



# ACT Autism Community Together of Northeast Indiana

Volume 3, Issue 1

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## Free Services for Families

ACT continues its sponsorship program for individuals who want to be trained to work with individuals with Autism. To ensure that the sponsored individuals implement their newly acquired skills, each must agree to provide free service to a family in Northeast Indiana. Families

interested in benefiting from these free services should contact the Autism Community at [info@ACTpositive.org](mailto:info@ACTpositive.org) or by calling (260) 609-7412. The ultimate objective of this program is to improve the quality and quantity of providers in our community.

Congratulations  
Fort Wayne now has  
**Certified Behavior  
Analysts**  
to serve the Autism  
community

Liz Anderson  
Holly Rothenbush

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## Awareness Materials Available



Car magnets and wristbands are now available. We are requesting a \$5 donation for the magnets and a \$3 donation for the wristbands. Proceeds will benefit our core programs of awareness, training sponsorship and summer programming for individuals with Autism. ACT is a 100% volunteer not-for-profit corporation. Please send a brief letter stating the quantities requested and payment to ACT at:

Autism Community Together, Inc.  
P.O. Box 422  
Leo, IN 46765



**Autism One  
Radio**  
began  
broadcasting earlier this  
month at  
[autismone.org/radio](http://autismone.org/radio)

## Improving the Social Equation

On Wednesday March 16th, ACT will sponsor a one-day seminar entitled "Improving the Social Equation in Autism Spectrum Disorders" presented by Carol Gray from the Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding.

The seminar will begin at 8AM in Kachmann Auditorium in Lutheran

Hospital, Fort Wayne, IN.

The day will focus on social stories, friendships and bullying. This seminar is designed for those who may have a general education focus and limited exposure to children with autism—the general education teachers, administrators, counselors, paraprofessionals, preschool teachers, stu-

dents or parents. Advanced registration is required. Applications may be downloaded from [www.ACTpositive.org](http://www.ACTpositive.org) or by calling (260) 609-7412. Sponsorship is also available by e-mailing [info@ACTpositive.org](mailto:info@ACTpositive.org).

The registration deadline is Wednesday March 9, 2005.

## Up and Coming Events:

- Friday, March 16th, *Improving the Social Equation in Autism Spectrum Disorders*
- Friday March 11th, LDC hosts its annual "Reaching for the Stars" Auction at the Fort Wayne Country Club starting at 6:30 PM
- Monday, April 18th, Michelle Trivedi will speak about Insurance Coverage in Indiana and Autism Spectrum Disorders at Kachmann Auditorium at 7PM.

Check the ACT website for the new community calendar featuring these and more local events.

## \* \* \* 2005 Walk-To-Talk \* \* \*

**Monday April 11th**, Autism Appreciation Day to recognize those in our community that make a difference in the lives of individuals with Autism. To nominate someone to be recognized, visit [www.ACTpositive.org](http://www.ACTpositive.org) for an application.

Second Annual  
"WALK TO TALK"

**Saturday April 23rd**, the Second Annual "Walk to Talk". This fundraiser will go towards summer programming for individuals with autism. The 2004 Walk-to-Talk was so successful, that all summer programming requests were fulfilled. We look forward to making this a

## Training Opportunities

In an effort to ensure our community has the quantity and quality of personnel to address the needs of the autism community in Northeast Indiana, ACT has raised funding to sponsor individuals to learn more about autism. Our aspiration is to inspire individuals to pursue careers working with individuals with autism. Due to the funding available through IN\*Source and Indiana's Governor's Planning Council, sponsorships are not available for parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. Individuals selected for autism-specific education sponsorship will be expected to provide free service commensurate to the sponsorship level to a family in Northeast Indiana utilizing the skills acquired in the sponsored training. This program is made possible from a generous contribution from the Time Corner's Lions Club. Applications can be downloaded from our home page.

Applicants may apply for sponsorship to reputable autism-related training of their choice.

## Paula Aquilla is Coming

Paula Aquilla is an Occupational Therapist and coauthor of "Building Bridges through Sensory Integration: Occupational Therapy for children with Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder." She has worked with adults and children in clinical, educational, home, and community-based settings. She founded the *Yes I Can! Integrated Nursery School*, *Yes I Can! Summer Camp*, and the *I Love My Baby Program* in Toronto and was the director for six years. Paula was also the founding executive director of Giant Steps in Toronto, an innovative program of intensive therapies, academics, and support services for children with autism spectrum disorder. Based in Toronto, Ms. Aquilla is an ac-

tive treating therapist who currently runs a private practice serving families with children who have special needs. Paula has given many workshops on the use of sensory integration in the practice of occupational therapy. Her practice is an approved placement for students from the University of Toronto's occupational therapy department where Paula is a regular guest lecturer. She is also a consultant to the MacMaster University occupational therapy students. Paula always brings warmth and enthusiasm to her work with children.

## Sensory Issues To Be Addressed



### LECTURES

April 19th Insurance Coverage in Indiana and Autism Spectrum Disorders

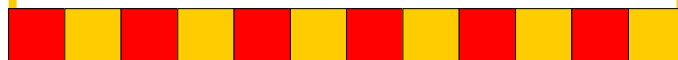
*All lectures are at Lutheran Hospital's Kachmann Auditorium and start at 7PM*

### SEMINAR \*

March 16th Improving the Social Equations in Autism Spectrum Disorders  
May 2005 Sensory Integration

*These seminars will be in Kachmann Auditorium at Lutheran Hospital, Fort Wayne, IN*

**\* Advanced registration required**



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# Food for Thought

By Pam Meissner

Over the years we have explored how having a family member with a disability permeates many aspects of your life—some you may not expect. Two subjects we have steered clear of are religion and politics. Go figure. Perhaps disabilities are one of those issues that just can't be separated. If you are on any list serves lately, you have been bombarded with e-mails entitled:

## WE ARE THE FAT IN THE BUDGET

## CHANGES IN STORE FOR THE 2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## BILLS THAT THREATEN THE AUTISM HEALTH INSURANCE

So you like me decide to listen to the 2005 State of the State address broadcast on January 18, 2005 and read the local paper the morning after. Wow! As the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette put it "Gov. Mitch Daniels dropped numerous bombshells in an explosive State of the State Speech." I think we are looking at great changes for the year ahead with our new governor. Regardless of the age of you or your family member with a disability, I think it is important to do your research into these issues and express your concerns. For example,

- what impact will freezing school funding have for you?
- If most of the money—about 80% - comes from "property tax relief, education and Medicaid," where will cuts be made?

Some quotable quotes include:

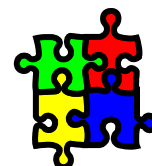
- "Our education results lag behind other states"
- "We have doubled the amount of money spent per child (in just under a decade) with a scant improvement in the only thing that matters, the readiness of those children. If money were the answer, this would no longer be a problem."
- "...teachers, taxpayers and academic results come first instruction must come before construction"
- "Government does not create jobs, it only creates the conditions that make jobs more or less likely."

- "The state has one car for every three employees and eighteen aircraft."
- "...speed the spread of charter schools"
- "... to move the I-STEP to the spring"
- Serving those with "Genuine Disabilities"
- "We are a state of people who speak plainly"
- "Medicaid cost growth is exploding at over 10 percent per year."
- "We will rebuild a broken, antiquated (Medicaid) system so that it delivers better care to those who cannot afford to care for themselves, while remembering that taxpayers deserve compassion, too."
- "This is the time to aside self-interest in the cause of restoring responsibility to our management of the people's finances."
- "This time, let everybody relent just a little. Let ever interest demand just a little less. Let those who can give just a little more. Let this be a legislative session of historic energy and action, and cooperation."

The term Genuine Disability, I imagine, will frustrate many individuals with Autism. As the spectrum is wide, does that mean those qualifying for services will be narrowly defined and limited to the most severe?

Sure, our state is financial trouble and we all must do our part. Clearly there will be cuts, but at least on the surface, it seems that he is asking everyone, particularly those households with more than \$100,000 in income to do their parts. What we must reflect on is what our part is. This, I believe, we can still impact. I encourage you to have some dialogues with your Waiver Service Coordinator or agency leadership, school personnel, disability advocates like ARC of Indiana and legislators.

We may not like the changes proposed and use our voices, pens and computers to impact them, but one thing is for sure, change is coming. Perhaps now is the time to reread the bestseller "Who Moved My Cheese?" by Spencer Johnson for change may be the only constant.





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 Leo, IN 46765  
 (260) 609-7412

Email: [info@ACTpositive.org](mailto:info@ACTpositive.org)  
[www.ACTpositive.org](http://www.ACTpositive.org)



Engaging and Supporting those surrounding those impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder.

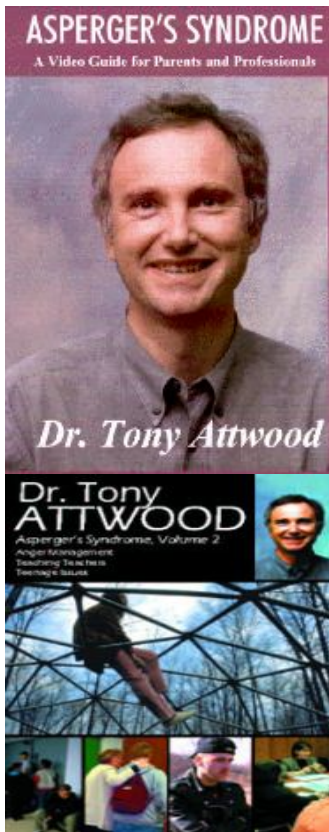
# ACT Autism Community Together of Northeast Indiana

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

- Parent Mentor Network
- Lecture Series featuring local personalities
- Workshop Series for families and providers
- Community website

In addition to these initiatives, ACT is working on community development projects with educators and medical professionals.

## Tony Attwood DVDs now Available at Allen County Public Library



If you were unable to attend the Tony Attwood Conference in Fort Wayne in October 2004, you can now catch up. ACT has donated 4 DVDs to the Allen County Public Library's Autism Collection. The collection is housed at the Aboite branch, but can be reserved online or by phone to be delivered to any branch. Intra-library loans are also available for those living in the surround counties. "Asperger's Syndrome: a Video Guide for Parents and Professionals" and "Asperger's Syndrome, Volume 2" comprise much of his speech given in Fort Wayne last Fall. His "Asperger's Diagnostic Assessment" DVD is invaluable. Many of these products are also great for awareness materials for family, friends, educators or professionals in the lives of those with Asperger's Syndrome.

Personal copies of these DVDs can be purchased from Future Horizons online at [www.futurehorizons-autism.com](http://www.futurehorizons-autism.com)

