

FREE



PORTLAND AND SW WASHINGTON'S ONLY MAGAZINE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

SPECTRUMS

magazine™

WINTER
2017

12 WAYS TO SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER

AUTISM IS AGAPE (LOVE)

AN EXPEDITION TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

SPECIALTY ATHLETIC TRAINING

#USTOO - YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We're
REBRANDING
and
EXPANDING!
(see page 18)

meeting sensory needs
with comfort, warmth & activity



NEW!
TWIDDLE®NATHAN

NEW! Lightly-weighted for an extra sense of security and stability, the TwiddleNathan helps youngsters find that "just-right zone" for maintaining attention and appropriate behavior for tasks and activities. Crafted from cozy, durable fabrics and plush fleece, the Nathan features high-grade fidgets attached with ribbon loops that snap, to enable switching around and personalizing fidgets for variety's sake, training purposes, or the child's own preferences.

Ideal for home, therapy clinics, and "safe spaces" at school and other group settings.



www.4twiddles.com
Try a Twiddle®
today!



TWIDDLE®CATS

TWIDDLE®PUP

TWIDDLE®CLASSIC

TWIDDLE®SPORT



Our Pledge: 50 cents for each TwiddleNathan sold will be donated to the Autism Society of America.

contents

24 WAYS TO SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER



FEATURED SECTIONS

ADVOCACY

- 8 Autism is Agape**
Teen filmmaker, Imani Chapin, promotes autism acceptance.
- 10 #UsToo - You are Not Alone**
Stories from the Spectrum: Sexual assault in the autism community.

LIFESPAN

- 14 An Expedition to Entrepreneurship**
Spencer Kelly cleans up with The Exhibition Soap Company.
- 16 The Inside of Me**
Stories from the Spectrum: Acceptance poem by Matteo Musso.
- 18 Dear Spectrum Readers**
We have some good news and some bad news.

RECREATION

- 22 Autistic Characters in Fiction**
Representation and audience input leads to progress.
- 24 Ways to Spread Holiday Cheer**
We all have gifts to give.

EDUCATION

- 28 Before and After School Activities**
What supports must a school legally provide?
- 30 All Our Students**
Every child deserves to learn.

HEALTH + WELLNESS

- 33 Specialty Athletic Training**
Physical fitness for all abilities.
- 36 Healthy Holiday Exercise Ideas**
Winter fun without the sun.

THERAPY

- 39 Autism and Mental Health**
The Autistic Operating System.
- 42 Luke's Journey Autism Fund**
Grant applications to support families now open through December 31st.
- 44 Provider Partner Directory**
Categorized listing of local autism-friendly providers.
- 46 Upcoming Autism Empowerment Events**
Support Groups, Social Clubs and Special Events.



We all have gifts to give. What are yours?

When I was in 3rd grade, a curious little girl in the neighborhood took it upon herself to unwrap all the presents under her family tree two nights before Christmas. There was one exception. It was the gift she had made for her parents at school, a partridge in a pear tree, carefully wrapped and labeled, "To Mommy & Daddy with love."

Being the rules-follower that I was, I was horrified for her and worried that Santa might bring her coal. As it turns out, when the little girl got up Christmas morning, the gifts were rewrapped and a special note was there for her with two powerful words.

You're forgiven.

Forgiveness. What a beautiful gift to be able to receive. What a wonderful gift to extend to others.

We hope you'll find this issue of *Spectrums* to be a gift you'll enjoy unwrapping page by page. A gift of knowledge. A gift of acceptance. A gift of inspiration. A gift of empowerment.

On behalf of the amazing Ambassadors for Acceptance at Autism Empowerment and *Spectrums Magazine*, we wish you and your loved ones a holiday season filled with joy, love and peace.

Thank you for your support and generosity!

May it return to you tenfold.

Karen Krejcha

Executive Director & Co-Founder: Autism Empowerment™
Editor: Spectrums Magazine™



SPECTRUMS magazine

WINTER 2017 | VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

SPECTRUMS MAGAZINE™
A program of Autism Empowerment™

Karen Krejcha, Autism Empowerment, Publisher

Dave Born, Graphic Designer

Mailing address:

Autism Empowerment
P. O. Box 871676 • Vancouver, WA 98687
(360) 852-8369
www.AutismEmpowerment.org
spectrums@autismempowerment.org

Connect with us online!

 /SpectrumsMagazine
/AutismEmpowerment

 @SpectrumsMag
@AutismEmpowermt

 SpectrumsMag

 Autism Empowerment

 Autism Empowerment

Autism Empowerment is a 501(c)3 nonprofit devoted to promoting a culture of acceptance and empowerment for children, teens, adults and families within the Autism and Asperger community.

Autism Empowerment makes no warranty, guarantee, endorsement or promotion of any service provider or therapy option listed in this publication or our websites: AutismEmpowerment.org and SpectrumsMagazine.org. This is a free community magazine created as a courtesy to the public. Autism Empowerment cannot be held liable for any action or decision based upon information found in this publication or our websites. It is the responsibility of individuals to discuss any therapy or treatment option with their care team. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy and verify information, however readers using this information do so at their own risk. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted without prior written consent from the publisher, Autism Empowerment. © 2017 All rights reserved.

ON OUR COVER



Photo by Ruslan Gilmanshi

Celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year with 12 Great Ways to Spread Holiday Cheer! See page 24.

MEET ^{the} EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

A GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY MAGAZINE, *Spectrums* is a program of Autism Empowerment. With a mission of promoting a culture of acceptance, enrichment, inspiration and empowerment, these area professionals help guide the magazine's future content providing expertise, insight and direction. We are honored to be partnering with some of the region's finest self-advocates, professionals, parents and experts in the field of autism.



AMY DONALDSON, Ph.D., CCC-SLP • *Portland State University Autism & Child Language Disorders Laboratory*
asdchildlab.research.pdx.edu/home.html

Amy L. Donaldson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences at Portland State University (PSU). Her research focuses on the assessment and intervention of social communication skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the natural environment, as well as intervention efficacy. She is also Director of the Autism and Social Communication Lab.



COURTNEY FREITAG • *Founder and Former Publisher of Spectrums Magazine*

Courtney Freitag founded *Spectrums Magazine* in 2013 and continued publishing quarterly issues until the Autism Empowerment acquisition in 2016. Her experience in communications, graphic design, writing, editing and marketing spans 20 years, complemented by raising a son on the spectrum.



JOHN KREJCHA • *Autism Empowerment*
www.autismempowerment.org

John Krejcha is co-founder of Autism Empowerment and serves as Program Director where he oversees Community Outreach and facilitates a monthly support group for dads. John was a Community Champion finalist at the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Business and Leadership Awards in 2014. John is married to co-founder, Karen, and is father to two amazing sons. All three are diagnosed on the autism spectrum.



TARA O'GORMAN, MSW • *Autism Empowerment*
www.autismempowerment.org

Tara O'Gorman, MSW, is an active volunteer in the Southwest Washington community. She blogs/writes about autism-related issues and is a social group facilitator for adolescents and young adults with ASD. Tara is a proud mom to two very busy sons, including a teenager on the autism spectrum.



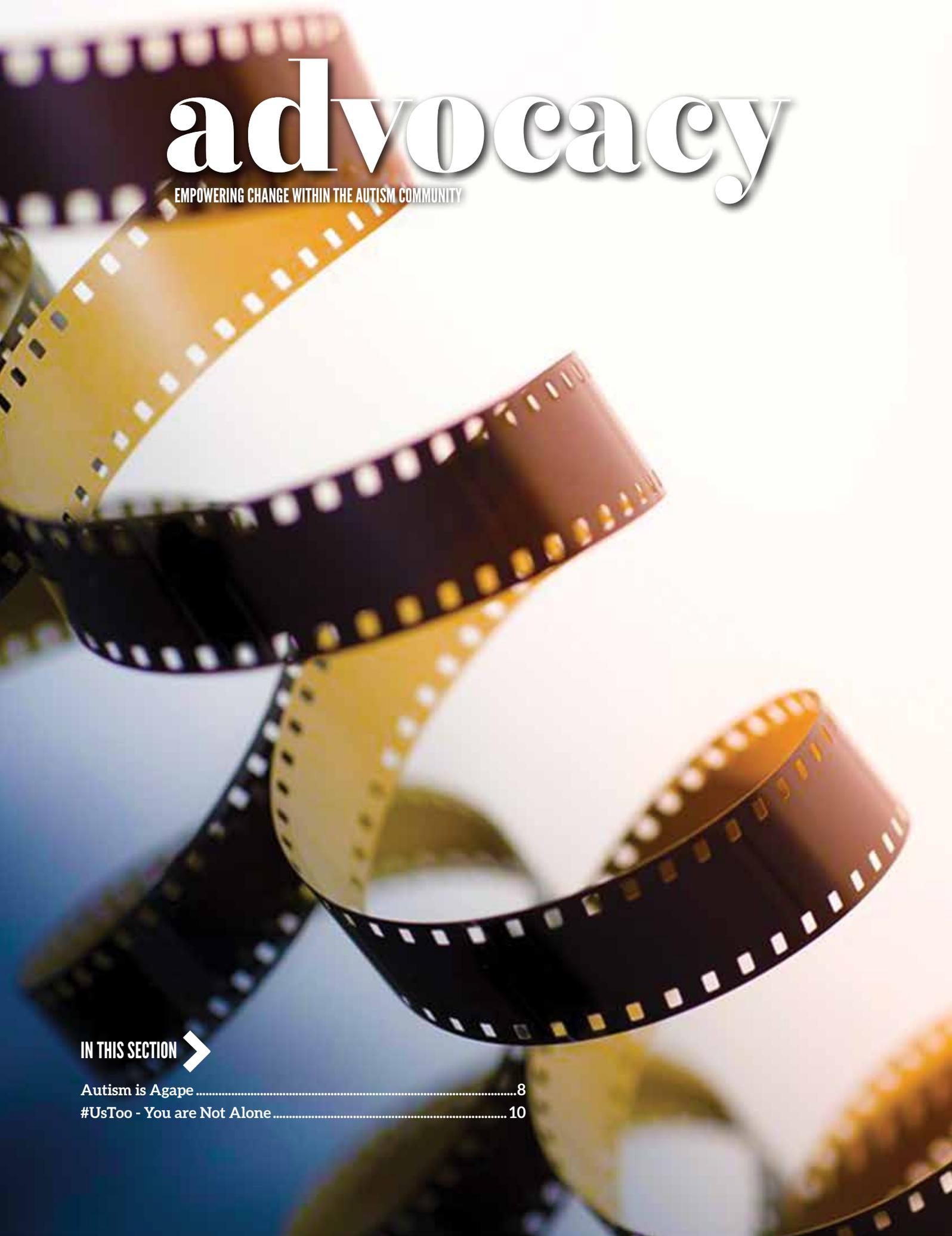
HEATHER PARROTT • *Parent Advocate*

Heather Parrott is married to Chris and is a homeschooling mom to Zachary, Ryan and Joshua. She became passionate about autism education when her oldest son was diagnosed with Asperger's. She is a volunteer with Autism Empowerment and worked on the Autism and Scouting program. She enjoys writing, working with the Boy Scouts of America and watching her youngest play baseball.



BRIAN TASHIMA • *The Joel Suzuki Series*
www.joelsuzuki.com

Brian Tashima is the author of *The Joel Suzuki Series*, a young adult science fiction/fantasy series about a teenage guitarist on the autism spectrum who travels to a world where music is magic and autism is a superpower. The first book, *Secret of the Songshell*, was a finalist in the 2012 USA Best Book Awards for fantasy fiction. *Mystery of the Moonfire* was released in 2015. The third book, *Legend of the Loudstone* was released in April 2017.
www.joelsuzuki.com



advocacy

EMPOWERING CHANGE WITHIN THE AUTISM COMMUNITY

IN THIS SECTION



Autism is Agape	8
#UsToo - You are Not Alone	10

3 Free Resources...

for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Autism from Seattle Children's Autism Center

The world of autism spectrum disorders is constantly changing and we at Seattle Children's Autism Center are eager to share with parents and caregivers the latest therapies, research, news and tips for families.



1. The Autism Blog

theautismblog.seattlechildrens.org

We provide information that may be helpful for raising a child with autism. Posts are written by physicians, nurses, psychologists, and family resource staff who are knowledgeable about the diagnosis and the latest in treatments and therapies are primary contributors to the blog. Topics range from selecting a summer camp to sibling support to new research findings to our perspective on the latest news and information about autism.

2. Autism 101

Available in-person at Seattle Children's or by teleconference

Autism 101 is a 90-minute presentation providing information and support for parents and families of children recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Topics include up-to-date, evidence-based information about ASD, behaviors associated with autism, autism prevalence, treatments available and resources for families.



3. Autism 200 Series

Available in-person at Seattle Children's or by teleconference. Watch past lectures on our website.

Autism 200 is a series of 90-minute classes for parents and caregivers of children with autism who wish to better understand autism spectrum disorder. Classes are taught by faculty from Seattle Children's and the University of Washington and other community providers. Topics include transition to adulthood, early intervention and school support. Each class includes time for questions.

Learn more or register at seattlechildrens.org/autism or by calling 206-987-8080.

For information related to setting up a teleconferencing site for the Autism 101 or 200 series in your community, contact James Mancini at james.mancini@seattlechildrens.org or 206-987-3481.



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Autism Center

Autism is Agape

Looking through the lens of acceptance

By Karen Krejcha

Local teenage filmmaker, Imani Chapin, has two younger brothers on the autism spectrum. She loves them immensely and advocates for their acceptance. Recently, Imani created a beautiful short film called **Autism is Agape** to shine a light on what autism looks like in one family, her own. She hopes viewing the film will empower others.

Tell us a little about yourself and your relationship with the autism community.

My name is Imani Chapin (age 16), and I am a junior at Union High School in Camas, WA. I am one of four siblings, with one younger sister and two younger brothers; their names are Asjia (age 10), Kaliq (age 12), and Mekhi (age 14), respectively. Kaliq and Mekhi both have autism. However, despite both brothers being affected by the disorder, the two are on opposite ends of the autism spectrum. Mekhi is almost entirely non-verbal, while Kaliq is extremely verbal!

What inspired you to create *Autism is Agape*?

Autism is an extremely important part of my life; if Mekhi and Kaliq did not have autism, I would be an entirely different person. Living with siblings on the

spectrum can be difficult and frustrating at times, but I am more than grateful for the opportunities it has given me and the experiences I have lived through. I wanted to make **Autism is Agape** because I have found so many people who know nothing about autism; if anything, they can rattle off the dictionary definition. However, there is so much more behind the label of autism, and, through my video, I wanted to show others why autism can be frustrating, but why it is also so unique and beautiful. Autism is my life, and I want others to hear my voice.

What is the film about and who does it include?

Autism is Agape is a video about my life experiences with siblings on the spectrum. The film has no speaking, but is instead set to the song *To Make You Feel My Love*, sung by Maisy Stella. The film is about three and a half minutes and I use different words to describe what autism means to me, each getting about thirty seconds of attention. The video includes me and my family: Asjia, Kaliq, Mekhi, and my mom, Angie Chapin.

Why did you choose that name for your film?

I chose the name "**Autism is Agape**" for the film because the word "agape," to me, is both the best and the worst



Photo courtesy of Chapin family

term to sum up autism: autism is selfless-love (the definition of “agape”), but autism is also selfish-love. Autism is selfish-love in that, at least in my house, my brothers face few consequences, have unchecked angry outbursts, make choices for themselves that affect the rest of us, and dictate when and where we do things. This is the frustrating part of autism. On the other hand, autism is selfless-love. Although my brothers often struggle with showing their love, they are incredibly and genuinely kind, never intend to hurt anyone’s feelings, and, even with their disorder, sometimes put others’ wants and needs above their own. Even more so, autism is selfless-love by the way parents and siblings give up so much to make their sister, brother, son, or daughter happy.

How long did it take to film and edit?

I filmed over a period of about three weeks. Some scenes took longer than others because they were staged rather than naturally-occurring, but, overall, shooting the film took a short amount of time. I tried to film certain activities and events as they were happening, which was the main reason for multiple weeks of filming. Individuals with autism often take everything literally, which also makes it difficult for them to act unlike themselves or to recreate a scene. Therefore, I had the most success when my brothers were unaware that I was filming them, and they were busy with their routines.

What was your favorite part of making this film?

My favorite part of making this film was having the opportunity to view the life of my family through a new lens. By filming the video as an outsider, I learned more about myself and my family. I am also proud to share my family’s story with the world.

What do your brothers think of the film?

I don’t know if my brothers have understood the impact of my film, but I do think they enjoy watching themselves! Mekhi, specifically, loves to watch himself in the mirror and in videos, so any chance he gets to see himself on screen is exciting for him!

What has been the response from others?

I have received countless positive responses from others. I love sharing the video with families from the autism community because of the immediate connection they feel with my family and me, but I also love sharing the video with others who know less about autism, because as they watch the film, I get to witness their minds become a little more open, and their hearts a little bigger.

Where has your film been shown so far?

My film has been shown to many family members and friends who live in the Pacific Northwest. I have also screened it at the United States Autism and Asperger Association World Conference in Portland this last August. It was very enriching to see my film on a big screen, being shown to a room full of people. I hope to do something like this again in the future, where I also have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the video and of autism itself for an audience.

What are your goals for this film?

My goal for improving the community is to be the voice for individuals and groups who are underrepresented, including individuals with autism, and empower them to advocate for themselves, through the motivational power of film and volunteering.

My dream is to work for Pixar Animation Studios as a film director, screenwriter, or story artist. If I were ever in such a position, I would create an animated film with a main character who has autism. I believe that the world needs to open their hearts to all different types of people, which often comes through the use of film; however, autistic characters are rarely represented in the media, so I want to be one of the first filmmakers to use the media as a platform for spreading autism awareness, giving back to the community, and inviting others in.

What takeaway messages do you want viewers to experience?

I have different hopes for different viewers regarding the takeaway messages they feel after watching my film. I hope individuals from the autism community feel less alone in the often confusing and frustrating world of autism. I hope these viewers watch my film and come away thinking the film was about their own families, because my intention was to tell the stories of everyone in the autism community. For others, I hope they find my video to be enlightening and, more importantly, challenging to their beliefs. We grow the most when we view an issue from a new perspective; if one viewer’s perspective about autism changed in a positive way, I would feel successful. Many people who have heard of autism only know the scientific definition, but there is so much more to an individual with autism than a definition will ever encompass. I hope these people get a small glimpse into what autism truly is through my video.

Do you have any other autism-related films coming soon?

I will definitely be making more films about autism soon, but have no specific plans to announce yet. I have an idea that I would love to turn into a short film, but this would either require actors (which would be difficult with Mekhi and Kaliq!) or animation (which would take a lot of time); I will, though, be exploring the possibilities of my idea in the near future!

How can Spectrums Magazine readers view Autism is Agape and your other work?

Autism Empowerment has **Autism is Agape** available to view on their YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/autismisagape>

This year, I have also been filming bimonthly motivational videos for my school. I have created three so far, with my most recent being about fall, change, and embracing failure. I have made over 200 Morning Motivation videos for Union High School as well. My two YouTube channels are included below; if you are in need of uplifting inspiration, please visit them and subscribe!

Imani Chapin: <http://bit.ly/imanichapinyoutube>
Reach Higher: <http://bit.ly/reachhigheryoutube>



#UsToo - You are not alone

Sexual Assault in the Autism Community

By your sisters and brothers in solidarity

The Stories from the Spectrum Series at *Spectrums Magazine* features autistic writers, male and female, young and mature who wish to share something about their lives with others with the hope that what they share may encourage, educate, empower or inspire another person.

If the charged topic of sexual harassment and abuse of youth and adults with disabilities makes you uncomfortable, you are not alone. Although personal accounts of this sensitive and mature nature are not often featured in autism publications, we believe that autistic adults gain personal power when these stories are shared.

In order to be respectful of the privacy of contributing writers, readers as well as their respective families, we have used pseudonyms in this piece. All those who contributed were over 18 years old at the time of publication.

Background: On October 5th, 2017, *The New Yorker* published an investigative piece detailing multiple allegations of sexual misconduct said to have been

committed by Hollywood film producer and movie mogul, Harvey Weinstein between the 1990s and 2015. One of the women sharing her story was high profile actress, Ashley Judd. As the days passed, more stories were shared from actresses and models around the world, including Asia Argento, Rosanna Arquette, Kate Beckinsale, Angie Everhart, Daryl Hannah, Angelina Jolie, Rose McGowan, Gwyneth Paltrow and Mira Sorvino.

As of November 8th, *USA Today* had an ongoing list online of over 75 accusers, some of which included actresses who identify on the autism spectrum.

The “Me Too” movement was initially founded by activist Tarana Burke, who created **metoo.support**, a website that supports and amplifies the voices of survivors of sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation.

In the wake of all of the allegations surfacing in Hollywood, actress Alyssa Milano regenerated interest in the movement when she started a #MeToo campaign on Twitter on October 15th to put a much-needed spotlight on the issue. The tweet read, “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.”



If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet.

Me too.

Suggested by a friend: "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too.' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."

1:21 PM - 15 Oct 2017

In the weeks that followed, through the bravery of victims and the power of social media, many other women and men in a variety of industries began to share publicly, their experiences being sexually abused or harassed by people in their lives.

As of November 11th, *The New York Times* had an ongoing list on their website of at least 20 high-profile men in a variety of industries that had also been accused. Since then, a number have resigned, been fired or experienced other fallout after claims ranging from inappropriate text messages to rape.

Additionally, there has been a lot of renewed media interest in former childhood star, Corey Feldman and his Truth Campaign to expose pedophiles in Hollywood and name sexual abusers who have been active in the industry for decades.

What does this have to do with youth and adults in the autism community?

Here are some of our stories.

"It has everything to do with us. Because it's #UsToo - Many of us have been victimized throughout our youth and adulthood." #MeToo ~ Susan

"When I realized the nightmares had started again, I panicked. The last time I experienced this cycle of pain, it lasted three months. I lost my boyfriend, my career, and almost my life. How could the misbehavior of a media mogul like Harvey Weinstein affect me so much? Because he resembled HIM... the Hairy Insane Monster who stole my innocence through sexual abuse when I was only 12. #MeToo ~ Kayla

"After the rape took my virginity something awful happened. I thought I was damaged goods. I didn't respect my body. I didn't respect myself. I gained weight, quit school, quit my job and alienated myself from friends and family. I also became somewhat promiscuous... trying to see if I was worth a real relationship or if people just wanted me for sex - or a fling - or something. I turned away from God, and it was a long time before I found Him again. Why

did this happen? I blamed myself. It was never my fault." #MeToo ~ Audrina

"I was taught compliance at a young age. Do this, not this. Quiet hands! Refusal is not accepted! Want your candy reward? Then shhhhhh! Be obedient. Hours and hours of repetitive hell. My therapist taught me "how to be a good boy" during the day and never had any idea that my uncle was sexually abusing me during overnight camping trips. Good boys don't tell. Well now, they do. I was nine bloody years old when it started. NINE." #MeToo ~ Robert

"I was one of those who stayed 'friends' with my rapist. He was my boss. He had all the power. I recreated all sorts of narratives that I would persevere on, like maybe I was misreading things. Maybe I sent the wrong signal. Maybe he really liked me... and the six other women he also abused. I. Was. So. Broken. I still am." #MeToo ~ Keisha

"I was sexually harassed for almost a semester by an English professor in college when I was 20. I was not diagnosed with Asperger's until many years later. I understood very little about social rules or protocol. I know this sounds naive but I had always gotten along better with adults than my peers, so I trusted him. In his off-time, he was an aspiring Hollywood writer and local comedian and very well-liked on campus. I was an aspiring writer and performer. He offered for me to read a script he had written. Then he wanted me to visit him in his office after-hours where he tried to kiss me. I said no thank you, I had a boyfriend and I'm sorry if I gave him the wrong impression. It only got worse from there. Soon he was visiting my dorm looking for me. In class, he would comment on my clothing and figure. He assigned me projects that required me to stay after class, threatening to fail me if I did not comply. I made a formal complaint with the school, and they took his side. That made him harass me more. I complained again, and the best the university would do was allow me not to attend my last week of class. I missed the final and got a B. He went on to Hollywood where one of his films recently starred A-list actors. I know it's not my fault, but I'm so sorry I couldn't stop him." #MeToo ~ Hailey

"I was molested when I was 6, then again at 8 and I'm only telling you this because maybe some parent will notice this happening to their child who can't speak. I should have been enjoying my childhood. WHY DIDN'T ANYONE HEAR MY SCREAMS?" #MeToo ~ Teddy

"A few years ago, I attended a seminar for men and women who experienced disability. The speaker brought up the topic of trauma, sexual violence and abuse. She asked audience members to raise our hands if this is something we had experienced by someone we had known. A few hands slowly went up around the room. She then asked us to close our eyes and breathe in and out multiple times. Afterward, she asked us with our eyes closed the same question and to raise our hands again. Then she asked us to open our eyes. Almost all the hands in the room were raised, including the men. I felt like throwing up." #MeToo ~ Shiloh

Continued on page 13

Lifespan

ALL AGES AND ABILITIES



IN THIS SECTION

An Expedition to Entrepreneurship.....	14
The Inside of Me.....	16
Some Good News and Some Bad News	18

This is one of our most popular floral scents! Not overpowering, but balanced just right with fruits, floral, jasmine, & geranium are the floral scents. The sweet fruits & floral scents are a great soap

HURRICANE



Just like the drink, this Hurricane soap bar has a swirling mixture of delicious lime, lemon, & sweet orange! One sniff is all it takes!

3.5 OZ

We have to talk about this.

Very few people want to talk about this and yet, if we don't, sexual abuse for children and adults with disabilities will continue to happen, and it will happen to people all across the autism spectrum. Let's not create a competition of suffering among different ends of the spectrum. NO autistic person being sexually harassed or abused is acceptable. We must come together in solidarity to prevent this whenever we can and to provide support, community and healing to those who are recovering. Thank you for this start. ~ Hailey

Abusers use stigma and confusion as a weapon. They know the people with disabilities that they prey upon will feel ashamed and will likely not tell anyone about it. ~ Shiloh

We need to teach everyone the warning signs, we need to change the way we talk about it and perceive it. We all need to do our part and make sure to support abuse survivors. I know it's triggering to think about. I have been having recurring nightmares again for weeks. But as autistic adults, we need to speak up for our brothers and sisters on the autism spectrum and let them know we have their backs. ~ Audrina

Now what?

Unlike different kinds of social-media campaigns and disability justice activism, the power of #MeToo and #UsToo is that it takes something that women and men have long kept quiet about and helps transform those stories into a

movement. It's an attempt to get people to understand the prevalence of sexual harassment, abuse and assault in our society at large. It's about getting women and men in the autism community, and our allies, to raise our hands.

It's about stepping up and showing support for grassroots nonprofit organizations like *Autism Empowerment* and publications like *Spectrums Magazine* which provide the opportunity to shine a light on our stories, promote healing, receive help and reduce isolation and shame.

When we reduce the stigma, we work toward reclaiming power and growing stronger.

Was your hand raised? #MeToo #UsToo

Autism Empowerment provides an online resource center to support sexual assault victims and prevent abuse and violence. www.autismempowerment.org/resource-center/

Me too Movement - <http://metoo.support> - Turning victims into survivors and survivors into thrivers.

RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. Whether you're looking for support, information, advice, or a referral, trained support specialists are ready to help. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE. Visit www.rainn.org for details.

The Miracle League of Vancouver believes that *everyone* deserves a chance to play America's great past-time: Baseball!



**Play.
Volunteer.
Give.**

-  Adaptive baseball program for kids and adults with any disability
-  No age limit
-  Everyone plays-bats-wins
-  Promoting positive interaction with our Buddy Program
-  Serving Portland-Vancouver area

www.miracleleagueofvancouverwa.org
info@mlvw.org • (360) 524-5423



An Expedition to Entrepreneurship

By Karen Krejcha

In many ways, Spencer Kelly is a typical teenager. He enjoys talking with friends, riding his bike and playing strategic games. However Spencer is anything but ordinary. This 16-year-old entrepreneur diagnosed with Asperger's recently spoke on a self-advocacy panel at the US Autism and Asperger World Conference in Portland, Oregon in August 2017.

Listeners were impressed by his intelligence, humor and charm as Spencer shared his story of starting his own company at age 15. With the support of his family, **The Expedition Soap Company** just celebrated its 1st anniversary and is gearing up for the holiday shopping season.

Spencer was eager to share about his business with *Spectrums Magazine* readers. He is hoping to encourage and inspire other autistic youth and adults who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

Tell us a little about yourself and your early years of life:

Hello, I am Spencer Kelly, a 16-year-old entrepreneur that dual-enrolls at Oakland University in Michigan and homeschools for high school. I am in 11th grade. My favorite subjects are history, business, politics, and science.

For most of my life, just doing the simplest daily tasks were an extreme challenge. I was unable to speak until after I turned four, when I saw an upper cervical chiropractic specialist. I also have motor tics that used to include severe arm and hand contortions, while having focusing issues simultaneously. These happened probably 100 times every day. When I used to lay for sleep every night, my body ticked endlessly for several hours before I could fall asleep. In the past two years, my motor tics have simmered down quite a bit, along with most of my brain and nervous system functioning issues. And for the first time in my life, I began sleeping peacefully, without ticking.

However, having these serious challenges didn't mean I was limited in every way. By the time I was two-and-a-half, I had taught myself the alphabet and all its phonetics, had learned how to count to 40 (in English and Spanish), and I had begun spelling and reading. Reading was and still is my favorite activity, as I enjoy learning by reading books.

My early years were often spent in and out of therapy and doctor's offices. When I finally did speak, I was echolalic and my conversations would go in circles because I was obsessed by the same topics. I liked to read signs anywhere I was and follow routines, such as driving or walking on specific street patterns or going to the same gas station.

After completing 5th grade, I began homeschooling. Although I was improving, I still faced the overwhelming challenges of never finishing work in school and having too much homework. I also had social challenges including difficulty participating in groups and in transitioning from class to class.

How did The Expedition Soap Company come to be?

In 5th grade, I read my first business book, called *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert T. Kiyosaki and my divine purpose became clear: I would start a business and be an entrepreneur! I rallied my classmates, readied my plan, and then... well, I was ten! I had no idea what to do, where to go, and how to do anything! Eventually, my opportunity came about five years later.

One day in late June of 2016, I was riding bikes with a friend. We had stopped at a small restaurant to grab a bite to eat. Not five minutes later did we come out to find that our bicycles had been stolen! My father bought me a new bike, but then made it clear that I would have to pay him back. I knew he was serious and I began to think up ideas. A week later, we had a bonfire with some family friends over, and my plight came up. We all started talking business ideas and the idea of a handmade luxury soap business came up. I immediately thought it was a great idea and I spent the rest of that summer working on creating my business, **The Expedition Soap Company**, and my online store, **ExpeditionSoaps.com**.

On September 1st, 2016, I launched my company and website, and the real expedition began!

Tell us about your business.

My company began a year ago with 20 varieties of soap bars. It quickly grew to 40 a month later, along with a second website that I created just for fundraising, **ExpeditionSoapsFundraising.com**. Today I carry almost 80 different soap scent choices, along with lotions, body butters, and bath bombs.

To date, we have set up at vendor shows 16 times in 2016 and for the 2017 year, it will total 36 or so different shows. We (my mom, dad, sometimes my little brother, and me) do these shows at different locations, mostly on weekends. We have served over 2,000 customers so far. We are looking to join in more fundraising activities as people become more aware of my company, brand, and great products.

Continued on next page

How did you choose your company name?

I chose the name **The Expedition Soap Company** because when I was a child, my fixation was expeditionary history. I adored the stories of Verne and Attenborough, marveled at the tales of Magellan and Columbus, and read many books, from the eras of ancient times, to the Victorian explorers in Africa, to our foray into outer space. I find the stories of the people that shaped our world to be fascinating!

What are some of the strengths and challenges of owning your own business?

The biggest challenge of owning a business at my age is balancing my business and my education. I package and ship orders first thing in the morning. Since I homeschool, I have the flexibility to change and adapt my schedule depending on my workload for both work and school. Homeschooling has also been a massive aid for my Asperger's, with it allowing me to feel comfortable learning, reading, and discussing topics without sacrificing my education. My social life hasn't suffered, since I have around 25-30 friends right now and a young lady I'm - ah, perhaps a gentleman's machinations about romance should stay hidden.

I do have some help from a few local teens in my neighborhood, when it's time to fulfill inventory stock. They come in and help wrap and package my soaps, body butters, and bath bombs in exchange for earning service hours for school. Also, my younger brother Grant handles the designing of the labels and packaging all the body butter and lotions. My parents have been a great help as well, through all aspects of my business. My mom handles the organizing of fundraisers and mini soap bar special

order labels. Both my mom and dad help me set up and sell on weekends at vendor shows. I am lucky to have so much support! I don't think any one person can run this busy business without help!

Having Asperger's is a strength for me in certain ways, as it allows me to go "full focus" and finish work, like bookkeeping, or wrapping soaps, or when initially creating and now editing my websites. It is a weakness, however, in that it is harder for me to follow multi-step tasks to get things completed. This can easily feel confusing and stressful. When there is a lot to do, say when preparing and packing for a vendor show for the coming weekend, I have learned to compensate by working with written to-do lists. Also, keeping the business organized and more routine has been helpful to making sure everything gets kept up.

What would you like to tell teens and adults on the spectrum looking to start a business?

It is important that all *Spectrums Magazine* readers know that I am not the only teenager or person in the autism community who can start a business. Starting a business is hard work, and it does take some help and a fair amount of money and research, but you can do it too. Be fearless and go for it! Don't let anyone tell you that you cannot do things. Find your strengths and put them as your focus, and go for it! Oh, there will be more challenges than you could ever dream of, but there are also odds that you could get killed by a coconut falling on your head! So, forget about the odds and test your hands on whatever trade you wish, from carpentry to accounting. The reward of all your hard work is the best reward of all, because it's your business that you created!

Remember, think about what drives your inner passion and dreams, and don't let fear hold you back! Take that leap into starting your own business adventure!

Where can *Spectrums* readers go online to purchase your products?

Head on over to **ExpeditionSoaps.com** and see what my company is all about! We have something for everyone on your holiday list! We have custom mini bars, full size soap bars, soap savers, lotions, body butters, and bath bombs. All of my products are handmade with organic Grade-A Shea Butter, natural and vegan ingredients, no harsh chemicals, and amazing scents. My soap is made by cold-process and has a creamy, dreamy lather. So, whether it's a gift for yourself or others, Expedition Soaps can get you clean without the chemical sheen!

With the holidays around the corner, our products are always available to order, and they are a perfect size for a quick little gift or a stocking stuffer. (See our black soap called **Coal**, it's our #1 stocking stuffer!) I hand cut, hand wrap and name each soap bar myself!

For more information about Spencer's business and personal journey, **an extended version of this interview can be found online at www.spectrumsmagazine.org**.



Photo courtesy of Kelly family

STORIES from the SPECTRUM

Autism from an Autistic perspective

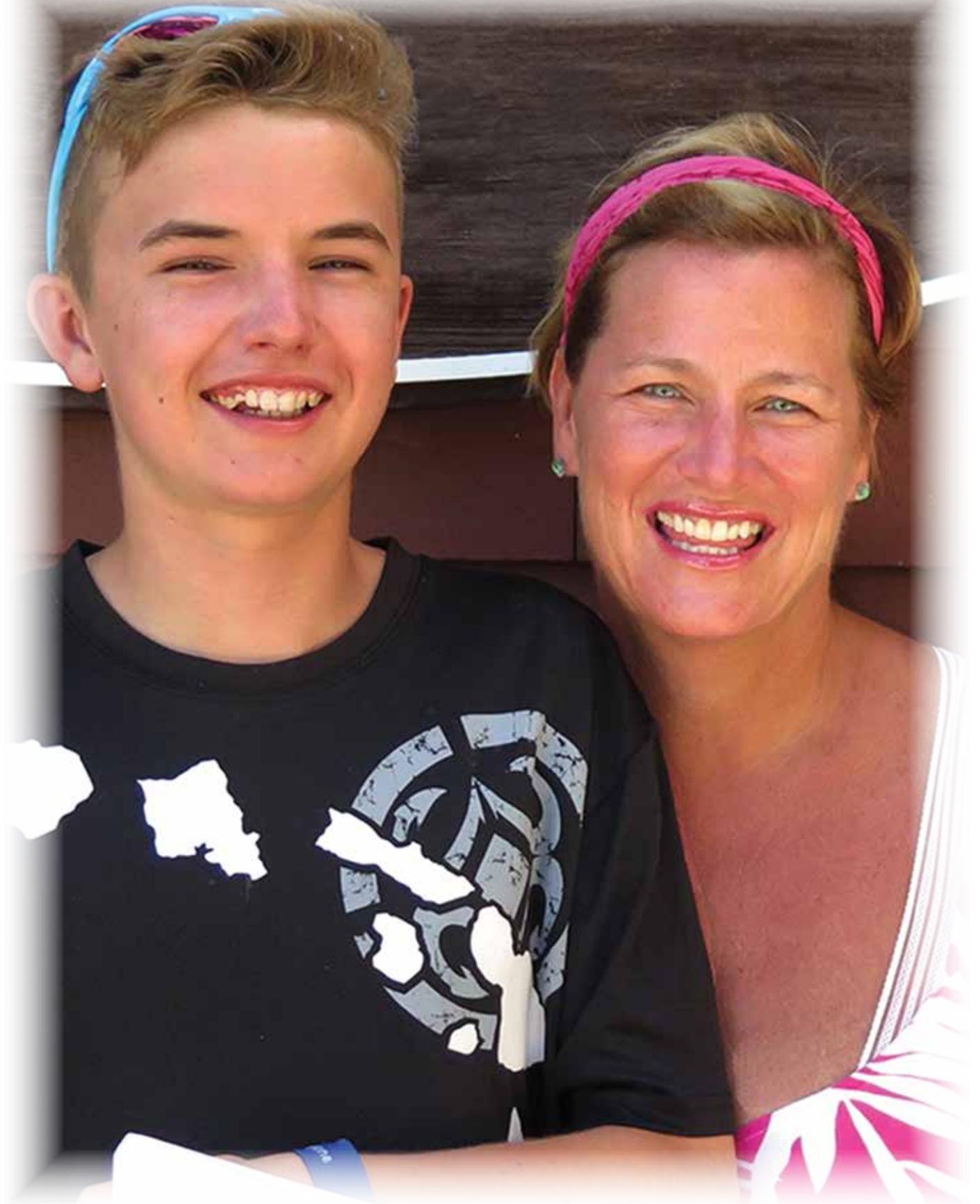


Photo courtesy of Musso family

The Inside of Me

How deep will you look and what will you see?
Look past the façade to see the real me.
I am more than actions my body must do
And likewise, your bodies must do their things too.
Are there ever times when you just can't just sit still?
Or you just want to yell something, then you could chill?
We feel that stuff too but imagine this,
That it is so magnified, a great sum like this.
One hundred times ten, then add on three zeros
To understand this, would make you our heroes.
We just can't contain it, the energy's too great,
So out it just comes, not too soon or too late.
We are sorry if our need for survival sometimes
Conflicts with the schedule you had in your minds.
We do our best to work with these things,
But oft you don't see that... frustration it brings.
I must say out loud, as strong as I can,
Cuz I speak for so many in Autismland.
Remember the things that you notice in us,
Are inside you too and seeing them is a must.
For that's when the world starts to shift more to love,
And the earth gets showered with gifts from above.

Accept this and kindness rains down on all of humanity, as we focus on our commonalities while appreciating the diversity God so entrusted to mankind. – *Matteo Musso, April 5, 2017*

Through his poetry and writing, 14-year-old Matteo Musso guides us through his world after almost 12 years of silence. His trapped intelligence released, he shares amazing insights on love, God, finding happiness and the gifts of autism. Through a miraculous discovery, Matteo's mother was finally able to communicate with her son, exposing a well of intelligence and heart way beyond her imagination. Matteo's first book, *Handbook of Us, Understanding and Accepting People with Autism*, is the light and culmination of locked up thoughts and messages. His messages are enlightening to say the least, about life, love, autism, and God.

Matteo gives incredible insight and tips on raising and befriending an autistic child or autistic adult.
To learn more, visit: www.matteomusso.com

Dear Spectrum Readers:
We have some good news and some bad news.



The bad news. This is the last new issue of *Spectrums Magazine* that you will ever see published and distributed from Autism Empowerment.

The good news? We love the autism community! It's our mission and calling to serve!

So... we have a **gift for you!** Autism Empowerment elves have been working busily behind the scenes to bring you a brand new website, a robust new resource directory and expanded multimedia content! Starting with our Spring 2018 issue, we are changing our name to **Spectrum Life Magazine.**

But WAIT, there's MORE! In addition to publishing quarterly *Spectrum Life* issues, we will be adding a very special bonus publication. This 5th issue will be our Annual Resource Directory that will come out at the same time as the Spring Issue. This directory will be the ultimate support guide to help members of the autism community navigate from birth throughout the lifespan.

That's not all! Our elves are working busily behind the scenes creating a new Spectrum Life website. It will also be ready in Spring: www.SpectrumLife.org.

At this new site, you'll be able to access all Spectrums Magazine articles from the past five years. You'll be able to quickly search for resources from our annual directory and check for new resources and updates.

We will continue to provide the excellent editorial features, human interest stories and resources you've come to expect.

Additionally, you'll find this:

- **Expanded versions of our most popular articles**
- **Access to over 125 Autism Empowerment Radio podcasts featuring interviews with autism advocates, changemakers and local service providers.**
- **Inspiring and educational videos**
- **Connection and community**

Autism is our journey. We'll meet you along the way!

Why the change?

Autism Empowerment is all about promoting a culture of acceptance, enrichment, inspiration and empowerment within the autism community. We believe everyone has gifts to give and that when we shine a light on the gifts each of us has, we grow stronger together.

Autism Empowerment serves youth, adults and families in the autism community throughout the lifespan. We want Spectrum Life to reflect that and to also be a reflection of the unique and diverse people who make our world a better place.

Do you want to see this happen?

Do you want to promote a culture of acceptance? Do you want to be enriched? Do you want to be inspired? Do you want to

be empowered? If you said "Yes" to any of this, will you come join us in building and strengthening our community?

We all have gifts to give.

We need your support to make this happen. *Spectrums Magazine* (soon to be *Spectrum Life*) is a program of Autism Empowerment. As a growing grassroots nonprofit charity, we rely on the generosity of people like you to help us serve our community.

Did you know that the month of December is when most nonprofits receive the majority of their donations to do their work for the following year?



Now is that time! We appeal to your generosity.

Fundraising Challenge!

We're really excited to let you know that Autism Empowerment is part of the Newman's Own Foundation \$500k Holiday Challenge. It's a friendly fundraising campaign launched by Newman's Own Foundation where 501c3 organizations like ours compete to raise the most money with the top team winning a grand prize cash donation of \$150,000. There are other smaller prizes too, \$350,000 worth!

From November 21st, 2017, through January 3rd, 2018, you can create your own fundraiser for us or donate to our fundraiser at: www.crowdrise.com/autism-empowerment

If you prefer mailing a gift, please send to:
Autism Empowerment, P.O. Box 871676, Vancouver, WA 98687

And of course, we have lots of fun ways to give and get involved at our website:

www.autismempowerment.org/donate

Help us help you!

Thank you so much for being an Ambassador for Acceptance of All Abilities! May your holiday season be filled with joy, peace and love. We look forward to seeing you in 2018!

recreation

INCLUSIVE WAYS TO HAVE FUN

IN THIS SECTION



Autistic Characters in Fiction	22
12 Ways to Spread Holiday Cheer	24

OmegaBrite®

OmegaBrite Gelcaps Doctors' favorite for school success

- "I take OmegaBrite, my whole family is on OmegaBrite and I recommend OmegaBrite to all my patients" - *Dr Ned Hallowell, leading ADHD authority and New York Times bestselling author.*
- "As a child psychiatrist, I often recommend OmegaBrite for my patients with ADHD." - *Vlad Kononchuk, MD*
- "My son has had a complete turnaround. He has been calm, focused, well-mannered and happy" - *Jennifer S*



OmegaBrite is a 100% Natural Advanced Physician Formulated Omega-3 supplement delivering high EPA anti-inflammatory benefits for positive mood, behavior and focus.
Available exclusively at 800-383-2030 or www.omegabrite.com

Autistic Characters in Fiction

Audience input leads to progress

By Brian Tashima

Fictional characters with autism-like traits have been around for quite a while. Some of the more prominent examples include Ray Babbitt (*Rain Man*, 1988), Tommy Westphall (*St. Elsewhere*, 1983-1988), and Christopher Boone (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, 2003).

But recently, not only have these kinds of characters become more commonplace, they've also begun to explicitly identify themselves as being on the autism spectrum. One of the first was Max Burkholder (*Parenthood*, 2010-2015). He was followed, just within the past year alone, by Christian Wolff (*The Accountant*), the latest incarnation of Billy Cranston aka the Blue Ranger (*Power Rangers*),

Julia (*Sesame Street*), Theo (*Thomas the Tank Engine*), Sam Gardner (*Atypical*), and Shaun Murphy (*The Good Doctor*).

Personally, I think that this trend is terrific. "Representation" is kind of a buzzword these days, but that doesn't make it any less important. People - kids, especially - need to see reflections of themselves portrayed in a positive, respectful, and accurate manner in the media they consume. It helps encourage self-acceptance, self-esteem, and a belief that they, too, can become the heroes of their own stories.

It also encourages acceptance from others. When people see fictional characters with autism, or from any group of society that is underrepresented in popular culture, it becomes more "normal" to see them in real life, especially when those characters are three-dimensional and not just there as a token or plot device. Life influences art, but it works the other way too.



Photo credit: Torin Tashima



The fact that these characters are actually identified as autistic is important as well. The aforementioned examples of those who were not - along with others like Sheldon Cooper (*The Big Bang Theory*), Spencer Reid (*Criminal Minds*), and Gil Grissom (*CSI*) - were good starts, but letting the audience know that your character is on the spectrum (without beating them over the head with it) helps to get the message across in an even stronger fashion. For those who haven't had any prior connection to the autism community, they can now make the mental associations that, hopefully, will lead to an increase in understanding and acceptance. And for those who are themselves on the spectrum, they can take a little more pride in knowing - rather than guessing - that yes, this character may share similar characteristics with them.

Now, are these portrayals perfect? Of course not. I've seen a lot of divided opinions in the autism community about these shows and movies, with some lauding the inclusion and praising the performances while others take exception to what they feel are unrealistic stereotypes, e.g., the characters' savant-like natures or their robotic mannerisms. In general, a lot of the positive reactions seem to come from those who aren't on the spectrum themselves, while those that are on the spectrum appear to be a bit more critical. This is certainly a cause for concern.

There also remains a disproportionate amount of female characters on the spectrum, with only Julia - a Muppet - as the prime example (there was Sonya Cross from *The Bridge*, but, like with the example of Sheldon Cooper, the show never explicitly stated that she had autism). Books have a few more characters, like Caitlin Smith (*Mockingbird*) and Ginny Selvaggio (*The Kitchen Daughter*), but there is still a way to go. I've read that the male-to-female ratio of people diagnosed with autism is somewhere around 3-to-1 or 4-to-1, so we really should be seeing more autistic female characters.

Improvement can also be made with regards to casting actors who are on the spectrum in real life in roles that are specifically written as autistic. I understand the challenges

inherent in finding the right people for the right parts as well as the pressure to make sure your movie or television show is profitable (Paddy Considine, an English actor on the spectrum, would probably have made a terrific Christian Wolff in *The Accountant*, but, as of this writing, Ben Affleck is the bigger box office name). Still, though, it would be nice to see some more advancement made on this front. Autistic actor Mickey Rowe was cast as Christopher Boone in the stage adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, so that's a good step.

Despite all of these issues, I feel that, overall, things are definitely moving in the right direction. It's hard - impossible, even - to please everyone, but the fact that we are even having these discussions in the first place is what leads to progress. My hope is that writers and creators will learn from the feedback they receive and use that to make improvements going forward.

I urge everyone reading this magazine to check out some of the recent examples of autistic characters if you haven't done so already. Not only to see how they are portrayed - I feel that most of them are well-done, although you may form your own opinion - but also because your support will help show the producers of these shows and movies that there is an audience for what they are doing, and in turn, they'll keep going and make more. And more representation with input from the autistic community can only be a positive thing.



Brian Tashima is the author of *The Joel Suzuki Series*, a young adult science-fiction/fantasy series about a teenage guitarist on the autism spectrum who travels to a world where music is magic and autism is a superpower. To learn about the first three books in the series, [visit www.joelsuzuki.com](http://www.joelsuzuki.com)

12 Ways to Spread Holiday Cheer

We All Have Gifts to Give

By Karen Krejcha

The holiday season is a time for giving, sharing and spreading holiday joy. As the classic Andy Williams song goes,

*It's the most wonderful time of the year
With the kids jingle belling
And everyone telling you "be of good cheer"
It's the most wonderful time of the year.*

For many in the autism community, this may not be the case. Some of us are feeling lonely and isolated. Others are missing a dearly departed loved one. Many feel the pressure of unmet expectations from ourselves or relatives. Changes in routine, crowded parking lots, long lines and tension around us create anxiety and sensory overload. We may experience overwhelming feelings of fatigue and burnout, and fantasize about crawling into our bed under a weighted blanket and sleeping until it's all over. Happiest season? Bah humbug.

Let's try to change that. For ourselves, for our kids, for our families, for the sake of joy to the world, let's make it different this year.

Let us do it by making a concentrated effort to show kindness and love to others. Let us be good to ourselves. The most wonderful gifts that we can give often aren't those that can be purchased at a store. They are gifts that are sparked by thoughtfulness, selflessness, and compassion.

Don't ever believe anyone who tells you that you have nothing to share. There is not one child or adult among us who does not have a gift to give. We all have gifts. Share yours.

Here are **12** ideas to spark the warmth in your heart. Most of them can fit into even the busiest of holiday schedules and are free or inexpensive to do.



Treat others kindly, the way you wish to be treated. Practice positive manners. When you're out and about this holiday season, make a conscious effort to say please and thank you. Practice patience by letting someone go in front of you during a crowded store line or while in traffic.



Be a thoughtful friend. If you know someone who finds the holidays tough or you have a neighbor who is alone at the holidays, find a way to include them authentically. Invite them to your gatherings, or just spend some extra time with them individually. Be there when they need you, but know that if they prefer to be alone sometimes, that's okay too.



Buy movie tickets and popcorn for another autism family. Many Regal Theaters offer monthly My Way Matinee sensory-friendly showings. The Regal Cinema Theaters in Vancouver, WA offers My Way Matinee the last Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. for just \$3.75 per person. - www.regmovies.com



Thank your local first responders. Make cards for local firefighters, police officers and paramedics to show how much their work is appreciated.



Create a photo collage, memory book or video for a loved one. Highlighting happy memories shows that you value their joy.



Volunteer at a place that has meaning for you, perhaps an animal shelter or at a food pantry. Families in the Vancouver, WA area can join Autism Serves Kids Care Club, an inclusive volunteering group for youth on the autism spectrum of all abilities, siblings, peer mentors and family members. - www.autismempowerment.org



Write a letter to someone who has made a difference in your life. If you send holiday cards, take the time to include a personalized note. Expressing how you feel and how much they mean to you is a beautiful holiday gift.



Sing a song! Create holiday spirit and join or create a caroling group that brings your favorite holiday tunes to shelters, senior living facilities, children's hospitals or adult care homes.



Draw and color pictures. Create smile cards. Write poems. Send messages of kindness and love to deployed soldiers, veterans and military families.



Start a "You've Been Elfed" tradition in your neighborhood. Sometime during the holiday season, secretly leave a bag or basket with a few goodies or treats along with an Elf sign and Elf poem explaining how to play the game. Ring the doorbell and run! (It is the best part! Even adults giggle! Really!)

In turn, each recipient is asked to post a sign to alert would-be Elves that they've been Elfed, and to pass the game along to other friends or neighbors. As the days pass, look for elf signs in your neighborhood.

If there is a family who has not been Elfed, be sure to include them, even Mr. Grinch and Mr. Scrooge. Find instructions and printables at <http://bit.ly/getelfed> or <http://bit.ly/elfingisfun>.



Perform random acts of kindness. Leave a note on a stranger's vehicle wishing them well. Leave thoughtful post-it notes on the bathroom mirrors at school. Leave cheery messages in surprise places for teachers, parents, spouses, sons or daughters. Even yourself!



Donate anonymously. Whether it is clothing, food, toys or a cash gift to an organization you know could use the support, next time, try it anonymously. Appreciate how it feels. Anonymous giving is a beautiful tradition to share with and pass on to family members.

A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. ~ James Keller

For more inspiring ways to keep your candle lit during the holiday season and all year long, visit:

- www.generationon.org
- www.kindspring.org
- www.randomactsofkindness.org

During a season when you may be feeling anything but jolly, a quick way to find happiness and joy is by helping someone else find theirs. When we give to others, we often receive a much bigger gift in return through the way we feel.

Whether you use these ideas or come up with your own, remember to tell yourselves, your children, your parents and everyone you meet that we all have gifts to give. **Share yours.**

education

KNOWLEDGE TO EMPOWER FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

IN THIS SECTION



Before and After School Activities	28
All Our Students	30



Can research
really change
the future of
autism?

You can **SPARK**
research with
one click.



Join SPARK – a free study with a simple mission:
speed up research and advance understanding of autism.



Individuals with autism will receive gift cards valued
at up to a total of \$50 for participation.



To learn more about SPARK and register online,
visit **www.SPARKforAutism.org/OHSU**



503-974-6478 | SPARK@ohsu.edu

SPARK: Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge

©2016 Simons Foundation

SPARK Primary Investigator: Wendy Chung, MD, PhD • Protocol Number: 20151664 • Western Institutional Review Board

Before and After School Activities

What supports must a school provide?

By Diane Wiscarson and Kelsey Coulter,
Attorneys at Wiscarson Law



After-school clubs, sports teams, carnivals, dances, and other non-academic activities are often a fun reprieve for students. At the same time, these group activities can be important for social reasons, such as finding others with common interests, learning teamwork, practicing social skills and even other health benefits. But, students with disabilities who want to participate in after-school programs do not always have access to the activities, or more specifically, the support needed to participate. For a child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), it is likely that the child will need similar supports for extracurricular activities as they do during the school day. Here's the rub: parents may have a difficult time getting schools to agree to provide these services outside of school hours.

Schools must provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students, and this includes nonacademic and extracurricular activities and services. But, what about students with IEPs or §504 Plans? Do those students have a right to participate in before and after school activities? What does the school have to do to help students participate? Does it matter if the activity is before school? After school? On the weekend? A football game? The answers to these questions depend on the type of activity and whether the activity is sponsored by the school.

Location versus Activity

For a school activity, such as a field trip or outdoor school, the district has the same responsibilities as it does when kids are at school. It doesn't matter if the activity takes place outside of school hours, over the weekend, or off-campus. The school must provide the services and aids needed for students with disabilities to participate. This could include a one-on-one aide, transportation, or specialized equipment, among other things.

School-sponsored activities can include after-school sports, clubs, and school dances and all students must have an equal opportunity to participate.

For non-school activities, such as Boy Scouts, the school doesn't have to provide services or support. While a school might allow private organizations to use school facilities, this does not make it a school event or activity and schools do not have to provide the supports for all to participate. If a school lets a Boy Scout troop use the gym after school or leases space for someone to provide before and after-school childcare, equal access within these activities is not a school issue. But, if a school gives significant help to one of these private companies, they may be on the hook for any discrimination that occurs.

Equal Opportunity Requirement

Special education law requires schools to allow students with disabilities equal opportunities to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities and services. All students must be allowed to participate as much as possible. This includes providing supplementary aids and services that are needed for a child to participate. Districts are not required to create separate or different activities for students with disabilities. Special education law says that this may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school, referrals to agencies that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, and employment of students (including both by the school and help making outside employment available). There is no limit on which activities can be included, nor must the activity be necessary for the education of the child for it to be covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under Section 504, districts have similar obligations.

Schools cannot engage in assumptions, stereotypes, or prejudices, including generalizations about children with disabilities. Schools cannot limit participation based on characteristics associated with particular disabilities. For students with disabilities who cannot participate in athletic activities, even with reasonable aids and services or modifications of policies and procedures, schools are encouraged to provide other opportunities that are separate or different. Schools should be flexible and creative to provide activities that serve a wide range of students.

There are several ways schools can make activities accessible to students with disabilities. Specialized or modified equipment for various sports might be provided. Sports fields and gyms can be adapted to make them safer and accessible. Schools can

train teachers and coaches on how to provide support and how to adapt activities and games.

Limitations

Selective or Competitive Programs. Equal opportunity doesn't mean that every student has the right to play on the basketball team. Equal opportunity to participate is different than having the right to a spot on a team where students must try out. Schools can offer competitive programs that require a certain skill or ability to earn a spot on a team, applied equally to all students. If the selection or competition criteria is not discriminatory, any student can be "cut" for not meeting the level required.

Fundamental Alterations. Schools must offer opportunities to participate by providing reasonable modifications and aids necessary for a student to participate. The key word is "reasonable." While modifications may be needed for a student to participate, they must also be reasonable. If a modification causes a "fundamental alteration" of the activity, schools do not have to provide it. A fundamental alteration is something that changes an essential aspect of the game or activity, like changing the rules of the game – such as lowering the basket in a basketball game. Even though lowering the basket would benefit everyone, it still changes the game, which is not required. If a modification is refused because it fundamentally changes the activity, schools still must consider if other modifications could be made to allow the student to participate.

Other Eligibility Requirements. Schools can have age, attendance, and minimum grade requirements for activities. These eligibility requirements are allowed if applied the same way to all students. Courts have found exceptions where a student is found ineligible based on a failure of the school. For example, if a student is kicked off a sports team because her grades were too low, but the low GPA was because the school did not implement her IEP correctly, there may be a valid exception to the grade requirement. In this situation, the parents might consider a discrimination complaint against the school.

Extracurricular Activities and the IEP

If an IEP student needs support to participate during the school day, then support is likely needed for extracurricular activities. But, if a student has a one-on-one aide at school, that doesn't mean the school will provide an aide for every extracurricular activity. The IEP team should meet and decide what supplemental aids or services are needed for a student to participate in a particular extracurricular activity. The needed aids and services should be added to the student's IEP, including any transportation.

Practical Application

Activities before and after school are different than the regular school day, because there is usually less structure and supervision. Teaching rules and social nuances on a sports field are different than in a controlled environment, like a classroom. Coaches, referees, and parent volunteers may not have experience with special education students or IEPs and may not want or know how to use accommodations. If an IEP team

determines that supplementary aids or services are necessary, the IEP must be followed, and coaches and volunteers do not get to decide what will be allowed for a student.

It can be difficult to get a school to provide services for before and after school activities. Schools don't want to provide additional staff, especially outside of contract hours.

For children with high needs, it is common for schools to tell parents their child cannot attend unless the parent is also there. Schools are not allowed to do this. There is no requirement that a parent must attend an activity with their child, and the school cannot prevent the child from attending for that reason. If the child needs an adult aide to attend an event, it is the obligation of the school to provide one, not the parent.

What Should You Do?

Ask the school to find ways for your child to participate. Even if a child doesn't make a sports team, there might be other ways to participate in practice or have a different role on the team. If you feel your child is being left out of activities or the school is telling you that your child isn't allowed to attend an event, you should request a meeting with the school. You shouldn't have to have an IEP meeting to discuss every activity, but if there is an unresolved issue, you should request an IEP meeting.

Parents should encourage every child to participate in whatever extracurricular activities are of interest. These experiences can be an integral part of all students' learning and development. Parents may need to advocate for their children in order to have an equal opportunity to participate. This advocacy can result in great benefits, not only to the student with a disability, but to other students as well. Inclusion benefits everyone and is worth fighting for. Don't let the school tell you their obligation is over when the school day ends.



Diane Wiscarson and Kelsey Coulter are attorneys with Wiscarson Law, the only firm in Oregon with a primary emphasis on special education law for families. Since its founding in 2001, Wiscarson Law has shepherded thousands of Oregon and Washington families through the region's public schools and education service districts on behalf of their special needs children.

All Our Students

Every Child Deserves to Learn

By Aaron Blackwelder

According to a study from the *Centers for Disease Control* (2012), about 1 in 68 children are identified on the Autism Spectrum. In the same study, it was estimated that boys are 4.5 more times likely to be identified than girls at a rate of 1 in 42 versus 1 in 189.

For educators, this means that we will have students with autism in our class and it is our obligation to ensure every child learns, is challenged, and finds meaning. As a father of two boys with autism, I have been blessed with the insight they have provided me both personally and in my role as a high school teacher.

Though the popular adage coined by autistic advocate and educator, Dr. Stephen Shore, "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism" is true, there are some consistencies. Children with autism are:

- smart
- funny
- loving
- curious
- creative
- insightful



They are these and so much more. They simply need understanding and patience. When provided this, they will thrive in any class.

Ask Questions and Allow Choice

When it comes to the uniqueness of children with autism, no one knows how to meet their needs better than they do. Some prefer to avoid group work while others thrive in it. Some hate loud noises while others get a kick out of them. Some expect structure and routine while others enjoy a bit of spontaneity. The only one who has a real idea as to what he or she likes and dislikes is the child.

I recommend talking with the child. Find out what he/she prefers. Allow the child to dictate how learning is acquired and respect the child.

Now, this does not mean that we avoid all of the child's discomforts. As a matter of fact, if we want all children to learn, we must challenge them outside of their comfort zone. What it means is we use scaffolding to get these children there.

Take group work for example. If a child doesn't like working in groups, start off small. Begin with table or elbow partner talks and then allow them to work independently. When it comes time for group projects, talk with the child in advance. Explain to them why group work and collaboration is important and then offer choice. If the student wants to work alone, allow it but tell the student that the goal is to eventually work in a group. Build trust with the child. This will go a long way.

Allow For Breaks

We all get overwhelmed and just need a break from time to time. I know that I often sit back at my desk and do nothing, play a game on my phone, or take a walk during my prep period because I am mentally exhausted from my day. Everyone gets to this point. We all need mental breaks from the stressful day.

Children with autism are no different. They need mental breaks as well. They, however, may need them a little more often. When my oldest son gets overstimulated, he will pretend he is going to the bathroom and takes

Continued on next page



a short walk. During this time he relieves his anxiety, and when he feels better he returns to class ready to work. I had a student a few years ago who, from time to time, would walk around the class or he would stand and do his work on a clipboard. It wasn't a big deal and it wasn't disruptive.

There is something about walking around or rocking back and forth that relieves stress. Give these students the opportunity to do this. It will help them to learn and will show that you value them as a person.

Be Understanding

Children with autism want to learn and they want to fit in. Teachers should model what they expect of their students. If we promote diversity, then provide differentiation. If we want to teach understanding, demonstrate flexibility. If we care about learning, allow students to make choices and have a voice in what and how they learn.

Aaron Blackwelder is a high school English teacher at Woodland High School in Woodland, WA. He is married and the father of two boys with Autism who have shaped him as an educator. He is passionate about creating learning environments for all students. In his free time, he writes his blog, "Thinking 101" where he shares his ideas about education. Visit mrblackwelder.wordpress.com

Like every child out there, students with autism want to learn and be recognized for who they are. They want to take on challenges and express their interests and ideas. They just need teachers to be creative and caring and provide opportunities for them to be successful.

It is not a matter of "if" teachers will have students with autism in their class. We will have them and it is our obligation to teach all of our students.

A variation of this article was originally published at mrblackwelder.wordpress.com, *Thinking 101* (February 2017)



Photo courtesy of Bell Studios

health & wellness

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF WELL-BEING AND WHOLENESS

IN THIS SECTION



Specialty Athletic Training	33
Healthy Holiday Exercise Ideas	36

Specialty Athletic Training

Physical fitness for all abilities.

By John Krejcha

The benefits of a good physical fitness routine, for the autism population as well as those with special health care needs, are many. Benefits may include better balance and coordination, improved motor function, better self-control and self-regulation, increased ability to focus on tasks, less anxiety, better overall health and even improved socialization.

So why doesn't everyone exercise? Many youth and adults on the autism spectrum have challenges with low muscle tone, gross motor skills, and balance. They may have had negative experience in physical education (PE) classes at school that turned them away from exercise because of fear or embarrassment. Add in sensory challenges such as the sound of barbells clanging or locker room odors, and it can be difficult to entice someone into starting a new workout program. Even if they were interested, how could you find the right place to work out that would fit within your busy schedule and have caring, qualified trainers that have experience working with youth and adults in the autism population?

Meet Ryan Lockard, founder of Specialty Athletic Training. Ryan is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (NSCA) and a Certified Fitness Nutrition Specialist (ISSA). He has over a decade of experience working with youth and adults with special needs and has over 10,000 hours of 1:1 instruction. It was a young teenager who introduced Ryan to the world of autism, and who continues to be the inspiration behind Specialty Athletic Training.

Ryan, tell us about Specialty Athletic Training.

In 2007, I began working with a 13-year-old boy with autism as his 1:1 aide. I recognized that the expectations were set lower for him in comparison to his peers, especially in the physical activity realm. He would become visually agitated during PE class within the first 5 - 10 minutes of the warm-up. When I asked what was wrong, he responded, "I don't want to run because I don't want to sweat."

No-one had ever asked him why he was becoming agitated and just assumed that he didn't want to exercise. After further discussion, he didn't want to sweat because it freaked him out. No one had ever explained to him WHY his body sweats. This was the aha moment.

I began to do my research and did not find anyone in the country providing the services aimed toward training this population, although adults and children with disabilities have an increased risk of becoming obese compared to their peers (58% & 38% respectively). After playing football in Europe for three seasons and working with a couple

of other families, I decided to take the leap and founded Specialty Athletic Training on June 12th, 2012.

Since then, we have worked with over 250 different individuals of various ages (4 - 63) and disabilities.

Where do you offer your athletic training services?

We have three locations in the Portland metro area.

- **Southwest Portland - Lewis & Clark College**
- **Southeast Portland - Ironside Training**
- **Vancouver, WA - Stephen's Place**

Stephen's Place is Specialty Athletic Training's newest location and provides an opportunity for youth and adults in the Vancouver, WA and Clark County area the opportunity to exercise while parents relax in the warm and inviting living area of this beautiful independent apartment community designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Is there a typical workout or are they all customized?

Most of our clients have had a negative experience with exercise in the past and may seem unmotivated. We aim to change that by providing a fun and friendly environment where they are able to enjoy themselves and feel supported.

We offer individual and small group training. We work with clients of all ages and various diagnoses. They all have their own unique interests, needs and goals, which we tailor their exercise program around. Each individual program is customized with all of these things in mind, along with client input.

What kind of qualifications do trainers have?

In partnership with Lewis and Clark College, Specialty Athletic Training has set up an internship program for students that have an interest in working with the special needs community. In looking for interns and trainers, we first start with their passion for fitness, add in a willingness to learn about the special needs community and top that with being able to be moldable and willing to learn. We end up with a staff willing to ask questions and listen to our clients and their parents to develop a program that will make fitness a priority in their lives for years to come. We are proud to share that all our trainers are certified as a Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) and/or as a Certified Personal Trainer (CPT). Clients and parents know that they or their child will be getting the very best of

Continued on page 35



PH: (866) 437-2165
ShapeofBehavior.com

The Shape of Behavior is an ABA clinic serving individuals of all ages with autism and other special needs. We are dedicated to evidence based treatment to improve quality of life for the individuals we serve.

Several
Locations
Nationwide



Does your child have Autism?
WE CAN HELP!



Visit us online for more information on our services

Follow us on Facebook to see our upcoming news & events!



We do the insurance verification and ACCEPT insurance on your behalf!

CALL US TO VERIFY COVERAGE!

7 SE 30th Avenue • Portland, OR 97214 • www.shapeofbehavior.com

care because our trainers are dedicated to providing a fitness workout that is customized to each client's needs.

Who are some of your trainers?

Andrew Traver is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. He joined the Specialty Athletic Training family in 2012 as a Peer Mentor and has worked with clients of varying ages and ability levels. He has become a client favorite and is now the Lead Trainer at our Southwest Portland location.

Emily Hatch is a Certified Personal Trainer who trains clients at our Southwest Portland and Vancouver facilities. She values relationship-building and the opportunity to mentor others. Stephen's Place residents and staff think she is awesome.

Do you have any client stories you'd like to share?

Cameron began working with Specialty Athletic Training in 2013. His mom shares, "I had read about Ryan's program and was curious to explore exercise programs that fit our son Cameron's needs. I met with Ryan and was excited to move forward with Cameron's participation in Specialty Athletic Training. Cameron had always participated in general education PE classes with teachers who modified as needed. We wanted Cameron to learn exercise and workout routines that would support a healthy lifestyle into and during adulthood. He needed more than the traditional group games that PE tends to promote and don't really complement his disability."

"Cameron has loved training with Ryan and his staff since day one! He looks forward to every session. He has become more confident in his exercise routine and overall health. He says he loves the way his muscles feel after a workout! Cameron thrives in the safe, supportive & loving atmosphere that is provided by all the staff. He has learned exercise is not only beneficial to your health but fun!"

What do you see for the future of Specialty Athletic Training?

We will continue to provide top-notch personal training for our community as well as partner with other community leaders to provide an inclusive healthy living experience. In the very near future, we will be offering nutrition workshops with a local meal prep company, Fit Kitchen Direct, as well as launching our online training program. We continue to hear the need for our services outside of the Portland/Vancouver area. Our plans are to expand to other cities on the west coast as well.

To set up a FREE consultation with a Specialty Athletic Training trainer:

Send an email to info@SpecialtyAthleticTraining.com (preferred) or call (503) 853-0512. You may also visit our website, read our blog and see more testimonials at www.SpecialtyAthleticTraining.com.

Specialty Athletic Training is also registered as a provider with the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Oregon and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) in Washington.



Kazoodles
kid-powered toys

WHAT'S YOUR CHILD WORKING ON?
FIND TOYS THAT HELP YOUR CHILD GROW WHILE HAVING FUN!
Brain Games • Sensory toys • Fidgets • Knowledgeable staff

9:30 A.M. - 7 P.M., NOON-4 ON SUNDAYS
13503 SE MILL PLAIN BLVD. #B-3 • VANCOUVER, WA 98684
360-823-0123 • WWW.KAZOODLESTOYS.COM • FB@KAZOODLESTOYS



**INSTRUMENTS
BALLET ACADEMY**

Classical Ballet
ages 3 -18

Contemporary and Jazz
ages 8 & up

Adult open ballet

Come dance with us in our
beautiful new studio

Register in advance at:
www.instrumentsacademy.com
or call 971.413.2730

19077 S Beaver Creek Road
Oregon City

Healthy Holiday Exercise Ideas

Winter fun without the sun.



Photos courtesy of Mary Rebekah Moore

By Ryan Lockard, CSCS, CFNS

Winter is coming, which means your life is about to be a little more chaotic than it already is. Changes in routine along with the gloomy Pacific Northwest weather during the holiday season can often lead to increased levels of sensory overload, anxiety and depression, especially for those on the autism spectrum.

While there might be a tendency to just want to sit on the couch and enjoy holiday goodies, a positive plan to keep you and your family physically active during the holidays helps improve self-regulation and may help in reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Here are five ideas to increase your family's activity level and decrease the stress of the holiday season.

- **Add activity to your holiday traditions** - You probably already have an assortment of family traditions that accompany the holiday season. One of my favorite traditions is cruising the neighborhoods to see all of the beautiful Christmas light displays. Whatever your traditions are, try to add an active twist to it. If you're like me and you enjoy seeing the holiday lights, make a list of the neighborhoods that you want to visit and plan to do some individual or family walks instead of simply driving through. If you have a wearable tracker (like a Fitbit), set a goal for how many steps you aim to reach. This will increase your sense of accomplishment once you are finished.

- **Put an umbrella in the car** - Whether we are visiting the grocery store to stock the refrigerator or going to the mall to grab that perfect gift, most people have the tendency to drive around scouring the parking lot for the closest possible open spot. It's not because we're lazy, but we all just know that the sun doesn't like to visit the PNW during the holidays and we want to stay dry! This year put an umbrella in your car and create a new habit by parking away in the farthest spot possible. You will avoid the parking lot pandemonium, get some extra exercise, and stay dry in the process. That's a win, win, win!

- **Make the TV your workout partner** - "Only five more minutes!" Does this sound familiar? A lot of kids look forward to their holiday break because of the increased screen time. I was no different when I was younger and used to see how many seasons of World Series Baseball I could play lounging in my bean bag chair. Replace that bean bag chair with the old exercise bike that you have in the garage. (If you don't have an exercise bike, they can be found for around \$50-\$100 on Craigslist.) Add incentive for riding the bike by allotting an extra ten minutes of screen time.

If they aren't the video game type and instead are glued to watching the TV, join them and use the commercials as exercise time. Do simple bodyweight exercises with them to increase your heart rates. If you live in an apartment complex or have access to a stairway, walk up the stairs ten times each time a commercial break occurs. Often kids are more inclined to do the exercises with you, instead of by themselves.



- **Create an exercise reward system** - Incentivize exercise with an exercise sticker chart. Assign different stickers for different activities and have a reward for a certain amount of stickers. Did you walk 30 minutes looking at the Christmas lights? **Red sticker**. Did you and your child walk farther in the parking lot? **Green stickers** for both of you. Did you do exercises during the commercials of a 30-minute cartoon? **Blue sticker**. You can assign the stickers and rewards however you want, but this should be a fun (and visual) way for the family to track their increased activity. Keep it fun and keep each other motivated!

- **Make time for YOU** - With all of the chaos that the holidays bring, it can be very easy to forget about yourself. This leads to feeling tired, burnt out, and dreading the holidays next year. Making time for yourself is a **MUST**. You want to enjoy the holidays, not have them increase your anxiety. Try to take a nightly bubble bath or simply wake up five to ten minutes earlier in the morning to meditate. This will do wonders for your mood and psyche. Plan time to get out of the chaos and take care of yourself.



Ryan Lockard is the founder and head trainer of Specialty Athletic Training, a personal training company located in Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA, that specializes in fitness programs for children and adults with special needs. He is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (NSCA) and Certified Fitness Nutrition Specialist (ISSA). He can be reached at: Ryan@SpecialtyAthleticTraining.com. www.SpecialtyAthleticTraining.com



therapy

THERAPEUTIC OPTIONS AND RESOURCES

IN THIS SECTION

Autism and Mental Health.....	39
Luke's Journey Autism Fund.....	42
Provider Partner Directory.....	44
Upcoming Autism Empowerment Events.....	46

Autism and Mental Health

The Autistic Operating System

By Judy Endow, MSW, LCSW

Mental health diagnosis and treatment has evolved over time according to what makes sense and what works for most people. We have an increasing body of research around mental health issues that informs us today. However, when it comes to autistic people, we do not have a body of research that informs us about diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders. Autistic people are not like most people. This means we need to understand the underlying autism neurology along with its impacts in the realm of diagnosing and treating mental health disorders in clients also diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Autism is an Operating System

For clinicians, it is important to understand that autism is much more than a diagnosis. Autism is a way of being. It is like being blind in that we cannot separate the blindness from the person, but the blindness – or in this case, the autism – defines the person. As an autistic I see, experience, interact with and give back to the world as an autistic. Autism is my operating system.

Autistics have a different operating system than typical people. This is not good or bad. It is just different. Think of PlayStation and Xbox gaming systems. Some gamers prefer one to the other, but most gamers like owning both. This is because some games can only be played on PlayStation while other games need an Xbox system. Neither gaming system is good or bad. They are just different systems.

The majority of the people in the world, because they represent the biggest number, are defined as “typical,” and we can say they have a typical operating system. Those with autism are in the minority. They are not wired with a typical operating system. Instead, they are wired autistic.

Medically and diagnostically speaking, anything not typical is atypical. This is most of the time helpful, but when it comes to autism, it has not proven to be very helpful. Most of the times in the medical field when atypical can be changed into typical this is a good thing, so that is the goal whenever feasible. Thus, for years we have tried to change autistic people (whom we assumed to be atypical) into typical people by trying to make

them behave like typical people. In the process, we have learned that we cannot change the operating system. Autistic people have an autistic operating system.

When Clinicians Don't See the Autism

Today, autistic people, just like the population at large, find their way to therapy when symptoms of depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and other diagnoses become problematic to them in their daily lives.

Clinicians need to understand the autistic operating system – in other words, to see the autism – if they are to be helpful to their autistic clients. When they do not have a strong grasp on this, the results are that their clients are not served well. Clinicians without a good understanding of autism generally sort things out in one of two ways:



- **It's All the Autism**

When a client has been previously diagnosed with ASD, it is common for mental health clinicians to attribute all psychiatric symptomatology to the autism, which often results in autistics not being diagnosed or treated for comorbid mental illnesses when warranted.

- **Can't See the Forest for the Trees**

Another example is clients who have multiple psychiatric diagnoses for which none of the typical treatments have been effective in lessening symptoms.

Continued on page 41



RESERVE YOUR AD TODAY

Spectrums Magazine is uniquely positioned to bring your business to individuals and families in the autism community. Book your ad today to directly reach this niche audience.

For ad inquiries, email spectrums@autismempowerment.org or call (360) 852-8369

WWW.SPECTRUMSMAGAZINE.ORG

Autism Empowerment Vehicle Donation Program



Tax-deductible donation for your car, truck, RV or boat (Running or not)

- Picked up free of charge by Donate For Charity
- Proceeds go to Autism Empowerment and Spectrums Magazine

Call toll-free at (866) 392-4483
 Indicate donation is for Autism Empowerment
 OR go online: bit.ly/aevehicledonation
www.DonateForCharity.com



Kites Pediatric Therapy Services, LLC
Helping Children Reach for the Highest Quality of Life!
 Carmen Rojas Larrazabal, OTR/L. Program Director/Owner • www.kitespediatrics.com



In-Home Occupational Therapy Services for children with disabilities

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Fragile X
- Attention Deficit Disorders
- Down's Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Developmental Delays
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Pre-natal Drug Exposure
- Coetical Visual Impairment
- Handwriting Difficulties
- Oral-Motor Impairment
- G-Tube to Oral Feeding Transition
- Depression
- Thought Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Attachment Disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder



Occupational Therapy Specializing in Sensory Processing Disorders

Auditory Interventions • DIR/Floortime • Handwriting Therapy Intensives • Interactive Metronome • Yoga Posture/Core Development • Qigong Sensory Massage Rhythmic Movement Training • Counseling Social Skills Training • Support Groups



Advanced Pediatric Therapies

AdvancedPediatricTherapies.com
 Portland & Vancouver locations: (360) 885.4684

These clients' individual symptoms are sometimes collectively better known as autism, but because the autism hasn't been recognized, clinicians miss the boat in rendering effective treatment.

Conclusion

When clinicians do not have a good understanding of the autistic operating system, they tend to lean toward one of the two above examples, neither one being helpful in supporting the therapeutic progress of autistic clients.

Author note: In my practice, I see clients who happen to be autistic. Their autism is usually not the reason they seek therapy, but it certainly affects how the therapy for their depression, anxiety or other presenting symptoms is delivered. When mental health therapy is delivered in a usual manner and not based upon the autistic operating system of the client, it generally is not very effective.

This article is part of a series on Autism and Mental Health. To follow the entire series, please visit www.judyendow.com, *Aspects of Autism Translated*



Judy Endow, MSW, LCSW maintains a private practice in Madison, Wisconsin, providing consultation for families, school districts, and other agencies. Besides having autism herself, she is the parent of three grown sons, one of whom is on the autism spectrum. Judy can be reached through her website, www.judyendow.com



Multnomah County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) is a part of a statewide services delivery system. We provide case management services to adults and children and help individuals and families choose and plan services and supports to live a healthy, safe and productive life.

Services that may be available depending upon eligibility:

- Case Management
- IEP Assistance
- Family Support
- Employment
- Transportation to work
- Supported Living
- Residential
- Career Discovery
- In-home Support for Children
- In-home Support for Adults



Want more information?
<https://multco.us/dd>
503-988-6258

Why Choose

Behavior Support Solutions?

We strive to provide the best quality of services to our families, accessing each child's gifts and unique abilities. Behavior Support Solutions provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services to families and individuals with autism spectrum disorders in home, daycare, school and community settings for ages 2 years through adulthood, 24/7. We can provide services where you need us, and when you need us.

We only use positive behavior supports that are research proven and considered the best practices in the field. Most insurance plans accepted, including some Medicaid plans. Service locations are in AZ, CA, OR and WA.



Contact us today!

1-800-661-3669

(extension 802 for new client services)

intakes@BehaviorSupportSolutions.com

www.BehaviorSupportSolutions.com

Luke's Journey Autism Fund helps Families

Grant application deadline is 12/31/2017

By Karen Krejcha

Luke's Journey Autism Fund is now accepting grant applications through December 31st, 2017. Luke's Journey Autism Fund was named for and inspired by a 12-year-old boy named Luke who was diagnosed on the autism spectrum at age 3.

The mission of the fund is to provide grant opportunities and resources for families in Southwest Washington and the Portland metro area who need financial assistance to cover costs specifically related to supporting their child or children diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

Since March 2016, Luke's Journey Autism Fund has raised over \$5,000 through the generosity of local and national donors supporting a variety of events, including Luke's Ride 2016 and Luke's Ride 2017. A third fundraising race, Luke's Ride 2018 is being planned for Saturday, July 21st, 2018.

Multiple grant awards are available.

For the first round of grant funding, Luke's Journey Autism Fund has \$5,000 to award in grants. It is anticipated at this time that five (5) \$1,000 grants will be made, although final determination will be made by the grant committee.

Requirements in order for families to apply:

- Children must live in counties in Southwest Washington or the greater Portland, OR metro area (Clackamas, Clark, Cowlitz, Hood River, Lewis, Multnomah, Pacific, Skamania, Wahkiakum or Washington).
- Children must be 18 years of age or younger with a documented autism spectrum diagnosis (DSM-IV or DSM-5 diagnosis accepted).
- The requested therapy, service or equipment must be directly related to the child's autism treatment and recommended in a referral letter from a doctor, therapist or special education professional.

Continued on next page

Take the guesswork out of behavioral assessments by putting data insights at the center.



BEHCA is a data tracking tool to support a systematic method for better identifying and managing behaviors through regular observation, communication, and collaboration.



Learn more and sign up for a free 14-day trial at behca.com





- Preference is given to families exhibiting financial need. Extenuating circumstances are considered.

- If you have health insurance, you are still eligible for this grant. Existing insurance benefits must be applied first.

What might the grant award cover?

There are a broad range of services and equipment that may be covered by a Luke's Journey Autism Fund Grant. Here is a list of some of the autism services and equipment that may be covered:

- Center and home based therapies including, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, ABA and Speech Therapy
- Summer camps
- Electronic communications including tablets and apps
- Professional Advocacy and IEP assistance
- Recreational Leagues and Scouting program fees
- Scouting Programs (including camps)
- Sensory Items
- Service dogs and animals
- Therapies including music, dance, aquatic, art and hippotherapy

This list is not exclusive nor is it a guarantee.

Are there any areas the grant will NOT cover?

These are a few areas that the grant will not cover:

- Initial autism diagnostic appointments
- Installation or maintenance of items covered by grant funding
- Personal travel to and from therapy appointments
- Items already covered through existing insurance or DDA/DDD benefits
- Services or equipment that were purchased prior to grant approval

These lists are not exclusive. Final decisions will be determined by Luke's Journey Autism Fund committee members.

How are grant decisions made?

Grant funding decisions will be made by Luke's Journey Autism Fund committee members which individually review and score each request. No single person makes the determination. A professional grantmaking process is used to ensure the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the applicants.

The intent of Luke's Journey Autism fund is to help as many children on the autism spectrum as possible; however the number of grants given and the dollar amounts available depend on a number of factors, including the amount of funds available to award, financial need of applicant and the number of applications received.

Due to limited resources, Luke's Journey Autism Fund is unable to fund all requests that are made and are unable to consider incomplete or late applications.

When will funding decisions be made?

All applications will be reviewed during January 2018. The length of the review process depends on how many applications are received. Luke's Journey Autism Fund is planning for award announcements and funding to take place in February 2018.

If awarded a Luke's Journey Autism Fund grant, funds go directly to the provider, vendor, retailer or organization listed on the grant application. Funds will not be paid directly to the family, however they will be notified to fill out a grant acceptance form.

How do families apply?

For more detailed information and a downloadable grant application, please visit: www.autismempowerment.org/programs/luke-journey

To apply, families will need to fill out and mail in a completed application with requested attachments. All applications must be received by December 31st, 2017.

For specific questions for Autism Empowerment about Luke's Journey Autism Fund and/or if you need an application packet sent via email, please email: lukejourney@autismempowerment.org

To connect with Luke's Journey Autism Fund founder, Doug Underwood, please email: dougunderwood@comcast.net.

PROVIDER PARTNER *directory*

www.spectrumsmagazine.org

Spectrums Magazine works to bridge the various communities serving those with autism to create a hub of information and resources - all in one place. Our print directory offers a categorized listing of provider partners that value access to information and help create a robust autism community.

In Spring 2018, *Spectrums* will be rebranding to *Spectrum Life Magazine* and will be offering new print and online directory options. Want to sponsor **Autism Empowerment**, **Spectrum Life Magazine** or have your business listed? Contact us to learn more: spectrums@autismempowerment.org

Spectrums Magazine doesn't endorse, promote or guarantee the services or outcome of any one provider or type of therapy.

ADVOCACY + SUPPORT

Autism Empowerment

P.O. Box 871676
Vancouver, WA 98687
(360) 852-8369
info@autismempowerment.org
www.AutismEmpowerment.org

AE promotes a culture of acceptance and empowerment for youth, adults and families within the Autism and Asperger community. We offer education, resources and support services for all ages and abilities.

Autism Society of Oregon

5100 SW Macadam Ave. #400
Portland, OR 97239
(888) 288-4761
info@AutismSocietyOregon.org
www.AutismSocietyOregon.org

ASO provides resources, education, services and supports to everyone impacted by autism. There is no fee for our services.

Multnomah County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Services Division

421 SW Oak Street, Suite 610
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 988-6258
<https://multco.us/dd>

We increase an individual's quality of life by helping to access their community through coordinated case management. We provide eligibility, case management, supports and protective services at no cost.

Parent to Parent of Klickitat County

Donna Tiffan, Coordinator
(971) 236-8791
klickitatcountyp2p@gmail.com

Program offering emotional support and information about disabilities and community resources to parents and caregivers.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

The Shape of Behavior

7 SE 30th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214
2nd Location at:
350 B Avenue
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035
(866) 437-2165
www.shapeofbehavior.com

Our individualized therapy focuses on the relationship between child and environment so that positive changes endure.

Western Psychological & Counseling Services

Various Locations in the Portland/
Vancouver Metro Area
Referral Coordinator: (503) 858-0183
www.westernpsych.com

Services include diagnostic testing, individualized ABA programs including a unit for aggressive/self-injurious behaviors, social skills groups, parenting support, and individual/family mental health treatment.

CHIROPRACTIC

Dr. Gloria A. Grubbs, DC, BA, BS

TriStar Family Chiropractic,
8221 NE Hazel Dell Avenue, Suite #104
Vancouver, WA 98665
(360) 258-1506
tristarfamilychiropractic@gmail.com
www.tristarfamilychiropractic.com

Specialized care and wellness for children and adults with Developmental Disabilities, ADD/ADHD, Mental Health/Addictions, Autism and Asperger Syndrome. Se habla Español.

HOUSING

Stephen's Place

501 SE Ellsworth Rd
Vancouver, WA 98664
(360) 984-3600
info@stephensplace.org
www.stephensplace.org

We are a supportive independent apartment community designed for adults within the I/DD community. We provide relationship-based care so each person may live a fulfilled life with meaning and dignity.

MUSIC THERAPY

Portland Music Therapy LLC

Angie Kopshy, MM, MT-BC
Kate Harris, MT-BC
9517 SW Barbur Blvd.
Portland, OR 97219
971-221-7144
angie@musictherapyportland.com www.portlandmusictherapy.com

We use neurologic music therapy techniques to achieve non-musical goals related to speech, cognition, motor-movement, anxiety reduction and community.

Continued on next page



NEUROFEEDBACK

Rose City Therapeutics

8050 SW Warm Springs St, Ste 130
Tualatin, OR 97062
(971) 224-4089
drjen@rosecitytherapeutics.com
www.rosecitytherapeutics.com

In our clinic, we use EEG neurofeedback, a method that optimizes brain self-regulation, to improve symptoms associated with autism and other brain-related challenges.

SPORTS + FITNESS

Miracle League of Vancouver

P.O. Box 872563
Vancouver, WA 98687
(360) 524-5423
craigm@mlvw.org
www.miracleleagueofvancouverwa.org

Adaptive baseball program for kids and adults with any disability. No age limits. Positive buddy program. Everyone plays-bats-wins!

Specialty Athletic Training

Portland, OR & Vancouver, WA
(503) 863-0512
www.SpecialtyAthleticTraining.com

Professional personal training specializing in fitness programs exclusively for children and adults with special needs.

TRAVEL

Trips, Inc

P.O. Box 10885
Eugene, OR 97440
(541) 686-1013
Trips@tripsinc.com
www.tripsinc.com

We provide all-inclusive vacation packages for travelers ages 18 and older with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Travel the world with us!



Upcoming Events • www.AutismEmpowerment.org

For a full listing of upcoming events and meetings, visit www.AutismEmpowerment.org



DECEMBER

Thursday, December 7th

AE/G6 Airpark Free Sensory Jump Night
6:30 - 8:30 pm
G6 Airpark Portland
10414 SE Washington St. Portland, OR

RSVP is required at info@AutismEmpowerment.org

NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION \$500,000 HOLIDAY CHALLENGE

Autism Empowerment is involved in the Newman's Own Foundation \$500k Holiday Challenge, a friendly fundraising competition raising money for causes like ours. Please help by giving what you can so our organization can win the grand prize of \$150k or other matching cash bonuses. Thank you!

November 21st, 2017 throughout January 3rd, 2018
www.crowdrise.com/autism-empowerment

MONTHLY - Last Saturday

Regal My Way Matinee Sensory Movie
10:30 am showtime
7800 NE Fourth Plain Blvd. Vancouver, WA 98662

Call 844-462-7342 ext 433 in advance for movie that will be showing.

Upcoming Dates: December 30th, January 27th and February 24th

APRIL 2018

3rd Annual Strike it Up for Autism Acceptance Bowl-A-Thon

More information coming soon.
Email: info@AutismEmpowerment.org

Autism Empowerment offers Support Groups, Social Clubs, Game Nights and Volunteer Service opportunities. Please see our website for dates/times and Facebook group page links.

Ongoing Support Groups:

- Adults on the Autism Spectrum (peer-led)
- AWETism We Embrace (Neurodiverse & NT)
- Dads' Autism Support Group
- G.I.R.L.S. Group (Adolescence)
- Parents of Tweens/Teens Support Group

Ongoing Social Groups:

- SW WA Tween and Teen Social Club (11 - 19)
- Tween and Teen Book Club (11 - 19)

Ongoing Service & Volunteerism:

- Autism "Rocks" - Rock painting, hiding and collecting (All ages)
- Autism Serves Kids Care Club (8 - 18)
- Autism Serves - Volunteerism for all ages

Support Autism Empowerment & Spectrums Magazine - <http://bit.ly/aedonate>



SMALL CLASSES – BIG RESULTS

Individualized Education for 5th - 8th Grade Students with Learning Differences

BRIDGES MIDDLE SCHOOL HAS MOVED!

You can now find us on First Avenue in Downtown Portland. Our new building boasts floor to ceiling windows, spacious classrooms, private counseling offices, and state of the art infrastructure. Most importantly, its central location enables more families to access a Bridges education.

As one of the few schools in Oregon devoted to students with learning differences and the only one focused exclusively on middle school, Bridges offers its 5th through 8th grade students small class sizes, differentiated instruction, and a safe place to learn and grow. For many Bridges students, this means the difference between effective learning and being passed along. It means positive social and emotional growth rather than isolation or, worse, bullying .

STRONG ACADEMICS & SOCIAL SUPPORT

A strong academic program is vital to helping students reach their potential and prepare them for high school. Our students enjoy a typical middle school curriculum, transformed to meet their individual needs. Our students gain strategies and skills that increase their academic performance, including learning to organize, focus and communicate more effectively.

Bridges Middle School does more than prepare our students for high school. We transform lives. Bridges students learn to navigate school — and life — with confidence and competence.

Come see what we're all about!
Learn more online at BridgesMS.org

STEPHEN'S PLACE

As an Independent Apartment Community (IAC), Stephen's Place offers positive living options for adults with developmental disabilities.

With forty-one modern apartments, our focus is on community; empowering and enabling each resident to be a productive contributing member of their community.

Call or email us to schedule a tour
(360) 984-3600
info@stephensplace.org

501 SE Ellsworth Road, Vancouver, WA 98664



Apartment rent is inclusive of all meals, supportive services, nursing & ADL assistance and programming including:

Job Skills Training, Placement & Coaching
Life Skills Training
Horticultural Therapy
Group Fitness Classes & Yoga
Arts & Crafts
Movie Nights
Sporting Events
Group Outings to Local Attractions
Transportation Services

We also offer a Day Program to people who live outside of the Stephen's Place community, but would like to build peer relationships and participate in activities.



Learn more about us @ www.stephensplace.org