

The Autism Connection

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AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
Greater Wisconsin

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2nd Annual

Tee-Time
for
Autism

August 1st, 2019

SentryWorld, Stevens Point
www.autismgreaterwi.org

Message from the President

In my first message as President of the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin, I want to share my background as an introduction and share the vision I have for the organization over the next two years. I am a psychologist and behavior analyst who has been serving individuals with autism for 25 years. I started as a respite worker, went on to a position similar to an EIBI line staff, and eventually moved on to directing programs and giving individual therapy. Over the years, I've seen vast improvements in the services available to individuals affected by autism and am committed to pushing the needle further. As President, I share the Autism Society's vision of a world where individuals with autism are able to maximize their quality of life and are treated with the highest level of dignity and respect.

I'm in my 7th year as a board member of the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and also served as chair of the Program Services Committee for the last few years. I'm excited about the direction of our organization and am looking forward to investing my service to help strengthen the programs and services offered. We're beginning a couple new programs this year (like our Autism-Friendly Business Initiative, coming this fall), expanding a few existing programs, and hope to develop even more. Our goal is to not only address challenges but also to celebrate the accomplishments and talents of individuals and families affected by autism. I invite you to get involved and reach out to us. Let us know what is happening in your community and what would be helpful for you and your family. All of us are a team, and together we can accomplish more. I can't wait to see all the good things we can do!

Robert Peyton
President
Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin

Personal Perspective

On the Spectrum

By Mitch Muenster

Our days are filled with sensory inputs from all kinds of sources. People, nature, electronics, etc. all bombard our system whether we want them to or not. This can be in the form of intense bright light from florescent lights, ambient noises of a city, traffic noise such as cars, trains, and planes. This input is layered on top of the requirements of daily life (personal care, work, living space maintaining) and all the other things that go on. Whether you are on the spectrum or not, this can be very demanding and taxing on your day. I've found that the environment we place ourselves in can either help or amplify this. As an individual on the spectrum (Asperger's) as well as ADHD and dyslexia, I struggle with this myself and have been looking for ways to expand my bandwidth for the day to better accomplish tasks and reduce stress.

The biggest single drain on my senses that I noticed or could identify first was fluorescent lighting. The way it lights and its cycling (each light is slightly different and come in twos or threes per fixture) were both big factors. It also seems this is the hardest to get accommodations for in the workplace. However, being around a natural lighting source such as a window helps to mitigate this.

For at home, I have started to play around with things like the LED lights that are often available around the holidays. The problem with the LEDs is that there is still a chance to see the cycling in them so going with the cheapest option is not the best. I have had good luck with the Target holiday shop brand and the Phillips LED strands. These have helped me at night or during darker days when ambient light and the light coming from the inside was not that bright. Otherwise I found using warm white LEDs also helps me, but these are harder to find.

Light is all well and good but what about sound and those noises you hear? I often use sounds from nature to help me focus during work, to prevent meltdowns / overloads, or to help me sleep. While there are many sounds available out there either for purchase or to listen to on YouTube, a lot of sounds are either looped (a 3-5 minute recording looped to make a longer track) or have other audio placed over it making the base sound (frogs, waves, etc.) not as helpful as it could be.

Other tricks I have used besides my own recording have been things like 4k cab view videos from trains. These videos consist of a camera mounted in the cab or engine of a train where the driver sits and will be a recording of the entire route with only the long delays between loading and unloading edited out. Using this had a dual purpose for me. The first was that I work from home and where I sit, everything is close to each other including potential distractions like games. By playing the videos on the game system from YouTube, it makes that platform be used for something to help me work, and I set a limit that while it's playing those videos, it's work time and no games should be played.

The second was that I like to get out and explore and travel, and without a good story to keep me occupied it's hard for me to stay content with sitting around at home and not getting out and seeing the world. In this respect, it also gives me fulfillment, so I can deal with the monotony of the workday. However, there are times when I need to have the sound off, like during calls or meetings or when I am editing audio or creating subtitles.

I hope these things have given you some ideas to try out for yourself regardless if you are on the spectrum or not. No one person is the same, but the key thing is finding your strengths and working around those to do the things you need to do. It is not easy sometimes to figure that out, it took me almost 10 years just to figure out these few things, and I still struggle with a lot of other things that makes my day challenging.

Mitch Muenster is an individual on the Autism Spectrum, Microsoft MVP, Mobile App Developer, and Sound Designer. To support his work and get access to new recordings you can visit <https://www.patreon.com/MobileRezAudio> or to hear samples you can listen to them on <https://soundcloud.com/mobilerez>

Local Affiliate UPCOMING EVENTS

July 19
1:00–3:00 pm

Autism Society of the Fox Valley Social Groups | Funset Boulevard, Appleton

Come out of the heat & cool off at Funset Boulevard! ASFV is providing deluxe wristbands that include unlimited access to Laserforce Laser Tag, Bumper Cars, Kids Playground, Train Ride and Carousel with 20 game tokens. Please bring extra money for snacks. Siblings are included but parents/caregivers will need to purchase their own wristbands.
Register: <https://tinyurl.com/y3m5s87g>

July 25
6–8:00 pm

The Ausome Tweener’s Social Group Swimming | Schulenberg Pool, Wausau

The social group will meet up every Thursday evening all summer for swimming. In case of bad weather the event will be cancelled for the week.

August 10
5–9

Autism Society of the Fox Valley Membership Night with the Timber Rattlers

It’s Fang’s Birthday! Join ASFV for tailgating and picnic. ASFV is sponsoring the meat, buns and soft drinks. Please bring a dish to pass. Fireworks after the game!!!
Tickets: \$5.00 each—no limit. If you have any questions contact: sbrennan78@yahoo.com or call 920–841–2596.

August 11
12–3:00 pm

Autism Society of the Lakeshore Family Picnic

Join us on Sunday, August 11th from 12–3 pm at Lincoln Park Cabin #1 in Manitowoc (1215 N 8th Street). There will be food and drinks, games and prizes, a bounce house. The event is near a park playground and a small zoo!
For more information and to register call 920–652–0964, or email autismlakeshore@gmail.com

September 21
5:00 pm

Autism Friendly Acoustic Concert | Sluggers Sports Bar, Appleton

This is the 2nd Annual Autism Friendly Acoustic Concert hosted by Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and Sluggers Sports Bar to help shine a spotlight on autism! Join us to hear from local artists, including 7000apart, in a sensory friendly environment.

2019

Fall Conference

OCTOBER 3, 2019 | EAU CLAIRE, WI

To Infinity and Beyond: Preparing Adolescents to Launch into the Real World

Presented by Nancy Clements, MA, CCC-SLP

Adolescence is a complicated time, and it doesn't help that the social rules continue to change and become more nuanced as we age. This course translates peer-reviewed published research on adolescent psychology, motivation, self-awareness, cognitive behavioral treatment, social learning challenges, acquiring independence, and more into hands-on strategies, clear frameworks, and concepts you can use immediately. Taking into consideration that the adult world focuses on access rather than success, we'll explore job coaching strategies for literal-minded individuals, strategies for becoming more independent, and how interventionists can help prepare our persistently self-protective/resistant students. We'll also share successful strategies for guiding our more sophisticated individuals in developing their own public relations and self-management campaigns.

All information draws from **peer-reviewed published research** but is translated into **hands-on strategies**, clear frameworks, and concepts to explore and discuss. The goal of this course is to help all parents and professionals develop a larger toolkit to better assist students to learn about their own executive functioning, sharpen their perspective taking, and begin to manage their own social lives. We focus on the fact that a successful treatment program is one that helps the student achieve his or her own goals. This course receives stellar reviews!



**Florian Gardens
Eau Claire, WI**



**October 3, 2019
9 AM - 4 PM**



**Member - \$100
Non-member - \$125
Person w/ ASD - \$50**



The speaker for this event is from the Social Thinking's Training and Speaker's Collaborative (STTSC). Social Thinking is not a sponsor of this event.

Registration to attend or exhibit is now open!
www.autismgreaterwi.org



Beyond Behaviors

UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF AUTISTIC INDIVIDUALS



Presented by Sharon Hammer, MS, LPC and Lisa Hoeme, MS, LPC

Mental health concerns are common for individuals on the autism spectrum, yet their struggles in this area often go overlooked and untreated. In this training, we will explore what individuals with autism share about their experiences and the impact living with autism has on their mental health and well being. We will explore the myths and realities of autism and mental health, with a focus on building understanding around the complexities of how these two areas intersect for individuals. This training will provide specific resources for those looking to learn more about the complexity of helping a person manage multiple conditions, particularly for those on the autism spectrum. This training is designed for individuals on the spectrum, parents, teachers, and other professionals that work to support the mental health of autistic individuals.



**Osthoff Resort
Elkhart Lake, WI**



**October 17, 2019
9 AM - 4 PM**



**Member - \$100
Non-member - \$125
Person w/ ASD - \$50**

Back by popular demand, this workshop will be similar to last year's November conference, with updated information and a focus on providing information for individual's on the spectrum, their parents, families, and support staff.

Registration to attend is now open!

www.autismgreaterwi.org

Celebrating Community

Autism Society Family Day
at Bay Beach
August 8, 2019



The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and our network of local affiliates would like to invite members to join us for a family day at Bay Beach. The Autism Society exists to create a sense of community for those affected by autism – a community that supports, encourages, and celebrates with each other. We're grateful to all of you for participating in our activities and events, for sharing our vision to maximize the quality of life for those on the spectrum, and for supporting our work. We're thrilled to host an event with the purpose of honoring all of you. Please join us for this day to celebrate the community we've all created, the milestones we've reached, and the future that we can build together.

DATE:

August 8, 2019

TIME:

Check in between 10:00 – 12:00. You're welcome to stay as long as you like.

FOOD:

We will provide a variety of drink and dessert options. Lunch will not be provided – please plan to bring or purchase lunch for your family.

TICKETS:

Each child under the age of 18 will be given \$5 to purchase tickets for rides.

LOCATION:

Bay Beach Amusement Park, Pavilion #3
1313 Bay Beach Rd
Green Bay, WI 54302

PARKING:

We recommend parking near the Zippin Pippin. [Click here to see the map of Bay Beach.](#)

MEMBERSHIP:

Not a member yet? [Join now!](#)

SIGN UP:

<https://www.autismgreaterwi.org/event-cal/celebrating-community-autism-society-family-day/>

2nd Annual
Tee-Time
for
Autism



AUGUST 1, 2019



Enjoy 18 holes of scramble-format golf at SentryWorld golf course, with proceeds benefiting the Autism Society of Wisconsin and the Central Affiliate. Registration includes 18 holes of golf with GPS golf cart, \$30 Pro Shop merchandise credit, a box lunch, banquet style dinner & two drinks on the course.

Featuring Special Guest Bill Schroeder
SentryWorld, Stevens Point
www.autismgreaterwi.org

14TH ANNUAL Essay Contest

Colten Poppe was the 1st place winner in the 6th – 8th grade category in the 14th Annual Essay Contest

"Everyone Belongs: Celebrating Differences." .

I'm Mikey Frank. My real name is Colten but I told my mom I want to change my name because I wanted to choose my name. I changed my parent's names too. I call my mom Louie and my dad Sebastian. I have a brother Brocky, I like his name so he does not need a new one.

I am 13 years old. My mom and dad told me I am very special and unique. It has a name, Autism. Not all people have it. I found out that I think and see (which can also mean understand) in a different way. Many people say things I do not understand. When someone says it is raining cats and dogs, I could not see cats and dogs coming out of the sky, I only saw rain. Why didn't they say there is a lot of rain? It is hard for some people, like my teachers, to understand that I do not know what they always mean. Sometimes they did not realize what they said so we are all confused.

There are many things I have gone through that have been hard for me because I have to learn the way most other people learn, we don't have an Autism learning world. Sometimes my teachers thought I was not behaving or called me rude. I didn't try to be. I wish they knew or asked me so they could help me and not be upset with me. I need my family, friends, and teachers to

be patient because I am trying, it is not easy for me either. I go to school that is not made for kids with Autism. There are not many of those and they cost a lot of money. I would like to go to a school that teaches kids with Autism. I would have much better days because the teachers would teach so I can understand it. I would not have to be in "special classes" or go in the hallway. I would have a lot of friends too because they would be really excited to know a lot about one thing. I like volcanoes. My friends do not want to hear about volcanoes all the time. I am lucky, my best friend has Autism too and he loves to talk about volcanoes all day with me. I don't want to talk about anything else because I only like volcanoes. I don't know what else to talk about.

I want to tell you about these moments I have gone through to help. If you have Autism like me, you are not alone. If you are not Autistic, this is a great time to understand how amazing and special Autism is. I can't wait to share this with you!

The Dentist

One time at the dentist I had to get special paint on my teeth called sealants. They put a mask on me with some kind of air that helps me stay calm. The dentist kept telling me to breathe in, breathe in, breathe in. I tried my best to do what she said but I had to take off the mask to tell her I needed to breathe out.

We Draw in Kindergarten

When I was in third grade I was drawing in class. My teacher said "Colten, we draw in Kindergarten." I was very upset. She called me a Kindergartner! Louie had to come in to explain to her that since I was drawing at the time she said that, it made me feel like she was saying I was in Kindergarten. Louie told her it would help to tell me when I can draw and it helps to do this before the activity started so I don't get embarrassed in front of everyone.

Japanese

Since I love volcanoes, I was in Seattle with my lovely grandma Angie and we were at a place doing Japanese art. The teacher said to sign our names but I could not write my name. Grandma asked me why I wouldn't write my name. I told her I don't know how to write in Japanese.

Keyboarding

When my class started keyboarding class the teacher didn't want us hitting the letters too hard. He said if we did our fingers would get stuck and we would have to stay all night. I was so scared. I was not going to type again! I told Louie. She said he didn't mean that and was trying to keep other kids from hitting the keys too hard. She said I would never stay all night and she talked to the teacher. Don't the teachers know that I believe exactly what they say?

The Best Teacher in the World

Mr. Cody is the best teacher in the world. He was my 5th grade teacher. He had a cool nickname for me that made me feel special and happy. "Big C". He always said hi when I got to school. He let me have snacks and my sensory tools. He told me to take my breaks if I needed one.

When I get upset my helper takes me for a walk and sometimes we would get milk. That made everything all better. I could pay attention and learn. Mr. Cody was always calm. He never said anything mean or embarrassed me. The best was that he listened. I could be myself. This was the first time I enjoyed going to school. He should have a meeting with every teacher on how to teach students with Autism. Louie wants him to be my teacher all the time.

Thank you for listening to my story!

You're my friends,

Mikey Frank



Ask the Experts



In the past, the first couple weeks of school have been really difficult for my son. Is there anything I can do this summer to help get him ready for the school year? I really want him to start off the year on a positive note and would love suggestions for setting him up for success. He'll be going into 4th grade this fall.

Mandy Reinke, Autism Consultant

Transitioning from summer break back to school can be challenging. Root causes of stress may include the new schedule, new teachers, and simply facing the "unknown." The good news is that there are proactive things you can do to help with the transition.

Implementing one or two of the following ideas should help set your son up for a successful transition to 4th grade:

Use a memory book, or ask the school for pictures of his new teachers, so that he can see them during the week or two before school starts. Then, if he's willing, have him write a letter of things that will be the same about school ("specials" teachers, friends, administrators, etc.) and the things that will be different (classroom teacher, some peers in the classroom). Review this during the weeks before school starts to help your son feel at ease.

If your summer schedule is different than your school year schedule, try getting back into the routine the week before school starts by starting morning and evening routines, driving by school, eating lunch at the same time as school lunch time with be, etc.

Set up a meeting with your son's teachers prior to school starting and then again a week or two after school starts to share things that work for your son and then to review how things are going and adjust strategies that could make things go better.

Mark Bertrand, BCBA

There are a number of strategies that can make the transition back to school more pleasant. Visiting the school ahead of time is one of the strategies that has proven to be effective. There are a number of things to consider regarding these visits. Helping the student to feel more comfortable with the building and the new routine can increase confidence and reduce anxiety.

If you are able, ask the student what concerns they may have. If they are able to communicate some of their worries, you can incorporate this into your visit. The student's classroom is one of the first things most people consider. This is important, and if you

are able, doing this step close to the first day is helpful because the classroom will be set up and look the same as it will on the first day. School staff is often present at this time allowing the opportunity to meet and interact with the teachers and staff.

Additional points of interest to consider may include the following:

- Show where the restrooms are located
- Touring the cafeteria and explaining or practicing the lunch routine
- Teach where the gym, art room, music room, OT, speech rooms are
- Identify any resource rooms

- Create a visual schedule or a first/then board that can be rehearsed at home, then implemented at school
- Identify the drop off/pick up routine
- Show pictures of the teachers and staff prior to the first day
- Create a social story (apps are useful here)
- Create an All About Me packet to share with teachers and staff so they are aware of things that the student enjoys, strategies that have been successful in the past, and visuals or verbal communication that are familiar.

Judy Endow, MSW, LCSW

Yes, there is something that he may find very helpful! The autistic brain often has difficulty with executive function. This means the brain does not automatically organize something new, such as new teaching staff and schedule, according to a previous organization method, such as last year's schedule and staff. Instead, when one or two elements change the brain experiences this as EVERYTHING changed. The experience is one of having your whole world become topsy-turvy as it is perceived there is nothing that can be counted upon. No wonder anxiety increases! Under these circumstances that is a reasonable response.

One way to support the underlying autism in this sort of scenario is to draw it out using the old and the new side by side. This supports the executive function difficulty by listing the elements that remain stable in every school year and showing that sometimes the particulars stay the same and sometimes they change from one grade to the next.

Here is a sample chart to show this idea. Feel free to add/take away whatever you need for it to match the needs of your son. You can put in the photos you have. Then, you and your son might take new photos before school starts. Be sure to invite

your son to tell you what is missing and add it to the chart. In the sample below, this particular student added the last three items.

This same chart can be used from year to year to record the anticipated changes. It is helpful for students to see over time that they did indeed manage the change from one grade to the next in previous years. If social stories are a helpful way for your son to receive social information, that could be used along with this chart. Some students like to create the chart on a poster board.

Elements of Every School Year	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade
Front of School	Insert picture	Insert picture
Door I enter/leave	North side bus drop off	North side bus drop off
Place for jacket/backpack	Cubby in back of classroom	Locker in the hallway
Classroom Door	Ms. Barnes, Room 8	Mr. Olf, Room 12
Picture of my teacher	Insert Ms. Barnes' picture	Insert Mr. Olf's picture
Name/Picture of TA	Insert Info	Insert Info
Music Room and Teacher	Insert Info	Insert Info
Art Room and Teacher OT Room and Therapist	Insert Info	Insert Info
My Schedule	Insert Info	Insert Info
Lunch Time	11:20	11:45
How I ask to use the bathroom?	Tell my one on one TA	Follow the classroom protocol.
Where is my seat on the bus?	First seat behind the driver.	First seat behind the driver.

Ask the Experts is a new column in the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin newsletter. Questions can be submitted to info@autismgreaterwi.org with "Ask the Experts" in the subject line.

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<https://76148.blackbaudhosting.com/76148/General-Donation>

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ASGW Board Meeting

July 20, 2019