



AUTISM NEWS

Newsletter of Autism Tasmania Inc.

Postal Address

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Australia

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WHAT'S ON!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I think that most of our members will find this newsletter has some very interesting articles. There is an update on the value of Secretin and we will keep you informed as information comes to hand.

Wendy Lawson, who many of you will remember from her previous visits to Tasmania, is visiting us again in mid-April to present two one-day seminars. Look out for information on this seminar and don't forget to fill out your Carer requirements on the form enclosed.

I recently attended a meeting of the Reference group convened to assist in the *Review of the Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools*, which has been approved by the Minister of Education. As many of our children are attending regular schools this review will be of interest to parents. More details of this review are on page 12 of this newsletter.

The Conference organisation is going very well so far and by the time you read this, most members will have had the opportunity to attend a Conference Information session. We will keep you informed as the year progresses.

Rose Clark

WENDY LAWSON SEMINARS

Wendy Lawson will be presenting two seminars for Autism Tasmania. One will be held in Hobart on Thursday 15th April, the other in Launceston on Saturday 17th April. These presentations are being held as part of the Commonwealth Respite for Carers Program. This entitles parents, who have a person with an Autism Spectrum Disorder in the family, to have respite care so they can attend one of the seminars. Parents may have the carer of their choice caring for their family member in their own home. Wendy will also be presenting two workshops for Giant Steps: on Mon 12th and Tues 13th April

Wendy, who has visited Tasmania on previous occasions is the mother of four children. She also has personal experience as an adult with Asperger's Syndrome.. Wendy's presentations promise to be informative and personal as well as giving us an insight into the confusing world that people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder face every day.

Information regarding venues and registration forms will be sent out to all members of Autism Tasmania as soon as possible.

Rose Clark

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the March issue of Autism News. I hope that you enjoy the articles and information in this issue. There is no shortage of literature and research being done on Autism Spectrum Disorder and I am grateful to members for providing me with details about them, so that I can pass them on to our members. If any member would like to submit an article or book review, I will be very happy to include it in the next issue. In the meantime thank you to everyone who supplied articles this quarter.

Cheryl Scott

NATIONAL AUTISM WEEK Sun 16th May to Sat 22nd May

Please put these dates in your diary now. The public service announcement will again be shown on television. The catch phrase is: "Be Autism Aware!"

Our committee is discussing ways of promoting greater public awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder within our various communities. Do you have any ideas? Are any of you willing to have your story told in one of our three daily regionals? If so, contact one of our committee members.

Details of functions organised for Autism Awareness Week will be mailed out closer to the actual week

CARER RESOURCE CENTRE BACK CARE INFORMATION SESSIONS

Carers who do a lot of lifting and bending down may risk having back problems in the future. Back pain can affect our quality of life, making it difficult to move around, to sit comfortably or to lie down. This session will concentrate on how to prevent injury, safe lifting and transferring techniques and the correct use of equipment.

Sessions will be run by Jennifer Moore, Occupational Therapist, Dept Veteran's Affairs at the following locations:

North

Date April 14th Wed 11.30 -1.00pm
Location Independent Living Centre -
46 Canning St -Launceston

North West

Date April 15th Thursday 10.30 -12.00
Location Community Health Centre -
11 Jones St -Burnie

South

Date April 22nd Thursday 10.30- 12.00
and 1.00-3.00 pm
Location Community Health Centre
2nd floor Physio Dept Gym
2 Terry St Glenorchy

Please register your attendance:

As places are limited, please register your name if you wish to attend any of the sessions listed above; by calling 1800 242 636.

Also, we are able to arrange respite or transport if required.

PICTURE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM WORKSHOP -(PECS) 8th-9th May 1999 at the University of Melbourne, Parkville VIC

"The picture Exchange Communication system (PECS) was developed 12 years ago as a unique augmentative alternative training package that allows children and adults with autism and other communication to initiate communication. First used at the Delaware Autistic Program, PECS has received worldwide recognition for focusing on the initiation component of communication. PECS does not require complex or expensive materials. It was created with educators, resident care providers and families in mind, and so it is readily used in a variety of settings. Many children learn "the exchange" within their first training session. It has been highly successful with adolescents, adults and young children with a variety of communication difficulties"

The workshop will be presented by the co-developers of the system: Andy S Bondy PhD and Lori A Frost.MS. CCC/SLP (Speech Language Pathologist)

Registration costs \$290.00 which covers both days, all refreshments and a manual (worth \$60.00)

Details are available from Mary Gebert on 03 9456 1333 or ihs@netspace.net.au

We're on the Net!

Autism Tas

AUTISM TAS IS NOW ON THE NET

Our address is

www.autismtas.org.au

FEATURE ARTICLE

THE AUTISM SECRETIN ISSUE-UPDATE by Amanda Golding (reprinted with permission from Autism Vic.)

Many readers will have read, seen or heard something about Secretin, a hormone claimed to produce significant changes in children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Autism Victoria has received many calls from families and professionals wanting to find out more. AUTISM NEWS will feature an update from time to time to help keep you informed about this and related issues. The information below has been derived from the Autism Review International Vol 12 No. 3, 1998 and from the AiA Newsletter No. 23 -Autumn (our Spring) 1998- This information is provided for readers of AUTISM NEWS in good faith, and does not represent endorsement by Autism Victoria in any form of the products or therapies discussed. This update has been written by Amanda Golding, Executive Officer of Autism Victoria, and any opinion offered is based on the information available to date.

BACKGROUND

For many years, Bernard Rimland has been a tireless campaigner seeking to uncover the 'truth' about Autism. He was a founding member of the Autism Society of America, and as a parent and professional, published a key book *Infantile Autism: The Syndrome and its Implications for Neural Theory of Behaviour* in 1964. Rimland was one of the first to loudly challenge the then commonly held belief that autism was a psychogenic (or mental) condition caused, among other things, by poor parenting. By the early 1970s Rimland was publishing papers in which he claimed the value of mega-vitamin therapy in reducing the symptoms of Autism. He therefore has a long history of championing 'alternative' viewpoints. His contribution to the autism cause is

respected by many, however his methodology has had many critics over the years.

Rimland established the Autism Research Institute (ARI) which publishes the quarterly *Autism Research Review International*. This publication is a selective summary of recent papers and research findings, as well as personal comment from Rimland. From time to time Rimland takes on a 'cause' or 'treatment' method for autism and actively promotes it. In more recent years he established "Defeat Autism Now!" (DAN!), a research foundation with the prime objective of discovering a cure for autism.

In October this year, the ARI and DAN! sponsored a conference "Effective Natural Approaches for treating Children with Autism and ADD/ADHD". One of the many presenters at that conference was Victoria Beck, who spoke about her discovery of the value of secretin in the treatment of her developmentally delayed son.

SECRETIN

Secretin is a naturally occurring substance - a polypeptide hormone - which is involved in the regulation of gastric function. It is prepared in its natural form from the gut of pigs. It has also been synthetically manufactured. It is used to diagnose digestive problems, more specifically as a test of pancreatic function and in the diagnosis of bile tract disorders. It has been in use for about 20 years overseas, but does not appear to have been used in Australia.

In their exhaustive search for an effective treatment for their young son, Parker's, chronic diarrhoea, Victoria and Gary Beck insisted on an endoscopy and internal examination of his gastro intestinal tract. They requested that the examination include an infusion (slow injection) of secretin. They believed that a pancreatic enzyme deficiency may have been the cause of Parker's gastro intestinal health problems. Parker was three years

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old and whilst not formally diagnosed with an Autism spectrum disorder, he displayed significant developmental delay. After the endoscopy, the family observed almost immediate improvement in Parker's health, and dramatic gain in his development. His vocabulary progressed from a few words to hundreds. He attended to people and what was going on around him and he started to draw pictures.

After a few weeks, the improvements seemed to wear off. Victoria requested more infusions of secretin. This is where her campaign began in earnest. The Beck's have become the hub of a small network of parents over the past two years, culminating in their presentation at the DAN! Conference in October and extensive world wide publicity.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

The answer is not much. There has been no research carried out on the use of secretin as a treatment of autism. Anecdotal reports from a small number of families do not constitute valid, scientifically based research. Parents and doctors need to balance the claims of a relatively small group of parents with the risks of having a substance administered to a child when we do not know

- which children are the most suitable candidates;
- what is the appropriate dosage and treatment regime;
- how the substance works;
- what are the long term effects of secretin on a growing child.

Autism Victoria has attempted to find out if secretin is available in Australia. The advice we have received from Canberra is that it has never been 'sponsored' for use. We have not been able to establish if any Australian doctor or researcher has worked with secretin in any capacity. We believe that a few medical people are interested in the

reports from the US, but have not heard of any firm commitment to establishing a research trial in Australia.

We have also heard that Victoria Beck's paper received only a lukewarm reception when it was presented at the DAN! conference in October. There were hundreds of parents, practitioners and research scientists present at the conference, and many were very concerned at the lack of scientifically valid evidence. A few days after the conference, the ARI web page urged all US parents and physicians involved with the use of secretin to complete a detailed questionnaire outlining their experience with the substance. Many have been loathe to provide this information, and we must wonder why.

The only research program we have been able to find out about is being established by The Foundation for Research in Energy Medicine, Grapevine, Texas, USA. This foundation claims that their research has been approved by the Great Lakes College of Clinical Medicine, Institutional Review Board, which is apparently answerable to the FDA, the key drug monitoring and approval agency in the US. If you would like to know more about this foundation which seems to have some link with DAN!, their web site is at <http://www.webh.com/secretin/one.htm> The information about this research foundation came from the internet and they seem to charge parents a great deal to participate, so we cannot be sure about the integrity of the research protocol.

TO CONCLUDE

The claims about secretin are both interesting and frustrating. "Why can't something be done immediately to find out more - we have no time to waste!" is the totally understandable response of many parents. Others are more cautious and recognise the risks of using something about which so little is known. My own thoughts? Quite simply, we need to find out what the secretin is treating - is it the autism, or some physical condition causing the child to feel unwell, which

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then impacts on their pattern of behaviour? There does not seem to be anything in the information available to indicate that secretin could be considered a cure or even a treatment for autism.

What is also interesting is the emerging, wide ranging collection of commentary and investigation into the biological aspects of Autism Spectrum Disorders. These commentaries belong strictly within the 'alternative theories and practice' regime at this time, but are providing much to think about. Some examples include:

- specific diet regimes, eg- gluten and casein free diets to minimise gastric problems and hopefully the person's 'autistic behaviours'
- homeopathic treatments, again to minimise 'autistic behaviours'
- allergy induced autism - is this one possible explanation for late onset autism?
- relationship between the immune system, early use of antibiotics and the micro organisms. of the gastrointestinal tract,
- yeast disorders and antifungal therapy-

There are many references to alternative theories and practice on the internet. A recent book, published by William Shaw, Director of the Great Plains Laboratory for Health, Metabolism and Nutrition in Kansas US, contains a great deal of information as a starting point. The book can be ordered using your credit card by fax 0015 1 913 341 6207 or by email <williansha@aol.com> Their web site is at www.greatplainslaboratory.com

A number of parents has contacted Autism Victoria with details of a U.K. group called Allergy Induced Autism (AiA). This group will be having their second major conference in March 1999 in Birmingham, England. The group can be contacted through their Executive Officer, Rosemary Kessick at 210 Pineapple Road, Stirchley, Birmingham, U.K. B30 2TY

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a life-long disability due to a brain disorder. the cause of which is unknown. One in a thousand people are affected. Autism Spectrum Disorder is not a mental illness. It is a developmental disorder. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder are not stupid. They are people from properly understanding the world in an otherwise sense : as well as affective. They can communicate, learn, interact with others. They are not violent.

These useful cards are available from Autism Tas. for \$1.00 for 20. Keep a few in your wallet to hand out at those times you need to explain your child's behaviour.

Autism Tasmania Inc.
Autism Tasmania's phone number is in your white pages

email <AiA~Kessick.demon.co.uk>. Their web site is at <http://www.demon.co.uk/charities/AiA/ala.htm>

Paul Shattock (see the article in the September 1998 issue of AUTISM NEWS titled "Gut Reaction") and Dr Andrew Wakefield are key members of the AiA, and they may be visiting Australia in 1999.

Finally, if your child (or adult) seems to have unexplained gastro intestinal problems constipation, diarrhoea, excessive flatulence, gastric reflux, irritable behaviour before or after meals, rigid food routines or preferences please consult a doctor. We have spoken to many parents in recent weeks who have reported significant changes in their child's behaviour where medical examination has revealed basic health conditions, including toothache, ulcers bacterial infections, irritable bowel, bowel blockages or muscle weaknesses.

I would very much like to hear from readers with your thoughts on the issues touched on above. What are your ideas and experiences? Please share them with us, so that all members of Autism Victoria can be as well informed as possible about this important but very difficult subject.

Amanda Golding

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NEWS AND VIEWS

YOUNG AUTISM SUPPORT TASMANIA

(Supporting Families Teaching Applied Behavioural Analysis)

Last month we celebrated our 1st Anniversary as an incorporated body and yet we have been meeting and supporting each other for over two years. In this time, we have not only been very pleased in the progress of our children through the ABA program, but also seen our membership and interest in ABA increase.

We were fortunate to have a return visit from three staff members of Giant Steps at our last meeting. Our recent contacts with Giant Steps have been welcomed and very positive. Two valuable ideas came from this meeting.

1. That we have a sharing workshop involving staff from Giant Steps and parents and therapists from YAST to be held on a Saturday in the South.

2. A big picture idea - that we each as a separate body create a picture of how we would like our children supported through school. To identify goals, and then as separate bodies come together again and see if we have common ground that we may work on together.

Clinical Psychologist, Jura Tender, visited the State this month to consult with families on their home based program as well as seeing some new members.

We are very fortunate, especially within the Hobart area, to have some very dedicated and hard working ABA therapists. Two of these therapists in particular are planning separate overseas visits to increase their knowledge on ABA. I'm sure we all benefit from the knowledge and experience they will gain while away.

YAST has invited to Hobart, Dr Amanda Sampson MBBS FRACOG DDU, COGU. Dr Sampson is not only a professional but also a parent who runs an ABA therapy program with her son. She will be in Hobart on the 25th and 26th of March. There will be 2 opportunities for members to spend time with Dr Sampson.

1. Friday 26th March 10.00-12:30 at the Early Special Education Centre 231 Campbell Street North Hobart. There will be no charge for members.

2. Friday 26th March from 7 - 9pm at the Hutchin's Conference Centre, Sandy Bay. This evening is designed as a fundraiser Cocktail Party. Dr Sampson will speak briefly at this occasion. Tickets are \$15.00 per head and everyone is welcome.

Dr Sampson's visit is also incorporating a professional development session with paediatricians and general practitioners. This will be held on Thursday the 25th of March.

YAST meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at Albuera Street Primary School, Hobart at 7pm. Everyone is welcome. Cost of membership to YAST is \$15.00 and as a member you will not only be associated with a large support network but also be informed of events such as...

- Visits by specialists and professionals
- Workshops
- Guest Speakers at meetings
- Members also have access to a resource library

For membership enquiries or any other information, please contact me on 6229 7818

or send correspondence to our secretary, Rosemary Rush, at 48 Drysdale Ave Kingston 7050 or E mail rushm@netspace.net.au

Grace Talbot (President Y.A.S.T.)

GIANT STEPS UPDATE

The year got off to a busy start with a full complement of 15 children. We welcomed three new families, two from Tasmania and one from Queensland. We also welcomed two new staff members, Robyn Fraser to the Play and Social Communication position and more recently, Anna Titmus to the Speech Pathology position. At Easter we will be saying goodbye to our teacher, Rose Clark and our Occupational Therapist, Jane Hosking. We will miss them both and wish them well in their future endeavours. We are in the process of securing a replacement for Rose and we would like to welcome Katrina Bock, who commenced as Occupational Therapist this week.

The Board recently hosted 70 guests at a Thank You luncheon and tour of the Centre for Giant Steps supporters. This was a most successful occasion and gave us an opportunity to show our appreciation to those who support us in so many ways. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the staff for their good natured acceptance of the disruption! At the luncheon, two members of the Van Diemen Street Rod Club arrived in their Hot Rods, much to the delight of the children and donated \$560.00, which was the profit from a recent event held by the club.

We are appreciative of the level of support from differing community groups. During the past few weeks we have received a donation of \$1105, the proceeds of a morning tea held by a group of interested people from Longford and also a donation of \$600, the proceeds of the Riverside Golf Club's Ladies Day. It would seem that awareness of the work done by Giant Steps, and others in the field of service provision for autism spectrum disorder, is increasing.

Giant Steps continues to provide professional development and has recently established a consultative relationship with Educational and Behavioural Psychologist, Vicki Bitsika who will be working directly with staff,

parents and children at the Centre at least once a term. Giant Steps also continues to build relationships with other service providers and organisations within the state. (See the reference in the YAST report.)

The children at the centre continue to make progress with six currently included, from periods ranging from three days to half a day, in a range of mainstream schools with the support of their Therapy Assistants. A major step forward has seen the inclusion of one of our students in a major secondary college in Launceston for three days each week

Trish Bourke

TECHNICAL AIDS FOR THE DISABLED-VICTORIA

TADVIC is based at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Kew. This organisation is a group of volunteers who design, build and modify equipment which is not commercially available.

A frequent request from families with autistic children is for a secure seat belt fastener. A TADVIC volunteer has made a small plastic box to fit over the seat belt buckle. A small slot enables the buckle to be undone by inserting any key. Fingers cannot be used to release the buckle!

TADVIC has produced a number of these devices and they are for sale for \$15.00 each. Because the use of the buckle is subject to certain laws regarding restraint, a medical certificate is required before the buckle can be used.

For details, contact the TADVIC office ph 03 9853 8655.

There is a Tasmanian Branch of TAD operating out of Hobart Trevor Leo can be contacted on 6247 9256 for local requests for modifications to equipment. Their brochure is enclosed in this mailing.

AUTISM TAS LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Teaching Children with Autism - Strategies to En- hance Communication and Socialisation

**by Kathleen Ann Quill
Delman Publishers Inc. 1995**

A book which describes teaches strategies and instructional adaptations which promote communication and socialisation in children with autism. These strategies capitalise on the individual strengths and training styles of the autistic children

Key features are:

- *the teaching methods presented address the unique, cognitive, language and social needs of the child with autism.*
- *assessment and intervention guidelines are summarised within the appendices to assist the teacher in strategy implementation.*
- *each chapter includes a bibliography to provide additional resources on all topics.*

Resources also to consider viewing are the excellent videos from the New Zealand conferences which cover a very wide range of topics. Some of these include:

- *Dr Luke Tsai Differential diagnosis*
- *Tony Attwood Coping with challeng-
ing behaviours*
- *Dr Luke Tsai Improving Social behaviours*
- *Temple Grandin Over view of Autism
and Asperger Syndrome, Sensory Problems and-
Medications*

All sessions including those mentioned above are also on audio-tape - there are 28 in all.

The new books in our library and the New Zea-

land conference tapes are located in our library in Launceston

Autism Tas Library contacts are:

Trish Bourke	63 342843
Roseanne Lay	6244 2540
Michelle Williamson	64 424079

Books purchased for our library are available from the bookshops listed below:

Open Leaves Bookshop
71 Cardigan St, Carlton 3053
Phone 03 9347 2355

Co-ordinates Occupational Therapy Service
165 Melville Rd, West Brunswick, 3055.
Phone 03 9383 7277

< book in hand >

16 Jumbuck Street, Jindalee, Queensland, 4074 Fax/
phone 07 3279 0678 or
email <blackman@eis.net.au

STOP PRESS

A very recent addition to the Autism Tasmania library is a large folder published by the Autistic Children's Association of Queensland; titled Autism Spectrum Disorder; Information and Strategies for Primary School Staff.

It is a very informative and comprehensive book with each chapter covering separate topics such as :

- An overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Autism vs Asperger syndrome
- Communication
- Social skills
- Sensory information processing
- Learning characteristics
- Behaviour support
- Teaching strategies and
- School issues

This book would be invaluable to parents, teachers and carers. It will be housed in the Launceston section of the Library.

BOOK REVIEW

When Snow Turns to Rain - One Family's Struggle to Solve the Riddle of Autism

by Craig B. Schulze Woodbine House,. Rockville, MD 1993.

This is another parental account of autism, this time by a father, also a trained teacher and now an assistant principal. Jordan was born in May 1982.

In writing about the first 8 years of Jordan's life, Craig Schulze describes his son's transformation from a happy toddler into an increasingly disturbed and isolated child with autism. The book really tells two stories: it chronicles the family's efforts to find and put into practice an effective therapy for their child and it also tells of Craig Schulze's long and difficult coming to terms with his son's disability. Jordan's development is apparently normal until he begins to regress during his second year of life. His autism deepens so that by the age of 4 he has almost no spontaneous speech, "he responds only to the most insistent commands. His contact with people is minimal. His mood is generally sour, except on those occasions when he is allowed to be totally by himself, or is given foods he likes..."(p125)

Being a teacher, with some knowledge of operant conditioning and reinforcement, the author felt confident enough to attempt a Lovaas-style behavioural intervention program for his son himself; using food rewards. He abandoned this after one month. Then the family tried various drug treatments: fenfluramine (ritalin) naltrexone and dietary restrictions.

They then spent \$9000US for a two week training program developed by advertising executives and parents, Barry and Suzy Kaufman who wrote *Son Rise* (later made into a film) and *A Miracle to Believe in* and who founded the Option Institute, where for a price, they teach others about their 14 hour a day seven days a week intensive

therapy program which has no empirical data to back its efficacy). Schulze asks himself, "Has desperation so clouded our thinking that we are at the mercy of every shaman and quack who would commend to the public their wares?" (p88)

Then they hear about Dr Kiyo Kitahara, who has developed a program for children with autism - Daily Life Therapy- which seems to be successfully run in Tokyo at the Higashi School. The Daily Life Therapy involves a lot of physical exercise; the rationale being that it will relieve stress and make the child more receptive to learning. There are moves afoot in Boston (near where the Schulzes live) to set up a Higashi school and they became active in lobbying for this to occur, but in the meantime decide to send Jordan, now four and a half, to the Higashi School in Tokyo. They leave their child in Tokyo for 10 months, visiting at Christmas. Jordan then returns to the US -with his Higashi teacher staying with the family for the first 4 months in order to teach them the correct techniques and to ensure a smooth transition for him. Yet after his sojourn in Japan, Jordan appears to have lost skills rather than made gains. Nevertheless, the Schulzes stay with the Higashi program, now with Jordan at the Boston Higashi School.

The family try mega-vitamins, B6 and magnesium.

Towards the end of the book Craig Schulze becomes more philosophical as he contemplates the possibility that Jordan's future progress may be minimal. They decide to keep him at Higashi. They observe other children participating in facilitated communication but conclude that it is of no discernible benefit for Jordan. Craig Schulze concludes his personally revealing account with thoughts about life and finding happiness and meaning: "I would come to understand through this trial that pinning my hopes for happiness on Jordan's recovery or on any particular outcome for my life was totally absurd. If the empyrean [heavenly bliss] was to be found at all, it would be

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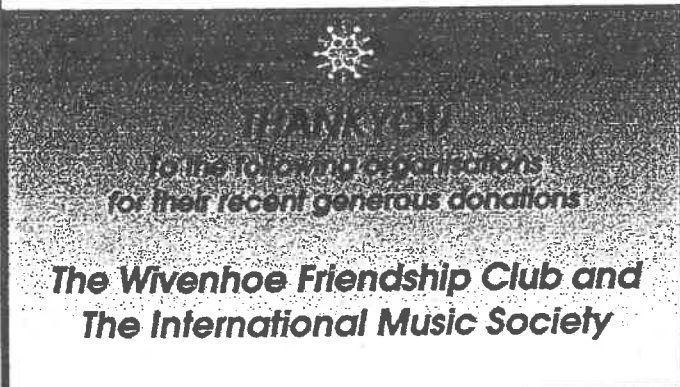
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located deep within myself, in a core of acceptance and love of life, regardless of its outer dress" (p 216)

Another worthwhile parental account of autism which makes an interesting contrast to Clara Claithorne Park's *The Siege*.

Lisa Minchin-

Borrowed from Munford St Early Special Education Unit Launceston



BOOK REVIEW

"There's a Boy in Here"

by mother and son, Judy and Sean Barron,

New York, Simon and Schuster. 1992.

This book offers a unique insight into autism as it tells the story of Sean Barron's life up to his late twenties from dual perspectives. Judy Barron tells each part of Sean's story as it appeared to her "from the outside in" and then the older Sean (with the benefit of maturity and hindsight), offers his account and explanations of his then bizarre behaviours "from the inside out". This parallel text format makes fascinating reading and serves to illuminate the compulsions, fears and idiosyncratic rules Sean developed and which shaped his very unusual behaviours.

Born in 1961, after a hyperactive and virtually non-verbal early childhood, Sean attended regular school and managed to cope in the classroom, achieving above average grades. His misery and social inadequacy meant that he remained on the fringe in the playground. At home, his behaviours were constantly challenging and difficult. His parents, who were trained teachers, experienced the patronising and judgemental attitudes of the doctors and psychologists at the time who subscribed to Bruno Bettelheim's theory that autism was caused by "refrigerator parents". Those professionals offered ultimately useless suggestions for therapy and management.

For many years, Judy Barron, despite her best intentions, found herself constantly shouting at her son in frustration and anger. Sean on his part, interpreted his mother's behaviour as indicating that she hated him. Judy sought to emphasise that it was Sean's behaviour and not himself that angered her. But it was not until Sean was in his late teens and for the first time genuinely wanted to learn to make friends and overcome his compulsions that, by an effort of will, he sought to control his life and his impulses; instead of allowing the impulses to control him.

Sean's struggle to study at college, to live independently, to make friends and even to be able to tell when so-called 'friends' were exploiting him, was never easy. The book ends on an optimistic note. For Sean, at least, it seems that his autism meant that certain aspects of development were only delayed, rather than never going to eventuate. His mother concludes, "...The only thing I'm sure of is that our son is the strongest person I've ever known. His successful struggle against autism shows an unwavering courage at which I can only marvel." (p.26)

Lisa Minchin

This book was borrowed from the Autism Victoria Library. It is no longer in print but may be available through libraries.

ASPERGER'S GROUPS

Asperger's North Western Support Group

On Thursday February 25th, the North West Asperger's Syndrome Support Group held a meeting with guest speaker, Gerry Plunkett, a family planning sex educator.

This meeting was well attended by parents and carers of young children with Aspergers Syndrome. Discussing the sometimes difficult subjects of puberty, sexuality and related issues; coffee was served, humour abounded and some answers found

Many thanks go to Gerry for her ability to talk straight and her irrepressible humour.

The next meeting of the North West Asperger's Group will be held on *Saturday, April 10th 1.30 - 3.30pm at Leighland's Christian School Leighland Ave. Ulverstone*

Please phone Eileen Prunster 64 451969 for further information

All family, friends, carers of /and people with Asperger's Syndrome are welcome
Eileen Prunster

Asperger's Northern Support Group

Sat March 27th at 1.30pm at Walker House, Newnham
Contact Rachel Hodge 6393 7183

Asperger's Southern Support Group
Contact Roseanne Lay for details of this group's next meeting ph 6244 2540

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REVIEW OF INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN REGULAR SCHOOLS

The Minister of Education (the Hon Paula Wriedt MHA), has approved a review of the Department's policy of Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular School. The Office for Educational Review is responsible for conducting the review and reporting its outcomes. A feature of the review process will be extensive consultation with teachers and students, families and relevant professional and community groups and organisations.

The three daily regional newspapers ran a notice on Saturday 6th March editions calling for submissions from members of the public. Autism Tasmania will be forwarding a submission to the steering committee. Anyone interested in having input to this documents in any way, please contact:

- Rose Clark
ph 6423 1086,
- Rachel Hodge
ph 6393 7183
or
- Kathy Gill
ph 6233 7175

"BE AUTISM AWARE"
Gold lapel pins



Still available from
AUTISM TASMANIA
for \$3.00 each
+\$1.50pp

send your order
to Autism Tasmania
PO Box 1552
Launceston 7250

Get your's now for
Autism Awareness Week!
26th - 22nd May