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Happy
Holidays!

AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
Maine



Maine Autism Connections



Winter 2020

Welcome ASM's New President

It is an honored tradition that every 2 year's ASM nominates a new President for the agency. There are many qualified people for this position, but it takes someone special who knows how to guide a conversation around a table with very diverse people. The board plays a huge role in steering the ship, but the President is the one with their hand on the wheel. It is my pleasure to introduce our new President Tiffany Rooney.

-Cathy Dionne, Executive Director

Hello ASM Community,

I am excited to take on the role of Board President to help lead Autism Society of Maine (ASM) through the end of this pandemic. The Society has experienced the challenge of delivering much needed support, education, and resources, coming up with creative ways to meet the needs of adults and children on the autism spectrum.

As a nurse I have seen the challenges patients and their loved ones have faced dealing with medical care and hospitalizations during this unprecedented time. Having a nephew on the spectrum who recently had to be hospitalized opened my eyes to the unique challenge for patients on the spectrum and their families trying to navigate the health care system in the face of a pandemic. Advocating for a loved one during a time when your nerves are already on edge because of an illness can feel overwhelming. Having strong support from family and a community is a necessity. ASM will continue to work hard to get the most up to date information to you in as many ways as we can come up with. We have an energetic team working for ASM and highly engaged board committed to being there for you. Whether it is a virtual 'Coffee with Cathy' to ask questions or hear a subject matter expert; or a virtual bike ride to support the many activities of ASM, the Society is here and will be continue to be here for anyone in need. Have a wonderful Holiday, be kind, and be safe!



Tiffany Rooney

ASM Board President

Board of Directors

Tiffany Rooney, *President*
Christina Nason, *Vice President*
Joshua Nash, *Treasurer*
Sherry Pike, *Secretary*

Brigid Rankowski Jon Youde
Jennifer Brooking Malarie Clark
Scott MacCallum Dick Farnsworth
Bobbi Jo Boisvert Kim Webber
J. Richardson Collins

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Cathy Dionne
Executive Director
Susan Vincent
Communications Director
Tara Perry
Office Assistant
Betsy Mahoney
Legislative Liaison

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info@asmonline.org

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Visit us online at:
<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>



Exciting News!



ASM Partners with Vitalxchange

In case you haven't heard about the exciting news let me share it with you!

ASM has partnered with Vitalxchange, an app that aims to change the worlds of autism and healthcare forever.

Here at the Autism Society of Maine, we are constantly looking at ways to improve the support and service we can offer our clients. We are a nonprofit organization, and I myself have a adult child who is on the autistic spectrum, so I am constantly learning, while looking to understand what is missing and what could be improved upon. I also realize the importance of social media platforms for support and content sharing. Our organization introduced online webinar via Zoom, through our Coffee with Cathy program. This was a huge success in our community, with a large number of members logging in from all over the state. I soon realized the scale and amplification of a digital platform like vitalxchange could bring to the autism world. I was introduced to vitalxchange through a mutual and trusted colleague and am here to share this unique and exciting partnership with you.

I have been using the app for couple of months now and have seen its potential to find families like ours solutions and meaningful connections. With Autism Society Maine, being part of this app, you will be able to access the information and knowledge whenever you need it. You will also be able to talk to us and others in the community in new ways and get notified for our events, so you will never miss them! You will also be able to connect and share information with other members of the community.

Every person that joins makes our community better and puts us one step closer to making a lasting shift in the autism world.

To learn more visit: <https://www.vitalxchange.com/autism-society-of-maine>

To get the free Vitalxchange app, from your mobile phone go to this link: <https://app.vitalxchange.com/l/ASME>



Vitalxchange and the Autism Society of Maine have partnered with an aligned vision of a community of sharing for families caring for loved ones with autism. We welcome you to an empowering place, where we will grow and learn together.

Join your community today!



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.

It's Never Really Goodbye

Every Day is SATURDAY (so I hear)

Six years ago, I came to the Autism Society of Maine, (ASM) after ending my tenure as a special educator in public schools. My last 20 years of teaching had been working with children on the Autism Spectrum Disorder, or with other significant disabilities. The position of "Information Specialist Coordinator" with ASM presented itself and felt perfect, as I was not ready to completely retire.

Now, six years later, I AM ready to retire and it is very bittersweet that I leave this organization and the wonderful people that I have worked with to provide support for all our families in Maine. While I intend to thoroughly enjoy my retirement, I do anticipate that I will not completely disappear from ASM.

Please know that the "Autism Information Specialist" program will remain active and continue to meet your needs when you call or email for supports.

Thank You to everyone, (staff, families, professionals) who made my time here enjoyable and fulfilling.

I will miss you all. Stay safe and Take Care.

Always,

Tena



We have a small family at ASM and when one of our family members leaves it's always heartfelt. Tena Hinds has been with ASM for 6 years and we were so fortunate to have her as our Autism Information Specialist Coordinator. Her knowledge of special education helped guide all of the AIS in helping families. She will be missed but it's not goodbye just another transition to retirement which we hope she sincerely enjoys.

-Cathy Dionne, Executive Director

Fall Conference



Our Annual Fall Conference was held Virtually on October 31, 2020. Special guest Dr. Kerry Magro gave an engaging presentation "28 Years of Autism: From Then Till Now" that focused on his personal education experience growing up and being on the spectrum. Experiences, both good and bad, can help students with disabilities from early childhood to the transition into adulthood. Kerry shared experiences with therapies focused on his early development, how he founded a disability awareness organization and a non-profit for special needs housing, his work on 3 best-selling books and much more!

[Visit ASM's conference page](#) if you would like to see the video of the keynote presentation and follow-up information and resources regarding the break-out sessions:

"Transition Services" with Cathy Dionne, Executive Director, ASM
"Self-Advocate Town Hall" with Kerry Magro

Conference Testimonials:

"So impressed with Dr. Magro's accomplishments and I loved some of his ideas! I will use these as a parent and as an advocate. Thank you!"

"Having a son who is 28 and non-verbal it is always wonderful to hear from people that have had a similar journey, and share what I wish he could. This was great information and I like that you shared on everything from bullying to transition and beyond. Valuable information, Thank you."

"Thank you, very useful information, and thankful from a parent. I would like to have additional groups on teens/adults with severe disabilities in the future."

"Very important information my son is transitioning to adult services soon he turns 18 next week it is very confusing process."

Annual Meeting

The coronavirus pandemic has created immeasurable challenges for us all, and like so many events this year, our annual meeting on September 25th was virtual to ensure everyone's safety.



Guest Speaker, Dr. Matthew Siegel, Vice President of Medical Affairs for the Developmental Disorders Service of Maine Behavioral Healthcare, introduced the progress of the new "Center of Excellence in Autism & Developmental Disorders" treatment, training and research facility currently being built on the grounds of Spring Harbor Hospital in Westbrook. Dr. Siegel explained the services it will offer for up to 700 adult and pediatric patients with intellectual disabilities. This project is a \$14.7 million, 28,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility created to meet the growing needs of Maine families and individuals with a diagnosis of autism and other developmental disorders is due to open in the summer of 2021. [Read more about this exciting project](#)

ASM Service Awards

Awards were presented to Camden Bank, Joshua Nash, Michael Cote, and Derek Pilkington for volunteering of service above and beyond our expectations that will benefit the Autism Society of Maine for many years to come. Josh, Mike, and Derek donated their time to help Autism Society of Maine transition from an antiquated computer system to an integrated network. We are so grateful they were willing to take on this complicated project that was long past due.



"Passing the Gavel"

We recognized the efforts of our incredible board of directors, who volunteer their time and effort to keep ASM moving forward, despite the setbacks of this unusual and historic year. We bid farewell to Dr. Nancy Ponzetti-Dyer who has dedicated countless hours to ASM serving on the board of directors since 2010, and as president (from 2018) presiding over our meetings and a constant source of guidance.

We are pleased to welcome incoming president Tiffany Rooney, Registered Nurse. Tiffany has served on the ASM Board Directors since 2014 and as vice president since 2017.

New board members we look forward to working with in the coming months:

J. Richardson (Jay) Collins is a former Autism Society Board Director, having served terms as Vice President and President

Scott MacCallum is a technologist with over twenty years of information and communications technology experience in the nonprofit sector.

Malarie Clark is a registered nurse with almost 10 years of experience; she currently works for a large healthcare system in Maine.

Current Board Members: Bobbi Jo Boisvert, Richard Farnsworth, Joshua Nash (Treasurer) Jennifer Brook- ing, Christina Nason (Vice Pres.) Sherry Pike, (Secretary) Jon Youde, Brigid Rankowski and Kim Webber



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.

Why Should You Join the ASM Family?

By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to connect families and individuals in Maine to valuable resources, information, people and programs to help them obtain the best quality of life possible.



By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to provide presentations and workshops to providers, educators, employers and community members to help spread awareness and teach others about autism.

By becoming a member of ASM you are helping to advocate for families and individuals at the State house.

By becoming a member you are also helping to fund the following programs that are so important to families, individuals and the general community here in Maine.

- **Lending Library-** a free service to provide informational books and DVDs to anyone in the state.
- **Autism Information Specialist Program-** A free service to connect an individual or family with someone who can help them navigate the DHHS system, Voc. Rehab, assist with filling out forms and applications or just provide general support, whatever is needed.
- **Summer Camps-** (Camp Summit & Finding the Pieces) Free day camps for children with autism, giving them the chance to experience camp in a safe, nonjudgemental environment.
Open to paid members.
- **Family Retreat-** An annual weekend for the whole family to come together, relax and have fun.
Open to paid members.
- **Fall Conference-** A free event in Bangor, a chance to bring great speakers and information to a rural area.
- **Teen Social Group-** A chance for teens to hang out with their peers who truly understand them and allow them to be themselves.

Everyone who renews their membership will receive a coupon for a 20% discount on any purchase from the ASM Store!!

If you sign up as a NEW member, ASM will send you a free coffee mug embellished with a Temple Grandin quote!

Click here
to
[Join Now](#)

\$25.00 Individual/Family Member

\$25.00 Teacher/Student

\$150.00 Professional

\$200.00 Agency/Organization

\$1500.00 Lifetime Member

Free Gift
for
New
Members

For more information on how you or your business can become a member of ASM please contact us:

www.asmonline.org
800-273-5200
info@asmonline.org
library@asmonline.org

Building Communication And Independence For Children Across The Autism Spectrum

Strategies to Address Minimal Language, Echolalia and Behavior
Elizabeth Ives Field

This book supports professionals and families by providing detailed practical intervention to address goals in communication, independence, and behavioral interactions for a wide variety of children with autism. The major premise is that all children, regardless of their abilities, should be helped to maximize their personal potential for safe, happy productive lives.

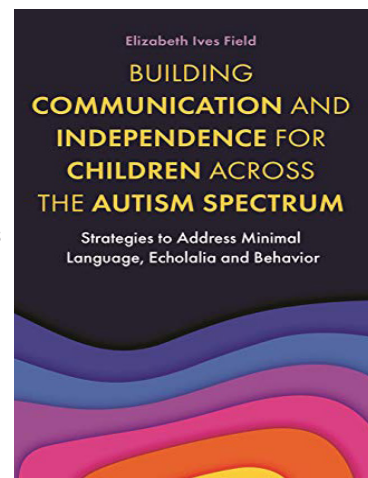
Most of the book lays out specific procedures to overcome obstacles that frequently interfere with successful interactions. Three interspersed chapters expand on the key, evidence-based, instructional methods, and describe other important skills to teach, with commentary on behavior tracking progress, generalization, and modifications for adults.

Nine children at various severity levels of the autism spectrum, from preschool to high school age, illustrate many characteristics of autism. Multiple goals included for each child focus on skills that are developmentally appropriate, functional in daily life, and foundations for future progress.

Among other topics, the goals and teaching methods focus on:

- Transitioning from a three-dimensional object system to picture-based communication.
- Establishing cooperation and joint attention in structured teaching or play-based sessions
- Developing basic receptive and expressive spoken language
- Replacing echolalia with more conventional requests, comments, greetings, protests, answers and questions
- Supporting group participation, conversation, and peer interaction
- Increasing independence in daily routines, schoolwork and pre-employment tasks
- Modifying communication to decrease refusal and aggression and to develop more effective expression of needs, knowledge and opinions

**Available soon in the ASM Library*



Coffee with Cathy

"Confidently Parenting & Teaching Children with Autism"

Linda Hodgdon, Speech Pathologist & Autism Consultant

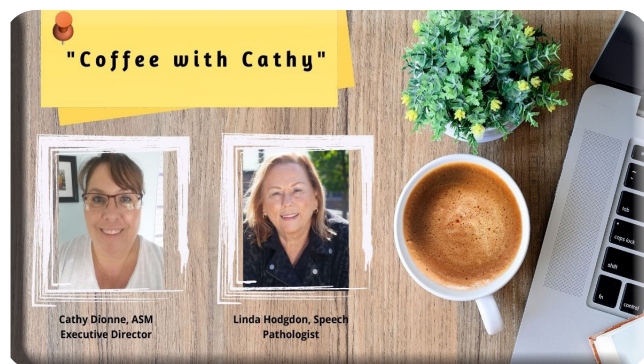
A webinar was offered at no cost on November 18th with Linda Hodgdon. Linda shared effective strategies that have proven to work for children and students with autism and avoiding difficult situations during these unusual times.

Linda explained in detail, with examples how simple visual tools and strategies can address the communication needs and for visual learners.

The webinar was recorded on ASM's [facebook livestream](#) for anyone to watch and learn how "the majority of students are visual learners, yet they live in an "auditory" world, they understand what they **SEE** better than what they **HEAR**."

Speech is transient: Message is there and then gone and easily missed.

Visuals are non-transient: Message is present long enough to take in and process information.

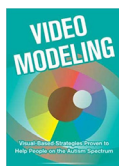


Welcome to the ASM Library

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!!



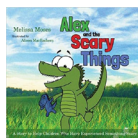
Video Modeling

Help your child to learn new skills and overcome existing barriers quickly and independently, regardless of age or ability. Video modeling is an effective method of teaching that uses recorded videos and technology.



Spectrum Women

In this book 15 Spectrum Women describe life from a female autistic perspective, and present empowering, helpful, and supportive insights from their personal experience for fellow autistic women.



Alex and the Scary Things

Alex is an alligator who has experienced "scary" things. In this story, he talks about how this affects him and how he copes.



How To Build A Hug

As a young girl, Temple Grandin loved folding paper kites, making obstacle courses, and building lean-tos. But she really didn't like hugs. Would she ever get to enjoy the comfort of a hug?

Community Helpers

From the months of September thru November, \$640 has been raised by Facebook's Birthday Fundraisers to benefit ASM!

This is an amazing amount of donations! 100% goes directly to ASM! Facebook covers ALL fees for donations made to charitable organizations. We want to thank the following people who supported ASM with a birthday fundraiser:

Wayne Ladouceur
Zachary Tremblay
Jersey Shaw
Casi Buckman
Amanda Miller
Elizabeth Wilson
Scott MacCallum



Courtney Giusti Welsh
Allyson Gillis-Parks
Hunter Smith
Donna Marie Cabral
Justine Capraro
Sasha Smith

Do you want to create a facebook fundraiser for ASM? It's easy! Just go to the [ASM fundraiser link](#) or to the tab or your facebook page to get started. Thank you!

Virtual Santa



ASM's Virtual Santa Event

Saturday, December 19, 2020

Start time: 1:00pm

If your child would like to have a personal (Virtual) 10 minute visit with Santa via ZOOM, please call ASM @ [800-273-5200](tel:800-273-5200) or email library@asmonline.org to set up an appointment time and receive the link for your visit, children will be in a virtual waiting room until it is their appointment time. When you set up your appointment time, you will be asked a few questions to personalise your child's visit!

All children who participate will have a special treat mailed to them from Santa after their visit!

Donations

In Memory

James V. Schencks
By Frank Ackley

New Memberships

Tatjana Doane
Mary Bishop
Inga Sullivan
Sabrina Stickney
Casey Hill-Smith
Christy Rousseau
Katie Lizotte
Jenna Dumoulin
Todd Hall
Kayla Max



Membership Renewals

Children's Odyssey
Debra Crump
Maurice & Rita Dionne
Daniel Pietroski
Dr. Matt Siegel
Kate Brix
Jeanne Laflamme
Melissa Fanjoy
Jon Youde
Joanne McMahon
Jane Brennan
Kendra Hughes
Karen Lipiatos
Faith McCaughin
Lucia Reardon
Laurel & Glenn Porter
Emily Pride
Michelle Murray
Lisa Irish
Jennelle McKinney
Lori Reil
Spurwink Services
Roland Preble



Donations/Sponsorships Employee Matches/Grants

Penobscot Foundation for
Developmental Services
Justine Capraro
Stan Davis
Alice Wilson
The Cadenza, Freeport
United Way of Kennebec Valley
Maggie Hoffman
Betsy Mahoney
PayPal Giving Fund
Mount Desert Island Marathon



ASM Store



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



Lanyard
\$6.00

Autism Society of Maine
72 B Main St, Winthrop, ME 04364
Call: 1-800-273-5200

Items can be seen
and ordered from ASM's online [store](#)



Magnets
Ribbon Magnet
\$5.00
Puzzle-Magnet
\$6.00
Window Cling
\$3.00



Stretchy
\$4.00



Wristband
\$3.00



Glass Pendant
Sm. **\$10.00**
Lg. **\$12.00**



Puzzle Tree Earrings
\$8.00



Lapel Pin
\$5.00



Face masks-
available in
three sizes:
Toddler:
Child:
Adult:
\$5.50



Charm Bracelet
1 Charm
\$8.00



Owl Charm
\$3.00



Autism Charm
\$3.00



Colored Heart Charm
\$3.00



Spacers
\$1.00