

Autism Society Acadiana Newsletter - July 2013

Welcome to our new newsletter for Autism Society Acadiana! In an effort to keep you more informed, we are changing not only the look of the newsletter but also the frequency of its distribution.

Look for a link to the newsletter to be sent via email on a monthly basis to your inbox if you have signed up for Autism Society Acadiana's email list. By issuing the newsletter on a more frequent basis we hope to keep you as current and as up-to-date as possible on what is planned and scheduled so there are no missed opportunities.

If you haven't signed up yet, you may do so by texting

"AcadianaAutism" to 22825. You can also subscribe to our email list by click on "Join My List" on our Facebook page. We are listed on Facebook as "Autism Society of Acadiana".

The membership form is on our website as well, www.AcadianaAutism.org. You can download and print the form, located under the Get Involved tab on the home page. You can send the form to us by fax, 337-235-4427, or by using our email address, contact@AcadianaAutism.org, or send via postal mail to: Autism Society Acadiana, 3108 West Pinhook Road, Suite 101, Lafayette, LA 70508. Or, simply contact our office and we can sign you up for the list

over the phone. We use email and social media as our main means of communication with our members and the public in an effort to hold down costs and to "be green". We can be found on Twitter @Autism_Soc_Acad.

Our website has a monthly calendar of events listed on our home page. Please visit our site often to learn what we have to offer as well as what is available with other organizations as we also publicize what is sent to us to be shared with others.

If you have any questions, please contact us! We look forward to hearing from you!

July 2013 Issue

Vickie Nettles, Editor
Jannel Moore, Co-editor

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Autism Awareness and Safety Presentations for Professionals and Families

Autism Society Acadiana, presents a nationally-known speaker, Mr. Dennis Debbaudt, is an author and co-author of over 30 articles and books since 1993, including Autism, Advocates, and Law Enforcement Professionals: Recognizing and Reducing Risk Situations for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and articles for the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (April 2001). Debbaudt Legacy Production's training video, "Autism & Law Enforcement Roll Call Briefing Video" is in use by the Department of Homeland Security and hundreds of agencies nationwide.

In collaboration with Lafayette City Police Department, Autism Society Acadiana is sponsoring a **FREE** autism training seminar for law enforcement officers and first responders at The Clifton Chenier Center Auditorium, Bldg. C, 220 West Willow St., Lafayette, LA 70501, July 18, 2013 from 8:00 AM - 12:00 noon. To register for this training or for more information, departments and agencies can contact Autism Society Acadiana, via email, Contact@AcadianaAutism.org, or by phone at 337-235-4425.

Also, on July 18th in the evening, Mr. Debbaudt will present autism safety information **FREE** to parents, family members and the general public at South Regional Library in Lafayette from 6:00 - 8:00 PM. All those interested, please register through EventBrite, at <http://acadianautism-es2.eventbrite.com/?rank=1#>.

Dr. Ball is Coming Back to Lafayette!

Dr. Jim Ball, Chair of the Board of Directors for Autism Society of America, will present information on the topic of **hands on strategies to employ when working with individuals who have autism spectrum disorders** on July 16th and on August 22. Both presentations will be at South Regional Library, Lafayette from 6:00 - 8:00 PM. Dr. Ball, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral, is the President/Chief Executive Officer of JB Autism Consulting. He has been in the field of autism for over twenty-five years providing behavioral, educational, residential, and employment services to children and adults affected by autism. Dr. Jim Ball is a very engaging speaker and is the author of Early Intervention and Autism: Real-life Questions, Real-life Answers among many other publications in the field of autism.



This is a DON'T MISS presentation!! Contact our office with any questions. We will see you there!

2013 Walk for Hope, written by Jannel Moore



The 7th Annual Walk For Hope was a day filled with autism awareness, coupled with lots of fun. It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining, accompanied by a nice breeze. For all who had the opportunity to attend, it seemed that the rain held out just for our families. Fun jumps, a rock wall, building kits, face painting, a picture-taking booth, carnival games, and a video gaming center were just a few of the attractions at the event.

We would like to thank our 2013 Walk Media Sponsors who helped with promoting and publicizing the event: BIG 102.1, Bayou 106.7, and FACE Magazine. Our Platinum Sponsors included S.P.I.C.E, an employee giving program of Opelousas General, Sertoma of Lafayette, and Walmart, Eunice. Silver Sponsors were: Acadian Ambulance/Safety Management Systems; Cetco Oilfield Services; Evangeline

Downs Racetrack and Casino; Facilities Consulting Group; Gachassin Law Firm; Iberia Bank; Joslyn McCoy, PhD., BCBA-D; Family Behavioral Health; M. A. Patout and Sons, Limited, L.L.C.; Marathon Oil; and Pediatric Therapy and Learning Center. Bronze Sponsors were: Arthur C. LeBlanc, Jr., CPL and Associates, Inc.; Danos; Donna Aucoin, PhD., M.P. for Aucoin and Associates; Frank's Casing Crew; Home Bank; Alesi's Pizza House; Lafayette Locksmith; LaJaunie Consultants; Our Lady of Lourdes; Ray Chevrolet, Inc.; and Walgreen's. Autism Angels included: Iberia Medical Center; Johnson's Boucaniere; Judice and Adley, A Professional Law Corporation and the Swamp Scooters.

Special guest, Sarah Montgomery, thrilled the kids who lined up to take photos with Sarah and her race car near the stage. Thank you to Sarah and the Montgomery Racing Team for their support!

Our Vendor Sponsors were: Acadiana Bottling, Inc.; Action Krewe Civitan Club; AT&T Pioneers; Cabot Cheese; Du-

hon's Fun Jumps; Kergan Brothers/Sonic Drive-In; LAMAR; Piggly Wiggly, Mamou, Sertoma of Lafayette members, Jim Richard with Goodwill, and Vance Lanier with Raymond James.

The T-shirt competition was a new addition this year and the participating teams submitted pretty awesome designs. The judges were: Tracy Wirtz, KATC; Flint Zeringue, FACE Magazine; Sarah Montgomery, local race car driver; Hoss from Bayou 106.7; and Shawn Murphy from Big 102.1. This year's 1st Place Winner was Ethan's Encouragers. Next year may be your team's year to shine, so begin working on your team's shirts early!

Thanks to all the Autism Society Acadiana's community sponsors, dedicated members and supporters, we raised a total of \$80,000. With the Walk proceeds, we will continue to give back and provide information and support to families affected by autism spectrum disorders.

A HUGE thank you also to all of the UL volunteers, Walmart

employees, Landmark Church, and the other groups who so generously gave of their time in helping us put on this huge event.

A special thanks to all of the vendors, our community supporters, donors, and volunteers, who continue to make the walk a success year after year. We truly could not have our Walk without all of your help and support!

The annual Walk for Hope and Family Fun Day event is a day where our kids get to be kids and the families can join in the fun in a stress-free and non-judgmental atmosphere. So until next year, KEEP HOPE ALIVE!



More photos can be found in the albums on our facebook page, under Autism Society of Acadiana!

Gear up for Autism and Awareness Celebration

The 2nd Annual Gear Up for Autism Car Show held in conjunction with the annual Autism Celebration in Kaplan was a great event for the city and Vermilion Parish! The two events were held once again at Turnley Park and included fun jumps for the kids, face painting, lots of wonderful music with The Babineaux Sister and Cajun Heat, great tasting food and beverages, and event t-shirts were available for purchase. The Farmer's Market, which was held on the same weekend, offered local items for sale. Founders and organizers, Lori and Jerry Touchet with Kirk and Krystal Moss, along with Autism Society Acadiana, sponsored a day of family fun for all. Thank you to the event sponsors and volunteers! (More photos can be found on our Facebook page!)



DID YOU KNOW? - OCDD has been Renamed Acadiana Area Human Services District

As of July 1, 2012, the Region IV Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities is technically no longer an office within the Department of Health and Hospitals. The agency formerly named OCDD, has joined with the agency that was previously named the DHH/Office of Behavioral Health, to become the Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD). Please be assured

however, that operational policies and procedures, including supports and services, will not change.

Region IV is the 6th DHH region which has shifted to a local administrative operation, generally known as a Local Government Entity (LGE). The LGE's are governed by a local board of directors; in the case of AAHSD, a board member is appointed from each of the

seven parishes by parish government, and three members are appointed by the governor, making up a ten-member board. The board in turn hires an executive director who serves as chief executive officer. The LGE operates via a Memorandum of Understanding with DHH, however, the LGE model allows for more local autonomy relative to decision-making and funding.

The executive director of the AAHSD is Mr. Brad Farmer. Notices of board meetings are posted in each AAHSD office and clinic, however if you have questions about the AAHSD board meetings or any general questions about AAHSD, please feel free to contact Mr. Richard Landry at 337-262-5610 or 1-800-648-1484.

How to Access Services and Programs of Acadiana Human Services District

By Richard Landry, Director

Access to supports, including a determination as to whether a person meets criteria as having a developmental disability, through the Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD) is accomplished through participation in the Entry Process. For the Region IV office, which serves the parishes of Acadia, Vermilion, Lafayette, St. Martin, Iberia, St. Landry, and Evangeline, the contact information is 337-262-5610 or 1-800-648-1484. Acadiana Area Human Services District is located at 214 Jefferson Street, Suite 301, Lafayette, LA, 70501.

Typically, the Entry process begins with a phone call to the office requesting Entry services and/or supports and services. During this phone call, initial

identifying and demographic information is obtained, as well as some information as to the person's disability. An appointment is arranged for an Entry interview, either at the office or an alternative location if transportation is a hardship. The person/family who will attend the interview is encouraged to bring existing evaluative information if available, such as, but not limited to, school evaluations or medical information.

During the interview, information is provided regarding potential supports and services and required documents are completed. A brief assessment is administered regarding the person's daily adaptive functioning. After the interview, available evaluative informa-

tion is reviewed and if there is sufficient information to determine if the person meets criteria, a decision is rendered. If current information is not sufficient, the Acadiana Area Human Services District office staff will work with the person/family to arrange further evaluation.

After thorough review of all evaluative information, if the person meets criteria as having a developmental disability, a Statement of Approval is issued to the person. At that point, the person's name is submitted to registries for the supports requested, and planning for immediate supports begins if initial assessments indicate that there is a current need for immediate supports. If the person is determined to not meet crite-

ria, a Statement of Denial is issued. If the person disagrees with this Statement of Denial decision, he/she has thirty(30) days to appeal this decision. If appealed, a hearing is held with an Administrative Law Judge through the Division of Administration appeals section.

****Note:** Families should feel free to contact the regional Acadiana Area Human Services District (formerly Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, OCDD) at (337)262-5610 with any questions or concerns.

Autism Society Acadiana is on Facebook!

If you are into social networking, join Facebook and "Like" Autism Society of Acadiana!!

We post information on our events and activities and also "share" good info we find or that other people send or "share" with us. We have over 4,150 "Likes"! Thank you ALL for your support! We want YOU to "Like" us, too!!



*Thank you to the **Cajun Jeepers** who held a fundraiser to benefit Autism Society Acadiana on April 16 at Cajun Harley Davidson in Lafayette. The Chili Cook-off and Jeep Show and Shine with both a live and silent auction raised a little over \$3,000 for our organization! Thank you so much, Cajun Jeepers, for your support!!*

Spotlight on Our Support Groups

Kids Club, previously known as the Play Date group, provides monthly activities for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families, between the ages of 5 and 13. For more information on upcoming activities, you may contact the group's facilitator, Suzie Hargroder, via email at: VPsupportGroups@AcadianaAutism.org, or by phone, in evenings, at (337)212-0633, or contact Co-Facilitator, Kristen Melancon, at kristenpm@gmail.com. Kids Club activities are posted on the calendar located on the home page of our website at www.AcadianaAutism.org.

We offer two **Sibling Groups**, Jr. STARS, for ages 7-11 and STARS (Siblings Talking About Real Stuff) for the older siblings, ages 12-16. Check the Autism Society, Acadiana website for details on meetings or activities or contact the facilitators, Kathy Chachere for Jr STARS, via email at davidkathy1@cox.net, or for STARS, contact Vickie Brignac, via email at vjmbvickie@aol.com or Janice Moss, via email at President@AcadianaAutism.org.

We also have a **Men's Group** (formerly known as "Just Dads") for all guys who are involved in the life of a person with autism. This group includes dads, stepdads, older brothers, uncles, cousins, grandfathers, friends, etc. The Men's Group will share ideas and help provide volunteers for Autism Society Acadiana events and activities when possible. The facilitator is Jim Nobles, who has a daughter with autism. Jim can be reached via email at jim-nobles77@gmail.com, by cell, 337-739-1506, or on Facebook. Check the website calendar for meetings and activities. Thank you Jim for stepping up to lead this group just for the guys!

A support group for **Evangeline Parish** through Autism Society Acadiana was officially reestablished with the first meeting held on Feb 19 in Ville Platte at the Rendezvous Dinner Club at 6:30 pm. This restaurant was previously operated as The Jungle Room. The group's facilitator, Jamie Tate Johnson, is the sibling to a brother with autism who unfortunately passed away 3 years ago. Jamie hopes to use her personal experiences to serve families affected by autism in her local area. This support group will meet every other month. You can "Like" the facebook page for this group which is listed as Autism Society of Acadiana, Evangeline Parish. Jamie can also be reached via email at: jjohnson8410@live.com

Another group we have reestablished, is a support group for **Acadia Parish**. Liz Alleman, a parent of a young boy with autism, is excited to be the group's facilitator. Liz will be working with others in her area, helping to spread autism awareness and bringing word of our services and programs, events and activities, to her local community. The group will held its first meeting with Liz as facilitator on Feb 27th at Mr. Gatti's in Crowley on North Parkerson at 6:30 pm. This support group will meet every other month. You can reach Liz via email at: lizalleman@cox.net. We look forward to seeing all of our families in Acadia Parish at the meetings! The Acadia Parish group also has a facebook page and be found at "Autism Society Acadiana, Acadia Parish".

We have a new facilitator for our **Iberia/St. Martin Parish** group, Lacey Bourque. The group now meets at Dauterieve Hospital on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM. Lacey can be reached via email at babykicks03@gmail.com. The group also has a facebook page which can be found at: "Autism Society Acadiana, Iberia Parish".

There is a support group for parents to share information and resources for those who have older individuals on the autism spectrum. It is our **Adult Issues** in Autism group. The facilitator is Vickie Nettles who can be reached via email at: acadiana_autism@yahoo.com. Leslie Calligan, co-facilitator, can be reached via email at CJesusLovesMe@cox.net. This group meets every last Thursday of the month at Alesi's Pizza House on Johnston Street in Lafayette at 6:30 PM.

We still have our original support group for **Lafayette Parish** which meets on the first Tuesday of each month at Alesi's Pizza House in Lafayette at 6:30 PM. The facilitator is Jessica Theall. Jessica can be reached via email at thejes-

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"The Dance of Jim, Paul, Jason, and The Mustache Man", Submitted and Written by: Jim Nobles

July 18, 2012

Today, I made a delivery to an assisted living apartment complex in Lake Charles. As I pulled into the complex, I was listening to a song titled "The Mustache Man" by a group called Cake. Yes, of course, I was listening to it very loudly. While pulling up to the complex, I noticed an adult male on the right standing outside of his apartment who was looking at me smiling and strumming an air guitar.

He looks at me and says, "Good sounds. I like it." Then continues to rock out his air guitar. I said, "Yeah man, thanks. I like it too." I

then thought nothing of it and continued to make my delivery as planned. Upon my return from dropping off the delivery, I found two adult males standing outside near my van and dancing like they were at Downtown Alive in the middle of Festival International. I could tell that they were both special needs adults. One of them (Paul) clearly had Down Syndrome and the other (Jason) did express characteristics very similar to those of someone with mid- to high functioning autism spectrum disorder.

Paul's voice was riddled with a speech impediment usually seen in those with Down Syndrome. Paul pointed to Jason and said, "He likes

it. He only plays his guitar if he likes it." I looked at Jason and he stood there dancing from side-to-side, playing his imaginary air guitar and smiling. Then he said softly, "Good Sounds" and then smiled even bigger. I asked, "Do you like that? That's a band called Cake." I look back at Paul who I found was poppin' and lockin' to Cake's infectious grooves. I looked back at Jason who smiled and said, "Mmmm, Cake sounds good."

At this point I almost broke down. I couldn't take it anymore. I realized right then I had one of two choices. Either start crying my eyes out or DANCE!! So, we danced. And it was - Fantastic!

The song ended and I told the guys it was nice meeting them and that I had to go. Paul hugged me and then talked Jason into giving me a nice firm handshake.

As I drove away, I was so happy that 1) it was so hot and 2) that I was wearing sunglasses so the guys did not differentiate between the tears and sweat that were falling off my face.

Thank you, God. Thank you, Paul. Thank you, Jason. And thank you, Cake, for changing my afternoon from okay to great!



Upcoming Events

Community Art Therapy for Individuals with Disabilities

The St. Pierre Center for the Arts offers community art therapy sessions to individuals with developmental disabilities. Sessions are available on a first come, first serve basis so hurry and reserve your spot.

The cost is \$10 per each class offered and \$30 if Leading Health Care needs to provide an assistant. All artists are required to have an assistant.

*Please make checks payable to St. Pierre's Center for the Arts.

*Please give two (2) days' notice if Leading Health Care needs to provide an assistant.

*St. Pierre's will send out a quarterly schedule with dates and times of art therapy sessions.

*Please call in advance if artist is unable to attend the session.

*In consideration of fellow artists, please do not attend the session if artist is ill.

*Please refrain from bringing food or a drink, water is available.

*Please pay in advance as it holds your spot.

Please schedule in advance an orientation time/registration to meet with Program Director, Sarah Melancon. Ms. Melancon would like to meet the artist prior to the session and provide the opportunity for the artist to become comfortable with the facility.

Office hours are Monday -Thursday: 8:30am-4:30pm, and Fridays from 8:30am-4:00pm. To set up an orientation time/registration and to sign up for sessions you can contact Sarah via email at smelancon@lhcla.com.

Save the Date!

Annual Members Picnic
& Family Fun Day

October 5, 2013 Acadian Village
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Details coming soon!

Asperger Social Group Meeting

The next meeting/social gathering for older teens and young adults will be July 9, 2013 at Deano's on Bertrand in Lafayette at 6:30 pm.

For more information on this group, which also includes a separate parents meeting, please contact Francine Gardner via email at stuartgardner65@gmail.com or you may also contact Sandra Taylor via email at sandrataylorla@yahoo.com

Reminder - Voting for Board Members of Autism Society Acadiana

Your ballot with accompanying information will be mailed to soon. Please return the ballot to the office by the deadline!

FREE Annual Back to School Swim Party!

Open to All Members!

**August 11th Riverside Swim Club
420 Corona Drive, Lafayette,
6:30 - 9:30 PM**

Socialize and meet other families! Food provided, but please bring water or soft drinks, juices, etc. for your family. RSVPs are REQUIRED! If you would like to bring desserts (cookies, brownies, fruit trays, etc) to share with others please do so!

Please respond via the Facebook event or contact our office by phone, 337-235-4425 or you may also respond also via email to the office at: Contact@AcadianaAutism.org

Happy July 4th to All!



Kids Club Pool Party

July 20, 2013

Robicheaux Center

11:30 - 1:30 PM

This event is for individuals on the autism spectrum only, ages 5-13.

Hotdogs, chips, and bottled water provided. Kids are allowed to bring arm floaties and one pool toy. Parents must stay for the event and there is plenty of seating inside the facility. Contact Suzie Hargroder via email to [RSVP at VPsupportgroups@AcadianaAutism.org](mailto:RSVP@VPsupportgroups@AcadianaAutism.org)

FREE!

Family Fun Ice Skating Event

LA Ice Arena Carencro, LA

July 13, 2013

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Open to all members! Learn to ice-skate! Adaptive equipment will be available for kids who cannot ice skate. The facility will be closed to the public that day.

The concession stand will be open for all who work up and appetite.

Please contact the office by phone or email or reply on the Facebook event with number attending in your family so we can have an accurate headcount.

This looks to be tons of FUN! See you there!

Mark Your Calendar!

2013 Louisiana State Chapter Autism Conference

November 8-9, 2013 Kenner, LA

Please check Autism Society, Louisiana State Chapter's website at www.lastateautism.org for more details or call Ms. Pat Giamanco, Administrative Assistant, directly at 1-800-955-3760 for more information on the conference and the services offered by the state autism organization.

Registration forms are available at the Autism Society Acadiana office. You can pick a form up in person or request a form to be sent via email, fax or postal mail.

Spotlight on Achievement Will Return!!

Due to space constraints we have suspended the Spotlight on Achievement column until the next issue of the newsletter which will also give our members and readers extra time to consider submitting a write-up on their child for the next issue.

Please submit any recent accomplishment with a photo of your child to Contact@AcadianaAutism.org with "Spotlight" and your child's name in the subject line of the email by July 22, 2013.

*Autism Society Acadiana is **GOING GREEN!** Those on our email list will now receive notification via email when the newsletter is posted on our website. Send an email to: Contact@AcadianaAutism.org, or give us a call, (337)235-4425, in order to be added to the email list.*

Autism Society Acadiana Has a Lending Library

Books, DVDs, and periodicals are located in our lending library at our office and are available for checkout. You must be a member of our organization to check out materials from the lending library. Membership in our organization is free. Materials may be checked out for one (1) month and can be renewed if no one is waiting for them by contacting us via email or by placing a call to the office. View the items we have available on the website under the New to Autism tab or come in to browse our selection at your leisure. Don't forget we have children's books to entertain them while you browse or your children can play in the Toy Room!



Educational and Recreational STIPENDS

Autism Society Acadiana has expanded its Educational Stipend program which covers conference registration fees to also include financially assisting families in obtaining technology/assistive communication devices and therapeutic equipment up to \$300. There are updated guidelines in place for this program and our *Recreational Stipend Program that all our members need to review. Please see the documents on the home page of the Autism Society Acadiana website under the Get Involved Tab at www.AcadianaAutism.org. Scroll down to the middle of the page to click on Updated Stipend Guidelines and Updated Stipend Request Form. Please make sure all required documentation is attached to the stipend form before you send it in and allow up to 2-4 weeks for processing.

* Due to the popularity of the Recreational Stipend Program in the summertime & the limited funds we had available in this year's budget, the Recreational Stipend Program is maxed out for 2013. We urge all members to submit stipend request forms with required documentation to the Autism Society Acadiana office as soon as possible each year, as funds are only available on a first come, first serve basis.

Family Friendly Films at The Grand 16



Family Friendly Films is based on the Sensory Friendly Films project between affiliates of the national Autism Society and AMC theaters. The local program is a collaboration between Autism Society Acadiana and The Grand 16, Lafayette, with the support of Southern Theaters, LLC. The purpose of the program is to allow families to enjoy a movie experience together with their loved one who has autism. For some families, this is something they have never had the opportunity to experience.

The house lights are turned up and the speaker volume is lowered also. You are also allowed to move around in the theater if need. Outside snacks are allowed, due to dietary restrictions, and the concession stand is also open. Volunteers will be on hand to assist families as needed. Tickets are regular matinee price, usually \$7.75, unless otherwise indicated. The movies will be shown on the last Saturday of each month, at 10:00 am unless rescheduled due to a holiday or other conflict with the regularly scheduled date.

Upcoming movies (tentative dates & titles are subject to change): June 29 - Monsters University (G); July 27 - Turbo (PG); August 31 - Planes (G).

For any questions about this program, please contact Vickie at the Autism Society Acadiana office, (337)235-4425 or via email at Contact@AcadianaAutism.org.

Autism Awareness Merchandise

Visit the Autism Society Acadiana office at 3108 West Pinhook, Suite 101 in Lafayette to view the merchandise we have available including jewelry, men's hats, car flags, shoe tags, lanyards, shoelaces, ribbon magnets, our own fleur-de-lis magnets, and more!

