



# The Sun

The Voice of Autism in Delaware

Detachable Monthly Calendar

## March 2007

Autism Society of Delaware

(302) 472-2638

[www.delautism.org](http://www.delautism.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Parent Coffee Hour 9 a.m.	14 ASD Chapter Meeting, Dover 7 p.m.	15	16 ASD Teen Night Out 7 p.m.	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Mom's Night Out 7 p.m.
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 ASD Spring Egg Hunt 10 a.m. Rain date 4/1



# The Sun

The Voice of Autism in Delaware

Detachable Monthly Calendar

## April 2007

Autism Society of Delaware

(302) 472-2638

[www.delautism.org](http://www.delautism.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 ASD Chapter Meeting 7 p.m.	4 Jackie Marquette Del Tech, Dover 8:30 a.m.	5	6	7
8	9	10 Dad's Night Out 7 p.m.  Parent Coffee Hour 9 a.m.	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 N.C.C. Support Group 7 p.m.	18	19	20 Teen Night Out 7 p.m.	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Walk the High Road for Autism 9 a.m.
29	30	<p>April is Autism Awareness Month!</p> 				



The Voice of Autism in Delaware

# The Sun

The Autism Society of Delaware Newsletter

www.delautism.org

March/April 2007

## Inside This Issue...

Kempner's Korner.....	2
News from Kent County.....	3
Welcome & Thank You.....	4
Conference Notes.....	5
Parent 2 Parent.....	6
Inside the ASD.....	7
ASD Social Scene.....	9
ASD Calendar of Events.....	11
Camp Fairlee Manor & Autumn Auction Needs Your Help.....	12
Walk the High Road for Autism.....	13
Family Support Waiver.....	14
Asperger's Syndrome.....	15
Who We Are.....	16
Making a Connection .....	17

## Our Mission

*The Autism Society of Delaware is a chapter of the Autism Society of America. We are 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.*

## April is National Autism Awareness Month ASD's Activities for NAAM

Every year ASD offers a special presentation in April to recognize NAAM. This year ASD is joining forces with the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation for the first time on a public awareness event. Because both organizations are concerned about adult issues, the two organizations are sponsoring a workshop for parents and providers on April 4th, featuring Transition Specialist Jackie Marquette. Jackie is the mom of an adult son with autism, and she has written a book called *Independence Bound* about the transition to adulthood of her son Trent. She shares the insights and strategies that helped her through the fears and crises of the transition process, moving into a good new life of quality and independence.

Jackie's son Trent is currently living and working in the community with support, and he is creating a business as an artist. As she worked to make this happen, she also studied 14 other families who have developed creative supports for their adult children with autism. We invited her to Delaware so that she can share success stories about adults from around America. Come hear her stories, meet her son, and have an opportunity to buy her book and his work. (See box on right.)

For those who do not have a full day available, Jackie will also speak at the

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Independence Bound Creating Innovative Community Supports Featuring - Jackie Marquette

April 4, 2007  
8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Del Tech Terry Campus  
Conference Room  
Dover, Delaware

\$20 per person  
(covers lunch and breaks)

To register contact ASD,  
(302) 472-2638  
delautism@delautism.org

Registration Deadline:  
March 30, 2007

Sponsored by:

Autism Society of Delaware,  
Division of Developmental  
Disability Services  
and the  
Lower Delaware  
Autism Foundation

Contributions for this newsletter provided by:





### The Sun

A publication of the Autism Society of Delaware  
5572 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington, DE 19808  
302.472.2638—Office 302.472.2640—Fax  
Email: delautism@delautism.org  
Website: www.delautism.org

### Officers

**President:** Artie Kempner, 302.777.7273 (h),  
artie3boys@aol.com  
**Vice President:** Mike Graci, 302.453.8586 (h),  
mjgraci@comcast.net  
**Treasurer:** John Hupp, 302.738.1056 (h),  
john96hupp@aol.com  
**Secretary:** Karen Bashkow, 302.453.7411(h),  
bashkowk@aol.com

### Staff

**Executive Director:** Theda Ellis, 302.472.2638,  
ext 202 (w), 302.388.9798 (c),  
theda.ellis@delautism.org  
**Communications Coordinator:** Cheryl Kelley,  
302.472.2638, ext 203, (w) 302.998.1466 (h)  
cheryl.kelley@delautism.org  
**Development Director:** Kim Siegel, 302.472.2638,  
ext 204, kim.siegel@delautism.org  
**Office Manager:** Margie Rowles, 302.472.2638,  
Margie.Rowles@delautism.org  
**Asperger's Specialist:** Heidi Mizell, 302.472.2638,  
ext 205, heidi.mizell@delautism.org

### Committee Chairs

**Adult Issues:** Karen Bashkow, 302.453.7411 (h),  
bashkowk@aol.com  
**Asperger's Committee:** Co-chairs: Heidi Mizell,  
302.455.9515 (h), toofers2@aol.com  
Penny Chelucci, 302.571.8868 (h),  
Penny.chelucci@state.de.us  
**Finance:** Michael Graci, 302.453.8586 (h),  
mjgraci@comcast.net  
**New Parent Support:** Cheryl Kelley  
(see above) & Mary Kelleher 302.761.9558 (h),  
mary.kelleher@delautism.org  
**Legislative Issues:** Tim Ireland, 302.573.6960 (h),  
irelandt@verizon.net  
**Public Awareness:** Dwayne McMahan,  
302.235.2101 (h), DMKemps@comcast.net  
**Social Events:** Nicole Curran 302.368.2468 (h),  
nicolesmailbox@comcast.net & Robin Delaney,  
302.636.0538 (h), katejosh1@verizon.net.  
**Staff Photographer:** Nicole Curran  
See Above.

### County Liaisons

**Kent County:** Yolanda Flanigan, 302.284.2499,  
LY1998@netzero.com  
**Sussex County:** Barry Sipple, 302.684.0725 (h),  
laurelmc@verizon.net

### The Sun Editorial Committee

Marcy Kempner	Judy Hedrick
Theda Ellis	Robin Ireland
Brenda Holsey	Jen Nardo

**Desktop Publishing:** Cheryl Kelley



# Kempner's Korner

By: Artie Kempner, President

During Super Bowl week, while I was down in Miami "working" on next year's game, chapter leaders from the Autism Society of America organized a retreat in North Carolina. In past years, Marcy and I have always been integrally involved in these workshops and meetings, helping with planning, presenting on specific areas and usually in a leadership position. As much as Marcy and I missed the camaraderie, the fellowship, and the great presentations, I'm proud to say that the Autism Society of Delaware was well represented by our Executive Director Theda Ellis and Development Director Kim Siegel. Theda and Kim were two of the main organizers and key presenters for the weekend. I received a bunch of e-mails from the attendees telling me how awesome they were, and how informative and interesting their presentations were. This is not only a high personal compliment for them, but a wonderful compliment for ASD. It means that we've made that huge step from volunteer-driven to professionally run non-profit organization. You should all see the beehive of activity at 5572 Kirkwood Highway on any given day. Margie, our fantastic office manager, taking care of business and keeping everyone straight; Cheryl, creating logos, invitations, web updates and making sure that all our events are first class; Heidi, continuing her work on the Physician's Awareness Project and also coordinating our Asperger's Social group; and Kim improving all of our fundraising efforts, spearheading our first Walk (April 28th - sign up now!) and adding so much to the professional development of ASD. Plus we have an incredible group of office volunteers; Mary Kelleher, Judy Hedrick and my great friend, Dan Prettyman. Dan is the first DAP student to work at the ASD office, and his accomplishments and success are paving the way for future students to be an integral part of the ASD office family.

With staff leadership and our continued strong volunteer commitment, ASD is truly positioned to make big things happen for our community. And nothing demonstrates that power to make change as well as our new adult service initiative that is aptly named POW&R (Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation). You have seen details of this project in these pages, but as we draw closer to making this dream a reality—with a business plan, funding, a name and a logo—the excitement is growing. We are going to change the way people with autism live in this state thanks to the incredible efforts of the Adult Issues Committee, along with the Legislative Committee, all the fundraising efforts and, of course, our great staff. Staff led, volunteer driven—that's a plan for real success. So thanks to Theda and the staff, and thanks to you all for volunteering and staying involved. It is up to all of us to put the POWER into the autism community and keep it strong.



### April is National Autism Awareness Month

*(Continued from Cover)*

April 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter meeting.

#### *Walk the High Road*

The nice thing about fundraisers is that they also present an opportunity to raise awareness. This year ASD is combining our media efforts for autism awareness with the walk. Look for bright and colorful autism awareness billboards, posters, and other materials that support April as Autism Awareness Month and our upcoming fundraiser. This will be the first time we have used billboards, so please let us know if you see them and if they make an impact. For more information about the Walk, go to page 13.

#### *Speakers Bureau*

Our public awareness committee members are also actively seeking opportunities to talk about autism awareness through radio and television. Look for public service announcements on the Physicians' Awareness project, and "listen" for us on several local radio shows. Since Christmas, we have been on CN8 twice, on WILM, and on Delaware Valley This Week, hosted by Mark Daniels, which airs on two radio stations in the greater Philadelphia area. As the number of requests for speakers increases, we would like to expand the public face of autism and the Autism Society. If you like public speaking, or even if you don't but you are passionate about getting out the word about autism, please contact the ASD office about participating in a Speakers Bureau. Lots of Lions and Rotary members want to hear our story.



Thank you to the following folks for putting autism awareness posters out into the community for the month of January.

- Dwayne McMahan
- Jen Nardo
- Judy Smith
- Teresa Dotson
- Carol DeMaio
- Dafne Carnright
- Nicole Curran
- Judy Hedrick
- Mark DeVore
- Steve Yeatman
- Kate Stomioski
- Yolanda Flanigan
- Ana Browning
- Valerie Wells
- Marcy Kempner
- Karen Smail
- Robin Delaney
- Regina Huddleston
- Brenda Holsey
- Judi Jeffers

#### Something New...

Looking for a new puzzle piece pendant, ring, lanyard, or embroidered shirt or bag? Check out the AutismLink Website.

[www.autismlink.com](http://www.autismlink.com)

Free Shipping!



### News From Kent County

By: Yolanda Flanigan & Kate Stomioski

#### *Budget Woes*

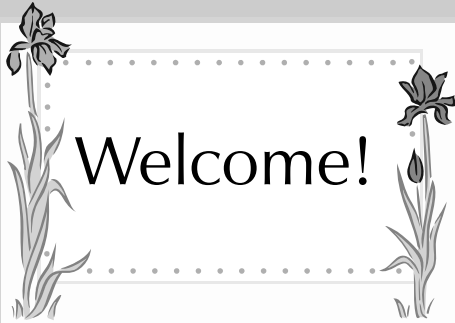
Parents of the Kent County DAP at the John S. Charlton School were notified last November that funding for transportation to and from community visits has been cut. Community visits are an integral part of our children's IEP's. This decision came as a shock to many parents. As a result, the Kent county PAC had their January meeting to discuss the John S. Charlton budget. The main question at the meeting was: What is so different this school year that we cannot afford transportation? Ada Twitchell, Caesar Rodney District Office Business Manager, attended to answer this question. Ada gave a detailed Power Point presentation that outlined the budget, where money for Charlton comes from, and where it goes.

In the end, the reason for the shortfall is: **rising costs and flat revenues**; however, the differences in costs between last year and this year were not clear. The Principal of Charlton, Dr. Pamela Atchison, assured the PAC that community visits were not cut, just the transportation. Teachers have been encouraged to suggest their own modes of transportation and to urge parents to get more involved in the process as well. Parents can pay for transportation, but for insurance reasons, cannot drive the students themselves. The PAC was assured that this was temporary and that transportation for community visits would resume next school year.

#### *Capital School District*

Congratulations to the new

*(Continued on page 5)*



Please welcome the following new members to ASD...

Gianna Ennis  
 Lisa & Ed Huber  
 Adele Abrahamanti  
 Monica Wallace  
 Damaris Albino  
 Susan Hall  
 Sandra Thornton  
 Laura M. Lavend  
 Nick & Aimee Parenti

### ASD Options Policy

All information provided or published by the Autism Society of Delaware (ASD) is for informational purposes only. Reference to any treatment or therapy option or to any program, service or treatment provider is not an endorsement by ASD.

You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for a specific individual. ASD assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information published or provided by ASD.

## ASD Would Like to Extend a Big Thank You To Everyone Who Gave to the ASD Annual Appeal Campaign!

Mr. & Mrs. Vartan Aghazadian	Mr. & Mrs. John Kolodczak
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Azarewicz	Mr. & Mrs. Steven Kortanek
Drs. Rene & Maricar Badillo	Ms. Carol Kortanek
Ms. Sally Benner	Mr. & Mrs. Dan Laughman
Mr. & Mrs. Dick Berggren	The Honorable Gregory F. Lavelle
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Binnix	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lenzioszek
Mr. William Biordi	Mr. & Mrs. Ben LeRoy
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E. Boyle	Mr. & Mrs. David Levin
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Breger	Ms. Melanie Liesener
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Brooks	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Lund
Mr. Michael Burton	Mr. & Mrs. Macknis
Ms. Nancy M. Carr	Mr. John Maple
Mr. & Mrs. Pete Chalverus	Mr. & Mrs. Richard McCoy
Mrs. Kathie Cherry	Ms. Helene Megna
Ms. Jeanette G. Dacumos	Ms. Eleanor Meier
Ms. Kim Davies	Ms. Dorothy Mizell
Dr. & Mrs. Neil DeLeeuw	Mr. & Mrs. Tim Mizell
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Doherty	Ms. Melinda Mizenko
Mr. Tom Delle Donne	Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Murphy
Mr. & Mrs. Lanny Edelson	Mrs. Joan Nagowski
Mr. Nick Fina	Mr. & Mrs. Chris Narwold
Dr. Charles Fishman & Dr. Nancy Mills	Mr. & Mrs. Dale Oberender
Dr. & Mrs. Melvin Fishman	Mr. Roger Pool
Mr. & Mrs. Robert R. Fitzwater	Mr. & Mrs. Bob Prettyman
Mr. & Mrs. William Flagg	Mr. Steve Biener & Mrs. Frances Ratner
Mr. & Mrs. Joel Friedlander	Ms. Julie Reybold
Mr. Blaise Giosa	Mr. & Mrs. Kent Reigel
Mr. & Mrs. Andy Glazar	Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. Leon Golfin	Ms. Naomi Seinsoth
Dr. & Mrs. John Goodill	Ms. Yvonne Shilling & Ms. Monica Manooshian
Mrs. Darlene Graham	Ms. Kim Siegel
Mr. & Mrs. James Graybeal	Mr. & Mrs. James Smyth
Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Graziose	Mr. Steven Stallone
Mr. & Mrs. Todd Harris	Mr. Dick Stockton & Ms. Lesley Visser
Ms. Judith Hedrick	Ms. Phyllis Torres
Mr. Charles Hill	Ms. Karen Tuohy
Mrs. Carole Hillegas	Ms. Sandra Tuttle
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Hoffman	Mr. & Mrs. Greg Weaver
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Johnston	Mrs. Teresa Wells
Mr. Bernard Juskiewicz	Ms. Jenny Worsham
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kempner	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zyontz
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Kempner	
Mr. & Mrs. Artie Kempner	
Mr. & Mrs. Brendan Killeen	
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Knight	

Next Deadline for Submissions to The Sun:  
 April 2, 2007

Want to share a story? Have an idea for an article? Send it to ASD today!  
[delautism@delautism.org](mailto:delautism@delautism.org). Or mail it to us,  
 (address on page 2)  
 Let Your Voice Be Heard!



ASD reserves the right to edit for space and content.



## News From Kent County

By: Yolanda Flanigan

Capital School District Delaware Autism Program site. They have had their first successful Parent Action Committee meeting.

### *Child's Play by the Bay*

In other news, three ASD families from Kent Co. have enrolled in the Social Skills Training class at "Child's Play by the Bay," located in Lewes, DE. "Miss Candace" and "Miss Alesia" are Pediatric Occupational Therapists, who believe that children learn through play. They teach social skills in a functional play setting. The children love going to "play group," while the parents are amazed at the results and at the creative genius of these talented women. Each week is a different theme, the children learn to lead and to follow, and interact to obtain a common goal. They use their imaginations while also practicing gross and fine motor skills.

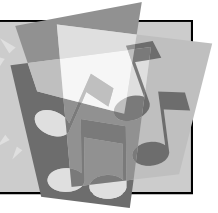
For more information, contact "Child's Play By The Bay" at 302-645-2153.

Stay in the loop!  
Join the ASD  
eGroup today.

Email your requests to  
[delautism@delautism.org](mailto:delautism@delautism.org)

Get current news and information about ASD's social activities, calls to action, meeting notices & important autism information that affects you!

# Conference Notes



## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual World Congress and Expo on Disabilities

By: Elizabeth Scheinberg

As parents of children with autism, we are charged with planning so much of our children's lives—their education through IEPs, their future through estate planning, their therapies by studying the myriad of interventions, and their recreation through our own creativity.

While we can find specialists in nearly every field to assist us, the fact is there is little in the way of organized affordable recreation for our special needs children. Typical children have little league, dance classes, after-school sports, scouts, etc...the list goes on and on. While the Autism Society offers social programming for our families, regularly scheduled recreation for children with autism remains a vastly unexplored necessity.

What if there was place to take our special children to learn the skills and expectations that our typical children seem to master so easily? A place where children with autism could practice a sport or hobby in a nurturing and accepting environment? A place where children could start and maybe one day transition to a team or program side by side with their typical peers? While it doesn't really exist yet, current research indicates that our children would really benefit from this type of programming. Adaptive physical education is wonderful, but it doesn't really level the playing field. Mainstreaming

children shouldn't just be an educational pursuit. It should transcend into recreational sports and hobbies as a facet of a fulfilling, enjoyable life.

In November I attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual World Congress and Expo on Disabilities. While much of the event focused on physical disabilities, I had the pleasure of attending Dr. Greg Reid's seminar, "Motor Behavior and ASD – Some Recent Research." Dr. Reid has dedicated his career to studying autism and motor behavior. Movement behavior is recognized as one of the least researched areas within autism spectrum disorders. Recent research has suggested that movement behavior could have a role in early diagnosis, and more importantly that it may play multiple roles in the lives of people with autism.

Dr. Reid's research has shown that children with High Functioning Autism have greater difficulty with motor behavior than those with Asperger's Syndrome. Children ages 4-6 tend to have shorter steps, an atypical rhythmic pattern when walking and increased vertical displacement. For children of this age group, planning is frequently more a problem than execution; mainly because these children lose sight of the assigned goal.

For children with autism who have planning problems, Dr. Reid found that performance could be enhanced when in a familiar environment, given a clear and meaningful goal, and a strong motivator or incentive. When a child showed hesitation, it was because of a

(Continued on page 10)



# Parent 2 Parent

written by parents  
for parents

## Friends are Hard to Come By

By: Keli Carr

When my husband and I first stumbled across the word "autism," it was from the mouth of our wonderful pediatrician during my son's 16-month checkup. "I am going to send your son to be evaluated through Child Development Watch," she said. "What's that?" we thought. She went on to explain she was reasonably sure Stephen had autism. "Autism, what is autism?" We pondered that in the car ride home, and we were both in silence as we ran over in our heads the information and news and tried to make sense of it all. The car ride home seemed very long and the next couple of days seemed blurry.

One week later, it was confirmed through Child Development Watch that Stephen had autism. We were then referred to the Delaware Autism Program (DAP). This was all happening very fast, and it was very scary. Our whole world was literally turned completely upside down. We felt so alone and isolated. No one in our family knew what autism was, and it was challenging to explain to them what we did not understand ourselves.

A few months passed after our son's initial diagnosis at Child Watch before we had our meeting and evaluation with DAP. Shortly after we were told that it was official, "Your son definitely has autism."

Our first Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting seemed to have come and gone,

and it was finally time for my little three-year-old boy to start school. "School?" I thought. There's no way. I am a stay at home mother, all Stephen knows is me. This is going to be terrifying for him, not to mention me. I was a nervous wreck his very first day. My husband and I remember bringing him in, walking through the lobby, and meeting his teacher at the entrance to the school. I remember looking around at all the other students, getting off the bus as little, if not smaller, than Stephen was. I remember thinking "I can't do this! How am I going to leave him?" He clung to my leg and cried. The separation finally happened, and I left crying and cried the whole way home. I paced my house until it was time to pick him up. "He had a good day!" the teacher told me. "A little whiny in the beginning, but cheered right up!" I was SO incredibly proud!

**"So I am NOT the only one who feels this way?"**

The days came and went, Stephen did better and better. Some good days, some bad, but all in all, a really productive first half of the year. Still, I couldn't help feeling so alone and very isolated. My family didn't really know what I was going through, at school, at home. They couldn't relate. I met a mother who happened to have twins, one was in Stephen's class, the other in a different class. We would pass each other, smile and say "Hi, how are you?", but that was the extent of our conversation. One day, she called me. I suddenly did NOT feel so alone anymore. It was amazing

to know her story, of her two boys, and all the isolation and fear she has felt as well with this new thing called "autism" in our lives. "So I am NOT the only one who feels this way?" I thought. Since that day, we have talked every single day, if not 2, 3, 4 times. Our husbands have gotten to know one another. We have become the best of friends. She has helped me get through some VERY rough moments along this autism journey. She has been there for me to cry to, to yell to, to hug, and to laugh. It's wonderful to have found a friend who I can talk to about autism who actually understands everything you are going through. This person's name is Kim Herbert. I love her dearly, I feel like we are sisters. We are so very close. I feel extremely blessed to have found her at the time in my life that I needed to the most. It seems so trivial, but it actually makes this journey through the autism world a smoother, more acceptable one with great friends around you. You can actually take a deep breath and say, "Ok, I can do this!" We go shopping together, we go to lunch and/or dinner together, we have "mommy time" when the kids go to sleep at night, we joke and have great times together. She has really guided me in a great direction as far as special-ists, supplements and therapies. I have learned a great deal from her and look forward to learning much more.

Friends are very hard to come by, especially friends who understand you and stick with you through some very rough times. Our friendship continues to blossom and we are inseparable.

*(Continued on page 8)*





# Inside The



## Valentine Cards

For the past several years ASD's Adult Issues Committee has developed Valentine cards to send to state legislators to help inform them about the growing number of adults with autism who need their assistance in terms of services and supports. For the past two years we have emphasized the Family Support Waiver. The cards have an area for the family to write a personal note and we encourage photos as well. Several people help with this effort. Our thanks to Karen Bashkow in New Castle, Yolanda Flanigan in Kent, and Barry Sipple in Sussex for getting cards to folks who want to send them out. Also to Cheryl Kelley who designs the cards each and every year. The cards are a way for you to help your legislators know your needs!



Productive Opportunities for Work & Recreation

Some of us are creative and some of us are not. Fortunately, members Lucy Graham and Cheryl Kelley are in that first group. They created the name and logo of our new adult service project. We struggled for months to find a name, rejecting all kinds of ideas. POW&R stands for Productive Opportunities for Work and Recreation, which reflects our values and our actions for our new service.

ASD has just recently been approved as a vendor for the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. The next step is to hire staff.

We plan to be able to support one or two individuals in the summer of 2007, and add a new person every two or three months. Our intent is to wrap services and supports around each person and have things well in place before adding new individuals. This is a time intensive approach, but one that we feel will best suit the needs of our community.

Look for more materials, information, and a webpage about adult services in the coming months.

### ASA Chapter Leaders Retreat

ASD staffers Theda Ellis and Kim Siegel recently attended an ASA Chapter Leaders retreat at Camp Royal, the North Carolina chapter's summer camp for children with autism. We spent Friday, Saturday, and Sunday with 65 chapter and ASA national leaders from around the nation, learning about what's happening in other ASA chapters as well as what's happening at the national level. Kim Siegel did workshops on development and Theda did workshops on board responsibilities. ASD has been invited to join in ASA's national strategic planning initiative as well. Oh yes, and we enjoyed the Southern hospitality complete with fried chicken, barbecue, bunk beds in cabins, and communal snoring. Next time.....we'll take earplugs.

This may become an annual event, and we would like to invite members to join us. As these opportunities come up in the future, we will make them available and we will offer conference stipends to members who may want to go.

### Annual Report

ASD will be releasing its first Annual Report by the end of April, outlining our program and service activities, fundraising and fiscal information for 2006. Once the report is

complete, we'll let you know and you can check it out on our webpage. The board made the decision not to spend too much money on a glossy report, but we will have a few printed copies for those who want it, and it will be posted on our website.

### WebSite

Speaking of websites, have you looked at the ASD website recently? We continue to update it with our press releases, legislative information, updated CDC prevalence information and our calendar. If you have suggestions about what else you would like to see, please contact us at [delautism@delautism.org](mailto:delautism@delautism.org), or you can even use the old fashioned method of picking up the telephone and calling 472-2638. We really appreciate those of you who send in articles and suggestions that are unsolicited.

## LucasWorks TM Autism Bracelets



Check out this item that is being made by students with autism in Kent County, working at LucasWorks. LucasWorks is a small business developed for Lucas Padgett, a student at Charlton, by his parents. His mom, Lauren, has a dream that her son can be employed along with others in this business. We have seen the bracelet and we love it and the message it brings.

Visit: [www.lucasworks.org](http://www.lucasworks.org)



## Parent 2 Parent

(Continued from page 6)

I encourage all the mothers out there who feel isolated and alone through this world of autism that we live in, to try and reach out to one another. You'd be surprised how much you can relate to one another. Thank you Kim, for your continued love, support, strength and friendship. You mean the world to me.

### Jake's Personal Pony

By: Jen Nardo

Do you believe in magic? I believe that magic can happen on an ordinary day in a field with a pony.

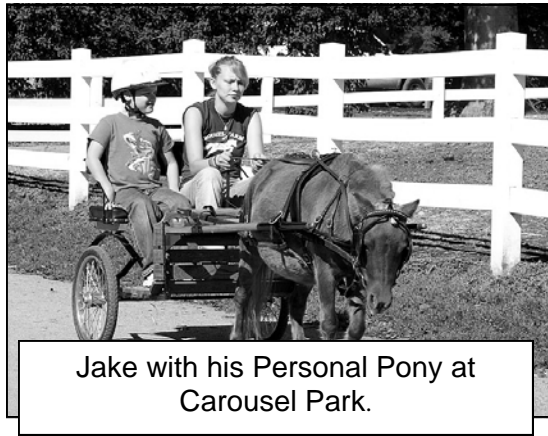
For a long time, I wanted to get my son, Jake (almost 9) into a therapeutic riding program. My hope was that it would help with torso strength and control. These hopes were dashed again and again when he would fight getting on the back of any pony we were with. We saw them at parties, at the park, and my brother's house. Jake would feed Uncle Bob's horse through the fence, but there was no chance of getting him in the saddle.

Last year, Carousel Park started talk of therapeutic riding lessons and I tracked down the information. I was convinced that I could get Jake to change his mind (what was I thinking?) I was hesitating over the decision because of the financial commitment. Around the same time, I saw an article in the CrossRoads section of the News Journal about a different kind of program.

This wonderful program is called the Personal Ponies program. The goal of this program is to allow people with special needs the opportu-

ity to care for and to love a small pony. The program is run by a volunteer, Patty Draper, who has a love of horses and special-needs kids. I contacted Patty (pattydraper@comcast.net or 455-1051) and we scheduled Jake's first visit (all visits are free) with one of the three Shetland ponies that she keeps at Carousel Park.

When Jake arrived, he wasn't sure if he wanted to stay, but Patty got him involved with putting hay in the corral. He showed me a handful of food at Patty's suggestion. Jake was now ready to brush the pony which he did very happily. For the next hour and a half, Jake rode on a cart (with Patty's



Jake with his Personal Pony at Carousel Park.

daughter) pulled by the pony, walked the pony on a lead and washed the pony...with soap and water from a hose! After Jake got his shoes wet, he wanted to leave. The last thing he had to do was give a treat to the ponies, and that pulled him back in. All activities were aided by Patty and her teen-aged daughter, and Jake was expected to wear a helmet while on the cart.

I noticed that Jake was very verbal after his visit. He wasn't speaking more clearly, but he certainly had more to say. I e-mailed Patty and we started going every couple of weeks until the cold weather prohibited being outside.

On his second visit, Jake helped Maggie, the pony, go over small jumps. He proclaimed her to be the "best pony ever."

I noticed that Jake was becoming more interested in our family dog. He sang songs about horses (using a Diego song), and he didn't get upset when he had to wear his boots to visit the ponies. He'd do just about anything to see the girls!

On his last visit, Jake fed Maggie a carrot by putting it on the ground. As she ate it, Jake sat, cross-legged right in front of her. Their noses were literally inches apart. He wasn't flapping or squealing. He was calm, quiet, and happy. At first, what was happening didn't register with me. Then I got it – here was the *magic*.

#### Personal Ponies Limited

Mission Statement:

*"We Believe in Magic"*

Contact:

www.personalponies.org  
pattydraper@comcast.net

### Campers with autism find fun & adventure at Easter Seals' Camp Fairlee Manor

Ginger has autism, but that doesn't stop her from seeking adventure. An exceptional athlete and Special Olympics contender, Ginger swims, runs track, and plays soccer and basketball. Her mom, Karen, knew that Easter Seals' Camp Fairlee Manor would be the perfect place her daughter to experience all the activities she loves.

(Continued on page 10)