

This year, 2017, will mark 20 years since the Center first opened its doors. Looking back on the very FIRST edition of our newsletter I realized how far we have come from the early days, when our mission was to provide information and referral to families raising children with autism. We had two staff then, each working 20 hours, sharing a small office and some books. In that first year, we had 411 families on our mailing list. Then a small thing happened. For unknown reasons, the number of families confronted by the challenges of autism began to grow. The autism tsunami gained momentum as the diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome was added to the DSM and clinicians began to diagnose more and more children. Work was done through the Act Early campaign to help Pediatricians recognize the “Red Flags for Autism” and refer patients for diagnosis. 1 in 2,500 became 1 in 500, then 1 in 250, then 1 in 166, to 1 in 150, then 1 in 110 and on and on, to 1 in 68. It didn't matter if your child was 1 in 2,500 like mine or 1 in 68, that diagnosis changed your life. Our mail list grew from 411 to 3225, and continues to grow as we expand to meet the needs of people with autism across the spectrum and across the life span. With the support of our community we have been part of advocacy that has successfully lobbied so that children from low income families have a shot at the critical services early in their lives that can make a difference. The Massachusetts Autism Waiver Program continues to serve children up to the age of 9 with intensive services. We've seen what a difference this can make for children in the eight years the waiver has been in operation. In 2010 we successfully lobbied to pass a comprehensive autism insurance law making it possible for families with some health insurances to access home ABA services and medically necessary treatments for autism. In 2014 the omnibus bill expanded this benefit to families with MassHealth. This also has made a world of difference for families. We lobbied successfully for expanded DDS eligibility for adults with autism only who have significant functional limitations. This we hope will make a difference for them, they have waited so long. There is still more advocacy needed to convince Beacon Hill to allocate sufficient funding to meet the need.

Our staff of two part time employees has grown to our current staff of eight people to serve our families and adults. With the waiver came our three Autism Waiver Support brokers and the expanded adult eligibility brought our Adult Services Specialist. Additional incremental funding over time from DDS, gave us two full time employees. Our incredible success in fundraising, initially done by parent volunteers from our Family Steering Committee, has allowed us to provide quality programs for our families, who come together at our Family Fun Events, bond through our on-line support groups, and create a support network like no other for those who are active and involved.

Family Fun events for children and their families grew to include separate events for teens and young adults. Activities are now being offered specifically to adults who are newly eligible. Camp Havvago and the Beachcomber experience at Camp Starfish have been funded through your fundraising efforts. Generous grants have allowed us to fund some kids to do the LEADERS program. Educational programs, emergency funds for families in crisis also are funded through your fundraising. Without the ongoing support of our families we would not be able to offer all that we do.

When the Center first opened, our motto was “Families Working Together”. That was precisely what made it possible for us to change our motto to “We are THE Center of the Autism Community”.

As we begin this milestone year we are indebted to all of you who have made us what we are, and committed to continued growth to be what you need. Experience has shown us that this will change over time, but you can count on us to meet the challenges of the times and to partner with you to make Central Massachusetts a place where people with autism can thrive. That's something to celebrate!

Floortime™ for Parents



To register
Visit

www.autismresourcecentral.org

For course information contact
the instructor:

Sarah Measures:

sarahmeasures@yahoo.com

617-413-1355

HMEA's Autism Resource Central in partnership with Astra Foundation is pleased to offer the workshop, **Floortime™ for Parents**.

When:

Six Thursdays from 7:00 to 9:00, on Mar 9th, Mar 16th, Mar 23rd, Mar 30th, Apr 6th and Apr 20th (snow day Apr 27th) with two individualized mentoring sessions on Saturday 18th March and Apr 1st. (Family times to be selected).

Where:

Autism Resource Central, 71 Sterling St, West Boylston MA

Tuition:

In this Floortime™ workshop, you will learn DIR® techniques developed by Stanley Greenspan, MD and Serena Wieder, PhD. DIR® focuses on the child-parent (or caregiver) relationship as the heart of learning and development. You will learn how to play with your child to better support his/her development and emotional growth. The individualized family mentoring sessions tightly couple theory and practice to help you master specific skills to help your child. This class is suitable for parents of children ages 2 to 10, with issues of behavior, regulation, communication or developmental delays.

We will discuss child development and watch videotapes of child play to understand how Floortime™ may help your child:

- ✓ Improve attention.
- ✓ Engage with you more strongly.
- ✓ Be more calm and organized.
- ✓ Communicate more effectively.
- ✓ Play with more complexity.
- ✓ Better understand themselves and others.



Sensory IEP Clinics and Inclusion Grants

Participants for all groups MUST be DDS eligible, and under the age of 18. Parents must register within 30 days of request for funding.

Social Skills

We've a limited amount of funds left for those who would like to enroll their child in a Social Skills Groups with a clinician. If you have NOT been funded this year you may apply for funding, up to \$300.00 towards a group session. Funds will be sent directly to providers, and families would be responsible for any fees beyond \$300.00. If a provider charges less than \$300.00 the fee will be covered in total by the funding. Funding for social skills groups is limited to eligible candidates under the age of 18 who meet the criteria for participation as set by the clinician. Contact the Resource Center to secure possible funding by calling Donmarie Smith at 508-298-1609. Once your DDS status has been verified your provider may invoice the Center for payment of \$300.00 for your child

IEP, ADL & VISUAL CLINICS

To book all clinics please call Donmarie Smith at (508) 298-1609.

ADL and Visuals Clinics are by appointment

ADL Clinics are booked only upon request. For Visual Clinics, parents may drop by the Center at any time during regular business hours to access the Boardmaker Program and material to create visuals. Printing and laminating are provided without charge. After a brief tutorial on how the Boardmaker software works, most parents can create their own visuals.

1 Hour IEP Clinics with Elaine Rabbitt Meet with an Advocate to discuss your child's IEP, concerns and needs and how best to advocate for changes with your school

Dates available for consultation are as follows :

February 7, 2017

Seven Hills Family Support Center Sturbridge MA

9:30,10:30, 11:30am, 12:30 & 1:30 PM

February 9, 2017

Leominster Public Library

9:30,10:30, 11:30am, 12:30 & 1:30 PM

February 16, 2017

Autism Resource Central

9:30,10:30, 11:30am, 12:30 & 1:30 PM

Sensory Clinics with Mary Loughlin MS OTR/L Autism Resource Central :

Clinic will provide consultation to families in the area of Sensory Processing Dysfunction. Child and Parent will meet with Mary for four (4) 1 hour sessions across 4 weeks. A Sensory Profile Assessment will be done which will identify any sensory specific needs their child may or may not have.

Parents will be provided with resources including websites, DIY sensory equipment, sensory play and activities. At the conclusion of the sessions parents will be given an individual "sensory diet" for their child.

Dates :

January 18, 25, Feb 1, & 8th

Snow date : Feb 15th

Times 3PM, 4PM, 5PM

YMCA Membership Inclusion Grants

This offering has become very popular, so much so that the funding allocated for the memberships has been depleted and we have a wait list currently. If other activities are not depleted by spring this offering will be re-opened and we will serve those on the wait list first then others on a first come first served basis.

The YMCA branches currently working with us are as follows

Greendale YMCA in Worcester
Montachusett YMCA in Fitchburg
Tri Community YMCA in Southbridge
Hockomock YMCA, Franklin Branch,
The Clark YMCA in Winchendon,
Whitins Community Center

Children who qualify may be accompanied by 1 parent or a 1:1 aide. Access to areas for children under the age of 13 may require the person accompanying the child to have a CORI & SORI check done, which would take 24 hours.



Donations & Memorial Gifts

Qijong Sensory Massage Training

UNITED WAY DONATIONS

Gregory Facteau

Robert Pastor

Wegman's Food Market Employees

Jennifer Kremer

Janet Albert

Alvara Gjylapi

Hanover Insurance

Brian Kelly

Margo McCaffrey Bishop

Maria Panerelli

Coreen Gaffney

John O'Leary

Liberty Mutual

Matthew Desimone

Brittany Tirozzi

Michael Couturier

Chelsea A. Olson

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

DONATIONS

David Powell

Andrew Cariglia

Stephanie & Robert Handlin

Yvonne Comoletti

Brian Kovalski

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Elain Henderson

Connie & Bill Lavalee

Deborah Sullivan

Eugene & Betty Ogborn

In Memory of Cecilia Lucek

Janet Such

Kathleen F. Koprusak

In Memory of Joseph J. Turner

Robert & Sharon Ross

In Memory of Bill Keevan

Terrian & John Baker

Diane & John Keevan

Carol-Ann Hall

Seantice Karimian

Deborah Bourassa

Robert & Johanna Dutra

CARS FOR AUTISM You can donate a used car and support your Center.

A professionally licensed, bonded and insured towing company will pick-up your car donation and provide you with a vehicle donation receipt. **Car Donations are accepted at**

<http://www.donateacar.com/>

or call

800-240-0160 to speak to a representative of Car Program LLC

Our Thanks to the following who donated

Amanda Molina

Rabi Fettig

Matthew Howes

Qijong Massage for autism is a research evidenced –based treatment for children with ASD . Developed by Dr Louisa Silva MD, L.A.C, it is a specialized massage based on Traditional Chinese Medicine that normalizes the sense of touch which in turn helps other sensory systems start working together in an efficient manner. As a result , the child is calmer and better able to focus , becomes more aware of themselves and others thereby enhancing their social interactions and developmental skills . Within a few weeks of doing the massage, eye contact, behavior and sleep improve. According to Dr. Silva, evidenced research after 5 months of parents administering the massage show that children under the age of 6 with severe autism can move into the moderate range, moderate autism moves towards mild and mildly autistic children can move off the spectrum. Improvements have also been noted with older children. Please see website www.qsti.org for updated research. Qijong Sensory Massage is administered by parents under the guidance of a trained qijong sensory massage therapist. It is administered daily on a massage table or bed with the recipient wearing comfortable clothing. Areas where the child is uncomfortable with touch are not avoided ; instead techniques are attuned to the child, within the comfort zone of the child.

Class will take place at the Autism Resource Center on Tuesday, January 17th 6:30– 9:30 PM

Fee: \$25.00/pp

Limit 4 Couples—8 People

Happy New Year!

You are cordially invited to HMEA's Autism Resource Central's

New Years Eve Dinner Dance

For Teens, Young Adults, & Their Families

Friday, December 30th 2016

The Manor Restaurant

242 West Boylston St , West Boylston Ma

Italian Dinner Buffet Regular and GFCF on request

6:30—9:30 PM

RSVP before December 23, 2016

Call Cid at 508-298-1610

or Donmarie at 508-298-1609

to register your immediate family

AUTISM 101 at UMass Medical School

When you first receive an autism diagnosis it can be overwhelming. There's the initial emotional shock, which is quickly followed by feelings of inadequacy as there is no manual for parenting itself, let alone parenting a child with an autism spectrum disorder. And there is SO much to learn. Our Autism 101 series is designed to help families who are new to the diagnosis gain a solid footing to begin their journey. It includes an overview of autism, the medical management of ASD, how to access public supports, an overview of sensory issues seen in ASD, a workshop on SPED Law and an organizational workshop. Autism 101 will take place in February & March at UMass Medical School from 10 AM– 12 Noon. We are thrilled to be collaborating with CANDO staff to bring this to the University Campus.

February 9, 2017: Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Center Supports—Donmarie Smith

February 16, 2017 : Autism and Sensory Processing Disorder, Mary Loughlin OTR/L

March 2, 2017 : Special Education Law: Elaine Rabbit

March 9, 2017: Let's Get Organized, Barbara Donati , Family Ties

March 16, 2017: Medical Management of ASD, Sue Loring RN

March 23, 2017: Accessing Public Supports, Kristen Cariglia —Autism Waiver Support Supervisor

Location : UMass Medical School , 55N Lake Ave Worcester , 4th Floor Suite 4-301

Register online at our website or call 508-298-1610 to register .

Register for Events @ www.autismresourcecentral.org or call 508-298-1610 Fees for Events are as stated on site

Events will be held at 71 Sterling Street, West
Boylston MA unless otherwise stated



DECEMBER

December 4, 2016

Children's Holiday Party
reservations required

December 7, 2016

Parents of Adults Support Group
7-9 PM

DECEMBER 9, 2016

CENTER CLOSED

December 12, 2016

Family Fun & Fitness
St. Vincent Hospital—Atrium
123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA
Walk 6-7 PM

December 14, 2016

**Parents of Children Support
Group**
7-9 PM

December 15, 2016

Grupo de Apoyo
Centros - 11 Sycamore St. Worcester
10AM – 1 PM

December 19, 2016

Parents & Tots
4:30 –5:30 PM

Family Fun & Fitness

Healthy Eating
UNO's
25 Major Taylor Blvd,
Worcester, MA 6 PM

DECEMBER 26, 2016

CENTER CLOSED

Family Fun & Fitness

3 Bartlett Pond Way, Sterling, MA
Core Training 6-7 PM

December 27, 2016

LaSalette Shrine

(meet at 4:45pm at Manor Restaurant
parking lot, leave at 5pm and return
approximately at 9pm) \$2.00/pp

December 28, 2016

Zoink's Fun Factory

7 Pioneer Drive, N. Oxford, MA
10 AM
\$2.00/child
12 & under must be at least 42"

December 29, 2016

Ice Skate

Wallace Civic Center
1000 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg, MA
10 AM—11 AM
Skate rental available
\$3.00/person friends and family

December 30, 2016

Friends & Family movie

West Boylston Cinema
101 W. Boylston St., W. Boylston, MA
10AM \$2.00/person

December 30 2016

New Year's Eve Dinner Dance

Manor Restaurant
42 W. Boylston St., West Boylston, MA
6:30-9:30 PM
Registration Required See Page 5

**Happy
New Year!**

JANUARY

JANUARY 2, 2017

CENTER CLOSED

January 2, 2017

Family Fun & Fitness
3 Bartlett Pond Way, Sterling, MA
Core Training 6-7 PM

January 4

**Parents of Adults Support
Group**
7-9 PM

January 9, 2017

Family Fun & Fitness
St. Vincent Hospital—Atrium
123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA
Walk 6-7PM

January 11, 2017

**Parents of Children Support
Group**
**Taking Charge of Treatment
for Your Child with Asperger's
(ASD)**

Cornelia Elwood &
Dr. Scott MacLeod 7-9 PM
(snow date Feb 8th)

JANUARY 16, 2017

CENTER CLOSED

Family Fun

Friends & Family Movie
West Boylston Cinema
101 W. Boylston St., W. Boylston,
MA 10AM \$2.00/person

Family Fun & Fitness

3 Bartlett Pond Way, Sterling, MA
Core Training 6-7 PM

Register for Events @ www.autismresourcecentral.org or call 508-298-1610 Fees for Events are as stated on site

FEBRUARY



- January 18, 2017**
Parents of Teens Group
 Teen Pizza & Game Social Group
 runs concurrently
 7 - 9 PM
- January 19, 2017**
Teens & Young Adults
 Movie & pizza
 6pm \$2/person
- January 19, 2017**
Camp Havvago Information Night
 7—9 PM
- January 23, 2017**
Parents & Tots
 4:30PM—5:30PM
- Family Fun & Fitness**
 St. Vincent Hospital—Atrium
 123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA
 6PM
- Parents Night Out Hosted by Our Dad's Group**
"Life Animated"
 Strand Theater
 58 High Street, Clinton, MA
 6:15 PM doors open, 7PM movie
 Food & beverages available
 \$2.00/pp
- January 25, 2017**
Parents of Girls Support Group
 pizza & Games for girls runs
 Concurrently 7 —8:30 PM
- January 28, 2016**
Sibshop
 Chinese New Year
 10 AM—2 PM
 \$10/child \$15 cap/family

- February 1, 2017**
Parents of Adults Support Group
 Margaritas Mexican Restaurant
 10006 Shops Way, Northboro, MA
 7-9 PM

- February 6, 2017**
Family Fun & Fitness
 St. Vincent Hospital—Atrium
 123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA
 Walk 6-7 PM

- February 8, 2017**
Parents of Children Support Group
 7-9 PM

- February 13, 2017**
Family Fun & Fitness
 3 Bartlett Pond Way, Sterling, MA
 Core Training 6-7 PM

- February 15, 2017**
Parents of Teens Group
 Teen Pizza & Social Group runs
 Concurrently
 7-9 PM

- February 18, 2017**
Sibshop
 Zion Lutheran Church
 60 Main Street Oxford, MA
 10 AM—2 PM
 \$10.00/child \$15 cap/family

- February 20, 2017**
Family Fun & Fitness
 St. Vincent Hospital—Atrium
 123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA
 Walk 6-7 PM

- February 21, 2016**
Friends & Family Ice Skating
 Blackstone Valley IcePlex
 121 Plain Street, Hopedale, MA
 11AM—12PM
 \$2.00/pp Skate rental available \$3 pp

- February 22, 2017**
Mass Audubon's Wachusett Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary
 113 Goodnow Road, Princeton, MA
 10 AM
 \$2.00/pp

- Parents of Girls Support Group**
 Pizza & Games for girls runs
 Concurrently
 6:30—8:30 PM

- February 23, 2017**
Skyzone
 290 Turnpike Road, Westboro, MA
 10:30 AM \$5.00/Bouncer

- February 24, 2017**
Family & Friends Movie
 Strand Theater
 58 High Street, Clinton, MA
 10 AM \$2.00/pp

- February 27, 2017**
Parents & Tots
 4:30-5:30 PM
- Family Fun & Fitness**
 3 Bartlett Pond Way, Sterling, MA
 Core Training 6-7 PM



71 Sterling Street
West Boylston MA

Phone: 508-835-4278 Fax: 508 -835-3723

Email: autism@HMEA.org

www.autismresourcecentral.org

Sue Loring RN - Director

Cid DeLeo - Assistant to Director

Donmarie Smith - Autism Information Specialist

Kris Cariglia- Autism Waiver Supervisor

David Iborra - Autism Waiver Support Broker

Priya Tikku - Autism Waiver Support Broker

Dianne Crossley LICSW - Autism Adult Services Specialist

Wanja Kiraguri- Event & Development Coordinator

HOURS

Monday through Thursday 9 AM– 9 PM Friday 9 AM–3 PM

Some evenings activities outside the Center result in the closing of the office , call ahead to verify that the office is open.

We are the **CENTER** of the autism community



The Resource CONNECTION is a quarterly publication of HMEA's Autism Resource Central

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

Introducing our Professional Advisory Board

As the Center has grown our needs have also grown and so as we enter of 20th year of operation we have developed a Professional Advisory Board to augment our Family Advisory Board. Many members of our Family Advisory board have professional experience as well as that as family member. For example Tina Colbert is an SLP. However in order to bring varied professional input to our board we decided late last year to develop a professional Advisory board as well. Members include Joyce Rosenfeld MD, Christopher Sharry Esq., and Mary Loughlin, OTR/L all parents as well as professionals . Bill Geary BCBA, HMEA's VP of Clinical Services and Kelly Charlebois, Executive Director of Tech Access of RI and Judy Scola of INSYNC Communication are lending their expertise as is long time supporter and educator Deb Beauregard. Join me in thanking those who've graciously agreed to give their time and talent so that the Center can continue to grow.

In the coming year, given the expansion of our services to serve Adults with ASD we will be adding 3 self advocates to our board to insure that their voices are represented as well. Any individual who would like to serve in that capacity may feel free to contact me at the Center.

Family Advisory Board Chair

Heidi Robbins (Millbury)

Vice Chair

Kristen Saad (Worcester)

Secretary

Tina D'Asti (Bellingham)

AFAM Liaison

Erica Ploof (Sterling)

Carrie Noseworthy (Leominster)

Kim Athanassiades (Oxford)

Tina Colbert (Worcester)

Brian Kovalski (Clinton)

Kelly Carey (Shrewsbury)

Lisa Thompson (West Boylston)

Mia McDonald (Worcester)

Herb Cabral (Bolton)

Donna Boucher (HMEA)