

# **AUTISM SOCIETY**

*Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism*

*Nebraska*

JUNE 20, 2011

NEWSGRAM

**A community is like a ship: everyone should be prepared to take the helm.**

—Henrik Ibsen



## **ADVOCACY IN ACTION**

Check out the AWESOME parade float the North Platte group put together for this weekend's Nebraskaland days! **GREAT JOB!**



Dear Autism Society,

I am confused by all of the acronyms in our community. AAP, ACN, AFN, ASN, ASD NETWORK to name a few. Everywhere I turn there is another acronym. It is so confusing! Can you explain to me who everyone is?

Confused in your community

Dear confused,

We totally understand what you are saying! Everywhere you turn there is another name or acronym to figure out. Let's start first with a Who's Who in the Nebraska autism community—particularly all those 'A' organizations! Here are a few tidbits to help you differentiate. It might also help to browse their websites.

But most importantly just remember that we are all out here working to help you and your family—no matter what letters make up our name!

Sincerely The Autism Society of Nebraska

#### ***A A P—Autism Action Partnership*** ([www.autismaction.org](http://www.autismaction.org))

When each of their two boys were diagnosed with autism, Gail Werner-Robertson and her husband Scott searched for support and did not know where to turn. In 2000 they established the GWR Sunshine Foundation. At that time, the state of Nebraska ranked as low as 48th in the availability of autism-related services. In June 2008, they re-created themselves as a public foundation and became known as the Autism Action Partnership.

Autism Action Partnership's mission statement is "to improve the quality of life of persons on the Autism Spectrum and their families through education, advocacy and support, thereby enabling them to be an integral part of the community." AAP led the charge on the Nebraska Autism Waiver and is currently taking the lead as Nebraska pushes for an insurance mandate. They also host an Autism Summit each fall with a full schedule of national and local speakers.

#### ***A C N—Autism Center of Nebraska*** ([www.ACNomaha.org](http://www.ACNomaha.org))

ACN is a non profit agency that is certified as a developmental disabilities provider by the state of Nebraska. Individuals eligible for state services may chose to have some or all of their state authorized services provided by ACN. Teaching programs address sensorimotor, communication, cognitive, social, independent living, leisure as well as personal needs. ACN offers In-Home Residential supports, Extended Family Homes as well as traditional residential services (group homes). ACN also provides vocational and transition needs.

#### ***A F N - Autism Family Network*** (<http://www.autismaction.org/afn/>)

The Autism Family Network is a volunteer run non profit organization located in Lincoln that was created in 2006. The mission of the Autism Family Network is to create meaningful relationships among the parents and children with autism. They host fun family events as well as sponsoring guest speakers on various autism topics.

A S N—Autism Society of Nebraska ([www.autismnebraska.org](http://www.autismnebraska.org))

The Autism Society of Nebraska is a state chapter of the Autism Society of America. ASA has the distinction of being the oldest and largest grassroots autism organization and our Nebraska chapter has been led by volunteers for over 35 years.

The Autism Society is a non profit organization whose leadership comes from the volunteer efforts of family members and working professionals. Our governing board has members from various communities across Nebraska. And although we are part of a national organization, we are able to keep 100% of all local fundraising dollars here in Nebraska to help serve our local mission.

That local mission is to “improve the lives of all affected by autism”. Our focus is to provide support for families and ultimately increase the public awareness of autism spectrum disorders. The Autism Society funds and helps maintain support groups in several cities across Nebraska and supervises an online support network. Our email Newsgram is created with the goal of helping our community stay informed and aware of all of the services that are out there to help their families. We also work with the ASD Network to provide a parent focus within the Nebraska State Autism Conference every April. Another important investment in our community is our Supporting Our Families scholarship designed to help families attend conferences and meet some of their other financial needs.

Each April, the Autism Society hosts the Puzzle Walk which is the primary fundraiser to support all initiatives for the next calendar year. Those funds help carryout out the state wide initiatives as well as help the various support group volunteers come together and create fun family events in their particular communities.

A S D Network—Autism Spectrum Disorders Network ([www.unl.edu/asdnetwork](http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork))

In order to keep up with the increasing rates of autism in Nebraska schools, the Nebraska Department of Education created the ASD Network. Five ASD Regions have been established in order to better serve their regional needs. See the map [HERE](#).

School districts may contact their Regional Coordinator for consultation in planning and supporting their students with autism. The goals of the Nebraska ASD Network are to:

- build and enhance the capacity of Nebraska schools and families in supporting children across the autism disorders spectrum.
- Provide training and technical assistance to Nebraska educators in providing appropriate services to students across the autism spectrum from birth to age 21

In April the ASD Network hosts the Nebraska State Autism conference with a jam packed schedule of local and national speakers. (The Autism Society has a long standing partnership and helps support this conference.)

## **OMAHA: NO SUPPORT GROUP / BOUNCE NIGHT IN JULY**

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: All Autism Families  
WHEN: **Monday, August 1, 2011**  
6:00pm - 8:00pm  
WHERE: Pump It Up 960 S 72nd (72nd and Pacific)  
COST: \$5 per child (\$10 maximum charge per family)

Due to the summer break we will not have as many UNO helpers on site to supervise the bounce rooms. Therefore we will not be having our separate break out room for support group. However the Autism Society - Omaha Support Group will still be hosting an autism-friendly Bounce Night where families can come and play together!

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## **OMAHA: Biomedical Discussion Group**

The Biomedical Discussion group meets the third Thursday of each month 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 [chrissycameron@cox.net](mailto:chrissycameron@cox.net) or Karen Falconer Al-Hindi [karen.alhindi@gmail.com](mailto:karen.alhindi@gmail.com) for more information.

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## **OMAHA: Join us for Storm Chaser Baseball!**

The Autism Society of Nebraska - Omaha Support Group is planning a trip to the ball diamond and we'd love to have you join us!

Sunday, July 17, 2011

Game Time 2:05pm

Location: Werner Park, 12356 Ballpark Way, Papillion, NE

\$7 Reserved Seat Tickets for families & Friends of the Autism Society of Nebraska

\$5 Add a Hot dog and Pop

Please download a registration form [HERE](#). (Deadline to register is July 5!)



## OMAHA: Pool Party and Barbecue

Come join the Autism Society of Nebraska Omaha Support Group for their annual Pool Party and Barbecue! Come swim, play, and enjoy lunch at this private pool party. The pool is heated, life guards are on duty (and friendly), and the grills will be fired up for hotdogs and hamburgers. (GF/CF and conventional picnic fare will be available)

Visit [www.maplevillagecountryclub.org](http://www.maplevillagecountryclub.org) for more information about the pool.

10:00 - 11:30 Swimming (10:50 safety break)

11:30 - 12:30 Food and Games

(Please note that we will not be able to return to the pool after 11:30am)



Please e-mail Karen Al-Hindi ([karen.alhindi@gmail.com](mailto:karen.alhindi@gmail.com)) with any questions of if you'd like to volunteer with the barbecue!

You must RSVP online [HERE](#) before Thursday, July 28th or by emailing Karen Al Hindi at [karen.alhindi@gmail.com](mailto:karen.alhindi@gmail.com)

**\*\*Safety is important to us! Please be sure you are able to provide proper supervision of your own children. Feel free to bring extra adults to help chaperone your family. All children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.\*\***

# OMAHA: Fire Safety Day

Join us for the 2011 Fire Safety Day sponsored by the **Bellevue Fire Department**  
and designed just for our families!

Sunday, August 7, 2011

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Bellevue Fire Department Training Site - 3100 Cornhusker Road

Come see a

- rollover car simulator demonstration and witness the importance of seatbelts
- witness real firemen put out a real fire
- visit with a friendly firefighter in full uniform
- explore the smoke trailer and you can even practice safely climbing out the window
- learn about 911 and even practice making a real call and answering questions to the dispatcher
- learn all about fire extinguishers
- learn about first aid and see the inside of an ambulance
- ride on an old fashioned fire engine
- learn about bike safety and even practice on our safety course
- wear your swimsuit as we have lots of water games!

RSVP required! Adult must accompany the child. Click [HERE](#) to register!

This event is hosted by the Bellevue Fire Department and co-sponsored by the Autism Society of Nebraska Omaha Support Group and the Ollie Webb Center.



## **GRAND ISLAND: Camp for Autism**

The Grand Island Support group is hosting a "Camp for Autism" on June 25 at Timberlake Camp near Central City. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. This is for individuals on the spectrum ages 5 yrs. - 18 yrs. There will be activities including hayrack rides, crafts, hiking, etc. Contact Roxanne Vipond at (308) 385-5655 with questions.

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## **GRAND ISLAND: Save the Date!**

July 10, 2011 PICNIC

August 14, 2011 POOL PARTY

More information to follow!

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## **NORFOLK: Family Party**

The Norfolk Support Group will be having a family party at Ta-Ha-Zouka Park (just south of Norfolk on Highway 81) on Sunday July 31. They will start at 2:00 and meet by the new playground equipment. They will have snacks and drinks and visit while the kids play. The support group will provide the refreshments. GFCF options will be available.

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## **OMAHA: Step by Step Dance Class**

Step By Step is a Movement/Dance Class for Kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Come and dance in a fun, safe, class! They'll stretch their bodies, work general coordination and even do fun acting and creative movement to fun music in a sensory safe environment!

Come learn some basics to ballet, tap or even hip hop! The class is designed for ASD students needing extra help with motor skills, or have trouble assimilating with peers in other dance classes, or just want to have fun. And this is open to both BOYS and GIRLS!

The Broadway Connection Dance Center is located at 2329 N. 90th St. (90th & Blondo next to Hobby Lobby)

June 11—July 30  
Saturdays 8-9am

Instructor: Sue Booton plus additional community volunteers  
\$35/ month (you may participate in one month or two)

\*\*tuition is the same whether there are 3, 4, or 5 week classes.

For more information call 402-571-4446 or visit [www.thebroadwayconnectiondance.com](http://www.thebroadwayconnectiondance.com)

## Munroe Meyer iPad lending library

The Munroe Meyer speech department in partnership with Autism Action Partnership has created an iPad and iPod lending library. The purpose behind this library is to provide families affected by ASD the opportunity to try iPads and iPods as communication devices before they go to the expense of purchasing their own.

If you have a family member or know a family who may benefit from this program, please have them contact Jennifer Brock at 402-559-6460 to set up a screening. During the screen, the family will have the opportunity to try the iPad or iPod as well as several communication applications and accessories. If one of the devices is deemed as a viable option for the child, they will set up a 30 day loan of the device and the appropriate application.

During the 30 days the family will be required for 2 follow up/training sessions. One will be scheduled midway through the trial and the other will be scheduled for the end of the trial period. During the last scheduled session, we will determine if the trial was a success and will begin the process of securing funding (insurance, grants or private pay options).

Munroe Meyer Speech Department  
Jennifer Brock [jbrock@unmc.edu](mailto:jbrock@unmc.edu)  
1-402-559-6460

## WrightsLaw Boot Camp

Providing advocacy training for parents of children with special needs  
Sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association for Families

July 29 - 30, 2011  
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Scottish Rite Temple  
332 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68508

[Click here for more information or to REGISTER!](#)

All children qualifying for special education services are required to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP specifies the special education and related services necessary to ensure the child a free appropriate public education. The IEP process can be overwhelming for parents due to complex federal laws and regulations. DSAF is hosting an intensive, two-day Wrightslaw training on special education and advocacy.

If you are a parent or guardian of a child receiving special education services, or a professional wanting to better serve kids with disabilities, you don't want to miss this 2-day training!

Participants will learn about:

- special education statutes and regulations to get answers to their questions
- tests and measurements to measure educational progress
- charting out test scores
- writing SMART IEP goals and objectives
- using No Child Left Behind as a tool to open doors to services
- creating paper trails and writing effective letters
- advocacy strategies to negotiate for appropriate special educational programs

## **KEARNEY: Kearney Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program**

The Kearney Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program (KTHRP) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering emotional, physical and social well-being through horseback riding.

Since 2010, the Kearney Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program has served the local community as an independent, service organization. The program operates during the warm weather months and serves a wide range of children and adults with disabilities. The program is lead by two certified instructors with over 25 years of combined experience. Instructors are certified in either NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association), CHA (Certified Horsemanship Association) or both.

In addition to specializing in therapeutic riding for individuals seeking specific physical, social and emotional gains, KTHRP also offers general horseback riding lessons to all individuals seeking the benefits and enjoyment available through horseback riding.

Learn more at their web site at [www.kthrp.com](http://www.kthrp.com)

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## **OMAHA: HETRA Summer Camp**

Learn all about Horses and the HETRA Summer Camp!  
(HETRA = Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy)

Dates and Locations:

Valley Day Camp: July 11 - 15, 2011  
Omaha Day Camp: July 18 - 22, 2011  
Advanced Riding Camp at Valley Barn: July 25-29, 2011

Hours: 9am - 11am

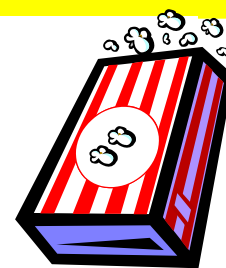
Cost: \$200 for 5 days or \$50 per day

\*\*Students must have previous riding lessons and ability to walk and trot independently

Download a flyer [HERE](#).

## 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.

### Cars 2

**Saturday, July 2**

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

### Upcoming Showings:

**July 23, 2011 - Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows, Part 2**

**August, 6, 2011—Smurfs**

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!

# 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. 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](#).

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

## ASA's Options Policy:

The Autism Society promotes the active and informed involvement of family members and the individual with autism in the planning of individualized, appropriate services and supports. We believe that each family and individual with autism should have the right to learn about and then select the options that they feel are most appropriate for them.

No single type of program will fill the needs of every individual with autism.

Our goal at the Autism Society is to help YOU be educated and informed about your various options.

[Click here to read the full Options Policy!](#)



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



## 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!



To have your event added to the Autism Society Newsgram and calendar please email [autismsociety@autismnebraska.org](mailto:autismsociety@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**

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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)