



Connecting the Pieces

serving families along the gulf coast

New Programs at Kids for Camp

Big changes are in store at Kids for Camp this summer as we strive to better serve children, teens, and young adults with autism and their families.

This summer extended care will be offered before and after camp for the first time. This program has been put in place to make it easier for working parents to transport their children to and from camp.

Our Kids College program will be housed primarily at Holm Elementary School this year.

This will enable these campers (ages 6 – 12) to engage in a variety of age-appropriate activities with their peers, while still participating in supported inclusion at PJC.

Our older teens and young adults (ages 16 – 22) will be participating in our first-ever Job Transition Program this summer. In addition to the social skills activities we have always provided at camp, they will now be learning job skills as well. These skills will be individualized to the needs of each camper and will include



both on and off-campus experiences.

We are very excited about all of the changes we have planned for this summer! Camp parents will have the opportunity to learn more about every aspect of camp at our parent orientation meetings. Parent orientations are scheduled for Monday, May 17 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at ARC Gateway on the corner of 10th and Fairfield.



Susan Byram and Logan Fink present Fred Donovan with his award

Fred Donovan Receives Community Spirit Award

When Logan Fink shared his message of the need for those in the business community to support families living with autism, Fred Donovan responded by helping to raise funds for camp in its earliest days. In 2003, Fred Donovan attended the first annual Connecting the Pieces Gala for Autism Awareness, and he has continued as a loyal supporter of this organization ever since.

In 2006, Fred joined the board of Autism

Pensacola, serving on the Executive Committee to this day. He has served as the Camp Oversight committee chair since 2007 and loves to 'get recharged' by visiting camp during the summer. Always encouraging and guiding camp leadership, he makes a difference with his wise council and involvement.

Fred is chairman and chief executive officer of the largest engineering firm based in Northwest Florida, Baskerville-Donovan, Inc., where he has been involved for over 45 years. In addition to Autism Pensacola, he serves on numerous community boards including Gulf Power and Baptist Hospital.

Because of his on-going support and dedication to improving the lives of those with autism, we present Fred Donovan with the Sharon and Logan Fink Community Spirit Award.

Jacqui O'Connell Hall of Fame Winner

Jacqui O'Connell is the founding Vice President of Autism Pensacola. Because of her experience raising Ryan, her son with autism, she understands the importance of having a local group where families can seek out support and information. In 2002, while helping found API, she had the foresight to realize the importance of an internet presence for this organization as an additional way to reach families living with autism. Her older son, Jason, a Pensacola High School IB student at the time, volunteered to create a website for API as his senior project. He did this and then tutored his mom on how to update the website.

Jacqui has now worked for eight years updating, creating, and adding to our web-

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Jacqui and Matt O'Connell smiling for the camera.

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From the director's desk



What a beautiful spring it has been! I don't know if you have noticed, but after our extra cool winter, I have found myself really enjoying the comfortable temperatures and striking colors of this April. The beauty of so many Autism Awareness activities was also impressive! Autism Pensacola was blessed by the generosity of our community when bikers celebrated April

Nicole's Ride for the 5th year and when our 7th Annual Connecting the Pieces Gala raised near record funds to support Kids for Camp. Our families gratefully learned about services and support at our annual information fair, held at Sacred Heart Hospital. So many volunteers made all of this happen, and each one has taken us a step closer to our goal of making Pensacola a more beautiful place for those living with autism.

Our partnership with Sacred Heart continues to bloom! Debbie Keremes, named Autism Professional of the year at our gala, is hard at work planning this year's training and curriculum for

Kids for Camp. Another near record is our registration for camp - as of press time, we expect to enroll approximately 75 campers! Because of the generous donors at our April events, over half of our campers will receive need-based scholarships of 50% or higher for camp this year.

Finally, I am very pleased to announce that in order to serve our community better, we have created the position of Program Coordinator at API. This position oversees all aspects of camp as well as some additional programs planned for the fall. Jessica Lapen and Tammy Mendiola will job share this position. Jessica and Tammy are both highly qualified with backgrounds in education, management, public relations and advertising, as well as personal experience with autism. Welcome aboard, Tammy and Jessica! Get ready for the best Kids for Camp ever and lots more services from API for everyone living with autism! Happy spring, everyone!!

Susan Byram

API Council

Susan Byram, API Executive Director
 Jessica Lapen, Council Chairperson
 Sharon Stebbins, Recording Secretary & GAP
 Sharon Fink, Corresponding Secretary,
 Newsletter Editor
 Jenny Doyle, Grants & Dinner
 Joan Harbuck, GAP
 Anita McGirt, Chats
 Tammy Mendiola, Camp & Newsletter
 Jacqui O'Connell, Webmaster
 Rebecca Sterzing, Programs Team
 Regina Williams, Support
 Bonnie Wooton, Newsletter Design/Print

There's a place for you to serve!
Many council members serve on more than one committee,
e-mail info@autismpensacola.org for information on council needs.

2010 API Board of Directors

Shirley Cronley	Gerald Hoewing
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Susan Byram - Executive Director

2010 API Executive Committee

Quint Studer, President	Logan Fink
Kevin Doyle, Vice President	Fred Donovan
Judy Burns, Secretary	Sandra Cesaretti Ray
Mort O'Sullivan, Treasurer	Bonnie Kanne Sferes

Jacqui O'Connell Hall of Fame Winner

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site. This year, with our name change, the website has been revamped and updated with the new name and look by Jane Birdwell and her team, but Jacqui remains the faithful webmaster ensuring that no matter when someone is looking for information on autism

in Pensacola, they will find the most current and up-to-date information on our website. She spends untold hours dealing with servers, merchant accounts, and forums. Thanks to her, everyone - donors, families considering a move, or those newly diag-

nosed - has a place to go 24/7 to learn about how to improve the lives of those living with autism.

For countless hours dedicated to making a difference, we name Jacqui O'Connell as this year's Hall of Fame award winner.

Connecting the Pieces Gala a Great Success!



Becca Buckley,
our “puzzle piece girl.”

The wonderful generosity of our community was evident once again at the 7th annual Connecting the Pieces Gala. This year's event, hosted by Teri Levin and Nina Campbell, raised over \$190,000 for Kids for Camp! We are thrilled we can serve so many children at camp this summer, thanks to the hard work and dedication of these two wonderful ladies and their team.

As guests arrived for the evening, they had the opportunity to socialize, enjoy music played by Will Fink and his band, and peruse the many silent auction items available while deciding where to place their bids. After cocktails, a wonderful gourmet meal created by chefs from some of Pensacola's

finest restaurants was enjoyed by all the guests.

After dinner, Collier Merrill, Pensacola's favorite auctioneer, was on hand to encourage guests to bid ever-higher on an array of live auction items. These included trips, special dinner experiences, and the exciting opportunity to fly to New York to have lunch with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and learn the sport of falconry. What a memorable experience that will be for the lucky winner!

This year during the “raise your paddle to send a kid to camp” portion of the evening, an extra treat was presented to the bidders. Each person who raised their paddle was given a large puzzle piece that had been handcrafted by a child with autism. The puzzle pieces were the brainchild of Becca Buckley, an IB student at Pensacola High School, who spent time this year at Holm Elementary School and Escambia Westgate School working with the children on their puzzle pieces. The artwork was so popular among our guests that 20 more pieces have been “sold”, and Becca has agreed to continue working with the children this spring to fill those orders. This truly was an evening to remember!

Debbie Keremes Autism Professional of the Year

Debbie Keremes began her career as an early intervention teacher over 20 years ago. Her love for those with autism led her to seek more and more training in the field until in 2008 she became a Board Certified Behavior Analyst - one of the highest levels of certification for those working with children with autism. She worked for Santa Rosa County schools as a classroom teacher and then a resource specialist helping children with autism all over the county.

In February 2009, Debbie began serving as Autism Program Training Coordinator at Sacred Heart Hospital. In this initial year, Debbie has trained over 500 professionals and parents across our community. In overseeing Kids for Camp 2009, she helped with staff selection and gave daily input to both parents and staff in addition to the 40 hours of intensive training attended by over 80 professionals and parents. Both parents and teachers agreed that the quality of camp improved significantly because of Debbie's willingness to listen to problems and her ability to explain things clearly. Her classroom experience, combined with significant knowledge of behavioral strategies, provides much guidance and has an on-going impact in the lives of camp staff and students.



Susan Byram presents Debbie Keremes with her Autism Professional of the Year award.

For her dedication to improving the lives of those with autism, we name Debbie Keremes the Autism Professional of the Year.

Special Thanks for supporting “Connecting the Pieces”

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Fish House
Ed Smith Catering
The Grand Marlin
Haute Affairs
Classic City Catering

Linda McGill Teacher of the Year

When her husband passed away, Linda McGill began a new chapter in her life by going back to school to earn a degree in teaching. Upon graduation from the University of Memphis, she was drawn to Northwest Florida because of family in the area. In 2007, she began teaching at Holm



Susan Byram presents award to Tammy Mendiola.

Elementary School in Pensacola as a long term substitute in a special education classroom and knew she had found her niche. In 2008, seeking more training, she applied to work at Kids for Camp and loved the things she learned. She served as a lead teacher in 2009 and continues to share what she has learned at camp with her colleagues every day.

In recognition for her dedication to making a difference for those living with autism, we present Teacher of the Year to Ms. Linda McGill.



Linda McGill applauds her fellow award winners.

Tammy Mendiola Volunteer of the Year

Tammy Mendiola moved to Milton in the fall of 2007 when her husband, Rudy, was assigned to NAS Whiting Field. Though excited to come to this area to be near family, they were anxious about the services for their son, Michael (now 18), who has autism. Tammy quickly became involved in Autism Pensacola, serving that summer as 'Lead Volunteer' for the teen campus at Kids for Camp and giving over 250 hours in 7 weeks.

In 2009, she continued in her leadership role by joining the camp planning team and also joining the API council, assisting with

the newsletter as well as other council activities. This year she continues as a camp leader and has been organizing membership files as well as overseeing our recent Information and Resource Fair and sending out monthly email updates to our members. To date, Tammy has given over 1000 hours in just 2 years! Tammy embodies what Autism Pensacola stands for - working together to make a difference for those with autism!

For her tireless dedication to API and Kids for Camp, we present the Volunteer of the Year award to Tammy Mendiola.

Fun Summer Activities Presented by GAP!

Adventures Unlimited
8974 Tomahawk Landing Road
Milton, FL
for ages 11 and up
June 12 at 8:45 a.m.

We will be tubing down Coldwater Creek and then enjoying a picnic together!

Advance ticket price is \$13 per person.

Release form is required and can be found on our website www.autismpensacola.org.

Please submit advance ticket money and completed release form by June 1st to:

Autism Pensacola, P.O. Box 30213
 Pensacola, FL 32503

Funplex
3123 Gulf Breeze Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL
for ages 10 and under
August 22 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Bouncing and gymnastics fun!

Tickets are \$8 per child.

All children must wear socks to participate.

More information on both of these fun events can be found at www.autismpensacola.org.

Hope to see you there!

Outstanding Teen Volunteer

Chain Reaction Volunteer, Kenneth Richardson, is a sophomore at Escambia High School. 2009 was his first summer volunteering with Kids for Camp. Inspired by his aunt who has autism, Kenneth went above and beyond his duties and responsibilities during the first two weeks of camp. He worked very comfortably with our students and had no trouble modeling appropriate behavior. He treated our campers with respect and dignity, considering each a friend. He arrived early each day to help set up drinking water and fill coolers and stayed late helping students get to their family cars.

Kenneth was so helpful, we asked him to stay the entire camp. At first he said he couldn't because gas prices were so high; however, just before Kenneth was to leave, all the campers learned how to ride the city bus. The next day, Kenneth told us he would be able to volunteer for the next two weeks. When Kenneth arrived the following Monday, we realized he had ridden ECAT to our camp. That meant he had gotten up extra early and paid money to ride the bus, but still he volunteered. He had really invested in our children in a way no other teen volunteer had ever



Kenneth Richardson at Kids for Camp '09.

done before. He spent his whole summer volunteering with our camp. He traveled on his own and overcame many obstacles to help our children for six weeks last summer. In our group of over 70 teen volunteers, his caring stood out.

Because of his amazing dedication to those with autism, we create this award and name Kenneth Richardson our Outstanding Teen Volunteer.



Anita and Doug McGirt enjoying their first "date" in 11 years!



Carol Carlan has attended every Gala for the past 7 years.



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Sharing information is what we're all about



Regina Williams and Joan Harbuck presented information at the API Council booth.

Autism Pensacola commemorated Autism Awareness Month this year with an Information and Resource Fair at Sacred Heart Hospital. This was a great opportunity for families to gather information from many different resources all in one place.

Our API Council members presented information on two projects that have been requested by our families – a respite care cooperative and social skills groups. There is high interest in both of these projects, and we are now seeking

volunteers to assist with implementing these programs for our families.

In addition to API, 37 vendors from our area participated in the event. They provided information on everything from early intervention to adult services – and everything in between! Families that attended were able to speak with vendors personally and ask questions relevant to their needs. Everyone seemed pleased with the wealth of information available, and some seemed surprised at how many services are available in our area.

Sharing information and working together is how we make things happen for our children. If you missed this event (and even if you didn't!), we hope you will join us in the future as we continue to improve the lives of those living with autism in our area.



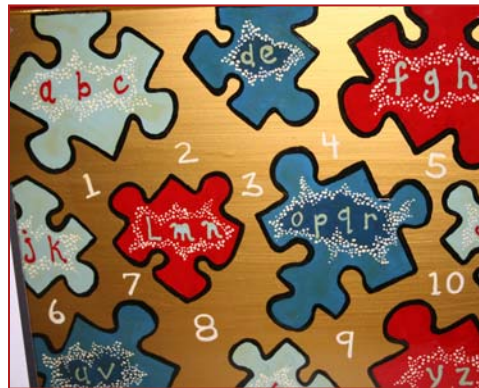
Jennifer Kensler, Susan Byram, and Jill Johnson shared information about API with many families.



Officer Jimmy Donohoe shared information about the Take Me Home Project.



Kevin Doyle and guest peruse the silent auction items.



A hand-painted child's table went home with one lucky bidder.



Fred and Susie Donovan enjoy the evening.



Gwen Appelquist-May proudly displays her puzzle piece.



Susan Byram and Logan Fink are ready for the Gala to begin.



Nina Campbell and Teri Levin, our beautiful dinner hostesses.



Jessica and Danny Lapen enjoying a great evening.



▼ A "Day At the Beach" anyone?

A table with a lovely view of the water. ▲



Quint, Studer, our President.



Will Fink and his band entertain during cocktail hour.

April Nicole's 5th Annual Ride for Autism

It was a beautiful Gulf Coast morning as 190 motorcycles were gathered at Gulf Breeze High School with one purpose in mind, raising money to help children with autism. The bikers were there to participate in April Nicole's 5th Annual Ride for Autism.

Organized by Steve Grant and Nicole Brown, this year's event was very successful as over \$5,000 was raised for autism.

This year's escorted ride followed the beach road from Gulf Breeze to Cocodrie's Restaurant on Navarre Beach. Once there, everyone had

the opportunity to enjoy a great lunch, live music, and raffle prizes. Susan Byram, Executive Director of Autism Pensacola, presented awards to Steve and Nicole in appreciation of all the hard work they put into this event each year.

Autism Pensacola would like to thank everyone involved in organizing the Ride for Autism, as well as all of the wonderful participants. Your involvement truly makes a difference in the lives of children with autism all over Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.



Nicole Brown receives award from Susan Byram, as April Nicole looks on.



Thank you to our Ride for Autism sponsors.



Ride along the beach to Cocodrie's.



Steve Grant says a few words after receiving his award.

Pre-empting Problem Behaviors in Children with Autism

By Debra Keremes, M.Ed., BCBA

Some children with autism spectrum disorders may use problem behavior as an attempt to communicate. These behaviors can be intensified when the child has limited communication skills and difficulty understanding social cues—two primary deficits in autism.

There are some things you can do **before** the behavior occurs that may help your child understand what is expected. These suggestions will not prevent the behavior every time, but it may occur less frequently.

1. Catch him being good.

Reward your child as often as possible when he uses the behaviors you want to see. Try to pair your praise with something that he likes such as hugs, tickles, a preferred toy or treat...whatever makes him happy. Make the reward bigger if the positive behavior was unexpected or the child made a significant effort. Rewarding positive behaviors can be more effective in changing problem behaviors than punishment, planned ignoring, or time out – and much easier to implement.

2. Know what is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for your child.

Asking your child to do something that is too difficult, stressful, or non-preferred can easily trigger problem behavior. This doesn't mean that he shouldn't do it, but asking when he is awake and happy will be much more successful than asking him to do the same things when he is tired or busy. In the same way, some tasks that seem easy to us may be very difficult for a child, especially one with communication delays. Try breaking up difficult tasks into smaller components.

3. Use lots of gestures when you talk.

Gestures not only make communication clearer to the child, but they confirm understanding. In February 2009, the Associated Press reported that toddlers whose parents used more gestures to communicate demonstrated richer vocabularies than those whose parents used fewer gestures. Gestures also give children another way to communicate with others, increasing social skills and decreasing frustration.

4. Use objects and pictures to explain.

Like gestures, pictures and objects are visual strategies – things your child sees that can help him understand what to do. Many children hear what you are telling them, but don't understand fully even in routine situations. Visuals can be especially helpful for transitions. If your child often cries or complains when you want him to change activities, try giving him something that represents what you are going to do next. For example, hand him a canvas grocery bag to signal that you are going to the store; a fork when you want him to come to the table for dinner; or a picture of Grandma when you are headed to her house. Just knowing what's coming next will help many children be more cooperative.

5. Structure his environment.

Having a designated spot for some of your child's favorite things

can be very comforting, especially for a child who is unable to ask for missing items. Many children enjoy putting away their own belongings and feel a sense of accomplishment when they can do some things independently. This will also be a good way to include older children and teens in family responsibilities.

6. Have a similar, but not necessarily identical schedule every day.

If your child falls apart when there are too many activities or when the routine is different every day, try implementing a schedule to help him make predictions about what's coming next, regulate sleep patterns, and begin to develop strong habits. The schedule may be informal (you simply do many things around the same time every day) or formal (such as posting pictures to show what you will be doing that day). A word of caution – some children become

Today's Schedule might be:

breakfast time	Breakfast Time	video game
swim lessons	Swim Lessons	video game
lunch	Lunch	
nap	Nap	
		video game video game

A sample of a basic visual schedule.

so set on the schedule that problem behavior will occur for even the slightest change. Try to vary the timing of activities when he is familiar with the format of the schedule. Use visual strategies and prepare him for changes whenever possible, but do not allow problem behavior to dictate your schedule. Changes are inevitable and it is important to include them. Let your child know that he will be okay, and help him to get through whatever is upsetting him. This will be extremely beneficial in the long run.

7. Prepare your child for changes.

Whenever possible, prepare your child for changes. Overlap

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Kai: Luke's Best Friend

by Cindy Pound

Eighteen months ago my husband, Iain, stopped by Joe Patti's to pick up our fish meal for the weekend and noticed a well-trained Golden Labrador Retriever in a service vest waiting for his owner to make a purchase. Iain asked the owner what service the dog was trained for. As it turned out Murray (the dog) was being raised in Pensacola by his puppy raiser, waiting to move on to Orlando for six months of professional training before being placed with a person with a disability.

The organization, Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), is a nationwide service that provides assistance dogs, free of charge, to people with various disabilities. After visiting the CCI website we knew that if we were fortunate enough to be a recipient, this was going to be a positive impact on Luke's life. Over a year went by, and after paperwork, phone interviews, and an onsite family interview in Orlando, we got the call that we would be going to Orlando for two weeks of intensive training to receive our dog.

The CCI campus, primarily funded by Sea World, was a very impressive facility that housed the 12 recipient families at on-campus dorms for the two weeks of training. Luke was a trooper and made friends with the other kids as well as adults receiving their dogs. The training consisted of 50 hours of lectures plus 50 hours of hands-on dog handling, both on-campus and in public situations.

The February 13 graduation day was a teary-eyed experience with the primary puppy raiser handing over Kai, our beautiful Black Labrador Retriever, to Luke to be his companion in life.

To put it simply, Kai is Luke's best friend. Since Kai has come into our lives, Luke has shown a level of love and affection toward someone else not seen by us before. Kai also has a positive calming effect on Luke which allows him to transition in and out of environments with



Kai keeps watch while Luke takes a nap.

ease. Luke, who has limited verbal skills, is talking to Kai, giving commands, and learning to care for Kai's needs. When Luke and Kai are out in public, strangers come up and speak to Luke and ask about his dog, improving Luke's confidence in his ability to socialize and respond to questions. I can't say enough about how Kai has opened up Luke's life; in such a short time he has become more active, engaged, and independent. Although it was a lengthy process to be accepted into the program, the reward has been more than we expected. Kai has enriched Luke's life, as well as the lives of our entire family.

For more information on Canine Companions for Independence go to www.cci.org.

Pre-empting Behavior (Continued from page 8)

strategies by using items or pictures to help convey meaning. For example, if Daddy is coming home late and won't be at dinner, you might use a dinner plate and Daddy's picture to help you explain. Say, "Dinner first, then Daddy," pointing to the objects as you talk. You may even want to draw a line down the center of a piece of paper, placing the plate on the left and the picture on the right. This will help him understand the concept of "First, Then." First one thing happens, and then something else. Be sure to use this idea with other scenarios throughout the day.

8. Model the behavior you want to see.

If you would like your child to pick up his toys, show him how to put them in the bins. Saying, "Do this," and then modeling what you want will be very helpful for children who seem to understand what you want them to do, but may be unsure. Tell him what you expect rather than what he shouldn't do. For example, rather than saying, "No hitting," try saying, "Hands down" while you model it or guide his hands to his side.

9. Let him have some input.

Give your child choices and control at times when either choice is acceptable to you. For example, he may choose between two chores or when he wants to complete it. Don't start your question with, "Do you want to..." if you will not accept "No" for an answer!

10. Have fun!

Do activities that are fun for both you and your child. Sometimes children misbehave because they don't understand why they need to act a certain way. Explanations won't usually help a child with a delay in communication. Prepare for events by bringing quiet toys to play with, taking breaks, and adjusting expectations as you might do for a younger child.

Debra Keremes is the Director of Training at Sacred Heart Autism Center in Pensacola.

Special Needs Children Require Special Planning

By Kristen Marks, Esq.

A parent of a developmentally challenged child faces unique challenges when that child turns 18 and becomes a legal adult. As a parent of an adult child, you no longer have the right to make decisions for your child. They are now considered in the eyes of the law old enough (maturity in the eyes of the parent has nothing to do with it!) to make their own financial decisions, enter into legal contracts, make their own health care decisions, etc. They can vote, get married, live on their own, enlist in the military...basically they can now legally do anything that YOU can do. (Scary for us parents, eh?) Unfortunately, even if you have a child with developmental challenges that you know is not mentally or physically capable of making such informed decisions on their own, there is not much you can do about it unless you become your child's legal guardian advocate.

Under Florida law, a guardian advocate may be appointed for a person with developmental disabilities if the person, even though competent, lacks the capacity to do some, but not all, of the tasks necessary to care for his or her person, property or estate. A "developmental disability" is defined as "a disorder or syndrome that is attributable to retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, spina bifida, or Prader-Willi syndrome and that constitutes a substantial handicap that can reasonably be expected to continue indefinitely." F.S. 393.063(10). This guardian advocate law is very useful because it streamlines the guardianship appointment process with the courts.

Becoming appointed guardian advocate for your adult child begins

with filing a petition with the court and outlining the reasons a guardian advocate is necessary. Medical reports, including ISP or IEP reports, need to be filed to show the nature of your child's disability. Both parents should consent to the petition (even if divorced) to avoid unnecessary litigation and time delays in appointing a guardian advocate for your child. An attorney will be appointed by the court to meet with your child and represent his or her interests and make recommendations to the court on whether they believe appointment of a guardian advocate for your child is appropriate.

Once appointed, initial reports and then annual reports will need to be filed with the court outlining the care plan for your child and accounting for any of his or her property, social security benefits or other income. Basically the Court wants to ensure that you, as your child's guardian advocate, are acting in his or her best interests at all times.

Another consideration if you have a child with special needs who is receiving, or might in the future receive, any type of public assistance benefits, is to include a Special Needs Trust in your estate planning documents. A Special Needs Trust is a discretionary trust to provide for your special needs child but which won't jeopardize those public assistance benefits.

Bottom line: A parent of a child with special needs should take particular care to ensure their estate plan is in order.

Kristen Marks, Esq. can be reached through www.mypinklawyer.com.



Reader's Corner

"The Speed of Dark" by Elizabeth Moon

Reviewed by Jessica Lapen

Elizabeth Moon has created a complete picture of a man living with autism in the novel, "The Speed of Dark." Set in the future where diseases have been eradicated and where autism can be diagnosed and "cured" in utero, Lou Arrendale is one of the last of his kind. He is living with autism because he was too old to receive the "cure."

Lou is the narrator throughout most of the book. The plot hinges on an experimental treatment that may "cure" autism in adults. Lou works at a pharmaceutical company that becomes a testing ground for the treatment. He is interested in the treatment but is struggling because he has lived for so long with autism. He likes the friends he has, the hobby he participates in (fencing) and the routine of his life. But he also longs to understand "normal" people.

Early on in the book Lou is frustrated that "normal" people change the meaning of words without warning, like when someone told him that a person was being a "real heel." "If someone is a bad person and you want to say that he is a bad person, why not just say it? Why say "heel" or "jerk" or something? And adding "real" to it only makes it worse. If you say something is real, it should be real."

Moon gives a clear, well-rounded view of Lou and his life. He has

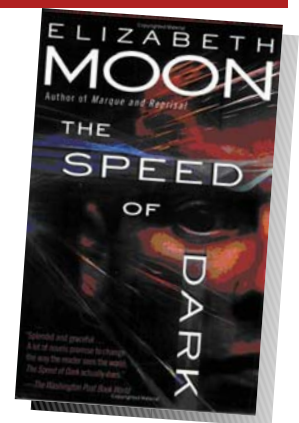
"normal" friends at his fencing group. He socializes with his coworkers, who also have autism, at the pizza place where they have their favorite table. He even has a crush on a "neurotypical" woman in his fencing group.

While Lou does function very well in his job and with his friends, the author shows just how hard it is for him to interact with the world on a day-to-day basis. Lou's trouble talking to new people or his reluctance to change his grocery day make him long to have a "normal" brain. Lou would like to have a relationship with a woman, get married, and have kids. Should he risk taking the treatment, possibly losing the old Lou for a new Lou?

Moon is the author of 17 books of science fiction. She is also the mother of an adult son with autism. She won the 2004 Nebula Award for Best Novel in Science Fiction for "The Speed of Dark"; she was a finalist for the 2003 Arthur C. Clarke Award.

Find this book on Amazon.com and other online bookstores.

If you would like to submit a book review for Reader's Corner, please email Tammy Mendiola, tmendi@live.com.



May/June Calendar of Events

May 15 – 8:30 a.m.
Dr. Debra Berry Malmberg, BCBA-D
Presentation at UWF

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May 17 – 6:30 p.m. Kids for Camp Parent Orientation at ARC Gateway

May 18 – 5:00 p.m. Kids for Camp Teen Volunteer Training at ARC Gateway

May 18 – 6:30 p.m. Kids for Camp Parent Orientation at ARC Gateway

May 22 – 10:00 a.m. GAP End-of-School-Year Picnic at Bayview Park

May 25 – 9:30 a.m. Pensacola Chat at the Village Inn on 9th Ave near Cordova Mall

May 27 – 10:00 a.m. API Council Meeting in Susan's office at ARC Gateway

June 7 – 6:00 p.m. Kids for Camp Teen Volunteer Training at ARC Gateway

June 12 – 8:45 a.m. GAP sponsored Adventures Unlimited trip for ages 11 and up

June 12 – 2:00 p.m. Kids for Camp Teen Volunteer Training at ARC Gateway

June 21 – Kids for Camp 2010 begins!

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Please visit our website www.autismpensacola.org for information on all upcoming events.

Celebrate Our Children



Please join us in congratulating all of these great accomplishments!

Michael Mendiola, son of Rudy and Tammy Mendiola, will graduate from Milton High School on June 3. He will attend the SITE program at NAS Whiting Field in the fall.

William Davis, son of Bill and Charmaine Davis, was named Student of the Month in January at Escambia Westgate School. He is very proud of the certificate he received.

Micah Lapen, son of Danny and Jessica Lapen, won first place for his age group in soccer skills at the Special Olympics area games on April 10.

Matthew Sterzing, son of Duane and



Michael Mendiola, our proud graduate



Micah Lapen receiving his Olympic ribbon.



Matthew Sterzing at the Special Olympics games.

Rebecca Sterzing, won third place for his age group in soccer skills at the Special Olympics area games on April 10.

Garrett Little, son of Larry and Rita Little, won first place in tennis at the Special Olympics area games on April 10.

Great job, everyone! We are very proud of each one of you!

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities has moved!

You can now find CARD at:
6706 North 9th Avenue, Suite C-3
Pensacola, FL 32504

Stop by and see their great new office space, peruse their lending library, and chat with their staff about what you would like to see in CARD's future!



New phone numbers

S. Lee Day – 850-494-7328

Carol DeLugo – 850-494-7325

Dianna Sorensen – 850-494-7324

FAX – 850-494-7333

The Grandparents of Autism Pensacola invite you to the End-of-School-Year Picnic!

Saturday, May 22

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Bayview Park, at E. Blount St. and N. 20th Ave. in Pensacola

Join us for great food, family fun, and
carnival games!



Hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and drinks will
be provided.

Bring a side dish to share, if you wish.

Rain location: ARC Gateway, 10th and
Fairfield.

For more information contact Joan Harbuck
at 449-3762 or Sharon Stebbins at 932-8329.

API Contact Information

To donate, pay dues, obtain membership forms or for other correspondence

mail to address below or visit www.autismpensacola.org

Email: info@autismpensacola.org

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