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Autism Society of Iowa



Inner City Slickers Arrive in Hudson, Iowa

By Cindy Corwin

Inner City Slickers (ICS) was founded 20 years ago by Michael McMeel, former drummer of the 70's mega-band, "Three Dog Night". ICS is an on-going "Old West Program" that was inspired by the film, City Slickers and the program was designed to use the magic of horses and cowboy ethics to help build Confidence, Trust & Hope, and overcome Fear. ICS works with at-risk children/teens, children with Autism, ADD and ADHD and families that require additional support & structure.

We chose to bring this program to Hudson, Iowa, because the "Old West" symbolizes Strength, Perseverance, and Hard Work, and this program builds self-esteem, self-confidence, character, and breaks down the social prejudices that are so prevalent in our culture today.

Our Slickers learn what it's like to be a cowboy/cowgirl and they learn to live by the "Cowboy Code of Ethics". Kindness, Dependability, Keeping Your Word, Being Responsible, and they learn what it's like to Trust and Respect the horses, themselves, and each other. They learn ethical and moral codes that will stay with them throughout their lives.

Our one-on-one sessions focus on grooming, balance exercises designed to help the child bond and experience the horse breathing and moving, and ultimately the child will ride at the level he/she is comfortable at. Our volunteers & staff will gently encourage each child to do more and become comfortable at various levels.

Additionally, day long group sessions teach our Slickers to rope, groom, feed, sit on a horse, and work together as a team. A number of Trust, Teamwork, and Balance exercises are incorporated into these sessions and our horses and expert volunteers work with their "Posse's" to transform these kids by challenging them to overcome

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Calendar

Saturday, April 7th
Bake Sale for Autism
Elgin, IA
gkoehn@alpinecome.net

Friday, June 8th
ASI Golf Benefit
Willow Creek Golf Course
Autism50ia@aol.com

Friday, September 7th
ASI Fall Conference & Auction
Keynote Speaker:
Scott Bellini, Ph.D.

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Membership

MEMBERSHIP for ASI & ASA: New Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Parent Professional Relative Other



Fax: 515-457-7225

Mail: 4549 Waterford Drive
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Questions?

515-327-9075
1-888-722-4799 or
autism50ia@aol.com

Annual Dues: \$25

National (ASA) and State Society dues are included in the above amounts.

Subscriptions to the ASA Advocate and the ASI Link are included in your annual dues.

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fears and step out of their comfort zones and expand their horizons. There is something magical about watching these children relax and change right in front of your eyes as they begin to concentrate and trust a magnificent animal!

Over the years, we have found that as a child develops a relationship and sense of trust with a horse, you find that both of their lives are being touched in a unique and profound way. There is a sense of peace, balance, and oneness that only could happen between the meetings of these two beings —helping each other learn the lessons of life.

Of huge importance after our Slickers have completed the program is ICS' continued contact with them. We believe experiences at the Slicker event combined with our follow-up and contact provides a much better opportunity for them to become responsible, caring citizens who have a positive impact in their communities. And that's what Inner City Slickers is all about...Making a Difference in the lives of Children, One Child at a Time.

For more information, visit us online: www.innercityslickers.com, via email at: cindy@innercityslickers.com or contact Cindy Corwin at 319.239.8097. ■

Learn the Signs Act Early Project

A grant from the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) to conduct a Learn the Signs Act Early Project has been secured by Child Health Specialty Clinics. This grant provides an opportunity for Early Childhood providers (agencies serving toddlers and young children) to increase awareness of this disorder and provide resources to connect

families to follow-up services.

The project will provide to each participating program at no charge:

- Learn the Signs Act Early materials from the Center for Disease Control, Autism Spectrum Disorders Fact Sheets (with Iowa resources for screening), and What to Do If You Suspect Your Son/Daughter Might Have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (with Iowa resources for comprehensive evaluation and diagnosis) and What To Do if Your Son or Daughter has been diagnosed with an ASD (connecting families with service agencies like Autism Society of Iowa, Early ACCESS, Child Health Specialty Clinic, and Regional Autism Services Program)

- On-site orientation to all materials, distribution process, and outcomes reporting requirements.

- Ongoing technical assistance, as requested, via phone call support throughout project period.

Participating programs making this commitment to distribute these fliers include: Child Health Specialty Clinic, WIC, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Early Head Start, Title V MCH Grantees, and Home Visiting programs. The Autism Society of Iowa has agreed to place these handouts on their website as well, www.autismia.org

We look forward to having a more connected relationship with these early providers related to early identification of autism and having families pleased with resources to start them on their journey. Contact Sue Baker, Autism Services Consultant at sue-baker@uiowa if you have questions. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We all have expectations about life. When I think back to how my life was “going to be,” somewhere back in college, it makes me laugh. Things have not exactly gone down as planned! Having a son with autism was definitely not in the cards, nor was marrying the world's greatest guy only to have him diagnosed with Stage IV cancer two and a half years later.

These challenges in life throw us all for loops. People tell us things like “everything happens for a reason,” “God never gives you more than you can handle,” and other helpful platitudes. Even I have probably said those things to people!

But the life we lead is ours alone. It is no better and usually no worse than anyone else's. We all have our “crosses to bear,” as I often say. And it probably is true that “what doesn't kill us makes us stronger”!

People often remark about the strength of those dealing with loved ones with issues such as autism or cancer. As I typically respond, “it is what it is.” I am so incredibly fortunate to have had the quality time I have had in my marriage. I also wouldn't change or trade my son for anything.

Both experiences have shaped and continue to mold the person I am and will become. They have led me to meet some extraordinary people and have altered the course of my life. As my family deals with the phase of hospice care, I thank my beloved friends in the Autism Society for their support.

We all must realize that when challenges present themselves, it is those who can adapt, as Charles Darwin said, who will survive. I would not typically write a message rich with clichés, but with a battery undercharged and jobs to do, these little nuggets do actually come in handy as reminders to me and, hopefully, reminders to you.

Suzanne Bartlett, M.D.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

So many of us are incredibly busy assisting our child with autism, along with trying to work and maintain a household, that we sometimes forget that a simple letter or email can make a huge difference. I was reminded of this at the Autism Society of Iowa's 2nd Annual Autism and Advocacy Day on the Hill in February. Representative Walt Rogers, from Cedar Falls, came to speak holding one letter from a parent, and one letter from a grandmother, who both live in his area. Because of this family, he has become a friend of those with autism and has voted on legislation to assist families with autism.

Senator Jeff Danielson, also of Cedar Falls, had one family contact him, who has a child with autism, and he responded by creating a bill to provide an autism waiver. Once again, it only took one family to make a difference.

When you have a few minutes to share your story, please send it to your representative or state senator. You never know what may become of just one letter or email!

**2012 Autism Society of Iowa
Grant Application**

Amount: \$250-\$500
Application must be postmarked by May 15, 2012
Grant Check awarded: June 1, 2012

Purpose: To encourage existing community recreation and leisure programs to include individuals within the autism spectrum by providing financial support to develop successful **integration** opportunities. This grant is specifically for programs which will include children on the autism spectrum with their community peers in various activities.

The grant application will be evaluated by a committee based on the following criterion:

- 1.) Social Intent: Does the grant application reflect **integrated** recreation, leisure, and social experiences?
- 2.) Accomodation: Does the grant identify how the individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder will be accommodated within the **integrated** setting?
- 3.) Staff Ratio: Is the ratio of adults to persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder specified?
- 4.) Use of Funds: Does the grant application specify how the funds will be distributed to support the identified individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder?
- 5.) Promotion of Program: Does the grant application describe a plan for advertisement in the community?
- 6.) # of individuals served: Does the grant application identify potential # of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder served?
- 7.) Success Measured: Does the grant application describe a process to measure the benefits of those served?

Name of Agency/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Fax: _____

Contact Person: _____

Please attach written documentation for the following questions:

- 1.) Describe the program, including provision of **integrated** recreation, leisure, & social experiences.
- 2.) Who is currently served? (ages, geographic boundaries, etc.)
- 3.) Describe anticipated accommodation plan/technical assistance.
- 4.) How many persons with autism would be served? (minimum/maximum)
- 5.) What agency (or persons) with knowledge of autism will consult in the development and implementation of your program plan? (e.g. Autism Resource Teams, LEA Autism Specialist, The Homestead, Woodward Resource Center, etc.)
- 6.) Identify possible matching grant sources (financial or in-kind)
- 7.) How will grant funds be used? (Staff development, additional staff, equipment, etc.) What amount of grant funding are you requesting from the Autism Society of Iowa?
- 8.) How will program availability be promoted and advertised?
- 9.) How will you measure the success of the program?

Please postmark or fax documentation by May 15, 2012 to:
ASI, 4549 Waterford Drive, West Des Moines, IA 50265
Fax 515-457-7225, e-mail autism50ia@aol.com, 515-327-9075

**Autism Insurance Reform
Legislation**

Senate File 2128, Autism Insurance Reform Legislation for Iowa Families, was recently passed unanimously by the Iowa Senate Commerce Committee. The bill requires private health insurance companies to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals under the age of 26 for services that are prescribed or provided by a physician or licensed psychologist. Coverage includes diagnosis, applied behavior analysis, psychiatric care, pharmacy care, psychological care, and therapeutic care up to \$36,000 annually. This mirrors the bill which was passed 2 years ago for state employees, but now encompasses all state insurance plans.

The bill has moved to the Senate floor for discussion. If the Senate passes the bill, it

will then move to the House of Representatives and, if passed, it will then move to the governor for signature. This is a critical time to contact your legislators to express your support for autism insurance reform in Iowa. ■



DONATIONS

**BASKETBALL AUTISM
AWARENESS GAME &
FUNDRAISER**

BALLARD COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
CRESTON COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEMORIALS

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD,
TOM, AND MIKE CONWAY
SHEILA HART

DONATIONS

MARION LUTHERAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS,
STS. JOHN AND PAUL
CATHOLIC CHURCH,
ALTOONA, IOWA
PEGGI TAYLOR
CYNTHIA BOWEN

HONORARIUMS

IN HONOR OF KALLIE
THERESE LOVAN
BOUALAY BARKER

IN HONOR OF JIM AUTRY
AND SALLY PEDERSON
KAREN BAILEY

Ballin' in Blue – An Autism Awareness Event

By Shawn M. Miller, EAST Facilitator
Creston High School

On December 6, 2011, the Creston Community, the Creston EAST Program, and the Creston basketball program helped raise autism awareness and funding with their “Ballin’ in Blue” Event.

That night, nearly 1,000 people packed the gym for a varsity basketball doubleheader with two ranked Carroll Kuemper teams. Everywhere you looked there was blue...blue jerseys for the players, blue t-shirts for the crowd, blue slushies, blue gummies, blue hair extensions, blue ice cream was available to everyone, and the three-time State Champion Peppers dance team blue flash mob performance. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF5ZoP6xBWY>)

Nearly 1,400 blue t-shirts were sold (designed by EAST students); 70 pounds of blue gummy sharks, 25 liters of slushies, 200 ice cream bars, and 150 bags of cotton candy were consumed.

Thanks to the incredible support of the entire Creston community, including more than 90 businesses and/or individuals that donated product or money or pledge money toward the number of points scored that evening, the EAST classes will present a check for \$7777.77 the Autism Society of Iowa. During the Jam the Gym Festivities in March, a check will be presented to a representative from the Autism Society of Iowa.

The EAST classes are in the process of making a video and myriad of collages documenting the event that will be shown at the EAST National Conference.

On December 6th, the Creston community further proved the old adage, first uttered by St. Francis of Assisi, “It is in giving that we receive” to be true. The EAST students and I couldn’t be more proud of the actions of everyone involved in this effort. While both basketball teams fell short in their quest against the Knights, it was clear that no one walked away a loser on this memorable night.

What is EAST?

The EAST Initiative is a nonprofit organization that provides new ways of learning for modern students. The EAST model of education features student-driven service projects accomplished with the latest in technology. EAST classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art workstations, servers, software, and accessories, including GPS/GIS mapping tools, architectural and CAD design software, 3D animation suites, and much more. Students find problems in their local communities, and then use these tools to solve them.

For more information on the EAST Initiative or the EAST model of education, including how to get started at your school, email EASTinfo@EASTproject.org ■



Autism Bake Sale

The annual Autism Bake Sale will be held on Saturday, April 7th, from 7 am-11 am at the Valley Community School Multipurpose room, located at 23493 Canoe Road in Elgin, Iowa.

Glenda Koehn and crew will be providing angel food cakes, pies of all kinds, sweet breads, buns, loaves of bread, cinnamon rolls, fruit filled rolls, cookies, bars, snack mix, cream cheese mints, Norwegian treats, and all kinds of salads for your Easter dinner! Come support this annual event to help out families in Iowa with children and adults to support, and—help yourself to some great food! Doors won’t open until 7:00 to make it fair for everyone!!

For information, please contact Glenda Koehn at gkoehn@alpinecom.net ■

2nd Annual Golf Benefit

The 2nd Annual Autism Society of Iowa Golf Benefit will be held on Friday, June 8th, at the Willow Creek Golf Course in West Des Moines. It will be a four person scramble, with registration and lunch starting at 11:30 a.m. At 1:00, there will be a shotgun start followed by a buffet dinner, award, raffle, and silent auction at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$100.00 for golfers and \$20.00 for non golfers who would like to join us for the evening.

For further information, please go to www.autismia.org or to register. ■

2nd Annual Autism Society of Iowa Day on the Hill

ASI held its 2nd annual Day on the Hill on February 13th. Despite being one of the few snowy days this winter, the event was well attended, with approximately 50 members showing up to voice their support for autism services in Iowa. An advocacy training workshop was conducted by Rik Shannon of the Governor’s Developmental Disability Council. Following the workshop, remarks were given by Governor Branstad who also signed an Autism Awareness month proclamation. State Senators Daryl Beall, Jeff Danielson, and Amanda Ragan and State Representatives Janet Petersen and Dave Heaton spoke to audience members about autism advocacy and the mental health redesign bill. Iowa Autism Council members Danielle Sharpe and Casey Westhoff also provided updates. Following the presentations, several ASI members met with their representatives to share their personal stories.

This year’s Day on the Hill was timely given that Senate File 2128 was about to be discussed in the Senate Commerce Committee (See “Autism Insurance Reform Legislation” article for details). We encourage ASI members to continue to stay in touch with their legislators this session and over the upcoming year.

Save the date for next year’s Autism Advocacy & Awareness Day on the Hill, which has been scheduled for February 7th, 2013. ■