

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

Successful Strategies and Effective Interventions

Fall is upon us and with the change in seasons, the kickoff of the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities training and workshops began with the Third Annual Conference. Over 225 parents, educators and community members attended "Successful Strategies and Effective Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders" at The Prime Hotel and Conference Center in Saratoga Springs, New York on September 23, 2004. The full day event included a plethora of information presented by nationally and locally recognized experts in the field of autism.

The conference began with a tasty breakfast and slide show of the Center's activities over the year, including the Annual Benefit, Sibshops, and the Summer Fun program. Dr. Kristin Christodulu, the Center's Director, gave welcoming remarks and introduced the Center staff.



From left to Right: Dr. Kristin Christodulu, Dr. Lynn Kern Koegel, and Dr. Robert Koegel

From that, the Conference jumped right into action with a presentation by Dr. Christodulu on "Best Practices in Educating Children with Autism."

After a short break, the Conference continued with the Keynote Presentation "Pivotal Response in Autism". Dr. Robert Koegel, Director, and Dr. Lynn Kern Koegel, Clinical Director, from the Autism Research Center at the Graduate School of Education, University of California-Santa Barbara led the presentation.

Dr. Robert Koegel began with the basic principals of Pivotal Response. Dr. Lynn Kern Koegel followed with directed practice of Pivotal Response. Each presenter used video clips to demonstrate the steps of pivotal response and the progress children made over time. It was an honor to have such astute professionals be with us as the Keynote Speakers.

The afternoon brought a change to this year's Conference. (continues on page 3)

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CARD Events:

- 10/29/04: Halloween Family Fun Night
- 11/6/04: Sibshop (# 2 of series)
- 12/4/04: Sibshop (# 3 of series)
- 2/4/05: A Night of Laughs
- 4/9/04: CARD Wine tasting
- 5/20/04: 2nd Annual Benefit

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Summer Fun

And it was! CARD Albany had the opening series of a summer recreation program. Children were able to choose from five activities, all of which were located throughout the geographic area that CARD Albany serves. The main goal of the program is to just have

fun and meet new friends. From the reaction of the children and feedback from parents, it was a great success! The program kicked off at the Schenectady Museum and Planetarium. The children enjoyed the WSKY: Radio Station of the Stars show at the

Planetarium. (continues on page 2)

"The weather was perfect for swimming in the lake, going on the paddle boat and making sand castles."

Autism Distance Education Network

CARD-Albany, in collaboration with the University at Albany, has developed a distance learning course sequence focused on the education of individuals with autism and related disabilities. The three courses, Autism I-Foundation Course, Autism II-Introduction to Intervention, and Autism III-Practicum in Intervention, are taught using the latest in Real Player technology.

Over 900 special and regular education teachers, school psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, paraprofessionals, speech and language professionals, teacher assistants/aides and parents have completed parts of this sequence. Each course offers 3 credits at

the graduate and undergraduate levels. The courses can also be audited.

Autism I –Foundation Course includes an overview of autism and related disabilities, including a discussion of diagnostic issues, philosophical issues, research on biological and psychological bases of the disorders, as well as an overview of intervention techniques and legal issues.

Autism II– Introduction to Intervention provides the student with in-depth knowledge of empirically validated techniques used to treat children with autism. Highlighted are programmatic efforts to improve language, communication and social skills of these

children.

Autism III– Practicum in Intervention parallels the Introduction to Intervention course, engaging students in practicum experiences with children having autism. Students are supervised as they work with children and are required to design and implement a series of plans with students that support the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

For more information about the series of autism courses offered by CARD-Albany and the University at Albany, visit our website or contact Alaina Forrest at (518) 442-5132.

-Alaina Forrest

Summer Fun (continued)

We toured the museum to see and touch inventions by local scientists and we even played with musical instruments.

A very popular activity was the trip to Adirondack Animal Land. We learned about different animals from around the world. There were African Lions, giraffes, monkeys and deer. Michael, from the South Glens Falls School District, participated in the animal show and played



a game with Odessa the donkey.

We ended the day on the African Safari Ride. Boy, did the camels get close!

The summer fun participants also spent the day at Chuck E. Cheese, playing video games, crawling through tubes, eating pizza and of course winning prizes! The trip to Moreau Lake State Park was filled with fun. The weather was perfect for swimming in the lake, going on the paddle boat and making sand castles. Some of us even saw a wildlife slide show.

The Summer Fun program finished the season at the Great Escape. There was so much to see and do! There was a diving show, a petting zoo and the Comet. This was Alex’s, a student from Ballston Spa Central School, first trip to the Great Escape and his favorite rides were “the roller coasters because they went very



fast.”

Air hockey and shopping were among the favorite activities for the children.

The summer flew by and was filled with fun! CARD Albany enjoyed the activities with the children and we look forward to next summer!

-Jessica Boisjoli

- SAVE THE DATE -

CARD Comedy Fundraiser is set for February 3, 2005

USF St. Pete & U-Albany Gain Research Grant

The dean of the college of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg was awarded the largest research grant in school history, \$ 892,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to study communication patterns within families with special needs children.

V.Mark Durand, former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at U Albany and now a professor of psychology at the University of South Florida, will conduct a five-year study of families who have

children with autism and other special needs.

The Department of Education-funded study will involve 40 families at U-Albany's Center for Autism, and another 40 down south. The project will assist parents in helping children who exhibit self injurious behavior such as head banging and hand biting. "If a child is banging his head to tell his mom to come spend time with him, I want to help parents figure out why the child is behaving this way," Durand said.

"The Department of Education-funded study will involve 40 families at U-Albany's Center for Autism and 40 down south."

"In the past, our field used punishment to teach children...we restrained [or slapped them]. We have found a better way that doesn't punish children."



Halloween Social



On October 29th, the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities hosted a very scary Halloween social. The event took place at the American Legion in Saratoga Springs and was open to all of the constituents registered with the Center for Autism. The only requirement was A COSTUME!

Several activities were offered,

including the decorating of pumpkins and Halloween cookies. The younger children enjoyed pinning the nose on the pumpkin and the older children spent most of their time participating in "spooky corner" activities such as making a witches brew and writing scary stories.

The highlight of the evening was the Halloween costume parade where the children were able to show off their

creative costumes. Awards and prizes were given out for scariest costume, best family costume and funniest costume to name a few.

By the end of the evening, goodie bags were filled with all sorts of candy and stomachs were full. The Halloween social turned out to be a huge success. Everyone had a spooky good time.



Successful Strategies (continued)

The breakout sessions gave participants the chance to choose from eight topics that were most correlated to their needs.

There was something for everyone, parents and professionals alike. The trainings covered a variety of topics that spanned throughout a child's life.

The first session included "How to be an Effective Paraprofessional in the School Environment" by Dr. Kristin Christodulu, "Using Visual Schedules to Develop Language Skills and Executive Function" by Vickey Morrison, "An Introduction to Transition Coordination and Related Services" by Andrew Greenwald, and "Autism Program Quality Indicators and their Relationship to IEP Development" by J. Andrew Jackowski and John Conwall.

The participants were also able to choose from the following topics in the second breakout session: "Waking Up to a Better Day" by Dr. Kristin Christodulu, "Insight Out: An Aspie's Perspective" by Sean Kinner and Vickey Morrison, "Sexual Maturation and Children with Disabilities: A Presentation for Parents and Educators" by Lynn Cantwell and Scott Iovinella, and "Disability Awareness" By Catharine McHugh".

Throughout the Conference, a book fair sponsored by the Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, was held. Attendees had the opportunity to review and purchase books that were related to the topics throughout the day. Among the titles were Overcoming Autism by Dr. Lynn Kern

Koegel, Sleep Better by Dr. V. Mark Durand, and How to be a Para Pro by Diane Twatchman Cullen. Autism Awareness Pins and Magnets were also available for purchase. The book fair was another great addition and resource to parents and professionals during this year's Conference.

Overall the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities Third Annual Conference was a great success! A wealth of information was presented that will assist all of us in implementing successful strategies and effective interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders.

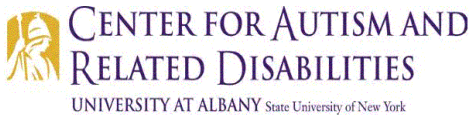
A special thank you to all who presented and attended this year's conference.

-Tara O'Connor



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MEET THE NEW STAFF

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities is pleased to announce that **Jerilyn Jesco** (Assistant to the Director) has joined the staff. Jerilyn comes to us from Wildwood Programs, where she served as a Residence Counselor and a Community Support Counselor. She brings with her a variety of experiences and is recognized for her work promoting independence, self-esteem, and community integration.

NOTE

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities is now selling autism awareness pins and car magnets for \$5.00 each. If you are interested in purchasing either a pin or a magnet, please call Jerilyn Jesco at (518) 442-5132.

Important Upcoming Events

4th ANNUAL ASPERGER SYNDROME CONFERENCE

(Sponsored by the Center for the Disabled)

Date: May 13, 2005

Time: 8:00 a.m.— 4:30 p.m.

Location: Marriot Hotel, Wolf Road, Albany

Speakers: Ami Klin, Ph.D. & Fred Volkmar from the Yale Child Study Center

Contact: Karen Coleman at 437-5623 for more information.

CARD 2ND ANNUAL BOAT CRUISE (ON LAKE GEORGE)

Friday, May, 20, 2005

Since it was such a great success the first time, we've decided to do it again. This time we need your help! Volunteers, please call Lauren Simon at (518) 442-2574.

LOCAL SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AUTISM TRAINING

In conjunction with CARD Albany staff, Dr. Rose Iovannone from the University of South Florida will facilitate training sessions to school personnel from **South Glens Falls School District** and **Queensbury Union Free School District**. The sessions will include short term internships and hands on training and information on using evidence based practices for students with autism spectrum disorders.

Information on PDA Center training opportunities for educators and families can be found at:
<http://depts.washington.edu/pdacent/index.html>

APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Join the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities for a special wine tasting and fundraising event

Date: 4/9/2005

Location: TBA

More details to follow