



C.A.R.E.



Coping with Autism through Research and Education

Southwest Chapter Autism Society of America

July 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.

NO MONTHLY MEETING IN JULY

We will not be having a Monthly Meeting the first Tuesday in July or August. We will meet again on Tuesday September 1st at 5:30 pm. It will be an Ice Cream Social. More details will be provided in the upcoming newsletters.

If you would like to see some of our new books during the summer, please call the office to schedule an appointment. Our office will remain open during the summer and messages will be checked daily. Feel free to call us for any information.

We are looking for a new treasurer. If you are interested in becoming SWASA's treasurer or if you know of someone that would be good at this position, please call us at 772-9100.

I am very sad to inform you that I am leaving the administrative assistant position at SWASA. I have taken a job with the El Paso Rehabilitation Center. I plan to continue to be active with SWASA because I have very special feelings towards this organization. I will be available for anyone as a resource or if you are seeking information I will be more than happy to help you. I will start working at the Rehab on July 5. My new phone number will be (915) 544-8484. We are desperately looking for someone to take my position, please help us find someone for the administrative assistant position. For me, it was a great opportunity to learn more about autism, help others, and it was great to be involved in this organization that has so much to offer. I was able to make friends and learn so much from the wonderful families that SWASA has. If you know of anyone that would be interested in the position please have them send a resume to P.O. Box 12486, El Paso Texas 79913. This is not a goodbye because I will always be around if anyone needs me.

Gilda Lopez

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JOIN US FOR FAMILY BOWLING NIGHT THROUGH OUT THE SUMMER.

We will be joining the El Paso Rehabilitation Center in their bowling night. We will meet at Fiesta Lanes (Westside) 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 is \$1.50 per game for each child.

THE MIRACLE LEAGUE OF EL PASO is a non-profit organization that provides children, ages 3 and up with mental and/or physical challenges an opportunity to play baseball as a team member in an organized league. Teams are forming now for the summer session. The league plays at 8831 Railroad Dr. on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. If you are interested in joining call Sandie Sparks-Olivar at (915) 872-9249.

EL PAPALOTE INCLUSIVE SUMMER CAMP!

El Papalote summer camp is a safe, healthy, and fun environment for all kids ages 6 to 12. This summer there will be swimming, arts & crafts, music, field trips, organized games, presentations and more! Fees are \$70 per week or \$15 per day. Scholarships may be available for parents that work or go to school. Dates are: May 31 to August 12, Monday-Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information call Kirsten or Bea at 544-8484.

Texas State Conference on Autism

“Holding the Keys to Success.”
September 15-17, 2005 at Corpus Christi, Texas. Conference Fee is \$100 by August 18. Region 19 ESC has Parent Stipends available, contact them at 780-5350 or 772-9100 for information.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EIP)

is having a Two-day Workshop with guest speaker Cheryl Baucum, M.Ed; Parent of a child with Autism on July 28 & 29 at ESC Region 19 from 8:00 am—4:30 pm.

COST is FREE. The training focuses on a blended approach to intervention strategies for young children with Autism and their families. The training offers practical suggestions that are individualized according to where the child is developmentally and where they should be progressing. Strategies include the DIR (Developmental, Individual differences, Relationship-based) Approach including Floor Time, ABA, visual strategies, integrated play-groups and others. The common elements of effective intervention will be discussed.

You need to register by July 20th with Pam Perez at (915) 633-0500 ext. 1003

Autism Society of America's 36th National Conference & Exposition on Autism Spectrum Disorders "In TUNE with the FUTURE" July 13-16, 2005 Nashville Convention Center—Nashville, TN

Keynote Speakers:

Thursday, July 14- Dr. Paula Kluth

Friday, July 15— Mr. Paul Shattock

Saturday, July 16— Mr. Stephen Shore

Breakout sessions with different topics on all three days.

To save money and time register on line at www.autism-society.org/registration

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SWASA:

The Friendship Club will also meet in August at Oasis Lanes & Amusement Center on Zaragoza. The dates will be August 6 for teenagers ages 10-15 and on August 20 for children ages 5-10. The time is from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Please RSVP for these events to (915) 772-9100. We will have Art Classes every Saturday in August from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Therapeutic Horsemanship will start again the last Saturday of September and every Saturday in October, ending with a Halloween Party. Hope to see you there!

The West Texas Parent Education Network is providing information for parents of students with disabilities for the 2005-2006 school year. First up IDEA 2004. The new law goes into effect July 1, 2005. In order to prepare families for the 2005-06 school year we would like to provide support and training on the following subjects:

- ?? IDEA 2004 Reauthorized statutes and what they mean to you. July 6, 2005 1-3 pm
- ?? Developing an IEP. Accessing the General Curriculum for students with disabilities. July 13, 2005 1-3 pm.
- ?? Positive behavior supports for students with disabilities. Is your child a target of bullying? July 20, 2005 1-3 pm.
- ?? No Child Left Behind & Students with disabilities, what is the connection with IDEA? July 27, 2005 1-3 pm.

Location: The Jenna Welch and Laura Bush Community Library
EPCC NW Campus
6701 S. Desert Blvd.

Space is limited for more information and to RSVP contact Donna Allan 274-8454
West Texas PEN is funded by a grant from the Department of Education

**I Am the Parent of a Child with Autism
Please be patient with me because.....**

I am exhausted. I work all day, and then come home to my second job as full-time caretaker for a special needs child.

I cope with all the physical, emotional, and mental stresses that any regular parent does, plus the many added concerns and worries pertaining to my child's unique needs.

I am financially depleted. The cost to raise my special needs child is astronomical, and no matter what my family income is, this cost takes a toll.

I'm doing the very best I can. No matter what else is going on, I'm always giving 150% effort to my child.

I once had a whole big group of friends that I no longer relate to. With the great time and energy demand of raising a child with autism, I lost connections with many friends and even some family members.

People seldom understand how much autism impacts my child's life and mine, too. I'm under constant, inappropriate, unwelcome scrutiny. People ranging from well-intended to insensitive talk about me behind my back, criticizing me, not believing that my child really has autism. They say he needs discipline, or punishment or something else. What he really needs are people to invest faith in me as his parent, and to support the well-informed choices I make in my child's life.

I sometimes snap at people around me, or show depression or sadness because I'm just so overwhelmed. We all get over-whelmed sometimes-I may be super human, but I'm still only human.

I usually don't have an equal level of support from my spouse, if I have a spouse at all. In families with a child on the spectrum, one parent usually takes the "lead role" in guiding the child....I am that parent.

Please give me a break. I'm a wonderful person, a fantastic parent, and I've got more courage, energy, and perseverance in me than I ever thought was humanly possible.

My child is currently not an independent person, which means I'm the one responsible, all the time, for making sure she or he is safe and comfortable. Also, I don't know when, or if, I'll ever be relieved to this position.

Most parents assume that their child will "leave the nest" around the age of 18. I don't know if my child will ever leave the nest, or when, or how. It's a heavy load to carry. I do everything I can to ensure the best possible future for my child, even faced with daunting uncertainties.

As a parent, I know my child and my child's needs. As a teacher, I hope and believe that you know my child, too. Those to us who work together in addressing those needs are the heroes in my child's life.

Anyone who makes an improvement in the quality of my child's life is my hero, even if I don't say so out loud.

SWASA WILL OFFER FREE MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS
WITH ELSA MARIA GARCIA, MT-BC FOR
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES

ON: SATURDAY, JULY 2nd

SATURDAY, JULY 9th

SATURDAY, JULY 16th

SATURDAY, JULY 23rd

AND SATURDAY, JULY 30th

AT: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1340 MURCHISON

THE SESSIONS WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7 FROM 10:00 am to 10:45 am

FOR CHILDREN AGES 7 TO 13 FROM 11:00 am to 11:45 am

YOU NEED TO RSVP TO (915) 772-9100

SPACE WILL BE LIMITED TO 10 STUDENTS PER SESSION

CALL AND SIGN UP FOR ONE SESSION OR FOR SEVERAL SESSIONS

JOIN US FOR A FRIENDSHIP CLUB!

COME AND MEET OTHER FRIENDS AT THE EL PASO ZOO ON SATURDAY JULY 9th, 2005 FROM 10:00 am TO 12:00 pm. THE AGE GROUP FOR THIS SESSION IS KIDS FROM 10-15 YEARS OF AGE.

THE SECOND GROUP WILL MEET ON SATURDAY JULY 23, 2005 FROM 10:00 am TO 12:00 pm AT THE EL PASO ZOO. THE AGE GROUP FOR THIS SESSION IS KIDS FROM 5-9 YEARS OF AGE.

WE NEED YOU TO RSVP TO 772-9100 AT LEAST 5 DAYS PRIOR TO THE DATE

NUMBER OF KIDS PARTICIPATING WILL BE LIMITED

TRAINED STAFF WILL BE AVAILABLE TO HELP THE KIDS SOCIALIZE BUT WE NEED AT LEAST ONE PARENT TO STAY.

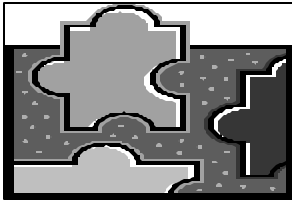
THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY. THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB IS ALSO DESIGNED TO PROMOTE FRIENDSHIP AMONG CHILDREN WITH SIMILAR EXPERIENCES AND ABILITIES.

A Letter from the President of SWASA

As you all know by now, we are very sad to see Gilda leave the position as our wonderful administrative assistant. She has been a great asset, but we wish her luck at the El Paso Rehabilitation Center. The change will be a difficult one, but life is full of changes. We never know what might happen if we do not take a chance to try something new. I had a different subject for my letter but when going through the SWASA office to organize things for our new assistant, I found this "prescription" in one of our handouts can be a difficult time with parents working and children out school and out of their routines. Our children may have special needs, but they are still children. I offer the following for advice and support and I hope everyone enjoys their summer.

PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTHY PARENTING

1. Discipline means to teach. Discipline is the process by which we help our children grow into fully mature human beings. Discipline is not only punishing undesirable behavior, it is the modeling of desirable behavior and values, and rewarding our children as they move toward desirable goals.
2. Be fair, firm, and consistent. A parent is fair as rules are set which are appropriate for the child's age and abilities. Firmness means drawing a broad stroke between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. A parent can be firm, yet gentle at the same time. Consistency tells the child his world is dependable and that there are logical consequences to behavior both good and bad.
3. Be positive. Catch the children being good and tell them so. Take time to see them, talk to them, and hug them when they are doing desirable things.
4. Be a good example. Practice what you preach. Children invariably do what we do, not what we say. Values, as well as behaviors, are caught more than taught.
5. Keep communication open. Listen to what your children are feeling, thinking, and learning. Share with them what you are thinking, feeling and learning about life.
6. Teach the child to appreciate the meaning of work. In doing so, they learn responsibility and acquire a sense of meaning to life. Let them see you work; work along with them; give them meaningful chores to do.
7. Encourage learning and growth. There is no such thing as a dumb question coming from a child. Every question deserves an answer even if it is, "I don't know. Let's find out."
8. Be prepared to let go at the right time. Children must grow, learn and eventually become independent. The parent must allow the child to gradually assume responsibility for himself or herself. Know when to turn loose.
9. Be a parent not a martyr. Children have rights and needs but so do parents. There are times when it is right for the parent to concentrate on the child's needs. But, there are times when the parent's needs must also be met.
10. Nurture your marriage. The best gift a parent can give his or her children is a warm, loving family with two parents who love and support each other. Give time to the marriage relationship. In single families, nourish those family ties you do have and seek family support.



SWASA
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In This Issue...

MUSIC THERAPY & FRIENDSHIP CLUB

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, e-mail us at swasa@sbcglobal.net 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

