

Spectrum News

The Magazine of Autism Tasmania Inc.

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across Tasmania

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Cover image:

The Barrett family revealing their super-hero powers at the Making Futures Brighter Walk, Domain Athletic Centre, Hobart.





Well like everyone I speak to recently we are asking how we got to June so quickly. My guess is that we are so busy in our lives that by the time we put our heads up for air half the year is gone. The good thing about this phenomenon is that as we enter winter, spring is only around the corner.

The last three months have been nonstop for the team at Autism Tasmania in the lead up to Autism month and with activities continuing into May. This will be evident as you read through this bumper issue of Spectrum News.

During April, the efforts of the autism community to lift the profile and awareness of Autism are to be congratulated. I would like to mention a few highlights of Autism month which include Parliament House "Lighting it Up Blue", Launceston Walkathon at St Leonards, the "Making Futures Brighter Walk" held at the Domain Athletic Centre and the Autism Specific Early Learning Childcare Centre (ASELCC) Family Fun Day.

All these events have the potential to grow and we have identified that by working together with like minded people we can punch well above our weight. I would particularly like to thank the Hobart Town Lions Club, the St Leonards Croquet Club and Robyn Davis and Robyn Thomas for their energy and enthusiasm in putting together their respective events. We look forward to building on both walks and increasing participation in future years.

Along with raising awareness during April, we also received some generous donations that will augment our programs of support and continue to raise awareness within Tasmania. Rotary Club of Youngtown supported our awareness campaign and fundraising again in 2013 by holding a BBQ Bunnings Kings Meadows with our team from Launceston.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the amazing contribution that Clinton and Crystal Taylor and their two beautiful boys Brayden and Oliver have made to autism awareness in Tasmania and encourage you to read the report of this initiative on page 10. I look forward to working with them in future years to look at growing this event.

We were also fortunate to have Prof Jacqui Roberts deliver her "Autism Across the Lifespan" workshop to a large appreciative audience at Tattersalls Park Glenorchy during Autism month with the support of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Autism Tasmania is now in planning mode for the coming financial year as we continue to operate and respond to the changing environment. The launch of DisabilityCare Australia in Tasmania for younger people 15-24 is much anticipated and we look forward to seeing this rolling out in support of our young people and their families.

As part of better understanding the needs of individuals and families particularly in this age group we invite you to complete our short "Tell us Your Story" survey which can be obtained by contacting our offices or via our website. All surveys returned by the end of June will go in a prize draw.

We are looking forward to the coming year and continuing to develop a relevant program of events to add value to your membership.

Terry Burke, CEO



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Share Your Story



Autism Tasmania's magazine provides relevant information about Autism services across Tasmania, current research and resources of interest to families of children. Spectrum News magazine also provides an opportunity for parents/carers of children with Autism, professionals working in the field of Autism, or adults living with an ASD to share their experiences with others by writing personal stories for publication subject to space availability and editorial approval.

If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact Autism Tasmania on 1300 AUTISM (1300 288 476) or email jacqui@autismtas.org.au



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Autism Awareness Month

Launceston Walkathon & Family Picnic



Above: Autism Tasmania representatives Robyn Thomas, Maree Morgan and Deborah Smith wearing blue to celebrate Autism Awareness Month at the Launceston Walkathon & Family Picnic.

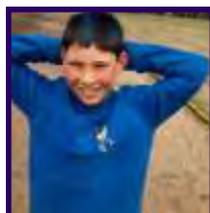
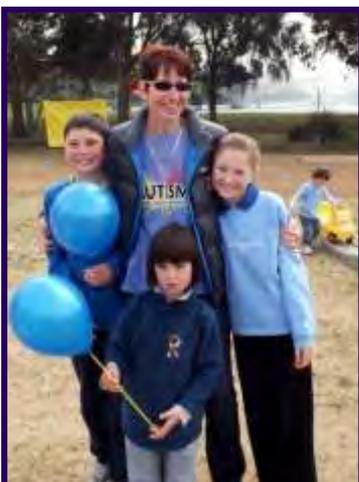
Around 70 people braved the inclement weather to converge at the Northern Croquet Centre on the 20th of April to celebrate Autism Awareness Month, raise awareness and funds, and enjoy a walk and picnic in the park. It was a day filled with smiles and laughter.

First, we walked laps of the lawns led by our very own Autism Tasmania President, Mick Clark, before enjoying a picnic lunch. Playgroup Tasmania and St Leonards Primary School generously provided play equipment which was greatly appreciated by attendees of all ages.

Online sponsorship of walkers via the Run4Autism website, personal sponsorship, and donations on the day managed to raise \$1200.



Considering that this is the first time Autism Tasmania has organized this event, we had a very healthy turnout, and a fun day was had by all. We are hoping to build on the foundations of this inaugural event to be even bigger and better next year!



Autism Awareness Month

Autism Awareness Month on the North West Coast

April is the month for Autism Awareness Month and for the second year running Autism Tasmania co-hosted some Autism Awareness Month activities with the Autism Specific Early Learning Childcare Centre (ASELCC)* in Burnie. Four community ASD awareness raising sessions were presented in the larger centres across the coast.



Attendees were able to participate in an interactive, informative hour that was aimed at raising ASD awareness among the broader community. Each attendee was able to access a copy of the presentation to take home and at the end there was an opportunity to mingle, ask questions and taste some local cheeses and fruit.

April was a busy month with regular parent get togethers somewhat interrupted by Easter, Anzac Day and the school holidays however not all was 'put on hold'. The Autism Centre organised and invited parents of children on the spectrum along the coast to a fun day in Burnie. Although the sky was a little overcast, the weather didn't dampen the day and much fun was had by all those who attended.

Thanks must go to Kathryn and all the wonderful staff at ASELCC for making it a wonderful occasion.

Planning for 2014 is now on the 'drawing board'.

**The North West Tasmania Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre (ASELCC) is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).*

ASELCC provides specialist early learning programs to children with autism spectrum disorders within long day care setting across the North-West of Tasmania.

Making Futures Brighter Walk Domain Athletic Centre, Hobart



This year, Autism Tasmania was proud to organise it's inaugural Making Futures Brighter Walk at the Domain Athletic Centre as part of the Autism Awareness Month celebrations. It was wonderful to see so many people turn up sporting blue clothing - the globally recognised colour for Autism.

During the day, young children engaged in the various activities provided such as face-painting, bubble blowing, totem tennis and jumping castle games. There were wonderful networking opportunities for the adults, with many positive interactions among those in attendance.

Autism Tasmania staff met with some of our Tasmanian politicians to discuss the needs of our growing Tasmanian Autism community, and what can be done in the future to close gaps and improve services.

The Hobart Town Lions Club provided and staffed the BBQ for the day, PCYC provided a variety of activities, and coffee was available from Double Shot Mobile Coffee.

We welcomed the Taylor family to the Domain as Clinton completed his Ride Tasmania for Autism Awareness.

As this was our first event of this kind, we are now planning for an even bigger and better Making Futures Brighter event next year!



Autism Awareness Month



Photo by Crysta Taylor





Hobart Parliament House lights it up blue!

On 2nd April 2013 an enthusiastic gathering of parents, families, children and those associated with the autism community gathered on the lawns of Hobart's Parliament House to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day and to take part in our own "Light it Up Blue" campaign to illuminate Parliament House in brilliant hues of blue. Parliament House was one of 3,000 buildings around the world taking part in the International "Light it Up Blue" initiative.

Children were entertained by a range of activities including a Magician, Puppeteer and had the opportunity to have their faces painted in an array of designs, all with a "blue" theme. Blue balloons were also handed out to children and families and it was wonderful to witness the sea of blue balloons bobbing around as children ran around squealing with delight. Families were also treated to biscuits, macaroons, and cupcakes and other delicious goodies, again all with a "blue" theme". The night had a wonderful feel of "family" and "connectivity" as families had the opportunity to catch up with other families/members

of the autism community that they may not have seen, in some instances, for years.

As the daylight faded and darkness started to fall, the brilliant blue tones of Parliament House started to make their real impact and the magnitude of what we had all gathered there to celebrate really became apparent - to support and make people more "Autism Aware" for all individuals on the spectrum and the families that love them.

Autism Tasmania would like to thank all those involved in the organization of this wonderful event and to those who donated their time, efforts and talents free of charge. A special acknowledgement and heartfelt thanks to Cassie LeFevre and John Xintavelonis and their team of dedicated supporters for their amazing efforts in coordinating Hobart's part in the global "Light it Up Blue" campaign for the second year running. Congratulations on what was a fantastic event that was enjoyed by all.



Autism Awareness Month

An Evening in Launceston



Each month the Adult Asperger's group in Launceston sit below this wonderful chandelier in a great room that once was the major dining room of a well known, now no longer in existence, restaurant.

On Sunday April 7th the Launceston group and a number of partners and family members spent a

couple of hours with Wendy Lawson talking about what it's like to be on the spectrum – the challenges and the highlights that make life what it is.

Wendy spoke about 'passions' not obsessions and how they can be the entrance to the world of work. Many people with Asperger's Syndrome have great

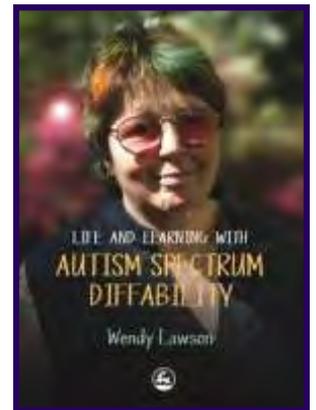
interest and skills with technology and this can be encouraged and extended and as Wendy added it's in keeping with the rest of the world and it's fashionable!

A well published author Wendy talked about her many books and the newest one that is currently at final draft stage and soon to go to the publisher, Jessica Kingsley Press. This latest book focuses on those with ASD aging and service provision. It will be one of the first of its kind when it is released.

There were many questions and much conversation over a very lovely afternoon tea and it was hard for all to leave at the end of our time together.

To learn more about Wendy Lawson and her books, have a look at her website:

www.wendylawson.com



East Coast Understanding Autism Awareness Walk



It was a good turnout considering the windy cold day. Over 80 people plus babies and dogs completed the walk.

The T- Shirts had a new design this year by our very own local lad Sam Goss. We also had blue wrist bands, baby bibs, dog bandanas and blue light bubble pens for purchase. The chocolate wheel was very successful with loads of donated gifts to choose from. Banjos kindly supplied the bread and St Mary's IGA the sausages for a hungry crew. It was lovely to

see such a diverse group of people showing their support for understanding and awareness of Autism. St Helens and St Mary's schools organised Autism Awareness days in May. The Scamander Norfolk Pine Tree has also come alive again for the 3rd year in a row with an array of blue flashing lights. It's amazing how many people were reminded of Autism month because of the tree. The money we have raised will go towards developing our second sensory room for the East Coast. St Mary's District School have had their sensory room operating since first term. The feedback has been extremely positive and the children are finding a lot of comfort and relaxation during their hectic days at school.

Karen Rawnsley



Ride Tasmania for Autism Awareness 2013

These days it has become common place for people to undertake various activities to either raise awareness of and/or funds for a cause. This has been assisted greatly in recent times by web based fund raising sites.

At a media interview prior to the Taylor family heading off from the Domain Athletic Centre in Hobart the following question was posed to Clinton "But what real difference will one person make by riding a bike around Tasmania"

Although harsh and I am guessing put Clinton on the back foot it is a beautiful lead into this article to explain the real difference that this amazing family made in jumping into the unknown and coming out the other side having created a lasting impact for their efforts.

As we watched Clinton ride off followed by a mobile home driven by Crystal, with their two beautiful boys buckled in, on a rainy cool Easter Tuesday the word brave came to mind. For the next two weeks all without the expectation of any other support the 1182 kilometre adventure had started.

The gruelling schedule of riding was a known and Clinton had been in training for some time in preparation however this would not necessarily have allowed for contingencies of riding out of Eagle Hawk Neck into cold icy winds and that was only day 2. His effort in completing the journey alone apart from a few short interludes when he was joined on the road is testament to his endurance and tenacity. Particularly when you consider that once finished meeting people, raising autism awareness, fuelling up with food, and trying to rest whilst relieving mum with his much loved boys was part of the agenda.

Crystal on the other hand as well as looking out for Clinton on the road had to contend with navigating a cumbersome motor home, looking after the needs of the boys, whilst arranging accommodation, meals and facebook and media updates. It must have been exhausting with super mum being an understatement. So what was achieved? The Taylors met with and were greeted by many families enroute around Tasmania, generated significant media interest and exposure, raised \$5900.00 that will be used to fund further initiatives to raise autism awareness in our community, were responsible for adding a key

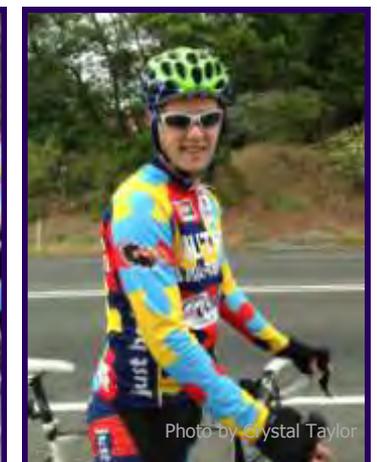
component and numbers to the "Making Futures Brighter Walk" and had an unforgettable extreme holiday.

Having had time to collect their thoughts they are already working on the 2014 event and Autism Tasmania is truly grateful for having the opportunity to work with this loving family to increase awareness of Autism.



Above: Clinton and Brayden meeting up with some familiar faces from Autism Tasmania. (Left) Robyn Thomas (Right) Kristen Desmond & family.

Below: Autism Tasmania's CEO Terry Burke accompanying Clinton for part of the ride around Tasmania, and later congratulating Clinton at the finish of the ride at the Making Futures Brighter Walk, Domain Athletic Centre.



An Evening with Wendy Lawson

Dr. Wendy Lawson CPsychol MAPs MBPsS



Autism Awareness Month got off to a wonderful start on the evening of Monday 8th April when Dr Wendy Lawson spoke to a large group of parents and carers in Devonport.

Wendy has a long history of visiting Tasmania as it's a place she very much enjoys coming to and her offer of coming to stay in Devonport and present an evening on ASD was a lovely 'gift' for all those who attended and heard her speak.

The session presented in Devonport was titled, 'Autism Spectrum: The Passionate Mind' which began with an explanation of what Autism Spectrum condition means. Wendy much prefers the term *condition* to disorder and referred to ASC throughout the evening. She pointed out that as a person on the spectrum she certainly doesn't 'feel' disordered!

Wendy referred to those people who aren't on the spectrum as 'the typical' or 'generic brand' which was a new take on the term. Her reference to brain function was very enlightening as Wendy is part of a study being done in the US (Illinois) which is focussing on the difference in the configuration of the brain and the way it works in both those on the spectrum and the generic/typical population. The study is showing a marked difference in the ASC population with an excess of gamma in the brain in comparison to the generic/typical population have anchored gamma. The reality of this could be quite clearly seen in the imaging slides that were part of the presentation.

ASC and the typical/generic population - what do we need to do? Wendy posed the question as to how we all need a common thread to work together. Her words were, "we need to understand and accept our differences. We need to find a vehicle that we can all use to drive communication and bring us together so that social interaction isn't as painful and difficult." The suggestion was that the 'vehicle' might be something not overwhelming, something that the person with ASC enjoys, some thing that can be shared together and something leading to success. Wendy made the point that success in small things is important so that new things can be tried – if there isn't success new things can be too daunting.

Joining and an ASC interest can be the common denominator. Wendy made the point that if we join the person on the spectrum in their particular interest then they are more likely to join yours. This can also be a 'vehicle' that drives the person with ASC toward understanding. This is, as Wendy pointed out, 'how we communicate. We don't have a brain that can easily switch attention so we may not notice the things you want us to.'

Interest or Passion? Wendy made us think about this and to shelve the word obsession. She went on to explain that for years, the different modes of technology have been used to improve the quality of life of people who have various developmental disabilities. However, the varied use of technology for Asperger individuals continues to receive limited attention, despite the fact that technology tends to be a high interest area for many. The interest lies in the fact that this tool is structured, it's predictable, it's stimuli reduced, it maximises the individual's control of controllable things and some of those that are not AND it is in keeping with the way the rest of the world is going and it's fashionable!

Towards the end of the presentation Wendy talked about acceptance: 'Being accepted for who I am is the very best thing and sends me a message that I'm valued. Part of that acceptance is understanding that I have interests that take over my attention. Using those interests constructively keeps me motivated and gives me a starting place to learn how to share with others in our everyday lives.'

Wendy finished the evening with a poem that she wrote - which is reproduced on the following page (12).

Kings Meadows BBQ

The Future

*Live on earth is but a moment caught within
the crease of time,
The seasons come and go again
You have your life, and I have mine,
The seed that's planted within the ground,
Cannot choose what to become.
A potato, an apple or a rose for some,
However, for it to be the very best,
It needs rich soil, not poor
The sun and the rains must come,
To open up the door.*

*I may be born to nourish others,
I may delight the senses.
I may grow tall,
I may grow small,
I may stay stunted beneath wire fences.
My future may not depend on my stock,
So much as it does upon sources.
Sources of warmth, sources of care
I depend on the nurture for me there.*

*Then I can blossom and sing with the birds,
Then I can grow my potential.
So plant me in goodness and all that is fine,
Please keep the intruders away.
Give me a chance to develop, in time,
To become who I am, in life's future,
One day!*

Wendy Lawson



Rotary Club of Youngtown generously hosted an Autism Tasmania sausage sizzle at Kings Meadows Bunnings on the 14th of April. The day was a huge success, with over \$1000 donated. There were lots of smiling faces, and many generous people opting to donate their change. People travelled from all over Launceston to buy a sausage and support Autism Tasmania.

Autism Tasmania would like to thank the Rotary Club of Youngtown Rotary Club, Kings Meadows Bunnings Warehouse, and the kind volunteers within the northern autism community who worked together to keep those sausage sandwiches coming.

If you missed out this time, keep checking our Facebook page or website for future Autism Tasmania events.

Autism Tasmania Lending Library

Launceston City Council has generously assisted Autism Tasmania in setting up an extensive borrowing library of Autism-related books and resources. Our Autism Tasmania Library Catalogue is now on our website under the Services heading. Why not take a look, and if you see something you would like to borrow, talk to our friendly staff.



Theory of Mind

Research may lead to social therapy that re-wires the brain

Most of us are very social beings. When we see a human face, we automatically and subconsciously assess the expression to read the person's mood, and make assumptions of their intent. It is a survival skill we develop in early infancy that becomes second nature as we grow. Infants as young as 6 months old show recognition of facial expressions, although it is not until the age of 18 months that they are able to reliably use this information to reason about other's intentions in a sophisticated manner. Psychologists call this "theory-of-mind". It is the skill of figuring out what is in someone else's mind.

Human social interaction gains much of its richness and complexity because we possess a theory-of-mind - an understanding of how other's behaviours are motivated by their internal mental states, such as beliefs, desires, intentions, perceptions and emotions. Theory of mind is the ability to attribute these mental states to self and others in order to understand and predict behaviour. It involves making the distinction between the real world and mental representations of the world.

For people with autism, theory-of-mind does not come naturally. One of the indicators for a diagnosis of autism is difficulty in social relationships. Children and adults with autism often have trouble making eye contact, have difficulty interpreting facial expressions and choosing appropriate behaviour in social settings. These social difficulties may present life-long challenges in a largely social human environment. Theory-of-mind deficits can provide a possible explanation for the communication and social challenges that define autism spectrum disorders. Howlin, Baron-Cohen and Hadwin (1999) also identified deception, empathy, self-consciousness, and the use of persuasion as being dependent on theory-of-mind understanding.

One of the first to discover theory-of-mind difficulties among children with autism was Simon Baron-Cohen, a world-leading authority on autism and professor of psychopathology at the University of Cambridge. Through his pioneering and continuing studies, it is now well-established that many individuals with autism, including high-functioning autism and Asperger's Syndrome, experience difficulties engaging theory-of-mind deficits stand in contrast to



surprising strengths in other areas of cognitive functioning. For instance, individuals with autism have difficulty recognising emotional mental states in pictures of eyes, but no trouble discerning other underlying traits (such as gender or age).

One of the tests Dr. Baron-Cohen used to assess theory-of-mind is called the "Sally-Ann test". He tested a diverse group of children to assess their theory-of-mind.

The Sally-Ann test is as follows:

Children observe "Sally" placing a marble inside a basket, then leaving the room. "Ann" then enters the room, takes the marble from the basket and places it into an adjacent box. Children are then asked to say where Sally thinks the marble will be when she returns.

Dr. Baron-Cohen found that children with autism thought that Sally would know to look in the box, because they saw it being placed there. They didn't comprehend that Sally's experiences and knowledge were different to their own, showing a lack of theory-of-mind cognition.

Studies of the functions of various regions of the brain have revealed that no single brain area is active when humans engage theory-of-mind relevant informational content. Instead, the neural systems that support successful theory-of-mind judgements are distributed across different cortical regions. This raises important questions regarding how to develop or enhance connections in these different neural circuits.

Carnegie Mellon University studies suggest that one of the main causes of social difficulty in autism is that the brain areas where theory-of-mind processing occur are poorly connected. Functional MRI images taken comparing a study group of people with and without autism showed less activity and connectivity in and between two key areas of the brain in the group with autism. The frontal lobe, and a spot above and behind the right ear called the temporal-parietal junction were not synchronized well with other areas of the brain in the study participants with autism. One of the most important functions of the frontal lobe of the brain is analyzing intentionality. When neural connections are not well-established between the frontal lobe and the temporal-parietal junction, as in autism, it leaves the individual at a social disadvantage.

"This functional underconnectivity between the front and back of the brain is a general problem that several studies at Carnegie Mellon's Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging have found in autistic people on everything from language comprehension to memory tasks to the theory-of-mind tests," said the center's director Marcel Just. "For instance," Dr. Just said, "people with autism have difficulty interpreting complex sentences. However, they have an advantage over other people in reading individual words, and often have superior spelling abilities."

Rebecca Saxe, a cognitive scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has devised adult versions of Dr. Baron-Cohen's Sally-Ann test to help determine the specific regions of the brain responsible for analyzing other people's beliefs. The studies confirmed that the right temporal-parietal junction was the main site of the brain involved in theory-of-mind. Dr. Saxe has further demonstrated that the same region of the brain is responsible for moral judgements, particularly critical in deciding how honourable someone's intentions are.

"In the human environment, the major cognitive challenge is other people. We live in large groups. Our survival depends on social relationships with groups, from birth to death." Dr. Saxe explains.

As our population density increases, our ability to navigate the social environment effectively is becoming increasingly important from the schooling years to the workforce and beyond.

Goldman-Rakic hypothesised that the prefrontal cortex utilises stored information to govern

behaviour. He observed that theory-of-mind requires an individual to "appreciate the act upon the mental states of others, using internal representations of these mental states to guide their responses."

Carnegie Mellon University's Dr. Just revealed the level of mental energy required in social cognition is significantly higher in people with autism. Dr. Just found that the task of facial recognition also requires pathways between the right temporal-parietal lobe and the frontal lobe of the brain. He tested a group of people on how well they remembered faces, and found significant differences in brain activity between the control group and the group with autism.

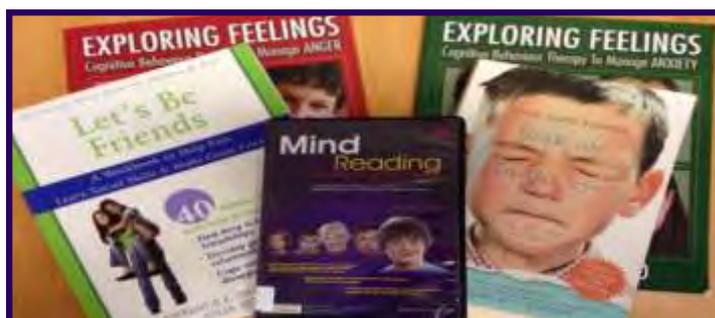
"There's no theory-of-mind challenge here — it was just, tell me if this face was the same as the face you saw before. But I think this reflects the fact that when people with autism were looking at the face they were thinking, 'Oh you know, wide cheekbones, broad nose...' coding it as a visual object, while the control subjects were adding to it (such aspects as) friendly, intimidating — some kind of social interpretation." Said Dr. Just.

While the temporal-parietal junction is important for social cognition, the lack of coordination between it and the prefrontal cortex may reveal the real challenge for understanding the way people with autism think, and what therapies will improve social cognition.

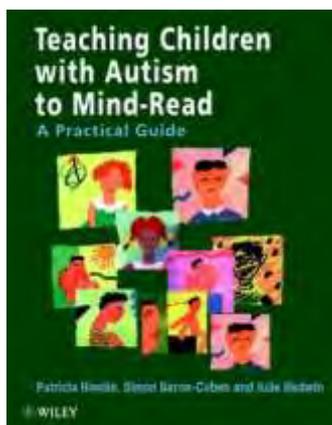
A principle aim of therapists working with individuals with autism is to improve their social functioning skills. The more we understand, the closer we get to developing specific therapies to assist in generating neural pathways between the two regions of the brain responsible for the majority of our social processing. This approach may capitalise on the neuro-cognitive strengths of individuals with autism to better their everyday social cognitive skills.

Jacqui Kingsley

References for this article are listed on page 26



Above: Some of our library resources relating to Theory-of-mind.



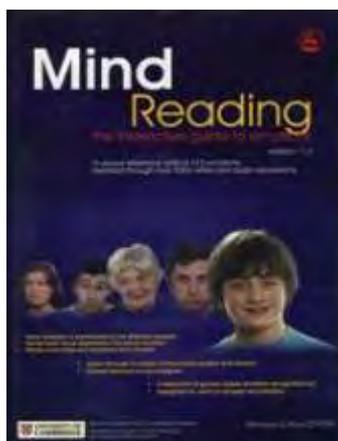
Tips for developing Theory-of-mind in children with autism:

To address the theory of mind challenges faced by individuals across the autism spectrum, Howlin, Baron-Cohen and Hadwin (1999) developed an intervention guide entitled, **Teaching Children with Autism to Mind-Read: A Practical Guide**. The Guide provides information on how to teach theory of mind skills to individuals across the autism spectrum while taking into consideration the developmental stages of theory of mind acquisition. The program was developed for children ages 4-13 whose language ability is at about the 5 year old level, but the authors encourage teachers to make adaptations to suit individuals of any age or ability level. The Guide is divided into three instructional areas as follows:

Emotion. Activities designed to help children understand the emotions of others include instruction in recognizing facial expressions from photos and schematic drawings, and identifying situation, desire, and belief-based emotions.

Informational States. The second part of the Guide offers instruction in simple and complex visual perspective taking; understanding that "seeing leads to knowing"; predicting actions on the basis of a person's knowledge; and understanding false-beliefs.

Pretend Play. The last section of the Guide suggests activities to promote the development of play skills from the child's current level of functioning (e.g., sensorimotor play) to pretend play.



Mind Reading the Interactive Guide to Emotion:

This is an easily accessible, interactive guide to emotions in DVD format. 'Mind Reading; the interactive guide to emotion', was prompted by Simon Baron-Cohen's research into methods for developing theory-of-mind cognition in autism. Baron-Cohen and colleagues at the University of Cambridge discovered that there are 412 human emotions (excluding synonyms).

In this DVD, they examine the age at which children understand the meaning of each emotion and developed taxonomy that assign all the distinct emotions into one of 24 different groups. A multimedia company then developed software that is suitable for children and adults to learn about emotions based on the work of the Cambridge team. On the DVD, six actors portray each of the 412 emotions using video recordings of facial expression, body language and speech. The DVD also includes video recordings and

stories that illustrate the circumstances and contexts for each emotion. There is an "emotions library", a learning centre and a games zone. A controlled treatment trial is currently being conducted to determine the effectiveness of the program in teaching and understanding of emotions and any improvements in theory of mind abilities.

Professor Tony Attwood strongly recommends this resource as particularly suitable for children and adults with Asperger's Syndrome. "Such individuals can have considerable difficulty learning cognitive skills in the 'live' social theatre of the classroom where they have to divide their attention between the activities in front of them and the social/emotional and linguistic communication of the teacher and the other children. With a computer the feedback is instantaneous; they do not have to wait for a response from the teacher and they can repeat a scene to identify and analyse the relevant cues many times without annoying or boring others. They are also not going to receive public criticism for mistakes, and are more likely to relax when engaged in a solitary activity. The program is designed to minimise any irrelevant detail, highlight the relevant cues and to enable the student to progress at their own pace. It may well be somewhat ironic, but those with Asperger's Syndrome have been better able to learn about people by using a computer than absorbing real life situations."

USEFUL LINKS:

<http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/index.php/publications/research-reports/theory-of-mind/507-thought-bubbles-help-children-with-autism-acquire-an-alternative-to-a-theory-of-mind30>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/strategies-and-approaches/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations/what-is-a-comic-strip-conversation.aspx>



ABOVE: The scenic venue for this year's Asia Pacific Autism Conference - the Adelaide Convention Centre

On a recent crisp autumn morning I met with Emily Brake in a Launceston cafe to chat about her selection as part of the Future Leaders Program to attend APAC 2013. I found her at a table writing a postcard to her sister in Hobart (she later told me that she and her sister exchange postcards several times a week). As I interviewed Emily I was struck by the easy frankness with which she talks of her sometimes difficult experiences on the autism spectrum, and also by her positivity and drive as she told me of her future ambitions, and the way in which her participation in the Future Leaders Program will help her achieve these.

Emily is very excited to have been selected to attend APAC 2013 in Adelaide as part of the Future Leaders Program. This initiative is designed to bring together a group of young adults aged 18-30 with a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder to attend APAC in August 2013 as part of a structured, integrated program which includes mentoring by older adults on the spectrum. Autism Tasmania is proudly sponsoring Emily so that she can participate in this program.

Emily is most looking forward to learning new information about autism. She says that ASD is a part of herself that she would like to understand more. She also anticipates that participating in the Future Leaders Program will help her in her aspirations of a potential career in helping other people understand more about autism. Emily's unique ability to help spread awareness and understanding about autism from a personal perspective has already been of benefit to various parent and professional groups who have been fortunate enough to hear Emily speak.

As well as spreading awareness by speaking about her personal experiences on the autism spectrum, Emily

aspires to establish a magazine specifically for people on the spectrum. She envisages a "rule book" for situations that people have trouble with, and a medium through which a sense of community can be built. She anticipates that profiles of individuals on the spectrum may form an integral part of the magazine, so that people can get to know each other.

Emily's first experience of public speaking about autism was when she was in Grade 10, two years after being diagnosed with high functioning autism. She describes the talk she gave to her own Grade 10 class at Exeter High School as being her first step in accepting her own diagnosis.

Emily is very eloquent in the way she describes her difficult teenage years. She describes her struggle with depression and her feelings of confusion when she was first diagnosed. She says she didn't really know what autism was and didn't understand why she was being sent to speech therapists.

When reflecting on how things have changed since these difficult years Emily is full of praise and gratitude for the brilliant support she has received from her family. She says she is fortunate that her mother had prior experience working with children with autism, and describes how her family continue to help her, particularly in her understanding of social situations. When watching movies Emily says she will often ask "What does that expression mean?" and her family are very good at interpreting and explaining obscure facial and verbal expressions. Emily also says that her mother is very good at answering any social questions she has, and prepares her for social occasions by drawing Emily's attention to potentially sensitive topics of conversation.

Emily also seeks regular support from a psychologist. She says he provided excellent assistance and advice to help stabilise her moods during recent challenging times when Emily was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. She also emphasises that it is beneficial to visit her psychologist when things are going well. And she is pleased that he has written an article about "coping strategies" for her magazine.

As well as family and professional support, Emily says that persistence is key to her progress. "I've come so far", she says, "I go into shops now and I can ask attendants for help, I used to be so scared in High School." Emily's confidence has grown so much that she is now seeking a part time job in retail. She enjoys the short contact with people that a job in this area would enable.

Autism Across the Lifespan - Jacqui Roberts Workshop

Emily is currently studying an Associate Degree in Arts at University. She says she learns best by listening, and finds the organisation that is necessary quite difficult. The university provide support with a Learning Access Plan which enables her to seek an extension when needed, and also offers more autism friendly exam conditions.

Emily's honesty and personal insights and her drive to share her experiences with people who want to know more about autism (as she says, "there is no point talking about it to people who aren't interested, they wouldn't listen") are bound to benefit the broader Tasmanian community in the years to come. And just as Emily is thankful and excited that she is part of the Future Leaders Program, the Tasmanian community should be too because Emily is an inspiring lady with great aspirations that will surely benefit us all.

Robyn Thomas

For more information on APAC, see page 21.

Autism Across the Lifespan - Jacqui Roberts Workshop



Autism Tasmania staff welcomed Professor Jacqui Roberts to Hobart to present her workshop "Autism Across the Lifespan". Pictured above are (Left to right) CEO Terry Burke, Nella Keane, Allison Lapham, Jodie Denman, Robyn Davis, Professor Jacqui Roberts, Jacqui Kingsley, Kate Wilson.

On the 11th of April, Autism Tasmania presented Professor Jacqui Roberts' workshop titled Autism Across the Lifespan at the Tattersall's Park Function Centre, Glenorchy.

Professor Roberts is national and internationally renowned for her research and expertise in the field of Autism. She is the chair of Autism Centre of

Excellence, Griffith University. Prior to her appointment, she was a consultant for a variety of national projects in Autism, and responsible for content in the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC) Positive Partnerships Program.

Professor Roberts is a consultant to the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) on the distribution of the Federal Government Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package; a director of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders and serves on the DEEWR Students with Disability in Schools Advisory Council.

Professor Roberts covered many current and relevant issues effecting Autism care and services such as the NDIS and the DSM 5. The topics flowed clearly and included many anecdotes to illustrate key points. Jacqui gave practical, no-nonsense tips for understanding and managing Autism behaviours in both adults and children.

The feedback we received was very positive. Most attendees found the workshop both informative and useful, with many remarking on the breadth of Professor Roberts' knowledge. Many left the workshop feeling confident that they had gained a better understanding of Autism, and the methods and strategies that may assist.

At the conclusion of the workshop, an evaluation form was collected. As a part of our commitment to responding to the needs of the community we support, Autism Tasmania value the feedback we receive not only to show us what we are doing well, but also determine how we can further expand to meet the growing needs of the Autism community. We are looking into the suggestions for future workshops.



Social Torture: Assemblies, Home Room, Carnivals and Leavers' Functions

My experience with having a High School student on the Spectrum is based on what occurred during my son's secondary schooling, so it is, of necessity, quite limited. And, I should point out, my perspective on different issues is very much influenced by my son's particular personality quirks. Which is all a roundabout way of saying that Matt had a great deal of difficulty with the compulsory social aspects of High School, and unfortunately I wasn't able to come to any really acceptable answer for him. I hope that other parents can do better for their children.

Assemblies

Like every High School in the world, Matt's school had a regular schedule of assemblies: for the whole school together, for the students of a particular year group, and for the individual 'Houses' when the student population divided for sporting purposes. And, like every High School in the world, the assembling of the relevant gaggle of students into the Gym/ Assembly Hall involved lots of pushing and shoving, and standing or sitting close to other students, and a level of noise like a jet engine in a barn.

And it was simply taken for granted that Matt would attend, just like everybody else. But he hated assemblies with a passion – most were held on Wednesdays, and it took me a while to draw a connection between Wednesdays and feeling too sick to go to school. When he was in the lower grades and I actually forced him to go to school, teachers told me later that Matt would disappear at Assembly time – he would slide off into the toilet block and stay there for the duration (and considering how much he hated school bathrooms, assemblies must have been really torture for him).

And another reason that assemblies were so problematical for Matt was their unpredictability. Naturally, school staff would organise an assembly as required – not necessarily always on a Wednesday. And I think that threw him into disarray even more than the sensory overload, because, to Matt's way of thinking, he was at school to do schoolwork, not to go to meetings. He had concluded that assemblies happen on Wednesdays, not on other days, and that they shouldn't be taking the time allocated for schoolwork. And explanations from the teachers about the importance of passing on certain information to a group of students didn't persuade him in the slightest. His logic was fixed, and wouldn't be budged,

In the end we managed Matt's timetable so that he could avoid being at school for Wednesday assemblies. When an unscheduled assembly was called I would generally go and collect him and we would go to the nearest shops and have something to eat – and I understand that I was positively reinforcing his negative behaviour (as one senior teacher thoughtfully pointed out to me). However, this cowardly option suited Matt, although it meant that he probably missed out on information that he should have had. But seeing as he would not have taken in any of the information disseminated at an Assembly (being too concerned about the people around him and whether or not they were touching him) the loss was probably balanced by the benefit, and I mostly caught up on any significant news through the school newsletter.

Home Room

I imagine that every High School also has some sort of arrangement akin to 'Home Room', which is intended to bring about some multi-age bonding between students, and provide the responsible teachers with an opportunity to exercise their pastoral care responsibilities. I gather that's the theory – it also knits up the start and/or end of the day for everyone. We even had something similar when I was at High School; it's just part of the package.

But not for Matt. Regardless of my explanations and justifications, he saw it as 'Not School' and therefore a waste of his time. As with a number of 'Not School' activities, the fact that he had to attend, and didn't want to, caused him significant anxiety. His negative perception about Home Room was heightened by the bullying behaviour of some of his fellow Home Roomers, which is probably likely to arise in any environment where teenagers of different ages and degrees of maturity are herded together, as well as the touchy-feely, getting-to-know-and-trust-each-other-activities that were conducted during Home Room times. Matt came home, most bemused one day, and informed me, wonderingly, "They just keep asking me how I feel". He didn't get it, and neither did they.

As things turned out, once Matt changed to a restricted timetable, there were several days when he didn't commence classes until later in the morning, and so managed to miss out on Home Room. I did however keep in fairly close touch with his Home room teacher by e-mail, probably two or three times a week, to let her know how things were going, and any difficulties we were having. She, in return, would keep me up-to-date about significant things we needed to do. In short, I didn't have any sort of answer about the problem of Home Room – like the irritant of assemblies, we sort of side-stepped it.

Carnivals

My son is not of an athletic bent. His idea of strenuous exercise is a really taxing video game with the hero doing lots of running and ducking and weaving. So you can imagine the resistance I encountered when I explained that sports carnivals are a compulsory part of High School and that they teach you good sportsmanship, how to act as part of a team and the value of performing to your own best standard.

During the early years of High School, when I could actually force him to do things that he didn't otherwise want to do, I made him attend a few different sports carnivals. The teachers could not, however, make him participate, so he sat in the stands for the day playing a hand-held game. Looking back on it, the experience of those events must have been just excruciating for him – noise from the PA system, teachers shouting instructions to competitors, students yelling all sorts of abuse and encouragement, the smell of sunscreen and sweat, sitting near strangers who might bang into you by accident or design. Those few times, Matt came home with a raging headache, not a trace of colour in his face, and lay down on the sofa and slept for hours.

As Matt grew older (and more stubborn) I couldn't see any benefit in putting him through this really

unpleasant experience, so I would contact the school and let them know that he would not be attending whichever carnival it was, and he would use the day to recharge his energies for the rest of the school week. Again, I didn't find any answer to the issue of sports carnivals, except a strategic retreat.

Leavers' Functions

In our State school system, High Schools celebrate their students' completion of Year 10 as a significant milestone, mostly with a special Presentation Night, a Leavers' Assembly, and, with much fuss and ceremony, a Leavers' Dinner. Back in the mists of time, I went to a Leavers' Dinner at the end of Grade 10, and I even occasionally drag out the photos, just to check that I was ever that young – and I guess I simply expected that Matt would also go to his Leavers' Dinner.

Wrong assumption. No. No way. Not if he was dragged by wild horses. I offered to get all the gear to wear: suit, tie, shoes not designed for running or done up with velcro – he could not have been less interested. I checked with the teachers that boys didn't have to take a girl – didn't matter, that wasn't the issue. I talked myself blue in the face, describing what would happen, who would be there, how he would remember the night for a long time to come – nothing. When my Leavers' Dinner manic mother had run itself down, Matt came to me and said, "Mum, you know, people who aren't like me? Do they really like that kind of stuff?" And I had to admit, that Yes, they do, but that there was absolutely nothing wrong with him not doing so.

I was a bit ashamed of how I acted, getting caught up with what I thought Matt should want, instead of thinking of him. I was also a bit disappointed (for me) that I wouldn't get the chance, at this stage, to dress him up and have him look like all the other handsome young people. But after thinking about what he said to me, I was incredibly proud of the self-awareness that he expressed, and that he hadn't allowed me, with the best of intentions, to railroad him into doing something he so much didn't wish to do. So, I'm sure there are arrangements that can be made to make Leavers' Dinners easier for students on the Spectrum (even thinking about it now, Matt would have had a terrible time with the perfume and aftershave in the function room, apart from anything else). But Matt chose not to attend and I eventually respected his choice – although I have warned him that if he makes it through University, he's not going to get out of Graduation so easily.

Clothes and Shoes

This fairly trivial aspect of having a High School child on the Spectrum has underlined, for me, the very real differences in outlook between Matt and myself. Admittedly, neurotypical teenaged boys probably create headaches for their parents in relation to what they wear to school and what they put on their feet, but I suspect that kids with Autism present different challenges in respect of schoolwear.

For one thing, I love shopping for shoes; I like the colours and the smells and the choices. And I have different sets of clothes which reflect the seasons and temperatures. Matt doesn't, as I will explain next.

Shoes

Matt hates shoe shopping, and no matter how I have, in the past, tried to coerce or bribe him into going to buy new shoes for school, everything has failed. It hasn't mattered a jot whether they were black lace-ups or runners, or black runners, he would always say "Next weekend" or "These ones are fine", or just flat out refuse to co-operate, until the soles had holes or were parting from the uppers.

And I only discovered the reason for his dislike this last year – maybe I wasn't listening closely enough before, or perhaps it was only then that Matt became aware of the basis for his feelings. But we managed to discuss his hatred of shoe shopping, and he told me, it was because other people had tried on the shoes before him. And it was that belief which made shoe shopping so uncomfortable for him. Once I understood how he felt, I realised that an outlet shoe store, with all the stock on display, and where you just grab the shoes off the shelf and try them on, was not the best option for Matt. He has considerably less anxiety in traditional stores where the shop assistant will bring the requested shoes out in the shoebox. So that's how we do shoe shopping now, when we absolutely have to.

And for Matt, having three or four different styles to choose from is a waste of time and energy – we would come home with nothing (which was fine by Matt, because he didn't particularly care about new shoes anyway). I have discovered, through trial and error – mostly error – that we need to find a brand and style of shoe which he finds comfortable, and buy it. Then, when that pair is close to wearing out, we buy the same shoe in a bigger size, and so on. Matt just wants one pair of shoes (or at the outside, two pairs with one for school and one for good), replaced by the same sort when they are worn out.

CONFERENCE THEME

True Colours has been adopted as the conference theme. The letters overlap to represent the connectedness of the autism community and the range of colours represent the diversity of the autism spectrum.

The theme motivates us all to reveal, encourage and support the collective skills, talents and abilities of all of us that are part of the autism community. The conference theme inspires us to be bold, be brave and be brilliant as we collectively create a good life for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The conference program includes international keynote speakers, symposia sessions, workshops and poster presentations. All streams will incorporate presentations from a professional, personal and practical perspective.

Keynote and invited speakers and biographies can be found at www.apac13.org.au

SPONSORSHIP & EXHIBITION

APAC 2013 has several sponsorship packages available, providing sponsors with a choice of exposure related to financial commitment.

Participating as a sponsor and / or exhibitor at APAC 2013 can take you straight to your target market and demonstrate your level of support and commitment to the Autism Spectrum community, its clients and partners.

Download the sponsorship and exhibition proposal from www.apac13.org.au

REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND

Registration is now open! To register online, please visit www.apac13.org.au/register and view registration inclusions and fees.

CONTACT US

For more information please contact the conference organisers:

All Occasions Management

41 Anderson Street,
Thebarton SA 5031
Australia

T: +61 8 8125 2200

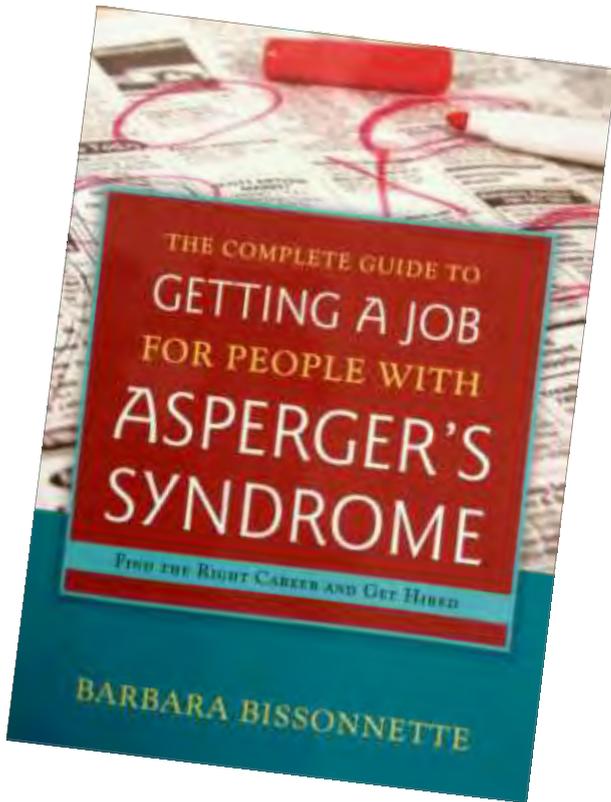
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www.apac13.org.au



The Complete Guide to Getting a Job for People with Asperger's Syndrome – Find the Right Career and Get Hired by Barbara Bissonnette

Book review by Mark Kingsley

Did you know that 85% of people with Autism in the US are unemployed or under-employed? And that 35% of young people with Autism do not have paid work or additional education and training for many years after leaving school. Whilst there are no specific figures available for people with Asperger's Syndrome, anecdotal evidence would suggest that it is almost as difficult for those with Asperger's to gain meaningful, paid employment. Barbara Bissonnette's book is a self-help manual designed to improve the chances of people with Asperger's in gaining a job.

Barbara Bissonnette has over 7 years' experience in job coaching individuals with Asperger's Syndrome with great success. She uses her practical experience to unravel the job-seeking process for people with Asperger's.

She outlines the importance in taking your time

to choose the right type of job or career for you by positively focussing on your strengths and, no doubt, people with Asperger's possess many strengths that would make them a valuable employee. These include (p. 172):

- *Attention to detail and sustained concentration*
- *Excellent long-term memory*
- *Tolerance of repetition and routine*
- *Strong logic and analytic skills*
- *Vast knowledge of specialised fields*
- *Creative thinking*
- *Perseverance*
- *Honesty and loyalty*

People with Asperger's have a wealth of potential to contribute to the workforce.

Ms Bissonnette provides tips in researching your chosen occupation including conducting preliminary research interviews with experts in your chosen field. Did you know that there are *right* and *wrong* questions to ask when conducting an interview?

Barbara provides valuable tips in personal presentation including your personal appearance, speech, facial expressions, body language and actions and behaviours. She stresses the importance of *marketing yourself* to employers before passing on her knowledge in writing resumes and cover letters.

It is estimated that over 70% of job vacancies are not formally advertised. Barbara shows you how to develop an effective job search plan which increases your chances of *being in the right place at the right time* when a job vacancy surfaces.

Arguably the most daunting aspect of the job application process is the formal job interview. Barbara Bissonnette breaks down the process into small, achievable steps. She even suggests topics for *small talk* with the receptionist whilst being escorted to your job interview location! She provides you with strategies for dealing with anxiety.

The issue of whether to disclose your diagnosis to a potential employer is dealt with sensitively by Barbara in her book. The pros and cons of disclosing are clearly outlined.

I would recommend this book to anyone serious about finding meaningful employment; not just those with Asperger's.

Barbara Bissonnette provides an excellent array of practical activities and examples to help you understand the information presented; links are provided to all activities in the book and via the web. The only disadvantage is that most of the examples are American and, whilst most are applicable to us here, there are major differences between the Australian and American job markets. Apart from this, *Getting a Job for People with Asperger's Syndrome* by Barbara Bissonnette is well worth a read!

Download survey form from our website:
www.autismtas.org.au



TELL US
 Your story...

Simply share your experiences with us to be in the draw for one of two \$100 gift vouchers!

Closes 31st of July, 2013



Contact our friendly staff to have a survey form mailed to you.

Autism Tasmania at

Gearing Up Expos across the state

With the impending National Disability Insurance Scheme launch in Tasmania to start from July 2013 for 15-24 year olds, the Gearing Up Expos are an excellent vehicle to provide individuals and families with the information and support they require to have informed choice and control.



Princes Wharf 1 was the new venue for the ever-growing biennial Hobart Gearing Up Expo,



and it couldn't have been a better location to support the crowds of people who came along!

Autism Tasmania had a table set up with our friendly southern staff there to answer questions and provide links to our services.

The Launceston Gearing Up Expo was held on the 6th of June at the Tailrace Function Centre. The North-West Gearing Up Expo will be held at the Burnie Arts and Function Centre on the 14th of August. Check the Gearing Up Expo website or facebook page for updates.

To be in the draw to win one of two **\$100** gift vouchers, please fill in our confidential survey. Contact Autism Tasmania on 1300 288 476 to have one sent to your address, or download from our website: www.autismtas.org.au



The Zone - North



THE ZONE

Social Club for High-Functioning ASD
students across Grades 5 to 8

Phone 1300AUTISM today
to register your interest!

Exciting news!!!

The Zone will be taking a new intake of children for six sessions in all three regions - North-West, North and South. Check our website www.autismtas.org.au and Facebook page for details.



Since the last issue of Spectrum News, The Zone North have been very busy knocking over pins at ten-pin bowling, creating some cool rhythms at a drumming workshop and busting some smooth dance moves at a dance workshop.

The Zone Group meets regularly at a variety of exciting venues depending on the organised activity, and continues to successfully forge strong friendships, expand experiences and strengthen the social skills of its enthusiastic members.

If you are interested in being a part of this fun and friendly social club for High-Functioning ASD students across grades 5 to 8, please phone 1300 288 976 (1300 AUTISM) to register your interest. Parent support is required, and there is a small fee to attend. Come and join in the fun!

Future Zone activities are listed in the events section on our website: www.autismtas.org.au, and reminders appear on our Autism Tasmania Facebook page.



Social/Support Groups

West Coast

The West Coast parents met in April in Rosebery at the Community House to catch up and watch the inspirational movie, 'The Magnificent Seven'. This movie is about the Jackson family – one of whom is Luke Jackson author at 13 years of age of the book, 'Freaks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome'. The movie was greatly enjoyed.



The West Coast group will meet again in May at either Strahan or Queenstown.

Circular Head



Circular Head parents recently met in Stanley for a morning tea and a chat about ASD and strategies. We welcomed a new parent to the group who moved to Tasmania from interstate quite recently – she was very pleased to meet other parents of children with ASD and enjoyed being around like minded people.

The next meeting will be held at a one of the group member's homes and the 'Magnificent Seven' (mentioned above) will be the focus of the morning.

North West

The group usually meet at the Burnie Community House however our most recent get together last week was at Preservation Bay and lunch at a lovely restaurant to farewell one of our long term members.

Nicole (pictured right) has been involved with the group for many years and very soon



moving with her children back to New South Wales. The group will miss her and the lunch was a lovely way to catch up one last time.

North-West parents will meet in June at the 'usual' venue with the focus being IT and apps for iPads and information on the NDIS.

Southern Adult Aspergers group

In July this year it will be 8 years since the Southern Adult Aspergers group first met. This is a testament to the willingness of the people that come along for the first time to be brave and walk into a room where they most likely know no-one. During the almost 8 years the group has had many interesting discussions about issues and challenges and the need to educate the broader community about Asperger's Syndrome (AS) and what it means.

In March the group spent a couple of hours discussing Transition – from school into college, from school into an apprenticeship, from college to TAFE or University and many wonderful ideas were written down. However that wasn't the end of the topic with the suggestion that the group put together a document on 'Making the Workplace an Asperger's Friendly Environment.' The April get together saw all who attended spending time talking about information and strategies. Currently the document is taking shape and will be very informative for those who will in future employ people with AS.

For those interested the group usually meet on the last Sunday in the month at the Autism Tasmania offices. The only reason the day is changed is if it falls on a public holiday or in a recognised holiday period such as Easter or Christmas. New people are very welcome to attend along with a friend, a family member or support person.

Interested in setting up an ASD Social/Support Group in your area?

Contact Autism Tasmania to see how we can help.

Ph 1300 288 476
or email admin@autismtas.org.au

Social/Support Groups

Dunalley Support Group



The Dunalley Support Group has been out and about engaging in a wide range of exciting activities. There was no shortage of smiles and laughter as the group walked on water in Zoodoo's new waterballs. Inside these gigantic, inflated, transparent balls you can crawl, walk, run, roll, bump, jump, tumble and splash - and stay completely dry!

Interacting with the animals was also very popular, and a picnic lunch in the gazebo was a wonderful opportunity to chat about the day's highlights.

The Dunalley Support Group usually meets the first Thursday morning in the month at 10am to midday at the Dunalley Community Neighbourhood Centre, and often hosts guest speakers to cover topics of interest to our group.

Occasionally we venture further afield, so if you are interested in attending, please check our website or Facebook page for details, or contact Amity Deans on 03 6253 5579. For further details, refer to page opposite.



The Zone - South



Recently, the Southern Zone group met at AMF Bowling, Moonah to knock over some pins. It was great to see the bowling aisles lit up blue, creating a fitting atmosphere for some serious bowling. It is easy to see by the row of smiles that everyone had a great time.



References for Theory of Mind article (pp 13-15):

Understanding other minds: Perspectives from developmental cognitive neuroscience (2nd ed.). Baron-Cohen, Simon (Ed); Tager-Flusberg, Helen (Ed); Cohen, Donald J. (Ed) New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press. (2000).

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134713/>

<http://psycserver.psyc.queensu.ca/sabbagh/2004-sabbagh.pdf>

<http://www.du.edu/psychology/dnrl/Executive%20function%20deficits%20in%20high-functioning%20autistic.pdf>

<http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/358/1430/281.full.pdf>

<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/?pageId=424>

Social/Support Groups

Southern Tasmania

New Norfolk

Venue to be advised

Second Thursday morning in the month – 10.30am – Midday.

Contact Robyn Davis 0408 376 838

Dunalley

Dunalley Community Neighbourhood Centre, Arthur Highway

First Thursday morning in the month – 10am – Midday

Contact: Amity Deans 03 6253 5579

Hobart- Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group

Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah

Last Sunday in the month 2.00 – 4.00pm.

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

North West Coast

Burnie

Burnie Community House, 24 Wiseman St, Burnie

Third Thursday in the month - 10.30am - midday.

Circular Head

Smithton District Hospital's meeting room

Third Friday in the month – 10.30am - midday.

Devonport

Devonport Community Health Centre, Cnr MacFie & Steele Sts Devonport

Third Monday in the month - 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Burnie—Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group

152 Wilson Street, Burnie

Second Saturday in the month 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

Northern Tasmania

Launceston

Northern Children's Network, Amy Road, Newstead

Coffee mornings - Fourth Tuesday in the month from 10am

Evening Meetings - Third Tuesday in the month from 7pm

Bike Centre family get togethers in school holidays

George Town

Wattle Group, Agnes St

Third Tuesday in the month – 10 am – 11:45 am.

Scottsdale

Dorset Community House

Second Tuesday in the month 11am—12:30pm

Contact: Robyn Thomas 0458 375 604

Launceston

Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group

Aspire Building, 190 Charles Street, Launceston

First Saturday in the month 1.30 – 3.30pm.

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

West Coast

Meetings on the first Thursday in every month on a rotational basis at Rosebery, Queenstown, and Strahan 10.30am - midday. Please contact Rose Clark for details of upcoming venue.

East Coast

Monthly meetings organised by Karen Rawnsley
Phone 6372 5077 or 0418 375 450



For more information please call: 1 300 288 476

or

email admin@autismtas.org.au



Autism

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Making Futures Brighter

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