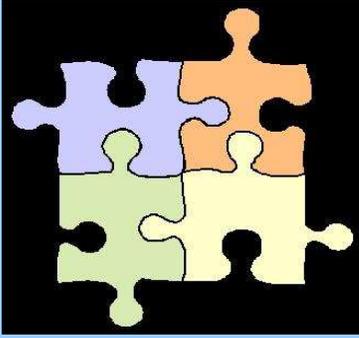


ASLC NEWS

2009 Awareness Events



"Bringing the pieces together."

Our Mission

The Mission of the Autism Society of Larimer County is to serve as a resource for individuals and families affected by autism spectrum disorder by providing information, advocacy, public awareness activities and promoting the development of services and resources.

Our Board

President:

Phyllis Zimmerman

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Abra Ziegler

Secretary

Andrea McGinley

Directors:

Community

Education & Awareness:

Brandi William-Stephenson

Community

Awareness & Education:

Ariana Iacobucci

For more information contact:

Autism Society of Larimer County

Phone: 970-377-9640

Email: aslc@autismlarimer.org

Website:

www.autismlarimer.org

This year's Autism Awareness Month was a huge success. The Autism Society of Larimer County, along with the wonderful help of the community, was able to bring much needed awareness while raising generous funding for the implementation of the Exceptional Sitter program for Larimer County. On Tuesday April 21st, the ASLC hosted a presentation by Dr. Temple Grandin in conjunction with a silent auction at the Hilton Garden Inn. Dr. Grandin shared from her new book, "The Way I See It" to a full house of enthusiastic attendees.

An enormous "Thank You" is in order to all the generous donors of the over 100 silent auction items. There were a large variety of wonderful items ranging from elegant overnight stay at the Stanley to marshmallow shooters. The ASLC and the evening participants were also privileged to have the donated talents of Sakkits "Hot Shot" Catering and Sunset Event Catering. The Hilton Garden Inn did a terrific job to help make the evening a success.

On Wednesday April 22, families and friends packed into the Island Grill to enjoy the hard

driving rhythms of the Fort Collins Drum and Dance Group. This awareness event titled "Help Beat Autism" was geared to promote awareness and provide hands on entertainment for kids. After a great performance, the children were treated with hands on rhythmic play provided by music therapist Megan Stiefken and Foundation Music. This was an entertaining night filled with food, fun and friends.

The week winded down on Thursday evening with a movie night at the Lyric Cinema Café. Viewers were inspired by the life story of Clay Matzo's "Just Add Water". This movie was a remarkable depiction of a young man's challenges and triumphs in managing life with Asperger's. Clay's powerful journey was an inspiration for all.

Again, the ASLC would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Larimer County community and donors for making the event week a huge success. We could never have raised the level of awareness and funds needed without your help. Thank you and see you next year!



Dr. Grandin and event guest talk before the presentation.



Dr. Grandin presents to a full house.



Silent auction bidding in full swing.



Fort Collins Drum & Dance



Kids enjoying the hands on drumming after the performance

Special Thanks

to

Dr. Temple Grandin

Our Sponsors

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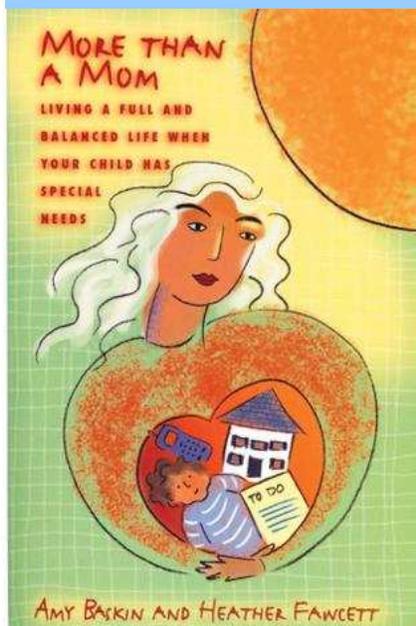
Silent Auction Donors

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Stanley Hotel
Starbucks (Harmony)
Sunflower Farmers Market
Sunset Event Catering
Texas Roadhouse Fort Collins
Timeless Creation and
the Creative Underground
Trisha Cummings
Unforgettable Images
Walnut Street Gallery
Water Valley
Wild Life Animal Sanctuary
Whole Foods

A Great Read for Mom



Stay posted for
Special Needs
Book Club
Summer
Information

More Than a Mom explores how women can lead rich, fulfilling personal lives while parenting a child with special needs. The authors' skillful blend of research, personal experiences, and feedback from over 500 mothers across North America results in a book that is jam-packed with practical strategies, advice, and reassurance for mothers trying to create more manageable and fulfilling lives.

More Than a Mom addresses the universal concerns and questions of all mothers, coupled with the added intensity of raising children with disabilities. This how-to guide looks at the challenges mothers face at home, at work, and within themselves, with special attention paid to:

- Staying healthy both physically and emotionally
- Keeping friendships
- Parenting your other children
- Staying organized
- Maintaining your marriage
- Nurturing interests and goals
- Seeking flexible work options
- Changing careers or starting a business
- Rejoining the workforce
- Finding specialized childcare
- Advocating for your child

The mothers who were interviewed for the book have diverse backgrounds and family dynamics. Given their differences and the fact that their children have such varied disabilities, it's striking that these mothers face such similar issues. **More Than a Mom** provides mothers with many voices and solutions that will resonate with their own circumstances. Husbands, extended family, friends, support organizations, and service providers will also want to read this insightful and fact-filled book.

By: Carin Yavorcik



An Essay for Mother's Day

Young man with autism wins writing contest Chris Chu of Prospect, Kentucky, recently wrote an essay entitled, "What My Mother Means to Me" for the annual 5th Grade Essay Contest sponsored by American Mothers, Inc. Chris' essay shares the incredible story of how his mother received the news that he was on the autism spectrum and how she helped him to learn despite his diagnosis. In honor of Mother's Day this Sunday, it is reprinted below.

Everyone thinks his/her mom is special in many different ways. I consider my mom is not just a caring mother; she is also my best friend, teacher, and coach for life.

Doctors delivered the dreariest news to my mom when I was three years old, 'Autism Spectrum Disorder.' They predicted I will never be able to catch up with my peer group, academically or socially. That broke my mom's heart. Fortunately, mom never let those words stop her from helping me to achieve my highest potentials. For years, I was reading without comprehending. Mom would spend endless hours reading with me, made sure I understood every word I read. Whenever I behaved improperly, mom always took time to explain and correct my mistakes.

Today, I am still struggling with many difficulties. But with my mom's help, I am confident I will be as successful as any of my peer groups. "Thank you mom!"

Meet Our First Exceptional Sitter

Through the fundraising endeavors of the 2009 April Autism Awareness Month the ASLC is excited to establish the Exceptional Sitter's program. We are planning on training and maintaining a group of highly qualified special needs sitters especially for our Larimer County families. In March, we started the recruitment and training process that requires candidates to complete CPR, First Aid training, a comprehensive application review, complete background check and culminating with specialized autism-centered training. The specialized autism training is provided by Board Certified Behaviorist, Catherine Bladow, SLP. As of now, we have one highly qualified Exceptional Sitter who has completed this process – Devin Ricketts. Devin is a history and secondary education major at CSU.

Although she now considers herself a Fort Collins native, she grew up on an island just outside of the Seattle area. Her family relocated to Fort Collins to be closer to her large extended family and she graduated from Fort Collins High School. Devin's immediate family is very close. Her parents have been married for 30 years, and her sister is almost exactly a year older than her. They have a golden retriever named Lucy, too. Devin's extensive sitting career started off in her freshman year of high school when she

began her work at Respite Care Inc. It was at that point that her interest and love for children with special needs began. She recognized that every child is a miracle and each has a unique gift to give to the world. Patience and compassion are only two of the many gifts she has received from the



many special kids she has worked with and grown to love and appreciate. She has also worked as an as-needed nanny and volunteer at "TGIF" (CSU volunteer group that takes teenagers with special needs out on fun Friday night activities.). She currently works at the First United Methodist Church nursery with infants, toddlers, and school-aged children.

Devin's warm smile and relaxed personality is sure to be a good fit for many families in our community. Her personal

motto with kids is ignore the negative behavior, reward the positive behavior and celebrate progress. She believes that patience and a calm attitude are the keys to gaining trust and building positive sitter relationships. Two of her special qualities she brings to the sitter families are compassionate understanding and a good sense of humor. Devin is our first available trained Exceptional Sitter and is prepared to start sitting for our ASLC families. To contact Devin please email her directly at



Interested in learning how to become an Exceptional Sitter?

Contact the Autism Society of Larimer County for information on the next training session. Call 970-377-9640 or email at aslc@autismlarimer.org

Senate Bill 244 Passes!

Colorado Legislature Passes Insurance Coverage for Treatment of Autism

Thursday, May 7, 2009

By: Carin Yavorcik

Bill on its way to the Governor
A landmark, bipartisan bill expanding the treatment of autism was given final approval by the Colorado State Senate and is on its way to the Governor. Senate Bill 244, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Brandon Shaffer (D-Longmont) and State Representative Dianne Primavera (D-

Broomfield), will require health insurance providers to cover assessment, diagnosis and treatment of autism, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), a substantially researched and favored behavioral treatment for autism spectrum disorders. This bill will require health insurance plans to include autism as a covered benefit.

Autism is extremely expensive to treat; the estimated lifetime cost of caring for a person with autism ranges from \$3.5 to \$5 million. However, if the appropriate early intervention treatments are applied, up to two-thirds of the cost for treatment can be avoided.

“The passage of this bill is a triumph for the most vulnerable among us; those who we, as a society, have a responsibility to protect,” said Sen. Shaffer. “Autism is treatable, but these families should not face this alone. This bill will finally make health-care manageable for those with autism disorders and their families.”

After the bill passed the Senate, Betty Lehman, Ex-

The passage of SB 244 through the legislature was the result of a grassroots advocacy effort involving hundreds of committed families, individuals and with the support of local and national advocacy organizations.

ecutive Director of the Autism Society of Colorado and a key architect of the bill, thanked individuals with autism in Colorado, their families and their providers, indicating their continued support ensured the bill’s passage. The Autism Society asked those affected by autism in Colorado to contact their legisla-

tors to encourage a yes vote on the bill, to great effect. Lehman also thanked the lawmakers that recognized the impact of the bill on Colorado families affected by autism.

“This bill will have a tremendous impact on the lives of people with autism and their families. It will also alleviate some of the financial burden on the

public education, public health care programs, and social services systems in our state,” said Lehman.

Michael Zeitlin, Board President of the Autism Society of Colorado, acknowledged the landmark bill would not have been possible without the hard work of the bill sponsors and Betty Lehman.

“Except for Senate Majority Leader Brandon Shaffer and State Representative Dianne Primavera, Betty Lehman was the single most important person involved in shepherding this bill through the entire legislative process, winning approval in both houses of the legislature and vetting about 50 amendments negotiated by various interest groups,” said Zeitlin.

The bill now awaits action by the Governor. If SB 244 is signed, Colorado will become only the 11th state requiring insurance providers to cover treatments for autism. The Autism Society of Colorado is excited to have worked diligently for legislation that improves the quality of life for people with autism and their families.

Article from ASA Website used with permission

What SB 244 Does:

- Defines autism spectrum disorders to include Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, PDD-NOS
- Requires health insurance to cover assessment, diagnosis and treatment of autism
- Prohibits carriers from denying issuance or renewal of policies due to autism diagnosis
- Delineates which health care professionals are eligible to provide treatment, and requires appropriate certification and credentialing
- Applies to small and large State of Colorado group plans, not individual or ERISA plans
- Provides parity with other medical illnesses
- States the annual cap on treatment for ABA therapies:
 1. Birth – age 8: \$34,000
 2. Age 9-18: \$12,000

Summer Fun & Learning

A big thank you to the PSD Special Education Advisory Committee for compiling a great list of Summer Fun & learning activities for our kids.

Check out the complete list at
www.autismlarimer.org

Just click on the left hand side bar link titled Summer Fun & Learning. Below are a few highlighted options:

Extreme Sports Camp

now offers weeklong camp sessions, both summer and winter, in the stunning Roaring Fork Valley, near Aspen, Colorado. Those with autism spectrum disorders can safely engage in sustained physical activities and find personal growth through a supportive, individualized, and adaptive program of recreational sports. For more information please visit our website: www.extremesportscamp.org For our summer video click on photo gallery and then "watch our video!"

Family Music Classes

Summer Session 2009

Did you know music can help improve speech and motor skills, enhance social skills and participation, encourage pre-literacy skills, enhance cognition, help improve mood?

Join us for songs, games, instrument play and dance.

Classes **START JUNE 2ND** and meet Tuesdays at 9:30 and 10:15 am at Harmony Presbyterian Church, 400 Boardwalk Drive.

Classes are \$30 for 6 weeks, no class the week of June 29th. Sliding scale fees are available.

For children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old. Children with special needs encouraged to attend. Parent participation required.

Taught by Megan Stiefken, music teacher in the Poudre School District Early Childhood Program and certified music therapist.

Megan also does individual therapy times for children infant to 18 years old. This therapy is done in home and focuses on attention, speech and cognitive skills.

To register please call Megan at (970)308-8779 or online at mderven@hotmail.com

FUN FUSION THERAPEUTIC PLAY GROUPS

All About Communication, LLC. Catherine Bladow, MS.CCC-SLP, BCBA and Integrated OT Services, LLC. Eileen Getches, MEd, OTR/L join together to bring you FUN FUSION- THERAPEUTIC PLAY GROUPS.

Together Catherine and Eileen, provide play groups for children ages 3-9 years old. Each play group is planed with individual needs in mind and is focused on the development of social, communication and motor skills. Catherine and Eileen draw upon their combined experience and advanced training in child development, verbal behavior and sensory integration to help children and families reach their goals.

Session I- Thursdays, June 4-June 25

Session II- Thursdays, July 9-July 30

Each group is 90 minutes.

Contact Information

Catherine

Phone: 420-0578

Email: allaboutcom@comcast.net

Eileen

Phone: 217-7302

Email: egetches@aol.com

for group meeting times and further information.

More Than Words – The Hanen Program For Parents of Children with ASD ®

This program helps children communicate by providing intensive and innovative training programs for the most important people in a child's life - their parents or caregivers. Parents/caregivers spend the greatest amount of time with their children, and have the greatest opportunity to help their children communicate. Given information and strategies, parents/caregivers have many more opportunities to improve their children's social communication skills than are possible through weekly therapy appointments.

Specifically, **More Than Words:**

Gives parents/caregivers the strategies they need to help their child interact, communicate, and improve understanding of language:

Combines the benefit of shared interactive group learning with individual guidance and consultation through videotaping and feedback

Is led by a speech-language pathologists who is Hanen trained and certified

Is supported by excellent print and video resources

More Than Words will run from June 16th (orientation) through Sept. 15th. Participation in this program requires a commitment to attend 8 class sessions for parents/caregivers conducted by

a Hanen trained and certified speech-language pathologist. In addition to these sessions each child and parent/caregiver will be scheduled for 4 individual sessions for videotaping feedback. One will be scheduled before the first group session. Families are also contacted for a follow-up meeting 3 months after the program has ended. *A commitment to attend all sessions is essential.*

We believe that parents/caregivers and children with identified communication needs benefit greatly. The *More Than Words* Program is felt to be an effective intervention approach to address specific social communication needs. After completion of the program and the follow-up meeting, the need for additional services is determined. *More Than Words* Program was developed 14 years ago through the Hanen Center. It translates the most current research on language acquisition and early language intervention into a practical, hands-on approach that is respectful of parents'/caregivers' and children's individual differences.

The sessions will be held at Children's Speech & Reading Center . Families participating in the *More Than Words* Program will be contacted prior to beginning the class sessions to schedule the child's 1st individual videotape session.

The *cost* of the *More Than Words* Program: Very few insurance companies fund intervention programs that focus on parent/caregiver training, or services that do not involve the child directly in the sessions.. However, the Scottish Rite Foundation will provide scholarship funding to eligible families enrolled in this program through Children's Speech & Reading Center . The total cost of the *More Than Words* Program is **\$1480 (\$1100** for group sessions and **\$380** for individual sessions). This cost covers 20 hours of parent/caregiver group instruction and 4 hours of individual video-feedback therapy time. Keep in mind that most families pay only a small portion of that fee when Scottish Rite Foundation assistance is utilized.

In order to take advantage of scholarships for the *More Than Words* Program participants must complete a short Scottish Rite Foundation application form.

The Scottish Rite Foundation asks all families to contribute what they feel they can toward the program.

Space in the More Than Words Program is limited. Please contact [Elise Tobler at 419-0486](mailto:Elise.Tobler@419-0486) for more information about registration and funding.

Unified Play Group

A playgroup for kids of all ages and abilities Summer 2009 Schedule

Friday Play Dates

- May 29 1PM-3PM **Beginning of Summer Pizza Party** at CiCi's Pizza Buffet, 2721 S. College Ave, Suite 2, Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-484-4443
- June 5 2PM-4PM **Inspiration Playground**, Spring Canyon Park, 2626 W. Horsetooth Road, Fort Collins, CO
- June 12 2PM-4PM **Bowling** at Sweetheart Lanes, 2232 W 1st. St, Loveland, CO (970) 667-4800 RSVP to Brenda Tuttle (970) 267-8705 or brenda@peakpeak.com by June 10th to qualify for your first game free compliments of the Tanning Salon, Loveland.
- June 19 2PM-4PM **Lee Martinez Farm**, 600 North Sherwood Street, Fort Collins
- June 26 2PM-4PM **Pizza Party** at Chuck E Cheese, 105 W Prospect Rd, Fort Collins, (970) 221-2122
- July 3 **Happy Independence Day!** No meeting this week.
- July 10 10AM-12PM **Boyd Lake**, 3720 N County Road 11-C, Loveland, CO. Meet at the Swim Beach
- July 17 10AM-12PM **City Park Pool**. 1599 City Park Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80521, (970) 484-7665
- July 24 11AM-1PM **Gardens at Spring Creek**, 2145 Centre Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80526 (970) 416-2486. Join us for Reading Retriever. Amy Fristoe and her furry companion. Kids will read gardening-related books along with Claudeen Jean 11am – noon.
- July 31 10AM-12PM **Inspiration Park**, Spring Canyon Park, 2626 W. Horsetooth Road, Fort Collins, CO
- Aug 7 12PM-2PM **Winona Pool**, 1615 E 4th St, Loveland, CO 80537, (970) 962-2435

All children must be supervised by a Personal Care Provider at all times.

A "personal care provider" is defined as a person who accompanies the child and assists the child with all necessary daily living skills. Please note that this is not a respite group.

*Ending times are approximations.