



# Community Connection

Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, Department of Child & Family Studies — Volume 11, Issue 1 • February 2008 - July 2008

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## Director's Note

CARD has had an amazing 6 months working with families and schools, but also on several larger projects that we will describe in greater detail throughout this newsletter. Did you know that CARD-USF received the honor of winning the award for project of the year within our division for 2006-7? This award was bestowed upon us at the annual Child and Family Studies luncheon and award event on Nov. 14, 2007. I could not be prouder of the CARD team and the daily work that is done with quality and integrity. We are serving over 2000 families in our 14 county region with our 18 full and part time staff. Please join me in welcoming our newest employees, Susan McMillan, Nycole Willoughby, and Krystal McFee.

But I am guessing what you really want to know is what is coming up in the next six months, so let me fill you in!

First, we are very excited to collaborate with Dr. Sylvia Diehl on putting together a training opportunity for families on literacy. This will likely occur late spring 2008. Along with that theme of literacy, we have distributed literacy boxes to each of the 14 county school districts with a training CD that discusses the use of the materials we assembled in that box. We hope that teachers will find this information useful and expand their reading initiatives for students.

In preparing for autism awareness month in April 2008, we are launching a new product called a "quick kit". Each quick kit will provide families and professionals with a starter supply of materials based on the kit's theme. Our first two kits will tackle the topic of promoting communication for young children and screening young

children by medical professionals. We will be working on kits for older children as our resources allow.

In addition, we will create a new product for newly diagnosed families that walks parents through the typical questions that are asked in each life domain, such as communication, skill development, social relationships, etc. This portable document will be provided to our families whose children are between the ages of 2 and 5.



Dr. Karen Berkman,  
CARD Director

Since the Autism and Co-Existing Mental Disorders conference in May of 2006 was such a success, we decided to hold this event again in our Ft. Myers region. We have four wonderful speakers who will be addressing this topic with overview information, national research efforts and school based practices for identifying students and intervening with students. The conference will be held May 9th, 2008 on the FGCU campus in Ft. Myers. This conference is co-sponsored by our friends at PDP, NAMI, SEDNET, the David Lawrence Center, FIN, and our UCEDD at USF. Please check our website for the save the date flyer and brochure.

I wanted to publicly thank Dr. Karen Moffit from FDLRS as well as Representative Bill Heller from St. Petersburg who were both award recipients at the statewide CARD conference for their hard work to keep us successfully funded for this year. Their leadership is greatly appreciated.

—Karen Berkman, Ph.D.

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### Our Mission

The mission of the Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) at the University of South Florida is to provide support and assistance that optimizes the potential of people with autism and related disabilities. Our effort to achieve this mission is exemplified in the four "components for caring" that are the focus of our work:

- Direct Assistance – Providing individualized support for people with autism and related disabilities, and their families, in natural community settings.
- Technical Assistance & Consultation – Undertaking activities on behalf of programs (e.g., classroom, supported living residence, supported employment site, etc.) that serve people with autism and related disabilities.
- Professional Training – Providing instruction on autism and related disabilities through our workshops, conferences, in-service training, and college courses.
- Public Education and Awareness – Developing and disseminating information about people with autism and related disabilities.

As one of seven regional, university-based CARD sites, CARD-USF provides its services to individuals with autism and related disabilities, their families, related professionals, and the general public throughout a fourteen county catchment area in west, central, and southwest Florida.

### Endorsement Policy

As a policy, CARD will not lend its name to the endorsement of any specific program, practice, or model that is offered for service to people with autism and related disabilities. However, the sharing of information and training opportunities are key functions of the CARD program.

*Events, activities, programs, and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.*

## CARD Collaborates with Hillsborough Recreation Departments

CARD has been exploring ways to help local recreation departments gain greater knowledge in best practices for including individuals with ASD in their programs.

One project that took place this past summer was a collaborative effort of Hillsborough County Conservation, Parks and Recreation Department, USF Applied Behavior Analysis Master's Program and CARD. The County Recreation Department invited CARD to provide overview training to their summer camp instructors prior to the start of Camp Sparks. There are six camp locations throughout Hillsborough County; each had opportunities to have a CARD consultant visit the camp to brainstorm ideas to better serve their campers with autism. One specific camp was assigned three graduate students from the ABA program at USF. These students developed individual interventions for specific behaviors of specific campers. The camp staff was asked to participate in a research project of intervention implementation. The ABA students created relationships with counselors, campers, teachers and parents of the campers in order to create interventions that could be used across all environments. The students were supervised by BCBA-qualified CARD consultants. This team met regularly to review and update camper interventions and progress. The ABA students appreciated the value of the practical application of best practices this project provided them. The participating staff expressed gratitude for the help they

received from the ABA students. The County Recreation Department and CARD continue to consult to the Out of School Time programs.

A second project involved collaboration with The City of Tampa Parks and Recreation Department, The PASS Group (The Parents of Autism and Asperger's Syndrome Support Group) and CARD. Two parents in the PASS Group proposed starting a social group with individuals with autism and their siblings in a setting where all participants could enjoy recreation and leisure activities. Through many preliminary planning meetings, a program design was shaped and implemented at the Loretta Ingraham Recreation Complex. The program was named Fun and Friendship. The PASS Group kept families connected by taking the responsibility for communicating with participants. The City Park Staff ran the evening sessions for PASS families while multiple CARD consultants provided consultation for weekly training, materials and strategies. Skills were taught by offering an overview and then practice time within recreation activities. Some of the skills were: talking with others, turn taking, giving and following directions, handling disappointment, showing respect and keeping in touch. Everyone regularly involved in Fun and Friendship has expressed exactly that.... They are having FUN!

Thanks to all, too numerous to mention by name, who have dedicated so much time and effort to each of these projects.

### Kaleisia Family Development Project

On Sunday evening, February 11th 2007, Kaleisia Tea Lounge at Fletcher and 15th Streets in Tampa hosted an auction to benefit CARD. Silent and live auction items were available, as well as, of course, a selection of Kaleisia's finest teas and goodies. Live entertainment by the Seahorse Orchestra and educational information about CARD rounded out a delightful evening. And we're delighted to announce that Kaleisia has selected CARD to benefit from the February 10, 2008 Gifts of Love Celebration and auction to support additional families.

In honor of the generous community spirit of Kim Pham and Lan Ha, the owners of Kaleisia, CARD has created the Kaleisia Family Development Project. The Kaleisia Project was established to provide funding for autism-specific training and educational development of families and individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Families and individuals can request stipends to attend trainings, educational programs, conferences or workshops. Please check out our website for additional information and an application.

## Educators Visit from Curacao!

CARD-USF and FGCU were proud to host the education team from the Hummingbird School on the island of Curacao on October 8-10, 2007. The School District of Hillsborough County was generous enough to arrange a series of school visits and made the teachers available to answer questions. The visitors were headed up by Verylynn Romero, the principal at the Hummingbird school in Curacao. The school primarily serves students with varying exceptionalities. They were in town at the invitation of Dr. Marci Greene, Chair of the College of Education, Florida Gulf Coast University. On October 9th, Glenda Koshy, Director of ASD, Suzan Fine, ART elementary, Sue Bennett, ART secondary, and Mindy Stevens, CARD Consultant, escorted the visitors to Pizzo Elementary, Riverview High School, Maniscalco Elementary, and Wharton High School. Our guests observed a vast array of teaching methods, visual supports, and activities. The group expressed their appreciation of different methods that they can take back to their country and use in their school. They expressed a desire to learn more about transitions into post-secondary life for our



students. In Curacao, there are few options for the students once they leave school at age 17. At Riverview High School, they witnessed vocational work completed by the students to enhance their skills and ultimately prepare them for Community Based Training and employment outside of school. The teachers from all the schools spoke with them and answered their questions. They in turn provided information about their own programs. It was a positive experience for all involved. After leaving Tampa, they arrived in Fort Myers on October 10th. They were reunited with Dr. Greene. Dr. Greene

had toured the Hummingbird School while visiting Curacao and everyone was glad to see old friends. The group learned about the Personnel Development Partnership (PDP) from Peg Sullivan and took a tour of the FGCU campus. They enjoyed buying souvenirs at the bookstore before beginning their long drive to Fort Lauderdale for the 61st Annual Florida Council for Exceptional Children Fall Conference being held October 11-13. The visitors gave their hosts wonderful tote bags with gifts inside. We look forward to further correspondence with our friends from Curacao!

*\*\*This article is an explanation of services available to Spanish speaking families\*\**

## ATENCIÓN A TODOS LOS HISPANOS: Proxima Reunion Hispana de CARD

¡Hola a todos! Es un placer anunciarles que nuestra próxima reunión hispana se llevará a cabo en junio del 2008. Muy pronto les estaremos enviando las invitaciones donde les daremos detalles de esta actividad, que por segundo año consecutivo, estaremos celebrando junto a nuestros constituyentes de habla hispana. No pierdan esta valiosa oportunidad de asistir a este evento familiar, donde tocaremos temas de interés para todos. Como siempre, tendremos entretenimiento para los niños y comida que será del agrado de todos.

Aprovechamos para invitarlos a visitar nuestra página de internet en <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/new.asp> donde hemos preparado una divertida presentación de nuestra actividad pasada. Esta vez, ustedes pueden ser parte de esta experiencia. Vivian Herrero estará comunicándose con ustedes para mas información, o si prefieren, no duden en llamar al 813-974-2297 o escribir a [vherrero@fmhi.usf.edu](mailto:vherrero@fmhi.usf.edu) y con gusto les atenderemos en SU idioma. ¡Hasta pronto!



With the ever growing incidence, research and media attention shining it's light on autism, we are charged even more with helping our communities obtain the skills necessary to help these incredibly special individuals. For so many, the fear of the unknown, the fear of doing something "wrong", can build a wall between the child with autism and those who truly want to make a difference in their lives. To help us take those first steps and begin the process of learning side by side with these children, let's commit ourselves to take action to make a difference.

Children with autism face many challenges throughout their day. We will focus our thoughts and suggestions on some of the more typical challenges faced by most children with autism in this article. Specifically, what we can do to facilitate "understanding language" and "socialization and play behaviors" in children with autism. Let's begin to try to "see" these challenges from the child's perspective. By doing so, we will begin to see how we can make a real difference.

## 1. Understanding language.

The child with autism typically has difficulty understanding the words of others to varying degrees. One of the first concerns reported by parents is about the child's hearing acuity. They express concern that the child "just doesn't respond when I call his name" or "seems to ignore me". Although it is always imperative that a child's hearing acuity be determined, for the child with autism the difficulty generally lies in his or her inability to process language or the spoken word. There is oftentimes a delay of response to the spoken word or expressive language of others, if there is an overt response at all. The child's processing time might be longer than for those of his or her peers. This will impact the child's ability to follow directions, participate in activities with peers and understand the process and completion of many tasks.

### What Can We Do?

- **Provide the child with clear and concise directions.** Instead of saying, "Johnny, it's time for (name activity of choice), please come to the table and sit down", try instructions in short phrases such as "Color time. Sit down". Allow the child adequate time to process this information. Generally, allow processing time of approximately 3-5 seconds before you attempt to lead a child through repetition of direction, use of hand over hand guidance or increased levels of cueing and prompting.
- **Use visual pictures as often as possible** to assist the child in understanding a

direction, activity or concept. The child with autism will oftentimes exhibit an increased level of understanding when provided with a visual support system.

- **Using phrases such as "bye-bye (name toy)" while placing items in their correct location** during clean-up routines will assist the child in developing this skill. And don't forget your facial affect and non-verbal gestures! Much of communication is non-verbal in nature and very difficult for the child with autism to understand. Using exaggerated hand gestures and animated facial expressions will further assist the child in engaging in any activity.
- **Conclusion and completion of activity is very important to the child with autism.** Schedules are very important to parents and teachers. Providing a cue that the activity is coming to a close will facilitate the child's ability to transition to the next activity. Using a verbal time countdown, such as "5 more minutes, 4 more minutes, etc." can be helpful to the older child. Using this same verbal cue coupled with a pictured representation such as "clock", might be necessary for the younger child.
- **Try using handheld items which represent a particular activity** to assist the child in understanding that another activity is to begin. When introducing a new activity, give the child an item representing that new activity to carry in his or her hand. Engaging the child through singing, marching or producing "silly sounds" (example: chugga chugga, choo-choo) during the transition, can further make these transitions manageable for the child.

## 2. Social and Play Behaviors

Play, by it's very nature, is unpredictable. The act of play allows one to see the invisible, make tea and cookies out of air, take on the unbelievable and conquer the mighty! Play allows a child to build relationships through mutual interest and fantasy. Through play, a child's first notion of pretend, problem solving, negotiation and symbolism are explored. These are all areas of great challenge to the child with autism. The need for predictability and routine does not easily enter into the play routines of children but such is vitally important to the child with autism. Through some very simple adaptations, we can build a child's ability to play with peers and learn in the process. Whether within the educational setting or at home, we must provide children with these vitally important opportunities to learn through play.

### What Can We Do?

- **Create Regular and Consistent Opportunities for Play & Socialization.** At home, consider joining (or establishing) a weekly playdate with other children in the neighborhood. Begin with short, but consistent, playdates where the play activities are clearly identified. Perhaps, have the children decorate holiday cookies or make simple decorations for the home. Don't feel as though these playdates have to be on a grand scale and last for hours! A 30 minute playdate making paper snowmen with 2 or 3 other children will be more beneficial to developing social skills than passively watching a 2 hour video!
- **It's the Process not the Product!** Break the task down into smaller components. Consider the level of ability to interact with peers carefully. If a child is unable to fully participate in completing a group activity such as coloring a picture at a table with peers, re-adjust your goals. Perhaps, you could create a goal to simply have the child remain at the table with peers and not necessarily produce the art project. As the child becomes more familiar and comfortable with remaining at the table with peers, then introduce the child to handling of the materials. From that point, increase the demand to participate with more functional use of the materials. Use of clearly defined steps will increase the child's ability to participate. For example, if decorating a paper snowman with eyes, carrot nose and top hat, provide the child with an outline of where the objects are to be placed. Remember! The process of working and playing with friends is more important than the perfectly placed top hat and eyes made of coal on the snowman!
- **When facilitating circle time or group activities, provide the child with a clearly defined space.** Use of carpet squares with animals, letters or numbers are great ways to help the child remain in a particular space while learning new receptive vocabulary. During music or reading times, provide the child with pictured representations or actual objects to participate in the activity. Use of puppets is a great way to engage and incorporate functional play routines for the younger child.
- Consider attending your local library for children's reading hour. Bring a small carpet square to clearly define where your child will sit during the readings. Provide your child with adequate preparation for this activity through simple social stories. A social story will prepare your child through clear and concise language as to what to

expect. An example might be,

*"I am going to the library. I will listen to the librarian read a book. There will be other children at the library. I will sit on my carpet square. I will be quiet while I listen to the story. When the story is finished, I will go home."*

- In the classroom, a child can be the "helper" for the day and perhaps assist the teacher in passing out materials to classmates. If the child has verbal capabilities, the child can be prompted to verbalize, "(Classmates name), here's your paper!" Social greetings and graces such as "thank you" and "your welcome" can be easily integrated into such routines.
- Boys club/girls club within the educational setting. Encourage the child to choose 2 other students to join him or her for "girl's/boy's club". An activity of this nature can be facilitated by either a therapist working with the child or a classroom aide. During this time, the child is encouraged to choose peers to "come play". This type of weekly activity can easily generate enthusiasm by the other children in the classroom as they soon realize they would like to be that special friend to be chosen! Activities to facilitate social interactions and play behaviors might include:

- Creating the opportunity for children to develop their play skills through consistent opportunities. Consider integrating "play buddy" activities within the classroom. In this, children choose their "play partner" by reaching into a bag or box with classmates names or pictures placed within. The children then complete a project TOGETHER which requires them to work together, such as a puzzle. Each time this activity is provided to the children, a new "buddy" is chosen and friendships are facilitated.
- Category completion activities. Have the child toss a ball to another peer. The peer who catches the ball must provide an item which matches the category. With each pass, the children develop turn-taking skills while engaging in an educational activity. If the child is non-verbal, use of his or her augmentative communication system can be easily incorporated into the activity. This type of activity can easily be modified to advance in complexity to match the level of ability of the child. From repetition of single sounds, to words, to category completion, to conversational discourse.

In our next issue, we will address the challenges of expressive communication and emotions. But for now, I leave you with what the words of a child with autism might just sound like if we would listen....

### **Please, Don't Walk Away...**

I hear you say, come over and play  
But I hear your words in a very special way  
Please give me your time, and guide me with your hand  
But please, don't walk away.

I see all of your colorful toys, paints and crayons,  
But I don't know how to play in these magical lands,  
Please help me to see, the joy of pretend and childhood friends.  
But please, don't walk away.

I speak to you through a cry, a laugh or even a word,  
But mine don't always fit in with the ways of the world.  
Please try to understand, I am reaching out the best that I can.  
But please, don't walk away.

I feel all the joy, the sadness, and love as deeply as you,  
But to feel all that's in your heart, I will need help with this too.  
Please know that I am just exactly who I am supposed to be.  
Growing and learning and becoming the very best "me".

But please, promise me, please, don't walk away.

Susan B. McMillan, M.S.,C.C.C.

## **Research Round-up!**



# **FUEL**

## **Family Unification through Empowerment and Learning**

The pilot study of FUEL has been successfully completed. We are currently in the process of analyzing the data and planning out our next steps for implementation of the curriculum. We would like to extend a very special

## **THANK-YOU**

to all of the families who participated in this project. Without your support and significant contributions, it would not have been possible for our FUEL staff to learn as much about family resiliency. Your dedication will truly help other constituents. Stay tuned for outcomes and next steps!

## **Equal Access for All!**

All Means ALL: Equal Access to Services for Individuals with Autism from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

This research project is about supporting service delivery systems that serve individuals and families impacted by autism spectrum disorders, from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds (CLD). Parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder, from CLD backgrounds, will be asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding personal experiences in accessing services for their child(ren) with autism. Out of the seven Hillsborough County schools identified for the study, five have agreed to participate. The data analysis portion of this study is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2008.

# Autism Support

**Autism Society of America (National Organization)**  
Website: <http://www.autism-society.org/>

**Autism Society of Florida, Inc. • Chapter #131**  
Mail: PO Box 970646 • Coconut Creek, FL 33097  
Phone: 954-349-2820  
Fax: 954-571-2136  
E-mail: [webmaster@autismfl.com](mailto:webmaster@autismfl.com)  
Website: <http://www.autismfl.com>

## CHARLOTTE COUNTY

**Autism Speaks • Southwest Florida Branch**  
Location: Port Charlotte, FL  
Contact: Sharon Boyd or Krista Rosado for meeting dates and times or to be added to their mailing list for upcoming events.  
Phone: 941-697-9772  
E-mail: [swflorida@autismspeaks.org](mailto:swflorida@autismspeaks.org)

## COLLIER COUNTY

**Naples Spectrum Support Group**  
Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Therapeutic Integration Services offices  
2960 Immokalee Rd #3 • Naples, FL 34110  
Contact: Angie Rue  
Phone: 239-514-5010  
E-mail: [ruesugar@aol.com](mailto:ruesugar@aol.com)

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

**Concerned Parents of Autistic Children**  
Meetings: Last Sunday of the month, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Location: 9631 Raiden Lane • Riverview FL 33569  
Contact: Dr. Moursi  
Phone: 813-643-9393

**STAND (Statewide Advocacy Network on Disabilities)**  
Hillsborough Monthly Chapter Meetings (All disabilities)  
Meetings: 3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Location: Children's Board of Hillsborough County  
1002 E. Palm Avenue • Tampa, FL  
E-mail: [advocate@standonline.info](mailto:advocate@standonline.info)

**Asperger's Syndrome (Moderated support group for adults with AS)**  
Meetings: Two times per month, Thursday evenings  
Location: Memorial Hospital of Tampa  
2919 Swann Ave. • Tampa, FL  
Cost: \$25 per session  
Contact: Stephen Kreitzer, MD to RSVP or for more information  
E-mail: [krei513@aol.com](mailto:krei513@aol.com)

Stephen Kreitzer MD has arranged for Jason Tompkins, LCSW to moderate a support group for adults above the age of 18. Family members do not attend but may greet Mr. Tompkins after the session. Dr. Kreitzer asks that if you are going to attend that you must RSVP before the meeting.

## LEE COUNTY

**Adonis Autism Center of Southwest Florida**  
Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Room 206 • Ft. Myers, FL  
Contact: Beth Bashaw Cameron  
Phone: 239-995-1794  
Website: <http://www.adonisautismflorida.com>

## PASCO (NORTH)/HERNANDO COUNTY

**Hernando Autism Parenting & Personal Experience Network (HAPPEN)**  
Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Location: Pediatric Therapy Works  
Contact: Leslie Bolen for directions  
Phone: 352-683-0209

## PASCO COUNTY

**AWARE 4 Autism – West Pasco**  
(Are We Awake Ready & Educated for Autism?)  
Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Holiday Recreation Complex  
2830 Gulf Trace Blvd. • Holiday FL 34691  
Contact: Monica Bice  
Phone: 727-945-0947  
E-mail: [AWARE4Autism@msn.com](mailto:AWARE4Autism@msn.com)

## AWARE 4 Autism – East Pasco

Support group for caregivers of individuals with an autism spectrum disorder  
Meetings: 1st Saturday of the month, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Location: First Congregational Church  
7900 Fort King Road • Zephyrhills, FL  
Contact: Johanna  
Phone: 813-782-9431  
E-mail: [AWARE4Autism@gmail.com](mailto:AWARE4Autism@gmail.com)

## Koolkidz Social Skills Group for Children with ASD

Social Skills Group for Children with Asperger's Syndrome and high functioning autism.  
Meetings: Activities each Wednesday to facilitate relationship building and friendships.  
Cost: Free!  
Contact: Suzette  
E-mail: [suzette@koolkidz.mysite.com](mailto:suzette@koolkidz.mysite.com)  
Website: <http://www.koolkidz.mysite.com> for current events.

## NAMI Adult Mental Health Peer-Support Group

Meetings: 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Location: Community Hospital of New Port Richey  
Conference Room

## POLK COUNTY

### Circle of Friends Support Group

Meetings: Every other Thursday of the month.  
Location: Alternate between the Winter-Haven Hospital and the Circle Building on Stuart Avenue in Winter Haven  
Contact: Mertice Fehring for dates and location.  
Phone: 863-679-2507

### Parental Education for Autism in Children Everywhere (PEACE)

Meetings: 1st Tuesday of the month, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Location: Family Fundamentals Bldg.  
1021 Lakeland Blvd. • Lakeland, FL  
Contact: Nicole  
Phone: 863-686-1221 ext 228  
E-mail: [Nikki73170@aol.com](mailto:Nikki73170@aol.com)  
Website: <http://www.peacelakeland.com/>

### A Differently Abled Parent Support Group (ADAPS)

ADAPS is a support network for families and caregivers of children with disabilities, ages birth to 21 years.  
Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Location: Family Fundamentals Bldg.  
1021 Lakeland Blvd. • Lakeland, FL  
Contact: Kim Ellis at 863-701-1151 ext 152 or Nicole at 863-686-1221 ext 228

*Please contact CARD-USF with changes or additions.  
Support Group listings are provided as a service and are not an endorsement by CARD-USF.*

# Annual Autism Community Leadership Award

CARD honored Sharon Boyd with its 2007 Autism Community Leadership Award. This year the celebration was held at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County in April with 50 guests honoring Boyd and her contributions to the community.

“This award is for a parent or caregiver that has demonstrated excellence in building a stronger autism community through developing relationships, creating networks of support and demonstrating a commitment to changing attitudes and beliefs through education,” said CARD Director Karen Berkman. “And it’s not easy keeping something like this a surprise in our fairly close-knit community.”

Berkman presented the honoree with a plaque, flowers, a certificate for her family to be the “Grand Marshalls for the Day” at the Charlotte County MotorSports Park and a certificate to attend the 2008 CARD Conference in Orlando.

And a surprised Sharon added, “My mother taught me that you can not complain about a problem if you are not willing to be a part of the solution. That is all I am doing. I definitely will keep my sense of humor about me, as my theory is that you can laugh or you can cry, I choose to LAUGH!”

## Spring 2008 Self Determination Series

This spring, we are excited to offer a series of workshops for families of adolescents and adults in Sarasota, Charlotte, and surrounding counties. This community collaboration will be provided with key partners from several surrounding social services agencies. Please stay tuned to the CARD website for final dates and times. Workshops will be held at the Charlotte Technical Center located at 18150 Murdock Circle in Port Charlotte. These workshops will focus on a variety of topics including:

### Self-Determination

Includes: incorporating choice and control into the lives of individuals with disabilities, teaching and communicating choice, and discussing risks and fears associated with choice.

### Transition Planning

Includes: the TIEP process, planning post-school outcomes, assessing academic achievement, vocational skills, and accessing community-based instruction.

### Person Centered Planning: PATH Planning

Includes: using personal strengths and capacities to plan for life goals; an overview of the PATH process is included.

### Social Services and Benefits and Agency Fair

Includes: information on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Social Security Administration.

### World of Work / Supported Employment

Includes: information on supported employment, the role of a supported employment coach, and job carving.

### Sexuality and Social Skills 101

Includes: discussion on social skills and sexuality for adolescents and young adults. To educate parents, teachers and other professionals on types of social and sexual behavior, ways to respond to that behavior, and resources for additional information.

### Residential and Living Options

Includes: information on various options for community living and the supports available.

### Guardianship and Estate Planning

Includes: information on guardianship types and alternatives, special needs trusts, and long term planning.

## CrossRoads Community UMC Tees Off “Fore” CARD

CrossRoads Community UMC hosted the 7th Annual Golf Classic on Saturday, August 25th at Plantation Palms Golf Club. The Golf Classic benefited CrossRoads and CARD-USF and welcomed over 150 players for a shotgun scramble on a beautiful August afternoon. Players were treated to complimentary lunch from Tijuana Flats and a young CARD constituent, Chase, served as our Honorary Starter. Then the players headed out to battle the links course nestled in Land O’Lakes. Players enjoyed a “hit the pastor” (a cut out of Pastor Greg Freeze’s likeness) or closest to the pin event on one hole and a chance to win a 2 year lease on a new Hummer with a hole-in-one on number 7. The hospitality tent welcomed players with cookies home made by CrossRoads members and Beverage Sponsor, EMG Mortgage, supplied the refreshing drinks.

“CrossRoads was honored to partner with CARD for our 7th Annual Golf Classic. We are very grateful to all of the sponsors and participants who helped raise money for these two wonderful organizations,” said Kristy Roberts, tournament coordinator for CrossRoads. CrossRoads presented CARD with a check for \$4006.73 during church services in September.



**Save the Date!**  
Friday, April 18, 2008



CARD-USF's  
**Fiesta**  
by the bay



Plan to join us for great music, food and drinks, salsa dance lessons and prizes while supporting the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at USF!

For more information please contact Christine Rover, E-mail: [crover@fmhi.usf.edu](mailto:crover@fmhi.usf.edu) or Phone: 813-974-9264



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