On October 20th, 2005 The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities was proud to hold their 4th Annual Conference Research to Practice: Advancing the Well Being of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. There were a record number of people in attendance, the largest CARD has seen to date, totaling 280 people! Numerous parents attended the conference and multiple professions within the autism community were represented, including educators, counselors, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and school administrators. The Crowne Plaza was the location of this event, and created a wonderful atmosphere for our renowned speakers to present.

Dr. Glen Dunlap provided our Keynote presentation on Positive Behavior Support for Children, Families, and Educators Affected By Autism. Dr. Dunlap is a research professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies, Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida. Dr. Dunlap was the founding director of the Division of Applied Research and Educational Support, an organization composed of research, training and demonstration projects, all of which are dedicated to supporting people who have disabilities or who may be at risk for disabilities due to environmental or physiological challenges. Dr. Dunlap’s principal activities and interests have been in the areas of Positive Behavior Support (assessment and intervention for behavior problems), early childhood intervention, family perspectives and family support, and autism & related disabilities. With this extensive background, Dr. Dunlap was able to provide a dynamic presentation applicable to all professionals and parents. Included in the presentation were positive ideas!

The second annual CARD spooky Halloween Social was held on October 28, 2005 at the West Albany Firehouse. All constituents and their families who were in costume and ready for fun were welcome. The children enjoyed a number of different spooky activities! Many made frightening faces on apples and pumpkins, while others enjoyed making witches brew and playing musical chairs. Wrap the mummy and catch the doughnut were also among the favorite games of the night! All of the guests were dressed to impress in their Halloween costumes. In attendance was Buzz Lightyear and Mulan, along with all sorts of other funny, spooky and happy costumes! Everyone did a great job picking out their creative outfits, and we all enjoyed seeing each other’s fun ideas! Along with all the scary fun we were able to have a special birthday celebration for a party guest. To wrap up the night each family was offered a goodie plate of cookies and doughnuts. Thank you to everyone we came, and we hope to see everyone at our up coming Holiday Party!

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CARD Events:

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12/1/05: PES Session 2
12/3/05: Family Holiday Breakfast
12/14/05: Role of Parents Training
1/5/06: PES Session 3
2/9/06: PES Session 4
3/22/06: PES Session 5
4/19 & 4/20/06: Medication and Autism, Dr. Luke Tsai
5/19/06: 3rd Annual Benefit
Professional Development in Autism

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities has been privileged to take part in a progressive project that is funded by the US Department of Education -- Office of Special Education Programs, Professional Development in Autism (PDA). “The overall goal of the PDA Center is to conduct training across the country so that every student with Autism Spectrum Disorders can access high quality evidence based educational services in his or her local school district.” The Center has six sites throughout the United States: University at Washington, University of Colorado at Denver, University of Kansas, Oakstone Academy, Maryland Coalition for inclusive education and the University of South Florida.

CARD teamed up Rose Iovannone, Ph.D. and Carie English, Ph.D. of the University of South Florida to work with two area schools, Queensbury Union Free School District and South Glens Falls School District. Each area school applied to the PDA Center to be a part of this exciting project. The schools identify teams of educators to work with the project leaders. The teams can consist of any person in the school district that works with a child with autism such as, regular and special education teachers, school psychologists, social workers, speech language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, principals, and committee on special education chairpersons. Each team chooses a child with autism to be of focus throughout the process.

For the local school districts, the benefit of having the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities involved with the project is that CARD staff is readily available to answer questions, collect data, and offer support throughout the process, in between the times that the PDA Center staff is not in the area, as well as, after the project has been completed.

The project begins working with the school teams by conducting a pre-training site visit to introduce the program and review the expectations to the participants. Each team of educators completes a needs assessment to determine what areas to focus on. The PDA Center staff, CARD staff, and the school teams set up dates throughout the school year to meet for training and technical assistance.

The intensive training and technical assistance covers various topics relating to children with autism determined through the needs assessment. Possible topics are positive behavior support, systematic instruction and data collection, collaborative teaming and person centered planning, and social interaction/peer mediation. The idea of the project is to teach educators about evidence-based theories and then train the teams how to put what is taught into practice.

The trainings are held as a large group instruction with all of the school teams and any others in the district that would like to attend and learn more about autism spectrum disorders. Each of the trainings lasts a full day and covers one topic at a time. There is plenty of time for participants to ask questions and share concerns. Many different types of examples are also shown to the group.

Technical assistance is held with the small team groups and applies the training material to one specific child. This way the team can see how to apply what they have learned during the large group instruction. Both the USF staff and the CARD staff can provide hands on assistance during this time by demonstrating how to implement the information learned during the training.

The final stage of the project is to have a post training visit to discuss progress and any issues of concern. The teams complete a needs assessment again and monitor how much knowledge and information has been gained because of the project. This is also a time to plan with the educators how they can share their newly acquired knowledge with others in their school district.

The Center staff is thrilled with this opportunity. Thank you to Dr. Christodulu, Dr. Iovannone, and Dr. English for making this joint venture possible. The families, school districts, and most of all, the children with autism will greatly profit.

For more information about the Professional Development in Autism training opportunity, please see http://depts.washington.edu/pdacent.index.

Summer Fun!

This summer, CARD was excited to offer a variety of fun outings across our catchment area, as part of its summer fun program. The purpose of these activities is to give children with an ASD an opportunity to interact with one another, to learn, and to have fun! As in the past, the summer fun activities were a hit!

We…
S plashed in the water at Grafton Lakes State Park
U ncovered jewels and treasures at Eagle Mills Cider Company
M ade Believe in the Children’ Museum at Saratoga
M ade friends with the animals at Adirondack Animal Land and Catskill Game Farm
E arned points playing mini-golf at Control Tower
R oilercoaster and Rides at the Great Escape
F antastic fun at Adirondack Animal Land.
F rontier life is cool at Fort William Henry
U ncovered secrets of outer space at the Schenectady Museum and Planetarium
O nce playwrights enjoyed the MacHaydn Children’s Theatre

What a FANTASTIC summer! Thanks for coming and we’ll see you next year!
video clips showing the progress that families of children with autism have made by implementing positive behavior supports.

The afternoon session was comprised of 8 different break-outs. Dr. Kristin V. Christodulu, Director of CARD-Albany, presented on two different topics: *Assessing Individuals with Autism and Mealtime and Children with Autism*. Dr. Rose Iovannone enlightened us with two presentations on *Systematic Instruction* as well as *Peer Mediation: Training Typical Peers*. Dr. Iovannone is an Assistant Professor in the college of the Florida Mental Health Institute, Department of Child and Family Studies, Division of Applied Research and Educational Support at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Currently, she is the Director of a federally-funded Behavior Research Center.

Dr. Deborah May is the Chair of the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology and the Director of the Division of Special Education at the University at Albany - State University of New York. Her presentation on *Using Universal Design for Learning to Make the Curriculum Accessible to Students with Autism*, provided several practical examples for professionals to use in their own setting.

Other speakers included: Patricia J. Geary, of VESID, who led the State’s implementation of the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. She was able to present her knowledge of NYS Implementation of the 2004 IDEA as one of our break-out sessions.

Dr. Allen A. Schwartz presented on *Person Centered Planning: The Art of Visualizing a Positive Future*, which is his primary professional interest.

Sharon DiLorenzo and Don Tenne provided a joint presentation: *How to Plan for the Future of Your Child or Other Dependent with Special Needs*. Ms. DiLorenzo is an associate financial planner and financial service representative with MetLife financial services. Mr. Tenne is a financial planner and financial services representative with the Tenne Financial Group and is also a specialist in MetDesk, MetLife’s Division of Estate Planning for Special Kids.

The Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza acted as our sponsor for the book sale for the second year in a row. There was a wide array of books available, all pertaining to the discussions and topics of our presenters. Some of the publications were authored by our Keynote speaker Dr. Dunlap including: *Families and Positive Behavior Support – Addressing Problem Behaviors in Family Contexts*. We were fortunate to be able to provide such a great selection in books for the families and professionals in attendance.

We would like to thank all of our Presenters, The Book House, and all of those who attended for making our 4th Annual Conference a great success! We hope to continue to provide interesting speakers and topics. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

**Parent Education Series and Autism Training Initiative**

CARD Albany is pleased to announce two new training formats!

The new **Parent Education Series** provides parents with the tools they need to help their child reduce the number and/or severity of problem behaviors, and/or increase new skills. Utilizing the principles of Positive Behavior Support, parents participate in five monthly sessions that include an educational presentation followed by a lengthy technical assistance segment where they can get individualized assistance relating to their child. The first session was held in Albany on November 3, 2005, with continuing dates on December 1, 2005, January 5, February 9, and March 22, 2006. A new series of 5 sessions is currently being scheduled in Columbia County. As always, programs offered by CARD Albany are free-of-charge to registered constituents and child care is provided whenever possible.

CARD Albany has also begun a new training series for educators. The **Autism Training Initiative** provides teachers and other school team members with intense training in the education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Teams are selected through an application process and, if chosen, participate in two days of intense training on two topics, with a follow-up day of support provided at a later date. Teams attend an educational presentation in the morning, followed by individualized technical assistance related to specific students or issues. The goal of this program is to train educators as leaders in the field so that they may share their knowledge with their colleagues. It is intended for people already possessing a working knowledge of ASD, and is provided free-of-charge to schools in our 10 county region. For more information on this, or any program offered by CARD, please contact us.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**CARD’s 3rd Annual Benefit, a Casino Night, is set for Friday May 19, 2006!**
Welcome Samantha and Erin!

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities is pleased to announce that Samantha Hilton (Intake Coordinator) and Erin Kietzman (Education Specialist) have joined the staff.

Samantha Hilton received her B.A. degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Albany. Samantha is coordinating efforts to disseminate information on autism, and is pursuing research in the areas of siblings of children with autism and sleep interventions.

Erin Kietzman received a B.A. degree in psychology from the University of Rochester and a Master of Science in Education degree in School Counseling from the College of Saint Rose. Erin worked as a counselor in the Vermont school system on a multidisciplinary team to develop behavior plans and special education plans, and has counseled individual and small groups of students in social skills, self-management, and classroom behavior skills.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!!!
Visit us at:
www.albany.edu/psy/autism/autism.html

Center for Autism Advisory Council

Saratoga-Warren-Washington Advisory Council:
Meeting Dates: November 3, 2005
Gail Aiken, Chair
Parent and Registered Nurse
South Glens Falls, NY

Fulton-Montgomery Advisory Council
Meeting Dates: November 10, 2005
March 9, 2006
Vickie Morrison, Chair
Community Professional
Lexington Fulton County ARC
Johnstown, NY

Albany-Schenectady Advisory Council:
Meeting Dates: November 9, 2005
March 8, 2006
Jeff McLellan, Chair
University at Albany Administrator and Director of CASDA
Albany, NY

Rensselaer- Columbia - Green Advisory Council
Meeting Dates: November 1, 2005
March 9, 2006
Jim Campion, Chair
Parent and President of Columbia-Greene Community College
Hudson, NY

LAST CHANCE TO ENROLL in Autism I!
For more information or to register, please contact Alaina Forrest at (518) 442-5132 or via email at aforrest@albany.edu

SAVE THE DATE:
Medication and Children with Autism presented by Dr. Luke Tsai
April 19 and April 20, 2006