



ASGC Newsletter

From The President's Desk

Dear Members,

It's February again in the Greater Cleveland area, cold and cloudy. A perfect time to hold our first fundraiser of 2006! Your ASGC Vice President Gus Gallucci will don his old bartending gear and serve one and all at The Mill Road Grill in Brecksville on Monday, February 6 for a "Guest Bartender Night". Look for the enclosed article (found on page 3) for details. If we're lucky, maybe we can persuade President Rory McLean to dust off his DJ system and spin some oldies! We hope to see you there.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, February 1 at 6:30 pm in the Parish Center behind St. Basil's Church in Brecksville. We welcome our guest presenter Ms. Jocelyn Eskenazi.

ASGC Meeting Time & Place

The ASGC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in room 8 of the St. Basil Parish Center in Brecksville. The next meeting is February 1.

Anyone who is affected by, has a loved one affected by, or just wishes to learn more about autism or autism spectrum disorders is welcome to attend.

**For more information, please call:
(216)556-4937**

Jocelyn is the coordinator of outreach services for the Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism. We look forward to a very informative presentation and Q&A session with Ms. Eskenazi.

In years past, it took a lot more time and resources to attend informative conferences on autism. Today we have more local conferences than ever before. Two are being held in the Cleveland area this month alone. Information on this and many other local conferences are listed on the back page of our monthly newsletter. We encourage all parents and professionals to attend these local conferences. They not only make us all better advocates for the autistic; our support of these conferences help insure they will continue on the local level.

Thank you all for your continued support as we strive to make the Greater Cleveland area the best place to live for those with ASD.

Sincerely,

Gus Gallucci
Vice President

Rory McLean
President

**Autism Society of
Greater Cleveland**

February 2006

Inside this issue:

Training for those helping victims	2
Transition checklist	3
OCECD available as a resource	4
Taco Bell holds autism fundraiser	5
Area special needs doctors	6
Rutgers seeks comments	7

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland Officers

Rory McLean
President

Gus Gallucci
Vice President

Maureen Ferfolia
Secretary

We can be reached
at:
(216)556-4937

Autism groups secure funding to train those who assist crime victims

The Autism Society of America (ASA), along with the Howard County Chapter of the ASA and L.E.A.N. On Us, Inc., have received funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, part of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, to develop, pilot, and distribute a training curriculum on autism for professionals who assist victims of crime. The project, entitled the *Victims with Autism Assistance, Education, and Training Program*, is designed to train professionals so that individuals with autism spectrum disorders can meaningfully access and benefit from victim assistance services.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to work hand-in-hand with the Department of Justice, our Howard County chapter, and L.E.A.N. On Us to address a growing need in this country," said ASA President & CEO Lee Grossman. "As the number of individuals with autism living in our local communities grows, there is an increasing need for training of professionals about the characteristics and needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders. This includes not only first-responders, but the full range of individuals and organizations that provide services to victims of crime."

The curriculum will be piloted in Maryland and completed training materials will be distributed to agencies and organizations through ASA's nationwide network of chapters. The project will also develop educational brochures for individuals with autism and their families about steps to take should they become the victim of a crime.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to work hand-in-hand with the Department of Justice, our Howard County chapter, and L.E.A.N. On Us to address a growing need in this country."

- ASA President & CEO Lee Grossman

Said Catriona Johnson, President of the Howard County Chapter of ASA, "We felt strongly in designing the project that local ASA chapters would be the best conduit for information. They know autism, they know their communities, and this project will provide opportunities for ASA chapters to develop long-term relationships with local agencies. The result will be better services for individuals with autism who are victims of crime."

L.E.A.N. On Us, a Michigan-based non-profit organization founded by police officers Andrew and Carolyn

Gammicchia, will do much of the curriculum development. "We see this as a necessary extension of the police training that we and other organizations have been doing over the last several years," said Officer Carolyn Gammicchia who has a son with autism. "The initial interaction between a police officer and an individual is just the beginning of what can be a positive or negative experience for a crime victim with autism. We hope that this training curriculum additionally will be used by a number of professionals from domestic and child abuse counselors to social workers, individuals within the judicial system, and legal advocacy organizations. All are likely to come into contact with individuals with autism and it will be of great benefit for them to have additional tools to meet the unique needs, and provide appropriate services, to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder."

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Individuals with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and sensory processing. The Autism Society of America was founded in 1965 and is the oldest and largest grassroots organization within the autism community with more than 50,000 members and supporters connected through a network of nearly 200 chapters nationwide. ASA and its chapters are dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. They share a common mission of providing information and education, and supporting research and advocating for programs and services for the autism community.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2005-VF-GX-K023 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Contacts: Catriona Johnson, President, Howard County Chapter, Autism Society of America, (443) 742-8339 or info@howard-autism.org

Lee Grossman, President & CEO, Autism Society of America, (1-800) 3AUTISM or lgrossman@autism-society.org

Carolyn Gammicchia, Executive Director, L.E.A.N. on Us, (586) 703-3866 or gammicca@comcast.net

Fundraiser at local grill to benefit Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland will hold a Guest Bartender's Night on Monday, February 6 at the Mill Road Grill, 7011 Mill Road in Brecksville.

The evening's featured bartender will be ASGC Vice-President Gus Gallucci, a former Cleveland barkeeper and area restaurant owner who will donate 100% of his tips to the ASGC.

Gus will be assisted by Mill Road Grill owner Glenn Mosham, who will donate a portion of the night's sales to the ASGC as well.

The Inn at Brandywine Falls, Wiredright Automotive Electronics of Fairview Park and Gallucci's Imported Foods are among those who have generously contributed items to be raffled off during the evening. All are invited to this special event beginning at 7:00 PM.

Checklist to help autistic students transition through school

The Wisconsin Department of Special Education has posted a transition checklist for students with autism on its website. This is in response to inquiries from staff and parents seeking effective ways to transition students with autism from elementary to middle school, and from middle school to high school. It was adapted from the book *Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence* by Myles and Adreon.

The checklist (with a print option) includes the pre-planning stage, academic modifications, environmental and social supports, and others. It is located at:

<http://www.cesa7.k12.wi.us/sped/autism/index1.htm>

Scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on "Transition Checklist".

PECS training available in Cleveland

Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. is the source for services designed to enhance the lives of children and adults with autism and related developmental disabilities. We are sponsoring **The Two-Day Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)** training workshop in **Cleveland, Ohio** during the month of **April 2006**. Pyramid's training workshops are appropriate for all educators, speech/language pathologists, OTs, PTs, social workers, parents and caregivers of individuals with autism and related developmental disabilities.

Websites have Spanish offerings

For those of you who may be looking for materials in Spanish, the following websites have some offerings:

- www.asgc.org
- www.autism.org
- www.autismtranslations.com
- www.autism-recoveredchildren.com
- www.nichcy.org

If you know anyone who might benefit from our training workshops, feel free to pass along this information. If you are interested in sending a group of five or more, please contact us regarding group discounts. We look forward to seeing you and/or your staff at our upcoming workshops.

For an updated workshop listing, please visit our website at www.pecs.com.

House and Senate work to pass Budget Reconciliation conference report

House and Senate Republican leaders recently negotiated a number of budget deals, including deals on Budget Reconciliation.

The House approved the Budget Reconciliation (titled "the Budget Reduction Act") by a vote of 212 to 206 with 16 House members missing the vote.

To pass the Budget Reconciliation conference report, the conference committee completed its work in mostly closed-door sessions with the Republican leadership. During the negotiations over a final bill, the House conferees seemed to prevail and the following provisions included in the conference report, if approved by the Senate, could be devastating to people with disabilities:

Please see Page 5 for listing of provisions

OCECD may be a valuable resource for children with disabilities, their parents and associated professionals and groups

The OCECD is a great organization and should be a valuable resource for both individual parents, professionals and groups. OCECD is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the educational interests of children with disabilities. OCECD's staff, many of whom have children or other family members with disabilities, are available to assist individuals or groups with such areas as:

- Public policy and school reform
- Identification of disabilities
- Early intervention for infants and preschoolers
- Family support systems
- Special education
- Community based services
- Information, referral and networking services
- Transition from high school to employment/college in the community
- Resources for professionals
- Team work between persons with disabilities, their families and service providers

Tools used by OCECD to provide assistance include:

- One-on-one consultation
- Group presentations and training sessions
- Numerous published materials, including a bi-monthly newsletter

OCECD also collaborates with local parent support organizations to offer information, training and support to parents of children with disabilities. They are also responsible for coordinating the Parent Mentor Program.

You can check out their publications, training schedule (which is quite extensive and runs all over the state), and more information at their website www.ocecd.org. You can also get more information on the Parent Mentor Program and a directory of Parent Mentors at <http://thelinkto.com/parentmentor/>.

Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities

Director: Margaret Burley

Co-Director: Lee Ann Derugen

Executive Office

165 West Center Street, Suite 302

Marion, OH 43302-3741

Phone: (740) 382-5452 or (800) 374-2806 (in Ohio)

Fax: (740) 383-6421

E-mail: ocecd@gte.net

DVD series designed with children on the autism spectrum in mind

Hi all, I just wanted to drop a note to introduce Spectrum Connections, an entertainment DVD series for children on the spectrum of autism and related disorders (<http://www.SpectrumConnections.com>)

I am the creator and producer of the programs. Spectrum Connections came about out of my desire to give my 4-year-old son, who has autism, some great entertainment that would, at the same time, address his "spectrum" needs. I am a TV producer in New York City and simply wanted to offer something good, high quality, nurturing and FUN to kids like my son.

Through my years in children's animation, I was able to team up with some wonderful ex Disney producers who have a company called Brandissimo! Inc. They were just as excited and committed as me to bring the best quality entertainment to children with special needs. The result is the first two of 13 episodes of Spectrum Connections. The series is distributed by Brandissimo! Inc. and Genius Products, and is available at SpectrumConnections.com, Amazon.com, BN.com,

[Borders](http://Borders.com) (online and in stores) and other places.

Spectrum Connection's goal is to connect with spectrum children on a KID level. The shows are not meant to be therapy - they are meant to be fun and entertaining while communicating core curricular in an engaging way. Led by a wonderful licensed music therapist named Elizabeth Balzano, MA, MT-BC, the programs model a music therapy class: Volume 1 features songs about emotions (The Happy Song, The Sad Song..) and Vol. 2 deals with body movement and spatial relations through song and example.

My secret agenda was to make shows that "typical" kids would be a tad envious of because they were so darn great - and I have been told that we've succeeded. One of the great things we've found about Spectrum Connections is that autistic kids love it, typical kids love it, and parents do too. This is fantastic, as it has been my great hope that this series would help bring everyone together. Spectrum kids are isolated enough already. I hope you spend a moment to check out the series at: <http://www.SpectrumConnections.com>.

Pittsburgh Taco Bells to help purchase tracking bracelets

PITTSBURGH, Jan. 10 /U.S. Newswire/ -- AutismLink, a national autism information and support organization, announced that it will team up with several Taco Bell Restaurants in the Pittsburgh area to raise money to purchase tracking bracelets for children with autism who tend to run or wander away from safe environments.

Popular autism gel bracelets will be sold at participating Taco Bell Restaurants for \$1 beginning in March 2006 in the "Bracelets for Bracelets" program that will help low-income families of children with autism. The proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase tracking bracelets from the Western Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Development Center.

"These bracelets will save lives," said AutismLink Director Cindy Waeltermann, "many children with autism wander away from safety because they are unaware of danger. The bracelets will help law enforcement track them so they can be returned home safely."

The Project Lifesaver bracelets, provided by the Western Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Development Center, use a transmitter that emit a signal allowing search and rescue teams to find missing children. "We have had over 1,200 successful recoveries all within 60 minutes," said Program Director Cindy Garfold. "Most recovery times average less than 30 minutes."

AutismLink began work on the program and searched for funding in the wake of the death of a 9-year-old boy with autism who was found only 1-1/2 miles from his Williamsport, Pa., home. "The death of that child shocked the autism community," said Waeltermann, "I kept thinking if he only had one of these bracelets, he may have been saved."

AutismLink welcomes other organizations who would like to help the program by selling the gel bracelets or by offering donations. "We'd love to expand this program outside of Western PA," said Waeltermann. Interested parties can contact AutismLink at 412-377-8778 or info@autismlink.com.

"I'm so happy that Taco Bell has stepped up to the plate in helping kids whose families can't afford this technology," she said. "This will give many families the peace of mind that they need and deserve."

About AutismLink: AutismLink is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization located in Pittsburgh, Pa., that offers nationwide support, information and resources to families of children with autism spectrum disorders. Since 2000, AutismLink has been providing free conferences, events, seminars, outings and inclusion opportunities for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Budget Reconciliation Provisions

Significant new cost-sharing requirements for Medicaid beneficiaries, including co-payments on prescription drugs and up to 20 percent of the cost of some services or items. This provision was included even though the Congressional Budget Office concluded it will likely lead many low-income Medicaid beneficiaries forgoing much-needed health care services or prescription drugs

Reduction in the protections for children under the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program by allowing states to offer a more limited package of benefits to children with disabilities or those at-risk of such disabilities

Elimination of protections for basic services for all Medicaid beneficiaries by allowing states to offer (1) a different package of health benefits based on "benchmark" packages in the private sector, or (2) a Health Opportunity Account

Indexing of all Medicaid cost-sharing fees at the medical inflation rate, which grows faster than incomes

Allowing providers to deny a Medicaid service if a beneficiary cannot pay at the time of service and allowing states to terminate coverage for families who cannot pay the premiums

Significant new penalties for people who transfer assets prior to needing Medicaid long-term care services, including those who made modest gifts to relatives or contributions to charity years before experiencing the need for long term care

Requiring some Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries to wait as long as an additional year to receive back benefits owed them by the Social Security Administration

Reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and imposing very expensive and unfunded new work requirements on recipients and states. The conference agreement sharply restricts the flexibility states now have to set policies in programs funded entirely with state funds.

Area News Briefs

Inner Health Ministries is a private practice on the west side of Cleveland that specializes in pervasive developmental disabilities. They offer assessments, individual and family therapy (focused on behavioral interventions), school consultation, and social skills and parenting classes. They also just started a nonprofit retreat center, that will be hosting day camps for families of children with PDD this summer. Please feel free to check out their websites, which are posted below.

Cara E. Marker, Ph.D.
Pediatric Psychologist
Executive Director, Inner Health Ministries
17730 Lorain Road, Suite 7
Cleveland, Ohio 44111
Phone: 216-252-1399
Fax: 216-252-1409
www.innerhealthministries.com
www.ihmretreat.org

Area Special Needs Doctors

Here is a brief list of doctors and other practices that may help you find needed care.

If you know of a good physician or other service, please send your comments to Marian at:
DMHelmick1@wmconnect.com

Pediatric Dentist for special needs children:

Arlene J. Coloma DDS. MS.
Phone: 440-526-2350
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

DAN Doctors:

DeMio, Philip M.D.
320 Orchardview Ave. Suite Two
Seven Hills, Ohio 44131
216-901-0441

Lonsdale, Derrick M.D.
Preventive Medicine Group
24700 Center Ridge Rd., Suite 317
Westlake, OH 44145
Tel: 440-835-0104
Fax: 440-871-1404

The Metro Detroit Rehabilitation Agency, the Autism Society of Michigan and the Autism Society of America, Oakland County Chapter jointly present "Asperger's and Employment" conference, featuring international speaker Gail Hawkins on Tuesday February 14, 2006 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at DeCarlos Convention Center 6015 East 10 Mile Rd. in Warren.

Gail Hawkins founded Hawkins Institute (formerly Mission Possible) in 1995 to help people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) realize their goals, achieve employment success and improve their overall quality of life.

Gail is an innovative consultant and practitioner, a frequent guest speaker, and author of *How to Find Work that Works for People with Asperger Syndrome* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004). With more than 15 years of experience, Gail has received international recognition for her specialized work with people on the Autism spectrum.

Sally Burton Hoyle of the Autism Society of Michigan will present on "Understanding Autism and Asperger's Syndrome: Psycho-social Aspects, Prevalence and Scope of Need for Services Related to Transition and Employment".

Nick Dubin will begin the conference, presenting on "My Personal Experience as an Individual with Asperger's Syndrome".

Fee (includes handouts, refreshment breaks and catered luncheon):

Association members Fee: \$60.00
MRA/MDRA, ASAOCC & ASM
Non-Members Fee: \$75.00
Register online with credit card at www.asaoakland.org

Milestones Hands-On Teacher Training

June 19-23, 2006

8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Location TBD

*Using ABA Techniques Efficiently in
A Public School Setting*

**Target: Pre-school – Early Elementary
School Educators, Para-professionals, and
Related Service Providers**

New Address

CUYAHOGA SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Cedarwood Landing - Suite 130

5811 Canal Road - Room 100

Valley View, OH 44125

(216) 524-2770 Ext. 3813

Fax: (216) 524-2885

Website: www.csesc.org

Proposed rule clarifies testing using Modified achievement standards

Proposed rules regarding assessments of certain students with disabilities under the No Child Left Behind Act were published in the Federal Register on Thursday, December 15, 2005.

The proposed rules pertain to students who would qualify for testing using modified achievement standards. States may allow up to two-percent of students (amounting to about 20 percent of IDEA students) to be assessed using modified achievement standards.

One key policy in the rule clarifies that students tested under the modified achievement standards will not be prevented from obtaining a regular high school diploma.

The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy will file detailed comments before the 75-day comment period is over. The regulations and supportive materials, including a Frequently Asked Questions document and a Tool Kit for school systems and families, can be found at

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-24083.htm> and

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/speced/toolkit/index.html.

Rutgers University in search of participants for discussion on employment and disabilities

Rutgers University Program for Disability Research invites you to participate in a discussion of important issues facing persons with disabilities who are working or who want to work.

The purpose of this online discussion is to inform policy and program recommendations for employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can choose whether you want to read information, respond to issues, or raise issues on this online discussion. The amount of time that you spend on it will be up to you. You can choose to remain anonymous or include your name and identifying information.

You will be directed to our welcome letter for more information about this study when you first enter the online discussion. This online discussion is funded by the National Council on Disability. It is located at <http://www.ncdadaemploymentstudy.com>

ASA's National Conference to be held in July 2006

The Autism Society of America's 37th National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders, "Lighting the Way to Hope, Navigating to Success & Solutions," will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, July 12-15, 2006. The Workshops will be day-long sessions on July 12, with the Opening General Session on Thursday morning, July 13. The exhibits also open on July 13.

Greater Akron Chapter of the Autism Society of America

serving Summit, Stark, Portage, Wayne and Medina Counties

February 21, 2006 at 7:00 pm

Met Desk/Met Life

Estate and Trust Planning for Your Child with Special Needs

Meetings at Akron Children's Hospital
Considine Building

www.asagreaterakron.com or 330-543-3955

Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

P. O. Box 41409
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

From Diagnosis through Adulthood.

The ASGC is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit volunteer organization

Phone: 216-556-4937
Email: support@asgc.org



Upcoming Autism Conferences in Ohio

Milestones Annual Autism Conference

June 19, 2006

8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Landerhaven

*Promoting the Independent
Learner*

Keynote speaker:

Dr. Patricia Krantz

Princeton Child Development
Institute

Milestones Annual Meeting and Dinner

June 19, 2006

5:45 pm to 7:30 pm

Landerhaven

"Behavioral and Inclusion Strategies for Home, School and Community"

Featuring:

**Maria Bird-West Wheeler and
Dr. Paula Kluth**

February 1-2, 2006

Cleveland, OH

Holiday Inn West

www.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com

Special Needs Trust: Providing for a Person with a Disability

February 15, 2006 at 7:00 pm

Featuring:

**Philip S. Kaufmann and
Roy A. Krall
Kaufmann & Kaufmann
Attorneys and
Counselors at Law**

**Ardmore Inc.
981 E. Market Street
Akron, OH**

RSVP: (330)535-2601 ext 3307
