



Connecting the Pieces

serving families along the gulf coast

Job Transition Program a Success!

In July 2009, a group of teachers from the Washington Campus got together to brainstorm ways to bring vocational training into our camp curriculum. Through a series of meetings during the fall of 2009, these teachers developed the core of what has become our Job Transition Program (JTP). This summer, our campers age 16 to 22 participated in a variety of activities designed to prepare them for adulthood. Our JTP campers completed jobs for a variety of businesses and non profits in our community and gained some important skills in the process.

A hugely successful piece of our Job Transition Program was made possible through API's partnership with Sacred Heart Hospital and the volunteer efforts of Tara Crawford of Trio Consulting. Through this partnership, six of

our campers became interns at the hospital this summer, working in the laundry, print shop, and cafeteria. Each group of two campers was accompanied by a camp staff member to their job site where they worked with a representative from the respective hospital department to complete job tasks.

David Powell of Sacred Heart Hospital described our first summer as a success, and said the hospital is interested in hosting more students as they continue working with API.

In addition to working at Sacred Heart, our JTP teens also completed jobs for Washington High School, Bellview Elementary School, Reflections Hair Salon, and CARD. These jobs



Ryan performed his duties at Sacred Heart with a smile on his face!

Program, continued on page 2



Joey made so much progress at camp!

Hands-On Training for Parents

Ruth Reed can't believe the progress her son, Joey, has made. Not only is he potty trained and talking more at home, Ruth is more confident in her skills as she works with him. "Being a parent

was sent out to parents about this opportunity. The parent had to make a commitment to be at the teacher training the week prior to camp, as well as commit to being in their child's classroom for three weeks of camp. This was a big commitment on the part of the parents, and four wonderful moms made the effort to attend training and receive more instruction in the classroom during camp. Feedback from these parents has been very positive.

campers more one-on-one instruction time.

Working with the lead teacher in Joey's class, Ruth was able to get a potty schedule going for her son during camp that she could carry over into the home. Within a few days of starting the training, Joey was vocalizing the word 'potty' and heading to the bathroom more independently. Since then, he has become independent in getting to the toilet at home. He even asks for a "high five" from an adult after!

instructor was the best learning experience I've ever had. It taught me a much better way to help my child learn on a constant basis, and as a parent that is an amazing feeling."

By pairing the intensive training in ABA with the hands-on instruction in the classroom, parents were able to focus on their child's learning and come away with guidance on how to best teach their camper. It also gave the parent an opportunity to work with other children and see the many faces of autism.

The stories of success from Ruth and our other parent instructors suggest this program will be back in 2011.

Kids for Camp 2010 was a year of new programs and big successes. One of the most successful was the Parent Instructor program. In past years, Kids for Camp has received feedback from parents that they would like more hands-on, in-the-classroom instruction on how to best work with their child. This year, under the guidance of Debbie Keremes, information

Lead teachers who had parent instructors in their classroom said the experience was beneficial for all of the campers in the room because the student-to-teacher ratio decreased when the parent was in the room. This gave all the

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From the director's desk



What a busy summer! Another successful Kids for Camp has flown by! This year's camp was our biggest ever with several new programs implemented that you can read about in this newsletter. From Parent Instructors to our Job Transition Program, we had many successes and made a huge impact on the 80 campers enrolled.

The biggest news of the summer is the API Charter School. On August 2, API submitted an application to create a charter school sponsored by Escambia County. The school will be located in the downtown Pensacola area and will welcome those from our entire area. A Charter School is a free public school. The process of creating one takes a full year-so our school will not open until fall 2011. Plans are to serve children in Kindergarten through 8th Grade in the beginning and add additional grades over the next several years. We are so excited to take this important next step in partnership with Escambia schools and in creating our 'Center of Excellence' for those

living with autism in Greater Pensacola. Enrollment will begin next spring, but if you are interested in learning more, please email school@autismpensacola.org

Fall brings us to the time of the year when we reflect and prepare. If you have paid your dues, you will receive our official ballot by mail in late September. Your vote must be postmarked no later than October 15 to be counted in this year's election. At our Annual Meeting on October 19, we will announce the results of our election of board members as well as hear our annual report. We have a great program planned-mark your calendar now so you don't miss this important meeting!

API would not exist without countless volunteers who give so much! Throughout the year we depend on volunteers to help us with the many activities and opportunities we offer our members. I hope as we approach the fall, you will make plans to get involved in any way you can to join us in making a difference!

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
Rebecca Sterzing	Ted Kircharr
Joe Story	Cate Merrill
Sue Straughn	Cecelia Nanni
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Bentina Terry	Mark Proctor
Joe Webb	Debbie Ritchie
Dr. Kevin Welch	Jim Shirley

Susan Byram - Executive Director

2010 API Executive Committee

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

Job Transition Program . . . Continued from page 1

included collating papers, tending gardens, washing towels, and other tasks. All of our JTP campers were able to work on tasks that stretched their abilities and gave them a glimpse into careers they might want to try.

Another important component of our JTP program was giving back to the community through volunteering. Our teens worked on job skills at several nonprofits in our area – Manna Food Pantry and Gardens, Loaves & Fishes Thrift Store, First Presbyterian Church, and Goodwill Thrift Store. The nonprofits were extremely accommodating, and they were grateful for the helping hand!

Kids for Camp has always offered a unique opportunity for our campers to practice a variety of new skills without fear of being judged, bullied, or teased. Through our JTP program, job skills have now been added to the mix, creating an additional opportunity for our teens to explore possibilities as they prepare for adulthood. Our teens enjoyed the work experiences, and their parents were thrilled that they had the opportunity to learn job skills in a safe environment.

By all accounts, the first year of our Job Transition Program was a huge success!

Special Olympics Comes to Camp!

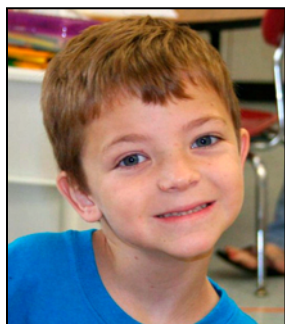
Physical activity is part of every child's summer fun -- running, swimming, playing ball with friends. For our Holm campers, fun and exercise was a daily activity thanks to Special Olympics.

The Young Athletes Program (YAP) is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility. This program is designed to give kids the basic sports skills they need to participate in soccer, baseball, basketball and other team sports.

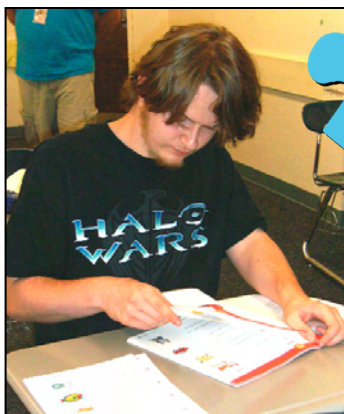
With direction from Dondie Roper, the director of Special Olympics Emerald Coast, and her amazing volunteers, our Holm campers played games and went through a sports circuit that was tailored to each class's ability level. There were balls to catch, handkerchiefs to throw, a balance beam

to walk along and sponges to run with from one hula hoop to another. This was a big hit with our campers, teachers, and parents. Our campers were also fortunate to have the use of the new air-conditioned P.E. building at Holm Elementary during the summer heat. All of the materials for this program were provided by Special Olympics Florida.

During the final week of camp, Dondie and her Special Olympics team put together a Closing Ceremony for each classroom - with ribbons, certificates and other goodies for all the children. The Pensacola Sports Association, another of API's community partners, provided drawstring backpacks for each camper and typical friend to carry home their YAP loot!



Ben loves going to camp!



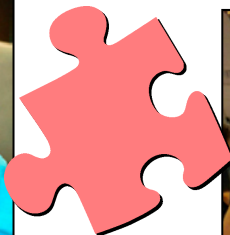
Zack concentrates on his collating job.



Korrin shows Ms. Susan a grasshopper.



Micah's smile lights up the room.



Bryce displays his musical talents.



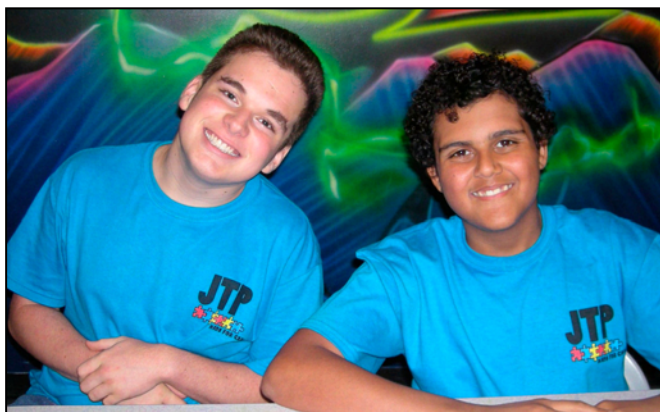
Matisha and Ryan working on a 3D puzzle.



Matthew enjoys Special Olympics.



He shoots! He scores! Go Dylan!



Victor and Corey are great friends!

What to Do When Problem Behaviors Occur

By Debra Keremes, M.Ed., BCBA

The last newsletter presented several strategies to help a child predict what's about to happen or clarify what is being asked. With these strategies, the goal is to give the child some control and help him to understand what's expected. These strategies may reduce the possibility of problem behaviors in many circumstances. However, even with these supports in place, sometimes undesirable behaviors will occur, and how you and others respond immediately following a behavior has a tremendous impact on how frequently it will occur in the future. This month we will focus on what to do after the behavior has occurred. Please remember that these are general suggestions. Every child and every situation is different. If your child is aggressive or self-injurious, or if you feel unable to manage the behavior alone, please consult a behavior analyst or other professional who can give you more specific information and ensure the safety of your child and those around him.



1. **Remain calm and analyze the situation.** Your child may not have the language to explain what he or she wants in a more appropriate manner, or he may not be using the skills effectively (just as adults don't always behave in the way that would probably produce the best outcome). Try not to take it personally. Since social deficits are part of ASD, your child may not understand that it is the "right" thing to do. Staying calm will help you remain in control of the situation. This can be very hard to do, but it will go a long way toward making positive changes.
2. **Be able to describe the behavior to someone who didn't witness it.** A tantrum or meltdown looks very different from one person to another. Children may use many behaviors at the same time or one behavior for several purposes. Describe the behavior in a way that can be measured - based on observable events, not emotional reactions.
3. **Try to determine the function of the behavior.** Your child is communicating through the behavior. It may not make sense to you, but it is serving a function for the child. Try to determine the reason that the behavior occurs. Does he want something he can't have? Does he want to continue doing something when told to stop? Is he refusing to do something? Does he get some type of sensory feedback? Does he want to avoid or escape something?
4. **If you are not certain about the function, keep a record of the specific behavior and what came immediately before and after it.** Over time you should begin to see a pattern. If not, brainstorm with a friend or seek professional advice.
5. **If you are fairly sure about the function of the behavior, don't allow it to be effective.** In other words, "It's been working for him...don't let it continue to work." If the behavior is occurring more frequently, it is being reinforced. Changing your response (or how others react to the behavior) can begin to make the difference.
6. **Clearly state what the child is supposed to do, rather than what he is not to do.** Do not try to explain or negotiate during a tantrum. Saying what not to do may get him to stop one behavior but it could be replaced by something worse. He may have no idea of what is expected unless you specifically tell or show him.
7. **Teach a replacement or positive behavior in place of the prob-**

lem behavior. Make sure the replacement is as easy and effective as the problem behavior in achieving the same function. The expected behavior should be taught after the child is calm, or before the problem behavior is likely to happen again. Often the replacement behavior is simply asking in a more socially appropriate way. If your child is unable to speak, try teaching him to point, hold out his hand, use gestures, or pictures.

8. **Keep track of how often the behavior occurs.** This will show you whether or not what you are doing is working. Usually it is easiest to count the entire episode as one event.



Examples:

- If your child grabs a toy from another child, don't let him play with it even if the other child has had it for a while. Wait until he is calm, and when he is permitted to have a turn, then teach him to ask with appropriate words, signs, gestures, or pictures.
- If he hits you or his sibling because he wants to leave the building supply store, block the hitting, but try to stay until the behavior stops. You might say, "Quiet first and then we can finish shopping." If you must leave temporarily to get the behavior under control, return to the location where the behavior occurred as soon as possible. This time try using supports such as saying, "One more thing, and then home" or teaching the child to ask, "Almost done?"
- If you have already told him "No," to a request, stick with your decision to teach him that you mean what you say. Mixed messages open the door for problem behavior.
- If he screams because he wants your attention, yelling or arguing with him is probably giving him the attention he desires. Ignore the behavior if possible or try holding your finger to your mouth to signal for him to be quiet and then wait to respond until he speaks in a quiet tone of voice.
- If a child who does not speak smiles and hits the child beside him, he may want to interact. Hitting could be his way of starting a conversation. Quickly move him away without talking to him or giving him any attention. Later when he shows interest in the child, but before the behavior happens again, teach him to wave or lightly tap the other child, then assist in teaching him to play.



Some things to keep in mind:

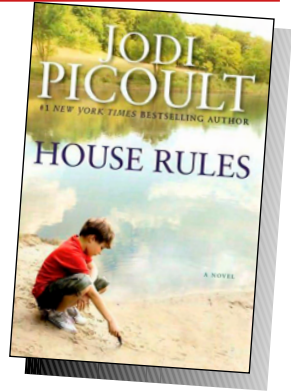
- Be consistent. Changing behavior can be very challenging. Even if you are doing the right thing, the behavior is likely to get worse before it gets better. This is often when people quit trying and think it isn't working. Don't get discouraged! The child may try harder and longer because he doesn't "understand" why it isn't working any more. If you stay consistent, the behavior should soon decrease dramatically.
- Throughout the day, remember to reward your child for using the behavior you want to see. It is best to emphasize the positive rather than correct the negative.
- Changing behavior can be a long process. Call a friend, link up with another parent or a professional --- get support. When you are confident that you are doing the right thing, it is easier to be consistent. You can do it - and your child will be better for your persistence.



Reader's Corner

“House Rules” by Jodi Picoult

Reviewed by Jane Radoszewski



“House Rules” is a murder mystery that revolves around a boy with autism and how autism affects his entire family. It also shows how the legal system looks at autism.

The story is about Jacob Hunt, a teenage boy who lives with his mother and his younger brother, Theo. The book explores how autism has affected all of their lives from the viewpoint of each person. You see how Jacob functions in his every day life, you see how Theo tries to cope being “normal” with a brother with autism, and you see how their mother copes being a divorced parent trying to raise her two very different sons.

Jacob has Asperger’s syndrome and has a difficult time with social cues. He often expresses himself by using quotes from

movies or TV shows. His life is very structured and full of routine, and he is fascinated by forensic analysis. This fascination has him helping police with their investigations. When his Social Teacher, Jess, is found dead, all evidence points to Jacob. Jacob is exposed to the legal system and the fact that few accommodations are made for him once he is arrested. Jacob has to deal with a world not interested in keeping his routine or understanding him.

This murder mystery keeps you wondering what happened. It is a powerful story from beginning to end about being

different in our society. The author has done her research, and anyone who has a child with autism knows that the concern is

always there of what will happen to their child in the event that something goes terribly wrong. This book showed so many similarities that all children with autism display, that it makes it comforting and funny at times. But it also shows how scary it is for our children if they are accused of something and no one knows what really happened. This book keeps you wondering how it is going to end and what will happen to Jacob and his family.

This book can be found at Barnes and Noble or other bookstores in town or online.

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

Fall Festival!

Saturday, October 9, 2010

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Bagdad Rec Center and Park

6860 Pooley St., Bagdad

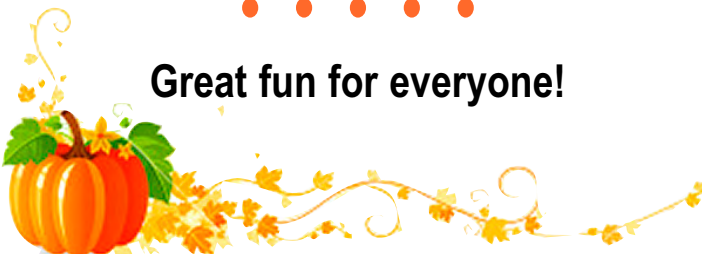
Inflatables!

Fun and games for the whole family!

Snacks and drinks will be provided.



Great fun for everyone!



In Memoriam

In memory of Mr. Carroll Eugene May
from Bethany Kirkland

In memory of Dr. Grover Sowell
(Susan Byram's father)
from Nancy Shugart

in memory of Dylan Randolph
from Trigg Marquiss

In memory of Dylan Randolph
from Dan Livingston

In memory of Dylan Randolph
from Utility Service Company

In memory of Dylan Randolph
from Ed Nixon

In memory of Sandy Roberts
from Debbie Ealy

*Thank you for remembering your loved one
by supporting Autism Pensacola.*

Calendar of Events

Thursday, Sep 9 – 5:30 p.m. - Women Empowered Fundraiser for API



Tuesday, Sep 14 – 9:30 a.m. - Pace Chat at Village Inn on Hwy 90



Friday, Sep 17 - 10:00 a.m. – GAP meeting in API office at ARC Gateway



Tuesday, Sep 21 – 6:30 p.m. - API Evening Meeting, “Tips for Teaching Social Skills” by Dr. Christine Ogilvie



Thursday, Sep 23 – 10:00 a.m. - API Council Meeting, in the API office at ARC Gateway



Tuesday, Sep 28 – 9:30 a.m. - Pensacola Chat at Village Inn near Cordova Mall on 9th Ave



Tuesday, Oct 12 – 9:30 a.m. – Pace Chat at Village Inn on Hwy 90



Friday, Oct 15 – 10:00 a.m. – GAP meeting in API office at ARC Gateway



Tuesday, Oct 19 – 6:30 p.m. - API Annual Meeting at ARC Gateway

Tuesday, Oct 26 – 9:30 a.m. – Pensacola Chat at Village Inn near Cordova Mall on 9th Ave



Thursday, Oct 28 – 10:00 a.m. – API Council Meeting in API office at ARC Gateway



Tuesday, Nov 16 – 6:30 p.m. - Evening Chat at ARC Gateway



Saturday, Dec 4 – GAP Christmas Party

We all need a break sometimes!

Are you interested in a respite co-op?

This is a program that would give you the chance to have a few hours away from your child with autism to relax!

Your only 'cost' is a commitment to take a turn as caregiver. We are currently looking for a church to host this program so we can begin later in the Fall. Please email us at programs@autismpensacola.org if you would like to be a part of this opportunity.



Chili's Fundraiser

Chili's restaurant on Bayou Blvd. will be hosting Autism Pensacola Charity Nights all through the month of September! Every Tuesday in September, between 4:00 and 9:00 p.m.,

simply present a flyer printed from our website

and tell them you are there to support API.

We will receive a percentage of your bill.

Treat yourself to a great meal, and support API at the same time!

Project Lifesaver

Project Lifesaver offers a reliable way to find a person who might wander. In our area, this service has only been available for those with Alzheimer's, but that is about to change.

Thanks to the Escambia Search and Rescue and the support of Alzheimer's Family Services, we believe we can now begin enrolling individuals with autism and related disabilities into this program. Costs will be on a sliding fee scale so that we can support as many individuals as possible.

There are many in our community who would be much safer and whose caregivers would rest easier if they have this system in place.

Please email info@autismpensacola.org with the subject line "Lifesaver" to get more information about this emerging project.

Save the Date!

Dr. Patrick McGreevy will be presenting a VB-MAPP workshop in our area on September 25, 2010.

Details will be available soon.

Announcements

“Tips for Teaching Social Skills to Individuals on the Autism Spectrum”

Presented by Dr. Christine Ogilvie

Tuesday, Sep 21, 2010
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Pollak Training Center
ARC Gateway
Corner of 10th and Fairfield, Pensacola

Special Thanks to the following businesses:

Sam's Club
Target on Bayou Blvd.
Olive Garden
Chik-fil-A on Bayou Blvd.
TGI Friday's
Pizzaman Pizza

for their generous gifts donated to
Kids for Camp 2010.

Attention Grandparents!

Summer is over and as our children head off to school, the Grandparents of Autism Pensacola (GAP) will resume monthly meetings in preparation for all of the fun activities we have planned for the future.

Our first meeting this year will be held on Friday, September 17 at 10:00 a.m. in the API office at ARC Gateway. Lunch out will follow for those who are interested.

We are looking forward to a great year and hoping to welcome some new grandparents to our group. If you know of anyone who has a grandchild on the autism spectrum that hasn't found our group yet, please spread the word!

For more information about GAP please contact Joan Harbuck at 449-3762 or joanharbuck@hotmail.com or Sharon Stebbins at 932-8329 or sharonjoy@aol.com.

Save the Date!

The Grandparents of Autism Pensacola will host our annual Christmas Party on December 4, 2010. Mark your calendar and plan to join in the fun! Details will be posted on our website soon.

CARD Presentations

Several interesting presentations are being hosted by FDDC and CARD in the Tallahassee area. Mark your calendar and plan a road trip!

• • • • •

Sep 16, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. – James Williams, an adult living with autism, will share his insight and experiences. Presentation will be held in Tallahassee at the College of Medicine Auditorium.

• • • • •

Oct 28, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. – Melissa Dubie will speak in Tallahassee on the subject of sexual health. The early session is for parents, educators, and professionals; the later session is for clients only. Presentation will be at the FSU Alumni building on Tallahassee St.

• • • • •

Nov 5, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. – Dr. Scott Bellini will present on social skills issues in adolescence, teens, and young adults. This will be held at the TCC Workforce Development Building.

• • • • •

Nov 16, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. - Dr. Carol Schall will speak on transitioning into adulthood for those on the spectrum. This presentation will be held in the PAEC building in Chipley.

API Family Cookbook

The Grandparents of Autism Pensacola are creating a cookbook containing recipes from all of our friends and families. These books will be sold as a fundraiser in the spring of 2011. All types of recipes are welcome – main dishes, side dishes, desserts, and everything in between! We would like to include a chapter of GFCF recipes, so if you have a child on this diet and have some favorite recipes to share, we would love to have them!

In addition to recipes, we would like to include some heartwarming stories and pictures of our children and their families. So if you have anything like this that you would like to contribute, please do.

If you would like to participate in this project, please send any recipes and/or stories to Joan Harbuck, 3708 N. 12th Ave., Pensacola, FL 32503, or email them to joanharbuck@hotmail.com. All submissions must be received no later than December 1, 2010!

**Women Empowered:
An Evening of Education and Altruism
Free Dinner Workshop
Thursday, Sept. 9th, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Come LEARN: The importance of empowering yourself and your family by getting your personal and business affairs in order.

Come HEAR: "Getting Back Up When Life Knocks You Down" & "10 Easy Ways Women Can Protect Their Family's Assets Now and Later."

Come ENJOY: Great food, fellowship, and door prizes.

Come MEET: New friends

Come SUPPORT: A great cause – Autism Pensacola



Hosted by Kristen Marks of My Pink Lawyer and Michelle Colon-Johnson. This event will take place at Pollak Training Center, 1000 E. Fairfield Dr., Pensacola.



Although this workshop is free, we ask you to make a \$10 donation to our sponsoring nonprofit, Autism Pensacola, that evening.



Dinner provided by Bonelli's Café Italia Restaurant. RSVP required. Please contact Kristen Marks with your name, number of people in your party, email, and phone number at www.mypinklawyer.com or 850-439-1191.

TelaNobis Fundraiser

Do you or someone you know need a website?

This is a huge growth field and we have an exciting opportunity to support Autism Pensacola!

Telanobis.com will donate \$25 per new account and \$10 for future renewals through their web hosting service.

All one needs to do is go to

www.telanobis.com, sign up for a website, and type in "autismpensacola" in the fundraising box.

API will then be credited for the account! Spread the word!

TELANOBIS.COM

Website Hosting Service

*Will pay Autism Pensacola \$25 per account!
(Plus \$10 residuals for future renewals!)*

Enter "autismpensacola" in the fundraising box.

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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Autism Pensacola

serving families along the gulf coast

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