



# A.S.G.C. NEWS

The Autism Society of Greater Cleveland

October, 2009



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(216) 556-4937

Email: [support@asgc.org](mailto:support@asgc.org)

Web site: [www.asgc.org](http://www.asgc.org)

Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

P.O. Box 41066

Brecksville, OH 44141



The ASGC continues to grow at unprecedented rates. We cannot provide the services to families affected by autism without your help. Thank you to all of our parents, professionals, volunteers and board members who work tirelessly to make the Greater Cleveland area the best place to live for those with autism spectrum disorders.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Jason & Lyndsay Eisenmann for the hard work in sponsoring a "Party for the Puzzle" Tailgate Party on September 12, 2009. We owe the tremendous success of this event to compassionate, benevolent individuals like the Eisenmann Family and all the volunteers who helped raise nearly \$6,000.00 to help support the ASGC.

Although many Autism Organizations provide research, the ASGC is dedicated to providing the much needed support to families in Northeast Ohio. After an initial diagnosis, the first call that many Northeast Ohio Families make is to the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland. The ASGC is a non profit 501 (c) (3) group whose mission is serve the autism community in Northeast Ohio by providing information, coordinating support services and facilitating communication for the benefit of those with Autism Spectrum Disorders from diagnosis through adulthood. It is the goal of this organization to help parents, caregivers, individuals with autism and professionals grow in understanding so that they may comfortably and confidently work together toward brighter futures.

We sincerely thank them for their wonderful, generous support and look forward to next year's event and continued participation.

Please join the ASGC and Autism Speaks on October 17, 2009, at 6:00 PM at Luther Farm, 5150 Alger Road, Richfield for a wonderful evening with a hayride, pumpkin launch, camp fire, petting zoo and cider. This event is open to all children, teens and adults with ASD and their families. Admission is only \$7.00 per person payable at the farm. Please rsvp to the ASGC at (216) 556-4937 or [support@asgc.org](mailto:support@asgc.org) with the number of people attending by Oct., 12, 2009.

Finally, a big thank you goes out to Cleveland's Country Charities, a non-profit organization benefiting Cleveland Charities. They have made the ASGC the beneficiary of all the proceeds for their Fourth Annual Cleveland's Country Charities Fundraiser at The Double Tree Hotel in Independence, Ohio on October 24, 2009 .

Eight talented bands are working together to raise money for a worthwhile cause. The money raised stays in our community and will help in many ways. Doors open at Noon with music and raffles throughout the day and evening. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and \$15.00 at the door.

For more information, contact Todd Bub at (216) 849-7390 or Barb Haselow at (440) 886-6157 or visit [www.myspace.com/Clevelandcountrycharities](http://www.myspace.com/Clevelandcountrycharities). Tickets are also available by contacting the ASGC at (216) 556-4937 or [support@asgc.org](mailto:support@asgc.org). Donations and prizes are needed. Please make checks payable to Cleveland Country Charities and help us support this wonderful event.

*Eileen Hawkins, Administrator ASGC*

# Join the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland!

Dues for the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland are **only \$5.00** per year.

Checks for dues or donations can be sent to:ASGC, P.O. Box 41066, Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Check out our website at [www.asgc.org](http://www.asgc.org)!

## Independence OH Independence Civic Center

All are welcome to the monthly  
**ASGC Meeting**

**When:** 1st Monday of each month

**Time:** 6:30pm to 8:30 pm

**Where:** Independence Civic Center

6363 Selig Drive, Independence OH 44131

**Free Childcare with RSVP**

## Avon Lake OH Avon Lake Library

All are welcome to the monthly  
**ASGC Meeting**

**When:** 2nd Tuesday of each month

**Time:** 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

**Where:** Avon Lake Library

32649 Electric Blvd., Avon Lake, OH

**support@asgc.org**

## Upcoming ASGC Meetings and Events...

### Sensory Friendly Upcoming Movies:

Oct. 17 - "Where the Wild Things Are"

November 21- "Planet 51"

December 12—"The Princess and the Frog"

(Please note change in previously published schedule)

All movies are at 10:00 AM at AMC's Ridge Park Square, 4788 Ridge Road, Brooklyn, OH 44144.

Admission is Reduced to \$4.25. AMC Entertainment and the ASA have teamed up to bring families affected by autism a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films on a monthly basis. The lights are brought up and the sounds turned down and the "silence is golden" policy is not enforced. Outside food is permitted.

**Monday October 5, 2009 6:30 - 8:30 PM - Independence Civic Center** We welcome Barbara Rutt, S.W.A., Parent Training Coordinator, OCECD - Cleveland Office. Barb will speak on the new IEP forms for all districts. Free Childcare with RSVP.

**Tuesday, October 13, 2009 7:00 - 9:00 PM Avon Lake Library.** We welcome Kate Boylan, Director for Behavioral Intervention Institute of Ohio. She will speak on ABA therapy for those with autism.

**Saturday, October 17, 2009 6:00—8:30 PM Hayride at Luther Farm sponsored by ASGC and Autism Speaks.**

All children, teens & adults with ASD and their families are invited to Luther Farm, 5150 Alger Rd., Richfield OH for a hayride, camp fire, tent, pumpkin rocket launch, petting zoo & apple cider. Admission is \$7.00 per person payable at the farm. Pumpkins & fall merchandise can be purchased. Please RSVP at (216) 556-4937 by October 12, 2009 so the staff at the farm can be prepared. This event will be held rain or shine. Any individual requiring supervision or assistance must be accompanied by a parent/guardian during the entire event.

**Tuesday, November 10, 2009 7:00 - 9:00 PM Avon Lake Public Library** a guest from Music Therapy Enrichment Center will speak about the benefit of music therapy for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

**Monday, November 2, 2009 6:30 - 8:30 PM Independence Civic Center Managing Parent Stress** Hal E. Wildman, Ph.D. Pediatric/Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychologist, Spectrum Psychological Associates. Dr. Wildman will speak about stress management issues for parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**Monday, December 7, 2009 6:30 - 8:30 PM Independence Civic Center "ABA" Therapy** We welcome Kate Boylan, Director for Behavioral Intervention Institute of Ohio. She will speak on ABA therapy for those with autism.



## Learning Disabilities Association of Northeast Ohio

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR LDANEO PROGRAMS

The Learning Disabilities Association of Northeast Ohio was created first and foremost to serve children and adults who have been diagnosed by a school or other professional with Specific Learning Disabilities as defined by IDEA or who are at risk for SLD.\*

Because our mission is to serve this population, our programs are developed exclusively for these children and adults.

Therefore, eligibility criteria for children/adults who are diagnosed with a different disability may qualify if:

1. A teacher or physician makes a recommendation;
2. A face-to-face interview with LDA staff determines status;
3. A record review of the student's current MFE and/or IEP by

LDA staff or other pertinent information qualifies enrollment.

Once these criteria have been met and it is determined that the participant may benefit from an LDA program, individuals will be put on a waiting list for the program in which they are interested. If the program has openings, the individual will be permitted to participate. All decisions by the staff will be final.

While we at LDA of Northeast Ohio would like to serve other populations, we can only do so if the needs of those with SLD are met first, as that is our primary mission.

*\*Record review required.*

### LEARNING PROPER SOCIAL

### SKILLS IS JUST AS IMPORTANT

### AS LEARNING MATH SKILLS...

### MAYBE MORE.

You know what your child likes to eat. You know what your child likes to wear. You know what grades your child gets. But do you know why your child may not have that many friends?



If you have a child with a specific learning disability in grades 4-6 who needs guidance with his or her social skills, we can help! Learning Disabilities Association of Northeast Ohio is offering an interactive and enjoyable fall program.

*Call or email Wendy Spitz at (216) 581-4549  
wspitz@ldaneo.org*

### **Course Dates & Times: Every Wednesday for 8 weeks**

**September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28,**

**November 4, 11, 18**

**4:15 pm - 5:45 pm**

**Location: LDANEO Office**

**4800 E. 131st St. Suite B**

**Garfield Heights, Ohio**

**Course Fee: Members: \$99 Non-Members: \$130**

**Registration Deadline: September 30, 2009**

*LDANEO office is not ADA accessible*



### **Internet Safety Alert Parents please read...**

The ASGC encourages our members to be cautious when posting personal information on internet autism/special needs support sites or chat rooms. School Districts, attorneys or other individuals may have access to private information that is posted on those sites. Please use extreme diligence when posting sensitive information in writing about yourself, your child or your family.

# The Characteristics of Asperger Syndrome

by [Tony Attwood](#) Source: [Autism Society](#)

Topics: [Teen Years \(13-19\)](#), [Autism Spectrum Disorders](#), [Asperger's Syndrome](#)

Not everything that steps out of line, and thus "abnormal," must necessarily be "inferior." Hans Asperger (1938)  
The doorbell rang, heralding the arrival of another guest for Alicia's birthday party. Her mother opened the door and looked down to see Jack, the last guest to arrive. It was her daughter's ninth birthday and the invitation list had been for 10 girls and one boy. Alicia's mother had been surprised at this inclusion, thinking that girls her daughter's age usually consider boys to be smelly and stupid, and not worthy of an invitation to a girl's birthday party. But Alicia had said that Jack was different. His family had recently moved to Birmingham and Jack had been in her class for only a few weeks. Although he tried to join in with the other children, he hadn't made any friends. The other boys teased him and wouldn't let him join in any of their games. Last week he had sat next to Alicia while she was eating her lunch, and as she listened to him, she thought he was a kind and lonely boy who seemed bewildered by the noise and hectic activity of the playground. He looked cute, like a young Harry Potter, and he knew so much about so many things. Her heart went out to him, and despite the perplexed looks of her friends when she said he was invited to her party, she was determined he should come.

This fictitious scene is typical of an encounter with a child with Asperger Syndrome (AS). A lack of social understanding, limited ability to have a reciprocal conversation and an intense interest in a particular subject are the core features of this syndrome. Perhaps the simplest way to understand AS is to think of it as describing someone who perceives and thinks about the world differently than other people.

Children with AS can also have signs of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). They may seem hyperactive, but this is not necessarily due to having ADHD. The hyperactivity can be a response to a high level of stress and anxiety, particularly in new social situations, making the child unable to sit still and relax. A young child who has AS may first be recognized as having a delay in the development of speech. He or she may exhibit a delay in language development and specific characteristics that are not typical of any of the stages in language development. For example, children with AS may have relatively good language skills in the areas of syntax, vocabulary and phonology, but poor use of language in a social context (i.e., the art of conversation or the pragmatic aspects of language).

Motor problems may also be prevalent. A young child may be identified by parents and teachers as being clumsy, having problems with coordination and dexterity. The child may have challenges with tying shoelaces, learning to ride a bicycle, handwriting or catching a ball, and an unusual or immature gait when running or walking. Some children with AS can develop involuntary, rapid and sudden body movements and uncontrollable vocalizations that resemble Tourette Syndrome.

One of the problems faced by children with AS who often use their intellect rather than intuition in social situations is that they may be in an almost constant state of alertness and anxiety, leading to a risk of mental and physical exhaustion. Some children with AS can become clinically depressed as a reaction to their realization of having considerable difficulties with social integration. Blame may be directed inward: "I am stupid," or toward others: "It's your fault."

Eating disorders for children and youth with AS can include refusal to eat foods of a specified texture, smell or taste due to a sensory hypersensitivity. There can also be unusual food preferences, and routines regarding meals and food presentation. Serious eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa can also be associated with AS. Approximately 18 to 23 percent of adolescent girls with anorexia also have signs of AS. An individual may be recognized as having an unusual profile of intellectual and academic abilities. Challenges may exist adapting to novel situations, time perception and comprehension. There are relative assets in auditory perception, word recognition, rote verbal learning and spelling.

As a child with AS matures into adolescence, the social and academic worlds become more complex, and there is an expectation that the child should become more independent and self-reliant. In the early school years, social play tends to be more action than conversation, with friendships being transitory and social games relatively simple with clear rules. In adolescence, friendships are based on more complex interpersonal rather than practical needs—someone to confide in rather than someone with whom to play ball. During adolescence, a teenager with AS is likely to have increasingly conspicuous difficulties with planning and organizational skills, and completing assignments on time. This can lead to a decline in school grades. Though the teenager's intellectual abilities have not deteriorated, the methods of assessment used by teachers have changed. Knowledge of history is no longer remembering dates and facts, but organizing a coherent essay. The study of English requires abilities with characterization and to "read between the lines." A group of students may be expected to submit a science project, which may prove difficult for the teenager with AS who is not easily assimilated into a working group of students.

The signs of AS are more conspicuous at times of stress and change, and during the teenage years there are major changes in expectations and circumstances. The child may have coped well during his or her pre-adolescent years, but changes in the nature of friendship, body shape, school routines and support may become challenges for teens with AS.

We know that the child with AS has difficulty socializing with his or her peers. If that child also has superior intellectual ability, difficulties in social integration may be compounded. Those children with exceptionally high IQs may compensate by becoming arrogant and egocentric, and have considerable difficulty acknowledging that they have made a mistake or compromising with others. Such children can be hypersensitive to any suggestion of criticism, yet overly critical of others, including teachers, parents or authority figures. It is essential that the individual with AS have an understanding of the many and complex challenges and assets that comprise this exceptionality. While it is necessary that they learn new skills and coping mechanisms, it is essential that individuals with AS understand that they are inherently good and valued, as is communicated by the following self-affirmation pledge of those with AS written by Liane Holliday Willey (Willey 2001, p.164). I am not defective. I am different. I will not sacrifice my self-worth for peer acceptance. I am a good and interesting person. I will take pride in myself. I am capable of getting along with society. I will ask for help when I need it. I am a person who is worthy of others' respect and acceptance. I will find a career interest that is well suited to my abilities and interests. I will be patient with those who need time to understand me. I am never going to give up on myself. I will accept myself for who I am. I consider the last pledge, "I will accept myself for who I am," as a major goal for individuals with AS.

## AutismNE On-Line Support Group

The ASGC is pleased to offer our members a free on-line support group for all those individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Please contact Marian Helmick at:

[dmhelmick7@wmconnect.com](mailto:dmhelmick7@wmconnect.com)

for details on how to join this group.

## 2009 Cleveland Walk Now for Autism

October 10th, 2009

Voinovich Park (behind the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum)

Registration: 8:00 am

Opening Ceremonies:  
9:45 am

Walk Starts: 10:00 am

[www.walknowforautism.org/cleveland](http://www.walknowforautism.org/cleveland)

Please take the time to register your team for the 2009 Cleveland Walk Now for Autism and to create your team page and start your fundraising today!

Contact Name: Danielle Porrazzo, Telephone Number: 216-538-9543



## Fourth Annual "Cleveland Country Charities Fundraiser"

October 24, 2009

The Double Tree Hotel  
6200 Quarry Lane, Independence, OH  
(I-77 & Rockside Rd.)

Doors will open at Noon, with music and raffles throughout the day and evening. Music will be provided by eight talented Country Bands who are working together to raise money for The ASGC.

**Tony Rio & Relentless  
Curtis Brothers Band  
Kentucky Thunder  
Lonesome Pony  
Laredo  
Caliber  
Reload  
Lucky Shot**

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door and are available by contacting the ASGC at (216) 556-4937 or Barb Haselow at (440) 886-6157 or Todd Bub at (216) 849-7390. Visit them on line: [www.myspace.com/Clevelandcountrycharities](http://www.myspace.com/Clevelandcountrycharities).

## Conference Registration 2009 OCALI Conference and Exposition

Mark your calendar, and join us for the premier international event in autism, assistive technology and low-incidence disabilities.

November 17-19, 2009

Greater Columbus Convention Center

Columbus, OH

**Professionals** - register TODAY at the Back to School rate of **\$225**. Available through **October 19, 2009**.

**Parents and family members of a child with a disability\*** – register at any time at the special rate of **\$100**.

Parent/family member rate made possible by [ASA - Autism Society of Ohio](http://www.asa-autism.org).

Online (preferred) and U.S. Mail registrations are accepted for the 2009 OCALI Conference (no faxes or email registrations accepted). Payment is accepted in the form of credit card (Discover, MasterCard, VISA), checks\*\* and purchase orders.\*Note: An individual with a disability may also register at the Parent/Family member rate.

866.886.2254 (Toll Free) / 614.410.0321 or <http://conference.ocali.org>

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The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, in collaboration with the Ohio Coalition for Children with Disabilities (OCECD) will be presenting trainings on "**Planning for the Transition from School to Adult Life**," in seven major cities throughout Ohio during the fall of the 2009-2010 school year.

The training, developed by John Magee, Consultant for the Office for Exceptional Children, Ohio Department of Education and Sue Beck, Coordinator, Southwest Quadrant, Miami Valley Regional Center, is designed for parents. This training will provide an overview of the transition process under IDEA 2004 and current Ohio law. Sue Beck will be co-presenting with the assistance of the Regional State Support Team (SST) Transition Coordinators. Parents will:

- Engage in activities and discussion around the planning process necessary to develop transition plans that are a part of a student's IEP, beginning when the student turns 14.
- Know how to proceed with their own son's or daughter's transition development.
- Know what questions to ask about the transition process. Know the steps necessary to move their student from the academic environment into an independent adult life.

**October 19, 2009  
Middleburg Heights Community  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
Admission: Free  
Recreation Center  
16000 Bagley Rd.  
Middleburg Heights, OH 44130**



### REGISTER

copy and paste the link below into the address bar of your browser  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=DraCVEeUuwg3ECBnwbG5dg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=DraCVEeUuwg3ECBnwbG5dg_3d_3d)



## Connecting With Autism

Innovative behavioral training is bringing children like Joey out of their shells.

By: Benjamin Gleisser

*Article printed in part with permission from The Cleveland Clinic Foundation & Melanie & Joe Timco.*

Joey was a dimple-chinned baby who attracted attention whenever his mother, Melanie Timco, took him to the supermarket. Other mothers cooed over the 1-year-old nestled in the shopping cart. But Joey never responded to the playful overtures.

"I used to tell them, 'Oh, he just woke up from his nap,' " Ms. Timco says. "He was a very unresponsive baby. We knew something was going on."

Like most parents, Melanie and Joe Timco were afraid to acknowledge that something was wrong with their firstborn child. The toddler was given to fits of repetitive hand-flapping. At age 3, Joey hid beneath the dining room table when visitors stopped by and refused to move until they left the house. He screamed when his pediatrician and others tried to touch him. At home, he incessantly played with trains.

The Timcos' fears were realized when Joey was diagnosed with autism just before his fourth birthday. Melanie, a middle school assistant principal, and Joe, a seventh-grade social -studies teacher, knew Joey would face challenges in a public school -setting. What kind of education would he receive?

"We had a hard time trying to picture where our son would be in 10 years," Ms. Timco recalls.

Autism is mystifying; its causes are not known, though researchers are beginning to pinpoint the genes involved in this brain development disorder. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism occurs in one in every 150 births, and boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls. The Autism Society of America calls it the "fastest growing developmental disability" and projects that by 2013, treating the 1 million to 1.5 million autism sufferers in the United States will cost between \$200 billion and \$400 billion a year. -However, the group adds, the cost of lifelong care could be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis and intervention.

The Timcos chose intervention by enrolling Joey in the Lerner School for Autism at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital in Shaker Heights, Ohio. The school practices the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatment of behavior modification. Within six months, the Timcos noticed a change in Joey's behavior.

"Last Christmas, for the first time ever, Joey hugged people," Ms. Timco says. "We were all moved to tears. He [started] -conversations with his relatives."

Now 5, Joey plays soccer with other kids at the community -recreation center, although he still requires a high level of -support from the adults around him.

Before the 1960s, children with autism were often considered impossible to educate, and schools focused on trying to curb the children's bizarre and aggressive behavior by isolating them from the group or sending them to the gym to work off hostile energy. Today, autism specialists, including those at [Cleveland Clinic's Center for Autism](#), find great success using ABA and other -behavior modification models to help children not only stop aggressive and self-destructive behavior, but also develop social skills, confidence and feelings of self-worth.

### **Rewarding the Positive**

Children with autism typically display three characteristics: -difficulty with communication, repetitive actions that can be self-injurious (such as slapping body parts) and socially challenging behaviors, such as temper tantrums. In addition, many children have low muscle tone and problems with fine motor skills.

In the 1960s, autism researchers began looking for ways to teach children with autism, and in 1987, O. Ivar Lovaas, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, reported that the approach he devised, Applied Behavior Analysis, resulted in improvements and even recovery among children with autism. Doreen Granpeesheh, PhD, founder of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders in Tarzana, Calif., worked with Dr. Lovaas on that early study.

Joey Timco develops his social skills during the Center for Autism's after-school program for children with high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome.

"Using behavior modification in the form of intensive ABA, 47 percent of the students in our study recovered, meaning the child's IQ reversed to normal, he displayed normal adaptive skills and was able to move into a mainstream educational environment," Dr. Granpeesheh says.

Behavior modification works on the following principle: A behavior followed by a reinforcing stimulus — a reward — boosts the likelihood of that behavior occurring in the future. However, Dr. Lovaas' method moved beyond simple behavior modification. It became a structured teaching program involving a series of small lessons that built upon each other to achieve a goal. Correct responses and behaviors were rewarded, and negative responses were ignored.

The key to educating children with autism is enabling them to communicate, Dr. Granpeesheh says. And their greatest reward? Pleasing their parents, she adds. "Normally developing kids want positive reinforcement from their parents. They care about making their parents happy. But kids with autism aren't really aware of what their parents are feeling; they don't make eye contact and can't read their parents' expressions. When children with autism begin to communicate with their parents, they begin to develop an internal awareness."

Once children become confident in their communication skills and their aggressive or self-injurious behavior dissipates, Dr. Granpeesheh says, you can teach them just about anything.

Cleveland Clinic's Center for Autism uses this approach. Combining ABA-based behavior modification with education to help children learn social interaction skills encourages them to become self-confident and develop compassion for others. For more information on ABA based behavior modification, please contact the Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism at 1-800-223-2273.

P.O. Box 41066

Brecksville, OH 44141

E-Mail: support@asgc.org

Website: www.asgc.org

Phone: (216) 556-4937

Office Hours: Mon-Friday - 9:00 AM –4:00 PM

**Lia Sophia Handcrafted  
Jewelry Show to benefit the  
ASGC**

**When:** Wed., October 28, 2009

**Where:** The Peppermill Pub &  
Grill, 7011 Mill Rd., Brecksville,  
OH

**Time:** 7:00 PM

Affordable prices, beautiful pieces and a wide selection of merchandise. Jean Carney has graciously donated ten percent of all jewelry sales to the Autism Society of Greater Cleveland.

For more details or to order jewelry in advance call 216-832-6260

**The Salon Oasis  
holds autism fundraiser**

During the month of October, The Salon Oasis will be holding a month long fundraiser for the ASGC. Marian Buchanan, who owns The Salon Oasis, had a son who suffered with Asperger's Syndrome, which is a high functioning form of autism.

They will be holding a month long raffle to raise money for the ASGC. This will span from October 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Tickets are only \$5.00 per entry. They have put together a great list of prizes from other area businesses'

Please visit the **Salon Oasis 37470 Harvest Dr., Avon, OH** and help them help our organization grow.

**Peppermill Pub & Grill**

**7011 Mill Road, Brecksville, OH  
to host ongoing raffle to benefit  
the ASGC**

Please take time to visit The Peppermill Pub & Grill in Brecksville Ohio. Gus Gallucci, the owner, has graciously donated Browns Tickets for an ongoing raffle to benefit the ASGC.

Stop by for great food, drink and fun with affordable prices for everyone and purchase raffle tickets for your favorite football game. All raffle proceeds benefit the ASGC. Thank you Gus!