

November
2008

Sonnenberg Consultants Newsletter

Happy Thanksgiving!

Take a Free Course

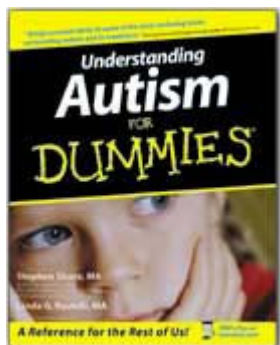
http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=getinvolved_home

ASA's website offers online courses for users to increase their knowledge of autism in general, as well as courses on specific topics related to autism. To take a course, click on the appropriate link below. They take approximately 30 minutes to complete and participants can download a certificate of completion when finished.

- [Autism 101](#)
- [Autism and the Environment 101](#)
- [Are You Prepared?](#)

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 up those that are missed. Good luck in the next drawing!



**Now
Available
!**

**Understanding
Autism for
Dummies by**

From within the

autism spectrum Stephen Shore, joins forces with veteran writer Linda Rastelli to write the long overdue *Understanding Autism for Dummies* as part of the acclaimed Wiley "For Dummies series."

With a foreword and other input from

Temple Grandin, as well as inspiring vignettes from others with autism, this resource helps the reader sort out challenges relating to selecting interventions, financial concerns, education, family issues, and adulthood. Newcomers and seasoned members in the autism community will find valuable advice for empowering people with autism to use their strengths for maximizing their potential in life.



[Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew](#) by Ellen Notbohm

Framed with both humor and compassion, the book defines the top ten characteristics that illuminate the minds and hearts of children with autism. Ellen's personal experiences as a parent, an autism columnist, and a contributor to numerous parenting magazines coalesce to create a guide for all who come in contact with a child on the autism spectrum.

**2009 Walk Now for
Autism Chicago
Saturday, May 16, 2009
Soldier Field
1410 S. Museum Campus
Drive
Chicago, IL 60605**

The Boston Globe

A Young Voice for Autism, Athletics

By Christine Legere
Globe Correspondent / September 28, 2008

MARSHFIELD - Michael Mayes, a senior at Marshfield High School, knows how important it is to have his voice heard.

He has high-functioning autism, a condition that makes communication a huge challenge.

"In elementary school, everyone always underestimated me," Mayes said. His difficulty in communicating made people think he was shy. As a result, Mayes was often simply told what to do by others, even his peers. "People would think they could control you," he said.

As his communication skills improved, Mayes became more capable of expressing his point of view. "People view people with autism as not having anything to say," he said.

Now, he will use his voice to speak on behalf of youngsters throughout the state.

Mayes is one of 28 students who will serve on Governor Deval Patrick's Statewide Youth Council. He was selected from more than 300 applicants.

The panel was established by the governor to allow young people to weigh in on issues important to their communities and to them personally - such as soaring college costs, violence prevention, and healthcare. The opinions and concerns, voiced during council meetings, will be relayed to state legislators. The council has two representatives from each county in the state. They serve for two years.

Because Mayes is high-functioning and has had plenty of support from his parents and therapists since he was very young, he communicates well. He will use that ability, while on the council, to advocate for other autistic children. "I want to give them a voice," he said.

"A lot of kids don't have as much support, so it's much harder for them," said his father, Steve. "Even for Mike, it was a huge struggle from the time he was little."

It was a matter of finding the right teachers, programs, and even coaches, as Michael was growing up. "People should know autistic kids are quite capable, but you've got to work with them," Steve Mayes said.

Catherine Mayes, Michael's mother, said Marshfield's schools have wonderful programs for children with autism, and local coaches have also been willing to help her son along.

Michael has come an enormous distance from his early childhood, when looking someone in the eye or wielding a baseball bat took months of training. "He worked on swinging for two or three years, and then he got it," Steve Mayes said. Once mastering the basic skills, Michael became a pitcher.

"Autism is a communication disability," Catherine Mayes said, and that includes taking in and processing information as well as speaking.

"Many autistic kids have extraordinary gifts," she said. "It's just a matter of finding out what that gift is and helping kids to develop it."

While Michael may have to work harder and longer at tasks such as reading and test-taking, he still gets the job done. At 18, he is an accomplished athlete - particularly in baseball and football - and an honor roll student who already knows what he wants to do with his life. It will involve some aspect of sports, he said, maybe as a coach or a scout.

Mayes works summers as a coach, teaching 5- to 7-year-olds at the South Shore Baseball Club in Hingham. He has also been a peer leader for autistic students at Marshfield's middle school, and a counselor in training for a sports skills program for elementary students with autism.

He has already selected a list of colleges to which he will apply, and he has visited a few of them, including Mitchell College in New London, Conn., and Pace University in New York City.

As part of the Youth Council's selection process, applicants were asked to state what experience and perspective they would bring to the group.

Mayes said he would bring the "perspective of a student with disabilities, a student who is both a player of team sports and loves the history of sports." He added that being part of a sports team has given him the ability to work effectively in a group toward a common goal.

During the application process, he secured recommendations from state Senator Robert Hedlund, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy Cruz (a Marshfield resident who was Mayes' onetime baseball coach), and state Representative Frank Hynes.

"It was a long waiting period," Mayes said. "My mother and I didn't think I had made it." The news came via a phone message from Steve Mayes, when his wife and son were in the car. "My mother pulled over and started dancing," Mayes said.

The 28 members on the Governor's Youth Council, ranging from high school freshmen to seniors and sworn in earlier this month, will meet at least four times a year. The first meeting took place yesterday in Worcester.