Annual Education Issue

Drawing Autism
Jill Mullin features art created by individuals on the spectrum
What's Inside  OUR FALL 2009 ISSUE

features

3 The Importance of Working Together, by Monica Richardson
3 A Matter of Pride, by Deborah Kitchen
4 Book Shelf Recommendations for Parents and Educators
5 A Disability that Shows Ability, an interview with Jill Mullin, by Jean Woolford
6 The Summer My Son Became a Man, by Kathleen Gifford
8 Life with Matthew, by Stephanie Richardson
9 Striking the Right Note, by Lori Oussoren
11 Info-Autisme – Three pages of resources for francophone teachers and parents
14 We are TOGETHER for AUTISM, by Bonnie McPhail
19 Autism Ontario Education Scholarships 2009
22 High School Students with Aspergers Syndrome, by Kevin Stoddart
24 ASD Additional Qualifications Course, by Dr. Kimberly Maich
26 Navigating Autism Treatment Information, by Stephen Gentles
28 York U Study Finds Evidence of Direct Link Between Mutated Gene and Autism, a press release from York University
29 Alumni Day for Autism Ontario Kids Camp, by Jean Woolford
30 In Your Corner – Chapter Activities, by Karyn Dumble

cover

This is our annual Education Issue, with special articles and resources of interest to educators. We welcome feedback from teachers and therapists.

book reviews

23 Marcelo in the Real World, by Francisco X. Stork
Two reviews by Malcolm Matthews and Michelle Turan
AS THE INCOMING PRESIDENT of the Board of Directors for Autism Ontario, I know that I have a lot to learn about governance, public policy and many other topics. The education never stops. And just like individuals on the spectrum, the way I learn is different from how others learn; I like to read, then actually learn by doing. My son who is on the spectrum, is a visual learner. My daughter learns through experiential moments.

When you have a child with autism, it may seem that you’ve been dropped in the middle of a whirlwind of information and buzzwords. You’ll hear things such as inclusion, behaviour modification, functional analysis, IEP, evaluation and sensory integration. You will be exposed to magazine articles, television shows and websites with one view or another about controversial issues. Some of the decisions you’ll need to make may come from areas where you don’t feel adequately informed. Of these important decisions, many will be in the area of education.

Educating children with autism can be a challenge for both parents and teachers. These children are individuals first and foremost, with unique strengths and weaknesses. Some may be of average to above-average intelligence, while others may be below average. Academic and lifeskill goals need to be tailored to that individual’s intellectual ability and functioning level.

As parents, teachers, teacher’s aides and policy makers we need to ensure that all individuals – children and adults – are given the opportunity to learn in a meaningful way, and recognize that learning happens both in the classroom and in everyday living. Parents and professionals need to work together. The more cooperation and mutual understanding there is, the higher the probability that the needs of the individual will be met.

I hope this educational issue stimulates you, exposes you to some new ideas and ways of thinking, and reminds us all that learning never stops.

Monica Richardson, President

A Matter of Pride

LAST JUNE I stepped down from my role as President of Autism Ontario – a role I proudly held for three years. It was truly an honour and a privilege for me to lead this amazing organization through some exciting times, and I have to say, I am very proud of all that we have been able to accomplish.

Autism Ontario’s membership and active volunteers are definitely a force to be reckoned with. Together we have been able to make a significant difference in enhancing the quality of life of individuals with ASD and their families. As active members and volunteers, you made my job really easy as a result of all the great work that you all do!

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the people that made this possible. First of all, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for all their hard work, dedication and support over the years. They truly have this organization’s best interests at heart and they work hard to ensure that we continue to move the needs of Autism Ontario forward.

I would also like to thank all of the amazing staff at Autism Ontario for all that they do – day in and day out – to run this great organization and meet the needs of our chapters, our members, the government and the community as a whole. Especially Marg Spoelstra, our Executive Director who, together with
her team, has done so much to move this organization to a whole new level over the past 10 years.

And last, but definitely not least, I want to thank all of our chapters for all that they do in communities across this Province, serving the needs of individuals with autism and their families every day. Our chapters are the backbone of Autism Ontario. They are the ones on the front line dealing with individual and families, and all of the realities and challenges they face. Without their dedication and efforts, Autism Ontario would not be what it is today. I know I speak on behalf of the entire membership when I say that their efforts are greatly appreciated and have made a world of difference for so many.

I will miss being President of this fine organization, but I look forward to continuing in my new role as Past President. I’ve had the opportunity to serve on the Board with our new President, Monica Richardson, for about six years now, and I’m confident that under her strong leadership Autism Ontario will continue to achieve even greater things as we move forward with our Strategic Plan for the next five years.

Deborah Kitchen, Past President

---

**Book Shelf Recommendations for Parents and Educators**

*Success Strategies for Students with Asperger Syndrome & Autism.* Geneva Centre for Autism, $79.95 DVD

Many students with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and autism have demonstrated that with effective transition strategies and informal support systems, secondary school can be a rich and productive experience. *Success Strategies* offers a framework for supporting these students with simple, common sense solutions.

Reduced course loads, a designated place to de-stress and the use of laptops and other technologies can make the difference between opting out of a program and thriving in secondary school and beyond. The DVD includes an introduction to AS for teachers, an ideal six-minute orientation for teachers and other staff with little experience with students with AS.

**DVD Chapters:**
1. Introduction
2. Transition Planning
3. Secondary School Success Strategies
4. AS – a Primer for Classroom Teachers
5. Resources

Distributed exclusively by Parentbooks in Canada and by Autism Asperger Publishing Company (AAPC) in the US. Also available in French — *Stratégies de succès pour les élèves ayant le syndrome d’Asperger et l’autisme*.

*Learners on the Autism Spectrum: Preparing Highly Qualified Educators.* Ed. Kari Dunn Buron and Pamela Wolfberg, $61.95

This text responds to the escalating need to prepare highly qualified educators with essential knowledge and practical skills to support diverse learners on the autism spectrum. Covering a range of critical topics and themes, this edited volume brings together leading experts representing diverse disciplines and perspectives for a comprehensive look at the core issues related to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Chapter authors include:

- Tony Attwood
- Gary Mesibov and Victoria Shea
- Pamela Wolfberg, Heather McCracken and Tara Tuchel
- Michelle Garcia Winner
- Ofer Golan and Simon Baron-Cohen
- Brenda Smith Myles, Sheila Smith and Julie Donnelly
- Stephen Shore

*Seeing is Believing: Video Self-Modeling for People with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities.* Tom Buggey, $27.95

Video self-modeling (VSM) is a proven and effective method for teaching new or more advanced skills and behaviours to people with autism. Homemade videos (created by parents, teachers or therapists) demonstrate a desired behaviour. Teach or modify a wide variety of behaviours and skills, such as controlling tantrums, increasing the frequency and length of verbal responses, making requests, interacting with peers, and solving math problems.

*Real Life, Real Progress for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Strategies for Successful Generalization in Natural Environments.* Ed. Christina Whalen, $38.95 (Pre-K–Grade 8)

Generalization is the key to effective autism intervention – when children can apply new skills across settings, they’ll make broad, long-term improvements in behaviour and social communication. Practical and reader-friendly, this book helps professionals take today’s most popular autism interventions to the next level by making generalization an integral part of them. With this urgently needed guide to one of the most important facets of autism intervention, readers will help children generalize social behaviours and communication skills – and ensure better lives and brighter futures.
A Disability that Shows Ability

AN INTERVIEW WITH JILL MULLIN

by Jean Woolford

JILL MULLIN, behaviour analyst and educator in New York City, works with children and adults who have been diagnosed with autism. She is the author of the soon-to-be-released Drawing Autism, a book of amazing illustrations by individuals on the autism spectrum. Jean Woolford of Autism Ontario interviewed Jill to get some further perspective on the book.

AO: What made you decide to do the book, Drawing Autism?
Jill: I was hired to work with a young man with autism who had moved out of his home into supported living. He had real artistic ability and we used his art as a way to build rapport and create a bond. It planted the idea that there might be others on the autism spectrum with artistic talents. I thought it would be wonderful to create a book to share these abilities with others.

AO: How did you decide which ones to choose for the book?
Jill: We had over 300 submissions. We grouped by themes which then helped us build the chapter framework. We eventually narrowed the number to approximately 50 artists. It was very hard telling such talented people that they were not going to be in the book.

AO: Were you surprised at the quality of the work?
Jill: I was surprised by the quantity, not the quality. There was so much variety of their visualization of the world. It was really exciting to have such expressive ability in the submissions.

AO: What is the unique perspective on the world that people with autism show in their art?
Jill: Overwhelmingly, it is about human interaction and isolation. Many artists use their art to portray their emotions; a sense of not belonging. Where words don’t work, art reflects the frustration of their relationship with people who do not understand autism. Some artists become “obsessed” on drawing one thing repeatedly. One artist drew his house 1,000 times in his artwork because it made him happy.

AO: How do you think the art helps laypeople get a better understanding of people with autism?
Jill: Most people do not understand those on the autism spectrum. This book will help people to realize that individuals with autism can have tremendous abilities. They speak about complexity, beauty, emotions and challenges through the language of visual art. They are inspiring.

AO: Do you have any favourite artists?
Jill: All of the work is really wonderful. I have a few favourites but probably the one I like the most is Shawn Belanger. His work is intricate and vibrant.

AO: What are you hoping to accomplish with the distribution of this book?
Jill: So many agencies helped in the early stages of this book. I want to be able to make donations from the proceeds to different agencies that have an art-centred focus and support the abilities of individuals on the autism spectrum. Watch the Drawing Autism Facebook page for further announcements.

AO: How do you feel personally now that the book is ready to be distributed?
Jill: I am very excited now that the book is close to its release. I look forward to hearing from the artists and their families once they have seen the book, as it is my hope that they will enjoy Drawing Autism as much as I do.

Drawing Autism, by Jill Mullin
Mark Batty Publisher, December 15, 2009
ISBN : 10 : 0981960006
The Summer My Son Became a Man

OUR FAMILY HOPES BEYOND HOPE TO BUILD MEMORIES FOR DAVID SO HE CAN LOOK BACK AND Cherish some of the same childhood memories we all Cherish.

by Kathleen Gifford

MY 13-YEAR-OLD SON has complex autism. He struggles greatly navigating through daily life as our family tries desperately to help him have a natural childhood. We helped David to ride a bike by getting him a customized trike that allows us to control steering and braking from the rear. Our only prayer while teaching him to ride was that he did not work on speed first. David is non-verbal and he quickly used the bike as a communication tool to access parts of the community that we had no idea he wanted. After getting the bike for him we got a neighbourhood paper route in his school district. David was reaching some goals and growing.

This summer was a challenge for our family. After a hard two-year battle with cancer it was David’s grandmother’s wish to die at home. David loves his grandmother and we were afraid for the loss and grief he would have to experience. After getting the bike for him we got a neighbourhood paper route in his school district. David was reaching some goals and growing.

Just three weeks after the funeral David’s sister was getting married. She had been diagnosed with a non-cancerous brain tumour that was going to take 14 hours of surgery to correct. Because of the gravity of this surgery Randi and her fiancé did not want to leave anything “undone.” The wedding was scheduled just one week prior to the surgery. They had a very small, intimate, beautiful evening wedding. Beautiful for us, but another challenge for David. He has great difficulty with new places and crowds. Together, the combination is too overwhelming. He also does not like to eat with a lot of people. For the last couple of years David has not even attended family dinners. It is just not a place or an activity that showcases his strengths. We decided to try to get him to the wedding. We brought a support worker and set a small goal of having one picture of David taken with the bride and groom. When we got to the inn, David could not go in-

ny, we took David to the grave. We gave him a flower to place there and wondered if he understood that Grandma was buried there. After a few short minutes we turned to walk back to the van. David stopped, turned around toward the grave and waved good-bye. We wept together both from sadness but also from the beauty of a shared understanding.
side. The support worker agreed to walk around the grounds with him until after the ceremony. Inside, the clock seemed to stand still while our youngest daughter spoke her vows. Surely David would not be able to withstand this and I gladly focused on being mother of the bride. The vows were filled with emotion knowing that they would be tried in just a week’s time with major surgery. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house. We followed the bride and groom to the door, and to my delight and complete surprise there sat David in the back of the room. He was so quiet I had not even known he was there. A tear-filled report from our support worker told us that David was signing, “I love you” to his sister and brother-in-law throughout the ceremony. He went outside and withstood the gruelling process of having lots and lots of pictures taken. He was absolutely thunderstruck by his sister’s beauty and could not keep his eyes off her. After the pictures I told him he could go home if he needed. David shook his head and walked back into the building where he gave the happy couple the rest of their wedding gift. He stayed and ate with everyone and behaved as a perfect gentleman. I can assure you that for David this just doesn’t happen. He does nothing because it would benefit someone else and he certainly does not put on pretences. He stayed at that wedding celebration for two glorious hours and kissed the bride’s cheek before leaving.

The next week was a blur and we found ourselves again having to explain the unexplainable. Using social stories we told David about the surgery that his sister was to have. He reacted violently whenever we talked about it. We were all so filled with fear. After 14 and a half hours the surgery was complete and successful. The days passed fairly quickly and every morning before going to the hospital we would ask David if we could give Randi a message from him. The first one was a simple, “I love you.” Day two he signed, “Come home,” and we gladly passed on his words. On the third day I asked again for a message for his sister and I got one that made little sense to me. He signed, “Sing” for me to tell her. I questioned him, asking if he was sure. He nodded his head and I agreed to tell her. When I passed on the message Randi was immediately filled with emotion. I learned that when Randi and David spent time together on weekends she would always sing to him. The first chance he got after Randi came home from the hospital David rode his bike to her house and had a visit with her on the porch.

Our life is filled with challenges and uncertainty but never again will I wonder if David is understanding the gravity of life’s bigger concepts. Nor am I afraid of them. We will continue to include David rather than shelter him as we walk this journey through life together. David is now getting ready for high school. He is no longer a boy, but a man. Life is just not any richer than that.
I HAVE A BROTHER who turned 16 in March. Like many families, we have our brother-sister fights – he comes into my room and bugs me, but he can also be really sweet to me too. We have our Mom and Dad, and our dog, Jack, a golden retriever. Sounds like the perfect family right?

But my brother also has autism, a global developmental delay, and he cannot speak.

Let me tell you what it’s like living with Matthew.

I am 14 years old and in Grade 9 at Greenwood College School. I have a pretty typical teenage life. I go to school, do my homework, hang out with my friends and I really like sports. I was on the basketball team and we had an undefeated season and won our division championship; I’m now on the volleyball team. On weekends I play basketball and also am a ski racer. It’s hard for me sometimes because while I play all these sports, Matthew does not and really does not know how to. He has learned to ski with Track 3. It’s really cool as they have him in a harness and he skis down with a couple of men who hold the harness. He really likes this so it makes me happy that he is able to at least get a taste of skiing.

In the summer we go to the cottage where Matthew loves to be in the water and play in the sand. After many years of lessons, Matthew is able to swim and he loves coming into the water with me, my cousins and all the dogs that are usually at the cottage.

Living with Matthew has its challenges and it can be very frustrating at times. Because he has a lot of very special needs, my Mom and Dad have to spend a lot of their time with him, so sometimes I don’t have as much of their time as I would like. When we go out he can be very loud, which can be embarrassing. Not all my friends really understand what autism is and what he is like so I feel uncomfortable having them at our house. I do have a few friends to whom it does not really matter. My cousins are really cool around him which is awesome, especially my older cousin Emily whom I’m very close with. She treats Matthew like he was a normal person and like he is her own brother.

My brother can be really funny too and he has this great laugh that comes straight from his belly, but he can get really angry and destroy things. It is hard to know why he has such extreme behaviours, and I guess something in his brain is just not working right.

Mom and Dad have worked with lots of doctors, therapists and special schools to try and help Matthew. Some things have helped but they have to try lots of different things to see what helps and what does not.

Recently Matthew moved out of our house and into a treatment-based residential program. When Mom and Dad told me about this, I really did not know what to say. It was a very weird feeling. I wanted to know where he was going, who was going to take care of him, when we would see him. We usually see him once or twice a week and take him out for dinner or for a walk. I know Mom and Dad really miss him. I miss him at times, but it is also nice to have some quietness around the house.

Will he ever be like me? Probably not. But that’s okay, because he is special in his own way.

I do worry about what will happen when he grows up, and when Mom and Dad may not be here to take care of him. But hopefully that won’t happen for a long time, and by then we will have it all figured out.

This is my story. I hope that in some way it has meant something to you.
Striking the Right Note
SOMETIMES MUSIC COMMUNICATES WHEN LANGUAGE FAILS

by Lori Oussoren, Music Therapist

Thomas* caught my attention the first time I met him. A tall and lean 18-year-old with a contagious smile and piercing eyes, he was incredibly articulate for his age. He was constantly in motion, had an amazing gift for language and especially loved poetry; he could quote entire poems of Ginsberg. He had been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome. Thomas had a deep love of music as well, but had had very little opportunity to explore music. That is where I came in.

I had been assigned to start a music therapy program in Thomas’ high school. As a team, we agreed to put Thomas into two music therapy sessions. The first would be a group session with about six participants; the other would be an individual session. Each session would be an hour long, first thing in the morning. The goals for Thomas were to increase social interaction and communication skills, and to increase motivation by offering Thomas the opportunity to learn more about something he already loved – music.

In the group session, Thomas learned that he could interact with his peers using the voice of the drum. He would glow when he heard his peers echo, on their drums, a rhythm that he had created. He was empowered when they followed his “conducting” and played louder or softer, faster or slower, depending on his direction. Just as importantly, Thomas learned to watch the non-verbal cues of his peers, and to respect and follow their instructions when they were “conductors” in the circle. He learned to listen to their voices, both on the drum and outside of the session.

In the individual session, Thomas explored his ideas of conformity, scheduling, authority, relationships and the expectations of society through songwriting. Although often Thomas would not tell me his thoughts in conversation, he told me in his song lyrics. He wrote of a lost love, of sadness over being different, of loneliness, and of his desire to remain an individual instead of conforming. Songwriting allowed Thomas to express the emotions in a medium that was safe. Thomas suggested surprising his mother with a CD of his compositions, which we did.

Music therapy motivated him to come to school on a more regular basis, it motivated him to do homework, it increased his communication with his peers, it provided him with a safe environment and medium in which he could express his emotions. It allowed him to discover and explore a skill that will serve him for the rest of his life. And lastly, it gave him the greatest joy of composing something he could truly be proud of.

What is music therapy?
Research has shown that music therapy is an effective form of therapy for children with autism. The structural quality of music helps children to organize their thoughts

*Name changed to protect privacy.
and ideas. Music improvisation activities increase motivation, social interaction and attention span. Case studies on music therapy and children with autism have shown that music therapy increases communicative behaviour, language development, emotional responsiveness and behaviour control in children with autism.

According to the Canadian Association for Music Therapy (www.music-therapy.ca), music therapy is “the skillful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain and restore mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health. Music has nonverbal, creative, structural and emotional qualities. These are used in the therapeutic relationship to facilitate contact, interaction, self-awareness, learning, self-expression, communication and personal development.” Music therapy is used with people of all ages and musical ability, in private practices and in institutions such as hospitals, rehabilitation centres and schools. Music therapists work with many populations, including those with brain injuries, trauma, geriatric, developmental disabilities, mental health, autism, Down’s Syndrome, physical disability, speech and language impairments and victims of abuse.

An accredited music therapist (MTA) has completed a minimum four-year Bachelor of Music Therapy degree followed by a 1,000-hour clinical internship. This education includes clinical placements, academic studies in music therapy research, psychology, counseling and music. During the internship, the music therapy intern develops their skills in music therapy, builds competence with various clinical populations and gradually assumes the full range of responsibilities of a professional music therapist. Following the internship, the intern submits a written portfolio about their music therapy philosophy, internship experience and case study. Upon approval from the Accreditation Review Board, the intern is given the title Music Therapist Accredited, MTA.

In my private practice, I specialize in giving adapted piano lessons to children with special needs. I have seen the many therapeutic benefits of making music: The giggles of confidence and trust from an 8-year-old selective mute who found her voice on the piano. The joy of a young blind woman when she learned how to play “Memory.” The excitement and eagerness of a 9-year-old boy with autism when he wrote silly lyrics to a song we’d composed. The proud smile of an 11-year-old boy when he presented his mother with a CD of his compositions.

Music therapy allows us to touch those who are sometimes difficult to touch. It brings us closer to those who would be isolated. It allows joy and harmony to enter the lives of those who have difficulties. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, “Music is the universal language of mankind.”
BIENVENUE À INFO-AUTISME, un ajout à la revue Autism Matters. Sur les deux pages suivantes, vous trouverez des informations à propos des nos services en français, un article qui fait réfléchir, des événements futurs et des renseignements au sujet des ressources en français. Célébrez avec nous notre première contribution à Autism Matters.

L’Autisme : Une Vision Commune

AVEC L’AVANCEMENT des connaissances, nous constatons que l’image de l’autisme se modifie. L’autisme est complexe à définir et peu de gens arrivent à identifier le noyau des besoins réels des personnes autistes.

Ainsi, pour un médecin, l’autisme se lit à partir des aires identifiées actuellement dans le DSM-IVR, soit la communication, l’interaction sociale et les comportements stéréotypés et intérêts restreints. Du côté du parent, l’autisme est d’abord une question de rôle parental, de compétence parentale et d’attachement.

L’individu Asperger, lui, décrira l’autisme à partir de ses trois thèmes préférés soit les habiletés sociales, ses intérêts et la communication (pour sa compréhension littérale). Le professionnel généraliste affirmera que l’autisme est défini par ses trois éléments principaux : les troubles de comportement, l’opposition et « l’absence d’émotions ».

L’autiste, lui, vous indiquera simplement que son fonctionnement interne implique trois pôles : la perception, le traitement de l’information et le décodage des émotions.

Qui donc se rapproche des vrais besoins de la personne autiste?

Il faut espérer que le prochain DSM (DSM V) nous apportera des lumières sur des éléments tels que l’aspect sensoriel, la cognition, l’intelligence et le langage afin que nous puissions trouver une langue commune pour parler de l’autisme et enfin répondre aux besoins réels des individus autistes.

Brigitte Harrisson, personne autiste
Lise St-Charles, personne neurotypique
Programme SACCADE
www.conceptconsulted.com

Brigitte Harrisson (travailleuse sociale) et Lise St-Charles (spécialiste en activités cliniques TED) sont consultantes en TED, conférencières et co-fondateuses de Concept ConsultED Inc. Elles ont créé le livre « TEDOU est autiste », qui explique aux enfants autistes de 7 à 11 ans ce qu’est l’autisme à l’aide d’images en langage conceptuel (©SACCADE). Publication à venir : TEDOU et le repas, fait dodo, s’habille, se lave… Elles enseignent aussi à l’Université de Montréal et l’Université Laval à Québec dans les programmes reliés à l’autisme.

Comité consultatif provincial d’Autisme Ontario pour les services en français

AUTISME ONTARIO a initié la création du Comité consultatif provincial pour les services en français. Le but de ce comité est de travailler en collaboration avec les familles francophones de l’Ontario qui ont un enfant ayant un TSA, les professionnels et les parties prenantes afin d’identifier les besoins des familles. Cette information aidera Autisme Ontario à identifier les priorités et à mieux déterminer comment répondre à celles-ci. Une source importante d’information est notre sondage en ligne, Sondage des besoins des familles de l’Ontario. Ce sondage fut conçu afin de rejoindre autant de parents que possible à travers la province. Autisme Ontario vous invite à compléter le sondage au www.autismontario.com/rcp et à envoyer ce lien à d’autres familles qui ont un enfant ayant un trouble du spectre autistique et à vos contacts communautaires afin que nous puissions rejoindre autant de parents que possible. Autisme Ontario vous remercie pour votre temps et pour vos opinions et idées.

CENTRE GENÈVE POUR L’AUTISME

Parmi les ressources sur le site Web du Centre Genève pour l’Autisme vous trouverez une galerie d’appuis visuels à télécharger, des vidéos expliquant l’utilisation de divers appuis visuels et un glossaire de termes.
Parentbooks-Ressources en français

Parentbooks est une librairie située à Toronto. Une liste des ressources en français chez Parentbooks est disponible sur notre site Web, www.autismontario.com. Voici quelques ressources excellentes à considérer :

Stratégies de succès pour les élèves ayant le syndrome d’Asperger et l’autisme
DVD créé par le Centre Genève pour l’Autisme, 79,95 $

Plusieurs élèves ayant le syndrome d’Asperger et l’autisme ont démontré qu’avec des stratégies de transition efficaces et des systèmes de soutien informels, l’école secondaire peut être une expérience enrichissante et productive.

Les stratégies de succès offrent un cadre pour soutenir les élèves avec des solutions simples et pleines de bon sens. Les stratégies telles que la charge réduite de cours, un endroit indiqué pour décompresser et l’utilisation des ordinateurs portables et d’autres technologies peuvent faire la différence entre opter de quitter un programme ou de s’épanouir à l’école secondaire et dans le futur.

Ce DVD inclut “Introduction au syndrome d’Asperger pour l’enseignant(e) en salle de classe.”

Un guide idéal en six minutes pour l’enseignant(e) et les autres membres du personnel commençant avec les élèves ayant le syndrome d’Asperger.

L’incroyable échelle à 5 points : Aider les élèves souffrant de troubles du spectre autistique à comprendre les interactions sociales et à contrôler leurs réponses émotionnelles. Kari Dunn Buron et Mitzi Curtis. 23,95 $

Quand mes angoisses deviennent trop grandes! Un livre de relaxation pour les enfants sujets à l’anxiété. Écrit et illustré par Kari Dunn Buron, 19,95 $

Ateliers et événements

DRE ISABELLE HÉNAULT : FORMATION EN FRANÇAIS À OTTAWA

Le programme Réalisons le potentiel de la communauté (RPC) d’Autisme Ontario, en collaboration avec le Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est (CECLFCE) vous présentent deux ateliers de formation cet automne offerts par Dre Isabelle Hénault. Dre Hénault est psychologue à l’Université du Québec à Montréal. Elle a développé une expertise en évaluation, éducation et soutien aux enfants, jeunes, adultes et couples vivant avec un trouble envahissant du développement (TED). Les ateliers suivants seront offerts à Ottawa, au Centre RA situé au 2451 rue Riverside, dans la salle Canada de 9h à 16h :

SEXUALITÉ : le dimanche 25 octobre 2009
Les participants auront une connaissance des facteurs du développement sexuel des personnes TED (sociaux, médicaux, les normes et influences de l’environnement); une compréhension des comportements sexuels inappropriés et comment intervenir de façon efficace; l’utilisation du matériel adapté à l’éducation sexuelle des personnes TED; les interventions afin de développer les habiletés socio-sexuelles des personnes TED.

Le CAT-kit : le lundi 26 octobre 2009 (cet atelier sera aussi offert le samedi 24 octobre en anglais). L’atelier abordera les théories et recherches sur l’efficacité cognitivo-comportementale (Cognitive Affective Training : CAT); le profil social et les difficultés sociales vécues par les individus TED-Asperger; l’application des stratégies d’intervention liées aux habiletés sociales, aux habiletés d’amitié et à la gestion des émotions; l’utilisation et la généralisation des techniques d’intervention positives dans les différents milieux de vie des personnes TED; l’application des exercices du Cat-kit. Une vidéo promotionnelle sur le CAT-kit est disponible en anglais au site suivant http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkCM5_pLr4s.

FORMULAIRE D’INSCRIPTION:
disponible au site www.autismontario.com/ottawa
De la part des parents

« Installé dans l’Est Ontario depuis quatre ans, je suis père de quatre enfants dont une fille autiste de 9 ans qui fréquente une classe distincte dans une excellente école publique francophone. Trouver des activités, des passe-temps, ou même des jeux pour distraire et amuser notre enfant autiste est une préoccupation quotidienne et un défi permanent pour toute la famille.

Grâce au RPC Ottawa, nous avons pu profiter de deux heures de bowling gratuit à Orléans pendant le mois d’août. Cette initiative nous a semblé extrêmement intéressante et très profitable pour le bien-être de notre enfant. Voici trois bonnes explications qui nous avons pu noter à ce propos:
• Notre enfant autiste a beaucoup apprécié le jeu de bowling, malgré le fait qu’il a duré un peu plus de deux heures,
• Ce jeu nous a permis de provoquer plus facilement une certaine forme d’intégration dans le jeu entre l’enfant autiste et le reste de la famille,
• L’horaire du dimanche matin nous a paru un timing excellent, puisqu’on était libre et la salle de bowling était très calme et vide,

Par la présente, nous tenons à remercier sincèrement l’équipe RPC Ottawa pour cette initiative ainsi que l’accueil très aimable et chaleureux qui nous a été réservé ce jour à notre arrivée, par la représentante d’Autisme Ontario.

Et enfin, nous pensons que ce jeu pourrait être très bénéfique pour beaucoup d’autres enfants autistes. »

Mehrabodin Masstan

« Quant à moi, durant toute l’année 2008-2009, j’ai assisté à des ateliers en français offerts par le Programme Réalisons le Potentiel de la Communauté comme par exemple la formation du Docteur Hénault. J’ai pu vraiment bénéficier de ces ateliers en français parce que certains des éléments abordés lors de ces activités m’ont aidé à mieux comprendre mon jeune. »

Merci à RPC.

Nacéra Zitoun, Ottawa

« Le samedi 19 septembre dernier, j’ai assisté à un atelier incroyable qui en valait vraiment la peine. L’atelier présenté par l’orthophoniste Yvon Blais, s’intitulait, « Logiciels et stratégies utilisant l’ordinateur pour le traitement orthophonique ». Cet atelier était formidable parce que le conférencier était très bien informé et nous a fait une démonstration utilisant un Smart Board, des différents logiciels disponible sur le marché, certains étant même gratuits sur l’internet. Je suis sortie de l’atelier avec motivation et enthousiasme relié aux potentiels d’apprentissage avec ces logiciels. Merci, merci, merci! »

Brenda Desjardins, Ottawa

« C’était mon premier vrai contact avec d’autres parents d’enfants autistes. J’ai donc pu fabriquer du matériel, mais aussi discuter sur ce que les autres vivent ou font comme thérapies. Le tout, en français, ma langue… Le programme RCP a changé nos vies et nous essayons d’en changer à notre tour. »

Élisabeth Duchesne, Prescott-Russell

---

Coach in the Kitchen

by Penny Gill

This 300-page cookbook written by the mother of a young man with ASD provides:
• Triple-tested recipes with full step-by-step instructions
• How-to illustrations
• Teacher guidelines
• Food preferences checklist
• Nutrition facts for each serving
• Cooking skills checklist
• Task-analyzed recipes
• Conversion menus
• Student intake forms
• Course evaluation forms
• Complete toolkit for cooking classes for people with Aspergers and high-functioning autism

To purchase this book, contact the author, Penny Gill at pibusc@sympatico.ca

Teachers and Therapists that Stand Apart

What are the qualities that make a teacher or therapist stand apart from the crowd? We heard from parents across the globe. We heard from adults with special needs as they shared their childhood experiences. And what we found is that they all agree! Find out what makes a great teacher or therapist.

This article receives thousands of downloads. Check it out at https://nlconcepts.infusionsoft.com/in/i64b540/253093804caf047a34a5c74728a752fd38554d5fc0abfe34a40812ebe9f47e&m=0.

Natural Learning Concepts
www.nlconcepts.com
1-800-823-3430
We are TOGETHER FOR AUTISM

by Bonnie McPhail, Campaign Coordinator

TOGETHER FOR AUTISM is a campaign in which students from kindergarten to university join hands with committed volunteers to raise autism awareness. How are we making a difference? It’s simple. Back in 2001 four people had the same dream: “Together we can make a difference in the lives of individuals with ASD and their families,” and we have carried on with this attitude of acceptance over these past eight years.

Time moves on, as do people, and this year we experienced many changes within the TOGETHER FOR AUTISM campaign. First of all, my Co-Chair Ron Harrison left in March to try his hand at a new venture, in which we wish him all the best. This was a difficult adjustment for me, as Ron and I had spent so much time together promoting our dream of making TFA a household name that some people actually thought we were married! Luckily for us, my husband was experiencing what many others are, an unplanned layoff that opened up his daily schedule. With his experience in computer reporting and autism he was a welcome fit for the TFA committee and he stepped into Ron’s shoes as a volunteer back in March. I can’t thank him enough for all he has done to assist us, especially knowing how much this campaign means to me. We also thank the provincial office staff who has had to settle only one domestic dispute thus far.

Another member who left us this past year is volunteer Layne Verbeek, our marketing guru who had to step down due to personal business commitments. Both Ron and Layne gave so much of themselves to the campaign over the last several years and we thank them both for their dedication. We continue to miss them on a daily basis.

Since celebrating our fifth anniversary, we have seen many changes to the overall look of the TOGETHER FOR AUTISM campaign, but this year we opened the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with the local chapters of Autism Ontario by offering a 50-50 split. Fifteen chapters took on the challenge of encouraging more schools, daycares, nursery schools, healthcare facilities and organizations to come on board and register their participation. The chapters that took part reaped the rewards of donations received from qualifying participants in their region. Half the money raised from that region stays within that Chapter.

Our most exciting new venture for the 2009-2010 campaign is our new history brochure entitled, “We Are TOGETHER for Autism,” which reflects the history of the campaign. It contains personal comments about its impact on the participants and families, as well as to the researchers who have benefited from our fundraising. The brochure will be used to give people a better understanding of the value of participating in TOGETHER FOR AUTISM. This wonderful edition was put together by Jean Woolford, who also keeps our website news up to date and has been a valuable member of the TFA committee for the past seven years. Graphic designer and volunteer Maria Harrison has been assisting us since the beginning and continues to add her creative flair to all of our printed materials, always keeping us looking polished and professional.

The total 2009 campaign registration was 500, with support from 72 different school boards. This enabled us to reach approximately 200,000 students and staff and nearly 700,000 family members. We greatly appreciate the continued support from all 310 repeat participants and welcome the 190 first-time joiners. Special mention goes out to the 14 schools that have been a part of this program since the beginning. To date the 2009 campaign has raised more than $150,129.89 for autism awareness and research, with more donations still coming in.

Along with those mentioned above, we would like to express our sincere thanks to these other fine individuals who assisted with this year’s TOGETHER
TOGETHER FOR AUTISM campaign. Special thanks to Mathew Rossi and Peter Woolford and the continued support of our Autism Ontario head office and all the Chapters. Remember that your assistance has helped make the TOGETHER FOR AUTISM name recognizable across Ontario.

This has been a successful public awareness campaign in Ontario schools for the past eight years. The ASD awareness component of the campaign remains strong. Raising money for research has been increasingly more challenging in the last few years. As more schools opt for an “awareness only” campaign (and don’t raise funds), we’re seeing a definite decrease in the bottom line and as a result, a corresponding decrease in our ability to direct funds towards research. The only way for us to legitimately tie this campaign for 2009-2010 to its two mandates – public awareness and raising funds for ASD research – is to get corporate sponsorship. This requires everyone’s attention. If you know of companies, individuals or organizations who might have a specific heart for such a campaign, we’d love to hear from you!

The 2010 official TOGETHER FOR AUTISM date is Friday, April 30, 2010. Many schools choose a date that is better suited to their individual needs and we do our best to accommodate them. It is not about when it is done, but the impact that your participation will have.

Encourage your family, friends and colleagues to join “together” for autism and help us keep this dream alive. We all know what a difference this campaign has made in the lives of children with ASD and their families, and how through this campaign their peers learn a new attitude of caring, understanding and acceptance.

Register your participation online at www.togetherforautism.ca. Registered participants may request free materials to assist in running their campaign. Your participation helps students, parents, staff, and your entire community learn more about autism. Most importantly, by increasing awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder, we create a more welcoming environment for all children.

Our new brochure

The Emmanouela Dimas Awards

The Emmanouela Dimas Awards were established in 2006 in celebration of TOGETHER FOR AUTISM’s fifth anniversary. Each selected school receives a commemorative certificate and $1,000 towards a service, resources or fund of the school’s choice.

Sincere thanks to all nominees and congratulations to this year’s winners.

For Outstanding Community Involvement
This award is presented to the Ontario school (primary, secondary or post-secondary) that demonstrates the greatest efforts to raise community awareness for autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The 2008 award goes to St. Ursula in Brampton.

For Outstanding Fundraising Effort
This award is presented to the Ontario school (primary, secondary or post-secondary) that raised the most dollars (on a per student/teacher/volunteer capita basis) for the TOGETHER FOR AUTISM campaign. The 2008 award goes to Earl Kitchener P.S. in Hamilton.

The students and staff at FAIRWOOD P.S. IN KESWICK were proud to participate in TOGETHER FOR AUTISM. Our school community demonstrates an understanding of ASD and daily celebrates the uniqueness of our students who are on the spectrum by respecting their accomplishments and supporting their challenges in their everyday interactions. This year classes actively participated in playing a board game we created called “Together for Autism, We Can Make a Difference.” The game was designed to build awareness about ASD, promote social/communication and friendship skills along with developing perspective taking and problem solving abilities.
My Friend Dylan
Where is she now?

IT’S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE MY FRIEND DYLAN – I WONDER WHAT WE WILL LEARN WAS PRODUCED FOR THE TOGETHER FOR AUTISM CAMPAIGN IN 2005.

by Cenza Cacciotti

SHE WAS ONLY 8 and in grade three and here she is today, a teenager getting ready for high school.

The year before My Friend Dylan was produced, her classmates took the TFA campaign for their school as their own and decided that it was important for the school to understand their friend Dylan and how autism affected her. They started by giving daily tips on autism during the morning announcements. Then they expanded these tips into a presentation for every classroom in the school. It took a lot of courage for these 7-year-olds to go to each and every class in the school to educate the school on autism and to let them know how it was possible to actually become friends with a kid like Dylan. And it was all theirs. I was so proud of these kids and encouraged about the school’s willingness to allow this. My Friend Dylan was born.

Jeff Dobbin, the creator and producer, was a joy to work with. He was genuinely surprised at how natural the children’s relationships were with Dylan, how they truly understood her challenges and knew how to deal with them, but more importantly how they embraced her strengths. They were truly her friends and appreciated her for who she was. They never treated her like she was special or different; she was just Dylan – their friend and classmate who had some difficulty but was a kid just like them.

Dylan’s principal and teachers were so enthusiastic and supportive about the making of the video and her classmates were so excited yet nervous at the same time. The support of their parents was overwhelmingly positive, and is to this day.

After viewing an advanced copy of My Friend Dylan, I called Margaret Spoelstra in a panic wondering what on earth I was thinking exposing my daughter in such a public forum. Some parts aren’t very flattering to Dylan, but it was her and it needed to be there. Marg encouraged me, reminding me about how positive it was and how proud I should be of the fact that Dylan was actually included in her school by her peers. She told me that there are so many kids like Dylan who don’t have the same positive experience. She said this would teach people that full inclusion of kids like Dylan was not only possible but her friends were going to show them how they did it, and why it was important. At that moment, I felt proud, not so much of Dylan but of her friends and classmates who didn’t even realize what a difference they were making in the life of their friend. An 8-year-old girl needed their understanding and support more than they could ever know. They couldn’t realize what a positive impact they were making in her life. They probably don’t understand to this day how special they really are and what a difference they have made in the life of their friend, and what a positive example they have conveyed to other children. I will be forever grateful to them.

Over the last five years I have had the opportunity to show My Friend Dylan to educators, service providers, schools, parents and students. I’m still somewhat surprised at their reaction – “Is this for real?” It is difficult for me to understand how Dylan’s experience is so unusual for others to grasp when it just “is” for us. Dylan’s relationship with her peers has grown and expanded and they continue to treat her like one of them – no different, just Dylan.

Heroes in the Hallway is a group of students who help clubs in the school and organizations outside the school in any way that they can. In April they decided to help a provincial organization, and focused on Together for Autism. Because local elementary schools participate in this event, and since ASD doesn’t go away after grade eight graduation, high schools should support this initiative as well. The grade 12 students read The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time as a course text and studied ASD during the unit. Our senior students became quite aware of the impact that ASD can have on an individual and what a school must do to accommodate the needs of students on the spectrum.

– GRAVENHURST HIGH SCHOOL
When I was asked to provide an update on Dylan now, I thought who better to ask than those who were with her in the video five years ago and who are still in her class now?

This is the fourth year our school has participated in this campaign, and this year we incorporated our fundraising efforts into our Education Week theme of Inclusion. Students raised money through the sale of autism buttons, hat day, gum day, hot dog day and paid $2 to have a paper “toonie” added to our chain that was linked throughout the school. In addition, each student made a unique puzzle piece that became part of our Autism Quilt that we proudly display in our hallway. – BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA SCHOOL IN ORLEANS

From Laura, Jonathon and Dana
We are very proud of all Dylan has achieved since kindergarten. She has a lot of amazing qualities. She is humorous and she likes to tell funny stories. Dylan is also very sociable; always talking and making new friends. Her interactions have improved over the years and she always plays with us at recess. We have known Dylan for 10 years and she has progressed a lot. When she was younger her temper wasn’t as controlled. She used to hit and kick and pull people’s hair but she doesn’t do that any more. In kindergarten and grade one, Dylan used to scream and cry but now we don’t hear any of that. Dylan is also very responsible because she gets the mail for the school every day and does all her work on time.

From Joseph and Michael
We have known Dylan a very long time. Dylan is more integrated in class now and doesn’t need to leave the room anymore. Dylan works with having autism so her brain needs to work harder to get things done. She used to get frustrated but she doesn’t any more. Dylan has many great qualities. She is sociable, respectful, honoring and compassionate. She also won the school award last year for responsibility. We know that Dylan will have a great rest of the year in grade eight, then we’re all going to high school. We want to say congratulations on winning last year’s award.”

Natassia, Christian and Andre
We have had an amazing chance to spend various years with Dylan. We know all her favourite things like her cat “Daisy,” her favourite movie, Jesus Christ Superstar. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt are her favourite celebrity couple with all their children of course, and whenever she goes to Wendy’s she orders chicken fingers with fries and a water.

Dylan works much better with other students as the years progressed. Usually it would have taken a couple of times for Dylan to understand what you were saying to her but now it only takes one time for her to understand. Dylan has learned too many new things to count throughout the years but it’s remarkable how amazing her memory is. Dylan is very helpful in our school. She takes the recycling from every class and gets the mail every day. Dylan is responsible because she does her routine every day mostly by herself. She likes to be sociable especially with the other students and she does the running club with us every day. She also plays basketball with us. She is so athletic! She plays with us with no problems and she answers all our questions.

Our experience with Dylan has been overwhelming, varying from our over-
Our time with Dylan has been amazing; she’s taught us so much and we can’t wait to be with her in high school next year. **David, Tim, Danielle, Mitchell**

Dylan is an amazing person. We have known her since kindergarten and in that period of time she has shown great progress. She has transformed from a shy person to a very outgoing girl. She has many likes and dislikes. She loves her cat, Daisy, playing with her friends. She respects Jesus and enjoys the movie, *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Dylan’s progress from grade one has been that she has more friends. We play with her, talk to her and help her. Dylan has showed us that anything is possible because she made it this far and now we all get to graduate together.

**Victoria, Vanessa, Justin, Willow, Mathusha**

Dylan is a great girl and she is now 13. Dylan has been attending Holy Spirit School for 10 years. She is smart, cute, well mannered and more. She is so interactive, we love talking to Dylan during our recess time.

Dylan has many likes and dislikes. She is very religious and loves Jesus and she hates seaweed. Seaweed is a big thing to Dyl. She loves the phrase, “Hold the cheese,” and going on the Internet but she hates loud noises. She doesn’t like vegetables but loves Lays Classic chips. She is always interested in playing games with us.

Dylan has made a lot of progress now that she’s in grade eight. She has become much more relevant in studies in our class curriculum programs. Dylan can control her temper much more than she did even two years ago. Dylan has also matured tremendously over time and she has made a ton of friends. She is respectful to everyone and tries her hardest to participate with us as much as possible. She has courage and always apologizes if she makes a mistake. Dylan has become so responsible and she is so much smarter too.

We compliment Dylan because she is a kid who is special with autism and she has been trying hard to be a normal kid just like us – and she is! She has even reached the stage of being all by herself with all of us at recess. Dyl has worked hard to achieve where she is. We should be fair to her because she has displayed many acts of responsibility and perseverance. Dylan is intelligent, talkative, responsible, honourable and courageous.

Our best wish for Dylan would be that her graduation will be a memory of a lifetime so she can remember how much she has achieved. Even though she has autism, we think she has got a dream to be something when she grows up and we think that she has every and all abilities to be something. She has progressed so much and we know that she will progress so much more throughout the coming years. She will continue to meet new friends and we will be the best of her friends and she will always have us throughout high school. Hopefully forever too.

---

As a parent of a child with ASD who attends HAWTHORNE VILLAGE P.S. IN MILTON, I am thankful that my son attends a school where being different is accepted. It is evident that the staff and students work as a team for inclusion to be successful in their school. Parents in the community take the time to educate their children about a disorder that is on the rise. My child with autism has taught me a lot about life. He has taught many at his school that autism is not the end of the world, but rather a different view of the world. Thank you for giving schools across Ontario the incredible opportunity to participate in such a great campaign. I made it a priority to educate others about autism when my son was diagnosed. Your campaign has made that possible.

---

**Our students watched the videos; Meet My Brother, My Friend Dylan, Experiencing Autism, and What Do You See When You See Me? according to their grade levels, and class discussions were held. Puzzle pieces were then used by the students to illustrate or write what they learned from the presentations and discussions. At the end of the week students were asked to donate a toonie and all were given a puzzle piece cookie, along with the Supporting People with Autism brochure and Friends stickers that you supplied. The feedback has been positive about opening the dialogue about ASD and how it is truly a spectrum disorder. – PRINCE OF PEACE C.E.S. IN KESWICK**

---

At the end of April, the students of GLEN ST. P.S. IN OSHAWA were engaged in an Autism Awareness Week. We were very fortunate to link up with a representative from Kinark who supported us with resources, ideas and man hours. Students had the opportunity to be involved in presentations, watch videos, listen to stories and experience some of the challenges facing individuals with autism through a Sensitivity Fair.
Autism Ontario Education Scholarships 2009

by Jean Woolford

WITH THE COMMITMENT of individuals, corporations and our chapters, Autism Ontario is pleased to be able to provide post-secondary education scholarships to individuals on the autism spectrum as well as to their siblings. We wish them every success as they pursue this next phase in their lives.

Eleanor Ritchie Scholarship Recipients
This award has been accepted by 10 individuals on the autism spectrum who have graduated from secondary school and are entering a post-secondary program this fall.

- Patricia Baxter from Peterborough will take her Bachelor of Arts degree at Trent University.
- Michael Chang from Richmond Hill has been accepted at the University of Waterloo in Honours Software Engineering.
- Peter Durkin of Fonthill is attending Niagara College in the General Arts and Science Program.
- Adam Foy of Windsor has been accepted at the University of Windsor to take his Honours Bachelor of Science, majoring in Chemistry.
- Mathieu Leblanc, qui vient de Sturgeon Falls, participera au Collège Boréal. Il fait des classes en Animation 2D-3D.
- Jonathan Lord of Orléans is taking his Bachelor of Computer Science – Computer Game Development at Carleton University.
- Travis Rezka of Thunder Bay is studying Office Administration at Confederation College.
- Edward Roué from Nepean is at the University of Ottawa to take his Honours Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Philosophy.
- Chris Skrypka (no photo available) from Willow Beach attends Georgian College, enrolled in the Tourism and Travel program.
- Graham Stahlbaum of Fergus is taking Business Administration at Sheridan College.
Quote from Jonathan Lord, “It is wonderful to be recognized for my efforts and to have people at Autism Ontario confident enough in my academic goals that they are willing to help me achieve my goals.”

Quote from Travis Rezka, “So many people assume that if you have a disability it becomes either a crutch or an excuse not to try harder. But for me it has become something of a blessing. I remember I asked my mother why Autism Ontario was having a fundraising campaign, and she told me it was for a cure. I thought about what it would be like to be ‘cured.’ I told her if they come up with one I don’t want it because I wouldn’t be me anymore. I don’t broadcast that I have Aspergers, but I am not ashamed of it either. I do hope that my story helps someone younger to see that Aspergers isn’t an ending, it’s a beginning.”

Jeanette Holden Scholarship Recipients
This award has been accepted by 13 young people who are siblings of individuals on the autism spectrum and who have graduated from secondary school and are entering a post-secondary program this fall.

- Kelly Baker of Belle River is taking her Master of Arts program in Applied Disability Studies at Brock University. She is specializing in Applied Behaviour Analysis.
- Krystal Belsito from Sault Ste. Marie is taking her Honours Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Linguistics.
- Ernie Chan of Mississauga is taking his Bachelor of Science at Dalhousie University, Halifax.
- Ruth-Anne Culliton from Stratford is attending the Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. She hopes eventually to take her Masters in Mediation.
- Lisa Gachet of Mississauga attends the University of Guelph, taking her Honours Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Psychology.
- Jessica Milette (no photo available) from Mississauga is studying Child, Youth and Family at the University of Guelph.
- Emma Mitchell of Ottawa is enrolled in the Developmental Services Worker program at Algonquin College.
Ernie Chan wrote, “I feel that my greatest volunteer contribution is one that involves autistic children. I have been coaching the Mississauga Junior Crusaders Special Needs hockey team. The kids on this team have various Autism Spectrum Disorders and range from 4 to 18 years of age... Getting the kids active and seeing the smiles on their faces is something I love about coaching this team.”

- Megan Mitchell of Mississauga is going to the University of Guelph – Kemptville Campus to take Agriculture Equine Option, Bring your horse. Her goal is to run a therapeutic riding stable for people with autism.
- Alana Pierscianowski of Ottawa is attending the University of Guelph, taking Psychology: Brain and Cognition in Honours Bachelor of Science.
- Jeremy Reisch of Ottawa is attending Algonquin College in Fitness and Health Promotion.
- Brendan Stanford of London is studying at the University of Western Ontario, taking his Honours Science degree in Genetics and Biochemistry.
- Loren White of Toronto is taking Psychology in a Bachelor of Arts program at Queen’s University, Kingston.
- Michael Wiland of Toronto is taking his Honours Bachelor of Arts at York University.

Ruth-Anne Culliton wrote, “Being Grace’s sister has given me resilience, inner strength, a non-materialistic approach to life, and an ability to put smaller problems into perspective, unlike most of my peers. It has also made me recognize that being disabled really just means differently abled.”
High School Students with Asperger Syndrome

ARE THEY YOUTH AT RISK?

by Kevin Stoddart, Ph.D.

INCREASINGLY, we hear the phrase “youth at risk” applied to teens at risk of legal troubles, substance abuse, mental health problems, unemployment and academic failure. Often, attention has focused on specific groups at risk due to poverty or other factors, but little attention is given to those who face neurological differences such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There is strong evidence to suggest that youth with so-called “mild ASD” such as Asperger Syndrome (AS) are also “at risk.” Many are diagnosed with AS for the first time when they are well into adolescence, even when they have had professional help to deal with other issues affecting academic performance, such as ADHD or learning disabilities. Lack of access to knowledgeable professional supports is a recurring theme for them and their families. Based on our experience with adolescents with AS at The Redpath Centre, and emerging literature on the psychosocial needs of youth diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, they are at risk in multiple areas including:

• Poor school performance, attendance or drop-out
• Failure to transition successfully to post-secondary education
• Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and addictions
• Problems with the law and inappropriate behaviour
• Social isolation and development of unhealthy relationships
• Physical and emotional bullying and other forms of victimization
• Unemployment or under-employment
• Poor organizational and life skills

What can teachers and school communities do? Both can provide the instruction, structure and support that adolescents with AS need. This can be accomplished through:

• Recognizing behaviour that may be suggestive of AS or mental health problems
• Facilitating assessment of multiple learning, sensory, social and emotional concerns
• Including social and emotional goals and accommodations in IEPs
• Providing information about community-based services and supports
• Ensuring a collaborative relationship with parents and service providers
• Supporting student self-advocacy and active participation in their school life
• Devising a long-term transition plan for life after high school

The protective influence of a positive high school experience for these students cannot be underestimated. Teachers and school communities can play an essential role in recognizing and addressing not only the academic needs of these youth, but also their social and emotional needs. Attention to work skills and life skills are a vital aspect of the curriculum for this population and are thought to increase their resilience and adaption to adult life. We have witnessed the results of a positive high school experience that sets these youth on a positive course into adulthood, but unfortunately, this is not the experience for many.

Many students with AS challenge us to think more creatively about “individual student success;” it is important therefore that we recognize each student’s and family’s understanding of a “successful” high school experience and the multiple risk and protective factors which may affect those desired outcomes.
Book Reviews

Marcelo in the Real World

by Francisco X. Stork

TWO REVIEWERS GIVE US THEIR PERSPECTIVES

Reviewed by Malcolm Matthews

From the first page, Francisco Stork’s novel Marcelo in the Real World, invites us into the life of 17-year-old Marcelo Sandoval and his struggles to navigate a world where everyone else seems to speak an alien language.

In the summer before his senior year of high school, Marcelo, who has Asperger’s Syndrome, finds himself working in the mail room of his father’s elite law firm in Boston, Massachusetts. Before Marcelo has time to get his bearings, he’s swept into a disorienting sea of baffling relationships and responsibilities. Reluctantly at first, his co-worker Jasmine helps him stay afloat, even as Wendell, a privileged and calculating elitist, works equally hard to bring him down.

When Marcelo salvages a disturbing photograph from a box of documents meant to be destroyed, he sets off a chain of events that could lead to a personal moral crisis, the destruction of his father’s firm, and the end of his dreams of finishing high school at Paterson, where his father promised he could go if the summer job went well.

To sort out the social chaos, Marcelo relies on Jasmine’s kindness, the spiritual guidance of his mentor Rabbi Herschel, and his own “Internal Music.” As the summer draws to a close, Marcelo begins to rely on himself, the one person he can finally count on to be the ultimate arbiter of his decisions.

With his formal speech patterns, periodic use of the third person, and echolalia (repetition of speech), Marcelo can come across at times as unemotional and pedantic. Wendell even refers to him once as “Spock.” While Marcelo’s speech may be accurate for some with ASD, it may also make for challenging reading in places. Like talking with many kids on the spectrum, it can take some getting used to.

Overall, Marcelo in the Real World is an engaging first-person journey into the life and mind of a teenager on the autism spectrum. The book captures the challenges and complexities of ASD, the prejudices of the uninformed, and the humanity behind the disorder. Marcelo, himself, represents the crucial transition from being a child on the spectrum to being an adult with new concerns about work, life and love. He causes us to reexamine our own perceptions even as we are seduced by his. In the end, we come to understand what Marcelo unfortunately may never know: There are as many “real worlds” as there are unique people to inhabit them.

Malcolm writes and works as a professional editor. He lives in St. Catharines with his wife and their three sons. His wife and their oldest and youngest sons are all on the Autism Spectrum. For more information or to read Malcolm’s blog, visit his website: www.malcolmmatthews.ca.


Reviewed by Michelle Turan

Marcelo in the Real World is a coming-of-age story about a 17-year-old boy, Marcelo, encountering adulthood with typical challenges of work, sexuality, independence and the search for freedom. Marcelo is not a typical teenager; however, he has Asperger’s Syndrome. As the senior year of high school approaches, Marcelo is forced to enter the “real world,” a summer job in the mailroom at his father’s powerful firm. Depending on how Marcelo “follows the rules” at this job, he will be given the option at the end of his summer to either stay in his current special school for students with similar challenges, or enter into a regular public high school. The book details the conflicts between a son and a father who cannot meet each other’s needs in their relationship. In addition, Marcelo’s fascination with God and all things religious is unexpectedly personified as it leads him into his own battle of good and evil.

Marcelo’s interpretation of the “real world” and the challenge of ambiguous rules, unclear social language and social expectations are funny and accurate. Stork’s portrayal of the teen who wants desperately to make his own choices about his educational setting, his job and his life is heartwrenching at every turn.

Stork gives the reader a glimpse of an always confusing and complicated “real world” and how only a young man with Asperger’s Syndrome can strip it down to its naked truths. This book is a fascinating portrayal of the naiveté of youth transformed by conflict and the discovery of raw emotions. One need not have an interest in Asperger’s Syndrome to be captivated by this novel.

Michelle Turan, M.A., B.C.B.A. is Coordinator/Professor, Autism and Behavioural Science in the Graduate Certificate Program at Mohawk College, Hamilton.
THE PROFESSIONAL college and self-regulatory body known as the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) who has been given the sole authority to provide licensure, governance, regulations, standards, and monitoring of professional practice, including professional development for certified teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2009) recently announced the development of the first stand-alone, one-session Additional Qualification (AQ) course in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In November of 2008 Redeemer University College (RUC) in Ancaster became the first post-secondary institution to offer this course, formally entitled Special Education – Communication – Autism, approved to offer to Ontario educators.

Working with the OCT, RUC developed the content and design of this course based on the AQ Course Guideline – Communication – Autism (Ontario College of Teachers, 2008) following a 15-session design. Important topics for educators included in these sessions are:

- the basics and terminology of ASD
- the characteristics of ASD, including social, communication, behavioural and sensory issues
- working with peers or friends with ASD, parents and families who have children or youth with ASD
- school and community resources including the classroom environment, local assessment practices and ongoing research
- instructional strategies such as applied behavioural analysis (ABA), functional behaviour assessment (FBA), and the use of visuals, and
- IEP development, including transitions as mandated in Program/Policy Memorandum 140 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

Throughout the first two offerings of the ASD AQ, participants were exposed to various on-site experiences enhanced by guest speakers from communities local to RUC. For example, students...
learned about the Woodview Manor in Hamilton, and heard three adults supported by Woodview Manor share stories of their lives with ASD. Students also participated in a Family Panel, listening to the stories of parents from the Brantford Chapter of Autism Ontario who are raising children with ASD. They were exposed to research conducted through McMaster’s Offord Centre, and learned the basics of ABA and FBA through Hamilton Health Sciences’ Autism Spectrum Disorder School Support Program. Students listened to presentations about ASD service dogs from National Service Dogs of Cambridge, and discovered resources available through the Thames Valley Children’s Centre in London.

To enhance these topics, participants in the ASD AQ discussed topics, issues and experiences as an online community through various venues supported by Moodle’s online learning platform. AQ students are asked to respond to questions such as this example from the Visual Reflections Forum: “Continue to consider your use of visuals for students with ASD. Think back to when you first implemented such a visual. Did you understand the theory behind your practice? Where did you find your materials? How did you deliberately teach the use of the visual – or did you? What would you do differently now? How has your practice changed – for the better?” They also built collective knowledge on specific topics through the development of in-course wikis and contributed to topic-specific knowledge through the development of course-specific glossaries of information.

In order to solidify this accumulation of information, ASD AQ students were expected to complete, share and present formal papers and projects. One example is the “ASD In Depth” Research Paper, an in-depth examination of scholarly and professional literature related to a single area within the study of ASD, either one category of ASD (Autism, Aspergers, PDD-NOS), one characteristic typical to ASD (social, behaviour, communication, sensory, etc.), ASD over time (i.e., the changing history of research, attitudes, family, practices, etc.), or one controversy in ASD (past or present). An example enjoyed by many ASD AQ students is the “ASD One-On-One” Transcript, focusing on an in-depth conversation with a person with ASD (child, adolescent or adult) or a significant other who is considerably involved with a person with ASD. This project includes a background discussion of a person with ASD, or significant other; self-chosen questions that are both reflective and respectful, including inquiries related to intellectual, social, emotional, physical, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral development; a respectful analysis of conversation, including suggestions for future support; and a conclusion, including how (and if) this conversation has changed or broadened your views on ASD.

The other day I was in a supermarket and the cashier displayed classic signs of Aspergers: reading and commenting on each item of food as he scanned it, meticulously placing the food in my grocery bags, and then forgetting to swipe my credit card as he held it in his hand for awhile waiting for the transaction to occur. There was no eye contact, no emotional reaction as the customers in line behind me fidgeted and muttered under their breaths, and then kept profusely apologizing. I was able to understand him as a young man with Aspergers because of what I learned in Dr. Maich’s ASD AQ class. As a result, I assisted him with swiping the card, instructing him on how to place the groceries correctly in my bags, and then thanking him for his help. As a university professor and parent of a child on the Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dr. Maich’s class has enlightened my understanding and application of just how many people in our society are on the autism spectrum, and how I can best assist them. The course provides an overview of ASD and examines the psychological, physiological, social and educational characteristics of individuals who have been identified as having autism, pervasive developmental disorder NOS, and Aspergers. After I completed this course I was able to define and assess the characteristics of learners with ASD, and learn how to assess individuals who are considered in need of special education services and intervention. In addition, I learned how to write instructional objectives, long-term goals, individualized education programs, and instructional plans for children with ASD. The assignments involved both research and personal research methods. Dr. Maich’s expertise in ASD has enabled me to assist not only my son but also the many students in my higher education classes who require accessible learning. Thank you, Dr. Maich.

Dr. Christine Lei, Assistant Professional, Laurier University

Feedback from an ASD AQ Student

The development of basic understanding, knowledge and skills to enhance the professional development of teachers educating students with ASD is supported through the study of a wide range of professional and academic resources, including Laura J. Hall’s (2009) Autism Spectrum Disorders: From Theory to Practice.

In Fall 2009, RUC presents its third offering of the ASD AQ with a combination of onsite and online delivery to meet the professional, family and geographic challenges of busy, committed educators. Consider immersing yourself in the study of educating students with ASD in your classroom, school and community. Will you be prepared when a child or youth with ASD enters your classroom?
Navigating Autism Treatment Information: What Can Parents Tell Us?

by Stephen Gentles

PARENTS ARE IN THE BEST POSITION to influence the course of their child’s development and autism-related outcomes. But at the same time, very few can say they were equipped with the skills and knowledge of what to do at the point when they were first faced with a possible diagnosis. Putting aside the emotions that the discovery of autism brings, parents face the immediate challenge of sorting through an intimidating volume of information that is available from a very wide array of sources. How exactly do they do this? And are there any obvious ways parents could be helped to meet this informational challenge so they are prepared to identify the most promising therapies for their child?

For my PhD work in the Health Research Methodology program at McMaster University, I will be conducting a qualitative study of treatment-related information used by Ontario parents of children with autism. This project has been supported by Autism Ontario. Other support comes from the Autism Research Training program, which provides access to expert mentors in the field of autism, and a summer school program for improving knowledge and research expertise.

Ideas underlying the study

To give a better understanding of the motivation for this project, I will share some of my personal background and ideas as the researcher. From my training, I believe that in health care, the most useful information for making decisions comes from research knowledge (evidence). Related to this, I see it as important to translate the most recent and best quality research knowledge into practice by making it accessible and available at the point where health decisions are made. I also believe that for some health conditions and decisions, it is especially important to view patients and caregivers as important decision-makers (i.e., not just their healthcare providers). An example of a frequent health decision that most of us participate in as patients is adherence, since we are free to decide how well to follow the instructions for taking a medication once we bring it home. An excellent example of where treatment decisions may be made by caregivers is autism, because parents are often involved in making choices about therapies for their child. Some of these choices are made together with a healthcare provider, but others may not be. In either case, it is important for the decision-making parent to be knowledgeable in order to make the best choices. Other conditions, such as different types of cancer, can involve decisions about diagnosis or assessment that patients or caregivers often desire to participate in.

Eventually, as someone with an informatics background, one of my hopes with this project is to discover how to help parents identify and make the most appropriate use of the best research evidence to improve their child and family’s health and wellbeing. But before focusing on solutions of any kind, it is generally better to start by understanding the problem. In this study, therefore, I will try to improve people’s

For more information about this study, please contact Steve Gentles at gentlesj@mcmaster.ca.

References:
explicit understanding of the current informational challenges from the point of view of parents.

It is worth noting one boundary for this study. Parents may use information for different purposes. An earlier study uncovered the fact that parents of children with special needs used information in three ways: to help adjust emotionally, to access services or resources, or to manage their child’s condition (Pain, 1999). In order to stay focused and manageable, I am restricting my project to the kinds of information used to manage a child’s condition – in other words, information about autism treatments including therapy.

One of the reasons for the large volume of information about autism is the wide array of therapeutic options that are available. A survey study asked parents about their use of 111 different possible autism treatments. These included many different categories including behavioural or educational therapy, medications, diets, supplements, medical procedures and alternative therapies. Parents (mostly from the US) indicated that they had tried an average of seven treatments for their child (Green, 2006). In choosing to use so many, some parents may be selecting options that have little research evidence to inform them what to expect. The danger here is that in some cases, a treatment may cause unpredicted harm to a child. Alternatively, it may not have as much effect as it is promoted to have and may result in a loss of family resources (time or money), which could be put to better use elsewhere.

One approach to this problem is for parents to review as much information as possible concerning a treatment they are considering for their child. But this, unfortunately, may not be enough. I believe that making an informed decision based on information from most publicly available sources, such as the Internet, requires knowledge of how to evaluate levels of evidence. Although this can be quite a sophisticated skill, learning how to appraise research knowledge at a more basic level can still be useful. But it is not something that is consistently taught in public school.

**How will this study work?**

Although some aspects of parents’ information-seeking behaviour and information use might seem intuitive to some, different parents can have widely varying experiences of the problem. Without the right kind of study, no one can give an appropriate description of this process in a way that accounts for this variation.

To develop a comprehensive understanding, I plan to use qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are good for turning something that was implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge and for digging deeper to capture details that other methods would miss. Another reason for using qualitative methods is to produce an account that will be truly representative of parents’ reality and point of view. Thus my primary data will be the words from interviews of parents. Specifically, I will use an approach called grounded theory.

In grounded theory, the participants’ words are analyzed in a systematic way and this process ultimately produces a story-like description, or theory. In this case the theory will explain the process of information used by parents in a way that accounts for the important variations.

I plan to recruit parents whose child’s diagnosis is less than five years old (or in some cases, not yet established) and who would have differing perspectives on finding or using autism information. Currently, I intend to recruit Ontario parents from Hamilton, Toronto, Sudbury, and surrounding areas, starting in 2010.

The primary interviews will consist of open-ended questions directed at the personal thoughts and experiences related to finding or using relevant information about autism treatments. A second interview will feature interactive activities that provide a different means for participants to share their attitudes and opinions regarding various information sources. When the analysis is done, participants may be asked to validate how well their interview was interpreted, to fill in any gaps, or to confirm whether the resulting theory matches their experience or not.

**How will this study be of use?**

Parents who volunteer their time to participate in this study will have a particular desire to know how their contribution may be useful. Broadly speaking, one of the things they will do is provide the insights necessary to shape the interventions and changes to practice that are most suited to address or improve Ontario parents’ informational needs in the future. The idea is, by asking parents about their needs instead of guessing what they are, it will be possible to generate better-targeted ideas about how to support them in their quest for information.

The form that supportive interventions take can vary from general to specific. For example, findings from this study could be combined with other studies to justify small changes to high school science curriculum that would affect a more general proportion of the population. Alternatively, a specific resource could be developed that addresses a particular aspect of parents’ informational needs regarding autism treatment. At the most specific level, clinicians who read the final report of this study may develop a greater sensitivity to different parents’ situations when addressing their informational needs on a one-to-one basis.

The resulting grounded theory will likely have aspects that are both uniquely applicable to parents of children with autism and generalisable to patients or caregivers with informational challenges related to other diseases as well. In any case, the knowledge provided by the participants in this study will contribute to the foundations for improving Ontario parents’ informed decision-making about autism treatments in the future.
A GENE MUTATION found in some people with autism appears to disrupt very early stages of brain development and contribute to the nervous system deficits that are the hallmarks of autism disorder, a York University study has found.

The study traces the link from autism and a mutated gene to the molecular mechanisms of cell signaling that occur as the brain is developing. It provides the first direct evidence that this gene influences brain development and the incidence of autistic behaviour.

Modern imaging equipment and molecular neuroscience techniques enabled the researchers to show how the protein encoded by this gene controls normal cell function and how this fails when the gene is mutated in individuals with autism.

“If we can identify defects in genes or molecules and the signaling pathways early in brain development – as we have in this study – then it should be possible to develop more effective treatments for children within three years of age, which is when autism is diagnosed,” said Dorota Crawford, an assistant professor of Kinesiology and Health Science in the Faculty of Health at York.

The study, entitled “The E646D-ATP13A4 Mutation Associated with Autism Reveals a Defect in Calcium Regulation,” is published online in the journal *Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology*. It represents a critical step toward the eventual development of pharmaceutical treatments for children affected with autism. It will also be of interest to scientists who are studying the same family of proteins, which are involved in other neurological diseases such as Parkinson’s disease.

Crawford found the gene mutation in a 2005 study of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which is characterized by lifelong impairment in communication and social interaction, coupled with repetitive behaviour, and affects about 190,000 Canadians. That study, in which blood samples were examined for their genetic content, revealed an unknown gene that was mutated in about 20 percent of the autistic individuals tested – a genetic marker for autism.

In the current study, Crawford, working with former York undergraduate student Janaki Vallipuram, who is first author on the paper, and York graduate student Jeffrey Grenville, characterized the biological function of the protein in the mutated gene. They determined that it is involved in calcium signaling, critical for the development of neurons, and then showed that the mutation may contribute to neuronal deficits in the brain and autism.

Crawford is on the faculty of York’s growing Neuroscience Diploma Program and is a member of the Alliance in Autism at York, a new research group whose interdisciplinary approach includes clinical, behavioural and neurophysiological experiments. Researchers in Crawford’s molecular neuroscience laboratory at York are examining how genetic, molecular and cellular neurobiology and environmental factors contribute to the brain development of children with autism. The recently-completed study is the first to use a state-of-the-art microscope imaging system funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and Ontario Research Fund, which was essential because it allowed researchers to take images of living neuronal cells. The study was also supported by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) of Canada.

*Courtesy of York University*
Alumni Day for Autism Ontario Kids Camp
(formerly known as ASK Camp)

by Ethel M. Berry

AUTISM ONTARIO KIDS CAMP was founded 22 years ago by a determined group of parents who wanted a quality camp experience for their children with ASD.

The camp has expanded since 1987, and now encompasses A-OK Camp, Autism Ontario Adult Summer Program (AO-A Summer Program) and with Kerry’s Place Autism Services, a Youth Camp. During a warm, sunny afternoon on Saturday, September 19 around 100 people dropped in to celebrate and share their camp experiences. Campers, staff, parents and volunteers were treated to a fabulous BBQ cooked by Paul Kalmykow, Camp and Program Coordinator for the Autism Ontario York Region Chapter. I was especially happy to see Camp alumni Gregory Merlihan and his mother Mary. Gregory, a former neighbour of mine, is all grown up but still has that happy smile to give me. Mary Merlihan shared her thoughts on the camp experience. “We parents were very fortunate to have ASK camp back in the '90s when really, the public at large was not aware of autism, like they are today... it allowed us some normalcy in our lives, a chance to regroup, de-stress, continue to work, and spend time with our other children... it was, really, a lifesaver!”

This program exists because of the dedicated volunteers in the York Region Chapter. Kudos to all of you for your hard work to help children and families enjoy their summer vacation time.

Oh, the possibilities...

Each camping season, the Possibilities Fund provides money to our summer camps to address priority items. This summer, over $60,000 funded pre-camp behaviour plans, in-camp behaviour supports, police checks and training in CPR, First Aid and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention for every camp staff, opportunities to check out other camp programs, busing for day trips, professional staff to deal with administration related to our own risk management process and the Ontario Camps Association’s accreditation process, and an outside professional to evaluate our programs.

Cheryl Dart, Manager of Chapter Development and Fundraising in our Sarnia-Lambton Chapter writes, “On behalf of the Sarnia-Lambton Chapter members, camp attendees and families I would like to personally thank you so very much for the wonderful opportunity that you have worked hard to present to our camp. As we strive to offer a quality program that is open to all individuals affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder regardless of their ability, financial situations or the level of their needs, these funds [made] the 2009 Summer Program the best year yet!”

Autism Ontario gratefully acknowledges the support of the Yellow Bus Foundation, a key contributor to the Possibilities Fund. Thank you to all of the fund’s supporters for your continued support of Autism Ontario’s camping program.
In Your Corner

THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO SHARE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES, GENERATE IDEAS AND FIND WAYS TO FILL GAPS LOCALLY

by Karyn Dumble, Chapter Liaison

Autism Ontario has the best volunteers in the world! Thank you – whether you stuff envelopes, assist on the day of an event or are spending many hours a week on Autism Ontario business. You make your communities better – furthering our vision of opportunities and acceptance for all individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our volunteers were honoured at the November training weekend.

Other organizations are honouring our volunteers too! In June, the United Way of Greater Simcoe County presented Simcoe County Chapter president, Amanda McNulty with the Community Leaders Award – Adult category, for her significant efforts in developing the Chapter (see photo, this page). Janet Culliton, a long-time volunteer with our Huron-Perth Chapter, was a finalist in McCormick & Co’s Community Service Awards. A judging panel comprising of McCormick executives choose five people from their total worldwide employee base of 7,500 to be honoured each year at the Annual Shareholder’s meeting and each of these finalists is awarded $5,000 USD for their respective organization. Congratulations to you both, Amanda and Janet!

This fall we also welcomed back Dennis Debbaudt to Ontario. Dennis speaks to groups around the world about autism recognition, response and risk management, helping law enforcement and first response agencies to increase officer and citizen safety. Dennis trained over 500 first responders and parents at presentations in North Bay, York Region, Waterloo and London, furthering our goal of making 100 percent of Ontarians aware of ASD, and making those communities safer and more responsive to autism emergencies.

Welcome aboard to our new staff: Tracy Davidson, Manager of Chapter Development and Fundraising in our Ottawa Chapter, Ruth Stockdale, Manager of Chapter Development in our Halton Chapter, and Chantal Robitaille, Office Administrator in our Simcoe County Chapter. We say good-bye and best wishes to Shannon Salisbury, the Information Resource Coordinator in our Ottawa Chapter. Chapter staff positions are funded locally through the hard work of our volunteers at fundraising events. They provide support and guidance to local volunteers. Thank you to all of our chapter staff and to the volunteers who keep the donations coming in, enabling our chapter staff positions to exist.

Hastings Prince Edward County Chapter leader, Andrea Doucette, and colleague, Karrie Phillip recently took up running. This spring they ran the Mississauga marathon raising money for the chapter. It was a first for both of them. Andrea shared that she was able to meet her personal goal of running (not walking) the entire 42 kms. Way to go! That’s going the distance to support your chapter.

The students of last year’s Accelerated Child and Youth Worker Program at St. Clair College – Thames Campus recently made a donation to the Chatham-Kent Chapter. The students raised the funds through a variety of events including trading giant paper clips for items to auction off. The students and their teachers decided to donate the money to worthy causes which dealt with children. The Chatham-Kent Chapter applied and was one of ten organizations selected to receive a donation from the students.

The Halton Region Chapter held a day of training for support group leaders. Autism Ontario’s support groups are an important part of our work. Support group leaders learned about self-care, promoting healthy supportive environments, and how to best facilitate peer support groups. Renfrew County Chapter identified that one of the gaps in their community was well-trained camp staff. This past summer they brought in a trainer who worked with more than 60 camp counsellors to make them better aware and able to work with campers that

Amanda McNulty credits the support of husband Darren as key to her ability to give so many hours back to the community.
have an ASD.

In addition to a highly successful camp season, York Region Chapter hosted an alumni day – about 100 current and former campers and their loved ones came together to celebrate their camp experiences. Camp Coordinator, Paul Kalmykow shares, “A barbeque was held, and there were fun things for the children to do with a bouncy castle, teeter totter and basketballs hoops. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie and meeting people they had not seen in a while.” Sounds like it was a great day.

Keep sending me your chapter news. I love sharing it.

Send your chapter news to karyn@autismontario.com or fax it to 416-246-9417.

---

**AutismONTARIO Monthly Gift Plan**

**Credit card donation authorization**

I hereby authorize Autism Ontario to deduct

- $50
- $75
- $100
- $150
- $______

from my credit card on the first of each month. I understand that I may cancel this arrangement in writing at any time.

Please charge my □ VISA □ Mastercard

Card No. / / / / Exp. __/__

Signature ____________________________________________ Date __________________

In our ongoing efforts to attract more supporters for Autism Ontario, we may from time to time share lists with other like-minded non-profit organizations. We hope that you will support this program which is so important to our success. However, if you do not wish your name to be exchanged, please indicate here. □

**Chequing account authorization**

□ I prefer to have my monthly gifts withdrawn from my chequing account. Please contact me at the following number: (______)_________ or contact Autism Ontario at 416-246-9592, Ext. 224.

Card No. / / / / Exp. __/__

Signature ____________________________________________ Date __________________

Yes, I’d like to help more children and adults with autism achieve their full potential and live with dignity. Here is my gift of:

- $50
- $75
- $100
- $150
- $______

I have enclosed a cheque in the envelope provided.

Please charge my □ VISA □ Mastercard

Card No. / / / / Exp. __/__

Signature ____________________________________________ Date __________________

Name ________________________________________________ Date _________________

Address ______________________________________________

City ____________________________ Prov _____ PC _____________

Phone (______)_____________...

Charitable Registration No: 119248789 RR0001. Receipts for income tax purposes are issued for gifts of $20 and over.


**Windsor**

**March 6, 2009**

Location: Place Concorde, 7515 Forest Glade Dr. Windsor, ON

Dr. Cathy Pratt is a renowned international speaker on Autism Spectrum Disorder and educational issues. She will come to Windsor for a one day workshop and will address how to deal positively with behaviours in a school setting. She will also give tips on how to diffuse and de-escalate situations and avoid behaviours altogether. This presentation is a must-see for anyone in the education field, but especially for Educational Assistants, Learning Support Teachers and Developmental Support Workers. Dr. Pratt will also give parents ways to get their children ready for school and talk about skills children must have to be successful in an educational environment. In order to benefit as many people as possible, registration is just $10 for anyone working in education or who is an Autism Ontario member. For everyone else, the cost is still only $20. Register early as seating is limited. Contact Catherine McKay, RCP coordinator at rcpwindsor@autismontario.com 519-250-9410.

**Thunder Bay**

Carol Gray, nationally recognized educator and author on autism spectrum disorders, will present a workshop for parents and professionals in Thunder Bay on **February 26, 2010**.

Carol Gray created Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations, used worldwide with individuals who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. She is the director of the Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding in Grand Rapids, Mich. She received the Barbara Lipinski Award for her contribution to the welfare of people with ASD.

Parents and professionals have used Social Stories™ for many years to effectively share social information with children, adolescents, and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other social-communication delays and differences. Using lecture, demonstration, case examples and activities, this workshop describes the research-based rationale that supports the approach; introduces each of the 10 characteristics that define each Social Story™; and shares strategies for introducing and implementing a Social Story™ at home or school. Participants will have opportunities to practice skills and concepts as they are introduced, and to write a Social Story™ for a child, adolescent or adult currently in their care. This fun, fast-paced, upbeat workshop teaches participants to write and implement a Social Story™ and provides plenty of positive and practical ideas along the way! Contact Loni Rudnicki to register, rcpthunderbay@autismontario.com, or phone 807-622-9713.