

Autism BC

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

Volume 10, Issue 1 • January 2002

Budget for Promised Treatment Slashed

*Cuts planned for Treatment and Community Living Services,
Auton Appeal Endorsed by Liberals*

The Autism Society of British Columbia is very concerned at the threats of draconian cuts to services for children and adults with special needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder. While many parents have been actively writing letters calling on MLAs to reconsider these plans, as we go to press, it is unclear whether the hundreds of letters and extensive press coverage will have any effect. The following is what we fear will be the implications for our membership. For up-to-date information on the joint efforts of families across disabilities to press government to reconsider, contact ASBC or Cyndi Gerlach of Militant Moms on the Move, the irrepressible group of parents who are waging a poignant campaign against these cuts: momsonthemove@telus.net Two of the letters have been excerpted in "Speak Out!" in this issue.



Protesters against the threatened cuts to services for children and adults with disabilities, organized by the Militant Moms on the Move, gather on the Lions Gate Bridge. Group of parents also rallied on the Burrard and Oak Street Bridges, in Delta and in Langley.

Contrary to pre-election promises, it would appear that at least 40 percent has been cut from the budget for early treatment that the Liberal Party endorsed and which was projected to provide treatment by the end of 2003 for all children under six with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

On August 9, 2001, Minister Gordon Hogg confirmed in the Legislature that \$19.85 million had been budgeted for autism treatment this year. Yet, in November, the Minister makes it clear that the budget has been cut to less than \$11 million. These budget cuts will make it impossible for the government to meet its pre-election commitment to provide early intensive behavioural treatment for all children under six on the Autism Spectrum. The result

of this ministerial cost saving is that children who could otherwise become a part of our world will be abandoned to their disability.

Continued on page 2

Inside ...

- ▲ Human Rights Commission to Investigate SEA Bumping
- ▲ ASBC News
- ▲ Speak Out! Parents Respond to Liberal Cuts
- ▲ Upcoming Conferences
- ▲ Info Sharing
- ▲ Community Groups
- ▲ Fundraising News

BOARD EXECUTIVE

Guy Murphy, President
Richard Gauntlett, Vice-President
Doug Querns, Treasurer
Paul Bowes, Secretary
Dr. Jill Calder

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Hugo Chan
Brian Davies
Shirley Ilic
Leah LaFlam
Michael Lewis
Avery Raskin

STAFF

Meridee Beaudry, Resource Worker
Heather Borland, Branch
Coordinator
Lindy Chau, Information Resource
Worker
Pam Collins, Librarian
Marja Jorgensen, Branch
Coordinator
Ted Kawamoto, Accountant
Melanie Kinsey, Librarian
Clair Schuman, Acting Executive
Director and Program Director
Ron Van Der Mark, Resource
Worker
Kory Webb, Office Manager

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Susan Blockberger
Ron Blouin
Dr. Glen Davies
Sue Formosa
Jeff Groberman
Dr. Roberta Heaven
Dr. Doug Lee
Arthur Lipetz
Dr. Paul Malette
Margot St. Onge
Dr. Pat Miranda
Vi Woods

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
Web: www.autismbc.ca

Autism BC

Second Class Mail
Registration No. 8501
Postage paid at Vancouver, BC
Return postage guaranteed
ISSN #1197-4524

Articles, opinions, and events in this
newsletter do not necessarily imply
endorsement by the Autism Society of
BC but are printed for information only.

Continued from page 1

The Autism Society estimates that this reduced funding will only permit 40 percent of eligible children to be adequately served each year.

Alternatively, service will become so diluted that it won't qualify as intensive early behavioural treatment, in accordance with MCFD's own guidelines. Unless this cut is reversed, 200 to 300 preschoolers with autism will be denied early treatment.

Many families who do not have tens of thousands of dollars to fund their own programs privately have been waiting for over a year for government-funded treatment. They are frantic at the delays. Many will be devastated to find that there will not be funding to treat all eligible children by the end of 2003, which was government's promise to the courts last year.

The Autism Society is also shocked by the government's decision to resurrect the appeal of the landmark *Auton* decision, in which the BC Supreme Court ordered government to fund treatment for preschoolers with autism. The judgement found that denial of state-funded treatment contravened the Charter rights of these children.

Last year, the Liberal Party condemned the former NDP-led administration for initiating this appeal. Since the Liberals have taken power, the grounds of the appeal have not changed, the rationale for the appeal has not deviated, but truth has been a casualty.

Draconian Cuts Planned to Community Living Services

Parents of children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders are also bracing for threatened cuts of 30 percent over three years to the budgets that provides them with vital Community Living services.

In recent years, the Society has seen many individuals with autism denied services,



Cyndi Gerlach, at the front of the demonstration, has been very active in organizing families, across disabilities and age groups, to campaign against cuts to services. To keep up to date with the campaign, e-mail Cyndi at Momsonthemove@telus.net.

unless parents could convince government that lives were at risk.

In contrast to pre-election promises to address the long, province-wide waiting lists for all Community Living services, a 30 percent funding cut will unquestionably result in slashing already meagre services. It will dash the hopes of many families of ever receiving respite, Supported Child Care, behavioural support, individualised funding,

or residential placement for their adult children.

The irony is that these moves are very unlikely to save taxpayer dollars. We are concerned that, increasingly, child protection services will be required to remove siblings from the family home for their own protection or children with autism will be placed into foster or group homes.

There is also fear that even more teenagers and adults with autism will end up on the Downtown Eastside or in prison. Family break-ups will accelerate. Dependency on welfare will increase. The pressure on the overstretched education system will worsen. Lives are at risk.

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised stability for families who rely on MCFD to help them support children with disabilities, criticizing the previous government for constantly reorganizing services.

The Autism Society of BC supports the need for systemic change to address inefficiencies, improve accountability and services and to offer choices, including individualized funding. However, the changes now threatened appear to be aimed primarily at reducing costs. They are so radical, and the time table so rapid, that they will seriously jeopardize the lives and futures of those with disabilities. ASBC, therefore, calls on government to reconsider its strategy of cutting funding and to develop more considered solutions.

Human Rights Commission to Investigate SEA Bumping

The scenario is a familiar one to many parents who have children with special needs. Their child has finally settled in with a new teaching assistant when the person is “bumped” by a union member with more seniority. In September 2000, ASBC member Freida Lalji drew the line in the sand over this practice when her son had his SEA bumped yet again — the fifth time in three years.

Rahim is severely affected both by autism and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. He can't walk, nor does he have a means of communicating. Everytime he loses an aide, he becomes acutely self-abusive, as he struggles to communicate his needs. Freida, with the support of ASBC, made a complaint to the Human Rights Commission when the Coquitlam School District told her that, “Unfortunately, the reality that we face is that the union contract takes precedent.”

Meanwhile, CUPE Local 561 has agreed, “on a without

prejudice basis to agree to expand the designated five Special Education Assistant positions to six positions,” which has allowed Rahim to have stable support this year.

Nonetheless, Ms. Lalji has decided to go ahead with her complaint, which has been taken up by the Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission. This gives it the status of a systemic complaint with the potential of helping many families across BC whose children suffered needlessly as a result of the practice of bumping. Ms. Lalji, a hard-pressed single parent, has made it clear that she hopes that other children will benefit from her conviction. Rahim, now 10, is unlikely to survive for more than a few years. There is no cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

ASBC salutes Freida Lalji for her compassion in fighting for the rights of all special needs children, even in the face of the tremendous challenges facing her own family.

A Message from the President

ASBC has a new President of the Board, Guy Murphy, who has moved up from his position as Vice-President following the departure of Susan Wieczorek who served as a Board member for many years. Guy Murphy is a lawyer by training and brings to the Board many skills, not the least of which is his tremendous commitment to our membership. Guy has a young son on the spectrum. ASBC's new Vice President is Richard Gauntlett, father of a young adult on the spectrum, who has extensive administrative experience in the non-profit sector.

I wish to thank the Board for endorsing me as the new president following Susan Wieczorek's departure. I will try my best to be worthy of the trust placed in me by the Board and the membership.

This has been a challenging year, with new governments, new staff, and new political directions, and early in the Liberal's mandate, it appears that the challenges we face will only get greater.

In addition to a tremendous staff, ASBC is fortunate to have a strong Board in place, with a diversity of talents, strengths, and views. This is neither a complacent Board nor a quiet Board. In many respects, as President, my task is akin to that of Chief Cat Herder! Fortunately we all are heading in the same direction for what we want for our membership: justice and the support autistic individuals need to accomplish a meaningful life.

To that end, the Board, with Clair Schuman, Program Director, recently held a strategic planning session over a day and a half, with the assistance of Facilitator Jim Beaubien, who generously donated his time to help the Society focus our direction for the coming challenges.

It is difficult to distill the results of two days of candid discussion, but at the end of the day we affirmed that our primary goal at the society is the empowerment of members in their roles as advocates for themselves and their children. It was recognized that the greatest strength of the Society is the membership and ASBC's Community Groups. These groups are dynamic forums whereby members can network to share information about autism

and discuss tactics in the daily battles we face as we strive to provide what our families require.

A wonderful example of that dynamism is the group “Militant Moms on the Move,” which was formed when a number of mothers of ASD children and adults came together and networked with other special needs groups. In a mere three weeks, these Militant Moms (and Dads) — Dawn Steele, Lori Wallace, Barb Anderson, Lisa Chapman, Heather McCracken, Cyndi Gerlach, and later Lou Arab, Rachel Notley, and Barbara Laird — pulled together an articulate and vigorous voice for children, adults and families and have captured the attention of both the media and politicians.

This kind of commitment is our great strength, and the Board recognizes this and wishes to encourage it. The Board is now trying to put tactical flesh on the strategic bones developed at our meeting; we will not lose the momentum. So, for those of you who have not attended a community group meeting, do so; not only will you benefit from the experience of people who have walked down this same path ahead of you, but with any luck you can also become part of a greater force for change. As well, we have a need for energetic Board members with fundraising expertise, because without stable funding, our ability to support our members is in jeopardy.

On a more personal note, much to my regret, Deborah Pugh has tendered her resignation as Executive Director of the Society and will cease that role as of January 15, 2002. Deborah has worked tirelessly and passionately for our membership for the past seven years, first as a Board member, then as Program Director, and most recently as Executive Director. The 50-hour weeks that she put in were not compensated by what the Society could afford to pay her, but she was fighting for something in which she believed. I have no doubt that she will continue the fight and the advocacy, but I hope she can now also have time to enjoy her family and her garden ... and she's still a “Militant Mom.” I wish her the best.

ASBC News

Goodbye from Deborah Pugh

Just a note to let you all know how much I have enjoyed the last five years of being on staff at ASBC. I remember coming into the job thinking that I knew a fair amount about autism and advocacy. It didn't take me long to realize that I had much to learn!

I am grateful for having had the support of many professionals, but especially at having the opportunity to learn from the insights of hundreds of courageous parents and a number of impressive adults with autism. You have taught me that along with the pain that autism brings, it can also bring joy.

I would also like to thank three Presidents of ASBC, past and present: Brian Davies; Darleen Abbott, and Guy Murphy, whose wise leadership of the Society has been extremely important in supporting ASBC's hard-pressed staff. ASBC's committed staff and its outstanding volunteers, including Board members and facilitators, are a tremendous asset. My thanks to you all.

A special thanks to Clair Schuman who will be Acting Executive Director as the Board continues the search for my replacement. Despite these very difficult times, I am confident that Clair's experience and tremendous sense of humour will keep the Society moving forward.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES!

The Autism Society of British Columbia is seeking to fill two senior staff positions in its Lower Mainland Office:

- A Director of Operations with a proven record in administration and human resources to provide dynamic leadership for this non-profit society. Experience managing within the business community and implementing strategic plans would be an asset.
- A Director of Fundraising with a strong track record in communicating key messages, grant application preparation, and building a donor base.

Please submit applications to the attention of Guy Murphy, President, ASBC, #301 – 3701 East Hastings, Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6 or info@autismbc.ca by January 10. Please include salary expectations. For more information on ASBC, see www.autismbc.ca. Only applicants being considered for a formal interview will be contacted.

Library Update

Patrons of ASBC's library will be sad to hear that Melanie Kinsey has resigned as our full-time librarian, as she will be returning to UBC in January to do a Master's Degree in Library Science. However, when her academic schedule permits, she will be available on Thursdays to provide the excellent support she is known for! Our new librarian is Pam Collins, who combines an encyclopedic knowledge of autism resources with a great deal of practical knowledge. Pam will be available Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 – 4:00. The library is open 9:00 – 5:00 for members, but if you need something special, call ahead to ensure there is someone available to help.

News from the Branches

NANAIMO

It is my New Year's wish that families who support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders enter the New Year with renewed energy and hope.

The end of 2001 has been a difficult and unsettling time for many of our members, as freezes in funding and changes in the level of service delivery have taken place. As a branch of the Society, it is time to evaluate and refocus our energy and efforts in our community at the grassroots level. If a family is working in isolation, that family has one tiny voice; however, if families

work together and support each other we have a strong, unified voice.

It is my hope and focus in the New Year to establish community support groups in our area that are run and facilitated by parents.

Information about parent group meeting times and topics on Vancouver Island and workshops of interest are posted on the branch's Web site: <http://www.asbc.nisa.com>. In an effort to get up-to-date information out to the members, please send your e-mail address to mjorgensen@autismbc.ca, so we can create an address book and keep members informed.

Marja Jorgensen

PRINCE GEORGE

A warm welcome back to Heather Borland, who is back to work after being off for medical leave. Many thanks to Louise Blais for stepping into the breach while Heather was away.

Heather and Louise report that Brenda Fossett's workshop on October 20 was a great success. They are especially grateful to the Prince George Child Development Centre which: "provided us with everything for free! Bob Bigelow was more than generous with their facility, chairs, use of the kitchen, etc. Their in-house social worker, Lana McQuarrie, attended and helped us with everything (on her day off, for no pay, while her hubby took care of the kids). Just incredible support." Thanks, also, to Brenda Fossett for her enthusiasm in spreading the word about helping our children communicate.



Liam is enjoying the therapeutic pool at Frank Jameison Pool during the November "Get Real" family get-together organized by the Nanaimo office.

Book Reviews

Recent Acquisitions:

On a recent holiday in the UK, I found myself irresistibly drawn to the autism section of Waterstone Books (a treasure trove!) and discovered a number of books that are difficult to find in Canada or very expensive. Librarian Melanie Kinsey has assessed my purchases and gives the following report!

Deborah Pugh

Hitchhiking through Asperger Syndrome, by Lise Pyles (Jessica Kingsley, 2002). The mother of a teenage son with AS, the author writes as a “scout” along the journey for other parents whose children are affected by AS. Pyles provides “cheap or free” strategies that were effective for her son, emphasizing the role of parents as the most important interventionists in their children’s lives. She has an especially good chapter on coming to term with the diagnosis, which covers such topics as grief, denial, labeling, disclosure, and differences in how each spouse responds. Also very useful are her chapters on home-schooling and pharmaceutical and dietary interventions.

A Positive Approach to Autism, by Stella Waterhouse (Jessica Kingsley, 2000). Drawing extensively from the personal experiences of adults with ASDs, the author explains autism in an inside-out fashion. Waterhouse outlines her complex theories on the causes of autism, identifying four sub-types. A lot of this material will be new even to well-read parents; she discusses the roles of the limbic system, reflexes, genetic factors, etc. She emphasizes the important role anxiety plays in individuals with ASDs, and she views ASDs as mainly a physical disorder.

Autism and Play, by Jannik Beyer and Lorne Gammeltoft (Jessica Kingsley, 1998). This slim volume is a practical handbook on how to develop play in individuals with ASDs. The authors begin with a description of the difficulties people with ASDs have with play and then outline play sequences focusing on visualizing, imitation, mirroring and turn-taking. The book is generously illustrated with black and white photos, many depicting the play sessions. While the book is an excellent start to thinking about initiating play with children with autism, the reader is left wishing the book were longer.

Reweaving the Autistic Tapestry: Autism, Asperger Syndrome and ADHD, by Lisa Blakemore-Brown, (Jessica Kingsley, 2002). Blakemore-Brown uses the image of the tapestry to illustrate both the interconnectedness of ASDs and ADHD and also the uniqueness of each person’s make-up. She proposes that many people on the autism spectrum may also have ADHD, and shows the overlap in these disorders. Especially helpful are the “tapestry kid” case studies. As a psychologist, the author’s

reports on individual children are thorough and complex, and they demonstrate her understanding that every child presents differently, no matter what the labels. As a reader, one becomes frustrated because the recommended treatments in each case are not as accessible in BC as they are in the author’s home in the UK.

Incorporating Social Goals in the Classroom, by Rebecca A. Moyes (Jessica Kingsley, 2001). This is a fantastic and much-needed book addressing the social needs of individuals with HFA and AS in an educational context. Written by a former special education teacher who is the mother of a son with AS, the book is full of practical suggestions for IEP goals and curricula to meet them. Also included are excellent checklists for assessing skills, as well as suggestion for writing IEPs. Unfortunately for Canadian readers, some of the material is not applicable outside of the US.

Autistic Thinking, by Peter Vermeulen (Jessica Kingsley, 2001). Vermeulen takes on the perspective of individuals with ASDs to explain how their seemingly odd behaviours have an inner logic within “autistic thinking.” He amply illustrates his points with often humorous situations of miscommunication between neurotypicals and people with ASDs. This book provides insight and understanding into the minds of people who often think very literally and suggests alternative ways to communicate with them.

Understanding and Working with the Spectrum of Autism: An Insider’s view, by Wendy Lawson (Jessica Kingsley, 2001). Here is a unique book combining the author’s experiences as a person with AS enriched by her research in the field of ASDs; she is currently working on a PhD thesis on autism and stress. Lawson is a woman who married, had four children, was variously misdiagnosed and even hospitalized for schizophrenia, and finally received an AS diagnosis in her early forties. One of her sons also has AS. The book explains the key features of autism, and each chapter ends with a highlighted box of key concepts, summarizing important points. As a bonus, the author includes many of her poems that vividly and movingly illustrate her feelings and perspectives.

Raising a Child with Autism: A Guide to Applied Behaviour Analysis for Parents, by Shira Richman (Jessica Kingsley, 2001). It should come as no surprise that this 173-page book does not live up to its ambitious title; better to look at the subtitle for a sense of what the book is about. The book is useful as a primer on no-name-brand ABA, applying ABA principles to daily events such as toileting and sibling interaction. The book is useful as it demystifies ABA, but the contents are spread rather thin. It is useful as a starting point, but parents wishing to get a handle on how to set up an ABA program will have to look elsewhere.

Speak Out!

In the past two months, the Autism Society has been copied dozens of poignant letters from our families, angry and discouraged at the prospect that promised programs will not materialize and that current services are threatened with draconian cuts. Here are two that represent a cross section of the concerns of our members.

ASBC welcomes submissions to Speak Out!

Excerpts from an Open Letter to Premier Gordon Campbell

My son Geoffrey will celebrate his 31st birthday on November 29 — a milestone in any young man's life. Ask Geoffrey, who is autistic, what he would like for a birthday gift and all he can say is, "birthday cake."

Since there were no early diagnosis and intervention programs during his childhood, Geoffrey wasn't diagnosed with autism until he was five years old. He can neither read nor write; his vocabulary is limited to basic life skills words he has learned over 25 years; he lacks communication and socialization skills, and he has no concept of time, relationships or money — essential prerequisites for living independently.

Despite his limitations, Geoffrey has strengths and abilities, but without supported training and citizenship recognition by government and the community, he cannot hope to achieve his full potential and become a productive, contributing member of society.

Geoffrey will always depend on the society in which he lives to protect him and to provide him with the quality of life that is the right of all British Columbians. And "society is judged by its treatment of its most vulnerable members." Geoffrey is not alone; literally thousands of mentally handicapped

British Columbians share the same fate.

Over the years, more than 8,000 mentally handicapped British Columbians have been



Geoffrey Lee and Manual Pickburn riding the Buddy Bike. The Buddy Bike was created thanks to the ingenuity of the staff of the PACT Day Program run by the Mainstream Association for Community Living in Vancouver. The bikes were donated by the generosity of KVOS-12 and Wosk's Christmas Wish enabling 14 participants in the day program to enjoy the thrill of riding a bike for the first time! Thanks to members Gwen Lee and Nina Pickburn for sharing this positive story with us.

the target of funding cuts by the government of British Columbia. ... To add to our despair and frustration, we must constantly beg, on behalf of our mentally handicapped children, for the same supports and services that the provincial government readily provides to others in society.

Gordon Hogg, Minister for Children and Family Development (MCFD), claims that "75% of the Ministry's budget in the community living area supports developmentally disabled adults and children." So the logical question is: Then how come

mentally handicapped people are still suffering and there are ever-increasing, lengthy wait lists?

(1) Because the previous NDP government of British Columbia discriminated against mentally handicapped people and their families by consistently implementing funding cuts over a number of years instead of providing adequate funding to keep up with the growing numbers requiring services.

(2) Because the NDP government preferred to allocate funding for useless, expensive, stopgap measures based on health and safety crises instead of maintaining a cost-efficient, consistent system of direct service delivery of appropriate programs and services.

Now, a Liberal government of British Columbia intends to travel the same hazardous road to

economic ruin, with proposed budget cuts of 35–50% and, once again, mentally handicapped British Columbians are the prime target. The mentally handicapped people of British Columbia and their families are still suffering the aftermath of several cutbacks and failed NDP government initiatives. As consumers, we can testify that a reduction by any amount in MCFD's budget and implementation of yet another radical initiative named "congregate care" will not only intensify the hardships endured by all

mentally handicapped people but also worsen the economy of the province by wasting taxpayers' dollars. ... No matter how small or large, a budget cut will definitely translate into deeper cuts in — if not the possible elimination of — existing insufficient essential direct services.

For years, families like ours have advocated for the basic essential services that our mentally handicapped sons and daughters need in order to continue living at home at tremendous savings to society. Regardless of whether they live at home or in government residential care, all mentally handicapped people, including Geoffrey, will face a life of increased hopelessness as a result of budget cuts. Mr. Campbell, if you are serious about fiscal responsibility, then you and your cabinet must avoid repeating the same money-squandering mistakes of the NDP government. ... As consumers, we can provide valuable input on how to achieve cost efficiencies without hurting the lives of our mentally handicapped sons and daughters.

For many years, the Parents Support Group for Families of Mentally Handicapped Adults (PSG) has identified several money-wasting areas in service delivery. In its pre-election Submission of Issues and Recommendations to the Official Opposition Liberal Caucus Committee for Children and Families Issues, the PSG has outlined a common sense and easy-to-implement cost saving measures that will improve the quality of life for mentally

handicapped people. In addition, the garnered cost savings can then be applied towards reducing wait lists. In her previous capacity as Liberal Official Opposition MCF Critic, Linda Reid (Minister of State for Early Childhood Development) recognized the efforts of this group and openly supported the cause of mentally handicapped people — people who cannot speak up for themselves. ...

Mr. Campbell, you promised a New Era for Children and Families and “to improve services by listening to advice.” Now is the time to fulfill your promise.

*Gwen Lee
(A Concerned Mother)
Vancouver*

To Christy Clark, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education and Gordon Hogg, Minister of Child and Family Development

I am the mother of a beautiful blonde three-year-old boy. I want you to imagine yourself, going through what I have gone through in the last two and a half years. You wake up every morning and hug your six-month-old baby. You marvel at his beauty. You make plans for his future. You bask in his smile. You take your baby to a place with one or two other children the same age. You stand back and smile as they crawl around and over each other, exploring, playing. He looks back at you with a smile, just to check that you're still there. You're so proud.

A few months later, it's his first birthday party. Your baby's beauty has increased

tenfold. You didn't think it was possible. Two of the other babies there are walking. They laugh and look at each other. A third one, not quite walking, declares “mama!” and crawls toward her mother. Your baby stares into space, lost in thought. The birthday cake arrives. Your baby dissolves into frightened tears. The cake is taken away. You try to interest your baby in the other children. The tears increase. A bad day you think to yourself. You feel your throat tighten.

Six months later. Still no words from your child. He's just started to walk. You've been to see your family doctor. “Everyone develops at his or her own pace,” you're told. You demand an appointment with another doctor. An eyebrow is raised. You're told to come back in another six months. A speech therapist tells you that your baby is “a little behind.” You go back to your doctor. You demand a referral, and then another. You are desperate.

Finally after six months of telling you that “there's nothing to worry about,” suddenly the collective opinion changes. You are told that you child is “probably autistic.” You're forced to wait another six months to get the “formal” diagnosis. You need that so that you can get help for your child. You grieve. You cry. You don't sleep. Your beautiful child continues on, unsuspecting, in his world. You cry some more ... a lot more. Then you “get busy.” Something must be done. You read everything you can find. You discover that something CAN be done. You hear that the new government promised treatment. The deputy premier, a new mother

herself, personally made a public promise during the campaign. You thank God for your timing. You feel bad for those parents that came before you whose children were not able to get the treatment you've been promised. You wait. Two months, four months ... the treatment gets put off again, and again. It will be coming soon, you're told. Then you are told that “a 30% cut will be made to the budget.” Tax breaks are more important. You look over at your beautiful child, just turned three years old. He looks up, he smiles. He returns to his odd little routine. He has no treatment.

Tax breaks are not more important. Anyone who says they are is immoral. They deserve to go through what we have gone through. They probably won't. Only 1 in 160 are autistic. The odds are on your side, Christy. Do you deserve to enjoy the benefits of those odds? If it were just you, I would not be so sure. But your child has done nothing wrong. So your baby deserves to be healthy.

Will both of you Ministers be proud of what you have accomplished? Will your cabinet be proud? How many people do you plan to hurt? How much treatment do you plan to deny? How many lives do you plan to ruin? Is there a point where it is all worth it? Are tax cuts worth my son's life? His future? Your “new era” means that I actually have to ask these questions. Your “new era” is nothing short of immoral. If you allow it to continue unchecked, so, too, are both of you.

*Rachel Notley
Vancouver, BC*

ASBC Workshop Opportunity

LITERACY AND CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: FROM EMERGING UNDERSTANDING TO COMPREHENSION

By Karen Erickson, Ph.D.

February 9, 2002

Registration 9:00 a.m.; Workshop 9:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Vancouver – Scarfe Auditorium, UBC

In Cooperation with UBC's Psychoeducational
Research and Training Centre

Costs (gourmet lunch included if you book by February 1, 2002)

Parent Members	\$75.00
Professional Members	\$85.00
Non-Members	\$95.00

* Low-income bursaries available.

Pre-registration is vital, as space is limited.

Call Kory at 1-888-437-0880 or (604) 434-0880.

Course Overview

The first half of this workshop will focus on supporting emergent literacy understanding in young children with autism and older children with more significant involvement. Participants will see videos of children with autism demonstrating a range of emergent reading and writing behaviors and learn a variety of techniques to support this development in the children they teach. The focus of the second half of the workshop will be supporting conventional reading and writing development.

About the Speaker

Karen Erickson, Ph.D. is the Coordinator of the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Knowledgeable in literacy, assistive and instructional technologies, augmentative communication, and the learning characteristics of children with significant disabilities, she is in great demand as a presenter, consultant, and program developer.

2002: Upcoming Conference Highlights

Saturday, April 6th, 2002

Visual Support Systems for Children and Teens with
Autism Spectrum Disorder

Delta Town & Country Inn

Speaker: Brenda Fossett

Presented by the Autism Society of BC

& Pacific Foundation for Autism Spectrum Disorders

This workshop is to satisfy all those Lower Mainland members who have seen the notices that Brenda has spoken in Kelowna, Prince George and Terrace over the last year (to rave reviews) and have been hoping for a workshop closer to home. Well this is it! This excellent workshop will be focusing on symbol assessment, the use of schedule systems, visual supports for communication, daily living and self help skills, as well as visuals for literacy and curricular adaptations.

Please contact the Pacific Coast Foundation to register (not ASBC) on (604) 943-4443. Funds raised by this workshop will support the outreach program of the Provincial Resource Program for Autism and Related Disorders.

April 24 – 27, 2002

Canadian Assn. of Speech & Language Pathologists
Annual Conference – Victoria

Speakers include: Amy Wetherby on Autism Spectrum Disorders & Dr. Pat Miranda on Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Check www.caslpa.ca for registration form.

Info Sharing

VOLUNTEER WANTED

Friendly, energetic volunteer required to spend quality time helping to enrich the life of a 36-year-old woman with autism. This position involves spending 2 to 3 hours a month enjoying activities including walking, swimming, skating, and much more (with a small group and one-to-one). Please call Sue Holland for more information at (604) 273-6968

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

ASBC member, parent of a two children with special needs and a health practitioner, Sarina Kier has written a series of articles on a holistic approach to assessing and treating a child with special needs. In her articles she discusses environmental factors and other factors that create disturbances in the functioning of an individual. Her interest is in a natural multi-disciplinary approach using a variety of alternative treatment approaches. ASBC has copies of these articles which we will mail out. Call (604) 434-0880.

GUT PROTOCOL

ASBC receives many calls asking about vitamin therapies and issues of intestinal health. Member Lori Wallace has discovered the Kirkman Laboratories "Guide to Intestinal Health in Autism Spectrum Disorder" and recommends having a look at the company's web page: www.kirkmanlabs.com under gut protocol.

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

For the latest on national & international conferences on Autism Spectrum Disorder, check out an excellent new site: www.autismconferences.com.

Community Groups

The Vancouver and Burnaby Community Groups have amalgamated! We congratulate them and encourage Vancouver and Burnaby members to join them. Kelly Sheldon is the contact person and will co-facilitate the group with Dawn Steele, who has been leading the Vancouver Community Group.

We welcome Carole McCarthy as our new facilitator for the North Langley group and thank Kathryn Fisher for having led the group for the past several years. Carole is the parent of a son with an Autism Spectrum Disorder who is currently in kindergarten.

Special thanks to Trish Campbell, who has decided to retire after years of service as the Richmond Community Group facilitator. Our new Richmond facilitators are Pam Collins and Linda Alblas. Both are parents of sons with autism who are in their primary years at school. Call them for specific group information!



Congratulations to ASBC's Central Okanagan group, which gratefully accepted the offer of free office space in the Child Development Centre in Kelowna. Pictured are ASBC Community Group Facilitator Lorraine Cristofanetti and Mike Morrill, Executive Director of COCDA with the October Autism Awareness display that was hosted by the COCDA. Call Lorraine to check on her new office hours: (250)763-5100, ext. 523

LOWER MAINLAND

Burnaby/Vancouver	Kelly Sheldon	604-522-0012
Chilliwack	Shelley Marochi	604-794-3593
Delta	Stacey del Fabbro	604-940-2751
South Langley	Elma Kozak	604-534-0207
North Langley	Carole McCarthy	604-888-4995
Mission & Abbotsford	Virginia Renaud	604-820-2645
TriCities	Clair Schuman	604-939-5157
North Shore	Anne Sulzberger	604-929-7017
Ridge Meadows	Amy Cocking	604-466-0170
Richmond	Pam Collins	607-277-2454
Surrey	Laurie Romey	604-951-2880
Mandarin-Speaking	Carol Ywan	604-594-8986

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Campbell River	Judy Hollywood-Bonnet	250-923-5654
Cowichan Valley	Aisha Sawchuk	250-748-0361
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 e-mail arlenez@shaw.ca.

INTERIOR & NORTHERN BC

West Kootenay	Dave & Sue Henke	250-367-6373
East Kootenay	Mike Fisher	250-427-9629
Kamloops	Glynis Rodrigues	250-374-KIDS
	Betty Ann Garreck	
Central Okanagan	Lorraine Cristofanetti	250-862-3162
	COCDA (ext. 523)	250-763-5100
North Okanagan	Cindy Method	250-542-5213
	Lorraine Donald	250-549-1281
Penticton	Shirley Bergeron	250-494-5241
Kitimat	Karen Jonkman	250-632-7947

Prince George	Heather Borland	250-963-7926
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.** Call Gwen Lee or Janice Reithofer, 604-321-6230.
- **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

Facilitators Needed

We continue to have several groups needing leadership! If you have an interest in taking on the rewarding role of community contact person for these groups or one in your community, call Clair Schuman, Program Director, at the provincial office.



Fundraising News

Like many other non-profit societies in the province, ASBC is steeling itself for the prospect of significant cuts to the funding we receive from the Ministry for Children and Family Development. One of the conclusions of ASBC's recent strategic planning session is that it is vital to concentrate on developing a secure, independent financial base. For this we must reinvigorate our fundraising committee. If you would like to volunteer, or if you know any good candidates for this committee, please call Clair Schuman at ASBC at (604) 434-0880 or e-mail cschuman@autismbc.ca

The Carnival of Wine and Roses

This will be a special year to become involved in fundraising for ASBC, as we are currently planning a major gala for October 3, 2002 at the Hotel Vancouver.

The Autism Society's Carnival of Wine and Roses promises to be the social event of the year! Vivace Multimedia Productions, led by its Artistic Director Ross Atley, is planning a fabulous evening of top food and entertainment. ASBC is particularly grateful to the incredibly energetic P.K. Holmes, whose brainchild this event has been. We will be setting up a special Gala Committee, so call Clair Schuman.

Young & Rubicam

We would also like to thank Christopher Heatherington, Creative Director of Young & Rubicam Vancouver, part of a major international advertising company. ASBC is pleased to have entered into a relationship that recognizes Young and Rubicam Vancouver as our partner agency and agency of record in the areas of enhancing autism awareness in BC and strengthening

our marketing and fundraising capacity. Young & Rubicam are playing a key role in the October 2002 gala.

Burnaby Heights Merchants Association

Thanks to the Burnaby Heights Merchants Association for the donation of two used computers. We will be sending them on to facilitators who will benefit their entire community group by having access to the Internet!

The Canadian Progress Club

This club has long been a generous supporter of ASBC. This fall, it has donated \$2,400 to be spent on books and videos for ASBC's library. This donation is much appreciated as a lack of funds has seriously limited our ability to buy vital new materials. Remember: library resources can be mailed

across the province to members free of charge and returned free!

Liberty Bakery

In this issue, we would like to recognize Liberty and Gunnar Gustafson of Liberty Bakery at 3699 Main Street in Vancouver, for their generous donation to the Autism Society. Every two months

Liberty Bakery selects a charity to support, and we were very pleased to receive their support earlier this year. The atmosphere at the bakery, which is also a café, is warm and inviting and, not surprisingly, the portions are delicious and generous! Enjoy!

Speros Thrift Store

Another Vancouver merchant who has singled out ASBC is Speros Mannoos of the Speros Thrift Store at 2939 Kingsway. Part of the proceeds that Speros raises through the sale of their eclectic mix of art deco furniture, clothing, housewares and even a few antiques has been donated to ASBC! A special thanks to Meiriead Keegan-Croxall who volunteers at Speros and is looking for more volunteers to generate more funds for ASBC! Call Meiriead at (604) 436-9484.

Major Gourmet Caterers

The 300 participants in September's successful workshop on Integrated Playgroups by Dr. Wolfberg benefited from the generous discount offered to ASBC by Major Gourmet on the delicious bagged lunches provided. If you are looking for a caterer to provide an exceptional meal, call Major Gourmet at (604) 322-9211.

ASBC appreciates the support it receives from local business and urges you to support them.



Children at Montgomery Middle School in Coquitlam competing in the Milk Run, organized by BC School Sports. This annual run raises money for charities. In 2001 ASBC received \$4,000 for our Summer Funding Program. Many thanks to the 91,397 children from 194 schools who raised a total of \$42,781 for charities across BC and the BC Dairy Foundation for supporting this wonderful initiative.

This is a list of all our donors since May. As you can see, ASBC is fortunate to have this level of support from our members and the wider community. It is especially touching that so many families are asking for donations to ASBC in lieu of flowers on the occasion of the loss of a loved one. Thank you to all donors who make our work possible.

COMMUNITY DONATIONS

Elks Lodge No. 122 (Prince George)
 Order of the Royal Purple #70
 (Nanaimo)
 United Way of the Lower Mainland
 Cavelti Enterprises Inc.
 Victoria Village
 Monte Cristo Bakery
 Crimpers Hair Fashions Ltd.
 The Vancouver Snowball Society
 The HYDRECS Fund
 The Sacred Hearts Council #8927
 Knights of Columbus
 Telus Community Connections
 Employee Charitable Giving
 Program
 CKNW Orphan's Fund
 United Way of York Region
 Bhandal Drywall (1992) Ltd.
 Fountain of Hope
 The Vancouver Sun Children's Fund
 The Moose #928 & #936 (Prince
 George)
 Metro Training Institute
 Liberty Bakery
 Royal Canadian Legion
 Speros Thrift Store
 Royal Canadian Legion (West
 Kootenay)
 General Electric Canada
 BC School Sports
 United Way (Vernon)
 Ladies Auxiliary Taurus #298
 Canadian Progress Club

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Leslie Tinkham
 Mr. & Mrs. McNicoll
 Mr. & Mrs. Harper
 Sean & Cynthia Noonan
 Edgar & Terri White
 Bruce & Maria Graham
 Aly Amarshi
 Amyn Amarshi
 Karim Amarshi
 Hieu Tang Tran
 Kevin Shiu
 Kellie Saine
 Alessandro & Rosina Franciosi
 Wenceslaus Kapralik
 Mary Sheridan
 Carmina Fancisco
 Robert & Stacey Del Fabbro
 Mr. & Mrs. S. Olsen
 Darcy Furness
 Elena Galang
 Githa & Eric Madsen
 Raymond & Fanny Lo
 Tony or Sharon Wollbaum
 Sharon Wilkie
 Melanie Kinsey

Phil & Adriana Lovera
 Dayna Mussell
 Shirley Ilic
 Therese Willan
 Betty & Donald Mansell
 Shawna Goodrich
 Millicent Carter
 Dr. Roberta Rathbun
 Joanne Bedggood
 Perviz Madon
 Jaskamal Bhandal
 Catherine Cadwallader
 Carol & Steve Unger
 Diane & Duane Dawson
 Chris & Elaine Overton
 Glenn Vanoooyen
 Min & Ling Wong
 Won Chul Shin
 Maria Morabito
 Brian Glennie
 Ken & Rose-Marie Davies
 Yasuhiko Yamamoto
 Pauline Lukey
 Barbara Curmi
 Reynalda & Luzviminda Neptuno
 Mrs. Josephina M. Roxas
 James & Wendy McDonnell
 Christine Gray
 Roy & Claudette Bailey
 Cecilia Murphy
 James Mathias & Brenda
 Pulvermacher
 Stan & Joy Davies
 Yusuf & Hawa Bawa
 Christopher & Donna Whitehead
 Mathilda Knowles
 Sarah Lerch
 William & Gertrude Whether
 Carolyn Mitchell
 Sharan Christie
 Dr. Angela Gedye
 David & Sandra Church
 Brian Kennedy
 Gary & Diane Tucker
 Roxanne MacDonald
 Darrell & Therese Brooks
 Steven Fung
 Stewart & Mary Murkin
 Betty Blockberger
 Marni & Steve Swannell
 Judi Langley
 Naway & Hasina Kessani
 Dr. Bruce Pipher
 Guy & Leah La Flam
 Marjorie Tudhope
 Alexander & Eleanor Stirling
 Tong Quach
 Lance Husoy & Shelley Reid
 Baogang & Pan Li
 Donald & Karen Davis
 Kahn Family Charitable Foundation

Patrick & Kimberley McGreevy
 Charles Huang & Diana Lu
 Paul A. Bowes Law Corporation
 Joanne Brecknock
 Kenneth & Judith Jackson
 David Harley
 Dr. Paul Malette
 Debra Milliken
 Jeannine Tremblay
 Jim & Gerry McIntosh
 Lori Wong
 Ann Easton & Ian Mothersill
 Richard Gauntlett
 Janet Mitchell
 Dorothy Donovan
 Nancy Spibey
 Christofer & Linda Yorath
 Rod & Cheryl Larden
 Jack & Patricia Owen
 Mryna Precilla
 Dr. Sam Chuang
 Sho To Li
 Manitoba Womens
 Christian Temperance
 Jennifer Enns
 Jennifer Farano
 Lu-Sheng Chou & Pi Ling Chen
 Stella Hsuing
 Dave & Maria Gilbert
 Deborah & William Gibson
 Shih Chang Wang
 Elizabeth Sparling
 James & Julie Underhill
 Earl & Jocelyn Cutting
 Edmond & Lisa Cheung
 Mr. K. Brown & L. Tebbitt
 Joanne Barker
 Dr. P. Mirenda
 Mr. & Mrs. Kopplinger
 Mr. & Mrs. T. Kasmer
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Rainey
 Mr. John Reid
 Doreen Scheer
 Shanthia Martin
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Kerr
 Ms. Y. G. Tillaart-Kocins
 Mr. & Mrs. F. Dahl
 Mr. Fred Michael
 Mr. & Mrs. T. Watson
 Mr. & Mrs. W. Pollitt
 Susan Formosa
 Mr. & Mrs. M. Impey
 Carol Kalmacoff
 Hector Acevedo
 Mr. & Mrs. Fang
 Mr. & Mrs. Henry
 Mr. & Mrs. Cavin
 Susan Roy
 Mr. & Mrs. R. Amit
 Mr. & Mrs. Nunn
 Mr. & Mrs. Klatt

Ms. G. Cragg
 Rosemary Coupe
 Naomi Amaral
 Dr. & Mrs. Harris
 Michel & Renate Eicher
 Ms. L. Greaves
 Howard Stein
 Mr. & Mrs. Laguzad
 Ms. J. Stoppard
 Mr. J. Sun & Ms. Y. Zheng
 Larry & Maureen Lunn
 James & Bessie Stephens
 Sheila Farano
 Katherine Isaac & Courtland Smith
 Elize Leung
 Katsumi Imayoshi
 Mr. & Mrs. G. Fraser
 Mr. & Mrs. B. Tolmie
 Ms. Jenny Tsou
 Ms. Judy Chin
 Mr & Mrs. Lai
 Mrs. Sharon Hilkman
 Mr. O. Wheatcroft
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Dewar
 Ms. Naomi Amaral
 Deborah Pugh

In Memory of John B. Davies
 Alan & Eileen Harrison

In Memory of Bryan Bedford
 Tim Dick

In Memory of Dorothy Aikman
 Harry & Phyllis Hoyle
 Shirley Levine & Family
 Ronald & Patricia Mathieson
 Gloria MacGillivray
 Frank Lieben
 Hugh & Hazel Aikman
 Andrea & David Knight
 International Alliance Theatrical
 Stage Employees
 Craig & Glenda Alderson
 Frances Diamond & Family
 Florence Peel
 Eva G. Dram
 Bill & Gertrude Whether
 Woman's Christian Temperance
 Union of Winnipeg

In Memory of Alvin Single
 Wence Kapralik
 Chrissie Kapralik

In Memory of Gladys Harford
 Mr. & Mrs. Don Mansell

In Memory of John Ross
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Edgell
 William & Lorna Alexander



OUR LIFELINE IS MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS! YOU CAN HELP!

- \$ 5.00 Person with Autism/Asperger's
- \$ 5.00 Student/Low Income
- \$ 25.00 Family
- \$ 25.00 Professional Individual
- \$ 100.00 Corporation/Group (school or non-profit)
- \$ 500.00 Lifetime membership
- \$ _____ Donation (optional)

Method of Payment: Cheque Visa Mastercard Amex

Name on Card

Card # Exp. Date

Signature

\$ _____ Total Enclosed

All donations are tax-deductible, and a receipt will be issued for contributions of \$10.00 or more.

MAIL TO: Autism Society of BC, 301 – 3701 E. Hastings St., Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6
or FAX TO: (604) 434-0801



Your donations allow us to provide extra services, such as the Library and 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.

Name

Company/Organization

Address

Postal Code E-mail

Phone (residence) (business) Fax

Child's Name Date of Birth

Name and Age of Siblings

Parent's Occupation or Employer Language(s) Spoken/Written at Home