

◆ *Into the Light* ◆

Volume 19 Issue 3 *Autism Society, Central Virginia* March 2011



AS-CV Mission & Philosophy

The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

2010–2011 OFFICERS AND BOARD:

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Newsletter Editor: Elizabeth Selko
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5K Run Committee Chair: Holly Aldridge
Childcare Coordinator: Francesca Jones

STAFF:

Executive Director: Bradford Hulcher
Asperger's Interest Group Facilitator: Brie King

AUTISM INSURANCE LEGISLATION AWAITS GOVERNOR MCDONNELL'S ACTION

As this newsletter goes to press, the bill for autism insurance reform sits on Governor McDonnell's desk awaiting action. Senate Bill 1062, sponsored by Senator Janet Howell, and House Bill 2467, sponsored by Delegates Tag Greason and Tim Hugo, passed through both houses by mid February. Governor McDonnell has 30 days within which to take one of the following actions:

- sign the bill into law
- take no action; the bill becomes law without his signature
- amend the bill and return it to the General Assembly for their approval
- veto the legislation and return it to the General Assembly where the veto may be overridden by a 2/3 vote in both houses

If enacted, the law would require insurance companies to pay for the diagnosis and treatment of autism for children ages 2 through 6. Treatment would include coverage of evidence-based autism therapies, such as applied behavior analysis (ABA), up to a maximum of \$35,000 annually. The law would apply to state and local government employees; businesses with fewer than 50 employees would be exempt.

Senate Majority Leader Richard Saslaw and House Speaker Howell provided leadership in the passage of the bills through their respective houses.

Legislators in the metro Richmond area who supported passage of autism insurance reform include:

Senators: Marsh, McEachin, Stosch
Delegates: K. Cox, Ingram, Loupassi, Janis, Massie, McClellan, McQuinn, Morrissey, O'Bannon, Ware

Legislators from the metro Richmond area voting against autism insurance reform were:

Senators: Martin, McDougle, Wagner
Delegates: Peace, Robinson



MARCH 11 CHAPTER MEETING 4TH ANNUAL RECREATION RESOURCE FAIR

We'll hold our 4th annual Recreation Resource Fair from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, March 11. **See enclosed flyer for details.**

Autism Society meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road in Richmond. **Our meetings are free and open to the public.** Free supervision for children and youth is available although space is limited; reservations are taken through March 4 by e-mailing the chapter at asacv@aol.com with the names and ages/grades of your child(ren).



This newsletter is a publication of: Autism Society, Central VA □ P.O. Box 29364 □ Richmond, Virginia 23242-0364 (804) 257-0192

We accept for consideration any comments, personal vignettes, book reviews, information, announcements or advertisements for publication in our chapter newsletter. The deadline for submission for the April newsletter is March 15. You may send your contributions to the Chapter at the above address or email contributions to SELKO1@aol.com.

The Autism Society, Central Virginia does not endorse nor promote any program or service provider. The information contained in this newsletter is provided for informational purposes only. The Chapter is a volunteer organization providing information, support and encouragement to parents, family members and professionals in the Central VA area.

This edition was edited by Elizabeth Selko and Bradford Hulcher.

Directions to ASCV meetings River Road United Methodist Church

From the East:

-64 West to Exit 181 Parham Road South

*Drive 2 miles till you reach a traffic light for River Road. Be in the left hand land and turn left onto the on ramp. At the stop sign turn right on to River Road

**Go approximately .2 miles and the church will be on your right.

Turn right onto Doverland Road. Turn right into the church parking lot. To the back left of the church is a door that says "office". Go into this door and meetings are held inside at the first dorr on yur right.

From the West:

I-64 east to Exit 181 Parham Road South.

Follow all directions that are written above for coming from the east. *

From the North:

I-95 South to I64 west then follow the same directions as written above under the East.*

From the South:

I-95 North to 1150 Chippenham Parkway North. Go over the Willey Bridge crossing the James River. At the first light turn right on to the on ramp for River Road. At the stop sign turn right on to River Road. Follow directions above at the **

Autism Society Will Join Autism Community to Call for Autism Understanding and Acceptance this April

By Amanda Glensky (Autism Society, National)

On World Autism Day, April 2, 2011, the Autism Society will join the autism community to unite in one global message calling for all people to truly understand and accept autism. This will be a grassroots movement dedicated to autism understanding and acceptance.

Autism awareness stories in the media largely focus on children with autism, but people with autism are children, teenagers, adults, men, women, scientists, programmers, engineers and the unemployed; some live in care homes – or don't have a home at all. People with autism have their unique sets of strengths and weaknesses, and they also have incredible potential. Autism is a part of who they are. Unfortunately, too many are also bullied, judged or ignored.

On April 2, the Autism Society will join other organizations, charities, self-advocates, family members, support groups, parents and friends to challenge others to understand and accept people with autism. We hope you will join us as well. If we can unite the autism community, we can be a powerful force to implement the changes needed to improve lives.

How you can help:

Visit *Autism Understanding and Acceptance* (<http://www.facebook.com/AwarenessIsNotEnough>) on Facebook and click on the "Open Letter" tab. Copy the letter that you see there. This is the one united message that the autism community will share with the world.

Then, look to the bottom where it says "fill in the rest with your experience," and write what autism means to you. Whether beautiful or ugly, we ask you to write your own personal story for the world to read.

On April 2, 2011, we challenge every single person in the autism community to submit their letters to blogs, media centers, RSS feeds, fan pages, groups - anywhere they can - so that when the media looks to the autism community for information, they find us all sharing one united message.

IDEAS FOR RAISING AWARENESS IN APRIL FOR NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

What can you do to raise awareness in your school, neighborhood, or faith community during National Autism Awareness Month in April? You might:

- Purchase or make an autism awareness lapel pin; wear it every day during April. (The ASCV has lapel pins available for purchase.)
- Create a bulletin board at your school, faith community or place of work to raise awareness about autism. Themes could include the warning signs of autism, the strengths of people with autism or famous people with autism.
- Donate a children's book about autism to your local or school library; we can help you with suggestions.
- Write an article about National Autism Awareness month or how autism has impacted your life; share it with your PTA or faith community newsletter or your community newspaper.
- Form a team for the 5K Run/Walk for Autism (May 28) and invite friends and neighbors to join you! Visit <http://www.ascv5k.org/> to register.
- Download 2 resources from the National Autism Society website to share with typical peers (http://support.autismSociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=shop_Downloads);

Growing Up Together (For School-Aged Peers)

This 4-page, large-type booklet is targeted to elementary-aged school children. It uses simple language to talk about what autism is and how to become friends with someone on the autism spectrum.

Growing Up Together Teens with Autism (For

Middle School-Aged Peers) This 4-page, booklet is written for teenagers. It uses basic language to talk about what autism is and how to be friends with someone on the autism spectrum

- Host a movie night for friends, family, church members, youth groups or kids to watch a story about autism; great choices might be:

Temple Grandin
Autism Is a World

Autism, the Musical
Mozart and the Whale



CELEBRATIONS!

When you share your child's successes, no matter how large or small, you offer hope to other families. To share your child's success with others in the newsletter, e-mail us at asacv@aol.com.

My son, **Zachary R. Brown**, is a Senior @ Hopewell High School. This past year Zach was selected to attend two youth summits with the I'm Determined Project sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education. The I'm Determined Project Youth Summits were held in Washington, DC and Staunton, Virginia. Based on his participation Zach was selected for the I'm Determined Project Leadership Team. On March 13 -16, 2011 at the Norfolk Marriott Waterside Hotel, Zach will attend the 2011 Virginia Transition Forum as a representative of the I'm Determined Youth Summit. His leadership team will be presenting a breakout session during the forum which will include self advocacy and determination. Zach has also been a part of the Early Childhood Education Program "The Gingerbread House" at Hopewell High School since 2009. During his Senior year, 2010-2011 Zach was selected as an Intern for "The Gingerbread House" and assists alongside Ms. Crystal Barnett, ECE director. After graduation Zach plans to continue his work with children and coach beginner swimmers.

submitted by Linda Ciancio-Brown

Sam Hulcher was invited to serve on the Advisory Board for the VCU- Autism Center for Excellence.

submitted by Bradford Hulcher

ASCV MARCH CALENDAR

The Autism Society, Central VA will sponsor the following meetings in March. All meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road unless otherwise noted. For information: 257-0192 or asacv@aol.com

Mar.2	10:00 a.m.	Parents of Children with Asperger Syndrome/HFA Interest Group
Mar. 7	7:00 p.m.	Parents of Children with Asperger Syndrome/HFA Interest Group
Mar. 7		Fire and Ice Cafe , 1110b East Main Street, Richmond 10% of sales at Richmond, donated to ASCV
Mar. 8	7:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
Mar. 11	6:30 p.m.	Chapter Meeting: Recreation Resource Fair
Mar. 24	10:00 a.m.	Biomedical Interest Group
Mar. 28	7:00 p.m.	Adults w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group (<i>open only to adults w/ AS/HFA</i>)
Mar. 28	7:00 p.m.	Family Members of Adults with AS/HFA Interest Group

Community Events/Meetings of Interest

Mar. 1 **Young Life Capernaum Henrico** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Avery at averyoldfield@gmail.com

Mar. 3 **Young Life Capernaum Hanover** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Clint at clint@gcpres.org

Mar. 7 **Aspie Bible Study** meet on the first and third Monday of each month @ Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Rd, Richmond; 7:15 pm. - 9 p.m.; call Shawn at 804-339-4393 for info; open to mature teens 17 or older and adults with HFA/Asperger's

Mar. 9 **Chesterfield County Special Education Advisory Committee** Thomas Fulghum Center; 4:30- 6:30 p.m.; open to the public

Mar. 9 **Eagles Nest** a support group meeting for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities; meets at Clover Hill Elementary School from 7 to 8:30 p.m.; rsvp to: tammy@theridgeonline.cc

Mar. 9 **Special Nights for Special Needs** @ the Children's Museum of Richmond; 5:50-7:30 p.m.; \$4; Enjoy all the museum has to offer and benefit from the availability of adapted materials, special activities, a cool-down space and reduced number of visitors.

Mar. 10 **How Can We Make Your Child's Education Exceptional?** The Henrico County Public Schools Special Education Executive Director will be in your neighborhood listening to your ideas and feedback. Bring a brownbag lunch and come to have a Constructive Conversation; Pemberton Elementary 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.

Mar. 10 **Richmond Asperger's Meetup** the second Thursday of each month from 7-9pm; a place where older children (age 11-17) can meet other Aspergers children and siblings/adults with Asperger's can meet together and/or share information with parents of kids with AS; RSVP at <http://aspergers.meetup.com/397/>

Mar. 12 **Buddy Break** a free respite care program for children with special needs ages 3-21 and their siblings ages 3-

11; 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.; sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church, North Parham Rd; for info: Carolyn Hassan 804-270-4626 BuddyBreak@TrinityRichmond.net

Mar. 15 **Young Life Capernaum Henrico** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Avery at averyoldfield@gmail.com

Mar. 16 **Faith and Light Community** an international community of persons with intellectual disabilities, their families, and their friends who meet regularly to share friendship, joy, prayer, and celebration; Colombian Center, Pump Rd; 6:30; rsvp by 3/11 to Eileen faithlight525@aol.com or 804-308-8012

Mar. 17 **Young Life Capernaum Hanover** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Clint at clint@gcpres.org

Mar. 17 **A Journey of Rest and Restoration**; a monthly Christian-based support group designed for couples/caregivers of children with any special needs; meets the third Thursday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m.; Mechanicsville Christian Center; free childcare and sign language interpreter; pre-registration required; contact Joanna Frank @ 746-4303 ext 360 or jfrank@resourceconnectioninc.org

Mar. 19 **Buddy Break** a free respite care program for children with special needs ages 3-21 and their siblings ages 3-11; 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; sponsored by Southside Church of The Nazarene, Courthouse Rd; contact Amy Morgan @ 804-778-7800 ext. 247 or BuddyBreak@SouthsideChurchVA.org

Mar. 21 **Aspie Bible Study** meet on the first and third Monday of each month @ Good Shepherd UMC, 9155 Hungary Rd, Richmond; 7:15 pm. - 9 p.m.; call Shawn at 804-339-4393 for info; open to mature teens 17 or older and adults with HFA/Asperger's

Mar. 22 **Henrico County Special Education Advisory Committee** program: budget and annual plan; Brookland Middle School; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; open to the public

Mar. 22 **Hanover Caregiver's Network** for parents, family members or service providers for children/adults with developmental disabilities; learn about resources, supports and advocacy' 5:30 p.m. at the Ashland Library; for info: Cathy Wilson—537-5482, cwilson15@live.com

Mar. 23 **Eagles Nest** a support group meeting for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities; meets at Clover Hill Elementary School from 7 to 8:30 p.m.; rsvp to tammy@theridgeonline.cc

(Continued on page 6)

Community Events/Meetings of Interest

(Continued from page 5)

Mar. 29 **Young Life Capernaum Henrico** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Avery at averyoldfield@gmail.com

Mar. 31 **Young Life Capernaum Hanover** an inclusive faith based group for teens and young adults with disabilities; 6:30 - 8 p.m.; for information, contact Clint at clint@gcpres.org

Workshops and Conferences

Mar. 2 **Student Success Workshop Series: Transition to Independence: Moving On and Up**; sponsored by Chesterfield County Parent Resource Center; for middle and high school students and parents; free; 6:30- 8:00 p.m.; Thomas Fulghum Center; to register: 279-7311

Mar. 3 **Make It and Take It Workshop** sponsored by Henrico County Parent Resource Center; 6 - 8 p.m. @ Newbridge School. 5915 Nine Mile Rd.; discover the benefits of visual schedules, First/Then boards and PECS; create your own customized boards to help relieve anxiety about schedules, assist in communication and facilitate easier transitions; leave the event with a complete communication board ready to use at home to help you and your family. Please RSVP by February 24 to 328-8117 or lhabernathey@henrico.k12.va.us

Mar. 3 **Understanding Medicaid Waivers: Services** sponsored by Hanover Arc; information for individuals already using a waiver on how to access services, case management, etc. ; RSVP to 798-2400 or lucy@hanoverarc.org

Mar. 3 **Financial and Legal Considerations for Families with Special Needs Dependents** sponsored by the Dominion School for Autism; 1-2 p.m. or 7 - 8 p.m.; speakers:

Jason Popham, Northwestern Mutual and Salima M. Duling, Esq.; at Christ United Methodist Church, 1618 Grace St; RSVP to Sali or Jeff Duling at (804) 789-0192 or admin@dulinglaw.com by March 1

Mar. 8-9 **Commonwealth Autism Service Annual Conference** Richmond; \$179 before 2/11; for info: <http://www.autismva.org>

Mar. 11-13 **Introduction to Verbal Behavior ABA** presented by Dr. Vincent Carbone, BCBA-D; sponsored by POAC-NoVA; Alexandria; \$300; for info: <http://www.poac-nova.org>

Mar. 14-16 **Virginia Transition Forum** Norfolk; for info: <http://www.virginiatransitionforum.org/>

Mar. 15 **Supporting Student Choice Making: Self-determination & Independence** sponsored by Henrico County Public Schools Transition Team; 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; free; open to the public; on the campus of VA Randolph, Bldg H, 2204 Mountain Rd.

Mar. 17-18 **"SSI/SSDI & Work Incentives" "Understanding the Myriad of Rules Governing SSI/SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare & Related Work Incentives for People with Disabilities"** sponsored by vaACCSES; FREE; Glen Allen; to register: http://www.vaaccses.org/training_conferences/

Mar. 21 **Just Give Him The Whale: Using Passions, Areas of Expertise, and Strengths to Support Students with Autism** with Dr. Paula Kluth; 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Thomas Fulghum Center 4003 Cogbill Road, Richmond, VA 23234; sponsored by the Region1 Parent Resource Centers and Region 1 Autism Education Consortium; FREE but RSVP required to Tracy, Family Resource Coordinator, Colonial Heights Public Schools at 804-524-3452 or racy_Lewis@colonialhts.net

Mar.21-23 **Shaping the Future** an intensive three-day workshop; designed to provide parents and professionals with training in the theory and application of ABA principles, specifically as they relate to children with autism. Topics covered include the principles of reinforcement, ABA-based teaching techniques, assessing the function of behavior, and data collection and analysis. The workshop includes lecture, hands-on activities, and student observation. A 20% discount in the workshop registration fee is offered to parents and home therapists; for info: <http://www.viaschool.org>

For additional information on autism conferences and workshops in VA, visit www.autismtrainingva.org

NEWS FROM THE ASCV BOARD

The ASCV was busy in February raising autism awareness in our community, providing recreational/social activities for our families, and advocating for improved services and supports for individuals with ASD.

LEGISLATIVE

- Continued our efforts in reaching out to local legislators regarding the bill for autism insurance reform in the General Assembly through e-mail, written e-mail, and personal visits with legislators. Staff, board members and chapter members were introduced from the floor of the Senate by Senator Walter Stosch and from the floor of the House by Delegate Bill Janis.
- Provided timely updates re: autism insurance reform and needed action to our members.
- Submitted a letter to the editor of Richmond Times Dispatch in support of autism insurance reform.
- In response to the recent Department of Justice report on the violation of civil rights of Virginians with disabilities, joined 189 other organizations from across the state in signing a petition asking the Budget Committee at the General Assembly to "do more, not less, to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities."
- Board member Shawn Kirk attended the Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C.

AWARENESS

- Exhibited at 2 transition resource fairs in Henrico County Public Schools.
- Exhibited at a Transition and Resource Fair at Northstar Academy.
- Presented "Reading and Resources: Building Parent Support" to the Communities of Practice in Autism group at the Henrico CSB.
- Presented "Autism Initiatives and Update" to the Hanover Caregivers Network.

RECREATION

- Sponsored a Pump It Up party for chapter members.
- Sponsored a bowling party for chapter middle and high school students.
- Sponsored an inaugural meeting for a Dad's Group followed by bowling.

THANKS!

Thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their support this month:

- Varina JROTC for volunteering to bowl with our middle and high school students
- Chapter member Phillip Link and Shrader Lanes for generously hosting our inaugural Dad's Group meeting
- Allyson Bateman and Shamsi Sadeghzadeh from the Grafton Winchester office for their outstanding presentation at our February chapter meeting
- Caroline Selko for her monthly support with the chapter newsletter
- Donna Sabel for organizing the Pump It Up Party

Thank You For the Following Donations

Dianne & Jim Kirkman

Fire & Ice Café

Pete & Nancy Weismuller in Memory of James Selko

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