Welcome to April! For most, April brings practical jokes, spring showers and hopefully some blooming flowers. For the autism community, April also means Autism Awareness Month and the opportunity to talk about how autism has impacted our lives. As the Autism Society of America celebrates its 50th year, we’re hopeful that our efforts to raise autism awareness will lead to action in our communities. Read more about our vision for Autism Awareness on page 2 of the newsletter.

In Wisconsin, April also means that the Autism Society of Wisconsin Annual Conference is almost here! Our conference is April 30th—May 2nd at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells this year. Temple Grandin will be speaking on Friday morning and there are so many breakout sessions about a range of topics that you are sure to find something of interest. I remember coming to my first conference 13 years ago. At that time, I thought I would come for a couple years. And now I have never missed a year! Every single year, I am listening from a different point in my journey and I always learn something new. While pre-registration has closed, onsite registration will be available. Please join us!

As I write this letter, I am looking at the sunset of my term as President. In my 12 years on the board, I have always been proud of the Autism Society organization. Over the last two years, the ASW board went through a formal board development. We learned that stepping outside our comfort zone allowed us to improve our structure and we are becoming an even stronger professional board and organization. I’m so looking forward to what the future holds for the Autism Society of Wisconsin. I want to recognize the fantastic volunteer board for ASW that did this great work! We could not have done this without the fantastic support of our ASW staff. Kirsten, Kelly, and Melissa keep the heartbeat going for ASW.

Thank you for allowing me the pleasure of serving as President.

Michele Matz

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As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Autism Society of America we ask ourselves, "Have we made progress?" The answer is "Yes". However, we all know that much work remains to be done. Services and supports are not available and accessible to all who need them. There is wide variability from one community to another and different policies govern across states. Through our services, the Autism Society’s goal is to improve the quality of life of everyone living with autism. Our vision is a service delivery system where measurable outcomes demonstrate marked improvements over time based upon an individual’s unique needs and preferences. When we say "quality of life" we’re talking about basic human rights that allow people to live their lives and interact with the world on their own terms. The Autism Society has identified several quality of life indicators: Respect and Dignity, Inclusion, Health/Well-being, Safety, Academic Success, Social Connectedness, Independent Living, Meaningful Employment with Fair Wages, Financial Stability, Recreation and Leisure, Subjective Well-Being, Self-Identity/Acceptance, Autonomy/Self-Sufficiency and Pursuit of Dreams. Quality of life indicators such as opportunities to make personal decisions and access to community activities, are essential aspects to the human experience. The Autism Society is committed to supporting these ideals and we promote policies and services with them in mind.

As we look forward to April, National Autism Awareness Month, it's important to remember the progress we've made. Autism Awareness Month is celebrated around the world – the Autism Society began it as an awareness week in 1972; when Congress adopted the official observance of Autism Awareness in 1984 it was a critical step forward. Awareness is only a first step on our journey to improve the lives of those affected by autism; we really want people on the spectrum to be appreciated as individuals. If awareness is the first step on our journey to improve the lives of those affected by autism and appreciation is the last, what comes in between? Awareness must lead to action, including access to adequate services and support in their own communities. When this occurs, the community can grasp a full appreciation of the value of our differences and the unique gifts we all have to offer.

We are not suggesting that we change the name of this commemorative month - Instead, we suggest taking a different perspective. Let’s expand what we have successfully done for the past 50 years to focus on the rest of the community. Together we can create a world where all people, regardless of diagnosis, are treated with respect and dignity and are appreciated for who they are. It is not until all individuals diagnosed with autism are appreciated for their unique abilities that we will be able to say we have achieved true success.

We're not there yet. It will take the efforts and the focus of all of us. The Autism Society remains steadfast in our commitment to improve the quality of life of everyone affected by autism. Let's build upon the momentum of fifty years of increased autism awareness. The Autism Society provides trained representatives in our national contact center who are there no matter when or what the need may be. Our national network can't be beat when it comes to offering critical local training, programs and events, paired with community outreach and federal, state and local advocacy. As we celebrate this historic year, we need to come together knowing that awareness can lead to action, acceptance, inclusion and appreciation for all individuals living with autism.

Connecting Wisconsin:
Autism Society of Wisconsin Newsletter

www.asw4autism.org

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Spring 2015
## Local Event Highlights:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Hosted By</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:administrator@asnew.org">administrator@asnew.org</a> or call (920) 264-8067 for more information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>11th Annual Bowl for Autism, Dale’s Weston Lanes, Weston</td>
<td>Hosted by the Central Wisconsin AUSOME Social Group</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>For more information call 715-446-2562.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>One Walk - Big Strides for Autism—Madison</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of South Central WI</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For walk details visit <a href="http://www.autismsouthcentral.org">www.autismsouthcentral.org</a> or call 608.630.9147</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Parent/Educator Workshop: Ensuring your Wishes for their Future at Miron Construction, Neenah</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of the Fox Valley</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This session will help families plan for the financial future of their child(ren), or other dependents, with special needs. To register E-mail <a href="mailto:diane.nackers@yahoo.com">diane.nackers@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>2015 Autism Gala—Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin</td>
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<td>An evening of fun, food and festivities. More details at <a href="http://www.assew.org">www.assew.org</a></td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Family Outing - Member Event at Fox West YMCA, Greenville</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of the Fox Valley</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>They have a wonderful adaptive swim program specifically catered to those on the autism spectrum, which ASFV helped to create. Please RSVP to Diane Nackers at <a href="mailto:bnack5@gmail.com">bnack5@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Bowling at Rudy’s Lanes, Two Rivers</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of the Lakeshore</td>
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<td>Enjoy pizza and bowling on us! All ages welcome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23,</td>
<td>Pump it Up Event, Brookfield</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00-8:00 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Email <a href="mailto:sue@assew.org">sue@assew.org</a> or call 414-988-1265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30-May 2</td>
<td>Autism Society of Wisconsin Annual Conference, Kalahari Resort &amp; Convention Center, WI Dells</td>
<td>Hosted by the Autism Society of Wisconsin</td>
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<td>Featuring an Educator Networking Session, Friday &amp; Saturday keynote presentations, breakout sessions, Friday reception &amp; dance, and MORE!</td>
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The Wisconsin Legislature is in the midst of debate on the 2015 – 2017 state budget.

Whether your child receives services through their local public school, has supports at home through the Family Support Program or will someday receive long term supports through Family Care, the proposed changes could have a profound impact on you and your family.

The Autism Society of Wisconsin and Family Voices encourages you to learn more about the state budget proposals and then contact your Legislators. To find your legislator’s contact information or who represents you go to http://legis.wisconsin.gov

**IF YOU DON’T EDUCATE YOUR LEGISLATOR, WHO WILL?**

**Budget Proposals that Impact People with Disabilities**

**Long Term Care System** The budget proposal contains a complete redesign of Wisconsin's long term care system for adults with disabilities and elders. Changes include: moving IRIS into the Family Care Program; adding primary care into the service package and requiring Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to provide services statewide. None of the current MCOs provide services statewide. To learn more go to the Survival Coalition’s Frequently Asked Questions resource on changes to long term care at www.survivalcoalitionwi.org

**Family Support Program** The budget proposes to eliminate the Family Support Program and create a new Children’s Community Options Program (COP). This proposal could be beneficial if current language in the budget is modified to include: a focus on supporting the whole family; and maximum flexibility in services.

**Medicaid Personal Care Services** The budget proposes cutting personal care services by $19.5 million as well as making administrative changes to the program. A new independent assessment would be required to determine the number of hours and level of services. Personal care is a Medicaid benefit that provides individuals with assistance in their home with activities of daily living (eating, bathing, dressing).

**Education** The budget proposal cuts funding for public schools by $98 million over the next two years. Most school districts will need to cut spending by $150 per student in 2015 - 2016. The budget also proposes to expand school vouchers, which allows families to send their child to a private school using public dollars. Under the voucher program, private schools are not required to provide special education services; do not have to abide by IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act); and can choose whether or not to take students with high needs.

To learn more about these and other proposed changes go to the Family Voices website under “State Budget” http://fvofwi.org/public-policy/state-budget or go to www.survivalcoalitionwi.org
Pre-Registration has closed for the 2015 Annual Conference but you can still register on site at the conference for an additional $25.

Pre-Conference Workshop: Literacy for All! Strategies to Support Emerging Readers on the Autism Spectrum

Friday Keynote: How People with Autism Think & Feel
Presented by: Temple Grandin

Saturday Keynote: Individuals with ASD and their Families Across the Lifespan
Presented by: Leann Smith


Don’t forget that all webinars in our Webinar Series are archived and are free to view. Archived Webinars include:

Autism 101

Autism and the IEP: Matching Services and Supports with the Needs of Students with Autism

Bullying and Autism in School

Looking Outside: Community Supported Living

While You Wait...What To Do While You Wait for Autism Services


AUTISM SOCIETY

AFFILIATES

FOR UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT YOUR AFFILIATE’S WEBSITE

AUTISM SOCIETY OF CENTRAL WI
www.wausau.k12.wi.us/east/Student%20Files/Autism/Autism.htm
autismsocietycw@gmail.com
715-359-0886

AUTISM SOCIETY OF CHIPPEWA VALLEY
www.cvasw.org
info@cvasw.org
715-450-3158

AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE FOX VALLEY
www.focolorg/asfv
asfv4kids@gmail.com
920-968-6829

AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE LAKESHORE
www.autismlakeshore.org
autismlakeshore@att.net
920-652-0964

Connecting Wisconsin:
Autism Society of Wisconsin
Giving Opportunities

Invest in the future of the Autism Society of Wisconsin!

Explore all the ways to give:

- **Employee/Matching Gifts** – Many employers encourage employees to give by matching employee gifts dollar-for-dollar. Check with your human resource department to find out more.
- **Honorary** – Celebrate a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion with a gift honoring a spouse, friend, family member or other loved one.
- **Memorial** – Memorial gifts made to the Autism Society of Wisconsin are to celebrate and honor the life of a loved one.
- **Planned Giving** – Receive tax and other financial benefits while giving to the Autism Society. Plan a gift for the future by working with a financial advisor to set up an IRA Charitable Rollover, trust or bequest, or beneficiary designation on a life insurance policy.
- **Unrestricted Giving** – Give a cash donation that allows us to fund programs which need it most. Donations can be mailed to the ASW office or can be made online through our Network for Good site, accessed from our homepage: www.asw4autism.org.

Autism Society of Wisconsin
1477 Kenwood Dr.
Menasha, WI 54952

Please call our office for more information on any of these giving opportunities.
Membership Application

Date of Application_______________________

Name ________________________________________________________________________________

Street Address __________________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________________ Phone (       ) _______________________

Email ___________________________________________ ☐ ASW is going green! To receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please check here

The Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) shares membership with the local Autism Society affiliates listed below. By checking a local affiliate, you will join both the state and local affiliate and receive member benefits from both. To become a member of only the state chapter, leave this section blank. To become a member of the Autism Society of America, the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin and/or the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin and to find out more about their membership benefits, please contact them separately.

Autism Society of Central Wisconsin  (ASCW)
Clark, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Price, Taylor and Wood Counties.

Autism Society of Chippewa Valley  (CVAS)
Sawyer, Polk, Barron, Rusk, St. Croix, Dunn, Chippewa, Pierce, Pepin, Eau Claire, Buffalo, Trempealeau and Jackson Counties.

Autism Society of the Fox Valley (ASFV)
Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Fond du Lac and Waupaca Counties

Autism Society of the Lakeshore (ASL)
Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Calumet, Kewaunee and Door Counties

Autism Society of Northeast Wisconsin
(BSNEW)
Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Florence, Menomonie and Marinette Counties.

Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin,
autismsouthcentral.org or autismsouthcentral@gmail.com


Membership Categories :   Individual ($12) _____  Family ($15) _____        New Member _____       Renewing Member_____

(Select one) (Select one)

☐ Bill my Master Card/VISA Card #____________________________________ Exp Date___________

Authorized Signature ___________________________________________________________

☐ Check enclosed, check #______________

☐ Enclosed is a $10 contribution towards the cost of the newsletter—thank you!

Additional contribution (tax deductible).

☐ $25     ☐ $50     ☐ $100     ☐ $ (Other)

Please send your completed membership form and payment to:

Autism Society of Wisconsin
1477 Kenwood Drive
Menasha, WI 54952
Fax (920) 558-4611

If you have questions, email ASW at asw@asw4autism.org or call 888-428-8476.

Connecting Wisconsin:
Autism Society of Wisconsin

www.asw4autism.org

Spring2015
Help us fulfill our mission!

Support the Autism Society of Wisconsin by making a tax deductible gift! All donations are appreciated.

$25 $50 $75 $100 $200 $ Other

Donations may be sent to:  We also accept donations online. Click the Donate Now button on our
Autism Society of Wisconsin homepage: www.asw4autism.org
1477 Kenwood Drive
Menasha, WI 54952

Thank you for your support!

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Michele Matz
President Elect & Treasurer
Mike Riemer
Secretary
Bobbi Wagner
Past President
Dale Prahl

Members At Large
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Judy Endow
Kerry Hoops
Robert Peyton

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Lakeshore
Northeast WI
Chippewa Valley
Central WI

Executive Director
Kirsten Cooper
Office Manager
Kelly Brodhagen

Events Coordinator
Melissa Vande Velden

ASW Board Meeting & Annual Meeting to be held on May 1, 2015.

Staff

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