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Autism



Connections

Fall 2022

WHY KIDS NEED ROUTINE & HOW TO MAKE A VISUAL ROUTINE FOR YOUR HOME

Shared with permission from Autism Society of Greater Akron

Everyone says children benefit from using a visual schedule, that it provides them with structure and routine. But if you've never used one before you might be wondering how to make a visual schedule for your home.

Where do you even start?

Benefits of a Daily Routine and a Visual Schedule

It's pretty simple – children need structure in order to thrive. One of the easiest ways to add structure to their life is by creating and following a daily schedule. Visual schedules are beneficial for all children. However, they can be particularly helpful for children with Autism and ADHD.

Some benefits of visual schedules include:

- Easily understood, even by children who can't yet read or who are nonverbal.
- Reduces anxiety. Not knowing "what's next" is often a source of anxiety for kids. Even if their routine is consistent, they may still worry about this. With a visual schedule, they can easily look to see what to expect next.
- Helps establish healthy, constructive habits – such as personal hygiene, and completing chores and homework daily.
- Provides stability – uncertainty may cause major stress for kids with Autism. This usually stems from not having a full understanding of how the world works.
- Encourages independence so kids don't need continuous prompting.
- Helps with the development of some executive functioning skills, such as time management and organization.



Story continued on page 6

Maine Autism Connections

A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

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<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>



President's Message

Greetings ASM Community,

I would like to thank the ASM Director, Cathy Dionne and her team for their tireless work at the Autism Society. Over the next two months, our capable vice-president, Christina Nason will be transitioning into the role of ASM Board President as my term will be up at the end of September. As I reflect on my time as a member of the board, I realize just how much I have learned about the resources available for individuals on the autism spectrum and the dedicated work of the society and the board. During the past two years as ASM Board President I watched in awe as Cathy, her team, and the board members pivoted during the pandemic to quickly acclimate to the changing environment. Although we had used technology to hold meetings and share information, leveraging technology became crucial to the health and viability of the society. The ASM Board of Directors will continue to steer the ship into an innovative and exciting future as ASM adapts while continuing to support the mission of the Autism Society of Maine: *promoting lifelong access and opportunity for all individuals on the Autism spectrum to become participating members of their communities*. Providing resources, education, supporting important legislation, and maximizing technology capabilities will continue to be priorities for the ASM Board. I am confident of the strength, skills, and diversity of our present board and proud to have served the ASM community.



Kind regards,

Tiffany Rooney, ASM Board President

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail" -Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony

Please join the Autism Society of Maine for our Annual Meeting and Awards on September 30 at 6 pm. The meeting will be virtual, and all are invited to attend. Our current Board President will hand over the gavel to new incoming Board President. New board members will be announced along with updates and reports from the past year activities. We will honor some very special community members with an award given by members of the Board of Directors.

If your interested in attending, please email tara@asmonline.org so she can send the link to you.



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

Registration is Open!!

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 any Ride updates! For more information or to register for the Ride, [click here](#).



Saturday, November 5, 2022

8:00am - 4:15pm

Cross Insurance Center
515 Main Street Bangor, ME.

We will be sending out vendor letters and announcing speakers in the next few weeks. Stay tuned to our website and FaceBook page for more details! To be sure you do not miss any updates [click here](#) to join our email list!

Giving Tuesday, a global giving day takes place each year on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. This year it will land on November 29, 2022. Join the movement and give whether it's some of your time, a donation, or the power of your voice in your local community. Learn more about Giving Tuesday ASM will be hopeful for donations on this special day of giving. There will be a Facebook campaign and we welcome donations through the ASM's website.

NOVEMBER 29, 2022
GIVING TUESDAY



"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.



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



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



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



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



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.

Empower the Learner

Pilot Program



Maine Parent Federation, The Autism Society of Maine, Empower the Learner, and Maine Developmental Disabilities Council have partnered to offer to parents/caregivers of children with special healthcare needs and disabilities an opportunity to develop a multi-media self-advocacy tool to share with the teachers/professionals in your loved ones lives.

We will be piloting this program on October 22nd at the Cohen Community Center in Hallowell, Maine from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

Come learn about the tool and how you can use it with your loved one to raise expectations for their community and school environments. In addition we will be looking for you to provide us with feedback about this tool to make this accessible for everybody in the disability community.

CLICK HERE



Any Questions? Please Contact

Cathy Dionne
asm@asmonline.org
800-273-5200

Carrie Woodcock
cwoodcock@mpf.org
207-588-1933

October 22nd, 2022

Cohen Community Center,
22 Town Farm Road,
Hallowell Maine

10 am - 3 pm



Maine
Developmental
Disabilities
Council

2022 Family Retreat by Susn Vincent

After a two-year hiatus, our family retreat was finally able to happen! The beautiful St. Josephs College campus was our location for the weekend on June 24th to 26th.

“Everything Disney” was the theme! Decorations adorned walls, t-shirts, and Mickey/Minnie Mouse ears were given out to each child.



A Day of play was on the agenda for the children! Bouncy house, games, craft time, playtime in the gymnasium, rock climbing and swimming. The kids were so happy and having fun with each other and with our amazing respite providers! It was truly uplifting to see friendships blossom and siblings connect.

Not only did the children have activities, but parents also had options of how they would like to spend their time: Drumming workshop “Beat to Your Own Drum” with Carol Richards, a presentation on “Supported Decision Making” by Carrie Woodcock (Maine Parent Federation), canoeing/paddle boarding and painting were some of the parent activities to choose from.



That’s not all! Family entertainment on Friday night was outdoor, big screen “movie time” with “Clifford the Big Red Dog” and Saturday night was “The Silver Circus” with Andrew Silver. We watched in awe of impossible magic, juggling and much more.



A Heartfelt “Thank you” goes to the families that joined us. Gathering a whole family to attend the retreat can be an incredible effort, along with fears parents may feel of how their children will react to a new environment. The kids amazed us at every turn, and we are so proud of each and every one of them. Memories were made and all turned out wonderful! [See Photos here!](#)

Sea of Blue 2022

On Saturday, April 30th, the Sea of Blue Walk/5K in Northeast Harbor raised funds for autism acceptance in the community and various agencies including the Autism Society of Maine. We are honored to have accepted a check for \$7,500!

We give a special “Thank You” to Christopher Heel who envisioned this event and to his parents, Susan and Matt Heel. They have done an amazing job creating connections and inclusion in their community and donating to ASM to go towards our mission of empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.



Chris Heel, Susan Vincent, ASM

Hannaford Community Bag Program



For the month of September, each time a \$2.50 reusable Community Bag is purchased at the Winthrop Hannaford located on Main St, \$1 will be donated to ASM!

ALL Hannaford Supermarkets will donate to your favorite charity if you use the Giving Tag directions all year long!

Why Kids Need Routine (cont'd from cover)

A Good Visual Schedule Will:

- Depict the activities that will occur, and in what sequence
- Show transitions within the day (like changing activities or environments)
- Promote independence
- Can be created for the whole day, or broken up into chunks. For example, you could have a morning routine, an after-school routine, and a bedtime routine.

How to Plan Your Daily Routine

Before making the actual visual schedule itself you need to first plan what your daily routine and the kids' daily routine will look like.

Most likely some parts of your daily routine are already established, like dinner time and bedtime. But if you have a lot of gaps in your day that are chaotic or have no apparent plan then it can be hard to decide what you want to do with that time.

It's a good idea to list a few habits that you'd like the family to adopt as part of their day, for example, everyone clearing their dishes from the dinner table each day. Then you can start planning those habits into your day.

Creating Your Daily Routine & Visual Schedule Step-By-Step

1. Write down what already happens every day: The best way is to begin by writing down your schedule starting with what already happens every day and at approximately that time. These should be things such as waking up, eating breakfast, leaving for school, eating dinner, bath time, bedtime, etc.

2. Fill in the gaps: Fill in the gaps by deciding on more structured activities for your child for specific times. Instead of telling them to "go play" you can add activities like – outdoor play, fine motor play (crafts, drawing, cutting, beading, etc), quiet time, etc.

It does not have to be a specific activity that they do every day because that can get very boring. However, for example, if you designate 3 pm-4 pm for craft time, then you plan different tasks each day or a week at a time.

3. Structure the environment: Set up specific areas in your home where each of these activities will happen and get any supplies you need. For example, set up your craft table, get a bin and fill it with homework supplies and set up a homework station.

[Build a calming down space](#) and anything else you want to create.

4. Decide how to initiate transitions: Decide how you will transition in between activities on the schedule – will you use a timer? A verbal cue? A sound warning? A song? Each activity needs a clear start and finish. This helps children know when it's time to move on. Plus, this transition cue should be consistent between every activity.

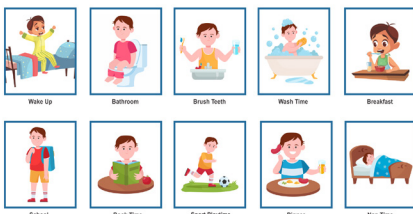
5. Create the schedule visually: There are many different ways to do this. You can also make this yourself – draw it by hand or create it by finding your own images online and printing them. Whatever you choose, make sure the visuals are clear for your child to understand and that everything is concise and consistent.

6. Display your schedule: Place the visual schedule in a central location in your home, such as the fridge, or in the family room. Ensure it's in a location that makes it easy for yourself and kids to check the schedule. In the beginning, you will probably need to remind your kids of the schedule all the time.

7. Teach your child to follow the schedule: It's not enough to make it and hang it up on your fridge – you need to actually teach your child the routine. This is the most important part. This can take time and may require a lot of prompts and reminders in the beginning. You can't deviate from the schedule once it's set – your visual schedule is like a contract between you and your child.



DAILY VISUAL SCHEDULE



Visuals for Your Schedule

You'll need to find visuals to use with your schedule that are easy for your child to understand.

Here are a few ideas:

- Visual Schedules from Living Well with Autism for [Self Care](#)
- Editable Bundle of Visual Schedule Cards from [Natural Beach Living](#)
- Google images online
- Take pictures of your child doing the tasks
- [Do2Learn](#) has an inventory of starter schedules, visual cards, pictures and templates

Why Kids Need Routine

Tips for Sticking to Your Schedule

- Make sure your child's schedule is compatible with your schedule so that it will be easy for both you and your child to stick to the daily schedule.
- Ideally, the schedule should include a combination of both structured and unstructured activities. Children should have a combination of both. Include time where they should play independently, for example, a quiet time each afternoon.
- You don't have to have the whole day on a single schedule. You can split it up and have a morning schedule and an afternoon schedule if that works better for your family.
- If your child struggles to follow the displayed routine, make a copy for them as a checklist, laminate it, and have them actually carry it with them around the house and check off the items with a dry erase marker.
- If your child has extracurricular activities or appointments that change frequently, you can make the schedule with Velcro on the visuals so they can be moved around every day. If the schedule changes a lot, go over it with your child the night before and again in the morning.
- Make adjustments when needed. Your schedule won't stay the same as the seasons change, your child gets older, during school breaks, etc. It's okay to make adjustments when they need to happen but try to keep a regular consistently routine over time.
- If you're struggling to keep your child motivated in following the daily routine, try using a routine app for your child's tablet to make it a little more fun for them.



[Here are a few apps to consider.](#)

For more great information visit: Raising an Extraordinary Person (<https://hes-extraordinary.com/>)

CALENDAR / BOARD IDEAS

ETSY has a couple of Calendar Kits ranging from \$7 to \$40 depending on how much you want to do yourself

RUDENS ART on ETSY

Downloadable Files: [Kids Daily Calendar](#), [Custom morning board](#), [Preschool printable](#), [Kids morning journal](#), [Toddler Morning Routine](#), [Weather Chart](#), [Visual schedule](#)

[VIDEO](#) on how to make the calendar

[PHYSICAL COPY](#) of calendar (already printed, laminated, cut and attached velcro)

TinyTot Reward Charts on ETSY

[Daily Visual Schedule \(120 Routine and Activity Cards\), Includes Charts](#)

Option 1 - Kit: requires assembly (customer cuts cards & applies velcro-dots) but includes everything you need. Everything is laminated.

Option 2 - Fully Assembled: Cards attach to chart via velcro dots. Everything is laminated, cut and assembled.

SECOND – Start with a pre-made magnet chart and then supplement as needed based on age, tasks, etc.

[My First Daily Magnetic Calendar](#) | [Weather Station for Kids](#) | [Moods and Emotions](#) | [Preschool Learning Toys](#) | [Classroom Calendar Set](#) | [Usable on Wall or Fridge](#)

Visual Schedule for Kids - [Create Your Own Daily Routine with Our 72 Magnets](#) | [Daily Schedule for Kids, Bedtime Routine Chart for Toddlers, Autism and ADHD Friendly](#)

[Chore Magnets for Older Kids \(30 piece set\)](#)

[Chore Magnets for Younger Kids](#)

“ Good government is no substitute for self-government.”

~Mahatma Gandhi

Halloween can be TRiCkY!

What can be more confusing and “against the rules” than to walk through the neighborhood at night, knock on doors of neighbors you don’t even know? Greeted by decorations of goblins and witches and maybe even “Jason” from the Halloween movie behind the door! For many of our children this is scary to the 10th degree!

If you want to try and take out some of the surprise factor, social stories, videos of children going door to door with their costumes on can be a great way to work in some “rules” trick-or-treating.

“Trunk or treat” get togethers are really catching on in communities. This is where community members gather at a public place, and everyone decorates their cars and passes out candy to the children.



There are so many options for celebrating at home with fun Halloween treats, crafts, pumpkin carving, and decorating.

However you choose to celebrate Halloween, whether in the neighborhood or at home, is unique for your child and family. Happy Halloween!

Halloween “trick-or-treat” cards for children who are nonverbal or may have difficulty talking can be printed out [here](#).

If you would like to request cards to be mailed to you, (Maine Residents) please call

ASM: 1-800-273-5200 or email: info@asmonline.org For

more ideas, visit ASM’s [Halloween tips and tricks page](#).



Ian’s Channel Swim By Shirley Haynes

Ian was diagnosed with Autism by age two and a half. He also developed a Neuromuscular Disorder, Myoclonus by age 18. Swimming has helped Ian with managing his Autism as well as his Myoclonic jerks, which he refers to as “the twitches.” He loves to swim. None of this would have been possible without the ongoing support and expertise of countless hundreds of individuals, each doing their part to support someone with a disability.

In July, our son Ian attempted to swim one of the world’s most challenging swims, the English Channel. The swimmer begins at Dover Harbor, UK and finishes off the coast of France, a distance of approximately 21 miles. Ian’s training for this swim included daily swims to maintain his base both at local pools and in the ocean. The swims in the ocean also focused upon acclimating Ian to cold water conditions as the Channel water runs much cooler than the water off our coast. Ian was accepted and placed into a reserved slot, 2 plus years away, through the Channel Swimming Association. This was in the summer of 2019 and prior to Covid. As a result of all the pools eventually closing and minimal reentry into those public spaces, Ian, myself and a friend met with Julie at Aqua Diving Academy to fit him for double wet suits to maintain swimming in the ocean as the winter grew near. Ian typically would swim each fall well into November and begin the next spring in the ocean beginning in March. He was undaunted.

Ian’s interest for this particular swim was sparked through an introduction to Pat Gallant-Charette of Westbrook. Pat is an experienced marathon swimmer who continues to break swim records for her age. She didn’t begin this part of her life’s journey until she was well into her 60’s. She has successfully swam the English Channel several times and continues to swim worldwide in her quest to both challenge herself as well as demonstrate that we can all do something “if we try.” She has and continues to be an incredible mentor.

Ian may not have completed his entire Channel swim. He began the swim at 1:30 am in the dark in an unfamiliar choppy sea. He gave it his best for 5 hours battling seas which were extremely challenging. He made it almost to the center of the Channel where he was in the midst of lines of ocean tankers and teasingly within visual sight of France. He wasn’t discouraged when he came aboard the vessel, where 6 experienced crew support members greeted him. Everyone was all smiles, especially Ian. It wasn’t about the finish for Ian. It was that Ian had been able to experience this swim which he worked so hard for and that he was actually finally in it. That became the most important and incredible moment for him and he was in joy. After Ian’s swim, we walked paths near the White Cliffs of Dover, toured ancient castles and ate a lot of fish and chips!

Ian is now relaxing and enjoying some casual ocean swim time, resting and looking ahead for future swim adventures. To read more about Ian and his Channel swim, [click here](#).



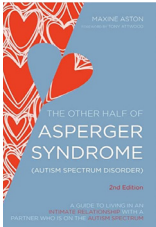
ASM Lending Library

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

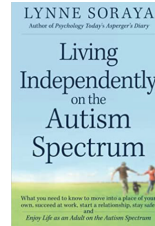
Visit our online library page [HERE](#)

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

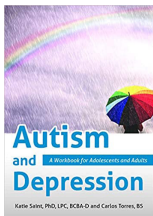
NEW BOOKS!!



Full of bite-size tips and advice, the book explains Asperger Syndrome, discusses whether or not seeking an autism diagnosis will help, and offers simple strategies for coping with a range of relationship challenges including communication, social, and intimacy difficulties.



These real-life strategies will help you cope with the feelings brought on by adulthood as well as deal with common challenges like: Budgeting and handling bills, Finding the right residence and/or roommates. Discovering a career path that complements your talents. Interacting with coworkers and clients. Building relationships with friends and potential partners.



This book uses Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to target emotional regulation skills, perspective-taking, acceptance, independent goal setting, and skill-building related to symptoms associated with depression. This book can be used individually or with a trusted therapist or friend.



This book includes hints and tips for involving your family in the right community activities, from sport to science; information on museums, arts organizations and science institutions as venues for an enjoyable and enriching day out for the family.

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

Donations/Sponsorships/Employee Matches/Grants

J. Crew
Bear Mountain Products
Katahdin Schools
Howie's Pub
United Bikers of Maine- Androscoggin Chapter
Bill Dodge Auto Group
Maine State Trooper Foundation
Phi Gamma Delta
Robin Reed
Sullivan's Chiropractic
Hannaford Supermarket, Winthrop
G & G Cash Fuel
Marston Marina
Kennebunk Savings Bank
Reggie & Mary Ellen Bechard
Cheese Louise, Portland
MRBN
Westbrook Fire Department
Danny & Arlene Bechard
Bangor Lodge of Elks #244
Sturdy Hardware
Rene Morin & Joyce Broadwater
104 Main Public Huuse
Frank's
Town Fair Tire Foundation

Membership Renewals

Lisa Vaillencourt
Christina Nason
Shannon Landry
Cheri Wilkins
Sheila Crocker
Margaret Shaver
Darlene Lepoff
Cheryl Stalilonis
Robin Reed
Linda Grant
Cheryl Young
Joanne McMahan
Alice Haines
Anthony Dostanko
Irene Kapothanasis
Lise Tancrede
Susan Marston

Joan Shelton
Marc & Colleen Lepage
Larry & Carol Jewett
Port Resources
Raffe Hopping
Len Dorman
Evelyn Lutz
Sharon Hewett
Tamera Shrum
Susan Morton
Gigi McAllister
Allison Hodder
Debra Crump
Lori Reil
Lisa Morgan
David Johnson
Kathy Wingard

In Memory of:

Mitchell Alan Bagley Philbrook

By:

Karen Littlefield
Susan Bryant
Bain & Rita Pollard
Raymond & Regina Seamans
Nancy Blanchard
Rex & Karen Kelley
Wayne Hamilton

Bernd "Bindy" Freund

By:

Vanessa McElroy & Family
Eugene & Diane Etchie
Mr & Mrs Larry Stevens
John & Cynthia Blease
Bonnie & Robert Randall
Jeanne Rogers

Geraldine Myra Jackson

By:

Edward Jackson
Charlene Jackson
Doug & Joyce Green



Facebook Fundraisers

A special thank you for some bright stars that created a Facebook fundraiser to raise donations for ASM. We appreciate you sharing your special day with us!

Facebook covers all fees for donations made to charitable organizations. This means 100% of your donation comes directly to ASM! Thank You! Your donation will have a lasting impact for those to receive guidance, resources, and experiences with ASM.

Mid May, June, and July fundraisers raised \$320!

Frances McLeod, Denna Marie GuilBeau, Breezy Bri, Stephanie West, Vanessa Helmick, Kat Omen Weedon, Angie Michaud Fowle, Robin Hillock, Beth Carter, and Jess Frake.

If you would like to create your own Facebook fundraiser for ASM, go to the [ASM fundraiser link](#) to get started or on your own facebook page fundraiser tab.

