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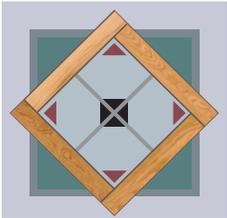
Autism



Connections

**Thank you to our 2022
Walk for Autism
Diamond Sponsor:**

Summer 2022



FOOTHILLS FLOORING & TILE

Home of the crawling craftsmen

My name is Rick Cummings, and I opened my store Foothills Flooring and Tile in the hopes and dreams of leaving behind a successful business that would take care of my son. Nicolas is non-verbal autistic and will require one on one support the rest of his life. He is the most precious gift ever given to me, and I wanted to make sure I have done everything possible in my lifetime to make sure he will be well taken care of when I'm gone. Nicolas is the foundation of Foothills Flooring and Tile, and thus the story begins:

Being an installer for over 23 years and installing all over the East Coast I noticed that there was a need in the Oxford Hills area for a flooring store that would have a large selection of various types of flooring. Many people were going to the city and the BIG BOX stores for their flooring needs. In their search they were discovering inferior materials, failing installations, and most of all lack of customer service to address their concerns. I wanted to change this for my community of which I have lived in for over 50 years. I wanted to bring my years of installing to the other side and make sure my customers were getting the best job possible, at the best price possible, and not forgetting the "fine details" required to achieve a quality installation.

On July 1, 2017 we opened Foothills Flooring and Tile in South Paris with the intention of offering sales and installations of almost every type of flooring products on the market today. I wanted the "small town" atmosphere of knowing my customers were going to get quality installations and great customer service at competitive pricing. These goals can only be achieved by having the best installers in the business. Our installers have over 100+ years of combined experience in almost EVERY type of flooring installations and take much pride in their work. They make sure EVERY customer is treated with respect, honesty, and integrity. A great business can only exist and achieve with great employees.

(Cont'd on Page 2)



Maine Autism Connections

A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

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Stay up-to-date for
Legislation issues, fund-
raising events, volunteer
opportunities, and
upcoming happenings.



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



President's Message

Hello ASM Community,

I Hope this message finds you all well. I look forward to the warmer weather and longer days as we move into the summer season. I wanted to share an opportunity for your voice to be heard when it comes to crisis services for people on the autism spectrum. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) has recently contracted with The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability to study mental health and crisis services for people who have intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) in the state of Maine. The OADS is looking for your feedback and recommendations to enhance and improve services. One component of this study is a telephone interview with families across the state who have a family member with IDD, including autism, and a co-occurring behavioral/mental health need, to ask them about their experiences with the mental health service system. Your input is crucial to help identify gaps in service, as well as, what works well and what needs improving. The interview should take about 15-20 minutes and all your responses are completely confidential. If you are interested in participating contact the study project manager, Ann Klein, at ann.klein@unh.edu



Kind regards,
Tiffany Rooney, ASM Board President

"Promise me you'll always remember — you're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

~ Christopher Robin

Foothills Flooring and Tile (Cont'd from Pg. 1)

Foothills Flooring and Tile offers sales and installations (both residential and commercial) of many types of products including: carpet, linoleum, hardwood, engineered hardwood, luxury vinyl plank & tile, porcelain & stone tile, and rubber. Custom showers and backsplashes are some of our specialties. No project is too big or small for our team to tackle.

Thanks to my installers Dan Luscombe (35+years), John & Frank Kereztesy (35+years), Shawn Knight and crew (20+years), and Brandon Reilly (10+years), and myself (23+years) we have over 95 Google reviews of 5 star ratings. We want all our customers to feel confident in hiring us to achieve their flooring needs.

We are a small town store with small town values. Give us a call to schedule your free consultation and measurements. We look forward to working with you.



Foothills Flooring & Tile
Home of the crawling craftsmen

DIAMOND SPONSOR

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.

New ABA Center in Bangor

New center-based pediatric Autism services are now available. Families are all too familiar with waitlists for Autism services. It starts with the wait for diagnosis and then families wait again for services in their home or a place at an early intervention preschool. Staff turnover, shortages, and the sheer volume of children on waitlists create frustration and delays in treatment at a critical time.

Heartleaf ABA is a new center located in Bangor designed to help address these challenges. Heartleaf ABA is not a daycare, nor is it a preschool. We use a medical model offering full or half days of 1:1 ABA therapy. Kids meet with their master's level BCBA or a registered behavior technician (RBT) in a quiet room, without distractions from learning. Based on a child's goals their treatment may include time in the kid's kitchen, art room, and the gym with loads of sensory-rich toys.

Research indicates that ABA (applied behavior analysis) is the gold standard for Autism treatment, and the earlier it is introduced, the more gains a child may be able to make. Our program supports children in moving towards positive behavior changes like, using the restroom, improving communication skills, and practicing feeding or eating skills. Parents receive ongoing support and education to learn how to transfer newly learned skills to home. Insurance companies in Maine are mandated to cover Autism services, including ABA therapy. And, by using private insurance, families can reduce wait times even further. We accept a variety of insurances to help families access services while still receiving state-funded services.

Pediatricians, psychologists, preschools, special education departments, and even contacts at the CDS may not be aware of our center as a treatment option, as this is truly a new approach to care in Maine.

We welcome the opportunity to talk with you about your child or a child you work with, invite you for a tour, or speak to groups about our work. For any questions, please contact Heartleaf ABA staff: Jaye van Dussen at (207) 319-5688, jaye.vandussen@heartleafaba.com; Grace Hebert at grace.hebert@heartleafaba.com or connect with us by sending an inquiry found on our website www.heartleafaba.com



"The goal of Positive Behavior Support is not "perfect children" Rather the goal should be creating the perfect environment for enhancing their growth."

~Randy Sprick

Email- Social Media- Online Groups



The Autism Society has a vibrant facebook community including parents, professionals, and anyone interested in autism. If you are not already a friend to our facebook page, we welcome you.



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



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



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



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



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



The Vitalxchange app is a health community that wants to connect you to everything you need when you need it.

20th Annual Walk for Autism

Step-by-Step we did it! A total of \$52,876 was raised at both Walk for Autism events in Westbrook, Bangor! This is our largest community fundraiser dedicated to supporting people with autism and their families. We are thrilled beyond words! Thank you all for participating in the walk, by fundraising, sponsoring and for those who made a donation.

Westbrook Riverbank Park on April 24th was a beautiful sunny day from start to finish and 428 participants raised a whopping \$23,530!

Bangor Waterfront Park May on 1st started out a bit chilly, but then turned into a lovely spring day! 337 Participants raised an amazing \$18,094!

Participants were greeted with a festive atmosphere of music, popcorn, games and prizes until the one-mile walk started at noon. Everyone thought the new walk routes were nice and just the right amount of time and distance.

Local first responders were at hand and let kids check out their vehicles, answer questions and talk with parents. Vendors put in a lot of effort to make their tables fun and inviting with games, crafts, and treats while offering supportive autism resources.

Many volunteers were so kind to give their time and effort for this event that is important to them. We couldn't have done it without their helping hands and support. We are so grateful for all they have done to help out. Thank You!

It all starts with the generosity of our sponsors; they are the cornerstone of this event, and we couldn't have done it without them. Thank you sponsors!

Check out Walk for Autism pictures on our website: <https://www.asmonline.org/Gallery/Category/2670/>



20th Annual Walk for Autism

Thank You Sponsors

DIAMOND LEVEL



PLATINUM LEVEL



GOLD LEVEL



State Legislation

Governor's Budget

Maine's system of care is in crisis. More than 30 group homes have closed in the past 18 months. Low wages for direct service providers are largely to blame for the workforce shortages that led to these closures.

However, in the last days of the legislative session, **the Appropriations Committee failed to include two budget amendments that would have provided wage and COLA increases for direct service providers. Earlier in the session, the Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee had unanimously passed [these amendments](#) to the Governor's Supplemental Budget to give DSPs a [4.9% cost of living increase](#) and to increase MaineCare rates to pay DSPs 125% of minimum wage.** The Appropriations Committee's failure to even bring up these amendments to help DSPs was deeply disappointing, especially in light of this year's record budget surplus.

ASM submitted testimony on the DHHS part of the budget on Feb. 28, making the case that funds included in the budget for direct care workers in Medicaid waiver programs (group homes and community services) were not enough to fulfill the promise legislators made last year to raise MaineCare rates to pay DSPs across the board 125% of minimum wage. While the Health and Services Committee was committed to fixing the problem, neither the Appropriations Committee nor the governor were willing to help.

Legislation to reform early childhood special education services fails to pass

After a years-long effort to revamp early childhood special education services, the Maine Department of Education proposed legislation, LD 2039, that would have made significant changes to the services provided for children birth through five. It would have moved some services from the Child Development Services System to Maine School Administrative Districts, among other proposals.

There were a number of problems with LD 2039, however. The bill would have eliminated Maine's Child Development Services without a plan to help CDS employees stay in the workforce; fast-tracked the move of special education pre school services for 3- and 4-year-old children to public schools; and created a new entity to serve infants and toddlers (birth through age 3). In addition, the bill did not include a clear funding mechanism and left too many unanswered questions. Finally, it provided no process for input from families, CDS staff, or stakeholders in the future development of these services.

- Representative Rebecca Millet (D-Cape Elizabeth) introduced an amendment to LD 2039 that addressed some of the problems, including creating a task force for stakeholder input.
- The Autism Society joined with the Maine Children's Alliance, the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, the Maine Parent Federation, and other advocacy groups to push Rep. Millet's version of the bill, or failing that, to kill the DOE bill altogether.
- In the end, [LD 2039](#) died because it failed to pass the House, and because the Senate adopted Rep. Millet's version. The two houses could not agree. It's back to the drawing board for reforming early childhood special education.

Federal policy

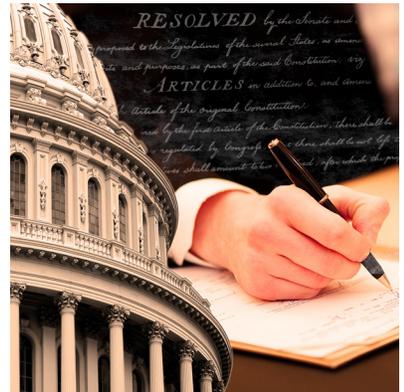
Kim Musheno of the Autism Society of America reported that the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Education and Rights Task Forces supported new policies (also supported by ASA) including:

- Federal funding targeted to state education agencies, local education agencies and/or schools must not support the hiring and/or training of law enforcement, including school resource officers.
- A vote in favor of this position would allow the CCD Education Taskforce to support the Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act and other similar bills.
- Federal funding and policy must not support school or district practices that utilize violence risk assessments or threat assessments.

Cont'd on next page

"Good government is no substitute for self-government."

~Mahatma Gandhi



Legislation Cont'd



There is a guide, [State Policy Strategies for Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce](#), that provides strategies that states have used to strengthen this essential workforce. They hope states will use these strategies to reform the direct care workforce to help the workforce crisis now and for the future.

The ASA has an updated Action Center, upgraded to a nicer platform and the team revised the Center to be in line with the new brand. <https://www.votervoicenet.com/AutismSociety/home>

Federal legislation

Budget reconciliation update. Advocates are concerned that if there is not a bipartisan agreement on a reconciliation bill, we might lose the chance for the HCBS funding.

See also the Washington Post article: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2022/04/26/white-house-manchin-biden/>

April Acceptance Month

At the Autism Society of Maine, EVERY day is Autism Acceptance Day! Our work is dedicated to all those in the Autism community with the supports, services, resources, advocacy, and connections that empower people to live to their fullest.

We encouraged the community to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month, and this inspired inquiries for Autism education and fundraisers in support of ASM autism programs.

ASM offered a series of four webinars, free of charge to anyone who wanted to learn and discuss the issues presented. These webinars have been recorded and accessible on our website or YouTube page:

"Achieving Success with Autism" Tyler McNamer, Author of "Population One" Tyler will discuss how he overcame

adversity, triumphed against all odds, and captured his story in his bestselling book *Population ONE: Autism, Adversity, and the Will to Succeed* he wrote at only 17 years old.

"Neurodiversity Panel and First-Person Perspective" - Dr. Kerry Magro, the goal of this presentation is to educate educators, therapists & caregivers on neurodiversity from a first-person perspective breaking down current biases around autism. Panelists: Olivia, Amanda Alonzo, and Brigid Rankowski.

"Unique Risk Markers and Warning Signs of Suicide for Autistic People" Lisa Morgan, M.Ed. Learn the unique risk markers and warning signs of suicide for autistic people, as well as how to communicate with and support autistic people in crisis.

"Exploring the Autism Diagnosis: The Forgotten Generation" Brigid Rankowki M.S. Spotlight on the challenges, barriers, and benefits of receiving a diagnosis in adulthood. Panelists: Cynthia Grimm, Andrew Komorow, Lisa Morgan

The Maine State Police and Maine State Troopers Foundation partnered with the Autism Society of Maine, and the (Doug) Flutie Foundation for April Autism Acceptance Month. License plates featuring logos of the Autism Society of Maine and Doug Flutie Foundation were displayed on Maine State Police cruisers for the month of April and will be auctioned off by the MSTF at a later date.

A commemorative framed license plate and Autism Acceptance patch is presented to the Autism Society of Maine and received by Cathy Dionne, ASM Executive Director.

L to R: Colonel John Cote, Cathy Dionne (ASM), Major Bill Ross, Sergeant Aaron M. Turcotte, Major Brian Scott



Van der Brew of Winthrop hosted a concert on April 2nd with music provided by Stone Quarry, Catbird Crossing, Hurry Down Sunshine and Ed Desjardins.

Sea of Blue Autism Walk and 5K, Northeast Harbor organized by Christopher Heel and family will be donating proceeds to Autism Society of Maine and various nonprofits.

J.Crew Factory offered a store campaign to its customers and donated proceeds to ASM.



Hannaford Store in Winthrop Bloomin' 4 Good Program donated to ASM from the sale of flower bouquets.

Heart Campaign – companies were supplied paper hearts that customers could purchase and have pinned up in the store as a supporter of autism. Thank you goes out to these agencies who participated in the campaign; Howie's Pub, Docks Seaford, Seacoast Nutrition, Timeout Sports Pub, Ruski's Tavern, Pizza Villa, Portland Pie Company, Outside of the Box, Ted's Trackside Grill, Everything Kids, My Sister's Place, Hannaford – Bucksport, and Freckles Salvage.



Upcoming Events

Save The Date



16th Annual Ride For Autism
Saturday, October 15, 2022
Kennebunkport Conservation Trust building
Gravelly Brook Road, Kennebunkport, ME

Join us on a great ride for a great cause! This is the Autism Society of Maine's 16th Annual Ride For Autism Fundraiser. This event raises money for many of ASM's amazing programs!

There are so many ways you can participate. You can ride as an individual, a family, or be part of a team and challenge your friends for the top fundraising spot. There are always some great prizes!

There are three rides to choose from: 10-mile, 25-mile, and 50-mile, all are family friendly and have some great scenic views! of course, after the ride you are welcome to enjoy an amazing BBQ lunch.

The ride is a great time for the whole family! With music, games and a firepit, it's a wonderful way to spend some time with family and friends, supporting a great cause!

Be sure to check the ASM website and FaceBook page for the upcoming registration details, you can also signup for the ASM email list to be sure you don't miss any Ride updates!



BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT 4-PERSON SCRAMBLE

All Proceeds go to the Autism Society of Maine



Lunch Provided
50/50 Raffle
Top 2 Gross/Net
Closest to Pin
Long Drive
Beat the Pro

495 Huntington Hill Road Litchfield, ME

25 Team Max

\$360 / Team

FRIDAY
26th AUGUST, 2022

Registration
8AM

Shot Gun
9AM

CONTACT: 1-800-273-5200

Award Nominations

Do you know someone who is deserving of recognition in any of the categories below? Let the Autism Society of Maine recognize them with an award. The following are the categories that we honor. Please write no more than 1000 words of why you believe they should be honored, email to asm@asmonline.org Provide us with this written statement along with the person's name, address, email, and phone number. ASM will notify you (provide us your information) if this person is chosen and to be honored at our annual meeting in September. Date to be announced.

Deadline for submissions no later than September 2, 2022.

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.



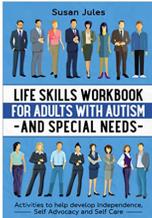
ASM Lending Library

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

Visit our online library page [HERE](#)

The library has its own room with a TV to watch DVD's. Children are always welcome to play with toys or read.

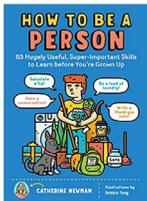
NEW BOOKS!!



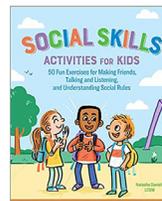
This workbook will help adults to work and develop: Practical living skills, Personal care, Job skills, Personal safety, Social skills, Safety awareness, Self-determination and advocacy, Consolidating independence, And much more



This workbook will help you to guide your teenage child to develop: Social Skills, Friendship Skills, Self Advocacy, Executive Functional Skills, Practical Living Skills, Developing a Career Path, Job Skills, People Skills, And much more!



They'll learn how to do chores like loading the dishwasher and making a bed, brush up on communication skills like making a phone call and apologizing, and master 61 other super-helpful skills including how to stick up for somebody, fold a T-shirt, and turn a 33-cent package of ramen into dinner. Improve work-life balance for the whole family with this kids' guide to growing up.



What are the Dos and Don'ts for making and keeping friends? How can you decode body language clues? What's the best way to keep a conversation going? Just like learning multiplication tables, social skills don't come naturally every child has to learn them. 50 awesome activities!

ASM Social Groups

Teen Group (Online)

I am happy to say our online teen social group is going strong and we are having such a great time! We have a really great group of teens who are enjoying our monthly meetings! I am so lucky to be able to hang out with these teens each month! If you have a teen (11-18) and think that they might benefit and enjoy joining our group send an email to tara@asmonline.org or call ASM at 800-273-5200 for more information. This group meets the last Friday of the month.

Young Adult Social Group (In Person)

We are also excited to announce a second social group for young adults (17-26) has begun and it has been a success so far! This group is facilitated by our very own Autism Information Specialist, Kendra Campbell. They meet the 2nd Monday of the month. If you are interested in learning more about this group, please email Kendra at bridgtonais@gmail.com.

Adult Social Group (Online)

Our Adult Social Function Group is also meeting each month and have been successful in adjusting to the ZOOM platform. This has been a great way for everyone to stay in contact during this time and they are definitely enjoying it! If you are an adult who would like more info on the Adult Social Function Group please email Tara at tara@asmonline.org or call ASM at 800-273-5200 This group meets the 2nd Thursday of the month.

Parent Support Group (Online)

Just a reminder that our Executive Director, Cathy Dionne also facilitates an online parent group each month. If you have specific questions, concerns, or would just like to meet others who are going the same things then this group is just what you are looking for. For more information send an email to asm@asmonline.org or call ASM at 800-273-5200. This group meets the last Friday of the month.

Parent Support Group (Online) NEW!!!

New online Parent Support Group in **Aroostook County**!! Facilitated by Jenna Cyr, an Autism Information Specialist with ASM. This group meets the second Friday of the month. For more info please contact Jenna at jennacyrdsp@gmail.com



Donations

Membership Renewals

Kathleen Vanadia
Kate Brix
Annette Rodriguez
Wendi Woolhouse
J. Collins
The Whitehouse Family
Robin Marland
Donna Anderson
Sandra Warden
Minna Brewster
Sharon Crosby
Kelly Gray
Spurwink
MaryAnn Smith
Tom McNally

New Memberships

Melissa Lipsey
Tracy Garrow
Keith Pillsbury



Donations/Sponsorships Employee Matches/Grants

Walmart
Holy Trinity Philoptochos Society
Elle Ousfar
Carol Sullivan
Callie Lemieux
Karen Lemieux
Seacoast Nutrition
OKLEE, LLC
Ruski's Tavern
Pizza Villa
My Sister's Place
Freckles Salvage
Dock's Seafood
Everything Kids
Hannaford Store # 8229
Waterville
Ted's Trackside Deli

"Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more."

~H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Facebook Fundraisers

From March through May, \$1,135 was raised in donations from birthday fundraisers and general donations. This is absolutely wonderful! We thank everyone who started a fundraiser and to those who made a donation! All fundraisers are appreciated, some do not bring in donations and that is ok! You let others know this cause is important to you and put a spotlight on ASM.

Facebook covers ALL fees for donations made to charitable organizations and 100% goes directly to ASM. If you would like to create your own Facebook fundraiser for ASM, go to the ASM fundraiser link to get started. Facebook fundraisers can celebrate any occasion and can be shared on your fb page.

There is also a donate button on ASM's Facebook page and that is not connected to a fundraiser but goes directly to ASM. Although donating only takes a moment for 100% of your dollars to have a lasting impact for those who receive guidance, resources, and experiences with ASM.

Jenna Woods
Matt Heel
Shilo Biggs
Kaelie Huff
Tina French Frappier
Roxann Gardiner
Amber Lyn Love
Anite Stratton



Paula Poulin
Richard Gannon
Mert Enterprises
Cori Shaw
Cory Reynolds
Kaitlyn Reynolds
Kevin McKinney
Tina Hatch