

Goals & Wishes - Walk 2007

This is, by far, the most exciting walkathon ever for me, and I think I speak for a lot of us when I say that. A big part of the reason for that is the new, online fundraising system at www.firstgiving.com, where lots of families have already created their own pages and started collecting donations. Sue emailed me last week and pointed out that, if everyone reaches their online goal, we will raise \$50,000 online alone! The most we've ever raised is about \$27,000! Big, big thanks to Doug MacPherson V.P. of Development at HMEA who found this online service and introduced it to us and kudos go to Erica Ploof who set up our account. We also got by with a little help from our friends, when several of you answered our call for help to get the walkathon mailing out. Huge thank-you to every one of you who came by and pitched in! We all know how precious our time is as parents and caregivers, and no one goes unappreciated when they give their time.

I mentioned the word 'goal' earlier. Anyone who has been in an IEP meeting has heard and used that term so many times it can be nauseating. But, for our kids with autism, goals are critical for self-esteem and concrete measurement of personal progress. For educators, goals help maintain focus. For parents, goals help keep us strong. My son is 14 now. I recently cringed when I was placed into the category of "trailblazer" in autism, but if there's one thing my 'vast experience' has taught me, it's that goals are important but they need to be attainable before we can learn from them. I've told this story to many people before, when my son was 18 months and first diagnosed, I said I would be fine as long as he could say "I love you, Mama" by the time he was 3. He didn't. I then said I'd be okay if he said it by the time he was 4. He didn't. I said I'd stay strong if he said "I love you, Mama" by the time he was 5. He was still non-verbal then. So, when he turned 5, I said I'd be happy if he said "hi" by the time he was 6. He did it!

This is a true story, and I came away with a new understanding of the importance of keeping goals realistic. I was devastated by the goals my son didn't reach— but they were not his goals, they were mine. They were unfair to him and to myself. The one goal he did reach gave me new hope like I had never felt before. So goals, while important, can be either devastating or empowering. So find your own goal, but be realistic, whether it be a milestone for your child or a dollar amount for your fundraiser. Reaching any goal can give you a feeling of incredible achievement.

There are many reasons why this is the most exciting walkathon ever for me – we're going to raise more funds than ever, which translates into more family activities and events. My family is going to meet our own personal goal, which is higher than we ever thought we could reach. Chairing this walkathon, my fifth or sixth one, I can't remember which, is special because I can enjoy it more than ever with all of the new volunteers and the incredible staff at the Center, who make the workload light and far more enjoyable! Even though the need to succeed with this fundraiser is more urgent than ever, because of the increasing demand by the autism community, I guess the best way to put it is "I'm feelin' the love!"

Antoine de Saint-Exupery said "A goal without a plan is just a wish." So plan to join us on Sunday April 22nd at Quinsigamond Community College and become part of the extended family that *is* the Autism Resource Center. Flippo the Clown will be on hand for the kids, and you'll be able to connect with old friends or make new friends as we work together toward a common goal. If you haven't set up your own online page and sent it out to everyone in your address book, it will be the best 15 minutes you've ever spent. Call the Center if you need any help, but it's so user-friendly I have no doubt you can do it without any assistance. If you haven't sent your letters out or made any phone calls, or taken your sponsor sheet to work, you won't know how good it feels to reach your own personal goal. We also want you to be a part of the joy and celebration when we reach our collective goal as a Center and Community.

Cheryl Chan

Annual Appeal

Our Thanks to those who responded to our Annual Appeal

Sandra & Herb Cabral

Tim and Carolyn Dee

Wess & Janet Cathcart

Janice Zupko

Mathew & Alison Bromberg

Jeanne Chaclas

Linda Gogolin

Donations

A special Thanks to Delta Designs for a donation of gently used office furniture

**RDW Group, Inc.,
Providence ,RI**

*In Honor of Doug Dupuis Birthday
Bill & Shawne Keevan*

UNITED WAY CONTRIBUTORS

**Sally Lampi
Russell J. Enlow
Charlene L. Hopkins
Stephen Kelly
Anna Rogers**

*To designate the Center as the recipient of your United Way contribution use the code UN 00365 and name
Autism Resource Center*

Memorial Gifts

*In Memory of
Ralph Levine*

Phyllis & Marc Breslof

Helaine Zonderman

Charlotte O. Kaner

Joan V. Stone

Joan Sigel Schuman

**The Employees of The
Angiogenesis Foundation**

Helene & Lawrence Gates

Nancy & Andrew Filipowicz

Dr & Mrs Herbert Berkowitz

Nancy Waldman

Lucille Matison

Andrew & Janice Krim

Edward & Helen Kaden

Sheila & Harvey Elfman

Dorothy & Melvin Cowan

Lillian Riseman

Patricia & Paul Riseman

Richard & Mary Embrey

JoAnne Johnson

Marc and Julie Slafsky

Ellis Waldman

The Cowan Family

Kenneth & Robin Levine

Barbara & Jerrold Slafsky

Jo Ellen and Chuck Levin

*In Memory of
Mrs. Eva Rachel
Morneault*

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Cloutier

*In Memory of
Grace Romano*

Sandra Grillo

Peter and R. Ann Decruz

Rose Visconti

W. David Brennan

Sandra and James Steen

Michael Diliberti

Rose DeCruz

Michael Diliberti

Rita LoRe Henenberg

Peter Henenberg

Estella Edmondson

Nancy Gioia

Arlene & Ed Ruff

Margaret Romano

Frances Romano Salmon

Farewell

If you have called the Autism Resource Center on a Wednesday or Thursday, you have probably spoken to me. My name is Julia Wild, and I have been an administrative assistant at the center for the last two years. I am sorry to say that I will soon be leaving this position, to pursue other career opportunities. I want to take this opportunity to thank Sue Loring, and everyone else at the center for teaching me so much and providing such a great work experience. I will miss being at the center each week, and I will definitely miss hearing Sue's unique outlook on life's adventures, but I will continue to attend the center activities. The Wild Family will stay in touch!

Notes from the Chair

Rebecca Blatz

A is for April and Autism Awareness month. Given the fact that awareness has been talked about in the media lately, I'm pleased. The efforts of many people and agencies seem to be working. Now if only someone would find that magic potion/pill. I'm saddened that the statistics have changed to 1 in 150, where it was 1 in 166.

April is just around the corner which means the walk for the Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts is coming up soon. Dust off your sneakers and stretch your sponsor lists to infinity this year. As it has been in the past, the walk is our best fundraiser. There is a special raffle this year...are you ready...A CRUISE! It should prove to be a wonderful day, making someone a happy walker or sponsor.

I'd like to say thanks to Sandra Osborne for her time and effort as Co-Chair of the Family Steering Committee. Sandra has stepped down and decided to put on a new hat. Our hats are off to her for all of her efforts and accomplishments as Chairwoman. There were some terrific things accomplished by Sandra during her short stay as chair.

Rebecca Blatz



Austin Wild explores the grounds during the Sensory Program at the Elm Farm in Brookfield.

Library

New on the Shelves

I Am Special—Introducing Children and Young People to Their Autistic Spectrum Disorder

by Peter Vermeulin

Siblings

Coming Unstuck and Putting Back the Pieces by Kate Strohm

Being the Other One, Growing Up With a Brother or Sister Who Has Special Needs by Kate Strohm

Children's

The Way I Feel

by Janan Cain

Discovery Toys

Look I'm Talking Record and Play

Look I'm Talking (2 DVD set)

My Baby Signs Bedtime

My Baby Signs Mealtime

My Baby Signs DVD

Shiny Touchy Smelly Colors

CD's

Therapeutic Listening

Cadaques Night

Sound Therapy

Apricot,

Kidz Jamz Series

Rhythm and Rhyme

Vital Sounds

DVD's

Natural Ties, Everyone is Dancing

Going Mobile

Samantha-Story of Positive Behavior Support

To Do List

- Check out the validated library at the Leominster Public Library. It recently expanded with family-friendly research articles available for download from the Beach Center. This collection of library materials contains information about research-based approaches to assist children and adults with developmental disabilities. The collection is intended to meet the diverse information needs of families, educators, and others in the community in a user-friendly way. Download articles from the following website: www.leominsterlibrary.org/developmental_disabilities_research.htm
- Schedule yourself for a conference. You can apply for a Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) Grant, through their Consumer Empowerment Funds Program. You can find information at: www.mass.gov/mddc/cefp/index.htm
- April is Autism Awareness Month. Join us for the annual Community Walk for Autism Awareness, April 22, 2007. The walk will be at Quinsigamond Community College. All proceeds from this fundraiser benefit local families affected by Autism, through programs funded by the Autism Resource Center.
- Visit the Statehouse for Autism Awareness Day April 30th

One Family's Experience—by Kathy Taylor

My name is Kathy Taylor I am on the Autism Resource Center's Family Steering committee. You may have seen my intro in the last newsletter. Sue asked me if I would mind sharing my personal experience of telling my son about his Autism with the group. I gladly will share our story.

I am currently participating in the CMFOC Family Leadership Series. Sue presented at the session and at lunch we were discussing our children's disabilities. Sue mentioned that we should share the diagnosis with our children. This way they can advocate for them self, things they may need. I mentioned that I had not told my son of his diagnosis. I thought that there would come a time where I would have to talk about it with him. Little did I know it would happen so soon after that weekend.

The Autism Resource Center has a wonderful program that they run for our non-autistic children to participate in called Sib Shop. This program is designed specifically for the siblings of brothers and sisters with disabilities. They can get together and have fun, play games and share their feelings about living with a sibling with a disability. My three children participate in this wonderful program. My children count down the days until the next Sib Shop. Zachary's twin, Emily has just begun attending since she and Zachary have just

turned seven

Emily mentioned going to the Sib Shop and how much fun they were to Zachary. He then asked if he could go. She told him no! She then said the reason he could not go to Sibshop was because it was for brothers and sisters of kids with Autism.

This next part broke my heart. Zachary came up to me and asked, "Am I Autism?" I told him sweetie no you are not Autism. I told him we

would talk about it on another day. I said I had some books I wanted to read to him. He liked the idea of the books and said just you and me.

I start thinking ok now I need to find some books that will explain Au-

tism to children. I had a meeting at the center the next day so I mentioned my plight to the group. After the meeting I looked at Sue and said it was now time to tell Zachary about his Autism. Sue told me that the center's library had some really good books to help with this. I borrowed three books from the library.

I read two of the books to Zachary that night. While we were reading the books Zachary noticed things that were written in the books were like him. The boy in the book mentioned he thought about dinosaurs all the time and when I asked Zachary if he thought about anything he said, "cars." He also agreed with the boy in the book when it discussed about how changes in routine bothered him. He was able to see a book about a little boy like him.

I am so grateful that the Autism Resource Center is just that a Resource Center. Having the books to help explain to my son about his Autism made it a lot easier.

If anyone is looking for materials on Autism try the resource center's library. The books have helped many of us and they may help you too. Thank You for letting me share our story with you.



Educational Software

Stop by the center to try out our new family computer workstation in the library/children's room. We have installed the following new programs for families to use:

Boardmaker

Writing with Symbols

Puddingstone Place

Learning Together with Music

Communicating About Sexuality

Use **Boardmaker** to create PECs and visual schedules. **Writing with Symbols** is a talking and word processing program that is great for teaching reading skills as well as creating social stories. **Puddingstone Place** is an interactive virtual environment rich in sound, graphics and animation. Very fun! **Learning Together with Music** gives educators and parents ideas about ways to use music to promote language and social skills. **Communicating about Sexuality** can help teach safety and appropriate behavior.



Please call 508-835-4278 to register for all events. Unless otherwise specified all events take place at The Autism Resource Center

APRIL



April 3, 2007
Autism Support Group
Charlton Sewing Center
12 Stafford St, Charlton
7-9 PM

April 4, 2007
Autism Support Group
ARC North Central
564 Main Street, Fitchburg
7-9 PM

April 4, 2007
Helping Our Children Achieve.
Millbury Public Library
128 Elm Street
Millbury MA 10 AM
Speaker : Karen Puopolo, Worcester/
Providence Counseling Services, -
Helping families in crisis and main-
taining marriage relationship

April 5, 2007
Parent Education Series
Melmark New England
Using Reinforcement in the Home
ARC North Central
564 Main Street, Fitchburg
7-9 PM

April 7, 2007
Spring Party
Egg Hunt, Bunny
Camp Woodhaven
55 Campground Road
West Boylston MA
2-4 PM
Suggested donation \$5.00/Family

April 10, 2007
Autism Support Group
Whitins Community Center
60 Main St. Whitinsville
9 AM—11 AM

April 10, 2007
National Siblings Day

April 11, 2007
Boardmaker Workshop
10 AM– 12 Noon

Mom’s & Tots (preschoolers)
4-6 PM
Asperger Support Group
6-9 PM

April 12, 2007
Assist Our Special Kids
(ASK_PAC)
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Intersection Rt.20 and Rt.131
Sturbridge, MA
7-9 PM

Understanding Assessments
Gloria McKibbon, Ed. D.
Learn when to ask for an assess-
ment and interpret the results

April 12, 2007
Parent Education Series
Melmark New England
Planning for Summer Breaks
7-9 PM
Autism Resource Center

April School Vacation:
FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES
Suggested donations \$5.00/ Family

April 16, 2007
Friends and Family Movie
West Boylston Cinema
10 AM
Pack a picnic for your family at
West Boylston Reservoir following
the movie 12– 2 PM

April 17, 2007
Bowling & Pizza Party
Bayberry Lanes—Rt 9
Spencer MA
10 AM – 2 PM

OR

**Scavenger Hunt , Animals &
Cookout**
Camp Green Eyrie
69 Still River Road
Harvard MA
10 AM– 2 PM

April 18, 2007
A Day at Southwick Zoo
Southwick Street
Mendon MA
**MEET AT GATE AT 10 AM—
latecomers can not be accommodated**

April 19, 2007
Ecotarium
222 Harrington Way
Worcester Ma
*Tickets will be mailed to families that
register– Meet at picnic area at 12 noon
for picnic with others from the center*

OR

A Day at Elm Farm
**For Children ages 3-10 with ASD &
Their Families—space limited**
26 East Main Street
Brookfield, MA
9 AM– 1 PM

April 19, 2007
Parent Education Series
Melmark New England
**Facilitating Social Skills/Community
Integration Skills**
7-9 PM
Whitins Community Center
60 Main St. Whitinsville

April 20, 2007
A Day at Elm Farm
**For Children ages 11– 18 with ASD
& Their Families—space limited**
26 East Main Street
Brookfield, MA
9 AM– 1 PM

OR

Swim & Pack A Picnic
Greenwood Pool
69 Park Street
Gardner MA
9:30 AM –1:30 PM (12:30 swim)

April 20, 2007
Autism Support Group
Community Room
Groton Public Library
Main Street , Groton
10 AM– 12 NOON

Calendar

Please call 508-835-4278 to register for all events. Unless otherwise specified all events take place at The Autism Resource Center

April 22, 2007

**7th Annual Community Walk
for Autism Awareness**
Quinsigamond Community
College Worcester, MA
1-3:30 PM

April 25, 2007

Autism Support Group
7-9 PM

April 25, 2007

Mass Advocates for Children
Julia Landau Esq.
For Teachers and Paraprofessionals:
Meeting the Needs of Children with
Autism, What Professionals Need to
Know about SPED Law
4-6 PM

Call the Autism Resource Center to register

April 26, 2007

**Parent Education Series
Melmark New England**
Daily Living Skills
7-9 PM
Center of Hope
1 North Street
Southbridge, MA

April 27, 2007

OPEN HOUSE
9 AM—4 PM

April 30, 2007

**Autism Spectrum Awareness Day
At the Statehouse
Beacon Hill
Boston, MA**
9:30 AM
(see page 7)

MAY



May 2, 2007

Helping Our Children Achieve.
Millbury Public Library
128 Elm Street

May 2, 2007

Helping Our Children Achieve.
Millbury Public Library
128 Elm Street
Millbury MA 10 AM
Speaker: Caroline Fisher, Child Psych-
iatrist -Treatment options for chil-
dren with special needs

May 2, 2007

**For Professionals &
Paraprofessionals**
**A Presentation by Melmark New
England -Successful Implementa-
tion of Behavior Interventions in
Public School Settings**
4-6 PM
Autism Resource Center

May 2, 2007

**Autism Support Group
“First Responders”**
**For Parents and Teachers on Emer-
gency Situations and Autism**
Presented by Jackie Sullivan MOM
ARC North Central
564 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA
7-9 PM

May 5, 2007

**Futures Planning, Trusts and Legal
Alternatives**
ARC Community Services
564 Main Street, Fitchburg MA
Speaker: Atty. Theresa Varnet, MSW,
JD 10:30-3:00 PM
\$35 person, \$20 for ARC members
Call (978)343-6662 to register

May 6, 2007

**Family Fun Activity
Cinco De Mayo Party**
Trout Brook Reservation
Manning Street, Holden
2-4 PM
Suggested donation \$5.00/Family

May 9, 2007

Mom’s & Tots (preschoolers)
4-6 PM

May 9, 2007

Asperger Support Group
6-9 PM

May 10, 2007

**Assist Our Special Kids
(ASK_PAC)**
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Intersection Rt.20 and Rt.131
Sturbridge, MA 7-9 PM
Activity and Environmental Transi-
tions. Theresa Ressigue, BCBA

May 15, 2007

Autism Support Group
Charlton Sewing Center
12 Stafford St, Charlton
9-11AM

May 16, 2007

Boardmaker Workshop
7-9 PM

May 20, 2007

SIBSHOP Family Cookout
Camp Green Eyrie, Harvard
For Sibshoppers and their families
Suggested Donation \$10/Family
2-5PM

May 22, 2007

Autism Support Group
Whitins Community Center
60 Main St Whitinsville
7 PM– 9 PM

May 23, 2007

Autism Support Group
7-9 PM

May 25, 2007

Mother’s Network Brunch
10:30AM —1:30 PM

May 25, 2007

Autism Support Group
Community Room Groton Library
Main St., Groton MA
10AM—12 NOON

May 28, 2007

Memorial Day
CENTER CLOSED

Please call 508-835-4278 to register for all events, unless otherwise specified all events take place at The Autism Resource Center

JUNE



June 2-3, 2007
Mother's Retreat
 Colonial Inn, Gardner
 Dinner and Breakfast
 2 Moms per/room
 Check in 3 PM June 2nd
 Check out 11 AM June 3rd
Cost \$35.00

June 5, 2007
Autism Support Group
 Charlton Sewing Center
 12 Stafford St, Charlton
 7-9 PM

June 6, 2007
Autism Support Group
 Fitchburg ARC 7-9 PM

June 6, 2007
 Helping Our Children Achieve.
 Millbury Public Library
 128 Elm Street
 Millbury MA 10 AM
 Gina Gallagher and Patty
 Konojian—www.
 shutupaboutyourperfectkid.com

June 12, 2007
Autism Support Group
 Whitins Community Center
 60 Main St
 Whitinsville, MA
 9-11AM

June 13, 2007
Asperger Support Group
 6-9 PM

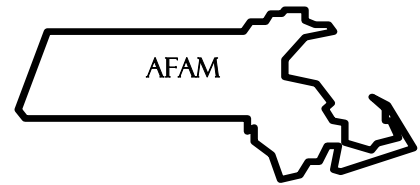
June 15, 2007
Autism Support Group
 Community Room
 Groton Public Library

Main Street, Groton, MA
 10 AM—12 NOON

June 19-20, 2007
Paraprofessional Training
 Quinsigamond Community
 College, Worcester, MA
 8 AM-3 PM

June 25—29, 2007
**Family Fun Days at Camp
 Charlton, MA**
*Suggested donation \$5.00 per
 Family/Day*

Featured Camp Events include:
 June 25-Capen Hill Animal Rehab
 June 26-The Bird Lady
 June 27-Pumpernickle Puppets
 June 28-Music with Kathy Riley
 June 29-The Monkey Man



**Autism Spectrum
 Awareness Day
 2007**

**Monday, April 30th
 Beginning at 9:30 AM**

**Autism Grows Up:
 Growing Incidence,
 Growing Awareness,
 Growing Into Adulthood**

The Statewide Coalition for Autism and Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM) invite you to participate in Autism Spectrum Awareness Day in the Great Hall of the Massachusetts State House.

This annual event is an excellent opportunity not only to learn about pending legislation and budget items affecting people with autism spectrum disorders but also to visit your legislators to discuss these issues with them.

Awards will be presented to two legislators and Community leaders who have distinguished themselves by their efforts on behalf of the autism community. Following the program, participants will have time to visit their own legislators to advocate for specific legislative initiatives and pending budget items.

Call 508-835-4278 to arrange Carpools



Help Wanted

Family Activity Coordinator

10 Hours/Week
 Some evening and weekend hours
 This person will facilitate family activities and Support Groups
 Parent of a child with autism preferred

Administrative Assistant

10 Hours /week
 The person for this position needs knowledge of computer programs Word, Excel, Access data base design and management and Publisher.
 Will also be responsible for budget tracking and ordering supplies.

Interested parties should submit a resume or letter of interest to

Sue Loring Director
 Autism Resource Center
 71 Sterling Street
 West Boylston, MA 01583

No Calls Please



71 Sterling Street
West Boylston, MA 01583

Email: autism@HMEA.org

Sue Loring - Director

Julie Goren - Family Activity Coordinator

Kris Gregoire - Case Manager

Hours:

Mon-Tues-Thurs – Fri 9 AM - 4 PM

Wednesdays 9 AM - 6 PM

Families Working Together



The Resource CONNECTION is a quarterly publication of The Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts

The Autism Resource Center does not endorse any treatments, programs or products. Articles, announcements and resources are provided for information purposes only.

Announcing Two New Programs

Early this year the Center, with the funding provided by DMR's Autism Division, announced programs to meet the need for Social Skills groups and Sensory programs for children in Central MA. We are pleased to announce the beginning of two more groups this spring. Children must be DMR or Division Eligible to participate in these groups.

Social Skills Group

For children with Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism ages 11–14. This group will begin April 28th and run six Saturdays from 10 AM–12 Noon through June

2nd. The group will meet at The Autism Resource Center. Debra Beauregard M. Ed. will facilitate this group with teen peers assisting her. Utilizing Lego building sets participants will learn to work cooperatively in a group setting while building the social skills of sharing, turn-taking, making eye-contact, following social rules, using greetings and names and perspective taking.

Sensory Gym for Older Children

This group is for children ages 12–18 and will meet on six Saturdays 1–3 PM. Dates to be announced, at Girls Inc. in Worcester with OT consultation provided by Mary Loughlin MS OTR/L. For more information or to register please call the Autism Resource Center

Family Steering Committee

Chairwoman

Rebecca Blatz (*Lunenburg*)

Treasurer

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Stacey Lavelly (*Shrewsbury*)

Janet Amorello (*Worcester*)

Kathy Hamelin (*Fitchburg*)

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