



Dare to Dream: Leading Happy, Healthy and Productive Lives

Transitioning to adulthood is a major milestone in the lives of all kids, but for those with autism, the challenges are vast. Read these great insights by Mary Fogle Douglass, MMAA Board Member and mother of 17-year old Drew.

The parents of most 17 year old boys might be anticipating senior year athletics, proms and graduation celebrations; maybe completing college apps and financial aid forms and contemplating dorm life or other independent living arrangements; perhaps assisting in finding part time jobs to buy that first car. For many of us, these typical teenage rituals of passage are not even fathomable. Anticipating the transition into adulthood has been a nagging concern for my husband and I since our son, Drew, was first diagnosed with autism as a young boy. Typical parental dreams of college and marriage and grandkids suddenly seem out of reach and the future becomes a scary unknown. We don't know how they'll develop, or how they'll respond to therapies; how well they'll be able to communicate; what life skills they'll develop; how people in our community will treat their idiosyncrasies. For families raising teens on the spectrum, the future can be more confusing and frightening than the day-to-day struggles of the here and now.

That is why we are turning our focus to Drew's future more than ever. Because even though he may not have the life we envisioned for him when he was born, we know he can still live a happy, meaningful and productive life as an adult. And it is clear to us that the transition from school to adult life is a critical crossroads.

Unfortunately, our communities are behind on developing supports for kids and adults on the spectrum, now estimated at over 600,000 in the U.S. alone. Federal dollars have been primarily focused on prevention and early diagnosis and intervention, and rightly so. But governmental units have been slow to develop a strategy to deal with the exploding number of adults with autism. Historically, services have been provided as part of the programming for adults with all manner of intellectual disabilities. But we know that adults with autism have unique and complex needs, particularly in the areas of receptive and expressive communication, behavior and sensory issues and social skills. Mental health agencies are not prepared for the number of adults with autism now seeking their services, nor have they developed programming at a fast enough pace to meet their unique needs. Families familiar with the school IEP landscape, where a team develops and



delivers a personalized strategy for each child, now find themselves basically on their own once that child “ages out” of the school system. Where do they turn?

The Mid-Michigan Autism Association is working to help answer that critical question for families in the tri-county area. We have set up a committee to look at the transition process for young adults leaving the school setting and seeking educational, vocational, social and housing opportunities in their adult lives. We’re beginning the process by taking stock of the programs that currently exist.

More importantly, we’re dreaming about the lives we want our kids to live as adults. We’re discussing what must be in place to help them build on their individual strengths to maximize their independence. What will give them full and rewarding lives? We’re envisioning the communities they will live in, the jobs they will have, the social opportunities they’ll have to choose from. How will they keep fit? With whom can they share their interests and hobbies? Where will they get health care? And how will they get there? What will their homes look like—will they be totally independent, supervised daily or supported full-time? Will they have housemates? How will the folks working with them at their work or in their homes be trained to understand the unique needs of individuals on the spectrum?



Their futures are in our hands...

These are BIG questions. And when we aren’t letting the lack of answers scare us to death, the possibilities can make us soar. Won’t you join the discussion? Help us see your vision for our kids futures. Together we can guide families, professionals, governmental agencies, entrepreneurs and developers to see what an integrated, inclusive community can look like.

Want to help us build a community of support for our adults? Join us for an evening of small group discussion; help us take stock of the options currently available; take a more active role on our committee. There’s a way for you to participate at any level. Contact me with your ideas or to volunteer to be part of this exciting dialogue. maryd@midmichiganautismassociation.com.



Drew Douglass
Drum Circle, Marshall Music
November 2010

We love you, Drew!

MICHIGAN AUTISM INSURANCE REFORM UPDATE

Contributed by Stacie Rulison, MMAA Board



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT for critical autism treatment legislation! Contact your district senator and let them know you support the legislation, and vote yes for this insurance reform.

There will be a hearing in Lansing on September 8 at 2:30 in the Senate Hearing Room of the Boji Building.

Find your Senator at the following and contact them! Go to: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysenator/fysenator.htm>

Go to the Michigan Autism Insurance Reform Coalition at [Michigan Autism Insurance Reform Coalition](#) to find more information on proposed legislation for Michigan. Read the bipartisan Senate Bill 414 ([Senate Insurance Bill 414](#)) and Senate Bill 415 ([Senate Insurance Bill 415](#)) which would require insurance companies regulated by the State of Michigan to cover autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis and treatment. This would institute reform by requiring insurers to fund evidence-based practice (EBP) treatment including behavioral health intervention such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) which can aid in significantly reducing the characteristics and symptoms of autism, potentially providing greater functioning across skill domains and improved quality of life.

Quick Facts:

- There are more than 15,000 children in Michigan with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Research shows that children as early as 1 year can show signs of autism and that with early identification and treatment approximately 50% recover typical functioning and another 40% make significant progress
- Less than 20% of children with ASD will receive access to needed therapy and intervention
- NOT acting will have tremendous quality of life impacts with lifetime societal costs over \$3.6 MILLION

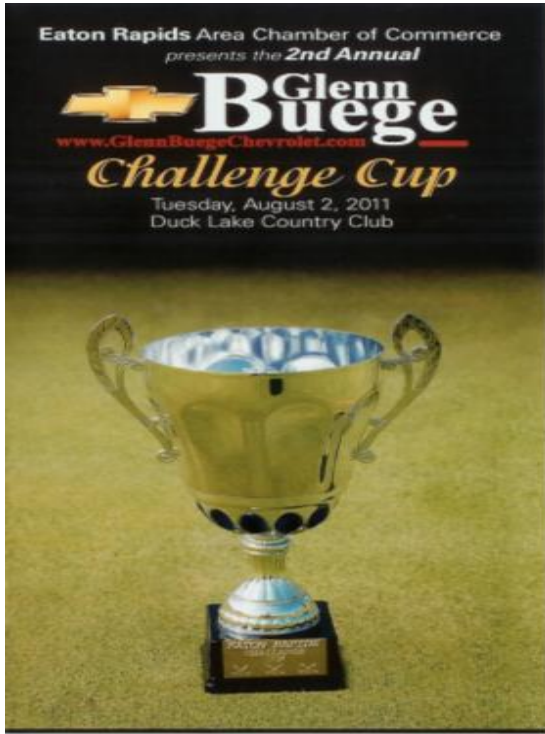


WDET Craig Fahle Radio Show: Listen to an interview with one of Michigan's key advocates for Autism Legislation, Dave Meador, who has a daughter with autism:

[Meador Interview](#)



For more continued information about autism legislation in other states, go to the [Michigan Autism Insurance Reform Coalition \(MAIRC\) Facebook page](#) and [Autism Votes](#) (an initiative of Autism Speaks)...MMAA will also continue publishing information in its newsletters and on its website!



WOW!!!!!! OUR GREATEST APPRECIATION!!!

Thank you to Kristan Buege-Miller and the entire Buege family for their wonderful fund raising efforts on behalf of **Mid-Michigan Autism Association!** As with last year, The Glenn Buege Chevrolet Challenge Cup was a sell-out event that was enjoyed immensely by golfers and volunteers. Dr. Mary Sharp and Mary Opsommer spent the day with the golfers discussing the community efforts of **MMAA**. We are most grateful for the generosity of Glenn Buege and all of the golfers who participated!!!!



The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the United States Department of Education is coming to Michigan later this year to examine the delivery of special education services in our state. The Michigan Alliance Parent Training and Information Center is responsible for providing feedback to OSEP from parents in Michigan. Please fill out this survey so that your voice can be heard and share it with any other parents/parent groups. If you have any questions, please call 1-800-552-4821. **Deadline: September 30, 2011.** Survey: [2011 OSEP Parent Survey](#)



Jack's Place for Autism in Southfield hosted a very successful "Dancing with the Stars" event on August 1, 2011. It featured ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" celebrities: Jonathon Roberts and Anna Trebunskaya. Check out this very (very) poignant video they showed at the event....it was produced by Jack's Place—and wow! It's amazing and something any parent or care giver of a child with autism would appreciate.....[Autism Video--Jack's Place](#)



**The START Project in collaboration with
the Mid-Michigan Autism Association (MMAA)**

Presents the

ASPERGER'S CONFERENCE

This presentation offers a new way of thinking about students with Asperger Syndrome (AS). The information presented will go beyond specific characteristics of students with AS and instead consider how those characteristics impact the way adults interact with students with AS. The significant emotional and often negative reactions of adults may be due to a misattribution of the behaviors of AS. These reactions may impede relationships and social and academic performance, resulting in less positive outcomes for students with AS.

This presentation will provide a review of attribution theory through the lens of AS, allowing adults working with students with AS to better understand their role in the response to and education of these students.

Date: Friday, August 19, 2011
Time: 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Cost: \$50 for Conference; \$75 for Conference with CEU's

Morning coffee and lunch provided!

Training Location:
McDonald Middle School - 1601 Burcham Drive
East Lansing, MI 48823

*A special thank you to East Lansing Public Schools
for hosting this important training!*



HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US!

The Emerald Golf Course
 2300 W. Maple Rapids Road,
 St. Johns, MI 48879

NO MORE SIDELINES GOLF OUTING

DATE & FEE

Saturday, August 27
 4 Person Scramble/\$220 per team

REGISTER

New this year is online registration! Visit <http://nmsgolfouting.eventbrite.com> to register your team! Registration opens July 1st and is a first come first serve basis! Payments can be made via PayPal or through Mastercard/VISA. Checks can also be made out to NMS of Central MI and mailed to Lloyd & Rhonda Feldpausch @ PO Box 115, Fowler, MI 48835.





Enjoy a complete program of special events, 18 holes of golf (including cart), continental breakfast, hog roast luncheon, door prizes and awards/prize drawings after golf.


- Longest putt
- Male/Female longest drive contests
- Closest to the pin challenge
- Optional skins game
- Optional mulligans



Hole Sponsorships & general donations welcome! Visit <http://nmsgolfouting.eventbrite.com> to make an online donation or send a check made out to NMS of Central MI to Lloyd & Rhonda Feldpausch @ PO Box 115, Fowler, MI 48835.

Statewide Autism Resources & Training





2011-2012 Workshops

Sponsored By:

Capital Region Autism Network (CRAN) including:

Eaton ISD
 Ingham ISD
 Grand Valley State University

**START Training is for Educators, Parents,
& Professionals!**

Register at:
<http://www.eatonisd.org/prodevelopment>
 Click on "Register On-Line" Icon

- Registration opens June 1, 2011 and ends 1 week before scheduled training
- Each workshop limited to first 50 registrants and waiting list available
- CEU's pending completion of entire workshop

Eaton ISD www.eatonisd.org 517-543-5500
 Ingham ISD www.inghamisd.org 517-676-1051

Go to [START Brochure](#) to download a brochure
 Go to [START Parent Insert](#) to download a
 Registration Form

MMAA CONTINUES FOCUS ON AUTISM SAFETY....



MMAA finished training the **Ingham County Sheriff Dept (ICSD)** and will provide a make-up session on December 5 for the ICSD. MMAA has trained approximately 220 law enforcement staff at ICSD and there were 78 officers throughout MI that attended the April 13 (Dennis Debbaudt) Training. **Sgt. Scott Schuelke** (retired from Lansing Police Dept—and whose knowledge and commitment are greatly appreciated) and **Lisa Grost** (MMAA Board) have been delivering this training. MMAA has partnered with the **Michigan State Police (MSP)** and provided a “train the trainer” session to their 21 new community service troopers, who will be providing training/outreach to communities on autism safety. We are excited about this new partnership and MSP’s in safeguarding individuals with autism!

Make sure to visit MMAA’s Autism Safety (Emergency Responding) site at: **[MMAA Autism Safety Management](#)**.

The following was submitted by **Sergeant Robert Ott** (PEM, EMT-P, I/C, Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Ingham County Sheriff’s Office, Mason, MI)

CoderED is available in Ingham County for families with children with autism! By creating a “Reverse Code Red” and proactively entering your child’s information in the system, and encouraging neighbors, local businesses, and others to do the same, you create a network of contacts if your child comes up missing. This program can then make proactive calls to that network and reduce the amount of time it would take to find a child who might be in danger.. The program is being provided by the Ingham County Sheriff’s Office through a grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

To get set up in CoderED—you need to be proactive and enter the information (called a “reverse CodeRED):

1. Go to www.ingham.org and find the small “Code Red” logo
2. Enter all of your contact information
3. Encourage friends, schools, neighbors, businesses, etc. to enter their information (they must opt in)...this will expedite the contact time to find a child
4. Callers MUST have a complete physical description, clothing description, time and location last seen. Responding officers will request a photo for news media coverage.

BE PROACTIVE! If you don't live in Ingham County—ask your county seat when they will be implementing this kind of service for missing persons. You can send a note about “Reverse Code Red” to your child’s school. The more homes in a neighborhood that participate, the more likely it is to be effective if your child goes missing one day.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY AUTISM CLINIC Parent-Assisted Social Skills Group

The MSU Psychology Clinic is offering a Parent-Assisted Social Skills Group for children with Asperger's Syndrome, high-functioning children autism, or related conditions ages 7 to 12. Groups are designed for children with well-developed language skills who have difficulty with social interactions with peers and adults. Children will be pre-screened to determine whether the group is appropriate for their individual needs and skill level.

The Social Skills Group will run weekly for 90 minutes over 15 weeks. Parents will receive instruction in ways to facilitate their child's social skills in a separate parent group that meets at the same time.

Topics covered will include:

- How to recognize your own and others' emotions
- How to cope with negative emotions
- How to recognize and use nonverbal communication
- How to have balanced conversations
- How to be a good friend
- How to choose good friends
- How to negotiate conflicts and compromise
- How to respond to teasing and bullying



We are currently recruiting clients for groups that will begin in October 2011. We will need a minimum of four children for a group to run. Thus, we will conduct pre-screenings in August and September. Interested families should contact us by mid-September at the latest.

The cost of the group will be \$30 per session. Fees are adjusted based upon the family's ability to pay. The Psychological Clinic is a treatment and training center in the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University. The MSU Autism Clinic is staffed by advanced graduate students under the direction and supervision of **Brooke Ingersoll, Ph.D.** Dr. Ingersoll is a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at MSU and a fully licensed clinical psychologist. She is a leading researcher in the field of autism intervention.

To set up a pre-screening meeting or for more information about the social skills groups, please contact the Psych Clinic at 517-355-9564.

Relatively Speaking

a conference for siblings and other family members of children with special needs



Out Of This World

Friday, October 7 – Sunday, October 9, 2011
Crowne Plaza, Grand Rapids

WITH FUNDING FROM THE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FUND
SPONSORED BY THE FAMILY CENTER, CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES DIVISION (CSHCS) 800/359-3722

Relatively Speaking 2011

Children with special needs participate in their own fun, ability-appropriate activities.

Siblings age six through teens share their unique concerns in fun, recreational groups led by specially trained adults.

Mothers, fathers and other caregivers hear "in-the-know" speakers:

Emily Holl & Tom Holl

Emily is a Senior Manager at YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities, a New York City based not-for-profit organization. A loving sibling to a brother with developmental disabilities, she has presented nationally to academic and non-academic audiences on sibling issues.

Nora Fox Handler & Bruce Handler

Nora is one of the founding members of SIBS Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters, a nonprofit support and advocacy organization for Illinois siblings. Along with her sister Margaret, Nora helped organize the first and second annual Adult Sibling Conference in McHenry, IL.



Don Meyer

Don Meyer

Don is the director of the Sibling Support Project, a national effort dedicated to the interests of millions of brothers and sisters of people with special health, developmental, and mental health concerns. He is also the senior author and/or editor of numerous articles and six books for professionals, family members and young readers.

Held at the Crowne Plaza
Grand Rapids, MI
October 7-9, 2011

Registration: \$35.00
Lodging: \$106.02 per night
Child care (under 6): \$30.00

Families may apply for a stipend to cover most costs.
Please call the Family Phone Line at (800) 359-3722 to request an application.

Professionals please note:

Professionals are welcome to attend all adult Relatively Speaking sessions.

NEW JEWELRY FOR MMAA!

Thank you Margaret Ross for the new beautiful jewelry designed exclusively for Mid-Michigan Autism. Check out these pieces at the START conference, or find them on our "Cool Stuff" page....samples below! To see all of Margaret Ross' incredible jewelry go to the website listed below ([Margaret Ross Website](#))





MANY, MANY THANKS to all of those who walked or ran on behalf of Mid-Michigan Autism at the Heart of Michigan Run in May!!! MMAA raised over \$7,500 from that walk and we so appreciate your support—exceeding our \$5,000 goal! We have been very blessed by the community, donors, supporters, sponsors, collaborators, and more. MMAA continues to grow because of grass roots efforts to support local families and projects. The coming year promises to be even better with an increased focus on families, transition, and maintaining past initiatives! We have affiliated with the **Autism Alliance of Michigan** and they are driving some significant state-based initiatives. We look forward to continued growth and relationship building with them as they nurture and expand relationships throughout Michigan!



www.autismallianceofmichigan.org

COMPLETE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT:

[MMAA CALENDAR OF
EVENTS:](#)



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