UPDATE

Fall 2004

South Carolina Autism Society

Together We Can Solve The Puzzle

Jerry Newport and Linda Hodgdon to Speak at 2004 SCAS Conference

Jerry Newport, whose life is the basis of a not-yet-released movie starring Josh Hartnett, will give the Saturday keynote speech at the S.C. Autism Society's 2004 Perspectives in Autism conference, Oct. 15-16, at the Columbia Conference Center.

The speech pathologist Linda Hodgdon, a pioneer in visual supports, will give the keynote talk on Friday.

Starring Hartnett, "Mozart and the Whale" was inspired by a 1995 article in the Los Angeles Times about the relationship between Jerry and his wife, Mary. Both are diagnosed with Asperger syndrome.

Is there someone special you would like to nominate for one of the S.C. Autism Society's annual awards? They are presented each year after the Saturday annual meeting. See page 9 for more about this crowd-pleasing annual event.

Linda Hodgdon's talk is titled, "Visual Strategies: The Key to Improving Communication, Behavior and Social Skills."

She is the author of the best-selling guide, *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication*, and more recently, *Solving Behavior Problems in Autism: Improving Communication with Visual Strategies.*

Teachers and parents find Linda's methods to be practical and easy to implement. She is the director of the Conerstone Communication Center in Troy, Michigan.

The conference will be preceded by a Thursday workshop, "No Child Left Behind: Analysis and Implications for Special Education." The presenters will be Erik Drasgow, Ph.D. and Mitchell Yell, Ph.D., both of the University of S.C.

cont. on p. 9 — see Conference

Fall Golf Outing is Oct. 2 at Indian River

Don't put those clubs away for the season! SCAS will hold its second annual Fun in the Fall Golf Outing on Saturday, Oct. 2, at Indian River Golf Club in West Columbia.

Early registration will mean lower fees for golfers. Before the event, the fees will be $110 per player and $440 per foursome. For those registering the day of the event, fees will be $125 and $500. Fees include cart, greens use, and lunch.

Registration begins at 8 a.m.; the shotgun start is at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at 1 p.m., with an awards presentation for the top team, closest to the pin and longest drive. There will also be a silent auction featuring golf memorabilia.

Sponsors are still being sought at five levels: Platinum, $1,000; Diamond, $750; Gold, $500; Silver, $400; and Bronze, $300. Families may sponsor a hole at $50; corporate holes cost $100.

Register on-line at www.scautism.org or by calling 800-438-4790 or 803-750-6988, ext. 100 or 109. To become a sponsor call Johanna at ext. 104.

From the Desk of the President

Dear Friends:

As we all know, and the Centers for Disease Control have confirmed, the occurrence rate for autism spectrum disorders is huge. Currently it is reported to be 1 in 166 people. That, of course, leads us to the idea that the so-called autism community is extremely large in this country. And it is by the time you add in the individuals with ASD, their immediate and extended families, and the professionals working with them. Do the math and you can see that this is a very large community. I would estimate that this community is greater than 10 million in the United States alone.

This community should be a force to be reckoned with. But, unfortunately, there are many divides in the autism community. I am sure most of you are very familiar with the various groups and divisions within this community. Currently there are at least seven national organizations that I can think of just off the top of my head. There are probably more.

That is seven different organizations seeking support and resources from the autism community. Some would argue that this is seven different focuses and that this is good for the community. I would agree up to a point, but when the seven groups rarely talk to one another and have different national agendas, it makes the community look and feel fractured.

I hear from families on a regular basis who ask me, "Why can't all of these groups work together?" This is a great question, but unfortunately it is a question I cannot answer. I recognize that many of these groups are formed around a specific treatment option. But this should not be a barrier to working together. After all, we all have the same goal, support for the person with ASD in reaching his or her maximum potential.

SCAS has fully adopted the ASA options policy. What this is in a nutshell is that we support the family's right to choose the best treatment option for their child. We hope that the family will research these options first, look at good independent studies, and talk to other families using them. SCAS does not endorse any one treatment option because what works with one child may not work with the next. SCAS strives to help families find the information that they need so that they can make their own choice.

But imagine if we, the autism community, spoke with one voice across this country. The things we could accomplish! More research dollars, adult entitlement programs, more treatment options covered by Medicaid — and the list can go on and on.

It is time that we tear down these barriers that we have created and start to talk as a community. We, here in this state, need to start to pressure our national organizations, whichever ones you belong to, to start talking to each other, end their turf issues and develop one national agenda. Working together as one voice, all will benefit. Most importantly, those with ASD will benefit with a better quality of life.

Craig C. Stoxen
President and CEO

Book Review: *Strengthening Relationships*

by Susan Marciano

Editor's note: Susan is a doctoral candidate in social work. Her dissertation is on the needs and concerns of married couples who have children with autism. She interviewed parents as part of her research.

Strengthening Relationships: When Our Children Have Special Needs, focuses on the relationship between parents who are caring for a child with a disability.

The author, Nicholas Martin, intends to provide parents with ways to enhance their relationships between themselves and their families. A clinical psychologist, Martin admits he did not have the experience or expertise he needed to write the book. So he went to parents to learn about the challenges they face and how to address them.

Martin quotes parents from internet postings, discussion groups, and personal e-mails. There are recommendations at the end of each chapter.

The author begins by addressing parents' concerns about a possible genetic component to their child's disability. He addresses thoughts and behaviors of parents at the birth of the child or at diagnosis and how these impact the individual and eventually the partnership. He provides suggestions on support groups, finding affordable child care, meeting expenses, spending time alone, communicating effectively, compromising on discipline, and preventing the child's needs from interfering with the couple's.

The book contains insights from parents on how they learned to meet challenges, as well as a six-week program for couples to strengthen their relationship; handling divorce if it becomes unavoidable; and group activities to reach out to others by sharing experiences and solutions to problems.

Most parents are aware of the problems they face early on and quickly seek out support from other parents or professionals. Many read just about anything they can get their hands on about the disability to understand their child's needs and how to meet them. This book would be helpful for parents who have just learned of their child's special needs as it provides good basic advice on how to protect the parents' relationship and also meet the needs of their child.

The chapters on child rearing and communication are particularly helpful in suggesting how parents can work together as a team. As any parent knows, this is the key to any successful relationship, whether or not they have children with special needs.

Effective communication strategies include insightful clues about the connections between an event, what you think about it, the feelings you have about it, and how you act.

This information can be helpful for parents in understanding their own reactions as well as the reactions of their partner. It may help answer the questions: Why do we do what we do? Why would a parent dedicate all his/her time to studying the disability, often neglecting others? The author provides alternatives to behaviors that may not be getting the desired results.

Strengthening Relationships: When Our Children Have Special Needs, serves as a basic guide for parents to increase their understanding of the potential problems in a relationship and how they might avoid some of them. It would be a good resource for parents at the time of diagnosis and for those who want to lay groundwork for their relationship, including how to deal with specific challenges that may arise as their child grows.

The Update

The *Update* is published four times a year by the South Carolina Autism Society, one of more than 200 nonprofit chapters of the Autism Society of America (ASA) and the only ASA chapter in South Carolina. Guest articles are welcome for possible publication. Information or points of view contained in the *Update* are not necessarily endorsed or held by SCAS, its directors or staff, but may be presented simply to keep readers informed about options. SCAS maintains offices in the Palmetto Office Building at 652 Bush River Road, Suite 203, Columbia, SC 29210. Call us at 803-750-6988 or 800-438-4790; fax us at 803-750-8121; or e-mail us at either scas@scautism.org or www.scautism.org.

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Why Choose SCAS for Service Coordination?

Editor's note: Below are some of the questions parents have asked about having the South Carolina Autism Society provide service coordination for their family member with autism (who is currently receiving services from DDSN). Craig Stoxen, SCAS president and CEO, provides the answers to these questions below.

Q. Service coordination seems to be a departure from programs the South Carolina Autism Society already has. Why does SCAS want to provide service coordination?

A. This question goes to the heart of why we are offering service coordination to families with a family member who has autism. The answer is purely and simply, that we support the philosophy of "choice" for individuals with autism and their families. Historically South Carolina has offered services to individuals with developmental disabilities through one source — the person's DSN board and, in some cases, the board's designated provider in that community. In the late '90s the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs began the process of making it possible for additional providers to offer services to these individuals in our state. The idea was to provide choices for consumers so that *their individual needs* could be met. As a result, we have seen new providers setting up shop in some areas state for early intervention, housing, service coordination, and so forth.

But to really make choice work, more service providers are still needed in South Carolina. As an organization that advocates for people with autism, SCAS could not sit idly by and talk about the importance of choice if we weren't going to step up to the plate and try to be part of the solution. Service coordination was the area where we felt we could make a difference in the lives of children and adults with autism. It fits in perfectly with our mission, which is to enable these individuals to reach their maximum potential. We feel that advocacy is our most important role, and service coordination is simply advocacy at the individual level.

Q. I'm afraid my child will lose services if we have the South Carolina Autism Society do our service coordination. Could this happen?

A. Absolutely not. Your child's services will remain the same no matter who his or her service coordinator is. We have been approved by the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to do service coordination. It is not as if you are cutting the strings to DDSN, but you are exercising choice by having a voice in who performs service coordination for your family member.

Q. As a parent, I can't honestly say that service coordination has done that much for my child. It seems like I'm the one who gets the ball rolling.

A. SCAS approaches service coordination as a team effort. Families must play an active part in order to make the greatest impact. There is no way the service coordinator can do everything for the family. But what they can do is help the family understand their options, brainstorm for solutions, and help put these solutions into place. SCAS will make sure all requirements are met and that paperwork is done appropriately and promptly Remember, we have more than 30 years of experience in advocacy specifically for individuals with autism, and we will make sure our service coordinators are prepared to work with this particular population and their families. As we all know, this is a unique population in many ways.

One example of how we can provide a family with expertise is that our service coordinators will receive training specific to autism. We are well positioned to give them this training because we offer it ourselves. SCAS offers training each spring and at the annual fall

conference, coming up next month, with a pre-conference workshop and autism related topics with keynote speakers and breakout session presenters at the conference itself. All of our information is up to date and we try to cover many bases without pushing a particular approach. There is no other organization in our state that does so much training in this area, and of course our service providers will receive this training.

Q. Can my child get more services by getting service coordination from SCAS?

A. Not unless the service coordinator accesses an existing service that your child was not receiving before. Remember, we can't create direct services. We can advocate for them, but we can't create them. Also, they must be allowed for in the DDSN budget.

Q. Is person-centered planning a required part of service coordination?

A. Planning is required through a "single plan" *or* person-centered planning. We encourage person-centered planning, however, and so does DDSN. Basically, person-centered planning, which again goes back to the '90s, was another way that DDSN envisioned that the *needs of the individual* could be met. The person-centered planning meeting is held annually, and this is where the individual's needs are addressed. So going back to your comment about parental involvement, parents are critically important members of their child's team, and that team participates in the person-centered planning process. We have seen the process work quite well, and I encourage families who are not already holding person-centered planning meetings to seriously consider doing so. This will become especially important as the child with autism gets into the school years and beyond, because many supports are likely to be what are sometimes called "informal supports."

Q. What is an informal support?

A. This means that in the absence of an actual service, the individual with autism is supported by someone who is already in their lives most likely and who agrees to help them reach a particular goal or goals. It can work really well when that person is already known to the individual and attends the annual meeting. One family I know of addressed the need their child had to learn how to cross a street safely. An extended family member was at their meeting and volunteered to take the child out into the community on a regular basis to teach them this particular skill. Some people might call this thinking outside the box.

Q. Should my service coordinator be the facilitator for the meeting?

A. We believe that, no, the service coordinator should not be the facilitator, even if she or he has been trained to do it. Certainly the service coordinator has to attend, but it is important that an independent party do the facilitating. This helps to guarantee that longer-term goals are addressed, including the steps to reach them. An independent facilitator also offers a fresh look at things and is unencumbered by concerns like how much paperwork could be involved. Your service coordinator can give you a list of trained facilitators in your area.

Q. The South Carolina Autism Society is not currently doing service coordination where I live. How does SCAS decide to start up service coordination in a particular county?

A. We need a certain number of families before we can actually start up. It's not a large number, but we can't set up shop with just one family. If you want service coordination from SCAS, or if you haven't made up your mind but you are considering having SCAS provide service coordination, call Cecilia Williamson at 800-438-4790, ext. 114. She is our service coordinator and she's willing to answer your questions. Just as important, she is keeping track of requests for service coordination across the state. If you contact her, and if you also spread the word in your community that SCAS is now doing service coordination, we will be one step closer to offering service coordination in your part of the state.

Results of Hyperactivity Study are Presented

by Ruth K. Abramson, Ph.D.
Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science, USC School of Medicine

Editor's note: Ruth is a Fellow of the American College of Medical Genetics and a regular contributor to the Update. *She is part of the USC-Duke University team that is researching the genetics of autism spectrum disorders.*

Once again the South Carolina Autism Society's annual meeting is growing close. Thanks to all of the families who participate in the USC/Duke University Study of Molecular Genetics, we have had a year that has advanced our quest to find a cure for autism (AD) and Asperger's disorder (AsD). The USC group this year has focused on clinical issues that affect the lives of individuals with AD and AsD.

Hyperactivity is a clinical issue reported by many parents. Some parents say that their children with AD are more hyperactive than normal children and some parents with children with AsD claim their children are more hyperactive than others. At the American Psychological Association meeting in July 2004, our group (Dr. Alicia Hall, Sarah Ravan, Dr. Harry Wright, Dr. Michael Cuccaro and myself) reported the following findings of a study we conducted on hyperactivity.

The boys who participated in this study were identified from a pool of 140 participants (115 Caucasian and 25 African-American) in our molecular study of autism and Asperger's disorder. Subjects with HFA, high functioning autism, (number in study=20) and AsD (n=20) males were age matched within 6 months for chronological age. The age range for this study was from 4.6 to 21.6 years. Girls were not included in the study because they were too few in number.

Hyperactivity/impulsivity was measured by the Aberrant Behavior Checklist subscale for hyperactivity (ABC-H) (Aman, 1985a,b). Hperactivity and inattention were measured by the SNAP-IV (Swanson, 2001). The ABC-H hyperactivity/impulsivity scores were not significantly different for African-American (X, or mean value = 18.8 ± 10.7) versus Caucasian males (X = 19.2 ± 10.5), and so African-American males are included in the age matched subject pool. When age was taken into effect, there was no difference between the mean ABC-hyperactivity/impulsivity scores for AsD males (X=21.4 ± SE 2.44) and HFA males (X=20.65).

There also was no difference in hyperactivity and inattention by parent report on the SNAP-IV. A small group chosen from the larger group above of HFA males (number in study=11) and ASD (n=11) males had similar mean values for inattention.

Normal values based on parent report for the community ABC-H (Brown, 2002) were used to identify how many HFA and AsD males had ABC-H scores in the normal range. A majority of males with HFA (70%) and AsD (65%) had ABC-H scores in the normal range. Only 25% of boys with HFA or AsD were 1 to 2 standard deviations above normal; and only 5% of HFA and 7.5% of AsD males are 2 standard deviations above the norm, meaning that they had very high scores indicating the problem was much more severe.

What do these results of this study mean in layman's terms? They indicate that there was no difference in parent perception of hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention between individuals with high functioning autism and individuals with Asperger's disorder, and when compared with the overall population of developmental disabilities. There was, however, a significant age effect in that the highest scores occurred at age 13. This study has implications for management of symptoms in HFA and AsD.

We want to thank all of the families who have participated in our study and welcome our new families. Our group has grown, and in addition to Sarah Ravan, Dr. Alicia Hall, Cathy Warner, Chamarlyn Fairley and Heather Smith, Dr. Wright and I would like to welcome another psychologist, Sarah Cagle, who will be visiting families in our study. Together we can make a difference. See you at the Autism Society meeting Oct. 15-16 at its new location, the Columbia Conference Center.

ASA Keynote Speaker Encourages Hope

At the Autism Society of America's annual conference in July, the opening keynote speaker said research is giving parents reason to hope for progress beyond their children's preschool years.

Pointing out that scientists had long believed most progress occurred in children with autism before age 6, Dr. Geraldine Dawson, director of the University of Washington Autism Center, said researchers are now finding that tremendous changes are made at elementary school age between 5 and 10.

"We're really getting a very different picture," Dawson said. She added that the belief that 50 percent of autistic children would "never develop connective speech" has changed for the better. Now the figure is 25 percent, and the goal is zero to 10 percent. "I believe we'll probably be able to get there," Dawson said.

The optimum amount of intervention is a subject for debate. For a time, experts recommended 40 hours weekly of one-on-one instruction – a tough standard for working families.

"We have no idea if that's necessary," Dawson said, or even feasible with toddlers, who need naps and other care. But she said the general rule for intervention is the sooner the better.

Diagnostic tools have improved to the point that autism can be reliably detected by age 2, but the average age of diagnosis is about age 4, Dawson said. While she and other experts are working to make earlier diagnosis possible, Dawson said alert parents and pediatricians will always be crucial to the process.

October conference on biomedical research

The conference, ASA's 35th, was held in Seattle. In Indianapolis from Oct. 22-23, ASA will present a conference on biomedical research in collaboration with the Indiana Resource Center for Autism. Speakers will address theories relating to autism such as the so-called "brain-gut" connection, environmental chemicals, "oligogenic" inheritance, oxidative stress, and metabolic issues and more.

For more information on "Racing Toward Answers in Autism: Latest in Biomedical Research," call 301-658-0881, ext. 110, or go to conference@autism-society.org.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Research Announcement

Autism and Asperger's Disorder Genetic Research Study

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine, in collaboration with Duke University Medical Center is pleased to announce a new research study is currently accepting families with one or more individual with a diagnosis of Autism or Asperger's disorder into our ongoing study of the genetics of autism spectrum disorders. Individuals must be between the ages of 3 and 21 and meet DSM-IV criteria for Autism/Asperger's disorder.

No travel will be necessary and there are no costs to participate.

For more information, or to enroll a family in the research study, please call **Sarah Ravan** at **803-898-2343.**

May - July Donors

M/M Jack Schoon
M/M William Gettys
M/M James Eargle
Susan Butler (SCEAP)
M/M Devon Dawson
Cheree West
Glen Brown (Santee Cooper)
Lynn Meadows
M/M Duncan Horne
M/M Alex Holbert
M/M Granville Hicks
M/M William Bishop
Aixa Rodriguez-Mariana
Paul Miller (SCDDSN)
M/M Mark Smith
M/M Roy Williams
Anne Dudek
Dorey Williams
M/M Robert Stansell
Peter Maloney
Marie Small
Janice Payne
Meadwestvaco
Janet Keith
Wilhelmina Kennedy
Grady Owens
M/M Kurt Kruger
Gene Grace Holbert
Kevin Towe
Barbara Drake

In Honor of

Joseph Getty by M/M Patrick Getty
Justin and Blake by M/M Laurie Priester
Steve Spann Jr. by Carrie Spann
Esther Senn by Honoria Poon
Carrie Mae DeFee by M/M Joseph Park
Michael Shippy by M/M Ronald Shippy
Cassel and Wesley Sloan by Gloria Jean Sloan
Matthew Pate by Mary Pate

In Memory of

Eddie Horowitz by M/M Robert McCarty
Frances Faust by Richard Wilson, M/M A.W. Davis, Elizabeth Lupton, Frances Galliard, James Van Ness, M/M Herbert Fore

New at Conference This Year!

If you're a parent or other caregiver and are coming to the 2004 SCAS conference Oct. 15-16, you may want to consider sharing something your loved one has accomplished recently. A display board will be set up so you can post a description of what he or she has done, along with a photo if you'd like. The total size should be no more than 8-1/2 x 11 inches. This could give you a chance to celebrate a success large or small, and maybe provide inspiration to others who attend the conference.

May - July New Members

Benefactor
Grady Jerry Owens

Supporting
Annabel Sy
Joyce Nicholas
Terry Stewart

Basic
M/M John Mabelitini
M/M Rick Rauppius
Cathi Browder
Dorina Talas
Darlene Higginbothem
Laura Arnstein

Renewing Members

Benefactor
M/M Ronald Shippy
M/M William Bishop
M/M Alex Holbert
Joyce Nielsen
M/M Joseph Park
M/M Phillip Hazlett
M/M Duncan Horne
M/M James Eargle

Supporting
M/M James Taylor
M/M Charles Banov
M/M Michael Smith
M/M Richard Moye
M/M Roy Thomas
Anne Dudek
M/M William Floyd
Cheree West
Harry Wright
Erik Drasgow

Basic
Granville Hicks
M/M Jim Kelley
M/M Premal Parikh
M/M Stuart Smith
M/M Stephen Park
Wendy Free
Barbara Drake
Mary Pate
Fayssoux McLean
Mildred Lilley
Susan Johnson
Lynn Ragsdale
M/M Jack Schoon
Joan Mott

Please support your local United Way.

Allocations and designations are an important part of the SCAS budget.

Thank you for giving.

Oops!

The name of a sponsor for the golf outing was inadvertently omitted from the summer 2004 *Update*. Our apologies to Dr. Mark Borowicz, who contributed $1,000 to the Fun in the Sun golf outing in Garden City last spring.

Nominate Someone Special for a SCAS Award

Each year SCAS presents awards to professionals, family members and others for their contributions to improve the life of just one — or more than one — child or adult with an autism spectrum disorder. Nominations are normally made by parents, and the awards have been given to school personnel all the way from "the top" to an aide or a bus driver who makes that extra special effort every day; to a child's devoted sibling; or to a therapist or a service coordinator who goes the extra mile. Explains SCAS President Craig Stoxen, "Our annual awards are rather unique in that they recognize people from all walks of life who have made a real difference to someone with an autism spectrum disorder. These are our 'unsung heroes' sometimes, although we have also given awards to directors of programs, all kinds of volunteers and even lawmakers." SCAS has award categories (and is not likely to give out more than one in a single category), but you may create a category with your nomination. The awards are presented on Saturday at the annual conference (Oct. 16 this year), immediately following the annual meeting. Whoever submits the nomination usually is asked to present it.

To nominate someone, call SCAS at 800-438-4790 or 803-750-6988, ext. 100 or 109, and a form will be mailed or faxed to you. Or you may obtain a form from our website at www.scautism.org. All nominations must be submitted by the end of September. You will be notified if your nominee is selected.

Conference

cont. from p. 1

All events will be held at a new location this year, the Columbia Conference Center. Lunch is included each day, including the pre-conference on Thursday, with registration.

Family members, professionals and students may register for one or two days, and with or without registering for the Thursday workshop.

Friday's program will include "Autism 101" for those new to autism, as well as two breakout sessions. There will be one breakout session on Saturday morning. .

More information may be found in the brochure mailed out in late August, or on the SCAS web-site, www.scautism.org. Return the form by mail; fax it to 803-750-8121; or register online. Call SCAS with questions or to register by phone, 800-438-4790 or 803-750-6988, ext. 100 or 109.

Perspectives in Autism is sponsored by SCAS, the Autism Division of the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs and the S.C. Department of Education.

The Columbia Conference Center is located on the eastern side of I-26 between the St. Andrews and Piney Grove exits. It is accessible from Fernandina Road and is behind the Hampton Pontiac-Buick dealership on Laurelhurst Avenue.

Fees for family members

The cost for a family member to attend Fri-day-Saturday is $95 for one day and $120 for two; if a SCAS member, the fee is reduced to $50 for one day and $75 for two. Two family members can attend for less: $125 for one day and $160 for two days; if members, two can attend for $80 for one day and $105 for two days. The Thursday pre-conference costs $75 for family members who are not members of SCAS and $60 for members. The pre-conference workshop costs $75 for family members who are not SCAS members, and $60 for members.

Professionals' fees

Registration for nonmember professionals is $125 for one day and $160 for two; members may register for $80, one day, and $105 for two days. If three or more professionals are coming from the same workplace, the rates are reduced by $5. The cost of the Thursday workshop for professionals is $90 for non-members and $75 for members.

Fees for students

Full-time students will be charged $95 for one day and $120 for two if nonmembers; those who are members pay $50 for one day and $75 for two. The workshop costs $75 for non-member students and $60 for SCAS members.

Autism Support Groups in South Carolina

Aiken (see article below)
Quarterly, Aiken Regional Hosp.
Denise Stout, 803-649-5425
dstout@aol.com

Anderson
1st Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Boulevard Baptist Church
Dixon Huiett, 864-225-3500

Barnwell
3rd Monday
Barnwell Elementary School
Faye Mitchell, 803-259-1599

Beaufort/Bluffton/Hilton Head Online Support Group
HiltonHeadChildrenWithAutism-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Coastal Region
2nd Monday, Charleston
Bev McCarty, 843-763-6877

Columbia
3rd Monday, 5:30 p.m.
at Family Connection
Susie Phillips, 755-6645

Greenville
4th Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
Center for Developmental Svs.
Kristy Hunsinger, 864-331-1340
(a Family Connection group)

Horry
Horry County DSN Board
Sarah Pascarella, 843-236-1591
Cheryl Bauerle, 843-449-8646

Kershaw
Margo Cook, 803-438-8877

Laurens
Lori Doyle, 864-833-9746

Manning
Each Wednesday, 10 a.m.
Saundra Wallace, 435-4007

Augusta CSRA
1st Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Children's Medical Center
Lisa Bryant, 803-278-2514

Spartanburg
3rd Friday, 7 p.m.
Spartanburg County Library
Maria Atkinson, 864-884-7460
autism_ANSA@yahoo.com

Wanted: Leader of Aiken Support Group

The Aiken support group is looking for a new leader. If you are the parent of a child with an autism spectrum disorder and live in or near Aiken, this is a great way to meet — and help — other families.

Meetings have been scheduled quarterly, and there already is a meeting place at the Aiken Regional Hospital.

Denice Stout, who is stepping down because of other demands on her time, will be happy to answer any questions about the Aiken group. Reach Denice at dstout6@aol.com or call her at 803-649-5425.

Other areas need groups!

There still are many areas of the state that do not have support groups close by. If you are interested in starting one or are leading one that is not on the above list, please call SCAS at 800-438-4790 or 803-750-6988 and ask for Lynn (ext. 108).

Books on ASDs to Go to Libraries

The South Carolina Autism Society has been granted funds to purchase books about autism spectrum disorders for the state's county libraries.

The project is called 5-FAB for "5 Featured Autism Books," five being the minimum number of titles expected to be distributed to each library system. There are 40 public library systems in South Carolina serving all 46 counties.

Parents are the target audience for the books, although one will be intended for children who have a brother or sister with an autism spectrum disorder. A committee of parents and professionals has already determined broad topic areas, the first being basic information about ASDs, with treatment options, intended for parents of newly diagnosed children.

Subcommittees will select one or more titles for each category. Once the titles have been selected and books purchased, the S.C. State Library will distribute them to each library system at no cost to SCAS. Plans are to have the books in the libraries in time for Autism Awareness Month in April 2005.

Craig Stoxen, SCAS president and CEO, said the intent of the project is to "provide accurate and up-to-date information, as opposed to a situation where there's just one book and it blames parents for autism."

The S.C. Developmental Disabilities Council is providing the funds to SCAS for the project.

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Michael Filippone, Mt. Pleasant
Maria Delgado, Seneca
Roy Williams, Lexington
Chris Heeringa, Sumter
Joyce Nielsen, Summerville
Alex Holbert, Conway
Erik Drasgow, Ph.D., Columbia
Margaret Moore, Columbia
Denise Long, Williston
Denise Oxford, Anderson
Beverly McCarty, Charleston
Susan DuRant, Columbia

SCAS Programs

For more information, visit our website, www.scautism.org.

- **Family Support / Information and Referral**
- **Autism & Informed Response - training for emergency workers**
- **Service Coordination for DDSN clients with autism**
- **People with Disabilities and 911 Assistance**
- **Parent-School Partnership - parent mentors assist families**
- **5 FAB - providing books about ASDs to local libraries**

SCAS also advocates for quality services for children and adults with ASDs — as individuals and statewide.

SCAS Staff

Craig C. Stoxen, **President & CEO** (ext. 106)
Vickie Stowe, **Admn. Assist.** (100)
Sheila Raulerson, **Prgm. Admn. Assist**. (109)
Mary Bennett*, **Bookkeeper** (105)
Cecilia Williamson, **Service Coordinator** (114)
Johanna Nwanagu, **Dir. of Development** (104)
Carol Niederhauser*, **Trng. Coord., *Update* Ed.** (102)
Paula Devan, **Office Clerk** (108)
Lynn Ragsdale, **I&R Specialist** (108)
Jan Mandeville*, **Parent Liaison**
Melanie Marquis*, **PSP Coordinator** (101)

Mentors, Parent-School Partnership (all 103)

Dandrea Woolridge*
A.J. Dearybury*
Lissa Waring*
Tammy Ruiz*
Brenda Dease*
Toni Ruzanski*
Dawn Thomas*
Spring Slagle*
Brande Smalley*

** parent of child with an autism spectrum disorder*

How to Reach Us ...

803-750-6988, 800-438-4790 (extensions above)
Fax: 803-750-8121
E-mail: scas@scautism.org
Information on Web: www.scautism.org

Mission Statement
South Carolina Autism Society

The Purpose of the S.C. Autism Society is to enable all individuals in S.C. with autism spectrum disorders to reach their maximum potential.

SCAS is a chapter of the Autism Society of America.

Protection & Advocacy Surveying Polling Places

Using a written survey, Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities is trying to identify polling places in South Carolina that may not be easily accessible to voters with disabilities.

The purpose of the effort is to ensure voting rights to South Carolinians who have disabilities.

One option might be for a voter to take the survey with them to their polling place in the general election coming up on Tuesday, Nov. 2.

For more information

For a survey form, or if you have any questions on Election Day, contact Protection and Advocacy at 803-782-0639 or toll-free at 866-275-7273.

Questions may be directed to Nancy McCormick or Cindy Parker.

Autism Division Begins New Teacher Training

The Autism Division, S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, began its new nine-day training for classroom teachers in July, "Autism: Behavior Based Instructional Strategies," or ABBIS.

The current session has four more one-day workshops, ending in February 2005. The next full session will begin in July 2005.

Teachers completing ABBIS may receive either graduate credit from the College of Charleston or teacher recertification credit by the S.C. Department of Education.

ABBIS is just one of many training programs offered by the Autism Division across the state. Other classes have been designed for parents as well as the various professionals who work with children and adults with autism.

Visit www.state.sc.us/ddsn/ and click on the Autism Division for more information.

South Carolina Autism Society
Together We Can Solve The Puzzle

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