

Autism Society Acadiana Newsletter - August 2013

So many upcoming events and new opportunities on the horizon for Autism Society Acadiana! Be sure to note all of the events in this issue of the newsletter and continue to check the website calendar often. Don't forget that we send out email 1-3 times per week so make sure we are landing in your Inbox and not your SPAM or Bulk Mail folder!

On Sept. 27-28, we once again will hold our annual fall fundraiser, the 4th Annual Racquets for Hope Tennis Tournament at City Club Courts at River Ranch. This year's format is a little different, so see the write up below for more information.

We also will have an Autism Awareness Night at an upcoming Ice Gators game this season! How exciting! Details coming soon!

The Annual Members Picnic and Family Fun Day will be held Oct. 5th, at Acadian Village, from 10AM—2PM. We are looking forward to a day of fun with new families, established members, and those we have not seen in a while! Come join us for a day of fun! Look below for more details.

For the past several years, Autism Society Acadiana has supported Treats at the Village, a safe trick-or-treating event for persons with disabilities and their families hosted by Families Helping Families of Acadiana

and LARC. Treats at the Village will be Oct. 29th. Admission is usually only 1 canned good per family, so bring more if you are able. Canned goods are donated to Second Harvest. Mark your calendars for this event!

Once the tennis tournament is behind us, we will focus on making the 2014 Walk for Hope an event to remember! Stay tuned for more details which may include moving the event to a bigger location!

Much more is in store in the months to come as we work ever diligently to deliver more services and programs to benefit you, our members and families!

Vickie Nettles, Editor

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4th Annual Racquets for Hope, September 27-28, City Club at River Ranch

The registration forms will be posted soon on our website for the 2013 Racquets for Hope Tennis Tournament. Interested players will be able to download the form and mail in their payment to our office.

New to this event this year is a mixer on the Friday evening from 6-9 PM. Players will be "mixed" - sometimes they will play a Men's doubles, Womens doubles or Mixed match. There will only be a 1st and 2nd place

winner for the event. The tennis pro will match players with others according to levels as best he can. Fee per player for the mixer is \$30.

Saturday will be an all-day tournament from 8AM-6PM. Check the website for the different levels per division: Mens; Womens; and Mixed. Fee per player on a doubles team is \$50. The Saturday tourney will have prizes for 1st and 2nd per division and level.

To play in **both** the mixer and the all day tournament is \$70 per player. Included in the fee is a tournament t-shirt, meals and drinks for the event chosen in which to participate.



All players will be given two courtesy tickets to the Sponsors and Players Dinner to be held the Friday evening with dinner catered by Johnny Carino's. Beer will be available while supplies last. Thank you to Crescent Crown for the donation!

A silent auction will be held also throughout the tournament ending at 5:00 PM on Saturday.

See you all there!

Annual Members Picnic and Family Fun Day, October 5, Acadian Village, 10AM-2PM

Our 3rd Annual Members Picnic and Family Fun Day will be a day for our members and their families to learn more about Autism Society Acadiana and meet the board members and the facilitators of the area support groups. Our members will also be able to receive information on programs and

services of agencies and organizations which may serve to benefit their family member who has an autism spectrum disorder. All of this will be provided in a fun relaxing day out on the peaceful grounds of Acadian Village.

Food, water and soft drinks

will be provided. We will also have lots of entertainment for the kids and adults! Music will be provided by Domingue's Disc Jockey Service. We will have a new balloon artist, Mr. Rick Hessler joining us. A fun jump, a video gaming trailer, and carnival games will be on hand. We will also have door

prizes! So mark your calendar and be sure to RSVP when our email invitation goes out about the event.



Spotlight on Achievement



Just a short note to remind you all of our Spotlight on Achievement column. Through this column in the monthly newsletter, we turn the "spotlight" on our loved ones with autism. In spite of all the obstacles which our children and adults face in their daily lives, they work so hard to make progress and achieve what we once never dreamed was possible! Allow us the honor of celebrating your loved one's accomplishments with you!

AUGUST 2013 SPOTLIGHT ON ACHIEVEMENT

This month we will showcase two individuals with autism in this issue and look forward to seeing more entries being submitted for the next issue of the newsletter. The deadline for Spotlight submissions for next month will be August 23, 2013. Please include a photo of your child with a brief paragraph of his/her accomplishment and remember that no accomplishment is too small! We want to hear about it!

The Cox Inspirational Heroes Award pays tribute to student heroes who lead meaningful, productive lives, while working very hard to overcome personal adversities. Over the span of this 20 year program, Cox has recognized amazing students (K-12) who have made overwhelming achievements despite their physical, emotional, psychological or social challenges faced on a daily basis. Cox Communications recognizes amazing students who have made overwhelming achievements despite any physical, emotional, psychological or social challenges faced on a daily basis.



Chesten Miller is an 8th grade student with autism at Scott Middle School. Chesten was chosen by his school to receive the Cox Inspirational Hero" award. Chesten was honored at the "Cox Inspirational Hero" Banquet on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 along with other students chosen from other schools in our area.

Chesten is very proud of himself for receiving this recognition and when asked why he is a Cox Hero, he said "Because I was a great kid at school". That in itself is a major accomplishment.

Chesten has had his most successful year socially and academically and is moving on to high school this fall.

Way to go Chesten! We are proud of you!
Good luck with school this fall!



Grant Klentzman also received the award this past school year. Grant attends Highland Baptist Christian School in New Iberia and will be in the 11th grade this fall. He has a 3.6 GPA, played on the varsity football and basketball team, was in the Service Club and regularly volunteered at the Iberia Humane Society.

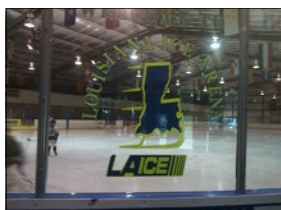
His dad recently gave us the update that Grant is taking Drivers Ed this summer!

His family is very proud of him as we all are here at Autism Society Acadiana!



Family Ice Skating with Autism Society Acadiana, LA Ice Arena, July 13

We wish to send a very big and sincere thank you to LA Ice Arena for hosting a FREE skating event for our families this past July. Even with a few falls here and there, the kids (and adults) would bounce right back up to continue skating - that was such a joy to see! The staff were absolutely wonderful with the kids and adults on the spectrum, accommodating but very respectful and nonjudgmental. We all had a awesome time and we cannot wait to have another, bigger event at LA Ice Arena in December!



Today you are you, that is truer than true; There's no one alive who is Youer than You!

~~Dr. Suess

Acadiana Area Human Services District—Board Members

The Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD) began its second year of operation on July 1, 2013. As you may recall from the previous newsletter, AAHSD is a Local Government Entity (LGE), which is comprised of the regional agencies which provide behavioral health services and developmental disability services in the seven parish area formerly known as DHH Region IV.

Also, on July 1, 2013, the four remaining DHH Regional Offices in Lake Charles, Alexandria, Shreveport, and Monroe became Local Government Entities, resulting in all ten of the previous DHH Regional Offices operating in this manner for behavioral health services and developmental disabilities services. Though this

operating model has resulted in changes relative to the administrative operations, participants in behavioral health and developmental disabilities will see virtually no change in day-to-day operations as it relates to programmatic criteria and service delivery. The location for accessing developmental disability services will be changing however, as the Developmental Disability Section of AAHSD will be relocating into the Tyler Behavioral Health Clinic located on Dulles Drive in Lafayette some time in September. Contact information will be forthcoming from various sources immediately prior to the move occurring.

The AAHSD is led by Executive Director Brad Farmer, who guided AAHSD through a smooth transition over the last

year. Under Mr. Farmer's leadership, the Behavioral Health Section of the district was given a three-year accreditation by the accreditation entity CARF.

AAHSD is governed by a ten (10) member board. The board is made up of a representative from each of the seven (7) parishes, chosen by local parish government, and three (3) other members appointed by the governor. The board meets monthly and meetings are open to the public.

The AAHSD board members are:

- Georgie Z. Blanchard (St. Martin Parish)
- Claire Daly (Iberia Parish – GOV)
- Rob Eastin (Evangeline Parish)

- Janise B. Hardy (Vermilion Parish)
- Patricia LaBrosse (Lafayette Parish – GOV)
- Kay Marcel (Iberia Parish)
- Mary B. Neiheisel (Lafayette Parish)
- John W. Pitre (Evangeline Parish-GOV)
- George J. Pourciau, Jr. (Acadia Parish)
- Amy Theobald (St. Landry Parish)

You can also view board information on the Boards and Commissions website:

<http://tinycloud.com/lzgdnh>

Online Men's Discussion Group for Dads

Dr. Robert Naseef introduces "Guy Talk for Fathers of Children with Autism and other Special Needs" which is a Google hangout hosted by [Autism Brainstorm](#). This is available as a community service online in a facilitated discussion monthly.

You can check out the YouTube recording by clicking

[here](#), or you can also [read the blog](#) summarizing the conversation.

Participants often talk about their struggles and triumphs as fathers, offer advice and perspective to others about how to survive and thrive, and how to support fathers and families from the newly diagnosed to adulthood. Stephen Shore who

grew up on the autism spectrum shares his insights, along with typical dads, as well as fathers who have autism.

Viewers can send in questions or comments for the group via a chat feature at autismbrainstorm.org. After the meeting, the video will be archived and available as a YouTube presentation.

The next scheduled session is Sunday, August 4, 8:00PM. The following meeting will be Sunday, September 8 at the same time and place.

If you would like to receive Dr. Naseef's blog regularly via email, you may contact him at: robert.naseef@gmail.com.

Autism Society Acadiana is on Facebook!

If you are into social networking, join Facebook and "Like" Autism Society of Acadiana!!

We post information on our events and activities and also "share" good info we find or that other people send or "share" with us. We have over 4,200 "Likes"! We thank all our Facebook Friends ALL for their support!

We want YOU to "Like" us, too!!



A Hearty Thank You to the Staff and Employees of Aggreko in Iberia Parish who dedicated the proceeds of a "Jean Day" to our organization. Aggreko raised almost \$900 for Autism Society Acadiana!

This is the 2nd year we have been chosen by Aggreko to receive funding from one of their "jean days".

We greatly appreciate our community sponsors and business supporters!

The Great Race, June 29, 2013

The Great Race sponsored by Hemmings Motors is a celebration of the American classic automobiles of yesteryear. The annual event takes antique cars across The United States, sometimes from west to east, or east to west, and this year was from north to south. In fact, The Great Race passed right through Acadiana, through Crowley, LA!

In conjunction with this year's race and its brief stop in Crowley, a car show was held and proceeds were designated to Autism Society Acadiana. Volunteers from the area and members of Autism Society Acadiana worked the event and all had a great time. Even though the temperatures were typical for this time of year the car show was a pretty cool event as you can see from the photos submitted!

Thank you to the City of Crowley and its Visitors Commission for asking Autism Society of Acadiana to be the beneficiary of the monies raised from the car show. We greatly appreciated your support and the opportunity to promote autism awareness to the general public and the participants of The Great Race.



Grassroots Advocacy Effort Spawns 2 New Groups

When Governor Jindal used his line-item veto power to take funding from programs and services for families and individuals with disabilities, little did he realize what would happen as a result! Families decided it was time to take a stand and the Override the Veto movement began. OTV was created to advocate through traditional and social media on what the cuts would mean for those families and individuals. Family members and individuals with disabilities rallied together to visit legislators, write letters to the editors of newspapers, appear on radio programs, and contribute to news articles.

Unfortunately, the goal of the having the LA legislators go back into session to address Governor Jindal's vetoes did not happen, but rather than become disappointed and give up, the group reorganized and 2 new groups were formed with no obligations to any one non-profit disability organization or to any government entity.

One group is called the Lou-

isiana Alliance for Citizens with Disabilities. You can find them on Facebook and Twitter. Their website is: www.louisianaacd.org. In their About section on Facebook, it states they are: a non-partisan, parent-led, grassroots advocacy group that seeks to monitor, influence, protect, initiate and enhance policies that govern the civil rights and protections of citizens with disabilities.

Another group is B3LA - Breaking Boundaries and Bias. Their Facebook page states they are a grassroots effort dedicated to breaking boundaries of traditional thought concerning citizens with disabilities. Their website is: www.b3la.org

These 2 new groups join other established advocacy organizations in Louisiana such as LaCAN and LaTEACH. We will introduce these two groups in the next issue of the newsletter.

Of course we also encourage families to become a part of the national Autism Society Society as one way to support advo-

cacy efforts at the federal level to benefit our families which helps to further the cause of autism awareness, acceptance, and the programs and services which would benefit individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families.

Those of you who have younger children on the spectrum may be thinking that advocacy work is too difficult, too time consuming, or better left to those who are more "knowledgeable" or who have the right "contacts." Instead, think of how you speak up for your child almost every day, in a grocery store, at a park, at a restaurant, at the doctor's office or at therapy— all of these situations require you to speak for your child and his or her needs, or at least decide if you are going to say something when someone is looking at your child in a puzzled, questioning, or rude way. To speak for someone else IS being that person's advocate. To join other groups simply means to add your voice to their efforts.

From Wrightslaw.com: "If

you think that you alone cannot do much to improve your school, you are probably right. You're more likely to get what you want for your child if you work with other parents.

If you are in a school that is not parent-friendly, this is how you might be perceived.

1 person = A fruitcake
2 people = A fruitcake and a friend
3 people = Troublemakers
5 people = "Let's have a meeting"
10 people = "We'd better listen"
25 people = "Our dear friends"
50 people = A powerful organization"

If you collaborate with other parents and organizations, you can make a difference. There is strength and power in numbers."

Source: 12 Things Parents (and Teachers) Need to Know About and Expect From Your Schools - and Yourself. (Originally from Parent Leadership Associates)

Upcoming Events

FREE Annual Back-to-School Pool Party!

**Open to All Members of
Autism Society Acadiana!**

**August 11th
Riverside Swim Club
420 Corona Drive, Lafayette,
6:30 - 9:30 PM**

**Come to relax and socialize with
other families!**

Hamburgers and/or hot dogs will be provided, but please bring water or soft drinks, juices, etc. for your family. If you would like to bring desserts (cookies, brownies, fruit trays, etc) to share with others, please do so!

Lifeguards will be on duty during this event. There is a wading pool and a larger pool with a diving board at the facility.

RSVPs are REQUIRED!

Please respond via the Facebook event or by phone, 337-235-4425 or via email at: Contact@AcadianaAutism.org.

A map will be posted on the Autism Society Acadiana website the week of the pool party.

We look forward to seeing you and your family!

Save the Date!

Annual Members Picnic & Family Fun Day

October 5, 2013

Acadian Village

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

(see page 1 of newsletter for details!)

**It's Back to School Time! Wishing
all of our families and their children,
teachers, support professionals
and administrators a great**

Asperger Social Group Meeting

The next meeting/social gathering for older teens and young adults will be August 12, 2013 at Deano's on Bertrand in Lafayette at 6:30 pm.

For more information on this group, which also includes a separate parents meeting, please contact Francine Gardner via email at stuartgardner65@gmail.com or you may also contact Sandra Taylor via email at san-

Mark your calendars!

Treats at the Village:

**A safe event for trick-or-treaters, all
ages, who have special needs**

Oct 29, Acadian Village, 6-8 PM

Acadiana Therapeutic Riding Association (ATRO)

**Family Fun Day
September 14, 2013**

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Lafayette, LA

To be held at "Cabbage Patch" Field
On side of Blackham Coliseum

Free activities for families and kids of all ages! Rock Wall, Hayride, Games and Crafts, Face Painting, and a Balloon Artist!

No ice chests please!

CARD (Center for Autism And Related Disorders)

Louisiana Autism Conference

Saturday, August 24, 2013

Oak Lodge Reception and Convention Center, Baton Rouge

The conference is designed especially for parents, practitioners, educators, and caregivers. All attendees must register online at <http://conference.centerforautism.com>.

This one-day, free comprehensive conference will feature keynote speaker, world-renowned autism expert/clinical psychologist and CARD founder/CEO Doreen Granpeesheh, Ph.D., BCBA-D.

"We are very excited to be able to bring such a comprehensive, no-cost conference to Louisiana," says Doreen Granpeesheh, Ph.D. BCBA-D. "We believe everyone should have access to effective autism intervention, and those affected by ASD should have the opportunity to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives."

Mark Your Calendar!

2013 Louisiana State Chapter Autism Conference

November 8-9, 2013 Kenner, LA

Please check the Autism Society, Louisiana State Chapter's website at www.lastateautism.org for more details or call Mrs. Pat Giamanco, Administrative Assistant, directly at 1-800-955-3760 for more information on the conference and the services offered by the state autism organization.

Registration forms are available at the Autism Society Acadiana office. You can pick a form up in person or request a form to be sent via email, fax or postal mail.

Educational Stipends are available to assist families in paying the registration fee. Please view the stipend guidelines on our website and then contact the Autism Society Acadiana office for more information

Autism Society Acadiana Has a Lending Library

Books, DVDs, and periodicals are located in our lending library at our office and are available for checkout. You must be a member of our organization to check out materials from the lending library. Membership in our organization is free. Materials may be checked out for one (1) month and can be renewed if no one is waiting for them by contacting us via email or by placing a call to the office. View the items we have available on the website under the New to Autism tab or come in to browse our selection at your leisure. Don't forget we have children's books to entertain the kids while you browse or your children can play in the Toy Room!



*Autism Society Acadiana newsletter **is green!** Those on our email list will now receive notification via our bulk email service when the newsletter is posted on our website. Send an email to: Contact@AcadianaAutism.org, or give us a call, (337)235-4425, in order to be added to the email list. Also, check to make sure we are not in your SPAM or bulk mail folder!*

Autism Society Acadiana's Mini-Grant Program—Fall 2013

Mini-grant awards are distributed to educators who have individuals with autism spectrum disorders in their classrooms and who submit a proposal for funding to help implement a program, project, or help to purchase needed supplies for the classrooms. The program budget is based upon funds available in the organization's budget set in January for the year. Awards are also based upon the strength of the project for which funding is requested. Application requests typically are anywhere from a few hundred dollars to the maximum award of \$1000. The 2013 Mini-Grant Application and Guidelines will be updated and on our website soon.



For more information, please contact the Autism Society Acadiana office.

Educational STIPENDS

Autism Society Acadiana's Educational Stipend program covers conference registration fees and also financially assists families in obtaining technology/assistive communication devices and therapeutic equipment up to \$300 through a reimbursement after purchase. There are updated guidelines in place for this program and our *Recreational Stipend Program that all our members need to review. Please view the documents under the Get Involved Tab located under the Home Page of our website at www.AcadianaAutism.org. Scroll down to the middle of the page to click on Updated Stipend Guidelines and Updated Stipend Request Form. Please make sure all required documentation is attached to the stipend form before you submit and allow up to 2-4 weeks for processing.

Family Friendly Films at The Grand 16

Our Family Friendly Films program is based on the Sensory Friendly Films project between affiliates of the national Autism Society and AMC theaters. The local program, which was created in September of 2010, is a collaboration between Autism Society Acadiana and The Grand 16, Lafayette, with the support of Southern Theaters, LLC. The purpose of the program is to allow families to enjoy a movie experience together with their loved one who has autism. For some families, this is something they have never had the opportunity to experience.

The house lights are turned up and the speaker volume is lowered also. You are also allowed to move around in the theater if need. Outside snacks are allowed, due to dietary restrictions, and the concession stand is also open. Volunteers will be on hand to assist families as needed. Tickets are regular matinee price, usually \$7.75, unless otherwise indicated. The movies will be shown on the last Saturday of each month, at 10:00 am unless rescheduled due to a holiday or other conflict with the regularly scheduled date.

Upcoming movies (tentative dates & titles are subject to change): August 31 - Planes (PG); September 28 - Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2 (PG); October 26 - TBA; November 30 - Frozen.



For any questions regarding this program, please contact Vickie at the Autism Society Acadiana office, (337)235-4425 or via email at Contact@AcadianaAutism.org.

Autism Awareness Merchandise For Sale!

Visit the Autism Society Acadiana office at 3108 West Pinhook, Suite 101 in Lafayette to view the merchandise we have available including jewelry, men's hats, car flags, shoe tags, lanyards, shoelaces, ribbon magnets, our own fleur-de-lis magnets, and more!

