



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

June 2005 **Volume 9, Issue 11**

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.

Thanks to everyone who attended our May meeting, which featured a discussion about using rhythm-based activities for individuals on the autism spectrum and their family members, led by **Dorinda Adams**. Her presentation included a group participation hands-on demonstration of rhythm-based activities. She also shared information about drum circle activities and events being held in our local area, and about ways that drum circles can be used by individuals on the autism spectrum.

If you were unable to attend or wish to obtain further information about drum circles, please go to <http://www.remo.com> and <http://www.fundrumrhythmcircles.com>. The information she provided about local family-oriented drum circles is as follows:

Annapolis Drum Circle: Meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 5:00 pm at the Chesapeake Children's Museum in Annapolis.

Adults and children welcome. Directions and information available at <http://annapolisdrumcircle.com>

Nellie's Circle: Meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month during the school year (except December) from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Lime Kiln School (Rt 216). Drums are provided. Contact: **Nellie Hill** at nthill@mac.com.

As a reminder, we will take our usual summer break from chapter meetings. We will resume holding chapter meetings in August.

In closing, I want to remind everyone about our **summer beach party**, which will be held on **Saturday June 25th** from 1:00 – 4:30 pm at a private community beach in Severna Park. Please see the flyer accompanying this newsletter for all of the details. I look forward to seeing you there!

Chapter Phone
Line:
(410) 923-8800

Next Meeting:

August 30th

7:00 pm

Celebrating Friends

Celebrating Friends provides social opportunities for young adults (age 16 and older) with cognitive disabilities who are living at home. The upcoming schedule of events is as follows:

Wednesday June 22 from 5:30-9:00 pm—Pizza and Games
The cost is \$28, which includes transportation. The event can accommodate up to 6 people.

Sunday June 26 from 12:00-4:00 pm—Lunch at the Inner Harbor
The cost is \$25, which includes transportation. Please bring spending money for lunch/souvenirs. The event will involve spending the afternoon eating and enjoying the Inner Harbor. The event can accommodate up to 6 people.

Celebrating Friends is also seeking volunteers to help with registration and as event leaders. The registration volunteer will require 2—4 hours per week and include communicating by phone/e-mail with clients and volunteers. The event leaders will require 10 - 15 hours per month and include coordinating with registration and organizing event pick up/drop off schedules for clients.

For further information about the volunteer positions, or to RSVP for any of these events, please contact **Kerrie Mansfield** at (410) 923-2882 or Kerrie.Mansfield@comcast.net.



Disclaimer:

Please note that 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.

Special Olympics

The upcoming season for **Anne Arundel County Special Olympics** includes the following sports:

Golf practice: Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm, beginning June 16th, at Arundel Golf Park on Dorsey Road in Glen Burnie.

Bocce ball: Monday evenings at 6:00 pm, beginning July 11th, at Ruth Parker Eason School in Millersville.

For further information, please call **(410) 923-0383** or go to <http://www.soaamd.org>.

Accessible sailing program for individuals with disabilities

The **Downtown Sailing Center (DSC)**, located at the Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1425 Key Highway in Baltimore, has a free accessible sailing program for people with disabilities. The dates for their accessible sailing are as follows:

- Saturday, June 18th
- Saturday, July 16th
- Saturday, August 13th
- Saturday, September 17th

They ask that participants call in advance. The DSC will provide accessible boats, life jackets, skilled and knowledgeable staff, and all accessible enhancements needed to make everyone feel comfortable. For further information, please call DSC at **(410) 727-0722**.

New Cooperative Assistive Technology Center

AT: LAST, Inc. has opened a **Cooperative Assistive Technology Center**, located at 7050 Oakland Mills Road, Suite 160, in Columbia (off Snowden River Parkway). The Center includes a demonstration/ resource and training room with a wide variety of adapted equipment, assistive technologies, and helpful gizmos and gadgets for your family member or client. They also have books, videos, and DVDs that can be used for training.

Among the many services provided by AT: LAST are a discounted cooperative buying service, a loan program, and training events. For further information, please call **(410) 381-COOP** or go to <http://www.matcoop.org>.

Workshop on visual strategies

On **Wednesday June 22nd** from **9:00 am – 3:00 pm**, the **Commonwealth Autism Service** will sponsor a presentation entitled **“Visual strategies for communication and music therapy”**. It will be held at Hickory Ridge Community Church in Chesapeake, Virginia. The workshop will also be held on **June 27th** from **9:00 am – 3:00 pm** at Richmond Ambulance Authority in Richmond, Virginia.

Visual strategies are an essential part of any educational or vocational program for students with autism. In this workshop, participants will learn: Why visual strategies are important for individuals with autism; the role of assistive technology in home and school settings to foster communication and manage behaviors; and easy (low-tech) ways to incorporate visual strategies into the classroom or home environments via schedules, choice boards, and other tools.

The second part of the workshop will offer an introduction to music therapy. Participants will learn: What is a music therapist, who do they work with, and what do they do?; how can my child receive music therapy services?; and if music therapy services are not available, what is the best way to integrate music activities into the special education or home environment?

The cost is \$100, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. For further information or to obtain registration materials, please contact **Commonwealth Autism Service** at **(800) 649-8481**.

Book club meeting

On **Thursday June 23rd** from **7:00 – 8:30 pm**, the book club for individuals with disabilities will hold their meeting at the public library located at 45 McKinsey Road in Severna Park. The book club is for persons with disabilities who are 18 years of age and older and are generally independent in their self-care. The June meeting will be “dress up like a character” night at the Book Club. Participants are encouraged to dress up like one of the characters in their book to bring life to their storytelling.

Participants are asked to bring a book, magazine article, or drawing of their choice to discuss. Students in need of community service hours or college students studying in the field are encouraged to attend and participate in the book club. For further information and to reserve a seat, please call **Chrystal Irving** at Service Coordination at **(410) 923-5751**.



Fundraising run/walk

On **Monday July 4th** at **8:00 am**, the **Mid Atlantic Chapter of Cure Autism Now (CAN)** will sponsor a 5K run and 1-mile walk in Potomac. The entry fee for adults ranges from \$21 – 35, and for children is \$12.

For further information or to obtain registration materials, please call **(301) 419-8198** or go to <http://www.canrun.org>.

Workshops on PECS

Pyramid Educational Consultants is sponsoring the following **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)** training workshops:

July 7th and 8th (two-day workshop) and **July 14th and 15th** (two-day workshop) in Richmond, Virginia

August 9th and 10th (two-day workshop) and **August 11th** (one-day workshop) in Erie, Pennsylvania

August 29th – 31st (three-day workshop) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

For registration information, please go to <http://www.pecs.com> or call **(888) 732-7462**.

Public meetings on IDEA 2004 regulations

On **Tuesday July 12th** from **1:00 – 4:00 pm** and **5:00 – 7:00 pm**, the Secretary of Education will hold a public meeting to seek comments and suggestions about proposed regulations to implement programs under the recently amended IDEA. The meeting will be held at Gallaudet University, Kellogg Conference Center, on Florida Ave, N.E. in Washington, DC.

Individuals can register to comment at the door, on a first-come first-served basis. Individuals can provide oral and written comments at the meetings; written comments that accompany oral remarks are optional. Written comments or suggestions can also be submitted electronically to comments@ed.gov, or mailed to: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5126, Washington, DC, 20202-2641

For a copy of the law and other pertinent information, including the proposed regulations, please go to <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>. For further information, please contact **Troy Justesen**, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, at **(202) 245-7468**.

Workshop on Verbal Behavior

On **July 14th and 15th** from **8:30 am – 5:00 pm**, **Parents Of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia (POAC-NoVA)** is hosting a workshop entitled "**Teaching Verbal Behavior in the natural environment**". It will be led by Holly Kibbe, BCABA and Cherish Twigg, BCABA, and be held at Marymount University, Ballston Conference Center, on Glebe Road in Arlington, Virginia.

This two-day workshop is designed to provide consultants, therapists, and parents who serve as their child's primary therapist with guided practice in teaching children with autism of all skill levels in the natural environment. Participants will view video-taped illustrations and will practice methods of effective instruction. Participants will develop natural environment programs of all learner levels and receive feedback on their teaching methods.

The registration fee is \$395. For further information or to obtain registration materials, please contact **POAC-NoVA** at **(703) 391-2251** or workshops@poac-nova.org.

Participants sought for training program

Families & Professionals United is a course for education professionals, parents, and persons with disabilities. The course includes nationally recognized speakers and local experts; leading edge resources, contacts, and practical applications for instant use; free books, handouts, and meals; effective communication and problem-solving strategies for creating accepting environments for all learners; and opportunities and possibilities for people with disabilities and those who support them.

Participants must be family members or caregivers of persons with disabilities, adults with disabilities, and/or educators—including but not limited to general educators, special educators, school counselors, administrators, supervisors, related service providers, paraprofessionals, instructional aides, inclusion facilitators, and health educators.

Participants who pay a fee will receive 6 MSDE credits. Participants may attend for free if they waive earning the MSDE credit. Participants may earn 6 Towson University graduate credits by paying a discounted tuition rate.

The course will be held at Towson University on a series of Fridays (4:00 - 9:00 pm) and Saturdays (8:30 am -4:30 pm) from September 2005 to May 2006. Applications are due by July 15th.

For further information or to obtain application materials, please go to <http://www.towson.edu/fpu> or contact **Kim Willard** at kwillard@bcps.org or **(410) 887-1905, ext. 254** or **Claire Holmes** at cholmes@towson.edu or **(410) 372-0618**.



MCIE Summer Institute

From **Monday August 1st to Thursday August 4th**, the **Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE)** will host a Summer Institute about including students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The event will be held at the Mt. Washington Conference Center in Baltimore, and will consist of a one-day workshop on "The Friendship Factor" led by Carol Gray and Ken Rubin, and a three-day series of workshops on systematic instructional strategies in general education settings.

The registration fee is \$150 for the one-day workshop only, \$295 for the three-day series, and \$445 for both. For further information or to obtain registration materials, please call **(410) 859-5400** or go to <http://www.mcie.org>.

Presentation on behavioral and social programming

On **Tuesday August 9th** from **8:30 am - 3:30 pm**, the **Loudoun County Public Schools** will host a presentation entitled "**Behavioral and social programming for individuals across the Autism Spectrum**". It will be held at Harper Park Middle School in Leesburg, Virginia and led by Dr. Cathy Pratt, Director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

The presentation will include a brief overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders and a detailed discussion of behavioral and social programming for individuals across grade levels and across the Autism Spectrum. Dr. Pratt will provide practical suggestions useful for educators, parents, and therapists.

The registration fee is \$75 for educators/therapists and \$50 for parents. For further information, or to obtain registration materials, please contact **Charlotte Crane**, Autism Resource Specialist, at **(703) 771-6430**.

Position announcement

Full time Assistant Director sought for **Caring Communities**, a local non-profit children's respite care organization located in Eldersburg. The individual will help plan the World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo, continue the mission and vision of Caring Communities, and carry out related office duties.

This is an excellent flexible opportunity for a parent of a child who has a disability or an individual with knowledge of the disabilities community. Candidates should have excellent communication skills, be a self starter, be able to multi-task, and have experience with computers.

For further information, please call Mona Freedman at **(410) 549-5707** or send a resume by e-mail to mona@caringcommunities.org.

Families sought for video project

Danya International, Inc., a worldwide health education group, is seeking families to participate in a video aimed at educating classmates of children with autism to build upon their previous work in this area.

In 2003, Danya completed AutismVision, a collection of peer education materials for classmates of children (ages 8-11) with autism through a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. AutismVision includes a video and facilitator's guide to be implemented in an inclusive classroom or school. A pilot evaluation of the materials revealed that classmates who attended a presentation of the AutismVision materials increased their knowledge of autism as well as reported more positive attitudes towards their classmate with autism. Parents, teachers, and children responded favorably and enthusiastically.

Due to the positive response Danya received from AutismVision, the company is currently in the process of expanding its autism education materials to include videos and facilitator's guides to educate: 1) classmates of teens (12-15 years old) with autism; 2) classmates of teens with Asperger Syndrome; and 3) classmates of children (8-11 years old) with Asperger Syndrome.

The videos will include interviews with children/teens, siblings, parents, classmates, friends, coaches, etc. and Danya is seeking people interested in being in the video. If you are interested in participating, please contact **Greta Tessman** at **(240) 645-1057**.

New on-line course on Assistive Technology

The **Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center** at the University of Massachusetts Medical School has developed an on-line course entitled "Assistive Technology." This free seven-week on-line course provides an introduction to Assistive Technology (AT), including assistive technology used to support communications, mobility, activities of daily living, and learning for persons with disabilities. It also reviews legislation and advocacy services in the provision of AT for children with disabilities. Case studies are used to illustrate the use of AT and the Assistive Technology Cycle in each of the content areas. In addition, this course will provide participants practice and guidance in researching his/her own solutions as applicable to AT.

This course is recommended for personnel who serve people with special needs. The course will be field-tested in June. Field test participants will be asked to comment briefly from time to time on course content and format. At the end of the course students will receive a certificate of completion. No college or CEU credit will be offered for this field test. For further information, please contact **Anncy Graziano** at anncy.graziano@umassmed.edu; please include "Assistive Technology Online Course" in the subject line.



A Puzzle Perspective **By Linda Hodgdon, M.Ed., CCC-SLP** **(Reprinted with permission of the author)**

I had an opportunity recently to observe a professional debate. Two people. Two different professional roles. Both serving students with autism. They were staking out their territory. One person was trying to make the boundary lines very clear. He was the expert in his field and he did not want the other person to cross the line. No one else was permitted to know about 'his stuff.' He was protecting his turf. In fact, he became angry when the other person said something to cross into his territory.

It Takes a Lot of Information. I began to think about all the different people that provide information to help understand the challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

* Parent	* Psychologist
* Psychiatrist	* Speech Pathologist
* Occupational Therapist	* Classroom Teacher
* Behavior Therapist	* Instructional Aide
* Autism Consultant	* Social Worker
* Doctor	* Dietician

Each of these people has training or experiences and information to help us understand some of the mysteries of autism. No one discipline has all the answers.

That's what makes autism so unique. Finding solutions for the challenges of Autism Spectrum Disorders can be difficult. There are many areas to investigate. Generally, one approach or one profession does not solve all the problems. More likely, a variety of people and a combination of interventions work together to create solutions. For example, solving a behavior problem may require input from a dietician, the Speech Pathologist, the Occupational Therapist, a behavior specialist and lots more.

What does this have to do with puzzles? Think of the simple first puzzle we may give a child. Each piece is separate and fits easily into its own space. Then think of those complicated puzzles with hundreds of pieces that can take days to assemble. Which puzzle do you think better represents autism?

So here's the point. . . There are many pieces to the puzzle of autism and each piece is essential to complete the picture. Information from many places in the education and medical fields are important parts of a bigger picture. Missing pieces result in a picture with holes.

Think about how puzzle pieces interlock with each other. Observe how the pieces connect. Each piece has a unique color and shape. Its shades and designs are distinct and different. Yet at the point where the pieces intersect, they have something in common: color, lines, details. When you hook many pieces together you begin to create a different picture.

That is a model for how we need to work together for solutions to the challenges in autism. Each member of the team brings unique information and understandings. Yet the blending and interlocking creates a different view. As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I have a lot of knowledge about the communication needs of these students. But understanding a student's sensory challenges or medical issues or other needs will help me help him more effectively.

And that is why I share. Communication is at the core of ASD. Each person who works with or lives with someone with autism needs to understand their communication strengths and challenges. Communication is the foundation for so much more. One of my goals is to help students become better communicators. But an equally important goal is to help others become better communication partners with individual students.

The power of the puzzle. The puzzle piece certainly represents the mysteries of autism. But another way to think about those puzzle pieces is how they link with each other to create the bigger picture of the autism spectrum.

We need to interconnect. But here is the caution. Reading a book or attending a workshop will give me some useful information. But that is just a piece. I cannot presume then to know everything you know from your professional background. I need you to teach me and help me learn more about what you know. I want to teach you what I have discovered. And if we link our understandings . . . think of the possibilities.

P.S. In puzzle terminology, I think of parents as the borders. They provide the shape and structure for all those pieces to fit together. In the beginning it can be overwhelming. When you first dump all the puzzle pieces on the table it looks like a mixed-up mess. But as you systematically turn the pieces over and begin assembling the border pieces, the whole puzzle begins to take shape. Eventually, you can appreciate the beautiful picture that was hiding in that pile of pieces.

Points to Ponder. I have been speaking for many years about communication skills in autism with a focus on using visual strategies. Years ago, the majority of people attending a program were Speech-Language Pathologists. Today, when I do a workshop on the same topics, the majority of people attending are not SLPs. They represent many related disciplines. What a great example to demonstrate how people recognize the need for knowledge across domains.

Linda Hodgdon is the author of the best seller, **Visual Strategies for Improving Communication**. She is featured in the award winning Visual Strategies Workshop–Video Program. To learn more or to sign up for her free e-newsletter, visit <http://www.UseVisualStrategies.com>.



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**, as well as autism puzzle piece **bracelets/wristbands**. They are available for \$5 at our meetings and \$6 by mail; order forms are available 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 pf saa@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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