

Merry Christmas



**OUR HOMETOWN STAR MODEL
OUR FACE OF AUTISM
KING RICHARD**

King Richard (R), 16-year-old son of Ann and David Richard of Pensacola, is being seen all over the world this year. ASP is very proud of our hometown hero. The now well-known face has graced the pages of numerous magazines including *Autism-Asperger's Digest* and *Guideposts*. The bookmark on the right is part of a poster chosen as one of the six "Faces of Autism" at a 2006 National Autism Society of America Conference in Rhode Island.

King has proven that he is more than a diagnosis of Autism and has become a successful model. "King loves having his photo taken. It's amazing how professional he can be in front of the camera," says Ann Richard, proud mother of King.

King, a student at Booker T. Washington High School, enjoys science; he is very curious about his environment. His favorite videos are *The Lion King*, *Finding Nemo*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Blues Clues*, *Barney and Winnie the Pooh*. King's favorite movie is *The Wizard of Oz*. According to Ann, "He has memorized the entire script, and can give quite a performance. It is a very powerful and entertaining one-man show." King loves music, the Disney Channel, playing on his computer, and singing in his church choir.

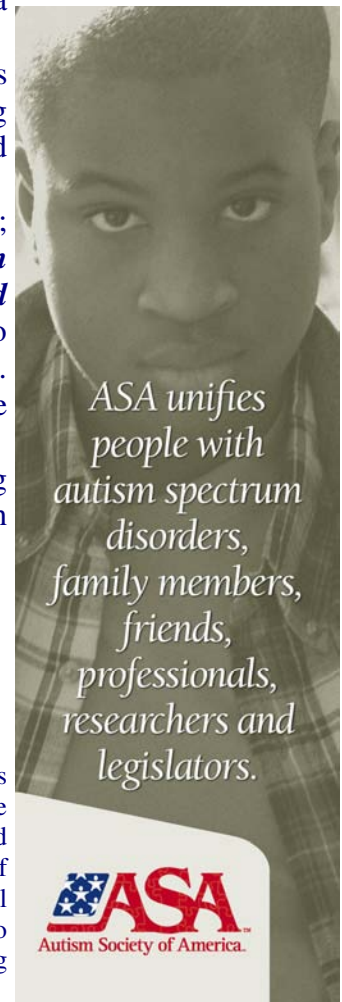
Ann recommends that parents of children of autism "learn everything you can, and get involved in every aspect of your child's treatment, which includes taking advantage of national and local autism resources."

The following is Ann Richard's story about King. Preface on Page 2.

Inside this issue:

KING'S BABY PICTURE BY ANN RICHARD

King Richard	1
Getting to Know You	2
Teen Camp 2006	3
Director's Desk	4
Calendar of Events	5
ASP Christmas Party	6
Lighting The Way	7
Information	8



ASA unifies
people with
autism spectrum
disorders,
family members,
friends,
professionals,
researchers and
legislators.



"GETTING TO KNOW YOU"

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR: *This is a new feature in our Newsletter; I want your story, poems, your favorites, fun facts, or a picture. I will feature something from a member of ASP every Newsletter. We want to get to know each of you more personally. So, send your items in to: sharonfink@yahoo.com*

For my Second feature, I have asked Ann Richard to tell her story about her son, King. Many of you may have heard Ann's inspirational talks. She is a published author, most recently in August 2006 *Guideposts*. Ann is a tireless advocate of Autism Awareness and Education. She wants what most of us want and that's for the lives of our children to be the best they can be. You will enjoy Ann's Story.

FUN FACTS

No one sent me any of their's so I had to use Fun Facts on my husband. Send me yours.

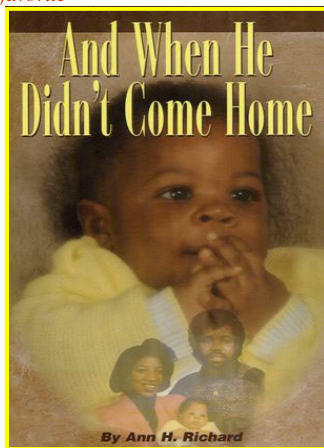
Logan Fink's favorite shows are Andy Griffith, M.A.S.H. , & anything on the History Channel. Loves FL Gator Football, Bluegrass, and Camping.

Michael Bjornstad (right) swings his bat with glee at a Miracle League Softball Game. Michael B's "Buddy" looks on.

Many children with Autism, along with other developmental disorders have enjoyed what the Miracle League has had to offer. If interested in the League e-mail WWW.miracleleaguepensacola.org



On the right are pictures of King Richard as a baby of 3 months and as a gorgeous 16-year-old model.



Continued From Page 1: King's Baby Picture by Ann Richard

"One day, millions of people will see that picture," I said to Dave as we hung the portrait above the fireplace mantle. At the time I didn't know how or when it would happen, but I was convinced that my prophecy would come true.

As the months passed, I discovered that King's looks had deceived me. Although his face was that of a normal baby, I soon learned that something was drastically wrong. After many months of searching for answers, King was finally diagnosed with Autism. Of course, Dave and I were devastated but, after many struggles, Dave was able to accept it. I thought that I'd done the same, but soon discovered that I had a lot more to learn about acceptance.

King's diagnosis led us down a completely different path than the one we'd planned. Our journey is chronicled in my book, "And When He Didn't Come" which details our frustrations and heartbreak as we tried to cope with King's autism. Today, King's baby picture that we so lovingly hung over the fireplace appears on the cover of that book. To our surprise, the book and King's picture was a new beginning that has opened many doors.

One day while visiting the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), I was looking at a magazine and thought that King would look great on the cover. I wrote down the contact information. I waited for months, and then on a whim I contacted the editor. She was a pleasant lady who expressed an interest in King. She sent me the magazine's guidelines and everything got underway. Dave and I took some pictures of King but, after they were developed, we decided that they weren't magazine quality. But we did notice that he was striking poses. He was a natural in front of the camera. We took him once again to a professional photographer. The first photo shoot landed King on the cover of a national autism magazine. King was thrilled to see his picture and referred to the magazine as "King's Book."

The magazine cover ultimately led to a modeling career for King. His photo has appeared in several publications and is one of six panels displayed at Autism Society of America (ASA) exhibits and other events, representing "the many faces of Autism." King's photo displayed at ASA events, has given him national exposure.

Modeling and seeing his pictures being exhibited has made King's self-confidence soar. At the same time, Dave and I are ever aware that King's modeling career remains his own choice. Just as singing and swimming, both of which he excels in, have been his choice. We've learned never to impose our interests on him. Together, we merely follow his lead, wherever that may take us. Dave and I have discovered that it's King's courage and tenacity that has inspired us to reach higher, to try harder. We've learned far more about ourselves from King than he will ever learn from us.

And it is enough, knowing that our child's life has impacted the lives of many and has made a difference in the world.

Who would have thought that a simple baby picture could lead to so many changes in so many lives???

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM A CHILD WITH AUTISM

My disorder makes it hard for me to understand the environment around me. I have barriers in my brain that you can't see but which make it difficult for me to adapt to my surroundings. Sometimes I may seem rude and abrupt, but it is only because I have to try so hard to understand people and at the same time, make myself understood.

People with autism have different abilities: some may not speak, some write beautiful poetry. Others are whizzes in math (Albert Einstein was thought to be autistic), or have difficulty making friends. We are all different and need various degrees of support.

Sometimes when I am touched unexpectedly, it might feel painful and make me want to run away. I get easily frustrated. Being with lots of other people is like standing next to a moving freight train and trying to decide how and when to jump aboard. I feel frightened and confused a lot of the time, like you would if you landed on an alien planet and didn't understand how the inhabitants communicated. This is why I need to have things the same as much as possible. **Holidays** are exceptionally hard because there are so many different people, places and things going on that are out of my ordinary realm. This may be fun for most people, but for me, it's very hard work and can be extremely stressful. I often have to get away from all the commotion to calm down. If I cannot sit at the meal table, do not think I am misbehaved or that my parents have no control over me. Sitting in one place for more than 5 minutes is often impossible for me. If I seem bossy, it's because that is how I try to fit into the world around me. Sometimes I cannot stop myself from talking, sing-

ing, rocking, flicking my fingers or flapping my arms. It helps me feel comfortable. I am unique and interesting. Please try to view the world through my eyes!

Honor someone you love by supporting ASP!

We will send a card telling of your gift in honor or memory of a loved one for donations of \$25 or more.

Mail checks to:
ASP

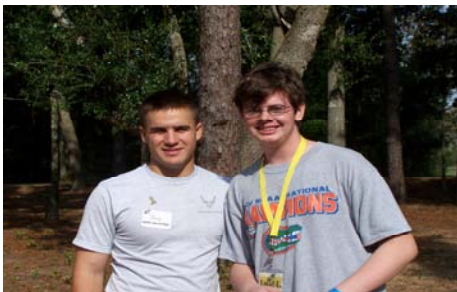
4148 N. Cambridge Way
Pace, FL 32571

ASP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Be sure to include contact information for your honoree.



TONS OF FUN AT TEEN CAMP! NOVEMBER 2006



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



As we are focusing on things we are thankful for, I find myself thinking about our major activity of the past few weeks. November 10-12 we held our second ASP Teen Camp in partnership with Sacred Heart Miracle Camp. Nineteen teens with autism enjoyed 2 and a half days of fun camp activities while having an opportunity to interact with their peers. Campers enjoyed crafts, games, visits from characters, a bonfire and fishing as well as many other activities. There was a rock wall for climbing and a giant slide and bouncer to get a great work out! What a treasure it was to be told by Miracle Camp staff that our camp is their FAVORITE! Of course, we all know how special our kids are! In this season of giving, I am reminded that camp would not have been possible without the gifts of time from our many volunteers. I especially want to thank our volunteer overnight counselors! Four are relatives of teens with autism: **Julian Irby, Duane Sterzing, Bill Harbuck** and **Kevin Mahaffey**. Three are professionals who work with individuals with autism: **Phillip Porterfield** is a teacher at Escambia Westgate, **Aaron Holley** is a behavior tech employed with Lakeview and serving Gulf Breeze Middle School and **Marc Churchwell** a student seeking a degree in regular and special education after retiring from his career in the Navy. Additionally, we were blessed to have 3 students from UWF serve as day camp counselors. **Stephanie Jackson, Todd Amacker**, and **Mike Ellis** were there all of our waking hours! Finally, Miracle Camp requires nursing staff to be present to administer medication and assure a high level of safety for our children. We could not have had camp if it were not for the generosity of **Judy Harrington, Dennis Aglipay**, and **Rebecca Sterzing**, who served as our nursing staff at great personal sacrifice. All these individuals made a huge difference through their dedication to those with autism. What a gift they gave our teens! Thank you. I hope that as we look forward to a new year, you are as excited as I am about the

future of ASP! With our new board in place, ASP is ready to expand our services and make an even greater difference in the lives of those with autism. We have big goals. There is much to be done. Below you see a list of our members who have paid dues this fall. Thank you so much! With your help and continued support, we will make a difference!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!!!! SUSAN BYRAM

UPDATED GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Thanks for sending in your dues!

Aman, Rebecca
 Babb, Shawnon and John
 Barber, Angie & James
 Botts, Betsy & Nathan
 Brown, Nicole
 Burns, Judy Newbill & Richard
 Byram, Mike and Susan
 Carlton, Sabrina
 Clark, Mary & Alan
 Crouse, Jeanine
 Enos, Henry and Dorothy
 Ewy, Peter and Sherry
 Fink, Logan & Sharon
 Geri, Tiffany and Greg
 Halenkamp, Karen & Michael
 Henderson, Connie & William
 Hill, Tony & Violet
 Hillman, Emily & Andrew
 Irby, Marilyn & Julian
 Jones, Dolores
 Knecht, Bruce & Judy
 Little, Larry
 Lott, Stephen
 Lundy, Jeanie
 Neal, Rosalind & Sky
 Nelson, Kim and Larry
 O'Connell, Matthew & Jacqui
 Radoszewski, Jane & Andrew
 Rubardt Peter & Hedi
 Sandfort-Christensen, Scott and Robyn
 Saunders, Dr. Jeff and Ken
 Sterzing, William & Rebbca
 Teston, Keith & Seletta
 Todd, Lynette
 Todd, Melissa & Nickolas
 Westervelt, Eric and Plant, Olga
 Williams, Regina

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS/ COMMUNITY LEADERS:

Gannett
 Foundation
 Mike Hill,
 State Farm
 Julian and
 Jimmy Irby,
 Irby Engineer-
 ing and Con-
 struction, Inc.
 Joe Webb,
 FormSystems



MUST READ:

The Curious Incident
 of the Dog in the
 Night-time by Mark
 Haddon

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO FORMSYSTEMS

THANK YOU FORMSYSTEMS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF ASP. YOUR PRINTING OF THE PROGRAMS AND NEWSLETTERS IS BEYOND GENEROUS. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

MEMBERS PLEASE SUPPORT FORMSYSTEMS AT 479-0800



ASP COUNCIL



ASP Council is a volunteer group of active ASP members who are devoted to assisting the Executive Director in carrying out the details of our work. Any member of ASP is welcome and encouraged to join us at anytime. The Director wishes to thank the following individuals who are committed to serving as leadership on the council for the coming year:

Rebecca Aman, Social Groups
Nicole Brown, Camp
Jenny Doyle, GASP and Dinner
Sharon Fink, Newsletter
Tiffany Geri, Programs
Marilyn Irby, Membership
Jeanie Lundy, Council Secretary



Members at Large:

Sherry Ewy
Joan Harbuck
Linda Sorrell

Join ASA!

Support our parent organization-your voice in Washington!
Check out the latest Autism Advocate! It features three of our own kids!
(Kelly & William Aman and Joshua Geri)
www.autism-society.org

It's not too late to send in your dues!

Mail your tax deductible donation of \$15 (or more) to:
ASP 4148 N. Cambridge Way Pace, FL 32571

ASP Calendar of Events

The following is a list of some of the activities we are aware of related to autism in our area

ASP Regular Evening Meetings- 3rd Tuesday each month (except Dec.) at 6:30pm at the ARC Pollack Training Center (10th & Fairfield, Pensacola). Sitters will be arranged with reservations at least 2 days before the meetings.

January 16- *Dr. Betsy Botts*, "Fads, Fashion, and Science in ASD Treatment"

February 20th-CARD/Dr. Lee Day, Director, "Help Peers Understand ASD"

March 20-CARD/Dr. Carol DeLugo, "Planning a Vacation"



**DEC 15 @ 9:30
GASP CHRIST-
MAS PARTY**

ASP hosts the following monthly events:

ASP Council

ASP Council meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, 9:30 am, ARC Administrative building

Chats

January 8th (2nd Monday of each month), 9:30 AM - Pace Chat-Village Inn Hwy 90 in Pace. Contact *Melissa Watts* 994-9076 with questions.

Saturday, January 20th, 10:00 AM - *Cyndie Hale's* home, 2120 Ortega St. Call 936-6497 for details and directions

January 23rd (4th Tuesday of each month), 9:30 AM-Pensacola Chat-Village Inn-9th Ave. Pensacola. Contact *Joan Harbuck* 432-6903 with questions.

B.I.G.-Biomedical Interventions Group-meets primarily on-line at: <http://aspbiomedgroup.blogspot.com/>
Log on to share ideas and info related to dietary and other biomedical treatments for ASD.

GASP-Grandparents of ASP, 3rd Friday of each month, 9:30 am ARC Administrative Building

December 15th: Speaker, Rene Kivell "Two Sons". Be preparing for **Christmas Party** the next day and it will also be **GASP's Christmas Party**. **Special Gift from Rene Kivell, a licensed massage therapist will be donating free 10-minute massages.**

January 19: Craig Miller from MetLife on "Special Needs Planning" (We encourage Parents to join us for this important meeting)

Social Fun Group: January 19, 7:05 Pensacola Ice Pilots game Tickets \$7 per person. E-mail Rebecca Aman waman@panhandle.rr.com or call Susan Byram by January 16.

Special Events

- ◆ **ASP Christmas Party-December 16th at 11-1 pm, ARC Gateway**
- ◆ **Winter Family Celebration** 7292 Rexford St. Navarre **Jan. 13th, 5:30**. R.S.V.P. to 936-1367 by Jan. 9th

CARD Knowledge at Noon

A lunchtime training series

Bring your lunch and feed your head. 11:00 am—12:30 pm

CMS Building 5192 Bayou Blvd., Pensacola FL 850-484-5040, ext. 1326

December 11th—Everyday Solutions for Everyday Problems-Getting Ready for the new year

CARD is in the process of planning our spring training series. For information about these trainings and future topics call 484-5040 ext 1326. **(Always call CARD 484-5040, ext. 1326 to make reservations.**

Events may be canceled if less than 5 attend)

FLDRS WORKSHOPS

Main Office: 30 E. Texar Drive Pensacola FL 32503

Training Contact: Barbara Shilling, 469-5545 or (888) 445-9662

FLDRS hosts a Lunch 'N Learn series every First Thursday of the month at the Hall Center from 11:00-12:30 pm with a light lunch provided. The topics for the next few months are: **January 4** Test-Taking Skills **February 1** Our own Executive Director, **Susan Byram will speak** "Autism: What it is, What to do about it, How to Cope, How to grow with it." Let's all come and support FLDRS. Let's get involved and learn.

Speaker Rene Kivell will talk on "Two Sons." Additionally, *Mrs. Kivell* has a surprise Christmas Gift for all of us. She is a licensed practicing masseuse. She is donating to the women there that day a **free 10-minute massage.**

Then we'll prepare the items for the Christmas Party to be held on the next day, the 16th..

The Autism Society of the Panhandle Invites You To Attend ASP's

1ST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

*Special Appearance by
Santa Clause and his Elf
He will have lots of
surprises in his bag.*

*Lunch will be provided,
including some
GLUTEN-FREE GOODIES!*



*All those affected with Autism and
Asperger's in our community are
invited to attend*

*ASP's 1st Annual
Christmas Party*

and lots of fun is promised.

***Note to Parents:** Please bring a gift for
each child that you bring. Wrap it, put
their first and last name on it and slip it
into Santa's Bag when you arrive.
The value should be between \$10-\$20*

GASP

(GRANDPARENTS OF THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF
THE PANHANDLE) IS SPONSORING A

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday

December 16th

at 11:00-1:00

AT ARC GATEWAY

3932 N. 10th Ave.

(Turn North off of Fairfield
1st Building on the Right)

MERRY

CHRISTMAS

EVERYBODY!



For More Information on the Party Call
Joan Harbuck @ 449-3762/432-6903
(joanharbuck@hotmail.com)
or Sharon Fink @ 944-1941/516-8153
(sharonfink@yahoo.com)

Navarre Area site of two special events in January!

Winter Family Celebration!

You are invited to the home of Amanda & Jason Whatley , 7292 Rexford St. Navarre
Jan. 13th, 5:30.
R.S.V.P. to 936-1367 by Jan. 9th
Come join us for a lasagna dinner, meet new friends and network with families who understand!

Navarre Area Chat Group organizing!

Organizational meeting at the home of Cyndie Hale, 2120 Ortega St.
Saturday Jan 20 at 10 am
Call 936-6497 for details and directions.



Lighting the way



Tree of Lights to benefit the ARC Gateway Foundation



You are invited to join in "Lighting the Way"

for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Purchase a light that will shine throughout the holiday season.

Honor, thank, recognize, or remember someone special this holiday season by purchasing a light for \$10 to be placed on the Tree of Lights.

The Tree of Lights will remain lit throughout the holiday season to honor those people who have made a difference in your life.

An acknowledgment of your kind gift will be sent to the honoree or their family along with an invitation to attend the Tree Lighting Ceremony. A Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held: **December 14, 2006**
7:00 p.m. at the ARC Holiday Shop
(on the corner of Tenth Avenue and Fairfield Drive)

Please make all checks payable to the ARC Foundation and Mail To:
3932 N. 10th Ave. Pensacola FL 32503

Please designate category:

In Honor/Recognition of _____

In memory of _____

To thank _____

Please send an acknowledgment of my donation and an invitation to the Tree Lighting Ceremony to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

From: (Your name as you would like it to appear on the acknowledgment)

**The Autism Society Of
The Panhandle**

Save The Date!

*"Connecting the
Pieces"*

4th Annual Dinner & Auction
Benefitting ASP

Friday March 30, 2007

7pm, Hilton Garden Inn

Tickets \$75 per person

Send information for Newsletter
to sharonjink@yahoo.com

For General Information Contact:
Susan Byram, Executive Director
Phone: 850-995-0003 or
850-432-4513
autispensacola@bellsouth.net

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