

# CHILDREN AT RISK NEWSLETTER

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## **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CHILDREN AT RISK, OTTAWA**

Thursday, June 15, 2006

235 Donald Street

Room 212 – 7:00 p.m.

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Children at Risk. This evening will also be an opportunity for all friends and families of Children at Risk to meet informally and to discuss issues around supporting children and families within the Autism Spectrum Disorders. Wine and cheese will be served!

### **\*\*Special Guest Speaker\*\***

We are delighted to have local **Speech-Language Pathologist Sheila Bell** present at the Annual General Meeting! Many of you know Sheila through her private practice, as well as her tireless work in the Autism community with presentations to school boards & organizations. Recognizing the lack of services for ASD teens, Sheila has also spent her “spare time” working with Children at Risk to facilitate the “Typical Teen” Outing-Based Social Skill Groups. Sheila will be presenting a talk on “What’s Next?”, what to do as your ASD child leaves the elementary school age group, both school and social issues, extending even to longer term issues like possible employment and independence. We also hope to pick Sheila’s brain about some ideas for “Summer Survival” of holidays and camps!

The following business will be conducted:

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. President’s Report
3. Treasurer’s Report & Appointment of Auditors
4. Fundraising Report
5. Election of new Board

Standing for re-election to the Board are:

**David Allingham\* Dean Ryan\* Mary McDonald  
Marlene Steppan\* Craig Perkin\* Louise Pavelic  
Ed Gratton\* Andrea Allingham**

The following positions are vacant:

**3 to 4 Members at Large**

We encourage parents and friends to get more involved with the Autism Community through service on the Board of our local charity! More information/job descriptions can be obtained by calling the office at 741-8255 or Board President, David Allingham, at 824-7919. Nominations are to be submitted to Brenda Reisch, Charity Coordinator at 741-8255, FAX 741-5530 or [carsup@magma.ca](mailto:carsup@magma.ca)

Members who cannot attend may give a proxy to any other person, who need not be a member. Proxies must be in writing, signed by the member who will be absent, and mailed to or brought to the meeting by another member. Members who have given a proxy may still change their minds and attend, in which case the proxy is cancelled. Only those members who have paid their annual membership dues to Children at Risk, Ottawa, have the privilege of voting at the AGM.

*By Order of the Board, David Allingham, President*

**AUTISM/ASPERGER'S  
COMMUNITY  
ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC  
Sunday, June 25th, 2006  
12 Noon-3 PM  
Brewer Park  
(see enclosed flyer)**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Submitted by David Allingham

Well, another year as President has come and gone. Looking back, there have been many changes here at Children at Risk! There will be more to come, as the Board continues to formalize how things are done with the goal of making things more streamlined and easier to manage. Progress has been made but it has also been slow as there is only so much that a small number of people can do at any one time. As President, I would like to thank each of you who have volunteered your time and efforts to this charity and ask that even more of you come forward to help in some way or other. (Perhaps as a Board member?)

Very soon (hopefully not before you receive this) we will be having our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and I would like to ask that you try very hard to come out and visit with us. We would love your feedback on what CAR has done-can do for the Autism Community. If you just want to put a face to this handwriting, by all means come and say "Hi."

This year we have been formalizing job descriptions for staff and facilitators, creating and implementing an incident report, working on an anti-harassment policy, as well as the assignment of portfolios for Board Members in key areas of responsibility for the charity. We now have live phone and office support 4 half-days a week which we hope has been helpful and useful to you. The charity's finances are doing well, still a long way from being self-sustaining, but they are moving in the right direction! Next year we will be looking at making better use of our "cash on hand" (uncommitted resources) through the use of investment vehicles that pay more than our bank account does without incurring risk to the capital or our reducing access. As we budget quarterly for our Groups, the goal has been to always have enough funds to finance at least one session, should our fundraising and/or donations decrease at any time.

In closing, I'll be putting my name forward as President at this AGM, to serve for another year. Have a great summer if I don't see you there and a notice on groups will be coming out late August for the fall session. Thanks again to our instructors, the Board, our charity coordinator, our admin staff, and all of you for making this a successful year for CAR.

## **CHARITY COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE**

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

Summer is just around the corner, as our children anticipate the end of school and the start of vacations! Our current Social Skill Groups will be finishing up by the end of June/early July. It has been an exciting quarter, with the identification and operation of more needs-targeted groups. This past session saw two "new" groups being offered:

- Activity-Based Social Skills group for children functioning at a moderate level
- Life-Skills Based pilot group for high functioning Asperger Syndrome children

With the "spectrum" of Autism presenting children at many levels of functionality, Children at Risk is continually trying to identify and meet the social skill development needs of ASD children. Of course the challenges of trying to meet the demand with financing only from fundraising and donations is ever-present. We also continue to support the whole family through our Sibling Support Groups, Educational Workshops, Information Seminars and entertainment ticket donations. In September, we will continue to liaise with Algonquin College for home placements of students in the Developmental Services Worker program, with an anticipated record number of students available!

In July, our Board of Directors will review finances and vote on the group budget for the Fall. Notices will be sent out by email (and mail for those without) in August, with groups scheduled to start the end of September or early October.

Children at Risk is also undergoing some transitions in its community role. With the establishment of the Community Coordinator position at the Ottawa Chapter of the ASO, CAR will be focusing more on the service provision aspect it was originally created to deliver. For several years, CAR has provided general supports to families, as well as services. We encourage you to contact Children at Risk to inquire about the services listed above. However, for general Autism community information, we suggest you call ASO at 230-6305 or [www.autismottawa.com](http://www.autismottawa.com) I want to wish safe and happy holidays to everyone! I look forward to seeing you at the AGM and/or Family Picnic!!

## DONOR'S CORNER

N.A.S.S \$92  
Al's Fencing Limited \$150  
Stanislaw Kawczak Family Fund \$263.11  
Perceptor Delta Epsilon \$500  
Wilfred Wilhelm \$500  
Bell Employees Gift Giving Program \$507  
IBM Employees' Charitable Fund \$1,508.19

### **What are Social & Play Skills Programs ?**

Submitted by Elaine Bissonnette, Behaviour Consultant & Sheri Curkovic, Groups Co-Facilitator

First of all the main goal is to have fun! The curriculum and objectives must ensure that the children are engaging and interacting as much as possible. Opportunities are set up to promote engagement and interaction, or activities are sabotaged in a way that facilitates opportunities for the children to practice skills identified within their group dynamics. Group strategies employed are also helpful in motivating children to demonstrate targeted skills using a positive behavioural approach (Token Programs, visual aids, charts.) for teaching new skills. Lots of reinforcement – IT REALLY WORKS!

***Listed below you will find some of the many social/communication skills that will be program objectives as appropriate to the age and functioning levels of the children involved.***

- Orienting to the group during a "Show and Tell" or "Sharing Time"
- Asking the "W" questions to initiate interest and conversation
- Responding to peers when called by name and asked a question
- Raising a hand and saying "I do" in response to "Who wants a turn?"
- Coping with teasing and bullying – talking together about how to deal with this increasingly reality in the community
- Skills such as protesting, negotiating, complimenting, greeting are practiced and modeled

- Understanding emotions and being able to identify (sometimes in the "moment") what makes you happy, mad, sad.....
- Practicing giving a "high five" to the winner can sometimes make it or break it! Learning simple group rules, turn taking, and joint attention during cooperative games like Musical Chairs, Duck Duck Goose, Cariboo, Bug in the Rug, and What Time is It Mr. Wolf?
- Learning and practicing team skills in the games of soccer, Four Corners, Spud and Freeze tag.
- Role-playing the do's and don'ts of social etiquette and of saying "no" appropriately,
- Using words vs. actions, practicing assertiveness skills without being aggressive.....

During activities such as snack, arts/crafts for young learners, children are prompted to use their communication and social skills to exchange even one word utterances. Activities are designed to help the children interact with their peers, ask questions and demand for desired or needed materials, as well as to display their work to each other!

Older peer group - Activities are set up to promote negotiation and assertiveness skills and learn how to be part of a team - a critical skill for being successful in school and other community program!

### **SOCIAL SKILL GROUPS PARENT FEEDBACK**

*"First, we would like to thank Elaine for organizing and managing the group!*

*It was great! This was really the very first time that Gabriel actually wanted to participate and attend an organized group activity (apart from summer camps). We have tried many, many...different activities, and he has never shown interest in any group activity. This time, he loved it! He was always looking forward to Monday evening. One time when we forgot about the group (Easter Monday) and realized that we have already missed 30 minutes, he started to cry and wanted to go even though he knew we were already late. It was great to see it! We're looking forward to the next time!"*

Greg Zawadzki

*"A very special thanks to you, Elaine, and your colleague for an excellent session that Romano attended on Monday evenings. I can't believe how well matched the children were in terms of age and interests. Romano was always willing and excited to attend. "Mom let's go -- I don't want to be late for my Friendship Group". So off we would go! Each Monday night session was well planned and organized. I really appreciated receiving the hand-outs. They always come in very handy. Hopefully, Romano and I can see everyone once again in the fall. Great job!"*

Ida DiFranco

*"The Friendship Social Skill Therapy group facilitated by Elaine Bissonnette and Sheri Curkovic has really helped our daughter Laura to "come out of her shell". She is ever so excited on Saturday mornings to attend her class where she interacts with her new friends. Laura loves the story time and sing-a-long sessions. Playing new games has helped her to wait patiently and to learn the skill of taking turns. We are delighted at the end of each session to hear her say "goodbye" to her friends and teachers as she brings home a wonderful piece of artwork. The remainder of the day goes so well as she is full of smiles and chanting one of her favorite tunes from her class. "Bug in a rug, bug in a rug.... who's that bug in a rug?"*

Jessie DeSouza

### **FUNDRAISING UPDATE**

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

Fundraising Chairperson

Since March, 2006....

### **5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL "ROCKIN'FOR RISK" DANCE**

Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> saw a crowd of "dancin' fools" rocking to the retro 50s/60s/70s sounds of local band Intersection, while raising funds for Autism! Entertainment was also provided by a return visit of The Capital Chordettes quartet "Sleepless", with the evening being hosted by OLDIES 1310's "Brother Bob" Derro. Despite the absence of our "Elvis" Tribute Artist, Shawn Barry, with the loss of his mother, we still managed to pack the halls and make \$6,000 to support Children at Risk's programs.

Many Thanks to our many volunteers and sponsors who made this event possible through their donation of time and merchandise. Special mention goes to Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, RioCan Properties and Il Paradiso/Strandz for hosting a Pre-Dance Sock Hop on March 18<sup>th</sup>, donating \$400 and a Pre-Dance Raffle that raised close to \$500!

### **MACMILLAN'S FOODS SPRING CAMPAIGN**

Another profitable MacMillan's Frozen Foods Campaign was held in April, with over \$400 being raised. We appreciate the support of parents like Patricia Flanagan, Susan Holder and Roxanne Bronsard who helped to make this fundraiser a success by selling to co-workers and friends! Another campaign will be held in the Fall!

### **LINCOLN FIELDS BBQ**

Our friends at Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre invited Children at Risk to hold a Charity BBQ on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Despite the rainy and cool weather, our volunteers served up donated hot-dogs and hamburgers, raising \$238!

### **CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

#### **11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHILDREN AT RISK RAFFLE**

Tickets are still available for this exciting, annual fundraiser!

They sell for \$2 each or 3 tickets for \$5.

They Feature:

- \$7,098 in Total Prizes!
- 40 Draws – a in 100 chance of winning!
- 1st Prize valued at \$722!
- Lowest Prize at \$25!
- 1<sup>st</sup> 6 Prizes over \$400 each!

The tickets are available in books of 12, we encourage families to help us sell and/or buy. You can email [carsup@magma.ca](mailto:carsup@magma.ca) or call 741-8255. We can either send out a couple of books for you to sell, or cheerfully fill in some tickets for your own personal purchase!

Also, one of our sponsors, Lone Star, had been unable to respond in time for the Raffle Ticket production due to their Anniversary Celebration. I just received two \$25 Gift Certificates in the mail

from them! Therefore, we will be having 2 draws for all those who either bought or sold one book or more of tickets, as well as those volunteers who manned the booth in Carlingwood at the end of the ticket sales in June.

Please, we encourage everyone to take a couple of books to sell, the prizes are terrific and with only 4,000 tickets printed, a great chance to win! Help us to sell out the Raffle this year – call or email if you can sell/buy books to make this fundraiser reach its potential!!

- Entertainment Coupon Books –August 2006
- 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrity-Carved Pumpkin Contest – October 26-28, 2006
- Fall MacMillan’s Campaign - Nov. 2006

## **CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL AUTHORS!**

### **More Than a Mom**

#### **Living a Full and Balanced Life When Your Child Has Special Needs**

**By Amy Baskin & Heather Fawcett**

Copies \$20 available for purchase:

- June 15, 7 pm, CAR AGM
- June 25, 12 to 3 pm, Autism Community Annual Family Picnic, Brewer Park
- June 29, 7 to 9 pm, Author Book Signing, Indigo Barrhaven, 125 RioCan Ave.

MORE THAN A MOM explores how women can lead rich, fulfilling personal lives while parenting a child with special needs. The authors’ skillful blend of research, personal experiences, and feedback from over 500 mothers across North America results in a book that is jam-packed with practical strategies, advice, and reassurance for women trying to create more manageable and rewarding lives.

This “how-to” guide looks at the challenges these mothers face at home, at work, and within themselves, with special attention paid to:

- Staying healthy both physically and emotionally
- Nurturing interests and goals
- Strengthening your marriage
- Maintaining friendships
- Keeping organized
- Seeking flexible work options
- Changing careers or starting a business
- Finding specialized daycare
- Advocating for your child

Husbands, extended family, friends, support organizations, and service providers will also want to read this insightful and fact-filled book.

**Published by Woodbine House**

**Canadian Distribution: Monarch Books 800-404-7404**

### **Lost Angels:**

#### **An Alternative Approach to Autism.**

By Mirella Zanetti-Laporte

We have another author in our community!

Mirella is a former parent with Children at Risk, her son Martin attended Thursday’s Child Nursery School

Enter the mysterious world of autism and experience it in a whole new way. Be prepared to question your beliefs as you discover who is teaching whom and what is being overlooked about these children as we puzzle through the mystery. By being who they are, could these children be agents of change, guiding us towards a new reality, a new paradigm? Take a journey with this book and find out.

*“I hope this book will make a difference in many peoples’ lives.”*

Copies \$16, available for purchase:

- Baico Books, Sunday, June 11th, Author Book Signing between 1PM and 4PM at 102 McEwen (corner of Richmond Road, going in the direction towards Lincoln Heights/Brittania)
- June 15, 7 pm, CAR AGM
- June 25, 12 to 3 pm, Autism Community Annual Family Picnic, Brewer Park

## **ASO NEWS**

### **New Services at ASO-Ottawa**

Submitted by Marlene Stepan

Most of you know me as a volunteer and board member of Children at Risk, Ottawa. As a vice-president, I have taken over some special projects including the human resources portfolio and provided administration and database support.

Recently I have added another hat to my collection by joining the Autism Society Ontario-Ottawa Chapter as the new Community Coordinator. In this role, I provide information and support to families and individuals impacted by the autism spectrum. As I meet with key players from different agencies and organizations, I identify gaps in the system and promote the expansion of services in our community. Over the last four months, we have received valuable feedback from surveys completed by our members regarding the needs of our community. We welcome you to contact us to share

your ideas on how we can better serve our community. We will keep you posted on upcoming focus groups.

We have also reestablished a resource library (books, tapes, DVD's) that is now open to the public. Please come visit our office in the Bronson Centre at 211 Bronson Avenue, Ottawa (Bronson, just North of Somerset, call 230-6305 for hours).

Enjoy your summer!

Marlene Steppan, ASO Ottawa Community Coordinator  
Autism Society Ontario-Ottawa Chapter

**R.I.A.S.  
REVERSE INTEGRATION  
ASPERGER'S SYNDROME CAMP**

AT "THE NEW CAMP LEO" August 2006

"New Camp Leo" launches a new pilot project, rarely found in the Ottawa region. R.I.A.S - Reverse Integration Asperger's Syndrome Camp - is a model whereby volunteer children and adolescents from the community at large, will be paired with Camp Leo's participants with Asperger's Syndrome encouraging mutual friendships and rewarding social interactions.

A growing list of pre-teens and teens of both genders have already shown great interest in joining R.I.A.S - Camp Leo as Peer Buddy Volunteers, this August. Contact [Campleo@rogers.com](mailto:Campleo@rogers.com) to find out how to join the Volunteer Peer Buddy program or your school guidance counsellor.

"Peer Buddies" will undergo training by an experienced specialist in the area of Reverse Integration, prior to the onset of camp. Furthermore, the Reverse Integration expert will also conduct weekly "Socialization Skills" classes during camp including active engagement, cooperative games, bonding activities and Bully proofing.

Participants with Asperger's Syndrome will also be surrounded by knowledgeable staff, caring and sensitive to their needs. Campers with Asperger's Syndrome will be given every opportunity to make life long friendships not only with the "volunteer peer buddy" but with other campers with Asperger's as well.

Teachers and school counselors, let your students know about this unique volunteering opportunity. Parents of children and adolescents with Asperger's Syndrome register you child at R.I.A.S - Camp Leo by visiting [www.autismottawa.com](http://www.autismottawa.com) for a registration form. If you have any specific

questions, regarding this new pilot project, please email us at [campleo@rogers.com](mailto:campleo@rogers.com)

Camp Dates : July 31st - August 25th  
Monday through Friday - 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Location : 235 Donald St , Ottawa - Just off the Queensway at Vanier Parkway or accessible from St. Laurent Blvd.

Registrations should be submitted by June 1st (earlier the better to assist with finding the right volunteer buddy). Registration can be conditional upon the availability of the appropriate volunteer.

Note: Spots still available for Autism campers ages 6-18 - See [www.autismottawa.com](http://www.autismottawa.com) for Registrations

**ASO June Workshops**

The ASO-Ottawa chapter is hosting its first annual Autism Summer Training program in June 2006. These workshops were initially planned to train camp counselors who will work with children on the autism spectrum this summer at Camp Leo. These high-quality presentations are open them to the public. Please contact the ASO-Ottawa office at 230-6305 or visit [www.autismottawa.com](http://www.autismottawa.com) for more information. We still are accepting registrations.

\* Saturday June 10 (2:30pm-5:30pm): Sensory Integration, Music Therapy and Neurodevelopment with Kathleen Rooney, M.Ed.

Sunday June 11 (10:00am-4:00pm): ABA & ASD: the ABC's of Adaptive Behaviour & Dealing with Challenges with Mary Champagne, Clinical Psych. Associate

\* Saturday June 17 (1:00pm-5:00pm): Applied Verbal Behaviour & Natural Environment Training with Lynne Thibodeau, M.Ed and Jackie Chretien, B.Ed.

\* Sunday June 18 (10:00am-4:00pm): Overview of PECS & Visual Strategies with Bob Ferguson, M.A. SLP, OCDSB Autism Team

**TOONIES FOR AUTISM**

The South Branch Elementary School raised over \$1,400 this year for the Autism Society Ontario's fundraiser! **Seth Flanagan**, diagnosed with Autism at the age of two, has attended this school for 3 years. Along with Seth's mother, Patricia and fellow Autistic student Adam Bergeron, Seth inspired his school to raise these phenomenal funds to help Autism research!

## MORE CAMPS...

### Spectrum Summer 2006 Social/Recreational Camp

The Spectrum Intervention Group is very happy to announce that, thanks to the Community Foundation, we will once again be able to offer our summer program.

Program details are available on the website at [www.spectrumig.com](http://www.spectrumig.com) and click on "summer program".

The details are as follows:

- Morning program for 3 to 6 year olds from 9-12 pm, 8 weeks, commencing July 4 to Sep 1, 2006 (closed week of July 31, 2006) Maximum class size of 8, Cost is \$125/week, except Sessions 1 & 5 where cost is \$100/week. Led by Jackie Chretien, B.Ed., this program will resemble a JK/SK class with emphasis on school skills, language, social skills and, of course, fun and motivating activities. This small group setting with ratios of staff to students of 1:2 or 1:1 is ideal to work on the individualized target goals of each participant based on the registration/assessment questionnaire, observations and discussion. with parents. Jackie who is our full-time teacher for this class during the school year, has more than 3 years experience working with children with ASD doing ABA/VB programs in one on one and in small group settings.

- Afternoon program for 7-15 year olds from 1-4pm, 8 weeks commencing July 4 to Sep 1, 2006 (closed week of July 31, 2006) Maximum class size of 8. For our older participants, the emphasis will be on recreational/leisure activities that are fun and will help motivate participants towards their individual social, language, and sometimes academic goals. Children may be divided into 2 or more groups depending on the needs of the participants each week. Individual goals will be established based on the parents'

input, questionnaire and observation by staff. This program will be lead by Genna McBain, B.Ed. Genna also has several years experience working with children with ASD doing ABA/VB programs in one-on-one and group settings. She is also a permanent therapist with our JK/SK group during the school year, as well she leads our after-school program for 7-12 year olds.

- Full-day program for 7-15 years olds from 9-4pm, Maximum 8 participants. Session 1: week of July 4-7 - Cost - \$160 Session 2: week of July 17-21 - Cost - \$200. Similar to the half day program above with many fun activities and led by staff with years of experience working with children with ASD. For our older participants, the emphasis will be on recreational/leisure activities that are fun and will help motivate participants towards their individual social, language, and sometimes academic goals. Children may be divided into 2 or more groups depending on the needs of the participants each week. Individual goals will be established based on the parents' input, questionnaire and observation by staff. Plans are to include some field trips in the afternoon. Swimming at the Boys And Girls club may be offered within our programs, for those who wish to participate, subject to availability of the pool and lifeguard staff.

Registrations will be taken on first come basis, advance notice will be given in the event any cancellations are necessary.

If you have further questions you can contact Jackie at [jackie@spectrumig.com](mailto:jackie@spectrumig.com) or Annette at [annette@spectrumig.com](mailto:annette@spectrumig.com) by e-mail or telephone us at 828-0428 ext. 29 (you will have to leave a message).

## Summer Jinzai Camps at Stronger You

This camp is for ASD children and has run for the last two years, the kids have a great time with experienced instructors. They run the Tuesday evening classes, which some of you may know formerly as the personal awareness class, it is now the Jinzai.

Make friends, splash at the Water Park, Do Crafts, Play Games, Go on outings, Learn bullyproofing, Life skills and more..... Register now for camp and don't miss out on the adventure!

July 4-7 4 days - \$160

Aug. 14-18 5 days - \$200

Camps run from 9am-4pm

A maximum of 10 children/wk (ages 10-17)

Located in the heart of Barrhaven!

3570 Strandherd Drive, Unit 13

(613) 823-6697, (613) 823-8508 fax

[www.strongeryou.com](http://www.strongeryou.com)

8. Visual materials to support ABA/IBI Programs: numbers, colours, shapes, alphabet

9. Visuals to support "Social Stories"

- birth of a sibling

- telephone etiquette

10. Learning materials: alphabets - block letters and cursive letters with upper and lower case

- alphabet letters are all single cards good for learning the alphabet and pairing with pictures to learn spelling.

- clocks - to teach time with both regular and digital

Let me know if this could help you?

Please visit my new web site

[www.picturecardcommunication.com](http://www.picturecardcommunication.com).

Sincerely, Marion Pusey

Email: [ppusey@sympatico.ca](mailto:ppusey@sympatico.ca)

Phone: (613) 825-4803

## iRunman - Autistic Celebration Run

### **Autistic Youth Runs PEI Tip-to-Tip for Autism Acceptance and Education**

(Oyster Bed Bridge, PEI, May 28, 2006)

On July 2nd, 2006, 18 year old Alex Bain will leave North Cape in a bid to be the first autistic to run Prince Edward Island tip to tip. Along the way, he hopes to raise \$20/km for his almost 300 km trek that will end in East Point on July 15th. The funds will be used to bring internationally recognized expert Dennis Debbaudt to PEI on September 27, 2006, for a series of 3 seminars about what happens and what should happen in encounters between autistics, emergency first-responders and law-enforcement officers.

Almost every weekend, for most of the year, Alex puts on this trademark yellow t-shirt, heads to a charitable road race on the Island. He runs not only for the charity benefiting from each race, but also for autism. Not to raise money to find a "cure" or to "prevent" people like himself from ever being born, the focus of most autism runs, but to raise awareness and acceptance. His recognition as the PEI RoadRunners 2004 Patterson Palmer Rookie of the Year and 2005 Ewen Stewart Inspirational Runner of the Year reflects both his running and advocacy abilities.

## PICTURE CARD COMMUNICATION

Submitted by Marion Pusey

I am a parent of a 22 year old son Eric with autism. I create and make personalized/individualized visual resources & educational materials for people affected by Autism and their families, teachers, therapists, etc.

### Products:

1. Toileting, hand washing, bedtime sequence

2. Choice boards: outings eg.

McDonald's, Canadian Tire, Toys R Us,

Loblaws, Wal-Mart, Zellers

- park, bicycle, trampoline

- snacks

- pre-school and school activities

3. Picture key chains - to attach to belt loops for easy and quick access.

4. Dressing Program: for Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, rain and bed-time.

5. Puzzles - farm animals (full colour cartoon) - "5 Little Monkeys"

6. Visual Schedules: hand washing, brushing teeth, toileting, dressing, > bedtime, pre-school and school

7. Emotions - choice board with "I feel."

- emotion thermometers



Accompanying Alex on her bike, and organizing Mr Debbaudt's PEI seminar, is Alex's mother, Janet Norman-Bain, known as "jypsy" to many in the autistic community both locally and internationally through a website she ran from 1995-2005, "Oops...Wrong Planet! Syndrome" at PlanetAutism.com Jypsy and another of her four children are diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome, an autistic spectrum diagnosis. Jypsy watched Alex start grade 1 unable to speak and graduate from Bluefield High School twelve years later with honours and prizes for top marks in two of his classes. This July she'll be there to see him fulfill his dream to be the first autistic to run PEI tip to tip and help fundraise to make PEI a safer, more inclusive community for all autistic people.

Studies show that autistic people are no more likely to break the law than non-autistic people, but are 7 times more likely to come into contact with law enforcement officers. Dennis Debbaudt, a professional investigator, journalist and a member of the American Society for Law Enforcement Training (ASLET), is the father of a 21-year-old autistic son. He has educated law enforcement, criminal justice, and education professionals, as well as first-responders, autistics, and parents throughout Canada, the US, and the UK but has yet to present in the Maritimes.

The response of autistic people to encounters with emergency first responders may not always be socially expected or behaviourally typical. Mr. Debbaudt will explain how autistic reactions in some situations, such as running away, unsteadiness, apparently unpredictable or impulsive behaviour, or failure to respond in the expected way, may be misunderstood by first response professionals, resulting in serious consequences. Mr. Debbaudt's law enforcement and first responder seminars offer tips and options for communications and responses designed to successfully resolve a call involving a person on the autistic spectrum, while his seminar for autistics, parents, caregivers,

school personnel and other people, will address the many ways that parents can keep their child secure and safe both in the home and in the community and how autistics can increase their own safety and security. Everyone will come away with a good, practical understanding of the best approaches to make interactions with autistics more informed, safer and less stressful for all involved.

Autism is a neurological difference classified as a developmental disability. Autistic people have atypical behaviours in three areas: social interaction, communication, and restricted interests or repetitive behaviours. Autistics are different at the most basic level available: how they experience the world, and how they learn from it. Autism presents with measurable differences in perception, attention, memory, intelligence, etc. The autistic order and progress of development is different from the typical version as is autistic brain structure, allocation, and function. Autism presents strengths not available to the typical population, but the different pattern of strengths and weaknesses characterizing autism results in many difficulties as atypical needs and adaptive but atypical autistic behaviours are at odds with what is considered or expected as "normal".

The PEI Council of the Disabled is assisting PlanetAutism.com in this fundraiser and will be handling the donations. Charitable donations can be made to the "PEI Council of the Disabled" (Runman Fund) by mail or at any Credit Union across PEI. Online donations can be made on the Run's website, [www.PlanetAutism.com/runman](http://www.PlanetAutism.com/runman) where much more information about the Run can be found including the daily schedule and a blog where you can follow the Run day by day.

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