

◆ *Into the Light* ◆

Volume 17 Issue 11 *Autism Society, Central Virginia* November 2009



ASA-CV Mission & Philosophy

The mission of the Autism Society of America is to promote lifelong access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully included, participating members of their communities through advocacy, public awareness, education and research related to autism.

Recognizing and respecting the diverse range of opinions, needs and desires of this group, ASA embraces an overall philosophy which chooses to empower individuals with autism, their parents or caregivers, to make choices best suited to the needs of the person with autism. At the very core of the parent choice philosophy is the belief that no single program or treatment will benefit all individuals with autism. Furthermore, the recommendation of what is "best" or "most effective" for a person with autism should be determined by those people directly involved - the individual with autism, to the extent possible, and the parents or family members. Providing information and education to help in decision-making are more highly regarded at ASA than is advocating for one particular theory or philosophy.

THREE NEW POSITIONS CREATED AT STATE AGENCIES TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH ASD

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)

DBHDS filled 2 new positions this fall to address the process of gathering the information and developing the direction that will help Virginia better address the very complex needs of persons with autism and their families as well as the broader spectrum of developmental disabilities. Although the General Assembly provided funding for the positions, there are no new dollars assigned to deliver new services. The efforts of the Office of Developmental Services (ODS) over the next year will be devoted to meeting the deadlines set down by the JLARC report, developing information, building collaborations, increasing workforce expertise, and formulating strategies for forward movement. The two new positions at BHDS and the persons filling them are:

- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialties Manager** Cindy Gwinn was appointed to this position at the Office of Developmental Services. Ms. Gwinn will concentrate her efforts on the Autism Spectrum Disorder community, reaching out to providers, families, and stakeholder organizations to gather the information necessary to fulfill the recommendations made by the JLARC report.

Ms. Gwinn was Information and Referral Specialist and Community Resource Specialist for Commonwealth Autism Service. Later she started her own business to support those with developmental disabilities as a Case Manager and Consumer Directed Service Facilitator for the Individuals and Families with Developmental Disabilities Waiver. Ms. Gwinn is a Medicaid Waiver Mentor, a member of the Autism Society, Central Virginia and a graduate of VCU's School of Social Work. Ms. Gwinn has a daughter with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- **Developmental Disabilities Specialties Manager** Emily Helmboldt was appointed to this position at the Office of Developmental Services. Ms. Helmboldt will concentrate her efforts on supported employment, housing, and other issues related to the developmental disability community that DBHDS has not had the resources before now to emphasize.

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2009–2010 Officers and Board

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NOVEMBER 13 CHAPTER MEETING

LISA SYKES, AUTHOR OF *SACRED SPARK*

Reverend Lisa Sykes will discuss her recently published book, *Sacred Spark*, which chronicles the story of a child affected by mercury-poisoning and his minister-mother's decade-long battle to restore the light in his eyes. It is also the inspiring story of Reverend Sykes' work with the United Methodist Church to pass the first global resolution advocating the elimination of mercury from medicine.

Rev. Sykes graduated from the University of Virginia, where she was an Echols Scholar, in 1987, and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1990. She has served the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church for almost twenty years. Lisa and her husband, Seth have three sons: Adam, Wesley and Joshua. Wesley was diagnosed with autism in 1998 and with mercury poisoning in 2000. Since then Lisa, in addition to being a wife, mother, and minister, has become an advocate for safe, mercury-free vaccines and for children with disabilities. She is president of CoMeD, Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to the elimination of mercury from medicine.

ASCV meetings are held at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road, Richmond, 23229. Our meetings are free and open to the public. The library opens at 6:30 p.m.; meetings are from 7:00 to 9:00. Free childcare is available during the meeting; space is limited. A free supervised teen group also meets during chapter meetings. Reservations for childcare and the teen group must be made by e-mailing the chapter at asacv@aol.com or calling 257-0192 with the names and ages of each child no later than November 6.

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 December newsletter is November 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.

NEW POSITIONS

(Continued from page 1)

Ms. Helmboldt is currently serving as a Behavior Therapist specializing in behavioral intervention for children and adults with developmental disabilities. She has a private practice and works as a trainer/project staff for the PBS Project through the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU. In addition, she has over 12 years of experience helping individuals with disabilities and their support teams understand challenging behavior and develop person-centered behavior support plans. Ms. Helmboldt has a rich history in working with persons with developmental disabilities in various capacities. Earlier in her career, she served in positions as an employment specialist, a residential counselor and supervisor and as a day support coach. Ms. Helmboldt has a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and is a Licensed Professional Counselor with an endorsement in Positive Behavioral Supports.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

VDOE has created a new unit within the Division of Special Education called the Office of Instructional Support and Related Services (ISRS). The major purpose of this new unit is to serve professionals and families who support students with intensive instructional, communication, behavioral, sensory, related service and assistive technology needs by providing evidence based training and technical assistance to support the building of improved student outcomes. The director of the unit is John Eisenberg.

- **Education Specialist** Samantha Marsh was appointed to the newly created position of Education Specialist within ISRS focusing on the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Intellectual Disabilities. She earned a BS from VCU in Psychology and her Masters in Teaching from VCU in Special Education. Ms. Marsh has worked in the public school setting as a special education teacher as well as a behavioral and academic consultant. She is completing her dissertation in the doctoral program in Special Education and Disability Policy Leadership Program at VCU and is a graduate of the Virginia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (Va-LEND) program. While completing her graduate work at VCU, she conducted research on reading skills in students with Autism Spectrum Disorders as well as the management of behavior of at-risk children in the preschool setting. Additionally, Ms. Marsh has taught courses related to professional development in working with individuals with ASD at the undergraduate and graduate level.

DBHDS Reports to Senate Finance Subcommittees on "Status of Virginia's Services for Autism Spectrum Disorders "

James Reinhard, MD, Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, gave a presentation at the September 17, 2009 joint subcommittee meeting of the Senate Finance Committee entitled "Status of Virginia's Services for Autism Spectrum Disorders." A link to the Powerpoint presentation can be found on our website at www.asacv.org.



CELEBRATIONS!

When you share your child's successes, no matter how great or small, you offer hope to other families who face the challenges of autism!

This week I was tucking my boys in bed and praying for my 6 year old (NT) and 5 year old (PDD-NOS). When I finished, my 5 year old said he wanted to pray (!?) and he thanked God for each and every one of his classmates--- by name. It was such a humbling experience to see his rote memory being used in such a special way... dear Father, thank you for Taylor, and thank you for Preston, and thank you, God, for Maggie, and for... all 19 of them! Precious!

submitted by Wendy Turner

AUTISM AWARENESS ITEMS AVAILABLE AT NOVEMBER CHAPTER MEETING

Do some early holiday shopping at our next chapter meeting. Teachers love autism awareness items and we'll have plenty in stock at our November 13 meeting. Choose from a wide variety of items, including magnets, pins, key chains, lanyards, bears, autism trees, and bracelets, ranging in price from \$3 to \$15. Great gifts for bus drivers, therapists, and relatives. All proceeds go to benefit our local autism community. Visa, Mastercard, checks, and cash accepted.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Nov. 4 **St. Joseph's Villa Transition Summit** FREE; 2-5 p.m.; 8800 Brook Rd; info: neverstopbelieving.org

Nov. 5 **Exploring Medicaid Waivers** sponsored by Hanover County Parent Resource Center; 6:30 p.m. at Oak Knoll Middle School; RSVP to Kelly at 365-4596 or hano-verpre@hcps.us

Nov. 5 **Wrightslaw Conference** special education, IEPs, and advocacy; Peter Wright, J.D.; sponsored by Autism Society, Northern VA; for info: asanv.org

Nov. 7 **Circle of Support** keynote speaker: Temple Grandin Ph.D.; sponsored by the ARC of Greater Prince William; for info: http://www.arcgpw.org/ASCV_bookstore_onsite

Nov. 7 **College 4U for students w/disabilities**, parents/guardians, and professionals. Learn How to Prepare for College, hear Students' experiences and perspectives, see technology demonstrations, talk with Virginia College representatives and build knowledge of supports or resources; \$5; James River High School, Midlothian; register online: <http://ttac.soe.vcu.edu/registration/index.cfm>

Nov. 9-11 **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; includes lecture, hands-on activities, and student observation. A 20% discount in the workshop registration fee is offered to parents and home therapists; Charlottesville; for info: <http://www.viaschool.org/>

Nov. 10 **Communication System and Verbal Behavior** Kathy Mathews, Ph.D.; information and examples of strategies to teach and maintain communication skills. This workshop will also provide an overview of verbal behavior principles; 8:30-10:00 a.m. sponsored by the Faison School for Autism; FREE but registration required: 612-1947 or wfray-ser@thefaisosnchool.org

Nov.14 **Overview of Final Virginia Special Education Regulations** presented by staff from the Parent Education and Advocacy Training Center; hosted by Woolridge Road

Church, Moseley; 9 a.m. to noon; FREE; rsvp to tammy@theridgeonline.cc

Dec. 3 & 10 Strategies for Supporting Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder; 2 day training sponsored by VCU TTAC and ASACV; Richmond; \$30; to register, visit www.asacv.org

Dec. 3-4 SSI/SSDI Work Incentives" Understanding the Working Rules Governing SSI/SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, & Related Work Incentives for People with Disabilities FREE; Richmond; registration required: www.vaaccses.org or 703-569-3932

Dec. 15 **Using Effective Behavior Intervention Procedures** Ania Young, MS, BCBA; an overview of effective strategies for decreasing challenging problem behaviors; 8:30-10:00 a.m. sponsored by the Faison School for Autism; FREE but registration required: 612-1947 or wfray-ser@thefaisosnchool.org

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

Save the Date!

December 20th Annual Holiday Party!

The Holiday Party for Chapter Members will be Sunday December 20 from 2 p.m.-5 p.m. at the Science Museum of Virginia. The party will include light refreshments and admission to the museum. This event will be free for Central Virginia Chapter members. Please look for an email invitation in early December as well as further details in the December newsletter.





November 20th Bowling Party for Middle and High School Students with ASD

Middle and high school students with ASD are invited to join us November 20 for a bowling party! Bri King, recreational therapist, is organizing the party which will include bowling, snacks, and drinks—FREE to chapter members! Not a chapter member yet? Visit our website at www.asacv.org to download membership application. Membership is free through December!

Look for details and instructions for RSVP in upcoming weekly e-mail updates soon.

Autism Society Central Virginia 5K Run/Walk Saturday, May 29, 2010 at the Innsbrook Pavilion

Interested in helping secure sponsorships for the race? Please contact Holly Aldridge at hollyaldrige@comcast.net



ASACV NOVEMBER CALENDAR

The Autism Society, Central VA will sponsor the following meetings in November. 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

Nov. 2	7:00 p.m.	Parents of Children (Preschool/School Age) w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group
Nov. 4	10:00 a.m.	Parents of Children (Preschool/School Age) w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group
Nov. 10	7:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
Nov. 12	10:00 a.m.	Biomedical Interest Group
Nov. 12	ALL DAY	Pizza Fusion Event to Benefit Autism Society, Central VA (at Pizza Fusion in Short Pump)
Nov. 13	7:00 p.m.	Chapter Meeting: Understanding Medicaid Waivers for Children and Adults w/ ASD
Nov. 30	7:00 p.m.	Adults w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group (open only to adults w/ AS/HFA)
Nov. 30	7:00 p.m.	Family Members of Adults with ASDs Interest Group

Community Events/Meetings of Interest

Nov. 1 **Eagle's Nest Parents** a faith based support group that connects parents and caregivers of special needs children and provides nourishment for the soul of those involved; from 5-6 pm and are held at Woolridge Road Church; contact Tammy Burns for info at www.theridgeonline.cc

Nov. 2 **Hanover County Special Education Advisory Committee** Hanover County School Board Office, 200 Berkeley Street Ashland; 7-9 p.m.; open to the public

Nov. 8 **Extraordinary Families** support group for families who are caring for children with special needs; offering educational, social, emotional and spiritual support; meets 2nd Sunday from 4:30 - 6 p.m.; for details, contact Jennifer at bitters4@gmail.com

Nov. 11 **Chesterfield County Special Education Advisory Committee** Thomas Fulghum Center, 4003 Cogbill Road; 4:30- 6:30 p.m.; open to the public

Nov. 12 **Richmond Asperger's Meetup** face-to-face meeting will be on the second Thursday of each month from 7-9pm at the River City Diner on Parham Rd (at Brook and I95); a place where older children (age 11-17) can meet other Aspergers Children and siblings/adults with Aspergers can meet together and/or share information with parents of kids with AS; to RSVP for the face-to-face meetings, sign up at <http://aspergers.meetup.com/397/> The Yahooogroup is at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/richmondaspergersgroup/>

Nov. 17 **Henrico County Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee** Brookland Middle School library; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; open to the public

Nov. 15 **Eagle's Nest Parents** a faith based support group that connects parents and caregivers of special needs children and provides nourishment for the soul of those involved; from 5-6 pm and are held at Woolridge Road Church; contact Tammy Burns for info at www.theridgeonline.cc

Nov. 17 **Living with Autism** Chickahominy Middle School library at 6:30 pm. RSVP to Kelly at 365-4596 or hano-verprc@hcps.us

Nov. 20 **The Advisory Consortium for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (TACIDD)**; an advisory group to the Office of Developmental Services at the Department for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; 10 a.m. - 2

p.m. open to the public; Henrico CSB, 10299 Woodman Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Nov. 21 **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; see website for additional information at www.nathanielshope.org; questions? contact Amy Morgan @ 804-778-7800 ext. 247 or BuddyBreak@SouthsideChurchVA.org; parents required to attend an hour orientation the first time they attend Buddy Break.



Pizza Fusion to Donate 10% on November 12!!

On Thursday, November 12th, Pizza Fusion will be hosting a benefit for the Autism Society, Central VA. 10% of all dine-in sales for the entire day (11:00 AM till 10:00 PM) will be donated to the Autism Society.

Pizza Fusion specializes in organic and natural foods and offers a wide variety of special dietary needs options, including a dairy-free cheese substitute, a gluten-free crust option, and more!

Pizza Fusion is located at 11331 West Broad Street, Suite 131 in the Short Pump Station shopping center, along with Trader Joe's and Petco. The phone number is (804) 381-4027 if you have questions or need further directions. The whole Pizza Fusion team is very excited for the opportunity to help such a great cause! Please join us for this special event--we look forward to seeing you!

Welcome New Members

Jim & Pendlé Whisnant
Zolandria Vega
Greta & Stephen Selden
Allison Meadon
Daniel Chrisman
Cheryl & David Dunn
Amy Y Scott Arnett
Ying Shi
Amy Gray
Erica Woolard
Jean Switzer
Mark Enright
Sadler Family Melinda & Peter Leitner
Sylvester & Natasha Henderson
Melody Thompson
Evangelist Valeneia Malone
Dennis & Karin Sewell
Chuck & Christine Riedel
Andrew Wiegratz
Steven Winner
Shawn Kirk
Judson Musiek
Steve Allen
Kimba Johnson
Wesley & Michèle Burton
Stephanie Puska
Lee & Jamie Randolph
Tammy Anderson

Thank You for the Following Donations

Fred & Cheryl Baynes
Jim & Dianné Kirkman
Sylvia & Fank Grossman
Arlyn Webber
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Godsey
Richard Parisi
Wesley & Michèle Burton

United Way Campaign

Please consider making your United Way pledge benefit our local chapter. Here's how:

Private employees may contribute to the Chapter through the Contributor Choice Program by identifying us as:

Autism Society of America
PO Box 29364
Richmond, VA 23242
#3108

Local Government (LGS)
#103

Combined Federal Campaign
#64417

Would You Like To Place An Ad in "Into The Light"

Our newsletter reaches over 500 families, professionals and educators on a monthly basis. If you would like to place an advertisement, please email it to asacv.org or mail it to the Chapter at P.O. Box 29364, Richmond, VA 23242-0364. Call the Chapter if you have any questions. Deadline for entry is the 15th of each month.

Ad Rates:

- \$25.00 1/8 Page
- \$50.00 1/4 Page
- \$75.00 1/2 Page
- \$100.00 Full Page

Discounts/Non Profits/Long Term Ads (3 months or longer) may have negotiated rates with board approval.

The board reserves the right to refuse to place an advertisement.