

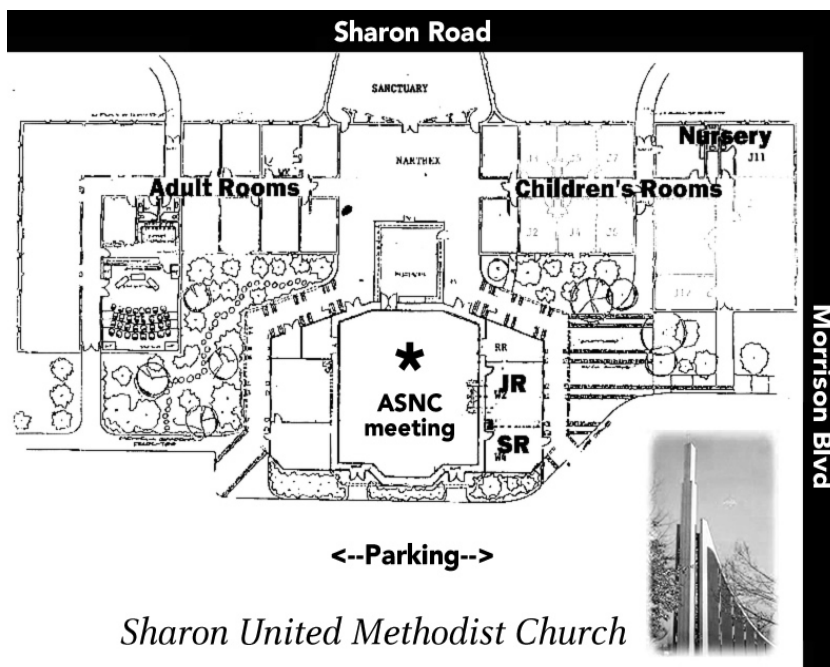


Back by popular Demand...

The ASNC-MCC Summer Parent Fair -Thursday, Feb. 7th

Join us and learn about all the summer offerings in the Charlotte area. Over twenty camp and program staff will be presenting information on schedule, curriculum, and cost. This could solve your summer dilemma!

Doors open at 7:00, announcements: 7:10, Summer Fair from 7:15-9:00.



Sharon United Methodist Church

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 Feb. 5th**. 704-341-0199 or kos101@earthlink.net

Meeting Location: Sharon United Methodist Church-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 our room via the doors near the portico.



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA
Mecklenburg County Chapter

President's Note:

Many exciting things are happening in our state and throughout our country. Recently Autism Speaks announced its new venture to support families and individuals with autism nationwide. Newly diagnosed families can contact Autism Speaks and receive a 100 day packet which guides them through the initial, overwhelming period of determining what to do next. In this packet, parents can learn of resources in their area that provide support and services. For many this means they can begin services for their children right away, even as they wait for services through state agencies. This is wonderful! It should make life a little easier for the newly diagnose. Having a pathway handed to them, should ease some of the anxiety and frustrations of this new life.

At ASNC-MCC we have some pretty exciting things happening too. We learned late last year that due to our size and our healthy bank account, we need to change our status from chapter to an affiliate sometime this year. What does this mean in the short term? As far as the services we provide you, we will continue to offer monthly newsletters, monthly support meetings, and information through e-mail blasts and our website. Our parent advocates will continue to bring you free support with school and community issues regardless of the age of your child. We will also continue to spread awareness and fund programs that increase support in our community, such as the teacher grants, free recreational activities, library book donations, and the Ruth Fuller Scholarship.

For you, the difference may be very subtle at first. Internally, we will be able to grow and at some point provide services. With all the service providers in our county who provide competent therapists and workers, our mission may be slightly different. We will continue to help parents advocate for themselves and their children with school issues, but also with personal issues such as insurance or community issues, such as access to community programs. This will be done by Nancy Popkin and Kim Tizzard. At this point, we do not see ourselves starting group homes or duplicating the work done by Parker Autism, Autism Services, Autism Speaks or the Autism Foundation of the Carolinas. We feel it is best to be supportive of existing organizations. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, we would rather use our resources to fill in spaces of need within our community. As with all organizations, we will not function well without the input from those we serve. We are hoping our new website will make it easier for you to find the information you need and to communicate your needs to us as well. In the meantime, if you are having difficulties with your child's school or troubles in the community because of your child's autism, please contact our parent advocates. You may contact me with issues you would like our chapter to address along with the Autism Society of North Carolina in Raleigh.

Change is difficult; but with careful planning and your help, we should be making our chapter stronger and better able to handle the challenges you are facing and will be facing as your child matures.

Nancy Nestor



: 704-545-1902



: nnestor@carolina.rr.com

February Events:



Feb. 3rd (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.

Feb. 7th (Th) ASNC Monthly Support Meeting- Summer Parent Fair~ meeting area camp summer camp directors and find out how to register; 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

Feb. 12th (T) Newly Diagnosed Workshop- for parents of children just diagnosed with autism; 10:00 AM -12:00; 209 Delburg St. Davidson; contact Kim Tizzard or Nancy Popkin at 704- 894-9678 to reserve.

Feb. 11th and 12th (T and W) DAN Dr. / Great Plains Lab Biomedical Satellite Clinic; Dr. Gail Szakacs will be seeing patients at Cyzner Institute; go to www.cyznerinstitute.com

Feb. 12th (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.*

Feb. 18th and 19th (M and T) School Day Out Programs for Teens and Youth; *President's Day and International Friendship Day;* Marion Diehl Center, 2219 Tyvola Rd. , Charlotte, 28210; Cost: \$35.00 Per day. Contact Angela Conti ~ 704-336-7639 by 2-15th.

Feb. 20th (W) Star Biomedical Support Group 7:00 Longhorn Steakhouse, Pineville-call Pam McCarthy 704-849-7991; pammccarthy@carolina.rr.com

Feb. 21st (Th) 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

Feb. 21st (Th) ASNC- Union Monthly Support Mtg.- Featuring Dr. Nancy Turner; EC Dept. Union Co. Schools, 7:00 PM; Walter Bickett Education Center; 501 Lancaster Hwy. Monroe, for more info call 704-753-1174; or www.unioncounty-autism.com

Feb. 22nd (F) Parker Autism Foundation 5th Anniversary Reach for a Star Silent/Live Auction Winter Wonderland Gala; 7:00 -?; Room with a View; 800 W. Hill St. Charlotte, 28208; contact Shelley Reilley ~ 704-819-4952 or parkerautism@aol.com

Feb. 23rd (S) Vital Interventions Accessible (VIA) Shop til You Drop for Autism Recovery Day; Concord Mills Mall, registration -8:00; walk -9:00; see Jill Urwick at www.vianow.org

Feb. 23rd (S) What Works Institute~ "Literacy for Students with Significant Disabilities" with Gretchen Hanser of UNCC; 8:00- 3:30; Hilton University Place- 8962 JM. Keynes Dr. Charlotte; cost- \$15.00 family members; \$25.00 others. Includes continental breakfast & lunch: call 1-800-962-6817 to register

March Events:



Mar. 2nd (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.

Mar. 4th (T) Special Olympics Swim Practice: Jewish Community Center; 6:30-7:30. Contact Steve Averitt @ 704-553-7971 or averitt@bellsouth.net

Mar. 6th (Th) ASNC Monthly Support Meeting- ASD and Siblings featuring Dan and Julie Coulter; 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211



Mar.6-7th (Th- F) PECS Basic Training with Anne Hoffman and Lauren Fredrick; Holiday Inn, Charlotte City Center, 230 N. College St. Char. 28202; \$295.00 per parent; \$395. for professionals; one parent scholarship is available; call 1-888-732-7462 or go to www.pecs.com .

Mar. 7th (F) Como puedo ayudar a mi hijo con autismo? (Conferencia gratuita en Español); 6-8:00 PM; World Alliance for Families & Children 4835 S. Tryon St, Charlotte, 28217; Requiere Inscripción: 1800-442-2762 Ext.21; Mariela Maldonado, mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org

Mar. 11th (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.*

Mar. 13/ 15th (TH/S) [practice/games] Adaptive Baseball; Adaptive Field (behind the Marion Diehl Recreation Center, 2219 Tyvola Road; registration- Jan. 15th- Feb. 15th; cost: \$50.00 includes practice, games, uniform, trophies, picnic; contact Vernice Gallon, 704.432.3049 or vernice.gallon@mecklenburgcountync.gov

Mar. 17th -18th (M &T) DAN Drs./ Great Plains Lab Biomedical Satellite Clinic~ Dr. O'Hara, Dr. Szakacs, and Vicki Kobliner will be seeing patients at Cyzner Institute; go to www.cyznerinstitute.com

Mar.20th (Th) ASNC- Union CC Monthly Support Mtg.- featuring Nancy Dartnell with Gastonia TEACCH Center : 7:00 PM; Walter Bickett Education Center; 501 Lancaster Hwy. Monroe, for more info call 704-753-1174; or www.unioncounty-autism.com

Mar. 20th (Th) 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

Thanks to our January Speaker

At our January meeting, **Tracie Zakas** gave a wonderful presentation of *Project Raise~* the collaborative effort between CMS and UNCC to serve those with severe literacy difficulties. She did a splendid job and we are most thankful. If you were unable to make the meeting, you can still learn more about ways to facilitate reading for you child. On Saturday, Feb. 23rd, from 7:45- 3:30, the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, ECAC, is hosting a workshop: ***What Works Institute: Literacy for Students with Significant Disabilities.*** The workshop will be at the Hilton Charlotte University Place; 8629 J.M. Keynes Dr. Charlotte. In addition to the presentation, both breakfast and lunch will be served. Cost is \$15.00 for parents and \$25.00 for others. *Limited scholarships are available.* Registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 15th. This workshop deals with learners with various disabilities, including autism. It is designed for those with:

- Limited book and writing experience
- Poor reading/ writing comprehension
- Struggle to hold a book/pencil
- Have trouble communicating without assistive technology
- Struggle to let us know what they know and understand

If you would like to attend, call ECAC @ 1-800-962-6817 and ask about the **What Works Institute.**

It's Almost Time to Play Ball!!



Mecklenburg County Park & Rec. Therapeutic Division Spring Adaptive Baseball practice will start for those ages 6-21 with disabilities. Participants will receive uniforms, trophies, photos, and an end of the season picnic. Games and practices will be held on the Adaptive Field behind Marion Diehl Center, 2219 Tyvola Rd. Practices will be held on Thursdays, starting March 13th through April 24th. Games will be on Saturdays, from March 15th through May 10th. The fee for this wonderful experience is \$50.00. Contact Vernice Gallon for more information @ 704-432-3149 or vernice.gallon@mecklenburgcountync.gov



Special Olympics Adds another Practice Time

If you are interested in Special Olympics Swimming, but the practice time was too late for your schedule, an earlier time is being offered. Starting March 4th, a second practice time will be available on Tuesdays from 6:30- 7:30 at the Jewish Community Center on Providence Rd. Contact Steve Averitt for more information 704-553-7971 or averitt@bellsouth.net

Parent to Parent: Picture Exchange System by Susan Wild

My husband Gerry and I have two son's (twins) who both have autism. When my son Jason was two years old, he could not communicate and was very angry and frustrated which led to destructive and injurious behaviors. However at age three, he was introduced to the **picture exchange communication system (PECS)** at the DE Autism Program. At that time, Dr. Andrew Bondy was the director of the school and his wife, Lori Frost, was a speech pathologist there as well. These professionals invented PECS. Jason learned he could easily get what he wanted by simply giving a staff member the picture of the item. I started working with him at home with three of his favorite foods and activities. He started initiating communication! Once he was able to discriminate the pictures, we added more. He quickly learned that he can get what he wants fast just by handing the desired picture to an adult. Because he immediately got what he wanted, this reinforced the picture training! This system was a God send to us! The behaviors disappeared and he communicated more each day. He later learned to put together full sentence phrases – I want to buy fries, chicken nuggets, sweet and sour sauce and coke at McDonalds. He is now 16 years old and has well over a 1,000 picture vocabulary that keeps growing each day.

The pictures give him a personality. We know his favorite color is red and what snacks, beverages he likes. Given a choice, we know he enjoys horse back riding going shopping and to the lake, and not doing puzzles! We would not know these things otherwise! He later learned to comment on things he finds interesting. I see the ornaments on the tree. He sometimes switches to a request. I want to decorate the tree with ornaments and lights. I see the man driving a bull dozer. It is raining outside. I see the car wind shield wipers. He now is using a Chat PC II which utilizes the same pictures and sentence starters which are the ones he started on when he was a young child.

My other son Jonathan prefers the actual picture logo and we use a digital camera or print pictures off from www.google.com (images). Using whatever pictures your child prefers is a great start! The PECS training will show parents and teachers how to implement the communication system, and how to fix errors in picture discrimination problems. Later it can be used to teach the child to expand to sentences, even commenting. You can read about these brilliant autism professionals and learn more about PECS at www.pecs.com

I have taken a couple of PECS workshops and I personally feel the workshops are fantastic and are a must for parents and professionals dealing with non verbal or limited verbal children with ASD. The workshops are truly worth every penny! The Picture Exchange System (PECS) was a true lifesaver for my sons and my entire family! There is a PECS workshop coming up in March in Charlotte. If you would like to attend please see the information in the calendar page 3.



Susan and her family recently relocated from Delaware to the Lake Norman area. She is a new member of our board. If you would like to contribute a story, please contact Nancy Nestor at nnestor@carolina.rr.com.



Mark the Date!

So far the following Vendors will be attending our Wonderfully Popular Summer Parent Fair to help you learn more about their summer options for kids on the spectrum. We expect *more* to be present. Come on over & see!

ABC Tutoring and Educational Services~ Summer programs for Pre-schoolers

Camp Boomerang~ Inclusion day camp at Siskey Y's Camp Eaglerock

Charlotte Speech and Hearing ~ Social Speech Groups for many ages/ levels

Kids Rein- Therapeutic riding lessons

Mecklenburg County Park and Rec. Therapeutic Division- day camps for all

Special Yoga- classes for kids and families

Confident Voice Solutions~ Social Speech Groups for many ages/ levels

Siskey Seals Swim Program~ One on One Lessons for pre-schoolers and up

Life Span at Joshua's Farm- Therapeutic riding and animal interaction

Miss Donna's School of Dance ~ Jazz, tap, and modern dance for kids with ASD

Lake Norman Pediatric Therapy ~ Speech, Sensory Integration, Behavioral Support Groups

Autism Services of Mecklenburg County~ Day camp for kids with ASD

Camp Shalom~ Day camp for Kids with ASD

Victory Junction Gang Camp- Family Day Camp/ Weekend for campers age 7-15

Achieve Therapy Services- social speech groups

South Lake Counseling ~ social skills groups for those with Asperger's Syndrome

Creative Expression~ social skills groups for many ages/ levels

Paint Out Loud~ art therapy group for kids with ASD

Mephibosheth Farms~ Therapeutic riding

First in Families- assistance services for needy families with children on the spectrum

Mitochondrial Disorders by Christy Koury

What is a Mitochondrial Disorder?

Autism Matters is running a series of articles on known genetic causes of autism. So far, we have featured Fragile X Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, and Tuberous Sclerosis. This month, the topic is Mitochondrial Disorders (also known as “mito”), which is a class of metabolic energy disorders that can, in some cases, affect the brain and cause autism. As the name implies, mito is a disorder or dysfunction of the mitochondria. Mitochondria are small organelles which exist in every cell of the body except red blood cells. They are responsible for generating energy for the cells to use. When mitochondria are not functioning properly, cells do not have enough energy to do their jobs or possibly even to survive.

According to the Cleveland Clinic (www.clevelandclinic.org), “*Mitochondrial diseases might affect the cells of the brain, nerves (including the nerves to the stomach and intestines), muscles, kidneys, heart, liver, eyes, ears, or pancreas. In some patients, only one organ is affected, while in other patients all the organs are involved. Depending on how severe the mitochondrial disorder is, the illness can range in severity from mild to fatal.*” When cells in the brain are affected by mito, the result can be autism.

How Is Mito Diagnosed?

Mito patients are diagnosed by a combination of clinical observations and lab tests. There is a list of red flags for the disease at <http://mitosoc.org/diagnosis/redflags.html>. Conclusive diagnosis is usually accomplished through biopsy, in which the mitochondrial function of the muscle and/or skin cells is evaluated. Usually, the path to diagnosis goes through a combination of neurologists, geneticists, and metabolic specialists.

Are There Treatments for Mito?

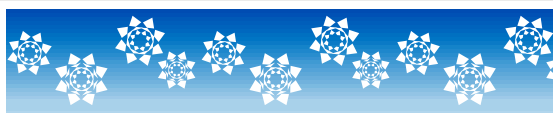
Currently, there is no cure for mitochondrial disorders. There are treatments which focus on minimizing cell damage caused by incompletely burned fuel inside the cells and which focus on maximizing the damaged mitochondria’s ability to produce energy. These treatments usually consist of dietary interventions and a “vitamin cocktail,” the use of which might alleviate some symptoms and slow or stall the progression of the disease.

Why Do Parents Pursue Medical Testing to Rule Mitochondrial Disorders In or Out?

Mitochondrial disorders are progressive, neurodegenerative diseases. Like other metabolic diseases, their severity and scope can be affected by interventions. Knowing that a child has mito means that the parents can pursue options that may make the child more comfortable and possibly decrease future degeneration and increase the child’s life expectancy. Additionally, autism is only one symptom of mito. An autistic child with mito might have many other issues that need to be considered in order to help the child in the best ways possible.

Besides the references listed in this article, there is a significant amount of information about mitochondrial disorders at The United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation - www.umdf.org, The Mitochondrial Disease Action Committee – www.mitoaction.org, and through the Muscular Dystrophy Association – www.mda.org. If you are concerned that your child might have mito, please speak with your neurologist or make an appointment with a metabolic specialist.

Three Ways to Help Local Families Facing ASD



Winter Wonderland Gala ~

**Fifth Annual
Reach for a Star Benefit**

Friday, February 22nd – 7:00 PM.

Room with a View

800 W. Hill St. -Charlotte, 28208

***Live/ Silent Auction with over 300 items for bid including:** Restaurants, Weekend Getaways, Diamond Tennis Bracelet, NASCAR Memorabilia, Panther's Autograph Memorabilia, Airline Tickets And much more.

***Live Entertainment -Mac Attack Jazz Band**

***Great Food:** Heavy Appetizers, Johnson & Wales Cake Table, Melting Pot Choc. Fondue Fountain, Open Bar of Beer/ Wine

Cost: \$50.00 per ticket

Contact: The Parker Autism Foundation
5290 Cambridge Bay Dr.
Charlotte, NC. 28269
704-819-4952 or visit
parkerautism@aol.com

Parker Autism Foundation is a 501-C 3 organization which provides scholarships for therapy and summer camps for those with ASD.



“Shop ‘Til You Drop” Walk for Autism Recovery Day

Saturday, February 23rd – Concord Mills

Registration: 8:00; in the food court
Walk Benefit: 9:00 AM

Registration is \$10. 00 for adults;
\$5.00 for children 12 and younger

Those who raise a minimum of \$50 will receive a free event T-Shirt, a coupon booklet for Concord Mills Mall, and additional discounts at various stores throughout the mall.

So put on your walking shoes and help families seek much needed medical treatments and therapies for their children on the autism spectrum that they otherwise could not afford. 100% of the profits will go to fund Vital Interventions Accessible, Inc. VIA is a 501-C3 organization. **For more information about this event and VIA ,visit www.vianow.org or e-mail Jill Urwick ~ jurwick@vianow.org.**



Monthly Autism Night- the 2nd 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.*



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA

Como puedo ayudar a mi hijo con autismo?

(Conferencia gratuita en Español)

Date: 7 de Marzo, 2008

Time: 6-8 PM

Place: World Alliance for Families & Children
4835 S. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28217

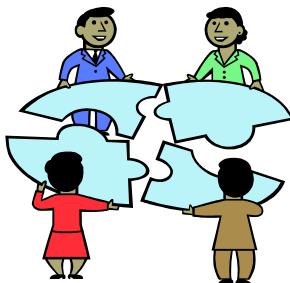
La Asociación de Autismo y World Alliance for Families & Children invit a lo padres con hijos con autismo y los coordinadores de la Comunidad Hispana a esta Conferencia gratuita en Español

Requiere Inscripción:

(704) 618-1489
World Alliance for Families & Children
Att; Mariame Boujilil
mariame2001us@yahoo.com

1-800-442-2762 Ext.21
Autism Society of NC
Att: Mariela Maldonado,
mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org

Se ofrece guardería a las personas que se inscriben con anticipación



ASNC-MCC Event Cancellation Policy

In the event of weather warnings which cancel school or other events which cause elected officials to advice against travel; our chapter will cancel or postpone events. If you are unsure whether an event has been cancelled, you may...

1. Tune in to WCNC, Channel 6 and watch for a posting on the bottom of the screen.
2. **If time allows us to change the posting,** you may also check our website:
www.asncmeck.org



Hey North Meck. Parents !

Have you thought your son might benefit from involvement in the Boy Scouts? If so, Robert D'Amelio is working to start a troop designed to meet the needs of our wonderfully unique kids. Contact him at 704-921-8181 or rdamelio@bellsouth.net



Coffee Time????

Feb.21th 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

**Please note Coffee dates shift to different days of the week so everyone has a chance to attend. Many Moms work part time and can only come certain days of the week. Check your calendar each month for details.*

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!