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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

Developmental Milestones

by Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer

The Autism Society of Maine would like to introduce our incoming President Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer and say a heartfelt goodbye to Laurie Raymond.

Isn't it wonderful that we are never too old to grow? I was worried about taking on this new role but Laurie Raymond kindly helped me to gradually take on responsibilities, secretary to VP, each change in its time. Because this is my first President's corner message, of course I went to the internet to help with this important milestone. I googled, "how do I get people to read my newsletter article?" This resulted in throwing away the first three drafts and settling on this one.

What milestone will you achieve this winter/holiday season? Will you give up one unenjoyable tradition done only because you feel you have to do it? Will you start a new tradition which brings more fun and relaxed feelings for your family? Will you help your child or yourself to focus on building one new skill rather than expecting instant development of numerous skills? See tips for making the holidays easier later in this newsletter. Please write or call and let us know what worked or didn't work for you and let us know if we can share your comments in the next newsletter.

ASM milestones this year include disseminating over 4,000 brochures and responding to almost 6,000 emails! We are moving steadily toward objectives on our Strategic Plan (developed in May 2017) Our training manual is in the process of formalization, we have expanded expertise/range of board members, welcoming Kim Webber, who works in marketing and Christina Nason, a parent from Norway a nice boost in representation for Western Maine. (See our annual report for details of the strategic plan and numerous services provided by our Autism Information Specialists).

State wide, MaineCare expansion is likely the single greatest win for many members of our Autism community to come from the election. Governor-elect Mills and many state senators and

Winter 2018

representatives have pledged to make this a priority.

Opportunities for helping with some of our priorities for 2019

Adult Social Group attendance has declined over the past two years; those who attend find it very welcoming and a nice way to socialize, so we are looking to spread the word to others who might enjoy getting together with peers for dinner and/or a variety of activities.

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

The WALK for Autism, Bicycle Ride for Autism, Fall Conference

Would you like to volunteer or participate in one of the events or as part of a short term action group? You can write to us and let us know by sending an email asm@asmonline.org

Finally, do you have questions for your Board President? If you send questions with ask Nancy in the subject line I will know that you read this article and will be happy to answer.

Best wishes for a safe and warm winter, Nancy



Incoming Board President Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, left, and outgoing Board President Laurie Raymond, right.

Maine Autism Connections
A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, President
Tiffany Rooney, Vice President
Jon Youde, Treasurer
Sherry Pike, Secretary

Dick Farnsworth Brigid Rankowski
Christina Nason Jennifer Brooking
Katie Crowley Kim Webber

Staff

Cathy E. Dionne, *Executive Director*

Tena Hinds,
*Autism Information Specialist
Coordinator*

Susan Vincent,
Communications Director

Tara Perry, *Office Assistant*

Betsy Mahoney,
Community Outreach Liaison

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asm@asmonline.org

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AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism

Visit us online at: *Maine*
<http://www.asmonline.org>

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](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Autism-Society-Of-Maine/107781499258293)



ASM Annual Meeting

ASM's Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner was held on Sept. 28 at the Augusta Country Club in Manchester

Laurie Raymond, ASM President, began our meeting with a warm welcome to attending members and to special guests from the Autism Society National. Laurie said her goodbye as outgoing president and shared a personal story with photos of her hopes and dreams for her adult son with autism. It is bittersweet saying goodbye to Laurie who has finished her term as President. Laurie has been with us since 2010 and will remain our good friend and mentor.

Several Board members are transitioning into new roles and we are fortunate to have their dedication: Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, former Vice President, has transitioned to President. Tiffany Rooney is now Vice President, Jon Youde is Treasurer and Sherry Pike is Secretary.

Board Members that have finished serving their term: Ken Huhn (Treasurer), Chris Osgood, Terry Valcourt and Kerrie Lapoint.

Previously appointed by ASM President, Board Members Jennifer Brooking and Christina Nason were duly voted in and Richard Farnsworth was re-elected. The meeting was led by Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, President while staff was recognized and awards given to individuals for their outstanding achievements and contributions.

Professional Providing Services

Kathy Baltes, LCSW: For her Outstanding Professional Contribution to the Autism Community

Autism Society of Maine Service Award

Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, Ph.D: For her Lifetime of Achievements in the field of Autism

Family Members or Persons with Autism Service Award

Laurie Raymond, LCSW: For her Outstanding Commitment to Improving the Lives of All Individuals and Families Impacted by Autism.

Brigid Rankowski: For her Outstanding Commitment Advocating for Individuals with Autism.

Cathy Dionne, Executive Director brought us through the year of amazing accomplishments and we were inspired while looking forward to future goals. Attendees were treated to entertainment provided by Maine Comedian, Gary Crocker.



ASM BOARD DIRECTORS:

Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer, President, Winthrop
Tiffany Rooney, Vice President, Vassalboro
Jon Youde, Treasurer, Hallowell
Sherry Pike, Secretary, Winthrop
Katie Crowley, Portland
Jennifer Brooking, Cape Elizabeth
Richard Farnsworth, Portland
Christina Nason, Norway
Brigid Rankowski, Augusta
Kim Webber, Scarborough

[ASM Photo Gallery](#)

Welcome ASM's New Community Outreach Liaison

Betsy Mahoney is an immigration attorney, disability and women's rights advocate, health policy analyst and former community organizer. She began her Maine career in 1989 for the Family Planning Association. She has been an active participant in the Coalition for Housing and Quality Services since its inception, and has served on the boards of the Maine Women's Lobby, Maine Housing and the ACLU of Maine, among other groups. Betsy has three adult children, including a son with autism and intellectual disabilities who lives in a group home in Windham. She and her husband live in Cumberland. Betsy@asmonline.org



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.

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

Autism Awareness Night
Mariners Hockey vs. Norfolk Admirals
March 6th at 7PM
Cross Arena in Portland



Join the Maine Mariners for a sensory reduced game on March 6th at 7PM as they take on the Norfolk Admirals!

[Click here to purchase your tickets!](#)

Contact Mitchell for more information at:
Mitchell_Ketchum@comcastspectacor.com
or call 207-761-4364

SAVE THE DATE

17th Annual Walk for Autism
April 28, 2019
11:00 AM Registration starts
12:00 noon Walk for Autism starts
5 locations: Bangor, Biddeford, Belfast,
Farmington, and Portland!



Each site is slightly different, from Farmington's petting zoo to Bangor's Ice Cream Truck, there is guaranteed to be something for everyone! There will be local vendors, balloons, face painting, snacks, and plenty of fun for all! Be part of a team, family, school, agency, or.. just come by yourself to support someone with autism.

TEEN SOCIAL GROUP

Meets the 2nd Friday of the month 6:00-7:30 PM
(call for dates)

Autism Society of Maine, 72B Main Street, Winthrop

Requirements for the Youth Group:

- Youth must be between the ages of 11-18 years
- Youth must have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Youth must be willing to verbally communicate with others to get the most benefit out of the group
- Youth must have a responsible adult with them when attending group or events
- All electronics (cell phones, iPods, Game Boys, DS games, laptops etc) must be left at home. Please DO NOT bring them to group.

NEW to the group:

Please call the office prior to attending for first time. We would like to find out more about the teen and provide you with information about the group.

PARENT/GUARDIAN GROUP:

While the youth are attending their group, Cathy Dionne will hold a parent/guardian support group. Various topics that affect individuals/ families will be discussed.

If you have questions please feel free to contact Cathy at asm@asmonline.org or 1-800-273-5200

Documentary Screening

EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

The Autism Society of Maine is bringing the documentary Extraordinary People to Maine during the month of April. We will have it run in various Universities across the state. It will be free and hopefully open your eyes to the possibilities of what can be achieved by individuals. Check out our calendar of events for future listings of times and locations.

Extraordinary People is a documentary film that tells the story of six adults across the autism spectrum, who, despite individual challenges, have found meaningful value and a deep sense of pride from their work at a business called Extraordinary Ventures. The film redefines expectations for employers and society alike, and shows the essential role a job plays for not just these six individuals, but for all adults.

<https://www.extraordinarypeoplefilm.com/>



Celebration of Achievements in Our Community!

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US!

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can and DO succeed as productive members in society. ASM is proud to showcase stories of people with ASD that can be an inspiration to others. See the ASM website [Celebration of Achievements](#) page for more information if you are interested in submitting your story.

Ride for Autism

by Tara Perry

On Saturday September 15, The Autism Society of Maine held their 12th annual Ride for Autism at the beautiful Conservation Trust Building in Kennebunkport. We could not have asked for a better day! The weather was a little overcast but the temperature was perfect. All of the 108 riders had the option of riding a 10, 25 or 50 mile loop, taking advantage of the beautiful coastal scenery our state offers. The riders returned to the Trust to enjoy some delicious pulled chicken sandwiches, hot dogs, pasta salad, homemade beans, and homemade desserts prepared and served by equally wonderful volunteers. After a delicious lunch, this year's top fundraisers were announced. The first place prize for individual fundraising, (\$380 value), was won by Conrad Sastre. The second place prize (\$275 value) was won by Jodi Chase and the third place prize (\$200 value) went to Hope Poore, with Team Marston being the top fundraising team.

Every rider who raised \$100 had their names entered into the raffle to win a new bike, generously provided by ASM and the Kennebunkport Bike Company. This year's winner was Susan Janosik. Congratulations to all! Because of the dedication and fundraising efforts we were able to raise over \$20,000! This money will help us continue supporting programs to benefit

children, individuals, and families touched by autism. Great job and thank you to everyone who rode and donated.

We would also like to thank our Sponsors, Bull Run Striping, Flagship Cinemas, Kennebunkport Conservation and Trust, Maranacook Healthcare and Rising Tide. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. A big shout out to all of our volunteers for your hard work and generosity as well. Its people like you who make this event possible. Be sure to check back with us for the date for next year's ride! We look forward to seeing you all!



Fall Autism Conference

by Tena Hinds

On Saturday, November 3rd, close to 160 people attended ASM's 2nd annual "Autism Conference" in Orono at the Black Bear Inn and Conference Center. Caregivers, professionals, educators, as well as individuals came together for a full day of learning and information gathering.

We are already planning for next year, so stay tuned and save the date for Saturday (November 2, 2019), same location, and.. hope for good weather.

This year we were fortunate to have **Nancy Tarshis**, a speech- language pathologist, and a Trainer and Speaker for Michelle Garcia-Winner's Social Thinking Methodologies join as the keynote speaker. Her message, regarding how we can help people with social emotional learning challenges improve how they interpret and respond to social information to better connect with others, was well received by all.

4 Breakout sessions followed, providing participants an opportunity to hear others speak on different topics:

Lindsay Payeur and Cheri Laflamme are both Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's) and together, they shared information about the different functions of behavior, and how a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) helps to identify why behaviors occur. With that information, interventions and supports can be put in place to help reduce problematic behaviors. She and Cheri also addressed FBA's in the school setting - who should do them, the components a parent should expect to be included in the assessment, and when an FBA should be used.

Nancy Tarshis, Keynote speaker followed her keynote address by exploring in greater depth, an understanding of social thinking and the impact it has on individuals. She also shared a few key ideas to help get started. There was time for questions and answers as well.

Maryam Mermey is a registered expressive arts therapist. She opened her session with a film to introduce "Transforming the Bullying Cycle through the Expressive Arts Model", in action with youth from California, Maine and Massachusetts. The film was followed by a discussion of practical applications with children and youth on the autism spectrum. An expressive arts activity using pipe cleaners was presented as an example found to be empowering for young people with autistic neurodiversity.

The Adult Panel Discussion featured ASM's Executive Director, Cathy Dionne, as she facilitated a discussion with a panel of 3 Adults on the Autism Spectrum. Questions related to their lives, past and present, were presented and their perspectives were be shared.



We want to thank the speakers: **Nancy, Lindsay, Cheri, Maryam** and our Panel of Adults: **Kevin Lamoreau, Madison Hopping and Calvin Michaud**. After months of planning, it was a joy to see all the participants engaged and identifying supports amongst each other, and with local agencies, businesses and organizations.



Thank you, also, to **The Penobscot Foundation for Developmental Services** and **The Hussman Foundation** for the Grants they provided, our Silver level sponsor: **Developmental Disabilities Council**, and Bronze level sponsors: **Spurwink, and Kids Peace** and the **14 Vendors**. Without all this support, the funding for our conference would have to come from participants and we would have to charge for attendance.

This is what a few participants had to say about the conference:

"I will implement information with students I work with."

"The Adult Panel was very informative, so proud of each of them".

"Great ideas to use in our social skills group"

"I really enjoyed the expressive arts breakout, wish I could have attended all."

The conference ended in the dark, as a power outage affected much of the surrounding area. With flashlights and battery operated lanterns, we all packed up and headed home. The wind and rain added a memorable kind of closure to an otherwise wonderful event.

Holiday Ideas

All of us at the Autism Society of Maine wish you and your families. Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!
[Please visit our online holiday page](#) for gift ideas, tips & strategies and print-outs!

Popsicle Stick Crafts

Do you remember making popsicle crafts as a child? The kids will enjoy making a *popsicle craft* project and can give to someone special or keep as a decoration. There are many designs to choose from on this page – invite the whole family and have fun!

by www.craftymorning.com/christmas-popsicle-stick-crafts-for-kids-to-make/z



Gingerbread Man and Reindeer Cookies!

Do you have a gingerbread man cookie cutter? If you do, then you have a reindeer cookie cutter!

The secret to making reindeer cookies is to flip the gingerbread cookie cutter upside down!

Gingerbread man and reindeer cookies can be sweet and easy with just white icing, red m&ms and chocolate chips - or add more icing colors and sprinkles to suit your fancy!

Make your own cookie dough or buy refrigerated pre-made gingerbread dough at your grocery store **or** sometimes you can find pre-made cookies all set to decorate.

Make your own icing and put in a squeeze bottle **or** buy pre-made pouches of icing. Here is a good recipe for the cookies and icing:

www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/gingerbread-cookies-with-buttercream-icing/



Donations

IN MEMORY OF:

Natalie L. Thompson-
Robert & Karen Beskar

DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP EMPLOYEE MATCHES/GRANTS

Liberty Mutual

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Sean Kelly- Ring Finders Metal Detecting
Augusta Fire Department
Margarita's Restaurant- Augusta, ME
Skowhegan Savings Bank
Maine Discovery Museum
Jack Dyer

EMAIL - SOCIAL MEDIA - ONLINE GROUPS

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!



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



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



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



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

Welcome to the Autism Society of Maine Library!

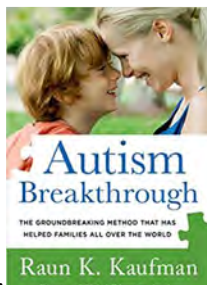


[Visit the ASM Library](#)

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

Autism Breakthrough By Raun Kaufman

As a boy, Raun Kaufman was diagnosed by multiple experts as severely autistic, with an IQ below 30, and destined to spend his life in an institution. Years later, Raun graduated with a degree in Biomedical Ethics from Brown University and has become a passionate and articulate autism expert and educator with no trace of his former condition. So what happened?



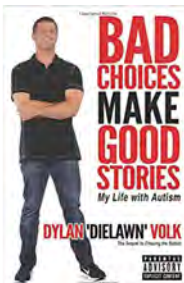
How to End the Autism Epidemic By J.B. Handley

In *How to End the Autism Epidemic*, Generation Rescue's co-founder J.B. Handley offers a compelling, science-based explanation of what's causing the autism epidemic, the lies that enable its perpetuation, and the steps we must take as parents and as a society in order to end it.



Bad Chices Make Good Stories By Dylan Volk

Now you can go where no one has been before: Deep inside a mind with high-functioning autism. In his rollercoaster of a life, Dylan Volk has lived all over the country, tried to fit in with many different crowds, and been in jail a few times. Now he has written a tell-all book to give you all the juicy details! Don't open this book before you go to sleep -- you may be up all night! The sequel to *Chasing the Rabbit: A Dad's Life Raising a Son on the Spectrum*, by Dylan's dad, Derek Volk, this book is a rare look at the challenges faced when autism is added to the daily struggle.



The Verbal Behavior Approach By Mary Lynch-Barbera

This step-by-step guide provides an abundance of information about how to help children develop better language and speaking skills, and also explains how to teach non-vocal children to use sign language. An entire chapter focuses on ways to reduce problem behavior, and there is also useful information on teaching toileting and other important self-help skills, that would benefit any child.



How to Build a Hug By Amy Guglielmo

Amy Guglielmo, Jacqueline Tourville, and Giselle Potter come together to tell the inspiring story of autism advocate Dr. Temple Grandin and her brilliant invention: the hug machine.



As a young girl, Temple Grandin loved folding paper kites, making obstacle courses, and building lean-tos. But she really didn't like hugs. Temple wanted to be held—but to her, hugs felt like being stuffed inside the scratchiest sock in the world; like a tidal wave of dentist drills, sandpaper, and awful cologne, coming at her all at once. Would she ever get to enjoy the comfort of a hug?

Then one day, Temple had an idea. If she couldn't receive a hug, she would make one...she would build a hug machine!

A Parents Guide to High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder- 2nd Edition By Sally Ozonoff, Geraldine Dawson

Many tens of thousands of parents have found the facts they need about high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including Asperger syndrome, in this indispensable guide. Leading experts show how you can work with your child's unique impairments--and harness his or her capabilities. Vivid stories and real-world examples illustrate ways to help kids with ASD relate more comfortably to peers, learn the rules of appropriate behavior, and succeed in school. You'll learn how ASD is diagnosed and what treatments and educational supports really work. Updated with the latest research and resources, the second edition clearly explains the implications of the DSM-5 diagnostic changes.





Silicone Chew Necklaces
Animals & Shapes- **\$9.00**
Raindrops & Circles-**\$8.00**

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

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

www.asmonline.org/asm-storefront.aspx

or by calling 1-800-273-5200.

*Includes gift box

Add 5.5% Sales Tax

SALE! SALE! SALE!
Great Gift Idea



**Folding Puzzle
Tote**
\$14.00



Silver Ribbon
\$10.00



Silver Puzzle
\$10.00



Keychain
\$6.00



Keychain
\$5.00



Stretchy
\$4.00



Wristband
\$3.00



Lanyard
\$6.00



Lapel Pin
\$5.00



Ceramic Mug
\$11.00



Charm Bracelet
1 Charm
\$6.00



Glass Pendant
\$10.00



Glass
Earrings
\$15.00



Ribbon Earrings
\$8.00

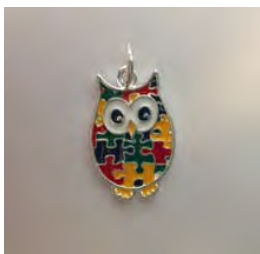


Magnets

Small \$3.00
Large \$5.00



\$6.00



Owl Charm
\$3.00



Autism Charm
\$3.00



Colored Heart Charm
\$3.00

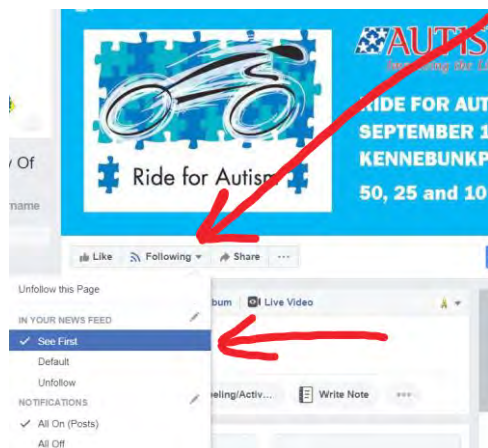


Silver Beads
\$1.00



Colored Beads
\$1.00

Major Changes to Facebook that Impacts ASM's Reach



Facebook has recently undergone major changes to its News Feed, pages that are not considered “trusted” by Facebook, even those users choose to follow, will most likely show up a lot less on their news feed.

If you have “liked,” but are not seeing ASM facebook posts, this new change may be the reason. However, there are some ways of making sure you can choose the content you want to see from the pages you like by updating the notification settings from ASM’s Facebook page.

Update Your facebook Settings: Go directly to ASM’s [facebook page](#) and click on the “Following” button to see a drop-down menu with options on how posts from that page may appear in your news feed.

Selecting “See First” lets you receive posts from that page in your News Feed right when it’s posted so you won’t miss updates from that particular page.

In addition, to help ASM grow and share its content, here are ways that facebook prioritizes posts that they will decide has more reach:

- If the content is shared over Facebook Messenger.
- If the content is Liked or commented on.
- If the content receives multiple replies.
- “Meaningful interactions” between users.

This is a quick and easy way to share what is important to you and help others to see autism related content. **Thank you!!**

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

The Autism Society of Maine is a statewide nonprofit organization that for over 40 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/get-involved/donations.aspx>
- 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
- 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/get-involved/donations-united-way.aspx>
- Join or host a fundraiser with proceeds to benefit ASM! Fun ideas can be found on our fundraising page: <http://www.asmonline.org/get-involved/fundraising.aspx>

ASM Mission Statement

The Autism Society of Maine provides education and resources to support the valued lives of individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

Become a Member!

Join our membership online:
<http://www.asmonline.org/join/>
or call ASM at 1-800-273-5200

For other ways to contribute, contact us at asm@asmonline.org. Thank you for supporting our mission!

Call us at: 1-800-273-5200 or visit us online at www.asmonline.org