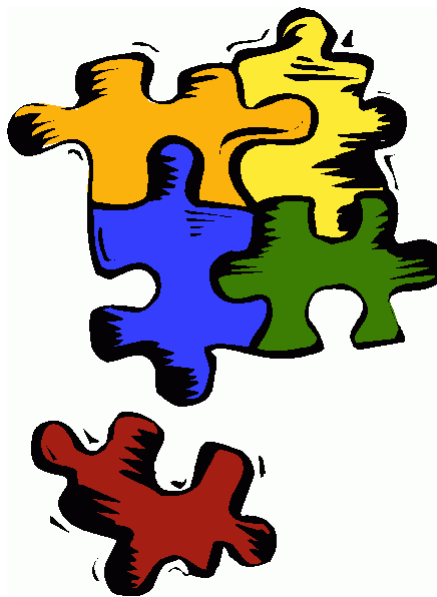


Sonnenberg Consultants Newsletter

Autism Awareness Month

Research Updates

The National Autism Project is a national online autism database that will serve as a shared resource to centralize registration of families and individuals with autism spectrum disorders and connect them with researchers, parents, and other individuals with autism throughout the country and the world. Autism Speaks is making an initial three-year commitment to the project, beginning with an award of \$2,266,000 for the first year. Kennedy Krieger Institute, one of the nation's leading treatment centers for autism and other developmental disorders, will develop the open, interactive database.



Classifieds

Weekend and weeknight hours available in Kenosha and Racine!

MVP of this month is...

Lindsay Hofmann-Wow, Lindsay has been so busy in the past month! Lindsay dedicated many hours doing one on one to help out with many of her families. She has been working hard to help out tutors and the kids to get all the hours filled so kids don't miss therapy. Thanks so much Lindsay for all your hard work and dedication to the kids and Sonnenberg Consultants!

Media Updates

**WALK NOW CHICAGO 2007
May 20, 2007 -
Soldier Field in
Chicago (On the
Field)**

(NEW YORK, NY - April 6, 2007) - Autism Speaks, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness of autism and raising money to fund autism research, and Regal Entertainment Group today announced that they are joining forces to spread awareness about autism, a disorder that now affects one in every 150 children. Beginning today and running through April 12, Regal Entertainment Group will run a thirty-second public service ad produced by the Ad Council -- part of the Ad Council's multi-year campaign with Autism Speaks -- before every film shown on its 6,386 screens in honor of Autism Awareness Month.

ABOUT AUTISM

Autism is a complex brain disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied

by extreme behavioral challenges. Autism Spectrum Disorders are diagnosed in one in 150 children in the United States, affecting four times as many boys as girls. The diagnosis of autism has increased tenfold in the last decade. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called autism a national public health crisis whose cause and cure remain unknown.

Company Policies

-Parent input is also welcome in nominating the MVP of each month. Just let your senior or Farrah know.
-Our website is up and running!
www.SonnenbergConsultants.com.

Joke of the Month

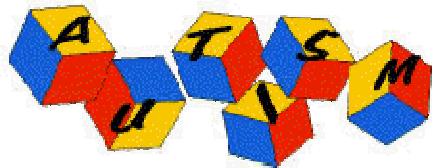
Q: Why was the man fired from the M&M company?

A: Because he threw away all the M&M's that had W's on them.

Projects to help with...

-Help us make a name for our company! We are going to add a phrase that will follow Sonnenberg Consultants and if you win then you will receive a prize. Be creative and have fun! Ask your senior for details.

-Tutors needed to help make stimuli for the kids programs. Please tell your senior if you are interested. Thanks!



Inspiring:

Scott Goldfarb, an eleventh grade student in Springfield, N.J., wrote an essay for school about living with Asperger's Syndrome and his perception of friendship, which can often present a challenge for children on the spectrum.

- *Autism Speaks*

In my life, there has always been a certain amount of trepidation with friends. Oh, I know full well that having friends is a good thing. I'm also certain that my life would be lacking without the friends I do have. Having moments when a friend is down and out in the blues, crying over a relationship, friends, family, or maybe even life itself, it is an extraordinary moment to realize that I share a relationship where I am a comfort; I am someone who, while maybe not able to take away the pain, certainly can ease it just by my presence. In addition, having a time in life to get into small grammatical arguments or discuss the different countries of the world, as I've done numerous times with my friend Eliav, is invigorating. In my heart, due to moments such as these, I've always known about the importance of friendship. Yet, thanks to the nefarious chains of Asperger's syndrome, I've suffered through a constant struggle to actually make and keep any friendships.

The characteristics of people with Asperger's are the perfect ones to make obtaining friends difficult. Asperger's Syndrome is part of a spectrum of autistic disorders, all linked by a level of non-communication. At the lowest level, we have cases like my brother Eric, a

person trapped in a void where communication is only at the most rudimentary level, about the level of a non-expressive two or three year old. Then among several forms at the highest

level, we have Asperger's syndrome. Those with Asperger's often suffer from a plethora of symptoms. The most prominent ones are difficulty with reading people's body language, a singular interest in a subject or several subjects (from my own life, I have one major interest in rock music, compulsively looking for new reviews and obsessing over the best quality of sound to listen to them), a slight monotone voice, struggling with proper body distance, and a tendency to use a vocabulary that is of a slightly higher sophistication than most people would use such as when I employ words like vitriolic, inundate, smorgasbord, plethora, paraphernalia, and others of that variety. While obviously every person with the syndrome may not experience each and every single trait, I have experienced all of these symptoms to some degree. Couple that with a fairly shy personality, a shyness that may or may not have anything to do with Asperger's Syndrome, and I am often left feeling like everyone sees me as being quiet and not worth talking to.

Truthfully, this is too bleak a prognosis. Despite all the biological factors behind Asperger's, I have made progress. I am no longer classified as needing special education by the Springfield Public School District; I have acquired friends I like stupendously; I can talk to people other than my family and myself. These are all great things, worthy of accolades. In spite of this progress, I still find it extraordinarily hard to make genuine

contact with new people. There's still a barrier looking me straight at me in the face that often prevents me from initiating the first word.



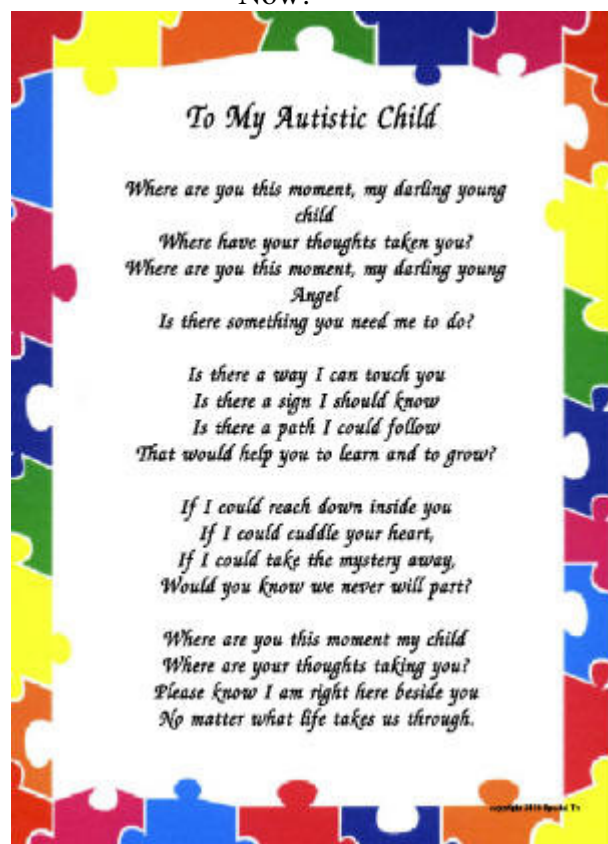
This knowledge is more disappointing in light of seeing role models like my Grandpa Dan. When I am with Dan on vacation, I can count on him being someone to open up to everyone he sees. The world around us gets regaled by this tall giant of a man, talking all about growing up poor in the streets of Brooklyn with his father and brothers, about being a garment maker before joining the army in WWII, and about how he used his entrepreneurial spirit to start and run a camera store, which is still running in Elizabeth. The way he speaks, it's impossible not to be entranced and to wish it were possible to travel back in time to witness all his tales firsthand. Knowing all this, it's not surprising to note that at all three vacations I've been on with him, he's managed to dance with someone each time whereas I've only danced one time with someone (although that at least partially has to do with the fact that I think that most modern dance music is monotonous drivel designed for mindless bopping I can't get into). Every time I capture Grandpa Dan in motion, I often wonder whether it's ever possible that I could achieve that level of comfortableness, that smoothness often gained by years of experiences and moment. More times than not, I have my doubts.

Even worse than the problem of actually making new friends is the problem of being a real friend to others. While I possess plenty of admirable qualities, such as an absolute loyalty to my friends and the aforementioned willingness and desire to help all my friends when they're down and out, there are still two traits I still am having a hard time overcoming. My demons are my shyness and self-doubt. Within my group of friends, I feel as if I'm always the quiet one, the one who doesn't contribute much value to any discussions. I worry so much about being thought of as dull and uninteresting. While I know that this is an oversimplification and I know people aren't actively thinking those thoughts, it bothers me somewhat. This is especially true in light of the fact that I have such a hard time asking people if they want to hang out somewhere. This is where the self doubt comes in. I never feel as if there is really anything interesting that I could offer people at my house or through any activities I can think of. In fact, all too often, I don't think I'd ever really want to have an objective in mind. My perfect idea of hanging out would be galivanting off to New York City on the NJ Transit bus and just exploring and doing whatever my friend and I wanted. Yet, the idea just sounds so childish and insane that I worry that everyone would view this as another one of Scott's crazy eccentricities, up there with his occasional stilted humor and his particularly peculiar way of speaking. Thus, at times I feel as if I'm an introverted extrovert, someone who lives a somewhat solitary life but desiring the interactions with others.

I do recognize that I have a long way to go to feel completely great about myself,

assuming that there is a point where I'll ever fully accept myself as being the way I want to be. Yet, I know it is foolish and stupid of me to just constantly dwell on what could've and what should've been. After all, it's not as if everyone in high school, or even beyond high school and into being an adult, is ever fully adjusted and happy and only those with Asperger's Syndrome are left with problems. As the R.E.M tune goes, everybody hurts. However, implicit in this message is that everyone, or hopefully everyone, heals. With this knowledge at hand, and with my striving to want to better myself day by day, moment by moment, I know that the chains of Asperger's and all the other little annoyances will prove to be just an illusion.

Help spread the word-Support Autism Now!



April 2007

Happy Easter!
Sonnenberg Consultants