



Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Chapter Autism Society of America



April 2005 Newsletter

www.asa-kal.org

“Connecting individuals within the autism spectrum, as well as their community, with life-long access to resources and opportunities through advocacy, education, research, and public awareness.”

2004-05 Meeting Schedule

*Social Time begins at 6:30 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.*

September 14, 2004-

Introductions and Social Meeting

October 12, 2004-

Topic: Social Thinking

December 14, 2004-

Topic: Safety Issues

February 8, 2005-

Annual Meeting: Board of Director Elections

Topic: Estate Planning

April 12, 2005-

Topic: Behavior Issues

May 11, 2005-

Social Meeting and Networking

New Board of Directors

At our February general meeting, we elected a new board of directors. The following board takes office on April 1, 2005. The next newsletter will list the responsibilities of each board member.

Kim Prater, President, kprater@asa-kal.org

Beverly Bishop, bbishop@asa-kal.org

Cyndi Carstens, ccarstens@asa-kal.org

Kelly Davis, kdavis@asa-kal.org

Brenda Gagie, bgagie@asa-kal.org

Karrie Kemery, kkemery@asa-kal.org

Sheri Marvin, smarvin@asa-kal.org

Betty Schimmel

Jean Steele, jsteele@asa-kal.org

Carey Whitfield, cwhitfield@asa-kal.org

Behavior is Communication

“Help! I don't understand why my child is behaving this way!” Understanding what our children with autism are trying to communicate through their behavior is challenging for every parent. Many parents feel frustrated and overwhelmed with behavior concerns. Often other people have ideas that can help us deal with what may seem like an impossible situation.

Last year we had a very successful meeting focusing on behavior management with Dr. Linda LeBlanc and Dr. Jim Carr, Codirectors of the Western Michigan University (WMU) Center for Autism. Many of you expressed how helpful this meeting was for you. We are very excited that Dr. LeBlanc is returning again this year. The meeting is Tuesday, April 12, 2005. Social time begins at 6:30 and our meeting will begin at 7:00.

We would like to make sure that your biggest concerns are addressed at this meeting. So, if you have specific topics that you would like Dr. LeBlanc to discuss, please e-mail those topics to Jayne Weaver at jweaver@asa-kal.org. We will also have forms available on the night of our meeting from 6:30 to 7:15 for you to write your topics down and turn in just prior to the presentation. We will have question and answer time as well, but we encourage you to submit your concerns in advance to help us focus on the areas of greatest need.

Dr. LeBlanc will also be sharing information about the WMU Center for Autism, which is an outpatient clinic that provides evaluation and behavioral treatment services for families of children (2-12) with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ex., autism, Asperger's Syndrome). The WMU Center for Autism offers three services: Parent Training Clinic, Problem Behavior Clinic, Diagnostic Service.

One of the ways our chapter is striving to help families in our community is by providing scholarship funds to the WMU Center for Autism. We have already donated \$2,000 to the Center for Autism this year. The Center uses these funds to allow families who are struggling financially to still receive services from the WMU Center for Autism. We encourage you to check into the services at the WMU Center for Autism. If you want more information prior to our meeting, give them a call at (269) 387-4459 or check their website at www.wmich.edu/psychology/autism.

Pre-Register for Childcare

We are happy to provide **free childcare for children with autism and their siblings** from 6:45 to 8:45 during our Chapter Meetings. We will provide structured activities and learning opportunities for this children during this time. Pre-registration is very important in order to insure that there is adequate staffing for the safety of every child, so if you plan to attend please contact Melanie Giddings at 269-373-4714 or at mgiddings@asa-kal.org

Directions

To get to Croyden Avenue School, take US 131 to the West Main (M-43) exit. Go east on West Main to Drake Road. Turn North (left). Take a right at the first light to Croyden Avenue, you'll see the circle drive of the School immediately on the left.



Buy your ASA
wristbands any of our
upcoming events!

2nd Annual Walk About—Talk About Autism Event

Portage Celery Flats

April 23rd, 2005

Time: Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. Walk begins at 11:00 a.m.

Place: Celery Flats—Meet at the Grain Building

Registration Fee: \$15 for adults (includes a T-shirt)

Distance: Approximately 2 miles

Lunch will be served following the walk!

We are very excited to be planning our 2nd Fundraising Walk for Autism Awareness Month. This walk is just one of many efforts to continue our commitment to raise public awareness and ensure continued access to educational opportunities.

Each registered participant will receive a T-shirt, lunch, and will have an opportunity to win door prizes after the event. Funds raised through registration fees and pledges will be used to support autism awareness and provide services to families.

Please tear off the registration form and mail it in as soon as possible. We must receive your form by April 10th in order to insure that you receive a T-shirt. Encourage your friends and neighbors to walk with you or to pledge you as you walk. Use the pledge form provided to collect your pledges and submit all money collected on the day of the walk.

Checks for registration and pledges should be made payable to Autism Society of Kalamazoo/Battle Creek. We are registered as a federal exempt non-profit organization 501©3, so all donations are tax deductible.

If you would like more information or have questions, please contact Trina Wood (269) 372-1509 or at kwood@asa-kal.org.

Registration and pledge forms are also available at our website: www.asa-kal.org.

Use this form to register your family and/or friends for the walk. The registration fee is \$15 for each adult, which includes a T-shirt. Children may walk for free, but must pay \$10 if they want a T-shirt.

Mail Form and registration fee to:
 Walk About—Talk About Autism
 C/O Trina Wood
 8031 W. H Avenue
 Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Name	Address	Phone	Registra- tion Fee	Child T- Shirt Size	Adult T- Shirt Size
				S M L	M L XL XXL
				S M L	M L XL XXL
				S M L	M L XL XXL

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$_____

Upcoming Events

Support Parent Training—Parent 2 Parent

Free Training to help support parents of newly diagnosed special needs children is Sat., April 2nd at Oshtemo Public Library, 10:00-3:30pm. Contact Michelle Miller at 269-345-8950 or 721-8950.

Asperger's Parent Support Group

Next meeting is Wednesday, April 25 at Croyden Avenue School 6:30-8:00 pm. Contact Michelle Gulbis at 553-9311.

"Autism/ Asperger's 2005" Detroit, MI

Featuring Dr. Temple Grandin, Sean Barron, and Dr. Jeannie McAfee. For more information, call Future Horizons at 1-800-489-0727 or www.futurehorizons-autism.

Going to the Heart of Autism—RDI

June 17 – 18, 2005, Ann Arbor, MI

Dr. Steve Gutstein dramatically illustrates the Relationship Development Intervention Program (RDI) via audience participation and hours of video taken from actual intervention sessions. For more information visit <http://www.connectionscenter.com/workshops/> or call (713) 838-1362.

ASA 36th Annual ASA Conference

"In Tune with the Future" July 13 - 16, 2005

We are hoping to arrange for some "carpooling" to this conference in Nashville, TN. If you are planning to attend, please e-mail Bev Bishop at bbishop@asa-kal.org. For more information call 1-800-3AUTISM or www.autism-society.org.

Project Lifesaver Update

We are pleased to announce that our chapter has received grants totaling \$28,545 from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to help launch Project Lifesaver in Kalamazoo County. Project Lifesaver is a program that provides electronic tracking wristbands to people who tend to wander. Police departments will be supplied with equipment to track lost program participants through a radio frequency emitted from the wristband. Our grant will allow us to pay for the equipment for the police departments, training for the police officers, reimbursement for the officers' training expenses, and up to 25 wristbands for people who need them. The only cost to participants will be a nominal \$10 per month, which will pay for monthly battery changes.

Last year, we mourned the loss of many young people with autism. One little boy in Michigan wandered from home and drowned in a neighbors pool. Another wandered from a group home and was killed by oncoming traffic. More recently, a young boy wandered from his home and was found frozen to death on a wooded road over a mile from home. Children with autism require constant supervision. A single moment of distraction can mean a lifetime of regret for parents and caregivers. With Project Lifesaver, parents and caregivers can now breathe a sigh of relief knowing that if their loved one wanders away, they can be located before something threatening or tragic happens.

We would like to thank Officer Holly Cerny of Portage Police Department, Lt. Wally Kipp of the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department, and Bill Wright of Seelye Wright Automotive Group for their efforts in making this program possible.

If you live in Kalamazoo County and would like more information about participating in Project Lifesaver, contact Bev Bishop at 269-381-2456 or bbishop@asa-kal.org.

Several of our new board members look forward to seeking funds for Project Lifesaver in Calhoun County.



Join Our Local Chapter!

We can use your help as a member of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Chapter-Autism Society of America! By becoming a member of our local chapter, you are helping to support printing and postage for the newsletter as well as receiving voting rights. If you are already a member of the national organization, only \$10 should be sent for local chapter dues. If you are not a member of the national organization, please send the following for membership in both the national organization and the local chapter :

Student – \$25.00
Individual – \$40.00
Family – \$50.00

Please make checks payable to: **Kalamazoo/BC Autism Society** and mail to: Kalamazoo/BC Autism Society of America; Croyden Avenue School; 4606 Croyden Avenue; Kalamazoo, MI 49006. Questions?? Contact Karrie Kemery at 324-1264.