



Autism Society
of North Carolina

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Emerging from the Pandemic

Staying Safe

Applied Behavior Analysis

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Mission Statement

The Autism Society of North Carolina improves the lives of individuals with autism, supports their families, and educates communities.

The Spectrum

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Careers

The Autism Society of North Carolina is always looking for qualified candidates who are passionate about helping individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. ASNC has offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Greenville, Raleigh, Newport, and Wilmington.

A variety of part- and full-time positions are available. Please visit www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers to learn more about current ASNC career opportunities. We appreciate referrals; please help us recruit the best talent by sharing the above link.

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of North Carolina

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A message from the CEO

At the Autism Society of North Carolina, we know that the needs of every individual and family are unique, and that those needs change throughout a lifetime. We work hard to meet people where they are, and to provide the services, supports, and resources that are appropriate for them, for that moment.

During the pandemic, we listened to our community to understand how we could best meet their needs during an unprecedented time. For some individuals and families, it was best to connect online, from a telehealth consultation with our Clinical Department to a virtual IEP meeting with an Autism Resource Specialist. We've hosted online chapter meetings, social groups, and webinars, as well as virtual events, such as the annual conference and our Run/Walks for Autism. For some, connecting online from the familiar surroundings of home was convenient and accessible, and I am pleased our online programming provided an important lifeline during this time.

Other individuals and families needed our in-person services, and our staff worked tirelessly to make these services available and safe. While much of the world was closed, our programs were still open and offering opportunities to build skills and try new things, find a volunteer position or a job, or make new friends. In this issue, you'll learn more about some of the services we've been able to provide.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we'll continue to listen to our community to provide the resources and services necessary for the moment. We know many will face challenges in returning to school, reconnecting socially, and finding suitable employment. It can be difficult to adjust to all of the changes we have faced in the past year-and-a-half, but I want to remind you that ASNC is your partner for a lifetime, and we are here to help address your unique needs.

I am excited to announce our new self-advocate advisory committee that will report to our Board of Directors. This new group, composed of adults with autism, will help us continue to be the best resource for the autism community. Over the past years, self-advocates have participated in a variety of ways, including serving on our Board of Directors, planning and speaking at our annual conferences, and providing information via blogs and webinars. We look forward to having more input and direction as we continue to expand opportunities for adults on the autism spectrum.

In closing, thank you all for your continued support. We could not have accomplished all that we have during this challenging period without our stakeholders, supporters, and donors. With your help, we are the best advocate for families, service provider for individuals on the spectrum, and educator within our communities. Much remains to be done, and we are committed to taking the lessons learned over the past year-and-a-half and moving forward.

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Sheriff".

Tracey Sheriff, *Chief Executive Officer*

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Social Reintegration after the Pandemic

By Mary Janca, Autism Self-Advocate and Teacher

We have had a year and a half of quarantine, and adults and children have settled into controllable routines. Many of these routines have been solitary, including video gaming and sleeping for kids. For adults, it has been filled with working from home, Zoom calls to loved ones, watching Netflix, cooking, and cleaning, according to common social media posts.

As a teacher, I have seen students struggle to participate in class, including initiating questions. Other areas of struggle have been in hygiene, interest in peers, and focus on tasks. In speaking with parents, there has been a lot of concern expressed over the decline in emotional and academic growth.

Children with autism often need social modeling. Social modeling includes direct instruction and observation of people in a natural setting. Direct instruction is when a practitioner (speech pathologist, BCBA, teacher, etc.) demonstrates behaviors with use of examples (such as social stories), explanation, and practice. Observation in a natural setting would include interaction with peers during play, eating with family, and going out to restaurants and stores.

Modeling can occur at school, church, Scouts, and other socially structured activities. COVID lockdown stopped all the learning and the practice. Therefore, the only way for children to get any social activity was within their fertile minds and in the worlds of fictional sources (video games, books, and movies).

In addition, school provides a huge resource of external motivators for children. These motivators include receiving praise for accomplishing a goal, interacting with peers of like-minded interests, schedules with expected routines, and satisfying predictable tasks like math. So of course, with COVID lockdown, the motivators from school mostly went away. There was still the opportunity to check in with teachers and peers during online classes. However, many kids opted to keep their video and audio off. Without the motivators to stay attentive and impress the teacher and their peers, students could leave classes open while they played video games or took a nap.

While many have been complaining about being stuck at home, there is the draw of habit and routine. Everything is open again, yet the draw of the computer or the television is strong. If people in the real world are hard to navigate, the internet social diaspora provides plenty of rewards, especially to those who are exploring identities. It is a virtual kingdom where anyone can have friends. Acceptance is attainable.

Since things have opened back up, how can children and adults begin to socially reintegrate? Some people naturally enjoy others and want to share their interests. You may have a child who is excited to tell anyone about their latest anime obsession. Many, however, may pull back from strangers in fear of rejection. Going anyplace where the reactions of others cannot be controlled can be frightening. If given a choice between spending time on a video game that guarantees control and success (in gaining points, leveling up, letting your avatar wear and say anything) versus an



If given a choice between spending time on a video game that guarantees control and success (in gaining points, leveling up, letting your avatar wear and say anything) versus an outing where there are chances of stress and confusion, which would be the natural choice?

outing where there are chances of stress and confusion, which would be the natural choice?

So how to motivate your child to get out of the house?

Approach your child with a plan to make this a collaborative process. Your child has to get on-board so they feel some ownership in social reintegration. Acknowledging any of your own challenges with the time of quarantine could help greatly. It has been hard for adults, so share those feelings of frustration and anxiety with them! Sometimes it helps the child to have to think about another person, because the child can understand that their feelings are not setting them apart. They are not alone in doing the difficult process of reintegration, because others are battling it as well. Therefore, the child may be more accepting when they know it is a collaborative process and can feel like they are “helping” their parents and siblings with going back out again.

After buy-in comes the process. You can create the plan of social reintegration by making a list of real-world activities they have missed in the past months. The goal is to continually keep the child on-board, yet assist with motivation by providing attainable steps towards progress with a reward system in place.

Reward systems can be something as simple as offering a set amount of time with doing outdoor activities in exchange for a set amount of gaming time, or whatever hobby they have that allows for feelings of success and relaxation. Again, work with your child on getting on board with this, by displaying examples of kids their age in the real world enjoying themselves interacting with peers. You can show or explain in ways that your child understands. If your child is praise driven, talk admiringly about other children they may know who are

engaging in activities. They may want to go out to get that same praise. If your child is token driven, provide whatever that token may be in a set schedule for each goal your child attains. As the child gains some independence, they will naturally replace your provided reward with the reward of growth and success.

Remember that this is a collaborative process. Any first steps in attaining a goal are stressful. However, they are first steps, and each step is something to note and celebrate. As your child attains goals and receives rewards, make sure that you are rewarded as well. The positive of being an adult is that you can choose your rewards that suit you! This is not an easy process, but it can be done. In addition, reaching out to other caregivers in an ongoing manner will provide additional support and encouragement.

May you have many successes and moments of joy in your family’s process of social reintegration! ■



Mary Janca is a teacher and coach for students of all learning differences. She has been teaching for twenty years, has a Master’s Degree in Teaching, Behavioral/Emotional Disorders, and is certified in multiple subjects from first grade to high school. She coaches youth and adults with life skills and academics. She is currently working on a client base to serve students in Greensboro and Raleigh. She is also drafting a book and website based on learning differences and behaviors.

Mary has Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD. She has faced many struggles in life due to these differences, but is proud of her desire to get back up, learn, and keep going. She loves to help others succeed with whatever challenge they are facing.

The COVID-19 Vaccine



Scan for more info.

This summer, the Autism Society of North Carolina partnered with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) and organizations across the state to educate our community about COVID-19 vaccines as part of the #BringingBackSummer campaign. We presented a webinar with information about the vaccine and strategies for supporting a person with autism through a vaccine visit.

To view the webinar, read the tips, or access the social narratives about vaccines, please scan the code to the left.



Scan to view our
Staying Safe page

Staying Safe in Our Communities

All parents are concerned about the safety of their children. Parents of children with autism face additional worries about safety, including fears about wandering and elopement and concerns about interactions with law enforcement and first responders. ASNC provides a variety of resources for parents and self-advocates and works with community stakeholders to ensure the safety of the community.

Information and Resources for Caregivers and Self-Advocates

One of the biggest concerns parents and caregivers may have about their child is a tendency to wander or bolt. Often, wandering behaviors have a reason, such as wanting to go to the store for candy or wanting to avoid a chore. When parents identify the root cause, they can create strategies to help prevent wandering.

It is helpful to talk to neighbors about children or family members with autism, in case they wander out of the home or yard. Provide neighbors with contact information, and consider asking them whether they'd be willing to help search for a child in an emergency situation. Additionally, teachers and other caregivers need information about the individual's wandering triggers, so that they can be prepared. Skills related to safety may be added to the individual's IEP.

In emergency situations, individuals with autism may be confused about the role of first responders. It may be beneficial to schedule a visit with local first responders so that children can

In emergency situations, individuals with autism may be confused about the role of first responders. It may be beneficial to schedule a visit with local first responders so that children can meet and identify them.

meet and identify them. This also gives the first responders familiarity with the needs of individuals with autism.

We have tools available at autismsociety-nc.org/staying-safe which can help facilitate conversations with neighbors and first responders. Resources include:

- **A tip sheet on wandering prevention** for parents and caregivers.
- **A printable personal information record** to share with first responders.
- **Social narratives** that teach individuals safety guidelines for various situations.
- **Identification cards** to print, fill out, and laminate. These cards include information about autism and assisting the card holder as well as emergency contact information.
- A link to our **webinar “Staying Safe: Information for Individuals with Autism.”** This webinar was developed for self-advocates to learn safe ways to interact with first responders such as police, firefighters, and EMS personnel. The training includes information on when self-advocates should call for help, how to identify themselves as a person with autism, how to act around a first responder, and how to answer common questions in those situations.



On this web page, we offer the opportunity to order safety materials from ASNC. Our safety kit includes a “Person with Autism” decal, which can be placed in the windows of vehicles or homes to alert first responders that occupants might not respond in a typical manner; identification cards; and cards with helpful hints about autism. These materials will be mailed free to NC residents; a small fee is charged to mail out of state.

Our Work with First Responders

The Autism Society of North Carolina has been educating first responders about individuals with autism since 2004. Our Autism Resource Specialists participate in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training with law enforcement officers, emergency services responders, fire and rescue staff, dispatchers, jail staff, and school resource officers in every area of the state. This nationally recognized week-long

training covers many mental health and crisis issues as well as strategies for intervention and de-escalation.

If you or a loved one with autism experiences a crisis, you can ask for a responder who has CIT training. Before a crisis occurs, you can check with local agencies to see whether they have CIT-trained staff. If not, you can ask that they schedule training. ASNC provides CIT training for free; contact your local Autism Resource Specialist for more information or call 800-442-2762.

You can learn more about the training we provide by viewing the video we created for first responders on our Staying Safe website. This video provides first responders with some of our strategies for interacting with individuals with autism, including using simple language and concrete terms; repeating questions and allowing additional time for processing and response; understanding differences in communications and behavior; and providing physical space.

Recently, we learned of a story that showcases the importance of these trainings. A mother reported that she pulled into a police station in Durham because her young son with autism unbuckled himself from his car seat. She was nervous about asking for help, but the Durham Police Department, which is offered four CIT trainings annually, was ready to help. The officers stayed with her son for about an hour, trying to help him back in the car in a very patient way. They even made a game out of allowing the son to chase them so he would get back in the car safely. What started as a stressful situation ended with the family feeling that they had more supports in their community.

We’re thankful to the Durham Police Department for this success story, and we’re thankful to all of the organizations that have reached out for training. ■

Learn More

Toolkits: autismsociety-nc.org/toolkits

Blog: autismsociety-nc.org/blog

Webinar library: autismsociety-nc.org/webinars

COVID resources:

autismsociety-nc.org/coronavirus

Online Safety for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum

By Bobbi Wells, Autism Resource Specialist

During the pandemic, our children spent an increased amount of time online. With virtual learning, it was easy for children to be sitting in front of the computer as many as eight hours a day, especially if they already had an interest and love for gaming.

As parents, we are tasked with maintaining appropriate screen time limits but also ensuring our children are safe in cyberspace. The deficits in communication and social skills related to autism make it even more critical that explicit instruction be given to children and teens on how to appropriately interact and how to protect their privacy online. Children and teens on the autism spectrum tend to thrive on structure, boundaries, rules, and visual reminders in most situations. We can use those same supports to keep them safe online.

Ideally, we'd set our children up for success from the beginning by implementing rules and guidance before handing them a device. However, it's never too late to establish a routine and plan if they are already online and have already strayed into unwanted territory. If this is the case, it will be important to have a detailed discussion and prepare them for any changes **BEFORE** those changes are implemented. Help them understand why you're setting rules around internet behavior. Explain that it's your job to keep them safe and you

can be held responsible for their actions. It can be helpful for the child to understand that they could get you in trouble too.

Steps to consider:

Make sure that all devices your child uses are set up with limits regarding what content he/she can access. Usually this entails adjusting the device's settings as well as the internet browser or app being used. Consider using specific monitoring apps like Qustodio.

It's important to not just restrict access, but to explain or show your child what is and is not appropriate because these settings aren't always foolproof. These conversations will be teachable moments to help him or her identify inappropriate content if they encounter it on their own.

Set up the rules and expectations. It's easier to set these early on rather than reining them in later. Let your children know you will be monitoring their internet usage and what your



expectations are. Write these expectations down and create an internet contract. Let them know the consequences for not following the contract and the rules. Your contract should include the rule that all passwords should be known by you and setting the devices so passwords can't be changed. Another rule to consider is how much time will be allowed and when.

Next, you must follow through and periodically check content, chat, and messages. I know this will be hard to believe, but the boundaries and rules will help your child thrive. My teenage son expects and wants me to hold him accountable (even though he has a hard time admitting it). Knowing I am going to check on his activity and hold him accountable helps him feel safe and secure.

Think specifically and in detail about what you need to teach your child about how to interact with others online. For example, it may be hard for some children to understand that not everyone is who they say they are online. Make sure your child/teen knows that anyone can post a picture of a young boy/girl and actually be an adult. Teach them to approach online interactions with caution because the reality is not everyone tells the truth. Explain "grooming" and consider finding examples and showing them how child predators talk to children.

Be explicit and detailed about identifying information that is not to be shared online. Write it out as a visual. Make a poster board of all internet rules and have it near their devices. Consider having rules about who they can chat with and what information is and is not allowed to be shared. You might consider adding the line, "Would I be comfortable if my mom read this or saw this picture?" Make a visual with comeback lines or strategies to stop a conversation they can use if someone is asking for explicit information or pictures. Teach them what to say in uncomfortable situations. And teach them how to report it to you or to another adult.

Let your children know you will be monitoring their internet usage and what your expectations are. Write these expectations down and create an internet contract. Let them know the consequences for not following the contract and the rules.

Role play! Practice! It is the best way to test their knowledge and educate them on the ways people on the internet get information without directly asking. The best learning exercise and eye opener for my son was when I role played as his "16-year-old friend." We texted each other from different rooms and I pretended to be his "friend" who asked him questions like: "My mom is a teacher, what does your mom do?" "Do you ever go to the bowling alley?" "I live right next to the school, so I walk to school. Where do you live?" "My mom works late so I am able to stay online. What time does your mom get home?" We talked through the ways this information could be used.

Make sure your child/teen knows the permanency of all he/she posts online. Just because he/she deletes it does not mean it's gone. Show him/her that messages and pictures can be saved and posted later. Once it's out there in the world wide web, it's out there forever. Explain the consequences of internet content when applying for jobs or trying to get into colleges.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em! Another excellent way to keep your children safe is to ask questions, learn about their interests, check out the websites they visit, watch them play games, or even try playing the games with them. What better way to test the game's appropriateness and help keep the lines of communication open between you and your teen? ■

ASNC Autism Resource Specialists are available to help families in every county of North Carolina on topics such as accessing services, community resources, IEPs, and residential options. They are all parents of children or adults with autism, so they have firsthand knowledge and a unique understanding of what you are going through. Find one near you: autismsociety-nc.org/ARS

Rapid Response Clinical Consultation



Scan to learn more.

Are you an individual with autism in need of targeted, short-term coaching to help you reach your goals?

Are you a parent/caregiver in need of additional strategies to support your loved one?

You might be a good candidate for Rapid Response Clinical Consultation, a telehealth service offered by the Autism Society of NC's Clinical Department.

We offer short-term consultation to individuals with autism and/or their families via telehealth service delivery in any county across North Carolina.

Our Position on Applied Behavior Analysis

By the Autism Society of North Carolina Clinical Department

There is confusion and controversy regarding Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), particularly when used as a comprehensive treatment for individuals with autism. Applied Behavior Analysis within the autism community is endorsed by many and criticized by others. It is a topic that evokes passion and emotional responses because of the perceptions, sometimes inaccurate, of how ABA is practiced and used. It is confusing for parents/caregivers who are trying to determine treatment options and select providers for their child. In addition, some families and autism self-advocates/individuals with autism/autistics may have experienced or heard of “ABA” treatments that are not reflective of best practices, may not focus on individual strengths and preferences, or may have been mislabeled as ABA.



What is ABA?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) represents a range of systematically implemented teaching strategies developed from the science of learning and behavior. ABA has been around for almost 100 years and like any science has evolved with knowledge and experience. There is an established and growing evidence-base for the application of behavior analytic strategies in school, home, clinical, and community settings. The practice of behavior analysis includes thorough assessment, which helps to identify skills that enhance quality of life and happiness, as defined by the individual and their family.

What matters most?

Modern and high-quality ABA services prioritize the values and goals of the individual. These programs emphasize meaningful skill development targeted in natural environments and activities, with close collaboration with the individual and their family.

The Autism Society of North Carolina encourages this community to advocate for person-centered behavior analytic services that promote individually determined forms

In modern ABA programs, goals expressed by the individual are prioritized. Parents and caregivers are treated as equal partners when developing the program.

of empowerment, independence, and overall happiness for the individual.

Many fundamental skills and rights are focal points within a modern, high quality ABA program, such as the rights to:

- Be heard and valued
- Express wants, preferences, needs, feelings, ideas
- Reject, terminate, negotiate
- Safety and privacy
- Move one's body to feel calm
- Leisure opportunities that they enjoy
- Meaningful vocational opportunities
- Social connections that are valuable to the individual
- Seek and receive accommodations, support, validation and understanding

These and many other pivotal rights comprise the broader concept of empowerment.

What does it look like in practice?

ABA is good teaching. Good teaching happens when a learner is relaxed and content. As it relates to autism intervention, good teaching requires understanding of the individual's learning characteristics, viewing challenging behavior through the autism lens first and foremost, and building on strengths and interests. Good teaching involves establishing a strong, positive relationship rooted in collaboration, trust, transparency, and respect between the person with autism and the professional. It involves careful assessment using input from all relevant sources and tools, identifying critical skills and concepts, and breaking those down into teachable parts. For example, when supporting an individual in finding a job, there are many important skills (e.g., building a resume, online searches, interview rehearsal, follow-up contacts) within the process. Each skill is organized and broken down into manageable and understandable steps. As a different example, when a young child is learning how to independently dress themselves, there are many parts to this broader skill (e.g., putting each item on, advocating around clothing preferences, assuring privacy, selecting attire based on weather or situation, etc.). Each part is broken down into steps, and systematically taught over time.

The teaching procedures are clearly defined so that anyone could replicate those (as is true of any scientific approach). Sensitivity to changes in the individual's motivation, affect, and engagement is critical. Learning opportunities occur frequently and are naturally embedded into the places, activities, and routines that are relevant for that individual. For young learners, the "place" for learning is in play and natural routines that happen in the child's environments (e.g., the home, the preschool, the playground). Like Fred Rogers said, "Play is really the work of childhood."

Intrinsic motivation and reinforcement strategies strengthen skills and behaviors. Skills and concepts are systematically targeted across environments and across increasingly complex situations to promote generalization. Ongoing observation and data collection, input from and collaboration with team members, and good common sense drive decision making.

Compassion and creativity are essential to behavior analytic teaching. Stakeholders should look for signs of contentment, enjoyment, and connection in any program. Teaching through tears and power struggles is not representative of today's high quality, contemporary ABA. In all cases, the individual's unique strengths and talents should be highlighted, emphasized, and encouraged.

Who is involved?

In modern ABA programs, goals expressed by the individual are prioritized. Parents and caregivers are treated as equal partners when developing the program. Natural supports, such as family members and caregivers, are coached to understand and use effective strategies in their natural routines and interactions with the individual. Modern, high-quality ABA programs aim for strong coordination and communication with all team members, including parents and caregivers, the school-based team, occupational and speech-language therapists, medical providers, etc. In short, it takes a team.

Applied Behavior Analysis is fully compatible with other treatments such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other evidence-based practices (EBPs). Several prominent EBPs, including Structured Teaching (TEACCH), Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions (e.g., the Early Start Denver Model; Pivotal Response Training), and cognitive-behavioral interventions (CBI) are heavily influenced by and work with behavior analytic principles and strategies. This is likely one of the biggest areas of confusion for families and professionals. One evidence-based approach does not have to be chosen over another. These approaches should work well together. Collaboration is the key.

Evidence-based practices – those that have been shown to be effective through review and research – such as visual supports, video modeling, social skills interventions, social narratives (including Social Stories®), peer-mediated interventions, parent-mediated interventions, incidental teaching, and/or exercise, should be integrated within a comprehensive ABA program. Other strategies and curricula, such as Social Thinking® and Zones of Regulation®, are also used to enhance modern behavior analytic approaches.

Lastly, and most importantly, we at the Autism Society of NC are committed to engaging with and listening to self-advocates/autistics/individuals with autism, families, and other stakeholders to continuously advance the application of behavior analysis within and beyond our organization. ■

The Training that Creates the Best Counselors

We just finished another wonderful summer at Camp Royall. Over the past few months, we served more than 200 overnight campers. It was our second summer of serving a smaller group of campers due to the pandemic, but we still felt the same level of excitement and energy.

So many people work hard to make camp a reality, including facility staff, lifeguards, activity directors, and counselors. Just as we enjoy seeing campers grow over the years, we also enjoy seeing the professional development of our staff as they return summer after summer. For many people, working as a counselor at Camp Royall is the first step in a rich and rewarding career helping others.

People interested in working as counselors at Camp Royall are not required to have any knowledge of or experience with autism; the most important things for potential staff members are the right attitude, a willingness to learn, and a lot of enthusiasm. Once staffers are hired, they complete an on-site intensive professional training lasting more than a week to learn how to provide the one-on-one support that makes Camp Royall so successful.

Our custom training includes presentations on autism, preventing challenging behaviors, communication strategies, and personal care for campers from senior camp leadership, ASNC's Clinical Department, and an occupational therapist.

Staffers also hear from panels of self-advocates and parents, who share what Camp Royall means for them and their families.

Ensuring camper safety is a huge part of the training. Staff lead safe space training so that counselors learn how to create safe spaces for all, regardless of race, gender, orientation, or ability. Counselors are then trained on all of Camp Royall's programs and activities, including the horse program, the zap line, boating, the sensory room, and arts and crafts. They learn how to ensure the safety of their camper during each activity as well as how to provide encouragement and build on skills during these activities. There are also sessions on water safety, fire safety, and first aid. For the past two summers, staff have also received extensive training on safety protocols related to COVID-19.

In addition to these instructional sessions, counselors spend several hours each day observing and assisting an experienced staff member with a camper. The counselors then meet in small groups to debrief on what they observed and learned.



Throughout the training, they complete worksheets on their observations and the lectures to enforce their learning and ensure comprehension.

Even during this intensive training, there is time for some Camp Royall fun! Counselors learn camp songs and engage in teambuilding activities such as dance challenges, trivia games, and other friendly competitions.

“The hands-on training helped me feel ready for the summer ahead,” said one new staffer. “It was an amazing experience.”

Once camp starts, counselors receive ongoing supervision and assistance, as they work with different campers with unique needs each week. This professional development helps our counselors provide the very best camp experience for those we serve. While our campers have their best week ever, making friends, trying new things, and building skills, we find that our counselors have an amazing summer as well, leaving with lifelong friendships, an amazing feeling of accomplishment, and more compassion for others.

Year-Round Fun at Camp Royall

Summer may be over, but there are opportunities to enjoy Camp Royall year-round! We offer programs for campers of all ages and on all levels of the autism spectrum.

Mini Camps provide campers the chance to spend the weekend at camp, from 5 p.m. Friday to 12 noon Sunday. Campers enjoy a miniature version of our summer camp program while families benefit from some respite; preference is given to campers living at home. Supervision at a ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 is provided for all campers during these weekends.

Residential Camps will be offered in December and January, with a range of activities. The overnight program includes a 1:1 or 1:2 counselor-to-camper ratio, based on each camper’s level of need.

Adult Retreats give independent adults, 18 years and older, a chance to enjoy time with friends at Camp Royall. Participants enjoy recreational activities at camp as well as outings in the community. Compared to our other programs at Camp Royall, the supervision level during Adult Retreats is low.

Teen Retreats give independent teens, ages 13-22, time at Camp Royall with friends. We gather on Friday evening to share dinner and activities. The weekend includes leisure and recreational activities at camp, as well as outings in the community. Compared to our other programs at Camp Royall, the supervision level during Teen Retreats is low.

Teen Tuesday offers teens (ages 13-22) the opportunity to learn life skills in a welcoming group setting. The group meets one Tuesday a month from 5 until 7:30 p.m.

Adult Skills Program will be piloted in the fall. This new program will take place two days per week and focus on recreation, leisure, and basic life skills development. 1:1 support will be provided for participants. ■



Registration for 2022 Programs

Online registration for the Camp Royall Summer Camp lottery will run from November 1 to January 15. This schedule allows us to notify you about placement and scholarship awards in early February. We hope this will help you make your summer plans!

Registration for all other 2022 programs will also open on November 1, but that registration closes on December 15, so that families can be notified in early January. After the registration period, you can apply for waitlists.

As always, we are honored to provide a caring, accepting place for campers on the autism spectrum. Please contact Camp Royall staff if you have any questions at 919-542-1033 or camproyall@autismsociety-nc.org. You can also learn more on our website, www.camproyall.org.

Summer Fun in Eastern NC

Social Recreation in Eastern NC serves individuals residing in the Trillium Health Resources service area through summer day camps, afterschool, and adult programs. Programs are located in Newport, Wilmington, and Winterville (Brunswick was served in Wilmington in 2021).

These programs focus on providing a setting where participants are cared for, accepted, and celebrated for their uniqueness. All program activities are designed to increase social relationships, communication, physical wellness, and independence. Interest forms are accepted year-round. Enjoy a highlight from the past months from each location:

Newport: On Safari Close to Home

For summer campers in Newport, each week brought a new theme and adventure. During Under the Sea Week, campers went to the aquarium and hunted for shells and shark teeth. For Dinosaur Week, there was a trip to the fossil museum and a bone dig.

But the early hit of the summer was Jungle Safari Week. Campers enjoyed some of their regular activities, including outings to pools and parks, but to celebrate the animal kingdom, they made stuffed animals and went to the petting zoo.

"My favorite part about the petting zoo was the cow," said camper Katalena. "He gave me a kiss!" Meanwhile, camper Jeremiah loved the smaller animals: "I had fun petting the bunny and baby duck."

Wilmington: Reptile Adventures

Wilmington campers also enjoyed getting up close and personal with local wildlife. Campers learned about native reptiles and amphibians from a representative of the Parks and Recreation department.

For camper Shane, the frogs were the highlight, but campers Batten and Sully found the snakes more interesting. Campers learned about how snakes shed their skins, and they had a chance to touch some creatures.



In addition to special events like this one, campers in Wilmington enjoyed daily fitness fun, music, and arts and crafts. Friendships were formed at the Game Station, where there were board games, card games, and puzzles.

Winterville: A Successful First Trip to the Movies

During the pandemic, Winterville staff found they could rent a movie theater for a low rate, providing the opportunity for a field trip while keeping participants safe. For 10-year-old Carter, this outing was his first trip to a movie theater.

"There was some hesitation with how Carter would do sitting in the movie," said his support staff, Hannah Everhart, who has worked with Carter for over two years. "He is always on the move, but we were all amazed with how well he did. He sat in his seat the entire movie and was cracking up during the silly parts. He was so excited in the van on the way back and it made my heart happy to know that seeing movies might be something he could do with his family in the future."

Carter's mom, Hillary Lassiter, gives credit for the successful trip to Hannah. "Miss Hannah has a special bond with Carter and was able to work her magic," she said. "I think she was just as excited as I was when Carter did so well. We are hoping to go to another movie this summer!" ■

Building Skills & Having Fun

The members of IGNITE have been busy in 2021! With locations in Davidson, Raleigh, and Greensboro, IGNITE offers activities and educational groups that foster independence and social interaction for young adults with high-functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome transitioning into adulthood. Here's a selection of some of IGNITE's recent activities and groups:

Planning, Organizing, Budgeting, & Scheduling (POBS)

Planning an outing from start to finish can be challenging. What if you show up at a store and it is cash only? Is the business only open on certain days? Do you have to buy tickets in advance? IGNITE members are learning how to consider all of these details by planning their monthly community outings together. During POBS group, the members brainstorm ideas, create a list of possibilities, share opinions, and work as a team to select an outing. Once a winner is decided, members identify and research details including cost, appropriate attire, location, and parking. If the answers aren't available online, members call locations in front of the group to get the relevant questions answered. Members have seen how making these kinds of calls takes practice, courage, and stepping out of their comfort zone. So far, the members have planned outings to parks, ice cream shops, mini golf, escape rooms, and ice skating!

Employment

During employment group, members explore areas of career interest, build resumes, create cover letters, and learn various skills they will need to be successful in the workforce. Members take assessments to see their skill sets and jobs where they might flourish, and they learn about the importance of volunteering to gain experience and learn about different fields. In the past year, members have received internships at JP Morgan and Bank of America and full-time positions at stores, restaurants, a VA clinic, and a federal courthouse.

Dating and Relationships

Dating is hard, but it can be even harder on the spectrum. IGNITE's new Dating and Relationships group allows members to explore and discuss what to expect when starting to date and prepares them for when dating turns more serious and leads to a serious relationship. Topics discussed include starting a relationship, intimate feelings and crushes, evaluating relationships, fixing problems, qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and more. One member said, "All the lessons thus far have given me the confidence I need to start searching for a special someone soon."



Disc Golf Outings

During the pandemic, getting outside has been one of the safest ways to socialize. The members of IGNITE Raleigh are playing disc golf several times a month, thanks to a donation of discs from Innova Disc Golf. Playing disc golf has allowed members to explore new areas in their community as they try out different courses, build confidence in trying new activities, exercise more, and strengthen social skills. Members who learned how to play disc golf at IGNITE are now introducing their families to the game! ■

Increasing Self-Sufficiency & Engaging Community

On a sunny morning in Raleigh, a participant in the Creative Living program considers her schedule for the day. There's no shortage of options: She could use her YMCA membership to exercise; she could use the computer room to practice her online communication skills; she could run errands to gain more experience making purchases and speaking with cashiers. On many days, there is a group activity to add to the schedule, such as music and movement, a trip to a local petting zoo or pumpkin patch, or a volunteer opportunity. Along with her direct support professional, the participant decides on that afternoon's outing – a trip to a park near the airport, to watch planes and enjoy a snack.

Creative Living is the Autism Society of North Carolina's skill-building day program in Raleigh. With 1:1 support, adults with autism develop greater self-sufficiency and community engagement. While there are a variety of group activities, individuals design their own schedules based upon personal interests and goals. Once participants and their direct support staff members set those schedules, they're out and about, exploring and interacting in the community – and their pace did not slow during the pandemic.

"Participants came ready to wear their masks and wash their hands," said Rachel McCarty, Program Director at Creative Living. While Creative Living was closed from May to July 2020, they have been serving participants in-person since last summer while also providing services in the home for others. "The individuals and families have been glad that we've been able to provide a sense of normalcy during the pandemic, a safe place where everyone is happy and cared for. The world may have changed, but we're not going anywhere."

One staple of Creative Living is the opportunity to volunteer. Before the pandemic, participants worked at several locations across the city, including Thrift to Gift, Habitat for Humanity, and the NC Art Museum. Many services had to limit volunteers during the pandemic, but Creative Living participants have been working weekly with Meals on Wheels, delivering food to the homebound, and hope to return to more organizations soon.

Like everyone, direct support professionals had to get creative in finding safe ways to explore. "I grew up in Raleigh, and we've found parks that I never knew existed," said Rachel Davis, who has worked with Creative Living participants for almost a decade. "It's been fun to explore, to walk around and see new places."

Davis was attracted to Creative Living because of the name. "Creative activities like art are great for everyone," she said. "I love figuring out where my participant's creativity lies. It's great to get to spend so much time with the individual I work with, finding out what works for him or her and what doesn't. Our program is unique because it caters so specifically to people's individual needs. We have a lot of fun."



Davis believes that Creative Living is a “home away from home” for participants, and McCarty concurs. “Everyone comes together like a family,” McCarty said, and that includes completing chores at the program, such as sorting recycling, wiping down surfaces, and taking out the trash. The camaraderie and ability to work together is fostered through meals shared in the program’s café and the regular group outings with all participants and their staff. While most activities have been outside for the past year, participants are excited now that indoor options such as bowling, roller skating, and basketball games at the YMCA are coming back. Participants are also eager to fire up their kiln again; before the pandemic, they regularly made pottery, some of which was sold at local events to benefit the program.



Creative Living currently serves participants aged 21 to 66, so activities will continue to be added or changed to meet the needs of the group. “Having one-on-one staff support allows us to try a lot of different activities or community outings,” said McCarty. “We have the flexibility to offer options and see what helps our participants meet their goals.” ■

To learn more about the Autism Society of North Carolina’s skill-building programs, please visit autismsociety-nc.org/skill-building.

Recognize Your ASNC Direct Support Professional

Join us in celebrating all support staff during Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, September 12-18.

Do you have an ASNC direct support professional who regularly goes above and beyond? Have they had a significant impact on you, your loved one, your family, and the community?

Recognize their excellence by nominating them for the John and Claudia Roman Direct Service Award. This award honors an Autism Society of North Carolina direct support professional who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to individuals with autism and their families.

Please complete the nomination form at autismsociety-nc.org/RomanAward by September 3.

The John and Claudia Roman Direct Service Award was endowed by Lori and Gregg Ireland to honor Christine Roman, the direct support professional who worked with their son, Vinnie.

We’re Hiring!

Do you know someone who is passionate about helping individuals on the autism spectrum and their families? Let them know that the Autism Society of North Carolina is always looking for qualified candidates to join us as we improve lives.

Why work for ASNC? We offer:

- Extensive training and education
- Full- and part-time positions across the state
- Flexible hours and customized schedules
- Competitive pay
- Benefits starting at 20 hours
- Extensive client matching to ensure good fit
- Rewarding and relevant job experience

We are always looking for candidates or referrals for the following positions:

- Autism Support Professionals
- Vocational Support Professionals
- Autism Services Coordinators
- Social Recreation Counselors
- Behavior Technicians

www.autismsociety-nc.org/careers



Virtual Conference Provides Connection & Knowledge

On March 19-20, more than 400 people attended the Autism Society of North Carolina's annual conference, held virtually due to the pandemic. Attendees heard from experts on autism and ADHD, problem behaviors and picky eating, dialectical behavior therapy for adults, and navigating the public educational system in NC. After the sessions, there were opportunities to meet others in virtual connection rooms or our online exhibit hall.

A Closer Look at the Link between Autism and ADHD

Geraldine Dawson, PhD, William Cleland Distinguished Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Director, Duke Center for Autism and Brain Development, presented information from Duke's NIH-funded program studying connections between autism and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Approximately 30-50 percent of people who have autism also have ADHD, but prior to 2013, it wasn't possible for an individual to receive a diagnosis of both, based on the guidelines of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Dr. Dawson presented information from a 2015 study in *Pediatrics* which showed that children with both autism and ADHD tended to get their diagnosis of autism later than children with autism alone, thus missing out on early interventions opportunities. Duke's program is developing standards for diagnosing both conditions together as well as identifying ways to address the unique learning challenges and needs for this dual diagnosis.

Like autism, ADHD is a lifespan condition, and individuals may require accommodations and modifications both at school and in the workplace. While experts don't yet know why the conditions co-occur, it's possible there's a genetic overlap and a similar difference in brain function.



Like autism, ADHD is a lifespan condition, and individuals may require accommodations and modifications both at school and in the workplace.

Dr. Dawson shared three essential ingredients for success for children and adults with autism and/or ADHD: exercise, adequate sleep, and a healthy diet. A lack in any of these can affect mood, memory, learning, and self-regulation, which will affect the success

of other interventions or strategies. Many of the supports used for autism, including visual schedules and step-by-step checklists, prove helpful to people with a co-occurring diagnosis. Dr. Dawson pointed out that while there aren't yet many books that provide tips for children with both diagnoses, the books about managing ADHD alone provide strategies that are helpful for co-occurring autism and ADHD.

Dr. Dawson's presentation also included an overview of the use of medication for individuals with both autism and ADHD. According to studies, individuals experience better outcomes when behavioral interventions and supports are used first, and medication is added only if an individual is still experiencing difficulties. Poorer outcomes are associated with a medication-first approach.

There are several opportunities for children with both autism and ADHD to be involved in Duke's research program; visit www.autismcenter.duke.edu to learn more.

Save the Date for the 2022 Conference

We are planning to return to an in-person conference in 2022! Please make plans to join us in Charlotte on **March 25-26**. The next issue of *Spectrum* will include more information. ■

Advocacy for Services and Direct Support Staff

By Jennifer Mahan, Director of Public Policy



ASNC and a coalition of groups across intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, aging, and home and community-based health services have been working collectively to press the General Assembly to increase the wages of direct support workers. We helped to host an in-person and virtual advocacy day on June 9th, including a press conference with the sponsors of House Bill 914, Support Our Direct Care Workforce. The bill proposed an increase in wages of direct support staff across a variety of Medicaid services including Innovations and other home and community-based waivers, personal care services, intermediate care facilities, home health, nursing homes and other behavioral health residential facilities. At press time, the bill had been referred to the Appropriations Committee.

Access to services must go hand in hand with competitive wages for direct care staff – or there will be no one to provide the service. The focus of our public policy advocacy has for years been on increasing access to services and supports for people on the autism spectrum. Waitlists for services are increasing faster than new services become available; some have waited many years for help. We know that any increase in services, no matter the type, is only as good as the people who are available to staff those supports. It's been well over a decade since some rates have been increased for most services that help ensure those with autism can remain in their homes and communities, and there is much more competition for similar people-focused jobs, which means direct support positions have, in some cases, gone unfilled for years.

It's an empty promise to increase the number of waivers and other services and not increase wages.

What Can You Do?

ASNC will keep up the pressure for competitive wages and more services, but we need your help to make it happen!

1. **Check the ASNC blog at autismsociety-nc.org/blog for updates** on public policy issues and the NC General Assembly (NCGA) session.
2. **Call or email your NC General Assembly member** and ask what they are doing to expand access to services for autism and to support the direct care workforce that delivers those services. To identify who represents you, visit ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators, and select the options for "NC House" and "NC Senate."
3. **Record a short video** about the importance of autism services and your direct support staff, or about what it would mean to have services and staffing. Post the video or message on social media tagging your elected officials and ASNC's social media accounts.
4. If you can't post a video, **tweet out your message** or post a question on your elected officials' Facebook pages.

If you'd like help preparing your statement, use our Advocacy Tips Sheet or Advocacy 101 Toolkit, located on our website: autismsociety-nc.org/make-voice-heard. In general, be brief and respectful. Introduce yourself and how you are connected to autism. Tell your story about how having, or not having, services is affecting you and your family, and explain the importance of high-quality, consistent, caring staff. ■

Please contact Jennifer Mahan, Director of Public Policy, jmahan@autismsociety-nc.org, for any questions about public policy advocacy.

Offering Something for Everyone

As life begins to settle into a new normal for many of us, our 77 Chapters and Support Groups across the state are emerging from the pandemic shutdown with more tools in their toolbox than ever before. With innovative online meetings and events as well as in-person fun and camaraderie, they are well-equipped to support families in their communities. Chapters offer something for everyone!

While Chapter members are excited to get back to in-person meetings and events, we've seen how beneficial virtual support can be in cases such as regional trainings, workshops, and social groups that aren't limited by geography. Both the Wake and Orange/Chatham Chapters, for example, have hosted very successful online groups for adults on the spectrum.

In a year that tested Chapters' resiliency, ASNC support groups are stronger than ever. With a multitude of options, it's never been easier to build yourself a community of support through your local ASNC Chapter. Read on to see how you could make a difference and have fun as part of your local Chapter!

The **Surry County Chapter** had a busy spring with their Walk for Autism and Shop & Dine 4 Autism. Central Middle School (\$1,791) and North Surry High School (\$1,655) were the top two schools in fundraising. Leader Bridget Soots said the Chapter appreciated all of the schools that purchased walk shirts and supported the event. Many of the businesses that participated in Shop & Dine wore their Walk for Autism shirts on April 27 to show their support.

The **Granville/Vance Chapter** set up an information booth at an autism awareness event in April at Granville Athletic Park. Local online radio station NextDoor sponsored the food truck and outdoor movie event and donated all proceeds to the Chapter. Chapter Leaders connected with community leaders and the police department, and the Franklin Chapter Leader also attended, making it a true regional affair.

The **Person County Chapter** had a very successful egg hunt in the spring and even made the local news. Families were thrilled to be able to schedule times for their kids to hunt eggs in a sensory-friendly and socially distanced way. Chapter Leader Cindy Martin posted: "Today was an amazing day! Hearing the kids laugh and squeal was music to my ears. Thank you to all who joined us. Seeing our group together and kids playing made this one of the best days in the past 12 months." One parent said: "I really had a great time...this was the first egg hunt that Phoebe has done...thank you again for doing this."

The **Crystal Coast Chapter** hosted a "Take Home Easter Egg Hunt." Families had a chance to pick up kits with eggs, treats,



and prizes in a drive-through event. Chapter members were also busy this spring recruiting sponsors and participants for the virtual Run/Walk for Autism.

The **Richmond County Chapter** raised more than \$2,400 in donations from local community members and businesses to put together bags of sensory items for all 110 AU students in the Richmond County school system during Autism Awareness Month.

The **Onslow County Chapter's** autism awareness motorcycle ride in April was a huge success, with 96 participants on motorcycles, in cars, and even on a firetruck! Some came from as far as Charlotte and Florida to attend. They were escorted by the Onslow Sheriff's Department. Afterward, participants enjoyed a hot dog lunch outside at New River Harley-Davidson in Jacksonville and door prizes donated by local businesses were awarded. Chapter Leaders were excited to hold the community event and fundraiser, which had been annual but was delayed twice by COVID-19. Proceeds benefited the life skills program at Coastal Carolina Community College for adults with autism and other disabilities.

The **Orange/Chatham Chapter** honored mothers with a Mother's Day walk. Not only did moms have a chance to connect in person, but they also received a rose as recognition for all they do. One member said, "We enjoyed some post vaccination reunion hugs!" Orange/Chatham has also offered virtual sing-alongs, story times, and Disney trivia events to keep their members in touch. The Chapter also started a support group for autistic adults that meets online. All are welcome! See the ASNC calendar at www.autismsociety-nc.org/calendar for details.

The **Wake County Chapter** hosted an information booth at a May autism awareness resource fair in Holly Springs. In June, the Chapter offered three virtual social events for different age groups using a Disney trivia PowerPoint created by the Orange/Chatham Chapter and UNC-CH Campus Club. The Chapter also started a support group for autistic adults that began meeting monthly in June.

The **Rockingham County Chapter** has been busy fundraising! They had a cupcake sale that raised more than \$700 and received various community donations. Reidsville High School held an autism awareness game that raised more than \$200 for the Chapter. "So excited to see how young people are taking the time to understand and accept the AU population in our area," wrote Leader Pat Routh. "The young man that threw the first pitch is on the spectrum and the guys on the team were so excited."

New Hanover County Chapter moms were excited to gather at a local restaurant for their first moms' night out since the start of the pandemic. After an evening of swapping stories and lots of laughter, they all said they hoped to make the event monthly.

In **Western NC**, teens have been meeting once a month online for games and conversation. The teens share their interests, including video games and art. See the ASNC calendar at www.autismsociety-nc.org/calendar for details; because the event is virtual, anyone from NC can attend!

The **Iredell County Chapter** received more than \$500 from a T-shirt fundraiser by Langtree Charter Academy, where Chapter Leader Danielle Abbott teaches. The Chapter plans to use the donation for childcare during meetings. ■

If you would like to join a local Chapter, find one near you at autismsociety-nc.org/chapters or contact Marty Kellogg, State Chapters Coordinator, at mkellogg@autismsociety-nc.org.



Photos in order from bottom to top right: Orange/Chatham Mother's Day walk; Iredell Langtree Charter Academy fundraiser; Surry County Walk for Autism; New Hanover moms' night out; awareness festival in Wake County. Photos on opposite page: Onslow motorcycle ride (left); Rockingham County baseball game (right).

Recursos y Eventos para las Familias Hispanas

Para obtener servicio en español llamen al 800-442-2762, extensión 1, o envíen un correo electrónico a Mariela Maldonado, Enlace de Asuntos Hispanos; mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org

El Departamento de Asuntos Hispanos ofrece servicios por teléfono, correo electrónico, videoconferencia y redes sociales para apoyar a las familias y a los profesionales bilingües. Ofrecemos entrenamientos y grupos de apoyo virtuales, campañas de sensibilización y eventos de recaudación de fondos.

Seminarios web en español

Ofrecemos seminarios web gratuitos en español. Los temas incluyen asuntos escolares, comportamiento, acoso- "bullying", transición a la adultez, educación sexual y el autismo, y estrategias para la vacunación contra el COVID-19. Los presentadores son psicólogos y analistas certificados de conducta (BCBA, por sus siglas en inglés) del Departamento Clínico y Especialistas en Recursos de Autismo de ASNC. Queremos agradecer a las organizaciones que se han asociado con Autism Society of NC para presentar los seminarios web: Disability Rights of NC, Family Academy of Wake County Public Schools y ECAC. Para registrarse en estos entrenamientos ingrese al calendario de ASNC, autismsociety-nc.org/calendar

Conferencia Anual

La Conferencia Anual 2021 se ofreció por primera vez en forma virtual en marzo. Cerca de cien familias hispanas recibieron becas para asistir y aprender sobre temas de comportamiento, problemas sensoriales y de sueño, y estrategias de educación a distancia. También se llevaron a cabo sesiones de panelistas sobre el comportamiento con especialistas bilingües de ABA del Departamento Clínico de ASNC. Reserve la fecha para la próxima Conferencia Anual, que se realizara el 25 y 26 de marzo de 2022 en Charlotte, NC.

Reuniones virtuales de los Grupos de Apoyo Hispano

Los Grupos de Apoyo Hispano se siguen reuniendo de forma virtual, logrando una alta participación de las familias desde sus hogares a través de teléfonos celulares, tabletas o computadores. Estas reuniones en línea son cómodas y convenientes, ya que las familias evitan los problemas de transporte, los largos viajes y el cuidado de los niños. Las reuniones ofrecen un espacio de confianza para que los padres estén conectados e intercambien experiencias y recursos para ayudar a sus hijos. Las reuniones virtuales se celebran el primer, segundo y tercer martes de cada mes de 7:00 a 8:30 p.m. Para más información sobre los grupos de apoyo, comuníquese con los líderes voluntarios regionales:

Triángulo: Wake, Durham, Orange, Johnston

Ana Chouza 919-244-9633
Guadalupe Ortega 919-247-5760
Juana García 919-687-7692
Mayra Tapia 919-540-6543
Hilda Murgía 919-946-5080

Charlotte, Concord, Gastonia

Laura Torres 704-430-0281
Magnolia Elguera 704-493-9339

Tríad: Guilford, Forsyth y alrededores

Monica Giffuni 336-549-75786
Jazmine Loera 336-997-2664

Fayetteville y zona sureste

Alma Morale 910-785-5473
Gloria Liran 910-391-8257



autismsociety-nc.org/recursos

Visite esta página web para encontrar videos, narrativas y estrategias sociales, una lista de reuniones, recursos y servicios en español.

Evaluación a distancia de UNC para hermanos hispanos de niños con Autismo

El Departamento de Asuntos Hispanos colabora con UNC Chapel Hill para realizar un estudio sobre los hermanos hispanos de entre 3 y 18 meses de edad. Las evaluaciones se harán en forma gratuita y a través de telesalud. Cada familia que participe recibirá un kit de evaluación por correo y una compensación por el tiempo dedicado a esta evaluación. Si desea participar en este estudio de hermanos, comuníquese directamente con el equipo de UNC en el 919-566-5171.

Kit de Herramientas ASNC en español

Estamos traduciendo los kits de herramientas al español para que las familias tengan un amplio acceso a la información sobre diversos temas de interés a lo largo de la vida de las personas con autismo. Los temas incluyen comportamiento, IEP, transición a la edad adulta, salud, tutela y acoso-(bullying). Las traducciones de estos kits estarán publicadas en el sitio web del ASNC y en la página de recursos en español.

La Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo

¡La Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo vuelve este otoño! Estos eventos ayudan a sensibilizar a la comunidad sobre el autismo y a recaudar fondos para apoyar los programas locales. Usted puede correr o caminar en persona, y este año también existe la opción de participar virtualmente.

Para más información y para inscribirse:

Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo de WNC

11 de septiembre, zona de Asheville

wncrunwalkforautism.com

Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo de la Tríada

25 de septiembre, Greensboro

triadrunkwalkforautism.com

Carrera/Caminata por el Autismo del Triángulo

9 de octubre, Raleigh

trianglerunwalkforautism.com

Donaciones para el Departamento de Asuntos Hispanos de ASNC

El Departamento de Asuntos Hispanos está muy agradecido por su apoyo con donaciones que proporcionan educación y promueven oportunidades para las familias hispanas en todo el estado, incluyendo becas para la conferencia anual y servicios de traducción en los talleres y en la Conferencia Anual. Si quiere ser patrocinador o contribuir con nuestro departamento, comuníquese con Mariela Maldonado en mmaldonado@autismsociety-nc.org. ■



La Vacuna contra el COVID-19 y la Comunidad con Autismo

Durante el verano, ASNC ofreció un seminario web en español sobre la vacuna COVID-19 con estrategias para una vacunación exitosa para las personas con autismo. Aquí le ofrecemos más información:

- Las vacunas contra el COVID-19 son gratuitas y están disponibles en Carolina del Norte para las personas mayores de 12 años.
- Para recibir la vacuna no se requiere ningún tipo de identificación gubernamental, seguro o estatus migratorio.
- Prepare la cita para la vacunación con antelación utilizando elementos visuales y narrativos.
- Ver Narrativas Sociales de ASNC para la vacunación en español: autismsociety-nc.org/socialnarratives
- Programe una cita en el momento más adecuado para su hijo y menos ocupado del proveedor.
- Comparta la condición de su hijo con el equipo de vacunación.
- Traiga los juguetes favoritos o la tableta de su hijo para distraerlo y premiarlo.
- Si tiene dudas sobre la vacunación, hable con el médico de su hijo.
- Los padres deben ayudar a sus hijos no vacunados a llevar mascarilla, mantener una distancia de 2 metros y lavarse las manos.
- Para encontrar un proveedor de vacunas cerca de usted, visite MySpot.nc.gov.
- Para obtener más información sobre vacunación, visite el sitio web del DHHS de Carolina del Norte: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>



Fundraisers & Events

Spring Run/Walks for Autism Raise \$130,000

The Spring Run/Walks for Autism, benefitting Beaufort, Greenville/Winterville, Surry County, and Wilmington took place April 17-24. While the Spring Run/Walks were virtual, we still felt an amazing sense of community as people stepped out to improve lives! Together, the events raised \$130,000 for local programs and services.

Join Us for a Fall Run/Walk – In-Person or Virtually!

We're excited to announce that our Fall Run/Walks will be in-person! Make plans now to join us for an amazing day of community that will improve the lives of children and adults with autism. For each event, we're offering the opportunity to participate virtually, which is a great option for friends and family across the country who want to be part of your team and help fundraise. Proceeds will support local programs of the Autism Society of North Carolina. Registration is online only: www.RunWalkforAutism.com

WNC Run/Walk for Autism

September 11
Bill Moore Community Park, Fletcher
wncrunwalkforautism.com

Triad Run/Walk for Autism

September 25
Jaycee Park, Greensboro
triadrunkwalkforautism.com

Triangle Run/Walk for Autism

October 9
Halifax Mall, Raleigh
trianglerunkwalkforautism.com



Spring Event Sponsors

We thank the following sponsors of our events this spring; these events would not be possible without them. Please support these businesses and thank them for helping to improve the lives of individuals with autism and their loved ones.

Platinum (\$15,000 +)



Visionary (\$5,000)



PHILLIPS-VAN HEUSEN CORPORATION

Champion (\$2,500)



Partner (\$1,000)

Behavioral Consulting for Autism, PLLC
CK Technologies
David H. Cline, IV, D.D.S., P.A.
Central Middle School
Cox Farm, Pilot Mountain, NC
Eastern Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, PLLC

Emerge Ortho
Freedom and Liberty Worship Center
G & B Oil Co.
Grady White Boats
Highland Park Baptist Church
Hugh Chatham Hospital
Libby Hill Seafood

Life Alliance, LLC
Magnolia Construction, LLC
Maple Grove UMC Unites for Autism
PPD
Renfro Corporation
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More than \$200,000 Raised to Send Campers to Camp Royall

Catwalk to Camp

The 10th annual Catwalk to Camp, held virtually on April 8, was an amazing evening celebrating hope and possibility. The annual talent show featured dancers, musicians, artists, and speakers, and the audience cheered on all our participants in the live chat.

This year's featured speaker was Dr. Kerry Magro, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of four. He didn't speak in complete sentences until he was seven, but he is now a professional speaker who has presented at more than 1,000 events in the past 10 years. He wrote several books and works as a film consultant to ensure realistic portrayals of autism in movies and television.

Dr. Magro shared his early struggles, including sensory challenges that made him feel like he was an alien and issues with picky eating. "I've failed more times than I can count," he said. But he told the audience that neither he nor his family ever let setbacks stand in the way of his goals. "No one thing in your life can define or measure what success you might have in the future," he said. "I cannot ride a bike due to balance issues and have trouble buttoning my shirts. I am also a doctoral graduate and have a job as a public speaker. The ability to button your shirts does not determine your success."

Dr. Magro shared his personal journey to becoming a self-advocate and encouraged the audience to stay positive. "There are going to be those times, regardless if you have a disability or not, when we have bad days. I made it one of my missions as I was getting older to take negative thoughts and turn them into positive thoughts, and it really helped trying to keep a positive mindset."

Ron Howrigan, ASNC board member and parent to a son with autism, reminded the audience that Camp Royall is the kind of place that makes positivity possible for so many individuals and families. "Camp Royall manufactures hope on a regular basis," he said. "It's a place where miracles happen every day, where helping kids with autism achieve their full potential is commonplace. It's a place where kids discover their talents, where friends are made, new foods are tried, and first-time experiences are the rule of the day."

The evening wrapped up with live and silent auctions. A total of \$181,000 was raised to benefit campers.

Camp Royall Classic Golf Tournament

On May 3, golfers came out for the Camp Royall Classic at Governors Club in Chapel Hill. The teams enjoyed a beautiful day on the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course and raised more than \$27,000 to send children and adults to Camp Royall.

Our thanks to local McDonald's franchise owners Paul, Pat, Rex, and Kelli Willoughby as well as Jeff Woodlief and Premiere Communications and Consulting for their continued support of Camp Royall.



The next Camp Royall Classic will be held on Monday, May 2, 2022.

We are so grateful to all who participated in our events to provide scholarships to Camp Royall. Be on the lookout for these events next spring!

Camp Royall Donors

Camp Royall is the largest and oldest camp exclusively for individuals with autism in the United States. We hope you will consider joining these generous donors in helping to provide an amazing experience for a camper with autism. Please contact Kristy White, Chief Development Officer, at 919-856-5086 or kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org if you are interested in donating to camp, learning about named scholarships, or helping with fundraising.

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Thank You!

The Autism Society of North Carolina would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all of our donors. While we appreciate every gift, we have limited the donation list to Honorarium/Memorial gifts in the interest of space and printing costs. Thank you for your tremendous support.

This list reflects donations received on or between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021. Please contact Beverly Gill if you have any questions or corrections at 800-442-2762, ext. 1105 or bgill@autismsociety-nc.org.

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Donor Spotlight: Wake Forest Fire Department

In March 2021, the Wake Forest Fire Department (WFFD) announced that its members would wear custom autism awareness shirts in support of Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month in April. The idea for the initiative came from Fire Chief Ron Early, his wife, Tammy, and Fire Captain Justin Brown; Mrs. Early and Captain Brown designed the shirts.

In response to strong community interest, the WFFD made the shirts available for sale. The department sold almost 1,000 shirts, including orders from as far away as New York, Florida, and Hawaii. For every T-shirt sold, the WFFD donated just over \$5 to the Autism Society of North Carolina for a total contribution of \$5,121.79.

The donation was made in memory of Kyle Early, son of Ron and Tammy Early. Kyle was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2. He experienced bullying in school and passed by suicide at the age of 19.

"Autism awareness is near and dear to our hearts," said Chief Early. "It is our hope that by bringing awareness to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), we can help people better understand individuals diagnosed with ASD with a more loving heart, patience, and kindness."

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a hotline for individuals in crisis or for those looking to help someone else. To speak with a certified listener, call 1-800-273-8255. To learn more, visit [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

Corporate Partnerships

Is your company looking for a way to give back and make a difference in your community? Partner with us! We are excited to work with companies, organizations, and their employees to improve the lives of individuals with autism and support their families.

Become a Corporate Partner

Each year, we host seven Run/Walk for Autism events and other special events that offer financial and in-kind sponsorships as well as volunteer opportunities.

Create positive brand association: For over 50 years, the Autism Society of North Carolina has been the leading statewide resource for individuals with autism.

Reach a large and diverse audience: 1 in 54 children are affected by autism, and their families partner with us to give their loved ones the best lives possible. Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries.

Let us customize your package: With a team of experienced and creative marketing and sponsorship professionals, we are able to customize your package to help you achieve your mission and ours.

Together, we will be here for the families who need us today and the families who will find out they need us tomorrow.

Contact us:

Kristy White, *Chief Development Officer*
919-865-5086
kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org



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Call on Us!

The Autism Society of North Carolina improves the lives of individuals with autism, supports families affected by autism, and educates communities.

Autism Resource Specialists connect families to resources and provide training to help you become your child's best advocate. As parents of children with autism themselves, they understand your concerns. Find yours: autismsociety-nc.org/ARS

Workshops and conferences with our Autism Resource Specialists or Clinical staff will help you learn more about topics that concern you, such as early intervention, evidence-based practices, IEPs, transitioning to adulthood, and residential options. autismsociety-nc.org/workshops

Online resources, including toolkits, webinars, a blog, and a Staying Safe section, provide opportunities to learn on your own time from your home.

Chapters and Support Groups provide a place for families who face similar challenges to feel welcomed and understood as they offer each other encouragement. Find one near you: autismsociety-nc.org/chapters

Skill-building and support services provide children and adults with autism the skills to increase self-sufficiency and participate in the community in a fulfilling way. ASNC's services across the state include skill-building in areas such as communication, socialization, community integration, and personal care; family consultation; respite; and adult day programs. Services are provided through the NC Innovations waiver, state funding, B3, and private pay. autismsociety-nc.org/skillbuilding

Clinical Services offer a variety of supports for individuals with autism and their families to increase independence and empower children and adults. **LifeLong Interventions (LLI)** provides comprehensive treatment for children and adults. LLI is rooted in the principles of ABA and involves effective instruction using evidence-based practices to promote meaningful skills and behaviors in the home, school, and community. **Rapid Response Clinical Consultation (RRCC)** is available in all 100 NC counties via telehealth for children and adults. RRCC is a short-term consultation service (2-4 weeks) that provides tips and strategies to address social communication, behavior intervention, and other skills. **Behavior consultations** provided by our psychologists and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) can help explain why behaviors are occurring, develop comprehensive behavior plans, and coach caregivers on effective strategies.

autismsociety-nc.org/clinical

Employment Supports helps individuals with autism explore their skills and interests, then assists them in finding, keeping, and thriving in a job. Services are funded through the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

autismsociety-nc.org/jobservices

Adult programs serve individuals ages 16 to 28 with a focus on job readiness, development, placement, and training, as well as financial literacy, daily living and independence skills, and social skills. The year-round programming

includes small group instruction in centers and one-on-one support in the community.

autismsociety-nc.org/adults

IGNITE community centers in Davidson, Raleigh, and Greensboro offer activities, skills training, and educational workshops that foster social, financial, educational, and employment independence for young adults with high-functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome.

autismsociety-nc.org/ignite

Camp Royall is the nation's oldest and largest camp for individuals with autism. Located near Pittsboro, Camp Royall serves all ages and offers year-round programming. camproyall.org

Social Recreation programs provide opportunities for participants to bond over common interests, practice social skills, and try new activities. In Newport, Wilmington, and Winterville, social recreation programs include summer day camp, afterschool programs, and adult programs, with support from Trillium Health Resources. In other areas, summer camp and group activities may be available. Contact us to learn which services are available in your area.

autismsociety-nc.org/socialrec

ASNC's public policy efforts aim to advocate for the needs of individuals with autism and their families by maintaining a wide range of ties with the executive and legislative branches of state government. You can get involved and make your voice heard.

autismsociety-nc.org/policy

www.autismsociety-nc.org

We have regional offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Greenville, Newport, Raleigh, and Wilmington. Contact our state office to be connected to resources.

State Office: 800-442-2762
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RunWalkforAutism.com

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