



ASGC Newsletter

From The President's Desk

Dear ASGC Members,
We have some important chapter news for all. Our November meeting will be held as always with respite care provided by our friends at Steps, however, December there *will not be a chapter meeting*. We are taking a month off for the holidays and to make arrangements for our move to a *new meeting location*. We have outgrown our space at St. Basil's and they have no where else to put us, given their growth as well.

We are immensely grateful to Fr. Walt Jenne, Cynthia Dennyhardt, Sr. Susan and everyone on the staff at St. Basil for all of their support over the last year and a half. They helped us out without hesitation right when we needed it the most. Please keep them along with all who are affected by autism in your prayers.

We will keep you informed on our new location as soon as we can. We are looking at three places in the Independence/Brecksville area north of St. Basil's. As soon as a decision is reached, it will be on the website, the phone line, in e-mails and this newsletter. Thank you

ASGC Meeting Time & Place

The ASGC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in room 8 of the St. Basil Parish Center in Brecksville. The next meeting is November 1.

This will be our last meeting at St. Basil's. We will keep you informed on our new location as soon as possible.

Our strategic planning process continues, as does our quest for feedback. Thank you to the many that have logged on to www.asgc.org and participated in our survey. We encourage you to do so if you haven't already. We are collecting feedback from parents, service providers, first responders and legislators. Thanks for your help. Your opinion counts!

For those of you seeing this newsletter for the first time, welcome! The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland is our local branch of The Autism Society of America, the country's largest and oldest grass roots organization acting for the benefit of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit all-volunteer organization. The content of this newsletter is for educational purposes only. We do not endorse or oppose any specific product, method of therapy or organization. Our aim is to provide information that assists our membership to make informed decisions. Thank you for your support!

Gus Gallucci and Rory McLean

CDC Finances Study Into Causes of Autism

Friday, October 6, 2006 9:37 PM EDT
The Associated Press
By MIKE STOBBE

ATLANTA (AP) — The largest federal study to date into the causes of autism was announced Friday — a multi-state investigation that will involve 2,700 young children.

See full story on page 7

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

October, 2006

Inside this issue:

A Parma Couple's fight	2
Medicaid Settlement	3
A Vaccination Choice	5
First Responders Training	6
CDC Study/ New Autism Stamp	7
Autism Conferences	8

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland Officers

Rory McLean
President

Gus Gallucci
Vice President

Maureen Ferfolia
Secretary

We can be reached at:
(216)556-4937

U.S. backs parents in court bid for son

They can act as lawyer, justices are told

Saturday, September 23, 2006

Patrick O'Donnell

Plain Dealer Reporter

Lawyers for the federal government are urging the U.S. Supreme Court to let a Parma couple represent their autistic son in court to improve his education -- a move that would open doors for parents of other disabled children.

Jeff and Sandee Winkelman asked the court last fall to overrule a federal appeals court ruling that only a lawyer could argue a case on behalf of their 9-year-old son, Jacob.

Appeals courts around the country disagree on whether parents have that right.

The Supreme Court held off deciding whether to hear the case until the U.S. solicitor general, the official lawyer for the federal government, could weigh in on the issue.

On Wednesday, the solicitor general's office resoundingly backed the Winkelmans, asking the court to hear the case and to rule in the Winkelmans' favor.

Special education laws so intertwine the interests of parents and children that separating them would be contrary to the law, the court filing said.

"Denial of a free appropriate public education adversely affects not just the child with a disability but also his or her family," the brief states.

Jean-Claude Andre, the California lawyer who volunteered to help the family on the Supreme Court appeal, said he was ecstatic and thinks the court will likely hear the case, perhaps as soon as February or March.

"Now we just have to get five justices to agree with this," Andre said.

Though Sandee Winkelman said she was delighted to have the solicitor's support, she noted that she is still fighting with the district over where Jacob will attend school this year. The parents want the district to pay for a private school, while the district wants to teach the child in-house.

Christina Peer, the Parma schools' lawyer, said she is still studying the filing but expects the court to hear the case.

Courts have long held that individuals can represent themselves in court but only lawyers can represent someone else. The Winkelmans and several social service organizations backing their case say that so-called pro se representation should extend to parents of minor children with disabilities.

They say families of those children already have high medical and therapy bills and most cannot afford lawyers.

The Parma schools have argued that the right does not extend to parents. The 6th Circuit Court agreed with that position in 2005 in the Winkelmans' case and in another involving a Geauga County family.

Andre hoped the Supreme Court would hear the Winkelman case to resolve a split between appeals courts over the issue.

The solicitor general's opinion said the law lists so many ways in which parents and children's rights are linked that parents qualify as "aggrieved parties." Some of those ways:

Parents help set education plans for children.

They can represent their children in administrative hearings.

They can recover private school expenses from districts.

They can recover legal fees from schools if they win court cases.

Peer countered that that argument addresses why parents have the right to sue on their own behalf but not why parents should be able to represent their children.

To reach this Plain Dealer reporter:

paodonnell@plaind.com, 216-999-4818

© 2006 The Plain Dealer

© 2006 cleveland.com All Rights Reserved.

Settlement Reached for Additional Medicaid

Community Services COLUMBUS

(September 25, 2006) - Governor Bob Taft today announced an agreement to settle the long-standing *Martin v. Taft* class action lawsuit.

If endorsed by the next Governor and General Assembly, it will provide opportunities for an additional 1,500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid-funded home- and community-based waivers; and allow for the funding and safeguards needed to assure these services.

"I am pleased that all parties were able to work through many complex issues and reach a shared vision for providing residential choices for Ohio's citizens with disabilities," said Taft. "This is a landmark settlement, through which I believe the state can make significant strides in expanding Ohio's capacity to serve these individuals in the community."

The Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) originally filed the case in 1989 on behalf of citizens with disabilities seeking to expand community residential services. The agreement offers new residential choices, including alternatives for individuals who currently reside in institutional settings, but does not require the closure of any public or private facilities. The settlement is conditional upon funding approval in Ohio's next biennial budget.

"This settlement is expanding opportunities for people to receive needed services in a manner consistent with the Ohio Access plan, developed under the leadership of Governor Taft," said Kenneth W. Ritchey, Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD). "These opportunities are possible thanks to the support of the Governor's office, the General Assembly, County Boards of MRDD and many service providers and advocacy groups."

Since January 2000, the Taft administration has improved options to serve people with disabilities in community settings by increasing the availability of Medicaid-funded homes and community waiver services. Since 2000, enrollment in the Individual Options waiver and the Level One waiver has increased by more than 9,200 persons, so that today more than 15,000 individuals receive home and community-based waiver services.

The *Martin v. Taft* agreement was negotiated among representatives of OLRS on behalf of plaintiffs, the Governor's Office, ODMRDD, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and the Attorney General's Office. A fairness hearing for public comment by interested parties will be scheduled in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

Upcoming Workshops

Fifth Annual Autism Seminar Series

This series is designed to improve understanding of the medical, behavioral, social, sensory, and educational issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorders. An emphasis will be placed on practical intervention techniques. Presenters are local and national experts in the field of autism.

PRESENTERS:

Lisa Audet, PhD, CCC-SLP

Christine T. Barry, PhD

Elizabeth Comrie, MS, OTR/L

Carol Mathews

Max Wiznitzer, MD

Kathy Maxwell, RN, MSN

Wednesday Evenings

7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Beginning October 18, 2006

through

April 25, 2007

Cost is \$120 for the entire series. (216) 844-1289 for more info

STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES: IDENTIFICATION, TREATMENT AND DISCIPLINE

PRESENTERS INCLUDE VANESSA JENSEN PSY.D., KATHERINE NORDAL, PH.D.
and FRANKLIN J. HICKMAN, ESQ.

NOVEMBER 13

AT WINDOWS ON THE RIVER IN THE POWERHOUSE

ALL DAY SEMINAR

CALL CUYAHOGA BAR ASSOCIATION at 216-621-5112

FOR REGISTRATION AND FEE INFORMATION

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN OHIO

October 31 from 9:30 am - NOON

SEMINAR WILL BE HELD AT SES OFFICES

27900 EUCLID AVE, SUITE 210

CLEVELAND, OHIO

REGISTRATION IS FREE, BUT SPACE IS LIMITED

TO REGISTER CALL 216-289-4332

You Have a Choice Regarding Immunizations

Schools require that students be immunized. In Ohio, exceptions to this can be made on medical, philosophical or religious grounds.

Under Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.671 A(3) Required Immunizations; Exceptions"

" A pupil who presents a written statement of the pupil's parent or guardian in which the parent or guardian objects to the immunization for good cause, including religious convictions, is not required to be immunized."

Obtaining an exception from immunizations is as simple as providing a written statement, signed by the parent or guardian, to the school objecting for good cause, which would be given.

For more information, visit: <http://www.909shot.com/state-site/Ohio.htm>

Travel Security Notes for Autistic Individuals

People who have hidden disabilities can advise Security Officers that they have a hidden disability and that they may need some assistance, or to move more slowly than other passengers.

Family members or traveling companions can also advise security officers when they are traveling with someone who has a hidden disability. This is especially helpful if the disability may cause the person to move slowly, become agitated easily or need additional attention.

Family members or traveling companions can offer suggestions to Security Officers on the best way to approach and deal with the person with a hidden disability, especially if they need to touch the person during a pat-down inspection.

Family members or traveling companions can stay with the person during a public or private screening. They may, however, need to be rescreened if they provide assistance to the person.

Notify the Security Officer if you need to sit down before or during the screening process.

See : http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/editorial_1374.shtm for more information

Announcing Video Social Stories

From: Carol Gray, Mark Shelley, & the Special Minds Foundation

View video from Carol Gray & Mark Shelley: www.dttrainer.com/smovvid.php

Imagine combining Carol Gray's social stories with the power of video for our visual learners. That is what has happened with the collaboration between Carol Gray, Mark Shelley, and the Special Minds Foundation. Volume 1 is the first in the planned series and covers basic social concepts & skills at school. Future volumes will address a broad range of topics and target young children to adults. The foundation has raised donations to help produce these materials so that the cost to the user can be much lower than otherwise possible for the product.

The Social Concepts & Skills volume will not only be valuable for teachers, but also for parents helping prepare their children for school situations. Additionally, some of the situations are issues for both home and school. The product was designed for children with Aspergers and others on the autism spectrum, however it will also benefit any child with limited social skills.

Law enforcement, first response agencies offered National Safe and Sound Training

ASA's first of many National Safe and Sound trainings will begin in Minneapolis, MN. The trainings utilize lecture, video and fully interactive discussions over two days focusing on: the definition of autism and common behaviors and characteristics; autism recognition and first response; public safety issues; criminal justice issues; initial contact options; establishing communications; behavioral de-escalation techniques; restraint and arrest options; perpetrator and victim trends; dilemmas in interrogation and interview settings; prosecution and court room issues; working proactively with families; advocacy organizations and school systems, and creating an effective training program and cross-educational opportunities for first responders and persons who have autism.

This training can help law enforcement and first response agencies to become compliant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), increase officer and citizen safety, enhance officer communication and response skills, save valuable time and resources, avoid litigation, and build community partnerships.

Please note: The training is appropriate for patrol and investigative law enforcement professionals, law enforcement training officers and supervisors, school resource officers, crisis intervention team members, juvenile justice and victims rights specialists, correctional officers, prosecutors, judicial and forensic criminal justice professionals, fire-rescue, 911 dispatch telecommunications professionals, EMS/EMT, paramedics and emergency room professionals.

For more information:

www.autism-society.org/siteCalendarview=Detail&id=4221

ASO seeks support for "First Signs"

ASO has been working with Dr. Jacquie Wynn from Columbus Children's Hospital, Dr. Nevada Reed from Akron Children's Hospital, Dr. Jim Bryant from the Ohio Department of Health and Melissa Arnold from the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatricians to secure federal monies to support the roll out of the "First Signs" awareness and early screening program for autism and developmental disabilities in Ohio.

Dr. Wynn submitted a proposal to Senator Mike DeWine's office to request that funds be allocated within the Labor, Health, and Human Services Budget Bill for this purpose. Many thanks to Doug Krinsky - a parent who served on the Ohio Autism Taskforce - for finding and helping to cultivate this funding source.

Through Senator DeWine's generous endorsement, this project did make it into the Labor, Health, and Human Services Budget Bill, but it is still in committee, and has a bit of a way to go to get signed into law. It may not be until next year that the funding will actually be secured. Senator DeWine may need to make concerted efforts to keep this appropriation in the budget and keep it funded at its current level.

Because of this, it will be important to make sure Senator DeWine knows how much his efforts are appreciated. **If you can take a moment to send a personal note of appreciation or make a phone call and leave a detailed message, it will go long way in helping the Senator understand how important his actions have been and that we appreciate his continued support.** A postcard, letter, phone call or fax that says the following - "Thank you for your support of the Early Identification of Autism Project. We appreciate your efforts on behalf of this important program for persons with autism and their families in Ohio. Please continue to support its inclusion in the Labor, Health, and Human Services Budget Bill at the current level of funding" would be best. They get inundated with email, and it is not effective. Please send your communication to Senator DeWine's Columbus office at:

Senator Mike DeWine:

37 West Broad Street
Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: (614)469-5186

CDC Finances Study Into Causes of Autism

Friday, October 6, 2006 9:37 PM EDT

The Associated Press

By MIKE STOBBE

ATLANTA (AP) — The largest federal study to date into the causes of autism was announced Friday — a multi-state investigation that will involve 2,700 young children.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and five other research centers will study the youngsters over five years. The research is designed to ferret out any genetic and environmental factors that may contribute to autism.

"The CDC hasn't funded a study like this (before)," said Diana Schendel, the CDC lead health scientist who is overseeing the Georgia research.

But some parents of autistic children say the CDC — which promotes childhood vaccinations — is not interested in fully exploring vaccinations as a potential cause.

"We don't want the CDC to do anything. We don't trust them," said Wendy Fournier, president of the National Autism Association.

Autism is a complex disorder usually not diagnosed in children until after age 3. Symptoms can include repetitive behaviors such as head-banging, avoiding physical or eye contact with others, and communicating with gestures rather than words.

In 2000, Congress directed federal health officials to increase research into autism. The law prompted a series of CDC studies, including prevalence research released in May that found 300,000 U.S. children have been diagnosed with autism.

The new study will recruit 900 children diagnosed with autism, 900 with undefined or other developmental problems, and 900 randomly selected youngsters.

Those studied will be ages 2 to 5, in part because health records and memories will be more complete, Schendel said.

That decision will limit the study's ability to assess the past impact of vaccinations that contain the mercury-based preservative thimerosal, she acknowledged. Since 2001, thimerosal has been removed from shots recommended for young children.

Fournier's group suspects that ingredient is a leading cause of the disorder, although past research suggests it is not.

Researchers will examine the medical records of the children and their parents, and will take cheek swabs and blood and hair samples, Schendel said.

The CDC awarded the other participating institutions \$5.9 million for the study. They are the Kaiser Foundation Research Institute in California, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Pennsylvania.

Until Friday's announcement, the largest federal study to focus specifically on autism's causes was research sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, looking at 1,000 California children ages 2 to 5. That study is still in progress.

New Postage Stamps to Benefit the Autism Community

Hollywood artist Metin Bereketli and the Autism Society of America (ASA) launched a new U.S. postage stamp series to benefit ASA and the autism community. The God Bless America stamp, a piece Bereketli created after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, is the first in a three-part series of postage stamps, which also feature Bereketli's Jollification and Freedom. The stamps are produced by Zazzle.com. Available at: www.autism-society.org/stamps

"It is my sincere honor to respect those who have served and are serving our country and protecting freedom," said Bereketli. "I wish for everyone to use these stamps in remembrance, particularly on September 11. Know that your patriotic support will also help those who are living with autism today and offer them the comfort of knowing that other people care."

-Metin Bereketli

Stamps can be purchased for \$17.99 for 20 \$0.39 stamps via. ASA and Bereketli hope that this effort yields increased awareness and support both for those affected by the tragedy of September 11 and those affected by autism.

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

P. O. Box 41066
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Phone: 216-556-4937
Email: support@asgc.org

"From Diagnosis Through Adulthood"

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



Upcoming Autism Conferences

Wrightslaw Special Education Law and Advocacy Training

Tuesday, October 17
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Featuring:

**Pete Wright, Esq.
&**

Pam Wright, M.A., M.S.W.

**Marriott Airport Hotel
Cleveland, Ohio**

**For more information, call:
(440)478-8708**

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN OHIO

**October 31 from 9:30 am -
NOON**

**SEMINAR WILL BE HELD AT SES
OFFICES**

**27900 EUCLID AVE, SUITE 210
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**REGISTRATION IS FREE, BUT
SPACE IS LIMITED**

TO REGISTER CALL 216-289-4332

STUDENTS WITH EMO- TIONAL DISTURBANCES: IDENTIFICATION, TREAT- MENT AND DISCIPLINE

**PRESENTERS INCLUDE: VANESSA
JENSEN PSY.D., KATHERINE
NORDAL, PH.D.**

and FRANKLIN J. HICKMAN, ESQ.

NOVEMBER 13

**AT WINDOWS ON THE RIVER IN
THE POWERHOUSE**

ALL DAY SEMINAR

**CALL CUYAHOGA BAR ASSOCIA-
TION at 216-621-5112**

**FOR REGISTRATION AND FEE
INFORMATION**
