



Autism Society of America Santa Barbara Chapter

FALL 2006

Education

Awareness

Advocacy

Support

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

Volunteers are not paid - not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

Wow, we just hosted another terrific Surf Day! Although my son declines to participate in the event, it is one of the highlights of my summer, a great time to get out, enjoy beautiful Santa Barbara, and chat with other parents.

But the real joy in the event is the smiles on the children's faces. I am so inspired by the

Santa Barbara Seals who enthuse their love of the ocean to others. It's infectious.

This amazing group volunteers their time and resources to create such a wonderful event.



Speaking of volunteers, I want to thank all of the volunteers who, throughout the year, have made a difference in lives of those with autism.

ASASB is powered by volunteers. Volunteers are the ingredients that make the whole organization work.

What are volunteers? Volunteers are people who donate their time and talents to pursue their passion for a cause for the sheer love of it. Martin Luther King, Jr. summed it up: "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.

You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.

You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."

ASASB strives to continue its strong commitment to those affected by autism. We plan to continue publishing our quarterly newsletter, and look forward to hosting more fun family events. We want to continue sponsoring informative workshops and conferences for parents and providers. We seek to continue advocating for our community locally, regionally, and nationally. We are working to provide pediatricians with information packets for newly-diagnosed families and are looking for opportunities to reach out to our local Spanish-speaking community.

We intend to be at the other end of the phone when a bewildered parent calls.

We want to continue to raise awareness, a precursor to acceptance and understanding.

During the next year, please consider giving of your time and talent. ASASB can benefit from your volunteer efforts in many ways. Maybe you are able to assist with the newsletter, from submitting articles to collating, folding and labeling. This is a huge effort, as we currently have over 500 names on our mailing list. We always welcome extra help and delight in the unique contributions new volunteers bring along with them. Please consider volunteering for a committee or working on an event. We are also planning to expand our Board of Directors.

From board member to labeler, all jobs are important.

If you have any questions, or would like to find out how you can help, contact ASASB at 560-3762 or info@asasb.org.

Marcia Eichelberger & Patti Gaultney

The highest reward for a person's work is not what they get for it, but what they become because of it.

John Ruskin

The Autism Society of America – Santa Barbara Chapter and The Autism Society of America (ASA) do not endorse individuals, groups or programs. References regarding programs, meetings, resources, treatment, etc. should not be interpreted as an indication of endorsement by either ASA or ASASB. They are provided for informational purposes only.

P. O. Box 30364, Santa Barbara, CA 93130 (805) 560-3762

Office hours variable : 48 hour response to e-mail, voice mail, and correspondence

www.asasb.org info@asasb.org

Blue Cross PPO – Insurance Plan of Woe

A local family's experience, as told to Sandy Shove

Over the river and through the woods, to grandmother's house we drove... A few hours later, my child had been taken away from me. He had gone into an episode at Grandma's and ended up in more trouble than you can imagine.

Early on in that trouble, my son attempted suicide the first time. Not long after, he tried it again. You see, he has Asperger's Syndrome. While cognitively bright, at age 16, he had the emotional maturity of a 7 or 8 year old in the body of a young adult. He was confused and terrified and most of those dealing with him seemed to know little, if anything at all, about Asperger's. I searched high and low for appropriate treatment for my son. It was a bleak exercise, trying to find a place he could get the treatment he so badly needed.

After a long, arduous journey, almost nine months later, it was agreed that my son would be placed in one of two residential treatment centers where his neurological disorder could finally be addressed. Thus enters, Blue Cross PPO: "Non-insurer of Woe."

I have been paying for Blue Cross PPO for several years, thinking they were top of the line, at least among the choices I was given at work. The treatment center selected for my son was even in the Blue Cross network. I readily placed my son in treatment, discovering that he met the qualifying criteria for my policy, under the descriptions of Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Serious Emotional Disturbance.

In addition, Blue Cross clearly states, "Coverage for Severe Mental Illnesses and Serious Emotional Disturbances of a Child will be provided in accordance with the plan provisions for any other medical diagnosis and not in accordance with the plan provisions for Mental or Nervous Disorders." This means that my son's placement should be treated as if he were in a hospital for treatment of a medical need, not a behavioral or mental health issue. In-Network Hospital In-Patient Facility/Professional services were to be paid at a rate of 70% up to a maximum co-pay of \$4500 per calendar year, according to medical necessity determined by reports from the treatment center, which are reviewed by Blue Cross. I flew my son to his placement, paid my \$4500, and he was admitted.

The first week my son was in the residential treatment program, Blue Cross authorized coverage. The second week, they denied coverage. That denial has now been twice appealed and a grievance filed with the State of California Department of Managed Healthcare. On what grounds have they denied coverage? I have yet to figure this out. As far as I can tell, he clearly continues to meet the criteria for eligibility. His neurological disorder could not possibly have been turned around in one week! He needed then, and needs now, the intensive therapy available at the residential treatment program. So, why did they deny coverage for his treatment?

The therapy my son is receiving is making a priceless difference, no doubt saving his young life. It is also providing him the opportunity to become an independent and capable citizen who will contribute his many talents to this crazy world, wresting his own unique brand of happiness from what should now have the potential of becoming a meaningful life.

After one week of treatment, he had not even begun to explore the damage the previous nine months of uncertainty had done to his fragile Asperger's psyche, nor started unraveling the confused Asperger's misunderstandings that had so muddled his young mind.

So, Blue Cross PPO denies that my child needs treatment. Hmmm... Asperger's is a neurological disorder. Perhaps Blue Cross believes that re-ordering a dis-ordered brain is less important than providing insulin to a child with diabetes. Without treatment, my child will not survive this world; he will die. The last year has proven that to me.

How can Blue Cross deny my son treatment? To be continued....

Community Notices

The Board of ASASB acknowledges with sadness the peaceful passing of Edith Gray on August 5, 2006. She was 92 years old.

Edith spent much of her adult life as an ardent, tireless and effective champion of people with developmental disabilities. The loving mother of two sons, one with a developmental disability, Edith advocated as a parent, was instrumental in the founding of Camphill Village and Opengate in New York, served on the board of Tri-Counties Regional Center, and published a book, "What Michael Taught Me," a memoir of her experiences raising a child with a disability.

Edith was truly a pioneer in her time, searching out information, services, and supports well before any of them were established by law. Those of us raising young children with disabilities today owe a profound debt of gratitude to Edith and her peers, those trailblazing mothers who forced open doors of opportunity, dignity, and empowerment through which our children and we now walk. Our heartfelt condolences go to Edith's survivors – her sons Anthony and Michael, sister Risa Igelfeld and brother Paul Knie, her nieces, nephews, cousins, and grandchildren, and the many, many friends whose lives she touched, both locally and worldwide.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Get a HANDLE on Neurodevelopmental Differences (Holistic Approach to Neurodevelopment and Learning Efficiency)

Presented by Marlene Suliteanu, OTR/L, Certified HANDLE Practitioner and Certified HANDLE Instructor

October 7-8 Ventura 9:00 - 4:30 Four Points by Sheraton at the Ventura Harbor, 1050 Schooner Drive, Ventura, CA.
Suzanne Singer (760) 613-9286 or gssinger@pacbell.net <http://www.handle.org>

Learning How to Learn: The DIR® (Floortime) Approach to Emotional Intelligence

Problem Solving and Social Thinking for Children with Autism Spectrum and Sensory Processing Disorders.

Barbara Kalmanson, PhD, Charla Cunningham, MFT & Drama Therapist,
Monica Osgood, Director "Celebrate the Children" Program

October 16-17 Santa Barbara 9:00 - 4:30, \$250, Hotel MarMonte, contact Megan Acedo, 805-965-0309,
jwhite@sojournservicesinc.org

"How to Access Your Insurance" follow-up meetings for parents:

Information to help parents access interventions for their children and necessary services through their health insurance.

Sponsored by Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center, Protection & Advocacy Inc.

Office of Client Rights Advocacy, PAPAS Hispanic Group, Area Board IX.

Oct. 20 Oxnard 6:30 -8:30 pm (Español) Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center,
2220 E. Gonzales Rd. Suite 120, Oxnard

Oct. 21 Oxnard 10:00 - 12:00 (English) Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center,
2220 E. Gonzales Rd. Suite 120, Oxnard ---Call (805) 485-9643 or (800) 332-3679.

Discovering the Possibilities with Visual Strategies - Improving Communication, Behavior & Social Skills.

Presented by Linda Hodgdon, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, author of bestseller Visual Strategies for Improving Communication.

One-day program packed with practical solutions to challenging problems, overcoming difficult situations,
building meaningful relationships & more. ASHA CEUs available 248-879-2598

Oct 27 San Diego 8:30 - 4:30 Holiday Inn on the Bay - Mary Jo Kurily
<http://www.QuirkRoberts.com/tour> tour@quirkroberts.com

5th Annual Downtown Holiday Parade

March down State Street with ASASB and friends as we welcome the Holiday Season!

Dec 1 Santa Barbara 6:30 pm, info@asasb.org, (805) 560-3762

ASASB Annual Family Holiday Party

Cookie decorating, holiday singing, crafts for the kids, and a special visit from Santa!

Dec 10 Santa Barbara 11:00-3:00, Dargan's Irish Pub, 18 E. Ortega Street, Santa Barbara,
info@asasb.org, (805) 560-3762

Two-Day PECS Training - The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
is an initial language-training package that is used to teach communication skills rapidly
to those with limited functional speech. Participants will learn how to implement the six phases of PECS,
including attributes, through presenter demonstrations, video examples & role-play.

Catherine Horton, M.S., CCC/SLP

Dec 20-21 Irvine 8am-4 pm, \$425 prof, \$325 parent

Hilton Irvine/Orange Amanda Hunter <http://www.pecs.com> ahunter@pecs.com 302-368-2515

Berard Auditory Integration Training, Auditory Integration Training (AIT)

is a ten day, noninvasive educational and therapeutic technique which helps people to hear all frequencies more evenly,
to improve in the processing of auditory input, and to decrease hypersensitivity
or hyposensitivity to specific environmental or speech sounds.

Dec 22 - Dec 31 San Diego, Excel Speech & Hearing Center, 7927 Ostrow Street - Suite B.

Early Bird Discount before 11/15 \$1400, \$1500 after 11/15.

Terrie Silverman www.we-exist.net/ait terries@execpc.com 262-569-782

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." ~ Anne Frank

Capital Donors . . .

*Federal Drug Store
Eugene Goldberg
Norman Kremer
Pedro Nava
Lorna Owens*



Volunteers . . .

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Ryan Bealer
Terri Bowen
Jennifer Calderwood
Jill Crang
Wendy Gillespie
Linda Hollingsworth
Kristi Holm
Kelli Johnston
Jeff Korpela
Elaine McKaba*



Gifts in Kind . . .

*Albertson's on the Mesa
The Berry Man
Eller's Donuts
Jack's Bagels
JFM Web Design
Santa Barbara Seals
Starbucks on the Mesa*



Autism Society of America Santa Barbara is a 501(c)3 organization. Please send your tax-deductible donations to ASASB, P.O. Box 30364, Santa Barbara, CA, 93130-0364 or donate online at www.asasb.org.



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