

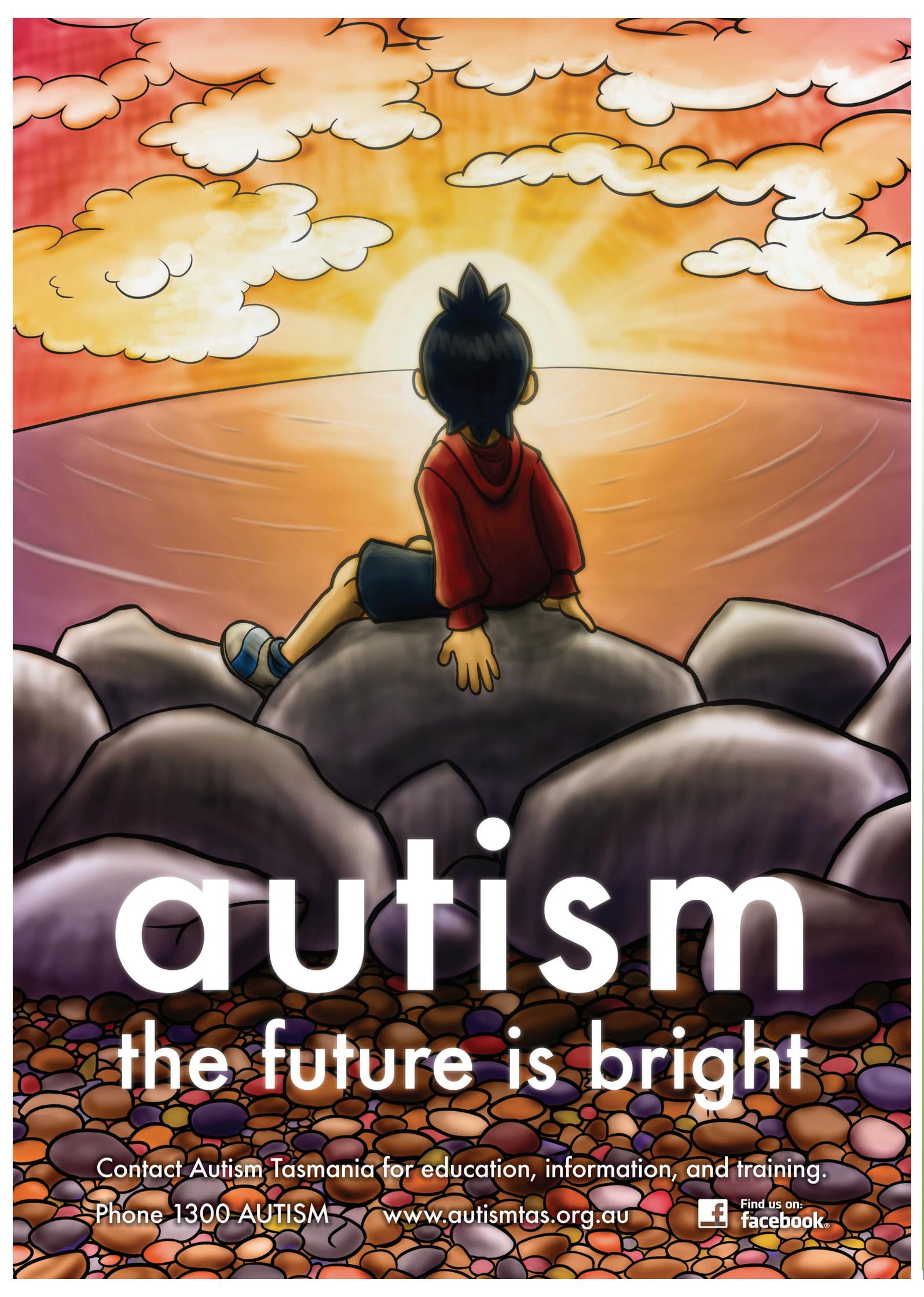
Spectrum News

The Magazine of Autism Tasmania Inc.

ISSUE: March 2012

A photograph of four people in an office environment. On the left, a woman with curly red hair wears a black and white patterned top and a necklace with a rose pendant. In the center, a man with a grey beard and balding head wears a blue button-down shirt. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair and a dark grey top holds a white certificate. On the right, a woman with dark curly hair wears a grey top. The background shows office cubicles and shelves.

*Aurora's
workplace
giving program*



autism

the future is bright

Contact Autism Tasmania for education, information, and training.

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www.autismtas.org.au



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On the cover:

Jodie Denman and Andrea Brumby receive the cheque from Aurora and two Aurora employees who participate in the Workplace Giving Program. They are Lorri Clarke, Media and Communications Advisor and Paul Hickey, Principal Environment Advisor. Please see page 6 for more information.

Inside cover:

Ben Lambert of Comet Punch Creative has designed our Autism Month Poster! Thank you Ben!
Keep your eyes out for this beautiful poster next time you visit a clinic or medical centre. Please see page 5. for more information.





From the President

A very warm [formal] welcome to Andrea Brumby who has now been in the CEO role for some 8 weeks. Briefly, for those people who didn't see or read the members' bulletin announcing her appointment, Andrea has over twenty years experience as a successful learning support co-ordinator and teacher, a Bachelor

of Education and Masters in Special Education. Over the last 4 years she has been a member of the school leadership team at Holy Rosary Catholic School at Claremont, where she built and led a very successful learning support team and developed a positive network of support with external service agencies, teachers, teacher aides, parents and specialists, with various successful whole school and individual programs focusing on student learning and family resilience.

Andrea has a solid knowledge of ASD [as well as other learning and developmental disabilities] and brings an understanding of the impact on families, having worked directly with parents and their children, as well as in collaboration with many of the external agencies with which Autism Tasmania deals.

Her arrival is proving to be a good opportunity on two fronts. Firstly, by having a fresh pair of eyes look over the organisation and re-focusing staff - what we do, how we do it and even why we do some things; secondly by allowing the President and Vice President to start focusing on the broader governance matters, composition and functioning of the Committee without being caught in the day-to-day operations. Over coming weeks and months there will be changes to the way we do some things and some new initiatives.

The first of these is Dr Tony Attwood's seminar at the Tailrace Function Centre in Launceston on Thursday, 15 November 2012. This location gives people on the north, northwest and west coasts the opportunity to more easily attend and hear one of the pre-eminent Australian and international clinicians and presenters on Asperger's Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism.

A call to action to all parents so we can gather information about the impact of cuts to school resources on children on the autism spectrum and their families. Please let us know of your experiences so we can collect an accurate picture of the situation and continue to bring matters to the attention of the Dept of Education and the Minister for Education & Skills, Nick McKim.

Thanks for the huge number of membership renewals that have come flooding in so quickly - and for your wonderful generosity with donations. Bear with us as we work through the pile and issue receipts to all and thank you letters in several specific cases.

If you haven't yet renewed, please remember that your membership lapses on 31 March 2012 but can easily be renewed by paying the annual membership fee - meaning that you can get the full membership discount to attend Tony Attwood. Our practice is to send all lapsed members a reminder and one complimentary copy of *Spectrum News*.

Mick Clark - President



R A I S I N G AWARENESS

Autism Tasmania focuses on education during Autism Month.

While completing a Masters in Special Education and working in my previous leadership position as a Learning Support Co-ordinator, I was able to fully appreciate the benefits of an inclusive education for people with disabilities.

The social and communication opportunities are often improved for people with autism in an inclusive setting. Friendships commonly develop between students with disabilities and those without. Students without disabilities often benefit from the additional resources and support staff in the classroom.

The benefits reach beyond the classroom too, as adults in the wider school community also learn to see beyond the disability and learn to value and respect students diversity.

At Autism Tasmania one of our primary roles is supporting and educating the people of Tasmania. This year in my role as CEO I intend to work with my team to deliver several and varied opportunities to provide information, education, training and additional learning opportunities for our members, families, carers, educators and professionals across Tasmania.

We are launching several projects and events to raise awareness and provide information as a part of our theme of 'education'. Through several different means we intend to inform, train and educate people across Tasmania.

In Australia we live in a community that maximises the educational and social opportunities for all people. We hope to ensure everyone understands and values diversity so that we have the skills to work together in a just and democratic society.

Through education and training Autism Tasmania helps promote a positive awareness of the talents and gifts of people with Autism.

Andrea Brumby, CEO

Autism Month

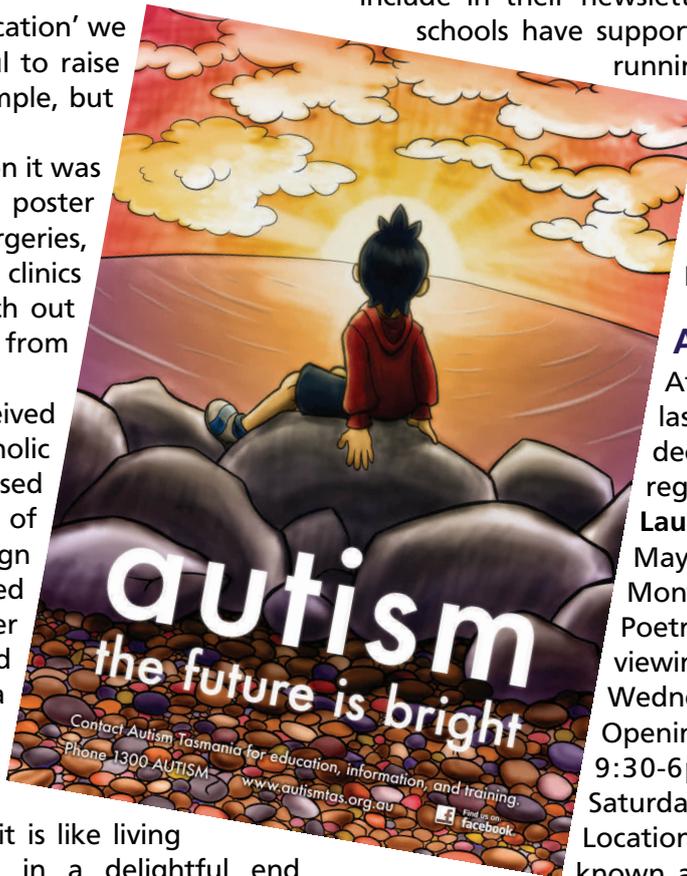
Internationally Autism Month is held in April to celebrate and raise awareness for Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Ben Lambert designs our Autism Month Poster!

As a part of our theme of 'education' we decided it would be wonderful to raise awareness of autism with a simple, but bright and positive message.

After some careful consideration it was agreed that having a colourful poster on the walls of doctor surgeries, medical centres and health clinics would be a great way to reach out to a wide audience of people from all ages and walks of life.

Autism Tasmania recently received a kind donation from the Catholic Archdiocese which we have used to commission Ben Lambert of Comet Punch Creative to design the poster. Ben is a talented illustrator and graphic designer on the Autism Spectrum and working with him was such a treat. His positive energy, eye for colour and design, combined with his obvious firsthand knowledge of what it is like living with autism, has culminated in a delightful end product. Thank you Ben!



Sausage sizzle

The Youngtown Rotary club has kindly offered to facilitate and donate all proceeds to Autism Tas. Great opportunity to meet Deborah and Robyn from the Launceston office who will be there along with some volunteers to assist on the day.

Friday 27th April 2012 from 8 – 4 pm at the Bunnings store Kings Meadows

Sausage sizzle in Hobart on the 21st of April at K&D Hobart to raise awareness and also raise some much needed funds for Autism Tasmania. Come on down and have a snag or lend a hand, we would love to see you even if it's only for a few minutes.

Thanks to Inghams, and Youngtown Rotary for their generous support

School Newsletter Inserts:

For the last two years Autism Tasmania has send out information about Autism Spectrum Disorders to schools to include in their newsletters during April. So many schools have supported this project and we are running it again this year.

If your school has forgotten to include the inserts let us know and we will send them another copy.

Ph: 1300 288 476

Art exhibitions

After the wonderful success of last years exhibitions we have decided to hold one in each region.

Launceston: 3rd April – 2nd May The Launceston Autism Month Exhibition of Art, Craft, Poetry and Prose. Open for viewing on Tuesday April 3 until Wednesday May 2.

Opening times: Monday-Thursday 9:30-6pm, Friday 9:30-7pm, Saturday 9:30-2pm, Sunday closed.

Location: Launceston LINC (formerly known as Launceston State Library), Civic Square, Launceston. In the reference library display area, on the first floor.

Let's get creative and raise awareness of Autism in our community!

Burnie: There will a small ASD information display in the Burnie Library and a combined art exhibition at the Maker Workshop in Burnie from April 14th. We are combining with the Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre in Burnie. The opening is on April 14th – late afternoon and open after that for 2 weeks all day in the Makers Workshop in Burnie.

for more info please call Rose Clark on 0407 320 048

Hobart: Help to celebrate the diversity of talent on the autism spectrum. Artwork will be on display at the Glenorchy Library between the 30th of March and the 20th of April. Artwork can be collected from the Autism Tasmania offices from the 23rd April. Please call Allison on 1300 288 476 for more information.



Thank you Aurora!

Thank you Aurora!

Autism Tasmania recently received a donation from Aurora through their work place giving programme "Will to Give". Employees who participate have donations automatically deducted from their pay each fortnight. Contributing employees vote every six months on a new Tasmanian charity. The program has been operating for 8 years and has donated almost \$50,000 to Tasmanian charities and not for profit organisations.

Autism Tasmania is a small not-for profit organisation that relies on donations and membership to help us grow and extend our existing services to meet the increasing demands of the organisation.

As we are operating in a highly competitive and financially stretched environment, donations make a huge difference in our ability to deliver a variety of extra services to the people affected by Autism across Tasmania. With the rate of diagnosis on the rise we feel an increasing need to 'think outside the square' and provide skill development and training in a creative and cost effective manner.

This donation has enabled us to start a series of autism

specific workshops for teachers and teacher aides. Professionals can choose the topics they wish to attend, therefore tailoring the professional development to meet their schools requirements. We would like to be in a position to offer this training and development opportunity to other regions across the state in the near future.

Thank you Aurora, you're contribution will help improve the knowledge and skills of many professionals who teach and support students with autism.

**Andrea
Brumby**
CEO



Andrea Brumby receives the cheque from Paul Hickey, Principal Environment Advisor.

Lindisfarne Psychology and Wellbeing Centre



Children, Adolescents & Adults – Educational & Psychological Assessments

People with Disabilities - Autism Spectrum Disorders

Lindisfarne Psychology are pleased to announce that Anne Hadrill and Dr Miriam Kirby are trained Secret Agent Society practitioners and will be starting this social skills group program in April 2012.

Please contact us if you would like to find out more information or register your interest.

Anne Hadrill and Associates
44a Lincoln Street, Lindisfarne 7015
Ph. 62438715



A **Freedom Wheels** bike can offer benefits such as increased physical activity and increased self esteem. But most importantly – it brings an opportunity for fun!”

The demand for bikes has been greater than expected, but community support for the program has been fantastic – with donations and fundraising activities all providing essential financial support to assist with the purchase of bikes. In 2011 the Freedom Wheels program was honoured to win both a Community Service Excellence Award and an Active Tasmania Award.

Jeremy Ashworth – Was the first child to receive a Freedom Wheels bike in Tasmania

Freedom Wheels Tasmania

The Freedom Wheels program provides individually modified bicycles for children with a range of needs. Many children are unable to ride a standard bike as they require more support to actually be stable and safe on a bike.

The Freedom Wheels program was established in Tasmania in 2010 and is a partnership between TADTAS and Tascare Society for Children. To date, 25 young Tasmanians have been assessed and have received their own bikes. “For many of the children it has allowed them the chance to ride a bike for the very first time and to experience the joy and independence that is a rite of passage for a child” said Denise Hamilton – Tascare Executive Officer.

Freedom Wheels bikes can accommodate a broad range of individual modification – but they are not just for children with physical disabilities – the program accepts referrals for children with a range of needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorders. Referrals are made by a child’s treating therapist who would determine if a Freedom Wheels bike was appropriate for an individual child.

“It is a wonderfully satisfying program to be involved with said Denise Hamilton. To be present and see the smiles on a child’s face when they take that first ride toward greater independence is priceless. The children who have Freedom Wheels bikes can now ride with their siblings and peers.



You can watch the video at-

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-yAW55svRA>



Enquiries about the Freedom Wheels modified bike program can be made to Denise Hamilton at Tascare on 6272 8265.



Children with Autism and Asperger Syndrome often find it difficult to understand their own emotions and those of others, to express their feelings in appropriate ways and make friends. As an allied health professional, the search is always on to find new and innovative ways to teach social and emotional skills, especially those that are evidence based. So when I heard about the Secret Agent Society (SAS) emotion regulation and social skills group program, I jumped at the opportunity to attend the practitioner training held in Melbourne recently.

The two day training was delivered by Dr Renae Beaumont, Clinical Psychologist, who developed the program as part of her doctoral research. SAS is an Australian made product published by the Social Skills Institute with some sound research supporting its effectiveness. Dr Beaumont has dedicated over 10 years to the development of this program which is demonstrated in the quality and the detail of the program. It is a well structured, hands on, fun and inviting program, as we discovered when we had some time to play some games and practice the social skills activities during the training.

What struck me during the training was **Dr Beaumont's** great passion and enthusiasm for working with children with autism spectrum disorders. Her enthusiasm for the program is catching, and we left feeling inspired and excited about being able to offer this to families. I think the analogy of being a cadet secret agent or junior detective and the related 'gadgets' and activities used in the program will be very appealing. The addition of an animated computer game with different levels to get through will also be a big drawcard for many children.

The program draws upon a solid theoretical framework which integrates an understanding of autism spectrum disorders, social-emotional development, and mainstream therapeutic approaches. The program addresses the following challenges:

- Theory of mind- a lack of empathy and challenges in thinking about others is characteristic of ASDs. This program aims to develop an understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of self and others in social situations ('mind reading').

- Weak central coherence – individuals with autism spectrum disorders often process information in a piecemeal manner, rather than seeing the whole picture. This means that they are often not focussed on the most important information for interpreting a situation. Developmentally appropriate social skills are broken down into concrete steps, identifying the key features that children need to focus on to interpret and manage social situations. These are presented visually and are also practiced during role plays.
- Executive functioning deficits – these relate to difficulties with problem solving and flexible thinking. Program materials are designed to specifically target problem solving skills and to demonstrate in a concrete way that there are different choices we can make, all with different outcomes.

The therapeutic approaches incorporated in the program include:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy
 - Affective education or learning specifically about individualised anger and anxiety triggers, warning signs, and management strategies such as relaxation techniques
 - Cognitive restructuring by shooting down unhelpful thoughts that prevent children from coping in challenging situations with helpful thought missiles
 - Setting specific behavioural tasks each week for the child to practice new skills, with rewards for success
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). This approach is useful for dealing with situations that cannot be changed or controlled. For example, when a situation seems unfair, the child is taught to choose to act in a smart way and become the 'master controller' of their own actions.

In the SAS program, groups of three to six children meet over nine x two hour weekly meetings, and at three-month and six-month follow-up meetings, facilitated by two trained practitioners.

While in training to become a secret agent, junior detectives work on essential life skills such as:

- how to recognise emotions in themselves and others
- express their feelings in appropriate ways
- talk and play with others
- make and keep friends

- cope with change and deal with bullying

The sessions are highly interactive with plenty of opportunities for movement breaks and a variety of activities to keep children engaged. For example, cadet secret agents use walkie talkies to interpret how someone is feeling just from their tone of voice. They make individualised code cards for anxiety and anger management. They use helpful thought foam missiles to shoot down unhelpful thought targets. They get into the competitive spirit by playing the Challenger Board Game. This involves practising skills learnt during the course and gives plenty of opportunity to work on those common issues around winning and losing, being first, and turn taking (and keeps the facilitators on their toes!). Each session ends with a 30 minute informal play session. The animated computer game is completed during home missions between sessions.

Parent meetings are held at the end of each session to share program content and discuss strategies to support generalisation of skills to home and school. Parents support their child to complete home missions between sessions and to monitor target skills using a home-school diary. All the resources required for the program are included in a Family Kit (pictured).

Liaison with school is also important for skill generalisation given that much of the social interaction and related challenges happen in that environment. Facilitators consult with teachers at the start of the program and teachers are informed about program content via weekly teacher tip sheets and the use of a home-school diary to monitor the child's target skills for that week.

The Social Skills Institute states that mastering the skill of mind reading is top priority for cadet secret agents. That is why child group sessions are complemented by parent education, teacher tip sheets, real-life missions and a system to monitor progress and reward achievement. With this network of support behind them, cadets learn how to use their new skills in different situations. And just in case they find themselves in a tight spot, a wallet of 'secret' code cards is always on hand to provide back up.

The success of the program is evaluated using child, parent, and teacher questionnaires focussing on the child's social and emotional skills. The questionnaires are administered before the program, at the end of the nine week program, and at three and six month follow up. The Social Skills Institute reports that SAS is attracting increasing international attention following a University of Queensland trial which showed 76 per cent of children improved from having clinically significant delays in social functioning to showing

social skills within the range of typically developing kids. More research projects are now underway including a trial of SAS delivered in a school setting.

Now that this program is available in Tasmania via three trained local practitioners, I encourage parents to consider this option for their children. This is an exciting opportunity for children and families to engage in a highly structured and well resourced program that specifically addresses the strengths and challenges of children who participate in the group. As well as seeing improvements in emotional regulation and social skills, the hope is that children will have fun while learning and in some cases, form friendships with other participants.

Although the program is pitched at the 8 – 12 year old age group, feedback from the training was that children aged 7 and in early adolescence have successfully participated in the program. If your child falls outside the target age group but you feel that they would benefit, contact a local practitioner to discuss your child's suitability. The program also has applications for children who don't have an ASD diagnosis but present with social-emotional difficulties.

To enrol your child in a SAS group program, please refer to the list of trained SAS practitioners at www.sst-institute.net by following the For Parents → Group program → Availability pathway.

Dr Miriam Kirby
Clinical Psychologist
Lindisfarne Psychology



All the resources required for the program are included in the Family Kit.



CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES

FAHCSIA PROGRAM PROVIDERS FOR BETTER START & HELPING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

St Giles has been approved as a program provider under the FaHCSIA *Better Start for Children with Disability* and *Helping Children with Autism (HCWA)* programs.

This additional service will be available for eligible children at St Giles Northern and Southern Children's Therapy Services. There has been a delay in commencing the services due to the need to recruit additional staff, but the process is now well underway.

St Giles is preparing to start the service and is accepting referrals, via Autism Tasmania's Autism Advisor Service for *Helping Children with Autism*, and Carers Tasmania referral service for *Better Start*.

St Giles is opting to use both Better Start and HCWA as 'top up' programs, meaning *eligible children and families will continue to receive the equivalent level of public or 'free' therapy services as previously, in addition to funded programs they may choose.*

We aim to provide consistency in the therapy staff that families see for 'top up' individual therapy intervention wherever possible.

To ensure the design of a **manageable and appropriate mix of programs** and services to meet each child's individual intervention goals, a meeting will be held with each family upon referral. At this time,

priority goals and program choices will be discussed, including consideration of other services already received, such as existing therapy programs, Department of Education's Early Childhood Intervention Service, and child care or other services.

Although St Giles had not intended to provide a service to North West until later, we have received some enquiries and will discuss individual requests for services.

St Giles is ready to discuss this new stream with you. You can contact any of the Managers listed below:

Ally White, Manager Northern Children's
Therapy Service Tel 6345 7333

Kirsty Bartlett Clarke, Manager Southern
Services Tel 6238 1801

Catherine Merry - Manager Business Development

Autism Service Providers Forum, May 24 2012

Autism Tasmania is hosting a forum for presenters to join us from all organisations delivering Autism specific programmes and services.

This is an opportunity for providers to present an explanation of their services to other associated professionals, providers and educational organisations. It is an exciting opportunity for providers to form working partnerships, avoid duplication of services and ensure we have a diverse range of programmes available around the state.

We invite representatives from organisations to attend the forum and provide the audience with an overview of their autism specific services, programmes, events and other supports they provide for people with Autism, families and carers.

Please Contact Allison Lapham for more information allison@autismtas.org.au or phone 1300 288 476

Andrea Brumby CEO



MyTime

MyTime is a National support program that enables parents to talk to and catch up with

Others in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, who understand the demands and rewards of caring for a child or children with a disability or chronic medical condition.

The Association for Children with Disability (ACD) facilitate MyTime groups in Southern Tasmania for Parents and Carers. We have recently started Groups in New Norfolk, Bridgewater and Midway Point to ensure parents in Hobart's surrounding area's have access to this wonderful support service. These groups compliment the services already running at the Early Childhood Intervention Service—Brooker Highway, Southern Support School—Howrah, Kingston Beach and Moonah.

We also have MyTime Groups running in the North of the State through Playgroup Tasmania and St.Giles.

Parents can choose to attend whichever group best suits them based on the location of the group, or the day and time a session is held. We can also arrange for a "Play Helper" to lead any children

attending in activities such as reading, drawing, or playing with toys whilst the MyTime parents catch up.

There are so many benefits attending a MyTime Group:

- Have a laugh, have some fun and hear from others as they share their experiences
- Meet others in similar circumstances—your not alone!
- Make time for yourself, think about and manage some of your current needs
- Get some idea's and help with extra parenting service information
- Add to and develop the skills you already have
- link into your local community and support networks

Session topics are decided by the group at the initial meeting, with the following being

Popular topics:

- Siblings
- Continence
- Behaviour Management
- Communication Tools
- IEP's
- Invitations are sent out to guest Speakers based on the needs of the group.

We have groups based at Kingston Beach, The Southern Support School, Midway Point, New Norfolk



and the Early Childhood Intervention Service in Hobart. All groups were created in order to support YOU as you work your way through the maze of issues and support requirements we face as Parents of a child with a disability.

For more information on a group closest to you, to get on a mail list, enrol in a group or organise a Play Helper for your child so you can attend, please contact:

Rachael Shotter

MyTime Facilitator

Association for Children with Disability (ACD)

Ph: 62 312 466

Email: r.shotter@acdtas.com.au

Web: www.acdtas.com.au

www.mytime.net.au

State Wide Autism Forum

Autism Tasmania is planning to hold a State wide forum as an opportunity for professionals and experts to run workshops or presentations for professionals and members of the community

To register your interest in speaking at the **public forum in July** please contact Allison on **1300 288 476**

Or allison@autismtas.org.au



The date and location is yet to be finalised.



Early Days provides workshops for mothers, fathers and other family carers of children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or who are going through the assessment and diagnosis process.

Early Days is a national program funded by the Federal Government under the Helping Children with Autism Strategy and is run by local facilitators.



REGISTER TODAY!

Email:
earlydays@autismtas.org.au

Call:
1300 288 476

This workshop is for parents and other family carers only. For professional development opportunities, please contact your state/ territory Autism Association.

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AUTISM?

Early Days Introductory Workshop

During this workshop you will learn:

- About ASD and what it means for your child and your family
- Practical strategies that can make a difference to your child's development
- How to select and maximise an intervention service

Dates Scheduled: Hobart: 4 May 2012, Launceston: 5 April 2012 and Burnie: 17 May 2012

Encouraging Early Interactions Workshop

This workshop will cover:

- Critical building blocks for social interaction and communication
- Practical strategies that encourage skill development in these areas in everyday activities
- How important shared experiences are for children's learning

Dates scheduled: Hobart: 10 & 11 May 2012, Launceston: 26 April 2012 and Devonport: 31 May 2012

Understanding Behaviour – A Step by Step Guide for Parents

This workshop will cover:

- How to understand your child's behaviour
- Ways to select and teach your child new behaviour
- How to promote positive behaviours

Dates Scheduled: Hobart: 31 May & 1 June 2012, Launceston: 24 May 2012 and Devonport: 21 June 2012

- Free of charge to attend
- Workshops are held in small groups and give you the chance to meet other parents
- Light refreshments provided
- Childcare is not provided

Parent Support Groups

Parent Support Groups:

Welcome to 2012 and as we begin this year we are very lucky to have 'on board' Autism Tasmania Robyn Thomas who is working in the Family Support role in the north of the state. I know many parents have already met Robyn and from this issue of Spectrum News you will be able to read Robyn's northern 'column'.



The parents in the northwest and south are gradually getting 'back into the swing' of things as their designated days in the month arrive - both groups decided not to start meeting until school resumed. This means that for Bridgewater, Hobart and Huonville the first full week in March will be the first time for a get together.

During the holidays the southern parents had a picnic at Dru Point at Margate and once again the weather was truly wonderful. We shared the space with some other families and everyone was very respectful and all the children there had a great time together. The parents that came along had the opportunity to have long chats and have some lunch and partake in the lovely fruit salad that Kathy (Bridgewater group mum) bought along for everyone.

Parents in the Devonport group have already had their first get together for the year and are coming up to their second - this time to watch the movie 'Temple Grandin'. The Devonport group meets at night which suits those who come along and we are lucky that some of the dads can come too. The parents in Burnie meet during the day and have had a coffee morning at a favourite café to start the year. This group will meet again on the third Thursday in March at the Burnie Community House.

The Circular Head parents recently met at one of the members homes and your truly took a very scenic drive trying to find the venue. As many of you will know that area of the world is truly wonderful to look at so the extra kilometres weren't a problem.

Each of the parent groups is different, with some people coming along to each get together because they enjoy the night out and others who understand ASD, while others come when the topic is of interest to them. The parents in each of the groups are very welcoming so if you've not been along to one near you please remember we'd love to see you.

Rose Clark

Family Support Co-ordinator

Phone: 6423 2288

Mobile: 0407 320 048

My name is Robyn Thomas and I am pleased to introduce myself as the Northern Support Person for Autism Tasmania. I live in Launceston with my husband and three sons and am really excited to be returning to work in the field of Autism.



After completing my University studies I began my career at Giant Steps Tasmania in 1999. During the years that I worked at Giant Steps I held a variety of roles including Play Therapist, Group Teacher and Autism Consultant to schools and families in need of assistance and advice. In 2004 I also worked for the Department of Education as a teacher in the First Links Program on the North West Coast. First Links was an early intervention program for pre-school aged children with Autism. The children I taught and the families that I worked with during my employment at Giant Steps and with the Department of Education have had a lasting impression on my life, and right from my very first day of employment at Giant Steps I developed a passion for understanding more about Autism Spectrum Disorders. It is exciting for me to be joining Autism Tasmania as it means that I have the opportunity to help explore and define what the needs are within the autism community in this region, as this picture emerges I will be able to help tailor Autism Tasmania's support services to meet these needs.

I am really enjoying getting to know some of the families who are living with autism in Tasmania's north. I can appreciate that there is a need to offer support in a variety of forms. Social activities in a safe environment allow parents of pre-school and school aged children with Autism to relax and mingle with other parents who are sharing similar experiences. Our get together at the Bike Centre in January seemed to be a great success and I intend to make this a regular activity.

I can see the unique value in support groups. I think they offer individuals, parents and carers an immeasurable opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences, to learn from each other, and to learn together. I realise that there is a need to offer a variety of times, settings and focuses for these groups. The coffee mornings at Peckish Café arranged by Rose Clark in previous years are continuing. I am also continuing to offer regular evening meetings in Launceston. Similarly, I would like to make regular visits to George Town to either meet families individually or together in a group. I would also like to arrange similar events and groups in the Bridport and Scottsdale areas and to continue

Parent Support Groups

the support offered on the East Coast. Wherever there is a need or a request from you our clients, I am happy to discuss opportunities for family support and education.

In addition to group events and activities I am available to talk individually with families about any specific concerns. I am happy to offer support on the phone or via email regarding referrals to service providers and groups they might link into.

Autism Tasmania is just one organisation that offers support to individuals with autism and to their families and carers. I am actively learning about other service providers in the northern region and am taking opportunities to meet their staff. I am hoping to work closely with them to ensure that I am aware of the full range of support that is available to people who need it.

I really look forward to meeting more families and service providers in Tasmania and I welcome the opportunity to hear your ideas about how my role as Northern Support Person can best support individuals, families and carers who live with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Robyn Thomas

Support Groups Locations and Dates

Northern Tasmania:

Launceston: Coffee mornings are on 4th Tuesday of every month at Peckish in Kings Meadows at 10am. Monthly evening meetings will recommence when a new venue is arranged. Bike Centre family get togethers in school holidays (next one June 2, 9-11) Please call 0458 375 604 for information.

George Town: meet at Wattle Group, Agnes St, on 3rd Wednesday of every Month, 10.30am – midday.

North West Tasmania:

Burnie: meet at Burnie Library meeting room on the last Monday in the month, 10 am – midday and meeting place are being reviewed.

Circular Head: meet at the District Hospital's meeting room on the third Friday in the month, 10.30am – midday.

Devonport/Ulverstone: group to be re-established in the early part of the year.

West Coast:

Meetings 'travel' around towns - Queenstown, Rosebery and Zeehan. No set meeting days or times. Phone 6423 2288 for information.

East Coast:

East Coast Support Group: monthly meetings are organised by Karen Rawnsley Ph 63725077 or 0418 375 450 or krawnsley@bigpond.com – visited and supported by Robyn Thomas from Autism Tasmania

Southern Tasmania:

Bridgewater: meet at the Bridgewater Community House on the second Thursday morning in the month, 10.30am – midday.

New Norfolk: meet at the New Norfolk Community Health Centre (located at the hospital) on the second Thursday in the month, 1pm – 2.30 pm. This may be changing so it's wise to check by phoning: 6423 2288

Hobart: meet at the Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah on the second Thursday evening in the month, 7.30 – 9.30pm.

Huonville: meet at the Health Centre, Sale St, on the second Friday morning in the month, 10am – midday.

Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Groups:

Hobart: meet on the last Sunday in the month at the Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah, 2.00 – 4.00pm.

Launceston: meet on the first Saturday in the month at the ARAFMI office, 190 Charles st , 1.30 – 3.30pm.

Parent Information group meeting 11th January 2012

During January Autism Tasmania conducted two parent support group meetings focussing on supporting children either returning to school or transitioning from home to school for the first time. Led by Kate Wilson, Autism Tasmania's education consultant, one session was during the day and another later that evening for parents who couldn't attend the day session. Many and varied topics were discussed including, Home / school communication, 25 reasons why we use visual strategies, Learner profiles, Sensory overload checklist, Social skills checklist and 10 things every student with an ASD wishes you knew.

The discussions centred on the use appropriate use of the tools mentioned above and how important it is that parents share information in a succinct and timely manner with staff at their school. At the meeting other items were discussed like how best to engage with your child's school to achieve the best outcome for you and your child and about having realistic expectations about what your school can and can't provide.

Since the Parent support group meetings, I have been lucky enough to visit schools where people have provided school personnel with some of the information shared at the session and the feedback from school staff has been that the information has been invaluable and timely.

If you would like copies of any of the information shared at the Parent support group meeting, please feel free to contact AT and ask a staff member to forward a copy to you.

Kate Wilson

Education Consultant Autism Tasmania

Educating Students on the Autistic Spectrum: A Practical Guide written by Martin Hanbury 2nd Edition. It is published by Sage Publications. 2012

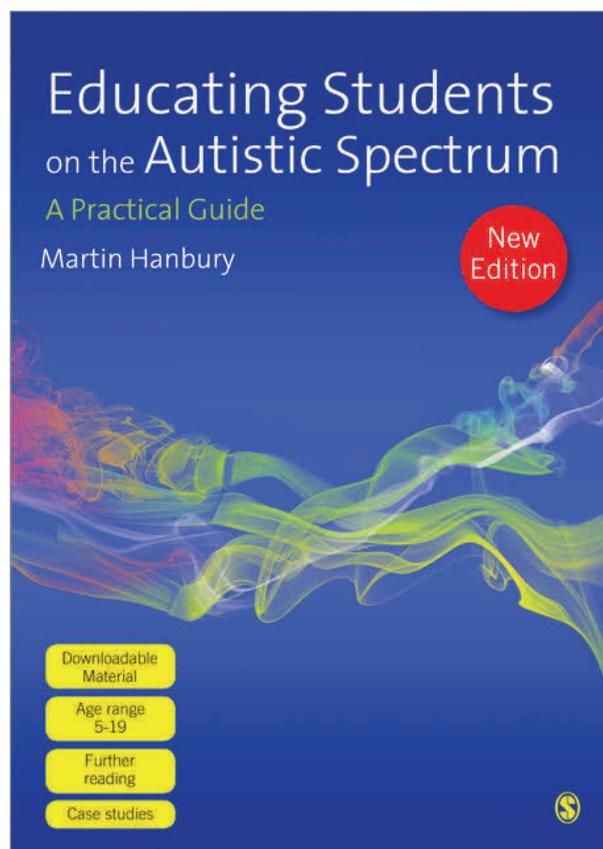
The author, Martin Hanbury is a teacher who has worked for 25 years in the UK in the field of autism. His roles in the field include, carer, teacher assistant, teacher and presently school leader. 'Educating Students on the Autistic Spectrum' is a very readable and practical book for teachers and covers the age range 5 to 19 years. For teachers it has downloadable material as well as case studies and at the end of every chapter has listed books for further reading and information regarding useful websites.

The book begins with an overview of Autism which includes the history of those professionals who first noted children identified with the features of autism in professional research papers such as Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger.

The second chapter looks at 'The impact of autism on learning' which is an in-depth look at the disorder with the author couching his views that autism can be 'seen as having three waves of impact on the child's learning which radiate from the child. These three waves are: the **effect** of autism itself, **behaviour** which occurs as a result of autism, **attitudes** which form as a consequence of the child's behaviour.' There is information on the social issues in the classroom, communication difficulties, inflexible thinking and an excellent look at the 'sensory processing in a sensational world'. The chapter also has a section regarding attitudes to autism and very good information in relation to working closely with parents and families. Martin Hanbury writes that that 'working with families is essential for effective practice in the field of autism.'

'Sharing positive attitudes towards students with autism' is a chapter looking at ways to promote autism by increasing people's understanding of ASD and provides strategies to support other practitioners in sharing knowledge with other colleagues.

Chapter four, 'Addressing behavioural issues in autism' is a very sizeable chapter and considers behavioural issues in terms of 'fear, flight and flight responses. There are proven and effective strategies which provide teachers with material for planning behaviour support and the format for a behaviour support plan. In the section regarding 'overcoming fear' the author looks at 'accepting, explaining, desensitising, supporting and celebrating the child's success.' There are also sections looking at: flight responses, running away, refusal, obsessions and understanding violent behaviour. As part of looking at behavioural issues there are case studies of 'alternatives' for the student with good explanations and examples for teaching



Cover Image courtesy Footprint books
www.footprint.com.au

staff to follow.

The book also has chapters on: 'understanding the effect of autism, effective and established strategies, and developing the curriculum for individuals with autism'.

The list of the author's references at the back of the book also provides teachers and other professionals with a very comprehensive list of books for their own professional development.

While 'Educating Students on the Autistic Spectrum: A Practical Guide' isn't a huge book it provides an insight into Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as very good information on the issues, the positives of ASD and practical ideas and strategies. It would be a very useful book for first time teachers of a student with ASD to read.

The book is written for teachers, however it doesn't contain a lot of 'jargon' and would be of interest to many parents of children on the spectrum.

The book was donated to Autism Tasmania for review by Footprints Books who have a wide selection of books on Autism Spectrum Disorders which can be viewed on their website.

'Educating Students on the Autistic Spectrum: A Practical Guide' will be processed and added to the Autism Tasmania Library.

Rose Clark

March

30th March—Friday **Art Exhibition**

Help to celebrate the diversity of talent on the autism spectrum.

Artwork will be on display at the Glenorchy Library between the 30th of March and the 20th of April.

Artwork can be collected from the Autism Tasmania offices from the 23rd April.

Please call Allison on 1300 288 476 for more information.

April

1st April— Sunday **Autism Awareness Walk**

Walk or run from Scamander Sports complex to support people with Autism in our community. 10:30am. T-shirts available. To register or for information email Karen Rawnsley

krawnsley@bigpond.com or phone 0418 375 450

3rd April -Tuesday **The Launceston Autism Month Exhibition of Art, Craft, Poetry and Prose**

Open for viewing on Tuesday April 3 until Wednesday May 2.

Opening times: Monday-Thursday 9:30-6pm, Friday 9:30-7pm, Saturday 9:30-2pm, Sunday closed.

Location: Launceston LINC (formerly known as Launceston State Library), Civic Square, Launceston. In the reference library display area, on the first floor.

Let's get creative and raise awareness of Autism in our community!

5th April -Thursday **Launceston: Early Days Introductory Workshop**

9-2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.

14th April Saturday **Art Exhibition and Awareness display**

There will a small ASD information display in the Burnie Library and a combined art exhibition at the Maker Workshop in Burnie from April 14th. We are combining with the Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre in Burnie. The opening is on April 14th – late

afternoon and open after that for 2 weeks all day in the Makers Workshop in Burnie.

15th April— Sunday **Balloon Release Day to raise awareness.**

Dru Point at Margate 10:30 am and we will let the balloons free at 11am, Bring a picnic and make a day of it. There is also a canteen to purchase food and drinks. Thanks to Melanie Garner for arranging this fantastic day.

19 April - Thursday **Parent Support - Rose Clark**

To catch up, have a chat, swap news and ideas you may have about anxiety and stress in children with ASD. There will also be time to look at some new books and DVDs that have arrived Bridgewater Community Centre, 6 Bowden Drive Bridgewater 10:30am - 12 Noon Free

19 April - Thursday **Parent Support - Rose Clark**

A catch up, sharing news and swapping ideas that have been successful during the holiday break. We'll also have a planning time about topics and speakers you would like to have for future meetings. 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah 7:30pm - 9:30pm Free.

19 April - Thursday **ASD PD**

Understanding ASD for Teachers and TA's please call 1300 288 476 for more info.

20th April—Friday **MyTime Kingston Beach**

10am to 12pm TOPIC: IEP's

21st April—Saturday **Sausage Sizzle**

Come on down to K&D and have a snagger or lend a hand, we would love to see you even if it's only for a few minutes.

23rd April Monday **MyTime ~ Pittwater Group**

MidwayPoint 10am to 12pm TOPIC: TBA

27th April—Friday **Sausage Sizzle**

8 – 4 pm at the Bunnings store Kings Meadows The Youngtown Rotary club has kindly offered to facilitate and donate all proceeds to Autism Tas. Great opportunity to meet Deborah and Robyn from the Launceston office who will be there along with some volunteers to assist on the day.

27th April—Friday **MyTime Kingston Beach**

10am to 12pm TOPIC: IEP's

26th April— Thursday **Launceston: Encouraging Early Interactions Workshop— an Early Days workshop.**

Autism Tasmania is on Facebook, we include events either directly or indirectly related to Autism on Facebook. 'Like us' to be updated regularly.

*FaHCSIA funding is available to eligible families with children on the Autism Spectrum between the ages of 0-6 years. To discuss your child's eligibility please call your Autism Tasmania Autism Advisor.

*Listing in the events calendar is a free service, we take no responsibility for inaccuracies or omissions. Inclusion does not imply endorsement of companies or events. Please contact the host of the event for more information.

9–2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.

May

- 4th May -Friday **Hobart: Early Days Introductory Workshop**
9-2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.
- 10 & 11th May– Thursday & Friday **Hobart: Encouraging Early Interactions Workshop– an Early Days workshop.**
6.30-9.30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.
- 14 May - Monday **Autism & Challenging Behaviour Managing and Avoiding Difficult behaviour with Children on the Autistic Spectrum** The old Woolstore Apartments Hotel 1 Macquarie Street, Hobart 9.00am - 4.00pm \$225.00 www.compassaustralia.com.au Compass team on 1800 673 385 or office@compassaustralia.com.au
- 17th May–Thursday **Gen Jereb’s The Traffic Jam in My Brain**
Hobart– please contact SensoryTools.net 02 4578 6123 fore registration and pricing information.
- 17th May– Thursday **Burnie: Early Days Introductory Workshop**
9-2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.
- 23rd May–Wednesday **ASD PD**
Visuals for for Teachers and TA’s please call 1300 288 476 for more info.
- 24th May Thursday **Launceston: Understanding Behaviour – A Step by Step Guide for Parents**
9-2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.
- 24th May– Thursday **Autism Service Provider Forum AT Rooms Hobart.** Call 1300 288 476
- 31st May– Thursday **Devonport: Encouraging Early Interactions Workshop– an Early Days workshop.**

9 –2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.

31 May Thursday & 1 June Friday **Hobart: Understanding Behaviour – A Step by Step Guide for Parents**

6:30–9:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.

June

21st June Thursday **Devonport Understanding Behaviour – A Step by Step Guide for Parents**

9-2:30pm Call 1300 288 476 or email earlydays@autismtas.org.au to register. For more information please refer to page 12.

22nd June Friday **Camp Autism Inc Devonport Camp Discovery Park** in Devonport. Please contact Camp Autism campautismvic@gmail.com or 040 770 1968 (Annette White) before booking park. Special rates negotiated. Guest facilitator River Night.

July

3rd July–Tuesday **ASD PD**

Transitions and Routines for Teachers and TA’s please call 1300 288 476 for more info.

August

16th Thursday **ASD PD**

Sensory Sensitivities for Teachers and TA’s please call 1300 288 476 for more info.

November

15th Thursday **Tony Attwood and Michelle Garnett Tailrace Convention Centre Riverside**

Registration from 9:00am

9.30am prompt start - 4.00pm

Managing feelings: Cognitive Behaviour

Therapy to manage anxiety, sadness and anger

Managing challenging behaviour in children with autism

Cost: \$180 Early Bird or Members \$145

(Early Bird available to June 30 2012)

Become a member and save!

Morning Tea and Lunch included

For more information please phone: 1300 288476 or email: admin@autismtas.org.au

Crisis lines:

Mental Health Helpline 1800 332 388

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Lifeline 131 114

Chef Solus Kids Gardening Word Search Puzzle!

Plants
Sun
Water
Roots
Seeds
Stem
Bush

R	K	T	X	Z	G	Q	E	M
U	E	S	B	O	R	T	B	E
Q	Z	T	B	P	C	E	M	T
M	Y	N	A	N	Q	K	L	S
Q	A	A	R	W	Q	F	M	D
T	Q	L	T	O	I	G	M	E
S	N	P	T	P	O	P	Z	E
Z	I	U	Z	O	X	T	H	S
H	R	S	S	F	B	U	S	H

Visit www.ChefSolus.com for free kids' nutrition games, interactive word puzzles and fun healthy food activities!
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HELP CHEF SOLUS FIND HIS WAY TO THE FARM TO GET MORE FRESH FRUITS!

End

Website find:

www.kidsdrawandcook.com

This fantastic website has recipes illustrated by kids. What a fantastic way to turn a cooking experience into fun and learning for your kids.

If your kids are inspired to create some of their own favourite recipes in visual form we would love to share them in Spectrum News.

Try cutting images from supermarket specials leaflets, or downloading pics from supermarket sites.

Try taking photos every step of the way for those who don't favour drawing.

Image: Marissa from Marshall Middle School, MN
www.kidsdrawandcook.com

White Chocolate Raspberry Cake

Marissa L.

Ingredients

- 2 pkg (6 squares each) white chocolate
- 3/4 cup butter, softened, divided
- 1 pkg (2 layer size) white cake mix
- 1 cup milk
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla, divided
- 1 pkg (8 oz.) cream cheese
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp seedless raspberry jam
- 1 cup fresh raspberries

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Grease and flour (9-inch) round pans, chop half the chocolate; melt for 2 min. with 1/2 cup butter; cool.
- Beat milk, chocolate mixture, vanilla (1 tsp), cake mix, eggs, and cream cheese until well blended; pour into pans.
- Bake 25-28 minutes; cool. Move onto wire racks.
- Spread 2/3 cup frosting on first layer. Then jam remaining cake layer. Spread top and side with remaining frosting.



Professor Tony Attwood
 Thursday 15th November 2012
 Tailrace Convention Centre Riverside
 Registration from 9:00am 9.30am prompt start- 4.00pm

Registration Form

Participant Name[s]

Dietary requirements

1.		Y/N	Description:
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Organisation [if applicable]: _____

Contact phone no. or email to confirm registration: _____

Terms and conditions [Which you accept by registering]

1. Workshop participation is not confirmed until payment has been received, processed & receipted.
2. Please arrive at least 15 mins before the starting time of the workshop to confirm your attendance on the day.
3. If the workshop is cancelled by Autism Tasmania Inc. We will contact you and give you a full refund.
4. If you cancel your attendance in writing up to 14 days prior to the workshop you will receive a full refund. If you cancel in writing within 14 days of the workshop you will receive a 50% refund. "No Shows" will not receive a refund.
5. Information provided by registrants will be treated in accordance to privacy legislation.

Payment [which must be made with your registration]

This document becomes a Tax Invoice for GST when you make a payment . Please keep a copy.
 Registration fee includes GST.

*** Morning tea and lunch provided please indicate any dietary requirements.**

Early Bird/ Members	Standard Rate	Total Payable
_____ x Person/s @ \$145 ea	_____ x Person/s @ \$180 ea	\$

Please indicate method of payment:

- Paid directly to Bendigo Bank** [Please include your name when making the EFT or direct deposit]
 Account Number: 633-000 136780525 Account Name: Autism Tasmania Inc.
- Cheque or money order enclosed** [please do not send cash through the mail]
- Visa or Mastercard**
 Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____
 Name on Card: _____ Cardholder's Signature: _____

Post to: Registrations, Autism Tasmania Inc, PO Box 514, Moonah TAS 7009
Email: admin@autismtas.org.au **Enquiries: 1300 288 476 (Option 1)**

Early Bird
Prices available
Book Now!

Autism Tasmania is
delighted to present:



Professor Tony Attwood



Thursday 15th November 2012
Tailrace Convention Centre Riverside
Registration from 9:00am
9.30am prompt start - 4.00pm

Professor Tony Attwood

Tony is a clinical psychologist who has specialised in autism spectrum disorders since he qualified as a clinical psychologist in England in 1975. He works in private practice in Brisbane, but is also adjunct professor at Griffith University, Queensland. His book *Asperger's Syndrome – A Guide for Parents and Professionals* has sold over 350,000 copies and has been translated into over twenty languages. He has worked with over 6,000 individuals of all ages with Asperger's syndrome or an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Tony presents workshops and runs training courses for parents, professionals and individuals with Asperger's syndrome all over the world and is a prolific author of scientific papers and books on the subject. His latest book *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* was published in October 2006.

PROFESSOR TONY ATTWOOD WILL COVER THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

MANAGING FEELINGS: COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY TO MANAGE ANXIETY, SADNESS AND ANGER

The presentation explains why children and adults with Asperger's syndrome are more prone to develop mood disorders and also explains strategies that can help such individuals learn about and manage emotions.

The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy includes affective education and cognitive restructuring, i.e. improving the understanding of emotions and changing the way the person perceives and responds to emotions. The concept of an emotional toolbox is used to provide a greater range of strategies to manage feelings.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

The presentation focuses on children and adolescents with classic autism and provides an explanation and strategies with regard to repetitive behaviour, emotion management and the development of effective communication systems for emotions.

The application of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to children with severe autism is discussed and how it can be applied to such individuals.

The presentation will include strategies to help with self-injurious behaviour and the improvement of social understanding and coping with change.

Special Guest
Co-Presenter
Michelle Garnett

Cost: \$180

Early Bird or Members \$145

(Early Bird available to June 30 2012)

Become a member and save!

* Morning Tea and Lunch included *

For more information please phone: 1300 288476
or email: admin@autismtas.org.au

