



HOWARD COUNTY CHAPTER AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA



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Autism Incidence Increases Dramatically

By Catriona Johnson

Counties throughout Maryland continue to struggle with an increasing number of students with autism spectrum disorders entering local public school systems. The 1998 Maryland Special Education Census Data puts the number of students with a primary diagnosis of autism as 1,594. The census count is done each year on December 1 and does not include children age birth through three. The 1997 count was 1,282 revealing a 24% increase in children in that one-year period.

Early increases in autism (1993 through 1995) can be explained by diagnosis reclassification. Prior to 1993, autism was not a separate category under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and students were given other disability labels. As children entered the system and were re-evaluated during the 1993-95 period, numbers increased sharply. However those numbers have continued to increase dramatically. Maryland State Department of Education officials report similar increases throughout the country, although admit that Maryland's numbers are slightly higher than in other states.

Increases in numbers of students with autism have outpaced other disabilities (see page 5). Autism saw an increase of 513% from

(Continued on page 5)

Jurisdiction	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Allegany	0	0	0	1	1	3
Anne Arundel	33	49	78	132	187	206
Baltimore City	85	106	167	227	280	323
Baltimore	54	83	121	163	218	306
Calvert	0	1	3	7	13	17
Caroline	0	0	5	6	10	11
Carroll	8	12	18	25	26	28
Cecil	1	2	1	5	9	9
Charles	4	7	5	7	10	14
Dorchester	0	1	3	3	2	4
Frederick	3	8	26	50	75	91
Garrett	0	0	0	1	1	1
Harford	7	16	13	18	19	34
Howard	10	38	64	106	129	169
Kent	0	0	0	0	1	3
Montgomery	30	37	74	65	65	82
Prince George's	19	49	90	134	175	209
Queen Anne's	2	2	3	4	6	8
St. Mary's	1	1	3	8	7	13
Somerset	0	0	1	4	4	5
Talbot	0	0	1	3	3	4
Washington	3	6	9	12	17	27
Wicomico	0	2	10	15	21	22
Worcester	0	2	2	3	3	5
Other (prisons, etc.)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	260	422	697	999	1,282	1,594

Table of Contents

Autism on the Rise	1	Local and State News	6
President's Message	2	Resources	7
Treating Autism	3	Upcoming Events	8
Summer Travels	4	Citizens' Advisory Committee	9
Waiver on Hold	5	News	12

Source: MSDE Special Education Census Data 1993-98

President's Message: New Beginnings

When my son Ryan was diagnosed in 1996, the Howard County Public School System ("HCPSS") offered him seven and a half hours of classroom time, an hour of speech and an hour of occupational therapy, which was an improvement over past years' programs. The only constant is change, and the new programs funded by Howard County and implemented by HCPSS as a result, in large part, of the persistent, prodding efforts of Ben Dorman, our past president, Anne Long, Sue Shafley and a host of others on the White Paper are now providing more and better services to our children.

Since I joined, the Chapter has been focused, and I think correctly so, on changing the HCPSS programs offered to our younger children. This year, the Chapter will be well served to expand its focus to a broader range of issues, although still maintaining a dialog with HCPSS with respect to the programs for our children.

Almost all of our most active membership are the parents of young children who will keep facing different challenges, like the rabbits in *Watership Down*, as those children enter grade school, middle school, high school, and then stop receiving school system services. Some of the speakers at our meetings will explore that aging process and describe resources apart from the school system.

A broader focus for the Chapter will require more active participation from more members. The easiest way to begin becoming more active is to join our email list. There's twenty-four families on it now, and I'm going to try and discuss much of the Chapter's business through this medium. Steve Fine also distributes copies of newspaper and magazine articles to this group that are of interest. I think this email group will be informative, more precise than the meetings and may be addictive.

Tangential topics are:

1. Child Care. The Chapter pays \$22.50/adult and \$10/teenager per night for child care. I was concerned that at the July meeting, there were nine children and one adult child care provider, when I have trouble managing my own five. Therefore,

- a) Please notify Anna Burns how many children you'll be bringing to child care so that we can try to have a reasonable number of child care providers, and
- b) I'm asking that you pay \$2/child/night to the child care provider when you leave your children. I emphasize that I'm asking, not insisting. If you can pay, please do so. If you can't

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pay, most of us have been there, and understand.

2. Newsletter. You don't have to write as well as Catriona to submit an article. Genetic research, drugs, diet, legal developments and alternative treatments are prime topics.

3. IEP Repository. Vicki Baxter wants to be the repository for previous IEPs. Although the forms change, it would be useful to have a range of IEPs for parents to consult. Please bring copies of previous IEPs to the next meeting or give them to Vicki. If you have privacy

issues, delete all identifying references.

4. ESY. Some of our membership is dissatisfied with ESY. A group will be forming to collect data and discuss what to do about it.

5. Partners for Success Center. Anne Long, as a member of the Howard County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee, will be working with the Center to make this resource better for parents to consult.

6. Athletics. Patrick McCardell's success with horseback riding indicates that more members could be horseback riding, swimming, doing gymnastics, and other sports like basketball and soccer for which Special Olympics provides training.

Finally, whenever I think of the time and effort my predecessor put into the White Paper, the chapter's web site creation and three years as the Chapter's President, I am in awe. I know I couldn't have done it. The Chapter, and all the parents who will be receiving services from HCPSS under its new program, owe him a debt of gratitude. Thank you Ben.

I look forward to a productive year. See you at the picnic.



Treating Autism: Traditional and Alternative Approaches

By Pamela J. Compart, M.D

Note: HCC-ASA adheres to the Autism Society of America's Options Policy with regard to treatments for individuals with autism. As with all HCC-ASA newsletter articles, the views represented here are those of the author. We thank Dr. Compart for her article on how she approaches her work with individuals with autism and their families.

“Healing” of autism can come in many forms. It may or may not mean “cure,” though that is what many of us, as professionals and family members, hope and strive for. Healing can mean improvement in language, communication and social skills. It can mean a decrease in interfering behaviors. It can also mean a strengthening of the family, of learning as much from the child with autism as he or she learns from us. How this healing occurs can also take many forms, through traditional and non-traditional (also referred to as “alternative” or “complementary”) treatments.

As the developmental pediatrician at the RiverHill Wellness Center in Clarksville, Maryland, I provide both traditional and complementary treatment approaches for children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental challenges. Though I was “traditionally” trained, in recent years I have become convinced of the potential benefits of a variety of complementary treatments. I also am convinced that treatments, whether traditional or complementary, need to be individualized to each child and family. Every child who carries the “label” of autism is not the same. Each child has his or her own strengths and weaknesses and is part of a family which is also unique. In addition, the underlying

pathophysiology, the underlying “cause” of autism, is not the same in each child. Further, even those children who have the same pathophysiology may not have the same symptoms. All these factors need to be taken into account when designing the optimal interventions for a given child.

In my practice, the process of planning interventions begins with a comprehensive assessment of the child. This involves evaluating the totality of factors which may be contributing to a child's symptoms and progress including medical history,



developmental history, educational interventions, family history, and behavioral symptoms. Current and past interventions and treatments as well as previous testing are reviewed. The evaluation also includes a complete general physical and neurologic examination looking for “clues” as to factors which may be causing or contributing to a child's presenting symptoms. The assessment also involves developmental testing and direct interaction with the child. This comprehensive approach allows me to develop an understanding of the uniqueness of that particular child and family which is crucial to designing treatments that best match their

needs. It also is a necessary path to developing the mutual trust and respect which is so important to the partnership between a physician and a family. I view this partnering relationship as essential to developing and refining treatment approaches as the child grows and develops.

Once the assessment is completed, I meet with the parents to discuss the findings from the evaluation as well as the variety of treatment options. I am open to discussing all available treatment options, traditional and complementary. More traditional treatments might include discrete trial training, other behavioral interventions for problematic behaviors, and medications. Other less traditional or complementary approaches might include sensory integration training (which I actually view as more standard than “alternative”), dietary interventions, herbal treatments, magnet therapy, acupuncture, or massage, to name a few. I am able to provide testing and interventions described in the DAN! (Defeat Autism Now!) Protocol, addressing possible underlying gastrointestinal and neuroimmune dysfunction. Many of the complementary treatment approaches involve looking for things which may be “out of balance” in the body and intervening to restore optimal functioning. This may involve removing those substances which trigger abnormal reactions and/or restoring the optimal health and functioning of the body so that it can “detoxify” itself and no longer be abnormally triggered by internal or external substances.

I see my role as being a partner with parents in the decision-making process. I feel one of my important functions is to teach parents how to evaluate current and new treatments so that they may be the most in-

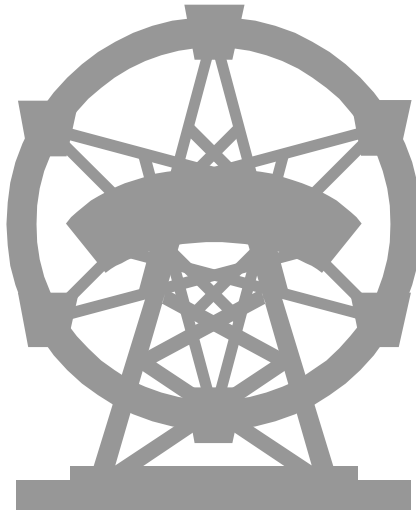
(Continued on page 4)

HAVE A BLAST AT HERSHEY PARK!!!

by Judy Terle

On a recent Sunday morning the family, which includes our two daughters with autism, ages 6 and 8, my husband and myself got into the car and off we went to Hershey Park. The Park is located in Hershey, PA., right near Harrisburg. It takes about one hour and 45 minutes to get there from Columbia. The girls liked the car ride and right before going into the park we stopped at McDonalds because the food at the park is very expensive.

When we arrived, the park was crowded so we had to park quite a distance away, but they have transportation from the parking lot to the park entrance if you don't want to walk. We arrived at the gate without any hassle, but once inside, it is a bit crowded until you get your tickets. The cost of the tickets for four was about \$80.00. There is a discount for children with special needs and discount tickets for others are readily available, including



through the Columbia Association. After purchasing the tickets you have to go to the Rides Office to get a wrist band for the kids so they don't have to stand in the long lines. With the band, once you get to the ride you go through the exit gates to get on the ride without waiting.

Boy did the kids have a great time on the rides!! Their favorite one was the big swing that goes way out to the sides and up high as it goes around. We rode on about 10 to 15 rides. Also, they have a small zoo there that kept the girls' attention. The positive points about the park are, that it is so clean, it has lots of restrooms, and the people are so nice. The negative points about the park for my girls were the food lines being really long even for a soda, and it was very, very noisy. My one daughter loved the bands playing and didn't mind the loud rides; however my other daughter didn't like the loud music. This is our second year at Hershey park and we plan on going every year. It's such a fun time. It's a day we can all be kids!!!

Camping at Rocky Gap

by Catriona Johnson

Our family spent two weekends camping at Rocky Gap State Park this summer, both of which were very successful. Rocky Gap is about 15 minutes east of Cumberland, MD (about a 2.5 hour drive from Columbia). As well as a large and well-maintained campground, there is a resort hotel, but we opted for the great outdoors at a much-reduced price!

There are three camping options at Rocky Gap: regular campsite, campsite with electricity, and cabin. Our first weekend trip we tented, while for the second trip we booked one of the small log cabins. The cabins (\$40 per night) sleep four and have electricity.

Our camping experiences have told us there has to be water nearby to keep our children entertained, especially Asher, who has autism. Lake Habib has a wonderful beach and lifeguards on duty. There are canoes and paddleboats to rent, as well as a twice-daily boat tour of the lake and surrounding area. For those who have trouble rising in the morning, a morning coffeeshop offers coffee and doughnuts. Camp volunteers offer afternoon craft activities for children on the weekends. The volunteers were very responsive to children with special needs. We liked Rocky Gap so much, we visited twice. What better recommendation!

Traditional and Alternative Approaches....

(Continued from page 3)

formed advocates for their children. For any given treatment, this may involve understanding the theory on which the treatment is based, the available studies and data (if any), and the potential risks and benefits of the treatment. The goal is for parents to have the most information possible on which to base their treatment decisions. By creating an atmosphere of openness and trust, parents and

physicians have much to teach each other and to learn from each other. I have yet to see a child or family who did not teach me something, and that is one of the many rewards of doing this work. As each family helps me grow or see something in a new light, I am expanded in my ability to help other children and families.



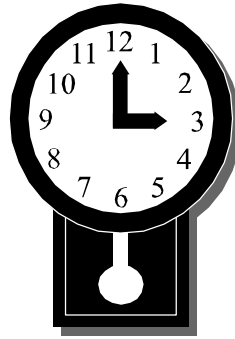
If you would like further information about the developmental pediatrics services offered at the RiverHill Wellness Center, please feel free to call me (Pamela J. Compart, M.D.) at 443-535-0200. I look forward to speaking with you and getting to know you and your children as we all seek to help the children we care for reach their highest potential.

Autism Waiver Still On Hold

By Cationa Johnson

The Autism Waiver being submitted to the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) has still not been approved and officials at the Maryland State Department of Education say it will be at least a couple of months before they gain federal approval and implement the program. The waiver is designed to be accessed through the IEP process and provide children and their families with community-based services in order to keep them out of institutions. In order for families to access the waiver services, the child must have a diagnosis of autism, be ages 0 through 21, meet certain financial requirements, and the parents or guardians must be at the point of considering institutional care. If the parents or guardians submit that the child is eligible for institutional care, the family will be offered waiver services to keep the child in the community. Services might include respite care, environmental modifications, day habilitation, various therapeutic inter-

ventions, and case management services. But because the parent has a choice of waiver services or institutional care, there must be an institution (however repelling the thought) willing to take children with autism. MSDE officials must be prepared even if only one parent requests the



institution option. Under HCFA guidelines, the institution must be an ICF-MR, a state-run institution that serves individuals with mental retardation.

Maryland's ICF-MR is Rosewood, outside Baltimore. The facility has just under 300 residents, some of whom are there on court order. There are no children at Rosewood. It is an inappropriate placement for children with autism, let alone adults with developmental disabilities, particularly in the current day of supported living and community-based supports.

Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, Secretary for the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, declined to approve Rosewood as a placement for children with autism. While this was a good decision for advocates of deinstitutionalization and community inclusion, it places autism advocates and MSDE in a difficult predicament. MSDE officials are now looking for an out-of-state ICF-MR just in case a parent or guardian chooses institutional care over community-based waiver services. The thought of a parent choosing an out-of-state institution over community-based services is disturbing to many, however, under HCFA guidelines for community-based waivers, the option must be available.

MSDE had begun to schedule training on the autism waiver for school psychologists, administrators, and special education personnel, but has postponed all training workshops pending HCFA approval of the autism waiver application. HCC-ASA will notify parents as soon as approval is gained.

Prevalence of Autism, continued....

(Continued from page 1)

1993 to 1998, while mental retardation increased 13%, specific learning disabilities increased 7%, and children with multiple disabilities increased 26%. Even if

one excludes the first 3 years that autism was included as a category under IDEA, there has been a 60% increase in students from 1996 to 1998. Maryland's estimated population growth from the 1990 U.S. Census to 1998 was 7% (U.S. Bureau of

the Census), underscoring the incongruent increases in the number of children diagnosed with autism.

California officials, based on their school system census data, recently described autism prevalence rates there as 1 in 500, an enormous increase from statistics a decade ago of only 1-4 in 10,000. The Autism Society of America uses a 1997 statistic from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that autism and its associated behaviors have been estimated to occur in as many as 1 in 500 individuals. In 1997, the CDC and the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) brought together researchers from around the world to discuss autism prevalence, etiology, and standard definitions.

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mental Retardation	5,949	5,689	6,497	6,544	6,666	6,747
Specific Learning Disability	42,690	44,537	43,482	43,958	44,121	45,720
Multiple Disabilities	5,189	5,308	5,385	5,691	6,264	6,551
Autism	260	422	697	999	1,282	1,594

Source: MSDE Special Education Census Data 1993-98

HCC-ASA NEWS

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

In June, the Chapter held its annual general meeting and elected a new slate of officers. Michael Dooley was elected the new president replacing HCC-ASA president of three years, Ben Dorman. Dooley pledged to carry on the dialogue with the public school system and broaden the Chapter's influence into the areas of recreation and community services. A full slate of officers were elected with Dooley. They are:

Executive Officers

Mike Dooley - President
Anna Burns - Vice-President
Catriona Johnson - Secretary
Susan Mountford - Treasurer

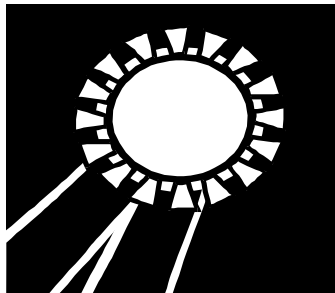
Members-At-Large

Genevieve McCardell
Steve Wampler
Stacey Stirmer
Judy Terle
Valarie Dunbar
Claudia Igras
Vicki Baxter
Cheryl Breville
Joanne Heckman

GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES CHAPTER FOR VOLUNTEERISM

HCC-ASA was awarded a Volunteer Appreciation Certificate for "outstanding and exceptional commitment to Maryland's vibrant traditions of generosity and caring, and for unstinting efforts to better the lives of your fellow Marylanders and a distinguished record of services which has earned you a nomination for the 16th Annual Governor's Volunteer and Service Awards."

The Chapter was nominated by a member for the volunteer effort of working with the Howard County Public School System to improve its early intervention services for young children with autism.



HCC-ASA RECEIVES AMERICA CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE CHARITY AWARD FROM NATIONAL SOCIETY

HCC-ASA was one of several chapters throughout the country to receive an America Contract Bridge League (ACBL) Award from the National Society. The Autism Society of America was named ACBL's Charity of the Year for 1999 and received a \$100,000 grant. As part of the grant selected chapters receive public education materials designed to educate school personnel about autism.

The grant is a wonderful opportunity for the Autism Society of America and HCC-ASA to fulfill one of its primary goals of helping to raise awareness and knowledge of autism and to impact the training and information-base available to teachers in the public schools. Long-time chapter member and former newsletter editor Anne Long will coordinate the local effort. She, along with a professional, will schedule a series of presentations to school personnel throughout the county. The Chapter will receive publications to assist in the public education effort.

News from Around the State

FEDERAL OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS (OSEP) MONITORS SPECIAL EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

By the time you read this newsletter, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will have held 4 public input meetings around the State seeking parents' and students thoughts about special education services in Maryland. In August, HCC-ASA sent out meeting announcements and surveys in collaboration with the Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities. The Coalition held a telephone conference call



with the OSEP monitoring team during the first week of September. The focus was on problems in special education that are statewide and included: Least Restrictive Environment and access to the general curriculum, discipline and suspensions, Extended School Year Services, essential elements of the IEP and IEP implementation, transition planning and services, etc. Underlying all of the problem areas was a focus on MSDE's inability or unwillingness to properly monitor local school systems. In reviewing local monitoring reports done by MSDE, advocates discovered that several jurisdictions had not been monitored or received written reports in a decade.

The OSEP monitoring team will return in October to do site visits. The decision on where to visit will be based on

public input meetings, and recommendations of Maryland's own self-assessment group. That group has been meeting over the summer, gathering information, and developing a self-assessment for the state. The group is looking at areas in which the state is performing well and where there is a need for improvement.

If you were unable to attend one of the public input meetings, your comments can be sent to:

Claudia M. Brewster (Age 3 through 21)
Alma McPherson (Infants and Toddlers)
Office of Special Education Programs,
330 "C" Street SW
Washington, DC 20202

Or e-mail:

claudia_brewster@ed.gov
alma_mcpherson@ed.gov

More News and Resources

PUBLICATIONS

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council has just published **Planning Now: A Futures and Estate Planning Guide for Parents of Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities**. This 130-page booklet covers federal government services entitlements, state services, and private financial planning. One copy of the guide is available free to parents of children with disabilities and individuals with disabilities. Additional copies are \$10. To receive your free copy, call (410) 333-3688.

The Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) is a private, non-profit law firm that has been designated the Protection and Advocacy organization for individuals with disabilities for the State of Maryland. MDLC publishes a handbook called, **Special Education Rightsand Wrongs**, which is an introduction to special education law. MDLC is located in Baltimore and can be reached at (410) 727-6352 or 1-(800) 233-7201.

The **Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education** has a new advocacy manual out describing students' legal right to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment. Call MCIE at (410) 712-4837 to order a copy.

Writing your child's annual IEP and looking for goals and objectives? Three very helpful books are: **The Goal Mine - Learning Goals & Objectives...Infancy to Adult**. This book was awarded the Seal of Excellence by Exceptional Parent Magazine and includes more than 6,000 goals and objectives, criteria, teaching methods, accommodations, tests, services, and special conditions for any child's learning program. Organized for easy reference by * Subject * Disability * Grades K-12 * Transition to Independence * Cognitive & Motor Development: Birth to five years. (\$39.95 + \$6.50 S/H). Order by calling 1-(800)-294-2759 or check out their website at www.ieps.net. Two other books helpful in writing IEP goals are **Individualized Goal Selection Curriculum** by Raymond Romanczyk, PhD., Stephanie Lokshin, PhD., and Linda Matey, MEd. (\$89) and **Teach Me Language** by Sabrina Freeman, PhD. and Lorelei Dake (\$59.95). Both these books are available from Different Road to Learning at <http://www.difflteam.com>

The Parents' Place of Maryland offers a free newsletter called **ParentTalk** that provides information on scheduled workshops and other issues of interest to parents of children with disabilities. To get on their mailing list, call (410) 859-5300.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council offers a small pamphlet describing what Family Support Services are and an additional publication on how different families have used family support services called **About Families**. Call MDDC at (410) 333-3688.

SERVICES

Speaking of Family Support Services, if you would like to speak to someone regarding low intensity family support services (respite, locks, etc.), call Kristen Wagner at the Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region at (410) 828-7700.

RESOURCES

Families for Intensive Autism Treatment (FIAT) is a statewide group that advocates for the use of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) for young children with autism and supports parents who are seeking to establish home-based ABA programs. The group meets the first Wednesday of every month at the Savage Branch Library, 9525 Durness Lane, Laurel, MD. 7:30 pm.

Maryland Aspergers Support Group
Call DeAnne Mertoglu at (410) 867-1531 for dates, times, and location.

The **Parent Educational Advisory Program (PEAP)** offers individual advocacy, information, and training workshops to Howard County families of children with disabilities. Call Diane Parker at (410) 730-0638 for more information.

The **Center for Jewish Education Special Education Services** offers support to and workshops for Jewish families with children with disabilities. Call (410) 578-6923 for more information.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Are you concerned about the health care of special needs children in Maryland? Is managed care working for children with disabilities? If you are concerned about health care and children with disabilities consider joining **Family Voices** of Maryland. For more information call The Parents' Place of Maryland at (410) 859-5300.

NEWS

After a short summer hiatus, the Maryland State Department of Education's **Autism Task Force** is scheduled to meet in late September to continue developing guidelines on the education of young children with autism. Task Force members have been asked to bring recommendations to the next meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Rosita Ferro** for her recent acceptance into the Maryland **Partners in Policymaking** program. Congratulations also go to **Stanley (Danny) Daniello** and **Anne Long** for their graduation from the program.

Congratulations to **Ben Doman** for his recent election as co-Chair of the Howard County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee!

Congratulations to the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council for its successful grant proposal, **Family NET Works**. The \$200,000 Projects of National Significance Award from the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities will be used to establish a Family Leadership Council, create an interactive web site on family support services, and provide mini-grants to organizations to develop innovative family support services and do outreach to underserved communities.

Congratulations to the **Howard County Public School System** for being awarded a Maryland State Department of Education Award to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities. HCPSS's proposal on collaborative planning made it one of 14 jurisdictions to receive inclusion incentive grants that ranged from \$10,000 to \$55,000.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, September 16, 1999

HCC-ASA's Monthly Support Meeting featuring Nancy Kuschner, Director of Community Programs, Developmental Disabilities Administration on "Services Offered Through DDA." 7:00 pm. The Meeting House, Oakland Mills Interfaith Center. Information: call (410) 760-5595; child care arrangements call Anna Burns at [410]-290-3782.

September 17-18, 1999

Brain Behavior Relationships for Individuals with Autism. Sponsored by the Center for Autism and Related Disorders at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Includes Rebecca Landa, Roberto Tuchman, Mark Ylvisaker, Steve Porges, Loisa Bennetto, Lynn Medley. \$125-\$220. Towson, MD. For more information call (410) 502-8446.

September 26, 1999

HCC-ASA's Fall Picnic. See advertisement on this page!

September 30-October 2, 1999

People with Autism: Horizons for the New Millenium. Sponsored by CSAAC and includes Ivar Lovaas, Karoly Horvath, Jacqueline Wynn, C.T. Gordon, Nina Lovaas, Marie Bristol Powers, etc. \$125-\$225. Rockville, MD. Call (301) 762-1650 for more information.

Friday, October 1, 1999

Inclusive Practices: A Vision for Schools. Conference sponsored by MCIE includes seminars on positive behavior supports, inclusion at the high school level, co-teaching, and developing IEPs. \$35. Maritime Institute of Technology, Linthicum. Call (410) 859-5700 for more information.

October 2-3, 1999

5th Annual Defeat Autism Now! (DAN) Conference. Sponsored by The Autism Research Institute. Featuring Sidney Baker, Victoria Beck, Bernard Rimland, etc. Cherry Hill, NJ. \$125-\$250. Call (609) 333-0886 for more information.

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

FIAT (Families for Intensive Autism Treatment) meeting.

Thursday, October 21, 1999

HCC-ASA's Monthly Support Meeting featuring the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) 7:00 pm. The

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Chapter picnic!!!

September 26 from 1 to 5

Chris Payne's farm in Mount Airy

The Chapter will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, paper goods and drinks for \$7/family.

RSVP sheets will be available at the September meeting (please pay when you RSVP) or call Anna Burns at (410) 290-3782. Anna will provide directions to those who RSVP and pay. If the weather is inclement, please contact her for cancellations.

Please bring a dish to share with the rest of the group. Please do not bring alcoholic beverages. Each family should bring its own blanket, anything that its children (or parents) uniquely require (including specific kinds of food), umbrellas, fishing poles and bait (there's a small stocked pond), balls and other sporting equipment, bubbles, frisbees, small riding toys, trampolines, music and anything else that would help make the picnic a collective success!!!

Meeting House, Oakland Mills Interfaith Center. Information: call (410) 760-5595; child care arrangements call Anna Burns at [410]-290-3782.

October 28, 1999

"WHERE ARE WE NOW?" ADA Update Conference. Sponsored by The Maryland Coalition for ADA Education, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Martin's West Baltimore. Keynote Address by Lorraine Sheehan, Director of Public Policy, Maryland Disability Law Center \$50.00 Deadline to register is 10/21/99. To register call The Arc of Maryland at (410) 974-6139.

November, 1999

Autism99-A Web-Based Conference. Registration is free. Register immediately by going to <http://www.autism99.org>

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

FIAT (Families for Intensive Autism Treatment) meeting.

November 8 - 10, 1999

AAMR Region IX Conference: "The Changing Face of Quality". Wyndham Garden Hotel, Annapolis, Maryland. (Registrations must be received no later than 10/18/99). A combination of short paper talks, longer discussion workshops, and poster presentations focusing on the theme of quality. Presenters represent a diverse blend of practitioners, policymakers, self-advocates, families, researchers and

evaluators. For additional information and registration materials, contact Sue Shouster, Developmental Disabilities Administration (410) 767-5630.

Thursday, November 18, 1999

HCC-ASA's Monthly Support Meeting featuring the Therapeutic Riding Center. 7:00 pm. The Meeting House, Oakland Mills Interfaith Center. Information: call (410) 760-5595; child care arrangements call Anna Burns at [410]-290-3782.

November 18 - 19, 1999

Autism '99 with Dr. Temple Grandin. Sponsored by Future Horizons. Chicago, Illinois. For More information Call 800.489.0727

January 21, 2000

Public Policy Institute Conference

Sponsored by The Arc of Maryland. 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Glen Burnie, Maryland. Call (410) 974-6139 for more information.

May 4-7, 2000

10th Biennial Parent-to-Parent Conference. International Parent to Parent Conference 2000: Pioneer Spirit - Blazing New Trails. Reno, NV. For more information, call 702.784.4921 (extension 2352)

Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

The Howard County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC) acts as a conduit for direct parent input into the process of improving services for all children of special needs. Most of us who have special needs kids have weathered the joys, challenges, and frustrations inherent in providing our children with the best possible educational opportunities. Our next meeting will be held **on November 16th at the Department of Education, Board Room B, 10910 Route 108**. We will hold public meetings approximately quarterly, on **January 25th, April 25th, and June 27th 2000**.

Our past two years of activities have been varied, and include:

- All Candidates Meetings for the 1998 School Board/County Council Elections, attended by all candidates.
- Meeting with State Senator Martin Madden
- Community Forum on Educating Children with Disabilities in partnership with the Howard County Commission on Disabilities
- collaboration with the HCPSS administration on the Strategic Plan for Special Education
- preparation of the Special Education Handbook for Parents
- holding an award ceremony for special education teachers and professionals who have shown outstanding dedication

In addition to these broader issues, specific tangible change has already resulted to the benefit of the County's general as well as special education population. This year the County Council reinstated funding to provide smaller classrooms through grade 3. We have

News that all of us can use!

Article submissions are always welcome. The next deadline for submissions is October 30th. Please consider writing an article, as the best newsletters we have put out have had many different authors, rather than the same ones who write for each issue. Remember that any word processing file should be e-mailed to

catriona.johnson@home.com

provided several training forums on topics ranging from IEPs, legal issues, and the expansion of our Parents' Center (to include additional staffing) at Longfellow Elementary.

This year we will focus on:

- Giving parent input to the school budget process regarding children with disabilities
- Improving Summer Services for children with disabilities

- Providing parent input to the Howard County Partners for Success Center
- Improving understanding of teachers and parents of general education students of special needs children

We hope to see you at our meetings!

Ben Dorman 410-381-2959

Kathy Rahal 410-442-1072

SECAC Co-Chairs

Information on Fast ForWord

If you have been looking for information on Fast ForWord now is your opportunity. Fast ForWord is a computer-based program that helps some children with language delay build language skills. An information session will be held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, 300 South Charles Street, Baltimore on Thursday, October 28 from 7-8:30 pm. The program, developed and marketed by Scientific Learning advertises gains of 1-2 years, on average, in 4-8 weeks of training and that the program adapts to the individual child's strengths, weaknesses, and skills. More information about the program can be found at www.ScientificLearning.com or by calling 1-888-665-9707.

ICDL Conference on Autism

The Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders in holding its *International Conference on Autism and Disorders of Relating and Communicating* on November 12-14 in McLean, Virginia. Featured topics include: Theory of Mind, Is Autism Increasing?, Attention and Motor Planning, Biomedical Advances, Clinical Practice Guidelines, etc. The cost of the conference is \$350. For more information, call (301) 656-2667 or see www.icdl.com

Need A Break?

The 2nd Annual Respite Awareness Day conference entitled "A Need for All Seasons" will be held at the Maritime Institute Conference Center in Linthicum Heights on October 18th. The focus of the event is to provide education and resources about respite care. Approximately 300 families, caregivers, respite providers, professionals, and legislators are expected to attend the event which looks at respite needs in various communities including those caring for people with disabilities and the elderly. For more information about the conference, contact Susan Vaeth at the Department of Aging at (410) 767-1100.

Donna Williams to Speak in New York

The Mount Sinai School of Medicine and the Autism Society of America are sponsoring a conference entitled, *New Insights in the Diagnosis, Genetics and Treatment of Autism* on Sunday, October 24 in New York City. Author and individual with autism, Donna Williams, will make a special appearance. Williams is the author of *Nobody, Nowhere* and *Somebody, Somewhere*, and one of the first people with autism to write a book giving insight into the disability. While much of the conference is focused on neurobiological issues, there are workshops on social skills treatment, pharmacology, secretin, and advocacy and support. Anyone wanting more information about the conference should call (212) 241-6737. The cost for the conference is \$70 for family members.

Developmental Disabilities Council Gets Grant

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council has been awarded a \$200,000 Projects of National Significance Grant by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities for its innovative grant project, *Family NET Works*. The grant project was developed in partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Administration, disability advocacy, parent, and service-provider groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations. HCC-ASA wrote a letter in support of the grant and will be working with the Developmental Disabilities Council as it implements the project. A comprehensive education program in family support services, *Family NET Works* seeks to make family support services available to unserved families, provide training in best practices, and raise awareness of family support services. Family support services assist families caring for children with developmental disabilities with a range of items and services from respite care to wheelchair ramps. Although the project provides no direct services, it is expected that families will have greater knowledge and ability to make better choices in accessing and evaluating the quality of family supports they need and feel that they are true partners in the family support system.

Family NET Works builds on the Maryland Developmental Disabilities study of family support services published in 1997, the resulting publication *About Families*, and the Governor's Waiting List Initiative which has expanded family support services throughout the State. The project will be directed by a Family Advisory Council made up of family members, self-advocates, and organizations that provide family support services. The Family Advisory Council will develop, implement, and evaluate the *Family NET Works* project. A subgroup will focus on the development of policy and an action plan to implement the recommendations of the Family Advisory Council.

Reaching families of minor and adult children with developmental disabilities is a central goal of the project. A key to outreach efforts will be a family-friendly website to include links to resources, an interactive discussion group, and tools to

assist families in defining their needs and finding the support services they require.

"Most families of children with disabilities find out about services and products through other families who have had similar experiences," said Jackie Golden, Chairperson of the Developmental Disabilities Council and parent of a young man with Angelman's Syndrome. "The website is another way of connecting Maryland families together to share information, and will augment additional outreach efforts to limited-income families and families of aging children through local and neighborhood newsletters."

The project will offer several mini-grants to organizations with new ideas for providing high quality family support services to underserved groups and with

creative approaches to increasing community respite services. As part of the mini-grant awards, grantees will share their expertise with other human service agencies throughout the State. "Our goal is for every organization in Maryland that works with families to be receptive to each family's unique circumstances, but to offer the same meaningful, high-quality level of support."

The project will challenge families and providers to redefine family support services to include generic services (those used by typical families).

"Only a small number of family supports are actually disability specific," said Golden. "We want to find new ways to hook up families with existing resources in their own communities."

Special Olympics Training Has Begun

Special Olympics Howard County has begun its 1999-2000 training season with a summer tennis session. Individuals eligible to participate in Special Olympics must be at least 8 years old and have mental retardation or closely related developmental disabilities are eligible. Students in Intensity Levels III-VI are also eligible.

The fall training schedule, which includes golf, physical fitness, soccer, volleyball, and cycling, begins in late August with the following schedule: August 26th - Golf, 5:00-6:30 p.m., Timbers of Troy Golf Course; August 30th - Physical Fitness, Soccer, Volleyball, 6:00 -8:00 p.m., Elkridge Landing Middle School; September 11th - Soccer, 2:00-4:00, Ilchester Elementary School; September 12th -Cycling, 11:00-12:30, Mayfield Woods Middle School; November 14 - Ski Training, 10:00-11:30, Centennial Lake. For additional information on any of the programs, please contact the SOHC office at 410-740-0500.

Family Focus Conference

The Eighth Annual Family Focus Conference will be held on October 30 at the Radisson Hotel in Annapolis. This free, all-day conference designed for parents of children with special needs ages 0 through 5 is sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education's Infants and Toddlers Program/Preschool Services Branch. The conference features workshops on autism, challenging behaviors, recreational opportunities and much more. If you have not received information about the conference by October 1, call Susan Hackman or Mona Freedman at 1-800-535-0182.

DADS Golf Tournament

The DADS support group for all fathers of special needs children is planning the second annual Timothy Gibbs/Jordan Rinehart golf tournament. The golf tournament will be held on Friday, October 1st and is \$99 per person. The price includes free beer and soft drinks all

day, a bull roast and a silent auction. There will be closest to the pin and longest drive contests, and a best ball scramble tournament. For more information, call Gary Gibbs at (410) 496-2518, Rocky Rinehart at (410) 744-2316, or Jay Freedman at (410) 549-5490.

Autism Society of America National Membership

From: Howard County Chapter

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Family Membership: \$35

Individual Membership: \$25

Student Membership: \$15.00

Mail to: Autism Society of America
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 300
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 657-0881
(800) 3-AUTISM

Autism Society of America—Howard County Chapter Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Interest:

- Individual with Autism/PDD or Parent
- Relative/Friend
- Professional*
- Other*

*Affiliation :

Dues: \$10 per individual/family (Note: You must be a member of the national organization to hold membership in a local chapter.)

Other information (optional):

Name of individual with autism/PDD: _____

Date of Birth: _____ School attending: _____

Memberships in other groups (Please List): _____

Special interests:

Education _____ Advocacy _____ Support _____ Political Issues _____ Medical Treatments/Research _____ Other _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: HCC-ASA, Susan Mountford, Treasurer
7509 Midas Touch
Columbia, MD 21046

What is HCC-ASA?

HCC-ASA is a chapter of the Autism Society of America, which was founded in 1965 to help parents, family members, professionals, and caregivers learn about autism, PDD, and related disorders, and how to effectively deal with these disabilities. HCC-ASA is one of over 200 chapters in 48 states across the country.

HCC-ASA is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. The national society and HCC-ASA share the common goals of providing information and education, supporting research and advocating for programs and services for the autistic population.

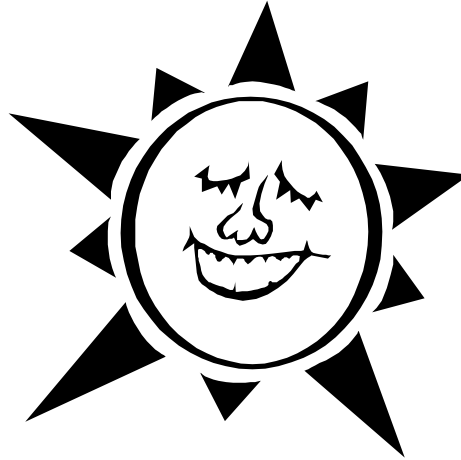
HCC-ASA works in Howard County to advance awareness of persons with autism, PDD, and related disorders. HCC-ASA provides:

- support for parents
- information and referral
- advocacy on behalf of persons with autism/PDD and their families
- presentations by experts on autism/PDD, disability rights, and other topics
- an active connection with the national society
- monthly meetings
- social activities

**HCC-ASA's
Information and
Referral Line**

(410) 760-5595

Supported by a grant from the Columbia Foundation



Howard County Chapter
Autism Society of America
8416 Early Bud Way,
Laurel MD 20723

<http://members.home.net/ben.dorman/hccasa/>

Next meeting: September 16, 1999 - Nancy Kirschner on Services offered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration. Watch for upcoming speakers on education and therapeutic riding. Chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month at the Meeting Place, Oakland Mills Interfaith Center, 5885 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia. Our use of this facility is thanks to the generosity of the Catholic Church of St John the Evangelist.