Happy New Year!!!

I hope this finds all of you well and ready to face the new year with hope, optimism and a sense of well being. ASFV membership have grown to over 225 families. With this increase we are always looking to our families to support and monitor social outings. If you are interested, just let me know when you sign your child up for an event.

As we grow – the ASFV Board continues to grow as well. We welcome Dale Bushman to the Board! Dale is Assistant Vice President, Commercial Relationship Manager with Old National Bank in Appleton. He comes to us with more than 13 years of experience in the financial services industry. In his time away from the office, Dale enjoys outdoor activities and spending time with his wife, Jennie, and their three children. He has already stepped up to support our outings!! WELCOME!!

The parent/educator workshop about IEP’s scheduled for January 21 is filling up nicely. Please see details on the next page. We have an internet safety talk planned for March 11th. This workshop is meant for parents to bring their children over 10. Officers from Fox Valley Metro will present the ways to keep safe while on social media or playing video games.

The Autism Society of Wisconsin spring conference is quickly approaching.

Our conference scholarships have been granted but we still have safety scholarships available. The information is included within the newsletter.

Additional workshops are being planned for April and May. The social outings continue to be a great way to meet new people and socialize. Thank you for bringing your children to the events we plan. It is such a joy to hear the laughs, watch the exchange of contact information, and see the kids try something new.

ASFV has the great pleasure of being able to support 10 different programs through a 1 time $500 scholarship offering. We will provide 2 grants for each of our 5 service counties: Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waupaca, and Winnebago. The information for these grants is in the newsletter. Please share the grant opportunity with your special education staff members and IEP teams. The board of directors looks forward to reading about the great programming that is taking place in our area. Winners will be announced in our April newsletter.

Like us on Facebook for all the latest events and news.

Diane Nackers
ASFV President

Keeping contact information up to date

As always, please keep your email contact current.
Check out our website: autismfoxvalley.org
General information questions: info@autismfoxvalley.org
All social outings: asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org

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The Autism Society of the Fox Valley, Inc. was established in 1989. We are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization serving the counties of Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waupaca and Winnebago. Our mission is to provide information and referral, advocacy, public awareness, education and support for individuals, families, professionals and others who support people with autism.

The Autism Society of the Fox Valley, Inc. is proud to announce a onetime opportunity for educators within the counties we serve to apply for 1 of 10 available $500.00 restricted grants for funding of autism related needs. The board of directors will award 2 grants per county in our service area (Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waupaca and Winnebago). The grants are intended to support a range of students on the autism spectrum pre-K through 12th grade including home school association participants, one grant per school or program. This grant is not intended for single student use.

Autism related needs may include but are not limited to:
- Educational materials – books, teaching materials, games and activities
- Sensory equipment and supplies
- Sensory kits designed for check out purposes
- Staff development
- Community based programming

When applying for this grant, please be prepared to write a short paragraph stating your anticipated needs, number of students served, and the potential impact on your students. Grant applicants will also be asked to follow up with the board via pictures of materials, how the grant impacted their students, or other appropriate feedback on how the grant improved educational opportunities for your students.

Grant timeline:
- Application open February 1st
- Application closes March 15th
- All applications reviewed and selected by the ASFV board of directors on March 26th at ASFV monthly board meeting
- Winners will be notified via email on March 27th
- Grants will be distributed via mail by April 1st
- Grant winner follow-up by May 15th

ALL Grant applications will be gathered using the attached link:
https://goo.gl/forms/LJPyZtL6PAkSxWkK1
All areas must be completed.

Applicant Name: _______________________________________________________________

School:   ______________________________________________________________________

Address (for mailing of grant):  ____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

County:  _______________________________________________________________________

Phone: ________________________________________________________________________

Email:  ________________________________________________________________________

Principal is aware of this application: ________________________________________________

Please provide a brief description of your program, ages of the students, anticipated needs of the
students, and specific items you intend to purchase:
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

I certify that:
  1. I have read and understand the guidelines of the ASFV Grant application.

  2. The information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

  3. I agree to cooperate with the Board of Directors regarding this grant application and provide fol-
     low-up information about how the funds were used and their impact on their students.

  4. The grant guidelines are not contractual, and the Board of Directors has sole discretion over the
     operation of the ASFV Grants.

  5. The funds received will be used as outlined in this application and not for any purpose of going
     into a general special education fund or that would jeopardize the 501(c)(3) status of ASFV.

______________________________________________      ___________________________
Applicant (s)                                          Date

Grants are nontransferable and can ONLY be used for the providers on the application.
The Autism Society of the Fox Valley Presents:
Katie Berg, CESA 1
“Autism and the IEP”

Katie Berg is the ES3 State Coordinator/Trainer for the state of WI and has been educating students for the past 18 years. She began her career in the private sector at an applied behavioral analysis (ABA) company working with children on the autism spectrum. Soon afterwards, Katie earned her master’s in special education and began teaching in the public sector. As a special educator Katie supported students across a continuum of servicing models including as a self-contained teacher, resource service provider, and inclusive practitioner. Through this experience, she was able to expand her reach to students with a variety of special education needs, piquing her interest in understanding behavior output and how to best support varying individual needs. In 2012, Katie became a district wide support for students on the autism spectrum. Katie’s role expanded to provide district training on topics including IEP's, challenging behavior and other neurological barriers to learning. She has created engaging adult classroom experiences in trainings, conferences and summits across the state and is excited to have the opportunity to share her knowledge and experience through the State Coordinator position.

Important issues to be discussed:
- DPI Autism Criteria through the CCR-IEP lens
- Using the criteria to discuss Disability Related needs
- Supports for students learning new skills within those criteria areas
- Brainstorm the most common areas of struggle for students on the spectrum

Date: January 21st, 2019
RSVP by January 10th to ensure enough handouts and materials are available for each participant https://goo.gl/forms/z2OJYuK9Wri2ZTI3

Time: 6:30-8 pm
Cost: FREE
Location: Miron Construction Main Office
1471 McMahon Road, Neenah, WI 54956
Monkeys Joe’s Play Dates

ASFV has reserved Monkey Joe’s for the first Saturday of each month during the school year. For those new to ASFV, we reserve Monkey Joe’s, an indoor inflatable playground, once a month starting at 9 am. This time is exclusive to families with a child on the spectrum until they open the doors to the public at 10 am. We are looking forward to seeing you there. All play dates are staffed with one board member. ASFV members are free! Non-members pay $5 per family. No RSVP necessary.

1800 N Casaloma Dr.
Appleton, WI 54913

Play dates:
February 2nd  March 2nd  April 6th  May 4th  June 1st

Hanging Out Social Group

ASFV offers social outings for kids 7-12 ish. The kids are supervised, encouraged to interact, and given a wide variety of options for socialization. Great things happen when kids get together with other kids with similar interests. If you would like your child added to the email list to receive all of the outing updates, email Diane at asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org

The specific information about each outing will be sent separately via email lists and Facebook posts.

Dates:
January 26th: Skate City, Check in 1:30-2, stay til 4. Kimberly
February 16th: Classic Lanes Fox Valley, Neenah. Bowling
March TBD 9th or 16th:

Teen Group Outings

Teen group outings are a great way for your teen to socialize. If you have a teen 13-20 who would like to meet new people, socialize, and have fun, email Diane Nackers at asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org to be added to the email list. We have several fun events planned for the next few months.

Outing Dates:
January 26th: Skate City, Check in 1:30—2, stay til 4. Kimberly
February 16th: Classic Lanes Fox Valley, Neenah. Bowling
March TBD 9th or 16th:
This social opportunity is designed for adults on the autism spectrum who like to participate in social activities, and are interested in getting to know others. An ASFV Board member organizes the events and is present to facilitate socialization for those who attend. Our expectation is for all adults with ASD be a member of the Autism Society of the Fox Valley (ASFV). All A-Team members should have the ability to independently participate in social events in the community. We engage in varied activities and events that are communicated to individuals via email. Please contact Diane Nackers at asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org.

Upcoming Events: January 18th - Out to eat at Good Company—110 N. Richmond St. Appleton — meet in lobby at 6pm
February 15th—Out to eat at Milwaukee Burger—421 N Casaloma Dr. Appleton—6pm
March 15th—Out to eat at Ground Round, Neenah

Do you need to talk, or just need a break? Please join us the first Sunday of each month, from 6:00-8:00 pm for ASFV’s monthly Parent Support Group meeting. Parents, grandparents & other caregivers will have the opportunity to get together in a relaxed, informal atmosphere to talk about everything from your personal experiences to available resources and general education about autism.

Where: 211 E Franklin St. in downtown Appleton (just two blocks west of City Park) in the building that houses Soar Fox Cities Inc. Parking is free. The doors will be locked, but there is a doorbell and someone will let you in. Refreshments will be provided.

Parents and other caregivers have the opportunity to get together in a relaxed, informal atmosphere to talk about everything from your personal experiences to available resources and general education about autism. We hope to see many of you there!

For more information: info@autismfoxvalley.org
The Building for Kids has changed the day, time, and name for this very popular free family friendly event. The third Sunday of each month is designated for Sensory Superstars—formerly Spectrum Saturday.

All family members of children with autism can spend time exploring the museum at NO COST. Spectrum Saturday will be moving to the 3rd Sunday of the month from 11 am – 1 pm starting January 2019.

2019 dates: January 20, February 17, March 17, April 28 (moved to the 4th Sunday for Easter), May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15.

Join us for a lower sensory experience and special programming created especially for children on the autism spectrum.

Special programming during these events:
- January 20 from 11 am – 1 pm: Winter Senses
- February 17 from 11 am – 1 pm: Feel the Love
- March 17 from 11 am – 1 pm: Sensory Sports

Did you know that the Community Foundation, Green Bay Packers and other agencies value and support Sensory Superstars? Did you know that the staff are trained in the basics of autism to increase their understanding and awareness? Did you know there are visual choice boards, time timers, and headphones available for use during your visit? Just ask at the front desk.

ASFV is proud to announce a parent/children over 10/teens/young adults and educator workshop that focuses on internet safety. The presenters/instructors for this topic will be Officers Mike Lambie and Brandon Stahmann with the Fox Valley Metro Police Department. Both officers have a passion for educating parents and their children on the fine points of dangerous apps, social media dangers, and how to be safe when using the internet for gaming.

A registration link will be available soon. To be placed on the email list: asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org
March 11, 2019
Miron Construction, 1471 McMahon Dr, Neenah, WI 54956
Time: 6-8 PM
We are happy to announce the Winnebago County 4H Horse and Pony project will be once again partnering with ASFV to bring kids a horse grooming and riding experience. More details will come in March. We hold a first come first serve registration process as this event fills up very quickly. If you would like to be on the horse event list, please email: asfvevents@autismfoxvalley.org.

WI Family Engagement Newsletter

WI Facets has published their latest newsletter. To receive your WI FACETS newsletter: www.wifacets.org

- Family Engagement Article: Should Your Child Attend the IEP meeting?
- Online resources for youth and families in the area of Transition
- For Your Information (formerly Instructional trends): DPI Information Update Bulletins- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Information about upcoming statewide trainings, workshops and conferences
- At Home Learning Strategies

Wendy Overturf, Ed.D.

Save The Date - August 10 - Annual T-Rats Game
Independent Learning College in Waukesha

Waukesha college helps answer 'What's next?' for people with autism. The link below takes you to the article published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on December 28, 2018. The school teaches independent living skills — how to buy groceries, how to cook, how to order at restaurants and how to hold down a job — to young adults with severe autism. The school — which was founded in 2012 and now enrolls 17 students — serves as a next step after the therapies and special education classes that kids with autism receive as children.

To learn more about this college whose slogan is “Springboard to the Future: https://wisconsinilc.org/
Or read the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article:

At WILC, Knowledge is Power

We provide integrated, personalized, training and therapy programs within a campus community.

15th Annual Day with the Experts: Autism

When: Saturday, January 26, 2019
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
(Complimentary coffee & bagels at 8:30 a.m.)
Where: Friends of the Waisman Center Auditorium
1st Floor, West Annex
Waisman Center, UW-Madison
1500 Highland Ave
Madison, WI 53705

About: Learn about the latest advances in autism research, and hear from a panel of experts — individual(s) diagnosed with ASD and their families

Registration: https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6YIEElpmAyQEEl5L
For additional details call (608) 263-5837 or email to palumbo@waisman.wisc.edu
Children with autism tend to love a few things very intensely. Play therapists have, for many years, built on autistic passions to help children learn skills such as collaboration, communication, and symbolic thinking. Now, a group of researchers finds that LEGO building toys are a particularly fruitful tool for autism therapy—and a great way to help autistic children build an interest they can share with their typical peers.

The Theory Behind Play Therapy

Maria Montessori said that "play is the work of childhood," by which she meant that children learn through play. Neurotypical children use play to expand and better understand their world through experimentation, symbolic (imaginative) play, physical activity and sports, social interaction, and observation. By pretending to be adults, television personalities, or superheroes, children practice using spoken language and behaving in expected ways. By playing organized games, children learn how to follow rules, collaborate with teammates, take turns, and work toward a shared goal.

Children with autism play very differently from their typical peers. They tend to play alone or engage in parallel play (two children doing the same thing, but each on his or her own). While autistic children may memorize and recite lines or actions from movies or TV, they rarely expand on what they've learned with their own novel interpretations of characters or storylines. And while autistic children may play games, they often have great difficulty with collaboration, turn taking, or working toward a shared goal. In addition to playing differently, most children with autism have specific play patterns or routines that they repeat over and over again in identical ways.

For example, they may sing the same song from the same TV show in the same way with the same hand motions, over and over again. Or they may build and rebuild the same building from blocks, create the same train track layout, or run a toy car back and forth along the same path. When asked to try something new,
they may become terribly upset because they find their repetitive play calming, while change can be anxiety provoking.

The many types of play therapy attempt to help autistic children to overcome challenges by building on existing interests to expand communication, imagination, and social skills. Rather than forbidding children to continue with their repetitive activities, play therapists use a variety of techniques to complicate and enhance their activities.

For example, if a child repetitively runs a truck over the same part of the carpet, a play therapist might place an obstacle on the carpet—thus requiring the child to negotiate the change and interact with the therapist. Through the process of play therapy, many therapists have seen significant improvement in language, communication, collaboration, and even physical skills.

Why LEGO Therapy Was Created

LEGO building toys are extraordinarily popular among autistic children. They offer a simple, predictable, repeatable activity that can be accomplished alone without outside help. They are also part of a system of toys that look and behave in similar ways. LEGOos also offer the added bonuses of:

- Requiring strong fine motor skills and significant hand strength
- Requiring spatial, visual, and analytical skills
- Having intrinsic value in the wider world (LEGO play is universal, and LEGO models and structures have become well-recognized not only as toy models but also as art forms)

Upon noticing that many autistic children are already drawn to and love LEGOs, clinical neuropsychologist Dr. Daniel LeGoff started experimenting with LEGO therapy in 2003. His idea was to create an effective social skills program that could be used in multiple settings and be transferable to real-world peer interactions. In 2004, he published a paper showing positive results from the program he created.

Today there are multiple practitioners as well as books and programs all focused on LEGO therapy. While there are a variety of behavioral and developmental approaches to the therapy, most use similar techniques for engaging children and requiring them to build skills in order to achieve their play-related goals.

How LEGO Therapy Works

The goal of LEGO therapy is to build the types of skills that can help autistic children better engage with peers, share experiences, and collaborate. This means that the children who are likely to benefit from LEGO therapy are already at least somewhat verbal and able to follow both visual and verbal instructions.

In the most basic form of LEGO therapy, children work in a group, taking the following roles:

- **The Engineer** – has a set of instructions for the model and has to request the bricks from the Supplier and direct the Builder to put the model together
- **The Supplier** – has the Lego bricks and supplies the Engineer with the required items upon request
- **The Builder** – is given the bricks by the Supplier and has to follow the instructions given by the Engine
An adult facilitator works with the group as needed to encourage problem-solving, communication, and engagement. In some cases, several therapists work together, using LEGO to build motor skills, facilitate speech, and enhance social communication. Therapists involved with LEGO therapy may be occupational therapists, speech therapists, behavioral therapists, or even psychologists.

LEGO therapy can also be expanded to encourage creative play and collaboration through storytelling, dramatic activities, and innovation. For example, one version of LEGO therapy has children work together to build versions of a pretend world described in a story, or work together to create a vehicle that has specific qualities or can navigate in a particular situation. Children can also work together to build much more elaborate LEGO Mindstorms robots and program them. In these more advanced scenarios, children collaborate in complex world-building, storytelling, or design.

Is LEGO Therapy Effective?

LEGO therapy is built around existing, effective, risk-free therapies. That means it can't hurt and will likely help your child to build skills and possibly meaningful friendships built around common interests. There are a limited number of studies focused on LEGO therapy, and most of those were conducted with small groups by individuals with a vested interest in seeing the therapy succeed. No therapy is always successful for every child with autism, and much depends on the chemistry of a therapy group and its facilitator. In any therapeutic setting, some children will come away with improved skills while others won't.

While the only thing you risk with LEGO therapy is time and money, you're more likely to see positive outcomes if your child:

- Actively enjoys building models with LEGO
- Is more or less at the same functional level as the other children in the group
- Has the ability to follow verbal instruction
- Has shown at least some success in interactive play in the past
- Is able to change his or her set ideas without significant emotional upset
- Is motivated to build social relationships with peers

Before getting started with LEGO therapy, have a discussion with the therapist(s) to determine what their goals are, what the mix of children is like, and what their therapeutic approach includes. Have the therapist meet and evaluate your child to determine whether he or she is ready for this relatively advanced form of play therapy. If there is a question in your mind, you may want to ask that your child participates for a trial period.
What If My Child Doesn't Like LEGOs?

There is nothing magical about LEGO®s. In fact, the same therapeutic approach can work around any collaborative project that involves working together on a shared project toward a common goal.

Over the years, therapists have worked with autistic children using a wide range of activities, toys, and characters that tend to be interesting to people on the spectrum. While people on the spectrum don't necessarily share the same fascinations, some common interests include:

* Thomas the Tank Engine
* fantasy games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*
* online collaborative games such as *Minecraft*

While it's possible to build a therapy group around these or any other shared interest, however, it's important that the group be properly structured and facilitated. It's also important to conduct preliminary evaluations, set benchmarks, and continuously monitor the group to be sure that progress is being made.

LEGO Therapy Resources

LEGO® therapy is not available everywhere, but most capable therapists who work with groups of autistic children are able to incorporate LEGO® play into their programs. Parents can also learn to use LEGO®s as a therapeutic tool in their own homes, working with siblings or other adults and children.

To learn more about LEGO® therapy, you may want to speak with your school's occupational or ABA therapist, speak with members of your local autism support group, or read one of these books:

* *How LEGO®-Based Therapy for Autism Works: Landing on My Planet* by Daniel B. LeGoff (founder of LEGO® therapy)

* LEGO®-Based Therapy: How to build social competence through LEGO®-based Clubs for children with autism and related conditions* by Simon Baron-Cohen.
30th Annual Conference
Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

REGISTRATION: https://www.asw4autism.org/event-cal/30th-annual-conference/#1541170772779-596e2236-64bb
INFORMATION: https://www.asw4autism.org/event-cal/30th-annual-conference/

Preconference Options for Thursday, April 11th
Friday, April 12th
Interoception, The Eighth Sense: Influence on Self-Regulation, Health and Emotional Well-Being
Kelly Mahler, MS, OTR/L

Interoception is an important sensory system that helps us to ‘feel’ body signals like a full bladder, growling stomach, tense muscles or speeding heart. Research indicates that our ability to clearly feel these internal signals enables us to accurately identify and manage how we feel: Do we feel Anxious? Frustrated? Hungry? Full? In pain? Need the bathroom? Many autistic individuals can have differences in interoception, causing significant challenges in identifying and managing the way they feel. This presentation will provide participants with an overview of what research tells us about interoception as well as how this sense influences self-regulation, health and emotional well-being.

Saturday, April 13th
Triumph: Overcoming the Odds
Russell Lehmann

The story of how a 28-year-old man with autism overcame debilitating mental health issues to lead a fulfilling life in which he travels the country spreading hope, awareness, understanding and acceptance. Shared are lessons learned, insights gained and poetry that gives a deeply personal and transparent look inside the world of autism, OCD, anxiety and depression. Eye-opening, motivational, informative and inspirational.
**Connie Pitt Memorial Scholarship**

The Autism Society of the Fox Valley offers five (5) full conference registrations to the Autism Society of Wisconsin Annual Conference. Families, educators and therapists may apply for a free conference registration (Thursday-Saturday). You must be a member of the Autism Society and live, or teach, in the Fox Valley area to be considered. If you would like to apply, please send an email (just a few paragraphs) about how the scholarship will help you and your family or, if you are a therapist or teacher, how it will help the students you support.

Send the email to: info@autismfoxvalley.org and in the subject line write "ASW Conference Scholarship". You may also send a letter to ASFV, P.O. Box 266, Little Chute, WI 54142

This annual scholarship is to honor Connie Pitt, a local educator who died unexpectedly several years ago. Connie was a dedicated teacher who taught students with autism.

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**ASFV Safety Scholarships Available**

The Autism Society of the Fox Valley offers three (3) safety scholarships—up to $250 each. Families who need assistance purchasing additional locks, alarms, fence gates, or anything to help ensure safety measures can be taken for your child, can apply.

Just send a short letter explaining what your needs are and the expense you expect to incur. The ASFV board will vote on your request at the next board meeting. You will then be notified via email or mail. If your scholarship is approved, provide a receipt and you will be reimbursed for up to $250. You must be a member of the Autism Society of the Fox Valley to be considered.

Send the email to: info@autismfoxvalley.org and in the subject line write "ASFV Safety Scholarship". You may also send a letter to ASFV, P.O. Box 266 Little Chute, WI 54942.
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.
Autism Society of the Fox Valley

P.O. Box 266
Little Chute, WI 54140
(888)428-8476 or (920) 558-4602
Email: info@autismfoxvalley.org

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Ann Olson—Vice President
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Steve Brennan
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Kristin Wahl
Chad Leder
Andy Teska
Ben Marks
John Oehler
Dale Bushman

Newsletter Submissions

Articles of interest, stories/poetry of persons with autism, book reviews and upcoming conferences or workshops are accepted. Submissions can be sent to: Diane Nackers, 8042 Sequaro Ct, Neenah WI 54956 email: bnack5@gmail.com.

Submission deadlines are November 30, February 28, May 15, and August 15. Responsibility for accuracy of information remains that of the author of the article.

Articles from this publication may be reprinted, giving credit to the author and ASFV. The ASFV Editorial Review Board reserves the right to edit or refuse submissions.

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Autism Society of the Fox Valley

Donations Are Greatly Appreciated!

Thank you for your continued support. ASFV is supported by an all volunteer board. ALL donations are used to advance our mission of supporting families who love someone with autism.

♦ Child Care and Referral Resource Center
♦ Uniquely You - Uniquely Boo event
♦ Knights of Columbus - Wisconsin State Council
♦ Brenda Tyrrell c/o Furniture Solutions Holiday Giving Program