

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Autism Society of Pittsburgh.

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February 2017

*Every cent raised is spent in our region
to help improve the lives of those among us
with autism and their families.*

Things you "AUT2KNOW"

Opinion-Commentary

Pennsylvania's Ongoing Assault on Institutions!

Governor Wolf has announced the forced closure of Hamburg State Center. His Department of Human Services is following the same compulsory involuntary procedure employed in the systematic elimination of the Western Center in Canonsburg, PA in 1992-2001 - the result was forced outplacement of unprepared residents into many equally unprepared alternative placements in the community and elsewhere, leading to the premature deaths of thirty-eight former residents (that we know of).

Investigation by the Auditor General in 1999 determined it was neither appropriate nor safe to remove the residents from Western Center, and asked DPW to conduct a study to ascertain whether sufficient group homes existed in the first place with sufficient intensive care services critical to the unique needs of these individuals. Auditor General Robert Casey, Jr., found that the State Department of Public Welfare was wrong in determining unilaterally that all residents were appropriate for community placement. His finding was ignored.

Institution demonization is and has been the anti-institutional mindset of the Department's entrenched policy makers since 1988. Rather than improve state centers (expand, reform, heighten scrutiny- see HB 1000, ***which never made it to the floor for a vote***) in order to appropriately accommodate the needs of the seriously involved developmentally disabled in critical need of out-of-home placement, the State continues to block admissions to, as well as to

close its residential care and treatment centers.

It is no coincidence these closings have been accompanied by skyrocketing growth of waiting lists of tens of thousands of those in need of appropriate and emergency out-of-home placement, as well as an unconscionable increase in financial costs and human suffering.

[Click here](#) to read a letter from Laura Mooney, last president of the Western Center Parents Group, to the parents and relatives of Hamburg State Center.

The views expressed are those of the Autism Society of Pittsburgh, and not necessarily those of the Autism Society of America.



NEWS OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

Faith-Based Guidance and Instruction for Special Needs

Continuing with our announcement in our December newsletter, below is a link to Chapter 3 of Dr. Larry Sutton's book entitled "How to Welcome, Include, and Catechize Children with Developmental Disabilities" [CHAPTER 3](#)

Special Education Enrollment Rose in 2015-16 Numbers boosted by students with autism by Christina A. Samuels

The number of students' ages 6 to 21 enrolled in special education rose in the most recent year for which the federal government has data, driven by increases in the number of students classified as having autism or "other health impairments." It was the fourth year in a row for such an increase. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

Antipsychotics and Autism: Weighing the Benefits, Eyeing the Risks by Marina Sarris

Children and adults with autism are sometimes prescribed an array of psychiatric drugs for hyperactivity, poor attention, or challenging behaviors. One type of medication, called antipsychotics, has become something of a "go-to" treatment for the most severe behaviors. According to the latest studies, one in five or six youths with autism have taken them, along with 43 percent of adults with autism, on average. Antipsychotics are the most frequently used type of psychiatric drug in autism. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

Brain Scans Detect Signs of Autism in High-Risk Babies Before Age 1 by Lauren Dunn and Jane Weaver

It may be possible to detect autism in babies before their first birthdays, a much earlier diagnosis than ever before, a small new study finds. Using magnetic-resonance imaging scans, researchers at the University of North Carolina were able to predict - with an 80 percent accuracy rate - which babies who had an older sibling with autism would be later diagnosed with the disorder. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

Study Finds Law Boosted Services For Kids On The Spectrum by Shaun Heasley

Children with autism are receiving more services at no added cost to their families thanks to a federal law that requires expanded mental health coverage, researchers say. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Autism Society of Pittsburgh is hosting a parents workshop.

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Northway Community Church
12121 Perry Hwy
Wexford, PA 15090

Guest Presenters

"Special for Autism - Keyboard Learning Fun!"

Donna Katz, President
Keyboard Town Pals, LLC

&

"Helpful Things These DC's Can Tell You About Autism"

Drs. Kelly and Lucas Amorose
Amorose Family Chiropractic

Max & Erma's

On March 1, 2017 join us for a delicious way to raise money. Enjoy delicious food in a fun atmosphere along with your family and friends while earning fund in support of the Autism Society of Pittsburgh. [Click here for flyer.](#)

Invitation to Participate in Study Regarding ASD and Employment for Parents of Adults, Age 26 or Older, with ASD

James Williams, MRC, CRC, a doctoral student with ASD and a fellow ASA affiliate board member, is requesting assistance in recruiting participants for an IRB-approved dissertation study involving the investigation of the relationship between parental factors and the successful employment of adults, age 26 or older, diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The survey is brief, anonymous, and easy to complete, however the participants must be the parent of an adult with ASD, 26 years or older. This data is crucial for in order to gain a better understanding of how parents and professionals can support adults with ASD to achieve better employment outcomes. Below is the invitation to participate along with the link to the study. [Take the survey.](#)

Top Notch Autism Referral

The Winter 2017 edition of the Kingsley Publishers collection of autism reference publications. Call

BEARS FOR TOTS!

Mary Crilley and Sharon Fawcett make "bear baskets" for the Autism Society of Pittsburgh.

"In 2015 I started making Autism Bears. Bears are my passion and I love to make them. I cut, sew and stuff each one. Then I design their clothes. I showed one of my bears to my sister-in-law, Shirley, and she loved it. Shirley told me about her great-granddaughter having autism and asked me if I could do something with my bears to help raise money for the cause. I said I was sure I could, but give me some time. I worked on a bear until I had what I wanted. But then, I thought, add more to it! Talked to a couple people and found out about the Autism Society. I had to figure out what would bring in more money and make it worth their while. That is when I put it into action -- made a child-size blanket, a bear blanket, a scarf for the child and one for the bear. Then I made a fleece hat for the child and, of course for the bear. I showed it to a couple people and I decided to contact the Autism Society. I met Sharon who said she knitted baby blankets and had extra yarn. She would like to knit a hat and sweater and donate to the cause. I liked that very much."

Mary and Sharon both work from their homes and assume all costs - making one bear a month - simply for the smile of a child with autism God bless them both!



Mary Crilley

Sharon Fawcett

Run for a Reason May 6 & 7, 2017



MAY 7, 2017 // PITTSBURGH, PA

The Autism Society of Pittsburgh is now a participating charity in the Pittsburgh Marathon Events.

[Click here to learn how you can join or team and support the Autism Society of Pittsburgh.](#)

S.P.E.A.K. Applications Coming Soon!

The Autism Society of Pittsburgh will mail S.P.E.A.K. applications to prior year students no later than February 17th!

S.P.E.A.K. is an Extended School Year (ESY) program founded by the Autism Society of Pittsburgh in 1974 to ease transitioning between school years by preventing or reducing learning regression common to children with autism.

S.P.E.A.K is a program for children ages 5 through 21 who have a primary diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum, are in good health, mobile, and able to participate in community activities. S.P.E.A.K. provides Community Based Instruction (CBI) and addresses each child's ESY goals and objectives. The program also provides music therapy, speech services, swimming, CBI classroom trips, field trips, art activities, and adapted physical education.

Download the 2017 S.P.E.A.K. application and brochure below or [click here](#) for more information. If you have additional questions or would like to request a paper application to be mailed to you, please contact the Autism Society of Pittsburgh at 412 - 856 - 7223.

[2017 SPEAK Application](#)
[2017 SPEAK Brochure](#)

Keep an eye out for the new Autism Society of Pittsburgh **website** coming soon.

EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

We offer a range of services, including workshops and support groups, training and educational programs, fundraising events, and community awareness building activities. We stay up-to-date on relevant happenings throughout our local autism community.

[Click here to view our calendar.](#)



AUTISM RESOURCES

We know that those with autism can present parents, families and providers with many challenges and a solid support system is essential. Be sure to check our website for a comprehensive listing of resources involving education, family support services, vocational training, nutrition and legal.

[Click here to download our complete resource list](#)



WAYS TO HELP

Our programs and services would not exist without the help of the caring individuals, businesses, and volunteers that support us. Contributions of any size are our lifeblood - vital to our existence and effectiveness - providing the means for us to help children with autism, their families, and professionals who work with them.



Donate

Please consider visiting [our donations page](#) today to make a contribution through PayPal or learn about other ways to donate.

Volunteer

From time to time we need caring volunteers to help with our programs and fundraising events. If interested, please complete [our contact form](#) and we will be in touch when a volunteer opportunity arises that meets your interests and availability.



Give us a call today!
412-856-7223

Visit www.autismsocietypgh.org or call us for more information and resources.

STAY CONNECTED

