



Autism Spectrum

The Official Publication of the Autism Society of New Hampshire

P O Box 68, Concord, NH 03302-0068

Winter 2007 Issue

From The President's Desk...

Dear Members,

After much deliberation and soul searching I have decided that the time has come to pass the torch as leader of the Autism Society of New Hampshire. After 3 years as President and 2 years as Co-President before that I find I can no longer give the time and energy necessary to perform my duties to the very best of my abilities.

As our lives change through their various stages so too my life has evolved. Although I have always worked a "real job" during my Presidency, in the past I have fortunately had the flexibility of time and schedule to attend the many functions and meetings necessary to represent the Society. Now I find it increasingly difficult to do so.

I have attended every Board meeting and fundraising event we have held over the last 5 years. I have had the distinct pleasure of representing the Society on TV shows and commercials, on live radio, in print. I have been honored to meet with 2 Governors and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services. I have presented at conferences and spoken to students of all ages and have loved every minute of it.

The Autism Society of New Hampshire is now being recognized as the powerful voice that it is of the Autism Community in New Hampshire. We are invited to be at the table of all of the major organizations of the state when autism is on the agenda. If nothing else I feel I have contributed to that fact in some small way and am happy for it.

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Honk if you are a "Spectrum Mom"

What's Inside...

By Viki Gayhardt

This fall, my husband and I decided it was time to put our old car out to pasture and look for something newer and bigger. Our reliable 1995 Dodge Intrepid had seen us safely through many memorable road trips and a decade of New England winters, but it was time to get a roomier vehicle to accommodate not only my son's growing legs, but also the ever-increasing mileage we seem to put on our cars.

When the unsuspecting young car salesman approached us and suggested that perhaps a mini-van might best suit our driving needs, I nearly snapped his head off in my reply, "You'll see me dead before I'll drive a mini-van." After pulling the poor guy off the floor, I apologized as I dusted him off and inwardly asked myself what was wrong with me? What is it that makes me sensitive to something so seemingly innocent as the suggestion of driving a mini-van? After some soul searching, the answer became obvious: it's the association. I associate mini-vans with the stereotypical idea of "soccer mom," and I am anything *but* a soccer mom.

I like to think that I am a "recovered" judgmental person. Because of the experience of mothering two children with autism spectrum disorder I've learned how painful judgment can be when on the receiving end of it, so I try my best to live the golden rule: "Treat others the way you want to be treated." Therefore, I've picked my own brain to get at the seeds of my disdain for any association with "soccer moms," as I know there are many out there who are very nice ladies (I actually know some), and I think I've unearthed the roots.

When my daughter was around five, many moons ago, she was fully included in the local Kindergarten/Daycare. All the parents were excited that their kids were of the age to begin recreational soccer. Living in a small rural town and being a parent trained in inclusion, I signed my girl up for soccer with all her peers and hoped for the best. Needless to say it was a disaster. My daughter would tantrum when she didn't get the ball kicked to her, and if she had the ball, she would tantrum when another kid tried to kick it away.

She cringed at the sound of the coach's whistle, became distracted by a bystander's dog, and picked

handfuls of grass in the field to throw over her head. I couldn't support her during the practices as I was too busy running after my toddler son, also on the spectrum, who kept heading for the soccer ball in play, and more frightening, for the woods that lined the field.

Soccer practice was a nightmarish failure on display to a community that didn't know how to support us and didn't seem interested in doing so anyway (in hindsight, I know there were exceptions, but I was too distracted and hurt to notice). Soccer practice was the realization that no matter how much I might support my kids and desire that they be included like every other kid, there were some things that they simply wouldn't be able to do successfully. I think this is where my disdain for the term "soccer mom" stems from: that early realization that my life as a mother of two children with autism was so different, so removed, and so alien to all those other mothers on the sidelines. I was resentful that they had the luxury of chatting with each other without worry and distraction, spending those lovely fall afternoons making social connections that would tie them to the community while I, tearfully leaving the soccer field with a screaming child under each arm, developed a disdain for soccer and all the "normal" moms that happily experienced the sport through their "normal" kids.

See Spectrum Mom ~ Page 9

**GET THIS
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heather@nhautism.com
THANKS!**

Book Review by Amy Frechette

Pretending to Be Normal Living with Asperger's Syndrome

Dr. Liane Holliday Willey

This is the autobiography of Liane Holliday Willey who is a doctor of education, a writer and a researcher who specializes in the fields of psycholinguistics and learning style differences. This is one book not to be missed by adults who are on the spectrum. Even if you are not on the spectrum, this book will give you a glimpse into an autistic adult's world.

As I read through her autobiography, I was thinking back through my life. I experienced similar situations as the author did and others who read it may feel like they are not alone. The end of her book has seven appendices, which are well worth the time. Dr. Willey talks about the following; *Explaining Who You Are to Those Who Care, Survival Skills for the A.S. College Student, Employment Options and Responsibilities, Organizing Your Home Life, Coping Strategies for Sensory Integration Dysfunction, Thoughts for Non-A.S. Support People* and lastly *Support Groups and Other Helpful Resources*.

I love this title of this book, as it is a very true statement for those of us who have Asperger's Syndrome (A.S.). Those of us on the spectrum live in a neurotypical society and therefore will never fit in. However, we can try our hardest, but because A.S. is a socially disabling condition it can be very difficult at times to fit in.

Dr. Willey was a late diagnosed adult after her youngest daughter was diagnosed at the age of 6. This is a common way for many adults to be diagnosed, only after their son/daughter has been diagnosed. The book follows Dr. Willey through elementary school, high school, college and finally ending up as a married mother of three daughters.

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President's Desk ~ From Page 1

My wonderful son Patrick to whom I owe so much for all he has taught me through the years has been the reason for all of it. He has let me share glimpses into the fascinating, challenging, maddening and utterly honest world of Autism. And so it is for him now that I will step down as President and devote more of my time to help him figure out what's next on the horizon for his future as he reaches adulthood.

I will not be far and will always be thankful to the Autism Society of New Hampshire for this opportunity. I have worked with the finest Board of Directors possible. It has defined my life these past few years and helped me grow as a person and an advocate. I continue to believe that those with Autism need no admittance pass into society - they are born into it and when given the chance, enrich the lives of all those around them.

I will continue to serve until April of 2007, which marks the 25th anniversary of the Autism Society of New Hampshire.

Always,

Stacey Shannon
President
Autism Society of New Hampshire

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Spectrum Monthly

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or visit their web at www.spectrummonthly.com

Welcome New Board Members!

It is with great pride we introduce two recently elected board of directors of the ASNH.



Eden and Amy



Steve, Ben, Sam and Kathleen

Amy Frechette ~ Hello, I am Amy Frechette. I live in Portsmouth, N.H. with my grandmother, and my three children (Pomeranians) Amos, Eden and Sidney. Eden is my Autism Service Dog.

I have an A.S. degree in Criminal Justice, 1997 from NHTI, and would like to finish my undergraduate degree in music at UNH next school year. I have been playing a trumpet for over 20 years and have been playing with the Phillips Exeter Academy Concert Band for the last 8 years.

I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in August of 2006 at the age of 30; however, I believed I had Asperger's for 5 years previously. Because of my late diagnoses, I grew up without support or services of any kind. My parents knew something was odd about me, but depended on the school system and professionals to diagnose and correct the problem, which never happened.

I have a personal goal in life to help others on the spectrum to obtain their dreams. I have been down a dark path for a long time, and I feel that with all the experiences that I went through growing up could be used to help others in a similar situation find their way in life. I went through something horrible, but I hope to be able to help others so they won't go through the same stuff I went through.

"Autistic People Have So Much Natural Fear and Anxiety." From *Animals in Translation*, Dr. Temple Grandin.

Steve Hambleton ~ Hello, I am Steve Hambleton. I have been married to Kathleen, my loving wife for 14 years. We have twin 10-year-old boys, Ben and Sam, who were diagnosed with Autism at age 3. I am a graduate of the University of Maine at Orono and have been the manager of Camp Carpenter, a Boy Scout camp, for fifteen years.

A few years ago I attended a meeting to start an Autism Spectrum Support Group at the Moore Center in Manchester. I agreed to co-chair the group to help families by providing information and a chance to network with other families facing similar challenges. I hope to continue this support as a board member of the Autism Society of NH. Kathleen and I have taken on the task of editing the Autism Spectrum newsletter.

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Is Integrated Therapy™ for Your Child?

By Sandy Bothmer

This is the first year that Johnny's mother hasn't had to go into his classroom with him each morning and get him organized to start the day. This is the first year that he has been able to walk home with kids his own age after school without her. This is the first year he has initiated conversation with others. This is a year of firsts, many firsts, for Johnny who is a sixth grade child with Asperger's Disorder! Such firsts are hugely important for Johnny and his family.

So why is Johnny suddenly enjoying such firsts in his life now? The answer seems to be related to the addition of Integrated Therapy to his treatment plan because his many firsts have occurred since August when he began weekly sessions with me. Prior to that time, he had been working with a psychologist for social skills and had private OT sessions. The social skills sessions are ongoing, but the OT has stopped except for working with his mom at home.

Integrated therapy™ is a blending of yoga and movement with energy balancing and relaxation, rejuvenation, and movement based on learning techniques to enhance the child's day-to-day functioning at home and at school. A session is typically an hour long with the first half of the session devoted to yoga, movement, relaxation and rejuvenation techniques, and the second half of the session is spent on balancing the energy body. The child's energy center vitality is checked at the beginning of the session, after the first half, and finally at the end of the hour-long session. Within this framework, each session is tailored to meet the individual needs of the child.

What I have noticed in the children I have worked with whether they have Asperger's Disorder, PDD, ADHD, or anxiety issues, is that their energy is all in their heads. They are not in their bodies; their feet are not connected to the earth. No wonder they often seem to have no sense of where they are in space, arms swinging in all directions or bumping into things as they go. Because of this, one of the first things that I do is work to bring the energy down into their feet, get them grounded. When one child with Asperger's heard me tell his mother that there was a lot of energy in his head but not in the other major energy centers he said, "Oh, maybe that is why my head feels so full all of the time." What an interesting comment? What must it be like to be walking around 24/7 with your head feeling full to overflowing?

The child mentioned above was very articulate and could sense the energy in his body. A couple of weeks later, I asked him how his head was feeling. Did it still feel full? "Oh, no," he said, "it's moving into my feet now." In his own way, he was telling me that he was beginning to feel different, connected to the earth. This was music to my ears, just what I had hoped for! My guess is that those who are less able to verbalize are also feeling similar sensation. Sometimes we have to key into their specific way of communicating to get a sense of what they are feeling inside their bodies. For example, one child I worked with would often say, "I don't know," which I came to understand meant, yes.

The children I have worked with have been displaying new, more positive behaviors over time, some more quickly than others. After working with one child for a year, the following changes were noted:

Continued ~ Page 7

Integrated Therapy TM ~~ From Page 6

Before June 2004

- * Inflexible with homework environment
- * No self-awareness of his body emotions
- * Needed others to help him manage his emotions, frequent meltdowns
- * No sense of the needs and feelings of others
- * Very little eye contact
- * Low self-esteem and self-confidence
- * Only interested in playing with younger children or needed adult facilitation
- * Poor muscle strength and balance
- * Extremities always cold
- * Little or no interest in eating and drinking except for very few foods, didn't drink water
- * Difficulty with academics due to emotional state

After June 2005

- * Flexible in his homework environment
- * Self-awareness of his body and emotions
- * Emotional self-regulation using deep abdominal breathing, minor meltdowns self-regulated
- * Developed a sense of "other awareness"
- * Improved eye contact
- * Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- * Interest in initiating play with age mates
- * Improved muscle strength and balance
- * Extremities no longer cold all of the time
- * Increased appetite, eating a variety of foods, drinks water
- * Improved grades, honor roll, more relaxed emotional state

Integrated Therapy TM is balancing the energy flowing throughout my young clients' bodies, connecting them to the earth, quieting their nervous systems, and relaxing them so that they can be more successful in their worlds. The behavioral changes in these children are proof that something beneficial is happening.

Certainly, not all families will feel comfortable with Integrated Therapy TM as part of their child's treatment plan. It is nontraditional. But for those who are open to another way of working with their children, this just might be the answer. They might be surprised just as Johnny's mother was when he recently announced that he wanted to run for student council ...

Yet another first!

Sandy Bothmer has 20 years elementary school teaching experience and is a Reiki Master and energy practitioner for children and adults, Creative Yoga and Movement teacher for children, and author of Creating the Peaceable Classroom. For further information, contact Sandy at sbothmer@aol.com or at 603-673-4252. Ask her about receiving a copy of her article "Integrated Therapy TM as a Treatment for Asperger's Disorder: A Case Study". A short version is in the Article Archives of the Autism Today web site, www.autismtoday.com.

DISCLAIMER

All information provided or published by the Autism Society of New Hampshire (ASNH) is for informational purposes only. Under ASA's Option Policy you are responsible for the choice of any treatment or therapy option or service provider. Specific treatment, therapy or services should be provided to an individual only at the direction of the individual's doctor, caregiver or other qualified professional. Reference to any treatment or therapy option or to any program, service or treatment provider is not an endorsement by ASNH of the treatment or therapy option, program, service or provider referenced.

ASA Applauds President Bush's Signing of Combating Autism Act

Tuesday, December 19, 2006

By: Marguerite Kirst Colston

Landmark bill provides nearly \$1 billion for autism research and education

Bethesda, MD (12/19/2006) -- The Autism Society of America (ASA) sends its heartfelt thanks to President George W. Bush for signing S. 843, the Combating Autism Act, today. This critical legislation authorizes almost \$1 billion through 2011 in federal funding for autism-related research, early detection and intervention.

After signing the Act, the President issued the following statement: "For the millions of Americans whose lives are affected by autism, today is a day of hope. The Combating Autism Act of 2006 will increase public awareness about this disorder and provide enhanced federal support for autism research and treatment. By creating a national education program for doctors and the public about autism, this legislation will help more people recognize the symptoms of autism. This will lead to early identification and intervention, which is critical for children with autism. I am proud to sign this bill into law and confident that it will serve as an important foundation for our Nation's efforts to find a cure for autism. ASA President and CEO Lee Grossman expressed his gratitude to the President and all the members of Congress taking leadership on this effort. "This is only the beginning of ASA's commitment to ensure federal for autism is spent wisely and, in the most effective way," commented Grossman. "Now, we hope that Congress will get to work on a comprehensive services bill for individuals with autism, including reforming Medicaid-funding waivers, employment incentives, housing improvements, job training and so much more. "ASA will work actively on the Hill in the 110th Congress to ensure further legislation for autism services, education, and environmental health.

S. 843, authored by Senators Santorum and Dodd, first passed unanimously in the Senate on August 3, 2006. The U.S. House passed an amended version on December 6, 2006. Key provisions of the bill include:

- Developing and implementing a strategic plan for research related to autism spectrum disorders;
- Reauthorizing Autism Centers of Excellence and providing funds to the centers for coordination of services and information for patients;
- Supporting basic and clinical research into the fields of developmental neurobiology, genetics, epigenetics, pharmacology, nutrition, immunology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, psychopharmacology, and toxicology;
- Improving coordination of the various federal, state, and local supports and services available to persons with autism and families affected by autism;
- Improving coordination of the various federal, state, and local supports and services available to persons with autism and families affected by autism;
- Increasing the number of providers that can screen, diagnosis and provide interventions to persons with autism; and,
- Promoting research to determine evidence-based best practices for diagnosis, early detection, prevention, intervention and possible/potential cure for autism spectrum disorders.

ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

A huge thank you goes out to Natalie Avila for her efforts on behalf of the Autism Society of NH. Natalie felt compelled to do something proactive after her 2 young nephews were diagnosed with ASD. In conjunction with the Yard Restaurant in Manchester where she works, Natalie organized a fundraising event the Friday after Thanksgiving. She raised \$1900 dollars!! We are so appreciative of her efforts and encourage everyone to patronize the Yard Restaurant and take a moment to thank the management for their kindness.

Spectrum Mom ~~ From Page 2

Time and wisdom heal old wounds (and allows old soccer balls to deflate and wind up on the bottom of a pile of unused toys in the basement). But seeing me in my new SUV, frazzled and disheveled, with my two good looking kids riding shotgun, zooming them from here to there, cell phone to my ear with papers loosely flapping in the back seat, one might easily mistake me for a soccer mom, too. I can't let that happen. I've worked too hard at the autism thing to be mistaken for a parent who has built a social life around Pee Wee sports. Alas, I am the antithesis of Soccer Mom... I am ***Spectrum Mom!***

The increasing miles put on my car are not from soccer and dance practices, or from taking my kids to social outings at the mall or a friend's house, or from going to the gym for some "me time" at a Pilates class. Instead, my mileage compiles going to and from two different school districts, to therapies half a state away from where we reside, to Special Olympic events, to conferences and appointments regarding autism, IEP's, transitional services, medication management, social skills classes, and legislative issues, while stopping at various drive-through restaurants for those French fries that seemingly sustain my son's very life. I do not chat on my cell phone with friends or neighbors about the latest town gossip, or to complain about how busy my children are with their friends. Instead, I use my cell phone to communicate with the vast network of people with whom I work and are involved because of autism.

We are another species from another culture, we Spectrum Moms. Vastly different from Soccer Moms, and yet with slight similarities that may confuse the untrained eye. I want people to be clear about who we are because we deserve the respect that is inherent to working so darned hard to support our kids. To avoid any cases of mistaken identity, I designed a car magnet to mock the "soccer mom" magnets, and so we will recognize each other on the road when the rocking figure in the passenger seat is not obvious enough for us to notice one another in our distraction and race to get to the next appointment or therapy. I am proud of all my sisters, Spectrum Moms, as I am of myself, for

"perseverating" in the face of indifference, for finding unending strength, courage, and humor in the little things, and for insisting that the world see our beautiful children as we see them.

So if you see me out on the road in my new SUV with a donut hanging out of my mouth and a "Spectrum Mom" car magnet where you might expect to find a soccer mom decal, honk if you are a Spectrum Mom, too! Your smile, amidst the bags under your eyes and through the Chicken McNugget grease on your car window, will make my day!

Viki Gayhardt is the proud mother of two adolescent children with ASD, a board member of the Autism Society of New Hampshire, and an autism family support specialist. To learn more about "Spectrum Mom," and the car magnet, please visit www.stitches4autism.com or e-mail VSGayhardt@yahoo.com.

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Recognition and Response

RecognitionandResponse.org is a comprehensive online resource that provides educators with information about this cutting edge approach to early education. This site offers information and resources to help early educators address the needs of young children (3 to 5 year-olds) who show signs that they may not be learning in an expected manner, even before they begin kindergarten.

What is Recognition & Response?

Recognition & Response is a systematic approach to addressing early learning difficulties before kindergarten. This approach includes assessing the overall quality of early learning experiences for all children as well as making program modifications, tailoring instruction, and providing appropriate supports for individual children who struggle to learn.

Recognition refers to the methods used to recognize young children who exhibit early learning difficulties and who may be at risk for learning disabilities when they are older. *Response* refers both to the ways in which teachers and parents respond to young children with learning difficulties as well as to the ways in which young children react to specific interventions. For more information visit the Recognition and Response web site at:

<http://www.recognitionandresponse.org>

In Memory...

We wish to thank the families and friends of Mrs. Latuch and Nonie Josie (beloved grandmother of Board Member Deb Dalzell) who gave so generously in memory of their loved ones. We offer our heartfelt condolences to them in their time of sorrow and pledge to honor their family members' memory by helping families in NH who are living and dealing with Autism.

Support Groups and Contacts

Amherst, NH Parents of children with a developmental disability. A place for parents who face the challenges and joys of raising a child with a developmental disability to meet, talk and support each other. Meeting schedule: Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm at RSEC Academy, Old Nashua Rd. (off 101A). Call Dave at 459-2751 or or e-mail daveh@region6.com to register and for directions.

Bedford, NH Adult Autism Social Group. This is geared for folk's approx. 18-35 years old with Autism/Aspergers. Jocelyn Lister is the facilitator. Jocelyn is an experienced speech pathologist and former Spec. Ed. Director. We will focus our nights on skills and fun---a combination of support that should meet the needs of everyone. We will include jokes and humor, games and riddles, construction and problem solving and some light cooking adventures (things that can be made with a microwave oven). The cost is \$10.00 per session. This will cover the cost of any materials and a light snack for each session. Meetings are on the first and third Monday of the month from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Speech Connections Office, located at 57 South River Road in Bedford, NH 03110. Office contact at 623-5237 or contact Jocelyn Lister jlister1@comcast.net.

Concord, NH Parents of Children with Asperger's Syndrome – 2nd Monday, 7:00-9:00 pm – Concord High School Media Center. Contact Dellie Champagne at 225-0421 or luvmysons@comcast.net.

Conway, NH Asperger's/NLD parent Support Group, a support group for parents with children who have social deficits – including ADHD and PDD-NOS. Meets once a month at the Conway Public Library – 3rd or 4th Tues. of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm (see local calendar section of newspapers). Join with other parents to share your concerns or advice. Guest speakers for particular interests. Contact Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf at 520-4780 or talkinrobin5@yahoo.com.

Hampton, NH United Parents for an Included Community. Meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 6:30 PM at the First Congregational Church, Winnacunnet Road, Hampton, NH 03842. This group is for parents of children with all special needs. Contact Melanie Muns 929-2183 or e-mail melmuns@comcast.net or Kate Portrie 926-0887 or e-mail portriek@aol.com.

Hooksett, NH Merrimack Valley Support Group for parents of children with Asperger's Syndrome – 3rd Saturday of every month – 9:00-11:00 am – Hooksett Public Library, Hooksett, NH. Plenty of free parking. Monthly guest speakers on a variety of topics related to AS. For more information e-mail Dellie Champagne at luvmysons@comcast.net.

Keene, NH Asperger Syndrome/High Functioning Autism/NLD Parent Group, Monadnock Developmental Services, Second floor conference room, 121 Railroad St., Keene. Contact Shelley Viles 283-2145.

Laconia, NH Lynn Carlson, Lakes Region Community Services Council, Streetcar Place, 63 Beacon St. West Laconia, NH 03246. Call for meeting schedule and location 524-7755.

Manchester, NH Area Autism Network at Easter Seals – Parent Support meetings held monthly on weekdays from 10:00 am-12:00 noon at the Auburn Street facility. Contact Elizabeth Webster 621-3444 or e-mail ewebster@eastersealsnh.org for further information.

Support Groups and Contacts Continued from Page 8

Manchester, NH Area Manchester Regional Autism Support Group, meetings are held the first Monday of the month from 7:00-9:00 pm in the Board Room of the Moore Center, Region VII Area Agency, 132 Titus Ave., Manchester, NH 03103. Contact Margie Louney at the Moore Center 206-2745 or Steve Hambleton 647-9567 or e-mail s.hambleton@comcast.net for further information.

Manchester, NH Developmental Pre-School 555 Auburn Street, Manchester NH. Contact Karen Davis at the Manchester Developmental Pre-School 624-6340 for further information.

Milford, NH Milford Caregiver Support Group For Parents of Special Needs Children 2nd and 4th Thursdays 9:30-10:30 am. Call 673-3460 for more information. Free childcare is available.

Nashua, NH Nashua Area Support Group. Parents and families dealing with PDD, Asperger's syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders meet to share information and experiences. Region VI Area Agency for Developmental Services of Greater Nashua 144 Canal St., Nashua, NH. Thursdays 6:30-8:30 pm. Call Dave Hackett, Parent to Parent Coordinator at 459-2751 or daveh@region6.com if you plan on attending. Link to site <http://www.areaagencynh.com>.

New Hampshire NH Dietary Intervention for Children. This statewide support group discusses dietary related issues for all children including the gluten free/casein free diet for Autism and Related Disorders, celiac disease, sensory feeding issues, diet supplements and nutrition. Discussions may also include recipe sharing, where to find appropriate food choices as well as other biomedical treatments. Please e-mail Dawn Marquis for current meeting times and info at heartmom2two@yahoo.com. Sign up for the online discussion group at <http://www.geocities.com/heartmom2two/dietintervention.html>.

New Hampshire NH Biomedical and Dietary Intervention for Autism Support Group – New Hampshire support group for parents of children with autism who wish to explore biomedical and dietary interventions or are currently treating their child through these interventions. For more information please call Missy Nadeau 228-9345 or e-mail missynadeau@comcast.net.

New Hampshire ASPERGER'S ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND, NH CHAPTER. Link to site <http://hometown.aol.com/aanenh/page1.html>.

Peterborough, NH Peterborough Autism Spectrum Support Group. A support group for parents of children on the autism spectrum who are ages 10 and under. Group meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at the River Center, 46 Concord Street, Peterborough. Free, experienced on-site childcare is available. For more info please contact Amanda DiNino 924-3985 or e-mail adinino@adelphia.net or contact Tammy Vilamarim 924-0952 or e-mail jetervsvaritek@aol.com.

Raymond, NH Parent support group/network in Rockingham County for parents/guardians of children with autism spectrum disorders. Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month (some exceptions during the summer) at the Family Place at Easter Seals Unit 10, in the Cozy Corners Shopping Center on Route 27 in Raymond, NH. Easy access from Rt. 101. We meet from 6:30-8:30 pm. Meetings are for parents and adult family members only. We will not be able to accommodate children at these support group meetings. Questions about the meeting location can be addressed by calling The Family Place at Easter Seals 895-1522. All other questions about meetings should be directed to Viki@nhautism.com.

Support Groups and Contacts Continued from Page 9

Strafford County, Rochester, NH Informed Hope for Families: Autism Spectrum Support Group - The 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Community Partner's Rochester Community Office at 25 Old Dover Road. This group services Strafford county and surrounding communities and Maine. Contact Kyle Szczepanik 335-5286 or e-mail informedhopeasd@aol.com, Suzanna Fletcher 942-8386, or Betsy Carroll (region 9) 749-4015.

Upper Valley, VT Facilitated Support Group sponsored by ARCH. First Monday of the Month, 6:30-8:30 pm at ARCH #80 Route 5 South, Norwich, VT. Please contact Kirsten Murphy at ARCH for directions (802) 649-2720 or ARCH@valley.net.

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'With One Foot in Each World'

By Joan Kern
Lancaster New Era

Published: Dec 16, 2006 12:59 PM EST

LANCASTER COUNTY, PA - Will Turnbull is one of 25 Lancaster County students who will graduate Sunday from Millersville University with honors. But he is the only one who is autistic. In fact, Turnbull, 32, the son of James and Ellie Turnbull, of Lititz, is the first person in Pennsylvania with his degree of autism (in the middle of the spectrum) to graduate from college, according to his mother. In August, he addressed the National Autism Conference at Penn State. "I think he's going to find his niche as a public speaker," said his mother. He has already found a job, with the Pennsylvania Action Coalition for Autism Services, giving presentations to people studying to be advocates for people with autism. The irony is that Turnbull doesn't speak. A "Write:OutLoud" computer program speaks for him. Nor does he write. With impaired fine-motor skills, he communicates slowly and laboriously by tapping a letter board, one letter at a time, or by typing on the computer, one letter at a time, with the eraser end of an unsharpened pencil. In either case, he needs someone — usually his mother, although at least 10 other people type with him — to aid him. When he taps the board, her finger steadies his hand; when he types, her hand grips his elbow.

Mrs. Turnbull has been with her son on his 10-year college odyssey, transporting him, sitting in classes with him, taking notes for him, asking the questions he types out on his computer. On Sunday, he'll join more than 400 students, including about 167 from Lancaster County, at the 2 p.m. graduation ceremony in Pucillo Gymnasium. Master's degrees will be conferred on 41 graduate students. With his new job, Turnbull hopes to take greater control of his life. He is planning to move out of the family home and begin working with a new, young aide. His mother hopes he will marry someday. "Now I'm out of a job," she joked. And even though they get on each other's nerves sometimes, she said they work very well together. "It's been a privilege," she said. "It's been extraordinary." In his new job, Turnbull tells about his life. He has a movement disorder that sometimes interrupts his thinking. "A rush of emotions takes over his body, making it hard for him to sit down and get out what he wants to say," Mrs. Turnbull said. He has sensory integration problems that make a flash bulb blinding, the music of a church organ unbearable, the switching on of the refrigerator motor maddening. "Our background noises are his foreground noises," she said. "That's the reason we never take him to Wal-Mart or Circuit City, where he would be bombarded by sensory stimulation." He doesn't eat pasta or bread because he can't stand the texture. For the same reason, he can't wear certain fabrics, such as wool and pique, and clothing tags drive him crazy.

Until he was 17, Turnbull was considered mentally retarded because he did not talk. Then a Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 teacher taught him to type. "Within a few months he was typing: 'I want to be in regular education; I'm really smart; I'm a Democrat; I hate my clothes; I want to redecorate my room'" his mother said. Two years later, he was on National Honor Society at Warwick High School. At age 21, he graduated from Warwick. It's taken him 10 years to complete his undergraduate degree, with five years at the Lancaster campus of Harrisburg Area Community College and five at Millersville, from which he will receive a bachelor's degree in English, with a minor in history. On Thursday, Turnbull took his last college exam, in literary criticism and theory. "It (the exam) was a great culmination to my college years," he wrote. "I loved (the course). It challenged my thinking and helped me develop my own philosophy of literature. "It involved hearing the voices of all the disenfranchised — ethnic groups, women, even those with communication differences like me." Writing these few sentences just hours after taking his last exam took its toll on Turnbull. He interrupted himself frequently, bursting out with words, such as "Done", and slapping his head or biting his hand, while obsessively folding and unfolding an index card in his other hand. "I'm trying to control my behavior," he wrote after taking a break. "He's getting 10 years of anxiety out," said Mrs. Turnbull. She explained that even though he says, "Done," he doesn't mean it, and he slaps and bites himself instead of others, childhood behaviors he has unlearned. This type of behavior is what he calls his "deceiving exterior," she said. "He tells people, 'You have to look deeper and see what's inside.'"

Turnbull, whose friends call him "Professor", is planning to write a book about his life — "of living life under the guise of mental retardation while having high intellectual ability." He will probably take the title from a poem he wrote in 1995 that ends, "with one foot in each world." Mrs. Turnbull always thought they would have a big party when Will graduated from college. "But that isn't his style," she said. Instead they will celebrate "very quietly." They'll order in some pizza. His brothers, Dan, 28, and Jesse, 25, will come. "We'll sit around, relax, savor the moment," she said. "We'll cry a little bit. But they'll be good tears."



Welcome to our OFFICIAL ASNH MASCOT

It's official! Eden, beloved pet and service dog to Amy Frechette (board member), has been named the Official ASNH mascot. Eden attends all board meetings and is always well behaved.

Save The Date

Sunday, April 22, 2007

**Fisher Cats Autism Awareness
Baseball Game 2007!**

**MerchantsAuto.com Stadium,
Manchester, NH**

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Attention All Baseball Fans



Autism Society of NH

has joined forces with the



to help celebrate **Autism Awareness Month!**

Join us Sunday, April 22nd, 2007

Fisher Cats vs. the Portland Seadogs

Game time 1:05 p.m.

MerchantsAuto.com Stadium, Manchester

Tickets are only \$8.00/pp

To purchase tickets or for more information, please visit our web site at www.nhautism.com or return the form below with your check/money order made payable to: The Autism Society of N.H., PO Box 68, Concord, N.H. 03302-0068.

Ticket-by-mail orders must be received at the post office no later than Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

Name: _____ No. of tickets: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

E-mail address: _____ Phone number: _____

“Fungo’s Funland” will be open with giant inflatable bounce houses and slides and is FREE for kids on the Autism Spectrum. Bring your family for some fun in the sun and help promote Autism Awareness Month !!



Attention All Baseball Fans



Autism Society of NH

has joined forces with the



to help celebrate **Autism Awareness Month!**

Sunday, April 22nd, 2007 – MerchantsAuto.com Stadium, Manchester

Game time 1:05 p.m.

Join us for some **fun in the sun** and

help promote Autism Awareness by sponsoring a table!

For \$100 table sponsors will receive:

- 10 tickets to the April 22nd game
- Your business/organization listed in a special flyer to be inserted into the April 22nd Program (name and web site address)
- Your business/organization's name "in lights" on the Fisher Cats sponsor board
- Recognition on the ASNH web site and in the ASNH newsletter

.....

To sponsor a table, visit our web site at www.nhautism.com or return the form below with your check for \$100 by Wednesday, April 18, to: ASNH, PO Box 68, Concord, NH 03302-0068.

Contact Name: _____ Business/Org Name: _____

Address To Mail Tickets: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____ E-mail address: _____

**Note: Items cannot be sold at your table, however orders may be taken.*



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Autism Society of NH

Stacey Shannon, President

P. O. Box 68 Concord, N.H. 03302-0068



Footsteps

By Michael Adam Lilienthal
(written at age 15)

Tread lightly on the stairs of life
And you will go far
My life is like a single star
In the cosmos of the universe
But the dew in the field
Is like the million stars
That surround my very being
I feel the sun upon my face
As I frolic in that meadow
While the wind lulls me to sleep

(written at age 16)

To Bone and Arrow:
Though your life was short
It brought me great joy
I still remember your turtle faces
And cute clinging embraces
Your lives were short yes indeed
You still mean the world to me
So you bid the world adieu
So long buddies
Love you past death
I'll miss you
I'll miss you
I'll see you at death

My Two Best Pets

By Michael Adam Lilienthal