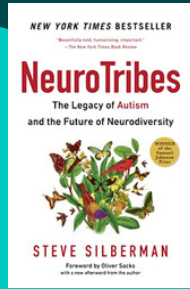




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Maine

Autism



Fall 2023

Connections

Let Me Introduce You to The Fraternal Order of Eagles

by Cathy E. Dionne

The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international nonprofit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness, and hope.

The F.O.E. was founded in February 1898 by six theatre owners gathered in a Seattle shipyard to discuss a musicians' strike. After addressing the matter, they agreed to "bury the hatchet" and form "The Order of Good Things." As numbers grew, members selected the Bald Eagle as the official emblem and changed the name to "The Fraternal Order of Eagles." This introduction ©Copyright 2023 Fraternal Order of Eagles.

Did you know that there have been past US Presidents, Comedians, Musical Performers who have been a member of Fraternal Order of Eagles?

The Fraternal Order of Eagles includes nearly 800,000 members and more than 1,500 locations across the U.S. and Canada.

In the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the term Aerie is the name of the building in which the members meet and hold events. Here in Maine, there are 14 Aerie's: #565 Casco, #4030 AERIE Port, #4131 Gray-New Gloucester, #1457 Skowhegan, #3137 Kennebec, #3792 Saco, #1248 Rumford Falls, #804 Biddeford, #4392 Waterboro, #2977 Westbrook, #4330 Cobbossee, #4352 Lake Region, #3177 Penobscot, and #618 Dirigo.



Story continued on Page 3



Maine Autism Connections
A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

President's Message



Hello ASM families and friends,

Welcome to fall, for me it is the most beautiful time to live in Maine. Fall also brings the stress of another school year for families. I hope that this year sees a successful year for your child. Remember to celebrate the small successes. Also, remember that ASM is here to support you and your loved one if you find you need support.

We have information specialists all over the state that can help to go over your child's IEP, or even attend an IEP meeting with you to support you.

For families with adults on the spectrum, you might be hearing a lot about the SIS assessment and the changes coming in 2025 to the section 21 and 29 waivers. Know that the society is keeping an eye on the information. There are still many things that will need to be figured out. Please feel free to call the office if you want to discuss concerns or have questions. We might not be able to answer them, but if we know what concerns our families have it is easier for us to advocate for you. Also, please reach out to your congressional representatives and let them know your concerns. This idea is in no way a done deal.

ASM is busy at work preparing for our fall conference in Bangor in November. Look for sign-up information in September. This year's conference is all about transitions. As we understand, transitions are hard for people on the spectrum no matter their age. We hope to see many of you there this year.

We still have two job openings, one for office support which is based out of our Winthrop office and is a part-time position. Our second opening is for a legislative leader to work on supporting ASM at the state house. This is a remote job. Please reach out to Cathy if you are interested in either of these positions.

happy fall

Sincerely,
Christina Nason, Board President

ASM's Mission Statement

The Autism Society of Maine creates connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources to live fully.

Board of Directors

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Maine Autism Connections

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Fraternal Order of Eagles

Continued from cover

Back in the fall of 2022, I was contacted by Joel Hersom, who at the time was the State President for Maine Fraternal Order of Eagles and he wanted to inform the society that he, as State President chose the Autism Society of Maine as the charity for the year. That means that all the 14 Aerie's would be contributing to this chosen charity. The Aerie's also support many other worthy causes throughout the year. In fact, this past year, donations coming from Maine totaled over \$44,000. Learning all that this wonderful organization does for their local communities and charitable giving was incredibly heartfelt. I did get to meet several of the Aerie's at their annual State Convention held in Waterboro on June 10th. There was a lovely reception held at Waterboro Aerie where the installation of officers happened, and then the state dinner.

One speaker was Thomas McGrath, who is the Field Service Manager with the Grand Aerie Fraternal Order of Eagles. He spoke about one of the charities that was established in 2014. The Fraternal Order of Eagles completed a \$25 million pledge to the University of Iowa to fund the Fraternal Order of Eagles Diabetes Research Center, a comprehensive research facility dedicated to progressing diabetes research in hopes of one day finding a cure. It was a very impressive undertaking, and the progress they are making is incredible.

After listening to Thomas, I was invited to say a few words on behalf of ASM and what it means to ASM for this donation. The group of two hundred individuals who sat and listened to what ASM does in Maine and how all funds stay in our state were very welcoming and pleased with what ASM does for families. The next part of the meeting was utterly amazing as I sat and watched each group come forward (all fourteen of them) and make their donations to various charities one by one. I was not keeping track of how much was being donated to ASM, but it was honoring to sit there and have each Aerie say to whom their donations were going. Most of the groups came up and had 5 to 12 different checks to donate to. They all encouraged each other and there was plenty of camaraderie to go around. The evening ended with lots of dancing and cocktails.

After all is said and done the Fraternal Order of Eagles donated to the Autism Society of Maine of \$23,379! I encourage anyone to check out a FOE near you.

ASM's New Book Club!

We are happy to announce that we have started a book club for Autistic adults and their allies. If you are a parent, caregiver, guardian, friend, or undiagnosed adult that's questioning if you're Autistic feel free to join in on the conversation. This is a safe space that offers people the chance to talk about Autism and different topics brought up in books.

Monthly meet-ups:

In-person at the Bangor Public Library Board Room: 5pm-6pm on the first Monday of the month

Via ZOOM: 12pm-1pm on the first Tuesday of the month. Join in anytime!

- **October Book:** Neurotribes by Steve Silberman
- **November Book:** Unmasking Autism by Devon Price
- **December Book:** The Electricity of Every Living Thing by Katherine May

Books not provided. If you need help obtaining a library card and requesting a book contact Jen at info@asmonline.org.



Autism Information Specialist Program *by Jennifer Frey*



Suzanne

Last quarter we had an Autism Information Specialist (AIS) training and are pleased to welcome 5 new Autism Information Specialists to our team. Angela M. from Cumberland County comes to us with a law degree and has 3 children, 2 are on the spectrum.

Suzanne joins us from Penobscot County and is a special education consultant with over 16 yrs. experience in classrooms. She is a foster and adoptive parent with two neurodiverse children. She has a passion for sharing brain-based teaching and learning strategies.

From Kennebec County, we have Kat joining us as an AIS. She was already a part of the team serving on the board of directors. We are excited to have her in this new role. She is also a mother of 3 with 2 children diagnosed with ASD.

Angela J. joins the team from Washington County and works in a variety of fields including: firefighter, BHP, and in Special Education as a paraprofessional. She is a mom of 3, including a teenage son diagnosed with ASD and another teenage son diagnosed with ADHD. She also has guardianship of an adult special lady who has Cerebral Palsy.

Angela

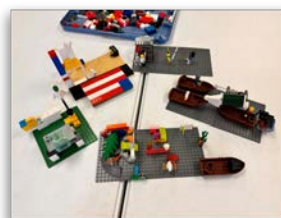


Finally, we welcome Judy, from Androscoggin County. She is the mother of an adult son on the spectrum and has a Master's in Social Work.

Already, these AIS have taken an active part in helping people throughout the State. They have talked one-on-one with families, consulted on a study about communication, helped a mother re-apply for MaineCare for her ASD child, joined in on and given presentations, signed up to host tables at events, and taken over as moderator to an online support group. We are so happy to have all of them and look forward to working with them.

Friday Fun Group!

by Jennifer Frey



Our Friday Fun Group for Neurodiverse Homeschoolers has been meeting since July at the Orono Public Library. We've been having a great time playing Legos and other board games. The kids in attendance created some nice builds and talked about other games they enjoy playing. Parents made connections and shared ideas as well as homeschool resources with each other.

For September, we are taking the group outside to have a Back to Homeschool Field Day! There will be yard games, face painting, bubbles, and more. We hope to see some new faces and make some new friends! We will also be offering an opportunity to get free school photos taken September 15th from 1pm-2pm.

For October we are planning a pet ghost craft! Kids will be able to decorate a jar to keep their pet in. They can also fill out an 'Afterlife Certificate' with their ghosts' name, favorite places to haunt, and more. In November we will have fun making fossils with air dry clay! We look forward to seeing all the creations the kids come up with.

If you would like to bring programs like this to your area we are looking for you! Become an Autism Information Specialist and pick your own hours to work. We can help you plan, prepare for, and advertise your own group. Register: 1-800-273-5200

Golf Benefit Tournament



A Huge Thank You!



Bechard Family

We hit a hole-in-one with our recent Golf Benefit Tournament held at the beautiful Meadows Golf Club in Litchfield, on Saturday, July 22nd.

This event truly exceeded all our expectations! From seasoned golfers to novices taking their first swing, everyone had a great time of friendly competition. We had nice weather, enthusiasm and camaraderie all rolled into a memorable day!

We give a special thank you to all 92 people, 23 teams and volunteers that joined us for the day, and to our amazing sponsors that made this event possible. Together, we raised 6,000!!

In addition, we want to give a heartfelt thank you to Kevin Bechard & Family, Kasey McDonough, Spurwink, A Family for ME, Reggie & Mary Ellen Bechard, and to Chad Hopkins, Beat the Pro. We hope to see you next year!



1st Net:
Frank's
Restaurant

Closest to the Pin:
Chris Brewer
Matthew Link

Putting Contest:
Pete Chaney
Howie Gooldrup

Long Drive:
Women: Suzanne Link
Mens: James Brewer

2nd Net:
The 19th Holers

50/50 Raffle
A heartfelt thank you to the very generous person who donated their 50/50 raffle winnings to ASM!

[See more pictures on ASM's online photo gallery!](#)





Our Annual Autism Family Retreat Weekend at St. Joseph's College was absolutely "out-of-this-world!"

It was a weekend filled with laughter, joy, and relaxation. Parents were able to take a much-needed break from their everyday challenges while their children had a blast participating in safe and fun activities with our incredible and caring respite providers. The theme for the weekend was "outer space," with "far out" decorations and crafts!

There was never a dull moment during the retreat! We had rock wall climbing, swimming, crafts, outdoor adventures, and a huge bouncy house. The kids were also thrilled to have Max Cookson visit and let them sign their name on his race car and even sit in it for a photo opportunity. And to top it all off, we had an incredible puppet show performance of "The Legend of the Banana Kid" by the talented Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers!

But it wasn't just the kids who had a great time. Parents also had the chance to join in on the fun with a painting class, canoeing, paddle boarding, and quality family time.

A presentation about the "[Empower the Learner](#)" program was given by Carrie Woodcock, the Executive Director of Maine Parent Federation and Cathy Dionne, ASM.

It truly was a wonderful experience for everyone!



Back to School!



The Autism Society of America and Nickelodeon co-created a free, downloadable, **[Back-to-School resource pack](#)** to help support students on the Autism spectrum and their teachers. Free to download, print, and customize with the support of your favorite characters, including: Spongebob Squarepants, Blue's Clue's, Bubble Guppies, Fairly Odd Parents, Paw Patrol, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Dora the Explorer, Peppa Pig, and Loud House.

- **Power Cards:** A "Power Card" is a visual aid that uses a person's interest as motivation to help teach a skill, encourage action, or set reminders. Power cards (featuring your favorite Nick characters) use a student's high-interest topic/passion to help encourage positive choices, set reminders, and support engagement.
- **Token Boards:** A token board is a visual support tool that provides reinforcement and supports self-management. They allow unstructured tasks to be broken down into clear and visual steps and support motivation and engagement through positive reinforcement using images of high interests/passions that are meaningful to the student.
- **Visual Schedules:** Visual schedules offer visual support that can help Autistic individuals set a routine, anticipate/foreshadow daily activities, transition between activities, develop independence, and can be used as a communication tool. Visual supports can also help the student process information easier and quicker.
- **Two visual schedule formats are provided**, one intended for younger students with larger images and one intended for older students with a more varied daily schedule. The resource pack can be used across all age ranges and should be personalized to support student agency and engagement.

ASM's Upcoming Events



17th Annual Ride for Autism

Registration is Open!
Saturday, October 7, 2023
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust
Gravelly Brook Rd., Kennebunkport

There are three rides to choose from: **10-mile, 25-mile, and 50-mile**, all are family friendly and have some great scenic views! After the ride, enjoy an amazing BBQ lunch and relaxation at the beautiful grounds of the Conservation Trust.

The ride is a great time and a wonderful way to spend some time with family and friends, supporting a great cause. Your ride awaits! **Register today!**

ASM's Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner



Friday, September 22, 2023
Augusta Country Club
19 Hammonds Grove, Manchester

ASM will update its members and stakeholders, share our accomplishments from the past year and what our goals are looking forward.

Join us for dinner and help us acknowledge award recipients for their outstanding contributions! Keynote Presenter will be announced. **RSVP ASM: 800-273-5200**



Virtual Sensory Santa Saturday, December 2nd

Would your child like to have a personal (Virtual) 10-minute visit with Santa? In addition to a visit, all children who participate will have a special treat mailed to them from Santa after their visit! Time Slots will be from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Registration begins on November 1st. Call **RSVP ASM: 800-273-5200**



#GivingTuesday November 28, 2023

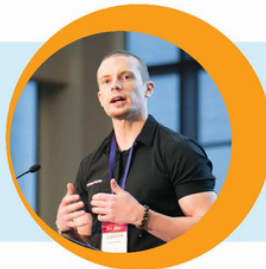
Join the **#GivingTuesday** movement and give whether it's some of your time, a donation, or the power of your voice in your local community. ASM will host a **Facebook campaign** and we are hopeful for donations.

AUTISM FALL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 4, 2023
CROSS INSURANCE CENTER
BANGOR, ME

KEYNOTE PRESENTER

Russell Lehmann, Autism
Presenter & Author of "On the
Outside Looking In"



TOPICS

- Transition & Kindergarten
- Transition from High School to Adulthood
- Everyday Life Transition
- Transition from Pediatrician to Primary Care Doctor
- Supported Decision Making
- Ageing Parents, Now What?

[Register Here!](#)



 Autism Society
Maine

1-800-273-5200 asmonline.org

ASM Social / Support Groups

[ASM's support group page listings can be found here](#)

Youth Social Group (Online & In Person)

If you have a teen (11-18) that may benefit and enjoy joining this group that meets at ASM in Winthrop and Online on the last Friday of the month from 6:00pm to 7:00pm, send an email: asm@asmonline.org or call ASM at 800-273-5200.

Young Adult Group (In Person)

A Social group for young adults (17-22) meets in Bridgton Community Center on the second Monday of each month from 6:00pm to 7:30pm Kendra Campbell. If you are interested in learning more about this group, please email Kendra: bridgtonais@gmail.com.



Adult Social Group (Online)

Our Adult Social Function Group is also meeting each month on the second Thursday from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. If you are an adult who would like more information about this group, I please email asm@asmonline.org or call ASM at 800-273-5200.

Teen Support Group for Autism

For youth ages 13 to 17 years old. 28 Yarmouth Crossing Dr., Yarmouth, Whilde, LLC meets on the third Friday of the month at 3:30pm to 4:30pm. For more information, contact: Jessica jessica@whilde.org

Parent Support Group (Online) with Cathy Dionne, Executive Director on the last Friday of the month at 12:00pm. If you have specific questions, concerns, or would just like to meet others who are going the same things then this group is just what you are looking for. For more information email: asm@asmonline.org

Friday Fun Group

A play group for Neurodiverse Homeschoolers that meets on the second Friday of each month from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. Orono Public Library Community Room. Recommended ages 5 to 11yrs. Contact Jennifer at the Autism Society of Maine: 1-800-273-5200 or info@asmonline.org

Intro to Dungeon & Dragons



Sessions are every other Thursday from 1p-2pm - FREE!

- Sept. 14th 1p-2p Zero Session
- Sept. 28th 1p-2p Session One
- Oct. 12th 1p-2p Session Two
- Oct. 26th 12p-2p Game Day

Come join ASM and Dungeon Master Bethany for this 4 week series that will help you get to know the game of Dungeons and Dragons. First, you'll pick a character & decorate your own dice bag! Then we'll work on character sheets and strategies and practice play. We'll end with a longer session to play a game and have some pizza!



Group meets at Galactic Comics: 547 Hammond St. Bangor
Recommended for ages 8-14
Email: info@asmonline.org to sign up



HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Halloween can be a lot to handle for children with Autism. All the sights and sounds can be scary and overwhelming! There are many alternatives to the traditional door-to-door trick or treat routines - like organized community events or even a candy treasure hunt in the safety of your own home. The possibilities are endless! We have put together a [“Halloween Tips & Strategies” page](#) on the ASM website that can be helpful for going out, crafts, games, and snacks. Here are a few tips:

Safety

- Make sure your child always has some form of identification on them and a way to communicate that they are lost.
- Use glow-in-the-dark tape on your child’s costume and yours too for night-time visibility.
- Wear something that distinguishes you from the crowd so your child can easily find you.

Costumes

- Keep it comfortable, check out the pajama section of the store for comfortable pajamas that look like costumes.
- Make it simple, too many accessories can complicate things and cause sensory overload.

Prepare

- Use social stories or visuals schedules to help prepare your child for Halloween.
- Practice step-by-step while wearing costume, ringing the doorbell or knocking at the door, have someone open the door, receiving candy, expressing thank you, etc.

Candy

- Teach your child not to eat anything they get from trick-or-treating without your permission.
- Exchange candy for treats that are safe for them to eat.



Thank you

We want to express our heartfelt appreciation to those who have organized online facebook fundraisers to support ASM, as well as to all the generous individuals who have made donations.

Mid-June through Mid-August Facebook Fundraisers were hosted by:

Kristine Abreu, Suzanne Cote, Kelley Grindle and Yvonne Nickerson-Ziehm



Autism news and updates delivered to your email inbox from ASM!



The ASM website has trusted Autism information and resources.



Join our Facebook Community for all things Autism.



Follow us on Twitter as we ‘tweet’ about all things Autism.



If you are not already a following our Instagram page, welcome you!



Visit our channel on YouTube for recorded webinars.

Donations

Donations / Sponsorships / Employee Matches / Grants

Hannaford (Bucksport Store)
Marston's Marina
Rene Morin & Joyce Broadwater
Dan & Arlene Bechard
Hannaford -Whitten Road Augusta
Reginald and Mary Ellen Bechard
Westbrook Professional Firefighters
Charities Aid Foundation America
Crafts Cars

Hannaford- Waterville
Rodilyn Pomelow
United Way of Kennebec Valley
Sam & Ella
Rumford Eagles
Hannaford- Bucksport
Hannaford- Winthrop
The Blackbaud Giving Fund
Carol Morrison

Membership Renewals

Donna Anderson
William & Debra Sodoma
Kelly Gleason
Hollis & Rosemary McGlaufflin
Sheila Crocker
Colleen Lepage
Jeannie Demaree
Sharon Hewett
Tamera Shrum
Margaret Shaver
Jane Brennan
Susan Morton
Linda Grant

Cathy Simonson
Cheryl Stalilonis-Francis
Christina Nason
Alice Haines
Carol Jewett
Kelly Gray
Maureen Zemrak
Kate Brix
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Sandra Warden
Irene Kapothanasis

Robin Reed
Cheryl Young
Greg McAllister
Kathy Wingard
Joanne McMahon
Sister Mary F Etringer
Joan Shelton
Joella Michaud
David Johnson
Anthony Dostanko
Lise Tancrede
Mary Chouinard



In Memory of:

Michael Garrow, SR
Marlan & Diane Dymont

Isabell J. (Izzie) Dolloff
Alison Littlefield
Maureen Dassaw
Patricia and Richard Dolloff
Hillandale Gettysburg LP
Carol Tibbets
Ashley Blanchfield



In Honor of:

Aaron Hartwell
June Cunningham
Commute Air

Tim & Sarah Stinson
Anonymous

New Memberships

Ron Bischoff
Rebecka and Ryan Hayes
Amanda and Cody Smith
Jennifer and Paul Pinette
Franklin Krajewski
Valarie Scanlon
Jean Ives