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Volume 5, Issue 7

# Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

**APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**

join us in  
CELEBRATION



awareness

action

acceptance

inclusion

appreciation

Nearly a quarter century ago, the Autism Society launched a nationwide effort to promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life. This year we want to go beyond simply promoting autism awareness to encouraging friends and collaborators to become partners in movement toward acceptance and appreciation.

Let's embrace a new perspective. For over 50 years we have worked in communities (both large and small) to ensure our actions, through our services and programming, supported all individuals living with autism. Let's expand this work to focus on the rest of us – ensuring acceptance and inclusion in schools and communities that results in true appreciation of the unique aspects of all people. We want to get one step closer to a society where those with ASDs are truly valued for their unique talents and gifts.

Join us in celebration for 2017 National Autism Awareness Month! National Autism Awareness Month represents an excellent opportunity to promote autism awareness, autism acceptance and to draw attention to the tens of thousands facing an autism diagnosis each year.

Continued on page 2.

## AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH CONTINUED.....

How is it celebrated?

- Presidential/Congressional declarations
- Online events and activities

[Local events and activities through affiliates](#)

- Partner opportunities

What can I do?

[Sign up for e-newsletter Autism Matters](#) to continue sharing ideas on how to make a better world for autism here.

[Share your experience/stories with NAAM or autism with us!](#)



**Put on the Puzzle!** The Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon is the most recognized symbol of the autism community in the world. Autism prevalence is now one in every 68 children in America. Show your support for people with autism by wearing the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon – as a pin on your shirt, a magnet on your car, a badge on your blog, or even your Facebook profile picture – and educate folks on the potential of people with autism! To learn more about the Autism Awareness Ribbon, [click here](#). To purchase the Autism Awareness Puzzle Ribbon for your shirt, car, locker or refrigerator, [click here](#).

**Connect with your neighborhood.** Many Autism Society [local affiliates](#) hold special events in their communities throughout the month of April. But if you can't find an event that suits you just right, [create your own!](#)



**Watch a movie.** Did you know that something that seems as simple as going to the movies is not an option for many families affected by autism? The Autism Society is working with [AMC Theatres](#) to bring special-needs families [Sensory Friendly Films](#) every month.

**[Donate to the Autism Society:](#)** Help improve the lives of all impacted by autism with a financial gift to the Autism Society. Every dollar raised by the Autism Society allows us to improve the capabilities and services of our over 100 nationwide affiliates, provide the best national resource database and contact center specializing in autism, and increase public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with ASD and their families.

<http://www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/>

## 7 Facts about Autism to Talk About During Awareness Month

By: Jeff Hayward

Autism is a wide-spectrum mental disorder that is talked about every day in health circles, but few really know all the facts about it. Research continues to push forward about the possible causes of autism (which can cause some patients to be non-verbal), and some are even challenging whether it's even something that should be "cured" at all.

April is [Autism Awareness Month](#), and the Autism Society and other related organizations are helping to spread the word about it through events and other efforts. In the spirit of awareness month, here are seven facts that you may not be aware of about autism....

### 1. Autism Is More Common Among Boys

Boys are four times as likely to have autism than girls, although there doesn't seem to be a solid explanation as to why. That hasn't stopped some organization from putting forth theories.

For example, The National Autistic Society (based in the U.K.) notes it simply may be harder to diagnose autism in girls, as girls "may be better at masking their difficulties in order to fit in with their peers" and may have better social skills overall. The speculation is that some girls with autism spectrum disorders never get diagnosed as a result.



### 2. Autism is Becoming More Prevalent

The Autism Science Foundation reports that as of 2014, 1 in 68 children in the U.S. had an autism-related disorder. The actual disorder itself may not be becoming more common, but in 2012 the estimate was 1 in 88 children.

That's a stark contrast to reports in the 1980's that claimed only 1 in 10,000 children had autism. The criteria for diagnosis is changing and therefore so are the numbers. For example, Asperger's Syndrome is now included in the autism spectrum, whereas it wasn't 30 years ago or so.

### 3. There's More than One Form of Autism

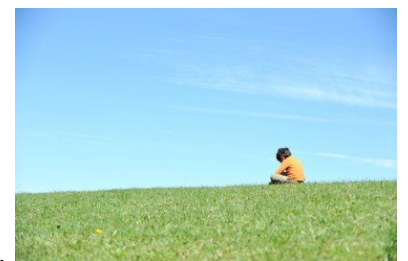
Following that same line of thought, there are now different diagnoses that fit into Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Asperger's Syndrome (characterized by restricted behavior, namely social interactions); Pervasive Developmental Disorder or PDD-NOS, for children who are on the autism spectrum but don't meet all standard criteria; and autistic disorder.

Because of this, children with autism have a wide range of symptoms, while others may not seem autistic all (often referred to as "high-functioning" autism). Some children are not as impacted by the disorder (with more "normal" behaviors and higher IQ), but still have enough of the symptoms to be included in the spectrum.

### 4. There's no Single Cause

The Autism Society says there hasn't been a cause pinpointed (although some people, including celebrities, have offered non-medical theories such as it's caused by vaccinations).

What is known, according to the society, is that there are noticeable differences on brain scans on those with ASD. Some researchers are also pushing toward linking autism with genetic factors, adds the society.



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## 7 FACTS ABOUT AUTISM CONTINUED....

### 5. Autism could be “Neurodiversity”

[Autism Speaks notes](#) that neurodiversity “is the idea that neurological differences like autism and ADHD are the result of normal, natural variation in the human genome.” What does this mean? It could suggest that those with autism just have a different way of thinking than those without the diagnosis.

This would also suggest that autism is not the result of a disease or a brain injury of some kind. In the realm of neurodiversity, autism is not something that needs to be “cured”, but rather that their needs be accommodated to improve quality of life.



### 6. Autistic Patients Excel Creatively

While those with ASD may not act or communicate like the majority of people, research has shown they can have superior creative abilities, [according to](#) The Guardian (U.K.), which noted, “Scientists found that people with the developmental condition were far more likely to come up with unique answers to creative problems.”

Despite the high level of creative thought, the disorder makes it difficult for those with autism to secure employment (because of “socially crippling” traits), noted the article, which also mentions that proponents of this idea are lobbying employers to consider hiring those with “learning disabilities”.



### 7. There are Often Related Health Issues

The National Autism Association noted that those with ASD are often faced with other health problems such as common allergies and gastrointestinal issues, to more serious conditions such as bipolar disorder, epilepsy, and neuroinflammation.

Other common problems associated with ASD include Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autoimmune issues, dyslexia, Crohn’s Disease, hyperkinetic disorder (excessive motor movements), Tourette’s Syndrome (vocal and motor tics), and many others according to this list from [Research Autism](#).

<http://www.activebeat.co/your-health/children/7-facts-about-autism-to-talk-about-during-awareness-month/?streamview=all>





### 10 Ways to Help and Support an Autism Family

Below is a post by autism mom and Autism Speaks Autism Response Team Coordinator Denise Bianchi.

With 1 in 68 children being diagnosed with autism in the United States, it is likely that you may have a friend, coworker or a family member affected by autism. Over the last ten years, Autism Speaks has worked tirelessly to raise autism awareness. While people are overall more autism aware, they may not realize how and what they can do to support their friend or family member and their child with autism.

Here are 10 things you can do to help a family that has a child with autism:

#### 1. Learn About Autism

A great way to start supporting a family affected by autism is to learn more about autism. It is also important to remember the saying 'If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism'. Check out some of our Tool Kits with autism information and resources here (<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits>). Not only will it be great that you better understand autism, but the parent will also feel REALLY supported!

#### 2. Ask Us About Our Kids

Parents love to share about their children with autism, especially to celebrate ongoing successes and new milestones. It's okay to ask your friend "How is your child doing?" It never hurts to ask us what our kids have been up to. Like all parents, we love to brag and boast about our kids' accomplishments. Be there to listen.

#### 3. Go the Extra Mile

Parent of newly diagnosed children may not call or visit as much as usual and sometimes it may seem like they've lost interest. But please understand this is not the case. They may be busy with meetings and therapies. From calling access the services he or she needs. Their child may also have difficulty with transitions, making it challenging to visit friends' homes or new places. Catching up with a phone call can be a great way to stay connected. Or offer to swing by their house with coffee to take the pressure off.

#### 4. Be A Good Listener

You may find your friend wants to talk about the diagnosis. Her own feelings about it may change from day to day - Be a good listener. Go out of your way to be compassionate and understanding and let her know you can be a go-to person when she needs to talk or a pick me up.

#### 5. Acceptance Strengthens Friendship

Asking about their child's progress (see above) will help you learn about the child's strengths and challenges. Even though you may not know everything about autism, it will mean the world if you get to know and build a relationship with our kiddo. This will make your friendship even stronger! Plus, you will be an even better babysitter!

#### 6. Caring for the Caregiver

Finding respite and time to recharge is an important part of being an autism parent. You can help by offering to watch your friend's child with autism (if you are comfortable doing so) or to watch the typical siblings so your friend can have time for a break.



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## SUPPORTING AUTISM FAMILIES CONTINUED....

### 7. Be Inclusive!

Another way to help is by teaching your own children about autism. Some children with autism may have trouble making friends and can be bullied by peers. You can help just by offering to include your friend's child in group and one-on-one activities with your kids. They can find out they have similar interests and will learn it can feel good to be a friend to someone who may need one. A new meaningful friendship for any child is always great, as it increases acceptance of individual differences and an individual's understanding of diversity.

### 8. Invite Us...Again!

Even though we may always seem busy and you might have not spoken to us in a while, we still love to go out to eat, go to the movies, go for a run, go to a game or see a concert. We are still the same friend you grew to know and love! However, if we cannot make it, please don't take it personally and invite us to the next one!

### 9. "Walk in Our Shoes"

Each year thousands of families affected by autism come together at autism walks and events all over the country to raise autism awareness! If your friend has a walk team in honor of their child with autism, you can support them by joining in on this special day! It's a great way for the autism community to come together and support each other .

Find a Walk Now for Autism Speaks event near you here:

(<http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/site/>)!

### 10. Help Us Advocate (Don't worry, it's easy!)

Advocating for access to autism services and supports at the state and federal level is a priority for the autism community. It will mean the world to an autism family if you become an autism champion by advocating on their behalf. The best part? It only takes a few moments! Sign up for Autism Votes to stay on top of easy ways to be an advocate.

## AUTISM AWARENESS VIDEO

### Award-Winning Autism Awareness Video



This 5 minute animated film aims to raise autism awareness among non-autistic audiences, to stimulate understanding and tolerance in future generations. It discusses neurological differences and creates empathy in ways that are accessible to all ages. It is perfect for teachers to show to classrooms or for families experiencing autism to share with others who need to better understand their situation. Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JdCY-cdgkl> or search "Amazing Things Happen Autism" on You Tube.

## AUTISM POEM

### "I Am Special Just Like You," an autism acceptance poem

The post below is by grandma Jackie Bielinski.



I am simply known as Nana to my grandchildren. My five year old grandson, Maxwell Harrison, is on the autism spectrum. I wrote "I AM SPECIAL JUST LIKE YOU" for Max and describe how he might feel about some of the symptoms he experiences. I hope my words provide some insight in describing how other Autistic children deal with their daily life. Thank you to my daughter-in-law Angel Bielinski for her creative illustrations and her Super Mom dedication.

I am special just like you  
I can take the things I do  
And learn from them the best I can  
Make a difference with who I am  
You might be slow and I might be fast  
We don't need to measure who is first or last  
You might be smart and I may be not  
So who cares about that we still have a lot  
To share and to grow together we'll be  
Friends to the end just you wait and see



I keep to myself quiet as a mouse  
Quiet is good in this very big house  
The noise the noise that gets too loud  
If we're shopping or in a big crowd  
It can come from the tv or radio music  
Whatever it is I can easily lose it  
It bothers me everywhere and starts to hurt  
In my ears and my head and I'm just not sure  
How to stop it but wish I could figure it out  
What is this terrible noise all about



I am a happy kid most of the time  
And smile at everyone I can find  
If I don't understand I easily cry  
Wish I could tell you I just don't know why  
Sometimes when you speak  
I'm not sure what you say  
If you're sad or you're hurt  
I might not hear it that way  
I like it when things are always the same  
Like my food and toys and my video games



I walk on my toes and twirl round and round  
It makes me feel better and helps me calm down  
When you listen to a sound that you don't want to hear  
You can take your own hands and cover your ears  
If I were a turtle I could move my head fast  
Back into my shell where it's quiet at last  
Sometimes when we talk I don't look in your eyes  
I might just forget so don't be surprised  
If I don't speak at all let's try to wait  
There are other ways we can communicate

Continued on page 8.

## AUTISM POEM CONTINUED...

It's hard to sit still when I want to play  
I start moving around in my own special way  
When I get excited I can keep myself busy  
By jumping and spinning even though I get dizzy  
I can play with my hands and fingers all over  
It's just what I do no need to take cover  
When I'm finally tired I do realize  
It's the end of today and can just close my eyes



Things don't look the same to you and me  
Where I see a forest you see a tree  
I hear the wind blowing strong in the sky  
You hear a breeze as it softly goes by  
My smell and my taste are different than yours  
So many choices thank goodness of course  
There's really a lot to say about touch  
Sometimes even my clothes feel too much  
If I think the light is shining too bright  
Or even if the noise isn't right  
If it smells awful and tastes bad  
And anything touching makes me mad  
It's a terrible time for you and me  
But it passes so quickly and soon we will see  
That it's over and done with and better at last  
It was just a quick moment now gone in the past



Say what you say easy and clear  
I only understand exactly what I hear  
If I can't find the right words to answer you  
Watch me carefully look at what I do  
When all those words get in the way  
I learn best when I see it every day  
Be patient with me it does take me time  
Show me again and again until my mind  
Can figure it out so I can tell  
That I learned what I needed and remember it well  
As I grow bigger and stronger each day  
I hope I can find an easier way  
To say what I think and think what I feel  
How great that would be a really big deal



I can do better when you think that I can  
Remember to show me and show me again  
I know that you love me so love me through this  
I do my best and don't need to be fixed  
Help me and teach me it's simple as that  
I need you I love you matter of fact  
If I can't tell you exactly how I feel  
Or act out in a way that seems unreal  
You're everything I count on every day  
Do accept me and cherish my own special way.



[https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2017/04/05/i-am-special-just-you-autism-acceptance-poem?utm\\_medium=text-link&utm\\_content=%22I%20Am%20Special%20Just%20Like%20You,%22%20an%20autism%20acceptance%20poem%20&utm\\_campaign=mostpopular](https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2017/04/05/i-am-special-just-you-autism-acceptance-poem?utm_medium=text-link&utm_content=%22I%20Am%20Special%20Just%20Like%20You,%22%20an%20autism%20acceptance%20poem%20&utm_campaign=mostpopular)



## SUMMER SUPPORTS

### Keep Your Child's Academic Skills Sharp this Summer

The summer holidays can be a long stretch for students with learning challenges. Reading, writing and math skills need practice in order to keep up the progress your child worked so hard to achieve at school.

[Summit Educational Therapy and Coaching LLC](#) in Corvallis offers summer 'top-up' sessions, helping students to maintain and grow their academic skills. Your child can attend once or twice a week – allowing plenty of time for summer fun and relaxation.

As your child returns to school in the fall, ongoing support sessions are available for academic skills, study and organizational skills for students of all ages.

Contact Lynn Scott at 541-908-8178 or [lynn@summitedtherapy.com](mailto:lynn@summitedtherapy.com) for more information.



## IPAD APPS & WEBSITES

**Check out the following apps that are free this month only.**

Apps are suggested and not required.

### **ASD Tools**

*iPad/iPhone - \$2.99 to FREE*

Tired of meltdowns, temper tantrums and hissy-fits you can't explain? Do you find it impossible to work out what your child wants? Are you trying to implement structure, routine or boundaries but find your child does not or does not want to understand? Does your child find it hard to complete a task? Do they have processing or communication difficulties? If you answered yes to ANY of the above questions ASD TOOLS can definitely help you :)



### **Cute Food – Cooking App for Kids**

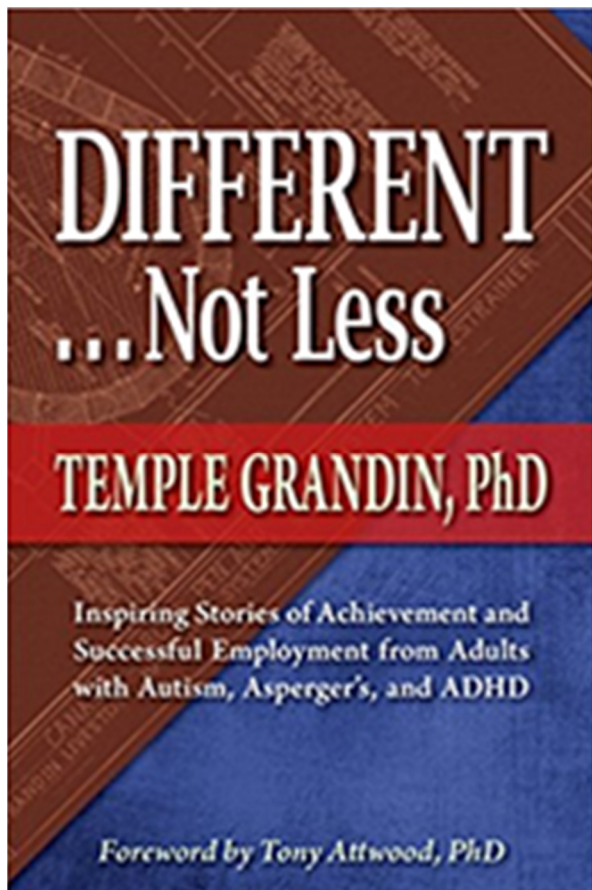
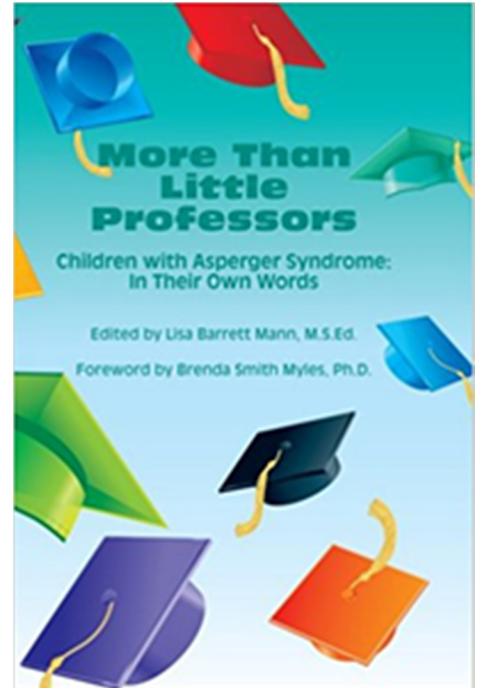
*iPad only - \$2.99 to FREE*

Cute Food is an absolutely wonderful app! There are so many opportunities to play and learn here. In this app, you “play with food” to design an appetizing plate. There is enough structure for kids who struggle with open ended drawing or art projects, and opportunities for the most creative to explore hours on end.

***More Than Little Professors -  
Children with Asperger Syndrome: In Their Own Words,***

edited by Lisa Barrett Mann

There are countless books with information about children with Asperger Syndrome, but very few offer a personal look into the inner lives of these children. In this unique collection of children's essays, poems and discussions recounted by parents, readers have a rare opportunity to gain insight into the world of children with Asperger Syndrome. Instead of being talked about, children here have the opportunity to share their world - their passions and fears, their awesome sense of wonder, quirky sense of humor, their distinguishing talents, and much more.



***Different...Not Less: Inspiring Stories of Achievement and Successful Employment from Adults with Autism, Asperger's and ADHD,***

compiled by Temple Grandin

This book is a compilation of success stories from adults with autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Each shares what helped them during their childhood and young lives that made them the independent adults they are today. One of the most important missions Temple Grandin has is making sure people with autism and Asperger's make something of their lives. As Temple says quite bluntly, being on Social Security is NOT a job choice. These unique individuals often have great potential in parts of their minds that neurotypicals never even start to tap. These strengths need to be shared with the world. However, in order to share their hidden genius, they have to overcome many social obstacles. The point of this groundbreaking work is that overcoming these obstacles are possible, and it is WORTH it. Let these crusaders, handpicked by Temple herself, show how it can be done.

Linn Benton Lincoln Educational Service District and the Cascade Regional Autism Staff are partnering with the Newport High School ECEL program to present our Second Annual Autism Resource and Transition Event



## “Knowledge Builds Hope” and Lincoln County Transition Fair

April 14, 2017  
4:00-7:00PM

Newport High School-West Gym  
322 NE Eads St.  
Newport, OR 97365

This event will offer you an opportunity to see what community resources are available to support all individuals with disabilities.

**We will have a variety of organizations that offer social skills, physical therapy options, support groups, Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.**  
This is just a brief sample of who you will be available to meet and visit with.

If you have any questions please contact: Michelle Neilson 541-812-2678 or Babe Brown 541-574-2244.





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## VISUALS

### How I Feel

