

# Autism LifeSpan



Autism Resource of the  
North State Community

Summer 2014

## Freedom In Elements Program

**Freedom in Elements** is a Residential Summer Program for teens and adults (13+) with autism or on the spectrum. Participants will participate in activities related to theater, poetry, music, art, fitness, and movement. The focus of the program is to provide participants with a pre-college experience and a familiarity with college life.

Freedom in Elements Program facilitators are **Dr. Rebecca Lytle, Josie Blagrove, M.A., Dr. Parasuram Ramamoorthi, Shaloo Sharma, and John Paul Gonzalez.**

Dr. Rebecca Lytle is an adapted physical education specialist. She has been teaching individuals with disabilities for over 25 years. She is also the founder of Chico State Autism Clinic. Josie Blagrove, M.A. is the coordinator of the Chico State Autism Clinic. She has been working with children with autism for over 10 years. Dr. Parasuram Ramamoorthi has an extensive background in theater and has been working in the field since 2003, and he was also a guest teacher at Little Red Hen's FLOCK program in 2012. He is considered a pioneer in the field of Applied Drama. Shaloo Sharma has 15 years experience in education and design. Her focus has been in teaching and developing creative arts for persons with varied abilities. John-Paul Gonzalez is a general and adapted physical education specialist who has been working with students with disabilities for the last 7 years.



**Dr. Rebecca Lytle & Josie Blagrove, M.A.**

**Freedom in Elements will take place July 13-16, 2014 at California State University, Chico.** Cost for the program is \$300.00 per participant. There is no charge for co-participant. A co-participant (someone that attends the entire program with participant to provide support) is required. All meals and 3 nights housing are included for both participant and co-participant.

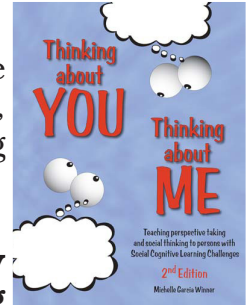


For more information about the Freedom in Elements Program contact Rebecca Lytle at (530) 898-4298 or [rlytle@csuchico.edu](mailto:rlytle@csuchico.edu) or Josie Blagrove at (530) 898-6324 or [ablagrove@csuchico.edu](mailto:ablagrove@csuchico.edu).

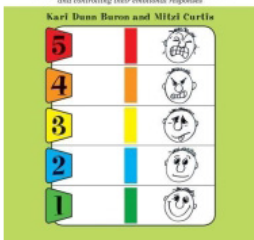
# TIME TO PLAY

**Little Red Hen FLOCK** will soon be in session! Here are a few books and resources that are used during FLOCK, that we recommend to encourage and teach social thinking for your child or adult with autism.

**Thinking About You Thinking About Me 2nd Edition** discusses the challenges of trying to use standardized tests to quantify an abstract, complex, synergistic process and presents the Informal Social Thinking Dynamic Assessment Protocol.



**The Incredible 5-Point Scale: The Significantly Improved and Expanded Second Edition; Assisting students in understanding social interactions and con.** As in their other writings, the authors emphasize the importance of self-management and self-regulation, two evidence-based practices.



**Should I or Shouldn't I? What Would Others Think?** The object of the game is to think about your own thoughts and behaviors and those of others in various situations posed on Prompt and Challenge cards; match the other players' responses to score points and win.

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## 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**

## Add your loved one to our Wall of Fame!

Bring your picture of someone with autism by the office so we can scan and return it safely. We'll add it to the faces on our wall. The wall will be at  
**Lifespan Center.**

Our newsletter is published by:

## Autism LifeSpan

@ LITTLE RED HEN'S  
LIFESPAN CENTER  
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# Learning with Technology

With technology becoming more portable and affordable, iPads, laptops, and tablets are showing up in many households. One advantage of these items is the availability of apps to help non-verbal children communicate. Autism Lifespan recommends the following apps.



## AutisMate

One great new app called **AutisMate** is a comprehensive visual app for individuals with Autism. It provides a set of tools and content for communication and learning. AutisMate is similar to PECS, and allows you to personalize

the icons and photos so that the child is able to show you exactly what he or she needs. With AutisMate you can use real-life photos, audio recordings, visual schedules, and social stories to help to facilitate communication and learning. With video modeling, the individual can see the activity being completed, and watch all of the necessary steps. Visual supports are most effective when they are used consistently, and AutisMate provides this support by making it easy to share content via e-mail from one device to another. *You can get more information about AutisMate in the App Store on your iPad or iPhone, or visit their website, [www.autismate.com](http://www.autismate.com)*

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## PROLOQUO

Another great communication app that many of our families use is **Proloquo2Go**. Proloquo2Go provides a talking word processor and an advanced speech engine that works with Mac and Android technology. Users are able to design their own speech sentences with colorable and resizable buttons containing text and/or images. It provides a speaking voice for individuals who are developing their own. *For more information about Proloquo2go visit the App Store on your iPad, iPhone, iTouch, or Android. You can also visit them online, [www.assistiveware.com/product/proloquo2go](http://www.assistiveware.com/product/proloquo2go)*



Apps of this kind are being created all of the time. If you or someone you know uses a great app, please send the name of the app to [nicole@autismlifespanspan.org](mailto:nicole@autismlifespanspan.org) so we can share it with others!

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## Microsoft Personalized Story Templates

**Microsoft Office, University of Washington Autism Center, and Autism Speaks** have teamed up to provide Microsoft Office template forms and personalized stories for individuals with autism. Much like a Social Story, these templates provide a series of personalized story PowerPoint slides that parents, caregivers, and therapists can customize to help explain social situations to children with autism. Stories include going to a restaurant, going to the store, potty training, and many more! To check out these templates and more, visit [www.office.microsoft.com](http://www.office.microsoft.com) and search for **Autism Speaks** templates.

## New & Improved!



Rowell Family Empowerment  
of Northern California, Inc.

Rowell Family Empowerment of Northern California is proud to announce the official launch of their new website, located at [www.EmpowerYourFamily.org](http://www.EmpowerYourFamily.org), and [www.RFENC.org](http://www.RFENC.org). The new website has new features, as well as a new design! They provide support services, respite care, and training sessions. The website is now more functional than ever, allowing you to search for information by age group, profession, or for parent information. They even have an interactive calendar to help you schedule training sessions and events. It also has an improved social networking integration, and a place to give anonymous feedback.

Rowell Family Empowerment also loves to show off pictures of the amazing children and families that they serve. If you're a family that they have assisted over the past year, help them build up the new website photo gallery by submitting your pictures electronically. If you are interested in sending in your photos, visit [www.empoweryourfamily.org/submit-pictures](http://www.empoweryourfamily.org/submit-pictures).

## SAFE & SOUND

Some individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities are prone to wandering and eloping behaviors. For these individuals and their families, safety is a major concern. Parents and caregivers of individuals with autism have special concerns when it comes to safety, and it is important that there is information in the community about how to assist these individuals in emergency situations.

The Autism Society began the Safe & Sound initiative in 2005 to provide resources on topics such as general safety, emergency preparedness, emergency prevention, and risk management. Safe & Sound has developed information and strategies to benefit individuals with developmental disabilities. This initiative is a collaborative effort between The Autism Society and several first response professionals. They work together to provide safety resources and information for first response professionals, individuals on the spectrum, parents, caregivers, and community providers.

As part of a grant from the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, the Safe & Sound initiative provides a series of fact sheets specifically for social workers, law enforcement officers, paramedics, judges, and other professionals. They also have emergency decals, personal information records, and plenty of information about safety. *For more information visit [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org).*



# AUTISM AND EMPLOYMENT

Recent statistics show that 9 out of 10 adults with autism are either unemployed or underemployed, regardless of their IQ or education level (Autism Speaks, 2014). For the number of organizations that are available to hire adults with developmental disabilities, this number is extremely high. There are many factors that may play a part in this high level of unemployment, and a lack of information is one of them. The Autism Speaks Employment Tool Kit is a how-to guide for finding employment created by the Autism Speaks Employment Think Tank in June 2012, which captured the current state of employment for adults with autism. The Think Tank included a diverse group of stakeholders led by adults with autism spectrum disorder, parents, business leaders, and academic experts. It provides information about self advocacy, finding the perfect job, the interview process, and everything in between. If you are interested in looking at the Autism Speaks Employment Tool Kit, visit **Autism LifeSpan** or go to **www.autismspeaks.org**

There are many organizations located in Butte County that provide jobs and job training to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Little Red Hen is a non-profit organization located in Chico, CA. They hire adults of all abilities for eight different locations. These locations vary from retail stores, to a plant greenhouse, floral shop, and online department. They help promote self-advocacy skills, customer service, independence, and career training. The Little Red Hen does not pay below minimum wage. *For more information about employment at Little Red Hen please contact your service coordinator at Far Northern Regional Center (530) 895-8633.*



Another great organization is the Work Training Center (WTC). WTC has been serving Butte County since 1960, and is dedicated to meeting the training, vocational, and recreational needs of adults with disabilities. They focus on community integration and placement in job settings according to individualized service plans. *For more information about employment at the Work Training Center, call (530) 343-7994.*

The Jobs Plus Employment Service at Caminar is also a great resource for individuals with disabilities that are looking for employment. The Jobs Plus program provides job placement and supportive employment services for people with all types of disabilities. They provide job coaching, assessments, and vocational training for each individual. They are dedicated to making working a reality and to help pave the road to financial success for the individuals they serve. *For more information about Caminar and their services, call (530) 343-4421, or email [info@caminar.org](mailto:info@caminar.org).*



# Rose Scott Open-Structured School

**Rose Scott School** is a private, non-profit, K-12 Open-Structured Program that specialize in students with high-functioning autism, Asperger's, ADHD, giftedness and other physical and learning challenges and strengths. Their standards-based, integrated curriculum includes weekly science experiments, hands-on math, guitar lessons, the arts, language arts, social studies, gardening, and much more. Small, multi-age group instruction allows students to work at their own pace, at the appropriate level, and in a home school atmosphere.

**Cindy Carlson**, Director of Rose Scott School says, "At Rose Scott, the happiness of our students is a primary goal. We want our students to want to come to school every day and to graduate from the twelfth grade with their self-esteem not only intact, but also enhanced".

We also host our Autism Awareness Fair here every year! For more information about Rose Scott Open-Structured School, visit their website, [www.rosescottschool.com](http://www.rosescottschool.com), or email [rosescottschool@gmail.com](mailto:rosescottschool@gmail.com)



Rose Scott Students and faculty with Temple Grandin

## The Alex Project

Suicide is all too common in our society, and is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24. On October 11, 2010, 17-year-old local boy, Alex Strauss, commit suicide. He volunteered as a math tutor, was working on electric car designs with his father, and had plans to travel to Alaska after high school graduation. Before he died, Alex tried multiple times to use his cell phone to text for help. Unfortunately, Alex's texts for help were not immediately answered because he sent them at night when the recipients were asleep. Had Alex known there was a 24/7 crisis center open that would have welcomed a text from him, he might still be alive today.



Texting is discreet, easily accessible, and seems to be the preferred method of conversation for young people. **The Alex Project** is dedicated to preventing youth suicide by promoting and supporting texting access to live saving crisis center services. These services are available 24/7, and are discrete. Spreading the word about texting access to crisis center services can save young lives. **For immediate help, please text "ANSWER" to 839363, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)**

For more information about The Alex Project, visit their website [www.alexproject.org](http://www.alexproject.org), or email [info@alexproject.org](mailto:info@alexproject.org).

## Little Red Hen NYGV Theater

Theater has slowly been forging its way into early intervention programs, and the outcomes have been exciting! According to recent research, participating in theater productions can encourage communication, turn-taking, and interactions with the environment.

Skills such as eye contact, communication, emotion recognition, body language, and expressive communication may be difficult for some individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. Theater programs can help teach these skills and many more.

Children with autism often have a hard time recognizing and interpreting facial expressions and body language. Theater and acting can help show the subtleties of body language, and teach participants the appropriate responses to these emotions. Acting also requires us to get our bodies moving, and to have control over what our bodies are doing. These skills can be improved by watching peers and participating in these activities.

Through improv games and creative play, students learn flexible thinking and valuable social skills in an environment that celebrates their unique talents. Participants learn how to wait and listen for their lines, recognize and act out appropriate emotions, and learn communication skills. Programs such as these allow children to interact with their peers, learn new skills, develop a new hobby, and have fun! Participating in theater allows children to act, sing, and perform for a crowd. They can also be involved in making sets, backgrounds, and costumes. There is something for everyone, of all abilities.

Some theater programs, such as **Little Red Hen's Not Your Garden Variety Theater**, also incorporate typically developing peers into the program design. These peers can serve as models for social interaction, communication, and appropriate behavior. Techniques such as role-playing and improvisation may be difficult for individuals with disabilities, and typical peers can help facilitate these types of activities. This year's production will be the Wizard of Oz!



*If you would like more information about NYGV Theater, contact Erika at (530)894-1300 or [erika@littleredhen.org](mailto:erika@littleredhen.org).*