



THE VOICE  
Anne Arundel County Chapter  
of the  
Autism Society of America

January 2005

Volume 9, Issue 6

## President's Message

**AACC-ASA meetings are held the last Tuesday evening of each month at Ruth Parker Eason School, 648 Old Mill Road, Millersville. Meetings begin at 7:00 pm.**

The meetings begin with introductions and general announcements, along with time for open discussion. A refreshment break is followed by a discussion led by the guest presenter.

Ample time is allowed for questions and follow-up discussion, as well as further opportunity for group support and socialization.

**New members and new ideas are always welcome.**

**Chapter Phone  
Line:  
(410) 923-8800**

**Next Meeting:  
  
January 25th  
  
7:00 pm**

I hope everyone enjoyed a happy and healthy holiday, and is ready to start the new year with renewed energy and spirit.

Our January meeting will feature a discussion about the use of communication boards and schedules, led by **Margaret Calvert**. She is the parent of an individual on the autism spectrum and a special education teacher who works with the autism class at Old Mill South Middle School.

Ms. Calvert will be sharing information about using individual communication boards and structured schedules of activities. She will also be sharing information about ways to create communication boards and activity schedules, as well as ways to create photo albums for use in social situations. I encourage parents and other family members, as well as professionals and service providers who work with individuals with autism spectrum disorders, to join us on January 25th.

My thanks to everyone who participated in our **chapter fundraising and autism awareness events** in December at the **Borders Books and Music** in the Annapolis Mall. We had a wonderful time wrapping books and other items and sharing information about autism spectrum disorders and about our chapter. We had a terrific group of volunteers who worked to make this a successful event, and **Mindy Wise** did an outstanding job serving as coordi-

nator. I'm very pleased to report that we raised over \$500 from this event.

Those of you in attendance at our October meeting will recall that we were joined by a production crew from Comcast, who were videotaping us for a televised message highlighting the work of our chapter and the volunteer efforts of **Comcast employee and chapter member Brian Clark**. This message, one of several in the "**Community Commitment Comcast**" series, is currently airing on Comcast cable networks across Anne Arundel County. I hope everyone has a chance to see it; they did a wonderful job combining pictures and Brian's words to raise awareness of and support for the work that we do.

I am also extremely pleased to announce that Comcast has presented our chapter with a donation of \$500 on behalf of Brian's daughter, Abby. I offer our sincere thanks to Brian for his central role in this project, and to **Christine Speicher**, Senior Director of Communications for the Comcast Maryland/Delaware Region, for her role in coordinating the project.

In closing, please note that beginning this month we have changed our prices for the **autism awareness puzzle ribbon lapel pins and car magnets**. They are now available for \$5 each at our meetings and \$6 each by mail; order forms are available on our web site at <http://www.aaccasa.org>.

### Workshop on special education

On **Wednesday January 12th** from **10:00 - 11:00 am** the **Partners for Success Resource Center** will present a free workshop entitled "**Understanding special education**". The event will be held at their office, located at Oakwood Elementary, 330 Oak Manor Drive, Portable B, Glen Burnie. The workshop will provide an overview of the special education process related to children in Kindergarten through grade 12. For further information, or to register, please contact **Debbie** or **Katy** at (410) 222-3805 or [partnersforsuccess@aacps.org](mailto:partnersforsuccess@aacps.org).



### Disclaimer:

Please note that all information provided or published by the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Autism Society of America (AACCC-ASA) is for informational purposes only. Reference to any treatment or therapy option or to any program, service, or treatment provider is not an endorsement by the AACCC-ASA.

### School system budget hearings

Public hearings on the superintendent's proposed budget for our school system will be held on **Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup>** at Glen Burnie High School and **Thursday January 13<sup>th</sup>** at the Board of Education Building on Riva Road in Annapolis. Both meetings begin at **7:00 pm**, and individuals wishing to testify can sign up beginning at 6:00 pm.

If you are unable to attend the hearings, you can submit written comments to the Superintendent and Board of Education members (2644 Riva Road, Annapolis 21401).

The proposed fiscal 2006 spending plan includes a \$733 million operating budget (an increase of \$64 million over the current year's budget) to fund many programs and positions, including the following:

- \* Two additional positions for the Infants and Toddlers program to expand services to more than 55 students
- \* Three additional positions for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) - two teachers and one technician
- \* Two additional home-based service providers - one teacher and one technician
- \* Three additional speech pathologists
- \* Three positions to provide services to students in their home school rather than a non-public placement - two secondary teachers and one teacher assistant
- \* Three behavior support positions - one teacher, one teaching assistant, and one technician
- \* Increased funding to keep up with rising expenditures to support students with autism, including funding for services provided by the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

The Board of Education will consider the comments provided by the public at these hearings before adopting its final budget and forwarding it on to County Executive Janet Owens.

For further information on the Superintendent's recommended budget and on the budget process, please go to <http://www.aacps.org/html/press/budget/06budget.htm> or call (410) 222-5311.

### Speaker series

The **Chesapeake Down Syndrome Parent Group**, with grant funding from Family NET Works, is sponsoring the following speaker series:

#### **Tuesday January 11th, 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

**"Celebrating all of us"** - Julie Bartos and Claire Holmes

Loyola Graduate Center, 2034 Greenspring Drive, Timonium

"Celebrating all of us" is a project that uses children's books and lesson plans to help families and educators discuss disabilities and demonstrate respectful attitudes using a similarities awareness model. These and other resources will be highlighted as tools for educators, therapy providers, and parents to use in enhancing inclusion experiences and facilitate friendships among young children with disabilities. Registration fee is \$5.

#### **Saturday February 26th, 1:00 - 4:00 pm**

**"DDA resources for families"** - Renae Kosmides

Loyola Graduate Center, 2034 Greenspring Drive, Timonium

Ms. Kosmides will discuss services available for children and adults, including the application process for services under the Developmental Disabilities Administration, Medicaid waivers, Social Security and other resources. Registration fee is \$5.

#### **Saturday March 26th, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**"Disability is natural"** - Kathie Snow

Loyola Graduate Center, 2034 Greenspring Drive, Timonium

Ms. Snow, the author of **"Disability is Natural: Revolutionary common sense for raising successful children with disabilities"**, encourages participants to adopt new ways of thinking about people with disabilities and disability issues. Registration fee is \$15 (includes lunch).

#### **Sunday April 24th, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**"Beyond access"** - Douglas Fisher, Ph.D.

Howard High School, 8700 Old Annapolis Road, Ellicott City

Dr. Fisher will discuss the supports that need to be in place to ensure that students with disabilities access the core curriculum, including curriculum accommodations, personal supports, and technology supports. Registration fee is \$15 (includes lunch).

For further information, or to register for any of these presentations, please go to <http://www.cdspg.org> or call **Brad Williams** at (410) 752-7501.



### Celebrating Friends

**Celebrating Friends** is a program that provides social opportunities for young adults with cognitive disabilities. Anyone over the age of sixteen who is living at home can participate in this program, which has been created to offer fun, organized activities while promoting socialization and independence. Parents and family members can also enjoy their independence, knowing that their son or daughter is in a safe and caring environment among friends.

The upcoming schedule of events is as follows:

**Saturday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Pizza lunch and visit to the Babe Ruth Museum in Baltimore**  
The cost is \$45, which includes transportation, lunch, and museum ticket. The event can accommodate 3 – 7 people.

**Wednesday January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**U.S. Naval Academy walking tour and home-made gelato ice cream**  
The cost is \$35, which includes transportation, tour ticket, and gelato. The event can accommodate 3 – 10 people.

**Saturday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10:30 am – 2:30 pm**  
**Performance of Buratino** (reworking of the story of Pinocchio) at the Classika Theatre in Arlington, Virginia  
The cost is \$45, which includes transportation and theatre ticket. The event can accommodate 5 – 12 people.

Celebrating Friends has also created a new program called "**Keeping in Touch**", which is a free pen-pal program that unites clients with volunteers and promotes socialization through the use of e-mail, phone, and mail.

For further information about the programs, or to make reservations for any of the events, please contact **Kerrie Mansfield** at (410) 923-2882 or [kerrie.mansfield@comcast.net](mailto:kerrie.mansfield@comcast.net). Information is also available at <http://www.celebratingfriends.org>.

### Presentation on helping children

On **Wednesday January 19<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 - 9:00 pm**, the **Ivymount PTA** will sponsor a free presentation by **Gary Clark, LCPC** entitled "**Transforming difficult children**". The event will be held at the Ivymount School in Rockville.

Mr. Clark is a family therapist who uses The Nurtured Heart Approach. This approach gives parents and teachers a clear understanding of how a challenging child responds to normal ways of parenting and why traditional methods actually make the situation worse. It also provides a set of strategies designed to turn the challenging child around to a new pattern of success.

For further information or to register, please contact the **Ivymount School** at (301) 469-0223.

### Presentation on visual-spatial learners

On **Monday January 24<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 – 9:00 pm**, **Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D.** will give a presentation entitled "**Upside-down brilliance: The visual-spatial learner**". The event will be held at Centennial High School (auditorium) in Ellicott City. The presentation is co-sponsored by The Individual Differences in Learning Association, The Parent Leadership Institute of Maryland, The Family Advocacy and Parent Education Program, The Howard County Public School System, and Howard Bank.

Dr. Silverman will present information about visual-spatial learners, who are talented in right-brained abilities (creativity, intuitive knowledge, multi-dimensional perception, inventive strategies in science and technology) yet who often struggle in school. She has spent nearly 30 years researching how children learn, and has observed patterns of visual-spatial strengths and right-brained dominance in gifted students, students diagnosed with learning disabilities and ADHD, and students who are both gifted and learning disabled/ADHD.

The registration fee is \$10, and registration is required. For further information or to register, please contact the **Individual Differences in Learning Association** at (410) 531-0764 or go to <http://www.gifteddifferentlearners.org>.

### Town Hall Meeting

On **Tuesday January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** the **Arc of Anne Arundel County** will be hosting a **Town Hall Meeting**. It will be held at the St. Phillips Family Life Center, 730 Bestgate Road, Annapolis.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns on disability policy directly to their elected officials. There will also be the opportunity to discuss issues confronting the disability community with staff, the board, and other members of the Arc.

For further information, please contact **Angie DeMoreland** at (410) 269-1883 or [ademorleand@arcofannearundel.org](mailto:ademorleand@arcofannearundel.org).

### Legislative event

On **Wednesday February 9<sup>th</sup>** the **Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health** will hold a special legislative event in Annapolis. At this event, participants will be able to learn about upcoming issues and visit their legislators.

For further information, please contact the **Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health** at (410) 730-8267 or go to <http://www.mdcoalition.org>.

# Happy New Year!



### Dr. Mel Levine presentation

On **Wednesday February 2<sup>nd</sup>** from **7:00 - 9:30 pm**, **Dr. Mel Levine** will give a presentation entitled **“A developmental approach to understanding differences in learning”**. On **Thursday February 3<sup>rd</sup>** from **9:00 am - 4:00 pm**, he will give the keynote presentation at a full-day conference on the same subject. Both events will be held at the National 4-H Center, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase. The events are co-sponsored by School Support Services, Washington Parent magazine, and the Washington School of Psychiatry.

Dr. Levine’s presentation will provide an optimistic and scientifically supported approach to dealing with individual learning differences. Topics to be discussed in his presentation include the neurodevelopmental framework for “All kinds of minds”, the learning profile assessment and evaluation process, and intervention strategies to strengthen neurodevelopmental functioning and academic skills.

The registration fee for the Wednesday presentation is \$25, and the registration fee for the Thursday conference is \$155. For further information, or to obtain a registration form, please go to <http://washingtonparent.com> or call (301) 320-7500.

### Seminar on SCERTS Model

On **Thursday February 10<sup>th</sup>** and **Friday February 11<sup>th</sup>** from **7:30 am – 3:30 pm**, **Childhood Communication Seminars** will host a seminar on the **SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support) Model**. The two-day seminar will be led by Barry Prizant Ph.D. and will be held at the Sheraton Reston Hotel in Reston, Virginia.

The SCERTS model offers a framework of specific goals and procedures for assessment and educational programming that directly addresses the core challenges faced by children with autism spectrum disorders:

- \* Social communication focuses on building a child’s functional spontaneous communication and the capacity to be a competent and confident communicator across many social settings and social partners.
- \* Emotional regulation focuses on helping a child to be most available for learning and interacting, and for preventing problem behaviors.
- \* Transactional support ensures that proper supports are in place to best support a child and his/her family.

The registration fee is \$315 for professionals, \$225 for students, and \$195 for parents. For further information or to obtain registration materials, please go to <http://www.ccseminars.com> or call (401) 467-7008.

### Sibshops

The next session of **Anne Arundel County Sibshops**, a program for kids ages 8 – 13 who have a brother or sister with special needs, will begin on **Saturday February 19<sup>th</sup>**. The four-part session will be held from **10:00 am – 2:00 pm** at Central Special School in Edgewater. The other three days for this session are **March 19<sup>th</sup>**, **April 16<sup>th</sup>**, and **May 21<sup>st</sup>**.

The fee for this four-part session is \$30. For further information, or to obtain registration materials, please call (800) 999-9442 x 5169.

### Members sought for Developmental Disabilities Council

Are you are interested in making Maryland’s communities more inclusive and supportive for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families? Are you interested in making systemic changes to Maryland’s service delivery systems and affecting housing, employment, education, health care, child care, support services, transportation, and other issues? Do you value self-determination and self-advocacy? If so, you may be interested in becoming a member of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council. The Council is beginning a new round of appointments. They are particularly interested in hearing from individuals with developmental disabilities and family members.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council has approximately 35 volunteer members who work on systemic change activities that ensure Maryland’s communities welcome and support everyone. The Council and all of its work are governed by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The Council believes that all people with disabilities should be supported to live in their communities. They advocate for needed services and supports, and changes in public policy. They also fund grants to develop new ideas. More than half of the Council’s members are people with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities.

For further information or to obtain an application, please call (410) 767-6249 ext 1. Applications are due by **February 15<sup>th</sup>**.

### News from National ASA: Fundraising initiative

In an effort to raise additional funds for the autism cause, the **Autism Society of America** has partnered with the **Reader’s Digest Association** to launch an online fundraising program offering hundreds of popular and specialty magazines at discounted rates. Forty percent of the revenues going directly to autism and the ASA. To view and order magazines, please go to <http://www.autismsocietymags.com>



### **Additions to Partners for Success/ Chapter lending library**

**Debbie Wetzel** of the **Partners for Success Resource Center** has provided the following list of new materials that have recently been added to their lending library. The new materials include items that were purchased by or acquired by our chapter.

The Social Skills Picture Book: Teaching play, emotion, and communication to children with autism, by Jed Baker

Honorable Intentions: A parent's guide to educational planning for children with emotional or behavioral disorders, by the PACER Center

A parent's guide to Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism, by Sally Ozonoff, Geraldine Dawson, and James McPartland

When gifted kids don't have all the answers: How to meet their social and emotional needs, by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith

It's nobody's fault: New hope and help for difficult children and their parents, by Harold Koplewicz

A guidebook for parents of children with emotional or behavioral disorders, by Dixie Jordan

Taking care of myself, by Mary Wrobel

Navigating the social world, by Jeanette McAfee

Autism Training Video, from the Autism Alliance of Metro West Inc. (AACC-ASA)

Looking Ahead: Estate and long-term care planning for you and your family in Maryland and the District of Columbia, by Ron Landsman (AACC-ASA)

"You're going to love this kid!": Teaching students with Autism in the inclusive classroom, by Paula Kluth (AACC-ASA)

Positive behavioral support in the classroom: Principles and practices, by Lewis Jackson and Marion Veeneman Panyan (AACC-ASA)

A guide to collaboration for IEP teams, by Nicholas Martin (AACC-ASA)

The natural medicine guide to autism, by Stephanie Marohn (AACC-ASA, donation from the publisher)

*[continued on next column]*

Gift from my son: Autism redefined, by Keli Lindelier (AACC-ASA, donation from the publisher)

Manners for the real world: Basic social skills, by Coulter Video (AACC-ASA)

The Autism Encyclopedia, by John Neisworth and Pamela Wolfe (AACC-ASA)

Sexuality: Your sons and daughters with intellectual disabilities, by Karin Melberg Schwier and Dave Hingsburger (AACC-ASA)

To request any of these item, please contact **Partners for Success** at **(410) 222-3805** or [pfsaa@yahoo.com](mailto:pfsaa@yahoo.com). They will provide information about the various ways in which library materials can be obtained.

### **News from National ASA: Call for nominations**

The **Autism Society of America** is accepting nominations for the **2005 ASA Award and Scholarship program**. The deadline for nominations is **February 28th**.

The 2005 ASA awards include two chapter awards, five media excellence awards, and one corporate recognition award. The 2005 Wendy Miller Awards include Parent/Parents of the Year, Autism Professional of the Year, Autism Program of the Year, and Outstanding Individual with Autism of the Year.

ASA is also accepting nominations for the 2005 Collins Scholarship for anyone doing graduate or post-doctorate work on basic and applied research in autism, and the 2005 Eden Services Charles H. Hoens Jr. Scholars Program for a qualified individual with autism to be applied toward his/her post-secondary education or vocational program of study.

For further information on the nominations, please go to <http://www.autism-society.org> and click on "ASA now accepting nominations" under "Events."

### **Participants sought for research study**

**Wanda Dixon**, a student in the **Psychology Department** at the **University of Oregon**, is conducting a research study designed to learn whether adolescents with High-functioning Autism and with Aspergers Syndrome process, understand, and comply with the rules of conduct they encounter in a similar fashion. She is seeking parents of adolescents (ages 11 – 18) with either High-functioning Autism or with Aspergers Syndrome to complete a short questionnaire. Responses will be completely confidential.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the questionnaire, or if you have any questions about the study, please contact Ms. Dixon at [wdixon@gladstone.uoregon.edu](mailto:wdixon@gladstone.uoregon.edu).



### Comments and recommendations sought on IDEA 2004

On December 3, 2004, the President signed into law the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004)**. The text of the new law is available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/plaws/index.html>.

The Secretary of Education is soliciting comments and recommendations from the public prior to developing and publishing proposed regulations for implement programs under IDEA 2004. They are particularly interested in receiving comments and recommendations regarding changes that you believe are needed to clarify a provision in the new law or to facilitate its implementation. They ask that the comments and recommendations include information about any regulatory actions that would be necessary to achieve the objective you are seeking. If appropriate, please identify the specific part and section (or subsection) of IDEA 2004 that is the subject of your recommendations. They also ask that you include a description of the area of your involvement in special education, regular education or early intervention, as well as your role, if any, in that area (e.g., parent, teacher, student, service provider, administrator, or researcher).

Comments and recommendations should be received on or before **February 28<sup>th</sup>** and sent to **Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Potomac Center Plaza, room 5126, Washington, DC 20202-2641. Comments and recommendations can also be sent to [comments@ed.gov](mailto:comments@ed.gov); be sure to put "Comments on IDEA-2004" in the subject line.

The Secretary of Education also plans to hold informal public meetings to seek further input (comments and recommendations) about developing the regulations for IDEA 2004. The meetings will be held in Atlanta, GA; Newark, NJ; Boston, MA; Columbus, OH; San Diego, CA; Laramie, WY; and Washington, DC. The dates/times and specific locations have not been set as yet.

For further information, please contact **Troy Justesen** at (202) **245-7468**.

### New research resource

The **Autism Research Institute** recently uploaded onto their website all of the back issues (1987 through 2003) of their newsletter, the **Autism Research Review International**. The website also contains a comprehensive index; you simply click on a topic in the index, and you go directly to the article.

For further information, please go to <http://www.ARINewsletter.com>

### Access Adventures trips and vacations

**Access Adventures**, Melwood's Recreation and Travel Service, provides fun and relaxation through well-planned trips and vacations for adults (age 17 and older) with developmental and/or physical disabilities. Their schedule of events for the coming year includes the following:

- \* January 14 – 16, Uday-Hazy Center Air and Space Museum and IMAX Theatre
- \* February 11 – 13, Washington D.C. sites
- \* February 18 – 20, Medieval Times dinner theatre and Arundel Mills mall
- \* March 4 – 6, Smithsonian National Zoo and Washington D.C. sites
- \* April 8 – 10, Pennsylvania Dutch Country (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)
- \* April 22 – 24, Busch Gardens and Williamsburg
- \* May 13 – 15, Potomac River luncheon cruise

Access Adventures also has the following programs:

- \* Saturday day trips in the summer
- \* Summer camp sessions at the Melwood Retreat Center
- \* Summer vacation trips to Kings Dominion, Virginia Beach, and Ocean City

For further information about these programs, please go to <http://www.melwood.com/CAMP/accessadv.htm> or call (301) **870-3226**.

### Special education advocacy course for parents

**"Partners in Education"** is a free three-hour on-line self-study course for parents of children with disabilities. The course is designed to teach the skills need to advocate for your child.

Topics include: Laws governing special education and how they protect your child's rights, your role in your child's educational experience, your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and your role in developing the IEP, how to advocate for your child, and your rights if you believe your child's educational rights have been violated.

For further information, please go to <http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/education>



### Series of newspaper articles about autism

A series of articles about autism was published in December in the **New York Times**. These articles cover a wide range of topics, including early identification, treatments, family and sibling issues, and self-advocacy. To view each of the articles, please go to the following links:

“For families of autistic children, the fight for ordinary”

<http://link.toolbot.com/FightForOrdinary/8093>

“For siblings of the autistic, a burdened youth”

<http://link.toolbot.com/BurdenedYouth/8088>

“In autism, new goal is finding it soon enough to fight it”

<http://link.toolbot.com/finditsoon/8087>

“How about not 'curing' us, some autistics are pleading”

<http://link.toolbot.com/DontCureUs/8092>

“Battling insurers over autism treatment”

<http://link.toolbot.com/BattlingInsurers/8089>

“To treat autism, parents take a leap of faith”

<http://link.toolbot.com/LeapOffFaith/8091>

“Slow-motion miracle: One boy's journey out of autism's grasp”

<http://link.toolbot.com/OneBoysJourney/8090>

### Job announcement:

#### Education Program Specialist for Autism Waiver

This is a contractual position responsible for training and technical assistance to school systems and public and private agencies in the implementation and monitoring of the **Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism Waiver)**.

Duties include the following: Provide leadership and technical assistance in implementing and monitoring the provision of Autism Waiver Services by local school systems (LSSs), local lead agencies (LLAs), and private providers for Autism Waiver recipients. Serve as a technical specialist for the implementation of the Autism Waiver including the Quality Assurances Plan. Provide outreach and technical assistance to prospective Medicaid providers. Provide site visits to determine service providers compliance with applicable Medicaid regulations. Conduct site meetings, workshops, and disseminates information through written correspondence and telephone contact. Serve as a liaison to local counties for related projects.

For further information about the position, or to obtain an application, please call (410) 767-0019 or go to <http://www.msde.state.md.us/hrweb>.

### News from Maryland Department of Disabilities

In September, the **Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD)** relocated to its permanent offices at 217 East Redwood Street, Baltimore. Since legislation was passed in 2004 creating the department, positions have been added to allow a thorough analysis of all state programs serving people with disabilities. Two staff members are assigned to the **Constituent Services Program**, which provides information and referrals to individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers. Policy experts are reviewing all state programs and services involving housing, transportation, employment, health and behavioral health, technology, education, community support services, family support services and emergency preparedness. Two related programs are located with the new department – the **Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council** and the **Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. MDOD can be reached at (410) 767-3660.

A draft of the **State Disabilities Plan**, calling for collaborative partnerships with state agencies to improve all services to people with disabilities, was presented to Governor Ehrlich for review in October. The plan was also submitted to the newly-appointed **Maryland Commission on Disabilities** for their input. Once the Governor and Commission have approved the plan, a revised version will be made available to the public. This plan will serve as the road map to reorganizing and improving services to people with disabilities throughout the state. It includes specific action steps to ensure immediate and progressive improvement in service delivery. The plan also includes measurement tools, driven by consumer satisfaction, to evaluate progress in each issue area, including housing, transportation, employment, health and behavioral health, technology, education, community support services, family support services, emergency preparedness and development of an Olmstead Plan for Maryland. The plan stresses service integration and operational improvements, including eliminating gaps in service, consolidating duplicative services and closely monitoring wait list numbers. Progress reports detailing improvements in each area are due to the Governor on July 1, 2005 and July 1, 2006.

The newly-created **Maryland Commission on Disabilities** held its first meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Governor Ehrlich appointed 16 of the 20 members, two were appointed by MDOD Secretary Kristen Cox, one by House of Delegates Speaker Michael Busch, and one by Senate President Thomas “Mike” Miller, Jr. Members represent diverse interests and have expertise in the disability community. As defined by statute, a majority of the members are individuals with disabilities. The Commission is charged with advising the MDOD with regard to carrying out its duties and reorganizing state services.

MDOD will be issuing monthly update; to receive these update, send an e-mail to [mdod@mdod.state.md.us](mailto:mdod@mdod.state.md.us) or call (800) 637-4113.



Anne Arundel County Chapter  
 Autism Society of America  
 P.O. Box 1304  
 Millersville, MD 21108

Postage  
here

**\*\* Chapter News and Notes \*\***

We have available for purchase **autism awareness puzzle ribbon cloisonne lapel pins** and **car magnets**. They are available for \$5 at our meetings and \$6 by mail; order forms are available on our web site at <http://www.aaccasa.org>.

We are participating in the **Future Horizons Affiliate Program**. Through this program, when you follow the link at <http://www.aaccasa.org> to the Future Horizons web site and purchase any Future Horizons-published books and videos or purchase a conference registration, our chapter will receive **40% of the purchase price**. We will also receive 20% of the purchase price on any non-Future Horizons books and videos. By making your Future Horizons purchases through our web site you will help fund our chapter's projects and activities.

Our **lending library** is located at the **Partners for Success Resource Center**, Oakwood Elementary School, Portable "B", 330 Oak Manor Drive, Glen Burnie. To see a full listing of the items available from our lending library, as well as related items available from the Partners for Success library, please go to <http://www.aaccasa.org>. To request an item, please contact **Partners for Success** at (410) 222-3805 or [pfsaa@yahoo.com](mailto:pfsaa@yahoo.com). They will provide information about the various ways in which library materials can be obtained.

Subscribe to our **e-mail action alert** by sending a message through <http://www.aaccasa.org>. It is an easy way to learn the latest information about Federal, State, and local legislative initiatives, lobbying efforts, or other action items related to autism and disabilities.

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**Anne Arundel County Chapter  
 Autism Society of America  
 P.O. Box 1304, Millersville, MD 21108  
 (410) 923-8800 <http://www.aaccasa.org>**

<b>Linda Carter-Ferrier, President</b>	<b>(410) 551-0655</b>
<b>Melinda Wise, Vice President/Treasurer</b>	<b>(410) 647-0114</b>
<b>Jean Dunaway, Secretary</b>	<b>(410) 721-1385</b>

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**AACC-ASA Options Policy:**

All information provided or published by the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Autism Society of America (AACC-ASA) is for informational purposes only. Reference to any treatment or therapy option or to any program, service, or treatment provider is not an endorsement by the AACC-ASA. You should investigate alternatives that may be more appropriate for a specific individual. AACC-ASA assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information published or provided by the AACC-ASA.