ABOARD'S MISSION:

There is considerable debate throughout the autism community about the cause of autism and issues such as vaccination, diet, inclusion, and appropriate therapies. Legislative acts can also influence services to those with autism. Our policy is to inform. We trust that individuals will assimilate the information we provide and make the best decision for their children and clients.

The entire mission statement can be found at http://aboard.web.officlive.com/aboutus.aspx

ABOARD turns 15 on March 17th!
It's also St. Patrick's Day so we've turned our logo green!

Please consider sharing your "green" with us by making a quick and easy online donation. We are hoping that you will show your support with any level of "birthday gift" you can spare to help all who struggle with the challenges of autism and bring a little gold to the end of their rainbow.

A birthday note from ABOARD Director Lu Randall
Essential nutrients for autism spectrum disorder

Ensuring proper biochemical functioning requires a consistent balance among various essential nutrients. Nutrients are substances that are involved in the creation of every molecule in the body. The body needs more than 45 nutrients, and the ways that nutrients are used are as varied as the molecules, cells and tissues they help to create. Carbohydrates, proteins and fats (called macronutrients) are broken down (metabolized) to give the body energy. Vitamins and minerals (called micronutrients) are not themselves metabolized for energy, but they are crucial in helping the macronutrients convert to energy. Six macrominerals are required by humans in varying amounts. Four of them (sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium) are cations, and two (phosphate and chloride) are accompanying anions. Nine trace minerals (microminerals) are required by humans in small amounts including iron, iodine, fluorine, zinc, chromium, selenium, manganese, molybdenum and copper.

Researchers and scientists continue to uncover the therapeutic role of nutritional supplements in the prevention and treatment of disease. The term "nutritional supplement" refers to vitamins, minerals, and other food components that are used to support good health and treat illness. While all vitamins and minerals play an essential role in the body's normal metabolism, growth, and development, some are pivotal and they do this by helping the body to perform various tasks. For example, vitamins B-6 (pyridoxine), B-9 (folate) and B-12 (methylcobalamin), regulate a special series of metabolic steps in brain cells necessary for forming neurotransmitter chemicals and repairing DNA.


CONFERENCE JUST TWO WEEKS AWAY!

Saturday, March 19, 2011
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn
Pittsburgh Airport

Featuring:

Gut Biology, Pathology, and Treatment Strategies in Patients With Autism Spectrum Disorders
Anju Usman, MD

Autism and the Autonomic Nervous System
Anju Usman, MD

Raising a Healthy Child in a Toxic World
Suruchi Chandra, MD
Here is a way to see a great show & support ABOARD all in one night!

Pittsburgh Symphony Community Partners
Concert Featuring BOYZ II MEN

Location: Heinz Hall
Thursday, June 23, 2011 at 7:30 PM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

Tickets may be ordered in any of the following ways:
calling the PSO Box Office at 412.392.4900 or toll-free: 1.800.743.8560
ordering online at pittsburghsymphony.org/communitypartners
coming to the PSO box office in person (600 Penn Ave., in Heinz Hall)
SATURDAY SEMINAR

AUTISM & SEXUALITY

Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Presented by
Shawn McGill

Saturday, April 9, 2011

9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at

The ABOARD Office
Pittsburgh, PA 15223

Seats limited register now!

PROGRAM D

Parent and clinical consultant in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1998, Shawn McGill will present an all-day workshop that addresses how we can best support persons on the spectrum to understand and safely express their sexuality. This comprehensive and unique training increases one's knowledge and awareness on how to best prepare your child for puberty, and how to best support them in navigating the many aspects of sexuality. Throughout the day you will learn educational and supportive methods to explain sexual feelings and body changes and to teach about legal and safe sexual expression.

Continuing Education Credits

Click here to register online!

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

www.walkforahealthycommunity.org
Select ABOARD as the organization that you would like to support.

Come out and walk for ABOARD!

Walk Details:
WHERE: Heinz Field, Pittsburgh
WHEN: Saturday May 21, 2011
REGISTRATION: Starts at 7:15am
5K WALK START: 9:00am
ONE-MILE FUN WALK START: 9:15am

Call 412-781-4116 or email autismwalk@aboard.org with any questions.
ABOARD and the families that we serve thank you for your support!

Spring will be here soon and it's time to start thinking about supporting ABOARD at the 9th annual Walk for a Healthy Community presented by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. This year's fundraiser benefits 67 local health and human service agencies in Southwestern PA, including ABOARD. Because all costs are underwritten by Highmark ABOARD receives 100% of the money that is collected.

To register, go to www.walkforahealthycommunity.org and select ABOARD as the organization that you would like to support. Would you like to be a team leader? On the website you can register as an individual walker, team leader or just make a donation. Pre-register and donate $25 to receive a t-shirt on walk day!
Education

**Teaching students with autism about their learning strengths and weaknesses**

The lesson I developed is about teaching our students and adults how to understand their social learning challenges in the context of their overall abilities and then how they can use their strengths to learn more strategies related to their weaknesses.

I have done this lesson with students as young as 8 years old and as old as they come. [http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/teaching-students-autism-about-their-learning-strengths-and-weaknesses-22983332#ixzz1FMQUyswF](http://www.autismsupportnetwork.com/news/teaching-students-autism-about-their-learning-strengths-and-weaknesses-22983332#ixzz1FMQUyswF)

**At the Boston Conservatory, autistic students learn from music lessons**
The Boston Conservatory is renowned for its intensive training in the performing arts, but on Saturday mornings, this Fenway institution offers a unique program: providing music lessons to children and young adults with autism. The Conservatory, a private performing arts college, united with the Autism Higher Education Foundation in 2007 to form the Boston Conservatory Program for Students on the Autism Spectrum.


Research

Studies Confirm That Serotonin Plays A Role In Many Autism Cases
Mouse models are yielding important clues about the nature of autism spectrum disorders, which impact an estimated one in 110 children in the U.S. In labs at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio, researchers are studying strains of mice that inherently mimic the repetitive and socially impaired behaviors present in these disorders. Georgianna Gould, Ph.D., research assistant professor of physiology in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, is eyeing the role that serotonin plays in autism spectrum disorders.

http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/217556.php

UAB computer program helps autistic children detect emotion
Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Biasini developed an interactive computer program that trained autistic children to look at the eyes and faces of the people they were communicating with so they better understood the emotional content and context displayed by the other person. This was accomplished through a six week training regimen of two twenty minute sessions with the FaceSay program the researchers developed. The Face Say program teaches the children to concentrate on the upper face, eyes, and facial expressions by using avatars as a training tool to develop memories of emotion and facial expression.

UAB computer program helps autistic children detect emotion - Birmingham science news | Examiner.com
Defining 'Essential' Care

Regulators Move to Specify Coverage Under Health Law; Insurers Seek Flexibility

The next big issue for the federal health law as it moves toward implementation is how regulators will define so-called essential benefits—the basic medical services that health plans must cover under the law. The legislation gives 10 categories of care that plans must provide for customers of the health-insurance exchanges that are launching in 2014. But the law leaves details up to regulators, who are now starting to develop the rules.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703905404576164904171231570.html

EveFoothill High senior is the picture of victory over autism

Computer graphics student writing a children's book with aid of parents, teachers

Ben Nelson, a 17-year-old Foothill High School senior, holds a sketch of Red, the housefly protagonist of his book. Nelson, who was diagnosed with autism when he was 3 years old, recently won a $1,000 scholarship from the Adobe Foundation to publish his first children's book.


Events/Info

ABOARD Support Group Meeting

For a complete listing of the ABOARD Support Groups please see our website at www.aboard.org!

FBR North Hills Social Skills group and Parent Group

Social skills group for children structured to practice and participate in activities, games and snack
8035 McKnight Rd Suite 102 Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Time 6pm
Monthly: 2nd MONDAY of every month  Please RSVP By 4:00pm the day of group meeting.
Contact Name: Teresa O'Brien
Contact Phone: 412-366-8342
Contact Email: tobrien@familybehavioralresources.com

GET CONNECTED!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Pennsylvania's budget process needs your input!

We will be writing a letter to Governor Corbett this week to ask him to preserve funds for autism treatment and supports. Since the time is of the essence, we urge you to complete the survey at the following link. We will include current data to support our respectful request that the 2011/2012 budget cuts not affect autism services. We will let the governor know that while we understand the difficulty of the decisions he has to make, there is a growing need in the autism community. We will list your most pressing concerns related to budget items. Our letter will politely make the point that spending dollars on preventative treatment and services will likely result in savings in the coming year and beyond. Cuts will in some cases mean very expensive emergency services or long term care, wiping out savings and then some.

Please know that while we advocate for your needs as a group, you should also send your individual letters as well. The mailing address again is:

Governor Corbett's Budget Secretary, Charles Zogby, 238 Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120

and write to:

Acting Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare, Gary Alexander, 502 Health and Welfare Building, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

Thank you for your participation.

Click here to take SURVEY

**Perspective Program: Intervention Research Study for Adults with ASD**

The Perspectives Program at the University of Pittsburgh is developing new non-drug interventions to meet the unique needs of adults with autism spectrum disorders. Individuals with Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder NOS, between the ages of 16-40, are now being accepted into the program. All participants will receive one of two new experimental interventions, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy or Enriched Supportive Therapy, at no cost. Participants must be able to come to the University of Pittsburgh on a regular basis. A new session is beginning soon.

To enroll or find out more information contact 1-866-647-3436 or autismrecruiter@upmc.edu.

**FBR and AERI Co-Host 9th Annual Autism Awareness Night**

The 9th Annual Autism Awareness Night is co-hosted this year by Family
Behavioral Resources (FBR) and the Autism Education and Research Institute (AERI) on April 7th, 2011 from 6:30pm-9pm at the Doubletree Hotel in Monroeville, PA. Hope for Tomorrow - A Tale of Two Mothers shares unique stories from two women - both of whom are national authors and motivational speakers. Amalia Starr, author of "Raising Brandon" and Claudreen Jackson, wife of the late Pervis Jackson (from Motown group The Spinners) and author of "Inspired by Autism" open their voices and hearts as they talk about their beloved adult sons and experiences in raising their loved ones on the autism spectrum. The stories are as alike as they are different, but common theme remains the same - they have immense love for their sons, and show strength, courage, and resiliency. Their life lessons and perspectives will undoubtedly teach and inspire the audience. This event has always been and is still FREE to the community as part of our commitment to supporting Autism Awareness Month in April. We invite family members, persons on the spectrum, therapists, teachers, paraprofessionals - anyone who need a "cup of comfort and inspiration!" Starr and Jackson will surely remind us that no matter how our loved ones are impacted by the spectrum, there is always "hope for tomorrow." Sponsorship and Exhibitor Opportunities are now available on a limited basis - first come, first serve! Finally, we have applied for Continuing Education hours and expect to once again be approved to provide this exceptional opportunity to those in need of credit. Should this change, we will notify the community immediately. We hope to see returning guests and new faces this year for our annual event. Join us for an exceptional evening!

Local Task Force 2011 STEPP Awards
The Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF3) is proud to sponsor the Scott E. Folmer Memorial: Student, Teacher and Exemplary Practice or Partnering (STEPP) Awards which recognize the outstanding support of children receiving special education services. You may complete the online nomination form by clicking the link located on the LTF3 homepage (http://www.ltf3.org). Nominations must be received by Monday, March 15, 2011.

Pressley Ridge is hosting a Professional Development Series on Autism and emotional disorders The topics include Instructional Strategies for Students with Emotional, Behavioral, Trauma, and Loss Issues (March 2-Greensburg), and High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome in the Regular Education Classroom (March 16-Beaver Falls, April 19-DuBois). To learn more about these seminars featuring nationally renowned speakers, visit www.pressleyridge.org/educationtraining/, call 412.872.9474 or email educationtraining@pressleyridge.org.

CCBH Family Members of CCBH Consumer Meeting
This meeting will be held on March 23rd at 324 Allenhurst Avenue, in Ridgway, PA, and is the location of Dickinson Center, Inc.'s Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center. This meeting is held by
CCBH's Joe Korney who seeks CCBH consumer family member input about any service related issue, or concern. The meeting lasts about 1 hour. Family members will be reimbursed $25.00 for attending and can be eligible for mileage reimbursement as well. Food and refreshment will be provided as well. Company Name: Dickinson Center, Inc. - Ridgway Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program (hosting)
Contact Name: Rita Onink-Kraus B.S.; Caseworker
Contact Address: 324 Allenhurst Avenue, Ridgway, PA 15853
Contact Phone: 814-776-2653
Contact Email: rita.onink-kraus@dmhc.org

Wesley Spectrum Services 2011 Extended School Year Programs
Wesley Spectrum Offers a Variety of Educational and Therapeutic Extended School Year (ESY) Programs for Students that Quality for ESY.

Wesley Spectrum Digital Storytelling ESY for Students on the Autism Spectrum
Wesley Spectrum Social Skills ESY for Adolescents with Asperger's Syndrome
Wesley Spectrum Academy ESY
Wesley Spectrum Highland/Integrated ESY
Wesley Spectrum Academy and Highland/Integrated ESY Summer Work Program

Programs are located in Upper St. Clair, Whitehall, Gibsonia and Penn Hills. For additional information, contact Dave Grabowski at 412-885-7017, or visit www.wesleyspectrum.org for a full brochure.

4th Annual Autism Expo : A Support and Resource Fair for Parents
Friday, April 8, 2011
The School District of Philadelphia Education Center
440 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
The Julia Ward Howe School in collaboration with the Office of Specialized Instructional Services cordially invites...... parents, guardians and family members to meet
9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Providers
Legislators
Advocates
Parent Supports
Refreshments will be served

Westmoreland IU & University of Pittsburgh Greensburg Autism Conference
Wednesday, May 4, 2011
The First Annual Autism conference sponsored jointly by the Westmoreland IU and UPG offers practical ways to respond to youth on the Spectrum. The opening keynote presentation by Dr.
Nancy Minshew will focus on understanding the cognitive and physical basis of autism. Dr. Minshew, Director of Pitt’s Autism Center of Excellance will review her 25 plus years of research on brain connectivity and information processing for persons on the spectrum. Afternoon sessions feature practical responses to "Sensory Processing", "Social Skills Training", "Responses to Agitation, Escalation & Meltdown", and "Career Development/Employment Experiences". Sessions on "Parent Partnership Development" and "Advances in Assistive Technology" are also scheduled. Contact Ms. Kelly Heitchue, (724) 836-2460 Extension 2324
www.wiu.k12.pa.us

WOW TWO GREAT FUN NIGHTS OUT THAT BOTH BENEFIT ABOARD! Thank you to our supporters who are hosting these events for ABOARD.

Tickets on sale now to get the early bird special!
Tickets will not be mailed for this event, but you are registered once you finish check out. Your receipt will be emailed to you.
Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at the Spring Fling for Autism & Masquerade Bowl.
Contact the Office at 412-449-0165 for more information!

REGISTER NOW For
save the date!

AUTISM through the LIFESPAN

A part of the Passavant Hospital Foundation Extending the Care ETC Program Series
Passavant Hospital Foundation Conference Center & Legacy Theatre at Cumberland Woods Village

Presentations and breakout sessions each day

Wednesday, April 13th early childhood to adolescence

research
findings and implications

education
working with the system to meet individual needs

medicine
primary care, co-occurring conditions and diagnosis

Thursday, April 14th transition: adolescence through adulthood

research

review of relevant state & federal legislation

planning for independence

employment

Sponsored by:

PASSAVANT HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Presented by:

[Logos of various organizations]
REGISTER NOW For

[save the date]

JOEY TRAVOLTA FILM WORKSHOP

For Students and Young Adults, ages 14-25

July 18-29th, Monday through Friday from 10a.m.-3p.m.

Cost: $2900.00 for two weeks

This workshop is specifically designed to meet IEP, Transition, and Vocational Goals.

[call, click, or email AHEAD for more information]
877.AHEAD.1 (877.243.2331)
www.ahead.org/joeytravolta | admin@ahead.org
CLICK HERE TO MAKE A PERSONAL DONATION TO ABOARD!

Your donation qualifies as a charitable deduction. ABOARD is registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State Bureau of Charitable Organizations. To receive a copy of the official registration and financial information, please call 800-732-0990 within Pennsylvania or visit www.dos.state.pa.us.

ABOARD is a member of the The Chamber of Commerce

United Way of Allegheny County Contributor Choice Agency Number 9817

Join our page or join our cause! You can also add a CAUSE Toolbar so every web search will help ABOARD generate funds! http://apps.facebook.com/causes/toolbar

GOODSEARCH.COM or GOODSHOP.COM - Select "ABOARD"

OUR MISSION

ABOARD IS DEDICATED TO MAXIMIZING THE SOCIAL, EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL POTENTIAL AND POSSIBILITIES OF PENNSYLVANIA CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM AND RELATED DISORDERS. THROUGH FAMILY SUPPORT, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, EDUCATION & TRAINING, AWARENESS BUILDING AND COLLABORATION, WE PROVIDE HOPE AND HELP TO PENNSYLVANIANS CONFRONTED WITH THE CHALLENGES OF AUTISM.

412 - 781-4116 or 800 - 827-9385