

February 2012



The Autism Echo



*The Autism
Community Choir*



**Are you 15 years or older?
Moderate to severe ASD?**

The Autism Choir is for YOU!!!!
Every Tuesday afternoon.... For more information turn to page 5

#174, 3359—27 Street NE
Calgary, Alberta T1Y 5E4
(north of 32 Ave on 27 St)
Ph (403) 250-5033 Fax (403) 250-2625
Email: info@autismcalgary.com
www.autismcalgary.com

Autism Spectrum Disorder includes:
Autism
PDD-NOS and
Asperger's Syndrome
Rett's Syndrome
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

Autism Calgary Community Sessions & Events

PLEASE NOTE: To register for these events, contact Rebecca Mason;
By phone: 403-250-5033 ext. 0 or email: rebecca@autismcalgary.com
Leave your name, phone number, and number of people attending

February 2012

**Thursday February 9, 2012 From 7-9pm
(Autism Calgary Office)**

Parents Connecting

A group for parents and caregivers of a young child with AS

**Thursday February 16, 2012 From 7-9pm
(Autism Calgary Office)**

Asperger's Network Meeting

A group of Adults with Asperger's Syndrome

**Thursday, February 23, 2012 From 7-9pm
(Autism Calgary Office)**

Plus 15 Group

A group for parents and caregivers of adults with ASD

What in the World Is Going On?

February 2012 Edition

By Maureen Bennie

Autism Calgary Member &
Director, Autism Awareness Centre Inc.



The University of Ulster (<http://news.ulster.ac.uk/releases/2011/6183.html>) in Northern Ireland has launched a new Master's Degree program that will expand and enhance the management of Sensory Processing Disorder by occupational therapists and other allied health practitioners. The new Master of Science in Sensory Integration degree is based on a series of modules conducted in partnership with the not-for-profit educational organization, Sensory Integration Network (UK and Ireland) <http://www.sensoryintegration.org.uk/>.

The new courses are designed to equip participants with knowledge to apply current theories to everyday practice and to provide them with a theoretical basis for the management of people with SPDs. The courses are delivered as a pathway to certification by the Sensory Integration Network as a Practitioner, or Advanced Practitioner, of Sensory Integration.

This new program will produce highly qualified professionals to work with those who have SPD such as individuals with autism, ADHD, Learning Disabilities, Dyspraxia and Developmental Coordination Disorder. It's a great step forward in education and programming.

A recently published study in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders <http://www.springerlink.com/content/984812t131480547/> found that although individuals with autism spectrum disorders are often preoccupied with television, computers, and video games (screen-based media), the majority (64.2%) spent most of their free time using non-social media (television, video games), while only 13.2% spent time on social media (email, internet chatting).

These results aren't surprising because using social media involves using social skills, something people with ASD struggle with. Assistant Professor Paul Shattuck who lead the study, says that as kids with ASD's age and as their cognitive skills improve, they spend more time using social media, which helps them to further develop social skills.

I recently discovered an excellent Facebook group called The Autism Discussion Page. The posts are written by Bill Nasen, MS, LLP and discuss tools that help children on the spectrum feel safe, accepted and competent. His philosophy is although each child is different with their unique strengths and challenges, there are some common strategies that can strengthen the social, emotion, and cognitive security for most children on the spectrum. All of his presentations are organized on the Fragile World on the Spectrum website (<https://sites.google.com/site/fragileworldonthespectrum/home>). He then opens the floor for discussion about these topics on his Facebook page. I noticed he does answer everyone who posts. Lots of effort here from someone who is clearly intelligent and understands individuals with ASD.

There is a lot of discussion and controversy around the new proposed criteria for autism in the upcoming DSM-V. The new definition would sharply reduce the skyrocketing rate at which the disorder is diagnosed and might make it harder for many people who would no longer meet the criteria to get health, educational and social services, a new analysis suggests. The new changes would probably exclude people with a diagnosis who were higher functioning.

We don't often hear from fathers of children with ASD. One dad I know in Nova Scotia, Paul Peters, started his own blog called a *Father's Perspective on Autism*. He has a daughter with autism. Paul's posts are insightful and well-written. You can read his blog here. (http://afathersperspectiveonautism.blogspot.com/2011_02_01_archive.html)

Continued.....

What in the World Is Going On?

Continued....

There was an outstanding article written in the New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/20/health/research/new-autism-definition-would-exclude-many-study-suggests.html?_r=3) on this subject, which includes statements from a wide range of researchers, people working in the field of ASD and parents. A very informative read on a hot topic right now.

It is challenging to find a curriculum on teaching sexuality to people with ASD. The recently published book *Intimate Relationships and Sexual Health: A Curriculum for Teaching Adolescents/Adults with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Social Challenges* (http://www.autismawarenesscentre.com/booksproducts/life-skills/sexuality-and-hygiene/page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage_aaci_books.tpl&product_id=775&category_id=31) is a comprehensive, well-researched curriculum and an up-to-date resource on sexuality, tailored to the unique characteristics of high-functioning adolescents and adults on the spectrum. The accompanying CD-ROM contains all the handouts for easy duplication and individualization.

Former Deputy Sheriff Robert Kahn, author of the Bobby and Mandee children's safety series books, has a new book called *Good Touch, Bad Touch* (http://www.autismawarenesscentre.com/booksproducts/childrens-books?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage_aaci_books.tpl&product_id=774&category_id=20). In this simple and engaging guide, Mandee and Bobby explain "good touches" (hugs and kisses from family members, a pat on the back, a handshake, or a high five) and "bad touches" (a hit, slap, punch, kick, bite, hard pinch, shove, or grabbing, tugging, scratching, tripping, or choking). They describe how to recognize each kind of touch, the differences between them, and how to respond. There are some great, helpful features in this book such as the 8-question Bobby and Mandee's Touch Quiz, how to teach the use of 911, and My List of Safe Grown-ups to Call – a blank form that parents and children can fill out together. Safety needs to be taught and this book provides a great framework to do just that.

Congratulations to Margaret Spoelstra, Executive Director of Autism Ontario (<http://www.autismontario.com/>), for her appointment to the Order of Canada. Thanks, Margaret, for your dedication to advocating for acceptance and opportunities for all individuals with autism; as well as your tireless work with Autism Ontario Chapters, families, self-advocates and professionals.

The Globe and Mail wrote an article about the Ottawa Police Service and their new voluntary autism registry. The idea of the registry is to inform police of an ASD diagnosis and if they need to intervene with that individual at some point, the diagnosis is known and the police have some training in dealing with ASD. "The goal of the registry is to inform police that a child or adult may not be able to speak to them or follow commands – often the case for someone with autism spectrum disorder, a term that describes a range of increasingly common disorders that affect social interaction and communication. Police are finding themselves increasingly interacting with people in crises. Factors including deinstitutionalization of care have meant that more people with mental illness, or disorders such as autism, are coming into contact with police. Arming officers with information about a person's condition is one way to prevent harm – both to the officer and the individual." To read the article in its entirety, here's the URL. (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/registries-of-autistic-children-arm-police-with-information/article2296849/>)

These are the highlights of what in the world is going on in autism for February 2012.



Autism Community Choir Tuesday Afternoons

We are looking for participants, youth and adults, with ASD ages 15 and up. We are focusing on individuals with moderate to severe autism. We recognize this population is in as much need of peer to peer support and some fun!! Please come with your coolest caregiver and join us. No pressure, just hanging out!

Where: Deer Park United Church, 77 Deer Point Road SE Calgary T2J 6W5 **When:** Tuesday Afternoons

What: Get together, learning songs...a choir

Who: YOU and Nicola, our very wonderful volunteer choir conductor. Maria and Rebecca our Autism Calgary Family Support team and Corrine, a wonderful volunteer. There will be snacks...

To register or for more information please email Rebecca info@autismcalgary.com or phone and leave a message at 403-250-5033 and dial zero.

Autism Calgary Live on the Web

As of this fall, our newsletter will not be routinely published monthly. Our new Website, Facebook, and Twitter are rapidly becoming our primary source of information and communication with our members and our community. Always—Check our website for the latest events and articles.



With the exception of "Classified" - all information in the newsletter is now a snapshot of our website. Classified will soon also be published on the website. At that point, the newsletter will be published periodically for members without access to internet technology.



Calgary Alternative Support Services
Is pleased to announce
That we are moving to a new location

March 1, 2012

Our new address will be:
2335 -30 Avenue NE
Calgary, Alberta
T2E 7C7

Our phone numbers remain unchanged
403-283-0611 F: 403-283-0691
The CAES program fax number will change to the fax number above

The CASS Programs relocating to this new address are:
CADO Calgary Alternative Day Options
CAES Calgary Alternative Employment Services
CAPA Calgary Alternative Poss-Abilities
CARS Calgary Alternative Residential Services
MM Money Matters Program



Make a difference in the Calgary community and help people with disabilities by putting your Friends in Motion!

On 25 February 2012, Between Friends Club will be hosting the 19th Annual Friends in Motion (formerly Skate, Walk, or Wheel-a-Kid-to-Camp) fundraising event. Proceeds will go to summer programs for children and adults with disabilities.

Friends in Motion is a team based event where participants have the option to dress in costume, create a snazzy team name, raise pledges and walk, skate or wheel around the Calgary Olympic Oval. Every lap translates into an unforgettable summer experience for a person with a disability.

Between Friends Club is a Calgary-based charitable organization providing people with disabilities the opportunity to connect, grow, and belong through social and recreational activities.

For more information, view event details [here](#) or visit us at www.betweenfriends.ab.ca

Details:
Olympic Oval
Saturday, 25 February 2012
2:00 PM (Registration from 12:00 – 1:30)





Enhancing the lives of children
with autism, their families and
the communities they live in.

Now accepting registration for the 2012-2013 school year.

Janus Academy provides specialized education to children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder from grades 1-12 based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis and Verbal Behaviour. We operate two sites, an Elementary and a Jr./Sr. High school. Class sizes vary from 5-10 students with 5-8 teaching staff; enabling us to provide 1:1 instruction and small group learning in each of our classrooms. Janus Academy exists with the belief that intensive, individualized education maximizes the potential of each child with autism by enabling academic success and facilitating lifelong community integration.

For more information or to set up a tour of our program please contact:

Janus Academy
2223 Spiller Road SE
Calgary, Alberta
T2G 4G9

Tel: 403.262.3333
Website: www.janusacademy.org
Email: contact@janusacademy.org



Fun groups for children and teens who have a sibling with a disability

Sibshops provides brothers and sisters of children with special needs an opportunity to:

- 1) Meet other siblings in a relaxed recreational setting
- 2) Talk about common joys and concerns with other siblings
- 3) Learn how to handle situations commonly experienced by siblings of children with special needs
- 4) Learn information about their brothers' or sisters' special needs

The Spring **Sibshops program** for children ages **8 to 11 year olds** will be held on **Saturdays, March 3, March 10 and March 17, 2012** from **9:00 am to noon**.

The Sibshops program will take place in the **Library and Gym** of the **Renfrew Educational Services-Janice McTighe Centre** located at **2050-21 Street NE**, Calgary.

Orientation Night

An orientation night will be held for parents and Sibshops participants on **Tuesday, February 28, 2012** from **6:30 to 8:30 pm** in the **Library and Gym** of the **Renfrew Educational Service – Janice McTighe Centre** located at **2050-21 Street NE**, Calgary. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the Sibshops program and the types of activities that are involved.

The cost of the three week program is \$45.00. Cheques are to be made payable to Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation and sent to 203, 1603 10th Avenue SW, Calgary AB T3C 0J7.

Note:

For more information or to register for this program and Orientation Night, please call Lisa at **209-1100** or e-mail **connect@calcna.ab.ca** by **February 14, 2012**

It is important that we know who is attending, so please make sure you register for the Orientation Night and Saturday program before attending.

Sibshops is sponsored by: Between Friends, Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation, Renfrew Educational Services, SCOPE Society and Milestones-McMan Youth Family Community Services

You can also browse our website for more information at **www.connections counselling.ab.ca**.



203, 1603 10th Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T3C 0J7

Ph: 209-1100
Fax: 274-1235
Email: connect@calcna.ab.ca

Skills To Learn Inc.



We offer 8-week sessions that will help your child learn how to:

- Initiate and maintain conversations
- Understand and deal with emotions
- Increase social problem solving skills
- Build social relationships
Learn new ways to be a friend

Our social skills program will incorporate your child's individual goals within a peer group setting. We provide a therapeutic, educational and fun program using a small portion of behavioural/developmental aide funding. Included in the program is homework to develop skills at home.

Space is Limited. Only 2 spots left.
To reserve a spot for your child
contact:

Denise Carroll M.Ed.

Weekly Social Skills Groups for Children with Asperger Syndrome, PDD-NOS & High-Functioning Autism

8-Week Program

Spring Session

Thursday March 8 - April 26th 2012

4:45 - 6:00

5-7 year olds

Max 6 Children / Group
(1:3 facilitator/child ratio)

Cost: \$500

Financial assistance through
FSCD maybe available.

(Payable by Cheque or Cash)

Location

St David's United Church
3303 Capital Hill Cres NW

What parents have to say...

" Your social skills group is wonderful! It is so well thought out and effective and fun; I feel very lucky that we have been able (and will be able) to participate in it. Thank you for starting it up. Really, thank you!! I know it will be very successful. We would love to sign up for all your sessions in the future. I feel it is exactly what our son needs, and he likes it so much! You have a wonderful way with the children and a tremendous level of integrity. My husband and I thank you for your efforts and skill. " (Parent from winter and spring 2011)

Youth Singers of Calgary Launches Special Needs Program

Youth Singers of Calgary through the assistance of the Calgary Foundation unveils a new comprehensive program tailored to the abilities of young people with special needs, specifically cognitive delays. This program is intended for special needs children who are 8-13 years old.

CALGARY— Youth Singers of Calgary (YSC) Artistic Director & CEO Shirley Penner announced the launch of the STAR (**S**pecial **T**alents in **A**rts & **R**ecreation) Program, a new initiative aimed at providing an exciting and beneficial music and movement education to children with special needs. STAR Program encourages and allows children to grow and gain confidence, build friendships and find an appreciation for the performing arts.

"Our goal is to promote growth using a variety of creative music experiences. Accessibility and inclusiveness are core values of Youth Singers and the STAR Program is the next step in furthering our mandate." said Penner. "We are proud to expand our programs to include even more young people; the Star Program is welcomed as our fourteenth division/level."

The recent funding from the Calgary Foundation will allow the STAR Program to run two separate pilot classes each running for ten weeks. Registration is now open and more information, an application and questionnaire are available at www.youthsingers.org . Interested parties may also contact the Youth Singers by phone: 403.234.9549

Contacts:

Jennifer Morton, Program Manager
403-992-1276 starprogram@youthsingers.org
Shirley Penner, Artistic Director & CEO
403-540-7985 srpenner@shaw.ca



Edmund Gee
Development Associate,
Government & Corporate Relations

T: 403.234.9549 1371 Hastings Cr. SE
F: 403.234.9590 Calgary, AB T2G 4C8



www.youthsingers.org

Seeking Experienced EDUCATOR/NANNY FOR AUTISTIC CHILD

For more information contact: danita@nanniesoncall.com

(If interested you are invited to submit your childcare related resume along with two childcare related reference letters.)

We need to hear from Dads raising children with Autism

Beth Parrott and Bonnie Lashewicz, from Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies at the University of Calgary, are launching a new study titled: *Building parenting capacity in families of children with disabilities: Understanding and resourcing fathers of children with ASD.*

Much of what is known about parenting comes from the perspective of mothers so we are on a new quest to collect stories from fathers about raising children with ASD, age 2-12. Participants, who can be biological, step, foster or adopted fathers, will be asked to take part in a private interview scheduled at a convenient time and location. If you, or someone you know, are interested in taking part, please contact Beth Parrott.



University of Calgary

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 Phone: 403-250-5033
 Fax: 403-250-2625

Email: info@autismcalgary.com
 Website: www.autismcalgary.com

OFFICE HOURS
 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
 9:00AM—5:00PM

FAMILY SUPPORT
 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
 10:30AM-5:00PM

February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 Family Swim 5:30-6:30pm	6	7	8	9 Parents Connecting 7-9pm	10	11
12 Family Swim 5:30-6:30pm	13	14	15	16 Asperger's Network Meeting 7-9pm	17	18
19 NO Family Swim	20	21	22	23 Plus 15 7-9pm	24	25
26 NO Family Swim	27	28	29			



FREE Family Swim for AC Members at the
 Vecova - Center for Disability Services and Research 3304 -33rd
 Street NW (just north of the
 University of Calgary) ph: 403-284-2231
 Drop-in, no reservations required-See calendar for times

