

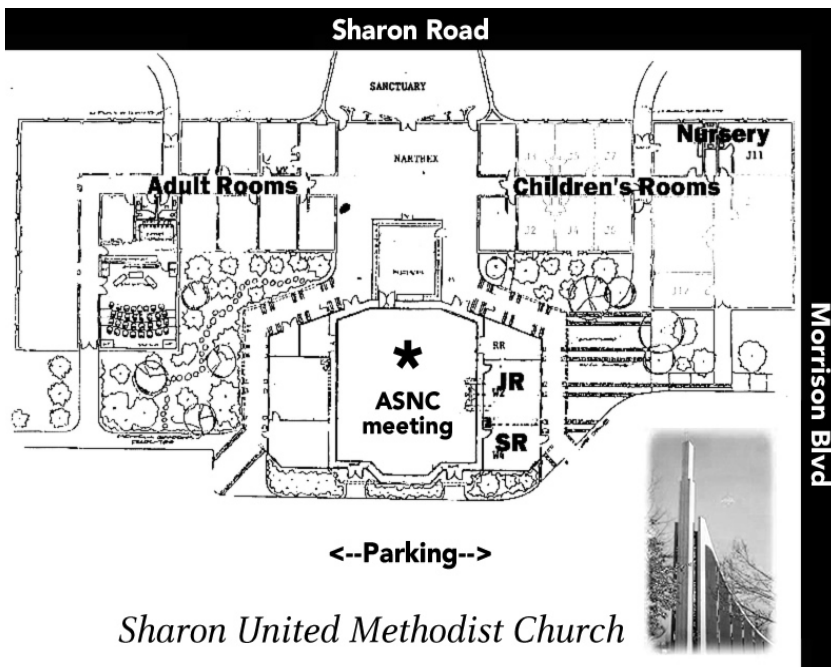


For our April 3rd Meeting

We honor those who have Embraced Autism

Join us to learn more about “Autism Friendly” people and places around Charlotte. Opening remarks presented by Dr. Joyce Lum of TEACCH. Featured groups include: Houses of Worship, the YMCA, the Boy Scouts of America, and more. Special recognition will be given to groups in the area who have taken a special interest in autism and created projects to support our children. Come and become empowered!

Doors Open: 7:00; announcements: 7:10; Meeting– 7:15– 8:15; Specific support group tables to cover parent led topics: 8:15-9:00.



Sharon United Methodist Church

Meeting Location: -4411 Sharon at Morrison Blvd, Charlotte 28211. (Across from South Park Mall – Cheesecake Factory side)
 Use Morrison Blvd. Entrance to park around back. Our room is near the middle of the building. Enter via the doors near the portico.

IMPORTANT CHILDCARE

NOTICE: Childcare is available for the first 12 children registered.

Those not registered will be turned away. We must insure the safety of all children under our care during the meeting, so we must know how many will be in attendance before each meeting. It will be important to Contact Kathy Snyder by **Apr.1st.** 704-341-0199 or kos101@earthlink.net

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April 2008

The Newsletter of the Autism Society of North Carolina
Mecklenburg County Chapter

President's Note:

It is Autism Awareness Month and lots of big things are happening Nationwide and in Charlotte too. With all of it's resources, Autism Speaks has planned a world wide Autism Awareness Day for April 2nd with events planned at the New York Stock Exchange where co-founders, Bob and Suzanne Wright, will ring the opening bell. In Doha Qatar, special ceremonies will take place at Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs to aid in spreading awareness around the world. Throughout April, Autism Speaks will provide several opportunities to spread awareness and raise funds. Toys R Us will offer point of sale coupons to raise money for Autism Speaks; in several cities around the US, Barnes and Nobles Bookstores will also offer special story time events. This is the most visible way that Autism Speaks is offering support. They are working hard behind the scene building legislative supports as well.

ASNC is working to spread awareness this month too. We are joining with Harris Teeter to offer point of sale coupons at registers. In Charlotte Mecklenburg, we have several stores and opportunities to help out. With enough volunteers in various areas around Charlotte, we can provide many places to spread awareness. If you have a few hours of time on a weekend afternoon, we would love to have you join us as we hand out pamphlets and answer questions about autism. This work is important. Funds will help us do the legislative work needed to develop effective insurance policies.

Autism Aware Fare will be on Thursday, April 17th this year. We would love to have your help with this important event again this year. The Aware Fare is our most important fund raising event. It is unique in that the event is a funding source and also spreads awareness. For you, it is a chance to support our chapter and to socialize with other members of our community as you dine out. Our chapter is raising funds for several important projects, such the Discovery Place Robotics Workshop, our annual teacher grants, book donations to the Public Library, autism training scholarships for teachers and other individuals working with our children, and programs that support our families in the community.

Aware Fare is essential. It allows us to partner with other groups to get your needs met. One such project, Safe Fest will debut on May 10th. Although we are not executing this event, we are responsible for the event. Upon hearing your need for help with safety issues, we approached Karen Samuels Fitts of the Arc of Mecklenburg, to collaborative the development of this program. Because of time constraints, the Arc of Mecklenburg has taken over this important project; we are acting as a support for their project. We hope you will make time to attend and provide input on areas where the event can grow and improve. Another program is the new partnership with Discovery Place. Last fall we applied for a grant to provide training for Discovery Place personnel so that they can execute autism friendly programs. Unfortunately, we did not receive the grant; but decided this program was important enough that we would fund it ourselves. We are happy to report the training went well and the Discovery Place staff are now ready to offer a Robotics class designed for our community. We hope to increase the availability of this program in our large county and expand the topic to other science related themes our children love.

Aware Fare also funds our monthly meetings where we can offer excellent insight with speakers such as the Coulters and David Hamrick. We realize making evening meeting are difficult for many of you and there may be another are of growth we need to consider. Growth will be limited by our ability to fund it.

This summer we will be moving to Affiliate status. With this change, we will need more help. Our list of needs for next year include: parents to help with the newsletter– editing and writing stories, working in delivery, public relations regarding fundraising and awareness events, interfacing with other support groups in the area, assisting with new legislative programs, helping with recreation events in specific areas of the county. If you are interested in helping at all, part time, several times, or event just once, please let me know. In the meantime, please enjoy your month!! Happy Autism Awareness Month,

Nancy Nestor, ASNC-MCC President



: 704-545-1902



: nnestor@carolina.rr.com

April 2008

The Newsletter of the Autism Society of North Carolina
Mecklenburg County Chapter

April Events:



Apr. 3rd (Th) ASNC-MCC Monthly Support Mtg:
t-shirt orders will be ready! 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

Apr. 3-7th DAN! Spring Conference; Cherry Hill, NJ
Nationally known speakers discuss latest findings. For more info. Call 1-866-208-0207 or go to www.defeatautismnow.com/Springconference

Apr. 5th (S) Autism Speaks /UNC Autism Research Update;
Research report and focus group for socialization of HFA teens and young adults; UNC Charlotte Campus Fretwell Building – Room 121; call Michelle Preslar- 704-561-0003 or carolinas@autismspeaks.org.

Apr. 5th (S) Camp Boomerang Open House; 12-1:00
At the Hemby Center; Formerly Camp Chameleon– Siskey YMCA's inclusion summer day camp for kids ages 5-15. In order to register, families must attend an open house. Call 704-716-4300 for directions.

Apr. 6th (S) SHINE -Church for people with ASD; Huntersville United Methodist 3:30 – 3:50 pm contact: Rev. Monica Humpal at 704-875-1156; monica@huntersvilleumc.org.

Apr. 8th (T) Parker Autism Night @Foster's Grill Colonnade at Kings Grant, 8520 Pit Stop Rd. Suite 10, Charlotte, NC 28269 *Proceeds go to fund camp scholarships for needy ASD families.*



Apr. 17th (Th) Autism Aware Fare- ASNC-MCC Annual Fundraiser ~ *All the funds raised from this event will stay in the area to support programs for families facing ASD.* Find more

www.AutismAwareFare.org

Apr. 19th—Skating 9:30 Starlight, -call Susan Wild (704-601-6938) susan_wild@msn.com

Apr. 22nd (T) Coffee Time 9:30- North: Caribou Coffee, 2706 W. Mallard Creek Church Rd, Charlotte, 28262; **10:00- South** Caribou Coffee, 7845 Colony Road Suite 6, Charlotte, 28226; RSVP~ Nancy Nestor 704-545-1902

Apr. 24th—STAR Biomedical Support Group
7:00 Longhorn Steakhouse, Pineville-call Pam McCarthy (704-849-7991) pammccarthy@carolina.rr.com

April 25-26th ASNC 2008 Annual Conference- Issues Across the Spectrum and Life time- Radisson High Point; *To register call: 1-800-442-2762 Or www.autismsociety-nc.org*

Apr. 28-29th (M-T); Dr. Gail Szakacs at Cyzner Institute; new and established patients; go to : www.cyznerinstitute.com .



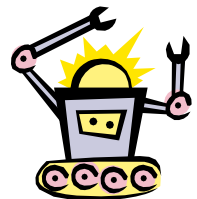
May Events:

May 1st (Th): Deadline for Parker Autism Scholarship Applications; go to www.parkerautism.org for more info.

May 1st (Th) ASNC-MCC Monthly Support Mtg. 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

May 3rd (S) EXTREME TOYS SPEED PARK: 20310 Sefton Park Drive, Cornelius, NC 28031. **Private Party for ASNC-MCC families– 11:00-12:00 Fundraiser for ASNC-MCC 12:00-10:00;** contact Susan Wild; (704-601-6938) susan_wild@msn.com

May 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st, and June 7th Discovery Place & ASNC-MCC Robotics Class, 2:00-3:00 PM. Morningstar Presbyterian Church, 13000 Idlewild Rd. Matthews, 28105; cost:- variable upon attendance~ \$80.00 for 6 classes and students get to keep their robot. Contact Jennifer Hamelink at Discovery Place-704-372-6261, ext.508 or jhamelink@discoveryplace.org.



May 4th (S) SHINE -Church for people with ASD; Huntersville United Methodist 3:30 – 3:50 pm contact: Rev. Monica Humpal at 704-875-1156; monica@huntersvilleumc.org.

May 6th & 13th (T) Parker Autism Night @Foster's Grill Colonnade at Kings Grant, 8520 Pit Stop Rd. Suite 10, Charlotte, NC 28269 *Proceeds go to fund camp scholarships for needy ASD families.*

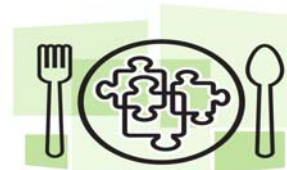
May 10th (S) Safe Fest: Independence Park; 10-2:00 PM; Create a safe environment for your ASD Family Member sponsored by Arc of Mecklenburg & United Way.

May 19th (M) Coffee Time 9:30- North: Caribou Coffee, 2706 W. Mallard Creek Church Rd, Charlotte, 28262; **10:00- South** Caribou Coffee, 7845 Colony Road Suite 6, Charlotte, 28226; RSVP~ Nancy Nestor 704-545-1902

May 20th (T) STAR Biomedical Support Group
7:00 Longhorn Steakhouse, Pineville-call Pam McCarthy (704-849-7991) pammccarthy@carolina.rr.com

Celebrate!

Thursday, April 17



AUTISM AWARE FARE

What?

Autism Aware Fare is Thursday, April 17. Restaurants throughout Mecklenburg County will donate a portion of the day's proceeds to Autism Society NC – Mecklenburg County Chapter, so grab a snack, savor gourmet dining, or order “to go” along with your friends and co-workers to benefit your neighbors with autism. The public can learn more about autism on table tents, from handouts, and event website.

Why?

You can help support our programs which include over \$18,000 in grants to teachers of students with autism, assistance to families in crisis, books about autism for the public library, our newsletter, renting spaces such as Ray's Splash Planet, and more!

Who?

You! Please plan to go out that day and organize a group to go with you: co-workers, friends, neighbors, members of your religious organization or civic club, fun clubs such as book clubs or Bunko, sports teams, scouts, etc. Can't get out? Order “to go!”
Volunteer to pick up orders for teachers at your child's school

Where?

Participating restaurants include: Brixx Pizza, Brooklyn South Pizzeria, Charleys, City Tavern, dd Pecker's Wing Shack, Five Guys (Ballantyne, Blakeney, Galleria, Steele Creek), Friendly's, Great Harvest Bread Co., Jillian's, Le Peep, Matt's Chicago Dog, McAlister's Deli, The Melting Pot, Midtown Sundries (Harborside and University), Monterrey Mexican Restaurant (Park Rd.), Nothing but Noodles, NY Pizza and Pasta, NY Pizza Express, The Penguin, Pike's Old Fashioned Soda Shop, Pizza Spiga, Restaurant X, Rotelli Pizza, Señor Tequila, Sugar Magnolia, Summit Coffee, Tony's Pizza (Ballantyne), Township Grille, Trio, Union Grille (Hilton Charlotte Center City), and Village Tavern.



Want to be Spoon-fed ways to Help? We can do that!
Contact Event Coordinator, Betsy Gustafson, at 704-341-9669 or
BetsyGustafson@carolina.rr.com or visit

www.AutismAwareFare.org

Thanks to our sponsors! WLNK (107.9, the LINK), Burke Communications, Inc, Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte Weekly, Union County Weekly, AREVA, IKON, A Special Needs Plan, Autism Services of Mecklenburg County, Siberimaging, Verbatim, Charlotte TEACCH, McMillan & Terry, P.A., Darnell Co., Inc., Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated, Space Kidets, Pediatric Dentistry of Matthews, RE/MAX Executive Realty, Lawrence A. Sladek, D.D.S., P.A., Science Kit and Boreal Laboratories

April 2008

The Newsletter of the Autism Society of North Carolina
Mecklenburg County Chapter



Disability Day on the Hill

On March 11th– 13th, the Autism Society of America (of which ASNC-MCC is affiliated with), Autism Speaks, and other groups interested in the support of our families met in Washington DC with congressmen to introduce legislation to create better supports for those with disabilities. Led by long time supporter, Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT.) legislation was introduced which will create the Disabilities Savings Act. The function of this act is to provide parents and care-givers a means to save for the future needs of their child with disabilities. This legislation will create supplementation; it will not replace benefits provided by Medicaid or private insurances. It has the potential to broaden the level of support also and reach those who might not have benefited from current programs. “Senator Dodd was an original co-sponsor of the Combating Autism Act and has long been a champion for individuals with disabilities and their families,” said Bob Wright., co-founder of Autism Speaks. “We commend him for launching the legislative process to create these vitally important savings accounts, which will reduce an unreasonable financial burden for millions of families and end discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the federal tax code. Parents can save, tax-free, to send their child to Harvard. They should be able to save in the same way to help every child meet his or her full potential.”

At the state level, ASNC and Autism Speaks are working together to create legislation designed to provide the best insurance coverage possible for North Carolina citizens with autism needing therapies and interventions not currently covered. Several other states are working on legislation as well and some states, such as South Carolina, have already passed legislation. In North Carolina, we determined to create the best policies possible, which means careful planning and collaboration. We are excited about these changes, but we must take our time.



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA

2008 Annual Spring Conference

Issues Across the Spectrum and Lifetime

April 25- 26th (Friday and Saturday)

Radisson Hotel -High Point- 135 S. Main St

Friday:

Integrating Effective Methodologies ~

Kelly Wendell and LaTamara Jackson from Vanderbilt University's TRIAD Center

Pre-Conference - \$145 until April 18;

PLEASE NOTE: no on-site registration

Friday Evening:

- Asperger Syndrome and Siblings with **Dan and Julie Coulter**- award winning authors
- Creating Programs for Children and adults in the Community ~ various ASNC staff

Saturday:

- Awards Ceremony
- **Keeping your Child Safe- What you need to know and prepare for~ Dennis Debbauldt**-award winning author/presenter
- **Charting a Course for Transition- Where's the GPS~ Donna Moneyham**-
- **Social Relationships: Challenges and Strategies** ~ Dr. Sloan Burgess
- **Keynote: Asperger's Syndrome: the Ins the Outs the In-Betweens** ~ Dr. Liane Willey, noted author

ASNC Member rate - \$100 until April 18

Non-member rate - \$150 until April 18

Person with ASD & Student rate - \$60 until April 18

PLEASE NOTE: Pre-registration required.

No childcare this year. To register call: 1-800-442-2762 Or www.autismsociety-nc.org



Want to support ASNC and help with the Awareness Cause?

ASNC is partnering with Harris Teeter again this year to offer point of sale coupons at registers in their stores. Our chapter would like to support ASNC by having tables with information on autism in their stores during the point of sale event. If you would like to join parents or teachers at your local Harris Teeter. Please contact nnestor@carolina.rr.com or 704-545-1902

MCC March at the Raptor Center: Soaring with Eagles or Luke Skywalker!..



On Saturday, March 8th several families met at the Carolina Raptor Center. After hiking around the trails and viewing all the various birds of prey, we were treated to a live presentation by a wildlife rehabilitator. It was

a chilly day and the group was happy to grab some lunch and meet again at the Stonewater clubhouse. What a beautiful setting for a relaxing chat over lunch!

Our April Rec. Outing

It's time to lace up your skates and meet us at Starlight. The rink opens at 9:00 AM. and will offer instruction from until 11:00. It is perfect for beginners with the large carpeted area for practice. The music is not too loud and with less crowded conditions, you don't have to worry about getting run over. So far we have had a pretty diverse crowd with skaters from grade school through adult. You are not too young, too old, or to inexperienced!



When: Saturday morning, April 19th; from 9:00- 11:00 AM
Cost: \$4.00 per person

Where: Starlight Skating Rink, 8830 E. Harris, Clt. 28227

Contact Susan Wild to RSVP
(704) 601-6938; or susan_wild@msn.com

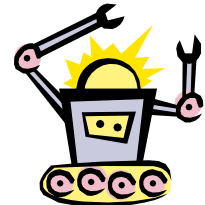
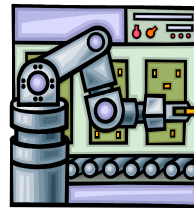


Discovery Place & ASNC-MCC Robotics Class,- Saturday Afternoons May 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st, June 7th 2:00-3:00 PM.

Morningstar Presbyterian Church, 13000
Idlewild Rd. Matthews, 28105; close to I-485

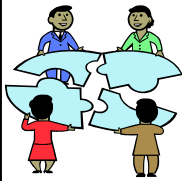
cost:- variable upon attendance~ \$80.00 for 6
classes and students get to keep their robot.

Registration open now! Contact Jennifer
Hamelink at Discovery Place-704-372-6261,
ext 508 or jhamelink@discoveryplace.org.



Coming in May!!

On Saturday, May 3rd, 2008, we are planning a fun event at Extreme Toys Speed Park -20310 Sefton Park Drive, Cornelius, NC 28031. An hour before the park opens (11:00 am-12:00 pm) our families can enjoy go-karts and mini-golf. The park will open to the public from noon til 10:00. So mark your calendar and look for more details in the next issue of Autism Matters!



ATTENCION!!

Estimados padres de familia: la división del Condado de Mecklenburg en la Sociedad de Autismo se complace en ofrecerles oportunidades para aprender más sobre Autismo y programas en nuestro condado que pueden ser de ayuda. Nos gustaría tener una mesa para hispano-hablantes en la que en cada una de las reuniones, nuestros miembros hispano-hablantes se puedan sentar juntos y tener traducción de la presentación a su lengua nativa. Hemos tenido varios padres de familia interesados en actuar como intérpretes para algunas reuniones; no obstante, buscamos más voluntarios. Si ustedes estuvieran interesados en ayudarnos para traducir, o si estuvieran interesados en atender a alguna reunión en la que la presentación sea traducida al español, porfavor contacte a Nancy Nestor al teléfono: 704-545-1902, o escriba por email: nnestor@carolina.rr.com

Donations accepted Here!

Ms Caudill's class at Selwyn Elementary is in need of action figures: Spiderman, Harry Potter and other characters, any miniature objects that can serve to represent story concepts, characters or settings. If you can help please e-mail lora.caudill@cms.k12.nc.us.



*Twice Monthly Autism Night-
the 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of the Month;*

**Foster's Grill- Colonnade at Kings Grant,
8520 Pit Stop Rd. Suite 10, Charlotte, NC
28269.** *Proceeds go to fund summer camp scholarships for children with ASD this summer.*



Safe Fest The Arc of Mecklenburg County

May 10, 2008

10 am to 2 pm Independence Park

Proceeds go to fund summer camp scholarships for children with ASD this summer.

SAFE FEST is a new annual event designed to help parents and caregivers provide a safe environment for their family members with disabilities. Come meet with police, firemen, and other groups in the community at this one-stop shopping event designed to help you keep your challenged loved one stay safe at home, and in the community.

- Internet
- Water
- Fire & Burn
- Stranger
- Sports
- Pedestrian & Bike
- Poison
- Emergencies

Coffee Time??

April. 22nd (Tuesday)
9:30- North: Caribou Coffee, 2706 W.
Mallard Creek Church Rd, Charlotte, 28262;
with Nancy Nestor

10:00- South Caribou Coffee, 7845 Colony Road Suite 6, Charlotte,
28226; with Betsy Gustafson

RSVP~ Nancy Nestor 704-545-1902



Autism's Touch

LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm is a very special place that transforms the lives of individuals through therapeutic horseback riding. As you drive up to our program you are immediately impressed with the buildings and well maintained grounds. You can not believe a farm such as LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm is located in Charlotte. When you begin walking around the farm you instantly feel relaxed and believe you have entered a world that is peaceful and serene. It is hard to believe your child with Autism is actually motivated with a bag packed with apples and carrots to feed the horses, donkey, pot belly pigs, goats, and rabbits that call LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm home

As you are given a tour of the program you see individuals with a sparkle in their eyes, a smile on their face, and you hear them laughing. You observe the riding instructor executing lesson plans, which are motivating, fun, and exciting. The volunteers supporting the riders are enjoying themselves and you think, "Wow! What a magical place." Your child is tugging at you and pointing at the riders on the horse indicating that they want to ride.

Sounds too good to be true, right? Wrong! As a parent of a son with autism, Zachary, who has been riding at LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm for over two years, I can tell you that this place is very magical. I have seen my son's coordination, motor planning, and posture increase. Zachary also has a secondary diagnosis of apraxia and his expressive communication is that of a two year old. I truly feel that the development of his core muscles through therapeutic horseback riding has helped increase his expressive language. When you have good core muscle strength it alleviates pressure on the abdomen to help open up the airways for speech production. Zachary is also learning how to steer a horse through cones without needing assistance from his horse leader. His favorite thing to do on his horse is trot. His eyes light up and he has the biggest smile on his face. When you stop trotting he instantly says, "Trot." And wants to do it again. I think he enjoys the motion of going up and down on the horse.

Winston Churchill once said, "There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man." I encourage you to call and make arrangement to visit LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm and learn more about how a horse can transform the life your child. You can reach us at 704.393.0333 or on the web at www.lifespanservices.org and click on LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm on the left hand side of the screen.

Jennifer Frey, Parent of a son with autism and the Program Director for LifeSpan at Joshua's Farm

Jennifer's experience with her son's autism has led her to this new field of work. If you would like to share how autism has had a positive impact on your life, please send your story to: nnestor@carolina.rr.com



Current issues: Vaccine Lawsuit

By Christy Koury

After years of denying the existence of any link whatsoever between vaccines and autism, the federal government recently conceded a case about this very issue in the court of Federal Claims. According to David Kirby in a recent Huffington Post article (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-kirby/government-concedes-vacci_b_88323.html), “the claim, one of 4,900 autism cases currently pending in Federal "Vaccine Court," was conceded by US Assistant Attorney General Peter Keisler and other Justice Department officials, on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services, the "defendant" in all Vaccine Court cases.”

Apparently, what made this case different from other vaccine injury-autism cases is that the child had a pre-existing mitochondrial disorder. The court’s conclusion is that an unusually large combination of vaccines was administered to the child at her 18-month check-up, causing stress on her body and exacerbating her mitochondrial disorder, thereby bringing about her ASD symptoms.

One of the big reasons that this is a significant concession is that the child’s mitochondrial disorder was undiagnosed at the time of the vaccine injury. It took the onset of the child’s regressive autism to alert the parents to the fact that the child might have metabolic issues. This is significant because it raises a question about whether it is *ever* safe to assume that a child can receive a large quantity of vaccines without harm, despite the official stance that multiple vaccines are safe for our children. Official National Institute of Health (NIH) data puts the incidence of mitochondrial disorder in the US at about 1 in 4,000 people, but scientists at The United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation (www.umdff.org) estimate that the actual number is probably closer to 1 in 2,000. The UMDF website states that “every 15 minutes, a child is born who will develop a mitochondrial disease by age 10.” With statistics like this, and with this recent governmental concession, one wonders whether it really might be time to rethink the vaccine schedule, like the DAN! protocol has suggested for years (<http://www.tacanow.com/medical/danprotocol.htm>).

To see the court judgment referenced in this article, please go to http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-kirby/the-vaccineautism-court-_b_88558.html

We Need Your Help - Become a Member!

Join the Autism Society of North Carolina
Membership Form

ASNC Membership (circle level)

Individual/Family - \$40
Contributor - \$75
Supporter - \$150
Agency/Service Provider - \$200
Life - \$1,250
Student - \$25

*indicate ASNC Chapter name below and ASNC will give back \$10 to your local chapter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (h) _____ (w) _____

Email _____

ASNC Chapter Name _____

Type of membership(s) (e.g. asnc-family) _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

**Mail all memberships to ASNC to:
Autism Society of North Carolina
505 Oberlin Road, Suite 230, Raleigh, NC 27605-1345
To charge memberships call 1-800-442-2762**

ASNC – Mecklenburg County Chapter
c/o Nancy Nestor
3846 Lipton Ln
Mint Hill, NC 28227

If you would like to receive *Autism Matters* via email, send a request to
nnestor@carolina.rr.com

Thank you!