

# Autism BC

Autism ... a part of our world, not a world apart

Volume 10, Issue 4 • Fall 2002

## Preparing for Your Child's IEP *What You Need to Know*

*Ron Van Der Mark, Community Education & Support*

It's that time of year again when we, as parents, are called upon to assist in planning our children's education. This usually involves the development of an individual education plan (IEP). If you are new to the school system, or if your child was only recently diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, then you may not be familiar with what is involved in putting together an IEP for your child.



### What is an IEP?

An IEP is an individualized plan designed to address the special educational needs of a particular student with a disability. Although your child may be on the Spectrum, it is important to note that not every child with a disability is required to have an IEP. An IEP must only be provided by a school if your child's educational program will have to be either adapted or modified.

#### An adapted program

would mean that your child would be expected to learn the same materials (e.g., English, music, social studies, etc.) as the other children, but there would be adaptations made to the methods used to teach your child. With an adapted program, your child would be graded using the same criteria with which the other children are graded.

Examples of adaptations include:

- alternate formats (e.g., Braille, books on tape)

- instructional strategies (e.g., visual cues and aids, use of interpreters)
- assessment procedures (e.g., oral exams, additional time).

With a **modified program** your child would not be expected to learn the same materials as the other children. In other words, courses within a modified program would be substantially altered or eliminated to meet the student's special needs. If your child's program is to be modified, then he or

she would not receive full credit for the courses taken.

### Where Do I Begin?

If your child has recently been diagnosed, then you should let your child's school know as soon as possible. This is important because the school board for your district must ensure that an IEP, if

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Autism Society of BC  
301 – 3701 E. Hastings St.  
Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6  
Phone: (604) 434-0880  
Fax: (604) 434-0801  
Toll-free: 1-888-437-0880  
E-mail: [info@autismbc.ca](mailto:info@autismbc.ca)  
Web: [www.autismbc.ca](http://www.autismbc.ca)

## Autism BC

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required, is designed for your child as soon as practical after the school has been made aware of the diagnosis. Due to time constraints in September, IEP meetings are often postponed until mid-October. Therefore, as early into the school year as possible, you should provide the school principal with a written request that an IEP meeting take place with the school-based team.

The initial school-based team is usually comprised of the principal, classroom teacher and resource teacher. Depending on your child's needs, you may also want to request that the school counsellor, psychologist, speech and language pathologist and physiotherapist/occupational therapist attend, at least for the first meeting.

The first IEP meeting typically involves getting to know your child and his or her particular needs. Therefore, in addition to the school-based team, you may want to request that your child's psychiatrist, social worker, therapist, etc. also be invited to attend the IEP meeting. These professionals can often offer valuable information for the team to consider.

## How Should I Prepare for the IEP Meeting?

- **Learn about autism and its educational implications.** When it comes time to attend the IEP meeting, make sure that you are well prepared in advance. There are a number of ways in which an Autism Spectrum Disorder can affect your child's educational needs. Thus, it is important that you have a very good general understanding of the disability itself before you attend the IEP meeting.

If you have not already done so, you may want to contact our office for an information package on autism or on Asperger's Syndrome. You may also want to request additional information specific to autism and education. In addition, you may want to stop by and visit our library, where we have a number of books and videos that may be of interest to you.

A valuable source of information that deals specifically with teaching students with autism is the Ministry of Education's manual, *Teaching Students with Autism – A Resource Guide for Schools*. It can be downloaded at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/welcome.htm#Autism>. It is a PDF document, so you will require Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it.

- **Get to know your child's strengths and weaknesses.** Like most children on the Spectrum, your child may have specific strengths and weaknesses related to communication, social interaction, unusual behaviours, paying attention, sensory stimuli (e.g., noise, light, etc.), and anxiety. How your child is affected may greatly affect your child's educational needs. It is important that you are aware of your child's particular strengths and weaknesses in each of these areas.

A valuable resource here would be reports from your child's psychiatrist, psychologist, behavioural consultant, speech and language pathologist, etc. These professionals should be able to provide you with specific information about your child's strengths and weaknesses. They should also be able to provide you with some suggestions on how to incorporate those strengths and weaknesses into an educational program.

- **Learn as much as you can about designing an IEP.** One of the ways that you can begin preparing for the IEP meeting is to become familiar with what is legally required to be included in an IEP. The Individual Education Plan Order (Ministerial Order 638/95) sets out some of the requirements that must be met when drafting an IEP. It states that, when applicable, an IEP must include:

- learning outcomes for a course, subject and grade that are different from or in addition to the expected learning outcomes for a course, subject and grade set out in the applicable educational program guide for that course, subject and grade, as the case may be;
- a list of support services required for the student to achieve the learning outcomes established for the student; and
- a list of the adapted materials, or instructional or assessment methods required by the student to meet the learning outcomes established for the student in the IEP.

If you have Adobe Acrobat Reader, you may want to download a copy of the IEP Order at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m638-95.pdf>.

It is important to note that the IEP Order does not set out all of the items that may need to be

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# President's Message

Michael Lewis – President

My best wishes to our membership; hopefully, the summer was great for everyone! For those families, like our family, with school-aged children, September presents its own challenges, and I hope that all has gone well for you and your children.

At this time, I would like to extend a thank-you to the following staff who have moved on to other endeavors over the summer: Executive Director Donna McKenna, Program Director Clair Schuman, and Librarian Melanie Kinsey. All are very much appreciated for their many valued contributions to ASBC. On behalf of the staff and the membership, we wish them all many successes.

## ASBC's Strategic Plan

Over the course of the Society's very interesting summer, many members have asked me about our Strategic Plan and how ASBC hopes to bring the plan to fruition.

The plan was developed over two sessions late last year and early this year. The result was a series of eight "strategic intentions" under the umbrella of "The Autism Society of British Columbia: Our Focus is Advocacy." The following is a summary of the plan. The full plan will be posted on the website shortly.

### Strategic Intention #1: Education

*To provide accurate and current information regarding the diagnosis, treatment and support of autism across all ages.* We want to counteract

misconceptions and prejudices; solicit support; and accelerate diagnosis, science-based treatment, and support for families.

### Strategic Intention #2: Information and Infrastructure

*To develop technology infrastructure to leverage our resources.* Using the Internet, we want to increase our efficiency and effectiveness, extend our reach, be more timely in responding to members, be more cost effective, and enhance our fundraising activities.

### Strategic Intention #3: Lobbying

*To influence government policy to align with stated goals and objectives of the Society.* We want to demonstrate the best interests of our constituents by ensuring early intervention and science-based treatment, amongst other goals, and by improving our lobbying skills. We will focus on both politicians and senior bureaucrats.

### Strategic Intention #4: Litigation

*To utilize the court system to enforce legal rights.* We want to select issues carefully and be willing to go as far as the Supreme Court of Canada.

### Strategic Intention #5: Fiscal Independence

*To achieve independence from government and political interference in setting our strategy and goals.* We want to be able to set our own

agenda, which will improve our credibility and self-esteem. We will achieve this by developing and implementing a fundraising strategy and repositioning the nature of our relationship with government.

### Strategic Intention #6: Networking Groups

*To develop and maintain community groups to educate, empower and support constituents.* We want to share information at a grass roots level and be as responsive as possible to local needs.

### Strategic Intention #7: Human Resources

*To attract, develop and retain the human resources required to implement the strategy and achieve the goals.* We want to provide good services to our membership while constantly endeavoring to improve efficiency and maintain a high level of staff morale. We will develop and communicate clear roles and responsibilities relative to the strategic plan.

### Strategic Intention #8: Communication

*To develop and rapidly disseminate accurate information to our staff and stakeholders.* We want to be consistent, timely and effective in our communications. We will explore further electronic dissemination of information, establish a communication policy and standards, and foster relationships with media and other external contacts.

We have these goals, but how do we complete them

with the resources available to us? We have chosen to implement the plan using a committee structure that reflects the plan goals. Our eight "intentions" are being looked after in six committees: Community Networking, Education, Human Resources, Communication/Infrastructure, Fiscal, and Lobbying/Litigation.

Each committee is chaired by a Board member and is open to participation by other Board members, the membership and staff. The exception is the Human Resources committee, which, because of the employer/employee nature of its work, is restricted to Board member participation only. The chairs of the committees decide how large their teams will be.

I will be asking each committee chair to report monthly to the membership about the progress of their committee. The committees are the keys to implementation of our plan—strong leadership and active contributions from team members are absolutely necessary for the teams to make progress.

This is one of the challenges that ASBC and all organizations like ours face—too much to do and too few resources. Nevertheless, I am convinced that while we probably will not achieve everything we want this year and next, it will not be from lack of effort.

My thanks to those of you who continue to contribute to winning the battles we are all fighting.

# Communications Committee Report

Avery Raskin, Communications Committee Chair & Vice President



▲  
**Our greatest resource is our power to help and support each other, and it is my fond wish that the hard work now being done on improving our communications will help make that resource more efficient and available then ever before.**  
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I'm sure I don't have to tell anyone here of the challenges and heartaches of fighting for the rights of people with autism. Our greatest resource is our power to help and support each other, and it is my fond wish that the hard work now being done on improving our communications will help make that resource more efficient and available then ever before.

These are thrilling days to be a part of our Society, and I thank you for the privilege of serving on your Board of Directors. As the chair of the Communications Committee, it is my great pleasure and privilege to be able to fill you in on some exciting changes which are coming our way in the weeks ahead — some of them may even be in place by the time you read these words in the newsletter.

At our strategic planning sessions in late 2001 and earlier this year, the Board members then sitting agreed unanimously that improving the ASBC web site and our communications infrastructure in the Society office would go a long way to helping us reach out to members wherever they lived, to make things easier for our hard-working staff, and to enable us all to take advantage of our most important resource—each other. The Strategic Plan has been adopted in full by the 2002/2003 Board of Directors, and your Communications Committee is working hard to make it easier for us to all reach out to one another.

As our good fortune would have it, earlier this year Marie Gauthier joined our staff as the Society's new Communications Coordinator, bringing the Society her wealth of talent in the world of computers. Marie has done an amazing amount of work in a very short time and I think we will all appreciate the results in the weeks and months to come.

First and foremost, we are about to inaugurate the ASBC Discussion Forum. This area of the web site will enable members to exchange information and ideas, get answers to questions, and communicate directly with staff, board and each other on any topic of interest, in an open forum.

Keep your web browser pointed at [www.autismbc.ca](http://www.autismbc.ca) and watch for the Forum boards — we will be starting with six separate areas divided up into areas of interest, including Treatment Issues, Adult Issues, School Issues, Provincial Issues (government programs & policies), Classified Ads, and Questions for ASBC. This last category is meant to provide a place for members to seek information specifically from staff and Board members, though the topic guidelines are merely that—guidelines.

The Discussion Forum should be a fabulous addition to the resources of ASBC, and hopefully help us all help each other with the many issues we deal with on a daily basis.

Second on the current list is a complete redesign of the website itself, to make the site more user-friendly for our membership and therefore more useful to us all. The first part of this you will see will be new pages for our Nanaimo and Prince George branches, which combined with the Forum will hopefully go some distance in making the Society more readily accessible for our members outside the Lower Mainland.

Many of the other improvements to our communications structure may not be as visually obvious, but they will be very apparent in the end result of making our Society more efficient and responsive to the needs of our members. The databases used in the office for the library, the membership rolls, and fundraising will be integrated and harmonized in the weeks to come; our phone system is being updated and reprogrammed; and a full audit of the computer system is being undertaken, with a view to improvements as our resources allow.

Our intention is to make your Autism Society the most open, accessible, useful resource it has ever been. I hope you will all let us know how we're doing in the Discussion Forum in coming weeks.

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## Branch News – Nanaimo

*Marja Jorgenson, Branch Coordinator, Nanaimo*

### **Raising money by recycling**

A fundraising account is now set up at the Harewood, Terminal and Mostar Bottle Depots so that anyone returning bottles and various other recyclable materials to those facilities can donate the refund to ASBC Nanaimo. When you return bottles, Harewood and Terminal branches will give a receipt to the donor, which should be kept so that a tax receipt can be given at the end of the year. At the Mostar branch the entry is recorded manually. Please consider taking your glass jars, bottles and other recyclables to one of these outlets whenever possible, and support the activities of your local branch of ASBC.

### **Litter Cleanup Day**

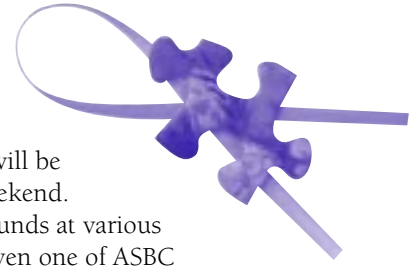
A crew of volunteers met on Saturday, September 21 to help clean up the city and raise both funds and awareness for ASBC. If you would like to assist with future events, please contact Brenda Krastel at: [bkrastel@city.nanaimo.bc.ca](mailto:bkrastel@city.nanaimo.bc.ca) or the ASBC Nanaimo office at 714-0801.

### **The Nanaimo Annual General Meeting**

The ASBC Nanaimo Branch held it's Annual General Meeting on September 28, 2002. Michael Lewis, President, attended as their special guest. Keep your eyes on the ASBC website for an update on this and other events.

### **Annual Tag Day**

Saturday, October 12 is our 2nd Annual Tag Day, which will be held on the Thanksgiving weekend. Volunteers will be soliciting funds at various venues and donors will be given one of ASBC Nanaimo's unique "puzzle" pins.



If you could volunteer 3 hours on Saturday, October 12 in your community, please phone the office at 714-0801. We are looking for parents from every community on the Island to help.

### **Community Support Group Meetings**

Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of every month at 7 pm at the ASBC Nanaimo office, located at the Community Services Building at 285 Prideaux, Nanaimo. Alexandria Stuart, the ASBC Nanaimo Community Facilitator, has a program of interesting topics; October's topic is "Effective Advocacy." Contact: [aksconsulting@pacificcoast.net](mailto:aksconsulting@pacificcoast.net) or the office at 714-0801.

### **GET REAL Program: Departure Bay Picnic**

After a wonderful hot, dry summer, ASBC Nanaimo families enjoyed an inside picnic at Departure Bay Beach's Kin Hut. As luck would have it, the weather was wet and windy, but we still managed to have fun and fellowship. The kids did manage to have a scavenger hunt on the beach.

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## Branch News – Prince George

### **Plan for Your Child's Education Needs**

With another summer past and the return to school, parents' focus has again shifted to their children's educational needs. Our offices maintain resource materials and educational packages. Information includes Ministerial Orders from the School Act, understanding the IEP, and teaching strategies to assist the parent or professional.

Additional support for families is available locally through Multisensory Learning Systems. The tutors individually design programs for students with learning disabilities and other special needs. They offer a variety of workshops, training, and support. A Multisensory Homework Strategies workshop is scheduled in October. For additional information, call (250) 561-9199.

### **Fundraising**

Once again, we would like to thank Canfor's Prince George Sawmill Mobile Shop employees for another donation netted from the return of lunchroom bottle refunds. As noted in our March newsletter, the shop employees elected to donate their proceeds to the Prince George Branch of the Autism Society. With your help, we all will benefit. Thank you.

### **Community Support Group Meetings**

Our community group will celebrate Autism Awareness Month in October. Be sure to attend on October 9 at Room 105, Prince George Regional Hospital from 7 to 9 pm. For more information, call our facilitators listed in the Community Groups section of this newsletter.

# October is Autism Awareness Month

## Some of the Autism Activities/ Workshops for October 2002

### October 5

ASBC, in co-operation with UBC Psychoeducational Research and Training Centre, presents *Positive Behaviour Support with Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, by Joseph Lucyshyn, Ph.D. and Anne Kayser. Takes place Saturday, October 5, 2002 at Scarfe Auditorium, UBC (Vancouver, BC) from 9:00 to 4:30 pm. Cost starts at \$70 for family members, some bursaries still available. For more details or to pre-register, call 1-888-437-0880 or (604) 434-0880, or download the form from our website at: <http://www.autismbc.ca>.

### October 16

*Case Management Workshop*, presented by Dr. Jill Calder at the TNFRS, 801 McGill Road, Kamloops from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Cost is \$10. Pre-register at (250) 376-5495 or (250) 376-4249, or e-mail [bettyanngarreck@yahoo.com](mailto:bettyanngarreck@yahoo.com).

### October 16–18

*Gentle Teaching International Conference*, Vancouver, BC. Gentle Teaching is an approach that helps children and adults with severe behavioral challenges develop a feeling of companionship. It is a non-violent way to deal with violence. Its main purposes are to teach children and adults to: 1) feel safe with their care givers; 2) feel loved by their care givers; 3) feel loving towards them; and 4) feel engaged with their care givers and those around them. See [www.gentleteaching.com/gti/](http://www.gentleteaching.com/gti/) for details.

### October 19

*Supported Child Care Mini-Conference: Celebrate Inclusion*. This conference explores ways of supporting families who have children with varied abilities in our community settings. A variety of workshops are offered, including one by ASBC staff member Pam Collins, who is presenting "Implementing Your

Child's Program." Registration deadline is October 1. Cost: \$45. Call (604) 214-3490 for details.

### October 25–26

*Springboard to Success Special Education Conference*, at Forster's Convention Centre, Kamloops, BC. An international conference addressing current research and best practices in special education, designed to meet the needs of parents, professionals and para-professionals working in the field. For more information, visit [www.sd73.bc.ca](http://www.sd73.bc.ca).

### October 25–26

The ParaEducator's Network of BC, ParaDise 2002 Conference presents: *Common Goals/Different Roles: Together We Make Better*. Richmond, BC. Everyone Welcome! PEN BC Members \$60; others \$65. Twenty workshops to choose from, including special guest, Jack Pearpoint. Jack Pearpoint is an independent Canadian author/publisher and catalyst for inclusion, diversity, teamwork and *change!*

ASBC staff member Ron Van Der Mark will provide a workshop on supporting students with HFA/AS in the classroom. Conference brochure available September 1 on [www.penbc.org](http://www.penbc.org), or telephone/fax (604) 574-2311

### October 22–25

*Community Living Conference 2002: Connecting with the Roots of Community*. George Dawson Inn, Dawson Creek, BC. Keynote speaker: Wolf Wolfensberger. For more information or to register, please contact the Professional Resources Program at (250) 782-1922 or e-mail [prp@pris.bc.ca](mailto:prp@pris.bc.ca).

### October 23–25

Geneva Centre, Toronto, Ontario, *Autism 2002 International Symposium*. See [www.autism.net](http://www.autism.net) or call (416) 322-7877 for conference details.

### October 25–26

The West Kootenay Community Group for Autism and The Trail Association for Community Living present Nathan Ory, M.A., Registered Psychologist, *Supporting Children & Adults With Persistent, Repetitive Behaviors*, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm, Sandman Inn, 1944 Columbia Avenue, Castlegar, BC. For information, please call Sue Henke (250) 367-6373 or e-mail [s\\_henke@hotmail.com](mailto:s_henke@hotmail.com).

### October 27

The Kamloops Community Group is going to be having "a firkin good time" at the Rock 'N Firking Pub & Grill. Tickets are only \$10.00 each. For more information, please contact Autism Kamloops at (250) 376-5495 or call Betty-Ann Garreck at (250) 376-4249 or e-mail [bettyanngarreck@yahoo.com](mailto:bettyanngarreck@yahoo.com).

## Free Ticket Available!!!

Are you a member of the Autism Society of BC? Do you plan to be in Toronto between October 23-25 or do you have the means to get there and stay there for those three days? If so, would you like something to do while you're there? The Autism Society of BC has **one free ticket** available for the **Geneva Centre International Symposium on Autism** being held October 23-25, 2002 in Toronto. We will make the free ticket **available to the first member that calls** that will either be in Toronto at that time or **that can pay to get themselves to Toronto and to stay over during the conference dates**. Please contact Marie at (604) 434-0880, or outside the Lower Mainland, you can call us toll-free at 1-888-437-0880.

# Autism Awareness Fundraising Campaigns

## The “A” TEAM

The Autism Team rode out in glory, capturing the “Most Improved Team” honours in the **First Vancouver Molson Indy Fest Bike Challenge**, July 23, 2002. We were among 60 other charitable organizations racing to raise monies for their charities.

Our aim was to create awareness, while enhancing the profile of the Society and still being able to raise \$1,000 on that evening.

We had a great group. Driving our bike was the Mayor of New Westminster Helen Sparks, and her hard working team included Fire Chief Carl Nepstad, Deputy Dan Wilson, ASBC Board members Jamie Collins and Doug Querns, Iron-man and Health Consultant Mark Goozee, Key Realtor Sam McCall, and staff members Pam Collins, Melanie Kinsey and Marianne Hanson.

This was a fun event and everyone on the Autism Team stated, “We will certainly be on for next year,” and vowed to start early to collect their pledges.

## Awareness Through Art

A 24-year-old autistic artist, will be helping to raise both funds and awareness.

Melanie Matthews’ talent first appeared at age seven, when she began sketching animals in both realistic and cartoon forms. During the early to mid 90’s, she contributed her wildlife artwork to fundraising presentations at the Wine and Roses Festivals in Vancouver. Her paintings have also assisted the societies in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto. She has received



The “A” Team: Staff and friends pitched in this year to help raise autism awareness at Vancouver’s first-ever Indy Fest Bike Challenge held July 23, 2002.

commendation and encouragement for her artwork from notable wildlife artists Robert Bateman and Carl Brenders.

After a period of other activities, she has returned to her artwork and is once again looking forward to assisting ASBC by sketching people’s pet dogs, a subject for which she has a particular fondness. Melanie can be found at Driftwood Mall, in Courtenay, every weekend starting Friday, September 27th and

continuing on until December. For further information on this event, please contact [mastimel@shaw.ca](mailto:mastimel@shaw.ca).

## Your Donations are Greatly Appreciated!

October is Autism Awareness Month—now is the time to focus our attention on how we can take the mystery out of autism. It’s a staggering figure: 1 in 160 children are at risk of being lost and isolated from our world

because of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

With the financial help of clubs, organizations, corporations, foundations and individuals like you, we can make a real impact when helping those with autism. If a child with autism could ask you to help, wouldn’t you?

A donation form is printed on the back page of this newsletter. Please, donate today. Your help is greatly appreciated.

## Elgin Orthotics Clinic Supports The Autism Society of BC

Elgin Orthotics Clinic, located at #102 – 2255 Elgin Avenue in Port Coquitlam, has kindly offered their services to our members, with **10% of all proceeds from ASBC members going to the Autism Society of BC.**

If you or a family member suffer from foot pain, knee pain, hip pain or low back pain, then Elgin Orthotics Clinic would like to help. They produce a wide range of prescription custom orthotics that are scientifically proven to alleviate these problems. Custom orthotics are frequently covered up to 100% by extended health benefit plans.

To support the Autism Society of BC by participating in this fundraising opportunity, please call Elgin Orthotics Clinic at (604) 464-2225 to schedule an appointment.

## Info Sharing

### **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

Friendly energetic volunteer required to spend quality time helping to enrich the life of a 37-year-old woman with autism. Ideally 2-3 hours enjoying activities with a small group and one-to-one such as walking, ice-skating, and swimming. Please phone Sue Hollands at 604-273-6968 for more info.

### **PIANO LESSONS AVAILABLE**

Piano Teacher in White Rock, former therapist and respite provider, is offering piano lessons to children with autism. Has been an ABA therapist for over 3 years. Piano lessons are customized and the cost is \$20 per half hour lesson taught in her own home. Arrangements can also be made to travel to child's home which would require a piano or keyboard. Will design a program to suit child's needs and coordinate lessons with program/therapist team to set up suitable practice drills. For further information please contact Jessica Huxley at 604-541-1488.

### **AUTISM AND NEUROLEPTIC/ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS**

Reports indicate that autistic persons may be susceptible to side effects if treated with these medications. In the UK there is an organization called Autistic Persons Against Neuroleptic Abuse (APANA). High functioning autism and Asperger's conditions may not be detected in early childhood and can be incorrectly diagnosed as schizophrenia. The medications may be prescribed in an attempt to relieve autistic symptoms, worsening rather than improving the symptoms has been reported in some cases. At least one BC girl with Asperger's has been severely impacted. If you can describe the beneficial or negative results of treatment of an autistic person with neuroleptic/antipsychotic drug therapy in BC please email: [andrew.mitchell@shaw.ca](mailto:andrew.mitchell@shaw.ca) who is compiling information on this subject.

### **UBC FACULTY OF MEDICINE STUDENTS NEED YOUR HELP**

Would you like to help in the training of new doctors and dentists? UBC's first-year medical students are looking for families and individuals with autism that they could interview as a part of their Patient and Society Course. The interview would take approximately one-and-a-half hours and would involve your providing personal information. If you are interested in being involved, please call Lisa Allen at (604) 875-4111, local 61579, for more information.

This is shared for informational purposes only. ASBC does not endorse or screen products or service providers.

## Asperger Poem

*By Tara Kimberley Torme*

It seems that other people don't care  
That Asperger is everywhere

People who just don't seem to fit in  
And are told they belong in a trash bin

My brain works differently from yours  
We both take different-separate doors

Sounds are much louder for me -  
Mere baby crying is not ecstasy!

Textures & tastes wreak havoc with my system  
What you tolerate, is torture in addition

Making friends is a pure mystery for me  
It's like figuring out the birds and the bees

Asperger takes over my life  
I've been cut into two with a knife

Sometimes I'm good and know how to behave  
And then my other half takes over—with a wave

Sometimes I'm quiet and calm as a squire  
Other times I'll rage out like an out-of-control fire

Insignificant actions, gestures and words  
Will make me angrier than a flock of wild birds

Asperger—I sometimes wonder, why me?  
Yet this is the best way to be.

*By Tara Kimberley Torme, Asperger Social & Support Group. To contact, phone (604) 876-8170 or e-mail: [AspergerGal@aol.com](mailto:AspergerGal@aol.com).*

# Library News

Compiled by Melanie Kinsey – Resource Information Worker, Library

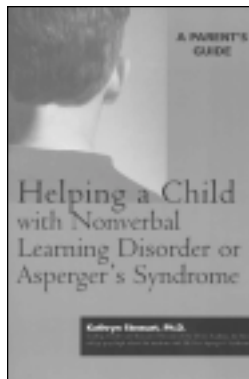
It is with great pleasure that we publish these book reviews by our members. Tara Kimberly Torme, a woman with AS, Devin Collins, older brother to a boy with autism, and Liz Amaral, the mom of a teenager with AS, responded to our invitation to submit expert reviews. As a token of our appreciation, we randomly drew a name to award a \$30 book certificate; we are pleased to announce the winner, Liz Amaral. We thank all our reviewers for their valuable contribution. A note to readers: each of these books is available in our library.



## ***Helping a Child With Non-verbal Learning Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome***, by Kathryn Stewart.

Reviewed by Liz Amaral.

I am relieved to have found this book. It is not just another book about Asperger Syndrome/Nonverbal Learning Disorder.



Its distinctive nature lies in the clarity that the author has for describing often confusing diagnostic characteristics that frame “the world” for AS/NLD individuals. I know that as the mom of an AS/NLD son, I struggle to put into words “my knowing” of my son’s world so that others—teachers, relatives, community members—can get a sense of his version of the world. This book is helping me with those words. A few examples of chapter titles are: “Why Is It Important to Understand the Child

with Nonverbal Learning Disorder or Asperger Syndrome?” “Speaking a Different Language,” and “Learning to Learn.” Kathryn Stewart uses clear, descriptive illustrations to exemplify her concise information. I highly recommend this book because it provides the tools for building bridges of understanding between worlds that are so unknowingly different.

## ***My Brother is Different***, by Louise Gorrod.

Reviewed by Devin Collins.

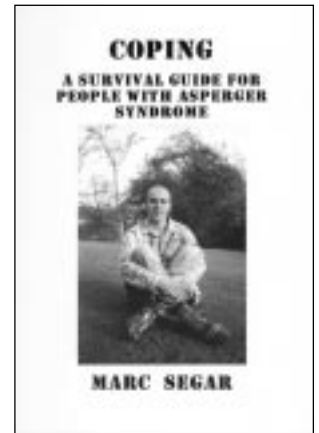
- It says everything about autism—I mean everything!
- My favourite part is the part about the television.
- It is best for “over-grade-oners” because of different words like “mum,” “telly,” and “pushcart.”

## ***Coping and Survival Guide for People with Asperger Syndrome***, by Marc Segar.

Reviewed by Tara Kimberly Torme.

This short little book is a guide to help those with Asperger Syndrome cope with the real world of NTs (neurotypicals). I enjoyed this practical guide, as it gave me some helpful hints of

what to do in certain situations. Marc Segar writes well, and this is a good guide to get when you are newly diagnosed with AS. However, for those who have been diagnosed for quite a while, this guide is not so great, because it is too vague at times and only gives unclear directions, such as “try to find ...” and “be on the lookout for ....” It does not give you any specifics on how to read facial cues and how to read emotions. I do like this book and I highly recommend it to newly diagnosed people with AS.



## ***Your Life is Not A Label***, by Jerry Newport.

Reviewed by Tara Kimberly Torme.

I found this book is so great, I’d like to buy my very own copy. Jerry Newport is funny and gives great examples of what to do; many of his life experiences read like mini social stories in themselves. At times, I just couldn’t help laughing at his great sense of humour. Jerry also gives much better advice to my fellow Aspies on how to live your life to the fullest. He deals with depression and getting a job and bluntly tells us to stop concentrating on our disabilities and focus on what we can do. He has a great appendix, which gives a list of helpful books and types of jobs we could do to make some fast money while looking for the career we want. He also gives a great suggestion list on how to start your own support group for other people with AS. I found this book really useful and I give it top marks for its style and advice. In short, he tells those with Asperger Syndrome to get off their butts and go see life out there, even if they don’t have someone to do stuff with. That way, friendship will form more naturally if you go out and develop some new interests. This book is top notch, and I encourage everyone to buy it.



Many members call our office inquiring about where they might purchase a book or video on ASD. We are happy to tell you about our bookselling partner, Parentbooks. This firm operates out of Ontario and can be reached by telephone or e-mail. They have expertise on ASD, parenting, and related issues, and they can provide good advice in selecting a title. They also have great prices and speedy service. If you mention that ASBC referred you when placing an order, Parentbooks will donate 10% of the sale to our library. You can visit the Parentbooks site at [www.parentbookstore.com](http://www.parentbookstore.com), or call 1-800-209-1982. Please note: we do not accept orders ourselves; please contact Parentbooks directly.

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included in your child's IEP. Therefore, it would be a good idea to check out the Ministry of Education's *Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning* that is found at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/IEP/toc.htm> for further suggestions. You may also want to check out the Ministry of Education's special education website located at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/#individual>. This site includes a lot of information, but you may want to pay particular attention to the sections relating to autism and to individual education plans.

If the above sites don't provide you with enough information, then please stop by our library, where you will find an assortment of articles and books on preparing an IEP. We would be pleased to help you with your research.

Once you have completed all of your research, you should prepare a list of any questions and suggestions that you may have. You may want to attend a local parents support group meeting in order to share your situation with the other parents and find out what they have learned from their experiences. They may offer additional questions or suggestions that you may want to add to your list.

### **What Should I Do at the Meeting?**

If you can, don't go alone. At a minimum, you should bring your spouse, partner or friend along to provide support and to take notes. This should not be an "us-against-them" situation, but it doesn't hurt



Ron Van Der Mark giving his IEP presentation.

to have a friend there with you to balance out the team.

At the outset, it is important to ensure not only that you were invited to attend the IEP meeting but also that you will be involved in the actual development of your child's IEP. Your input is essential because you know your child best, you have to live with the results of the educational program provided, and you will be with your child throughout their years in school.

Do not be surprised if you get to the meeting and an IEP has already been prepared for your child. The school team may want you to simply sign off on it, but you don't have to. Instead, make it clear that it is acceptable as a draft document but that you want to be sure that your questions are answered and your suggestions are taken into account before the final IEP is prepared.

There is always a time limit to these meetings. However, if you are uncertain about the IEP, then try not to allow yourself to feel pressured into signing off on it. It

may be unlikely that there will be time allotted for a second IEP meeting. However, if the team agrees, revisions can continue to be made to the IEP after the meeting.

A time limit should be placed on how long the revision process should go on for. Also, one team member, usually the resource teacher, should be placed in charge of incorporating the changes into the IEP and providing the final draft to each team member. It is important that you follow up to ensure that this task is completed for your child.

### **What Comes Next?**

Be sure, prior to the end of the IEP meeting, that a date is set for a second meeting to review the IEP. This IEP Review Meeting is very important. Not only will you be able to find out how your child is progressing, but you will also have the opportunity to find out if the IEP is being implemented properly. In other words, it's your opportunity to find out if the school staff that were assigned

responsibilities for your child are actually doing what is required by the IEP.

Between the first IEP meeting and the IEP review meeting is when you and the school will find out how well designed the IEP is. As with all plans, problems may arise. It is important that you strive to maintain a good relationship with the school team so that regular and open communication can take place.

It may be necessary for changes to be made to the IEP prior to the IEP review meeting. You should ensure that you are informed of any changes to be made and why they are being made. You should also attempt to inform the school of any changes to your child's medications or home life, as these can have an impact at school.

One thing to keep in mind is that the IEP forms part of your child's permanent school record, so any information contained in it should be accurate and acceptable to you. This is another reason not to sign off on the IEP unless you are comfortable doing so.

It is true that this can be a long, and sometimes arduous, process. However, an IEP is a valuable tool for ensuring that your child receives an appropriate educational program. More importantly, with your input, and the assistance of a strong and supportive school team, your child will have the opportunity to have a positive school experience.

Best wishes for the new school year and please call if you feel that you need our help.

# Community Groups

ASBC welcomes your inquiry if you would like to apply to be a facilitator in your community. Interested parents of children with ASD are welcome to contact Pam Collins at the provincial office toll-free at 1-888-437-0880 or at 604-434-0880 or by e-mail at [pcollins@autismbc.ca](mailto:pcollins@autismbc.ca).

## LOWER MAINLAND

Vancouver	Dawn Steele	604-874-1480
Chilliwack	Karen & Don Davis	604-823-2328
Delta	Forest Wilton	604-591-2583
	Brenda Viala	604-940-3882
South Langley	Elma Kozak	604-534-0207
North Langley	Carole McCarthy	604-888-4495
Mission & Abbotsford	Virginia Renaud	604-820-2645
	Leslie Bowling	604-850-7260
TriCities	Clair Schuman	604-939-5157
North Shore	Anne Sulzberger	604-929-7017
Ridge Meadows	Nancy Auersperg	604-467-3407
Richmond	Pam Collins	604-277-2454
	Linda Alblas	604-277-9727
Surrey	Nancy Walton	604-538-8021
Mandarin-Speaking	Carol Ywan	604-594-8986

## VANCOUVER ISLAND

Campbell River	Judy Hollywood-Bonnet	250-923-5654
Cowichan Valley	Aisha Sawchuk	250-743-0367
Nanaimo	Alexandria Stuart	250-754-3732
Port Alberni	Cheryl Magnussen	250-724-7233

Victoria Community Contact – Arlene Zuckernick is the person to call if you need information about ASBC activities and you live in the Victoria area. Arlene's number is 250-592-0911 or email [arlenez@shaw.ca](mailto:arlenez@shaw.ca)

## INTERIOR & NORTHERN BC

West Kootenay	Dave & Sue Henke	250-367-6373
East Kootenay	Mike Fisher	250-427-9616
Kamloops	Betty Ann Garreck	250-376-5495
Central Okanagan	Lorraine Cristofanetti	250-768-1144 or at COCDA 250-763-5100 (ext. 523)
North Okanagan	Cindy Methot	250-542-5213
	Lorraine Donald	250-549-1281
Penticton	Shirley Bergeron	250-494-5241
Kitimat	Karen Jonkman	250-632-7947
Prince George	Heather Borland	250-963-3342
	Louise Blais	250-964-4870
Prince Rupert	Larissa Goruk	250-624-5984
Peace River Region	Zita Cole	250-788-2989
Terrace	Christine Cook	250-638-0485

Bulkley Valley Community Contact – Call Jan Morrison-Hines at 250-847-5740.

## OTHER GROUPS WELCOMING ASBC MEMBERS

- **Parents Support Group for Families of Mentally Handicapped Adults Living at Home.** Call Gwen Lee or Janice Reithofer, 604-321-6253.
- **Parent Discussion Group focusing on ABA programs** (Lower Mainland), run by F.E.A.T. of BC. Call Jean Lewis, 604-925-4401.
- **Victoria Society for Children with Autism.** President: Michael Yarr, 250-385-3862.
- **Parents for Inclusive Education** (Powell River). Call April Sweet, 604-485-5885, or Linda Leutz, 604-485-5386.
- **Parents of Exceptional People Prayer & Support Group** (Dawson Creek). Call Jennifer Van Spronsen, 250-782-8342.
- **Gateway Parents Advocacy Group.** Call Karen Philipchuk, 604-535-0903.
- **Canadian Chinese Autism Association of BC.** Call Hugo Chan, 604-641-6620.

## Autism Society of British Columbia

Autism ... a part of our world, not a world apart

### Branch Offices

#### NANAIMO

Marja Jorgensen  
Branch Coordinator  
#212 - 285 Prideaux St  
Nanaimo, BC V6R 2N2  
Tel: (250) 714-0801  
Fax: (250) 714-0802  
E-mail: [mjorgensen@autismbc.ca](mailto:mjorgensen@autismbc.ca)

#### PRINCE GEORGE

Heather Borland  
Branch Coordinator  
#208 - 154 Quebec St  
Prince George, BC V2L 1W2  
Tel: (250) 561-0881  
Fax: (250) 561-0887  
E-mail: [hborland@pgonline.com](mailto:hborland@pgonline.com)

# Autism Society of British Columbia

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## OUR LIFELINE IS MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS! YOU CAN HELP!

- \$ 5.00 Person with Autism/Asperger's
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- \$ 25.00 Family
- \$ 25.00 Professional Individual
- \$ 100.00 Corporation/Group (school or non-profit)
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- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation (optional)

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**or FAX TO:** (604) 434-0801



Your donations allow us to provide extra services, such as the Summer Reimbursement Program.

*This information is for our files and is optional and strictly confidential. It is designed to help us better plan services for our members. We do NOT sell our membership list.*

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Name and Age of Siblings

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Parent's Occupation or Employer

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