

# The BCC-ASA News

March 2008

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information regarding Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and related disorders.  
We do not necessarily endorse the information printed in this newsletter.

## The President's Communication By Heather Thoms-Chesley



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The next few months will certainly be a busy time for our chapter. I hope you will plan to attend as many of the chapter's coming events as possible. The Partnership Project's Autism Speaker's Series continues with a look at ***Challenging Behaviors*** on **March 12<sup>th</sup>**, followed by ***Social Skills Training*** on **April 16<sup>th</sup>**. The 2007-2008 Series concludes in May with a ***Make and Take It Workshop*** on **May 21<sup>st</sup>**. In addition, check out the Calendar Close-Up on Page 2 for information about **Support Group programs** for the next few months. And don't forget the exciting opportunity we have to hear **Dr. Temple Grandin on March 9<sup>th</sup>** at the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association's Region 2 Conference. This is a chance to hear Dr Grandin speak on Autism at a discounted rate of just \$5 for members of BCC-ASA. For details, see Page 3.

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, our chapter will sponsor an **information table at the Towson Barnes & Noble**, with proceeds from purchases made that day (using our special vouchers) to benefit the BCPS/BCC-ASA Partnership Project. Then, on April 26<sup>th</sup> we will be joining with POAC to bring a **free workshop** to you (see Page 5). This is after we enjoyed our first private movie screening in February, and we look forward to seeing many of you at our **pot-luck social** to be held at the Trellis Services clinic in Cockeysville on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Childcare, including planned activities, will be provided by the professional staff of Trellis so that parents can have a chance to socialize with fellow BCC-ASA members. Look for more details in the next newsletter. Finally, mark your calendar for the **Annual Family Picnic at Cascade Lake** to be held on Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup>.



I hope that many of you will join us as we **GO GREEN and switch over to delivering the majority of our newsletters electronically**. When your membership renewal arrives in April, you will be offered the option of receiving a "hard" copy of the newsletter by mail *for an additional fee*, or, if you provide us with an e-mail address, *we will send your newsletter electronically at no charge*. This switch will also free up more funds within our budget to offer more programming to our members, about which we have received much positive feedback. Thank you in advance for providing your e-mail addresses and making this important change. **Think Spring and Think Green!**

Thanks to the dedicated volunteers who have helped to make all these meetings, events and activities happen. I would encourage you to volunteer to help with an event as "many hands make for light work." We are dedicated to improving the lives of all those affected by Autism, and together we make a difference. To volunteer; feel free to contact our chapter, or me directly at [thoms-chesley@verizon.net](mailto:thoms-chesley@verizon.net).



# Calendar of Events



- March 5 & 6 *Picture Schedules for the Home*, Baltimore, 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- March 6 BCC-ASA Support Group, *Parent Potty Panel: Tips from the Trenches*
- March 8-9 NARHA Region 2 Conference. Speaker: Dr. Temple Grandin
- March 9 Camps and Summer Programs Fair/Camp for Everyone, Timonium, 12:00 p.m.
- March 10 Baltimore County SECAC, Topic: IST, SST, 504 & IEP, Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- March 11 Adult Autism Resource Group (AARG), Speaker: Dr. Charlotte Exner Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- March 12 *Early Intervention Services and Response to Intervention (RTI)*, Arc of Baltimore, Baltimore, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- March 12 Autism Speaker Series: *Challenging Behavior*, Loch Raven High School, 7:00 p.m.
- March 18 POAC of Central Maryland, Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- March 19 Baltimore City Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee, 200 North Ave., 6:30 p.m.
- March 27 Pivotal Response Treatment Workshop featuring Drs. Bob and Lynn Koegel, Columbia
- April 3 BCC-ASA Support Group, Topic: *A Celebration of Grandparents and other Special People in our Children's Lives*, 7:00 p.m.
- April 8 Adult Autism Resource Group (AARG), Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- April 12 Barnes & Noble BCC-ASA Awareness Day/Fundraiser, Towson, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- April 14 Baltimore County SECAC, Topic: Conversation with Dr. Hairston, Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- April 15 Spring Respite and Resource Night, Battle Monument School, Dundalk, 5:30 p.m.
- April 15 POAC of Central Maryland, Towson, 7:00 p.m.
- April 16 Autism Speaker Series: *Social Skills Training*, Loch Raven High School, 7:00 p.m.
- April 16 Baltimore City Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee, 200 North Ave., 6:30 p.m.
- April 26 Applied Behavior Analysis/Teaching Verbal Behavior Workshop, Catonsville
- April 28 BCPS Office of Special Education/SECAC Community Forums, various locations, 7:00 p.m.
- May 1 BCC-ASA Support Group, Annual Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- May 2-3 World of Possibilities Disability Expo, Gaithersburg
- May 16 BCC-ASA Pot Luck Social with Childcare, Trellis Services, Cockeysville, 7:30 p.m.

## Calendar Close-up

On **March 6th**, our Support Group topic will be: **Parent Potty Panel – Tips from the Trenches!** Learn from the “pros” how they have achieved success in this challenging field. In honor of **Autism Awareness Month**, BCC-ASA invites **Grandparents and Special Adults in the lives of children to our support group meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Please feel free to invite anyone who has an exceptional bond with or influence on your child to attend our support group so that we may learn more about their perspectives and experiences.

**Our May 1<sup>st</sup>** Support Group will be BCC-ASA's **Annual Meeting** where we will vote on our proposed slate of officers for the 2008-2009 Board of Directors (see the proposed slate on Page 6), review the BCC-ASA annual report and honor outgoing board members. In addition, some of the winners from the “Celebrating Differences!” autism essay contest will be reading their winning entries! You'll also have the opportunity to enjoy some time with your fellow members while enjoying some delectable delicacies!

# DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS . . .

(ABOUT THE CALENDAR ITEMS)

**Wednesday & Thursday, March 5 & 6, 9:00 -11:30 a.m. or 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

***Make & Take: Picture Schedules for the Home***

Presented by the BCPS Office of Special Education for Balto. Co. parents of young children w/ ASD. Two *repeat* sessions to be held at each location: Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am or 1:00pm at the Resource Center at Campfield Early Childhood Center, 6834 Alter Street, Balto. 21207, or on Thurs., March 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am or 1:00 pm at the Resource Center at Middlesex Elementary at 142 Bennett Road, Balto. 21221. No Cost. For more info. & to register (specify Date & Session): Debbie Page at [dpage2@bcps.org](mailto:dpage2@bcps.org). If you do not have e-mail, call Mary Mitchell at 410-887-3660.

**Sunday, March 9, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

**NAHRA Region 2 Conference with Dr. Temple Grandin**

Temple Grandin, Ph.D. will present *Autism - Thinking in Pictures* followed by a book signing. Location: Marriott Hunt Valley Inn. Cost: \$5 for members of BCC-ASA, \$25 for non-members. Sat. evening March 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Grandin will also give a talk on Animal Behavior at the NAHRA conference's banquet. Cost: \$50. For more information, please contact Ross Braun, NARHA Region 2 Representative. 301-474-6044 or visit <http://www.narha.org/Regions/Region2.asp>.

**Sunday, March 9, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Camps and Summer Programs Fair/Camp for Everyone**

Sponsored by *Baltimore's Child* and The Arc of Baltimore. Featuring programs for the summer of 2008. Meet the camp directors and ask questions. Children's entertainment provided. Enter a drawing at the fair to win a \$500 scholarship toward a camp at the fair. Location: Crowne Plaza Timonium, (formerly Timonium Holiday Inn Select), 2004 Green-spring Drive. For more information: 410-367-5884 or [info@baltimoresChild.com](mailto:info@baltimoresChild.com).

**Monday, March 10, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Baltimore County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Topic: IST, SST, 504 & IEP**

Monthly meetings are held in Room 114 of the ESS Building, located on the BCPS Board of Education's Greenwood campus, 6901 Charles Street, Towson. For more information: Jan Thomas, 410-560-2613 or [jan560@comcast.net](mailto:jan560@comcast.net).

**Tuesday, March 11, 7:00 p.m.**

**Adult Autism Resource Group**

Dr. Charlotte Exner, Dean of Towson University's College of Health Professions, will join us to talk about Towson University's plan for an exciting new program that will focus on the needs of adults with autism. See article on Page 9 for more information about the TU program. If this is your first time attending an AARG meeting, please call Linda at 410-769-9500 during the day for directions.

**Wednesday, March 12, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

***Early Intervention Services and Response to Intervention (RTI)***

Sponsored by The Arc of Baltimore and The Parents' Place of Maryland. Location: The Arc of Baltimore, 7215 York Road. No cost, but registration required. To register contact Joseph Anastasio, 410-296-2272x5346, [anastasio@arcofbaltimore.org](mailto:anastasio@arcofbaltimore.org) or Rochelle Howell, 410-768-9100x109, [Rochelle@ppmd.org](mailto:Rochelle@ppmd.org)

**Wednesday, March 12, 7:00 p.m.**

***Autism Speaker Series: Challenging Behavior***

Sponsored by the BCPS Office of Special Education and BCC-ASA. See Page 7.

**Tuesday, March 18, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Parents of Autistic Children of Central Maryland Meeting**

POAC of Central Maryland is a training, support and advocacy resource for families regarding ABA programs for children with autism. Monthly meetings to discuss parents' experiences creating and funding ABA programs. Location: Coldwell Banker Offices, York Road, Towson. For more information: <http://poacofcentralmd.org>.



## DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS . . . (continued)

**Wednesday, March 19, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Baltimore City Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

Monthly meetings throughout the school year are held in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Board Room at the Board of Education's offices, 200 East North Avenue. For more information: Wendy Foy, Chair, SECAC at [fox\\_foy@yahoo.com](mailto:fox_foy@yahoo.com).

**Thursday, March 27, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Pivotal Response Treatment Workshop with Bob and Lynn Koegel**

Sponsored by the Howard County Autism Society. Location: Howard Community College, Kittleman Room, Columbia. Cost: \$75 for families and individuals, \$100 for professionals. For more information: 410-290-3466 or <http://www.howard-autism.org>.



**Saturday, April 12, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Barnes & Noble BCC-ASA Awareness Day/Fundraiser**

Stop by the BCC-ASA information table to find out what's new, and when you're ready make your purchases from the store, pick up a voucher at the check-out which will designate a portion of the proceeds to go to BCC-ASA. *Everyone* needs more books, don't they? Location: Towson Barnes & Noble.

**Monday, April 14, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

**Baltimore County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Topic: Conversation with Dr. Hairston**

See article on Page 5. For more information: Jan Thomas, 410-560-2613 or [jan560@comcast.net](mailto:jan560@comcast.net).

**Tuesday, April 15, 5:30 p.m.**

**Spring Respite and Resource Night**

Representatives from a number of local agencies and programs that serve children with special needs and their families will be available to give out information and talk with families about what they have to offer. A light dinner donated by local businesses will be offered, and families with children are welcome. Location: Battle Monument School, 7801 E. Collingham Dr., Dundalk. FMI and to confirm attendance, call The Social Work and Family Center at: 410-288-0391

**Wednesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.**

**Autism Speaker Series: Social Skills Training**

Sponsored by the BCPS Office of Special Education and BCC-ASA. Location: Loch Raven High School. No cost. For more information: 410-655-7933 or [RSVP@bcc-asa.org](mailto:RSVP@bcc-asa.org).

**Saturday, April 26, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis and Teaching Verbal Behavior in the Classroom**

See article on Page 5.

**Monday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.**

**Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Special Education/SECAC Community Forums**

See article on Page 5.

**Friday & Saturday, May 2-3, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo**

Presented by Caring Communities, Inc. Location: Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Gaithersburg. Cost: \$3, or free with expo pass available from website. FMI: 1-866-227-4644 or [www.caringcommunities.org](http://www.caringcommunities.org).

**Friday, May 16, 7:30 p.m.**

**BCC-ASA Pot Luck Social w/ Childcare, Cockeysville. See May edition of *The BCC-ASA News* for more details.**

## April 28<sup>th</sup> : New Date for Spring Special Education Community Forum

by Elisa Hartman

Director, Partnership Project of BCC -ASA & BCPS Office of Special Education



If you have something important to express about your child's education, both positive and/or negative, and you want to be heard by people who have the power to do something about it, the Community Forum is the place to go! The BCPS Office of Special Education, in collaboration with the Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC), is holding the next **Community Forum at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**, to listen to general concerns about the delivery of special education services AND to gather public input about the '08-'09 BCPS Special Education Staffing Plan. The forums will occur at five elementary school locations simultaneously to encourage broad participation: **Charlesmont, Church Lane, Dogwood, Joppa View, and Ridge Ruxton** School. The forums are attended by members of the Board of Education, Area Superintendents, Office of Special Education personnel, school principals, and parents. Staff look for common concerns expressed across the five meetings and try to work those priorities into the staffing plan wherever possible. Priorities for special education spending are reflected in the yearly updated Staffing Plan.

If you are unable to attend one of the meetings, your comments can be submitted in writing to: [staffingplan@bcps.org](mailto:staffingplan@bcps.org) or to the Baltimore County Public Schools, Office of Special Education, 6901 Charles Street, Towson, MD 21204. To preview the 2008-2009 Special Education Staffing Plan, visit [www.BCPS.org/offices/special\\_ed/staffing\\_plan.html](http://www.BCPS.org/offices/special_ed/staffing_plan.html) anytime after April 17th.

### Want to Talk about Special Education with the County School System's Top Official?

The Baltimore County Special Education Advisory Committee (SECAC) is hosting a conversation with Superintendent Dr. Joe Hairston, on **April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** in the ESS Building on the grounds of the school system offices (6901 Charles Street). This event was conducted as an open question/answer discussion last year and provided a unique opportunity for direct access to the system's chief! Don't miss this opportunity!

### Unity Jazz Fest 2008 to Benefit BCC-ASA

Our chapter was thrilled to learn that all ticket proceeds from the Unity Jazz Fest 2008, scheduled for February 26<sup>th</sup> at Stemmers Run Middle School in Essex, will be donated to BCC-ASA. The jazz ensembles of Chesapeake High, Deep Creek Elementary & Golden Ring, Parkville & Stemmers Run Middle Schools are scheduled to perform. Each jazz band plays a 10-15 minute set and at the end of the concert the bands combine for a mass number, "Theme from The Family Guy," where all 120 musicians and teachers perform together. Thank you Unity Jazz Fest 2008!

**BCC-ASA Co-Sponsors FREE ABA Workshop** BCC-ASA, in conjunction with Parents of Autistic Children of Central Maryland and the Central Maryland Regional Office of the DDA, is co-sponsoring a free workshop ***Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis and Teaching Verbal Behavior in the Classroom***. Led by Thomas Caffrey, M.Ed., BCBA, the workshop will demonstrate through extensive use of video how the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) that emphasize the teaching of verbal behavior are being applied effectively in *public schools* to teach children with autism language, academics, and other important skills. This workshop is for professionals and parents and will be held on **Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, Building Q Lounge, 800 South Rolling Road. For more information, and to register go to <http://www.thefate.org/training/index.asp> and scroll down to the April 26th date on that page (Teacher Training) to get to the button for registration.

### **Proposed Board for BCC-ASA 2008-2009**

Listed below are the nominees for the 2008-2009 Board of Directors. If you are unable to attend and vote in person at our Annual Meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>, please be sure to return the proxy included with your BCC-ASA dues renewal notice which will be mailed next month .. Every vote is important, as we are a member-driven group.

#### **Executive Board for 2008-2009 (elected for 1 -year terms)**

##### **President: Heather Thoms-Chesley**

Heather has been a board member since 2001, serving as Treasurer and President. She is a homemaker and the mother of four. Victoria, her oldest, is 10½ years old and has Rett Syndrome.

##### **Vice-President: Mary Ellen Curtis**

Mary Ellen is completing her first year as Vice-President. She has served on the board for the past six years, serving as Secretary for two years, and as Newsletter editor for the past three years. Her daughter, Laura, is 11 years old.

##### **Past-President: Eva Williams**

Eva, after two terms as Co-President, continues in the role of Past-President. A former school teacher, she has served on the board for the past five years. Jake, her younger child, is eight and is on the spectrum.

##### **Treasurer: Carol Brown**

Carol continues in her role as Treasurer of BCC-ASA and has served on the board since 2005. She works for Baltimore County, and her son Curtis is 13.

##### **Secretary: Helen Shafer**

Helen has agreed to continue as Secretary on the Executive Board. She is a proprietor of multiple businesses; dealing in medical supplies and early intervention for pre-school children. She and her husband P.J. are the proud parents of two – their 5½ year-old son has ASD.

#### **At-Large Board Members (elected for 2-year terms )**

##### **Returning Board Member: Janet Preis, Ed.D., CCC-SLP**

Janet will continue in the second year of her term on the board. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at Loyola College and a practicing speech-language pathologist. Her research interests are primarily in the area of autism. She has become a valuable member of our Library Committee.

##### **Returning Board Member: Debbie Page**

Debbie has a son with autism who will be turning five and works as an Instructional Assistant for the Autism Early Intervention Programs for Baltimore County Public Schools. Debbie and Helen have been responsible for the social outings BCC-ASA members have enjoyed over the past year as well as coordinating the Support Group programs.

##### **Returning Board Member: P.J. Shafer**

P.J. continues his term on the Board. He is a financial planner and attorney, and, together with his wife Helen, is responsible for opening the Shafer Center for Early Intervention. He, along with President Heather Thoms-Chesley, has been attending the Baltimore County Special Ed Citizens Advisory Counsel as a representative of the BCC-ASA for the past two years.

##### **Returning Board Member: Tom Hogle**

Tom has agreed to stay on the Board for a new, two-year term after successfully filling a board vacancy for the past ten months. Tom is employed as a science writer at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. His six-year-old son was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome in December 2006.

##### **New Board Member: Adrienne Gleason**

Adrienne is excited to be joining the BCC-ASA board. She is a stay-at-home Mom with 5 and 3-year-old sons. Her younger son is on the spectrum.

##### **New Board Member: Elaine Michelson, MS, CCC-SLP**

Elaine is a speech-language pathologist in private practice who specializes in the evaluation and treatment of children with autism. She is a strong supporter of early intervention.

## ASA Members Serving on Non-Board Positions:

**Newsletter Editor:** **Mary Ellen Curtis** will continue as editor and designer of our bi-monthly newsletters.

**Web Master:** **Will Cassano** will continue to be the webmaster, keeping our website up to date.

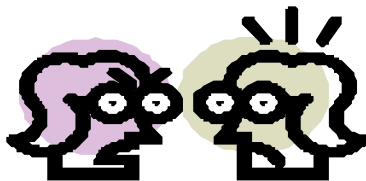
**Librarian:** **Elaine Williams** will again be our librarian screening the many books on the market.

**Adult Autism Resource Group—Ellen Feifarek and Linda Pearl** will continue as Co-leaders of this working task force to address the needs of transitioning youth and adults with ASD by working to improve services through increasing the quality, quantity and range of options available to adults with ASD and their families.

**Baltimore County Public Schools/BCC-ASA Partnership:** **Elisa Hartman** will continue to serve as the Chair of this successful partnership.

Our chapter is driven by the vision of our membership, and volunteers such as these continue to help our organization move forward. They have provided much-needed support in our goal of serving those individuals on the Autism Spectrum and their families.

BCC-ASA would like to thank all those individuals who worked so hard on the Board during the past year. Special thanks go to retiring board members **Joan DiPietro** and **Hilary Hellerbach** for the unique gifts and talents they brought to our board over the years. A special thank you goes to former Newsletter Editor and Typesetter **Annette Piatek** who created the BCC-ASA newsletter in 1991 and continued to edit it until 2005! She then continued to do the typesetting until last November! **Thank you Annette!**



## THE 2007-2008 Autism Series: THE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Sponsored by the Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Special Education  
and the Baltimore Chesapeake Chapter of the Autism Society of America

### Challenging Behaviors

*Presenter:* **Robin Tapette**  
*BCPS Autism, Alt-MS, Resource Teacher*

*When:* **Wednesday March 12, 2008**

*Time:* **7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

*Where:* **Loch Raven High School Auditorium-  
1212 Cowpens Avenue, Towson 21286**

To register, and for further information,  
email [RSVP@bcc-asa.org](mailto:RSVP@bcc-asa.org) or call 410-655-7933



## Essays About Autism 2008

### *Celebrating Differences*

Are you an individual with autism? Do you have a brother or sister with autism? Are you the parent or grandparent of an individual with autism? Are you the teacher of a student with autism? Or, are you the friend of a person with autism? We'd like to hear from you! What are the special, positive things that have come from your experience? What have you learned? How have you been challenged to re-think your notions of autism? How have your experiences made you a better, more understanding person?

The Baltimore -Chesapeake Chapter of the Autism Society of America (BCC-ASA), in conjunction with the Baltimore County Public Schools, is accepting essays, poems and artwork to celebrate *Autism Awareness Month 2008*, which takes place in April. Winning entries will be awarded cash prizes and will be published in the Baltimore -Chesapeake Chapter of the Autism Society's newsletter.

Prizes will be awarded for each of the following categories:

1. Individuals with Autism
2. Family Members or Friends
3. Elementary School Students
4. Middle School Students
5. High School Students
6. Educators or Therapeutic Professionals

Contest Rules: Essays and poems are limited to 500 words. Please include your name, grade, school, phone number, and address. One entry per person. Entries must be postmarked by March 21, 2008. BCC-ASA reserves the right to publish entries. Entries cannot be returned. Please e-mail your submissions to: [questions@bcc-asa.org](mailto:questions@bcc-asa.org).

Or mail to :  
BCC-ASA Essay Contest  
P.O. Box 10822  
Baltimore, MD 21234

### Scholarship Funds Available

Each year, current BCCASA paid members are able to access funds to offset the cost of trainings, conferences, or workshop attendance. These funds are available from the **Fowler Memorial Fund** established to honor the memory of Chuck Fowler. To utilize these funds, submit a request before the event detailing the date, the event and funds requested. After the training, submit a copy of the registration form to BCCASA, P.O. Box 10822, Baltimore, MD 21234 or electronically to [questions@bcc-asa.org](mailto:questions@bcc-asa.org) and reimbursement will be mailed to you.

Also, if you are unable to afford the cost of membership in the Chapter and/or the National Autism Society, we can provide assistance. Please let us know.

### In Memorium

Several donations to BCC-ASA were received in memory of Stokely Linwood Brooks, Jr., father of chapter member Mary Lee Richardson. We gratefully acknowledge these donors' generosity in memory of Mr. Brooks:

- Diane M. Andersen
- The Staff of *Being There Senior Care*
- Barbara Graves and Family
- Michael Helinski and Family
- John E. Hermann
- Martha Powers and Family
- Ruthann Richardson
- John and Carol Shilling
- Jane D. Simoes
- Lois Stickles and Family

### BOOK DONATION TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our chapter library is burgeoning with a great collection of up-to-date books and other resources. In order to increase the circulation of this treasure of materials, we have donated a number of books, videotapes, and magazines to the Baltimore County Public Schools, where they will be readily available to parents and school professionals through their library at the Resource Center for Families and Schools at White Oak School. Families, BCPS staff, and community members throughout the county are welcome to borrow from the collection. We encourage you to check out these materials, which have much valuable, user friendly information for both parents and professionals to help children with autism spectrum disorders.

- Elaine Williams, Librarian

### \$50,000 Gift to Establish Center for Autism at Towson University TU to Offer Services for Young Adults with ASD

- from the Towson University website -

Through a gift of \$50,000 from Douglas and Therese Erdman, the College of Health Professions at Towson University will establish the Center for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders which will offer and evaluate model programs for addressing the needs of adults, primarily young adults, with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. In addition to these services the center will support ongoing education for a variety of professionals who serve this population and provide outreach to a variety of entities.

Young adults entering higher education or the workplace are faced with a number of challenges. They find themselves dealing with career, health care, time-management and professional relationship issues as they move into new adult roles. For the individual with ASD, these challenges can be particularly difficult. At this time few resources are available to support individuals with ASD as they make the transition from home life toward independence. Professionals who focus on this group are limited in number, as are researchers.

The Erdmans have been touched by ASD and have experienced first-hand the support available to families. Douglas Erdman, an alumnus of Towson University, said "Our youngest son, Ross, has benefited from the many programs that exist for children with autism, but we have noticed that outreach seems to disappear for young adults. There just is not enough done for these kids as they matriculate into adulthood. That is what this gift is about: it is empowering young adults who have ASD to keep learning and to live life to their fullest."

Dr. Charlotte Exner, dean of Towson's College of Health Professions, said, "The generosity of the Erdmans provided us with the critical start-up funding we needed to launch this important initiative. We view it as the first step in creating an effective, integrated, interdisciplinary resource for individuals with ASD, their families, professionals, employers, and the general public." She also noted that the Center will rely on the expertise of Towson University faculty and staff with professional experience working with this population. Occupational therapy and speech-language services will serve as the base for the Center, to which other areas of professional expertise will be added in order to provide unique programming, conduct research, and support outreach.

Editor's note: Dr. Exner will be speaking to the AARG about this project at their March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. See the calendar for details.



This just in . . .  
The most recent MSDE  
autism statistics are  
now posted on our web-  
site, [www.bcc-asa.org](http://www.bcc-asa.org).

**Officers and Board Members**

President: Heather Thoms -Chesley  
Past President: Eva Williams  
Vice President: MaryEllenCurtis  
Secretary: HelenShafer  
Treasurer: Carol Brown  
BoardMembers: JoanDiPietro  
Hilary Hellerbach  
Tom Hogleund  
Debbie Page  
JanetPreis  
P.J. Shafer  
Newsletter: MaryEllenCurtis  
Website: Will Cassano

**Chapter Phone:** 410-655-7933  
**Website:** www.bcc-asa.org  
**E-mail:** questions@bcc-asa.org

**Support Group Meeting**

The next support group meeting will be **Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 p.m. at Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital. The support group meets on the **first Thursday** of every month . Childcare is *not* available.

**Directions to Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital:**

From North of Baltimore:

Take the Beltway (I-695) to the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) south. From I-83, take the Northern Parkway exit, 10B West. Make a right turn off the exit ramp and make an immediate right turn onto West Rogers Ave. (the first street off the exit ramp). Go north on West Rogers Ave.; the hospital is on the right.

From Baltimore and South:

Take the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) north to the second Northern Parkway exit, 10B West. Turn right onto West Rogers Ave. (the first street off the exit ramp). Go north on West Rogers Ave.; the hospital is on the right.

It's time to start looking forward to the Baltimore-Chesapeake Chapter's Annual *PICNIC AT CASCADE LAKE* — Sunday June 29th!



Permit #5672  
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