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Charitable Registration #

10691/3775/RR/0001

Our Mission Statement

To provide services and programs to families of children diagnosed within the Autism Spectrum Disorders to develop their child's behavioural, communication, and social skills, and to advocate for their ongoing needs.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

5th Annual "Rollin' for Risk"

Bowl-A-Thon - Sunday,

January 23, 2011



10th Annual "Rockin'

for Risk" 50s/60s/70s+ Dance -

Saturday, April 9, 2011

Children at Risk Annual Raffle

May/June 2011

Autism Community Annual

Family Picnic - June



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For those who know me, I am a person who believes in getting things done - in getting the best results from the best effort. This applies in my personal, business and charitable lives. I am proud to say that, as President of the Board for Children at Risk, this is a charity that also gets things done! Despite reduced funds from events and activities, less monies from donations, decreases in grants - Children at Risk STILL managed to provide direct services to over 140 children in groups and camps (and hundreds more with opportunities to attend hockey games, shows, etc.). To boot, we also sent a dozen kids to Walt Disney World for a day through the Dreams Take Flight!

I want to take this time to thank all those who helped Children at Risk through 2010 - many of you are parents, who also work hard to "get things done!" Many of you would finish your day job and show up at a Sens game to work the 50/50, canvas your neighbourhood with Raffle tickets and give up your valuable weekends to Volunteer for an event. We hope you can continue to support our "local" charity so that the charity can continue to "give-back" to you and your family!

I came across a poem that combined both Christmas and New Year wishes - essentially "getting it done" for both events that happen at this time of year - Enjoy!

Christmas New Year Wish

I made a Christmas wish for you, For a holiday full of pleasure,
Friends and family all around, And memories to treasure.
I wish for you a Christmas filled with joyous holiday cheer;
I wish you a Merry Christmas, And a very Happy New Year!

By Joanna Fuchs

Paul Lacroix, Children at Risk, Board Chair



Holiday Snowflake Party

Where: Dovercourt Community Centre
When: Sunday, December 5, 2-5 pm
Activities: Holiday music and a sing-a-long.
Face painting and craft activities.
Free photo with Santa.
Cost: Free to Autism Ontario and Children at Risk members.

RSVP by phone at 613-230-6305 x 22.

2010/2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Paul Lacroix
Treasurer.....	Lesia Gilbert
Secretary.....	Mark Lalonde
Director.....	Robert Jaffray
Director.....	Irma Boyle
Director.....	Hazel Smith

CHILDREN AT RISK 2010 REPORT ON SERVICES **

Social Skill Therapy (Friendship) Groups

(Based on sessions of 10 weeks, 1 ½ hours/wk)

Ages 4-6 years	15 children
Ages 7-8 years	4 children
Ages 9-11 years	20 children
Ages 12-13 years	8 children
Ages 14-16 years	11 children
Asperger "Typical Teens" (8 week session, 2 hrs/wk)	20 children
March Break & Summer Science Camps:	46 children
TOTAL:	124 children served

Sibling Support Workshop

2 Full-Day Session Ages 7-12	20 children served
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GRAND TOTAL OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING DIRECT SERVICES FROM CHILDREN AT RISK: 144

****In addition – we sent 12 children to Walt Disney
World through Dreams Take Flight in 2010!**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch

As I write this, many of us are preparing for the Winter, with cold weather, snow, shorter light-filled days...But Winter also brings skiing, skating, tobogganing, holidays, Winterlude, our Bowl-A-Thon and many more fun-filled activities and events! We also prepare to close out one Year and welcome in a New Year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE (Cont'd)

2010 has proven to be a year of challenge - a year of Pluses and Minuses. The Pluses included Event Ticket Donations of unprecedented amounts, with our Families having opportunities to attend Ottawa Senators and Ottawa 67's Hockey games, music concerts like Sting and Black-Eyed Peas, as well as NAC Orchestra performances, Family Cinema movies, Disney on Ice, Dog Whisperer, Comedy Gala to name a few. Unfortunately, the Minuses were reflected in significant reductions of income from our Fundraising Events and Activities – merely mirroring the depressed economy throughout the land. This reduction in funds necessitated some scaling back of services offered by Children at Risk, like the Social Skill Groups. While we hope this is only a temporary measure, we know that we cannot spend monies we do not have.

Children at Risk continues to apply for funding grants and is pleased to announce that 2 applications (Autism Speaks and The King's Daughters and Sons) have resulted in donations that will assist in expanding existing services (Typical Teens West End) and creating new services (Full-Day Summer Camps). We also added on many new fundraising events and activities in 2010 in an attempt to raise more funds. We are still examining all these ventures for feasibility, as we know that one side-effect of these efforts is a need for many more Volunteers – not the easiest thing for many of our Members with daily struggles raising children with ASD.

Many, many thanks to all those who have helped make 2010 memorable – our Members, Supporters, Donors, Volunteers, Partners and Friends. It requires tremendous effort and commitment to keep the doors open when you are a small, local charity that survives solely on fundraising, donations and grants. However, daily we hear how Children at Risk makes a difference in the lives of families raising children diagnosed within the Autism Spectrum Disorders – so we welcome the opportunity to continue with our efforts in 2011!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Submitted by Brenda Reisch, Fundraising Chairperson

UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES SINCE SEPTEMBER 2010 ...

What Happened:

BLAST-OFF TO KIDS WELLNESS FAMILY FUN DAY – OCTOBER 2, 2010

Held this year at the Confederation Education Centre, the 4th Annual Blast Off to Kids included: OUTDOOR FUN (1K, 5 K and 10 K Runs, Tim Horton's, Grill Master BBQ) and INDOOR FUN (Little Ray's Reptiles, Spring Action Trampoline, Junkyard Symphony, Face Painting with Heather-A Little Bit of Bling, Ride-On Jeeps, Tunis Shrine Klowns, Basket Ball and Mini-Putt, Yoga and Juggling Instruction and Inflatable Fun).

We also want to thank our Health and Wellness Vendors: ReviveLife Wellness Clinic, CHEO Injury Prevention, Club Yoga, Discovery Toys, Eco-Source, Epicure Selections, GIA Wellness, Goldenmoor Therapeutic Spa Products, H-Trio (Positive Attitude Zone Parenting), Isagenix Nutritional Cleansing and Replenishing, Music for Young Children, Shaklee, Sun Life Financial, The Prana Group, University of Ottawa – School of Psychology – Developmental Labs Special Guests that made it extra special fun included the 501st Legion Capital City Star Wars Charity Costuming Group!

Many thanks to all our Volunteers and Supporters who helped to make this a fun and action-packed day!

BLAST-OFF RAFFLE TICKETS

Draw: October 2, 2010 1 PM – Blast Off event

We are more than excited to announce that while we did not sell out the tickets, we did sell enough to earn **\$4,171** for Children at Risk! The Winners are:

- 1st Prize West Jet Tickets and Vancouver Venues – Ticket # 0638 - Karen Lamberton
- 2nd Prize Hotel, Balloon Ride and Dinner – Ticket #0107 - Janet Kooiman
- 3rd Prize Joseph's Bayshore & Hair Care – Ticket #1816 - Scott Silver
- 4th Prize Sens Tickets and Dinner - Ticket #2682 - Nadia Petti

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR AUTISM - Sunday, October 3, 2010



Presented by The King's Daughters and Sons Ottawa Autism Circle, this inaugural Concert raised funds for both Children at Risk and the Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario. Hosted by Lucy van Oldenbarneveld of CBC

News, the Concert featured an exciting line-up of Classical & Popular Musical performances from both professionals and promising young stars!

These included Valentina Kotko and Marlene Basarab - piano duets, Angela Blackwell –clarinet, Marc Coderre – inspirational singer, Eric Pusey – piano, ASD adult, Alisa Klebanov – violin, Marie-Sophia Pera - violin and Susan Lines – soprano. Many thanks to the All Saints Anglican Church for donating their chapel, along with Leading Note & Collected Works Books for ticket sales! Both charities were delighted with close to **\$2,000** being raised!



2010/2011 ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOKS



STILL AVAILABLE! For only \$35, you too can own this premier discount coupon book that can save you hundreds (even thousands) of dollars on dining out, fast food, services, merchandise, sports and recreational activities. Additions include

Metro grocery stores, Rainbow Cinema at St. Laurent shopping centre and Lone Star Restaurants. Check out the **BONUS \$30** in Gift card for Domino's Pizza, Lone Star, Big Daddy's, Mr. Lube and Lapointe Fish!

Go to our website (www.childrenatrisk.ca) to check out the list of Quickie Convenience Stores that will be selling the book for Children at Risk until January or through our offices (235 Donald Street, Suite 212), parent **Merle Hagerman** (Centrepointe Drive, 613-226-4982), **Kanata Optometry Centre**, 99 Kakulu Rd. (613-592-6193) & **Pflug Optical**, 1580 Merivale Rd. (613-723-2766).

They make great stocking stuffers and books are available for other major cities like Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

15th ANNUAL CELEBRITY-CARVED PUMPKIN CONTEST – OCTOBER 21-24, 2010

We have our Winners!!

After a whirl-wind week of activity resulting in some of the best-carved/best-decorated pumpkins on the planet - we have our Top 13 Celebrity-Carved Pumpkin Contest Winning Pumpkins! Of course, we all are Winners with the valuable funds raised for Children at Risk to support Autistic children and their families in the Ottawa area!!

Please join me in congratulating and thanking not only the Top 13 Carvers, but also extending Back-Pats to ALL 141 Carvers (a record number!) who participated - sacrificing a Pumpkin in the name of Autism!! Despite it being one of the busiest weeks of the year with the Municipal Election AND the current economic climate, their collective efforts helped to raise almost **\$9,000** that will be used for programs and services to support children in our community who have been diagnosed with the life-long disability of Autism.

We also need to acknowledge that this all could NEVER be done without our Army of dedicated Volunteers who helped with the Reception and the many hours of manning our 4 displays! Join me in also thanking our Pumpkin Mall Managers – Hazel Smith/Mark Lalonde, Alison Armstrong, Angele Jodouin/Ursula Ferraro & Bambina Lemme – as well as our Host Malls – Merivale Mall, Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, Carlingwood Shopping Centre and Place d'Orleans.



Acknowledgement also to RealDecoy for the use of their RealAuction website to enable Children at Risk to once again have the opportunity to raise funds through an on-line auction!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

Top Lucky Thirteen Celebrities (FINAL)



Hammer, Stuntman Stu & Sandy Sharkey,
93.0 BOB-FM

2010 Celebrity-Pumpkin Carver Champions

- 1) Stuntman & The Shark -- 93.9 BOB FM
- 2) The Garlic King
- 3) Rick Gibbons -- The Ottawa Sun Publisher/CEO
- 4) A TV Morning Team -- Kurt, Angie & Lianne
- 5) Susan Sherring -- Ottawa Sun City Beat
- 6) Bruce Garrioch -- Ottawa Sun Sports
- 7) Doc & Woody -- CHEZ 106.1 FM
- 8) Lynne Saxberg -- Ottawa Citizen Music Columnist
- 9) Carter & Sandra -- KISS FM Morning Show
- 10) Larry O'Brien -- City of Ottawa Mayoral Candidate
- 11) Ian Mendes -- Rogers TV Sportsnet
- 12) Wayne Scanlan -- Ottawa Citizen Sports
- 13) Catherine Lathem -- CTV Ottawa News

Special Mention: Richard Robinson's Academy of Fashion Design Students for enthusiastically and artfully creating 16 colourful and exciting Pumpkins in their first year of joining our Event!

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED FOR CHILDREN AT RISK
(Supporting Autistic Children): **\$8,985.47**

DONOR'S CORNER

\$50	Healthwise Publications Inc.
\$11,588	Autism Speaks Canada
\$32,500	The King's Daughters and Sons Ottawa City Union

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY GOLF TOURNAMENT



For the 5th year, the Technology Services Division, Information Technology Branch of CRA held its Annual Golf Tournament for Children at Risk in September! Despite a challenging economy that has affected many other fundraising events, parent Randy Fix managed to raise a status-quo of \$4,181.94!! This self-managed event raises not only awareness, but valuable funds for our charity! Total funds raised now are in excess of \$18,000 for the 5 years - earning the December 2010 Newsletter's "Hat's Off" award! Please join me in extending our appreciation!!



5th Annual "ROLLIN' FOR RISK"

Bowl-A-Thon for Autism
Walkley Bowling Lanes
Sunday, January 23, 2011



Minimum Pledges of \$120/team for entry. All pledges over \$20 will receive an income tax receipt. Join us for fun, prizes and a rockin' & rollin' good family time! See info and pledge sheet included.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cont'd)

50/50 TICKET SALES – OTTAWA SENATORS



Children at Risk is super-excited to be invited by **The Ottawa Senators Foundation** to sell 50/50 tickets at the Sens hockey games!!

Below we have listed dates that we are currently booked for – please check your schedules and let us know if you can help out for a few hours!! Call us at 613-741-8255 or email car@childrenatrisk.ca.

(needing 15 Volunteers/Game)

- Thursday, Dec. 9 VS. Rangers (7:30 PM game)
- Saturday, Jan. 1 VS. Leafs (7 PM game)
- Saturday, Jan. 8 VS. Lightning (7 PM game)
- Friday, Jan. 21 VS. Canadiens (7:30 PM game)
- Wednesday, Feb. 2 VS. Red Wings (7 PM game)
- Saturday, Feb. 26 VS. Flyers (7 PM game)
- Friday, March 4 VS. Rangers (7:30 PM game)
- Friday, March 25 VS. Capitals (7:30 PM game)

Volunteers:

- must be at least 16 years of age or older (but 16-18 teens must be very mature) - note that high-functioning ASD teens can come with a parent to sell as a team and get volunteer hours!
- need to arrive 2 hours before the games.
- will be given free parking, pizza and a drink AFTER sales are done.
- will sell up to the end of the 1st intermission and some into the period, then have to cash out before leaving or staying to watch the game - floats are supplied by Children at Risk.

THANK YOU

“I really appreciate all that Children at Risk has done for us. I am a single parent of limited financial means and I cannot say how grateful I am for all that the charity has given my family. Thank you so very much.” *Laurie*

“My family and I are extremely thankful for the opportunity to get out to some events through ticket donations. We had a wonderful time at the Dog Whisperer, along with guests. We are still talking about it and are in fact implementing a few tricks learned at the event. The Ottawa 67's games have been enjoyed also, especially when they win! Go 67's GO!! Thank you again.” *Craig*

“I would like to say thank you for the ticket donations to my family and I for two Ottawa 67's games this fall. We have also received donations to the 67's in previous year and - as always - the games are a wonderful way to get out for an evening and spend time together as a family. We truly love going to the games! Thank you again!” *Susan*

“Hello, I wanted to send this letter of thanks to Children at Risk! I have not seen a Senator's game since they were born nearly 20 years ago, the closest I got was selling 50-50 tickets at the games as a volunteer for Children at Risk and sure enough I was given tickets and the Sen's won that night I had a blast and all thanks to Children at Risk. I do not volunteer to get anything because in a sense I already do as does anyone and that's the satisfaction of helping something that is assisting and helping children and knowing my work does that, I really enjoy working with Children at Risk and I plan to keep doing it as much and as long as I can. Thank you all for reading this, I hope that many others are as happy as I am to be taking part in working with such an organization, fund raising for them where is in my eyes, everyone wins!!! To those at Children at Risk - my thanks goes to you in sending me and my family to this game, you make me proud to be able to help in your fund raising efforts always glad to help thank you.” *Message from Daniel Oickle, Community Advocate*

THANK YOU (Cont'd)

“On November 12th, we were lucky enough to attend the Liona Boyd concert. It was a great adult evening out. Thank you!” *Amber & Allan*

“Our family very much appreciated tickets to a 67s game in October, when our son was able to invite a few friends. They got to enjoy an exciting shoot-out 67s win together.” *Maurice & Mary*

We would like to thank the donors for the generous donations of tickets to events we have been able to attend in the recent months!

“My 6 year old son LOVES the Senators. Recently, we received tickets that allowed my husband to take Robert to a Senators Game. They both came back beaming after the game and we heard about it for days! These donations really make a huge difference in the life of our family and make things a little easier by creating great memories and strengthening relationships through quality time spent together! THANK YOU!!! Our whole family attended the Dog Whisperer show and truly enjoyed it! It was fun for our daughter with autism, as she LOVES going to shows. She was so happy to be there! These donations are so valuable to our family. They allow us to attend events we otherwise would not be able to attend and allow us to create fun memories and practice life skills with our daughter with autism! THANK YOU!!! Last Friday, my husband and I had a date at the NAC, where we enjoyed the Liona Boyd show. We would like to thank the sponsors for the donation!” *Ania, Rachael's mom*

“I would like to say thank you to Children at Risk for the donations for the tickets to enjoy hockey games.” *Joyce*

“I would like to thank the people that donated tickets - I've been given tickets to a few events, and had a great time with my daughter! I also would like to thank Children at Risk. Without them, people wouldn't get the chance to see events.” *Joan*

THANK YOU'S (Cont'd)

"I would like to thank Children at Risk and their generous sponsors without whom my family may not have been able to attend the Dog Whisperer show. It was an awesome family outing with my kids and everyone enjoyed Cesar Millan's wit, stories and jokes very much. My oldest son would like to follow in Cesar Millan's footsteps to become a dog whisperer also, so I was grateful for the opportunity to attend. I would also like to thank you for the Ottawa 67's tickets, which we were fortunate enough to receive on a few occasions. The hockey games are the boys' favorite as they enjoy cheering on their team and have a chance to use the horns they love so dearly." *Lori*

"Our warmest thanks to Children at Risk and the Ottawa Senators Foundation for making it possible for our family to go see Cesar Millan. We have been fans of his for a long time! We have three dogs - all wonderful but each with his or her little quirks - so this seminar was not only entertaining but above all educational, as we watched Cesar demonstrate how to get your dog's respect, attention and trust. We could not have afforded to go to this event on our own, and feel very fortunate to have had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." *Barbara and family*

"Our family would like to thank Children at Risk for giving us the opportunity to go out for a symphony orchestra concert at the NAC. My younger son Sasha with autism was fascinated by this live orchestra performance. We also had the best seats as we sat near the stage. Thank you very much for giving us the gift of a great cultural experience together as a family." *James and Nataliya*

"I just wanted to thank Children at Risk for the two tickets to the Senators game on October 14th against Carolina. Dad and I went and it was a fun evening, a real treat. Thanks again!" *Alison*



THANK YOU'S (Cont'd)

"Over the last several months, we have been the lucky recipients of donated tickets for the Shriner's Circus, and an Ottawa 67's game, and two Senator's games. We wish to express to the donators, who so generously support Children at Risk, our sincerest appreciation for these.....participation at such events is a mini-vacation, an outing that we couldn't really afford on our own. These activities allow us and our kids something to look forward to, to plan for - to see the tickets stuck on the fridge in anticipation of the day - and are the break in our lives that help us along." *The Piquard family*

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Children at Risk for the tickets to see Cesar Milan. Having the opportunity to go see Cesar has been a great joy for our family. We have a pet named Kora who is considered a part of the family and we've always enjoyed having pets at home. Our daughter has gained a lot from having a pet at home and was ecstatic. This was a great opportunity for our family to spend some time together enjoy the day; allow my daughter to learn new things and social skills. Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity. Best Regards," *Alicja and family*

"Just wanted to say a big thank you, for the tickets to see the Sens that you provided to me as a Children At Risk volunteer. I was able to take my 90 year old father, who is a rabid Sens fan and never misses a game. But he hadn't had an opportunity to actually be at a game in years, so he really enjoyed himself, as did I. Thanks so much for rewarding us volunteers in this wonderful way." *Janet*

"We would like to thank the wonderful donors who donate tickets to a number of events throughout the city. It enables us to provide our son James with many special experiences that he otherwise would not have the opportunity to enjoy. For many families the focus is spending our money on therapy and other educational strategies to help our children, teens and adults learn & thrive. Having these free tickets enables us to engage in fun activities which would otherwise not be possible. Thank you!" *Louise*

"Just a quick note of thanks to CAR for the 67's tickets that have given me the opportunity to work on getting my son to appreciate being out in the community." *Joël*

THANK YOUS (Cont'd)

"I wanted to say a big thank you for the tickets to the Dog Whisperer Show at Scotiabank Place. The show was thoroughly enjoyed by my family and was a very positive experience. This was a very generous donation!" *Heather*

"I do want to thank the donors for the tickets we were given this year! My boys saw Sting and the Black Eyed Peas. What restricts us from going to concerts and such is the fact that we always have to be prepared to leave given that my son's sensitivities can flair up at any minute. It's hard to put out the cash when we can't anticipate how much, if any, of an event we'll be able to enjoy. Although I had to leave 1/2 way through each concert, the benefits of even a short period at a concert are huge when access to entertainment is so limited. We are so grateful for the generosity of those who offer us these opportunities!" *Christine*

"Thanks for the SENS Tickets. The game was awesome! The Sens won 3-2. We also got fantastic seats! It was their first win this season and we got to see it. Since the tickets are expensive we wouldn't have been able to go otherwise. GO SENS GO!"
Drew(Mom, Dad and Gavin)

"Thank you so very much for the tickets, I really wanted to go to a Sens game, but with school being a big expense it wasn't looking very likely until now. You're making 5 people very happy, thank you very much!" *Alison*

"I would like to thank you for the tickets (2) to the Friday evening home game on November 19th against the Belleville Bulls. We had an incredible time there. We ran into a few friends who we hadn't seen in awhile. I was also really impressed with the promo that all the kids (well - a whole lot of them) were wearing 67's toques. It really lit up the arena and the kids loved them. Thanks so much!" *Brian*



UPCOMING EVENTS

New Parent Guide re: children with speech/language problems!

A new publication has just been released, titled "Helping Students with Speech and Language Disorders: A Parent Guide to Supporting Success at School." It is produced by the Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD).

This 40 page Parent Guide will help parents of students with speech and language problems throughout the province.

It will help parents to:

- Navigate the speech and language service system
- Prepare for transition to school
- Understand the special education systems
- Participate for the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) development
- Prepare for an Identification and Placement Review Committee (I.P.R.C.)
- Engage effectively with the school system

This easy to read Parent Guide is full of tips to empower parents as they support their child's success at school.

The guide is chronologically ordered with information covering transition to school, elementary and high school and the transition to post secondary education or employment.

You can order the publication at OAFCCD's website at <http://www.oafccd.com>, at a cost of \$10 for OAFCCD members, and \$20 for non-members.

You can also purchase the publication here in Ottawa for \$15 non-member (still \$10 for members) if you pick it up directly from Joyce Mortimer, a local OAFCCD Ottawa chapter member (i.e. you save the cost of shipping). Email to contact Joyce is ckingmortimer@sympatico.ca and list "OAFCCD Parent Guide request" in the header.

TICKET DONATIONS – PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETE

One of Children at Risk's Mandates is to request donations of tickets for local entertainment and sporting events – and then distribute them FREE to our families.

Ticket donations offer opportunities for social outings and interactions - without the cost of a purchase that might be wasted if it does not work out - or a purchase that is just beyond the reach of many families due to the cost of raising their ASD child(ren), with therapies, reduced family income, medications, and many other expenses. Children at Risk recognized long ago the value of these donations - even the Provincial Government acknowledges this through Autism Ontario's RCP Program and invests major funds in outings for Movies, Steam Train, Mont Cascades, Bowling, etc. We also understand that some outings may not be suitable for your children - but do encourage parents to also use these donations for some needed respite for them or siblings.

However, it must be understood that, as Children at Risk does not receive government monies, these ticket donations do cost the charity in time and money. Therefore, it is necessary to streamline the offering and distribution of the tickets as much as possible. Over the years a good system has been established - always with constant refinement as new challenges arise, but overall fairly efficient.

The main issues we have are that the emails are NOT BEING READ FULLY and information is not being provided. Although we have not yet done this - we may have to dis-allow a request if it is missing information due to the short time frame we often have with the donations. Donations are most often given last minute when promoters see that ticket sales are low and they want to bring up attendance or be philanthropic - but cannot do this until right before an event!

I am going to list a few points that can cause delays in getting the tickets distributed - please read them carefully and note these for the next donation. As I indicated, we would be very sad to have to put a request aside if the information we asked for is missing - and then have the family miss out on the opportunity due to limited tickets and too many requests. But it may come to this, as we must spend our time on offering services and fundraising to pay for these services.

1. READ each Ticket Donation email CAREFULLY! Requested information is often different ie. if tickets are being mailed, we need addresses, if tickets are being handed out, we need cell phone numbers. Number of tickets you are requesting needs to be stated - in the excitement of responding to an email, even this basic information is sometimes missing. Letting us know a minimum amount and maximum amount desired also helps, possibly making the difference of whether you get tickets or not if numbers are limited.
2. If we are mailing tickets, we MUST have your complete mailing address - with postal code and in block form is easier to read (than in a straight line). Many times this information is missing - we have to take time to deal with your request, then more time to look up your address if it is missing. As well, we often seem to be the last to be notified when a family moves - we have had a couple of cases of an address missing, it being sent to what we had on file and then the tickets not being received, an event missed and tickets wasted if you have moved.
3. If tickets are being handed out before an event, we MUST have a cell phone contact number. We understand that sometimes families are running late or having parking issues -so we need to verify you are on your way - we also ask that you kindly call our Volunteer (cell numbers are usually provided) if this is the case. Usually they are also attending the event and may end up missing some of it if they are waiting for you to show up.

TICKET DONATIONS – PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETE (Cont'd)

4. If something unforeseen happens that you cannot attend the event where tickets are being picked up, we ask that you call our cell number of 613-261-4442 if you can. DO NOT email the office to let us know - while we now can have contact with our email here through an iphone - it does not automatically notify us of emails (set up to only bring in emails when asked to save date charges) so we may miss that email and then tickets go unused. Often there are not enough tickets for all the requests and if you cannot attend, then tickets go unused. Not only does this mean some families have lost out on this opportunity, it can also have serious repercussions with Ticket Donors, as they are often at these same events and can see if their donations go unused. If the tickets have been mailed to you - let us know if there is lead time to get them to another family - or ask your friends, neighbours, co-workers or other persons you have contact with if they can use the tickets. We understand that sometimes it is just not logistically possible to return tickets or get them to another family - in this case it is more important that the tickets be used. While ticket donations are intended for use by our Families 1st, to have them used is the 2nd most important detail.
5. Please sign your emails with a first and last name - we have some Members whose emails do not identify their family name and it is then challenging to try and find out who they are. Also, many families go by 2 names - make sure to indicate which name the tickets will be picked up under. Recently we had a problem when only a last name was given and the wrong tickets were handed out - as that name had been different than the name the tickets were filed under - which then affected 3 families as we tried to figure out what had happened.
6. Know that you have "your ducks lined up" before responding to an email. If you need a babysitter or have to make other arrangements to use these tickets, these details must be in place prior to asking for tickets. We know that families will often "knee jerk" respond and then worry about the details, but this can also lead to unused tickets if you cannot get your plans in place. As often as possible, we try to take requests up to a certain time and then deal with them - but sometimes we find out only a few hours before a show that we have a donation, so this must be dealt with on a first-come basis.
7. Lately we have had a few families miss an offering because they only had registered a work email and were on holidays - we offer to put more than one email in our data base Membership Email listing - but bear in mind you will then get all our emails at on both addresses you provide. Let us know if you wish to add another email address to make sure you do not miss out!
8. Although we often send out an email to ask – it would be wonderful for anyone who receives tickets to get in to the habit of sending us a quick note of thanks by email after you have attended the show or game! Children at Risk regularly sends letters of appreciation to our donors – to let them know how much their donation meant. It also helps to keep the donations coming when donors know how important gifts like this are to our families!

Please look at this as a guide to handling the ticket offerings! A little attention to detail can go a LONG way in making these donations easier and more efficient to handle - this might even allow us to have the time to look for more!! Help us to help you and we can all enjoy these special gifts to the MAX!

Autism Awareness Centre Conference, March 24 & 25, 2011 Ottawa, ON

Location: Crowne Plaza Ottawa, 101 Lyon Street, Ottawa, Ontario

To register, visit www.autismawarenesscentre.com

Thursday, March 24 - Morning Session

Cindy Schneider, Setting the Stage for Social Success



This is a highly fun and interactive workshop in which all participants will be actively engaged. There will be a brief overview of the social, executive function and sensory needs of the target students who exhibit social needs. Participants will then participate in theatre games and activities specifically designed to address those deficit areas. Following each activity the group will analyze the skill areas addressed, and explore possible adaptations of the activities to meet the needs of different age and ability levels.

Thursday, March 24 - Afternoon Session

Lauren Kenworthy, Unstuck and On Target! Teaching Flexibility and Goal Directed Behavior to Children with ASD



A new intervention framework focusing on executive functioning in ASD, including strategies that you can use today, will be presented.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the importance of executive functioning in ASD.
2. Understand key principles of intervention with high functioning children with ASD.
3. Understand the basic components of an innovative school based intervention targeting flexibility and goal directed behavior in children with ASD.

Friday, March 25

Gary Mesibov, Structured Teaching



One of the world's leading autism experts, Professor GARY MESIBOV, director of Division TEACCH in North Carolina, in the United States is coming to Ottawa to speak to families, educators and therapists!

The TEACCH program has developed and taught strategies and programs (commonly referred to as structured teaching) that has served people with ASD all over the world of all ages and all levels of functioning. Structured teaching is based on the understanding of the neurological differences that research has identified in people with ASD and then adjusting educational, self-help, social and community-based program approaches to more closely match the learning strengths and needs of our children and youth with ASD.

This presentation will describe some of the learning differences that have been identified in people with ASD, and will show how these can be accommodated by making adaptations in how educational programs are created and delivered to assist people with ASD to think, learn and understand more effectively and independently in the home, school and community. The emphasis will be placed on educational programs in inclusive settings as well as home and community-based strategies.

Persons diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome (AS) lack the understanding of nonverbal communication that so many of us take for granted. A nod of the head, a smirk, a change in voice tone is so often misinterpreted or totally missed by those with this diagnosis. If you do not read these non-verbal signals, you are not likely to send the appropriate non-verbal messages either. Additionally, youngsters with AS often interpret language literally and miss the more abstract references. These youngsters often have difficulty building relationships with their peers. For this reason many of these individuals also suffer with poor self-esteem. Yet traditional “social skills” programs have not been very successful in teaching these capable individuals the skills they need in our social world.

After over 20 years as a special educator and autism consultant and 20 years as a children’s theater director, an exciting idea began to form. The idea combined my lifelong passion for theatre with my desire to help students with AS and related diagnoses improve their social understanding and awareness. The program developed over the next several years, and became known as ACTING ANTICS. Six years later, the Acting Antics Art Center was born. The center now offers programs for preschoolers through adulthood, at a variety of developmental levels. The response from participants and families has been extremely positive.

Although we offer many levels of classes, the focus of this article will be on our classes that are designed for the youngsters and adults with higher cognition and language skills, and social deficits such as seen in high-functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome. After all, what is *acting* all about? It is about reading and portraying emotions by using your voice as well as non-verbal communication. It is about acting and reacting. It is about developing a relationship with other actors onstage. It is about interpreting the language of a script. Is that not a perfect match for students with the social deficits mentioned above?

It is important in these classes that everyone is made to feel entirely comfortable in the first session. Activities will include on whole group games, and simple activities designed to put actors at ease and not put anyone on the spot. As the instructors get to know the actors, and the actors get more comfortable with one another, the bar is raised and actors are gradually asked to leave the comfort zone and take some risks.

Humor is an essential tool in our workshops. It is often said that people with HFA and AS do not understand humor, which often involves multiple meanings or wordplay, which can be very abstract. However, if taught how to interpret humor, these individuals often have a profound response to the humor in these abstractions, and are eager to grow their repertoires of puns, jokes and the like.

Our instructors teach some of our basic precepts in the initial class. First they review the two universal rules of acting. The first is “Never hurt another actor”. While discussing that rule, our actors tend to discuss staged fighting and special effects. Then actors are asked if it is possible to hurt an actor in a way other than physically. Discussion ensues about hurting feelings, or being disruptive while someone is performing, or being hurtfully critical of someone’s work. The second rule is “Listen to the director.” Actors are asked what they think would happen to a movie if all of the actors did exactly what they wanted, chose their own parts, and said whatever they wanted to say. Often we will talk about a current movie, and the actors get a clear picture of the chaos that could have resulted if no one was at the helm. These are the only two rules we need in acting class, because they cover everything!

Next the students are introduced to the “Big 3.” These are 1) vocal tone and volume, 2) body language, and 3) facial expression. These are depicted with words and drawings on a poster that hang in the theater. Often this is introduced by having the instructor make a grand entrance into the group. The instructor will stomp into the room, scowling and growling with arms crossed. He/she saunters over to the group, saying in a low, grouchy, and unconvincing voice, “I am so happy to see you all here today.” Generally, because it is so exaggerated, the actors recognize the ridiculousness of the words and have a good laugh. The instructor will then ask if the actors believed that he/she was happy to see them. They will then be led to identify the specifics of the instructor’s non-verbal cues that belied the words uttered. At this point the instructor will often have one of the actors demonstrate a more positive entrance. We then review the changes in the “Big 3” that made it believable the second time.

Reading and utilizing the “Big Three” becomes a focus of our sessions, but there are many other skill areas that are targeted through the theater activities. These include many of the executive function skills that are difficult for so many individuals with neurological differences. These include skills such as initiating and sustaining a task, organizing and prioritizing, shifting from one thing to another. The goal is for every actor to be successful in each activity, and that success is huge in terms of building self-esteem. Actors work in partners and in groups with instructors facilitating cooperation and flexibility, both of which are difficult skills for individuals on the autism spectrum to master.

Actors participate in some icebreakers and warm-up games, designed to increase their comfort level and begin interactions with one another. These activities also assist the instructors in getting to know the actors before assigning scenes. In subsequent classes, the actors are assigned partners and are sent off to work on short scripted scenes. The adults circulate to facilitate, and then the actors regroup to perform the first ‘public’ reading of their scene. There is discussion about what it means to be an audience member, and the expectation that the actors will observe and make *positive* comments about their fellow actors’ use of the “BIG 3.” Actors will continue to rehearse these scenes throughout the sessions in preparation for the final performance.

The scenes we use in our classes range widely in reading level, abstract language, social topics, and character development. Antics instructors are encouraged to modify the scenes to the specific needs of the actors, as the scenes were written by this author. The group will also work on a larger skit that involves all of the actors. These are usually shorter, silly skits that tend to have a punch line. The actors love these, and it really gives them a chance to work together as a company. These usually involve some costuming and props, which adds to the fun!

Other activities involve improvisational activities that again have the actors working in a small group. One such activity is called “Slow News Day” in which each group comes up with its own newscast. In another improvisational activity called “Sell Your Partner,” in which the actor conducts a structured interview of a partner, and then develops a sales pitch about his/her partner, using a ‘used car salesman’ persona. This activity is a great way for actors to learn about another person, and to begin to think about their own strengths and differences.

On the final day of class, the actors present a “showcase” for family and friends. The showcase consists of demonstrations of many activities, performances of the scenes and skits, and presentation of one of the improvisation activities. This is a great culmination of the workshop, and a real self-esteem builder for the actors.

Through these and many other activities, the actors have a wonderful time interacting with their peers, and working on their social deficits, all in the name of *theater*. Many individuals with AS spend years being dragged to “social skills” groups in school or in the community. They often know that they don’t “get it”, and hate going once again to a group that focuses on what they do not do well. It is much more effective to find a program that is fun and activity-based, and build the social cognition skills into that activity. Acting is a perfect vehicle for this as it intrinsically works on interaction as the integral part of the craft.

Parents and students have responded tremendously to this program. One parent commented after being in the next room during his son’s first session, “I have never before seen my son engaged and laughing in a group of peers for two solid hours. Thank you.” Students who have reportedly ‘failed’ in many other situations have been successful in our theater program.

School districts in eastern Pennsylvania have been getting on board with this approach to teaching social cognition, and that is most exciting. Three districts brought our program to the district for Extended School Year instruction, and five others paid to have youngsters attend our summer programs. One Chester county district has brought the Acting Antics in during the school year as a pilot program in social instruction. Special educators will be trained in the program and will be coached the following year by this author.

The Acting Antics program has been run in five different counties, and each session has been amazingly successful. There is a tremendous need to bring this program to many communities and schools, so that more individuals can reap the recreational and social benefits. These youngsters have so many gifts that stay hidden far too often. My mission is to teach professionals how to run this program in local communities and schools. The world is indeed a stage, and we need to provide our youngsters with the tools they need to flourish on that stage!

*Cindy Schneider’s book, **ACTING ANTICS, a theatrical approach to teaching social understanding to kids and teens with Asperger Syndrome**, was published in 2007 by Jessica Kingsley Publishing, and has a foreword written by Dr. Tony Attwood. Cindy has presented her techniques to parents and professionals throughout the United States and in Canada. Cindy runs the Acting Antics program in eight-week sessions during the school year for students of all ages. Acting Antics also conducts summer camp programs for a variety of age and ability levels.*

Disclaimer: Children at Risk does not does endorse or recommend programs and is providing this article for information purposes only.

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