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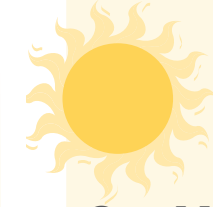
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Helping People and Families Affected by Autism



Our Mission

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

www.delautism.org

Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

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The Sun

Newsletter
October-December 2010

Funding Delaware's schools

by Melissa Martin and Dafne Carrnright

In terms of the overall strength of provided resources, Delaware's method of assigning funding to schools is one of the strongest in the nation. However, in 2004, the federal government found a problem with Delaware's program. The state's current method of assigning funding encourages the use of more segregated settings and works against the least restrictive environment provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA requires that states ensure their systems are placement-neutral. (That is, they do not contain incentives for serving children in restrictive settings.) If the systems are not placement-neutral, federal funding could be jeopardized.

While the United States Department of Education (DOE) found Delaware out of compliance on this issue, the DOE continued to support the efforts of the state over the last few years to implement a change to the system so that funding would be equally distributed based on the needs of the student rather than his or her disability category.

Delaware's DOE devised a new formula, called needs-based funding, which was intended to ensure equal access to resources regardless of setting. The DOE piloted the system through several districts as it relates to teacher and paraprofessional ratios. As of 2010, funding levels for related services still need to be piloted and established.

During this past legislative session, General Assembly House Bill 436 was proposed to help bring Delaware into compliance with federal regulations. Part of HB 436 would have ended the guarantee of specific specialists for special school programs, such as the Delaware School for the Deaf and the Delaware Autism Program (DAP).

While this proposal may have opened new opportunities for students with special needs who have not been supported by special school programs, it would have resulted in a situation that equated to "a win for some and a loss for others." The bill would have reduced resources and undermined state code safeguards in place for the DAP.

Autism Delaware opposed the legislation and, along with the disability community, chose to advocate that all students deserve a high level of funding for needed specialists (rather than taking from some to give all a small piece of the funding pie). This advocacy created a challenging situation for the DOE whose charge was to redistribute funds without any new resources



Continued on page 11, column 1



Funding for this newsletter provided by: AstraZeneca

Annual Membership Application

Please 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 membership

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

I am a: Parent Family member Educator Service provider 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 only for families who do not receive *The Sun* through DAP distribution.)

My membership fee is: _____ \$

I would also like to contribute this amount: _____ \$

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

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 us at (302) 224-6020.

All membership fees and contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The Sun

A publication of Autism Delaware

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From the director

Theda Ellis, Executive Director

Summer 2010 passed in a blur of busy days. We finished work on our three-year strategic plan and major database, merged the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation's systems and staff with Autism Delaware's (AD's), created a POW&R site at Dover Downs, hired and trained new staff, looked for new office space in southern Delaware—and on and on.

Many continuing items on the list call for your input. One priority: reaching out to and supporting families with young children with autism because, around the state, they are feeling overwhelmed. So much information is now available that it's still hard to know where to turn.

We've started meeting with these parents so they can tell us what they want and need—and we will continue to do so throughout the fall. Please come to our events and meetings, and share your thoughts. I'm happy to receive a phone call or email as well.

We are also working on improving support for young families. Whether you have a 24-month-old child with autism or a nine-year-old who is newly diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, you will benefit from the update of our resource manual—personalized to your specific needs and available on CD.

The website is also being redesigned with more easier-to-find information. Altogether, these items should be completed by the new year. In the meantime, if you have a child who is entering the Delaware Autism Program (DAP) for the first time, AD will give you

a free one-year membership.

Another priority is insurance. Lisa Poyta, who chairs the AD Insurance Committee, is preparing to head back to Legislative Hall to support our autism insurance legislation. After a strong start last year, the insurance industry placed a high price tag on the cost of insurance. Since 23 other states have been successful in providing insurance for critically needed therapies without breaking the bank, we think it's absolutely doable in Delaware as well. Please tell your representative and senator how much insurance would help your child get what he or she needs to thrive—and to support insurance legislation.

A third priority: We're convening a meeting of the AD Parent Advisory Council to address the potential closing of the DAP group homes. Perhaps the Christina School District is not the best place to administer this program, but sending our children out of state is not a good option either. As an autism community, we need to develop and advocate for alternative approaches.

And finally, the AD Adult Issues Committee is meeting again. Now that POW&R has been established—After only three short years, POW&R has been recognized nationally as an effective program—let's do the same for other services. Parents may want to consider adult residential alternatives. Please join us in looking at the alternatives.

Sincerely,
Theda



A Service of Autism Delaware



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katina.demetriou@delautism.org

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Funding Delaware's schools (Continued from page 1)

and to write the language defining the changes and their implementation.

The Autism Delaware Legislative Committee and AD families took a strong stance on this advocacy issue, noting that needed specialists in Delaware are already underfunded despite the code, and urged our legislators to recognize the need to support efforts to find funding that would ensure more resources for specialized services for all students with disabilities. Legislators took note and voiced their concerns around HB 436. As a result, the bill was tabled, and the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) workgroup was charged with working with the DOE to find a solution to the challenge.

Join the Autism Delaware Legislative Committee!

Contact Kim Siegel at kim.siegel@delautism.org.

During the most recent meeting, GACEC and DOE representatives agreed that one way to keep current funding levels is to seek

an additional \$1.9 million in the DOE's proposed budget to the governor. The Delaware General Assembly has long maintained that the state needs to provide world-class services for all children, and this would be one way to ask the assembly to show a commitment to these values.

In the next legislative session, Autism Delaware will again be calling on our families and friends throughout the disabilities community to help us make sure this funding is approved during these difficult economic times.

Social thinking teaches you to think before you speak

During their classic comedy routine, Abbott and Costello argue over "Who's on first," "What's on second," and "I don't know's on third." This baseball babble, for people on the autism spectrum, is how they view the social world: They may understand the words, but the meaning is lost on them.

Michelle Garcia Winner, M.A., C.C.C.-S.L.P., helps children and adults on the autism spectrum to better understand. For more information, visit www.socialthinking.com.

Ask Dr. Love

Janelle M. Love, M.D., is a biomedical autism specialist who not only treats children and adults with autism but is also the mother of a child with autism. To improve the quality of life of children and adults with autism, Dr. Love works on the individual's biochemistry, genetics, food intolerances, and toxin loads. Although her practice is located near Annapolis, Maryland, she treats patients all over the East Coast and a few internationally. Please email your questions to AutismReliefFoundation@comcast.net. Or visit Dr. Love's website at www.AutismBusters.com.

Q Dear Dr. Love,
At autism support group meetings, other moms have talked about their kids on special diets becoming "less autistic." They mention removing dairy and wheat from the diet. Can you explain why the kids get better? Thanks so much. Jeannie G.

A Dear Jeannie,
Many different diets have helped people on the autistic spectrum. One type that seems to help the majority of these patients is a gluten- and casein-free diet. Gluten is the wheat protein. Casein is the dairy protein. Children and adults on the autistic spectrum, in the majority of cases I have seen, have intestinal inflammation so these large proteins from dairy and wheat cannot be broken down properly by the body for appropriate use. These large proteins can be absorbed into the body and cause unusual chemicals in the body that affect speech, increase sensory issues, disturb sleep patterns, and cause stomach pain. When a person removes casein and gluten from the diet, these unusual chemicals are no longer formed and the patient may become "less autistic" over time.

Q Dear Dr. Love,
My four-year-old son Adam has autism. He has been biting on everything he can put in his mouth for the past two years and behavior therapies will not help. His doctor says autistic kids "just do that" and nothing can be done. Is there any medical reason for this to happen? Thanks, Patricia M.

A Dear Patricia,
Biting on objects can be a sensory-seeking issue. The question to ask would be "What is causing an increase in sensory seeking?"

Several things have presented as causes with my patient population: zinc deficiency, chronic lead exposure, food intolerances, and parasite infection. These causes can each be investigated with appropriate blood, urine, and stool testing by a doctor trained in these areas.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Save the date
Rec4All Winter Ball
January 30, 2011

October

October 2—Milford Skating Party. 5:30-7:30 P.M. Milford Skating Center Roller Skating Rink. One Park Av. Enjoy an early evening of roller skating at a sensory friendly rink. Skate rental: \$2.50. Parents can wear soft street shoes to better assist their children.

Every Wednesday starting October 6—Bowling Night. 5:30-7:30 P.M. AMF Price Lanes. 3215 Kirkwood Hwy. Wilmington. Pre-registration needed. Email karen.tuohy@redclay.k12.de.us. Or call (302) 633-3316.

October 11—POW&R office closed.

October 13—Presentation. 7:30 P.M. John S. Charlton School. Camden. Join Policy & Events Director Kim Siegel for a town hall on policy and legislation in Delaware.

October 13—New Castle County Evening Coffee Hour. 7:00-8:30 P.M. Autism Delaware Newark Office. Join with other parents in coffee and conversation. New location and day. RSVP appreciated to (302) 224-6020 or delautism@delautism.org.

October 15 & 29—Teen/Tween Asperger's Game Night. 6:30-8:15 P.M. Autism Delaware Newark Office. Join teens and tweens ages 9-19 for this fun, social activity. Board games only. \$10 per game night. Contact Heidi Mizell for more information and to register. (302) 224-6020 or heidi.mizell@delautism.org.

October 19—Speaker Series. 7:00-8:30 P.M. Brennen School DAP. 144 Brennen Dr. Newark. Featuring Kimberly Mollo of the Sensory Integration Center at Thomas Jefferson University.

October 19—Parent Coffee & Conversation Hour. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Holiday Inn Express. North DuPont Highway. Dover. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or caregiver, get some informal support while sharing ideas.

October 21—Speaker Series. 6:00 P.M. Sussex Consortium. 520 Dupont Av. Lewes. Immediately following SUSPAC meeting. Featuring Mila Wells of the Parent Information Center. Learn to interpret if progress towards student IEP goals is being met and what to do if not.

October 24—Fall Festival. 12:30-3:00 P.M. Bellevue State Park. The Figure-8 Barn. 720 Carr Rd. Wilmington. Fun for the whole family! Free for AD members. \$10 for non-AD families. RSVP at (302) 244-6020.

November

November 9—Parent Coffee & Conversation Hour. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Holloway's Hideaway Cafe, 1901 DuPont Hwy, New Castle.

November 10—Parent Coffee & Conversation Hour. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Georgia House Restaurant. 18 South Walnut St. Milford.

November 12—Teen/Tween Asperger's Game Night. 6:30-8:15

P.M. Autism Delaware Newark Office. Join teens and tweens ages 9-19 for this fun, social activity. Board games only. \$10 per game night. Contact Heidi Mizell for more information and to register. (302) 224-6020 or heidi.mizell@delautism.org.

November 13—Autumn Auction for Autism: Rhapsody in Blue. 6:00-11:00 P.M. DuPont Country Club. Enjoy a gourmet meal, dance the night away, and take part in live and silent auctions. Tickets: \$150.

November 16—Annual Meeting (upstate). 6:30 P.M. Special Olympics Office. University of Delaware. 619 South College Av. Newark. Participate in elections, and hear Christa Burch discuss alternative treatments.

November 18—Annual Meeting (downstate). 7:00 P.M. Sussex Consortium. 520 Dupont Av. Lewes. Participate in elections, and learn more about what's happening in southern Delaware.

November 25-26—AD and POW&R offices closed.

November 26—Holiday Train. 12:30-3:30 P.M. Greenbank Station. 2201 Newport-Gap Pike. Wilmington. \$5 per person for members. \$7 per person for nonmembers. RSVP at (302) 224-6020.

December

December 7—College Living Experience. 7:00-8:00 P.M. AD office. Learn about support for college students with autism spectrum disorders. RSVP: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

December 10—Teen/Tween Asperger's Game Night. 6:30-8:15 P.M. Autism Delaware Newark Office. Join teens and tweens ages 9-19 for this fun, social activity. Board games only. \$10 per game night. Contact Heidi Mizell for more information and to register. 302-224-6020 or heidi.mizell@delautism.org.

December 11—Milford Skating Party. 5:30-7:30 P.M. Milford Skating Center Roller Skating Rink.

December 14—Parent Coffee & Conversation Hour (with lunch). 11:00 A.M. Holloway's Hideaway Cafe, 1901 DuPont Hwy, New Castle. RSVP: Heidi Mizell at (302) 224-6020.

December 24—AD and POW&R offices closed.

December 27-31—AD office closed.

Recreation downstate growing fast!

by Dafne Carnright & Melissa Tice Martin

Autism Delaware teamed up with Providence Acres in Lincoln to offer AD's first Recreational Horseback Riding Event for Kids with Autism. Twelve families participated, enjoying the opportunity to pet the horses and ride them. A first experience for many of the children, everyone agreed we should hold the event again. Thank you, Jenn Cinelli-Miller, for setting up this event. And thank you, Virginia Abate, for supporting a second riding event in August.

AD also teamed up with the Milton Historical Society for the first time to offer Family Fun Day at the Milton Museum. Families toured the museum, participated in craft activities and a scavenger hunt, and were introduced to geocaching, a treasure hunting game with other participants in which you use a GPS to hide and seek containers. Thank you, Vincent Varrassi, for your assistance with this collaboration. Thank you to the wonderful volunteers at the museum. And thank you, Melinda Huff of the historical society.

AD continued these Lower Delaware Autism Foundation (LDAF) summer events:

Summer Swim at Plantations, Lewes

The children enjoyed their time splashing and swimming at the pool with coaches Nancy Berg and Christina Cutts. Thank you, volunteers Pat and Tom Hamer, Sue Keller, Louise McGinnis, Len Lesham, Sharon and Taylor Crist, Karen Shaud, Adam Kelly, Susan and Monica Patel, and Dale Oberender.

Day Camp at the Childrens Beach House, Lewes

The activities at the beach house included navigating a rope course, swimming, playing in the bay, and



taking part in arts and crafts. Thank you, volunteers Pat and Tom Hamer and Sue Keller.

Junior Golf at The Rookery Golf Course, Milton

The children learned golf skills and language with coach Butch Holtzclaw. Thank you, volunteers Pat and Tom Hamer.

Also, sensory friendly movies continued to play

downstate at the Clayton Theatre in Dagsboro and the Dover Mall's Carmike Cinemas. Families enjoyed showings of *Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore* and *Nanny McPhee Returns*.

Thank you, volunteer Chie Kelly, for setting up the Clayton movie events.

Do you want more info?

For more information on recreation downstate, contact Dafne Carnright at dafne.carnright@delautism.org. Or call (302) 422-2255.

POW&R

PRODUCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK AND RECREATION

On July 15, 2010, the POW&R program was given the opportunity to run the concession

stand at first base at the Wilmington Blue Rocks game. On a beautiful 90-degree day, the Blue Rocks were scheduled to play a double header.

As the POW&R families arrived, Shaheda Pine diligently assigned each volunteer a duty, and each dived into their assigned tasks: Grant ran the register and enthusiastically told each customer to "Enjoy the game!" The beverages were flowing with Andrew prepping the ice bins and Dan pouring Pepsi. Rashe, currently employed at Burger King, did not hesitate to show off his food service knowledge; when the concession staff needed assistance, he hurriedly manned the fryers and showed off his expertise. Philip and Paul assisted in the kitchen, packaging food to be placed on the line. And parents, participants, and staff, all did their part, calling out

orders while Shane and Michael ensured that the orders were filled. Ben and Jenny put a face to POW&R as fans gave donations at the information table.

"You cannot place a monetary value on the experience or opportunity that this event has given us," says POW&R Project Director Katina Demetriou. "Our partnership with the Blue Rocks will yield jobs for our program in the near future. This same evening, Brendan was interning with the Blue Rocks marketing department. This event was just the beginning of what is in store for our program, our community, and all of our participants and families.

"When I think of POW&R and this evening," continues Katina, "I smile. This evening truly highlighted the spirit and philosophy that we live by at POW&R: that folks with autism, no matter how they are affected, can be

a part of their communities. We heard several positive comments from fans who appreciated our participants' involvement and considered it for their own programs. I look forward to several more opportunities such as this one.

"Thank you to everyone for all of your hard work and dedication."

Donations: \$150.00
7 percent of concession sales: \$250.00
POW&R families working the Blue Rocks concession: Priceless!

Did you know?

You can make a donation to Autism Delaware through the United Way of Delaware. Simply include our designation number on the United Way form. In Delaware, our number is 9234. In southeastern Pennsylvania, it's 12598.

To the following new members, Welcome!

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| David Morrow | Kelly Needles |
| Evelyn Baez | Carol Williamson |
| Tom & Pat Hamer | Leslie-Robin Davis |
| Tom & Jennifer Schick | Thomas McGrath |
| Kyle Bryan | Jill & Steven Scott |
| Kelly Panetski | David Zamara |
| Maureen Brinkley | Cynthia & Tim Campbell |
| Nicholas Hoeschel | |

Autism Delaware is interested in a variety of viewpoints about autism and emerging research findings.

All information provided or published by Autism Delaware 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 Autism Delaware.

You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for your specific needs. Autism Delaware assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information published or provided by Autism Delaware.

Annual Meetings

November 16, 2010
6:30 P.M.

Special Olympics Office
University of Delaware
619 So. College Av.,
Newark

November 18, 2010
7:00 P.M.

Sussex Consortium
520 Dupont Av.,
Lewes

Parent Coffee & Conversation Hour

Oct. 13. 7:00-8:30 P.M. Autism Delaware (Newark)
RSVP: (302) 224-6020 or delautism@delautism.org

Oct. 19. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Holiday Inn Express, Dover

Nov. 9. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Holloway's Hideaway Cafe, New Castle

Nov. 10. 9:00-10:00 A.M. Georgia House Restaurant, Milford

Dec. 14. 11:00 A.M. Holloway's Hideaway Cafe. New Castle. RSVP: Heidi at (302) 224-6020



Fall Festival

October 24, 2010
12:30-3:00 P.M.
Bellevue State Park,
The Figure-8 Barn
720 Carr Rd., Wilmington

Fun for the whole family! Free for AD members. \$10 for non-AD families.

Milford Skating Party

October 2 & December 11
5:30-7:30 P.M.

Milford Skating Center Roller Skating Rink



Sensory friendly. Parents can wear soft street shoes to better teach their children how to skate. No RSVP required. Free admission. Rental fee for skates: \$2.50.

Rhapsody in Blue

The 12th Annual Auction for Autism!

Saturday, November 13
Dupont Country Club, Wilmington

Fine dining and dancing to jazz and other favorites.

Over 100 auction items— sports memorabilia and tickets, vacation getaways, jewelry, works of art, and much more...

Call 302-224-6020 for your invitation!

Seats start at \$150; table and corporate sponsorships available.

PARENT 2 PARENT

Written by parents for parents

The evolution of Delaware's group homes

by Marcy Kempner

When group homes were first established for the Delaware Autism Program (DAP) in 1985, the goal was to avoid the expensive and highly controversial placement of students with extreme behavioral challenges in a residential facility in Rhode Island. Ideally, the group homes were intended to also provide a setting for teaching functional and self-help individualized education plan (IEP) objectives that were difficult to teach in a school environment. Because the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) stipulates that students with an IEP must be taught by a special educator (or an individual under the supervision of a special educator), logic dictated that a residential component of the DAP be placed under the auspices of a local education agency. In this case, the Christina School District administered the DAP. In addition, parent training and mentoring, as components of the system, ensured that children could transition back into the home as soon as possible.



Over the years, a combination of factors contributed to the deterioration of group home services and led to this year's process of reevaluation. First, the growth in the number of students strained the entire DAP and affected the quality of training and oversight for the homes' staff. While many homes are wonderful, the overall lack of properly certified staff has become a problem. Second, the sheer number of students created a problem. With more than 700 DAP students statewide, 15 beds in three group homes does not

meet the need. And third, the focus of the group homes moved away from education to residential care, calling the school district's administration into question.

Autism Delaware is working closely with DAP Director Vincent Winterling and state agencies to make sure that important educational services are not lost. Some ideas: continuing to use the group homes for education during the day, for after-school programs, and for weekend and emergency respite. These ideas are especially challenging given the current economic climate. Some students need residential support just as the funds are becoming less available, and a scarcity of residential programs means no existing program can accommodate Delaware's adolescents. Autism Delaware is also aware that a small percentage of children with extreme behavioral challenges will always need the type of constant supervision and teaching provided by residential-educational settings.

Thirty years ago, a small group of dedicated and relentless parents worked to create a school that was ahead of its time. Now, we have the opportunity to come together and make sure that the DAP model continues to evolve and meet the needs of our children. Please join us. Call Autism Delaware at (302) 224-6020. Or email delautism@delautism.org.



Call now!

In light of several reports about parents killing their children who had or were suspected of having autism, please remember: Resources are available in Delaware to help protect kids and families. If you believe you may harm your child or if you suspect a child has been abused, please call the Division of Family Services for help at 1-800-292-9582. Report adult abuse at 1-800-223-9074.

Legislative corner

Don't forget to vote on November 2!

Campaigns are in full swing. By law, Autism Delaware does not endorse candidates or influence campaigns, but we certainly encourage you to get involved and learn your candidates' positions on the many issues important to you.

This time also offers a great opportunity to tell your story. Legislators have told us they're supporting our positions because of what they've heard from Delaware's citizens during campaigns. For example, maybe you'd like insurance coverage for your son's applied behavior analysis. Ask your candidates about their stances on requiring such coverage. Or share the good news about your friend's daughter who's doing well in a day program funded by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, and ask for continued funding for existing and new clients. Or perhaps your Delaware Autism Program (DAP) student needs a residential placement. What do your candidates think about the closure of DAP homes? Would the candidates support funding to keep Delaware's children in state? And how would the candidates address these issues and others that affect your life?

And then, armed with this information, vote on November 2!



Insurance coverage of autism

How much will it really cost?

Twenty-three states have passed legislation mandating coverage of autism treatments, including applied behavior analysis (ABA). Why not Delaware? Because, as has happened in other states, insurers projected a cost far higher than what should really be expected. Autism Delaware thanks Autism Speaks for contracting an actuarial study that documents how little this bill will impact consumers.

Here are some of its findings:

- The number of children treated is expected to be one in 150—not one in 110. Not every child who has been diagnosed (one in 144) receives a medical diagnosis (one in 133) or would use a covered service.
- Average premium increases in the long run would range from 0.28 to 0.64 percent, or \$11.90 to \$27.90 per year. That's less than a dime a day, and costs will be lower in the early years as the supply of providers grows.
- Generally, children under eight receive the most ABA—average 1,500 hours a year compared to 401 for ages 13 to 20—because they are not in school. Since the DAP accepts children of any age, Delaware may even see lower usage and, thus, lower costs.

The entire study can be found at www.delautism.org/Advocacy.

Thanksgiving cards

In November, Thanksgiving cards will be available for you to send to state legislators and Governor Markell, not only to thank them for past support but also to tell them what their constituents affected by autism will need in the next fiscal year. This is your chance to influence the governor's budget before it is sent to the Delaware General Assembly in January.

If you have new legislators by then, ask for extra cards so you can thank your past legislators and introduce yourself to your new ones.

To order your cards, call (302) 224-6020.

Pedal go-cart big hit at summer beach picnic

The twelfth annual Autism Delaware Summer Beach Picnic enjoyed a wonderful turnout. Dwayne McMahan was particularly glad that his family could share the four-wheeled pedal go-cart he'd purchased for his son Harrison. "We spent many years looking for a bike that Harrison could ride and, most important, be able to control," explains McMahan. "As most of you saw at the picnic, it does not take much to get these kids on the cart and get them going."

"When I saw this cart for the first time," continues McMahan, "it was at a corn maze, and small children were able to maneuver these carts through mud and dirt. I left the corn maze and went right to the Tractor Supply Company to purchase ours. It took Harrison a few weeks to get the hand-braking system down,

but with assistance, he now has. I have shared this cart with many families and helped a few learn to ride. I am sure that you will see as many smiles as we have when your child rides this cart.



"The cart that we brought out to the picnic is the Heavy-Duty Adult Pedal Go-cart. I would strongly recommend this cart. The seat can be moved forward and back as your child grows, and the heavy-duty one pedals with as much ease as the junior one. These carts do require a little assembly, but I had Harrison's ready in less than 30 minutes."

If you have a question about the Heavy-Duty Adult Pedal Go-cart or want to take Harrison's for a test drive, feel free to call Dwayne McMahan at (302) 235-2101.

Ride for Autism

The Police & Fire Rod & Gun Club held its second annual Ride for Autism on Saturday, August 14. Escorted by the Delaware State Fire Police, participants enjoyed a great run, lots of food and music, and a pick-and-choose auction as well as a fifty-fifty. About 50 bikers showed up for the cause along with another 50 or more nonriders.

Donations to AD totalled \$1,336!

Next year's event is scheduled for Saturday, August 13, 2011. It will be held again at the Police & Fire Rod & Gun Club, 100 Linstone Avenue, Swanwyck Estates, New Castle.



Mark your calendars—Saturday, August 13, 2011—for the third annual Ride for Autism!

April 12, 2010

Hi, Deanna [Principe],

We have not met yet, because my husband takes Sean to Game Night. I'm sure Sean and George express their gratitude; however, I'd like to personally thank you. Sean tends to isolate himself from his peers, and his therapist is encouraging him to socialize. He started our church youth group this school year, and it has been challenging for everyone. Sean has decided that he prefers to go to Game Night rather than the youth group. Without your group, he probably would have just quit trying altogether. Thanks for giving Sean and others a place where they can be themselves and learn social skills while having fun.

Blessings,

Grace McCloud

INSIDE Autism Delaware

Do you want to help?

Did you know that most of the Autism Delaware (AD) staff, except for POW&R, works only part time? Only two work full time, so the challenge is balance. We divide our time between advocating, creating this newsletter, helping with social activities, raising public awareness, and fundraising to pay for speakers, activities, parent conferences and support, scholarships, a website, and the office and our small staff.

To pull off our social activities and events, we rely on volunteers. And we have several opportunities now available:

If you'd like some family fun, join the the AD Social Committee. Current Chair Robin Delaney wants to make fun things happen for your children. Robin's goal is to have a family event once a month somewhere in the state, and needs your help to do it.

AD also offers many ways to make things happen in Delaware: Support insurance legislation. Join the Walk & Race for Autism. Represent AD at community fairs. Or work in the office for a few hours. Any help is greatly appreciated.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact Melanie Matusheski at melanie.matusheski@delautism.org.

Looking for space

We are currently looking for space for Dafne Carrnight and Melissa Martin to work together as of January 1. Ideally, the space would be located along Route 1 between Milford and Lewes; able to house two people plus a meeting room, good storage, and parking; and affordable. If you can help, please email specifics to dafne.carrnight@delautism.org or melissa.martin@delautism.org.

Meeting with today's parents

Every generation has a different idea about what is wanted for its children. Whereas the parents who started AD looked to the future and created POW&R, today's parents have different ideas. We will be inviting you to join us and share your issues. Heidi Mizell and Theda Ellis will set up focus groups around the state, attend PAC meetings, and talk individually with the parents of children with autism.

Welcome, Carla!

Carla Koss has joined the staff as the new communications coordinator. Her part-time hours will be divided between the website, newsletter, AD communication projects, and Drive for Autism Delaware. A trained writer-editor, Carla comes to us with experience in the fields of health care and consumer advocacy as well as business communications and technical documentation. A two-time recipient of the First State Award for Writing, Carla has been recognized for her work with the Center for Disabilities Studies and the Delaware Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Her major events support has included the Allentown Art Festival in Buffalo and Delaware's own Bike to the Bay.

Farewell to Cher Frampton

by Theda Ellis

Although Cher Frampton left her position as an Autism Delaware staff person in August, she intends to maintain her connection in other roles. But for her many contributions over the last 12 years, she deserves a big *Thank you* from all of us because she has made a huge contribution to the autism community.

To begin, did you know that Cher was here first? When I joined AD in 2002 as the first director, I knew AD had an active parent group, great volunteers, good advocacy, and a vision for the future, but I had no idea that I wasn't the first staff person. I found out one Sunday afternoon about two weeks before I started. The phone rang, and someone named Cheryl started telling me things I needed to know about working for the Autism Society of Delaware (AD's old name). I thought "Who IS this person?!" I finally said "Now tell me again who are you." When she said she worked for ASD, I said something very intelligent: "Oh! You mean I have a staff person?"

Once at work, I learned that AD was much more than I realized. We had a website. (Remember, in 2002, not everyone had a website.) We also had a database, an accounting system, and a great newsletter. Everywhere I turned, there was evidence of Cher!

As a mother of a child with autism, Cher started out discussing the issues with other parents at a kitchen table before moving to the AD office with me. She also mentored parents, created the AD logo, and created art for posters, autism awareness, and events. She was an original parent who formed Autism Delaware, served on the executive council, and got more involved as we grew and expanded our efforts.

Cheryl has also testified before our legislators about very personal and difficult issues (such as Medicaid and group homes), supported opportunities for families to have fun (such as Bowling Night), recruited key volunteers and staff (like Deanna Principe and Heidi Mizell), trained staff on how events run, and used her creative talents to create logos and artwork while always maintaining her voice as a parent.

Why? Because she did not want other parents to be as isolated and alone as she had been, and she wanted to build a better future for her son and other children like him.