



Autism New Zealand Inc.
Including Asperger Syndrome and Related Disorders

**Taranaki
Branch
Newsletter**

**June/July/Aug
2011**

Hi Everyone,

Sir Wilson Whineray has agreed to become the first patron ever of Autism NZ. His long list of achievements include being the longest serving All Black captain and NZ sportsman of the year in 1965, as well as chairman of the board of Carter Holt Harvey. He said "I am pleased to be able to be involved with the work that Autism NZ are doing in communities throughout this country. Autism is a condition that affects over 40,000 kiwis and their families and yet it does not have the profile or support that it deserves. If my patronage can help to change attitudes then I will consider this a success."

ASD Information Evening

Wednesday 8th June 2011, 7.00pm

Plymouth Hotel, cnr Courtenay & Leach Streets, New Plymouth

Don't miss our popular annual ASD Discussion Night, bringing you the latest health and education information. Guest speakers this year are Lyndal Henry (Occupational Therapist) who will speak about sensory issues, and Cheryl Palmer ('Go To' person for ASD issues in Special Education). Entry is by gold coin donation, or purchase at the venue of an Autism NZ enamel lapel pin for only \$5.00

ALL WELCOME

REGISTRATION FORM FOR ASD INFORMATION EVENING ON PAGE 10 OF THIS ISSUE

We hosted a fantastic 'visuals' talk back in March, at which two of our parents (Rowena Newey and myself) and a psychologist (Nicola Waters) spoke and gave examples of how useful and in fact crucial visuals are when living or working with an individual on the spectrum. Why visuals were important for any one with processing difficulties was at first outlined, and then examples of visuals that both Rowena and I had either purchased or made and had used with our kids were shown.

The presentation was attended by about 137 people which included parents, teachers, teacher aides, speech language therapists, social workers and special education workers. Here are a few of the comments we received on our feed back sheet:

"Wow, heaps to take back to work. We will be changing many of our teaching of ASD students (and staff). It is excellent having an event like this as it has meant I could offer it all my teacher aides and almost my whole team could come. THANK YOU."

"Very informative in a very personal way."

"Very practical advice. Fantastic speakers, great to hear from people actively involved in living the situation."

"Great practical examples."

It was a great presentation to be a part of and I enjoyed sharing what I have learned and what works for my son. So, enjoy this issue of our newsletter!

Karen - akglenny@ihug.co.nz or 7512287



**ENAMEL
LAPEL PIN
\$5**

Pg 2 - From Judi our Information Coordinator
Pg 3 - TDHB update MedicAlert advert
Pg 4/5 - Info for Caregivers
Pg 6- New in the library
Pg 7 - A Trip Overseas
Pg 8 - What's On?
Pg 9 - Items of Interest
Pg 10 - Registration for ASD info evening
Pg 11 - Think Differently

President

Mairi Wharehoka
Ph 7591861

Secretary

Currently covered
by President and Treasurer

Treasurer

Vanessa Elliott
Ph 7579231

Information Coordinator

Judi Gopperth
Autism NZ Inc.
Taranaki Branch
Communication House
62 Powderham Street
P.O. Box 3355
New Plymouth
taranaki@autismnz.org.nz
Ph (06) 7695958

National Office
0800 AUTISM
0800288476

www.autism.org.nz

NOTES FROM OUR INFORMATION CO-ORDINATOR JUDI GOPPERTH



Welcome to our 2011 Autism New Zealand Taranaki Branch Newsletter. We have had a wonderful summer; with autumn temperatures continuingmay it last a little longer before winter ascends.

Office Location and Hours

Yes we are still in Communication House (although visitors may at first consider the building closed) the difference is that the entrance is from the back of the building with the advantage of parking space available also.

Physical and Postal Address: Communication House 62 Powderham Street New Plymouth 4310

Phone: 06 769 5958

Email: taranaki@autismnz.co.nz

Office hours: Tuesday - Thursday 9.30 - 3 pm

Remote Server

AutismNZ Branches throughout the country have been realigned with the National/remote server. After a few cliques the set up is almost complete. If however you are not receiving emails and should - or receiving emails and prefer not to please let us know.

Successes

2011 has been busy and with many successes

- **Visuals Seminar** Autism Taranaki Branch - over 130 attended this hugely informative and enlightening evening. Fantastic effort by all. Special thanks to our presenters Karen Glenny, Rowena Newey, Clare Back and Nicola Walters.
- **Hearts and Minds** working with the mind through the heart - March 31st Autism New Zealand hosted in conjunction with Autism Taranaki Branch 'Minds & Hearts'. Sixty attendees appreciated the opportunity to hear and interact with specialist presenters Dr Louise Ford and Winnie Yu Pow Lau psychologist who spoke of ASD-transitions and relationships.
- **Earlybird programme** was held in New Plymouth earlier this year with five families attending. Earlybird is a programme for families of children ASD diagnosed under the age of five.

Social and Support groups (Friendly, informal, helpful and inclusive)

A reminder that you are invited to join group(s) of your choice. All welcome

- Girls Night Out - meet monthly 'Coffee and dessert' Thursdays 7.30 @ Elixar
- New Plymouth Coffee group - meet monthly - Mondays @ private homes
- Hawera Coffee group - meet every two months - date and venue TBA
- Appetitude Social/Support group (adults) - meet monthly - Sundays 2pm @ Espresso

General Reminders

Library loans: love to receive any outstanding loans back - no questions asked-will just appreciate having resources back to lend out to others. Many thanks.

PS New books have arrived - see page 6 for details.

Judi Gopperth

May 2011



Taranaki District Health Board
Health Update – Autism Spectrum Disorder Co-ordination

Taranaki District Health Board has a contract with the Ministry of Health to provide a co-ordination service to families who have a child newly diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD Co-ordination). The co-ordination service is not a Therapy Service.

Some of the Principles within the contract are as follows;

- Children and young people with developmental issues have those issues addressed faster and more efficiently resulting in improved levels of satisfaction from families and Whanau about the support they receive.
- The service includes the establishment (and ongoing support) of a developmental plan that is based around the family and the developmental needs of the individual.
- Identification of developmental issues that are in need of co-ordination will be based on the NZ ASD Guideline.
- Following assessment and diagnosis of ASD, the provider must ensure appropriate referrals are made to meet the needs of the individual.

Referrals for this Service are made through a Health or Education Provider.

The service will be delivered by Anne Llewellyn and Clare Back Paediatric High Needs Service Coordinators (PHNSC). We both work part time and are based at The Child and Adolescent Community Centre.

The ASD Co-ordination role will be achieved in collaboration with the work we already undertake as the PHNSC.

Processes within the role are still currently being developed and we have ongoing discussions with other services who may be involved with a child and their family / Whanau.

On the 30th June we will be attending an ASD Co-ordination day in Wellington. Here we hope to gain knowledge about how the role is working in other District Health Boards throughout the country, Unfortunately this Service is not available to all DHBs.

Clare Back & Anne Llewellyn
Paediatric High Needs Service Coordinators





MedicAlert

Save 20%
New 'Enrolment Fee' Discount
Exclusive Offer - Expires 30th September 2011

To make an inquiry contact
MedicAlert
0800840111
www.medicalert.co.nz

TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



- **AVOID TOO MUCH STRESS OR OVERLOAD.** Watch for signs that s/he is getting too tired or anxious. Stimming (hand wringing, fidgeting, head rubbing, etc) can be a useful clue.
Reason: People with ASD can have some or all of their senses turned up too high, causing hypersensitivity to sound, touch, taste, smells and visual stimuli, and a vastly reduced tolerance for stress.
- People with ASD may have poor eye contact, so don't expect them to look at you when they are speaking to you.
Reason: They find it difficult to listen and think whilst maintaining eye contact.
- Announce changes that might occur **IN ADVANCE**, allowing the prospect of change to sink in.
Reason: People with ASD can find it difficult to cope with changes to their predicted routines and must be prepared, otherwise extreme stress and meltdowns may result.
- Give clear, specific and concrete messages, whether these are instructions, information or requests. Eg, do not say "clean up your room"; instead say "pick up the clothes on the floor". Be aware that metaphors, idioms, slang etc may not be understood.
Reason: People with ASD think very literally and logically, and have difficulty with abstract thinking.
- Give one instruction at a time.
Reason: People with ASD can only focus on one thing at a time. Multi-tasking is very difficult or impossible for them.
- Give them time to answer any of your questions.
Reason: They have a slower processing time and sometimes it can take them a while to formulate an answer.
- Realise that if a person with ASD feels pressured, they may give a stock-standard answer rather than the truth. (this could include "I don't know", "yes", "maybe")
Reason: They know it will get them out of trouble quickly and relieve the stress they are feeling.
- Don't expect normal emotional responses. People with ASD may respond very differently to emotional matters, e.g. bereavement, expressions of love and affection.
Reason: ASD is a developmental disorder so there is delayed emotional development. The person may be very emotionally immature and have childlike qualities.
- Choose the right time and place for communicating.
Reason: People with ASD focus strongly on one thing at a time, and attention-shifting can be a long process. It is never a good idea to disturb an person with ASD who is concentrating on something else.

- Make written lists for them and communicate information via the written word or a diagram as well as verbally. A diary or calendar can be useful.
Reason: People with ASD often have a very poor short term memory, and are visually oriented, so verbal information takes them longer to process and retain.
- Allow the person with ASD space, time alone, recuperation time and time for personal hobbies and interests.
Reason: They can be hyper-sensitive to outside stimuli and these things are important ways in which they regenerate and deal with stress.
- If the person with ASD is socially inept, explain the "rules" of each social occasion before it starts, so that he or she is aware of what is expected and can observe the script or model which you provide.
Reason: Intuitive social skills do not come naturally to most people with ASD - they have to learn them. Eg, they may not know when to speak, when to join in a conversation, how to maintain a conversation, smalltalk etc. They may come across as very rude, with no intention of being so.
- Don't compel the person to attend functions or celebrations if they don't want to.
Reason: Social interaction can be overwhelming for people with ASD and can cause too much pressure.
- Help them to organise their belongings if required.
Reason: Some people with ASD find organisation very difficult. They tend to be at either extreme, either extremely messy or extremely tidy. The extremely messy ones should not be reprimanded for not keeping their belongings tidy - it is almost impossible for them. Simple solutions such as labeled baskets may help. The extremely tidy ones are usually obsessive about their belongings being in the correct place and may get very upset if you try to move them out of place.
- Limit their choices and be very specific with choices.
Reason: They can find choices overwhelming and can be overly concerned with making the wrong choice.
- Don't be confrontational.
Reason: People with ASD fear anger and confrontation and find it impossible to think during conflict. They may even accuse you of being angry when you are not.
- Don't drop hints, be subtle or expect your body language or tone of voice to convey a message.
Reason: People with ASD have difficult recognising non-verbal communication - e.g. facial expressions.

Resources used: "Negotiating Relationships With Aspergers" from "Loving Mr Spock" by Barbara Jacobs

"Ten Essential Tips for Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder" from "The Essential Guide to Secondary School" by Sue Larkey & Anna Tullemans

Please feel free to contact Autism NZ Taranaki Branch - Coordinator Judi Gopperth
ph 7695958 or email taranaki@autismnz.co.nz

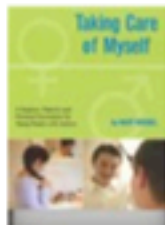
NEW BOOKS IN OUR LENDING LIBRARY

**Please return all overdue books!!!
Books, DVD's, etc can be returned at any time – just use our new letterbox in the entrance of Communication House, 62 Powderham Street.**

Taking Care of Myself

Mary Wrobel

A Hygiene, Puberty and Personal Curriculum for young people with autism. This book has been specifically designed to address the health and safety needs of students aged five and up with autism spectrum disorders.



Comic Strip Conversations

Carol Gray

An excellent communication teaching tool that offers colourful, illustrated interactions for students with autism, Asperger syndrome and related disorders. These drawings help the student to comprehend the exchange of information by conversation.



Managing Meltdowns

D Lipsky & W Richards

Using the easy-to-remember acronym S.C.A.R.E.D, this guide offers strategies and practical techniques that will be a valuable reference tool to anyone in a first response position. The authors have created a training programme to explain the autistic experience and mindset, and guide the interventions of first responders to autistic individuals in crisis.



Body Language & Communication

Simon Perks

A guide for people with autism spectrum disorders. Understanding and using body language can be difficult for people with an autism spectrum disorder, but learning how to use it effectively can help us to communicate more successfully and enjoyably with other people, including family, friends and colleagues.



Can I Tell You About Asperger Syndrome?

Jude Welton

Adam, a young boy with AS, helps children understand the difficulties faced by a child with AS. He tells them what AS is, what it feels like to have AS and how they can help children by understanding their differences and appreciating their many talents. This illustrated book is ideally suited for boys and girls between 7 and 15 years old and also serves as an excellent starting point for family and classroom discussions.



Early Intervention for Young Children with ASD

C. Pratt, B Vicker, K Davis

Written for both families and professionals, this publication describes the key components of an effective early intervention programme for young children. It provides practical recommendations for implementing those components.



When My Worries Get Too Big

Kari Dunn Buron

More than any other issue, "losing control" can cause major problems for children with ASD. Through the irresistible character of Nicholas, this book gives young children an opportunity to explore with parents or teachers their own feelings as they react to events in their daily lives while learning some useful relaxation techniques.



All Dogs have ADHD

Kathy Hoopman

Following the style of the award-winning "All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome", charming colour photographs of dogs bring to life familiar ADHD characteristics such as being restless and excitable, getting easily distracted, and acting on impulse.



Toilet Training Program

Marina Bailey

A step-by-step guide to toilet training children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. An excellent book for parents of younger children.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Autism NZ Inc. From time to time in the interest of providing the widest possible range of information to our members we may include some approaches to Autism Spectrum Disorders now available. This does not, however, imply that Autism NZ Inc. endorses any particular

A Trip Overseas

My husband and I recently took our adult son who has Autism to Europe. Of course, I had grave concerns on how I was going to get my son through Auckland Airports Customs Department. Standing in line for sometimes up to an hour or more and then taking off shoes, emptying pockets etc, walking through the scanner and being frisked with a hand scanner. I was beginning to have an anxiety attack just thinking about it.

During the planning process, I had a chat with the travel agent about lessening both my sons anxiety levels and my own. I explained my sons "phobia of eyes" and his inability to tolerate or be around more than three people he didn't know, without crashing to the floor in a limp lifeless slumber and drop into a deep sleep. This is my sons version of a "meltdown" "Can you imagine", I said, to the agent, "what chaos this would cause the entire queue of people waiting to board planes? My son is almost six foot tall and weighs about 85kgs, too heavy for my husband and I to pick him up. I wouldn't even think of letting security touch him, I'd become a raging protective Mother in a flash and would more than likely get myself arrested"

"Well," the travel agent said, "Why not use a wheelchair?" What an odd idea, I thought. She continued, "if your son had a meltdown and went to sleep, at least he would be in a wheelchair. There would be no worries about queues, people or security, if he went to sleep, **in a wheelchair.**"

I quickly saw the benefits of this and the agent organised for a wheelchair to be waiting for us at checkin at the Auckland, Hong Kong, Paris and Rome Airports. An attendant was waiting with a wheelchair, outside the plane door each time we arrived and assisted us to get luggage and see us to the door of the next flight or taxi stand.

My son wore sunglasses the entire time, which meant people couldn't see that he was looking away and not at them. He was able to go through the scanners in the wheelchair, security checked his bags in front of him and consulted with me whenever they had questions. Of course, I was prepared, my son wore his Medicalert dog-tag and I had a handful of Autism NZ pamphlets and contact cards of our local Office Coordinator, which I dutifully handed to every person I had to speak to.

The trip was excellent, our stress levels were minimal and every airport, railway station & hotel now have the contact details and information about Autism NZ.....:)

A job oppourtunity exists for a person to help with the education of a child with ASD. This would involve several hours a week on a regular, ongoing basis. In the first instance please contact Judi at the Autism Taranaki Office Ph 7695958



WHAT'S ON IN JUNE/JULY/AUG?

Coffee Group

Next coffee group meets:

Mon 19th June @ Rowena's house, 44a Waiwaka Terrace, Strandon

9.30-11am

Contact - Rowena 7591287

Girls Night Out

Thursday once a month.

Meet @ Elixir at 7.30pm for dessert and coffee.

June 16th, July 28th, Aug 18th

Contact - Karen 7512287 or 0277157751

Hawera Coffee Group

Every second month @ Hawera playcentre.

Children welcome.

Contact - Lynda parata 06 2788314

Apptitude

Our Taranaki based social group is for friends, partners or family of people on the autism spectrum.

We meet monthly for a coffee and a catch up on the second Sunday of each month @ Espresso cafe in Brougham St at 2pm.

June 12th, July 10th and Aug 14th.

All welcome.

Contact Chris O'Connor 7546222 or 0275676049

www.autismtoday.org.nz

Autism Taranaki

Have you visited our office yet? Pop in for a chat and to borrow books and DVDs. It's upstairs in Communication House, 62 Powderham Street, New Plymouth – use the back door off the carpark. Open 9.30am-3.00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Phone: 769 5958 e-mail: taranaki@autismnz.org.nz

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Halberg Trust Funding

The Halberg Trust Activity fund will meet costs over and above what it would cost an 'able-bodied child' to participate in sport. Examples of funded activities include specialised sports equipment, sports activities, coaching and school camps, as well as swimming lessons. Your child must be at least five years old.

Contact John Sigurdsson at Sport Taranaki 7590930 ext 702

Moveable in New Plymouth

Gym class for 5-13 year olds with disabilities. Held at NPGHS in their bouncy floor gym, on Fridays at 10-10.50 & 11-11.50. Cost is \$25 per term and those attending need to come with a caregiver.

Moveable in Hawera

Special needs gym class held at St John's Gym Club in Burnside Ave, Hawera on Mondays from 11-11.45. Ph 06 2786766 or you can contact Morven Woodhead at 8am on 06 2784033.

Taranaki Guide to the Gluten free/Casein free diet

You may have read that some people with ASD find removing Gluten (wheat protein) and casein (dairy protein) from their diet improves their concentration and general wellbeing. We are a group of Mums here in New Plymouth who have tried this diet with our kids, and have found it makes a difference to them. We have put together a list of recipes and products and where you can buy them locally. If you'd like a copy contact Karen Glenny akglenny@ihug.co.nz





REGISTRATION FORM

ASD Information Evening – June 2011

Please fill in this form and bring it with you. Spare forms will also be available at the door.

1) **NAME(S):**

2) **Are you already on Autism Taranaki's database?**

Yes – please go to question 5

No – please go to question 3

3) **ADDRESS:**

PHONE:

e-mail:

4) **Are you....**

Person with ASD

Parent(s) or grandparent(s) of person with ASD

Teacher / Teacher Aide

Professional

Other

5) **Are you a couple or family group? If so, please just fill in one registration**

form and tell us how many are in your group: Number.....

6) **How did you find out about this seminar?** [please tick all that apply]

e-mail / newsletter from Autism Taranaki

Advertising in Daily News

Advertising in Midweek

Heard from other parents / committee / teachers / etc.

Thank you

Think Differently

Some characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder



If the routine isn't followed he can become extremely agitated and anxious



Displays indifference



Talks incessantly about only one topic



No eye contact



Difficulty in interpreting how others are feeling



Echolalic – copies words like parrot



Words are used for naming objects not for conversations



Inappropriate laughing or giggling



Bizarre behaviour



May allow you to play along side them but not interact with you



Indicates needs by using an adult's hand



Have a limited range of imaginative activities often following the same routine repetitively



Handles or spins objects



Joins in only if adult insists and insists



An obsession or interest with water can be common

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter please hit reply and put 'unsubscribe' in the subject line

