

AUTISM

THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

First Word

Greetings to all of the membership and friends of the ASGC! It promises to be an exciting spring for the ASGC, with key speakers from each corner of the state and our major annual event, The Greater Cleveland Chili Cook-off for autism on April 8 to celebrate Autism Awareness month.

First, a warm word of thanks to Shawn Henry, Executive Director and Donna Owens, Family Service Administrator of OCALI (Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence), for a very helpful and informative presentation at our last chapter meeting on February 5. They are involved in many endeavors to assist families living with autism. More on their fine work can be found on page two of this newsletter or at www.ocali.org.

For our March 4 meeting we welcome Carol Falender, Associate director of PLAN of Northeast Ohio. PLAN Provides home based social work services by licensed independent social workers to persons with mental challenges and their families. PLAN offers a wide range of social & recreational activities for its members.

Their efforts in helping provide work service for adults is an area that does not receive the attention it deserves. It is also an area for many of us who have a family member with autism find little assistance with. We welcome Carol and look forward to our March meeting.

As I mentioned in the opening- The Chili Cook-Off is on! We will have at least 25 chefs again, along with the great rock/blues band Ace Molar providing the live music for another great ASGC celebration at the Terrace Club. Tickets this year are \$20, we will have some wonderful prizes again and it all goes to assist families here in Northeast Ohio. More information is on page two of the newsletter and at www.asgc.org. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thanks again for making us your leader in autism advocacy in Northeast Ohio. We are proud to serve you and welcome your calls or emails anytime. Tell us how we can better serve you in our ongoing efforts to make the Greater Cleveland area the best place to live for those with ASD.

Sincerely,

Gus Gallucci

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

MARCH, 2008

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

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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

Cash bar is available!

25 different chilis, silent auctions, raffles, prizes!

Thank You to Our Friends at OCALI

The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland extends a sincere thank you to Shawn Henry, Executive Director and Donna Owens, Family Service Administrator of OCALI (Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence), as they provided us with a highly informative talk at our February ASGC meeting. OCALI has recently initiated a number of programs to increase awareness and knowledge about autism. Here are a few examples of their recent projects:

- In process of collecting and categorizing a data base of all service providers in the state of Ohio <http://familyservices.ocali.org/>
- Created a manual of information which includes the most pertinent information needed during the first year of diagnosis http://www.ocali.org/family/fs_res_guide.php. The manual is available for FREE!
- Created the Autism Internet Modules in an effort to educate parents, educators, and medical professionals about various topics relating to autism <http://www.ocali.org/aim/>
- Developed an Assistive Technology library where professionals can borrow various communications devices for trial with individuals with autism <http://www.ocali.org/at/>
- Collected a variety of books and resources for families to borrow to learn about autism related topics http://www.ocali.org/family/fs_resources.php

Thank you, OCALI, for all you do to help those affected by autism!



Shawn Henry and Donna Owens from the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

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 March 4th

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

March 4th: Carol Falendar, Associate Director of PLAN (<http://www.planneohio.org/>)

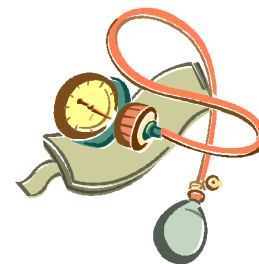
PLAN: Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of Northeast Ohio

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

Please join us!

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

Efforts towards Autism Insurance Parity Continue: Your help is needed!



The Autism Society of Ohio continues to work with other advocates on Autism Insurance Parity. They are working on a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) flier that we will use with legislators and to solicit support from other organizations. It will be posted to the ASO website as soon as it is completed. The ASO is also finalizing costs and other data related to the legislation. Organizations have been added to a list of groups to solicit to support this legislation. The ASO continues to look for individuals that can advocate with their legislators for this all important legislation. That's where we need your help! If you are willing and/or able to:

- provide a story related to autism services from your health insurance company
- provide a letter of denial from your insurance company
- provide a copy of your health insurance policy that contains language specifically excluding autism
- testify in Columbus at committee hearings
- write letters to legislators
- come to the statehouse to support others testifying or for rallies
- meet with legislators, either in Columbus or your local area

Please provide the following information via email: **Name, address, city, zip+4, phone, email address, state representative and state senator.** Not sure of your zip+4 - visit www.usps.gov, click on "find a zip code" and enter your address. Not sure of who your state legislators are - visit www.legislature.state.oh.us and follow the directions under "Locating Legislators". **Cut and paste the items that you can help with from the above list into your email** and send to askASO@autismohio.org - **please put INSURANCE PARITY in the subject line.** If you wish to participate, but would like to remain anonymous when working with legislators, please still send your contact information so you can be alerted as to when your help is needed - and you can respond to your legislators anonymously. Just note with your contact info that you would like to remain anonymous.

The ASO is especially interested in getting help from folks who are constituents of members of the Ohio House Insurance Committee. They are:

REPUBLICANS

Batchelder, Chair (Medina)

Hottinger, Vice Chair (Newark, Licking)

Adams (Sidney, Shelby), Coley (Liberty Township, Butler), Daniels (Greenfield, Highland), Gibbs (Lakeville, Holmes), R. McGregor (Springfield, Clark), Raussen (Springdale, Hamilton), Wachtmann (Napoleon, Paulding/Putnam/VanWert), Widener (Springfield, Madison/Clark/Greene), Zehringer (Mercer/Darke/Preble)

DEMOCRATS

Koziura, Ranking Minority Member (Lorain, Lorain)

Barrett (Amherst, Huron/Lorain), Book (McDermott, Scioto), Celeste (Columbus, Franklin), DeBose (Cleveland, Cuyahoga), Driehaus (Cincinnati, Hamilton), Dyer (Green, Summit), Fende (Willowick, Cuyahoga/Lake), Letson (Warren, Trumbull), Luckie (Dayton, Montgomery)

Please sign up to help us today!

Upcoming Fundraisers for Cleveland Autism Organizations

February 28 & 29: *National Autism Association of Northeast Ohio*– 2nd Annual Autism Concert at Beachland Ballroom & Musica http://www.autismnortheastohio.org/special_events.php

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 <http://www.rockthepuzzle.com/>

Children's Services Program to Host Family Information Fair

Families and caregivers of children with special needs are invited to attend a Family Information Fair on **Thursday, April 24th 2008 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**. The event will take place at United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Greater Cleveland at 10011 Euclid Avenue in Cleveland. Area organizations and vendors will be available for questions and will provide information on services such as alternative therapies, home adaptation, nutritional needs, equipment, and sporting options for those with special needs. There will be speakers before and after lunch (lunch provided at no charge, compliments of our sponsors) who will share their knowledge on topics relating to advocacy & care for a child with special needs. The day will end with relaxing yoga techniques designed for children with special needs.

The festival like environment will offer food, entertainment, and activities for children while providing families the perfect opportunity to learn about available community resources. For more information, contact Paula Ulewicz at (216) 791-8363 x250. Information about UCP can be found at http://www.ucpcleveland.org/ourservices_cs.asp



Do you have some news or information to share?
Send information by email to laureneseet@yahoo.com by the 12th of each month.
We will share information, provided that space is available. Thank you!

IN THE NEWS

Poor recognition of 'self' found in high functioning people with autism

Contrary to popular notions, people at the high end of the autism spectrum disorder continuum suffer most from an inability to model “self” rather than impaired ability to respond to others, said Baylor College of Medicine researchers in a report that appear in the journal *Neuron*.



This inability to model “self” can disrupt an individual’s ability to understand the world as a whole, said Dr. P. Read Montague Jr., professor of neuroscience, and director of the Human Neuroimaging Lab and the Computational Psychiatry Unit at BCM. “It’s an interesting disconnect.”

Using a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner, Montague and his colleagues scanned the brains of people considered “high functioning” autistics because they have normal or high normal intelligence quotients but many of the symptoms of people with autism. During this procedure, the researchers identified a pattern of activity or “signature” in the brain that identified those with autism. The level of activity correlates with the severity of the autistic symptoms. The less activity there is, the more serious the symptoms. The finding could lead to a test to speed diagnosis.

To understand the behavioral patterns of people with autism spectrum disorder, Montague and his colleagues used a technique called hyperscanning, which enabled them to scan two brains simultaneously while the research subjects played a trust game. In the trust game, one player receives an amount of money and then sends whatever amount he or she wants to the other player via computer message. The amount sent is tripled and the player at the other end then decides how much of the tripled amount to send back. During this interaction, Montague and his colleagues evaluated the brains’ response by watching bright spots in the brain that represent increased blood flow and thus brain activity. Prior work had shown that during the trust game, most of the activity occurs in an area called the cingulate cortex.

To hone their picture of the “self” response in that part of the brain, Montague and his colleagues had 81 athletes (football, baseball and soccer players as well as members of the Houston Ballet) take part in an imagining task. They watched clips of various athletic activities while in the scanner. They then imagined themselves performing those activities. The pattern of activity in the cingulate cortex during that “imagining” reflected the “self” response.

Later the scientists identified the same “self” response in the cingulate cortices of normal subjects when they decided how much money to send to the other person. The pattern contrasted with the “other” response seen when the actions of their partner in the trust game were revealed to them.

The researchers then brought in 18 adolescent males with high functioning autism to play the game. Montague and his colleagues determined that the subjects understood the game and helped them adjust to the scanning procedure.

“It was the first time an autistic kid had been scanned in a social exchange,” said Montague. The adolescents did not play the game differently from their partners, who were taken from a population of similar teens who did not have autism. They made similar amounts of money overall and round by round. However, when the researchers scanned the brains of the youngsters with autism during the trust game, they found that the youngsters’ “self” responses were dim compared to those of normal subjects. Not only that, but the more serious the subject’s autistic symptoms, the dimmer the response.

The response occurred in the cingulate cortex. In a normal “self” response there, the brightest area was in the middle of that area of the brain. That response was significantly less in the brains of the youngsters with autism.

“They cognitively understood the game,” said Montague. “It’s not that they don’t understand the game. It’s that there is a very low level of ‘self’ response. It’s impaired in them and the degree to which it is missing correlates with their symptom severity. The more you are missing the self response, the more autistic you are...To have a good self concept, you have to be able to decide if the shared outcome is due to the other person or due to you,” said Montague. “If people can’t see themselves as a distinct entities at deeper levels, there is a disconnect.”

Source: Baylor College of Medicine
<http://www.physorg.com/news121524625.html>
Posted by Robert Karl Stonjek



Autism Society of America National Conference

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!

More information and registration at:

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

Boy With Autism Saved From House Fire

On February 13th, two boys were rescued after an electrical fire broke out in their Cleveland home. Thirteen year old Jaiwan Woodley noticed that all the lights went out in his home. As he smelled smoke, he quickly called 911 from his cell phone and then pulled his 14 year old brother who has autism (Jack Jackson) to the roof. When Cleveland police officers arrived on the scene, Jaiwan informed them that his brother is autistic. The officers borrowed a ladder from a neighbor and rescued the boys from the roof.

The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland honors Jaiwan and the four Cleveland police officers on the scene for their heroism in this rescue. Rescues involving individuals with autism can require special handling and knowledge. In this case, Jack was fortunate to have a brother who knew how to help him and skilled officers on the scene.

This past year, the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland provided training to over 50 first responders in how to handle emergencies involving individuals with autism. World renowned speaker Dennis Debaught provided training materials to allow departments to implement strategies and techniques. In 2008, the ASGC will continue to train first responders in these specific strategies.

Study Finds Boys with Autism at Risk for Thin Bones

Researchers urge caution in dairy free diets

An early study by the National Institutes of Health and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center suggests that dairy-free diets could put boys with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at higher risk for thinner, less dense bones. Results were published online in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.

During the study, researchers X-rayed the hands of 75 boys between the ages of 4 and 8 years old who had been diagnosed with autism. The researchers then measured the thickness of the bone located between the knuckle of the index finger and the wrist and compared its development to a standardized reference based on a group of boys without autism. They found that the bones of the boys with autism were growing longer, but were not thickening at a normal rate. The boys in the study who were on a casein-free diet had the thinnest bones; boys who were not on a casein-free diet showed a 10 percent decrease in bone thickness when compared to boys with normal bone development.

"Our study shows that it couldn't hurt — and would probably help — if parents of children with autism or autism spectrum disorder consulted with a dietitian during their children's routine medical care to make sure that their diets are balanced," said Dr. Mary L. Hediger, the study's leader, in a [release](#).

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

Teaching Play and Leisure Activities to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Friday, March 14th

9am-3:00pm

Cleveland Clinic Foundation-Shaker Campus

<http://cms.clevelandclinic.org/childrenshospital/body.cfm?id=68>

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/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.summitacademyinstitute.com/Conferences/2008ConferenceFeaturingRICKLAVOIE/tabid/167/Default.aspx>

