

The Sun

Newsletter

October–December 2011

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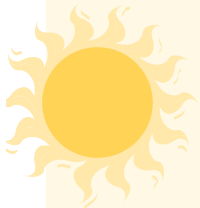
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Our mission

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



Creating better lives

The Autism Delaware staff is on a mission: create better lives for all Delawareans affected by autism spectrum disorders (or ASDs, for short).

And thanks to last year’s merger with the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation, all families throughout the state are now within reach.

“We now have a physical presence in both lower and upper Delaware that supports our mission,” explains Autism Delaware’s executive director, Theda Ellis, MBA, MEd.

For children with ASDs, Autism Delaware continues to run the summer day camp at the Children’s Beach House in Lewes, junior golf at The Rookery Golf Course in Milton, and the summer swim program, now at the Rehoboth YMCA.

And for adults with ASDs, Autism Delaware is expanding its employment services. Known as Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation (or POW&R, for short), the services—now available in New Castle and Kent Counties—should also be available to Sussex County adults by July 2012.

Already available are parent mentoring and social and recreational opportunities, such as horseback riding and sensory friendly movies.



Enjoying a summer day at the Children’s Beach House

Supporting innovative community programs

In addition to providing programs and services statewide, Autism Delaware awards grants to organizations with new and promising community programs.

“We support balance in the autism community,” adds Ellis, “so we support innovative programs with the potential to improve the lives of both children and adults across the state.

“This year’s grant recipients meet our vision,” continues Ellis, “because they reach every age range, from children to adults, and address a range of needs.”

In June, Autism Delaware handed out \$10,000 in grant money to

- Keystone Human Services, a provider of community-based services, to improve the communication skills of 10 adults with ASDs;
- Variety, the Children’s Charity, to run an after-school program for students enrolled at the Brennen School;
- Parent Information Center of Delaware to provide five parent-training sessions by Delaware

Continued on page 10

The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware

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The Sun Editorial Committee

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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

More changes next year

All summer, the Autism Delaware board and staff talked about the "next step" as we transition into a statewide organization.

This fall, we're continuing our discussions because, beginning in January, we'll see more changes.

First, Rob Gilsdorf will step down after four years as president of Autism Delaware's board of directors. Rob's outgoing personality and general sense of hospitality served us well since he joined our board as a member nine years ago. In that time, he reached out to Kent and Sussex Counties to work together on common issues, and his presence and spirit of camaraderie helped set the stage for the merger between Autism Delaware and the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation. A consistent and steady presence on the board, Rob also strongly supported our expansion of individual services. We are grateful for Rob's guidance, and hope he'll continue to work with us in the future. Thank you, Rob, for all of your support to the organization and to me.

Stepping up as the new board president is Marcy Kempner. A guiding force since Autism Delaware's beginning, Marcy has worn many hats over the years. The first to call with support for parents with children newly diagnosed with autism, Marcy

also organized early conferences and the speakers series and functioned as clean-up crew after parties and events. With a clear vision of where Autism Delaware needed to go, Marcy has been the guiding force behind our strategic plans and instrumental in creating the road map we continue to follow today. With Marcy in the office of the presidency, we will be in very good hands.

Next year is major because we plan to expand our direct services, including clinical services for individuals of all ages. If all goes as planned, we will provide diagnostic services, functional behavioral assessments, behavior support plans, and private consulting to schools and families. These clinical services will enhance POW&R's services and be available statewide. We plan to look at residential services for children and adults as well and look to 2012 as a development year. These services not only are very big steps for Autism Delaware but also are critical for our growing autism community.

My role over the coming year will be to develop these direct services as part of my step down as executive director next year. Beginning in January, I will work only three days a week. During that time, I will also work with the new management team as our very capable associate director, Teresa Avery, takes on a greater administrative role. We expect a seamless transition to new management by 2013.

Tell us what you want from Autism Delaware in the future. Join an upcoming focus group, and let us know.

Theda

A service of Autism Delaware



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Outstanding volunteers honored



Nicole deBorja

As a nonprofit organization with statewide events and programs, Autism Delaware relies on the generosity and skills of our volunteers to help us with our mission. Because we benefit so greatly from their efforts, we like to recognize our volunteers at least once a year at a volunteer recognition event.



Demetris Demetriou

This year, the invitation-only affair took place on June 23 at the Dover Elks Lodge Outdoor Pavilion.

For their exemplary effort in 2010, seven received the Outstanding Autism Delaware Volunteer award: Nicole deBorja of Maryland, Demetris Demetriou of Wilmington, Josh and Kris Grant of Newark, Pat and Tom Hamer of Milford, and Andrew Zeltt of Wilmington.



Josh Grant

These volunteers provided much-needed help—from support in Autism Delaware’s Newark and Milton offices to assistance during social outings and fundraising events—and provided it often throughout the year. Thanks to their generous donations of time and expertise, Autism Delaware can apply more funding toward creating better lives for Delaware families living with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs).



Kris Grant

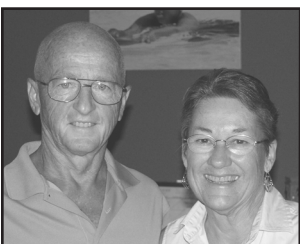
Autism Delaware also honored outstanding community service over the past year. Three community leaders were recognized for their effort on behalf of Delawareans with ASDs.



Andrew Zeltt

Joint recipients of the Outstanding Leader in the Community award are Jennifer and Tom Schick of Dover. As pack leaders for Cub Scout Pack 623, the Schicks welcome boys with ASDs.

“Tom and Jen do whatever it takes to help the Cub Scout with autism to succeed and be a part of the pack,” says Kate Stomieroski who nominated the Schicks and has a son in their scout pack. “They believe in our children’s capabilities. Their kind, nurturing, and supportive ways bring out the best in our boys.”



Tom and Pat Hamer

The Outstanding Leader in the Community award was also received by Paul Miller of Claymont. Miller is noted for heading a Brandywine YMCA pilot program that taught tumbling to children with autism as well as for tutoring in a Claymont

Elementary School program that helped children with ASDs with their social thinking.

“Since his daughter Sarah was diagnosed, he has devoted his life to helping her and other children to be all they can be,” says Miller’s father and co-nominator for the award, Richard Holloway. “He said he had to get into her world so she would be willing to come into his. Sarah has made remarkable progress, and this same outcome, he would like for every child with autism.”

“He continues to make a difference in the lives of the people he touches,” adds Jeannette Holloway, Miller’s mother and award co-nominator, “and to pass on information that will help make children with autism happier and more confident.”

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Autism Delaware, visit www.delautism.org.



Tom and Jennifer Schick



Paul Miller

Did you know?

A tax-deductible donation can be made to Autism Delaware through the United Way of Delaware. Simply enter the code on the United Way form!

For the United Way in	the code is
Delaware	9234
SE Pennsylvania	12598

PARENT PARENT

Never thought it would happen

Karen Bashkow heard this comment often over the 25 years of her son Ben's life: *Never thought it would happen.* It revealed the speaker's negative assumptions about her son's abilities as well as the surprise in being proved wrong. Bashkow enjoyed the surprise because she knew not to underestimate her son. His list of accomplishments grew daily.

But some situations warranted the assumption. When faced with the need for health care, children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) struggle with the concept of personal space and are often anxious. Plus, many health-care professionals are ill-equipped to work with children with ASDs. For this reason, Bashkow recalls a devoted teacher at the Delaware Autism Program who recommended Dental Care at The Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children.

"At the time," explains Bashkow, "the dental clinic specialized in working with children with disabilities. I felt very fortunate that Ben and I wouldn't have to



Ben Bashkow at work at the Dollar Tree Store

deal with that look of horror from the dental professionals."

Even though the clinic was prepared to clean Ben's teeth every six months, Ben was not. Bashkow and her husband had to hold their son in the chair during every cleaning and oral examination. And Ben cried through it all. "I was quite relieved when I was told 'Everything looks good,'" admits Bashkow. "I didn't want to even consider a cavity!"

When Ben was about to turn 18, the dental clinic told Bashkow that her son was aging out of the program. X-rays were suggested to see the state of Ben's wisdom teeth. If they were impacted, the clinic would remove them while Ben was still eligible. The clinic was prepared to

begin the process by x-raying Ben's teeth, but everyone doubted Ben could tolerate it. "No one," emphasizes Bashkow, "including me, thought Ben could get through the x-rays. Never thought it would happen."


Then, Bashkow was introduced to Practice Without Pressure, Inc. (PWP). Founded by Deborah A. Jastrebski to help her son with Down syndrome tolerate allergy testing, the Delaware-based nonprofit helps people, especially those with disabilities, to receive health care with dignity and respect. According to the program's website, www.pwpde.com, help includes training as well as treatment at the PWP center.

"Ben went through three practice sessions," claims Bashkow, "and was able to get a panoramic x-ray of his mouth with no tantrums or holding involved. Ben now gets his teeth cleaned regularly without his mom and dad holding him down.

"Ben just learned that he has his first cavity," continues Bashkow. "Deb worked with Ben to prepare him. She even practiced the injection in his mouth to numb the area. As I watched the dentist actually give Ben the injection, I felt my eyes fill with tears. This young man accomplished something that I never thought would happen. I am so proud of Ben, and even more importantly, he is proud of himself.

"Never underestimate your child," adds Bashkow, "and give him or her the chance to succeed. It's so worth it!"

Win a 2012 Toyota Camry LE!
All proceeds benefit Autism Delaware!
Only 500 tickets available: \$100 each
Drawing: November 19, 2011
Details: www.delautism.org



Made possible by Hertrich Toyota of Milford and Autism Delaware

Holiday gift ideas

What can I get my child that is both fun and educational?

WordXchange Junior

Winner of The National Parenting Center's Seal of Approval and a Parents' Choice Award

Win, make, steal, and keep words. Works on phonemic awareness, spelling, reading, and abstract thinking. For ages 5 and up.



Amazon: \$19.99

Don't Make Me Laugh, Jr.

Perform various improvisations, such as Pretend you're a sprinkler and Imitate your favorite teacher. Works on body language, interpretation of body language, and turn-taking. For ages 5 and up.



Amazon: \$19.06

Guess Who?

A mystery person is on your opponent's card. Can you find the matching face in the crowd? Start with a game board full of funny-looking suspects. Then, ask questions to eliminate faces that don't match. Once you're down to a face or two, solve the case by guessing who.



Works on question-asking, categorizing, and turn-taking. For ages 6 and up.

ToysRUs: \$17.99

Taboo

Try to get your team to guess the word on the card without using the five most popular descriptions. Works on word-finding, describing, categorizing, attributes, and listening skills. For ages 12 and up.



ToysRUs: \$27.99

Hullabaloo

Get kids bouncing, twisting, spinning, and dancing. As they do, they hone their problem-solving skills and are rewarded for quick thinking and cooperation. Works on problem-solving skills, direction-following, critical-thinking skills, cooperation, body awareness, and motor planning. For ages 4 and up.



ToysRUs: \$20.99

I Spy Memory Game

Word games and group challenges for the entire family. Have fun while helping young players develop memory, reading, thinking, and language skills. Works on turn-taking, rule-following, and sharing. For ages 4 to 7.



ToysRUs: \$19.99

Printed with permission from Orchard Friends School, Riverton, New Jersey. Prices as of August 2011.

Welcome new members!

Kimura L. Anderson

Art & Michele Belson

Kevin E. Carson

Henry & Amy Carter

John & Carrie Caulfield

Tara Dick

Mr. & Mrs. J. Craig Felker

Laurette Frazier

Andrea Hamilton

John & Kerri Hollyday

Timothy S. Hudson

Terry Knauf

John P. Landon

Kathleen McHale

James & Jori Polve

Keith & John Riley-Spillane

Diane Schachtel

Doris Scruggs

Mr. & Mrs. Garrette Slonacher

Judy Stanger

Lois R. Walley

Donna Webster

John & Diane Weis

Two of the many benefits enjoyed by new members:

#1 Access to the preeminent Delaware agency for autism advocacy

#2 Access to a range of information and services

INSIDEAutism
Delaware **by Theda Ellis, MBA, MEd**

IEP guidance

What you may not know—but should

by Marie-Anne Aghazadian,
Executive Director of the
Parent Information Center
(PIC) of Delaware, Inc.

The saying about the squeaky wheel getting the grease is absolutely true—and knowledge and persistence will get you both the grease and the mileage.

Every year at the Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware, we receive upwards of 1,200 calls from parents who have questions about their children's individualized education programs (IEPs). I am often surprised that both parents and schools don't know several essential points about IEPs in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). So, here are a few that you should know.

To read Marie-Anne Aghazadian's entire article, visit www.delautism.org. From the top menu, choose Autism Resources; then, Learning Links and Autism Articles.

Improving and expanding services

Residential services—The Autism Delaware Adult Issues Committee has been meeting monthly for the past nine months. Our purpose: to look at opportunities for adult children (or soon-to-be adult children) to live independently.

We visited a new apartment complex being built for people with autism in Cape May, held conference calls with providers around the country, and listened to invited speakers from the Arc of Delaware, Delaware State Housing Authority, Autism Living and Working (Penn.), and Neighbours (N.J.).

What have we learned? We need to think very broadly when we consider living options. One size does NOT fit all. Everyone needs living arrangements that meet his or her own personal needs.

The Autism Delaware Board of Directors has agreed to hire a community living services director to plan and implement a comprehensive residential program over time. Together with this new director, we will look at a wide variety of options that support adults with Asperger's syndrome as well as adults with autism and that use technology to enhance daily living skills. We will also consider providing residential services to children on the spectrum.

First, we need to become an authorized provider for the state; then, to develop the infrastructure we need to deliver services. So, while residential services are probably at least two years away, look for us to hire a community living services director this winter.

Clinical services—If you read my column on page 2, you know that Autism Delaware plans to also offer clinical services. We will begin by hiring a clinical director, a psychologist who will be able to diagnose through testing and functional behavior assessment and to develop behavior support plans that can be used in the home or at school. With this new clinical director, we will be able to consult with school districts, conduct independent education evaluations, and offer parent training. Housed in our main office, the clinical director will provide services statewide.

This program will be available on a half-time basis at first, but we are looking to grow it over time. Our initial goal is to serve children who do not have access to the DAP (including those who are home-schooled or educated in their home district) as well as to supplement DAP services when needed. We also anticipate improving our clinical and behavioral support services to POW&R participants.

We are currently finalizing our plans, looking for new space, and hope to open the doors to increased services by winter 2012.

Providing information

When families with children newly diagnosed with autism asked us to improve our website, we listened. Autism Delaware's associate director, Teresa Avery, and Tipton Communications redesigned our website to now provide immediate access to the kind of information new families need, especially when going through the diagnostic process. So take a moment, check out www.delautism.org, and tell us what you think.

In addition to our website, we redesigned our new parent packet and updated our Delaware resource list. New families are now either mailed a CD or emailed an extensive list of Delaware's resources—from physicians to haircuts! This list will be updated annually and is also available online.



Amanda Jackson in Autism Delaware's new office in Milton

Amanda Jackson now works full time! Autism Delaware's office assistant and event coordinator began working in the new Milton office last spring, helping to organize the Walk-Race for Autism. Today, Jackson is coordinating the upcoming Autism Gala & Auction scheduled for November 19 and working on southern Delaware's fall festival for October and December's holiday party.

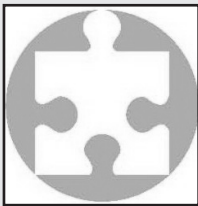
"In the future," adds Jackson, "I'd like to increase opportunities for families in Kent County."



In August, 26 campers enjoyed summer day camp at the Children's Beach House in Lewes. The camp is designed for children who will be in grades 3 to 11 in the next school year. The campers swam, kayaked, sailed, and took part in arts and crafts, sports, and the low-ropes course.

"Camp was a great success this year," says Autism Delaware's southern Delaware service coordinator, Dafne Carrnight, MS, LPCMH, "and the campers had a fun time exploring all the activities."

Each camper's family will be mailed a CD of the photos taken this year.



A few abbreviations and acronyms

Parents with children newly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) can be overwhelmed by abbreviations for terms and the use of acronyms (pronounceable words formed with the initial letters of a term). The first half of this list was published in *The Sun's* April-June 2011 issue. Here are a few more spelled out for you:

- NIMH** National Institute of Mental Health
- NINDS** National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
- OCD** obsessive compulsive disorder
- OT** occupational therapy
- PAC** Delaware Autism Program's (DAP's) Parent Advisory Council
- PDD-NOS** pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified
- PECS** picture exchange communication system

- PT** physical therapy
- Rec4All** recreational resources for Delaware's entire disabilities community
- SIB** self-injurious behavior
- SIT** sensory integration therapy
- SLP** speech-language pathologist
- SPAC** Statewide Parent Advisory Council
- TEACCH** treatment and education of autistic and related communication-handicapped children

Social committee update

After six years as chair of the Autism Delaware Social Events Committee, Robin Delaney can boast of expanding social opportunities.

With help and guidance from fellow volunteers Nicole Curran and Kim Herbert, Delaney not only supported long-successful events, such as the holiday party and the annual beach picnic at Cape Henlopen, but also arranged new and now-popular activities, such as the train ride on the Wilmington & Western Railroad and



the spring egg hunt. Delaney even talked her husband Rob into wearing the bunny costume!

Thanks—yet again—to Delaney, Curran, and Herbert. All of the committee-run activities are appropriate for Delaware families living with autism spectrum disorders—and happily enjoyed by all!

A new term

New and ongoing activities will continue to be on the agenda as Kimura Anderson, Cory Gilden, and Masha Kohli start managing the committee this fall. Included on the list of new possibilities are a pool party and a revamp of Mom & Dad's Night Out.

If you're interested in joining the New Castle County social committee, call Deanna Principe at (302) 224-6020, ext. 213. Or email her at deanna.principe@delautism.org.

The social committee in southern Delaware needs members! Call Amanda Jackson at (302) 644-3410. Or send an email of interest to amanda.jackson@delautism.org.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

October

- 1**—Sensory friendly movie: *Dolphin Tale*. Regal Cinemas. 1100 Peoples Plaza. Newark. 10:00 A.M.
- 4**—Family bowling night. Brunswick Doverama Lanes. 1600 S. Governors Av. Dover. 6:00–8:00 P.M. *Registration*: Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.
- 5, 12, 19, 26**—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.
- 11**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 9:00 A.M.
- 14 & 28**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware main office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration*: Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.
- 20**—Parent Coffee Hour. Georgia House Restaurant. Milford. 9:00 A.M.
- 20**—*Rapunzel*. Second Street Players. 2 S. Walnut St. Milford. 6:30 P.M. *Registration*: Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.
- 21**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Milton office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration*: Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.
- 22**—Fall festival. Killens Pond Picnic Area. 5025 Killens Pond Rd. Felton. 1:00–3:00 P.M. *Registration*: Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.
- 28**—Haunted train ride on the Wilmington & Western Railroad. Choice of two rides: 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. *Registration*: Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.

November

- 2, 9, 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.
- 5**—Sensory friendly movie: *Puss in Boots*. Carmike Cinemas in the Dover Mall. 1365 N. Dupont Hwy. Dover. 10:00 A.M.
- 8**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 7:00 P.M.
- 12**—13th Annual Auction for Autism. DuPont Country Club. 1001 Rockland Rd. Wilmington. 6:00–11:00 P.M. *Reservations*: www.delautism.org or Kim Siegel @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 204.
- 12**—Sensory friendly movie: *Puss in Boots*. Regal Cinemas. 1100 Peoples Plaza. Newark. 10:00 A.M.
- 17**—Parent Coffee Hour. Barista Café. Lewes. 9:00 A.M.
- 18**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. 6:30–8:30 P.M. Autism Delaware main office. *Registration*: Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 205. Autism Delaware Milton office. *Registration*: Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.
- 19**—Autism Gala & Auction. Baycenter. 124 Dickinson St. Dewey Beach. 6:00–11:00 P.M. *Reservations*: www.delautism.org or Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.

December

- 3**—Sensory friendly movie: *Happy Feet Two*. Regal Cinemas. 1100 Peoples Plaza. Newark. 10:00 A.M.
- 7**—Parent Coffee Hour. Holiday Inn Express. Dover. 9:00 A.M.
- 7 & 14**—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.
- 9**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware Milton office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration*: Dafne Carnright @ (302) 644-3410.
- 13**—Family bowling night. Brunswick Doverama Lanes. 1600 S. Governors Av. Dover. 6:00–8:00 P.M. *Registration*: Amanda Jackson @ (302) 644-3410.
- 13**—Parent Coffee Hour. Panera Bread. Wilmington. 9:00 A.M.
- 16**—Teen/Tween Asperger's game night. Autism Delaware main office. 6:30–8:30 P.M. *Registration*: Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.
- 27**—Sensory friendly movie: *Alvin and the Chipmunks*. Regal Cinemas. 1100 Peoples Plaza. Newark. 10:00 A.M.
- 29**—Pump It Up party. Pump It Up. 103 S. James St. Newport. 10:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M. *Registration*: Heidi Mizell @ (302) 224-6020, ext. 205.
- TBD**—Sensory friendly ice skating. Delaware State Fair Ice Skating Rink. 644 Fairground Rd. Harrington.

13th Annual Auction for Autism
Bollywood Magic

November 12, 2011
 6:00–11:00 P.M.

For reservations
www.delautism.org
 Or call Kim Siegel at
 (302) 224-6020,
 ext. 204

DuPont Country Club
 1001 Rockland Rd.
 Wilmington, Del.

Autism Gala & Auction
Illuminate
Attire: blue jeans & bling!

November 19, 2011
 6:00–11:00 P.M.

For reservations
www.delautism.org
 Or call
 Amanda Jackson at
 (302) 644-3410


Baycenter
 124 Dickinson St.
 Dewey Beach, Del.

Teen/Tween Asperger's Game Night

For 9–19 year olds with Asperger's syndrome

Game night is now also available in Autism Delaware's Milton office. For details, contact Dafne Carnright at (302) 644-3410.

Place: Autism Delaware main office
Dates: October 14 & 28
 November 18
 December 16
Time: 6:30–8:30 P.M.
Reservations: Heidi Mizell
 (302) 224-6020, ext. 205
heidi.mizell@delautism.org



Parent Coffee Hour

One of the best things you can do for yourself is to join a network of parents facing the same challenges as you. This network will afford you some quality downtime while you learn the ins and outs of Delaware's autism community and how to get your child's needs met.

Panera Bread
 3650 Kirkwood Hwy., Wilmington
 Oct. 11 @ 9:00 A.M.
 Nov. 8 @ 7:00 P.M.
 Dec. 13 @ 9:00 A.M.

Holiday Inn Express
 1780 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover
 Dec. 7 @ 9:00 A.M.

Georgia House Restaurant
 18 S. Walnut St., Milford
 Oct. 20 @ 9:00 A.M.

Barista Café
 17644 Coastal Hwy., Unit 3, Lewes
 Nov. 17 @ 9:00 A.M.

Join us at an Autism Delaware Parent Coffee Hour. Here's this quarter's schedule. For more, visit www.delautism.org.

The coffee's on us!



Haunted Train Ride

Friday, October 28, 2011

Two rides on the Wilmington & Western Railroad:
 5:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Registration
 Heidi Mizell @ heidi.mizell@delautism.org

Dress up, and ride the open-air rail car. If it rains, we're moving the ghosts inside!

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.
 Or visit www.delautism.org.



Winter 2011 session
Call for dates!



Bowling night

Every Wednesday
 5:30–7:00 P.M.

Bowlerama
 3031 New Castle Av.
 New Castle DE 19720-2297

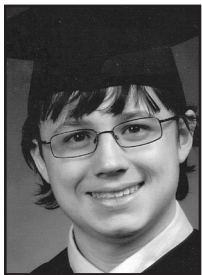
To register, email Karen Tuohy at karen.tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us. Or call (302) 633-3316.

Creating better lives Continued from page 1

- Autism Program Teacher of the Year Dom Squittierra;
- Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore to develop and offer a statewide social-thinking model that will help improve social skills; and
- Very Special Arts (VSA) Delaware to support an artist-in-residence program in Kent County that will help build the confidence of 52 young adults with ASDs or cognitive disabilities.

Supporting outstanding students and professionals in the autism field

Autism Delaware also supports the educational goals of students who want to help create better lives for Delawareans with ASDs as well as the continuing education of autism professionals. In July, annual scholarships and stipends were awarded to six individuals.



Alexander Prohaska

Alexander Prohaska is the recipient of the Adult with Autism Scholarship. The \$1,000 scholarship will support Prohaska’s attendance at the University of Delaware this fall. The New Castle resident plans to study math and to take a creative writing course. “After I graduate,” says Prohaska, “I want to be a writer. I have a lot of ideas, and I just don’t want them to go to waste.”



Cindy R. Hoffstadt

Cindy R. Hoffstadt is the recipient of the Autism Delaware Para-to-Educator Stipend. The annual \$1,000 stipend is available to eligible para-professionals who, in the past year, completed their education to become teachers of children with autism. Hoffstadt, a former para-professional at Star Hill and Stokes Elementary Schools, has been an autism teacher with Kent County Community School since December.

Currently learning sign language, the Dover resident will use her stipend for training in the picture exchange communication system (PECS) and autism certification. “My goal is to continue to become more knowledgeable in my field,” notes Hoffstadt. “My hope is that I can have a positive influence on the lives of my students.”

Four University of Delaware students received the annual Daniel and Lois Gray Memorial Scholarship. With hopes of becoming professionals in the autism community, each of the students will receive \$1,000 for the 2011–12 academic year:

Jenna M. MacKenzie (Class of 2012) wants to become a licensed speech-language pathologist and to work as a clinician helping individuals with communication

disorders and impairments. Currently majoring in human services clinical studies with double minors in disabilities studies and linguistics, the Felton native also volunteers at Autism Delaware events and practices applied behavioral analysis with a young child with autism. “I have always had dreams of working with individuals with autism,” says MacKenzie, “and this career path allows me to help people in a way that I had never dreamt possible.”



Jenna M. MacKenzie

“My career goal,” says Janine M. Navarra (Class of 2012) who is majoring in elementary education with a concentration in special education, “is to become a special-education teacher, and I would specifically like to work with students with autism. I would love to have my own classroom consisting of a small group of students with autism, but I would also enjoy being a special educator in an inclusion classroom with students with autism as well.”



Janine M. Navarra

Allyson M. Szecsi (Class of 2013) is working toward a master’s degree in speech pathology. Currently a junior at UD, Szecsi is majoring in cognitive science with a concentration in speech pathology and double minors in disabilities studies and psychology. “Once I am certified,” notes Szecsi, “I hope to work in a school that specializes in students with disabilities, particularly autism. Eventually, I hope to open my own practice.”



Allyson M. Szecsi

With the goal of becoming a speech pathologist, New York native Anne M. Yuskevich (Class of 2013) is majoring in cognitive science at UD with a concentration in speech pathology and double minors in disabilities studies and psychology. “I intend to work with children on the autism spectrum,” says Yuskevich. “Due to my experience working with [children and adults with autism at Camp Anchor in Lido Beach], I see how greatly they can benefit from speech therapy, and I want to help them.”



Anne M. Yuskevich

“Whether they want to become professionals in the autism field or to improve their current skill sets,” adds Autism Delaware’s Ellis, “we support their efforts with

Continued on next page

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scholarships or stipends. It's in our best interest to support these highly motivated and skilled people any way we can."

Providing easy access to information

In addition to expanding services and supporting innovative programs and promising students and professionals, Autism Delaware strives to provide easy access to the most up-to-date information available. To this end, the staff focused recently on two areas: the Autism Delaware website and parent information packet.

The website—According to Autism Delaware's associate director, Teresa Avery, recent revisions to the website arose in response to a member survey that asked Autism Delaware members about ease of use at www.delautism.org.

"We surveyed our membership about using our website with an eye toward making information easier for families to find," explains Avery. "In response, we upgraded our web presence this summer. The home page looks the same, but how the information is organized has changed. We're hoping the entire autism community will now be able to come to our site and enjoy easy access."

Would you like to add your input about the website? Email Teresa Avery at teresa.avery@delautism.org.

Parent information packet—Educating families with children who are newly diagnosed with autism is a priority of the Autism Delaware staff. Aware that the information can be as overwhelming as the diagnosis, we work at providing easy access to needed information. To this end, information is now available on CD as well as in print format and includes contact information for Child Find, Child Development Watch, and Delaware Autism Program sites across the state.

"The parent packet is updated as we receive news or updates," notes Autism Delaware's Asperger's resource coordinator, Heidi Mizell. "We realize that knowledge is power, and we want all parents to feel confident about fighting for their children's rights."

For more, call Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020, ext. 205. Or email her at heidi.mizell@delautism.org.

Details in the annual report

The above article, *Creating better lives*, gives only an overview of how Autism Delaware spends the funds raised throughout the year.

For details, see the Autism Delaware annual report on our website, www.delautism.org.

Speaker series



One of many programs presented by Autism Delaware, the speaker series offers a range of information by experts in their fields—as well as an opportunity to get your questions answered.

Available in each of the three counties, these workshops are free and usually begin immediately following scheduled Parent Advisory Council meetings:

New Castle County

- **Fall 2011:** Enzymes, digestive issues, and how they all relate to ASDs
- **Spring 2012:** Sexuality and autism spectrum disorders (ASDs); special-education law

Kent County

- **Fall 2011:** Sexuality and ASDs
- **Spring 2012:** Applied behavior analysis (ABA) and tools you can use

Sussex County

- **Fall 2011:** Special-needs trusts—What you need to know, with Ryan Williamson, certified special-needs advisor, and attorney Kevin Baird
- **Spring 2012:** Special-education law

For more information, email Dafne Carnright at dafne.carnright@delautism.org.



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www.delautism.org

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To pay by credit card
Visit www.delautism.org. And click the "Join today" button on the bottom left of the screen.
All membership fees and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

My membership fee is \$
I would also like to contribute this amount \$
Total amount enclosed \$

Enroll me in the following category:
 Individual \$20 Family \$25 Professional \$50 Silver \$100 Platinum \$300 Lifetime \$500
 I am a new member. I am renewing my membership.
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 option is only for families who do not receive *The Sun* through DAP distribution.)

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