

AUTISM NEWSLETTER

Little Red Hen



Winter 2017

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation

Autism Resource of the North State Community



Public Speaking Advocate for Autism Awareness and Senior Staff Assistant Meghean S. of Little Red Hen's Gift Shop

Meghean S. at Meet & Greet

Meghean S. was an incredible guest speaker at Autism Lifespan's October **Meet and Greet!** We had an amazing turnout of parents, caregivers, and a couple of young adults on the spectrum who came to hear Meghean address her personal experiences living with autism.

Meghean was well spoken, upbeat and positive addressing some of the

challenges she faces on a daily basis. She told us about her personal journey from childhood to her current status as a 10 year employee of Little Red Hen and pride in being a Senior Staff Assistant at Little Red Hen Gift Shop.

Meghean aspires to become a public speaker for individuals on the spectrum. She'd like to spread the message to all people with

disabilities that "You will succeed in the World!"

Meet and Greet is a monthly support, advocacy and information group for parents, caregivers and guardians of individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages.

Contact Loren Blunkall at Autism Lifespan for more info.

*Call 897-0900 or email:
Loren@autismlifespan.org*

Calendar of Events

JAN 22ND @ 6 pm

Little Red Hen Meet and Greet
at the Lifespan Center
RSVP Loren@autismlifespan.org

JAN 30TH @ 6pm

Little Red Hen Mommy and Me
Fairy Garden Class
at Floral and More
Price is \$30
Call 894-0040 to Sign-Up

FEB 9TH @ 7:30 pm

Festival Ballet from Russia, Moscow
Perform Sleeping Beauty
at Laxson Auditorium
Price is \$10-\$45

FEB 10TH @ 10am - 4pm

Fourth annual Lego and Toy Show at the
East Ave community church
Price is \$2-\$10

FEB 10TH @ 9am-12pm

Block Party with a Purpose:
Community Supported clean-up
Corner of Pine St. and Humboldt Ave.

FEB 20TH @ 6pm

Little Red Hen Mommy and Me
Fairy Garden Class
at Floral and More
Price is \$30
Call 894-0040 to Sign-Up

Meet & Greet

Congratulations to the Preckwinkle family who won the turkey at the November Meet and Greet turkey shoot!

Our next Meet and Greet is scheduled for Monday, January 22nd.

We will be serving homemade soup with grilled Italian sandwiches, and be mapping out meetings for the year. Bring your ideas!

Contact Loren Blunkall for more info

Call 897-0900 or email

Loren@autismlifespan.org

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Santa Visits Little Red Hen



Little Red Hen's Annual Breakfast with Santa fundraiser

Santa recently made a trip to our Annual Breakfast with Santa fundraiser! Over 350 tickets were sold for this merry holiday breakfast, with all profits going back into our children's programs. If you couldn't make it out this year don't worry, you can still help support our children and adult programs by shopping any of our 5 retail stores or

making a donation.

Tickets for this event included a breakfast of eggs, bacon, and pancakes as well as a number for our silent auction. Thank you to all the local businesses who donated items! Also up for auction was a unique sculpture made with care by local artist Io Bonini. The "Little Red Hen and her Peeps" sculpture was

definitely the most unique items up for grabs.

After enjoying a hearty breakfast, kids lined up for a photo with Santa himself. This "clause for a cause" event was a rousing success, with attendees showing up to snag their breakfast and a shot to get their time with Santa all the way until the last 20 minutes.

Little Red Hen would like to thank all of the attendees for their support, and all the employees and volunteers who helped make this a burst of holiday cheer.



Alex W. and David M. at the front desk



Santa listened to everyone's Christmas wishes

Donate at any LRH store or online at LittleRedHen.org

NEW from **Autism Speaks!**

COMMUNITY BASED ASSESSMENT (CBA)

Autism Speaks is excited to announce that their Community Based Assessment (CBA) is now an app powered by Idenifor. The CBA is a tool designed to help develop a personalized transition plan for people on the autism spectrum.

The CBA is the first tool to assess needs in the area of community based living, from transportation to financial management to peer relationships and more. The tool is divided into three levels based upon the

age of the individual being assessed. Eight critical areas of functional life skills will be assessed:

1. Career path and employment
2. Self-determination/advocacy
3. Health and safety
4. Peer relationships, socialization and social communication
5. Community participation and personal finance
6. Transportation
7. Leisure/recreation
8. Home living skills



Photo credits: AutismSpeaks.org

This assessment was developed for Autism Speaks through a contract with Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center to assess an individual's knowledge, skill and social communication abilities.

To download the app visit:
www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/community-based-skills-assessment

Dual Diagnosis

The term dual diagnosis refers to having more than one diagnosis. With autism it is more common than not to be diagnosed with secondary impairments. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can typically be accompanied with Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Fragile X, and/or Seizure Disorder. Additional co-occurring conditions include depression, low IQ, anxiety, high or low pain threshold, sleep problems, low muscle tone, sensory integration disorder,

and hearing and visual impairments.

A more frequent co-occurring diagnosis is an intellectual disability. However, a verbal IQ test may not accurately measure a child's IQ if the child is stronger in non-verbal skills.

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Dual Diagnosis cont.

The test for non-verbal intelligence (TONI) will be more accurate in measuring intelligence for these children.

Both children and adults with autism

spectrum disorder frequently experience anxiety and there is a growing awareness that

anxiety disorders need to be addressed as separate and not



as an inevitable by-product of autism. Signs of anxiety may be overlooked or be attributed

to “behavior problems” when in reality the individual may be experiencing panic or anxiety.

It is important that a child be diagnosed early if he or she has any accompanying conditions with the autism diagnosis.

Early identification can mean appropriate educational, medical and social/therapeutic treatment.

Autism Impacts the Entire Family



Old photo of Conner, family friend of Executive Director Teresa Wolk-Hayes.

The first step to sorting out the difficulties arising in families due to autism is to understand the way it affects family members and relationships.

Emotional Impact:

Unwanted feelings of embarrassment, isolation, frustration, guilt, despair, anger & overwhelmment.

Martial Impact:

Time together is approx. 128 hours less per year than

parents of neuro-typical children. ASD parents documented fewer occasions when they shared a joke, held meaningful conversation, or intimacy with their partner. The challenge of finding childcare and inconsistent schedules can place undo stress on relationships.

Sibling Impact:

Siblings too, are affected by the additional time and finances parents need to provide care for a child on the spectrum. Some siblings can

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Activities and Games Using Tape

This is the season for indoor fun!

Here are a few activities that are easily set up and will provide great benefits for your child.

1. Duct Tape Maze

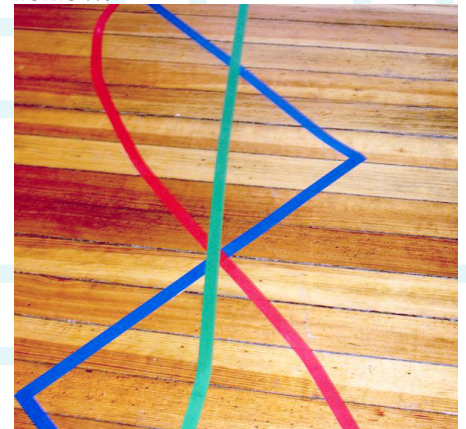
Using masking or washi tape design a maze on your floor and encourage your child to complete the maze either walking it or pushing an obstacle through it, or even using a straw to blow a lightweight item through it. The maze can be a race, timed event, or a challenge of one!

One step further, design your maze on a large flat piece of cardboard so it can be used multiple times!



2. Walk the Line

This is another large motor skill activity using tape. Design 3-5 “tracks”, each in separate colors on your floor. Have your child pick which track they want to follow.



4. Life size PacMan

Using tape on your floor, design a pac-man grid use coins for the dots on the course. Have a couple people dressed in a sheet to represent the ghosts trying to capture pac man as



3. Wall Maze

Turn your hallway into a challenging maze activity for your child. Using masking tape from wall to wall, front to back you can create an obstacle challenge that your child has to crawl, climb through without coming in contact with the tape.

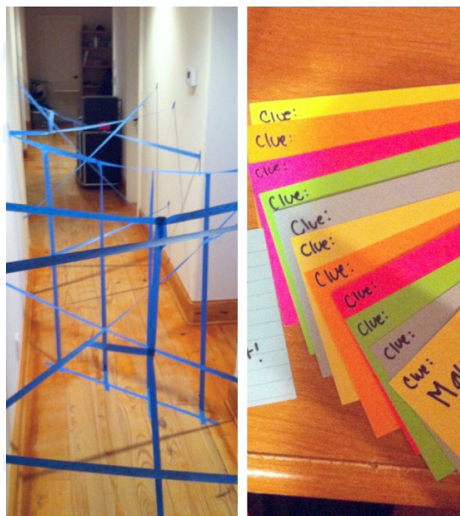


photo credits: pinterest.com

..... Autism Impacts the Entire Family cont.

feel left out and/or become resentful. Some families experience a more intense form of sibling rivalry.

Financial Impact:

Add to all the above the additional financial stress of insurance co-pays for therapies, treatments and medications. Studies show families with autistic children underwent an average loss of 14% in their entire family income. Working full time is difficult for either parent but necessary to provide family health insurance and finance

non-insured services.

There's Help:

Family counseling can help parents deal with communication and marital difficulties. Psychotherapy can help deal with autism's emotional impact. Family members, especially parents, can also consider joining support groups. Meeting and sharing stories with families who face the same challenges as you has proven to be very beneficial.

Parents and caregivers must first take care of themselves

in order to provide the best care possible for their loved ones.

Autism Lifespan's Meet and Greet

is held on the fourth Monday evening of each month. We are a group of parents/caregivers sharing dinner, information and stories. We support one another with a caring ear, tears and laughter.

Contact Loren Blunkall at Autism Lifespan for more info.

*Call 897-0900 or email:
Loren@autismlifespan.org*

Share Your Wonderful Experiences With Us!

Our loved ones are so amazing! We would love to include one of your favorite stories in a new section of our newsletter. Sharing our stories helps new families realize they are not the only ones experiencing the uniqueness of our lives. Include a picture of your loved ones too, if you so desire.

**Submit your Story
to Loren@AutismLifespan.org**

A Special Thank You

FAR NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER

We at the Lifespan Center

would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to Brad Cook for the generous donation of ad credits to promote our Santa Breakfast on Facebook!

Lending Library Hours:

Tues / Thur 10-2 P.M. & Wed / Fri 2-6 P.M.

LITTLE RED HEN PRESENTS

CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL FUNDRAISER

benefiting Little Red Hen's Autism Programs

COMING IN APRIL

AUTISM RESOURCES * MUSIC
BOUNCE HOUSE * KIDS ACTIVITIES
FOOD & MORE

FREE ADMISSION

Stay up to date:

SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAILS

@ LittleRedHen.org/pages/subscribe

For more info: call (530) 897-0900

Sponsored by Little Red Hen Autism LifeSpan & Far Northern Regional Center

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