

CARD Staff

Karen Berkman, CARD Director
 Lise Fox, DARES Div. Director
 Don Kincaid, DARES Div. Asst. Director

Nila Benito, UCEDD Community Supports Coordinator
 Mary-Kay Bunton-Pierce, Data Coordinator
 Jean Caldicott, Resource Specialist
 Donna Casella, Training Coordinator
 Tanisha Clarke-Dobney, UCEDD Admin Coordinator
 Dave Guido, UCEDD Employment Coordinator
 Vivian Herrero, Spanish Translator/Intakes
 Carly Morgan, Program Assistant
 Christine Rover, Community Inclusion Coordinator
 Bobbie Vaughn, UCEDD Diversity Coordinator
 Kim Weiss, Graduate Student

Neill Broderick, CARD Consultant
 Michelle Duda, CARD Consultant
 Shelton Gilyard, CARD Consultant
 Amanda Keating, CARD Consultant
 Mary Reed, CARD Consultant
 Mindy Stevens, CARD Consultant

Ft. Myers Staff

Ft. Myers Branch Office
 Connie Philbrook, Senior Secretary
 Anne Allen, CARD Consultant
 Leigh Anna Nowak, CARD Consultant

Constituency Board

Sarina Adeni
 Michael McCroskery
 Ann Reynolds
 Julie Sneed, Chair
 Nicole Torres, Vice Chair
 Chandra Williams



Director's Note

Time has flown by so quickly this year. School is almost over, summer is around the corner, and CARD-USF has accomplished several major events during this 6 month period. This newsletter will tell you stories about the special events hosted by CARD, such as the annual Fiesta By the Bay, our Autism Community Leadership Award, and the conference on Autism and Co-existing Mental Health Disorders. We have truly had an amazing year, involving ourselves in the communities we serve, expanding existing social and recreational opportunities, and offering educational trainings to school personnel and families within our 14 county region.

We are always looking for new ways to engage families in participating with CARD and learning about what works best for delivering consultation and information that will lead to successful outcomes. We also are interested to know what the factors are that keep families resilient. We will be launching a pilot project this fall that will seek to answer that question by recruiting families who have a child with autism, age 5-6. We will hope to further expand our work after we complete this small pilot. I will report back to you what we have learned through this pilot and hope that we can create new methods to increase family resiliency that will help all of our constituents. Another project that will begin in the fall is learning about access to services for families who are culturally or linguistically diverse. Since CARD serves a population that is less varied than we would have expected, we want to learn more about any barriers that may prevent families from seeking assistance.

So allow me to tell you about some things that you will not see reflected in the articles by highlighting some of the family feedback we have received through our work. If you were in



Dr. Karen Berkman, CARD Director

attendance for the Fiesta By the Bay event this year, you will know that folks had a great time, and we raised money to support new activities and events for this coming year. Additionally, there were the personal outcomes some families experienced by being out with their entire family in a public place where everyone was accepted and appreciated. One family expressed their amazement in being able to participate in a party where they did not have to constantly worry about what their son with autism would do. As a matter of fact, their son became one of the stars that evening, getting to be on the stage with our Honorary Chair, Stacie Schaible from News Channel 8. It was a great moment of pride and excitement to see their son shine in front of 200 people. And we were proud that we created an atmosphere where families, children, and professionals could all be together for one purpose...to have fun together and make new friends.

CARD-USF has a passion for the work we do and the relationships we form with families and professionals. We are dedicated to do the best we can do with the limited resources we have, and we thank you all for allowing us to be part of your lives, your communities, and your schools and programs.

—Karen Berkman, Ph.D.

HIGHLIGHTS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|----|
| What's New at CARD-USF? | 2 | When Autism and Mental Health Disorders Co-exist | 5 |
| CARD Visual Arts Program for Adults Concludes | 2 | Book Review | 6 |
| Creating Visual Supports | 3 | Teaching friendship and play skills for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder | 7 |
| CrossRoads Community UMC Tees It Up "Fore" CARD! | 4 | Visual Strategies: "I See What You Mean!" event March 31, 2007 | 7 |
| 6th Annual Autism Summer Institute 2007 | 4 | Young Adult Hero, David Latu | 8 |
| Hot, Hot, Hot Chili Peppers Salsa the Night Away at Fiesta By the Bay | 4 | Autism Support Groups | 10 |
| Reunion Hispana de CARD-USF | 4 | CARD Gift/Pledge Form | 11 |



Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
University of South Florida
Louis de la Parte
Florida Mental Health Institute
Department of Child & Family Studies
Division of Applied Research
& Educational Support
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-3899

Phone: 813-974-2532
Florida only: 1-800-333-4530
FAX: 813-974-6115
E-mail: card-usf@fmhi.usf.edu
<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu>

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.

What's New at CARD-USF?

In 2007, The Center for Autism & Related Disabilities has continued to push the envelope in developing innovative ways to support individuals impacted by autism. Following the success of two other new CARD endeavors, the "Make and Take" Technology Open House and the 2nd Annual Fiesta By the Bay, CARD-USF will be rolling out two research projects in 2007-2008. These research projects are timely and important.

All Means All: Equal Access to Services for individuals with Autism from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CLD)

In this research study, CARD-USF will be collaborating with several school districts in Florida to explore the issue of caregiver perception of equitable access to services for individuals with autism from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We hope to support community based service providers by identifying barriers that may exist for families from (CLD) backgrounds attempting to access services in the current service delivery system. More information regarding participant recruitment will be available in Fall 2007.

Family Unification through Empowerment and Learning (FUEL)

The FUEL project seeks to identify the key "ingredients" that resilient families demonstrate. We will learn more about strategies to teach these key ingredients and improve the family's quality of life. CARD-USF will be recruiting 24 English speaking families, with children ages 5 to 6 years old that have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder to voluntarily participate in this study. Participants in the FUEL research study will have a choice between three models of family support that will teach them how to utilize these key "ingredients" with their own families. STAY TUNED!! Recruitment information has been sent to all CARD constituents that have a child in this age range. If you know of a friend who also may qualify to participate in this study, please contact us and we will send out an information flyer.

CARD Visual Arts Program for Adults Concludes

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida, in collaboration with Very Special Arts of Florida, recently concluded a six-week visual arts program for constituents age 16 and older. The visual arts program took place on Saturdays, March 24 – May 5, 2007 at the University of South Florida campus. The program was lead by artist-in-residence Kathy Iwanowski while behavioral support and peer mentoring was provided by Amanda Keating and three student interns who assisted in the creative process. During the course of the program participants learned about various visual elements including composition, line, texture, form, and color. They experimented with these elements through different class exercises. The exercises provided individuals with the opportunity to make progress on various goals such as parallel and cooperative engagement, turn taking, flexibility, etc. For example, for one individual with sensitivity to particular sensory experiences, this program provided an opportunity to incorporate various textures such as glue, chalk, crayons, and pastels into a fun activity.



educational and safe environment where participants were able to express their colorful and creative abilities through art. The program was of particular value for participants whose special interest in art could blossom. The presence of

Kathleen Iwanowski's passion for the arts and Amanda Keating's vivacious enthusiasm for CARD added genuine warmth and energy to both the program and all the individuals and families who participated." Valerie Saucier, a student intern interested in communication disorders, echoed

Denise's sentiments noting that, "[the students] were able to learn the variety of ways in which adults with autism spectrum disorders relate to the world. Art turned out to be a wonderful means of communication." Through art participants expressed a variety of interests, preferences, and feelings.

The experience culminated in a final art project created by the participants that demonstrated their ability to use the visual art elements in their artwork. All participants in the visual arts program reported planning to continue their artistic endeavors. CARD wishes to extend a very special thanks to our artist-in-residence Kathy Iwanowski, Very Special Arts of Florida, and Nycole Willoughby, Valerie Saucier, and Denise Johnson, the student interns who contributed to this program.

Creating Visual Supports

Many times, the right visual supports can provide people with autism the necessary information to express their wants or needs, to understand changes in routines, and to be successful in social situations with friends or family members. However, sometimes it can be difficult to decide what type of visual support is best suited for any given situation that may be a part of the individual's experiences.

The first thing you'll need to determine is the purpose of the visual support – what information do you want it to convey?

Look closely at the situation the individual may need the visual support for. Is the need to:

- Make time sequences or changes in routine easier to understand?
- Articulate communication requests or responses?
- Clarify expectations in specific social situations or interactions?
- Specify the rules and structure for an activity?

Another important consideration when creating a visual support for someone with autism is to choose the right symbol level for the individual.

The most concrete symbol level is to use an actual object (or a remnant of one), to represent the activity associated with it. As an example, many small children know they are going to bed because they are given their favorite stuffed animal or their blanket before being tucked in.

Photographs are a bit more abstract, because even though they look exactly like the item or object they represent, they are 2 dimensional.

Color drawings are the next symbol level. The more closely they resemble the item or activity they represent, the more concrete and easier they are to understand.

Black and white drawings, icons or logos are another way of representing an object or activity. While the shape or form often looks like the thing it represents, icons are much more abstract and less concrete in nature than photos or color drawings.

Written or printed words are purely symbolic, because they represent the sounds that form a spoken word. In turn, spoken and written words represent other people, items, activities and concepts.

Some other questions you'll want to answer include:

- What does your child rely on to communicate with you? – is it objects, words, pictures or other symbols?
- Does your child understand better what's going to happen if you show him/her an object, or a picture of an activity, than if you use a verbal explanation by itself?
- What happens if you write things out?

You'll also want to think carefully about the best way to actually construct your visual support and organize the format to suit the learning style of the individual. Consider things like:

- **Size**—how big should the visual be?
- **Orientation**—should pictures be sequenced from left to right or from top to bottom?
- **Number of items**—how many symbols should it include?
- **Spacing**—how much separation should there be between symbols?
- **Finished items**—once an activity is completed or the child is done with an item, what becomes of the symbol that was used?
- **Location**—where will the visual supports be kept?

Some children need to understand the routine of a specific activity – things like following the steps for brushing their teeth or getting dressed. An **activity sequence, or a picture task analysis**, can provide this sort of information.

A **personal schedule** can indicate the order of two or more activities during a longer period of time, such as a morning or an entire day. Personal schedules are great for conveying information about an activity that is out of the ordinary or doesn't typically occur during the usual routine of the day.

First/then boards serve as a convenient visual reminder of the sequence of two activities, especially when obtaining the second activity depends on completing the first one. They're easy to use for redirecting or motivating individuals who may not complete the first activity before trying to move on to the next.



Message boards or books are often used to expand vocabulary and facilitate simple communicative functions such as requesting or protesting. When first teaching a child to use a message book, be sure to represent the items or activities that are most interesting to the child. Similarly, try to avoid including too many images of unfamiliar or uninteresting things – these will only clutter the message board and make it harder for the child to understand the value of the book.

Choice boards represent options that can be offered to a child when teaching or expanding choice making skills.

Personal dictionaries express to other people the meaning of certain words or phrases that may have a personal definition for the child. For example, one child may repeat the term "Car, car, car!" to ask "When are we leaving?" Other children who have difficulty understanding idioms or terms of speech can rely on personal dictionaries as a way of clarifying for themselves what exactly those phrases mean.

Social scripts can be used to provide information about appropriate social behaviors and their impact on other people.

Cue cards can be used to prompt prescribed patterns of behavior or speech within a social situation.

Conversation books provide pictures (or even remnants of items) from an activity the child has participated in, which then can be used as a visual reference point for discussing the activity.

Now that you've got the basics for creating a successful visual support, you may still have questions, or want some further assistance with teaching your child how to use it. Feel free to contact CARD by phone or e-mail to learn more.

6th Annual Autism Summer Institute 2007

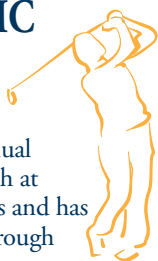
The 6th Annual Autism Summer Institute was held on July 23-25, 2007 from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM. The free 3-day event included many notable speakers, presentations, and facilitated workshops. The summer institute included sessions for those who are new to the field as well as more experienced individuals who want additional information on research, innovations, and the provision of effective programs to students with autism. The keynote speaker was Paula Kluth, an independent educational consultant and an adjunct instructor at National-Louis University in Chicago, Illinois. Her

professional and research interests center on differentiating instruction and on including students with significant disabilities in inclusive classrooms. The title of her presentation was "You're going to Love this Kid: Educating Students with Autism in Inclusive Schools." The final day keynote speaker was Stephen Hinkle, a young man with autism who speaks nationally about topics such as inclusion, self-advocacy, and transitions. The title of his presentation was "The Importance of Inclusion." Other featured speakers addressed topics such as transition planning, paraprofessional training, and supporting communication

in classroom settings, among others. The final day of the institute involved 10 interactive mini-sessions. The topics included behavior interventions, social skills and comic strip conversations, visual supports, and team scheduling, among others. The event was sponsored by the Florida Department of Education (DOE), Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism (PEPSA), Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, and Polk County School Districts, The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), and the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN).

CrossRoads Community UMC Tees It Up "Fore" CARD!

CrossRoads Community UMC in Wesley Chapel is hosting its 7th Annual Golf Classic on Saturday, August 25th at Plantation Palms Golf Club in Land O'Lakes and has offered to share the proceeds with CARD through our Autism Services Fund. Sponsors and players, alike, are needed to make this annual event a success for CrossRoads and CARD. A silent auction will be held during dinner which follows the 1 PM shotgun start. If you are interested in sponsorship, playing, or donating a silent auction item please contact Kristin at kkpelletier@verizon.net or call 813-326-2628. Interested in volunteering? Call Christine Rover at CARD at 813-974-9264.



REUNION HISPANA DE CARD-USF

El pasado sábado 16 de junio del 2007 se llevó a cabo una Reunión Hispana de constituyentes activos de CARD-USF. La reunión ofreció una excelente oportunidad para compartir en familia y afianzar los lazos de amistad y apoyo que necesitamos en nuestros hogares. La actividad estuvo muy concurrida y todos pudimos disfrutar de una presentación de autismo, juegos divertidos para nuestros niños y un delicioso arroz con pollo que dejó a todos con ganas de comer más.

Queremos agradecer a todos los presentes y exhortar a toda la comunidad hispana a participar en eventos de este tipo. Esperamos que éste sea solo el comienzo de muchas actividades más.

CARD-USF se está esforzando en llevar comunicación e información en español a nuestra comunidad, para así poder tocar más hogares y brindar apoyo a las familias hispanas residentes en nuestra área que tengan en común una vida tocada por el autismo.

Hot, Hot, Hot Chili Peppers Salsa the Night Away at Fiesta By the Bay

On April 20th, the 2nd Annual Fiesta By the Bay fundraiser was held at Gaspar's Grotto in Ybor City with Stacie Schaible of News Channel 8 as the Honorary Chair. Tijuana Flats provided chicken and beef tacos and, of course, their signature hot sauces to a crowd of over 200. Mayor Pam Iorio sent a Proclamation that was read at the event by Michael Gonzales, Special Operations Chief, Tampa Fire Rescue, and parent of a son with autism.

The Silent Auction was a real crowd pleaser this year with 2 roundtrip tickets on Southwest Airlines going to the highest bidder. Four Disney Hopper passes, accommodations at the Nickelodeon Suites and a trip to Key West to enjoy 3 nights at the Hyatt's Vacation Resort rounded out the large auction items. The goal of the evening was to have FUN learning to salsa and eating great food while raising awareness and funds to top last year's almost \$10,000 mark! Well, we're still shaking our maracas because we achieved our goals and more by raising over \$13,000 with 200 guests dancing the night away!

"Stacie has a personal connection to the community we serve," said Karen Berkman, director of CARD-USF. "That connection influenced her decision to join forces with us."

Schaible has both a relative and a friend with a child who have both been diagnosed with autism. "My heart goes out to all families touched by autism," said Schaible. "We keep hearing about the alarming increase in the number of children who are diagnosed and we have to continue to raise awareness."

Schaible's station, News Channel 8, also sponsored this year's fundraiser and was joined by others including the Tampa Tribune, Tijuana Flats and Kaleisia Tea Lounge, which hosted the "Gifts of Love Celebration," a fundraising event for CARD-USF, in February. "Having the support and contributions from concerned citizens allows CARD-USF to give back something extra to the communities we serve such as special events and family oriented activities," said Karen Berkman, director of CARD-USF.

"Fiesta By the Bay was such a wonderful event for us and we expect to see even greater participation and sponsors coming aboard in 2008," said Berkman. "Showing support in this way provides another vehicle to spread awareness and helps us continue toward our goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism and related disabilities."





When Autism and Mental Health Disorders Co-exist

Families report they are challenged to understand symptoms of emotional and mental health disorders in their children and adolescents. And, CARD-USF is listening. Parents voice that behavioral health practitioners are often unprepared to help them distinguish the red flags that suggest a co-existing mental health disorder from the core challenges of autism.

"Many professionals working in the field of autism have extensive training in autism spectrum disorders. However, those same professionals have not had an opportunity to receive training in psychiatric disorders within the population of individuals with developmental disabilities," explains Dr. Marc Tasse, Assistant Director, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities, a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the University of South Florida. A clinical psychologist with a specialty in dual diagnosis, Dr. Tasse promotes continuing education and technical assistance to help professionals to close the gap in diagnosing individuals with developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and co-existing mental health disorders.

Conference attendance exceeds expectations

In May 2007, CARD-USF collaborated with the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities and USF Health to host a one-day conference for behavioral health clinicians, educators, related service providers, and family members, addressing "Autism and Co-existing Mental Health Disorders."

Child and adolescent psychiatrist, Dr. Martin Lubetsky of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), presented the keynote address to a standing-room audience of 240 professionals and family members. School psychologists, behavioral health clinicians, educators and families were eager to understand a topic often misunderstood or under-recognized in the field of autism. Diagnostic overshadowing, or attributing all symptoms to the diagnosis of autism, often contributes to individuals with treatable mental health disorders to be unrecognized. And, without early identification and intervention, untreated mental health disorders can escalate.

Dr. Lubetsky is Chief of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Center for Autism and Developmental Disorders at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic at UPMC.

Mood, anxiety and attention disorders

A variety of mental health disorders occur in individuals with autism and Asperger's disorder. Four faculty members from across Florida joined Dr. Lubetsky to help clinicians differentiate the pervasive developmental disorders from the common emotional and mental health symptoms that may be present in individuals with autism. Depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, symptoms of ADHD, and sleep disorders were described in individuals with autism. Each speaker offered an overview of evidence-based interventions and resources for additional information.

On the subject of intervention, Dr. Lubetsky called for a multidisciplinary team approach to include treatment recommendations, follow-up assessment and monitoring, coordination of care, and a behavioral crisis plan.

"Plan for it," said Dr. Lubetsky, referring to anticipating and responding to a behavioral crisis. Interdisciplinary teams need to identify ways to pull together to support the individual with a mental health disorder, and build the capacity of the parents in the role of case manager.

Looking ahead

"This conference is the first step in creating an integrated system of care that moves beyond the current access barriers to one that works in concert with each other and considers the needs of the individual as paramount," said Dr. Karen Berkman, Director of CARD-USF. An interagency planning team, including CARD-USF and the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities, is planning a conference in Southwest Florida in 2008. Go to <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu> to learn more about the conference and follow links to resources for parents and professionals. Follow <http://fcic.fmhi.usf.edu> to learn more about research, training opportunities, and community supports for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Many professionals working in the field of autism have extensive training in autism spectrum disorders. However, those same professionals have not had an opportunity to receive training in psychiatric disorders within the population of individuals with developmental disabilities.

—Marc Tasse, Assistant Director
Florida Center for Inclusive Communities
University of South Florida

For additional information

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (previously AAMR)
www.aaidd.org

Asperger Counseling Network
<http://www.aspergercounseling.net/>

Autism Society of America
301-657-0881 or 1-800-328-8476
<http://www.autism-society.org>

Autism Speaks
212-252-8584
<http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
813-974-2532 or toll-free
Florida only: 1-800-333-4530
<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Public Inquiries: (404) 639-3534 /
800-311-3435
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation
847-256-8525
<http://www.bpkids.org/>

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
800-826-3632
<http://www.ndmda.org/>

"Learn the Signs. Act Early," Campaign
<http://www.cdc.gov/actearly>

NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness)
703-524-7600
Information Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
<http://www.nami.org/>

NAMI Florida
850-671-4445 or 877-626-4352
<http://www.namifl.org/>

OASIS (Online Asperger Syndrome Information & Support)
<http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/>

Recommended reading

Ghaziuddin, M. (2005). *Mental health aspects of autism and Asperger Syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Dr. Ghaziuddin, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, is a child psychiatrist with a special interest in children and adults with autism and related disorders. This is the first book to address the need for information about psychiatric challenges in people with autism spectrum disorders.

Book Review



Perfect Targets: Asperger Syndrome and Bullying, Practical Solutions for Surviving in the Social World

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Author: | Rebekah Heinrichs |
| First Copyright: | 2003 |
| Publisher: | Autism Asperger Publishing Company |
| Type of Book: | Social Skills |
| General Subject: | Bullying in schools-prevention |
| Special Features: | Straight Talk About Bullying, a letter to kids with Asperger Syndrome from Rebekah Heinrichs; Ten Bullying Strategies for Kids with Asperger Syndrome; Extensive, usable reference and resource list. |
| Price: | \$21.95 |
| ISBN: | 1-931282-18-8 |

“Persons being bullied (especially those with AS) have the least power and fewest options with which to protect themselves.”

Purpose: The purpose of this book is to emphasize that adults are ultimately the changing force behind any effective bullying prevention program. Children with Asperger Syndrome (AS) have unique social challenges and needs to consider when examining the phenomenon of bullying. Children with AS require empowered adults to effectively provide for their safety and learning.

Thesis: In this book, Rebekah holds both the adults and bullies accountable. Unlike many other bullying programs, she feels that the persons being bullied (especially those with AS) have the least power and fewest options with which to protect themselves. They have the fewest friends who can stand up for them to prevent bullying from occurring.

Evaluation: Throughout this powerful book, Rebekah uses stories of both children and adults who have been victims of bullying to illuminate real life perfect targets. Part I provides an understanding of bullying by putting it into perspective, defining types of bullying, bullies, targets, and bystanders. Each chapter is easily summarized with tables for quick reference. Recent research has discovered that typical teenagers do not feel safe in school and that the main coping mechanism used by these students to feel safe is trying to predict the behavior of their peers and teachers. They feel they will be safer by knowing how to stay out of harm's way. Children with AS are at a great disadvantage in this area due to their difficulty in being able to take the perspective of others or in predicting what others may be feeling or thinking. Rebekah feels we can safely assume that students with AS expend even more energy than typical students do in trying to predict behavior in order to feel safe in school and that this puts them at a higher risk for negative social interactions. Because children with AS have difficulty in reading social cues they are at risk for crossing the line between social teasing of their peers and bullying. They may end up unintentionally hurting the feelings of others when trying out teasing behaviors they see other students successfully engage in. Based on research findings, it is suggested that to decrease the likelihood that anxious, insecure children develop into targets, it is important to promote independence, self-confidence, and assertiveness.

There is a culture of silence in our schools that surrounds bullying. Many students predict that adults either cannot or will not help. Parents often reinforce these concerns by telling their kids it is okay and even wise to “stay out of it.” Bystanders often share some of the same emotions as victims; helplessness, confusion, upset, anger, because they don't know what to do and fear for their own safety. Teachers report that they “almost always” intervene in bullying incidents 71% of the time compared to student reports of 25%. However, observations have indicated that teachers actually intervene in only 14% of classroom episodes of bullying, and only

4% of playground episodes of bullying. Possible reasons for this low rate of intervention could be because often episodes are brief, verbal and occur when there is little supervision. When bullying doesn't get addressed it further perpetuates the culture of silence.

Part II of the book addresses taking a stand against bullying; increasing awareness and understanding, and developing a bullying prevention plan at the school, classroom and individual levels. The final chapter is a compilation of personal perspectives on bullying from persons, parents, and professionals. The first step in any program development is to gather information. Strategies are provided for gathering information from teachers and students and individualizing an assessment for children with AS. The assessment is included in the appendix. This book provides strategies for implementing a successful bullying prevention plan at school that includes topics for staff training, goals for the prevention plan, a school code of conduct, and a step-by-step procedure for consequences. There are strategies to involve students at school, how to involve parents, and a way to evaluate the bullying prevention program. The chapter on bullying prevention at the class level includes a class code as well as strategies for class meetings, behavior management, dealing with targets and bullies, modeling appropriate behavior, and promoting successful communication between teacher and parents. The chapter also focused on promoting cooperative learning with structured teaching that reduced competition and nurtured cooperation and teamwork. The chapter on individualizing bullying prevention focused on being proactive and providing clear expectations. This chapter addressed how to talk to students when bullying occurs, how to provide consequences, distinguishing between normal conflict and bullying, promoting social competence, and addressing bullying in the IEP. In addition, in keeping with the thesis of this book, this chapter emphasizes how to avoid blaming the target (the child with AS). Adults need to assist AS students in developing social skills. Adults shouldn't escalate matters by reacting in an aggressive or angry manner; this makes children with AS twice as victimized. Adults are supposed to understand the challenges faced by children with AS and help guide them through bullying incidents in the school setting.

Author: Rebekah Heinrichs, MSN, M.S.ED, is an educational consultant specializing in autism and Asperger Syndrome. She received her master's degree in pediatric nursing from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in special education with a focus in autism/Asperger Syndrome from the University of Kansas. Her current interests include bullying issues and supportive educational programs for parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. Rebekah resides in Chelsea, Michigan.

Teaching friendship and play skills for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Why is this important?

A primary goal that many families have for their child is to “be accepted,” or “to be happy.” Teaching your child how to make friends is perhaps one of the most important things a parent can do. For children, the vehicle they use to make friends is through play. Unfortunately, for many children with autism, developing friendships are very difficult for them and should be viewed as a skill that needs to be taught. It is important to make sure that children have the opportunity to practice friendship skills in a variety of settings with different people.

From a technical standpoint, play is a means by which children practice a variety of developmental tasks (e.g., cognitive, language, social, emotional, or motor skill tasks). Through play, children do not just attain individual social skills, they “learn the rules” about how to interact with others, how to manage their own behavior, play with a specific toy, pretend, or participate in a group game. Unaware of the many sequentially-linked developmental milestones that are often practiced within a play activity, children quickly learn to perform advanced skills through play. In this regard, play is a medium for developmental milestone attainment; it is the way that children learn and grow. As parents and caregivers, there are many ways we can facilitate a positive play experience for our children. Here are some strategies to consider when teaching play skills to your child

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Who would be a good friend for my child?

- Siblings
- Cousins
- Classmates
- Neighborhood children
- Children who share similar interests (i.e. if your child is interested in animals, a child you meet at the zoo)

What are some ways to promote/enhance my child's friendship skills?

- Arrange for your child to be in a natural environment where a few other same-age peers may also be (i.e., a neighborhood playground).
- Arrange for a situation wherein your child would be in the presence of another child such as setting up a play date with a friend.
- Provide specific, descriptive praise to the children for demonstrating appropriate play skills.

TIPS:

- Provide duplicate toys or materials to decrease the likelihood of “sharing” problems.
- Prepare the playmate for potential situations (such as your child possibly not sharing their toy).
- Pick a play partner who has good play skills; the play partner could serve as a model for initiating and sustaining communication, and playing with toys, etc.
- Stay nearby so that you can help the children interact or come up with play ideas (or intervene as necessary).
- Begin with a short play time and increase the duration gradually over time.
- Provide your child with information pertaining to the activity (i.e. duration of time, place, etc).

“My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.”

—Henry Ford



Visual Strategies: “I See What You Mean!” event March 31st, 2007

In the fall of 2006, the USF Collaborative for Children, Families & Communities implemented the Service Learning Leadership Academy. The Academy was created to provide opportunities for students, community members, corporate partners and alumni to receive training and build connections with the Tampa Bay community. The Collaborative sent out a request for community agencies to submit ideas for projects they would like to do, but have not had the time or staff to implement.

CARD-USF submitted a proposal to be a part of the inaugural class of the Academy, and was invited to work with a team to develop a visual strategies “make and take” event that would present hands-on demonstrations of evidence-based visual strategies for working with individuals with autism

spectrum disorders, as well as showcase local and state agencies and organizations that offer a variety of technological solutions to augment and assist communication.

We could not have anticipated working with such a great team or having such a successful outcome! Over 263 families and professionals learned a little more about visual strategies and assistive technologies on March 31st!!

All of the above was accomplished with a great degree of success measured by the participation of numerous collaborative partners, the number of attendees, and the satisfaction surveys completed by par-



ticipants. If success is measured by leaving them wanting more, then we exceeded all expectations as comments ranged from, “when are you doing this again?” to “this should be an annual event!”

Young Adult Hero, David Latu

By Anne K. Allen



The family members and professionals assembled around the living room in David Latu's two-bedroom home in Cape Coral were there for a reason. They believed, and continue to believe, in David's potential to live an independent life.

"He's so ready to march toward independence," said Paula M. Paquette, a principal of Community Homes and Hearts. David employs Community Homes and Hearts to provide in-home supports and supported living coaching in his home in north Cape Coral. Community Homes and Hearts, Inc. is a provider of Medicaid Waiver and Family and Supported Living Waiver services in Florida.

Today, at 22, David is self-directing his path in life with an air of confidence that inspires his person-centered planning team, his coaches, and his employers. He is a doer, a role model for young adults, a hero.

Person-centered planning has become a movement in the field of developmental disabilities. Instead of a single event, person-centered planning is a repeated process that requires alterations as a person's life emerges, according to Robert Horner, University of Oregon. An overall theme is "building" instead of repairing. To enhance quality of life in the community, team members gather information about an individual's strengths, abilities, and interests related to community living rather than focus on making lists of deficits to be repaired. Team members bring professional skills to overcome obstacles and teach ways to achieve community inclusion.

CARD constituent since 1992

David was enrolled with CARD-USF as a constituent at the age of 7 years. Glen Dunlap, the founding Director of CARD-USF, was David's mentor and coach through his school years. An individualized education program for a student with autism in the early 90s called for professional support providers and family members to come together to build a common understanding of the supports

and circumstances that would enable David to thrive. And, those who believed that individualized education was possible paved the way for other youngsters with autism to attend their neighborhood schools along side their peers in Lee County.

Kate Latu, David's Mother, never stopped believing in David's potential to succeed in an individualized education program-nor in his transition toward community living. She believed with tenacity, high expectations and a multidisciplinary team pulling together around her son with autism were instrumental in David's transition to an independent adult life post-high school. David also believed in what was possible.

Teamwork works

Teams have been a part of David's life since he was a young child; Kate made sure of that. Today, David takes responsibility to organize his own team meetings twice a year, prepares a written agenda, and reports his accomplishments. He enlists the support of his team members and supported living service agency, to help him to navigate new goals and problem-solve new challenges. Written documentation preserves the history of the group.

At a recent team meeting, David shared his accomplishments, with precise details of date, place, and activity; bringing smiles, nods, and often tears. Some of David's recent accomplishments include:

- Moving into a 2-bedroom home in Cape Coral, Florida
- Working part-time for Lee County Parks and Recreation
- Working part-time for Goodwill Industries
- Winning a gold medal for 5K Cycling at the Special Olympics State Games
- Addressing the Lee County Board of Commissioners during National Autism Awareness Month
- Delivering three keynote kick-off luncheon speeches for the 2006 Walk for Autism with Autism Speaks
- Mentoring Special Olympic Florida athletes in leadership development and public speaking
- Purchasing a laptop computer
- Planning a vacation to California and flying independently from Miami to California
- Visiting the campus of Florida Gulf Coast University to learn about a career in library science and college enrollment

That's where I came in, a CARD consultant, based at the Fort Myers branch office of CARD-USF, located on the campus of Florida Gulf Coast University. David Latu is one of the adult constituents that CARD supports in Southwest Florida. He told his team he wanted to learn more about careers in library science and accounting, and how to prepare himself for college.

Career Exploration

David entered the goal of "career exploration" on his action plan. Following the structure of a corporate board meeting, David's action plan was projected from a laptop computer to a wall for his team members to follow during the meeting. Action steps were identified and included planning a trip to Florida Gulf Coast University and interviewing a librarian. As a member of David's team, I agreed to help him accomplish this step.

We agreed to schedule a separate meeting to plan the visit. At that session, a written action plan was developed to help David visualize the steps to reach his current goal. Here's what David's written plan looked like at the end of the meeting:

1. Identify two possible dates for the visit.
—David and Anne
2. Plan a phone call to Rebecca Donlan, a librarian at Florida Gulf Coast University, to schedule an appointment. Rehearse what to say prior to making the phone call. —David
3. Call Ms. Donlan to schedule appointment. Write the date of the meeting in daily planner. —David
4. Develop a list of questions to ask the librarian. Rehearse the questions prior to the meeting. Take the list of questions to the meeting. —David
5. Call Lee Tran to determine the round-trip public transportation bus schedule from Cape Coral to the university in Fort Myers. Notify CARD with the time the bus will arrive and depart from FGCU. —David
6. Plan time to visit the university bookstore, ride the campus shuttle, and have lunch. —David and Anne
7. Reconfirm the meeting with Ms. Donlan two days prior to the meeting. —David
8. Talk about what to wear to the meeting on campus and have clothes ready. —David
9. Pack a lunch and spending money. —David
10. Go to the FGCU website to view the campus map and search library services. —David

College student for a day

Tuesday, April 18, 9:13 AM was highlighted on my planner. I had David's cell phone number, a cell phone, a camera, and a map of the campus. David called twice to let me know when he changed busses successfully. We reconfirmed the bus stop on campus where I would meet him. I met the 60 E bus at 9:13 AM as scheduled, and David announced that he had been traveling for 3 hours to get from his home in Cape Coral to the campus (23 miles) using Lee County's public transportation system. The long ride did not diminish his enthusiasm.

We stopped at Einstein Brothers Bagels on campus for coffee, juice, and David's first bagel with cream cheese on the side. He reflects that he enjoyed another first, eating a bagel. "No thank you," was his response to trying the cream cheese. As we took time to review the plan for the day, David prompted us to take a deep breath and "clear our minds so we are ready for the meeting at the library." I nodded, breathed deeply, and followed his lead. David was my teacher.

The FGCU Library is one of the largest buildings located on the environmentally sensitive campus of Florida's 10th University. David was beaming. He approached the circulation desk and announced he had a meeting with Rebecca Donlan. Ms. Donlan is the Assistant Director of library collections and technical assistance. She met us in the lobby and David toured the three-story building, the computing labs, the book collections, multi-media collections, and research collections before concluding the tour in Ms. Donlan's office. I listened, took a few pictures with permission, and observed that David was a "zero" on his "worry meter."

The worry meter is a self-management tool that helps David to manage his anxiety. When asked, he will tell you exactly where he is on the worry meter. David will ask for help, clarification of directions, or request "to stop and take a break" when the number on his worry meter gets too high. A break wasn't needed on this day; I could see David was a "zero" on the worry meter.

David brought a list of five questions to ask the librarian. He sent a duplicate copy of his list via e-mail to my office at the university days earlier. He discussed his questions with Ms. Donlan and took notes about the education preparation of librarians, the types of library science degrees, what universities offered degrees in library science, the salaries of librarians, and how students on campus could apply for jobs in the library while working on their undergraduate degree.

Campus tour

After the library visit, David rode the FGCU campus shuttle to the Alico Arena and toured the campus sports complex and Olympic pool. He visited the campus bookstore, and with prompting from David, we found the Taco Bell on campus. Our time together also included a visit to FGCU Adaptive Services, where David learned about college entry requirements, scholarship opportunities, and campus supports for college students with special learning needs. We met the bus at 3 PM and David returned to his home in Cape Coral with the experience of being a "college student for a day," expressed in his own words.

Next step? David called a team meeting. David detailed his visit to FGCU, and how he located books in the library on the topics of algebra, medicine, and Spanish, using the online library catalog system. He told the team that he wanted to learn about preparing to go to college and taking a college entrance exam. David also wanted to learn about how to apply for a scholarship, and to visit Edison College in Fort Myers. David told his team he graduated with a 3.86 grade point average. We agreed to support David's vision of applying for college in 2008.

Sharing David's vision of community independence, the team offered assistance with the plan. Ed Paquette, Community Homes and Hearts, agreed to help David with exploring Bright Futures and scholarship opportunities in Florida. Mike Latu, David's adult sibling, agreed to help David explore enrollment, college entrance exams and online degree opportunities. I volunteered to help David plan to visit Edison College.

A life plan

And CARD? We're standing in the wings, ready to help David and his team to navigate the next steps. We document the person-centered planning history so the team can review the plan in development. David and his family have taught the team that David's life plan and team members are the co-pilots, professionals and family members are recruited to offer guidance along the way to inclusive community living.

Today, we're a team celebrating David's vision of personal and community independence and the newest goal on his person-centered plan: to enroll in college in January 2008.

Anne K. Allen is one of two CARD consultant based in the Fort Myers branch office of CARD-USF. The Fort Myers team serves individuals, school districts, and organizations in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties. For information, call (239) 590-7771.

David's Team

- David Latu
- Kate Latu, David's mother
- Mike Latu, adult sibling
- Amanda Gutierrez, Lee County Parks and Recreation
- Donna Djerf, Lee County Schools
- Paula and Ed Paquette, Community Homes and Hearts
- Linda Smith, David's roommate and life coach
- Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Recommended reading

Holburn, S; Gordon, A.; and Vietze, P. (2007). *Person-centered planning made easy: the PICTURE Method*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

A step-by-step guide to person-centered planning for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

To learn more

Palmer, A. (2006). *Realizing the college dream with autism or Asperger syndrome: A parent's guide to student success*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

University of Washington; DO-IT — Preparing for College: An Online Tutorial <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html> <<https://fgcu-piranha.fgcu.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html>>

TEACCH: Preparing for College: Tips for Students with HFA / Asperger's Syndrome <http://www.teacch.com/college.html> <<https://fgcu-piranha.fgcu.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.teacch.com/college.html>>

HEATH Resource Center <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/> <<https://fgcu-piranha.fgcu.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>>

The HEATH Resource Center of George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, is an online clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities.

Autism Support

Autism Society of America (National Organization)
7910 Woodmont Ave, Suite 650
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301-657-0881 • Fax: 301-657-0869
<http://www.autism-society.org/>
Ven Sequenzia, President - Florida State Chapter #131
2858 Remington Green Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32308
Contact: 850-997-7233 • Fax: 305-652-8896

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Autism Speaks

Southwest Florida Branch (Formerly NAAR)
Contact Sharon Boyd for meeting dates and times
or to be added to their mailing list for upcoming events.
Location: Port Charlotte, FL
Phone: 941-697-9772 • Email: swflorida@autismspeaks.org

COLLIER COUNTY

Naples Spectrum Support Group

Meets the third Wednesday of the month.
Time: Meetings begin at 7:00pm
Location: Therapeutic Integration Services offices,
2960 Immokalee Rd #3, Naples, FL 34110
Contact: Rob Moher: 239-593-8669
Email: robandsandra@mindspring.com

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

KIDDS (Keys for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities)

Meets several times throughout the school year.
Time and Location will be provided when you RSVP.
To RSVP contact one of the following individuals.
Debbie Valdes via email at Debbie.Valdes@sdhc.k12.fl.us
Phyllis Guthman via email at Phyllis.Guthman@sdhc.k12.fl.us
To leave a voice message, please call 813-837-7740 or 7732.

Concerned Parents of Autistic Children

Meets the last Sunday of the month from 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Nature's Health Food Store in Valrico (Corner of Lithia Pinecrest
Road and Bloomingdale at the Publix Shopping Plaza)
Contact: Dr. Moursi 813-643-9393

PASS (Parents of AS/HFA Support Group)

Support group for parents of children with Asperger's
Syndrome or High Functioning Autism meets monthly
at the Bloomingdale Library.
Contact Liisa at liisaneumann@tampabay.rr.com for date,
time, and location confirmation or to be put on their
contact list.

Asperger's Syndrome (Moderated support group for adults)

Ben Graffam, Ph.D. moderates a support group for adults
above the age of 18.
Location: Memorial Hospital of Tampa, 2919 Swann Ave.
Group meets two times per month on Thursday evenings.
The cost to attend is currently \$25 per session. Family
members do not attend but may greet Dr. Graffam after the
session. If you are going to attend you must RSVP to Dr.
Stephen Kreitzer. Please respond to krei513@aol.com if you
are interested and to get more details.

Lauren's Link (Sibling Support Group)

A fun, supportive group for school-age kids who have a
sibling with special needs.
Location: St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 3315
Bryan Road (at Bloomingdale Ave.) in Brandon. Family
Life Center Bldg., Room 304.
Meets: 2nd Friday of the month from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm.
Contact: Kris at 813-671-1038 (Evenings) or contact
MaryJo by email at wsmith68@tampabay.rr.com

STAND (Statewide Advocacy Network on Disabilities)

Hillsborough Monthly Chapter Meetings (All
disabilities)
Meets: 3rd Thursday of the month
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Location: Children's Board of Hillsborough County
1002 E. Palm Avenue, Tampa
Email: advocate@standonline.info

LEE COUNTY

Adonis Autism Center of Southwest Florida

Time: 3rd Thursday (monthly), 7:00 p.m.
Place: Bashaw home, 1456 Lynwood Avenue, Ft. Myers
Contact: Maureen Bashaw, 239-332-5395
Website: <http://www.adonisautismflorida.com>

Southwest Florida ASA Chapter #555

Contact: Fran Swanson, 239-768-0723
Please call for meeting times.

PASCO (NORTH) COUNTY

Hernando Autism Parenting & Personal Experience Network (HAPPEN)

Time: 3rd Wednesday (monthly), 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Location : Pediatric Therapy Works
Contact: Leslie Bolen at 352-683-0209 for directions

PASCO COUNTY

AWARE 4 Autism (Are We Awake Ready & Educated for Autism?)

Time: 7pm 3rd Tuesday of Every month
Location: Holiday Recreation Complex., 2830 Gulf Trace
Blvd., Holiday FL 34691
Contact: Monica Bice at 727-945-0947
or Email: AWARE4Autism@msn.com

Rock of Refuge Faith Based Support Group

Group covers all special needs/disabilities, including autism,
ADHD, mental retardation and physical disabilities.
Time: 2nd Friday (monthly), 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Location: Victorious Life Church, 6224 Old Pasco Rd.,
Wesley Chapel, Bldg. 300
Respite care provided during meeting -- must RSVP for respite!
Call the church office 813-973-2230 for more information or
to RSVP for respite.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Gulf Coast ASA Chapter #134

Time: 2nd Wednesday (monthly), 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Place: Abilities in Clearwater, 2735 Whitney Rd., Clearwater
Contact: Filomena MacDonald, 727-789-0082

POLK COUNTY

Circle of Friends Support Group

Non specific to any one disability.
For the next Circle of Friends Parent's Meeting, please call
Lynne Pabani for place and time at 813-676-8768 or the
Circle at 813-679-2507 and ask for Lynne.

Parental Education for Autism in Children Everywhere (PEACE)

Time: 1st Tuesday (Monthly) 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Place: Family Fundamentals Bldg.
1021 Lakeland Blvd., Lakeland
Contact: Nicole 863-686-1221 ext 228
or email Nikki73170@aol.com
Website: <http://www.peacelakeland.com/>

Parents Rallying for Individuals with Disabilities Everywhere!

(P.R.I.D.E.) Non specific to any one disability.
Time: 3rd Thursday (Monthly) 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Place: Family Fundamentals Bldg.
1021 Lakeland Blvd., Lakeland
Contact: Connie Carter, 863-701-1151 X-141
Nicole Torres, 863-686-1221

SARASOTA COUNTY

South Florida Autism Coalition

Pinnacle Academy
833 Magellan Drive, Sarasota FL 34243
7 PM 3rd Thursday every month
Phone at the school: (941)355-4696

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

Join the CARD Constituency Board

Julie Sneed

Hillsborough County

Julie is our current Board Chair. Julie is a lawyer at Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. in Tampa and the parent of a five-year-old lively and charming son with autism. Julie joined the Board to help parents become aware of autistic spectrum disorders and to educate the public concerning the prevalence of autism. According to Julie, "The public needs to be able to associate the label of autism with real people they know. I want to help personalize autism for those who have only heard about it on the news." She is also interested in increasing the funding for CARD and other services, therapies and research for a cure for autism. Julie is excited about contributing, sharing, learning from others and helping to develop strategies to better the lives of those in our autism community.



Nicole Torres

Polk County

Nicole Torres is a parent of a 5 yr old son diagnosed with Autism/ADHD. She is currently serving as Vice Chair for the CARD constituency board. Nicole works as a Family Resource Specialist for Infants and Young Children of West Central Florida and the Early Steps Program. She also is the founder of the PEACE support group in Lakeland (www.peacelakeland.com).



Ann Reynolds

Sarasota County

A member since 1998, Ann decided to join the Board to develop awareness of needs. Ann's main priorities for the autism community are legislator awareness, community awareness and acceptance, social skills development, employment opportunities for individuals with autism, community inclusion opportunities. As a parent of a 16-year-old with autism, Ann can offer understanding and support to CARD-USF families. She encourages parents to contact their legislators with a unified message—the need to improve life outcomes for individuals with autism.



Dear CARD-USF Constituent:

We are the CARD-USF Constituency Board. We are your representatives to the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida in Tampa serving a 14 county region. As individuals or family members of individuals with autism, we understand the problems and concerns you are dealing with because we are dealing with them too.

We can all still remember how lost and lonely we felt during the process of getting this diagnosis, and afterwards trying to understand how to meet the needs of our children. Having opportunities to meet and talk with other parents of children with autism and related disabilities was like opening a door to a whole new world.

The Board's members are not just from the Tampa area. We live in Lee, Charlotte, Pasco, Pinellas, Sarasota and Manatee Counties. The Board is always looking for new members to join us. Our group meets four times a year with the director and executive director of CARD-USF. We have set goals for this year, and work quarterly as a group to develop ways to meet those goals. This year, we want to communicate with the constituents from all areas that CARD-USF serves to hear what your needs are. We will then advise the administration at CARD-USF on these issues of importance. Our role is to listen to you, be your voice and to coordinate efforts that meet the community needs.

We want to hear from you. We want your input. We want to hear your ideas, concerns and suggestions. Please contact us through the CARD's e-mail at card-usf@fmhi.usf.edu and a Board member will respond to you directly.

Sincerely,

CARD-USF Constituency Board

Help CARD Survive, Thrive, and Grow!

CARD-USF NEEDS YOU

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities is currently accepting applications to join the CARD Constituency Board. Your talents, creativity and enthusiasm would be a welcome addition to CARD's Constituency Board!

The CARD Constituency Board is comprised of caring individuals and family members, like you, who are touched by autism. We meet four times a year to develop and implement plans and fundraising projects to help benefit CARD. Basically, that means we are a group of folks that want to help CARD survive, thrive & grow.

HOW TO JOIN US

To join the CARD Constituency Board or to find out more information about becoming a member of the CARD Constituency Board, please contact:

Mary-Kay Bunton-Pierce
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
(813) 974-5960
email at bunton@fmhi.usf.edu

If you have a family member or are an individual diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder and you live in Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk or Sarasota county, you are eligible to join the CARD Constituency Board



15th Annual Conference

January 24-27, 2008

Mark your calendar!

Location: Marriott Orlando Lake Mary

Supporting the Needs of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Deaf-Blindness, or Cognitive Disabilities with a Vision or Hearing Loss



Return Service Requested

Non-Profit. Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Tampa, FL
Permit No. 257

Department of Child & Family Studies
Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute
University of South Florida
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MHC 2113A
Tampa, FL 33612-3899