

◆ *Into the Light* ◆

Volume 17 Issue 1 *Autism Society of America, Central Virginia Chapter* January 2009



ASA-CV Mission & Philosophy

The mission of the Autism Society of America is to promote lifelong access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully included, participating members of their communities through advocacy, public awareness, education and research related to autism.

Recognizing and respecting the diverse range of opinions, needs and desires of this group, ASA embraces an overall philosophy which chooses to empower individuals with autism, their parents or caregivers, to make choices best suited to the needs of the person with autism. At the very core of the parent choice philosophy is the belief that no single program or treatment will benefit all individuals with autism. Furthermore, the recommendation of what is "best" or "most effective" for a person with autism should be determined by those people directly involved - the individual with autism, to the extent possible, and the parents or family members. Providing information and education to help in decision-making are more highly regarded at ASA than is advocating for one particular theory or philosophy.

January 15 Rally for Autism Insurance Mandate

As the General Assembly opens its 2009 session, a major Rally is planned in Richmond for over 1000 people on January 15. Rally participants are encouraged to meet with Senators and Delegates prior to and after the rally to urge support for an Autism Insurance Mandate in VA, House Bill 1588.

Please start making plans to "Rally to Richmond" on Jan. 15, 2009, with autism advocates, families and friends from all over Virginia. The game plan is simple: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. visit the office of your delegates and state senators, drop off a card or letter asking them to support HB 1588 and a picture of your child. At 10:30, assemble in Capitol Square by the Bell Tower with other advocates who've joined in the campaign. The Rally begins at 11:00. Wear red and bring a picture of your child or loved one with ASD. Speakers will include bill Patrons, some inspiring parents, and maybe a special guest or two.

HB 1588, sponsored by Delegate Robert Marshall (R-13) and Delegate David Poisson (D-32):

- Requires private health insurance companies to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder
- Coverage will be provided to individuals under the age of 21
- Coverage under this bill is subject to an inflation adjusted maximum benefit of \$36,000 annually
- Coverage of treatments will be provided when prescribed, provided, or ordered for an individual diagnosed with autism by a licensed physician or a licensed psychologist who determines the care to be medically necessary
- The bill includes coverage of the following treatments:
 - Diagnosis
 - Habilitative or rehabilitative care

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JANUARY 9 CHAPTER MEETING AUTISM AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Join us in January to learn more about how you can personally educate your state policymakers about the needs of your loved one with autism spectrum disorder and impact change for a positive future for your family. We will share information about the state budget and how it impacts supports and services for your family; information about HB 1588 for an Autism Insurance Mandate and the Rally on January 15 at the Capitol; and information from other advocacy groups about other issues that impact our families. We will share information about simple steps you can take to influence public policymakers.

The Chapter will also hold elections at the January Chapter meeting. Katherine O'Connell has been nominated for the position of Meeting Secretary and Henry Fine has been nominated for Corresponding Secretary.

ASACV meetings are held at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road, Richmond, 23229. Our meetings are free and open to the public. The library opens at 6:30 p.m.; meetings are from 7:00 to 9:00. Free childcare is available during the meeting; space is limited. A supervised teen group also meets during chapter meetings. Reservations for childcare and the teen group must be made by e-mailing the chapter at asacv@aol.com or calling 257-0192 with the names and ages of each child no later than January 2.

Group to Visit Legislators on January 22

Linda Moore and other advocates and self-advocates will visit Virginia legislators on January 22. The group will meet in House Room #3 in the Capitol Building on Bank Street at 10 a.m. For details, contact Linda at 749-3895 or linda.moore87@yahoo.com.

This newsletter is a publication of: ASA Central VA Chapter □ P.O. Box 29364 □ Richmond, Virginia 23242-0364
(804) 257-0192

We accept for consideration any comments, personal vignettes, book reviews, information, announcements or advertisements for publication in our chapter newsletter. The deadline for submission for the February newsletter is January 15. You may send your contributions to the Chapter at the above address or email contributions to SELKO1@aol.com.

The Autism Society of America, Central Virginia Chapter does not endorse nor promote any program or service provider. The information contained in this newsletter is provided for informational purposes only. The Chapter is a volunteer organization providing information, support and encouragement to parents, family members and professionals in the Central VA area. This edition was edited by Elizabeth Selko and Bradford Hulcher.

January 15 Rally for Autism Insurance Mandate

(Continued from page 1)

- Pharmacy care
- Psychiatric care
- Psychological care
- Therapeutic care
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- The bill applies only to fully-funded health plans governed by state

Further details about the bill and talking points can be found at www.autismvotes.org.

In the meantime, write or e-mail your senator and delegate and tell them how important House Bill 1588 is to you and your family. Not sure who your representative is or how to contact them? Visit

http://legis.state.va.us/1_cit_guide/contacting_my.html to find out.

For information about the rally, visit www.vaautismrally.com

JANUARY "PDAs" WORKSHOP FOR TEENS AND ADULTS ON THE SPECTRUM AND THEIR FAMILIES

This series of workshops will continue on January 12 with a presentation from Tony Gentry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at VCU. Dr. Gentry will introduce us to PDAs, electronic organization tools that can help individuals with autism spectrum disorders who have memory, attention, or organizational deficits manage daily tasks more independently and efficiently. PDAs can improve functional participation at school, work and in the community.

Our meetings are held at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road and are free and open to the public. This meeting is at 7 p.m.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Jan 12 -15 **Orton-Gillingham Training**; a multi-sensory approach to teaching reading, writing and spelling across the curriculum; sponsored by the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education; \$900; Richmond; for info: **Orton-Gillingham.com**

Feb. 23-25 **Shaping the Future** an intensive three-day workshop designed to provide parents and professionals with training in the theory and application of ABA principles, specifically as they relate to children with autism. Topics covered include the principles of reinforcement, ABA-based teaching techniques, assessing the function of behavior, and data collection and analysis; includes lecture, hands-on activities, and student observation. A 20% discount in the workshop registration fee is offered to parents and home therapists; Charlottesville; for info: <http://www.viaschool.org/>

Feb. 26-28 **Leading the Way for Change**; sponsored by the Speech-Language-Hearing Association of VA; sessions include *Speech Production Disorders in Autism: Approaches for Evaluation and Intervention*; *Climbing the Ziggurat with Luke: Using a Comprehensive Planning Tool to Support Tool to Support a Middle School Student with Asperger Syndrome*; *What's Hot. What's Not: Autism Intervention*; Richmond; for info: <http://www.shav.org>

March 11-13 **Autism: Making a Difference Together**; sponsored by Commonwealth Autism Service; \$250 before 2/9; Richmond; for info: www.autismva.org

March 16-18 **VA Transition Forum** a conference for educators, rehabilitation practitioners, workforce development personnel, community stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, advocates and representatives from adult service agencies invested in the successful transition of youth with disabilities; \$99 (before 2/12); Norfolk; for info: <http://www.virginiatransitionforum.org>

For additional information on autism conferences and workshops in VA, visit www.autismtrainingva.org <http://www.shav.org>



Local Support Groups

A Voice for GAP Kids Shares information with students and parents about GAP Kids (Grades 9-11) and educates members of the Virginia General Assembly on the issues that affect GAP Kids. Contact info: <http://www.voiceforgapkids.com>.

Autism Network Group - for parents of children with medical issues in addition to autism; dinner on 1/25 from 5-7 p.m. at Boychicks' Deli in Innsbrook for individuals w/ disabilities and their families; for info: Heather at HKELIAS@AOL.com or 387-9425

Eagle's Nest A faith-based support group for parents of children with special needs; sponsored by Woolridge Road Church; for info: tburns@woolridgeroad.org or 639-4777

Families of Children with Special Needs Support Group at Mount Vernon Baptist Church; A support group for families who are caring for children with special needs. Informative and inspirational, offering educational, social, emotional and spiritual support; meets second Wed. of month, Jan. 14; 6-7 p.m. Jennifer Bittner at 421-4989, bittners4@gmail.com

GRACE (Greater Richmond Autism Coalition for Equality) Support group for parents or any other person raising or caring for a child with autism or a related pervasive developmental disorder; welcomes individuals with an interest in improving service delivery for children in Eastern Henrico and other underserved communities in the Richmond metro area; contact Deanna Parker (804) 257-9007 to RSVP.'

Living with Autism: A Parent Discussion Group sponsored by the Hanover County Parent Resource Center; meets second Tuesday of each month (Jan. 13). For info: 365-4596

National Autism Association, Virginia Chapter The mission of the Virginia Chapter of the National Autism Association is to advocate, educate, and empower; Charlottesville area; 3:00PM until 5:00PM; childcare provided at no charge. For location and more information please contact: Kathy at Kathy@naa-va.org 434-977-4198

Our Daughters with Autism Network - Networking group thru email. To contact the group: e-mail Cindygwin2004@yahoo.com

Parent to Parent of Virginia
(804) 222-1945 or PTPOFVA@aol.com

Richmond Asperger's Meetup The face-to-face meeting will be on the second Thursday of each month from 7-9pm (Jan. 8) at the River City Diner on Parham Rd (at Brook and I95). The meeting is also designed as a place where older children (age 11-17) can meet other Aspergers Children and siblings, if desired. Finally, adults with Aspergers can meet together and/or share information with parents of kids with AS. The Yahoo group is an online discussion support group where parents of children with Aspergers and adults with Aspergers can ask questions and share information. To RSVP for the face-to-face meetings, sign up for our Meetup Group at <http://aspergers.meetup.com/397/> The Yahoogroup is at:

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/richmondaspergersgroup/>

ROCK (Raising Our Celiac Kids) 527-3424 or MikeDebBeam@aol.com

Virginia Voices in Action Support group for parents of children, youth and adults with disabilities. Form lasting friendships with people with disabilities and their families as we support positive change in the community in order to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Hopewell (804) 458-0551 www.vavoicesinaction.com

Public Hearing On Proposed State Budget Monday, January 19, 1:00 p.m General Assembly Building House Room D

Speakers should register no more than 1 hour prior to the start of the hearing. Speakers will be taken in the order they register. Comments should be limited to 3 minutes or less. Those unable to attend may send their comments to:

Delegate Lacey Putney
P. O. Box 406
General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23218

Senator Charles J. Colgan
10th Floor
General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA 23219

ASACV JANUARY CALENDAR

The Autism Society of America, Central VA Chapter will sponsor the following meetings in January. All meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Meetings take place at River Road United Methodist Church, 8800 River Road unless otherwise noted. For information: 257-0192 or asacv@aol.com

Jan. 5	7:00 p.m.	Parents of Children Preschool/School Age w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group
Jan. 6	7:00 p.m.	ASACV Board Meeting
Jan. 8	10:00 a.m.	Biomedical Interest Group
Jan. 9	7:00 p.m.	Chapter Meeting
Jan. 12	7:00 p.m.	"PDAs" (Workshop Series for Teens in Transition, Adults, and their Families)
Jan 15	11:00 a.m.	Rally at General Assembly
Jan. 26	7:30 p.m.	Adults w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group (open only to adults w/ AS/HFA)
Jan. 26	7:00 p.m.	Biomedical Interest Group
Jan. 28	10:00 a.m.	Parents of Children Preschool/School Age w/ Asperger's/High Functioning Autism Interest Group

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Second Annual Self-Determination Youth Summit Seeking Nominees

The Virginia Transition Forum's Youth and Family Committee invites nominations of young persons for sponsorship to the Determination Youth Summit and the Virginia Transition Forum in Norfolk, Virginia March 16-18. Youth with disabilities from across the Commonwealth will meet to identify ways to become better advocates and lead more self-determined lives. In addition, Youth Summit participants will have the opportunity to attend Forum workshops specific to their needs and interests. The selected individuals will receive paid registration, lodging accommodations, travel expenses and meal reimbursements for the three day event.

For more details on the Youth Summit and the Forum visit:

www.virginiatransitionforum.org

www.imdetermined.org

Nomination Criteria:

Young person with a disability

Young persons under age 18 must have a parent/guardian attend

WANTED **IN HOME TUTORS** **FOR 7 YEAR OLD BOY** **\$12 TO \$15 PER HOUR**

Wanted enthusiastic, reliable, energetic, responsible individuals to work with a child with Autism in home Minimum 2-3 hours in afternoon/evening during week days and weekends. Prior experience in working with a child with a disability is preferred. If you don't have experience we will train you. Ideal job for students.

Location: Mechanicsville, Hanover County

Benefits:

- Flexible timings
- Free cell phone service

How to apply:

- Visit <http://www.devta.net> for more information.
- Send your resume at jobs@devta.net or contact Raksha at 804.201.1464.

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APRIL 2, 2009 - SAVE THE DATE TO "BOUNCE FOR AUTISM"!!

The ASACV is proud to announce that we have been selected for the 2009 Bounce for Autism! This is a national event that partners the Autism Society of America with Pump It Up to raise autism awareness through a sensory friendly fundraiser. On April 2, 2009 we will be hosting a Bounce for Autism at the Mechanicsville Pump It Up from 6-8 pm. Individuals will be able to register for the bounce online and then create their own fundraising webpages. All registered individuals will receive a Bounce for Autism t-shirt and can win great Pump It Up prizes based on the fundraising!

This is a great activity that can include folks from all over our community in a celebration of sensory fun! Proceeds from the event will benefit both our local ASACV and the national ASA. More information will be coming in the February newsletter... but look for an email announcement in mid-January when our website for the event will go live. Mark your calendars now to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day, April 2, at the ASACV's Bounce for Autism!

Thank you for the Following Donations

Larry & Lynne Smith

Welcome New and Returning Members

Brian & Heather McGill
Larry & Lynne Smith
Charlene & Rom Dorte
Mr. Mrs. Bernard Pair
Elizabeth Allums
Kim Krito
Nathan & Jennifer Barnum