



# C.A.R.E. Coping with Autism through Research and Education

Southwest Chapter Autism Society of America

February 2005

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**MONTHLY MEETINGS**

**General**

**Membership Meetings** are held the first Tuesday of every month at First Presbyterian Church at 1340 Murchison beginning at 6:30 p. m.

**Board Meetings** are held on the Monday, one week prior to the Membership meeting at 6:15 p.m.. All members are welcome to attend, and your input is always welcome.

MONTHLY MEETING

*Our Monthly Meeting will be on Tuesday, February 1st, 2005 at 6:30 pm at our new location. We will meet at First Presbyterian Church which is located at 1340 Murchison. We need to apologize to you all for the mistake on the directions to the church. The way to go to Murchison if you are coming from the east side of town, take the Cotton exit off and go north to Murchison, on Murchison turn left and the church will be on your left. If you cross Brown St. you have gone too far. If you are coming from the west side of town you can take the Schuster exit and drive towards El Paso High School, after Brown St., the church will be on your right. Our meeting will be in the choir room which it is located on the second floor. Childcare will be in one of the classrooms on the first floor, in room 101. You will need to park in the big parking lot and go in through the entrance that says Office, then you will follow the signs. President Lisa Mitchell will have announcements and we will have an open support group meeting where everyone will have an opportunity to talk and share anything that you want with the group. Childcare and refreshments will be available. Books and information will be available at the meeting. We hope to see you all!*

*Our office has moved to a new location, our new address is 5959 Gateway West Ste. 440. Our office days and hours will be Tuesday 12:00 to 3:00, Thursday 9:30 to 3:00, and Friday from 10:00 to 3:00. We are right across Bassett Center. We hope that these new locations will be more accessible to everyone that is coming from different parts of town. Our goal is to serve everyone in need of information and support. Our new phone number is 772-9100 and our new fax number is 772-9105. We will still be getting calls from 532-6014 (our old phone number) but we want to start spreading the news on our new locations and places where we can be reached. We want to welcome our newly elected secretary Vicki Hernandez. Welcome!*

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**JOIN US FOR FAMILY BOWLING NIGHT.** We will be joining the El Paso Rehabilitation Center in their bowling night. Starting in December, we will rotate between two locations. We will meet at Fiesta Lanes the first, third and fifth Thursday of each month and Oasis Lanes, 1660 N. Zaragoza Rd., the second and fourth Thursday from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. The price has also changed. It will now only cost \$1.50 per game for each child.

The Southwest Chapter Autism Society of America, El Paso Rehabilitation Center and Region 19 ESC presents:

6th Annual International Autism Conference- "Understanding Social Cognitive Deficits" with Michelle Garcia-Winner, MA, CCC, SLP. Author of "Inside out: What Makes The Person with Social Cognitive Deficits Tick" (2000) and "Thinking About You, Thinking About Me" (2002).

Friday April 8, 2005 from 8:00 am -3:30 pm at the Ysleta Cultural Arts Center Auditorium, 9600 Sims. Registration Forms are NOW AVAILABEL! Please contact your school district to inquire about parent stipends. If your child attends a school in EPISD please call Leticia A. Gonzalez at 775-2108 or mail your registration form to EPISD Special Populations, Attn: Leticia A. Gonzalez, 6531 Boeing Dr. El Paso, Texas 79925. If your child attends a school in YISD contact your in-home trainer and they should be able to help you attend the conference, although they are only sponsoring 20 parents so contact them immediately. If your child attends Clint ISD call Ms. Sue Gray at 851-8383. If your child attends Canutillo ISD call Letty Martinez at 877-7449. If your child attends Fabens ISD call Richard Ortega at 764-3816. If your child attends San Elizario ISD call Edna Lopez at 872-3926. If your child attends Anthony ISD call Rick McCarty at 886-6570.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS AT SWASA:**

We are excited to be offering many classes during the 2005 year. We were able to get some money from different foundations and organizations and we will be using the money to offer Art Classes every Saturday in the month of February. Every Saturday in March we will have Music Therapy, and every Saturday in April we will have Therapeutic Horsemanship Camp. More information will be provided in the upcoming newsletters. These events are open to anyone that has autism, any age. We do need you to reserve your space before because the classes are limited in size, they will be on a first call first serve basis.

#### ***10 Tips for a Successful Visit to the Dentist***

**1. Sometimes it's the little things that make a visit to the dentist successful. If needed, mom or dad can meet with the dentist and "pretend" to be the child going through the procedure. It can help identify any issues that might arise with sounds, smells, instruments, timing, etc. That will need to be addressed. 2. Schedule an advance visit with your child so that your child can see the room, and meet the dentist and staff prior to the actual procedures being done. 3. Schedule the visit for your child's best time of day. 4. Make sure both you and your child are wearing comfortable clothing. 5. Bring a favorite toy. 6. If the office has VCR's in the rooms, bring your child's favorite video. 7. Ask if your child can wear headphones during the visit. 8. If the dentist chair is posing a problem, bring a favorite blanket for it, or try a heat/massage pad. (we have one at SWASA that you can borrow). 9. A timer might help the child know the procedure won't go forever. Make sure it stays in visual range. 10. Try sharing a Social story with the child prior to the visit so she knows what to expect.**

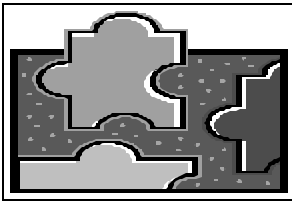
## A Letter from the President of SWASA

What is art? Most people have differing opinions of art. If you asked that question to a group of 30 people, you would probably receive 30 different answers. Each person is unique with his/her own individual likes and dislikes. Our children with autism, whether young or grown, are no different. They may often be excluded from participating in art because of difficulties in expressing their likes or dislikes or because of sensory issues.

So, I ask the question, again. What is art? In the dictionary, it is defined as "a human skill of expression of other objects by painting, drawing, sculpture, etc; a branch of learning. Through art, our children can learn the skill of self expression. There should be no failure in art, only the ability to release creativity and self expression and to enjoy the experience. If you look only at the finished art product, then the child is being deprived of the true meaning of art. Art leads children in a positive direction. It helps them develop a positive self-image. They also learn to develop;

form discrimination, sequencing, fine motor skills, eye contact, cause and effect, tactile awareness, attention span, and pride in their accomplishments.

Experiencing art should lead to an awareness of self and environment, to grow emotionally, to build trust, and to most of all, have fun. The end result does not have to look like anything. If the child was encouraged to try something new, to create something of their own choice, enjoyed the experience and took pride in his/her work, then you truly have seen the creation of a masterpiece! Look for the book-*Reaching the Child with Autism through Art* by Toni Flowers. It will provide practical, fun activities to enhance sensory motor skills and to improve tactile and concept awareness.



SWASA  
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SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

## Submit Stories about your Children to the News Letter

We want to know more about your children and your entire family. Please share your family's activities, events, and endeavors with all of us through the SWASA News Letter. We would like each family to contribute a story about your children's accomplishments, hobbies, likes and dislikes.

You may mail your stories to SWASA office at P.O. Box #12486., El Paso, Texas, 79913, fax us at 772-9105 or contact our office at 772-9100. Also please submit a photo of your child or family along with your story. Visit our website at [www.autism@swasa.com](http://www.autism@swasa.com)

