



AUTISM

THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

First Word

First word April 08:

All the committees for third annual Greater Cleveland Chili Cook-Off for Autism are doing a wonderful job in preparing for our big event. Tuesday, April 8 is the day and Tickets are on sale at www.asgc.org or by sending a check by March 31 to ASGC, P.O. Box 41066, Brecksville, Ohio 44141. Those web or mail purchases received after then will be emailed or phoned a notification that their tickets will be available at a will call station in the Terrace Club the night of the event, so please leave an email address and/ or phone number when you order.

Thanks to all of the sponsors, Chefs and suppliers who have returned from last year to lend support. While the list is still being finalized at the time of this newsletter's printing, expect a lot a familiar faces from our last bash at the Terrace Club.

There are, of course, some new names, too: Fairview General Hospital, The Serpantini Auto Group, Sysco Foods and the Wealth Management Division of Key bank, Just to name a few. Many of the Cleveland area's finest restaurants will be represented with chefs, judges and tasty gift certificates to be won. A few

celebrity surprises may be in order pending no schedule conflicts, so stay tuned to www.asgc.org for updates.

All of the funds we receive will be used exclusively to assist our efforts to help provide the best in autism support and advocacy for the greater Cleveland area. This includes passing on latest information on autism, holding monthly support meetings and special social events and enhancing our speaker's bureau. It also includes providing safety and information programs for those who live with autism, first responders and the general public.

A note of thanks to Manager Ana Nickolic of the Clubhouse on Mill in Brecksville and ASGC friend and fellow guest bartender Kenneth Mucha for all of their help with the Kick-Off to the Cook-Off held on Thursday, March 13. ASGC President Rory McLean did another great job as DJ and Chef John dished out some amazing chili. Nearly \$2000 was raised for the chapter thanks to the incredible generosity of the night's patrons. Sincere thanks to you all!

Our next meeting will give us an opportunity to bring you information on the many summer programs in the area as well as any updates regarding the Chili Cook-Off. Tickets will be available. We hope you can join us on April first (no fooling).

Gus Gallucci

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

APRIL, 2008

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

Officers:

Rory McLean
President

Gus Gallucci
Vice-President

John Hearn
Treasurer

Laurene Sweet
Secretary

Board Members

Tom Bregar

Joe Glass

Jim McIlwee

Barb Rutt

ASGC
P.O. Box 41066
Brecksville, Ohio 44141



NEWS FROM THE
AUTISM SOCIETY OF
GREATER CLEVELAND

3rd Annual ASGC CHILI COOK-OFF



Live music by Ace Molar!

***Tuesday April 8th
6 to 9 pm***

***Terrace Club at Progressive Field
Only \$20 per ticket!***

Tickets available at the door or at monthly ASGC meetings!

More information at http://www.asgc.org/08chili_Trifold_final.pdf

25 different chilis, silent auctions, raffles, prizes!

Cash bar is available!

Win a laptop computer in our door prize drawing!!!

ASGC Aiding St. Basil's Parish

The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland is proud to provide assistance for the parish of St. Basil's the Great in Brecksville. In a program we expect to expand in the coming year, more individuals will provide assistance in classes like this PSR class pictured with ASGC religious education aide Brittany Hawkins. We appreciate her excellent work with children with ASD and look to more people who are willing to assist as aides for schools of religion in the future. If you think you might be qualified to help, we welcome your call at 216-556-4937 or email at support@asgc.org.



Join the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland!

Dues for the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland are **only \$5.00** per year.

Checks for dues or donations can be sent to:

ASGC
P.O. Box 41066
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Check out our website at www.asgc.org!

Join us for our next ASGC meeting: Tuesday April 1st

All are welcome to the monthly ASGC meetings!

When: 1st Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:30pm to 8:30 pm

Where: Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, 8001 Brecksville Rd. in Brecksville, 44141

Info or RSVP (216) 556-4937

Free Childcare is Available for ASGC Meetings

- Provided by staff members from STEPS Behavioral Consulting
- RSVP is requested for childcare by calling (216) 556-4937
- Let us know how many children will be attending



Upcoming Meetings

Meetings are held at 8001 Brecksville Rd., Brecksville, Ohio 44141

APRIL 1st FROM 6:30 TO 8 pm

Please join us!

DIRECTIONS TO THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY CAREER CENTER
<http://www.asgc.org/events.htm>

Autism Rally at the Statehouse on April 2nd!

Ohio individuals with autism, activists, families, and state legislators will gather for the fifth annual statewide Autism Awareness Rally at the Ohio Statehouse on April 2, 2008. The rally, which is co-sponsored by the Autism Society of America - Central Ohio Chapter, Autism Speaks, and the Autism Society of Ohio, will take place on the South Lawn of the Statehouse from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. For more information email askASO@autismohio.org or call 330-376-0211.

ASA Statement on Vaccine Injury Court Case

On March 6, 2008, the major news networks reported on a National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program case in which liability was conceded based on circumstances surrounding Dr. and Mrs. Poling's 9-year-old daughter's autism. Medical personnel at the Division of Vaccine Injury Compensation, Department of Health and Human Services concluded that the facts of this case met the statutory criteria for demonstrating that the vaccinations Hannah Poling received on July 19, 2000, significantly aggravated an underlying mitochondrial disorder, which predisposed her to deficits in cellular energy metabolism, and manifested as a regressive encephalopathy with features of autism spectrum disorder.

Individuals living with autism need help today, and this case illustrates the need for the medical community to probe further into environmental causes of autism. The Polings, like all families affected by autism, deserve to be heard and supported in their journey raising their daughter. While we don't know the cause for autism, or its interaction with other conditions or environmental aggregators, we need to focus today on what works to maximize the potential of people with autism to help them live meaningful, productive lives. This has always been ASA's mission and we will continue to advocate for research, family and individual support, and lifespan services for people across the autism spectrum.

ASA believes that the science of autism causes and treatments need to be more vigorously researched. We hope that primary decisions will be reached through thoughtful dialogue by parents and professionals on medical research and comprehensive treatment and services, not court rulings.

Sincerely,

Lee Grossman
President and CEO
ASA Member since 1991
Parent of a son with autism



Autism Society of America.
improving the lives of all affected by autism



Save the date! The 2008 ASA National Conference will be Held in Orlando, Florida, July 9-12, 2008, at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center.

Conference registration is open!

http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=research_conference

Upcoming Fundraisers for Cleveland Autism Organizations

April 8: *Autism Society of Greater Cleveland:* Chili Cook Off at the Terrace Club of Progressive Field from 6-9 PM http://www.asgc.org/08chili_Trifold_final.pdf

April 12: *Autism Speaks-* Rock 'til it Stops at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame http://www.autismspeaks.org/press/rock_til_it_stops.php

April 26: *Northeast Ohio Autism Group-* "Rock the Puzzle" at the House of Blues

Monarch Offers Activities

For Families with Children/Adolescents with Autism

Teen Sibling Shops: Meet other 13 to 19 year old teens who have a sibling with autism in a recreational environment

When: April 10th and May 1st (Thursdays) from 6:30 to 8pm

Cost: \$10 per session

Where: Monarch School



Pottery Class: Paint a mug which will be sent out to be

When: April 12th (Saturday); Ages 3-9 at 11am; Ages 10-18 at 1pm

Cost: \$12

Where: Monarch

kiln fired.



TO REGISTER, PLEASE CALL KARIN AT (216) 320-8658

Free Family Information Fair

For Families & Caregivers of Children with Special Needs

WHEN: Thursday, April 24th 2008, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

WHERE: United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Greater Cleveland at 10011 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, 44106

SPEAKERS: *Barb Rutt* (Advocate from OCECD), *Dr. Alexander Andrich* (Developmental Optometrist) & *Patti Andrich* (Occupational Therapist), and *Nicole Lidyard* (Dietitian from Rainbow). Also featuring *Paula Hackley* (Occupational Therapist), presenting on Yoga for children with special needs.

ACTIVITIES: Entertainment, Activities for children, vendor booths, area organization booths, and food (lunch and refreshments provided at no charge!!!)

COST: FREE!!!

RSVP is Requested by April 23rd: (216) 791-8363 x250



Do you have some news or information to share?
Send information by email to laureneseet@yahoo.com by the 12th of each month.

FIRST AUTISM-VACCINE LINK: HOW HANNAH MADE HISTORY

By Alison Young

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 03/06/08

In a move autism family advocates call unprecedented, federal health officials have concluded that childhood vaccines contributed to symptoms of the disorder in a 9-year-old Georgia girl. While government officials continue to maintain that vaccines don't cause autism, advocates say the recent settlement of the girl's injury case in a secretive federal vaccine court shows otherwise.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has concluded the family of Hannah Poling of Athens is entitled to compensation from a federal vaccine injury fund, according to the text of a court document in the case. The amount of the family's award is still being determined. The language in the document does not establish a clear-cut vaccine-autism link. But it does say the government concluded that vaccines aggravated a rare underlying metabolic condition that resulted in a brain disorder "with features of autism spectrum disorder."

In an interview Wednesday with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Hannah's parents, Jon and Terry Poling, said the government's concession in the case will help pay for the numerous therapists and other medical experts their autistic child needs — now and for the rest of her life. "At least we have some commitment from the government to take care of Hannah when we're gone," said Dr. Jon Poling, a neurologist.

But the case also thrusts the family into a national spotlight in the controversial public debate over whether vaccines have played some role in the growing number of U.S. children diagnosed with autism. Of particular concern to some families is the mercury-based preservative thimerosal, not used in child vaccines (except for some flu shots) since 2001. Hannah's case was one of three vaccine-court test cases alleging that thimerosal caused the children's autism. The other cases go to trial in May.

Suspicion of vaccines is fueled in part by vocal advocates — including radio shock jock Don Imus and actress Jenny McCarthy — speaking out on radio and TV shows such as "Oprah" and "Larry King Live." Even Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain said on the campaign trail that "there's strong evidence" that a preservative in vaccines is fueling the dramatic rise in autism cases across the country. As many as 1 in 150 children in some communities have autism disorders, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We need to recognize this is a national crisis," Jon Poling said.

Pediatricians and public health officials worry that this case may cause fear among some parents and prompt them to refuse to vaccinate their children, and put them in real danger from measles, whooping cough and other diseases. "The risks of diseases are real risks," said Dr. Melinda Wharton, deputy director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Numerous large studies don't support a relationship between vaccines and autism, according to the CDC and the Institutes of Medicine.

The Georgia girl's case — and its implications in the vaccine-autism debate — raise more questions than it answers, experts say. Some medical experts say it's difficult to fully assess the case because the federal vaccine-court documents are sealed from public view. "It raised a lot of questions for us," said Dr. David Tayloe Jr., president-elect of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The national medical group's leadership has been seeking more information about Hannah's vaccine-court case since last week when a sealed vaccine-court document detailing the government's settlement was posted on the Internet by an autism book author, then circulated widely among autism groups. The pediatrics association has been trying to get access to official documents in the case so medical experts can delve into the science, assess whether there are implications for other children and answer questions from doctors and families. "Our responsibility is to make sure the public is given good information and make sure the hype doesn't distract from public health," Tayloe said. "I still would not think that we're going to have evidence showing a role of vaccines actually causing autism."

According to the leaked document posted online, the government's Division of Vaccine Injury Compensation concluded that five shots Hannah received in July 2000, when she was 19 months old, "significantly aggravated an underlying mitochondrial disorder" and resulted in a brain disorder "with features of autism spectrum disorder."

READ THE REMAINDER OF THIS ARTICLE AT

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/printedition/2008/03/06/autism0306b.html>

What Does Hannah's Case Mean to Me?

Questions and Answers (By Alison Young- Continued)

What does the case mean for the safety of vaccines? Medical experts said parents should continue vaccinating their children because it protects them from diseases known to be deadly. If you are concerned, talk with your pediatrician.

Q: What is autism?

A: Autism spectrum disorders are a range of developmental disabilities — from mild to severe — characterized by communication problems, an inability to have normal social interactions and unusual behaviors.

Q: What causes autism?

A: Scientists don't know but are exploring what role genetics may play, as well as possible environmental factors.

Q: Why is this Georgia child's case drawing so much attention?

A: A leaked federal vaccine court document, posted on the Internet and widely circulated among advocates, shows the government has agreed to compensate her. Federal health officials have conceded that the five shots she received in July 2000 "significantly aggravated an underlying mitochondrial disorder," which manifested as a brain disease with features of autism. Autism family advocates say this shows the government is conceding — after years of blanket denials — that vaccines play a role in at least some autism cases.

Q: What do federal health officials say about the case?

A: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services branch that administers the vaccine injury program says the government "continues to maintain the position that vaccines do not cause autism and has never concluded in any case that autism was caused by vaccination."

Q: What are mitochondrial disorders?

A: Mitochondria are tiny rod-like structures that serve as the energy-making machines inside cells. When mitochondria don't work properly, they produce less energy and can cause various body systems to fail.

Q: What causes the disorders?

A: For the most part, genes. Sometimes a person's mitochondria — if their genes make them susceptible — can be affected by environmental factors such as medications. The Georgia girl's family suspects her mitochondria were damaged by a mercury-based preservative in the vaccines she received. Tests didn't find a genetical link in her case, the family said.

Q: What's the relationship between mitochondrial disorders and autism?

A: While some children with mitochondrial disorders have autistic symptoms, the vast majority do not, said Dr. Bruce Cohen, a pediatric neurologist at the Cleveland Clinic and past-president of the Mitochondrial Medicine Society. Most autistic children do not have mitochondrial disease, he said.

Q: How can a mitochondrial disorder be aggravated by vaccinations?

A: Vaccination — like illnesses, starvation, extreme heat or any other stress on the body — may unmask a mitochondrial disorder, experts said. When a vaccine is injected, it causes the body to mount an immune response. This requires increased energy the body may not have if there is an underlying mitochondrial disorder. Still, Cohen said he recommends vaccination, even for most patients with diagnosed mitochondrial disorders. That's because of the greater danger posed by vaccine-preventable diseases.

Q: How common is this?

A: According to the United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation, at least one in every 4,000 children born in the U.S. each year will develop a mitochondrial disease by age 10. Many children are misdiagnosed with such things as atypical cerebral palsy, seizure disorders and other diseases. Adults also can be diagnosed with adult-onset mitochondrial disease.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/printedition/2008/03/06/autism0306b.html>

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

P. O. Box 41066
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Phone: 216-556-4937

"The mission of ASGC is to serve the autism community by providing information, coordinating support services, and facilitating communication for the benefit of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder from diagnosis through adulthood."

The ASGC is a 501(c)3 non-profit, all volunteer organization.

Your donations are tax deductible and we welcome your support!

To learn more, call us or log on to:
www.asgc.org

The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland does not endorse any specific product, method of therapy or organization. Our aim is to provide information that assists our membership in making educated decisions.

Thank you for your support!



Autism Conferences and Courses

Facilitated IEP's Conference

April 22 from 9am-3pm

Sheraton Hotel Independence
Ohio

FREE Conference limited to 1st
250 people to register at

www.ocecd.org (click on OCECD
activities, then conferences)

Presenters: **Eva Soeka** Associate
Professor of Law and **Ann Guinan**,
Assistant Director Procedural Safe-
guards Office

Questions, Call Connie Hudson at (937)
842-2150 ocecdcs@embargmail.com

Milestones 6th Annual Autism Asperger's Conference

Monday June 16th

8:45-4:45 pm

Landerhaven in Mayfield

Keynote Speaker Dr. Jed Baker
[http://www.milestones.org/ne
ws_conferences.htm](http://www.milestones.org/news_conferences.htm)

Continuing Education Credits are available
for many professionals.

2nd Annual Conference on Educating Students with Asperger's Syndrome ADHD

Friday, April 25th

8:00 am to 5:30 PM

Sheraton Suites Akron

Featuring Rick Lavoie
[http://www.summitacademyinstit
ute.com/Conferences/2008Confe
renceFeaturingRICKLAVOIE/tab
id/167/Default.aspx](http://www.summitacademyinstitute.com/Conferences/2008ConferenceFeaturingRICKLAVOIE/tabid/167/Default.aspx)

