen Game Night

**Game nights are scheduled for
April 24, May 8, May 22**

For Ages 9 to 19

**Neurology Associates, 774 Christina
Road, Newark**

6:30 - 8:15pm

**To RSVP or request more
information, contact
deanna.principe@delautism.org or
(302) 224-6020**

N.C.C. Family Bowling Night

Join us every Wednesday night at AMF Price Lanes, Prices Corner, Wilmington, 5:30 pm. RSVP required by the Monday before bowling to Mark or Cher Frampton at (302) 998-1466. No commitments. Pay after you play. Play as many or as few games as you like. Bumpers, ramps and special discounts available. Game room and snack bar open. Bring the entire family! Parents, siblings, and friends are welcome to bowl.



Lights, Camera...Action!



Our 11th Annual Auction for Autism will take place on Saturday, November 14, 2009. There are plenty of opportunities to participate in this movie-themed gala, from soliciting items for the silent auction to serving on the decorating committee to bring the glamour of Hollywood to our event at the DuPont Country Club. The auction committee will also need help selling program ads, recruiting corporate sponsors, and ensuring publicity. And, of course, we'll need plenty of helping hands on the day of the event to make it a success. To join the auction committee or volunteer for the event, please contact Kim Siegel at kim.siegel@delautism.org.

N.C.C. & Milford Roller Skating Party

Milford, May 9 - Milford Skating Center 5:30 -7:30pm
N.C.C., April 4 - Christiana Skating Center 5:15 - 7:15 pm

Free admission. No RSVP needed. Family and friends welcome. Rinks are closed to the public. Autism friendly lights and music. Snack bar is open, and skate rentals are available (\$2-3).



Next N.C.C. Skating Party
September 12
Next Milford Skating Party
TBD

Milford Coffee Hour

Milford Coffee Hour will be held at the Georgia House Restaurant from 9:00 - 10:00 am.

18 S. Walnut Street, Milford

April 30, 2009

RSVP to Dafne Carnright at:
dafne.carnright@delautism.org

or at (302) 422-2255

Coffee hours are now conveniently being held in all three counties. Don't miss this opportunity to meet both new and experienced parents.

Autism Delaware Speaker Series

Dr. Janelle Love, A Functional Medicine Physician Using DAN (Defeat Autism Now) protocol.

Will Present: "Autism, What You Need to Know"

Saturday, April 4, 2009, 10:00 am - 12 pm

Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, The Delaware Room
1331 North DuPont Highway, Dover.

Registration is required: (302) 224-6020 or delautism@delautism.org.

N.C.C. Parent Coffee Hour



Join us along with other parents or family members on the second Tuesday of every month at the elegant Prince on Delaware for coffee and conversation. Coffee is on us!

124 Delaware Street
Historic Old New Castle
(Across the street from the old court house near the Delaware River.)

(302) 326-1130
(Restaurant)

Restaurant is closed to the public. Children are welcome. No RSVP needed.

Sensory Friendly Movies

Save the dates for these new and developing social opportunities...

Movie: UP

NCC Regals People Plaza - June 13

Time: TBD Tickets sold in advance.

Movie: Ice Age

July 18 we hope to be in all three counties.

Exact location and time TBD.

For more information contact Heidi Mizell at
heidi.mizell@delautism.org or (302) 224-6020, ext 205

Sussex Coffee Hour

Join us for some coffee and conversation!
Rehoboth Beach/Lewes McDonald's, Route 1.

May 19, 2009

RSVP to Dafne Carnright at:
dafne.carnright@delautism.org

or at (302) 422-2255



Come on out and meet up with some old friends and make some new ones!

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Friends and family are highly encouraged to come.



Parent Coffee Hour at Prince on Delaware

April

April 1, 2009 – Smart Cookie Day, Legislative Hall, Dover.

April 1, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night, AMF Price Lanes, Price's Corner, Wilmington. 5:30 pm. No age limits. Discounted games. Meet at the right end of alley in lanes 46-51. Let attendants know you are with Autism Delaware. Pay after you play. RSVP: Mark Frampton (302) 998-1466. Additional dates are April 8, 15, 29. No bowling on April 22.

April 4, 2009 - Autism Delaware Speaker Series welcomes Dr. Janelle Love, A Functional Medicine Physician Using the DAN! (Defeat Autism Now Protocol). "Autism, What You Need to Know." 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. Dover Downs Hotel and Casino. More information on page 9.

April 4, 2009 - N.C.C. Roller Skating Party, Christiana Skating Center, Route 273, Newark. 5:15 - 7:15 pm. Autism friendly lights and music. No RSVP. Free admission. Snack bar open. Skate rentals \$2-3. Closed to the public. Friends and family are highly encouraged to come.

April 8, 2009 - Disability Awareness Day, Legislative Hall, 150 William Penn Street, Dover, 12 pm. Join advocates from other disability groups to educate legislators in advance for appointments. Morning advocacy training session by registration only with limited seats. Contact kim.siegel@delautism.org for forms.

April 14, 2009 – N.C.C Parent Coffee Hour - Prince on Delaware, 124 Delaware Street, Old New Castle. 9:00 a.m. Coffee is on us!

April 21, 2009 – Kent County Support Group, Campus Community High School, Pear Street, Dover. 5:30 - 7pm. Contact: Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255.

April 24, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates. Contact Heidi Mizell, heidi.mizell@delautism.org. (302) 224-6020.

April 30, 2009 – Milford Coffee Hour, Georgia House Restaurant 9:00-10:00 am. RSVP: Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255 or dafne.carnright@delautism.org.

May

May 6, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night, AMF Price Lanes, Price's Corner, Wilmington. 5:30 p.m. RSVP: Mark Frampton (302) 998-1466. Additional dates are May 13, 20 & 27.

May 08, 2009 – N.C.C Parent Coffee Hour - Prince on Delaware, 124 Delaware Street, Old New Castle. 9:00 am. Coffee is on us!

May 8, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates. Contact Heidi Mizell, heidi.mizell@delautism.org. (302) 224-6020.

May 9, 2009 – Roller Skating Party, Milford Skating Rink, Milford. 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Autism friendly lights and music. No RSVP. Free admission. Snack bar open. Skate rentals \$2-3. Closed to the public.

May 12, 2009 – N.C.C Parent Coffee Hour - Prince on Delaware, 124 Delaware Street, Old New Castle. 9:00 am Coffee is on us.

May 19, 2009 – Sussex Coffee Hour - Rehoboth Beach McDonald's, Route 1. 9-10am. RSVP: Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255 or dafne.carnright@delautism.org.

May 21, 2009 – Kent County Support Group, Campus Community High School, Pear Street, Dover. 5:30 - 7pm. Contact: Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255

May 22, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates. Contact Heidi Mizell, heidi.mizell@delautism.org. (302) 224-6020.

May 25, 2009 - Memorial Day - Office Closed

June

June 3, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night, AMF Price Lanes, Price's Corner, Wilmington. 5:30 pm. For the month of June, please RSVP: Deanna Principe (302) 832-1990 or deanna.principe@delautism.org. Additional dates in June are 10, 17, & 24.

June 6, 2009 - A Day with the Wilmington Blue Rocks! 3rd Base Picnic Area. These seats are hot! Call now for tickets. More information available on page 4.

June 5, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates. Contact Heidi Mizell, heidi.mizell@delautism.org. (302) 224-6020.

June 09, 2009 – N.C.C. Parent Coffee Hour - Prince on Delaware, 124 Delaware Street, Old New Castle. 9:00 am. Coffee is on us.

June 16, 2009 – Kent County Support Group, Campus Community High School, Pear Street, Dover. 5:30 - 7pm. Contact: Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255

Coming in August – Save the Date

Autism Delaware's 10th Annual Beach Party Picnic!

August 16, Cape Henlopen State Park, Lewes

More details in the next issue of *The Sun*.

Not a Label

by Heidi Mizell

Your child is not a label. He or she may have a medical diagnosis or an educational classification of an autism spectrum disorder, but your child is not a label.

When I talk to parents I mentor, the focus is not on the label or classification. Rather, we discuss the presentation of your child's needs and the way he or she learns. Advocacy at this level should satisfy your child's academic needs. Understanding your child's presentation on the spectrum will also help with advocacy at the developmental level.

Children with AS, HFA, PDD-NOS, or NVLD in traditional academic settings will not receive the same services provided to those children whom the DAP serves. And although it may be true that they may not need the same services, we parents can strive to ensure that certain services are provided. For example, instead of being concerned with how much therapy is offered, focus on what the therapist will work on.

It may be too overwhelming to try to cover all the ways your child may be struggling in school. Understand that the IEP is a document that will be used for one year and that it can be changed. Why is your child struggling? Is your child having difficulty adapting in his or her environment, transitioning between classes, or with communication? First, determine the source of the struggle, and then advocate to change the school experience at this level.

How will that service be best provided?

Such an important decision should not be left up to the therapist or teacher. Many

parents defer to the "professionals who should know best." You know your child best, and you alone are your child's best advocate. The IEP team, including the parents, should work together to determine the amount of service provided. For example, your child may require social skills (as indicated by his inability to participate appropriately in a group). Who can help? The SLP, OT, and school counselor can all work in private and group. SLP works on language, greeting, and eye contact. The OT works on body awareness and how to sit together in a group. The school counselor works on what may be frustrating your child while reinforcing what the therapists are focusing on. Finally, the teacher has specific objectives to meet and can help the child work on these skills. Simple forms can provide weekly updates for the team so that no one has to wait for progress reports that accompany report cards. For more information, please call one of our parent mentors.

Heidi Mizell is presently planning recreation activities for families and individuals of all ages across the spectrum.

Look for upcoming events like sensory friendly movies and family nights out.

You may contact Heidi at Heidi.Mizell@delautism.org or at (302) 224-6020, ext 205 for additional information or to share ideas.

Nutritional Facts

Serving Size 1 Lifetime (75 + years)

Amount Per Serving

Enjoyment 100%

%Daily Value

Autism 25%

Living Life 50%

Creative Problem Solving 25%

Payoff for the effort -Priceless

Fortified with smiles, extra sense of accomplishment and unwavering determination.

Once you
label me,
you negate
me.

~ Soren Kierkegaard



Autism Delaware Annual Membership Application

Please enroll me in the following category:

Individual / Family \$20 Professional \$50 Silver \$100 Platinum \$300 Lifetime \$500

I am a new member I am renewing membership I was referred by: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____ Email: _____

I am a: Parent Family Member Service Provider Educator Medical Professional Individual with autism

Other (please describe): _____

Yes! Please add my name to the mailing list to receive Autism Delaware's newsletter *The Sun*.

(This is for families who do not receive The Sun through DAP Distribution only please.)

My membership fee is..... \$ _____

I would also like to contribute this amount directly to ASD . \$ _____

Total amount enclosed (add both amounts)..... \$ _____

Becoming a Silver member or higher will make you a part of a select group of individuals who have demonstrated special leadership and a deep commitment to making a significant difference in the fight against autism. You will receive special recognition in our newsletter or other documents as a leader in the support of autism and autism research.

Please make your check payable to the Autism Delaware (AD) and send payment and application to Autism Delaware, 924 Old Harmony Rd., Ste 201, Newark, DE 19713.

If you prefer to pay by credit card, please contact Autism Delaware (302) 224-6020

All membership fees and contributions are tax deductible.



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