

The Sun

Newsletter

July - September 2009

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Autism Delaware Announces Volunteer Awards

The most rewarding event we host is to recognize outstanding volunteers to Autism Delaware and the statewide autism community. We are particularly fortunate in the number and variety of nominations for 2008 including the participation of couples. Autism Delaware has three categories of awards; Outstanding Autism Community Leaders Award, Outstanding Autism Delaware Volunteer Award, and the Laurel Perry Smith Employer of the Year Award.

Outstanding Autism Community Leaders Award acknowledges contributions to the broader autism community.

Kim Herbert recieved several nominations for her many contributions that include developing and supporting the reinforcement room at the Brennan School and revising the Parent Resource manual which is invaluable for parents in New Castle County. Kim also co-chairs Autism Delaware's Social Committee where she plans and organizes holiday parties, picnics, hayrides, playgroups and the many activities that make life more fun for us all.

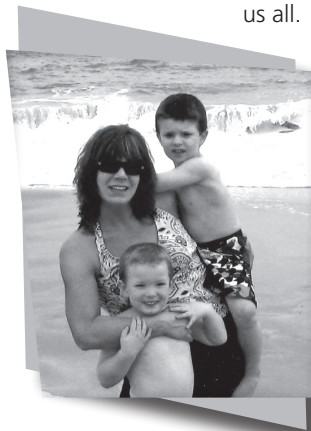


The second award went to **Tracy Holmes**, Director of Operations for the Courtyard Marriott at the University of Delaware. Tracey has opened the doors of the Marriott to a swim club for our children and families, known as the "Merry Otters." She is also teaching UD students about the value of community service by bringing them in as volunteers. Look for Swim Club dates on our community calendar.

The **Laurel Perry Smith Employer of the Year** is made to an employer who hires one or more individuals with autism and promotes a positive role model for the employment community.

Curt Melhorn, Associate Administrator for Sodexo at DuPont Hospital for Children, is the 2009 recipient. Sodexo has hired four POW&R participants for positions in the dining room and kitchen. He is also working with us to open other opportunities in the hospital as well.

We want to thank these three for the great opportunities that they are bringing to the autism community.



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

A publication of Autism Delaware

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Drive for Autism - Cheryl Frampton
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The Sun Committee

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Jen Nardo
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Cheryl Frampton Deanna Principe

Director's Column

By Theda Ellis, Executive Director

This summer I've been sitting on my deck reflecting about the past year. What went well? What could have been smoother? Then I try to look into my internal crystal ball to see the future. What will it bring? What do we want to happen? Who do we want to be?

This is the year that has been the most important in answering that last question. It has been an active, busy, successful, eventful, and yes, a trying year. Why? Because we have re-invented ourselves as Autism Delaware! Leaving our parent organization was a difficult decision, but it pushed us to re-define ourselves as an organization. We had to sit down and think about who we are and what we represent. We have a great new name that immediately identifies what we are about. Add the new office space, the updated website and newsletter, the logo that ties all our activities together and we are reborn in a sense.

But Autism Delaware isn't just about looks or successful events. It's really about people – the people who work hard to support each other and to change the world—at least to change our local world. We are blessed to have a growing group of devoted folks who make us who we are. We are made up of board members, staff, volunteers, and people in the community who have heard our stories and who want to help. We are both parent and mission driven—a powerful combination! We would not have accomplished some of our goals without that strong parent direction at all levels supporting a single mission – to make life better for our loved ones with autism and their families. That was never more clear to me than at our recent Volunteer Recognition Dinner. This is typically a quiet annual celebration to honor our outstanding volunteers and community members who make a difference. It's always

a special event, but this year a new level of passion emerged. Elizabeth Scheinberg moved us all to tears as she introduced



Tracey Holmes of the Marriott and thanked her for the impact the swim group has on Elizabeth's family. Katina and Karen of POW&R again moved us as they introduced Curt Melhorn of Sodexo and talked about the employment opportunities and ongoing support his staff gives to the POW&R participants. I think we were all more than a little surprised and amazed at the energy, emotion and passion that surrounded us. It was a great feeling! Thank you to all the volunteers around the state who make Autism Delaware work. It makes me so proud to be part of this amazing organization. You are a special group.

Theda M Ellis



2009 Volunteer Recipient

Rob Delaney with his wife Robin.

A Service of Autism Delaware



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Downstate News...

Summer is here and downstate events are rolling along! It's exciting just to think about the things that are happening! In April, Autism Delaware members were invited to be the dress rehearsal audience at the Possum Point Players theater production for the first time! We send our thanks to Dr. Lucinda Bunting-Clark for setting this up. Our goal is for our members to be invited to dress rehearsals of upcoming shows around Kent and Sussex Counties! Know of a show coming up? Let us know and we'll call to set up!

We also had our first Bowling Night in Milford and are working on Dover and Millsboro Bowling Nights. Parent Coffee & Conversation Hours continue on a monthly basis and are a favorite among parents and caregivers.

The Milford Skating Center has been great to us. We had a Coffee & Conversation Hour during our recent skating party, AND they are doing an autism awareness campaign as well. Want to get your name on a piece of the puzzle? For only \$1 your name will be painted on a puzzle piece on the wall of the skating rink to help raise awareness of autism spectrum disorders!!! Proceeds will come to Autism Delaware. See the Milford Skating Rink staff for information about how to do this. Thanks to Carmen for this awareness raising idea!

Member Chie Kelley organized a special movie showing of *Monsters Vs. Aliens* at the Clayton Theatre in April as well and we're looking forward to more movie events. Look at the Autism Delaware online calendar to find July showings of Ice Age 3.

More than 30 folks attended the spring session of the Speakers Series with Dr. Janelle Love at Dover Downs. Dr. Love talked about

the many bio-medical issues related to autism. She was gracious enough to stay over her time limit to answer the many questions families had. Thanks to board member Mark Rossi for helping us with the room and refreshments.

And finally, we're happy that several Kent and Sussex teams participated in both the Walk for Autism and the Drive for Autism. Rick Schroeter volunteered his time and public announcement equipment to the Walk. We really appreciated that equipment so – thanks to Rick!



Dylan Carnright & MomMom holding their sign for the Nascar Foundation Walk at Dover Downs International Speedway on May 30, 2009.

A small committee is working to create more activities for our families so that you have opportunities to have fun and meet other families. There are plenty of families like yours right here in Kent and Sussex counties. We all need support so we hope to see you at an event coming soon!



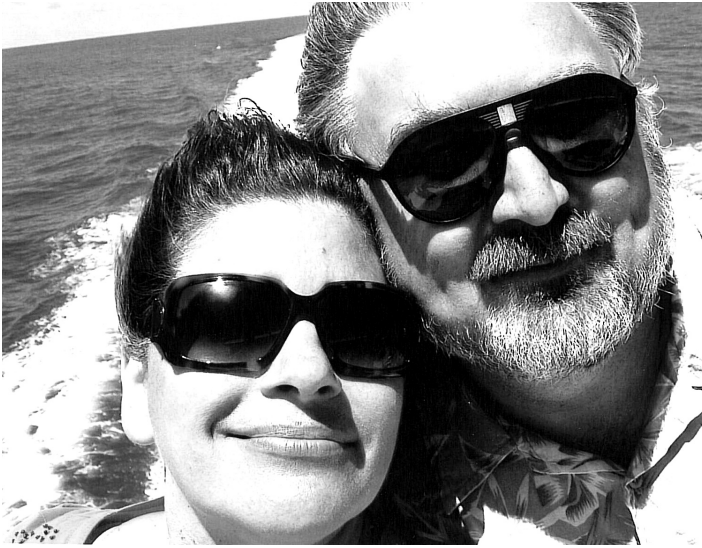
Go Fish! For Autism Delaware 2009

Autism Delaware is sponsoring a catch & release bass fishing tournament on Saturday, September 19, 2009. This fun event will specifically support our new downstate office, reach out to a different community, and raise autism awareness.

We have eight local ponds reserved in southern Delaware. Each pond can have up to ten two-person fishing teams, so register early to get a spot! A \$500 prize will be awarded to the team with the most combined weight. We'll also have prizes for the team that raises the most money, and to the youth under age 13 with the biggest fish.

The afternoon festivities and prize awards will be held at Bicentennial Park in Milford. We'll have food, a moonbounce, fishing lessons for kids, and a band. If you don't want to get up to fish at 6 am, you can still join us in the afternoon. Additionally, the Texas Roadhouse has arranged for Pro Bass Fisherman Mike Delvisco to fish in the tournament. They will be giving Autism Delaware a portion of their dinner receipts for Friday, September 18 for all those who bring the coupons found on our website!

Please check our website or contact the office to sponsor the event or for further information.



The Autism Delaware Outstanding Volunteer Award is for volunteers who make Autism Delaware successful. Recipients are:

(Continued from Cover)

Dave and Lucy Graham have each brought their many talents to us over the years. Dave offered to help us design our new office space. What we didn't realize was that he would have to design five spaces before we got the right one. We've been here almost a year and the space is great! So thanks Dave for providing professional design and lay out. We appreciate you every day.

Lucy has always been a key auction volunteer. She took on a bigger role last year, picking up when another volunteer left. She worked to develop the invitation and to design the decorations. This is her 10th auction, so it is past time to thank her for many years of service.

Rob and Elizabeth Scheinberg are another leadership couple. They took the entire responsibility for the Silent Auction this year. Their attention to detail, ranging from soliciting donations to recruiting children to make ornaments to sell, were critical to the auction's success.

Jen Nardo is one of the folks who make Autism Delaware a year-round success. Jen has been co-chairing the Public Awareness committee for three years, writing Autism Delaware's press releases and copy for radio ads and planning April autism awareness publicity. Additionally, she serves on *The Sun* committee, writing "Parent 2 Parent" articles, and developing ideas for publication. Finally, Jen also serves as a

parent mentor. For all these hats, we deeply appreciate Jen.

And finally, Rob Delaney is an unsung hero who wears many hats. He has taken a leadership role in the Drive for Autism over the years, chairing the awards section. Golf isn't the only time Rob shows up to work. He is also a fixture at the Walk and the Auction, working behind the scenes to ensure that events run smoothly. Without his help, our events wouldn't run as smoothly as they do.

Pictured above left: Lucy and Dave Graham

Pictured above right: Theda Ellis presenting awards to Elizabeth and Rob Scheinberg

Pictured right: Theda Ellis presenting award to Jen Nardo.



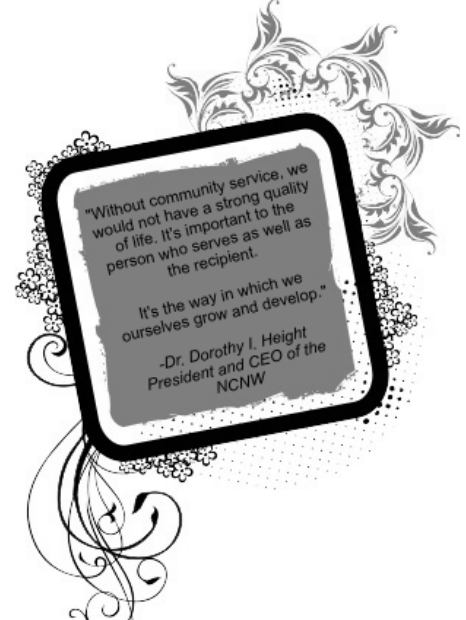
Thank You to all of our volunteers!

There are so many more than just the ones recognized that night. We could not do all that we do without you!

Want to help?
Currently we are looking for help with:

- The Sun
- Public Awareness
- Recreational Committee
- Membership

If any of this sounds interesting to you, give us a call today! (302) 224-6020.



Autism Delaware's 3rd Annual

April 25, 2009
Bellevue State Park



The News Journal *Worth every minute.*
www.delawareonline.com



www.delautism.org



almost the whole year just to be able to accept it and be able to say the words out loud! This walk was very beneficial for us in that process. A positive way to start to be able to tell our friends about [her] and even be able to talk more about it." That is what the Walk is all about an opportunity to share stories and raise awareness of the widespread effects of autism. It's why Walk promo



Photos Courtesy of Laura Novak Photography

Thank you to everyone who made the Walk for Autism a success. Over a thousand Walkers, donors, sponsors, and exhibitors pushed us past the \$100,000 mark! As some sponsors left or lowered their gifts, new ones jumped in to fill that space, and we look forward to future partnerships with them. There were more exhibitors than ever before, and of course there was the celebration with free snacks, moonbouncing, visits with Personal Ponies, and live music on an unseasonably warm, sunny day.

It's amazing to see not only the generosity the Walk brings out, but how many families join us for their first Walk each year. As one parent said, "[Our daughter] was just diagnosed last year and I think it's taken us

tion is also our biggest media outreach effort; we put up billboards across New Castle and Kent Counties, and recorded radio ads on WJBR featuring personal stories of a mom, a brother, and an adult with autism. We were also fortunate to have the News Journal as our print media sponsor, which highlighted autism on the front page as well as in their April Get Involved section.

Thank you to our sponsors: *The News Journal* (Print Media Sponsor), Casale Construction, Alliance Personnel/ Berks Insurance, Bear-Glasgow Dental, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware, Grotto Pizza, Tybout, Redfearn, and Pell, All the Difference, Benchmark Transmission, Coventry Health Care of Delaware, Delmarva Power, Laurel Motor Company, Pyramid Educational Consultants, the many generous fact sign and water and food sponsors. And of course, thank you to our media partners WJBR and Clear Channel Outdoor.



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FAX: (302) 225-6090

PARENT PARENT

written by parents for parents

What about the other side?

By Cheryl Frampton

While sitting around discussing what our next Parent 2 Parent column should contain, we decided to ask a few DAP staffers to share why they choose to teach our children. After all, I question the sanity of my teacher (who is wonderful...hi Tim!) all the time. I mean, anyone who wants to spend their entire day chasing after my kid and going head to head him to fold pizza boxes has my admiration. My hat's off to you. Thank you very much!

Dottie Halliday

**John S. Charlton School
Preschool Teacher**

I have been teaching children with autism for over 20 years. That's hard to believe! What's even harder to believe is of all the students that I have worked with over that twenty plus years, no two are alike. I think

that's part of the reason I find this job so interesting. Even though I may see similarities between students, each student comes to me with unique circumstances and it's my job to figure out the best way to provide that child an opportunity to grow and learn. Also, I have the pleasure of working with that child right from the beginning. They come to me usually not having received too many services or interventions. How exciting it is to see them accomplish something for the first time and then gain confidence as they master that skill!!! There are days you wonder, "Am I really making a difference in this child's life?" But, then when you see that student years later and find out what he/she is able to do on his/her own, it's rewarding to be able to say, "All that started in my classroom!"

Debbie Swain

Paraprofessional

John S. Charlton School (DAP)

Working with children with autism has taught me how to have more patience, compassion and to appreciate my overall good health and happiness. They say working with autistic children can be difficult and challenging. While there is some truth to this, it is also equally true that there are many rewards. Each child with autism is unique, and every classroom's challenges and experiences are different. They have taught me to be flexible and patient as I learn with every child what will or will not help them lead a more calm and happy life. I get great pleasure from the small accomplishments I see the children achieve. Mostly, it's heartwarming and worthwhile when you see their smiles!

Legislative Update

Working close with the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation paid off during this long and challenging legislative session in which services for adults were on the line. Between the two organizations, the autism community had weekly representation in Dover working on budget and insurance issues.

There is a \$3.2 million decrease from the Minner/Markell budget for adult services, however Joint Finance members and the Comptroller General's Office have provided assurances that this line will be "made whole" by substituting federal funding. This is our #1 priority—to ensure that funding is in place for new graduates. Our members

with young children may not be aware that funding for adults is not an entitlement – your child must be eligible and funding must be available. Otherwise, your child may sit at home after leaving school. Funding for adults has remained static for four years while gas, electricity, food and all other costs of services has risen. In effect, adults have already had budget cuts. Any further cuts would result in reduced staffing ratios which results in health and safety issues or possibly even termination of services. Please thank your legislators for working with us to resolve these difficult issues.

Insurance legislation is now ready to introduce in the next legislative session and we are working with the Kid's Caucus to

solicit support.

We need members to get involved with the legislative committee. This can include organizing events such as Cookie Day or local "meet & greets" with legislators. It can mean calling, writing letters, or meeting with members of the Senate and the House. Creating the relationships with legislators is critical. It's only when they know you and your issues that we can really make a difference. Please contact Denise Bradley if you are interested in legislative affairs at DenisePete@msn.com.

INSIDE Autism Delaware

POW&R Nominated for Best Practices Award

We are thrilled to announce that POW&R is being nominated by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for a National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) award for best practices. Being nominated is a major accomplishment for a program just approaching its second birthday. Katina Demetriou, Karen Anderson and the POW&R staff have worked very hard to make this happen. Drs. Peter Gerhardt of the Organization for Autism Research and George Tilson of Transcen, are on the POW&R Advisory Board, and have told us that POW&R is a very special program, so we are very proud of this nomination. Jobs are hard to come by now, so we are concentrating on high quality volunteer sites. Our participants are volunteers at the March of Dimes, Wilmington Hospital and Children & Families First.

Our goal is to eventually open offices in Kent and Sussex counties, but we need to find funding to make that happen. The board will continue to commit significant funding to POW&R until it becomes totally self-sufficient in New Castle and we are happy that we are actually ahead of schedule.



Southern Delaware Founders' Campaign

To achieve our goal of being truly statewide, Autism Delaware has created the Founders' Campaign to recruit donors to support the development of the downstate office. All Founders will contribute at least \$100 a year for three years for downstate services. Best of all, when you become a Founder, you can double your impact because the Bank of America Client Foundation will match the funds raised up to a certain amount through December 2011.

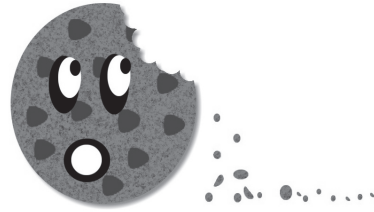
To pitch in even more, join the Founders' Circle! Members of the Founders' Circle will promote the office by recruiting other Founders and volunteers, and will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. Founders' Circle members commit at least \$250 per year for three years.

The demand for our information and services in Kent and Sussex Counties has gone beyond anything we anticipated, so contact Dafne Carnright at (302) 422-2255 or Kim Siegel at (302) 224-6020 for further information on the Campaign. If you are interested in learning more about being a Founder or serving on the Founders' Circle, an interest meeting is planned for July 28 at 6:30 pm at Dover Downs; RSVP to Kim Siegel.

Early Screening Efforts

Do you remember reading about the Physician's Awareness Campaign that Autism Delaware started in 2005 with partnering agencies including LDAF, Child Development Watch, Public Health and Developmental Disabilities Services? That campaign promoted the use of parent reporting tools as part of the early screening process so that diagnosis of autism and other disabilities will not be delayed. In May 2009, the Health Care Center at Christiana in Newark announced they were approved to start using the PEDS (Parent's Evaluation of Developmental Status), a tool we brought to the state along with its developer, Dr. Frances Glascoe, as part of the Physician project. It's been a few years, but that initial project set the stage for this decision. Autism Delaware has continued to work with Public Health projects promoting early screening, so we're all very happy that the PEDS will be used much more widely. Early screening and diagnosis are critical for children with autism, and thanks to Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn and the General Assembly's Kids' Caucus, a bill was recently passed to mandate coverage of developmental screenings by many insurers. That law will help children receive a diagnosis and services earlier.

INSIDE Autism Delaware



(Continued from page 7)

Board Changes

Former Autism Delaware Board President John Fisher Gray returned from Belgium a year ago and is now returning to the Board of Directors, bringing his legal and human resource skills to that position. We're happy to have John back and feel his presence already.

On a sadder note, board member Bob Dunlap left for personal reasons so we will miss him and thank him for his many contributions as a board member. Bob was leading our membership drive and he also

offered his legal services as we re-organized after leaving our parent organization. Bob represents the Asperger community on the board, so we will be recruiting a new board member representing the Asperger community.

Board elections will be held in October. If you have any interest in Bob's or other positions on the board, please contact Rob Gilsdorf at robdelautism@aol.com.

Autism Awareness

In April, we worked with LDAF to promote autism

awareness in Legislative Hall. April 1, 2009 was Smart Cookie Day! Brennan School students baked bags of cookies, which families distributed at Legislative Hall with a message about autism policy issues, and the House of Representatives passed a resolution declaring April to be Autism Awareness Month. The day ended with a "Meet & Greet" at Fraziers where families from around the state met the 12 legislators who stopped by. These two events allowed us to introduce ourselves to our representatives; and for them to meet us and

our families. It was also a great way for LDAF and Autism Delaware to present a united face to the legislature.

Speaker Series

The 2009 Speaker Series, in which we'll bring a speaker to each county twice a year, kicked off in April with presentations by Dr. Janelle Love in Dover on bio-medical issues and Diane Black of Paragon Consulting on behaviors at home in Newark. Look for more Speaker Series with Practice Without Pressure, Dr. Jim Ball and others this fall.

Autism Delaware will be holding its 11th Annual Summer Beach Party Picnic!

Sunday, August 16, 2009 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
(Food served from 11:00 am-1:00 pm)

Cape Henlopen State Park
42 Henlopen Dr., Lewes, DE 19958 - at the MAIN BEACH PAVILION
(Daily entrance fee for Delaware registered vehicles is \$4.00, out of state vehicles - \$8.00)

Autism Delaware will provide the hot dogs, hamburgers and entertainment!

Please bring beverages for YOUR family and a salad or side dish or dessert to SHARE.

There will be a train ride, moon bounce and other activities for the children. Don't forget your beach supplies!

RAIN OR SHINE

Please register by August 11th at
302-224-6020 or Margie.rowles@delautism.org
Due to the popularity of this event, we ask that only immediate families attend (including grandparents). We are limited to 220 participants.
Get your reservations in early.

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...Auction!

November 14, 2009 Autism Delaware's 11th Annual Autumn Auction for Autism

An Old Hollywood experience with dinner and dancing and first class silent and live auctions. To volunteer to collect or donate items for the Auction, please contact Betsy Fisher-Gray at 302-256-0013 or elizabeth.fisher.gray@post.harvard.edu. First time volunteering? We'll give you advice on securing donations. Items that sell include wine and liquor, jewelry, original works, vacation or "experience" packages, signed memorabilia, and tickets, but we'd love to hear your other creative ideas!

If you would like to be on the invitation list for Lights, Camera... Auction! or if your company would like to learn more about sponsoring, please contact Autism Delaware's Newark office.

Dine Out - Texas Style!



Join us on Friday, September 18th at the famed Texas Roadhouse Restaurant in Camden. Pro Bass Fisherman Mike Delvisco will join us at the Roadhouse and he will be fishing in our tournament "Go

Fish" the next day. Bring the family, friends, and neighbors. Heck, bring the mailman to dinner! A portion of all proceeds from dinner that night go to Autism Delaware. 4568 S Dupont Hwy, Camden, DE 19934-1363

Kent County Support Group

There will be a support group held in Kent County at the St. John's Lutheran Church & Preschool on
July 16 & August 11th
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
113 Lotus Street, Dover, DE
(Behind YMCA) go the white building.
Please RSVP to Dafne Carnright
(302) 422-2255
dafne.carnright@delautism.org

Autism Delaware Speaker Series

Jane Miller Presents:

Practice Without Pressure's New Medical Services Opening this Summer

July 30, 2009 6:30 p.m.

Special Olympics Office, Route 896, Newark

Dr. Jim Ball Presents: Behavioral Supports in the Home

September 10, 2009 6:30 p.m.

Sussex Consortium, Lewes

Free to Autism Delaware Members \$5.00 to non-members

Childcare is available. (302) 224-6020

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 Movie

Movie: Ice Age 3 Dawn of the Dinosaurs

July 18 - 9:30 a.m.

Regal People's Plaza

1100 People's Plaza, Newark, DE 19702



Presale tickets are \$7.50 per person available through the office. Cash or Check only. Call ASAP (302) 224-6020. Space is limited.

Kent Coffee Hour

Join us for some coffee and conversation!

July 16, 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

July

July 1, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night, AMF Price Lanes, Price's Corner, Wilmington. 5:30 pm. No age limits. Discounted games. Additional summer dates and information on page 9.

July , 3 2009 - Independence Day (Observed) Office Closed

July 14, 2009 - N.C.C. Parent Coffee Hour. 9:00 a.m. Prince on Delaware 124 Delaware Avenue, Old New Castle. Coffee is on us! More information on page 9.

July 14, 2009 - Kent County Coffee Hour 9-10 a.m. Zippy's Ice Cream Cafe', Dover. Please RSVP to Dafne (302) 422-2255

July 16, 2009 - Kent County Support Groupm 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church & Preschool. 113 Lotus Street, Dover. RSVP to Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255.

July 17, 2009 - Tween/Teen Game Night at Neurology Associates, Newark. Please RSVP to Deanna Principe at (302) 832-1990 or Deanna.Principe@delautism.org.

July 18, 2009 - Movie Event - Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs. Regal People's Plaza, 1100 People's Plaza, Newark, DE 19702. 9:30 am. Presale tickets are \$7.50 per person. More information on page 9.

July 26, 2009 – Milford Bowling, Milford Bowling Lanes, 6-8 p.m. \$3.5 games, free shoes. No RSVP required.

July 30, 2009 – Autism Delaware Speaker Series - Practice Without Pressure 7-8. Special Olympics Office. Route 896, Newark. (Next to the U of D Feild House.)

August

August 5, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night. More information on page 9.

August 11, 2009 – N.C.C. Parent Coffee Hour, 9:00 a.m. Prince on Delaware. 124 Delaware Ave. Coffee is on Us! More information on page 9.

August 11, 2009 – Kent County Support Group 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church & Preschool. 113 Lotus Street, Dover. RSVP to Dafne Carnright (302) 422-2255.

August 14, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates, Newark. Contact Deanna Principe, (302) 832-1990, deanna.principe@delautism.org.

August 16, 2009 – Autism Delaware's 11th Annual Beach Party Picnic! Cape Henlopen State Park, 42 Henlopen Drive, Lewes, DE 19958 at the Main Beach Pavilion. 10am - 4pm (Food served from 11am -1pm) Daily entrance fee for Delaware registered vehicles is \$4.00, out of state vehicles - \$8.00. We provide the hot dogs, hamburgers and entertainment! Please bring your beverages for YOUR family and a salad or side dish or dessert to SHARE. There will be a train ride, moon bounce and other activities for the children. Don't forget your beach supplies! Rain or shine. Please register by August 11th at 302.2246020 or margie.rowles@delautism.org.



Due to the popularity of this event, we ask that only immediate families attend (including grandparents.) We are limited to 220 participants. Get your reservations in early.

August 29, 2009 – Family Bus Trip to Dorney Park. Ticket and Bus trip \$30 per person. Contact Heidi Mizel for details. heidi.mizel@delautism.org or 302.224.6020.

September

September 2, 2009 – N.C.C. Family Bowling Night, AMF Price Lanes, Price's Corner, Wilmington. 5:30 pm. See page 10 for more details.

September 7, 2009 – Labor Day - Office Closed

September 8, 2009 – N.C.C Parent Coffee Hour - Prince on Delaware, 124 Delaware Street, Old New Castle. 9:00 am Coffee is on us. More information on page 9.

September 10, 2009 – Speaker Series - Dr. Jim Ball; Behavioral Supports in the Home. More information on page 9.

September 11, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates, Newark. Contact Deanna Principe, (302) 832-1990, deanna.principe@delautism.org.

September 18, 2009 – Dine Out Texas Style! - Pre-Go Fish Tournament Dinner/Fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse in Camden. Go to www.delautism.org for coupon so your purchase will go towards Autism Delaware. Call office for details. (302) 422-2255.

September 19, 2009 – Autism Delaware's 1st Annual Pond Fishing Tournament - Go Fish! \$500 first prize. Morning fishing at 8 different ponds. Afternoon celebration at Bicentennial Park in Milford.

September 25, 2009 – Asperger's Tween/Teen Game Night. 6:30 pm. Neurology Associates, Newark. Contact Deanna Principe, (302) 832-1990, deanna.principe@delautism.org.

Coming this fall....

**October: Annual Meeting
Fall Festival**

November: Autumn Auction for Autism

Passenger in the Car of Life

by Heidi Mizell

As parents of children with Asperger's Syndrome we may do a little too much for them. How can we expect our children to learn skills if we don't teach them how we want them to do a skill? Last year my son earned his driver's license and my husband and I decided he needed lots of experience before he could go out on his own. One of the hurdles we had to overcome was his lack of sense of direction. He admitted that as the passenger in the car he really never paid attention to where we go or how we got there. In April I attended a conference given by Alan Sohn, Ed.D. and Cathy Grayson, M.A. on teaching awareness, independence and problem solving. Dr. Sohn called individuals with Asperger's Syndrome "passengers in the car of life." She said that we as parents, need to teach our children to be more socially aware and to independently solve problems before they can truly be independent.

The prerequisite skills necessary for developing independent problem-solving skills are to be flexible, to manage anxiety, to reduce interfering factors such as attentional challenges or black and white thinking, and very importantly, to have a good coach. That would be you, Mom and Dad. Teach flexibility in a direct way, and when you are identifying the inflexibility your child is showing, make sure you address it specifically. For example, if your child is having trouble moving from finishing math problems to reading time, identify why. Is the problem that they don't want to leave the math work incomplete? Or is it the transition itself? You may want to teach your child how to identify how big a problem is and their reaction to the problem by using a rating scale. Some examples of rating scales can be found in

"A 5 Is Against the Law! Social Boundaries: Straight Up!" by Kari Dunn Buron, or the Anger Thermometer in "Navigating the Social World" by Jeanette McAfee, MD. Teaching your child that someone sitting in your seat may be a 5 in a 1-10 scale, but the reaction of dumping the kid on the floor was a 10 on the reaction side, was the reaction equal to the frustration level? Teach flexibility in baby steps, your child may need to learn 10 different things, but overwhelming them with too many skills may cause them to shut down. Let your child learn from their own experiences.

Many of our kids have anxiety; the most worrisome thing is when someone treats your child as oppositional when anxiety is the cause of the negative behavior. An example most of us can relate to is the fear of spiders. Would you be comfortable being forced into a room full of spiders? Is there anything anyone could teach you or take away from you to make you more comfortable with those spiders? Probably not, yet we have an expectation for our children to do this everyday in our communities and in school. To reduce your child's anxiety you need to teach problem solving by giving him experience. Stop leading and let them lead you. Give them the strategies to use (maybe a script on what to say) in a new situation. Teach and re-teach until your child is successful. Teach your child to observe others and how they do things. We learn how to do things by watching others, but this doesn't come naturally to many individuals with AS.

Finally, teach coping skills. You've worked hard to teach your child to identify their frustration level, now teach them how to handle it. Relaxation techniques, letting someone know you are beginning

to feel stress, having somewhere to go before you have a meltdown are all strategies you can teach your child to cope with his/her feelings. You can find some strategies for teaching coping skills in books like "No More Meltdowns" by Jed Baker, Ph.D. and "Sticker Strategies: Practical Strategies to Encourage Social Thinking and Organization" by Michelle Garcia Winner.

You may contact Heidi at

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

"Would you be comfortable being forced in to a room full of spiders? Is there anything anyone could teach you or take away from you to make you more comfortable with those spiders? Probably not, yet we have an expectation for our children to do this everyday in our communities and in school."



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 Autism Delaware 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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