

# **AUTISM SOCIETY**

*Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism*

*Nebraska*



**NOVEMBER 18, 2010**

**NEWSGRAM**

## **HUSKER HEROES**



**Husker Heroes was an amazing success!**

**Thank you to everyone who came out to participate and thank you the UNL Husker Athletes who took time out of their busy schedules to kick, dribble, tackle and just hang out with over 200 of their most special fans!**

**Also special thanks to all of the advocates at the Autism Society, Autism Family Network, Arc of Lincoln, Dreams Unlimited, Early Development Network, DSAF of Nebraska, United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska and the Nebraska Spina Bifida Inc. and UNL who helped make this event happen!**

## Have your United Way donations impact YOUR community!

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGNS ARE UNDERWAY!

Most companies across the state participate in the United Way Campaign, which gets into full swing each fall. **Did you know that you, and anyone else you know, can donate to the Autism Society of Nebraska through the United Way?** It's true! The United Way allows donors to write in specific organizations for donations. If you would like to have your United Way donations go to ASN, you can write it in as:



Autism Society of America—Nebraska Chapter  
PO Box 83559  
Lincoln, NE 68501-3559

If your United Way campaign contact person needs any information about the Autism Society of Nebraska, he/she can contact ASN Treasurer, Dan Kosmicki at 1-800-580-9279.

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## OMAHA: PRISM hosts Transitions Workshop

Due to numerous requests from parents, the PRISM Project has decided to offer a special meeting on Transitions. Join them for this important training series for parents of a child preparing for the transition from school to adult life.

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Saint Timothy's Lutheran Church  
510 North 93rd Street, Omaha

Dinner will be provided at 5:45pm. Please RSVP by December 3rd.  
Print a flyer [here](#).

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## ASD Network Workshops

The Nebraska ASD Network is overseen by the Nebraska Department of Education and works in an advisory capacity providing training to Nebraska schools. They offer exceptional training to professionals as well as parents. Be sure and keep an eye out on their website for the current list of workshops!

These are a GREAT way to bring training to your teachers as well as into your home!

<http://events.unl.edu/asdnetwork/upcoming/>

## **OMAHA: Ollie Webb's Kids Club this Saturday**

Saturday, November 20, 2010—5:30pm -8:00 p.m.

PVA Building, 7612 Maple Street

They'll be making Apple Turkeys! Parents of children with developmental disabilities may bring their children, ages 5-12 years, to participate in developmental play activities while their parents leave for free time or a date night for themselves. Childcare is provided at \$5.00 per child with Arc membership (\$7 per child for non-members) by staff from The Arc of Omaha at the Ollie Webb Center and by volunteers from Creighton University and other youth groups. Siblings may participate as peer models, and a light snack is provided.

TO REGISTER FOR THIS SESSION—Contact Annie at 402-346-5220, ext. 23, or [aanderson@olliewebbinc.org](mailto:aanderson@olliewebbinc.org).

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## **LINCOLN: Sibshop**

Sibshops are fun, informative workshops held for children ages 8 – 13 who have a brother or sister with a developmental disability. Siblings have a chance to meet other brothers and sisters and join them in recreational activities. While having fun in a safe environment, they can discuss their feelings about being a sib and talk about common concerns, interests, and joys.

For more information contact the Arc of Lincoln / Lancaster County at 421-8866 or visit their web site at [www.arclincoln.org](http://www.arclincoln.org)

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## **LINCOLN: Family Connections hosts speaker about Social Security**

Thursday, November 18th - 6:30-8:00pm - Culler Middle School

A speaker from Social Security will touch on basic SSI/SSDI eligibility, benefits, work incentives, and serving as representative payee. Come with questions!

Meeting during the school year, the Family Connections program is a way for families to link with professionals in a casual atmosphere to gain knowledge on a variety of topics. Free respite/childcare is provided for individuals with or without disabilities. Reservations are required for respite services so that we are sure to accommodate everyone attending.

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## **OMAHA: Biomedical Discussion Group**

The Biomedical Discussion group meets Thursday November 18 at 7pm at Whole Foods in the Lifestyle Center room. Whole Foods is located just south of the Westroads mall at Regency and Dodge. This is a discussion forum for those families currently involved in biomedical treatments. Contact Chrissy Cameron [chrissycamero...n@cox.net](mailto:chrissycamero...n@cox.net) or Karen Falconer Al-Hindi [karen.alhindi@gmail.com](mailto:karen.alhindi@gmail.com) for more information.

## AUTISM SOCIETY—OMAHA SUPPORT GROUP

Come join us at Pump It Up - The Original Inflatable Party Zone - for a night of bouncing, jumping and climbing! This will be a private event for families with children on the autism spectrum.

WHO: Autism Families

WHEN: **MONDAY, December 6, 2010**

6:00pm - 8:00pm

WHERE: Pump It Up 960 S 72nd (72nd & Pacific)



### **Autism Society Omaha Support Group Holiday Party**

## Join us as we celebrate the Holiday Season!

Join the Omaha Support Group for our Holiday Party on Monday, December 6th at Pump It Up from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The kids can bounce, do crafts, eat treats and best of all visit with Santa. Santa will understand that there might be kids who are hesitant to meet him. He has been told to follow your cue!

There will be no formal support group this evening but rather an opportunity for the kids to play and the parents to mingle.

This event is FREE for paid members of the Autism Society of America. \$5 for non-members. No RSVP required. Not a paid member? It's not too late...see the next page of this Newsgram on how to become a member of the Autism Society of America!



## Autism Society of America Membership

The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

Founded in 1965 by Dr. Bernard Rimland, Dr. Ruth Sullivan and many other parents of children with autism, the Autism Society is the leading source of trusted and reliable information about autism. Through its strong chapter network, the Autism Society has spearheaded numerous pieces of state and local legislation, including the 2006 Combating Autism Act, the first federal autism-specific law. The Autism Society's website is one of the most visited websites on autism in the world and its quarterly journal, [Autism Advocate](#), has a broad national readership. The Autism Society also hosts the most comprehensive [national conference](#) on autism, attended by 2000 people each year. Our [information and referral](#) team, our program staff, and our strong chapter presence serve thousands of families each year who are searching for help in their journey with autism.

When you join the national Autism Society of America you become a member of your local Autism Society chapter here in Nebraska as well. In fact, the Autism Society of Nebraska receives 60% of those dues paid to the Autism Society of America. ASA forwards those fees on to the local chapter so that we can carry out our local mission here in your neighborhood! The Autism Society of America is committed to helping the grassroots grow in strength and they recognize that those in the local community have the best understanding of the local needs.

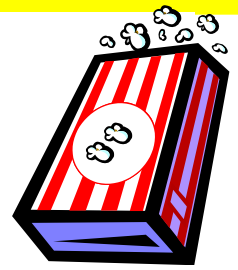
The Autism Society of Nebraska has the benefit of being part of a well respected national organization yet we are still able to keep 100% of all of our local fundraising efforts here in Nebraska.

So are you a member yet? It's not too late...you can join online [HERE](#) or download a form [HERE](#). A household membership is only \$25.

**Join the Autism Society of Nebraska and help us make a difference here in Nebraska!**

With ASA membership you will receive ASA's quarterly magazine, The Autism Advocate and 60% of your membership dues come back directly to our Nebraska chapter!

It is a win-win for everyone!



## SENSORY FRIENDLY FILMS

The Autism Society is very thankful to AMC Entertainment for their leadership in bringing families affected by autism and other disabilities a special opportunity to enjoy their favorite films in a safe and accepting environment. We have now had almost two full years of Sensory Friendly Movies here in Omaha and for many of our families this has been an amazing way to overcome some of the isolation we as a community tend to experience.

A movie is something that so many in society take for granted but for those with sensory issues it can be very difficult. For some, walking into a dark theater is terrifying. For others the heart pounding sound system is too much to handle. 2 hours is an awful long time to sit still and for many of our community it is just not possible for them to be totally silent for the entire showing.

So what is a *sensory friendly* movie? This is a movie venue that is accommodating to YOUR needs! The auditorium will have their lights brought up, the sound turned down, and a silence policy will not be enforced. AMC showings do not have previews so plan to arrive on time!

We are thrilled to announce additional sensory friendly opportunities in the area! First of all, AMC has expanded their theaters there are now sensory friendly showings at the AMC –Star 17 theater in Council Bluffs! Also Marcus Theatre has recently developed their own program called **Reel Movies for Real Needs** and there are two Nebraska theatres participating. You can learn more about the Marcus Theatre program [here](#) as some of their accommodations vary.

**\*Please keep in mind that these next two showings are more geared towards the more mature crowd!\***

### Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1

Saturday, November 20

**OMAHA: 10:00 am**  
**Oakview 24 Theater (AMC Theatre)**  
 3555 S 140th Plaza

**COUNCIL BLUFFS: 10:00 am**  
**Council Bluffs Star 17 Cinema (AMC Theater)**  
 3220 23rd Avenue

### The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

Saturday, December 11

**OMAHA: 10:00 am**  
**Oakview 24 Theater (AMC Theatre)**  
 3555 S 140th Plaza

**COUNCIL BLUFFS: 10:00 am**  
**Council Bluffs Star 17 Cinema (AMC Theater)**  
 3220 23rd Avenue

The Autism Society of Nebraska has developed a toolkit to help you approach your local theater about creating sensory friendly showings in your community! Contact us at [autismsociety@autismnebraska.org](mailto:autismsociety@autismnebraska.org) to find out more information about how to create sensory friendly showings in your community!

## OMAHA Support Group—Gym Swim Family Event



Check out photos from October's Gym and Swim Event at Montclair Community Center on our photo gallery [HERE](#).



Did you miss it? Don't worry...we are doing it again!

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Join the Autism Society Omaha Support Group for another open gym and swim time at the Montclair Community Center located at 2304 S 135th Ave in Omaha.

WHO: Autism Families

WHAT: Open Gym and Open Swim time for our families

WHEN: Sunday, November 21st

12:00—1:00 Explore the gymnasium and game room

1:00—3:00 Family Swimming Time



Game Room: Ping Pong, Pool Table, Foosball, Air Hockey, and a Craft Table (There is no cost for the games. However, \$1 is needed to cover usage of the items like paddles/balls. You will receive the \$1 back when the items are brought back to the counter. )

Open Gym: Run, shoot hoops, play! This is free. Bring your own equipment.

Swimming: Costs \$1 per person. Sorry no floatation devices allowed (You can bring in a life jacket, diving rings, water toys) The pool varies from 3ft to 12 ft so you will need to be in the water with your children.

**Children attending these events must have an active parent with them at all times. This is not a structured group activity but rather a venue for our families to come together. Parents MUST BE responsible for their OWN children in the swimming pool.**

All information on this Newsgram is also available by visiting our web site at [www.autismnebraska.org](http://www.autismnebraska.org)

## **KEARNEY: KidZone Respite**

Attached are registration forms for The Arc of Buffalo County's free monthly respite sessions at KidZone, Kearney Area Children's Museum for the fall 2010 semester. This is a very popular program for children with disabilities between the ages of 2-10, and their siblings, hosted the first Thursday of each month from 6-8 pm.

Due to the popularity and staff and volunteer availability, The Arc will be accepting registrations on a first come, first serve basis up to 25 children. Please note that once the available respite slots are filled, there will begin a waiting list, based on a first come, first serve basis.

Submit your registrations as soon as possible. This program was made possible from grant funding from the Nebraska Respite Network.

Download Kidzone Respite guidelines [here](#).

Download registration form [here](#).

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## **ELKHORN: CREATE hosts a special needs Art Class**

Every child is an artist! This class will give your child the opportunity to learn and explore using art. There will be a variety of activities, easily adapted to meet the needs of your child. This class is a place to play and explore using our imagination.

Special Needs class meets every Tuesday from 4:30-5:30pm

Cost - \$10 a day or \$30 for the month (4 Classes) Cost covers all materials and instruction for the class. This is for school age individuals. Just call ahead at (402) 933-4446 to reserve your space! You can join anytime!

Learn more at [www.inspireandcreate.com](http://www.inspireandcreate.com)

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## **ASD Network SE Regional Newsletter**

The Nebraska ASD Network is an amazing resource for families and professionals in our state. If you haven't already met your regional coordinator, do it now! Also be sure and check out their statewide website as well as their regional pages for training opportunities near you! [www.unl.edu/asdnetwork](http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork)

[Here is the SE Region's October/November Newsletter.](#) This is a great resource to check out. Print them off! Take them to your school! Teachers...put them in the teachers lounge!

## **12 Tips for Helping People with Autism and Their Families Have a Happy Holiday**

While many happily anticipate the coming holiday season, families of people on the autism spectrum also understand the special challenges that may occur when schedules are disrupted and routines broken. Our hope is that by following these few helpful tips, families may lessen the stress of the holiday season and make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved. The following tips were developed with input from the Autism Society, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, Easter Seals Crossroads, the Sonya Ansari Center for Autism at Logan and the Indiana Autism Leadership Network..

**1. Preparation is crucial for many individuals.** At the same time, it is important to determine how much preparation a specific person may need. For example, if your son or daughter has a tendency to become anxious when anticipating an event that is to occur in the future, you may want to adjust how many days in advance you prepare him or her. Preparation can occur in various ways by using a calendar and marking the dates of various holiday events, or by creating a social story that highlights what will happen at a given event.

**2. Decorations around the house may be disruptive for some.** It may be helpful to revisit pictures from previous holidays that show decorations in the house. If such a photo book does not exist, use this holiday season to create one. For some it may also be helpful to take them shopping with you for holiday decorations so that they are engaged in the process. Or involve them in the process of decorating the house. And once holiday decorations have been put up, you may need to create rules about those that can and cannot be touched. Be direct, specific and consistent.

**3. If a person with autism has difficulty with change, you may want to gradually decorate the house.** For example, on the first day, put up the Christmas tree, then on the next day, decorate the tree and so on. And again, engage them as much as possible in this process. It may be helpful to develop a visual schedule or calendar that shows what will be done on each day.

**4. If a person with autism begins to obsess about a particular gift or item they want, it may be helpful to be specific and direct about the number of times they can mention the gift.** One suggestion is to give them five chips. They are allowed to exchange one chip for five minutes of talking about the desired gift. Also, if you have no intention of purchasing a specific item, it serves no purpose to tell them that maybe they will get the gift. This will only lead to problems in the future. Always choose to be direct and specific about your intentions.

**5. Teach them how to leave a situation and/or how to access support when an event becomes overwhelming.** For example, if you are having visitors, have a space set aside for the child as his/her safe/calm space. The individual should be taught ahead of time that they should go to their space when feeling overwhelmed. This self-management tool will serve the individual into adulthood. For those who are not at that level of self-management, develop a signal or cue for them to show when they are getting anxious, and prompt them to use the space. For individuals with more significant challenges, practice using this space in a calm manner at various times prior to your guests' arrival. Take them into the room and engage them in calming activities (e.g., play soft music, rub his/her back, turn down the lights, etc.). Then when you notice the individual becoming anxious, calmly remove him/her from the anxiety-provoking setting immediately and take him/her into the calming environment.

## **12 Tips for Helping People with Autism and Their Families Have a Happy Holiday (Continued)**

- 6. If you are traveling for the holidays, make sure you have their favorite foods or items available.** Having familiar items readily available can help to calm stressful situations. Also, prepare them via social stories or other communication systems for any unexpected delays in travel. If you are flying for the first time, it may be helpful to bring the individual to the airport in advance and help him/her to become accustomed to airports and planes. Use social stories and pictures to rehearse what will happen when boarding and flying.
- 7. Know your loved one with autism and how much noise and activity they can tolerate.** If you detect that a situation may be becoming overwhelming, help them find a quiet area in which to regroup. And there may be some situations that you simply avoid (e.g., crowded shopping malls the day after Thanksgiving).
- 8. Prepare a photo album in advance of the relatives and other guests who will be visiting during the holidays.** Allow the person with autism access to these photos at all times and also go through the photo album with him/her while talking briefly about each family member.
- 9. Practice opening gifts, taking turns and waiting for others, and giving gifts.** Role play scenarios with your child in preparation for him/her getting a gift they do not want. Talk through this process to avoid embarrassing moments with family members. You might also choose to practice certain religious rituals. Work with a speech language pathologist to construct pages of vocabulary or topic boards that relate to the holidays and family traditions.
- 10. Prepare family members for strategies to use to minimize anxiety or behavioral incidents, and to enhance participation.** Help them to understand if the person with autism prefers to be hugged or not, needs calm discussions or provide other suggestions that will facilitate a smoother holiday season.
- 11. If the person with autism is on special diet, make sure there is food available that he/she can eat.** And even if they are not on a special diet, be cautious of the amount of sugar consumed. And try to maintain a sleep and meal routine.
- 12. Above all, know your loved one with autism.** Know how much noise and other sensory input they can take. Know their level of anxiety and the amount of preparation it may take. Know their fears and those things that will make the season more enjoyable for them.

Don't stress. Plan in advance. And most of all have a wonderful holiday season!

SOURCE: [http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=holiday\\_tips](http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=holiday_tips)

## Parent 2 Parent Advice: Tips on Surviving the holidays

We recently asked our community on the ASN Listserv for some pointers on how they survive the holidays. Here were some of their responses.

- Try not to get carried away with the presents and let your family know that your child may not respond like they expect to their gifts. Our son doesn't really know what to do with the new toy until we help him explore and learn how to play with it. We've had family disappointed because he didn't respond how they thought he should to their gifts. Don't let that get you down!
- If surprises (or the unexpected) are a problem for your child tell him what is in the present before he opens it. You'd be surprise how much more exciting it is for them to open the present when they already know what is in it!
- Send out a short note or email to everyone you will be with during the holidays explaining your family's unique needs. Let them know that you are excited to see them but that this time of year is challenging and you may need to set aside some one on one time with them rather than catching up during a large gathering.
- Set a schedule and STICK TO IT! Family meals always fall behind schedule. If the family expects to eat at 2pm than make a schedule out for your child so he knows what to expect. Explain to him that today's Thanksgiving meal is at 2pm. What if the turkey isn't done at 2pm? You let your child eat at 2pm. You make them a plate with the food that is ready and get them started. Do not make them wait!
- If traveling...take as many comforts from home as you can. A blanket, a pillow, a favorite movie. Now is not the time to worry about too much time on the Nintendo DS. If they find it calming...bring it!
- Keep gatherings small. It may be a pain because it means more gatherings if you want to see everyone but. . .in the long run its better for your child. We only go to familiar homes or have everyone here.

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### Help us make this Newsgram relevant to you!

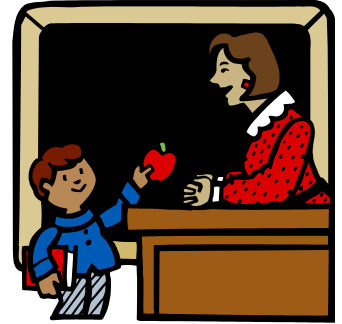
We rely on our community to help us find useful information to share with you through this Newsgram. If you have an event that you would like added to the Autism Society of Nebraska Newsgram please email us at [autismsocietynewsgram@autismnebraska.org](mailto:autismsocietynewsgram@autismnebraska.org).

You are our eyes and ears across the state. Please help us help you AND your neighbors by sharing your resources and contacts with us!



## Friend of Autism Nominations Sought by ASD

Do you know an educator who demonstrates remarkable dedication to individuals with autism spectrum disorders? Nominate them for the ASD Network Friend of Autism Award. Submissions should include details of how the nominee exhibits the following qualities.



**Commitment:** Has the education of families and children and youth with ASD as a primary focus and provides opportunities that enable students with ASD to reach their potential.

**Vision:** Sees potential in all individuals, readily adapts to change and accepts all individuals with ASD and their strengths and needs.

**Innovation:** Is aware of empirically supported practices in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders and shows a willingness to adapt and use resources creatively.

**Inspiration:** Displays positive interactions with students and parents and actively influences peers with their energy and enthusiasm.

Please include contact information for the nominee and the person(s) submitting the nomination. Nominations can be submitted via email: to Annette Wragge at [awragge2@unl.edu](mailto:awragge2@unl.edu), or by mail to the following address: Annette Wragge, UNL, 253F Barkley Center, Lincoln, NE 68583-0738

\*Nomination Deadline: March 1st, 2011

\*The award will be presented during the evening event at the 2011 ASD State Conference on April 7th and 8th. (Embassy Suites, La Vista)

Please contact Annette with any questions!

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**It takes a village to raise a child and we truly have to rely on all of the villagers when it comes to our special needs children!**



**Thank you to all of the professionals out there helping serve our families!**

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Join the Autism Society of Nebraska on Facebook!  
Become a Fan...click [HERE!](#)

Please help us complete our list of resources by forwarding any ASD friendly events to [AutismSocietyNewsgram@autismnebraska.org](mailto:AutismSocietyNewsgram@autismnebraska.org)

To have your event added to the Autism Society Newsgram and calendar please email [AutismSocietyNewsgram@autismnebraska.org](mailto:AutismSocietyNewsgram@autismnebraska.org) or you can post it directly to our calendar at [www.autismnebraska.org](http://www.autismnebraska.org). Please be aware that it may take 24 hours for your event to appear on the site.

**Autism Society of Nebraska**

PO Box 83559  
Lincoln, NE 68501-3559

Phone: 1-800-580-9279  
E-mail: [autismsociety@autismnebraska.org](mailto:autismsociety@autismnebraska.org)

We appreciate your help including our statewide community events! Please help us help you AND your neighbors!



All information on this Newsgram is also available by visiting our web site at [www.autismnebraska.org](http://www.autismnebraska.org)