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Let ME  
spread the  
word on  
AUTISM

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

# Maine Autism

## Connections

### Sibling Essay Contest 2016

Summer 2016



In honor of April Autism Awareness Month, we held an Essay Contest for Siblings of individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Brothers and sisters that have a sibling with autism were encouraged to share their story.

The essays were reviewed by our Board of Directors and 2 stories have been chosen. Congratulations go to:

Emily Wotton, from Thomaston  
Justin Meservier, from Farmington.

Each of their essays with a sibling photo, are posted below. Thanks to all who participated!

#### **My Autistic Sibling** *By Emily Wotton*

A lot of people make fun of kids with disabilities. That's really only because they don't understand what is going on with their brains, they don't understand that everybody is special in their own way. Having a brother with Autism has definitely changed my perspective on things in life. It helps me want to stand up for people with disabilities or even just everyday people because they have something going on that nobody understands.

Sometimes it's hard when my friends are out at their siblings sports events and concerts. Sometimes it makes me jealous and happy at the same time. I'm jealous that they get to experience those things and I don't, but I'm happy that they can experience those things. When I go to my friends house's and they have little siblings I'll always want them to hang out with us but my friends will yell at them and tell them to go away. I always wonder why they do that. I know now that it's because they don't have a sibling with a disability to help them understand the reality of how lucky they are. I have a friend named Corbin and it's so amazing to have him as a really close friend with a brother with Autism as well,

so we can talk about it with someone and they'll truly understand what your talking about, and how you feel.

Having a brother with Autism is not a burden. It is more of a wake up call. Even though I'm only thirteen, I understand a lot more because of my brother. My brother Ryan, has severe Autism and is non-verbal. But he speaks more than anyone I know. But, we can't understand him. He'll scream when he's angry, and when he's happy, he'll cry when he's upset. He loves to swim and jump on the trampoline just like any other kid. But, he isn't any other kid, because he's my Autistic brother and that makes him special.

Even though my brother has Autism, that doesn't mean I don't know what it's like to have a brother or a friend. I just know it from a little bit of a different perspective than most people. Most people take what they have for granted, but I don't and I never will. I wouldn't trade my brother in for anyone else because he makes me a better person and I'm eternally grateful for his presence in my life.

This is a photo of me and my brother. It's from a long time ago but I chose it because I feel it shows how our relationship is different than other siblings.



Emily and her brother Ryan; continued on page 3

**Maine Autism Connections**  
A publication of the  
Autism Society of Maine

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Maine Autism Connections is a  
quarterly publication of the  
Autism Society of Maine  
72B Main Street  
Winthrop, ME 04364  
Phone: 1-800-273-5200

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**President's Message**

In our country, the CDC has published the prevalence rate of autism, for the second year at 1:68. This means that we all know, care for, work with, live near or love someone affected by autism. We know that the family and community response to autism impacts the quality of life and well-being of individuals living with autism.

Over the years, I have learned from other families who were living with autism. There are parents that would allow reasonable risks for their son/daughter to have new experiences and the potential of skill development. Like all of us, sometimes mistakes are made and initial attempts fail. The courage to take this planful risk is admirable and so often can lead to new skills and opportunities.

There are families that have been active in social policy issues for decades to influence service delivery to their family member or loved one. We saw the power of individuals and families in changing social policy, particularly in this legislative session. For example, Section 17 changes in eligibility requirements have been extended as far as June 2017 to give teams time to plan and make appropriate steps so no one is left without adequate supports. The Support Intensity Scale (SIS) as the only measure for resource allocation has been discontinued. (Stay tuned though because there is further work being done to identify another test instrument).

Each day in my work, we learn about individuals who are using self-advocacy skills--- and having this voice improves their experience. Families are talking with other families--- learning from each other. After my son braved a solo, albeit not entirely successful city bus trip, another mother elected to work with her son to do the same. Families are creating housing options within their own communities for individuals with autism.

Individuals and families are reaching for and mastering technology to support individuals with developmental needs. We are seeing the use of videoconferencing, remote monitoring, medication dispenser equipment, and safe houses. Each allows for more autonomy.

The community response also impacts the quality of life for individuals and families impacted by autism. Get active and understand the issues. The combined efforts of individuals, families and service providers in legislative and social policy work, will insure services that are adequately funded and responsibly managed.

For all of us, being vigilante to individuals and families living with challenges makes a difference. Get to know your neighbors. Pay attention to people you come in contact with. Be a natural support for someone. It may just be a small gesture but it is the connectedness that allows for true community inclusion.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the individuals, families, service providers, stakeholders and community members who work to insure a high quality of life and sense of well-being for people touched by autism in our state. It is our combined actions that will continue to enhance services, policies and supports in Maine.

In July, ASM will travel to New Orleans to participate in the Autism Society of America's National Conference and represent Maine in the Affiliate Leadership meetings, so look forward to sharing all that we learn. **Best, Laurie Raymond.**



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.

## Announcing Our NEW WEBSITE!

We're delighted to announce our new website which has been months in the planning and developing.

The new website welcomes visitors with a clean uncluttered design that is efficient, direct and easy to use. Have you have looked up ASM's website in the past on your phone or other device and found it difficult to use and hard to see? Please visit again for a **new experience** optimized for mobile devices.

The website [Home Page](#) was designed with great thought because not only is it the first page that you see, it is the portal to the rest of the website. We wanted it to be as helpful as possible to give direction to where the information is that you want to see.

The ASM [Store Page](#) is much more advanced and easy to use. It features a "shopping bag" that you can "drag and drop" items to purchase and instantly see what your total is as you shop, including shipping and tax.

We extend our appreciation to PHD Consulting, Maine Web Design, who developed our new website to suit our needs perfectly. Enjoy discovering our new mobile friendly website and hope that you find it easy to navigate and pleasant to use.



## Sibling Essay Contest 2016 (continued from cover)

### Sibling Essay By Justin Meserve

Growing up was an interesting experience, not only did I have to learn everything that everyone else did but I also had to learn how to grow up with a brother with Autism. I think that a big part that helped out and was a key in this process was being homeschooled. During these years a lot of time was spent learning how to get along with Tim. There were many things that were hard to understand at a young age. Like why my brother was older than me but might not understand as much. As I grew it became easier to see that there was something not in his control that changed the way he thought. Almost all of my memories of Tim and I are positive. We have always got along as best as brothers can, and we have always been best friends.

It wasn't until we started going to public school that I realized how judgmental people could be. I think that most of this comes from curiosity and being afraid of the unknown. I was always asked many questions like what Autism was and how it affected people. To many of these kids, it was not a common occurrence and they had nobody to talk to about it. I tried to answer all questions which wasn't always easy. Even I had to ask some questions and do some research of my own. At one point I was on a board in my elementary school to bring awareness. My friends have understood from the beginning and have always treated Tim as an equal.

Tim has taught me that there is so much more to life than what people think. He has been a big part in making me who I am. It's weird how a word so small can mean something

so big to me. Seeing and dealing with this mental condition every day has shown me how some people are quick to judge. I think that even if I wasn't so close to someone with a mental disability I wouldn't judge them. A big part of life is seeing someone for who they truly are and what they believe in.

People may not see it as a big deal just because they don't think it could affect them or anyone that they know. In my lifetime I have seen the amount of kids with Autism rise from one in over a hundred to one in sixty-eight. With the number increasing the understanding is also growing. More and more people understand what it is like for someone they know to have Autism. This awareness is good, and is what people with Autism need. They do not need to be singled out rather brought in and included in many things that everyone does. Autism may change a person's brain but I do not think it changes their morals and how they are as a person. Tim's positivity, strength, and perseverance despite his situation is an enormous inspiration to me to keep following my dreams.



Justin and his brother, Tim.

# Programs & Events

## 14th Annual Walk for Autism

Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon, the Walk for Autism kicked off in four locations across the state: The University of Maine in Bangor, Farmington Fairgrounds in Farmington, University of New England in Biddeford and the Belfast Area High School in Belfast.

Off we went! Each of us with our own reason for showing up and walking. We walked for our children and loved ones with autism, for our students with autism, for our friends and coworkers who have a child with autism, for our clients with autism and for cause we care about. Together we walked in celebration and in support of autism awareness. It was amazing and encouraging to all who attended.

### THANK YOU!

**We are pleased to announce that in total \$59,000 was raised!** A Special thank you to all who attended and to those who donated in support of the Walk for Autism! This will help ASM to continue to provide programs, events, education, and autism awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Maine.

**Police Officers, Firemen and First Responders tried their best to be at each site** barring they weren't called out to an emergency. This was the perfect time to let children get close to, and familiarize themselves with first responders in uniform and also check out their vehicles. Parents asked questions, many about wandering. They passed along a safety/wandering form, for parents to fill out and give to their local police department. We appreciate their involvement and support for families.

**We looked forward to seeing Tracy Sabol of WMTW News.** Tracy came to the Biddeford Walk to visit with families and provided an opportunity to interview with Richard Farnsworth, ASM Board Director to let folks know what the walk event is all about.

**A heartfelt thank you to Jeannie Jarry, owner of Party Castles** who once again adorned the Biddeford Walk with colorful balloon pillars along with balloons for the children. We will not have Jeannie next year and will miss her dearly.

**Darling's Ice Cream for a Cause** came out to the Bangor event and was a real crowd pleaser! Ice cream is offered free but

donations were appreciated to benefit ASM.

**Thank you to our Team Leaders:** Cathy Dionne (Bangor), Susan Vincent (Biddeford), Jean Mason & Tena Hinds (Farmington) and Allison Pooler (Belfast).

**There were many volunteers from the community** that devoted their time: Mason Family, UNE Pre-OT Students, Stillwater Academy, Frank Spinney, Bangor and Biddeford Kohl's Associates in Action, Bates College Students, Michaud Family, Jess Heald and crew, and Laura Woolston.

**Board Directors:** Nancy Ponzietti-Dyer, Laurie Raymond, Tiffany Rooney, Richard Farnsworth, Brigid Rankowski, Kenn Huhn, Lynda Mazzola and Sarah Tackett-Nelson

We thank each and every one of you for your efforts!

### Top Fundraising Team!

Team Tommy raised 5,835!

Team Tommy was developed in honor of Tommy Tiernan. Tommy passed away on August 9, 2015. Tommy was smart, funny, talented and loved by all who knew him. He graduated from Noble High School and was continuing his education at USM. Tommy had Autism, but he never let it define who he was. He, instead, educated others on the diagnosis.



**A Special Thank You** to all of our **Corporate Sponsors** and **In-Kind Sponsors** who are the cornerstone for this event, we couldn't have done this without your help.



# Programs & Events

## Sea of Blue Walk/Run for Autism - Northeast Harbor

By incorporating his love of running, Chris Heel organized his third Walk/Run for Autism event. This was held on April 30<sup>th</sup> in Northeast Harbor. Chris is passionate about raising autism awareness and abilities. This event also gives the community an opportunity to show their support. The preliminary result of donations raised is **\$6,000!!** Amazing!! This charity event will help fund programs to help children, families and individuals achieve their abilities. We thank Chris and his parents Matt and Susan Heel for organizing this event and to all who participated.



## Sensory Friendly Movie Event

There were 156 individuals who attended the Sensory Friendly Movie event sponsored by the Lewiston Auburn Rotary Club. This event provides an opportunity for a family to attend a movie, without feeling as though others are judging them due to behaviors their child might be engaging in. The movie theater lowers the lights and sound to accommodate a child who has sensory needs. Rotary members volunteer to help families with drinks and popcorn. Many families love this event and look forward to it every year.



## Toddle Inn – Diamond Corporate Sponsor

**Toddle Inn recognizes the importance of early learning experiences and pledge to provide a fun, safe and loving learning environment where children follow a formal curriculum promoting the development of independence, self-discipline, creative thinking, healthy bodies, problem-solving and self-confidence. Toddle Inn values the process of early childhood development and realizes children are constantly learning through structure as well as play!**

**There are 8 Toddle Inn locations in Southern Maine:**

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



## April Autism Awareness Month "Round Up"

**At the Statehouse:** A Joint Resolution by the House of Representatives was made, recognizing April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month in Maine. Representative Richard Farnsworth presented a motion to the House of Representatives to recognize April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month. Representative Craig V. Hickman read a moving letter to the House of Representatives, written by a mom of an adult male with autism and the struggles and triumphs they have experienced throughout his life.

**The Center for Disease Control (CDC) announces the rate of autism** among eight year olds in the United States has not changed, and the incidence rate remains **1 in 68**. This updated report occurs every two years.

**Over 300 Autism Awareness Packets** were mailed out to schools, libraries, medical offices, first responders and the community. Let's keep the momentum going with autism awareness and acceptance throughout the year!

### April Autism Month Celebration Events:

"The Family Next Door" Free Showing in Portland, Wells and Auburn

*Hosted by Autism Society of Maine and Port Resources*  
"Jungle Book" Sensory Friendly Showing for families of children with autism  
*Sponsored by the Lewiston-Auburn Rotary Club*

### Fundraising Campaigns

Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program  
LIDS Foundation  
Peppers Garden and Grill, Winthrop  
Walk for Autism



Tena Hinds, Tiffany Rooney, Richard Farnsworth, Cathy Dionne & Susan Vincent



ASM Board of Directors accept the Joint Resolution Document  
*Top Left: Richard Farnsworth, Laurie Raymond (President), Sarah Tackett-Nelson, Kerrie Moody, Sherry Pike, Marla DiBiase (Secretary), Lynda Mazzola, Tiffany Rooney, Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer (Vice President)*

Autism Awareness Display by the Center Drive School, Orrington



## Families Make It Happen

Time flies and, in what seems like a blink of an eye, your special needs child will have moved beyond the educational system. Looking down the uncharted maze of adulthood makes many parents worry about what the future holds, especially if you and your child yearn for a life that fosters independence. Not so very long ago, I was one of those parents. As I started researching options for a home away from home for my daughter, I discovered that finding an appropriate housing solution would not magically appear. The wait for housing is long and much is unknown. What was I looking for? A housing option that would be a safe and supportive long term home that included other residents who would become lifelong friends. A place that would be a constant in her life, especially as I grow older.

So, like many parents who have gone before me, I started researching housing options and what I found felt like a good match for my daughter's needs, an organization called

Specialized Housing. Located in Brookline, Ma., these folks have been supporting adults with disabilities since 1983. Their track record is impressive – 8 of the original 10 residents in their first house (they now operate 13 houses in total) are still living together 33 years later, happy and thriving. This housing model offered what I was looking for, the security of knowing that my daughter has a long term living solution that would foster her independence while giving her the support she needs. Now came the hard part.

Developing a group home like this takes



# Upcoming Events

## 2016 ASM Family Retreat Weekend July 15 - 17, 2016

Please join us! Families from all over the state come together for this weekend to connect and have fun! Children are cared for by respite providers and get to swim, rock climb, create a craft, and make new friends. Parents have the option of attending presentations and participating in fun workshops or just relaxing! Everything is included! Meals, respite care, dorm room (for up to 4 persons), activities and entertainment! This year's theme is "Dinosaurs!" with Saturday evening entertainment being a movie, "The Good Dinosaur" in the auditorium.

## ASM's Camp Summit July 25 to August 18, 2016

Camp Summit is offered FREE to children ages 5 to 15 with autism. Each child has a one on one camp counselor who is a student from the University of Maine. This program fosters social communication with fun peer activities and field trip adventures.

Located in Farmington, the summer camp offers 2 - two week programs that run Monday through Thursday from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

Space is limited! Call ASM to have your child's application sent to you. ASM: 1-800-273-5200

## Ride for Autism - October 1, 2016 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.

Each route is relatively flat, offering opportunities to enjoy a casual ride, or you can "crank it up" for an individual challenge. Short rides of ten miles or less are very family friendly, or you can choose the Trail Ride at the Smith Preserve. Several trail heads are located within one mile of the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust building.

Registration is \$35

## Annual Gagne Ride for Autism August 21, 2016 Jeff's Catering, Brewer

Registration is at 9 am with the riders leaving by 10 am. This will be a Coastal Route Ride between 80 to 100 miles. The ride cost is \$25. There will be food available for purchase.

Contact Ann Messer 745-1468 or Doreen Sands 659-1285 FMI

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Car Show for Autism Sunday, September 11, 2016 92 Mudgett Rd, Parsonsfield, ME

Enter the car show with "What you Run" or just come with your friends and family to enjoy the day! Prizes, raffles, food, burnout session and entertainment!  
Hosted by Richard and Wendy Humphrey



## Families Make It Happen (continued)

dedicated, likeminded parents who are willing to privately create a housing situation based on the Specialized Housing model. After much effort, 8 determined families joined me and in May of 2010 our nine children moved into their new home in South Portland, Maine, supported by Specialized Housing. Based on this success, a core group of 3 families are seeking others to create a Specialized Housing program in a house recently purchased in South Portland.

t's not for everyone. The available staffing levels may not meet your child's needs or the financial obligation may be beyond reach. But it is an option that may be feasible for you

and other parents to create a secure home for your child and give you the peace of mind you seek for their future.

To find out more about Specialized Housing or to learn more about the next house in South Portland, please contact me or visit the web sites listed below. I would love to share my journey with you.

Mary Chris Semrow

[mcsemrowshi@gmail.com](mailto:mcsemrowshi@gmail.com)

FMI [www.specializedhousing.org](http://www.specializedhousing.org)

[www.14estreet.com](http://www.14estreet.com)

## Handling the Death of My Dad

by Deb Lipsky

**M**y father died this past March. His wife made sure that not only would I be shut out when he was dying (I wasn't notified he was on his deathbed) but also be shut out from all funeral proceedings. As his only child I fully expected to speak at his eulogy. At my grandfather's funeral a few years back I talked to my father about his eventual demise and what his last wishes were. Being autistic I felt funerals were a great ice breaker to bring up the conversation of what someone's future funeral directive would be. It is a hard subject to bring up under any circumstance so from an autistic viewpoint funerals are a great way to "kill two birds with one stone" (no pun intended). My father did oblige me and from that day forward I began to mentally prepare for when that dreaded day would arrive. Unfortunately the rest of his side of the family who feels I am mentally unstable rather than autistic were horrified that I would have the audacity to bring up such morbid talk at such a sensitive time. I really recommend that all my loyal ASM readers read my book on autism and grieving. People with autism do have empathy and despite perhaps a non outward expression of it; we DO love! When someone dies that we love it hurts and wounds us deeply. It's just the autistic way of dealing with feelings is in sharp contrast with non autistic conventional ideas on grieving.

When I found out my father died through a distant relative I was taken by surprise that the funeral arrangements were completely different than what my dad expressed to me. That threw off my entire script of how I planned to deal with his death. You lose your parent only twice in your life and it is a big deal regardless of what that relationship was in life! It was very stressful being excluded at such a difficult time. Rather than trying to deal with a bitter narrow minded widowed wife, I chose instead to completely avoid the entire funeral itself thus avoiding putting up with her drama and hostility towards me that she

harbored since the day she married him back in the 1970's. Instead, I chose a get away for a couple of days to go sea glass hunting in Bar Harbor. It was my way of dealing with the loss of a parent. To my father's side of the family not paying final respects (even though I was not included or invited) was unforgiveable. To my mom, husband, and friends who accept I am autistic, they understood what I needed to do to grieve.

I planned my "trip" for April vacation week when I knew schools were out of session. If there is one thing that sparks great anxiety in me it is getting stuck behind a school bus either picking up kids or dropping them off. When I was young we had school bus stops every mile where we would wait for the school bus. Now a day they have curbside pickup at every dooryard even if the next house pickup is only 10 feet away. In the afternoon if that isn't bad enough, it seems like the bus driver not only waits until the kid crosses the street, but waits till he goes in the house, has a snack, and takes a nap!! This only is aggravated by the parent waiting at the next house (10 feet away) who decides to have a lengthy conversation with the bus driver all the while you are stuck behind staring at those flashing strobe lights plastered all over the bus: rooftop, tail lights, and that stop sign attached to the side of the bus. Add at least a half hour delay to your destination..... never mind a blown script. To me a school bus is nothing more than a yellow oblong torture chamber on wheels!

My life revolves around school bus pickup and delivery times where I am not to be seen on the road during those critical peak hours. That is why I chose April vacation week because there would be no school buses to contend with. My executive functioning, or more appropriately a lack

thereof, forgot to include what some families do during school vacations: which is to go on vacation as a family.

Because it is "off" season in Bar Harbor, I thought I would have the place to myself, especially since it was mid-week. I booked myself a room at the only hotel open close to town. It was unusually busy at this hotel with lots of vehicles from out of state in the parking lot. At that point I was still completely clueless of what autistic hellish nightmare lurked right around the corner. My friend Sister Francanne accompanied me on this trip as she loves the ocean and for moral support. After checking into the hotel, we went to the town "beach" by the pier where we methodically began our crusade separately to find the ever elusive sea glass. This is a solitary sport of mine where I completely engross myself at the task at hand and I don't like company or interruptions. I hadn't noticed the gradual influx of children on the beach by late afternoon until it became like an infestation. Now there were kids running and yelling all around me, and I kept getting pestered with, "What are looking for?" After the hundredth time of being interrupted, I realized my "Zen" moments ran away screaming when the first kid walked onto the beach. I decided to go back to the hotel and "chill out" till morning.

Where do you think most of these tadpoles came from? You guessed it, the only open hotel in town!! All



## Handling the Death of My Dad

evening long all I heard was the pounding of racing pre-adolescent feet up and down the corridor outside my room as if it were qualification trials for the Kentucky Derby. If that wasn't bad enough, they brought their "outdoor voices" inside. It was a miracle I ever fell asleep but even a bigger miracle that I would survive the complimentary continental breakfast the next morning.

I arrived at the breakfast nook very early hoping that all the little "sleeping beauties" would still be held hostage by the sandman at least until I finished breakfast. At first the coast was clear but soon parents with their pre-ankle biter offspring (diaper/toddler stage) began pouring in like

a breach in a levy. Oh the horror of the noise decibel level going up a million percent!! It no longer was a leisurely breakfast time, but my worst nightmare....being dab smack in the middle of nursery school feeding time (or frenzy)! Moments of relative quiet were shattered by unpredictable piercing shrill screams of an unhappy diaper clad campers not getting what they demanded. Like the comic superhero "Flash", these diaper clad bursts of energy zoomed from one side of the room to the other measured only in light year speeds. Naturally my table was their official "pit stop" where they would come one by one to a screeching halt and just stand there and stare up at me.

Frankly it was like being in a creepy Twilight Zone episode for people not fond of little unruly human "cherubs" (sarcasm). Between the incessant crying over spilled milk (literally) and the numerous temper tantrums going unchecked and unnoticed by their keepers (parents) my stress level was at near meltdown boiling point. Thank God I had my friend Sr. Francanne there to assist me out otherwise I would have been trapped in my own personal autistic hell. I am sure my dad who didn't understand autism when he was alive saw my mis-adventure and is chuckling about it still.

Love you Dad and always have, rest in peace.

## Legislative Update

The Second Session of the 127<sup>th</sup> Legislature opened January 6 and adjourned in the middle of April. It was a very active and busy session for Legislators as there were many bills that were carried over from the First Session since the Second Session is supposed to be only for carry-over bills, bills introduced by the Governor and bills deemed to be "Emergency" In fact, at the end of the 127<sup>th</sup> Legislature, they had addressed 1,703 Bills.

This session there were 11 bills that ASM followed. Several of these bills were very contentious with Legislature passing them and Governor LePage vetoes them. Following are the bills that are important to our membership and that ASM was actively engaged in advocating for. Several of them were extremely important to our members.

Unfortunately, **LD 1030 (HP 713)"An Act To Better Coordinate the Work of Mental Health Crisis Agencies with Law Enforcement Agencies"** was not passed.

**LD 1421 (HP 967) "An Act To Establish a Tax-free Savings Program for Individuals with Disabilities"**

This amendment changes the bill to a resolve directing the Treasurer of State to 31 review the experience of other states in implementing tax-advantaged

qualified savings 32 programs for qualified individuals with disabilities and report the results of the Treasurer 33 of State's research and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the 34 Legislature having jurisdiction over taxation matters by January 15, 2017. The committee is authorized to submit a related bill to the First Regular Session of the 128<sup>th</sup> 1 Legislature. This bill needed to be passed so that Maine could allow these savings plans to be offered. ASM met with the State Treasurer to advocate for the Bill and offered to help with an education need about Autism.

Below is the Summary language from the Bill **LD 1696 (HP 1162)**

**"Resolve, To Establish a Moratorium on Rate Changes Related to Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Sections 13, 17, 28 and 65"**

Resolve, To Establish a Moratorium on Rate Changes Related to Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Sections 13, 17, 28 and 65 Sec. 1. Rate Study. Resolved: That, on January 2, 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services shall report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters with a completed rate study on Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Sections

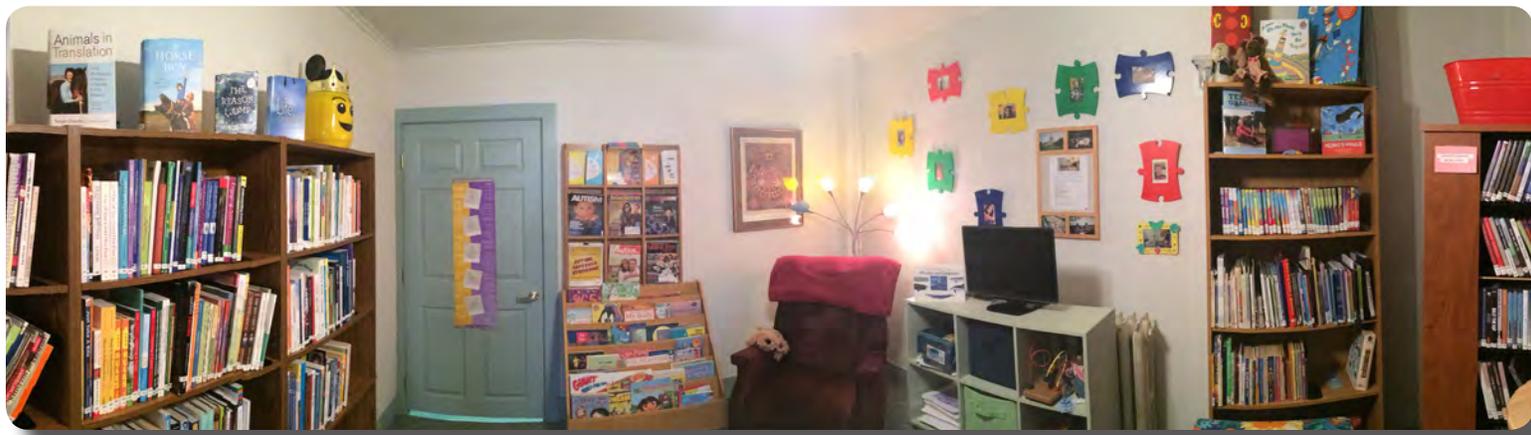
*By Dennise Whitley, ASM's Legislative Liaison*

13, 17, 28 and 65 conducted by Burns and Associates and in process on the effective date of this resolve; and be it further Sec. 2. Moratorium on rulemaking.

Resolved: That the Department of Health and Human Services may not begin any rule-making procedure connected with rate changes for reimbursement levels under Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Sections 13, 17, 28 and 65 until at least 60 days after a completed rate study has been presented to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters pursuant to section **1.LD 1696 (HP 1162)** was the most contentious and the most important to ASM and many of the other groups who provide services to clients with disabilities and those who need mental health services. The Governor vetoed it and with much advocacy and collaborative work with other groups enough pressure was put on the Legislators and they overrode the veto. This was a huge victory for all of us!!



# Welcome to the Autism Society of Maine Library!



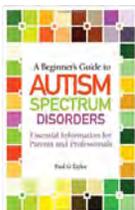
ASM's Lending Library is a valuable and free resource for parents, caregivers, educators, children and professionals working with children and adults on the autism spectrum. The Lending Library is a FREE resource for Maine residents. The collection can be viewed on the ASM website or you may request 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 or emailing: 1-800-273-5200 email: [library@asmonline.org](mailto:library@asmonline.org)

## New Books:

### A Beginner's Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders

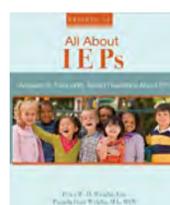
by Paul G. Taylor

This short introduction is an ideal starting point for anyone encountering Autism Spectrum Disorder for the first time. The book covers all of the essential information needed to ground an understanding of the condition and offers effective practical strategies for assisting children who are living with ASD.



### All About IEP's

by Peter Wright, Pamela Wright and Sandra O'Connor.



In this easy to read book, you will find clear, concise answers to more than 200 frequently asked questions about Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Learn what the law says about IEP teams and IEP meetings, parental rights and consent, steps in developing the IEP, placement, transition, assistive technology, and strategies to resolve disagreements.

### Older Adults and Autism Spectrum Conditions

by Wenn Lawson



This book covers a multitude of issues including dealing with transitions and changes to routine, communicating an individual's particular needs and wishes to care home staff, the social and financial impact of retirement, mental health, and sensory and physical changes and challenges.

“Check Out” the “New and Improved” online Lending Library Page!

<http://www.asmonline.org/library/>

## ASM on Social Media!

The Autism Society of Maine has a wonderful 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!

By “liking” ASM's Facebook page you can help us spread the word to hundreds of new supporters!

 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Autism-Society-Of-Maine/107781499258293>

 We have a great collection of videos and will be adding more throughout the year!  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/AutismSocietyofME>

 Follow us on Twitter as we ‘tweet’ about autism!  
<https://twitter.com/autismsocietyme>

 My Autism Team logo A reputable and friendly place to connect with other parents in Maine.  
<http://www.myautismteam.com/>

 A young man from Maine has designed a blog to provide personal insight into overcoming the challenges of living with a disability. Here you will find helpful disability resources and tips on: social issues, improving oneself, and technology. <http://zachfly.com/>

# Donations

## In Memory of:

### Rose Riley

Joyce P. Wing  
 Alan K. Morrison  
 Michelle G. Riley  
 Marsha Hamblin  
 Loretta A. Howell  
 Norman G. Bilodeau  
 Norman J. Nemi  
 Carol Carignan

## In Honor of:

Joan Farwell  
 Simone Vaillancourt

## Employee Pledges & Donations

VBK Attorneys at Law

## Donations / Fundraisers

John Russel/ Peppers Garden & Grill  
 Sunshine Fund/ Hermon Elementary School  
 Emma Hodgdon/ Hartland Consolidated  
 New England Jumpers Association  
 Marco Associates  
 Franklin Health Pediatrics  
 Holy Trinity Philoptochos Society  
 Darlings Ice Cream for a Cause

Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution  
 Muse Paint Bar- Caitlin Lefebure  
 Rosemary McGlaughlin  
 Iris Silverstein  
 Andre P. Beaudoin  
 SeDoMocha Schools  
 Rumford Falls Auxiliary #1248  
 Lisa Vaillancourt

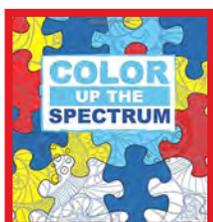
Thank you to all  
 who participated  
 in the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual  
 Walk for Autism!

# ASM Store



Hand crafted Dichroic Glass Pendant with Sterling Silver Plated bail (includes black silk cord); 5/8" x 7/8" random design and color

\$8.00

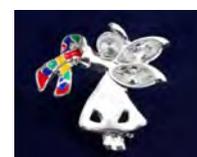


**NEW!**  
 Adult Coloring Book (60 pages)

"Color Up the Spectrum" by Heather Down

\$10.00

You may purchase these and more items on the ASM website at:  
<http://www.asmonline.org/asm-storefront.aspx>  
 or call 1-800-273-5200.



Angel Pin

Sterling silver plated with clear crystals; 1" by 1" (gift box included)

\$8.00



Silver Cuff Bracelet

Puzzle piece design cuff bracelet  
 Sterling silver plated 7" and flexible for fit (gift box included)

\$10.00



Multicolored Puzzle Piece Heart Hanging Charm

1" x 1" and Sterling Silver plated

\$3.00



Big Heart Autism Ribbon Key Chain

1.5" x 1.5" and comes in embossed gift box. Sterling Silver plated

\$6.00



Autism Ribbon Earrings

Sterling Silver plated  
 Includes Embossed Gift Box

\$8.00



Autism Awareness Lanyard

\$6.00



Autism Stretch Bracelet

Sterling Silver plated

\$4.00



Baseball Cap

Black/Yellow Wave Cap with yellow font

\$15.00



Autism Awareness Lapel Pin

\$5.00



Puzzle Piece Car Magnet

4" x 8"

\$6.00



Hand Crafted Dichroic Glass Earrings

Sterling silver plated wire fish hooks; 5/8" x 7/8" random design & color

\$15.00



Autism Ribbon Keychain

\$5.00



Gel Autism Awareness Bracelet

\$3.00



Mini Magnet 2" x 4"

\$3.00



Autism Awareness Magnet 8" x 3.5"

\$5.00



Autism Touches Us All Hanging Charm

1" x 1" and Sterling Silver plated

\$3.00



## **Support our Services: Give to the Autism Society of Maine!**

The Autism Society of Maine is a statewide nonprofit organization that for over 36 years has served Maine individuals with autism and their families, professionals, and communities by providing education, advocacy, referrals, and resource development. We rely on donations and fund-raisers to help cover the cost of our programs and activities that bring awareness and community to individuals and families affected by ASD. Here's how you can help:

- General donations may also be made anytime of the year online using our secure donation forms (or you can download and print our PDF forms) at: [http://www.asmonline.org/involved\\_donations.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_donations.asp)
- Memorial donations to the Society in memory of a friend or loved-one may also be made at: [http://www.asmonline.org/involved\\_donations.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_donations.asp)
- Donations through Network For Good may be made at: <https://www.networkforgood.org/donation/ExpressDonation.aspx?ORGID2=010407346>
- Donations through United Way can be directed to the Autism Society of Maine. For more information, visit: [http://www.asmonline.org/involved\\_donations\\_united\\_way.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_donations_united_way.asp)
- Host a fund-raiser with proceeds going to ASM. Some of the past and current fund-raisers have included: Avon, Pampered Chef parties, Mary Kay parties, bake sales at events, selling autism awareness items at conferences or craft events, selling holiday wreaths, selling T-shirts. If any of these fund-raisers interest you, please call us for more information.

### **Become a Member!**

The Autism Society of Maine invites you to join families and professionals in the pursuit of knowledge about autism spectrum disorders, treatments and support for Maine children and adults with autism.

You may register online at:  
[www.asmonline.org/involved\\_joinasm.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_joinasm.asp)  
or call ASM at 1-800-273-5200

For other ways to contribute, contact us at [asm@asmonline.org](mailto:asm@asmonline.org). Thank you for supporting our mission!

**Call us at: 1-800-273-5200 or visit us online at [www.asmonline.org](http://www.asmonline.org)**