

◊ *Into the Light* ◊

Volume 21 Issue 4 *Autism Society*, Central Virginia April 2013



IDEAS FOR RAISING AWARENESS IN APRIL FOR NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

What can you do to raise awareness in your school, neighborhood, or faith community during National Autism Awareness Month in April? You might:

- Purchase or make an autism awareness lapel pin; wear it every day during April. (The ASCV has lapel pins available for purchase.)
- Create a bulletin board at your school, faith community or place of work to raise awareness about autism. Themes could include the warning signs of autism, the strengths of people with autism or famous people with autism.
- Donate a children's book about autism to your local or school library; we can help you with suggestions.
- Write an article about National Autism Awareness Month or how autism has impacted your life; share it with your PTA or faith community newsletter or your community newspaper.
- Form a team for the 5K Run/Walk for Autism (May 25) and invite friends and neighbors to join you! Visit <http://www.ascv5k.com/> to register.
- Download 2 resources from the National Autism Society website to share with typical peers (http://support.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=shop_downloads):
 - ***Growing Up Together*** (For School-Aged Peers) This 4-page, large-type booklet is targeted to elementary-aged school children. It uses simple language to talk about what autism is and how to become friends with someone on the autism spectrum.
 - ***Growing Up Together Teens with Autism*** (For Middle School-Aged Peers) This 4-page, booklet is written for teenagers. It uses basic language to talk about what autism is and how to be friends with someone on the autism spectrum
- Host a movie night for friends, family, church members, youth groups or kids to watch a story about autism; great choices might be:

Temple Grandin
Autism Is a World

Autism, the Musical
Mozart and the Whale

Mission & Philosophy

The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

2012-2013 OFFICERS AND BOARD:

President: Bill Thompson
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Treasurer: Adam Bailey, CPA
Meeting Secretary: Katherine Gray, J.D.
Corresponding Secretary: Tim Jones
Past President: Sandi Wiley

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Newsletter Editor: Elizabeth Selko
Webmaster: Anthony Wiley

STAFF:

Executive Director: Bradford Hulcher
Asperger's Interest Group Facilitator: Brie King
Child care Supervisor: Deo Smith

Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

April 12 Monthly Meeting

Kids with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) experience difficulties in communication, interaction and imagination, and often find the social world difficult and confusing. Many parents of children with autism are well aware that their children are bullied at school, but more recent research suggests the problem is pervasive. One study found that 46% of middle and high school students with ASD have been bullied. By comparison, in the general adolescent population, an estimated 10% of children have been bullied.

Staci Carr, Ed. M, M.S., will discuss the ways bullying happens (from teasing to cyber bullying) and what can be done to help our children cope with bullying as well as strategies to address bullying.

To ensure we have enough handouts, we ask that you register @ <http://bullyandasd.eventbrite.com/>

Autism Society meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road in Richmond. **Our meetings are free and open to the public.** The library opens at 6:30 p.m. and meetings begin promptly at 7 p.m. Free supervision for children and youth is available although space is limited; reservations are taken through April 5 by e-mailing the Society at asacv@aol.com with the names and ages/grades of your child(ren).

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS IN MARCH!

Skills Development Center
Sam Hulcher
Alpha Xi Delta @ VCU

This newsletter is a publication of: Autism Society, Central VA □ P.O. Box 29364 □ Richmond, Virginia 23242-0364 (804) 257-0192

We accept for consideration any comments, personal vignettes, book reviews, information, announcements or advertisements for publication in our newsletter. The deadline for submission for the May newsletter is April 15. You may send your contributions to the above address or email contributions to SELKO1@aol.com.

The Autism Society, Central Virginia does not endorse nor promote any program or service provider. The information contained in this newsletter is provided for informational purposes only. The Society is a 501(c)3 organization providing information, support and encouragement to individuals with autism, their families and professionals in the Central VA area.

This edition was edited by Elizabeth Selko and Bradford Hulcher.

Items of Interest from the 2013 General Assembly

The General Assembly's final Budget Bill has gone to the Governor's office for review and signing. The General Assembly reconvenes on April 1, 2013. Items of interest to the autism community include the following:

200 additional Intellectual Disability (ID) Waivers
The 200 ID Waivers provided are in addition to the 375 ID Waivers that were already in the budget. This means that a **total of 575 new ID Waivers will become available effective July 1, 2013.**

50 additional Developmental Disability (DD) Waivers
The 50 DD Waivers provided are in addition to the 80 DD Waivers that were already in the budget. This means that a **total of 130 new DD Waivers will become available effective July 1, 2013.**

Maintenance of Medicaid Eligibility for Waiver Services
The introduced budget included language that would have reduced Medicaid financial eligibility for waiver services from 300% of SSI to 267% of SSI. This proposed reduction would have meant that some people who currently receive ID/DD Waiver would lose their services and supports.

Funding for 25% increase in group home funding for people with complex needs.

Expanded Community-Based Crisis Services for Children and Adults with ID/DD
\$3.8 million is provided to expand adult crisis services. \$1.25 is provided to develop and implement children crisis services.

Funding for early intervention services to reduce shortfall.

Waiver Supported Employment Providers May Bill for Job Development/Placement It is anticipated that this change will increase access to individual supported employment for Virginians with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Additional Funds Department of Aging and Rehab Services (DARS) Vocational Rehabilitation Program This will bring approximately 1000 individuals off of the waiting list.

Partners in Policymaking Free Training Program for Parents and Self-Advocates

Are you the parent (or guardian) of a young child with a developmental disability (DD)? Or are you a person with a developmental disability? If you are, or know someone who is, now is the time to apply for a free training program called

Partners in Policymaking (PIP). Only 30 people from across Virginia will be chosen to be Partners. Classes (on Friday evenings and Saturdays) begin in September 2013 and will conclude in May 2014. Eight sessions are held; lodging, meals, training, and transportation (plus individual accommodations such as personal care attendants and interpreters) are paid for participants in Partners. Topics covered in the sessions include independent living, assistive technology, supported employment, and history of the disability rights movement. Partners practice presenting testimony and learn about impacting the legislative process. Download the application at <http://www.vaboard.org/policymaking.htm>. Applications are

NEWS FROM THE AUTISM SOCIETY, CENTRAL VA BOARD

The Autism Society Central VA worked to fulfill our mission to "improve the lives of all affected by autism" in March in the following ways:

Education

- Sponsored a workshop for dads of kids with ASD
- Sponsored our 6th Annual Recreation Resource Fair attended by over 100 people
- Partnered with VCU Autism Center for Excellence to provide a venue for 3 days of ADOS training for professionals
- Sponsored a Medicaid Waiver training for over 50 people
- Presented on Medicaid Waivers at the Henrico County SEAC meeting

Services and Supports

- Sponsored bowling leagues for elementary school students with ASD and middle and high school students with ASD
- Sponsored Inclusive Lego Club
- Sponsored Asperger's Middle School Social Club
- Sponsored 4 Interest Groups for Parents of Children and Adults on the spectrum
- Sponsored an Interest Group for Adults with Asperger's

Awareness

- Exhibited at Commonwealth Autism Service's Annual Conference
- Participated in a March 20 interview on WTVR regarding the CDC's new data on the incidence of autism (<http://wtvr.com/2013/03/21/why-are-more-children-showing-signs-of-autism/>)



LOCAL EXHIBIT TO FEATURE ARTWORK OF CHILDREN WITH ASD

Autumn Cox is a 17 year old at James River High School and a member of Girl Scout Troop 3370. As her Gold Award project, Autumn chose to organize an opportunity for school aged children on the autism spectrum to exhibit their art at a professional gallery.

Working with the support of Autism Society board member Sandi Wiley and Art 180, Autumn was able to collect over 50 pieces of local art work from children with ASD for the exhibit, in multiple mediums, including some very large sculptures. Autumn stated, "I am very excited about the project. The gallery, Sandi, and I anticipate this being a yearly event. The theme this year is Love, and what love looks like to these very talented children. The goal of the project is to get exposure for the children on the autism spectrum in a professional art gallery, and giving them a huge event and show to be proud of."

The exhibit, entitled "love through the eyes of children with autism spectrum disorder" may be viewed on May 3 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Atlas, 114 W. Marshall St., Richmond, VA.

AUTISM SOCIETY APRIL CALENDAR

The Autism Society, Central VA will sponsor the following meetings in April. All meetings take place at River Rd. UMC, 8800 River Rd, Henrico, unless otherwise specified. For information: 257-0192 or asacv@aol.com

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|---|
| 4/6 | 1:00 p.m. | Inclusive Lego Club for children of all abilities in grades K - 8; River Road UMC; free but registration required: http://aprillego.eventbrite.com/ |
| 4/6 | 1:00 p.m. | Parent Support Group for parents of children with autism |
| 4/8 | 7:00 p.m. | Asperger's Interest Group for parents of school aged children with AS |
| 4/9 | 7:00 p.m. | Board Meeting |
| 4/11 & 4/12 | | Exhibition at Monument Ave. 10K Event - volunteers needed to man our exhibit (2-3 hr, day and evening shifts) contact jessica@echelon-events.com for info! |
| 4/12 | 7:00 p.m. | Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders Workshop information and registration: http://bullyandasd.eventbrite.com/ |
| 4/12 | 7:00 p.m. | Asperger's Middle School Social Club pre-registration required; e-mail asacv@aol.com |
| 4/14 | | Bowling League for Elementary School Children w/ Autism , Grades K-5 FREE for Society members; \$25 /non-members (includes annual membership fee) ; preregistration required |
| 4/14 | | Bowling for Middle/High School Students w/ Autism FREE for Society members; \$25/non-members (includes annual membership fee); preregistration required |
| 4/15 | 10:30 a.m. | Autism Interest Group for parents of children w/ ASD |
| 4/18 | 7:00 p.m. | Autism Interest Group for parents of children w/ ASD |
| 4/29 | 7:00 p.m. | Parents/Family Members of Adults with Asperger's |
| 4/29 | 7:00 p.m. | Adults with Asperger's/HFA Interest Group (open only to adults w/ Asperger's/HFA) |

One Family's Journey

My husband and I were stunned after our son's diagnosis. We didn't know anything about autism. Our only frame of reference was a movie we had seen years earlier, "Rain Man". The doctor was not helpful and didn't give us any information regarding therapies or what we could do to help our son. Maybe he didn't have access to that information or maybe he thought we wouldn't hear anything else because we were still in a state of shock. He did give us the phone number to the Autism Society Central VA. Family and friends tried to encourage us, but no one knew how to help us.

When I made that phone call to the Autism Society, it felt like someone had thrown me a lifeline. Finally, I had someone who understood what I was going through, another parent just like me. Coming home from a meeting from the Autism Society helped me feel empowered. The speakers were knowledgeable and gave me valuable information that taught me how to understand and help my child.

The Autism Society wants to change the way you view people with autism: to see ability instead of disability, to see a person instead of a label, to see an opportunity instead of a challenge, to see strength instead of weakness, and to see the value of each person no matter what their level of ability may be.

What the Society does- informative monthly meetings, lending library, newsletter, websites, emails alerting members to important information, sponsoring trainings and seminars, information about other resources in the area and support groups. Learn about medical issues, educational rights, government policy, insurance regulations and so much more. Everything you need in one place to navigate the complex world of autism.

I'll never forget those parents I met through the Autism Society in the early years when my son was first diagnosed. They always took the time to talk with me and answer my questions. They shared their stories with me, letting me know that I was not alone. They listened to mine as well, giving me advice and encouraging me. I learned so much from them. They

gave me a different perspective from their years of experience. With time, I became a strong advocate for my son with the knowledge I gained from the Autism Society.

Sandra Harris
mother of 2 with autism



Thank You For the Following Donations

Brendan Moran
Kimberly Cooper
Deborah Reizelback

SAVE THE DATE!

MAY 4 NOON TO 3 P.M.

ANNUAL AUTISM SOCIETY MEMBER PICNIC





HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET? MAY 25 RUN/WALK FOR AUTISM

NEW!

Visit www.ascv5k.com to read stories about how the Autism Society has impacted the journeys of moms, dads, grandparents, and individuals on the spectrum - in their own words! Once on the site, you can take the opportunity to share how the Autism Society has helped you or your family.

WWW.ASCV5K.COM

Visit our new and improved 5K website!! On the website, you can register for the 5K, form a team, volunteer, fundraise, and much more! May 25 will be here before you know it - don't delay!!

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Do you own or work for a business that values local efforts to support children, youth, and adults with ASD and their families? Remember, all the money raised for this effort stays right here in the metro Richmond community to help local families affected by autism. You can download our Sponsorship Packet at <http://ascv5k.com/sponsors/> or contact ascv5k@echelon-events.com.

Conferences, Workshops, and Webcasts

April 9 **The Foundation of Feeding Challenges in the Child with ASD** free webcast from VCU Autism Center for Excellence; many caregivers and professionals are overwhelmed by the child who eats only a handful of foods and accepts only particular brands of foods. This presentation focuses on uncovering the root of the problem by examining the medical and developmental history, as well as, the nutritional and feeding history of the child with ASD; register here:

<http://www.vcuautismcenter.org/training/webcasts/upcoming.cfm>

April 9 **Financial Planning Families of Children and Adults with Special Needs** speaker from Commonwealth Community Trust; When your child has a disability, it is your responsibility to find out how you can plan for their future without jeopardizing eligibility for means tested benefits such as SSI and Medicaid. If you have wondered about setting aside funds for your child, but are not sure where to begin or how public benefits may be affected, learning about special needs trusts is a great place to start planning; 6 p.m.; register by calling 717-6648

April 18 **START** free webinar from the Arc of VA; a program to support adults with intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, as well as a mental health condition or challenging behavior that is negatively affecting their quality of life; 7 p.m.; to register: dholloway@thearcofva.org

April 25 **Getting Started. What Families with Young Children with Disabilities Need to Know** free webinar from the Arc of VA; if you have a young child with a developmental disability please join us to learn more about the resources available to your child and family; 6 - 8:30 p.m.; to register: dholloway@thearcofva.org

April 30 **Positive Behavior Supports** Kara McCulloch from VCU/TTAC shares strategies and techniques for positive behavioral support for those on the Autism Spectrum; sponsored by the Henrico County Parent Resource Center; 7 - 8 p.m. @ Glen Allen High School.

For additional information on autism conferences and

Community Events/Meetings of Interest

April 1 **Aspie Bible Study** meet on the first and third Monday of each month @ Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Rd, Richmond; 7:15 pm. - 9 p.m.; repeats 4/15; call Shawn at 804-339-4393 for info

April 6 **Sensory Friendly Movie** "The Croods"; 10 a.m.@ Movieland; \$6.50

April 8 - 14 **ReelAbilities: VA Disabilities Film Festival** ReelAbilities is dedicated to fostering awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with different abilities; for info on films, venues, dates, and times, visit richmond.reelabilities.org

April 10 **Chesterfield County Special Education Advisory Committee** @ the Fulghum Center; 5 - 6:30 p.m.; topic: mental health resources; open to the public; for info: 594-1732

April 11 **Richmond Asperger's Meetup** the second Thursday from 7-9 pm @ River City Diner on Parham Rd.; RSVP at <http://www.meetup.com/aspergers-397/>

April 11 **Young Life Capernaum West End** an inclusive faith based group for middle and high school students with disabilities; repeats 4/25; West End Presbyterian Church, Henrico; 6:30 - 8:00; for info: westendcapernaum@hotmail.com

April 11 **Young Life Capernaum Hanover** an inclusive faith based group for middle and high school students with disabilities; repeats on the 4/25; Burkwood Clubhouse; 6:15; clint.dowda@gmail.com or call 814-7433

April 13 **Buddy Break** a free respite care program for children with special needs ages 3-21 and their siblings ages 3-11; 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.; sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church, 2315 N. Parham Rd., Henrico; RSVP to 804-270-4626 or BuddyBreak@TrinityRichmond.net

April 16 **Young Life Capernaum City** an inclusive faith based group for middle and high school students with disabilities; repeats on 3/19; 6:30 p.m.; Richmond; for info: citycapernaum.rva@gmail.com

April 16 **Richmond/Northern Chesterfield Asperger's Meetup** third Tuesdays @ Positive Vibe Cafe, 6:30- 8:30; children 10+ diagnosed with Asperger's, HFA, P P D - NOS, and ADHD and their parents, as well as adults with these diagnoses, are welcome RSVP at

<http://www.meetup.com/aspergers-397/>

April 16 **Monkey Joe's Special Needs Night** every third Tuesday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.; kids ages 2 - 12 w/ special needs just \$5; closed to the public; siblings welcome; 11304 Midlothian Tnpk, Richmond; 897-5867

April 18 **Asperger's Support Meeting** meets 6:30 p.m. on 3rd Thursday at Midlothian YMCA; 804-908-7246 or email RobinDavis@RichmondAutism.Org

April 18 **Young Life Capernaum Chesterfield** an inclusive faith based group for middle and high school students with disabilities; Mt. Pisgah UMC, Midlothian; 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.; for info: 757- 651-5223

April 18 **A Journey of Rest and Restoration**; a monthly Christian-based support group designed for couples/caregivers of children with any special needs; 7 to 8:30 p.m.; Mechanicsville Christian Center; free childcare and sign language interpreter; pre-registration required; contact bfrank.ResourceConnectioninc@gmail.com

April 20 **Buddy Break** a free respite care program for children with special needs ages 3-21 and their siblings ages 3-11; 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; sponsored by Southside Nazarene Church, Courthouse Rd.; 804-778-7800 ext. 247 or BuddyBreakSouthsideVA@gmail.com for info

April 20 **Connections Resource Fair** free @ the Children's Museum; over 60 exhibitors; 9:30 - 12:30

April 20 **Sensory Friendly Movie** sponsored by Henrico County Parks & Rec @ the Henrico Theater; 2 p.m.; FREE; the movie auditorium will have their lights brought up and the sound turned down, to create the most inviting accessible environment for our Autism community! Dancing, clapping, and cheering are encouraged! Information and reservations: Jennifer Godfrey, 501-5135.

April 21 **Rhythms of Grace** a special worship service to and for children w/ special needs and their families; the third Sunday of each month @ St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 12291 River Rd, Goochland; 1 - 2 p.m.; for info: 347-8755

April 23 **Henrico County Special Education Advisory Committee** open to the public; 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Byrd Middle School; topics: *Inclusion, Hearing Impaired*



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join with hundreds of individuals with autism, their families and other caring individuals; become a part of a larger community - the Autism Society, Central VA. We can't be heard alone, but with more voices joining daily, that small voice can become a roar. We invite you to become a part of a community of hope.

Membership in the Autism Society, Central VA provides the following benefits:

- ASCV's monthly newsletter, the leading local resource for information regarding local and state autism-related issues, workshops, and community events
- ASCV's weekly e-mail updates
- Access to ASCV lending library
- Free chapter sponsored social/recreational activities; discounted workshops

Membership Levels:

___ \$5 ~ Self-Advocate (Adult w/ ASD) ___ \$25 ~ Household ___ \$1500 ~ Lifetime

Names(s): _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

(By providing your e-mail, you will receive our weekly e-mail; your e-mail will be kept confidential.)

Additional Donation:

___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 _____ please specify amt.

Payment information:

___ Check (made payable to **Autism Society**) ___ Visa ___ Mastercard

Name on card: _____ Expiration: _____

Card #: _____

CVV# (security code on back of card) _____

Signature: _____

Please mail or fax w/ payment to:

Autism Society, Central VA

P.O. Box 29364

Richmond, VA 23242 (804) 290-0286 (fax)

For information on joining the Autism Society, National, visit: <http://www.autism-society.org/>

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