

# Autism LifeSpan

Autism Resource of the  
North State Community Spring 2015

## Introducing Autism LifeSpan's New Parent Liaison

We are so excited to introduce our newest Parent Liaison for Autism LifeSpan, Loren Blunkall. Loren has been an integral part of starting Autism LifeSpan and Little Red Hen.

In 1993, Loren met Teresa, the now Executive Director of Little Red Hen, at a support group for parents of children with autism. They were fast friends and immediately got to work on many projects to help benefit their children who were recently diagnosed with autism (Loren's daughter, Felicia, and Teresa's son, Alex were both 3 years old at the time). She helped start the swim program, which offered one-on-one lessons for children with autism, as well as a support group for parents of children with autism, AND a computer learning center for people of all ages with autism. During her seven years of helping with the swim program, Loren was also helping start Little Red Hen Nursery. For years she stored and cared for plants in her back yard and helped Teresa sell plants out of her driveway to friends, supporters and passersby. She was also one of the first Little Red Hen Nursery assistants when it opened its doors in 2000. Shortly after, she took a step back to focus on her family.



*Parent Liaison Loren Blunkall, Temple Grandin, & Little Red Hen Executive Director Teresa Wolk Hayes*



*Loren Blunkall*

Last summer, Loren was asked to help design and sew the costumes for Little Red Hen's "Not Your Garden Variety Theater" program's production of 'Wizard of Oz'. *(She is an amazingly talented seamstress and the costumes turned out incredible!)* "It was so much fun to be a part of that project and, even better, to watch my grandson in the play as a flying monkey!"

Now that Loren's daughter Felicia is an adult and part of a day program, and her other daughter is now in high school, she has some free time and wanted to be involved again and give back. She has a lot of life experience with her daughter and can relate to parents who are going through the same things.

Now that she has a grandson with autism, she feels like she has an instruction book and more experience to help him. Loren is an open book and willing to share her stories and what worked and what didn't work for her family. You can now find Loren in the Kids & Kitchen store (where she works as a retail assistant and helps with sewing projects with the staff) as well as in the Autism LifeSpan office. We are so fortunate to have her as our Parent Liaison, she has a wealth of knowledge and is a wonderful addition to our team. Don't hesitate to call or stop by!

# Chico Walks FOR AUTISM

2015

Supporting Local Children With Autism & Their Families



**April 4th @ Bidwell Park, One Mile**

**Welcome @ 8:30am & Walk Begins @ 9am**

Post walk BBQ hosted by Chico Elks Lodge # 423

*Little Red Hen will have a booth at the event! Come see us!*



Do you want some festive nails? For the entire month of April, when you purchase the Autism Jamberry nails through the contact below, \$5.00 from each set will be donated back to Autism LifeSpan.

Purchase online: [www.angelahaskell.jamberrynails.net](http://www.angelahaskell.jamberrynails.net) or email: [angelahaskell@jamberrynails.net](mailto:angelahaskell@jamberrynails.net) Or purchase at the Autism LifeSpan office and at the Autism Awareness Fair. Each set costs \$15.00.

Our newsletter is published by:

## **Autism LifeSpan**

at LITTLE RED HEN'S  
LIFESPAN CENTER

2418 Cohasset Road, Suite 150  
Chico, CA 95926

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# Autism Awareness Fair

**Bounce House**

**Live Band**

**Food Trucks**



**Face Painting**



**Games**



**Autism Resources**

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**



Rose Scott Elementary School  
(Located at the First Baptist Church)  
850 Palmetto Avenue, Chico



Sponsored by Autism Lifespan,  
Little Red Hen & Far Northern Regional Center  
For more information or to reserve a booth, contact

Autism LifeSpan (530) 897-0900

# Things We Shouldn't Touch

A touchy subject, I know. But as a parent of a child with autism, I've had to deal with feces smearing. For obvious reasons (embarrassment mostly) I was not open to discussing this issue with anyone including our behaviorist. I preferred to keep this dirty little secret to myself, going through life armed with long heavy duty gloves, a bucket of cleaning rags, gallons of bleach, a rental carpet shampooer, white shaving cream and a full on hazmat suit. **UNTIL. . . .**

A rather memorable evening returning home from a respite break with my husband, and realizing our oldest son who was caring for our 3 year-old daughter; had solicited the help of our neighbors to help him clean her room. **YIKES!!** It was definitely time to seek advise from our behaviorists. "So what do you do when she "smears" her room?" Well, we put her in a warm bath, wash her head to toe then sit her out in the living room with a snack & movie so we can clean.

*"Oh, so you reward her."*

I had never thought about it that way.

The new plan; *"when she smears, put her in a quick cool wash down, then move her chair into her room and she is to sit there the entire time you are cleaning."*

I'm sure I don't need to add there was a lot of retrieving and re-sitting involved so cleaning took a lot longer, but our daughter was learning natural consequences.

What I learned. *"In order to extinguish this negative behavior, it needed to be replaced with a positive or acceptable behavior."*

"Feces smearing" in our daughter's case served as a tactile stimulus. **Ewwwww.** We were on a mission to find an activity that would offer her the same stimulus satisfaction.

After trying various play doughs she would not interact with, we came across a recipe for homemade Gak. Allowing our daughter to play with this "dough" on a daily basis gave her the same stimulus satisfaction as, well you know.

I can honestly say that within a few weeks we were done washing walls.

These following recipes are safe and fun for play.

Note: The "Goop" recipe contains Borax so please protect any wood surface it will come in contact with.

Article by Loren Blunkall, Parent and Autism LifeSpan Liasion

## Goop

1 cup of white school glue  
1 cup of warm water  
2 teaspoons of Borax powdered soap  
2/3 cup of hot water  
food coloring of your choice

Directions:

1. Put the food coloring in the cup of WARM water.
2. Mix the glue and colored warm water in a bowl. In another small bowl or measuring cup, mix the hot water and Borax until the Borax is dissolved.
3. Add the Borax mixture to the glue mixture. Stir for a little while, then knead. It will look really funny and oh so wrong at first, but it will soon combine correctly and you can't mistake the finished product.

*Keep in mind this mixture contains Borax.  
Cover any wood surface that will come in*

## MOON SAND

8c. bleached white flour  
1c baby oil

Directions: Mix the flour and baby oil.  
Play and Fun!

# Meet & Greet

Join Us for a Fun Grown-Up  
Easter Egg Hunt for Prizes!

Taquitos, Rice & Beans will be served!

Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 PM

Lifespan Center  
2418 Cohasset Rd. Suite #150  
(Behind Cathy's Sew & Vac)

Please R.S.V.P. by March 25<sup>th</sup>  
897-0900 or [Loren@Autismlifespan.org](mailto:Loren@Autismlifespan.org)



Meet & Greet is for parents and guardians of all individuals with  
Developmental Disabilities of all ages to network and  
exchange information while having fun!

Special Thanks to Far Northern Regional Center  
& Little Red Hen's Autism Lifespan

## Thank You!

We want to give a Special Thank You to **Joan Goodreau** for her generous donation. She has donated the proceeds for her new book, "Strangers Together: How My Son's Autism Changed My Life" to Autism LifeSpan and the Little Red Hen Children's Programs.

We would also like to thank **Cleanrite-Buildrite** for their generous donation from the Driving to Fight Autism Golf Tournament.

Special Thanks to  
**Far Northern Regional Center**

# Birthday Party Success!

Birthday parties can be a lot of fun, but if your child has sensory, routine, or attention issues, planning the celebration may require a few extra steps. Use some of these ideas to make your child's party a success!

**1. Keep the guest list small-** Invite only a handful of kids to make the party more manageable. If your child struggles with social skills, a smaller group can relieve stress, and allow children make more meaningful connections with each other.

**2. Schedule wisely-** Short and Sweet- Two hours is usually plenty of time (Older kids may be able to go longer). Consider your child's medication and sleep schedule when setting the time.

**3. Choose a familiar party location-** Consider your child's favorite playground or activity center as the setting. Make sure it's a location they are familiar and comfortable with. If you plan on a new setting, visit that location before the party so your child can get used to the space. If they prefer the home, bring the party to them!



**4. Find a fun activity -** Choose an activity your child already enjoys and that he or she can share with other children. Avoid activities that create challenges. Take into consideration coordination issues.

**5. Serve your child's favorite foods-** Don't feel obligated to offer a full meal when snacks will do the trick. Perhaps a lineup of cereals that guest can mix as they like or sundaes they can top with an array of toppings. Consider an alternative if someone has a food allergy.

**6. Set the party scene-** Help prepare your child for the party by giving details about who will be there and what the schedule will look like. Role-play or give your child the language to use when guests arrive, when they are playing, when opening gifts, or when leaving.

**7. Talk about presents-** Consider deciding beforehand whether to open gifts during the party or after. Opening presents can be used as an opportunity to practice certain social skills and self-control. Don't hesitate to space out presents, opening them one by one throughout the party, if that works for your child.

**8. Recap the party-** After everyone leaves, ask your child what was the best part of the party. Help your child reflect on the party by asking: "How did other people make you feel?" And "How did you interact with others?" Reinforce social skills by creating a thank-you list together.

# AUTISM LIFESPAN CARNIVAL

Our very first Autism LifeSpan Children's Carnival was such an incredible success! Food, games, face painting and walking for treats. It was quite satisfying to be asked how many years had we been doing this. We appreciate the many families who attended and enjoyed this event. We look forward to many more Children's Carnivals to come.

Thank you to all who came out to have fun with us! Special thanks are extended to our parents who went over and above to help make this successful: **Shameka Harris, Jeannie Schroeder, Robeena Khan & Dan Strauss**, as well as: **Andrew, Savannah, Jodi, Juan, Andrea, Renee, and Melanie**. Girl Scouts of Northern California, Troop 70228 Members: Harley, Cheyenne, Sequoyah, Serena. Supported by Co-Leader Heather Darden, & Joey.



## Upcoming Events

### Meet & Greet

Monday, March 30, 2015 6:30 PM  
Lifespan Center ~ 2418 Cohasset Rd Ste. 150 Chico, CA 95928  
More information, e-mail [Loren@AutismLifespan.org](mailto:Loren@AutismLifespan.org)



### Do It Leisure Spring Eggs-Travaganza

Friday, April 3, 2015  
7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.  
Chico Card Center~545 Vallombrosa Avenue, Chico, CA 95926

### Chico Walks for Autism

Sunday, April 4 2015  
8:30 Check in, Walk Starts at 9:00~Bidwell Park, One Mile



### Rowell Family Empowerment Airports for Autism: A Unique Racing Experience

Saturday, April 11, 2015  
8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.~Redding Airport  
For more info visit: [www.empoweryourfamily.org](http://www.empoweryourfamily.org)



### Autism Awareness Fair

Saturday, April 25, 2015  
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.  
Rose Scott School~850 Palmetto Avenue, Chico, CA 95926



# Autism LifeSpan

A Little Red Hen Service

Non-Profit  
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Permit #1690  
Chico, CA

Located at  
2418 Cohasset Road, Suite 150  
Chico, CA 95926

Address Service Requested

**The Voice and Resource  
of the Autism Community**

provided for information purposes only.

Autism LifeSpan does not endorse individual programs. Articles appearing in the newsletter regarding programs, resources, treatment, etc. should not be interpreted as an indication of endorsement by Autism LifeSpan. They are

## ENDORSEMENT POLICY

THE MISSION OF AUTISM LIFESPAN is to promote lifelong access and opportunity for all individuals within the autism spectrum and their families, to be fully participating, included members of their community. Education, advocacy at state and federal levels, active public awareness, and the promotion of research form the cornerstones of Autism LifeSpan's efforts to carry forth its mission.

Little Red Hens  
Autism LifeSpan  
2418 Cohasset Road, Suite 150  
Chico, CA 95926

