



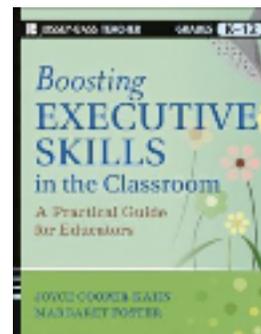
Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 2, May 2013



Upcoming Events

May 11, 2013 -- Executive Functioning Workshop at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center, 10 am - 4 pm (registration beginning at 9 am). Guest speakers are Joyce Cooper-Kahn and Laurie Dietzel, authors of *Late, Lost, and Unprepared*. In the morning session, the authors will provide information about executive functioning. In the afternoon, there will be two concurrent sessions, one designed for parents and the other for teachers. The cost is \$25, which includes lunch and a free copy of *Late, Lost, and Unprepared* (parents) or *Boosting Executive Skills in the Classroom* (teachers). There will be raffles and door prizes, too!



May 11, 2013 -- Smithsonian Institution Morning at the Museum at the National Air and Space Museum, 9:00 am–11:00 am (public hours begin at 10:00 am). Morning at the Museum is a project of the Smithsonian Institution's Accessibility Program and the Smithsonian Museums. Guided by a Community Advisory Committee comprised of museum educators, exhibit designers, professionals who work with children with cognitive disabilities, parents, and self-advocates, the Smithsonian has developed a program that includes early admission and pre-visit materials designed to help children with cognitive disabilities and their families enjoy a visit to the Smithsonian Museums. RSVP to: access@si.edu or 202-633-2921. Pre-visit materials available at: <http://www.si.edu/Accessibility/MATM>. Future Morning at the Museum events include June 15, 2013 at the National Museum of American History and October 5, 2013 at the National Postal Museum.

May 13, 2013 -- Citizens' Advisory Committee For Special Education Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Board of Education Building, Leonardtown.

May 15, 2013 -- Autism Spectrum Support Group Meeting, 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Coffee Quarter, California, MD.

May 15, 2013 -- Autism Spectrum Support Group Meeting, 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Panera in La Plata, MD.

Thanks to...

A gigantic "THANK YOU" to Personalized Therapy for hosting their 6th Annual Autism Awareness Day at the Olde Town Pub in Leonardtown on April 13th. The turn-out was fantastic. We were able to reach many families, sharing information about [The Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland](#) and about autism.



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## Fundraisers



We started our first fundraiser on April 13th at Autism Awareness Day: We're selling Support Group car magnets (above) for \$7 to do double duty to raise funds and to raise awareness. Our goals are to let people know that the Support Group is here, at meetings, by phone, on the web, and on Facebook and Twitter, and to put money back into our coffers after sponsoring the Executive Functioning Workshop, awarding camperships and scholarships to conferences, and purchasing promotional materials.

We are working on other ideas for fundraisers; feel free to add ideas and lend a hand!

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Kid to Kid

Does your child have a recommendation to make to other families, such as a great website or place to visit?

Send it to Terri (terri@autismsupport-somd.org) for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

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[www.facebook.com/AutismSupportSoMD](http://www.facebook.com/AutismSupportSoMD)

@autismsomd

# Features

The following article is a reprint; the original may be found at:

<http://www.aspennj.org/pdf/information/articles/the-case-of-the-perfect-misplacement.pdf>

## Asperger's Syndrome and Pursuing Eligibility for Services: The Case of the "Perfect Misplacement"

Ami Klin, Ph.D. and Fred R. Volkmar, M.D.  
Yale Child Study Center, written for ASPEN

The authorities who decide on entitlement to services are usually unaware of the extent and significance of the disabilities in Asperger Syndrome (AS). Proficient verbal skills, overall IQ usually within the normal or above normal range, and a solitary life style often mask outstanding deficiencies observed primarily in novel or otherwise socially demanding situations, thus decreasing the perception of the very salient needs for supportive intervention. Thus, active participation on the part of the clinician, together with parents and possibly an advocate, to forcefully pursue the patient's eligibility for services is needed.

It appears that, in the past, many individuals with AS were diagnosed as learning disabled with eccentric features, a non-psychiatric diagnostic label that is much less effective in securing services. Others, who were given the diagnosis of autism or PDD-NOS, had often to contend with educational programs designed for much lower functioning children, thus failing to have their relative strengths and unique disabilities properly addressed.

Yet another group of individuals with AS are sometimes characterized as exhibiting "Social-Emotional Maladjustment" (SEM), an educational label that is often associated with conduct problems and willful maladaptive behaviors. These individuals are often placed in educational settings for individuals with conduct disorders, thus allowing for possibly the worse mismatch possible, namely of individuals with a very naive understanding of social situations in a mix with those who can and do manipulate social situations to their advantage without the benefit of self-restraint. It is **very** important, therefore, to stress that although individuals with AS often present with maladaptive and disruptive behaviors in social settings, these are often a result of their narrow and overly concrete understanding of social phenomena, and the resultant overwhelming puzzlement they experience when required to meet the demands of interpersonal life.

Therefore, the social problems exhibited by individuals with AS should be addressed in the context of a thoughtful and comprehensive intervention needed to address their social disability - as a curriculum need, rather than punishable, willful behaviors deserving suspensions or other reprimands that in fact mean very little to them, and only exacerbate their already poor self-esteem. If this issue is ignored, and individuals with AS and individuals with conduct disorders are seen as requiring the same form of intervention, there is a high probability that we will be placing "perfect victims" with "perfect victimizers". **In our contact with adults with AS, we ascertained that this was indeed the case all too often in the past. In fact, this is still very prevalent in different parts of the country.**



*The Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland* supports families by offering scholarships to attend conferences or workshops related to autism or similar disabilities. All we ask in return is that you provide a brief summary of your experience either in writing or in person at a Support Group meeting. Contact Terri ([terri@autismsupport-somd.org](mailto:terri@autismsupport-somd.org)) or Tracie ([tracie@autismsupport-somd.org](mailto:tracie@autismsupport-somd.org)) for more information.

The following is Part 1 of a summary of the US Autism & Asperger Association 2012 World Conference in Denver, Colorado, September 6-9, 2012, by Toni Sieg. Part 2 will appear in the June Newsletter.



## US Autism & Asperger Association 2012 World Conference in Denver, Colorado (Part 1) by Toni Sieg

I attended the US Autism & Asperger Association 2012 World Conference in Denver, Colorado, September 6-9, 2012. Fortunately, I was able to attend with my husband and both of my children, Alex and Zach. Alex and Zach are identical twins, 21 years old now and both on the spectrum, with a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome. This multi-day conference was partially funded by the Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland. I have hours of conference notes and hope to share this information with the Support Group over the next several months. This month I will focus on the overview through the first full day of the conference.

The conference events we attended began with Thursday evening's presentation, "Adults – Ongoing Services Throughout the Lifespan." This presentation focused on what adult services might be needed for our children after they leave the school system. There are a wide range of needs for adults with autism, from independent living with minimum support to intensive on-going services.

On Friday morning, we attended the Keynote Address by Dr. Martha Herbert, MD, Ph.D. Dr. Herbert spoke about the environmental factors that affect brain development and beyond. As environmental exposures persist, they continue to accumulate. This leads to ongoing impacts on metabolic and immune functions at the sub-cellular, organ and systems levels.

The next session we attended was, "Beneficial Interventions and Critical Health Challenges During the Lifespan" by Dr. Phillip DeMio, MD. This presentation focused on the medical issues that present problems associated with ASD throughout the lifespan, childhood into adulthood, including gastrointestinal tract, immune system, viruses, hormonal imbalances and other areas. This was a very technical topic, but interesting, none the less.

Following this presentation, we listened to Aaron

Likens, who was diagnosed in his 20s with Asperger Syndrome. His presentation was titled, "A Journey of Pain, Suffering, Struggle and Hope." This was a wonderful story to listen to. Aaron reminded me a lot of my sons, and it was fascinating to watch him as he spoke. He authored the book, *Finding Kansas*.

The next session we attended was "Strength, and Internet Based Learning: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities" by Stephen Shore, Ed. The discussion focused on going against conventional wisdom and examining how deficits and challenges so pervasively attributed to autism can be reframed as strengths. We walked away from this presentation with a better understanding of how to change the obstacles into successes.

We concluded this day with a panel discussion titled, "Building Relationships, Marriage, and Family in the Context of Autism." This was an interesting discussion. One couple discussed the effects of marriage and family life with both of their children on the spectrum as well as the husband, although he wasn't officially diagnosed. Another couple discussed the issue of being bullied in adolescence, as well as finding love and partnership, raising children on the spectrum and the lessons learned from surviving by struggling to thrive in a marriage. Further discussions focused on the stress and need for a network of support.

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Bios for speakers highlighted this month (from USAAA Website):

**Martha Herbert, MD, Ph.D. - KEYNOTE** -- Dr. Herbert is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, a Pediatric Neurologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and an affiliate of the Harvard-MIT-MGH Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging. She is director of the TRANSCEND Research Program (Treatment Research and Neuroscience Evaluation of Neurodevelopmental



Disorders). Dr. Herbert earned her medical degree at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Herbert's main research interests are in addressing autism as a "dynamic encephalopathy" (something that can change) rather than a "static encephalopathy" (something that is fixed for life) and in how environmental vulnerability affects brain and body health. Dr. Herbert's recently published book is entitled, *The Autism Revolution: Whole Body Strategies For Making Life All It Can Be*.

**Phillip C. DeMio, MD** -- Dr. DeMio is board-certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine. He received his M.D. from the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine with honors in Neurosurgery, Endocrinology/Metabolism, Advanced OB/GYN, and Advanced Internal Medicine. Dr. DeMio has been a faculty member at several teaching hospitals including Case Western University School of Medicine and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. He is accredited by the Teaching System of U.S. Armed Forces Medical Core, and his career includes an emphasis on toxicology.



**Christopher M. Gauthier, MFA** -- Mr. Gauthier is an actively exhibiting artist teaching Fine Art Photography at Utah State University. He holds a MFA from Ohio University in photography and received a BA from Southern Illinois University. His work can be found in the permanent collections of the Mississippi Museum of Art; Webster University, The Netherlands; Koltsovo Airport, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation; and in private collections nationally and internationally. Autism advocacy became a personal imperative when he became aware of the link between his environmental



concerns and his children's autism. He is a collaborative partner in the photographic project, *Evidence and Artifacts: Facing Autism*.

**Jacqueline F. Gauthier** -- Ms. Gauthier studied Social Work at Eastern Mennonite University and is currently the Director for Morningside School, a private Preschool and Kindergarten in Logan, UT. Jacqueline became invested in autism related issues with the birth of their children, Madeline and Caleb. She is a collaborative partner in the photographic project, *Evidence and Artifacts: Facing Autism*.



**Stephen Shore, EdD** -- Dr. Shore was diagnosed with "Atypical Development with strong autistic tendencies." Dr. Shore was viewed as "too sick" to be treated on an outpatient basis and was recommended for institutionalization. Nonverbal until four, and with much help from his parents, teachers, and others, Dr. Shore completed his doctoral degree in special education at Boston University in 2008 with a focus on helping people on the autism spectrum develop their capacities to the fullest extent possible.



In addition to working with children and talking about life on the autism spectrum, Dr. Shore presents and consults internationally on adult issues pertinent to education, relationships, employment, advocacy and disclosure as discussed in his books, *Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome*, *Ask and Tell: Self-advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum*, and *Understanding Autism for Dummies*. He serves on the US Autism & Asperger Association Advisory Board and presently works as a professor at Adelphi University in New York.

<http://www.usautism.org/>



*The Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland*

[www.autismsupport-somd.org](http://www.autismsupport-somd.org)

