



Let ME  
spread the  
word on  
AUTISM

**AUTISM SOCIETY**  
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism  
Maine

# Maine Autism Connections

## Summer Tips

by Tena Hinds

Summer vacation is fast approaching and without the structure that school days provide, the big challenge is keeping our children somewhat engaged and busy with activities and outings. Hopefully day care will provide for some. For those that do not have that availability there are things you can do right from home that are not too costly or time consuming. We have identified several links to different sites that have suggestions for activities to do at home, or community based events that are happening around the state. (See below)

For younger kids be mindful of the amount of time they spend with their electronic devices. Too much is not good, but it can certainly be effective as a motivator that follows a less preferred activity, such as a "chore", that you and your child have identified as something he/she can be responsible for now that they have more time in their day. "Screen time" could also be built into their daily schedule during a time of day when everyone needs a little down time.

For older children, consider having them volunteer at a local non-profit organization such as an animal shelter or library.

## Summer 2019

Volunteering can be very rewarding and will start to develop skills that will be needed when employment becomes a reality.

The links below will take you to sites that offer community based events and or ideas of activities that you can do from home.

Most importantly, Enjoy the next few months!

<https://www.visit-maine.com/state/family-activities/> state wide

<https://www.care.com/c/stories/3331/101-fun-things-to-do-with-kids-this-summer/> list of activities including some ideas that include gross motor activities

<https://www.womansday.com/life/work-money/tips/g1212/summer-activities/> photo gallery of ideas that can be done at home

<https://arv.macaronikid.com/> events in Central Maine

<https://portland.macaronikid.com/> events in Southern Maine

<https://midcoastme.macaronikid.com/> events in Midcoast area

<http://www.kitetails.org/calendar-of-events/> events Portland



**Maine Autism Connections**  
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**Staff**

Cathy E. Dionne, *Executive Director*

Tena Hinds,  
*Autism Information Specialist  
Coordinator*

Susan Vincent,  
*Communications Director*

Tara Perry, *Office Assistant*

Betsy Mahoney,  
*Community Outreach Liaison*

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*Graphic Designer:* Justine Bickford

*Proofreader:* Tena Hinds

*Contributing writers:* As bylined

*Send article ideas and suggestions for  
our newsletter to:  
asm@asmonline.org*

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## President's Message

Summer, Yikes!

Summer vacation conjures up hope of fun times and relaxation for many families yet terror for others. I have learned that summer can be a very stressful time for families of children with autism. My first education in this area came when I was a camp counselor in the mid 1970's at Camp Waban in southern Maine. Our director, Wayne Wormwood, taught us about the safety challenges of having a camp on the water and the importance of keeping all of the campers safe because one accident would cause families to keep their children home and take away opportunities for future potential campers for years to come. Later in life many children, teenagers and families taught me about their challenges of summer but all of them grew at their own pace just like the flowers in our gardens.



Summer Safety, particularly around water, is a big challenge for all families. For children with autism there is often a much longer developmental period before awareness of danger is learned, too little fear of water, traffic in parking lots, eating non-food items, can persist well into the grade school years or longer for some individuals on the spectrum. The flip side is too much fear, of insects or different textures such as sand or grass, of thunder storms or unpredicted weather, can result in the whole family feeling anxious and avoiding activities.

Summer Fun can happen with patience and taking one small step at a time. Staying indoors, avoiding everything or taking no steps mean that it never gets easier. Now that autism awareness has increased there are many blogs and resources about taking safety measures and doing fun things like planting gardens. Kayaking, running and swimming can be very therapeutic. We have learned that anyone can learn relaxation strategies to work through anxious moments and there is cognitive behavior therapy with a licensed therapist if simple strategies don't work.

Here is one link with some good ideas about summer: <https://www.autism-society.org/keeping-summer-safe-enjoyable-children-autism/>

We still have opportunities for helping with some of ASM priorities for 2019

Membership has increased some but we are still lower than usual. Have you renewed, asked a friend to join?

Adult Social Group - those who attend find it very welcoming and a nice way to socialize, so we are looking to spread the word to others who might enjoy getting together with peers for dinner and/or a variety of activities. We have an Autism Information Specialist helping out now and all ideas are considered.

Reading and commenting on proposed legislation via email (often with only 24 hours to respond) to help our legislative committee

The Bicycle Ride for Autism September 14, Fall Conference

Would you like to volunteer or participate in one of the events or as part of a short term action group? Call or let us know by sending an email [asm@asmonline.org](mailto:asm@asmonline.org)

Finally, do you have questions for your Board President? If you send questions with Ask Nancy in the subject line I will try my best to find an answer to your question.  
[boarddirectors@asmonline.org](mailto:boarddirectors@asmonline.org)

*Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, President Board of Directors*

Editorial Notes: Maine Autism Connections and Autism Society of Maine programs and services are made possible by donations from people like you and funding from the Maine Department of Health & Human Services. We hope you will also visit us online at <http://www.asmonline.org>, where we have a great deal of information available about autism, programs, resources, news, a calendar of events, legislation and more.

## Become a Member Today - We Need Your Help!

### MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

#### Why should I become a paid member of the Autism Society of Maine?

Like most non-profits, the Autism Society has to rely on the generous donations from families and fundraisers to sustain our agency. Membership is a huge part of our sustainability. We believe that every person who reaches out to us will get a response that will help them and their situation. Sometimes just talking with someone who understands is helpful – that is what we do. Whether we are corresponding with you on phone or by email, we provide valuable information from where to get a diagnosis, how to fill out a MaineCare application, setting up an Autism Information Specialist to attend an IEP with you. Being

a paid member helps in all these areas by allowing us to do our job. Membership also gives you the opportunity to participate in our Family Retreat Weekend, fall conference, or two summer camps offered by ASM. You're valued.

ASM would like increase membership to 400 families which would be \$10,000. If we could get 200 business's to become a member that would be \$30,000. Knowing that we could rely on this every year would help us to continue to serve you.

If you're already a paid member, thank you for your support. If you're not a paid member would you consider investing \$25 a year? Become a part of our family and a valued member of our organization!

[Click here for the membership application.](#)

### Social Groups Needed!

*by Tara Perry*

Have you ever thought of hosting or facilitating a social group? The Teen Social Group is such a great place for teens to meet new friends, practice and learn social skills all in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. There is such a great need for these groups for children of all ages, unfortunately, there are so few to fill the need. It doesn't take a whole lot of time and the benefits are incalculable. I wonder if more people would be willing to facilitate a group if they knew more about what it consists of and how easy it is to be successful at it.

Rules are a must! There needs to be clear, set boundaries so everyone knows what is expected of them and what is considered unacceptable behavior during the group. Our teens were included in making the list of rules- after all, it is their group.

Activities- Most kids like to be kept busy so be sure to have a schedule of things to do during group. Our group lasts from 1.5 – 2 hrs. (Depending on the teens) and consists of a craft, a snack and 1 or 2 games. Our group enjoys Bingo and Trivia these can take up a bit of time, we also break into groups and play other games sometimes. Jenga and Sorry are other group favorites. While the teens are engaged in their craft or while there is some "awkward silence" we sometimes answer "would you rather" questions to encourage conversation.

That's it. That's all there is to it! I get to hang out with some amazing teens, get to know them and help them create friendships with other teens! It's a wonderful thing! Parents are present during the group but usual hang out in another room or area and talk amongst themselves. The social group benefits everyone! Sounds easy doesn't it? It is! Do you think you might be interested in starting a group in your area? I know that there are many kids out there looking for groups like these, the need for these groups are great throughout the state. If you think you might like to start a group but still have questions, give us a call, we will be more than happy to help get you started! To see the criteria we require for our group go to <https://www.asmonline.org/programs/teen-group.aspx>



### Celebration of Achievements

Share your story with us! ASM is proud to showcase stories of people with ASD that can be an inspiration to others. See the ASM website Celebration of Achievements page for more information if you are interested in submitting your story.

<https://www.asmonline.org/News/107/Article/7880/>

Please submit your story to this email address: [info@asmonline.org](mailto:info@asmonline.org)  
or call ASM with any questions you may have: 1-800-273-5200.

# 17th Annual Walk for Autism

by Susan J. Vincent

## 2019 Fun Facts!

**Teams Registered: 119 Online Registrants: 1,087**

**Funds Raised: \$53,740.78**

**Top Fundraising: Team Tommy, Biddeford location raised \$5,200**

With five different locations across Maine, we all get slightly different weather! For most the most part, the day was a bit chilly, but the weather cooperated and didn't get in the way of making this year's Walk-for-Autism a fun and memorable event. It was wonderful to see so many of you walking and volunteering! This year's theme was "Bubbles!" T-shirts were specially designed with the theme and each child was given bubbles to have fun with!

Although the Walk for Autism funds ASM programs throughout the year, the event means so much more. Families, caregivers, individuals and loved ones see each other and feel the support of their community; this makes the event so very special.

**Let's celebrate our SHARED SUCCESS!** The Walk for Autism raised \$53,740.78! We are so grateful to have the many wonderful people who "teamed up" to raise vital funding, and who believe it is important to raise money that will stay here in Maine. This funding supports programs for children, adults with ASD and their families, the professionals who support them and the community they live and work in.

**A HUGE "THANK YOU!"** goes out to all of the volunteers who shared their time to make the day run smoothly from beginning to end. We couldn't have done it without you! Vendors really did a nice job of making their table fun for people to stop by with games, raffles and giveaways! Thank you!

Volunteers came out to entertain us with music, juggling, bubble blowing and more! Thank you!

**Team Leaders:** Cathy Dionne & Tara Perry (Bangor), Susan Vincent (Biddeford), Jean Mason & Tena Hinds (Farmington), Kendra Campbell (Fryeburg), Jennifer Hendren from UNE Special Care Dentistry Association (Portland)

**ASM Board Members:** Richard Farnsworth, Sherry Pike, Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, Tiffany Rooney, Jon Youde, Christina Nason, Brigid Rankowski, Kim Webber, Joshua Nash and Deb Harvey (Autism Information Specialist)

**Group Volunteers:** UNE Special Care Dentistry Association, UNE Pre-OT Club, Kohl's Cares Associates, TD Bank, Stillwater Academy and Louise Magoon's Group of volunteers.

**First Responders:** We appreciate the first responders that came out to "Meet and Greet" with the families, answer questions and even let the kids check out their vehicles and sit inside! Firemen and police officers made a special effort to engage the children in a friendly manner to show that they are the "good guys" and indeed, they are!

**Sponsors:** The Walk for Autism is built on a foundation of Community Partners; this important event wouldn't be possible without the generosity and support of all levels of sponsorship and in-kind donations by organizations, local businesses and food companies. Refreshments, giveaways and activities were offered at no cost with the help of in-kind donations.

## DIAMOND SPONSOR:



## PLATINUM SPONSORS:



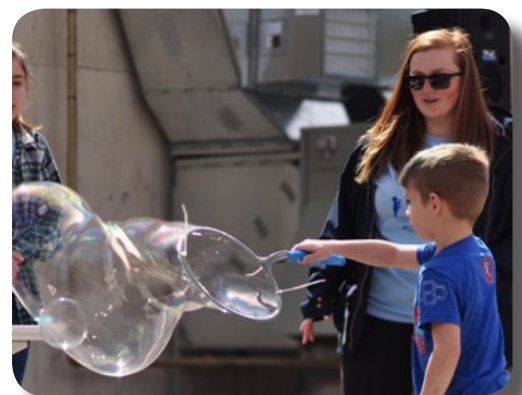
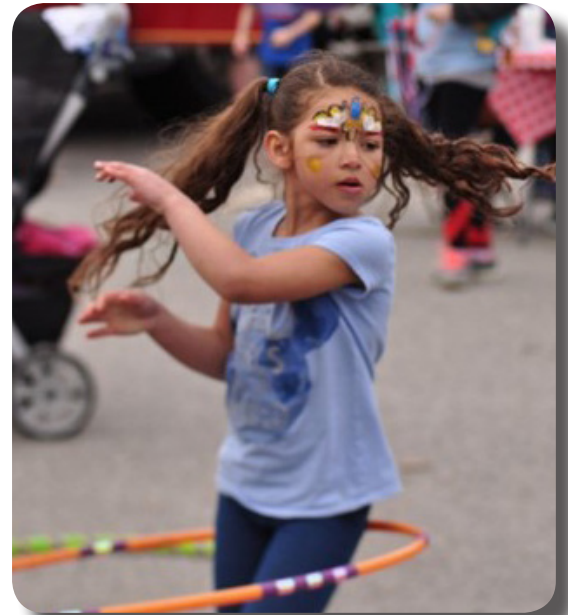
## GOLD SPONSORS:

### Thank You GOLD Sponsors!



**Thank you to all who made a donation and participated!**

Walk for Autism photos can be seen on ASM's website photo gallery: <https://www.asmonline.org/Gallery/Category/2670>



# April Autism Awareness Month - Celebrate Differences

by Susan J. Vincent

Together, we have made the most of this special time during April Autism Awareness Month to celebrate and educate about Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Autism Society of Maine will continue to engage and educate the community all year long.

**ASM joined Autism Society National with “Celebrate Differences”** autism awareness campaign during National Autism Awareness Month. A united message was shared **“Individuals with autism are unique. Each person has strengths and no two people with ASD are alike.”**

**ASM hosted events with the help of our Autism Information Specialists** and added to the many happenings going on across the State.

**Social media played a huge part in the “Celebrate Differences” campaign** as well as ASM’s website in sharing autism awareness. Autism information including facts, links to resources, videos, webinars, local events and ways to share and get involved in the community were shared with thousands of viewers. Issues regarding autism and employment, safety, bullying and siblings were just a few topics that started conversations and encouraged learning more about autism.

**Autism Awareness packets were mailed out that included useful autism resources** to help educators support their students with ASD, as well as help their classmates understand autism in a positive light. These packets were mailed out at no cost to anyone by request. Packets were tailored for either schools or the community. If there was specific information needed, that was also included as well.

## April 2019 as Autism Awareness Month in Maine

Representative Craig Hickman presented ASM Board Directors & Staff with official document of “Joint Resolution Recognizing April 2019 as Autism Awareness Month,” adopted by members of the Maine House of Representatives and Senate Chamber. We appreciate this official recognition in support of individuals and children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families in Maine.

*(Back row L to R) Betsy Mahoney, Sherry Pike, Christina Nason, Jon Youde, (Front row) Cathy Dionne, Representative Craig Hickman, Nancy Ponzetti Dyer, Representative Richard Farnsworth (ASM Board Member), Tiffany Rooney*



## A NEW fundraising opportunity was rolled out just in time for Autism Awareness Month!

The “Heart” campaign was a huge hit! We supplied “heart” cards to schools and businesses to sell for one dollar. In turn, the person who purchased a card has his/her name written on the card, and then displayed in a window or on wall as a supporter of ASM!

**A Special Thank You to:** Ready Set Grow, H & R Block, Howie’s Pub, Bath Elks Lodge, Buddie’s Groceries, Van Der Brew, and Cobbie’s Corner Store. Thank you to all that donated a dollar!

 **AUTISM SOCIETY**  
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Maine



## Long Legislative Session Coming to an End

by Betsy Mahoney

The first session of the 129<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature is steaming to the finish line, expected at the end of June. ASM has weighed in on a number of bills that would impact families with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities. Several bills that would help our families are likely to pass.

ASM presented testimony on the following bills:

- In favor of a bill that would create a waiver for home and community-based services for children with autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disabilities. These children are only partially served by MaineCare Sections 28 and 65. The committee passed the bill unanimously but the Appropriations Committee must agree to set aside funds to implement it. We will keep you posted.
- In favor of Rep. Farnsworth's bill that called for tracking of how often schools restrain or place students in seclusion. Schools will have to file annual reports, including any injuries. The Education Committee unanimously passed an amended version of the bill.
- In favor of a bill creating an oversight panel to review deaths and serious injuries, in response to clients with ID who died while receiving developmental services. The Health and Human Services Committee passed an amended version of the bill.
- In favor of Rep. Farnsworth's bill that would strengthen supports for adults with intellectual disabilities and autism in crisis. The Health and Human Services Committee passed an amended version of the bill.
- Neither for nor against a bill that encourages but does not require shared decision making as an alternative to guardianship (in the Maine Probate Code) for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Judiciary Committee unanimously passed an amendment, which ASM supported, that allows a probate judge to consider vetting members of a person's supported decision-making team; and to ask for reports on current SDM arrangements.
- In favor of a bill that would add coverage to MaineCare for dental services to adults with intellectual disabilities or



autism spectrum disorder. The Health and Human Services Committee passed an amended version of the bill.

- Neither for nor against a bill that would require the transfer of services to children with disabilities between ages 3-5 from Child Development Services to the Maine public schools. The bill needed more detail, and was carried over to next year.
- In favor of legislation that would require that wages for direct care workers for adults with ASD/IDD are aligned with the minimum wage. The bill is still pending; it passed the HHS Committee with a divided report (some members in favor, some against).
- Neither for nor against a bill removing the right of parents to decline to vaccinate their children for philosophical and religious reasons. Our testimony acknowledged that there is no evidence linking vaccines with autism. The bill passed and is headed to the governor's desk.
- In favor of a bill that would have established a MaineCare Reimbursement Rate Review Process and the MaineCare Independent Rate Commission. The HHS Committee did not pass this bill.
- In opposition to a bill that would have shortened the period for parents who place their special needs child in a private school to file for a due process hearing to ask for reimbursement. The bill did not pass.

Please check the ASM website legislation tracker for updates on these bills.

## Nominate Someone Special for an ASM Award!

We are still accepting nominations for someone special that deserves recognition? This could be a teacher, an in-home worker, or someone who has touched the lives of individuals with autism. ASM is now accepting award nominations and we want to celebrate these special people at our Annual Meeting.

If you would like to submit a nomination, please write in 1,000 words or less why this person should receive this award and attach it to the form that can be found on the ASM website and due by September 16th:

[www.asmonline.org/about/about.aspx](http://www.asmonline.org/about/about.aspx)

ASM's Annual Meeting will be held on **October 4**  
with location to be announced at a later time.

Maine Autism Connections, Autism Society of Maine, Summer 2019



# Upcoming Events

## 2019 ASM Family Retreat Weekend

St Joe's College, Standish Maine  
July 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>

This is an annual event that brings families from all over the state together to connect with other families and have fun.



\*ASM also offers a Saturday only policy for families that are unable to spend the night.

Space is limited! Call ASM 1-800-273-5200 for more information or to have your application sent to you

## Camp Summit

Farmington, Maine  
July 29<sup>th</sup>- August 8<sup>th</sup>



This is a two week, day program that runs Mondays through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Call ASM at 1-800-273-5200 for more information.

## "Finding the Pieces"

August 5, 2019- August 16, 2019  
Biddeford, Maine



The camp takes place at the Ross Center, 189 Alfred Street, Biddeford and will run August 5 through August 16. This is a two week, day program that runs Monday – Friday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Visit [www.asmonline.org](http://www.asmonline.org) for more information.

## RIDE FOR AUTISM

September 14, 2019

Kennebunkport Conservation Trust Building  
Gravelly Brook Road, Kennebunkport

Join us for a ride to remember! This bike ride covers several miles along the coastline in Kennebunkport, including up to five beaches and world renowned scenic view areas. Staggered start times for the **50, 25, and 10 mile** routes are well marked and offer an opportunity for everyone to finish together and enjoy a spectacular lunch.



Call ASM at 1-800273-5200, or visit:

<https://www.asmonline.org/get-involved/ride-for-autism.aspx>

for more information

Registration is \$35 or onsite \$40

## Save The Date ASM's Annual Awards & Banquet

October 4, 2019 at 6 PM

Location TBA

Please join us for the ASM Annual Board Meeting and Banquet Dinner. We will welcome new board members and honor members finishing their term. Awards will be presented from various categories. There is no cost to attend this meeting, but membership is recommended.

Seating is limited; please call ASM to make your reservations: 1-800-273-5200

## 3rd Annual Autism Fall Conference

Black Bear Inn and Conference Center  
4 Godfrey Drive, Orono



On November 2nd we will be hosting our 3rd Annual Fall Conference that will focus on how to help people affected by autism reach their fullest potential.

Dr. James Ball, author of "Early Intervention & Autism, Real-Life Question, Real-Life Answers", will present: "You can't make me: Proactive Strategies for Positive Behavioral Change."

He will discuss the 7 evidence based strategies that have been proven the most effective in teaching students and adults with an autism spectrum disorder. He will guide the participant, step by step, through the process of implementing these 7 evidence based strategies in a school based or adult services program. Real life examples will be used. Modifications will

be explored that allow this particular program to be effective with students significantly challenged with autism, as well as those students with Aspergers Syndrome. Because of the nature of this presentation, a question and answer period will be provided.

In addition to our keynote speaker, there will be 4 breakout sessions in the afternoon related to topics that assist in supporting the valued lives of individuals on the Autism Spectrum.

There is no cost for attendees and our hope is that everyone will leave with practical tools and strategies that can be implemented immediately in the home, school and/ or community. Hope to see you there!!

Stay tuned for more information re breakout sessions

For more information call 1-800-273-5200, or go to: <https://www.asmonline.org/News/107/Article/8265/>



# 2019 ASM Family Retreat Weekend

## St. Joseph's College, Standish Maine July 19th, 20th and 21st

Please join us! This is an annual event that brings families from all over the state together to connect with other families and have fun. This year's theme is "Superheroes" and it's looking like it is going to be another great year! Don't forget to bring your best Superhero attire- T-shirts, costumes, anything goes! Any guesses who Cathy Dionne will be dressing up as? Find out at the retreat! While the children are in the care of respite providers, caregivers have the opportunity to attend informational workshops, hang out with other families, or enjoy some alone time. The children will swim, rock climb, create a craft, play games and make new friends in small groups with

respite support. Each family has a dorm room with two twin beds. There is also room for blow up mattresses. All meals are provided for the weekend. Friday night is family Fun Night, a chance for families to settle in, catch up with other families and spend some great family time together! There will also be entertainment on Saturday night. This year the Great Stephan will take you on a captivating journey through his exceptional mind reading skills and discovery of the five senses. A leisurely check out on Sunday gives families time to explore the beautiful campus of St. Josephs College in Standish. Go to [https://www.asmonline.org/Pdf/Programs/Family-Retreat/2019%20Family%20Registration%20Packet%20\(6\).pdf](https://www.asmonline.org/Pdf/Programs/Family-Retreat/2019%20Family%20Registration%20Packet%20(6).pdf) to download an application or call ASM at 1-800-273-5200 for more information or to have your application sent to you.

### Respite Providers Needed

ASM is looking for more respite providers for our Family Retreat weekend. Do you or anyone you know love to play games, swim, do crafts and just hang out with some amazing kids? Respite providers work in groups and accompany the kids through the activity schedule during the retreat. Rooms and all meals are provided and all respite providers receive a stipend for the weekend. If you or someone you know may be interested or would like more information you can download an application at <https://www.asmonline.org/Pdf/Programs/Family-Retreat/2019%20RESPITE%20PACKET.pdf> or call ASM a 1-800-273-5200 for more information.



## Autism Information Specialists; What a Great Job They Do!

A BIG thank you to our Autism Information specialists, (AIS), who hosted several events around the state throughout the month of April to raise awareness and bring communities together.

Story hours with activities for children and resource information for adults occurred on:

4/6 - Children's story hour, followed with an activity at the Waterville Public Library

4/10 - Children's story hour, "Wiggles and Giggles" followed with an activity at the Lubec Public Library

4/19 - Q&A session for parents and professionals at the Charlotte Hobbs Library in Lovell

4/22 - A Sensory Friendly Movie Event featuring "Shazam" at the Magic Lantern Movie Theatre in Lovell

4/27 - "Sensory Day" at the Bingham Union Library

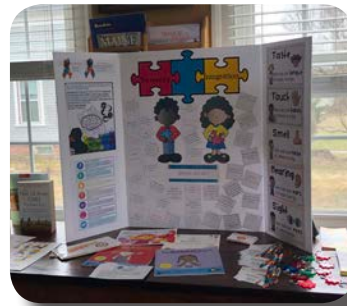
4/22- Table with information materials at a Sea Dogs Game in Portland

4/28- "Talk Back" Q&A session engaging actors and actresses as well as members of the audience after a presentation of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, was held in

Belfast at the Mid Coast Actors Studio

by Tena Hinds

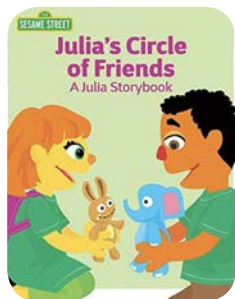
Several other events throughout the month utilized AIS by requesting informational materials. These events were organized by various organizations as they work to bring awareness to their communities in Warren, Ogunquit, Cumberland, Howland, Auburn and Boothbay.



# Welcome to the Autism Society of Maine Library!

[Visit the ASM Library](#)

The Lending Library is a FREE resource for Maine residents. The collection can be viewed on the ASM website or you may request a printed list to be mailed to you. Stop by the office, or have material sent to you (we will include return shipping label) by calling 1-800-273-5200 or email: [library@asmonline.org](mailto:library@asmonline.org)



ASM is proud to announce that we now have 3 books about Julia! For those of you who may not know, Julia recently moved to Sesame Street with her family. Julia has autism. There are currently 3 titles in Julia's story. 1) 1-2-3-We Are Amazing. This story stars Elmo, Abby, and their friend Julia, who has autism. Together, the three pals have a delightful playdate. 2) Family Forever. Join Julia's whole family for a day in the park with friends! 3) Circle of Friends. Come along with Julia as she experiences camp with her friends for the first time.

All three books are available at ASM. Email us at [library@asmonline.org](mailto:library@asmonline.org) or call 1-800-273-5200 for more info.



## EMAIL - SOCIAL MEDIA - ONLINE GROUPS



ASM is has a vibrant Facebook Community including parents, professionals, individuals and anyone interested in autism. If you are not already a friend of our Facebook page, we welcome you to join us!



Searching for autism information on the web can be overwhelming. The ASM website has relevant autism information and resources for Maine Residents.



We have a great collection of videos and will be adding more throughout the year!



Follow us on Twitter as we 'tweet' about autism!



Sign up to get interesting news and updates delivered to your email inbox from ASM!



My Autism Team: A reputable and friendly place to connect with other parents in Maine.

## Donations

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By Charlotte Blier  
Allen Bernier-  
By Nancy Moore

### IN MEMORY OF:

Lauris O'Neil-  
By the Vaillancourt Family

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**Autism Society of Maine**  
 72 B Main St, Winthrop, ME 04364

Items can be seen and ordered from ASM's  
 online store:

[www.asmonline.org/asm-storefront.aspx](http://www.asmonline.org/asm-storefront.aspx)

or by calling 1-800-273-5200.

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