

December
2008

Sonnenberg Consultants Newsletter

Merry Christmas!



Throughout the country children and adults with autism are living, going to school, working and enjoying recreational activities in their communities. ASA began the Safe and Sound initiative in 2005 to provide much-needed resources to the autism community on topics such as general safety, emergency preparedness and prevention, and risk management. Safe and Sound works to develop information and strategies that are beneficial to individuals on the spectrum, their families and the professionals who work with them. Another significant aspect of Safe and Sound is to provide information and training to various first responders—those who are first on the scene in an emergency situation.

ASA works on the Safe and Sound initiative through a collaborative effort with Dennis Debbaudt, a law enforcement trainer with more than 10 years of experience presenting autism-related training sessions. Dennis's book, *Avoiding Unfortunate Situations*, became the first resource to address the interactions between law enforcement professionals and people on the autism spectrum, and his training materials are in use by law enforcement agencies around the world. Safe and Sound helps parents and

professionals identify potential public safety or criminal/juvenile justice situations and provide possible solutions so that individuals with autism and those who care for them can be prepared for, stay safe during, and avoid these situations.

Created by ASA and safety expert Dennis Debbaudt as part of ASA's Safe and Sound Initiative, the Emergency Decal can be placed on your door or automobile window to alert First Responders. A companion piece, the Personal Information Record, provides information to help primary caregivers be prepared in case of emergency and gives on-scene tips for emergency personnel. The Personal Information Record should be updated regularly and kept in a place where emergency responders have access to relevant information. Please visit ASA's Store to order the Safe and Sound Packet.



Company updates: (w/ families)

- ✚ Keep hours consistent; only cancel if your child is sick!!!! All hours need to be made up if the therapist cancels!
- ✚ Congratulations to everyone that was able to participate in the gas gift card drawing! Keep up the good work at attending all shifts and making

December
2008

the next drawing!

up those that are
missed. Good luck in

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG, "BABY ANGEL"

When Amy Ames found out her son was autistic, she drowned herself in desperate disbelief. Then a friend told her a beautiful story about an angel sent to earth as an autistic child to enjoy his final visit. That story etched into Amy's subconscious surfacing during difficult times. One night of the many, she woke to the horrible cries of her son. While trying desperately to get him back to sleep, she started making up this song and singing it to him. Four hours a night gradually turned into a few minutes. And then a beautiful thing happened - her son (in his whispery voice) started singing the song back.

BABY ANGEL (5:08)

Baby Angel I hear your cry.
I will stay by you until you can fly.

On Earth he's labeled Autistic, misplaced in special-ed.
But he's placed in a world that's been surely misled.
And as I have watched him at his young age, I see an
angel without his wings.

Baby Angel I hear your cry.
I will stay by you until you can fly.

Baby Angel in a world all his own
Could it be heaven is all that he's known?
He doesn't say hello when I come home, nor do angels
say good-bye when they go.

Baby Angel I hear your cry.
I will stay by you until you can fly.

Baby Angel so sensitive to noise
Could it be in heaven he never heard a harsh voice?
Baby Angel likes to spin and watch fans
Could it be in heaven Earth spins in His hands?

Baby Angel I hear your cry.
I will stay by you until you can fly.

Sometimes when he talks, I can't pick out a word.
Is it a language only Angels have heard?

And as I gaze upon this child like no other, I thank God
every day for choosing me as his mother.

Baby Angel I hear your cry.
I will stay by you until you can fly.
Baby Angel I hear your cry.

I will stay by you until you can fly.
I will stay by you until you can fly.
Bye, bye

Award-winning Southern California author, Chantal Sicile-Kira, is launching her new book, *Autism Life Skills* on Monday, October 6th in Del Mar California. Ms. Sicile-Kira will also use the event to promote the US launch of the international magazine, *The Autism File*.

Sicile-Kira's third book, *Autism Life Skills: 10 Essential Abilities Every Child Needs and Deserves to Learn*, was inspired by her 19-year-old son, Jeremy, who was highlighted on MTV's *True Life*, in the award-winning episode "I Have Autism." Jeremy attends Torrey Pines High School and is working towards graduating in 2010.

Foreword by Temple Grandin, Ph.D.
Author of Thinking in Pictures

Autism Life Skills

From Communication and Safety to Self-Esteem and More—
10 Essential Abilities Every Child Needs and Deserves to Learn

Chantal Sicile-Kira
AUTHOR OF Autism Spectrum Disorders AND
Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum



Autism Life Skills presents a positive and empowering "bill of rights" for every person with autism, regardless of impairment level.

"I wanted to give people a message of hope and strength," explained Chantal. "Life is not easy for someone as impacted by autism as my son is. Yet, Jeremy looks at the reality of his life and does not see tragedy. He has a strong sense of self. He realizes he is dependent upon others who are skilled in helping him reach his goals, but he knows that it doesn't make his life any less valid than yours or mine."

With advice and reflections from autistic adults across the spectrum, as well as Sicile-Kira's own experience as an advocate and parent, the book covers 10 essential life skills including communication, safety and self-esteem.

Joke of the Month.....

When the mother returned from the grocery store, her small son pulled out the box of animal crackers he had begged for. Then he spread the animal-shaped crackers all over the kitchen counter. "What are you doing?" his mom asked. "The box says you can't eat them if the seal is broken," the boy explained. "I'm looking for the seal."

December
2008

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!