

# Regional Autism Spectrum Newsletter

In Focus  
January 2010



## Cross Categorical Low Tech Networking Day

January 28, 2010 8:30-3:30  
Cost \$50 Included lunch and materials

South Central Service Cooperative  
2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato, MN  
Registration: [www.mnscsc.org](http://www.mnscsc.org). Click on events. Call  
Loree Brown at 507-389-1425 or [lbrown@mnscsc.org](mailto:lbrown@mnscsc.org)  
with questions.

### Upcoming Events

- ◆ 1/28/10 Cross Categorical Low Tech Networking Day
- ◆ 2/20/10 Dive In To Fun! It's A Pool Party
- ◆ 2/25/10 Austim Regional Teachers Meeting

Paula Buendorf, Special Education Teacher from Lakeview Elementary in Albert Lea, MN will start the morning with a presentation on functional use of a SMARTboard for students with disabilities. The afternoon will be an opportunity for you to “make and take”.

The following stations will be provided: work/fine motor boxes; toy adaptation (bring battery operated toy to adapt for switch use; functional living skills; listening games.

There will be a time for all to share ideas, websites, etc.

## Walk do 2 Raises Money & Awareness



Over four hundred people laced up their sneakers to participate in the Autism Walk do 2 on October 2, 2009. The event was sponsored by the Southern Minnesota Autism Coalition as a way to not only raise money... but to promote tolerance and acceptance of those diagnosed with autism. Karen Wright says, “I think a lot of people don’t necessarily understand what autism is and so it’s great that people can come and learn a little more about it because the prevalence of autism is becoming so much greater.” Walk do 2 raised over thirteen thousand dollars today, and it’s money that will all be spent locally. Right now there are over one hundred and fifty kids in the Mankato school district diagnosed with autism. Funds raised will help implement Project Lifesaver to save the lives of individuals with autism and other related disorders in Region 9.

Visit the website at [www.southernminnesotaautismcoalition.org](http://www.southernminnesotaautismcoalition.org)

## Dive In To Fun! February 20, 2010

Join us for a winter pool party.



*It's a winter pool party!*

Children with vision impairments and children on the autism spectrum and their families in Region 9 are invited to brave the cold and have some fun at the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center on Saturday, February 20 from 11:30-2:30.

We will have access to the pool from 11:45-2:00 and the community room for snacks and drink.

Register by calling Loree Brown at 507-389-1425 or [lbrown@mncsc.org](mailto:lbrown@mncsc.org)

Registration deadline is Tuesday, February 16. In case of inclement weather—the event is cancelled.

## Did You Know?

Governor Tim Pawlenty has proclaimed the week of January 18-23, 2010, as Paraprofessional Recognition Week. As part of the celebration of this event, the Minnesota Department of Education is sharing the Governor's Proclamation and strategies that schools may use to honor and recognize paraprofessionals.

Be sure to thank a paraprofessional any day but especially the week of January 18-23.

*"A healthy attitude is contagious, but don't wait to catch it from others."*

*TOM STOPPARD  
British playwright*

*"We're dedicated gardeners.  
Just look at all  
We've sown.  
Thanks to our patience  
And caring  
see how much our students  
have grown.  
By allowing them  
to dream big dreams,  
and helping to make  
learning fun,  
we're planting seeds of success  
so each student is  
Number One!*

## Here's An Idea!

Here's an idea from

[www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org](http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org)

Grade Level: Elementary

Category: Understanding Emotions

Skills: Relaxation/Stress Management (Coping Skills)

Goal: To understand what stress is a utilize strategies to appropriately cope with situations that make student feel stressful or anxious, such as, learning relaxation strategies.

Materials: Curriculum from Life Skills Activities for Special Needs Kids, stress management for students grade 3-6; "When My Worries Get Too Big" for grades K-2; "Boy and a Bear," which uses visual cues to teach relaxation.

Steps/Strategies:

1. Introduce the concepts of "stress"-What emotions do you feel? (angry, frustrated, anxious) or for younger students: Being mad or angry and what happens with your body.
2. Teach strategies to allow students to implement on their own (i.e. relaxation techniques: 3 deep breaths, 3 hand squeezes, count to 5).
3. Have students role-play stress management strategies, and practice relaxation strategies on regular basis so they become "over learned".
4. Use visual cue cards to call student's attention to an exhibition of signs of stress and then allow the student time to use a learned strategy.

References: Mannix, Darlene. Life Skills Activities for Special Needs Kids. The Center for Applied Behavior Research, 1992.

Lite, Lori. A Boy and a Bear: The Children's Relaxation Book. Florida: Specialty Press, Inc. 1996.

Dunn-Buron, Kari. "When My Worries Get Too Big"

## Events

|                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| February 18-29 | MN CEC, Breezy Point                 |
| March 22-23    | PECS Basic Training, Bloomington, MN |
| April 21-24    | National CEC, Nashville, TN          |
| April 28-May 1 | AuSM Conference                      |
| June 16-28     | Autism Symposium, St. Benedict's     |
| July 7-10      | ASA National Conference, Dallas, TX  |

## Become A S.M.A.C. Member

Your membership will provide support to the Southern MN Autism Coalition. You will receive information on events, priority registration and opportunities to participate in Autism Awareness activities.

\$20 annual membership. Make checks payable to S.M.A.C. and send to:

S.M.A.C., PO Box 3753, Mankato, MN 56002

Your donation is tax deductible.

You will receive a membership card with your membership number.



## Websites to check out

<http://socialthinking.com>  
[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)  
[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

## Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

| CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS   |  |
|--|--|
| Medical  | Educational  |
| “Medical Diagnosis”  | “Special Education Eligibility”  |
| Purpose is differential clinical diagnosis   | Purpose is access to FAPE and administrative   |
| Based on a set of clinical criteria (e.g. DSM-IV-TR)   | Based on federal law (IDEA) and specific behavioral criteria   |
| Refers to separate and specific Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDDs)<br><br>Including, Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), Asperger’s Disorder. (DSM-IV-TR) | Refers to a broad disability category utilizing a single term Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).<br><br>“ a disability category characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in several areas of development, including social interaction, communication, or the presence of restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities... ASD may include Autistic Disorder, Childhood Autism, Atypical Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, Asperger’s Disorder, or other related pervasive developmental disorders.” MN Rules 3525.1325 |
| Used in private settings.  | Used only in public schools system.  |
| May be determined by an individual or a team.  | Must be determined by a team.  |
| <p>Table Source: Adapted from Aspy, R. and Grossman, B., Assessing Autism Spectrum Disorders: Guidelines for Parents and Educators, Autism Advocate 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., 2007</p>                                   |  |

- This is a national concern that is related to the different systems.
- Terms such as “Diagnosis” vs. “Eligibility” can often contribute to confusion between physicians, educators and families because they are mistakenly used interchangeably.
- “Diagnosis” and “Eligibility” are not synonymous terms and there are different criteria used in each field.
- There are legal requirements, different purposes and different practices in the Medical and Educational communities.

# Resources

Each director unit has an Autism Resource Specialist. Call the Specialist serving your district if you need help or have questions.

## Mankato Public Schools-District #77 Riverbend Academy Charter School

Robin Boeke 507-345-3015 x266  
[robeke1@isd77.k12.mn.us](mailto:robeke1@isd77.k12.mn.us)

Becky Splett 507-345-3015 x310  
[bsplett1@isd77.k12.mn.us](mailto:bsplett1@isd77.k12.mn.us)

## River Bend Education District

Mary Olson 507-359-8726  
[molson@riverbend.k12.mn.us](mailto:molson@riverbend.k12.mn.us)

Butterfield-Odin  
New Ulm  
Madelia  
Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop  
Sibley East  
Sleepy Eye  
St. James  
Lafayette Charter School  
Green Isle Community School  
MN New Country School

## MN Valley Education District

Patty Yahnke 507-934-5420 x315  
[pyahnke@mnved.org](mailto:pyahnke@mnved.org)

St. Peter  
Le Center  
Cleveland  
Le Sueur-Henderson  
St. Clair  
Nicollet  
Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial

## Southern Plains Special Ed. Coop.

Chery Brumbaugh 507-238-1472  
[cbrumbaugh@fairmont.k12.mn.us](mailto:cbrumbaugh@fairmont.k12.mn.us)

Fairmont Area Schools  
Blue Earth Area Schools  
Martin County West  
Truman  
Granada-Huntley-East Chain

## Waseca Area Schools-District #829 TEAM Academy

Tracy Helms 507-835-3000  
[helt@waseca.k12.mn.us](mailto:helt@waseca.k12.mn.us)

Waseca  
Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton  
New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva  
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown

## Southern MN Special Services

Linda Watson 507-389-2123  
[lwatson@mncsc.org](mailto:lwatson@mncsc.org)

United South Central  
Maple River Schools  
Alden Conger

We're on the Web!  
[www.mncsc.org](http://www.mncsc.org)  
Special Education Link

