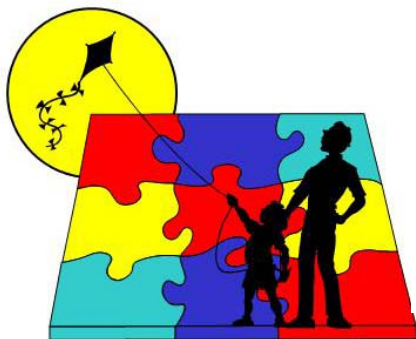


Autism Community
Together, Inc.
P.O. Box 8203
Fort Wayne, IN
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www.ACTpositive.org
Email: info@ACTpositive.org



ACT Autism Community Together of Northeast Indiana

December 2009

Target Awards ACT \$2,000 Grant



We at ACT are pleased to announce that we were a recipient of a \$2,000.00 grant from Target Corporation for 2009. This grant will be used to help north-east Indiana families affected by autism through our summer programming efforts such as camp opportunities and speech therapy.

We would also like to thank the Target employees who gave their time and talents to volunteer at the 2009 Walk-to-Talk. We enjoyed getting to know them and hope they had a fun time with us at the walk. We look forward to continue this relationship with Target and their employees in the years to come.

SUMMER PROGRAMMING NEWS!!!

We at ACT are excited to announce that in **summer 2010** there will be **two weeks** of autism **camp** offered at Camp Red Cedar **and** we are expanding the age group we serve. Camp opportunities will be available to kids from ages **5-18**. Mark your calendars. The camp dates for 2010 are **June 21-25** for younger age children and **July 19-23** for older age children. Our goal is fill all camp slots, so the actual break between age groups will not be determined until we receive camp applications in the mail in April 2010. **We need you...** to make this expansion of programming a success. An increase in programming means we must increase our fundraising. To continue the two weeks of camp into 2011 and beyond, we need you to participate in our annual Walk-to-Talk. The 2010 Walk-to-Talk is Saturday, May 15th. Bring your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, everyone you know and walk to support local families affected by autism. Every little bit when brought together adds up to a lot!

Thank you ! Auburn Autism Walk raises \$4,600 for ACT

Congratulations to Jason and Melissa Shores for all their hard work putting together the 2nd Annual Auburn Autism Walk on October 10th at Rieke Park in Auburn. Their efforts from walk donations and a silent auction resulted in over \$4,600 being raised. The Auburn walk each year has donated it's proceeds to ACT and we are grateful for their support and efforts to help families affected by autism.

Next year's Auburn autism walk will be on Saturday, October 9, 2010 at Rieke Park. Be sure to grab your walking shoes and join them for a wonderful time.



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vice Award



ACT is looking for
volunteers to help
keep our website up to
date with information
relevant to our com-
munity. If you are in-
terested contact us:
info@ACTpositive.org



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DECEMBER JANUARY

FEBRUARY

SUPPORT GROUP CONTACTS

Autism Parent Support Group

3rd Monday of the Month
7-8:45pm Dupont Library-
Joe.Ostrowski@stld.com

Asperger's Support Group

2nd Monday of the Month
Lutheran Hospital 7-9pm
Function Room 4
kara@karaskaggs.com

Sibling Support Group

Ages 12-18
3rd Saturday of the Month
Higher Grounds 1-2:30pm
St Joe Village, Maplecrest
Road
carlanunez24@yahoo.com

Grandparents Support

Last Wednesday of the Month
Parkview North Women's
Health Center 6:30-8pm
2nd floor, Suite 200
Sue Watson 637-7225

DECEMBER

- 14th Asperger's Support Group Lutheran Hospital 7pm
- 19th Sibling Support Group Higher Grounds St Joe Village 1-2:30pm
- 21st Autism Parent Support Group 7pm, Dupont Library
- 30th Grandparents Support 6:30 pm Parkview North Women's Health Center

JANUARY

- 11th Aspergers Support Group, Lutheran Hospital 7pm.
- 16th Sibling Support Group Higher Grounds St Joe Village 1-2:30pm
- 18th Autism Parent Support Group-7pm Dupont Library
- 27th Grandparents Support 6:30 pm Parkview North Women's Health Center

FEBRUARY

- 8th Asperger's Support Group Lutheran Hospital 7pm
- 15th Autism Parent Support Group-7pm Dupont Library
- 20th Sibling Support Group Higher Grounds St Joe Village 1-2:30pm
- 24th Grandparents Support 6:30 pm Parkview North Women's Health Center

Support for Siblings!



Sibshops

Mad Anthony's
Children's Hope
House

Lutheran Hospital Campus

Ages 7-11 For brothers and sisters of children with disabilities regardless of the type of disability.

This group meets quarterly. For more information please contact Emily Enockson at 435-6027 or by e-mail at

eenockson@lutheran-hosp.com

Thank you to Knights of Columbus and Huntertown Elementary



We at ACT would like to thank the Knight of Columbus, Our Lady of Hope Council # 12417 for their generous donation of

\$497.47. Autism Community Together was chosen as their charity of choice for their annual Tootsie Roll Drive

Huntertown Elementary School had a "jar wars" fundraiser where each class competed against each other and encouraged the kids to bring in their spare change. Mrs. Taylor's 3rd grade class was the winner and Huntertown Elementary raised \$820 for autism!



Have a submission for the next newsletter?

contact

susan@actpositive.org

Creating Your Own Sensory Room

By Lisa Compton, President of SensoryCritters.com

What is a sensory room? A specific room designed with multi-sensory equipment used to elicit an increase in communication, relaxation, focus, and other interactive responses from an individual with sensory processing deficits, neurological challenges, communication delays, and/or developmental delays. From infants to the elderly a sensory room can be a wonderful educational, grounding, or relaxing space providing opportunities and stimulation necessary to increase an individual's participating in their everyday life and experiences. Additionally, they can be quite beneficial and even necessary to individuals with behavioral issues. When a sensory room is used proactively, it is proven that unwanted behaviors are significantly reduced and/or eliminated.

Actually, you are probably thinking even YOU would benefit from spending time in one! Your right...YOU would too. Don't we all have our favorite types of sensory input that calm or stimulate us depending on what we need, or are doing throughout the day? Do you love chewing gum? Do you shake your leg when sitting still? Does a warm bath with candles and soothing aromas calm you down? Does a shower wake you up in the morning? Do you listen to different types of music when you are in need of different sounds? Do you hate going into a room with fluorescent lights? Do you need to wear sunglasses often? Do you love a good bear hug? Do you hate when someone touches you all the time, or unexpectedly? Do you avoid amusement parks and swings because they make you sick? I think you get my drift.

It is truly important to note that what may seem like a "luxury" is actually a necessity for so many of our kids today.

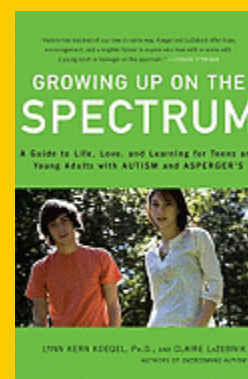
- There ARE children who cannot make it through an entire day at school without decompressing in a sensory room, or receiving vestibular, tactile, and/or proprioceptive input in a sensory gym.
- There ARE children who are developmentally and neurologically at a level in which their education is almost solely based on their most basic sensations.
- There ARE children whose behaviors within the classroom setting will not be controlled if they are not able to adjust, control, and/or access certain sensory stimuli within their environment.
- There ARE children who will never meet their educational potential without sensory integration therapy as part of it.
- There ARE parents who need OT, PT, SLP, and sensory rooms at the school their child is going to. There ARE parents who will choose YOUR school BECAUSE of this. As they say, "If you build it, they will come".

So, we know the benefits, but HOW do we create one? What should we put in it? The specifics about YOUR sensory room will depend on, yes, I hate to admit it... how much money you have budgeted for this room. Since we are talking about designing a sensory room within the school setting, it will have to be based on several things; budget, space, durability, and versatility. You will want (and NEED) to work with a company such as SensoryCritters.com who will be able to assist you personally to get the exact products YOUR school needs and for continued follow up of any products that need replacement or updating through the years. Feel free to contact our sales staff to assist you with the first step and to receive your own booklet about how to create your very own sensory room with examples of products for the various senses. **ACT would like to thank Sensorycritters.com for their generous donation of a gift basket full of "sensory goodies" to the 2009 Walk-to-Talk. Thank you for helping local families affected by autism!**

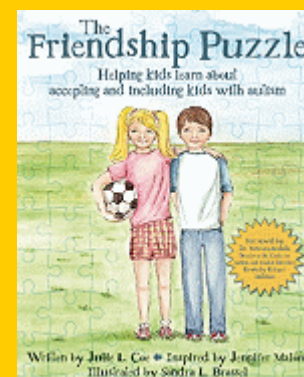
Readers Corner

Check out these reads at the Allen County Public Library!

Growing up on the Spectrum By Lynn Kern-Koegel is a great resource for parents of teens and young adults affected by ASD. Some of the topics include, peer pressure, bullying, dating, sex, middle school and high school supports, college supports, job interviews, and legal supports to name a few. A book worthy of the time spent reading it!



A great book for teachers or parents talking to children about autism is **The Friendship Puzzle** by Julie Coe.



DIET?!

How to get started...

Honestly assess your cooking skills.

Evaluate how much time you have to prepare meals.

Figure out how much of what food items are eaten in your home.

Does your grocery store have a health food section?

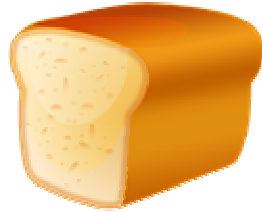
Know your food budget.

Starting reading food labels of every thing you buy.

DOING THE DIET?!

What is the fuss all about?

By Jerri Mead, Author of *Grayson's Way*



I was thrilled when I was asked if I would write articles on the Gluten Free Casein Free diet (GFCF). GFCF has been a part of my life for over the last ten years, so I've experienced a bit. I want to bring to you the knowledge and the tools to either begin the diet or for those of you already "doing the diet" to do it better.

What is "Doing the Diet"? I've heard that question hundreds of times between parents. "Are you doing the diet?" "How bad is it?" "It just seems to be so much work." Food and how we eat is part of our identity and it's hard to change one's identity. GFCF is more about organization. I see more people fail because they don't plan ahead and organize, so they just set themselves up for failure. I would like to make a challenge to all of you who know you need to take the plunge and haven't. I challenge you to follow my articles and go through the steps and be successful. The transition is not easy and not fun, but it can be done and it's a very good thing.

What about other diets? There are different diets for different needs. Many of the diets are for short term. The Specific Carbohydrate Diet (SCD) or the diets that work on reduction of phenols etc... The important thing to remember is that you can't do all the diets at the same time, or your child will only be drinking water. So one diet at a time is plenty.

GFCF is a diet that is used by many people, those with Celiac, Allergies, Asthma as well as Autism, Asperger's and ADHD. This diet can be followed for a life time as long as the person following the diet takes vitamins that fill in the nutritional gaps. Most of our B vitamins are derived from grains with gluten so it is important to supplement this vitamin as well as others. **We always suggest that you work with your licensed health care provider to discern what vitamins and dosages are correct for you and your child.**

Where do I begin? Grab a notebook and a pen. I want you to go through your kitchen and list all the equipment you have: stove, refrigerator, crockpot and, etc... What are your cooking skills? Are you the microwave, stove or oven person? Are you going to need a book to show you how to cook? (Be honest.) I want you to take the next few weeks and see how long you have each night to prepare dinner. (Be honest.) Also see how much time you may have in the morning if you were to create a crockpot meal. Write it down in a separate place in your notebook. Also you need to figure out just how much is being eaten, so you can later figure out how much to buy without wastage? Now, over the next month, notice what you are buying at the store and which stores you shop and list them. Note if they have a health food section. Do they carry equivalents of what you're already eating? Look at the cost of the items, is it within your budget? How much freezer room do you have if you wished to make TV dinners? The last thing I challenge you to do is to read every label, every time you buy it. Those labels change every day and we don't notice. Look for hidden gluten, casein and sugar.

Once you have completed all the above, you will have accomplished a lot towards making this transition possible. You will have defined your eating and shopping habits and time available for food preparation. This will serve you later to make the diet comfortable and doable. You also will know what equipment you have at your disposal and have honed your skills reading labels.

Our next step will be starting to plan meals, space for food storage, who can make the meal and if there are others in your household who can help and how we incrementally unincorporate harmful items out of our diets and replace them with equivalents that taste good. This transition will take time, but your efforts will reap the reward of a healthier happier child.





All of us at ACT are proud of Sue and wish to congratulate her on her award. But most of all, we are grateful for her passion, commitment and involvement in the northeast Indiana autism community.

Sue, you have made a difference in the lives of many families affected by autism.

Thank you.

Steve Hinkle, of Easter Seals Arc with Sue Watson at Parkview Field for the EP Maxwell J. Schleifer award presentation



ACT Board Member Sue Watson Presented EP Maxwell J Schleifer Distinguished Service Award

CONGRATULATIONS SUE!!!!

It was last minute news in the previous newsletter, but on Friday, July 17, at Parkview Field, the Fort Wayne Tin Caps hosted "Disability Awareness Night" courtesy of Exceptional Parent Magazine and Mass Mutual, locally known as WestPoint Financial Group. Sue Watson, was presented with the *EP Maxwell J. Schleifer Distinguished Service Award* (named after the founder and former editor-in-chief of *Exceptional Parent* magazine), which signifies the remarkable accomplishments that can be achieved under difficult circumstances. Sue is involved with multiple organizations in the fight to assist families dealing with loved ones who have any form of autism.

Sue was nominated by Easter Seals Arc and we at ACT gladly wrote a letter of recommendation for the nomination as well. Sue is such a wonderful person and has done so much for families in our community affected by autism. As some of you may already know, Sue is a grandparent to a child with autism. When hearing his diagnosis, she set out to inform herself by reaching out to ACT and Easter Seals Arc to learn more about this disorder. Not only has been to local events to learn more about autism, but she has attended Autism Society of America national conferences and reached out to leaders in the autism field nationally to educate herself about autism.

But Sue, didn't stop with just learning about autism. She asked herself, what could she do to help those in her community? The answer is a grandparents support group called Empower, Encourage, & Enjoy. This support group meets at Parkview North Women's Health Center on the 2nd floor, suite 200, on the last Wednesday of each month. Sue's group is geared towards grandparents and the issues they face when learning of a grandchild's diagnosis of autism. Of course many of the struggles are similar to the ones parents face upon learning the diagnosis, but some struggles are different, such not being with the child as frequently, a misconception of what autism is (previously, autism was thought to be caused by poor parenting), and feelings of helplessness of watching their child and their grandchild struggle. Luckily for grandparents in our community, they have a resource to help guide them in Sue Watson, a grandmother who has truly made a difference in the lives of families affected by autism.

Empower
Encourage
Enjoy

Grandparents Support

Last Wednesday of the Month

Parkview North Women's Health Center
6:30-8pm

2nd floor, Suite 200

Sue Watson 637-7225

NEW U.S. AUTISM RATE: 1:91



A C T
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2010
Walk to Talk
Saturday May 15th

ACT's role is to engage and support individuals, families, medical professionals, therapists and educators on effective methods to improve the lives of individuals with Autism and their families in Northeast Indiana. By focusing on the front-line service providers and high-tech solutions, we will be able to build communities of providers and extend best practices for enhancing the lives of people with Autism. ACT's key programming consists of:

- Community Website
- Parent Mentor Network
- Summer Programming for Individuals with Autism
- Training Sponsorships for Area Professionals

We at ACT want to wish you and yours a blessed holiday season.



GO GREEN!

We at ACT want to get information out to you more quickly, so please help us and the planet by going green. By reducing the number of newsletters we print, we can be more focused on spending the money we raise not on postage and paper, but on individuals and families affected by autism locally that need our help.

Going green is easy! Just visit www.ACTpositive.org and click the join mailing list link and complete the information requested.

Have a new e-mail address or contact information? Just click on the join mailing list link at www.ACTpositive.org and complete the information requested with your changes once again.