Your presence is requested for our Thursday May 1st Meeting

Maureen Morrell and Bob D’Amelio will join us to discuss the ASNC—Autism Speaks plan for working with your legislative members to address the needs of individuals with autism and their families. This is a very important meeting. Please come learn how you can help make life changing progress for your family.

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

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 Monday, Apr. 28th. 704-904-0456 or kos101@bellsouth.net

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. Handicap access outside on the right hand side entrance.
President’s Note:

It’s the first 80 degree day and I am sitting on the bench swing at the farm, watching my son, Paul, hone his horseback riding skills. My brain is thinking, “Lean forward when the horse begins to trot, not backwards. It is much easier to keep your balance.” Of course, he’s across the field and couldn’t hear me if I yelled. Also, all that “wisdom sharing” is not my job at the moment. Letting someone else do the teaching is what I need to do now. Bittersweet. When he was a toddler, I never dreamed I’d be watching him ride a horse all by himself, something I learned to do as a pre-schooler. I am so lucky. Even though I can’t compare him to what I was like at 11, Paul is very much, a different boy than he was when we first got news of the “A” word. A gorgeous day and I am fretting the small stuff— as usual— wishing I could crawl inside his skin and help him do it right. My friends with typical kids say this is normal Mom behavior. They too have often wished at times to live life for their kids: keep everything moving forward smoothly and save them from those painful bumps in the road we’ve all endured. Yes, that is all true, but sometimes I think life with Paul is like living under an amplifier. Noise is louder, feelings -more intense, actions -more real. My sense of helplessness is stronger too. It is a tough balance: holding up the supports so he can succeed, yet letting go at the same time so that he learns to be independent. I don’t do helplessness well, but Paul and I have several years to perfect our balancing act.

Yesterday was Autism Aware Fare. It was great to see the support so many of you provided. On Tuesday night, at their 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Fair, Collette Pendergrass made a point to remind the crowd of our event and urge them to support us. This week, some of our board members wore their new “Ask me about Autism” buttons while out and about. The reaction from the public was welcome. Several people asked for more information. One man shared how much he learned from the table tent at one of our Aware Fare Restaurants. Spreading awareness is really what our event is about. Raising money is nice, but if the public gains knowledge and the ability for quiet understanding, then we have done our job. Throughout the day it was nice to see and hear about the deliberate efforts so many of you made to support each other through our Aware Fare Fundraiser. Next month, Betsy will send personal thank-yous in Autism Matters, but with all this so fresh in my mind, I want to thank you now. It is nice to enjoy the icing on the cake, once in a while.

Aware Fare ushers in the end of the season for “Autism Matters”. Only one more issue left this year. Next month is our annual teacher appreciation issue where we publish your positive sentiments for your child’s teachers. Send me your thoughts, in 100 words of less, by May 10th, to be sure we have space for you.

With the end of “Autism Matters” this year, our board will begin moving from chapter to affiliate status. Although only a few people will be doing this valuable work, we still need your help. With the vast group we serve, from those “Newbies” with toddlers in tow, to those with grown children working for better local services, to those with Asperger Syndrome and those whose children are profoundly affected by their autism, we are working the same balancing act that I do with Paul. Trying to decide where we need to put our efforts. How much and where do we create structure and support? Do programs need space from us so that they can operate with independence? Some things are very labor intensive— such as this newsletter-. Are they the best use of our time and energy? You can help by letting us know what works for you and what could be done better. Any suggestion is welcome. Feel free to call or e-mail your ideas. If you have time, we would love your help in putting your ideas to work.

Nancy Nestor, ASNC-MCC President

: 704-545-1902  
: nnestor@carolina.rr.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. Working together for Change—planning the path for legislative mandates for insurance coverage; with Mau-reen Morrell and Bob D’Amelio; 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

May 2nd (F) No Da Gallery Crawl/ Life Span Open House; 6-9:00 PM; Area 15 No Da– 516 E. 15th St. Charlotte 28206
For more information call Gail White: 704-393-5916.

May 3rd (S) EXTREME TOYS SPEED PARK: 20310 Sefton Park Drive, Cornelius, NC 28031. (Beside Monkey Joe's) 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-31st and June 7th (S) 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, supplies, and take-home robot. Call Jennifer Hamelink at Discovery Place-704-372-6261, ext.508 or JenniferH@discoveryplace.org.

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

May 4th (S) ASNC-MCC Awareness Display @ Harris Teeters - 11:00– 7:00 at various stores in the county

May 9th (F) Deadline for ASNC Holiday Card Contest; send artwork on 8.5 x 11 inch paper to Brooke Tonklin, ASNC, 505 Oberlin Rd. Ste 230; Raleigh, NC 27605

May 10th (S) Safe Fest: Independence Park; 300 W. Haw-thorne Lm. Charlotte 28208; 10-2:00 PM; Create a safe environment for your ASD Family Member sponsored by Arc of Mecklenburg & United Way; call 704– 332-4535.

May 13th & 27th (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 Continued…..

May 15th (Th) Registration begins for Siskey Y Pilot Autism Inclusion Afterschool Program for 08-09 School year; contact Liz DeFreitas- (704)716-4338

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

May 21-25th: Autism One Conference- Chicago; Key-note speaker: Jenny McCarthy; several sessions presented by top biomedical practitioners and Verbal Behavior Program Director– Mary Lynch Barbera. To register go to: www.autismone.org

June Events:

June 1st (S): SHINE -Church for people with ASD; Huntersville United Methodist; 3:30 – 3:50 pm contact: Rev. Monica Hum-pal at 704-875-1156; monica@huntersvilleumc.org.

June 5th (Th) ASNC-MCC Monthly Support Mtg. End of the Year Party- Food, Fun, Games and Door Prizes! 7:00-9:00 Sharon United Methodist, 4411 Sharon Rd. Charlotte, 28211

June 5th (Th) ASNC Professional Development Conference: Early Intervention: Addressing Core Deficits– Connie Kasari from UCLA’s Center on Autism Research will address issues and strategies for early intervention. Go to: www.autismsociety-nc.org for more information.

June 16th-20th Lose the Wheels Bicycle Camp for those with Special Needs Cricket Arena, Special bikes for special kids who need specific interventions to learn to ride. Camp slots for various times available; call Claire Jordan- 704.759.0307; clairejordan@mac.com

June 23rd-27th Autreat 2008; Syracuse NY; a conference for those with autism presented by those with autism; self-advocacy, programs on the positives of living with autism; go to: ani.autistics.org/aut08
Many Thanks to ALL

Aware Fare is 08 has passed and we are totaling the take, but we haven’t forgotten you. We would like to thank all of those who brought in sponsors and restaurants, created print or web-site information, assembled packets, delivered materials, helped with t-shirts, wrote articles, press releases, spoke in interviews, handed out posters or flyers, e-mailed invitations, held parties at aware fare restaurants, handled take-out orders for schools or business, or dined at any of our Aware Fare locations for all your support. Hopefully by the June issue, we will have our total and will be listing the names of all those who contributed funds, time, and talents to our important event. We are so thankful for your help!

AND NOW FOR OUR NEXT EVENT…..

Want to have fun and raise money for ASNC-MCC?

On Saturday, May 3rd, Extreme Toys Speed Park will be holding a fundraiser to benefit our chapter. All you have to do is bring your family and friends to Extreme Toys between the hours of noon and 10:00 PM and buy admission tickets. Extreme Toys will donate a portion of the proceeds to our chapter. Food from Jersey Mikes will be available for purchase.

SPECIAL APPEARANCES BY: CAROLINA GARRISON 501 STORM TROOPERS, STAR WARS CHARACTERS, AND THE JIMMIE JOHNSON BUDWEISER #11 RACE CAR ON DISPLAY BY MAN MADE LEGENDS

EXTREME TOYS SPEEDPARK LOCATION:
20310 SEFTON PARK RD. CORNELIUS NC 28031
Beside Monkey Joes
(704) 896-1400 or www.ExtremeToysSpeedPark.com

DIRECTIONS: I-77 Exit 28, head West, first light turn left on Liverpool Pkwy, first stop sign turn right on Sefton Park Rd. go 500 yards; Extreme Toys is on the left.

Please note a private party for ASNC members will be held from 11:00-noon. So come early and enjoy the fun with other families whose kids are on the spectrum!
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 on Sunday May 4th. So far we have volunteers for Mountain Island, Park Road, Stonecrest, Northcross, Mallard Creek, University, and Matthews Festival. If you would like to join parents or teachers at your local Harris Teeter. Please contact nnestor@carolina.rr.com or 704-545-1902 ASAP so that we can work out details. If you are unable to join in, please shop at Harris Teeter this month and tell the customer services manager Thank-you for sponsoring our event. Our numbers speak volumes!

We are Go’in Green!!

ASNC-MCC is creating canvas bags to show support for the autism society. We need just one more thing: a logo. We would like to see your best idea for a logo design to put on our bag. The designs are due back at our May 1st meeting. Bags make great gifts and can help the earth stay green. So far we have had one wonderful entry, but we would like more to choose from. Grab your drawing pencil and let’s see what you can do!! Send your entries to Kathy Snyder: (Kos101@bellsouth.net) or bring your design to the May 1st meeting.

AND NOW FOR AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

It’s almost election time again. We will be holding annual elections during our June support meeting before the fun and festivities. All board members must be a relative of someone with ASD and have the time to commit to monthly board meetings, support meetings and special projects. With the diverse community we serve, there just might be room for you. We have definite needs for newsletter writers and editor, and with fundraising, and hospitality. If you are not interested in being on the board, but would like to help with projects, we have activities year round and could always use extra hands. Just e-mail Nancy Nestor to find out more at nnestor@carolina.rr.com
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, por favor contacte a Nancy Nestor al teléfono: 704-545-1902, o escriba por email: nnestor@carolina.rr.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 JenniferH@discoveryplace.org.

Are you new to the autism world?
Would you like to be part of a local focus group?

Ms. Victoria Knight is a doctoral candidate at UNCC whose doctoral project is to create brochures for parents by defining various therapeutic early intervention strategies. The brochures will discuss which practices are evidence based to be helpful through research and which ones appear to be harmful or useless for most of the children who took part in studies. Upon reading these materials, parents will be asked to critique them for helpfulness. If you have a newly diagnosed child, are in the process of determining what to do next, and are interested in being part of this focus group, please contact Ms. Knight - vfknights@uncc.edu.

Hey Carpool Fans!!

Live in North County? Want to make friends, save gas, avoid city driving??
The North County Carpool leaves Northlake Mall at 6:00 pm on meeting nights.
Want to join?
Call Susan Wild: 704-601-6938 or e-mail: susan_wild@msn.com
Safe Fest
The Arc of Mecklenburg County
May 10, 2008
10 am to 2 pm Independence Park
Free Event!!

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.

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

Call 704–332–4535

Pre-School Social Skills Starting in May

Carolina Family Frontiers is now providing the opportunity for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders to practice social skills building in a comfortable, safe environment. The group’s goals, depending on the child and age, may include, but are not limited to: greetings, sharing, turn-taking, conversational skills, negotiating, waiting, joint attention, social cues, emotions, peer responding, cooperative play, Theory of Mind, and Executive Functioning Skills. Social skills are the foundation from which all learning occurs! Without the direct teaching of social skills, some children may find the world of learning a difficult one to navigate. By providing successful opportunities in a small social skills group, with the ultimate goal of generalizing the skills to a larger group (e.g., school, park, cub scouts, Sunday School, and the community at large), the child is "set-up" to succeed!

The Social Skills programs are designed for small groups ranging in ages from 5-7, 8-10, and 11-12. (minimum 2 children per class-maximum 4 children per class). Cost for the six week duration is $375.00 plus a $35.00 joining fee.

Starting in May, classes will be available for 3-5 year olds on Thursday afternoons at 3:30. Several slots are available. Groups will meet at My Child and Me Fun Center in Indian Trail. Classes will run for a six week duration and the cost is $250. plus a $35.00 joining fee. If you are interested, please contact Susan Jordan at Carolina Family Frontiers: Ph (704)-625-1291.
Autism’s Touch

The Greatest Birthday Gift
A Sister Could Receive

What a surprise, brought tears to her eyes
She turned twenty-four, couldn’t ask for more
But more came to her from her little sir
Her brother San Juan, couldn’t ride across a lawn
Couldn’t ride across the street, couldn’t pedal his feet
No bike riding at fifteen, twenty four days from sixteen
Mom, dad, bro’s and sis thought his whole life he’d miss-
Out on the rush, of a bike (childhood must)
But that all changed in a three day range
Lose The Training Wheels, a title with appeal
A program so special, to teach all the wonderful
People that are way too special to do
What’s considered the norm, with balance and form
Dr. Richard E. Klein would learn to find
A way to change things, a blessing he brings
This Rocket Scientist Engineer found a way to rear
Children into riding a bicycle, it’s not simple
But with his invention and volunteers
Phil Bailey, students and peers
Two Thousand and Seven
Start date- April 2nd
The program ran, a success as planned
Her birthday was April 4th
A call came forth
Her mom shared the good news
Her brother, San Juan, could cruise
On a bike, no training wheels
No assistance- a victory steal
In the wind he could drift
Head held high- he could lift
His chest in the air, look up to the sky
Count the trees, hear birds cry
Feel the breeze, pollen (sneeze)
As he rode by on his bi
He could see the clouds and their rift
His sister’s greatest birthday gift

Karian S. Brown

Juan Brown, shown here with his Dad– John Brown, was one of several area young people who were fortunate enough to be part of the Lose the Training Wheels program last year. Because of the experience, he was able to master riding and now rides his bike regularly with his family in his neighborhood. This wonderful program will be returning to Charlotte this summer.

If you would like to share a story of how Autism has led to a positive experience in your family’s life, please feel free to send your story to nnestor@carolina.rr.com.
In the current issue of The Spectrum, Tracey Sheriff, Interim Executive Director of Autism Society of North Carolina, detailed several initiatives that concern our families and that ASNC is working on. With a 30 year history of advocacy for those on the spectrum throughout the state, ASNC continues to be committed to the development and maintenance of programs which support us. Below is a brief summary from The Spectrum of some of the issues, advocacy targets, and how ASNC is working to meet those needs:

**Issue: CAP-MR/DD waiver waiting lists**
The CAP-MR/DD waiver provides families and individual with autism access to critical therapies and instructions which they could not afford to acquire without undue financial hardship. Across the state, those with autism needing community based services have been on waiting lists for several years. ASNC has worked with the Division of MH/DD/SA, the Division of Medical Assistance, and other advocacy groups to create a new tiered CAP/MR/DD waiver so that more people can be served with more appropriate services.

**Issue: Early Intervention**
Research has pointed to the overall positive results for children on the spectrum when interventions occur in pre-school or earlier. ASD Partners, the sector of ASNC which is dedicated to training others how to effectively work with those with autism, is currently operating under a state grant for early intervention in three test sites. Through this test work, will develop different strategies that parents, case managers, pediatricians and others can use with individual clients. In time this should increase the professional skill of providing agencies and others working with our family members.

**Issue: Insurance**
In our state, only 2% of health insurance policies include developmental disabilities and autism services in their coverage. Currently ASNC is consulting with other autism advocacy groups, including Autism Speaks, who have successfully passed insurance legislation in other states in order to expand private health insurance coverage to include those on the autism spectrum. Fortunately, ASNC employs an extremely experienced lobbyist who specializes in insurance reform to help with our course of action.

**Issue: Crisis Services**
Throughout the state, crisis programs are inconsistently available and difficult to access. Along with the use of Parent Advocates who assist parents in accessing the crisis supports that are available in their area, ASNC, along with other groups, are working with Mental Health officials and LEAs to create a consistent, comprehensive crisis prevention and response system.

**Issue: Adolescent and Adult Support**
With so many teens entering adulthood in the coming years, current funding will not be sufficient to fund necessary vocational, community living, and residential services. ASNC, along with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, waiver workgroups, and the Coalition are working to eliminate the VR waiting lists for assessment and job placement. We are also working to increase funds for housing and employment supports.

**Issue: Staying Safe in the Community**
Due to the nature of autism, members of our families may not perceive dangerous situations; therefore, we must work to educate safely personnel on the features of autism, as well as, to teach those with autism ways to remain safe in the community. ASNC is working on many levels to achieve this goal. Parent advocates offer “Staying Safe in the Community” workshops and safety kits for families and all public safety officials. ASNC is working to expand autism specific training beyond first responders and police, to include magistrates, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys, as well as, school officials where anti-bullying policies are being developed.

**Issue: Collaboration with other public policy groups**
With the population of citizens affected by autism growing, while government financial resources diminish, only careful planning and use of coordinated effort with public groups such as, the Coalition, DD Consortium, Special Needs Federation, Exceptional Children’s Assistance Center, Disability Rights, and AutismSpeaks can we insure that necessary supports and freedoms be in place for our family members with disabilities.

*If you would like to receive your own free copy of the Spectrum each quarter, please contact the Autism Society of North Carolina at 1-800-442-2762 or www.autismsociety-nc.org. You don’t have to be a member fo the Autism Society to receive this benefit.*
**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

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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!