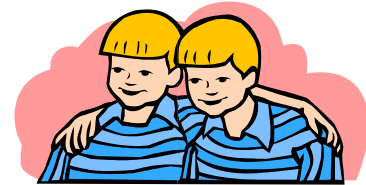


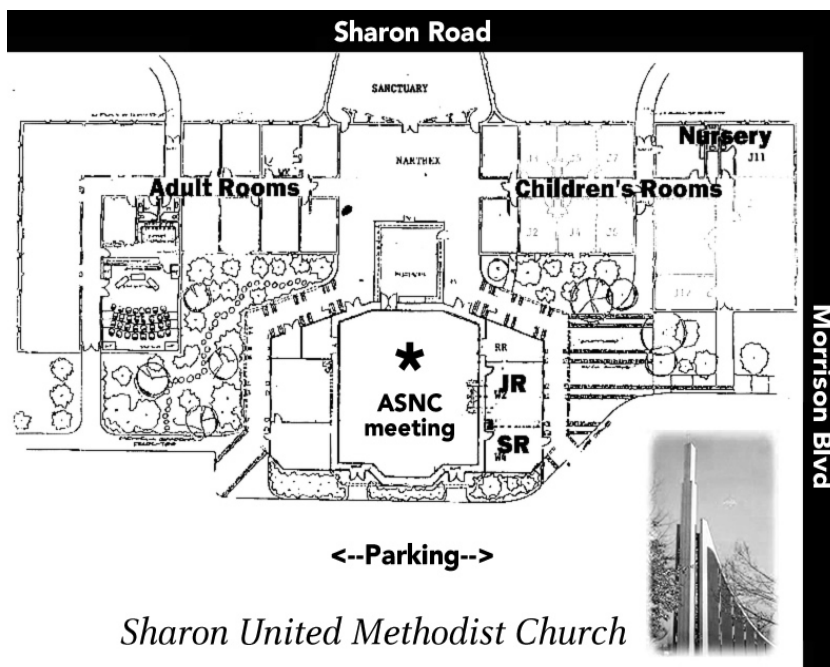
*For our March 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting, we present:*



## ***A Parent's Primer for Siblings: Understanding Brothers & Sisters with Autism Spectrum Disorders***

Join us as we listen to a presentation by award winning video creators, Dan and Julie Coulter. With discussion and video clips, they will share the successful strategies used by siblings of those with Autism or Asperger Syndrome, as they deal with difficult situations. Over 24 families with children facing various levels of autism/ aspergers and of various ages starred in these helpful videos. The meeting is appropriate for parents and brothers or sisters that are 10 years or older. The Coulters will join the "Sibling Support Group Table" as we continue with our support group sessions.

*Doors open at 7:00; Announcements: 7:10; Featured Speakers: 7:15-8:15; Support Groups: until 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 Mar. 4th.**

704-341-0199 or [kos101@earthlink.net](mailto: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:*

*This has been some kind of month. First it was a delight to hear of 13 year old, Hannah Haas' Grand Prize winning in the Second Annual Bubble Wrap Competition for Young Inventors. Hannah won the competition by designing "Sensory Wallpaper" for our children. Having a younger sister, Ms. Haas knows too well the difficulty our children face with sensory issues that overpower their ability to process everyday occurrences. Because of her intimate knowledge, Hannah knew the sensory input of rubbing Bubble Wrap could bring relaxing stimulation and focus. She created the wallpaper with various sizes of bubble wrap on a calming blue background, using Velcro strips to anchor. (Someone has been to TEACCH!) What a great idea! The competition was stiff, with over 1,400 entrants and several projects with high creativity/ functionality. For her hard work and creative mind, Sealed Air Corporation, parent company of Bubble Wrap, gave Ms. Haas a trip to New York City, and a \$10,000 savings bond. I am wondering if we should put a line item in the budget for Bubble Wrap wallpaper to use in our childcare room during meetings. Maybe we will this wallpaper in a future Teacher Grant Request! Congratulations Hannah!*

*Like many of you, I have been sorting through my mind, emotionally, about the tragic loss of 10 year old, Brandon Parrish Johnson, who drowned after wandering away from his cottage at Howell Care Center-Clear Creek. For many of us, his death revives fear we have dealt with or are still dealing with. We know all too well how quickly our children can escape. They have no fear and when danger is present, they often do not recognize it. Even if they do, many who have language can not call for help; those without language certainly can not. On one hand, I can easily see how such a tragedy could happen, but on the other hand it is hard to see how a secure setting, such as Howell could allow this to happen when they knew Brandon had a history of running. They were aware of this problem and should have had structure in place to prevent this tragedy. We parents would like the security of knowing that there are places like Howell we can turn to when we have run out of energy to deal, even with maximum support such as CAP services. The facility was found negligent. The state fined them \$12,000 and forced them to submit and follow a correction plan within 30 days or lose their Medicaid license. Now children who run are grouped together so that they can receive more intense supervision. According to the chief operations officer, everything has been corrected and things are fine.*

*On one hand I am thinking- That is all- \$12,000 for the life of a child with autism?? Certainly his life was just as priceless as anyone else's. No doubt Brandon's parents will settle a civil suit which will not bring their son back nor give them pleasure. Clearly, we have much more work to do in the area of education when it comes to those dealing with our children. I wish the fine had been larger, but it won't bring Brandon back. Unfortunately, we do not have that many options for families that are too burned out to care for their children. Many are too difficult for an AFL (Alternate Family Living) or even group homes. Places like the Howell Center are necessary and hopefully this will never happen again. My heart breaks for Brandon, his family, and those who worked with him at Howell. Paul Nestor has gotten some extra hugs lately. We sure do have more work to do.*

Nancy Nestor



: 704-545-1902



: [nnestor@carolina.rr.com](mailto:nnestor@carolina.rr.com)

## March Events:



**Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> (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](mailto:monica@huntersvilleumc.org).

**Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> (T) Special Olympics Swim Practice:** Jewish Community Center; 6:30-7:30. Contact Steve Averitt @ 704-553-7971 or [averitt@bellsouth.net](mailto:averitt@bellsouth.net)

**Mar. 5<sup>th</sup> (W) Understanding Early Intervention Strategies: A Workshop for Families of Young Children with Autism;** with Ann Palmer, Christine Reagan, and John Thomas, 8:30- 3:30; Hickory Convention Center; **FREE; but registration required by Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>.** Go to [www.autismsociety-nc.org](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org) or contact Marty Kellogg ~ 1-800-442-2762

**Mar. 6<sup>th</sup> (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.6-7<sup>th</sup> (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](http://www.pecs.com) .

**Mar. 7<sup>th</sup> (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](mailto:mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org)

**Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> (S) ASNC-MCC Winter Hike and Picnic;** Carolina Raptor Center and picnic at Stone Water Clubhouse; Cost will decrease with higher attendance. Contact Susan Wild 704) 601-6938 or [susan\\_wild@msn.com](mailto:susan_wild@msn.com)

**Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> (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. 17<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> (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](http://www.cyznerinstitute.com)

**Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> (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



## April Events:

**Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> (Th) ASNC-MCC Monthly Support Mtg-** A Celebration of Autism- Speakers TBA; 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

**Apr. 3-7<sup>th</sup> DAN! Spring Conference;** Cherry Hill, NJ Nationally known speakers discuss latest findings: Lisa Lewis, Stephanie Cave, Nancy O'Hara, Doreen Granpeesheh, Jon Pangborn; Maureen McDonnell, Elizabeth Mumper, Andrew Levinson; Jeff Bradstreet, Jenny McCarthy, Jerry Kartzinell and more. For more info. Call 1-866-208-0207 or go to [www.defeatautismnow.com/Springconference](http://www.defeatautismnow.com/Springconference)

**Apr. 6<sup>th</sup> (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](mailto:monica@huntersvilleumc.org).



**Apr. 17<sup>th</sup> (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 with ASD members.* Learn more at [www.AutismAwareFare.org](http://www.AutismAwareFare.org)

**April 25-26<sup>th</sup> ASNC 2008 Annual Conference- Issues Across the Spectrum and Life time-Friday: Integrating Effective Methodologies** ~ with Kelly Wendell and LaTamara Jackson from Vanderbilt University's TRIAD Center

**Friday Evening: Asperger Syndrome and Siblings** with Dan and Julie Coulter- award winning authors

*Creating Programs for Children/ adults in the Community* ~ various ASNC staff from across our state

**Saturday: Keeping your Child Safe- What you need to know and prepare for**~ Dennis Debbault-award winning Author and presenter

*Charting a Course for Transition- Where's the GPS* ~ Donna Moneyham- Transition Coord. Brunswick Co.

*Social Relationships: Challenges and Strategies* ~ Dr. Sloan Burgess

**Keynote: Asperger's Syndrome: the In's the Out's the In-Betweens** ~ Dr. Liane Willey, noted author on Asperger Syndrome

To learn more go to: [www.autismsociety-nc.org](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org)

## Save the Date:

**Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**



### What and

### When?

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!”

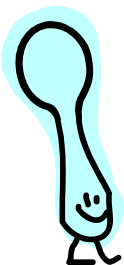
### How?

In March, be sure your office, neighborhood, religious or child's school newsletter has information about Autism Aware Fare for its April issue. Write a letter or e-mail inviting friends and co-workers to accompany you. Plan an awareness bulletin board.

### Where?

#### **Participating restaurants so far include:**

Brixx Pizza, Charleys, City Tavern (NEW this year!), Jillian's, Le Peep, Matt's Chicago Dog, The Melting Pot, Nothing but Noodles, Restaurant X (NEW this year!), Señor Tequila, Summit Coffee, Township Grill, Trio, Union Grill, and Village Tavern . . . and more to come.



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 for updates, scripts, or see

**[www.AutismAwareFare.org](http://www.AutismAwareFare.org)**

Thanks to WLNK (107.9, the LINK), Burke Communications, Inc. & Carolinas HealthCare System



## ***The Mecklenburg Connection:***

*by Susan Wild, ASNC-MCC Recreation Coordinator*

On January 26, 2008, we kicked off our first skate party of the new year at Starlight Skating Rink in East Charlotte. It was a wonderful event with fourteen families in attendance. Our group consisted of young children, teens, and adults. It was so nice to see some familiar faces which helped me and my kids feel more comfortable with this new rink. We are hopeful that these events will spark more families to venture out and try new things. A goal of our recreation activities is to give support and encouragement. For many, it was nice to know that everyone in our group understood our wonderful kids as they react to new environments. That comfort and acceptance extended to others skating that day, including the helpful staff. I saw lots of smiling faces and that's our number one goal!

My son, Jason, who has practiced skating since he was four years old, enjoyed himself very much at this new place! It had been over a year since he skated last, while we were living in Delaware. But out he went onto the floor, picture book in hand to let me know what he needed. He didn't care that I couldn't skate fast enough to keep up with him or receive his pictures of French fries and soda when he was reaching back to give them to me on the rink, of all places! Honestly, I was afraid he would drop the pictures and we would all fall tripping over them or trying to pick them up! But we made it through that fiasco just fine and he got his snack.

The music was loud, but it didn't seem to bother our kids, since the skating was their major focus. The rug around the rink really helped warm up kids, as well as parents, prior to venturing out on the rink. "Rug practice" helped with control and confidence levels rose fast!! Although skating was the draw for the event; some kids really enjoyed the arcade games too! After an hour of skating, some of us had enough; which was perfectly fine to do whatever you feel comfortable with. There was a snack bar and a few vending machines. After all that skating, several people needed a snack- including Jason. One thing I learned is that Starlight only rents men's skates. This is good to know, since your size may be somewhat smaller when renting women's skates.

We all had a great time skating and socializing! Those who didn't skate were able to relax and socialize a little more. A few of us parents went around greeting our families, but we honestly couldn't tell who our kids were. If you are new to one of our recreation events, you can help us out by wearing an awareness tee-shirt or puzzle pin so we can say HELLO and THANKS FOR COMING!!!! It is so nice to get kids and parents out in the community to have fun, meet other families and also spread autism awareness! We will be skating at Starlight again on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 9:30 and hopefully again later in the spring.

If skating is not your thing, we are planning a picnic and hike at the Carolina Raptor Center for the morning of Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Reservations will be needed for this event, so if you are interested, please contact Susan Wild ~ (704) 601-6938 or [susan\\_wild@msn.com](mailto:susan_wild@msn.com)  
We hope to see you there!



## 2008 ASNC-MCC Parent Summer Fair Vendor Contact Info

*We are thankful to all our vendors for the wonderfully informative evening. If you were unable to attend please use this contact list for answers for your summer option questions:*

### **ABC Tutoring & Ed. Services~ Terry Knudsen**

7001 Wallace Rd., Ste 600; Charlotte~ 28212  
704-568-1291; [www.abctutoring.com](http://www.abctutoring.com)  
*summer educational supports pre-school – 5<sup>th</sup> grade all summer*

### **Achieve Therapy Services~ Sally Pidge**

10800 Independence Pointe Pkwy. Ste D; Matthews ~ 28105  
704-708-8314; [www.achievetherapyclinic.com](http://www.achievetherapyclinic.com)  
*individual and social speech groups- all summer; year round*

### **Camp Boomerang ~Liz Defreitas**

Siskey YMCA: 3127 Weddington Rd; Matthews~28105; ph. 704-716-4300  
[www.ymcacharlotte.org/files/SK\\_08\\_CampGuide.pdf](http://www.ymcacharlotte.org/files/SK_08_CampGuide.pdf)  
*inclusion day camp~ June –July 11<sup>th</sup> scholarship: YMCA Pathways Program*

### **Camp Shalom at the JCC ~Marcia Stern**

5007 Providence Rd. Charlotte 28226 ph. 704-366-5007; [chalyce@aol.com](mailto:chalyce@aol.com)  
*themed day camp with professional instructors; June 30<sup>th</sup>- Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>*

### **Charlotte Speech and Hearing ~Angie Rickert**

210 E. Woodlawn Rd. Bldg 6 Ste 150; Charlotte 28217 ph. 704-523-8027  
[www.charlottespeechhearing.com](http://www.charlottespeechhearing.com) - *scholarships available*  
*individual and social speech groups k- teenager; dates TBA*

### **Child and Family Development ~Susie Crain or front desk secretary**

4012 Park Rd. #200 Charlotte - (704) 332-4834; Susie Crain  
10508 Park Rd # 130, Charlotte - (704) 541-9080; front desk secretary  
[www.childandfamilydevelopment.com](http://www.childandfamilydevelopment.com)  
*wide ranging services for individuals with ASD; all year*

### **Confident Voice Solutions ~ Katy Hench**

10722 Carmel Commons Blvd #450, Charlotte, 28226  
704) 543-9903; [www.confidentvoicesolution.com](http://www.confidentvoicesolution.com)  
*individual and social speech groups k- teen; mid June- mid August*

### **Davidson, Cornelius, Huntersville Park and Rec. Therapeutic Dept.**

452 S. Main St. Davidson, 28136; 704-892-7591 ~ **Contact Denise Clark**  
[www.d-recs.org](http://www.d-recs.org) – *various activities for those with ASD; year round*

### **Discovery Place Summer Camps ~Jennifer Hamelink**

301 N. Tryon St. Charlotte, 28202; [www.discoveryplace.org](http://www.discoveryplace.org) ph. 704-372-6261  
*inclusion camps for Aspergers/ HFA; robotics camp for Parent/ ASD child*

### **Joshua's Farm ~ Jennifer Frey**

3701 Kidd Ln., Charlotte, 28212 ph. 704-393-0333;  
*therapeutic horseback riding*

### **Kid's Rein~ Teresa Tucker**

3900 Rocky River Rd., Charlotte, 28215; ph 704-701-4711; [www.kidsrein.com](http://www.kidsrein.com)  
*Therapeutic horseback riding*

### **Meck. Co. Park and Rec Therapy Div.**

2219 Tyvola Rd., Charlotte. 28210  
Adult programs: **Vernice Gallon** ~ 704-432-3049  
Pre-school – youth; **Angela Conti** ~704-527-0237  
[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com) *day camp; 6/ 23- 8/ 15<sup>th</sup>*

### **Mephibosheth Farms- Marla Pressly**

820 Forest Hills School Rd N., Wingate- Eastern Union Co.  
704-233-9277; [www.angelicriders.org](http://www.angelicriders.org)  
*Therapeutic horseback riding*

### **Miss Donna's School of Dance~ Mandy Breech**

1707 Sardis Rd N, Charlotte. 28270  
704-846-6324 or [mandyjb@windstream.net](mailto:mandyjb@windstream.net)  
*Various dance styles for kids with ASD*

### **Paint Out Loud ~ Kati Carbonaro**

7820 Ballantyne Cmns Pkwy. Ste 106; Charlotte .28277  
704-543-0427; *Art & social stories to help with behaviors*

### **Shoreway Family Therapy~ Laverne Fesperman**

Lake Norman Ped. Therapy; 9606 Bailey Rd. Ste 250, Corn  
(704) 896-8688 Ext. 213 [www.LKNormanpediatrictherapy.com](http://www.LKNormanpediatrictherapy.com)  
*Individual and family interventions-year round*

### **Rainbow Express Camp~ Laurie Little**

Matthews United Methodist 800 E. Trade St, Mattws 28105  
704-847-6261 *Day camp with 1:1 instruction; July 7-11*

### **Seal Swim Class~ Siskey YMCA: Arail Buntyn**

3127 Weddington Rd. Matthews, 28105 Ph. 704-716-4216  
[www.ymcacharlotte.org](http://www.ymcacharlotte.org) *year round 1:1 swim instruction*

### **SOAR Sports ~ Jenny Young**

340 Matthews Township Pkwy; Matthews 28105  
704-814-1063; [www.SOARSports.com](http://www.SOARSports.com)  
*Inclusion baseball, soccer- spring/fall; basketball/winter*

### **Speech Discovery 4 Kids ~ Jennifer Plummer**

Lake Norman Ped. Therapy; 9606 Bailey Rd. Ste 250, Crmls  
704-896-8688 Ext. 203 [www.LKNormanPediatrictherapy.com](http://www.LKNormanPediatrictherapy.com)  
*Individual and social speech groups k-teen; July*

### **Southlake Counseling ~ Annie Seier**

903 Northeast Dr. Davidson 28136  
704-896-777 [www.southlakecounseling.com](http://www.southlakecounseling.com)  
*Asperger Teens 2-4 wk programs in June- July TBA*

### **Special Yoga ~ Nancy Dill**

2004 Gloucester Circle, Charlotte ph. 704-364-8321  
[ndill3@yahoo.com](mailto:ndill3@yahoo.com); *family/ group instruction Sats. In June*

### **Touchstone Therapy~ Debra Buck**

561 N. Polk St. Pineville 28134; ph. 704-889-7828  
[www.touchstonekids.com](http://www.touchstonekids.com); *year round speech and OT*

### **Victory Junction Gang Camp~ Carolyn Mullis**

4500 Adam's Way, Randleman, NC 27317  
Ph: 1-877-854-2267; [www.victoryjunction.org](http://www.victoryjunction.org)  
*Fall family camps TBA*



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](mailto:mariame2001us@yahoo.com)

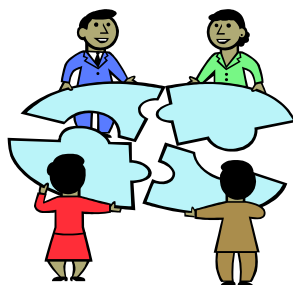
1-800-442-2762 Ext.21

Autism Society of NC

Att: Mariela Maldonado,

[mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org)

*Se ofrece guardería a las personas que se inscriben con anticipación*



## Monthly Autism Night- the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.*



## 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](mailto:rdamelio@bellsouth.net)



## Coffee Time??

Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)

**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



## Our March Rec. Outing

Saturday, March 8, 2008 we are excited about our plans for a fun Saturday walking through the **Carolina Raptor Center, in Huntersville**. This is a family event; each child must be accompanied by an adult. The Raptor Center is located at 6000 Sample Road, Huntersville, NC 28078. There will see and hear beautiful hawks, owls, and eagles, and enjoy nature face to beak!!

We can get a group rate admission cost of \$3.50 per person if we RSVP with **15 attendees...** Members of the Rapture Center are FREE. **Group reservations must be made at least one week in advance. Please respond promptly to get our head count by March 1, 2008.** Otherwise admission costs are as follows: Adults \$7, seniors: \$6, Students: \$5, Siblings are welcome!

Please meet in the parking lot at 9:50, as our tour will **start at 10:00 AM.**

Most birds at the center are in cages; however, a couple birds may be out for special programs. No one is allowed to touch these particular birds for everyone's safety. I am working with staff so when our group is there, staff will do everything they can to move these birds out of our way for those who might be bothered by them. For further information call the center at 704-875-6521, or [www.carolinaraptorcenter.org](http://www.carolinaraptorcenter.org).

For those who would like to bring a bagged lunch, ASNC-MCC has rented the Stonewater Club House located in the StoneWater community at Village Glen Way, Mt Holly, and NC 28120. The club house has bathrooms, tables for indoor dining, and a microwave to heat up lunches and couches to take a break! After lunch, those that would like to stay longer are welcome to a hike the scenic walking trails by Mountain Island Lake, where you enjoy the lake views and wildlife. There are additional walking trails and a community park with playground you may enjoy using as well. The clubhouse will be open to our group for the afternoon until 3pm. Directions are available upon reservation. Please join us!

Susan Wild ~ Recreation Coordinator; ASNC-MCC  
(704) 601-6938; or [susan\\_wild@msn.com](mailto:susan_wild@msn.com)



Autism Society  
of NORTH CAROLINA

Providing Support...  
Promoting Opportunities...

## 2008 Annual Spring Conference

*Issues Across the Spectrum and Lifetime*

*April 25- 26<sup>th</sup> (Friday and Saturday)*

*Radisson Hotel High Point- 135 S. Main St*

**Friday: Integrating Effective Methodologies** ~ with **Kelly Wendell** and **LaTamara Jackson** from Vanderbilt University's TRIAD Center

**Pre-Conference** - \$135 if registered online by March 1, then \$145 until April 18; no on-site registration

### Friday Evening:

\* *Asperger Syndrome and Siblings* with **Dan and Julie Coulter**- award winning authors

\* *Creating Programs for Children/ adults in the Community* ~ various ASNC staff

### Saturday:

Awards Ceremony

\* *Keeping your Child Safe- What you need to know and prepare for*~ **Dennis Debbault**-award winning author and presenter

\* *Charting a Course for Transition- Where's the GPS*~ Donna Moneyham- Transition Coord. Brunswick Co.

\* *Social Relationships: Challenges and Strategies* ~ Dr. Sloan Burgess

**Keynote: Asperger's Syndrome: the In's the Out's the In-Betweens** ~ **Dr. Liane Willey**, noted author on Asperger Syndrome

ASNC Member rate - \$90 if registered online by March 1, then \$100 until April 18 Non-member rate - \$140 if registered online by March 1, then \$150 until April 18 Person with ASD & Student rate - \$50 if registered online by March 1, then \$60 until April 18 **Pre-registration required. No childcare this year.**

To register call: 1-800-442-2762

Or [www.autismsociety-nc.org](http://www.autismsociety-nc.org)

## Angelman Syndrome by Nancy Nestor

### What is Angelman Syndrome?

*Autism Matters* is running a series of articles on known genetic causes of autism. This year we have featured Fragile X Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, Tuberous Sclerosis, and Mitochondrial Disorder. This month's feature is Angelman Syndrome.

Many doctors and scientists feel that Angelman Syndrome is not part of the Autism Spectrum (Stephen M. Edelson, Ph.D. -Center for the Study of Autism, Salem, Oregon). In his on-line article, Dr. Edelson states, "Angelman Syndrome is not considered a subtype of autism, but individuals suffering from this disorder exhibit many behaviors characteristic of autism. They are also sometimes given a secondary diagnosis of autism.... For many of these individuals, a small portion of chromosome 15 is missing; and this appears to be from the maternal side. Interestingly, when a small portion of chromosome 15 is missing and is from the paternal side, the child may suffer from Prader-Willi Syndrome. Similar to autism, individuals with Angelman Syndrome display the following behaviors: hand-flapping, little or no speech, attention deficits, hyperactivity, feeding and sleeping problems, and delays in motor development. These individuals may also engage in biting and hair pulling. In contrast to autism, people with Angelman Syndrome are often described as very sociable. They are very affectionate and engage in frequent laughing. The majority of these individuals have abnormal EEG's and epilepsy. Many tend to have a stiff-legged gait and jerky body movements. These individuals also have common facial features, such as a wide smiling mouth, a thin upper lip, and deep set eyes. More than half have low levels of pigmentation in their eyes, hair, and skin. The prevalence rate of Angelman Syndrome is estimated to be 1 in 25,000 individuals, and the majority of these individuals are described as severely mentally retarded."

While many feel there is a distinct difference between Autism and Angelman Syndrome, others are feeling the correlation may be closer than once thought. Researcher, John Ostergaard of University Hospital in Aarhus Denmark, studied co morbidity (conditions occurring at the same time) of Angelman Syndrome and Autism. By using an ADOS-G algorithm classification of the 17 students in the study who had confirmed deletions in chromosome 15, Ostergaard found that 13 of the students also qualified for ASD. Despite these findings, Ostergaard felt the autism may have been over diagnosed due to the intellectual limitations of the subjects. This finding has led to other studies involving co morbidity.

**How is it diagnosed?** Although Angelman Syndrome has many of the characteristics of Severe Autism, most children are diagnosed by age 7. Characteristics such as a flat back of the head, a jerky gait when walking, wide-smile with abnormal tooth spacing, thin upper lips, eyes and light skin tones alert doctors to the underlying condition. Those with Angelman always have extreme mental disabilities, which does not necessarily occur with autism. They also have extreme issues with hypotonia and can often seem to have cerebral palsy.

**Are there treatments?** There is no cure. Just as with autism, treatments are needed for physical and medical conditions, such as: seizure medication, PT, OT and Speech Therapy. Children must have self-contained educational settings and speech therapy in order to gain life skills.

**Why do Parents pursue testing for Angelman Syndrome?** Diagnosis can lead to better family support and assistance through groups like the Angelman Syndrome Foundation. To find out more go to: [www.angelman.org](http://www.angelman.org)

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