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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

### Transitioning to College Life

by Connor Archer

For some, transition from high school to college can be challenging. For me, I was fortunate enough to have many of my close friends either attend Husson University or the University of Maine at Orono, close to Old Town High School. This made the transition process very smooth. I was excited to also begin a new chapter of my life, without having to go out of state or move into the college dorm setting. This allowed me to still continue my charitable work, and my other hobbies such as running, building, and volunteer track coach.

The most challenging part of the transition to college was meeting new people. Even though I knew many people at Husson, it was still challenging for me to strike up a conversation with the many new people I was meeting. It will always be challenging for me to make new friends, but I push myself to find different approaches of doing so, and seeing how those approaches work. It is a learning process for sure.

For 7 years of my childhood, I had a social worker, named Bob Faerber, to help me in the community. Bob happened to also be one of my former pre-school teachers. After spending 7 years with Bob, I developed an unforgettable friendship with him and many key skills to be a productive member of a community. Even though he is not around today, I always will be grateful for what he taught me, what he inspired me to do, and most importantly, for being a true friend. I also have to thank my many childhood friends who have continued to stick by my side. Even though our paths have taken us in different directions, I will be forever grateful for that early support.

Fall 2017

Besides the incredible therapists that I had for many years, and dedicated teachers that supported me along the way, I have to give much credit to my family, and my mom for their continuous support over the years. My mom has dedicated 19 years of her life to finding a way for me to succeed. By going back to school, and earning her Masters degree in Special Education and a CAS (Certificate of Advanced Study) in Literacy, she was able to tutor me and provide the support I needed in order to be a successful student. Though I don't need nearly as much support in college, she is there if I have a question about an assignment or need some advice about what to ask a professor.

As a college student, who is on the Autism Spectrum, I would recommend that you pace yourself. I limit my course load to 12 credits a semester. That works for me. Don't be afraid to talk to someone. Reach out to the many services provided by your institution. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, or try something new. You might just learn something that you never knew.

My favorite part about college is being independent.



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**President's Message**

Autism Society of America's National Conference  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Each year, ASM is invited, along with the other Autism Society of America's now 90 Affiliates from across the United States to our organization's national conference. This year it was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This President's message will highlight a few of the sessions and provide some links to obtain further information. ASA offered 80 break-out sessions and welcomed over 50 vendors. Unfortunately, I will not be able to write about all of the amazing sessions I attended but want to share as many as space allowed.

Autism Society of America (ASA) Conference July 12-15, 2017

The opening keynotes included a panel of parents and a panel of self-advocates. Both were inspiring and moving. Parents were asked to consider many questions to include, "What kinds of supports and strategies have worked in your family to achieve a quality of life?" Parents shared the importance of asking for and accepting help, self-care, paying attention to employment and skill building (maintaining hope and future focus), advocating that their children getting to do the same thing others their age are, supporting the siblings, "take the good with the bad", try to make each other laugh, celebrate successes, pay attention to fun and accept their sons and daughters. Regarding what do they look for in a professional, parents highlighted the importance of parents as expert and essential to the process. Hands on modeling, in Speech, OT and PT were applauded. The universal concern was what will happen when I/We are gone? They worry about the political environment which can impact both funding including Medicaid as well as how people with disabilities are treated by their communities. The recommendations were to stay informed and stay active—remember, your representatives and state agencies work for your family!

The keynote panel of self-advocates explored "what is most important to you each day in quality of life?" Individuals shared the importance of having a goal that you are working on each day and to improve everyday. They recommended living life to the fullest which can include having goals to surpass (like attending college), establishing a routine for yourself, include sensory needs each day and insist on work accommodations that support your excellence. Anita Lesko shared "it is not about the falling down, but the getting up." The importance of independence was a strong theme—right to live, to work, go to movies, travel, attend conferences, have education, friends, make their own choices and having friends and family that support you—and love you.

There was a panel of professionals on the following day of the conference, including experts in the fields of—BCBA, faith leadership, OT, Teaching and Advocacy on the state and national levels. The themes of this discussion included supporting families and individuals in taking some risk and "push past your fears", never giving up on people—families, individuals, one another, be informed and use strength in numbers to effect change in policy, supporting families and self-advocates to tell their stories, and paying attention to transition. The notion of building a team around an individual and family was highlighted.

Creating an Autism Friendly Community Program by Laurie Cramer of Autism Society Greater Akron-shared an autism ambassador program where businesses in their community worked to become certified as "Autism Friendly". Expectations were outlined including required trainings, support of Autism Society and

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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.

## Transitioning to College Life (continued from front)

I commute to college and structure my day around classes, work, running, volunteering. The very best part of being in college is that I can still do what I've wanted to do for a long time, which is to help spread awareness of developmental challenges, including Autism. I do this personally, but I also do this through The Courageous Steps Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization serving children and young adults with developmental challenges. I am the founder and CEO of this nonprofit organization benefiting many individuals in central Maine. To learn more about the organization, please visit our website at: [www.thecourageousstepsproject.org](http://www.thecourageousstepsproject.org), or find us on facebook!

I am also grateful that I can still mentor younger kids to become distance runners, as I was a distance runner in high school. Most importantly, I have more time to relax and enjoy life. Even though my charitable work takes up a majority of my

time, along with my job at the Old Town Recreation Center, I feel more relaxed now. I still have stressful days, but I have learned to manage that much better as I get older and know how to find the help I need, when I need it. Trying new things has opened many doors for me and I feel like I am well on the way to being the person I was always meant to be!

About Connor Archer

Connor Jacob Archer, is 19 years old and lives in Stillwater, Maine. Connor, a graduate from Old Town High School in 2016, currently attends Husson University in Bangor where he is majoring in Business, Communications, and Technology through the NESCom program. Connor plans to earn his BA and pursue a Masters degree in Business Administration. Connor lives with the challenges of Autism, a disorder that impacts language, communication and social skills.

## Autism Society of Maine's Annual Meeting

**Augusta Country Club**  
**19 Hammonds Grove – Western Ave.**  
**Manchester, ME**

**October 6, 2017 - 6:00pm to 8:30pm**

This year's Annual Meeting and Banquet Dinner will again be held at the beautiful Augusta Country Club, **State Senator, Shenna Bellows** from District 14 will be our guest speaker, Advocacy and Hope will be the topic she will be discussing. You will also be able to hear about the fundraising that has taken place over the last year and all other things ASM has been up to. Award presentations will also take place; nominations are due by Sept. 20, 2017. (Please see a description for each category at the bottom of this page.) Ballots have been sent out to all paid members of ASM; if you have not received yours please call us so we can get one out to you. We look forward to seeing you all. **Seating is limited; please call ASM to make your reservation at 1-800-273-5200.**

**Following are the categories of awards ASM presents:**

**Professionals** (not in the field of autism, but contributing to it):

Any professional within their own field of expertise who contributes in any manner relative to individuals and/or families affected by ASD. *Example: Media person who wrote series or article on autism, State Representative or Senator supporting autism related bill etc.*

**Family Members or Persons with Autism:**

To an individual with autism or a family of an individual with autism who has contributed to the community to enhance the lives of individuals with autism. *Example: Promotes education or autism awareness to the local community, schools, or general public.*

**Professionals Providing Services:**

Any professional practicing within the field that has devoted his/her service potential and opportunities to supporting, treating, and effectively providing services to individuals and families with ASD. *Example: Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Special Ed Teacher etc.*



## Managing Behavioral and Social Challenges

Keynote by: Dr. Jed Baker

November 4, 2017 8:30-11:30 Key note Speaker



On November 4, 2017, at the Black Bear Inn and Conference Center in Orono, ASM is holding a “Fall Conference for Autism”, with a focus on Managing Behavioral and Social Challenges.

This conference is designed for parents and family members of children, or adults on the autism spectrum, as well as educators and other service providers. In addition to our keynote speaker, Jed Baker, there will be break-out sessions in the afternoon related to topics that assist in supporting the valued lives of individuals on the Autism Spectrum, (see descriptions below). There is no cost for attendees and hopefully everyone will leave with practical tools and strategies that can be implemented immediately in the home, school and/ or community.



**Jed Baker**, founder of the Social Skills Training Program, comes to us from New Jersey and has authored many resource books related to the behavioral and social challenges individuals with ASD often encounter. This workshop describes how caregivers can best think about difficult moments with children and adults, in order to achieve better outcomes. The first half of the presentation describes how to create prevention plans to reduce debilitating anxiety and frustration. The second part of the presentation details strategies to motivate students to learn, ways to teach social skills, how to generalize skills into the natural setting and increase acceptance and tolerance from peers.

**11:30-12:30 Lunch (on your own)**

**First Break out Speakers 12:30-2:00**



**Connor Archer** is an Old Town High School graduate and a Husson University sophomore majoring in Business, Communications and Technology. Connor lives with the challenges of Autism He is also the founder & CEO of The Courageous Steps Project, a charitable organization that strives to help children and young adults with developmental challenges. Connor will share his story as an individual living with Autism. And eventually shift to “Courageous Steps”, the non-profit he developed.



**Matt Brown** is a recently retired state and federal law enforcement officer with 26 yrs. experience, and the parent of a young adult on the autism spectrum. Matt will describe Autism Spectrum Disorders, with a special emphasis on those characteristics and challenges unique to this population which can create crisis situations in almost any setting. He will explore prevention and response to meltdowns and discuss the importance of implementing individualized safety plans in collaboration with local law enforcement and other first responder agencies.

**Second Break out speakers 2:15-3:45**



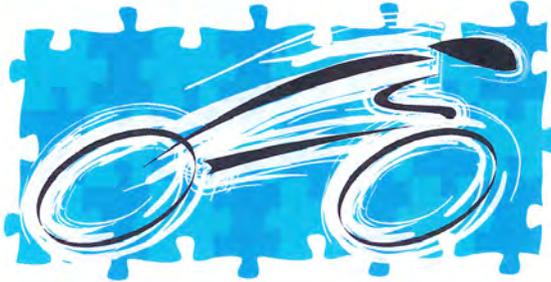
**Carla Tanguay** is a board-certified music therapist with over 15 years of experience in clinical practice and healthcare management. Music therapy is a growing healthcare profession that uses music to help improve communication, social skills, emotional expression, motor skills and auditory processing. This presentation will describe why music can be an effective treatment method for people with ASD, demonstrate techniques that music therapists use, and explore recent research studies and recommendations.



**Libby Stone-Sterling** is assistant director of Voc. Rehab. She reviews, monitors, and evaluates the delivery of agency services and provides guidance to DVR on issues related to youth in transition. In this presentation, Libby will discuss the new opportunities for pre-employment transition services available through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and will share examples of partnerships (with schools, employers and organizations) that are occurring around the state to help young people gain the vocational and soft skills needed for employment.

**There is no cost to attend this conference.**

Visit our website: [www.asmonline.org](http://www.asmonline.org) for information regarding registration and/or sponsorship options, or call 1-800-273-5200.



Ride for Autism

Annual Ride for Autism To Benefit the Autism Society of Maine

September 23, 2017

10, 25 or 50 Mile Kennebunkport Conservation Trust Building Gravelly Brook Road Kennebunkport, ME

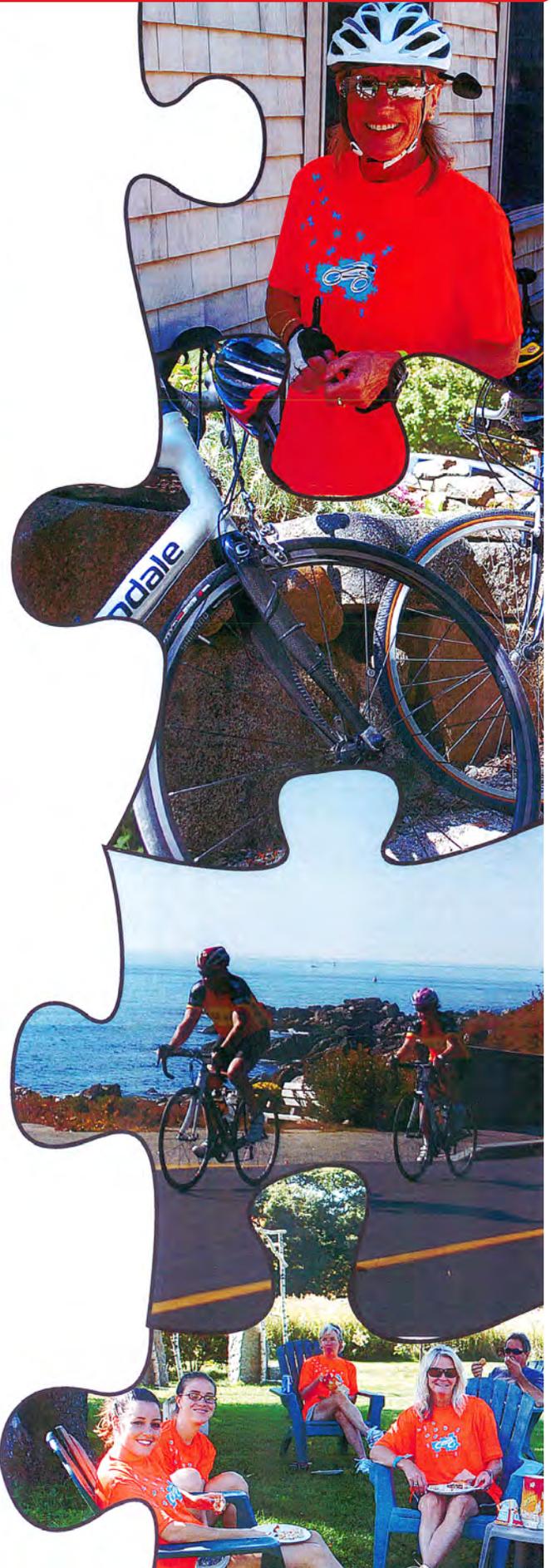
For more information contact: 1-800-273-5200 info@asmonline.org

Register:

Firstgiving.com/ASMMaine/ride-for-autism-2017



The Ride for Autism offers the best scenic route along the coast of Maine. After your scenic ride, enjoy a hearty BBQ. There will be activities for the kids. Bring the whole family and help support the Autism Society of Maine.



# Upcoming Events

## ASM's Annual Board Meeting Augusta Country Club

October 6th at 6 PM - See Page 3

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

## Fall Conference on Autism Managing Behavioral and Social Challenges

Keynote by: Dr. Jed Baker

November 4, 2017 - See Page 4

## Ride for Autism Kennebunkport Conservation Trust Building

Gravelly Brook Road, Kennebunkport - See Page 5

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.

To register:

[www.firstgiving.com/ASMMaine/ride-for-autism-2017](http://www.firstgiving.com/ASMMaine/ride-for-autism-2017)

Registration is \$35

## 6th Annual Car Show for Autism Awareness

Sunday, Sep 17, 2017 – 9:00am to 2:00pm

(registration 7:30am)

92 Mudgett Rd, Parsonsfield, ME

Prizes, raffles, tons of food, burnout session and entertainment! Enter what you ride or just come with your friends and family to enjoy the day! *All proceeds to benefit the Autism Society of Maine*

## ASM Summer Camps



It's hard to believe that camp is more than halfway over already, but it sure is! We had a successful first group of older campers, who seemed to enjoy the activities and field trips we planned for them. The biggest hit for those kids seemed to be the Alford

Youth Center waterpark, where two veteran campers tried the waterslides for the first time ever. They had a blast and we have the pictures to prove it.

One aspect of our time at camp that astounds me every year is how quickly campers and counselors bond. After only two days, some campers are so attached and fond of their counselors. It's an amazing connection for both the child and the college student. There has been a flurry of activity, with lots of crafting, games of hide-and-seek and tag at the playground, building bridges out of blocks for motorized cars to race over, razor scooter races, puppet

*By Hattie DeRaps*

shows, children's books being read in groups and one-on-one, and strategizing about an upcoming talent show. We have cowboy/girl day to look forward to this week and a trip to the bowling alley in Augusta.

Luckily, the weather has been cooperative this summer. We're hoping that holds true into next week so that our trip to Webb Lake can happen as planned on Monday. Otherwise, we just have more and more fun days ahead!

*"So tomorrow we have to say good bye to our Camp Summit family as it is Elijah's last day of summer camp. We cannot express how great this experience over the last 7 years has been. This camp has been more than a blessing to Elijah and our family. He has come so far from his first year of camp. Thank you to all who help put on this great camp for children with Autism. A big thank you goes out to the Autism Society of Maine for all their hard work and money. We will miss all of you, summer will just not be the same. Christina Nason"*

# Softball Tournament for Autism

By Tara Perry

The 5th annual Softball Tournament for Autism was held Saturday June 24 at the Union Street Sports Complex in Bangor.

Although the morning started with torrential rain flooding the fields, soaking the teams, and leaving all of us wondering if the games would go on, by 10am the rain let up, the fields were prepared (again) and 11 teams were ready to play ball! After a few practice throws, Garrett and Jonathon threw out the first pitch to start off the tournament.

In addition to the games, spectators and players were able to take a chance on the great raffle items that were donated. Some of the items included a kayak from Old Town Canoe, a Yeti cooler, donated by Harvey's RVs, concert tickets from Bangor Waterfront, multiple games of golf from local courses, autographed sports memorabilia, and more.

All the teams had fun and played hard, but at the end of the day, the championship trophy was awarded to Team SIS who won 19-13. The plaque for the top fundraising team was awarded to Stillwater Academy. In total we raised \$ 2,906.76 for the Autism Society of Maine! Great job everyone!

We would like to thank our Platinum Sponsors: Mark Hammond, Emera, and Harvey RV's, as well as all of our other sponsors. A big Shout Out to Bangor Parks & Recreation for the use of their wonderful facilities. Thank you to all of our teams and volunteers, we never could have done it without you! We are looking forward to seeing you all next year. Be sure to watch our website and FB page for more info.



# Annual Family Retreat Weekend

By Tara Perry

Pirates, pirates everywhere! Trouble on the High Seas was the theme for this year's Family Retreat which was held July 14-16 at St. Joseph's college in Standish. A great time was had by all, families and staff alike. This year ASM hosted 22 families and 40 children, 7 of those families were new to the retreat this year! It was an amazing weekend!

Friday's Family Fun Night kicked off the festivities with pool time and the rock wall but the thrill of the evening came from Capt'n Jim (Mark Bedell) and his band of pirates- Captain "Me" and first mate, Marcus. The pirates told stories, did some magic and much to the delight of the kiddos, engaged them in sword fighting! It was great to see the kids jumping up for a turn to fight! The pirates also made themselves available for photos with the families at our first ever photo booth! We loved to see the smiles on all those faces!

After a good night of sleep the kids were ready for a day full of activities. The day consisted of laser tag, bounce house fun, pool time, gym time, card games, popping pirates, making "pirate slime", calming ocean bottles, and painting what else, but their very own treasure chests!

While the children were busy having their fun, parents were also enjoying spending time with Cathy at the Meet and Greet, catching up on events and milestones reached in the last year and getting to know and welcoming the new families. Cathy gave a presentation on state and federal legislation which was full of great info that affects all families. There was also a representative from the Spark Program, a new study "to speed up research and advance the understanding of autism." For more information, you can go to our website [www.asmonline.org](http://www.asmonline.org) Saturday afternoon, parents had the choice to enjoy paddleboards and kayaks on beautiful Sebago Lake, join Susan for a relaxing painting class, spend some time by the water or just do nothing at all.

Back by popular demand, Saturday night's entertainment was the Frogtown Puppeteers! They are always a treat for the whole family. Sticking to the theme they performed Everybody Loves Pirates. What a great show! Once the show was over, the performers welcomed the families down to the stage to check out the puppets and set up close. They showed everyone how they operate the puppets and the set; this was a big hit with the kiddos! In addition to the puppet show the pool and rock wall were also available for families to enjoy for the evening.

The whole weekend was full of fun and laughs for everyone! It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone, we have already begun planning for next year's retreat which will

include more activities, laughs and as always FUN! We can't wait to see you all next year!

## TESTIMONIAL

*"Every year I am supposed to fill out a review about the weekend and every year I fail to (sorry Cathy). This year I will post my review about this weekend. We look forward to this weekend like most families look forward to Disney, we look forward to seeing and meeting the families and hearing their triumphs throughout the past year. I love going to this retreat every year because I feel like I am at a family reunion where everyone knows and feels the same way about their children. We are all experts in our own way when it comes to Autism. I love seeing new faces and hearing their stories, seeing all the children smile and for once no one is giving me dirty looks when my kid acts up or saying get your kid under control. I have met so many incredible people on this retreat who have such amazing soul shine, whose candle continues to burn bright even though it feels like it should've been blown out long ago. I see angels on earth. I realize that we all struggle every day but when we all come together what an elite group of people!! We are the warriors who fight every day for our children and we know what their swan song is, we realize they dance to the beat of a different drummer but that drummer's got a pretty sick beat hahahaha. Thank you ASM for bringing us all together so we can meet and have our own private paradise. I look forward to our reunion next year and bless each and every one of you. We are all brothers and sisters in this together!!! Love Julie Farrell"*



The Whitehouse Family

# Annual Family Retreat Weekend



## President's Message (continued from 2)

demonstrating “autism friendly” environment. Their model can be seen online. Please reach out to the above contact for more information (<https://autismakron.org/index.php/what-we-do/autism-friendly?id=498:autism-friendly-community>).

Quality of Life Created through Inclusive Practices and Circles of Natural Support by T. Collin Brusnahan, and L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan. This explored the importance of paying attention to growing connections through the lifespan, highlighting opportunities such as play dates, recreational departments, schools, faith communities, going out with a pet, and volunteering. Often individuals with autism have the first circle (family and intimate friends) and fourth circle (people paid to interact with you), while circle three (people enjoy being with occasionally) and circle two (good friends) have less. Community inclusion insures connections in all four circles. Check out the resource: (<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/>)

Developing a Housing Strategy Because Mom and Dad Living Forever Isn't A Plan by Catherine Boyle of Autism Housing Pathways and Cheryl Chan of Community 4 Each, Inc. This session began with the information that 81% of young adults live with their parent or guardians and 90% of adults with ASD are not working. Therefore, most families will need to face the challenge of finding and creating housing. This session outlined three important areas: best practice to separate housing from services so people choose who they live with and they can change providers without moving, through life and learning pay attention to living skills—the more living skills the more options and keep a person centered approach to map out a vision and long term housing strategy. Get more information through this organization: Autism Housing Pathways, Inc. at [www.autismhousingpathways.org](http://www.autismhousingpathways.org). You can download their free housing workbook.

Lunch and Learn session with John Donovan and Caren Zucker, authors of “In A Different Key: The Story of Autism” shared future plans to create a documentary of their book and to capture the narrative of Donald Triplett of Forest, Mississippi, the first child diagnosed with autism. They shared some footage of Donald, now in his 80's, as he went about his day in the community. ASM has the book in our library and is a deeply moving book, telling the story of Donald and many others early in the autism advocacy movement. We look forward to the completion of the project documenting the history of autism.

Self-Advocate Panel: A Discussion on Love & Relationships on the Autism Spectrum: This panel included a number of self-advocates (Anita Lesko, Lindsey Nebeker, Amy Gravino and Kerry Magro) moderated by Stephen Shore. They reminded the audience that persons on the autism spectrum are diverse in their sexuality as everyone else. Sexuality education is however complicated by the challenges they face in language, communication and social difference. The risks and vulnerability were also highlighted for those on the spectrum. Through the use of personal stories, this talented group of individuals taught the audience a lot about love and autism. Some things to check out: “Autism In Love” at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org);; [www.amygravino.com](http://www.amygravino.com); [www.bornwithaspergers.com](http://www.bornwithaspergers.com); and [www.kerrymagro.com](http://www.kerrymagro.com). All these sites have links to books, videos and related on the topic.

“Involved Fathers Get Results: Engaging Fathers and Strengthening Families by Robert Naseef, Ph.D. This presentation highlighted the contributions made by father's across the globe in parenting their children with autism. He also challenged the notion that autism = higher divorce rates. In fact, he shared that biological parent of children with ASD stay together more often than typical families. He provided a context for understanding the male experience, strategies for engaging with fathers and supporting families as a whole. For more information, check out: [www.alternativechoices.com](http://www.alternativechoices.com) or email at [RNaseef@alternativechoices.com](mailto:RNaseef@alternativechoices.com).

Please reach out to Autism Society of Maine if you have any questions or would like further information on sessions at the conference.

All the best, Laurie

Autism Society of America (ASA) Conference July 12-15, 2017



SPARK Outreach Manager was there-Beverly Robertson

Maine's own Brigid Rankowski with Jennifer O'Toole and Maura O'Toole of Asperkids, LLC. and family was highlighted.



Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Vrsatyl shares his song “Born This Way” with Scott Badesch of ASA

You can listen to it on YouTube (add link)

# Just One Big Nightmare!

*By Deb Lipsky*

It never ceases to amaze that me when I ask for reasonable accommodations because of my autism how that is interpreted. Yes it's true autism is considered a disability by most people but we aren't handicapped. When I travel for work I only ask for one "reasonable special needs accommodation" when booking my room.

Recently I was to go out on a routine seminar speaking tour as I have for the last 12 years with the same company. I always ask that when booking my hotel room that it be lower than the 4th floor because of my autism. Actually it is more a common logic safety issue rather than "autism" per say, but I can't seem to convince people of that. Explaining how staying on higher floors during an all consuming hotel conflagration will result in their untimely demise strangely doesn't seem logical to them. To this day I still have vivid recall of the 1974 blockbuster movie "Towering Inferno" starring Paul Newman and Steve McQueen as if I had just seen the movie last night. It was the highest grossing film for 1974 and won academy awards. That movie aptly chronicled the insanity of building a 138 story high rise building which ends up having an electrical short on the 81st floor leading into the entire building being consumed in flames during a dedication ceremony with over 200 people above the 81st floor. It was a disaster movie that depicted the plight of impossible rescue of trapped souls when the elevators and stairwells weren't usable, along with fire truck ladders that didn't reach very high, and yes the rescue helicopter caught in the heated updrafts crashes and burns saving no one. Ever since then my rule has been and will always be to stay on the lowest floors in any high rise. I once argued with a hotel clerk who was trying to convince me that staying in their penthouse suite on the top floor was perfectly safe. He went on to say that I would be forsaking the glorious view of the harbor and beyond. His attempt was feeble at best as I countered by telling him that I don't want to see into the "Great Beyond" as an overly burnt piece of human toast in the unlikely event of a catastrophic hotel fire. Naturally I gave him a complete narrative of the most compelling disaster movie I ever saw but he just thought I suffered from some sort of mental handicap.

For all my loyal ASM readers I will assure you that I am not "suffering" from some mental disability or paranoia by conveying these well researched facts regarding personal survive-ability under such circumstances. 1. If the doors and hallways are impassable in a high rise building, jumping out a 1st story window will result in only some bumps and scrapes. 2. Jumping out of a 2nd story window will result in some bumps and scrapes, as well as a few broken bones but you will live to tell the tale. 3. Being trapped on the 3rd floor and needing to jump may likely result in bumps and scrapes, broken bones, and internal injuries putting you in critical condition but still alive. Jumping out a 4th story or higher window is a more

merciful death then burning alive. The probability of surviving a fall at this height or higher is measured in fractions of a percentile.

Anyway getting back to my booking preferences, the gal back at the company I work for must have been new because although she booked a room on the 2nd floor she also booked me a handicapped room because of my "special accommodations". I tried to change my room number when I arrived at the hotel but with another large function going on at the same time the only other available rooms were well above the 4th floor.

Because we arrived after dark, my traveling assistant and I decided to check in, get our room keys and go out for supper before going to our rooms. Upon entering my room my hand frantically swiped the wall looking for the light switch. It was nowhere to be found. Instead of fumbling around in the dark I just flicked on my key chain flashlight (which I always carry when traveling overnight just because you never know....) and realized the light switches were better than a foot lower than normal. No time to get worked up over it because I had to pee really bad so I ran to the toilet. Not realizing that the toilet was also better than a foot lower than normal, I am still amazed how I didn't manage to wedge the toilet seat around my waist as I crash landed on top of the porcelain goddess. I think handicapped hotel rooms should use padded toilet seats (like I remember my grandparents having when I grew up) as I am sure I am not the only one who miscalculated distance. Thank God my traveling companion didn't witness this spectacle so the only red cheeks I had were my butt cheeks.

Time to shower. The no door handicapped walk in shower had a shower wand set at a ridiculously low chest high height. Needing to rinse above the chest line it became a Rubik's cube like puzzle trying to get the right configuration for the wand so it would detach and then fit nicely back in its holder. Since I suck at puzzles it took only about 30 seconds of my awkward fumbling for the entire large heavy metal fixture to become unbolted from the wall and crash to the floor in a million pieces with such force it sounded like 3CPO (star wars robot) slipped on a bar of soap and took a "header". I heard a muffled scream from the other room and a frantic "Are you alright in there?" from my friend. I just retorted with, "Yup, just dropped something that's all".

Amazingly amidst the chaos, the shower wand calmly kept streaming out water never missing a drop. Needing both hands to deal with the metal carnage I let go of the wand which then morphed into an angry out of control fire hose spewing out water at the shower curtain (the force of which blew the curtain over to the toilet allowing spray to saturate every inch of the bathroom and instantly turned a full roll of TP into a gigantic

*continued on page 13*

# Legislative Update

By *Dennise Whitley, ASM's Legislative Liaison*

The First Regular Session of the 128th Maine Legislature convened Wednesday, December 7, 2016 and adjourned Wednesday, August 2, 2017. It was a robust session with 1,647 Bills introduced. ASM followed 47 Bills with 20 passing, 18 dead, 7 carried over and 2 withdrawn. ASM provided testimony on the following 6 bills.

The following 3 bills all passed and then were put on Carry Over status because of budgetary considerations:

**LD106:** An Act To Provide MaineCare Coverage for Dental Services to Adults with Intellectual Disabilities or Autistic Disorder: This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to extend MaineCare dental services to a person 21 years of age or older who receives services under Chapter 101, MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 21 or 29. Dental services provided to such a person must be the same as those provided under the MaineCare program to an eligible person under 21 years of age.

**LD 323:** An Act To Fully Fund the Waiting List for the Home and Community Benefits for Members with Intellectual Disabilities or Autistic Disorder Waiver Act To Fully Fund the Waiting List for the Home and Community Benefits for Members with Intellectual Disabilities or Autistic Disorder Waiver

This bill provides to the Department of Health and Human Services the funding to fully fund the waiting list for community-based services provided under the MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapters II and III, Section 21 relating to home and community benefits for members with intellectual disabilities or autistic disorder.

**LD 967:** An Act To Ensure Access to Community Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism. This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse services provided to MaineCare member adults with intellectual disabilities or autistic disorder under a waiver granted by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for home-based and community-based care on the basis of rates and a methodology for application of the rates that reflects assessment of individual need and applies criteria for resource allocation established by the department pursuant to criteria established in the bill. The bill also directs the department to adopt rules providing reimbursement rates that take into account specified costs of care and service; suffice to ensure access, including compliance with federal standards; are based on a 2007 report of the department adjusted for cost increases from 2007 to 2016; provide future annual inflation adjustments; and consider competitive wage markets, training and qualification requirements and increased costs of new technologies.



The following 2 Bills were voted to be Carried Over until the next Session:

**LD 763:** An Act To Support Individuals with Disabilities by Exempting Certain Wages from Consideration for MaineCare. This bill exempts income received by a person with a disability from certain work programs available to individuals with disabilities from being considered in determining the person's eligibility for MaineCare.

**LD902:** Resolve, To Increase Access to Evidence-based Psychosocial Treatment for Children in the MaineCare Program

This resolve requires the Department of Health and Human Services to increase the MaineCare reimbursement rates for evidence-based outpatient psychosocial treatments for children to a rate that covers all costs involved with providing the service, including additional training, clears waiting lists and attracts providers to all areas of the State, including underserved rural areas. The resolve also requires the department to cover 2 additional evidence-based services known as trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and parent management training programs through a request for proposals, using General Fund funds for training and hiring staff. The department and the contracted providers are required to develop a reimbursement rate for providing the service that is sufficient to allow the continued financial health of the service providers providing these therapies.

**LD665:** An Act To Give the Courts Sentencing Discretion When a Person with a Developmental Disability Has Been Convicted of a Crime. Unfortunately, this Bill was killed in Committee.

This bill provides that, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, if the court finds that a convicted person has an abnormal condition of the mind as a result of an intellectual disability or an autism spectrum disorder, the court may in its discretion impose a sentence that is less severe than any mandatory minimum sentence that is required by law, including, but not limited to, the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 17-A, chapter 51 or 53. The bill defines "intellectual disability" as a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and the conceptual, social and practical skills that are required for successful everyday functioning and that are recognized by professionals in the field of developmental disabilities as adaptive behavior.

The general effective date for nonemergency laws passed in the First Regular Session of the 128th Legislature is Wednesday, November 1, 2017.

## "Just One Big Nightmare!" (continued from 9)

spit wad). Instinct took over and I pulled the slippery hose away from its destructive aim and wrapped it around my neck so that the water would hit the shower wall while I tried to repair the 100 piece jig saw puzzle of a wand holder. It never occurred to me to shut the water off as doing so wouldn't contribute to re-assembly of the holding unit. It was only by God's grace that I got the whole thing put somewhat back together again in a timely fashion and that I didn't slip with the hose around my neck. In the moment it seemed the only plausible course of action but had I slipped it would have been misconstrued as a successful suicide attempt as opposed to the reality of a botched plumbing repair job attempted by an unqualified and unlicensed plumber.

After all that excitement I was tired and ready for bed. My traveling companion and close friend had to share the king bed with me. Normally we always have rooms booked with 2 double beds. I don't know why this handicapped room had only one bed. It was just "another nail in the coffin" as the expression goes for when things don't go according to plans. To add insult to injury the mattress was one of those new newfangled sleep number contraptions pre-set to "firm" which is the equivalent of sleeping on a concrete sidewalk. I crept under the covers and fell asleep. The mattress was so uncomfortable that I tossed and turned during my slumber. At some point I awoke somewhat and adjusted the bed setting down to its lowest "soft-ness" setting which promptly ended up having me on a deflated air mattress cradled in a king size wooden crate. Ever try to wrestle yourself out of tangled bed sheets while on the floor in a big pine box with 2 and a half foot high solid wood walls, in the dark, half asleep, forgetting there is someone else sleeping beside you after watching horror movies? Trust me...it takes less effort to scale Mount Everest than it does trying to free yourself from a king size coffin being shared by an imaginary but incredibly real in the moment zombie close enough to munch on your face!! The whole experience was just one big nightmare!!

## Donations

### IN HONOR OF:

Mrs. Simone Vaillancourt  
Mrs. Joan Farwell

### IN MEMORY OF:

Carl M. McAllister  
-Elaine McAllister  
Stanley "Bump" Tilley  
-Christopher and Elizabeth Anderson  
-Stephanie Rideout/Fargeorge Family  
-Vickey Tilley  
-FA Peabody Company  
-Claudia Fullerton  
Arthur Rowe  
-Shirley Estes

### DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS/

Matches/Grants  
Moe's Original Barbeque  
Kohl's  
University of Maine Farmington  
Jennifer O'Connor  
Bath Lodge of Elks No. 934  
Community Health Options  
Stillwater Academy  
Harvey's RV  
Twin City Tile  
Marston's Marina  
China Middle School JMG  
Holy Trinity Philoptochos Society  
The Vaillancourt Family  
Carol Sullivan  
1st Rate Bait

Mark Hammond Associates, Inc.  
Emera  
Kennebec Savings Bank  
33 Elmwood  
Orono IGA  
Spurwink  
UCP of Maine  
Disability Rights of Maine  
Denise Baxter  
Brewer Eagles Club # 3177  
Fraternal Order of Eagles Saco Aerie #  
3792  
Change Healthcare  
Jennifer O'Connor  
Helen Murray  
Anonymous  
Catholic Charities of Maine

## 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/>



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 1-800-273-5200 or emailing: [library@asmonline.org](mailto:library@asmonline.org)

## Early Start Denver Model for Young Children with Autism: Promoting Language, Learning, and Engagement

by Sally J. Rogers PhD, Geraldine Dawson PhD

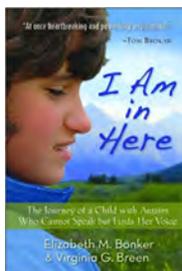
Designed for toddlers and preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder and supported by the principles of developmental psychology and applied behavior analysis, ESDM's intensive teaching interventions are delivered within play-based, relationship-focused routines. The manual provides structured, hands-on strategies for working with very young children in individual and group settings to promote development in such key domains as imitation; communication; social, cognitive, and motor skills; adaptive behavior; and play.



## I Am in Here: The Journey of a Child with Autism Who Cannot Speak but Finds Her Voice

by Elizabeth M. Bonker, Virginia G. Breen

A spiritual journey of a mother and daughter who refuse to give up hope, who celebrate their victories, and who keep trying to move forward despite the obstacles. Although she cannot speak, Elizabeth writes poetry that shines a light on the inner world of autism and the world around us. That poetry and her mother's stirring storytelling combine in this inspirational book to proclaim that there is always a reason to take the next step forward--with hope.



## School Shadow Guidelines

by Jed Baker; Alex Liau Whatt Meng

Your child may find it difficult to adapt to new surroundings and learning environments from time to time. School Shadow Guidelines helps guide your child to develop appropriate behaviors in school, establish an environment that helps to strengthen academic ability, and also build up on his/her social interaction skills with the goal of independence. Special needs children can benefit from having inclusive education to aid in their development and growth; this is where school shadowing serves vital roles.



## Social Skills Games and Activities for Kids with Autism

by Wendy Ashcroft, Angie Delloso, Anne Quinn

Complete instructions for using fun, engaging games and activities to teach social skills to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The games include directions for assessing skills such as asking for toys, getting the attention of others, reading nonverbal gestures, understanding perspectives, and cooperating to solve problems.



## The Autism Playbook for Teens

by Irene McHenry, Carol Moog, Susan Kaiser Greenland

Teens with autism have the potential to be excellent actors. They are natural observers—able to study, imitate, and learn social behavior. The Autism Playbook for Teens is designed to bolster these strengths with mindfulness strategies and roleplaying scripts, while also helping teens reduce anxiety, manage emotions, be more aware in the present moment, and connect with others.



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.



Adult Coloring Book  
(60 pages)

"Color Up the Spectrum" by  
Heather Down

\$10.00



Autism Awareness Lanyard

\$6.00



\$8.00



\$9.00



\$9.00

Silicone Chew Necklaces  
All necklaces are 24" in  
length and have a break-away  
clasp and are made of 100%  
food grade silicone – Assorted  
Colors : Call ASM to request  
specific color

**ELEPHANT**  
3" x 2 3/4" Pendant (hole size  
is 1/8")  
**ROUND**  
2" Pendant (hole size is 1/2")  
**TEAR DROP**  
2" x 3"  
**OWL**  
3" x 3" Pendant



Silver Cuff Bracelet

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

\$10.00



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

\$10.00



\$8.00



Autism Awareness Mug (red)  
features words: "Embracing the  
Amazing"  
porcelain (do not microwave – hand  
wash)  
\$11.00



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



Walk for Autism T-Shirt

Special 15th Anniversary  
Design, size large or x-large

\$10.00



Autism Ribbon Earrings

Sterling Silver plated  
Includes Embossed Gift Box

\$8.00



Puzzle Piece Car Magnet

4" x 8" \$6.00



Autism Stretch Bracelet

Sterling Silver plated

\$4.00



Gel Autism Awareness  
Bracelet

\$3.00



Autism Touches Us All  
Hanging Charm

1" x 1" and Sterling Silver  
plated

\$3.00



Autism Awareness Lapel  
Pin

\$5.00



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



Mini Magnet  
2" x 4"

\$3.00



Autism Awareness  
Magnet  
8" x 3.5"

\$5.00



## 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)**