

Executive Director
Ms. Joanne Quinn

Executive Board:

Ms. Kathy Schlenz,
President

Mr. Chris Perrotti,
Vice President

Ms. Andrea Krupp,
Secretary

Mr. John Quinn,
Treasurer

Mr. Cary Coen

Ms. Joan Colwell

Ms. Nancy Merrill

Mr. Ken Pariseau

Ms. Beth Pinto

Dr. Anthony Regine

Mr. Timothy Gray

Mr. David Tassoni

Ms. Bernadine Sadwin

Advisory Board:

Ms. Cheryl Cotter

Ms. Barbara Dubois

Ms. Kat Felkner

Ms. Melissa Ferreira

Ms. Lore Gray

Ms. Melinda Jackson

Ms. Susan Morsilli

Ms. Connie Rinehart

Ms. Susan Sposato

Ms. Joanne Weaver

Intensive Summer Institute Coming July 26th

The Autism Project of Rhode Island will host the Intensive Summer Institute the week of July 26-30th at the Meadowbrook Farms Elementary School in East Greenwich, RI. It is an opportunity for an intensive 5-day training featuring presentations by the Project's highly trained and experienced consultant staff. This year, Lisa McKay, an Adaptive Physical Education Teacher, will join the Project's consultants. Lisa will address successful inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in physical education classes, recess, etc.

The Intensive Summer Institute offers special education teachers, regular education teachers, paraprofessionals, speech and occupational therapists, community-based

professionals and therapists a unique local opportunity for intensive training on effective strategies for educating children with autism based on best practices. Team participation is encouraged in order to build a solid team understanding of the principals and strategies in a relaxed environment. Individual registration is \$795.00, team registration is \$4,000 (up to four team members attend and follow-up training-two full days and two half-day workshops-are included in the cost). A limited number of slots for full time graduate students (\$395.00) and parents are available (\$200.00). The Intensive Summer Institute operates from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm each day and lunch is provided. For more information, call 785-2666 or visit our website at www.theautismproject.org.

Countdown to Camp

We are working hard to finalize registrations for this year's camp Move, Think, Create, Communicate! It's still 11 weeks away, but we are down to our final slots. Last year's camp really showed the need for this special time and was rated a tremendous success by the participants and their parents. If you are interested in reserving a slot for your son or daughter, please call Melinda at 785-2666.

There are two sessions of camp this year. Campers participate in small group activities, swimming, hiking, rowing boats, and much more. The first week is August 16th to 20th and the second is August 23rd to 27th at Camp Champlin in Cranston, RI. Members receive a 10% discount on camp tuition and limited camperships are available.

Campers ages 5 (and entering a Kindergarten program) to 17 are invited to attend. The cost is \$325 per week.

Imagine Walk, 2004

Second Annual Imagine Walk and Family Fun Day took place under sunny skies this year! The turnout was terrific and from all accounts families had fun.



Imagine Walk 2004 was a huge success. The sea of blue shirts in the picture above shows the strong presence of the URI Rams football team making a difference in their community! See the full story on page 4 for details.

From the Executive Director's Desk...

What a busy couple of months! Thanks to your generous support and endless hours of work by our volunteers our second annual *Imagine Walk and Family Fun Day* was a huge success. The weather was great, the food delicious, the activities fun and how 'bout those Rams! The sea of blue uniform shirts added quite the spark to this year's Walk. Coach Stowers already called to sign up for next year.

The Walk's success could not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, the many in-kind donations, the hard work of our volunteers (new and old!), and the generous support from our families, friends, neighbors, and professionals who come out each year to support individuals with autism. (See Walk Article , Page 4)

Additional important events during April, Autism Awareness Month included the formal Gubernatorial Proclamation of April 2004 as National Autism Awareness Month in the State of Rhode Island, and an educational outreach to members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Thanks to the efforts of Dave Tassoni, parent, and Melinda Lemos-Jackson, Operations Manager, members of different autism community agencies were able to join together to promote autism awareness. In addition to information tables, an executive brief that highlighted key concepts of the recent RI KIDS COUNT Issue Brief on Autism was given to each member of both houses, members of key agencies were recognized and the summary was read into record.

Finally, Rhode Island was well represented at the recent TEACCH International In-Service and Conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Five members of the APRI Advisory Board, Sue Constable and Amy Gratten from RITAP and Paula Aube, an OT from East Greenwich made the trip to learn from leading authorities on Sensory Processing Issues and Narrow Interests in People with Autism.

We were particularly proud when during his talk "Current Thoughts on Blending Methods", Dr. Roger Cox, director of training for TEACCH, referenced how some years back the group from RI discussed how TEACCH and Structured Teaching were the heart (or core) of their philosophy and additional intervention methods were introduced within the structured teaching framework. He validated our approach and continued to discuss how different methods could blend successfully or not. It was an interesting talk and the discussion will continue to evolve as we learn more about individuals with autism and how they learn.

Thank you again for your support. I look forward to seeing many of you this summer at one of our upcoming events. Information on all of our programs and fund raising events is listed in this newsletter or can be accessed at our website:

www.theautismproject.org.

Sincerely,

Joanne G. Quinn

Lessons in Learning...

This column usually features effective strategies for children with autism and their families. The current column will focus on effective strategies for the families, especially the mothers and fathers living with autism.

Every family has a unique dynamic that is reflective of their values, culture, family size, etc. That is true for families living with autism too, however, every family living with autism faces a common set of challenges: learning about autism and how it presents in their child, learning about services available in the area; investigating the different therapeutic approaches, educational

philosophies and strategies for children with autism; advocating for your child and choosing the therapies and strategies that you feel fit your child's and family's needs.

This is a daunting job description for any parent-add the typical parental responsibilities of laundry, grocery shopping, housework, meal preparation, paid employment, the needs of other children, a spouse and other family members-and the possibility for OVERLOAD is obvious!

Lessons in Learning continued...

How do you cope? How do you educate family members about your child's disability? Families often find solutions that work for their unique situation.

We will be including a few of the more common issues and successful strategies in the upcoming issues:

Issue: My mother (father, mother-in-law, etc.) just doesn't get it! My child won't "outgrow" his autism, and his "behavior" is not the result of my parenting (the way I raise him, taking his bottle away, etc.)!

Strategy: Acknowledge, Educate, and Accept Limitations

Parents of children with autism often face a world filled with judgmental people who, ignorant of the disability, often misjudge a child and their parent(s). While we don't have to take on educating every person we meet about the disability, we certainly should make the effort to educate our closest circle of family, friends and neighbors. If we can help these people in our "inner circle" understand autism and how it presents in our child, then we've started to work towards acceptance and appropriate inclusion at home, at family gatherings and in the community.

It may not be an easy task.

Our family members have their own set of unique strengths and needs. Some may be better prepared to understand autism and accept the challenges—finally working with the parents to help include the child and the family. One family was delighted when they were able to attend large family gatherings because the hostess offered a quiet bedroom with a TV/VCR for a "pull-out" area. Another family was deeply hurt that a grandmother refused to baby sit her granddaughter with autism, she was too afraid of "what might happen" and not willing to learn enough to understand the child and the strategies that helped support her at home.

Parents faced with educating their families and friends often talk about autism and how it presents in their child on a regular basis starting with the basics. The best way to teach is often to share information during "teachable moments" (Before you attend the roller skating birthday party, talk to your sister, "David can't roller blade like other kids his age because of his motor planning needs that are part of his autism. But we're

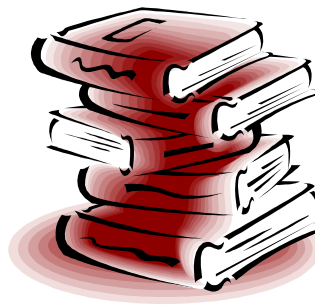
really excited that he can dribble a ball now with the help of occupational therapy and lots of practice").

Books written for children ([Taking Autism to School](#), for example) often contain a lot of great information in plain language that is easier to understand than more technical articles or lengthy books on the subject. Networking with other families who have children with autism, through informal networks of friends and formal support groups and community agencies, can often give parents a wealth of tips and ideas, while allowing them to take comfort in the company of people who "really understand" because they live with autism every day too. Try to help the important people in your life understand Autism and how it presents in your child. It may take a lot of time and energy, but the results can be worth the effort.

Editor's Note: The Autism Society of NC's Bookstore is a great resource for books on autism. A link to their website will be available on our website: www.theautismproject.org next month.

Autism Project Affiliates With Autism Society of NC Bookstore

We are pleased to announce the Autism Project is now affiliated with the Autism Society of NC's bookstore. This allows members of the Project and other visitors to our website to purchase books from the NC Bookstore. In return the Project receives 20% of the gross sales.



The Autism Society of NC maintains the most current titles of books, videos and DVDs on autism related topics. It's an established bookseller and we are proud to be selected to be one of their affiliates.

The next time you need a particular book on autism go to our website and click on the button for the North Carolina bookstore. We also have copies of the NC Bookstore's entire inventory including a brief write-up for each title.

Second Annual Imagine Walk Is A Great Success...

Great weather, good food, fun activities, dedicated volunteers, generous community support and wonderful family participation all contributed to the successful second annual Imagine Walk and Family Fun Day. Once again, close to 1,000 people came out to support individuals with autism. The sun was shining, the Kiwanis Club of Newport kept the Hot Dogs coming and our volunteers worked to keep the children involved with activities, popcorn, cotton candy and pony rides.



Thank you to our Honorary Chairpersons, Susan and Mark Weiner for their generous donation of time and resources. (Did I mention the URI Rams are in again for next year!) It was great fun promoting the Walk with Mark on the John DePetro Show inter-mixed with their political jousting! The added exposure boosted attendance, donations and awareness about the disability of autism. Kim Keough, our emcee for the day did a great job keeping us on time.

Thank you also to Senator Jack Reed, Congressman James Langevin and Mayor Scott Avedesian for making the time to lend support to our children and families.

It's important to recognize our key committee members who began planning the event last May. Co-chairs Roberta Zimmerly and Susan Sposato stepped up for the second year to lead the planning of the event. Susan Morsilli, Jennifer Marton, Carole Baker and Judy Wayss joined us as chairs for key committees. Thank you to all of you for your continued support.

Finally, thank you to the URI Rams Football Team and staff for getting up early after their last scrimmage to support our children! Thank you to our

many volunteers who worked the day of the Walk, Saturday setting up and the many months before the Walk on our committees. Hats off to our friend, George Russell, president of the Telecom Pioneers and the many Pioneer volunteers who continue to support us.



Sponge Bob makes a new friend

As of press time we raised close to \$55,000! We know we couldn't do this without great support. In addition to the many individual donations we received, we would like to extend a very special thank you to all those businesses that supported us with corporate sponsorships and In-Kind Donations for this year's Imagine Walk and Family Fun Day:

Walk Partners

Advanced Financial Services

GEM Plumbing

Neighborhood Health Plan of NE

WJAR/10

Area Sponsors

Citizens Bank

DeWal Industries

Re/Max Preferred/Michael Pinelli

Beaulieu Financial Group/John Hancock Financial Services

T-Shirt/Red Flag Sign Sponsor

G&G Technologies

T-Shirt Sponsors

Centerville Savings Bank

Hope Global

Univar

Zelano Insurance

Global Property Management

Justice for All

Toray Plastics

Perfectly Fit

Red Flag Sponsors

Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Nardolillo Funeral Home

In-Kind Donations:

Back to Basics, BJ's Wholesale Club/Coventry, Coca-Cola, Foxwoods Resort, Franks Rentals Inc, George Greer & Company, Homestead Bakery, Krispy-Kreme Doughnuts, Journey's End Farm, Let's Party/Cumberland, Mei Design, Meriden Printing, Monroe Dairy, Pepsi, Quality Beef, RI Novelty, Sam's Club/Warwick, Stop & Shop/North Kingstown, Structural Graphics, Target/Warwick, and Wal-Mart/North Kingstown.

Fundraising Update

Last month we held our 1st Wine, Dine and Help Autism Event at Pat Orlando's Restaurant in Johnston and raised close to \$3000.00 to support camp scholarships for our summer camp, Move, Think, Create, Communicate. Many thanks to Michael Andoscia from Waddell & Reed for hosting this event.

Silent Auction

We are in the process of forming a committee to plan a silent auction event in early fall; please contact Mary at the Autism project if you are interested in being part of the committee.

The RI Judiciary raised \$971.00 with a Dress Down Day to support the Project.



Pictured from (l/r) are: Karen Torti, Mary Farhoumand, Joanne Quinn, Andrea Krupp and Carol Costa

Editor's note:

The Autism Project of Rhode Island would like to feature community partner's upcoming events in its newsletter. In order to post community partner events in our newsletter in a timely manner, please contact Melinda Jackson, at melinda@theautismproject.org with the details of your event, including the date, time, location, brief description of the event and a contact person's name and telephone number and/or email address. Thank you!

OTHER CAMP OPPORTUNITIES:

Easter Seals Camp Hemlocks is located in Hebron, CT (just over the RI border). This beautiful camp hosts week-long overnight camp sessions for people with special needs. This year's camp schedule includes two weeks for children with autism, July 4th-9th and July 18th-23rd. For more information regarding Camp Hemlocks, call 1-800-832-4409 or check the Easter Seals website at :

WWW.CT.EASTERSEALS.COM.

Future Events...Save the Dates!

June 14, 2004: Take me out to the Ballgame-The Project is sponsoring its first Pawtucket Red Sox Night on Monday, June 14, 2004 at McCoy Stadium. Tickets are \$6.00 and will be sold at the walk. For more information please contact Mary Farhoumand at 785-2666 or mary@theautismproject.org

June 29-July 4, 2004:Please join us for the Snaple Sunset Music Festival at the Newport Yachting Center and enjoy music by America, Something Corporate, Howie Day, Ben Folds, Lyle Lovett and Livingston Taylor, partial ticket proceeds benefit the Project. Tickets Available at:

www.sunsetmusicfestival.com,

Strawberries Music, or by calling 846-1600, ext. 2. Volunteers are also needed for the event; if you are interested please contact the Project at 401-785-2666.

July 17, 2004: "Drive for Autism"-Waddell & Reed, Inc. is hosting a golf tournament at the Cranston Country Club at 1:00PM. For ticket information please contact Michael Andoscia or Cathy Easop at 736-8843



Check out our website for more info at:

www.theautismproject.org

United Way #8410


the Autism Project
 of rhode island
 51 Sockanosset Crossroad
 Suite A
 Cranston, RI, 02920

<p>Non Profit Org US Postage paid Providence, RI Permit #114</p>

Future Newsletters will be sent via e-mail so please go to our website and sign up with your e-mail address today!