



Family Retreat
Page 4



Autism Acceptance Month
Page 3



Legislation
Page 5



Coffee With Cathy Webinars
Page 6

Maine

Autism



Connections

Join us for our 20th Walk for Autism!

Spring 2022

The Walk for Autism is BACK at NEW locations!

By Susan Vincent

Twenty years has passed since our first Walk for Autism fundraising event, back when the prevalence rate for Autism Spectrum Disorder was 1 in 150. Currently, the CDC estimates the prevalence rate of 1 in 44 children nationwide will be diagnosed with Autism. Throughout the continuous rise of Autism rates, ASM has remained dedicated to offer meaningful programs for individuals with Autism and their loved ones.

Fun with a Purpose! A Community Event!

Our Walk for Autism is an integral piece for funding our programs. We are very excited to announce two NEW locations! Our Walk events have major changes and enhancements that will help to make it a spectacular experience for everyone! Games, prizes, firetrucks, vendors, Otto the Moose from Bill Dodge Auto Group, Sparky the Dog of the Westbrook Fire Department, and much more!!



WESTBROOK, April 24th - Westbrook Riverbank Park
BANGOR, May 1st - Bangor Waterfront Park

Both events start at 12:00 noon - registration & games start at 11:00am
Step-by-step- join families, relatives, caregivers, providers, friends, and community as we generate inspiration and support for each other on our [Walk for Autism!](#)

Maine Autism Connections

A publication of the
Autism Society of Maine

Board of Directors

Tiffany Rooney, *President*
Christina Nason, *Vice President*
Joshua Nash, *Treasurer*
Bobbi-Jo Boisvert, *Secretary*

Malarie Clark
Jenna Cyr
Isabel Douglas
Shannon Landry

Brigid Rankowski
Kim Webber
Jonathan Youde
J Richardson Collins
Lisa Morgan

Staff

Cathy Dionne
Executive Director

Susan Vincent
Communications Director

Tara Perry
Office Assistant

Betsy Mahoney
Community Outreach Liaison

Maine Autism Connections is a quarterly publication of the Autism Society of Maine
72B Main Street
Winthrop, ME 04364
Phone: 1-800-273-5200

Graphic Designer: Tara Perry
Proofreader: Susan Vincent
Contributing writers: As bylined

Send article ideas and suggestions for our newsletter to:
info@asmonline.org

Statements made by various authors regarding treatment, products or services represent the views and opinions of solely those authors, and do not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by ASM.



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>



Spurwink- Diamond Walk Sponsor

Spurwink: A Proud Supporter for a Much Needed Cause

Spurwink is proud to support the Autism Society of Maine and its Walk for Autism 2022, as we share aligned missions and values of supporting those affected by behavioral and mental health challenges, including Autism.



SPURWINK

The need for autism awareness is greater than ever. The National Center for Disease Control & Prevention's most recent data indicate that about one in 44 children in the U.S. have been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) — an increase of 54.5% since 2010.

Spurwink has the depth of resources and people needed to support people and their abilities. Currently, Spurwink serves over 500 people with ASD, and provides individuals and families an array of services, tailored to both youth and adults. Through a focus on the development of the whole person, attention to strengths, and recognition of unique needs, every child and adult with autism or intellectual disabilities is given the opportunity to realize his or her fullest potential, and are supported to lead healthy and engaged lives in their communities. Autism support services Spurwink provides include consultation, case management, community support, outpatient therapy, educational services, and residential treatment. Locations are offered throughout Maine, and in some instances, telehealth services may be available.

If you or someone you know are interested in Spurwink's services or how to support their services, visit www.spurwink.org.

About Spurwink

Spurwink is a nationally accredited nonprofit organization that provides a broad range of mental health, education, and residential services for children, adolescents, adults, and families. Spurwink offers specialized programs throughout Maine with a commitment to caring relationships and treatment expertise, grounded in evidence-based, best and promising practices. For more information, visit www.spurwink.org, or call 207.871.1200.

Be sure to check out our Summer 2022 Newsletter to see all of the pictures of our 20th Annual Walk! We will also showcase our 2nd Diamond Sponsor- **Foothills Flooring and Tile!**



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.

April Is Autism Acceptance Month

This April, the Autism Society and Affiliates [#CelebratesDifferences](#) for Autism Acceptance Month. Every day, we work to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community to live fully. Be the connection this April to spreading awareness for early diagnosis, promoting inclusion in the greater community, and practicing acceptance in everyday life.

Ways you can participate!

Throughout April, we will be posting daily Autism Acceptance Month informational posts and encourage you to share on your own Facebook page. Be sure to follow [ASM's Facebook Page](#) and add to your "favorites" follow settings or go directly and check-in to our page often!

If you haven't already, sign-up to receive [ASM informational emails](#) directly to your email inbox. Choose the list that you prefer: Parent information, programs, activities & events, provider information, legislation information, quarterly ASM newsletter, special education directors, and volunteer information.

Visit the [ASM website](#) and browse Autism information and resources that are available as well as the Autism Acceptance Month page that will be updated throughout the month.

While the Autism Society is committed every day to creating connections for the Autism Community to live fully, April is a reminder that YOU are the connection. Give today to help us support more people.

[Make your donation here](#)



In honor of Autism Acceptance Month the Autism Society of Maine (ASM) is offering businesses or agencies the opportunity to sell puzzle piece paper hearts for \$1 each to your customers or clients.

They would put their name on the heart and your agency would display them. You have seen a variety of stores/ businesses sell them to show support for a cause. This is a great way for you to support the Autism Society of Maine. ASM would supply you with the hearts and you would provide a check at the end of the campaign for the total amount of hearts sold. It's that simple.

Call ASM if you would like to participate at 1-800-273-5200. We will provide a shout out on Facebook to all businesses or agencies that participate. Share your pictures with us.

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.

Welcome Back to the Family Retreat Weekend!

It has been 2 years since we held our retreat weekend for families. We are all in need of time together. A lot has happened in these past 2 years, and we know for some families it has been with devastating outcomes.

Looking ahead to our retreat on June 24, 25 and 26 at St. Joseph College we are busy in the planning stages for activities and entertainment. We know our theme will be all about “Disney.” If you have a favorite character or there is a special Princess you love, we encourage you to come in costume or bring your favorite item with you to show off to others. I have been to Disney 3 times, and it is the most fantastic place and truly does make dreams come true. As you can see, I went with my daughter and we wore matching shirts, I was the mother of the Princess, and she was the daughter of Queen. The weekend will be one to remember.

There are some changes to our retreat, right now we have limited rooms and only can offer two rooms if you are a family of five or more and have adult children. With things still limited we are hoping we can still get the supplies we need and the respite providers. Do not procrastinate, **call for your application** and when you receive it fill it out right away and send it in to secure your spot.

Masks are required when in doors, but things may change by the time June comes around. We will still have the pool and rock climbing and try to be outdoors as much as possible. We will follow the guidelines that the college has in place.

Parents, Grandparents, Guardians will still have activities together and time to share with each other how you are doing. Play a game and have a painting project slightly different than what we usually do.

The application will be available by April 1st so mark your calendar and make sure you get yours and get it in.



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@yahoo.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.

Federal legislative news

President Biden's Build Back Better bill, that would have provided funds for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for many services needed in the autism/intellectual disability community, did not pass. However, negotiations on a revised version of the bill began earlier this month, and advocates believe that funds for HCBS will be included in the new bill. The Autism Society of America is working with congressional allies to keep other disability-related provisions in the bill.

Five members of the Autism Society of Maine will attend (virtually) the annual Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC from March 28-30. Seminar topics will include appropriations, HCBS, employment, education, voting, housing, civil rights, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income, affordable and accessible housing and financial security challenges for people with disabilities.

Most importantly, we will be meeting (virtually) with members of the Maine Congressional Delegation, including Senator Angus King, Senator Susan Collins, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and Congressman Jared Golden. The Autism Society of America will provide guidance to Mainers on the issues to will bring up at these Congressional hill visit meetings.

State legislative news

The second part of the 130th session of the Maine Legislature is more than halfway through. Many of the bills ASM is addressing are actually carry-overs from last spring that have a "fiscal note" attached, meaning that they require state funding. Among the most important is the Governor's budget, because so many of our issues in schools and in supported housing, and community-based service require state funding.

Governor Janet Mills issued her Supplemental budget in February. She noted that the state had a record budget surplus of \$822 million, and she proposed that half of this surplus – \$411 million – be sent back to the people of Maine, which would amount to about \$500 per person.

Funding for MaineCare waiver programs under Sec. 21 (supported housing and day programs) and Sec. 29 (community-based programs) is most important to many of our members. The governor did provide new funding for these programs, including MaineCare increases and bonuses, but it was not enough to address the critical direct service provider wage issues.

Finding enough support workers for people receiving services under MaineCare has long been a serious problem that as only gotten worse over the past couple of years, between the pandemic and the availability of higher paying entry-level jobs at fast food restaurants and discount department stores. As a result, many group homes have closed and more than 25% of the direct care workforce has left the field since the start of the pandemic. (Source: the Maine Association of Community Service Providers)

Last year legislators voted to include in the state budget an increase in MaineCare rates sufficient to pay direct service providers 125% of minimum wage -passed. Unfortunately, the budget that Governor Mills presented did not include enough funds to do that. ASM is working with key members of the Appropriations Committee and other advocacy groups to "fix" this gap.

Education bills

There has been a years-long effort to revise the early childhood education system that serves children with disabilities, and the Advisory Committee on the Independent Review of the State's Early Childhood Special Education Services has been meeting for several years to address this.

Among the proposals are to shift services from the Child Development Services system to school districts and the Maine Department of Education. Another is to assist school districts in billing MaineCare for services for special education students, thus accessing critical federal funds.

Specific bills that would implement parts of the Advisory Committee's recommendation are being developed and there will be an opportunity for public input later in March. ASM will offer testimony.

Project Lifesaver

Since 2014, the Brunswick Police Department has participated in Project Lifesaver, a non-profit that trains Law Enforcement in using electronic tracking via a special bracelet to locate people with conditions and disorders like Alzheimer's, dementia, Down Syndrome or Autism, that may cause them to wander.

Project Lifesaver's mission is to use the state-of-the-art technology to find person with Alzheimer's, Autism, Down Syndrome, dementia, or any other cognitive condition that may cause them to wander to and become lost.

A lost person with a cognitive condition presents a critical emergency. They are often unaware of their situation. They may not call out for help and sometimes do not respond to people calling out to them.

Project Lifesaver consists of a bracelet with a personalized radio transmitter. This technology allows Brunswick Police Officers to locate the wearer in the event that they become lost, often with an average rescue time of less than 30 minutes.



This program can help ease the concerns of caregivers who are trying to cope with wandering behaviors.

If your looking for more information please contact the Brunswick Police Department at 207-725-5521 and speak with Communications Officer Joe Westrich or Detective Whitney Burns.

Email jwestrich@brunswickpd.org or wburns@brunswickpd.org
www.projectlifesaver.org



Coffee With Cathy

Coffee with Cathy is back! To celebrate Autism Acceptance Month, we are pleased to bring back our free lunchtime webinars.

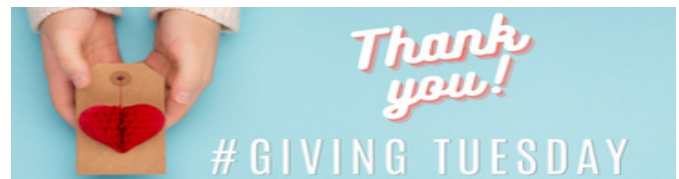
Join Cathy for lunch and some great information. One of the featured webinars will be with **Dr. Kerry Magro**, an award-winning national speaker and best-selling author.

Dr. Kerry Magro will moderate a 'Neurodiversity Day Panel' for our community on March 27, 2022 at 1pm. He will be joined by two autistic self-advocates as well as one local self-advocate to learn more about them and Neurodiversity! [Click here to register](#).

Throughout the month, we will be adding more speakers and topics, be sure to check out the [ASM website](#) and [FaceBook page](#) for the complete schedule, times and registration info.



Giving Tuesday



Last November 30th was Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving. Your generosity shined through, and we give sincere appreciation for all donations that we received during our Facebook Fundraising Campaign. Together, we raised \$671!

Your support made a difference in time of need to the autism community.

Thank you Sponsors:

Maurice Dionne
Joanne Mason
Richard Farnsworth
Maggie Hoffman
Betsy Mahoney
Daniel Paul
Robin Reed
Brenda Chaimowitz

Karmen Owens Patnaude
Laura So
Kayla Lavigne
Jeannie Kimball
Amber LeClair
Casi Buckman
Nicole Tripp
Emmalee Elizabeth Savage

"It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving"

~Mother Theresa

Donations

In Honor of

Ella M and her family

By Adele & Roland Martel

In Memory of

Ralph Arthur Stowell Sr.

By: Pamela Lindner

Lyle & Karon Doughty

Richard Stowell

Pam Lidner & Bob Emerson

Hannigan's Island Market

Stephen & Carol Amero

Jane Beard

By: Michael & Gail Consolazio

Michelle Offner



Membership Renewals

Jane Brennan
Dan Pietroski
Mary Bishop
Emily Pride
Children's Odyssey
Maurice & Rita Dionne
Jeanne LaFlamme
Matthew & Emily Siegel
Karen Lipiatos
Richard & Margie Mangin
Melissa Fanjoy
Deborah Williams
Kim Webber
Constance Mazelsky
Kendra & David Hughes
Deana Devincenzo
Lindsay Funicello-Paul
Christina Jordan
Sheryl Rogers

New Memberships

Susan Southwick
Carina Adams Writes
Carey Haars
Amy Irvine
Elizabeth Lord
Amy Berry

Donations/Sponsorships Employee Matches/Grants

Foothills Flooring and Tile
Spurwink
Calzolaio Pasta Co.
Children's Odyssey
Hannaford (Winthrop)
Abbott Diagnostics Scarborough
Mr & Mrs. Thomas and Suzanne Gray
Jane Brennan
United Way of Mid Maine
The Libra Foundation
Spurwink
Bangor Savings Bank
People's Choice Credit Union
Toddle Inn Daycare
Woodford's Family Services
UCP of Maine
Meredith and Myron Hamer
Zach Bonnvie- Worlouts & Whiskey



Facebook Fundraisers

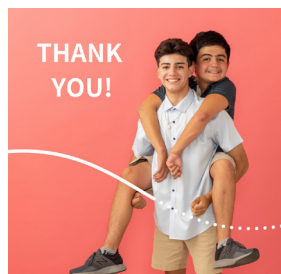
From the months of November thru February \$1,350 was raised in donations by online birthday fundraisers hosted on Facebook! This is an amazing amount of donations that will be enormously helpful for our programs! Thank you to everyone who made a donation!

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! April Autism Acceptance is around the corner and would be a great time to host a fundraiser and let people know that this is a cause that is important to you.

A special "thank you" to those who shared their birthday with ASM by having a Facebook fundraiser:

Wayne Ladouceur
Kachina Price
Frank Baker
Stephanie Mercer
Willow Caissie
Sadie Ross
Todd Delaney
Stelio Cantos
James Murray



Lori hart
Katie Robinson-Call
Stacey Michelle
Cynthia Hallowell
Nina McNally
Crystal Lynn
Stephanie Ireland
Sylvia Bryant
Cathleen Marie Chipouras

"We make a living by what we get....

But we make a life by what we give."

~Winston Churchill