

The Times They Are A Changing !

As we are poised to start a new year I am struck by how much progress we have made since the Center first opened it's doors. In 1997 autism was a low incidence disability. The number of families affected by ASD, has skyrocketed since then. The Center, which began with only the funding from the Department of Developmental Services began to do significant fundraising in order to meet the needs of so many new families. Being dependant on fundraising can be difficult when events do not generate the hoped for response. In order to serve increased numbers of families we are compelled to make some changes rather than cutting services families need. To begin, we are finding ways to cut costs. We're changing our software platform for event registrations, which will result in considerable savings. The new platform does not allow for a per family fee, so we will now have to charge a per person fee for activities. These fees will continue to be modest, but some events which are costly will have a slightly higher fee. The website registration page may have a different look but I'm confident you will be able to navigate it with relative ease.

We've gone from mailing welcome packets to families to sending the information electronically, resulting in a decrease in our operating costs and being a greener way to disseminate information. If you are receiving a paper copy of the newsletter and have

e-mail, we request that you share that e-mail with the Center and help us by going paperless.

After 2010 when the passage of ARICA made it possible for families to obtain services for autism under their health plans we saw a downtick in the numbers of families who utilize the DDS funded Sensory Gyms and other therapeutic groups. We've since decreased the number of hours we offer these groups and have tried different offerings with minimal response. It is not a good use of our state funds to run groups for 2- 4 children as the cost remains the same whether 2 or 10 children participate. Too often families sign up and attend 1 session and then do not return. We run the groups based on enrollment so those who do this may be denied funding for future groups, as it is OUR responsibility to utilize the funds from our State wisely. We understand that sometimes an activity is simply not a good fit so we're offering a "Sensory Sampler" so that families can "try on" different offerings and then settle on which is the best fit for their child.

We ask that parents make a firm commitment to attend the activities they register their child for and recognize that kids with ASD tend to resist novel experiences. As parents we need to be consistent with them, and attend so that they develop a comfort level with the activity and benefit from it. The cost for sensory activities will increase to \$50 /8 week session, which is less

1/2 the cost of what a sensory gym costs per child based on 10 participants. There will be no refunds for those who drop out from a group and we reserve the right to cancel a group if there are not sufficient participants. So if you enjoy the sensory gym format, talk it up and encourage others to enroll.

Those who request funding for a Social Skills group MUST inform the Center if they do NOT enroll their child, so that the funds can be allocated to another family. Failure to do so may result in being denied future funding.

Last year we were able to offer YMCA memberships for children on the spectrum. This was well received and we are offering them again through June 2014. Additionally we will be able to offer a month of Karate classes at specific studios. See page 3 for details. If your child is already enrolled in a martial arts class not listed, please call us to arrange funding for the class.

The idea is to give kids the opportunity to participate in a community activity which will enhance their ability to be interdependent and grow to be independent members of their community. Lots of changes, yes. However, the goals and mission of the Center remain the same. Working together we can improve the outcomes for this generation and pave the way for the future. Happy New Year !!



Autism Division Funded Clinics

IEP, ADL & VISUAL CLINICS

ADL and Visuals Clinics are by appointment ADL Clinics are booked only upon request. Please call Kathy at (508) 298-1609 to request. For Visual Clinics, parents may drop by the Center at any time during regular business hours to access the Boardmaker Program and material to create visuals. Printing and laminating are provided without charge. After a brief tutorial on how the Boardmaker software works, most parents can create their own visuals.

1 Hour IEP Clinics with Elaine Rabbitt Meet with an Advocate to discuss your child's IEP, concerns and needs and how best to advocate for changes with your school. Dates available for consultation are as follows:

January 9, 2014

Leominster Library, 30 West St, Leominster—Small Study Room on 2nd floor
9:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1PM, 2PM

January 16, 2014

Autism Resource Center
9:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1PM, 2PM

January 23, 2014

HMEA 8 Forge Park East, Franklin MA
9:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1PM, 2PM

Your Child must be Autism Division eligible and under the age of 18 to access this service

Please call Kathy at (508) 298-1609 to book your clinic.

Grupo de Apoyo

El Centro de Recursos de Autismo (Autism Resource Center, en inglés), en colaboración con Centro las Américas, se complace en ofrecer un grupo de apoyo para las familias que hablan español y que están criando a un niño con un Trastorno de Espectro de Autismo. Este grupo se reunirá mensualmente en Centro las Américas en el 11 de la Sicomoro Street en Worcester, MA. El grupo de apoyo será codirigido por David Iborra, Autism Support Broker en el Centro de Recursos de Autismo, y por Ydalia V. Heimann, del personal de Centro.

La primera reunión será el jueves 19 de diciembre a las 10:00am, y el grupo continuará reuniéndose mensualmente hasta junio. Ustedes pueden ver las fechas en la página Web del Centro de Recursos de Autismo, en el calendario que aparece en www.autismresourcecentral.org.

Se ayudará a los padres a que aseguren los servicios a través de la División de Autismo del Departamento de Servicios de Desarrollo, incluyendo clínicas sobre IEP, ayuda financiera que le permita a su niño asistir a un grupo de destrezas sociales, Actividades del Diario Vivir, y clínicas para el desarrollo de apoyos visuales para sus niños, así como el apoyo y el compañerismo de otros padres que enfrentan desafíos similares. Los talleres que abordan las necesidades del grupo se ofrecerán según sea necesario.



Autism Division Funded Groups And Community Inclusion Grants

Participants for all groups MUST be Autism Division eligible, and under the age of 18.

Social Skills

Those who would like to enroll their child in a Social Skills Groups with a clinician may apply for funding, up to \$300.00, towards a group session. Funds will be sent directly to providers, and families would be responsible for any fees beyond \$300.00. If a provider charges less than \$300.00, the fee will be covered in total by the funding. Funding for social skills groups is limited to eligible candidates under the age of 18 who meet the criteria for participation as set by the clinician. Contact the Resource Center to secure possible funding by calling 508-298-1609. If approved, your provider may invoice the Center for payment of \$300.00 for your child.

Sensory Gyms, Music, Swimming

These clinics are designed to require parent participation so that children have 1:1 supervision by a parent. Instructors are there to instruct and assist parents, not to provide direct supervision of children. Parents MUST stay at the location of the group. Please wear appropriate clothing for activities. Register online or call Cid at 508-298-1610

Music and Movement with Janice Kenyon and Liz Johnson

Children's Room, Leominster Library
30 West Street, Leominster MA
Children: ages 3-8 8 children
4:15– 5:15 PM Fee \$50.00
Dates: January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30th,
February 6, 13, 27th

Sensory Clinic "Moves and Grooves with Natalie Marcil OTR/L" at Get Fit: Body Mind Soul

A sensory based brain gym that incorporates rhythmic organized music and movement, sensory exploration & integration Includes social skills.
66 John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg MA
Saturdays 3-4 PM Fee: \$50.00
Jan. 4, 11, 25, Feb 1, 8, 15, 22, Mar 1st
Children 3 -18 (10 parent/child pairs)

Sensory Clinic with Amy Smith COTA at Sensibility Gym

8 Charlesview Place unit 4, Hopedale
Sundays 1-2 PM Fee : \$50.00
Jan.5, 12, 19, 26 Feb 2, 9, 16, 23
Children 3 -18 (10 parent/child pairs)

Swim and Safety Class with Leah Nyberg

Paxton Sports Club
603 Pleasant St, Paxton MA
Sundays 3-4 PM Fee: \$25.00/session
Session 1 Jan 5, 19 Feb 2, 9
Session 2 Feb 16, 23, March 2, 16
Children 3 -18 (4 parent/child pairs)

SENSORY SAMPLER -Attend each group for 2 classes Fee : \$50.00

Music & Movement :Jan 2, 9
Moves & Grooves : Jan 25, Feb 1st
Sensory Gym at Sensibility: Feb 9, 16
Swim : Feb 23, Mar 2

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

African Drumming with Crocodile River Music with Zach Combs Children's Class

Gallery of African Art
62 High St , Clinton, Ma
Wednesdays 4-4:45 PM
Children 3 -18 8 Weeks (ongoing class) Cost: \$50.00

INCLUSION GRANTS

Please call Kathy at 508-298-1609 to request Inclusion Grants

YMCA Memberships

The Autism Resource Center will provide scholarships to the following YMCA's for children under 18 with ASD who are DDS eligible, which will run through to the end of June.

Greendale YMCA in Worcester,
Montachusett YMCA in Fitchburg,
Tri Community YMCA in Southbridge,
Hockomock YMCA, Franklin Branch,
Boroughs YMCA Branch in Westborough
The Clark YMCA in Winchendon

Children who qualify may be accompanied by 1 parent or a 1:1 aide. Access to some of the program areas for children under the age of 13 may require the person accompanying the child to have a CORI & SORI check done, which would take 24 hours.

Martial Arts

The Autism Resource Center will fund 1 month of fees for inclusion in a martial arts program at the following studios

MJA Martial Arts in Spencer or
New Horizons Martial Arts in West Boylston .

If you are enrolled in a class elsewhere call Cid at 508-298-1610 to inquire for funding.

Book Review—The Reason I Jump

The Reason I Jump written by Naoki Higashida, a thirteen year old with Autism is a bit different from books written by other people on the spectrum, in that this young man is non-verbal.

As the parent of a 5 year old who was non verbal in 1989 I was fortunate to meet Temple Grandin. I had read her book and was excited to be able to pick her brain. With typical lack of appreciation for the sensibilities of a young mother Temple was blunt and to the point, telling me that if my son was nonverbal at 5 chances were that he would not have an outcome that mirrored her life. This was crushing to me as a parent. But I remained determined and convinced of my son's intelligence, so I soldiered on.

This book is not a story of Higashida's life, it is done in a Q & A format,

which is slightly off-putting at first, but then becomes fascinating as he answers various questions put to him about his behaviors, emotions and thought process. After a while it makes perfect sense that the book was written this way.

The questions run the gamut from "What's the reason you jump?" to "Should we listen to every word you say?" to "What's something people with autism really enjoy?" The answers may surprise you. Strong emotions "lock" his body so that he can't move the way he wants—jumping frees him of the ropes of the emotion. Listen to every word? Not every answer is reliable and it's frustrating for words to escape that aren't meant. What does he enjoy? Nature, his description of enjoying nature will touch you like a soft breeze can comfort you.

As the parent of a nonverbal man with autism, I know that his communication is not always verbal and over the years we've learned from each other how to communicate without words.

What struck me most was Higashida's oft repeated request that we be patient, and understand that the maddening things a person with autism might do are not designed to drive others mad, and that the actions are just as problematic for them.

His words encourage me to never ever give up and always to presume competence. Like others who have found a voice through typing some may doubt the veracity of his words. That is a mistake. His is a good message we should all heed.

Sue Loring

Donations and Memorial Gifts

DONATIONS

Elaine & John Hogan

UNITED WAY DONATIONS Hanover Insurance

*Stephen Kelley
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Kevin Ertell
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Coreen Gaffney
Suzanne Borden*

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UMASS Memorial Health Care

*Katherine York
Bobbi-Jo Anderson*

PROCTER GROUP INSURANCE

Lynn Marie Vuona

MACY'S

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FEDERAL EXPRESS CORPORATION

Anonymous Donors

Our thanks to both these establishments for their support

Devens Grill

Publick House

To designate the Autism Resource Center as the recipient of your United Way Donation use the name Autism Resource Center and the code UN 00365

Car Donations are accepted at

<http://www.donateacar.com/> or call 800-240-0160 to speak to a representative of Car Program LLC directly.

Holiday Giving and Annual Appeal

Any general donations made the week of December 1-7 will be designated to meet the needs of families who are seeking assistance for the holidays.

In the spirit of the Season, please consider a gift to help others.



Floortime® for Parents

The Autism Resource Center, in conjunction with the Astra Foundation will once again be offering a course on **DIR® / Floortime for Parents**, starting January 21, 2014.

DIR® is an abbreviation for Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship-based. DIR® is a model—a framework—for thinking about a child's complete development, from infancy into whole joyful personhood.

While DIR® can be a helpful way to think about any child's development, it is particularly useful in working with children with developmental delays.

In this course, we'll discuss the basic principles of DIR®, and learn about Floortime, a strategic, emotion-driven way of playing and interacting with a child that helps a child initiate and respond at higher and higher developmental levels. We'll also discuss the importance of understanding each child's unique sensory profile and how to incorporate this knowledge into Floortime sessions.

Participants will be provided with a copy of The Child with Special Needs as part of their registration fee. Due to popular demand this course will include the opportunity for parents to have 1:1 consultation with instructor Sarah Measures on three separate dates as the program progresses

The Course will take place at the Autism Resource Center on Tuesdays.

Course Dates are as follows:

Tuesdays from 7:00 pm—9:00 pm: January 21, 28th . February 4, 11, 18, 25th Snowdate :March 4th

Mentoring dates: Saturday February 1st and February 22nd

To register complete the form below and return with your registration fee to the Autism Resource Center .

***** **Floortime for Parents Registration** *****

Name: _____

Address: _____

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Fee: \$30.00 for Parents registered with Autism Resource Center /\$60.00 for Parents from outside the area
Make checks payable and mail to: Autism Resource Center, 71 Sterling St., West Boylston MA 01583
or register online.

Donations and Memorial Gifts

New Years Eve's Eve Ball

You are cordially invited to

*The Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts
Annual Teens & Young Adult Holiday Party*

Monday, December 30, 2013

The Manor Restaurant

Route 12, West Boylston , Massachusetts

For Teens, Teen Siblings and Parents

6: 30 PM—9:30 PM

Music , Dancing & Karaoke with DJ Greg Engvall

Family Picture and Gift for Teens

Regular and GFCF menu, served buffet style includes :

Pasta, Sauce, and Meatballs , Salad bar, Bread , Drinks and Cake

RESERVATION BY PHONE REQUIRED

RSVP by Friday December 20th Call 508-298-1610

Suggested Donation : Warm New Socks for the Homeless



One Family's Experience—Letting Go

My story is similar to many of yours. My firstborn is a boy. As a new parent, I might have been a little neurotic--always trying to make sure he had a nutritious diet, disinfecting every little thing, and the list goes on.

Seventeen months later I had my second child. I believed the adjustments & changes to the home caused my son's lack of social and communication skills. We started early intervention, and by 18 months old they recommended that he be evaluated for autism.

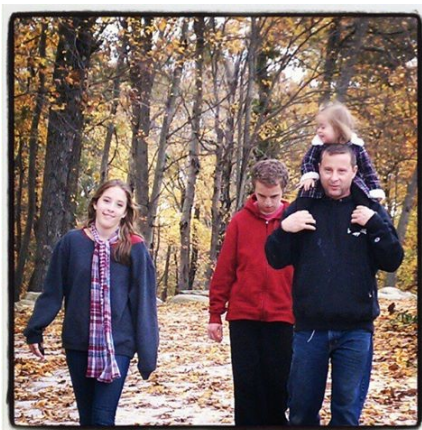
In 1998, autism was not something I had ever even heard of. It was devastating. My husband and I started weaving through the therapies, interventions and how to advocate as best we could. Cal worked really hard with numerous therapists for hours daily. Some years, he was in a specialized outplacement schools. Thankfully, he acquired a lot of skills, like showering, brushing his teeth, tying his shoes, some basic reading and math skills.

He still struggled with his communication and expressive language, which escalated his aggressive outbursts and self-injurious behaviors. As the teen years approached these behaviors intensified and became more and more unsafe. The thought of a residential placement was something that I respected other parents for doing, but a choice I wanted to avoid and thought I would never have to make.

In 2010, I had my third child, unaware she would be born with Down Syndrome and a heart defect. She had

open heart surgery at two months old, and through this period my son was stable. When she was around nine months old, his behaviors once again became a crisis in the home. When we could for see an outburst coming, I would have to hide the other children in a room.

Sometimes these outbursts came unexpectedly, and furniture and objects would be thrown, making holes in the



walls, sometimes just missing us. He had many sleepless nights of pacing, and he needed constant supervision, as he was very good at sneaking off and wandering. Most of the time I was alone and felt exhausted, vulnerable, unsafe and desperate to keep him and my family safe.

In our desperation, we placed him in and out of a psychiatric hospital, and we came to the decision that he needed a residential setting. I had to advocate with the school district that this would be best for him also. This process took about a year.

For about a year and a half he has been in his new placement. The hardest

thing I ever had to do was letting go. He is my first child and I had to let go of him earlier than I expected.

For 15 years, everything we did as a family was based on his needs, and now we've started seeing each other's needs more.

Through letting go we were able to grow. We've had to learn a different way to be a family. We are able to start putting energy and time into each other in a healthy balance.

Our time together with Cal is quality time, and now we are also able to enjoy each other. Cal has adjusted much more quickly than I anticipated. He seems more confident and happy.

Through a daily consistent routine and trained, compassionate staff, he has been doing chores, community activities, biking and hiking along with his peers. This progress is a joy to see, especially as it was a struggle when he lived at home even to get him out of his room.

I encourage you not to wait until there is a crisis in your family before you make this decision. Some of you are going to have to make this decision sooner or later. You are not alone. Reach out for support from other parents that have been there.

Letting go was one of the hardest things I had to do. Through prayer and support from my community, we were able to get through it. The rewards far outweighed the initial pain.

Judy Lefort



Calendar

Register for Events @ www.autismresourcecentral.org or call 508-298-1610 Fees for Events are as stated

DECEMBER



December 2, 2013

Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital - 6PM

December 4, 2013

**Support Group for Parents of More
Able Children on the Spectrum**
7-9 PM

December 8, 2013

Children's Holiday Party
Manor Restaurant
Registration closed November 27th

December 9, 2013

Center Closed

Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital 6PM

December 11, 2013

Classic Autism Support Group
7-9 PM

December 12, 2013

Floortime Information Night
Sara Measures M.Ed
7-9 PM

December 16, 2013

Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital 6PM

December 18, 2013

Center Closes at 5 PM

December 23, 2013

Family Fun and Fitness Walk
Our Lady of Fatima Shrine
101 Summer St., Holliston
Meet at 6 PM

December 24, 2013

FRIENDS AND FAMILY MOVIE

West Boylston Cinema
Rt 12 West Boylston
10 AM Cost \$2.00 /pp

Center Closes at 12 Noon

December 25, 2013

Center Closed

December 26, 2013

Family Fun—Hockey Night
Worcester Sharks vs
Providence Bruins
DCU Center Worcester
7 PM
Cost \$15.00/pp

December 27, 2013

**Vacation Fun
Bowling & Pizza**

Gardner 10 Pins
560 West Broadway
Gardner MA
10 AM
Cost \$2.00/pp

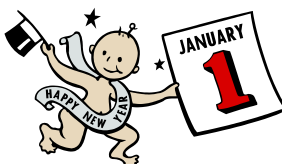
December 30, 2013

**New Years Eve Dinner Dance
for Teens, Young Adults
and their Families**
Manor Restaurant
242 West Boylston St, West Boylston
6:30– 9:30 PM
RSVP to Cid at 508-298-1610

December 31, 2013

Center Closed

JANUARY



January 1, 2014

Center Closed

January 6, 2014

Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital 6 PM

January 8, 2014

**Support Group for Parents of More
Able Children on the Spectrum**
7-9 PM

January 12, 2014

Family Fun –Glow Golf
Fore Seasons Mini Golf
135 Westboro Rd, Grafton, Ma
1 PM
Cost \$2.00/pp

January 13, 2014

Parents & Tots
4:30 – 5:30 PM

Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital 6PM

Accessing Public Supports
Kristen Finne-Gregoire
7PM

January 15, 2014

Classic Autism Support Group
7-9 PM

January 16, 2014

Camp Havvago Information Night
7-9 PM

January 20, 2014

MLK Day
Center Closed
Family Fun & Fitness Walk
St Vincent's Hospital 6PM

January 21, 2014

Floortime for Parents 7-9 PM
Registration required see page 5

January 22, 2014



Register for Events @ www.autismresourcecentral.org or call 508-298-1610 Fees for Events are as stated

Parents of Teens Support Group

Autism Housing Pathways presents

Thinking about Housing

7-9 PM

Teen socialization group meets concurrently

January 25, 2014

Sibshop

For Siblings ages 7 and older

Cost \$10/child/ \$15/family

10 AM—2 PM

January 27, 2014

Family Fun & Fitness Walk

St Vincents Hospital 6PM

January 28, 2014

Floortime for Parents

7-9 PM

January 30, 2014

Family Fun for Teens

& Young Adults

Pizza and a Movie

Meet at the Center at 6 PM

Cost \$2.00/pp

FEBRUARY



February 1, 2014

Floortime 1:1 coaching

February 3, 2014

Family Fun & Fitness Walk

St Vincent's Hospital 6 PM

February 4, 2014

Floortime for Parents 7-9 PM

February 5, 2014

Support Group for Parents of More Able Children on the Spectrum

7-9 PM

February 8, 2014

Sibshop

Zion Lutheran Church

60 Main St , Oxford Ma

For Siblings ages 7 and older

Cost \$10/child/ \$15/family

10 AM—2 PM

February 10, 2014

Parents & Tots

4:30—5:30 PM

Family Fun & Fitness Walk

St Vincent's Hospital 6PM

February 11, 2014

Floortime for Parents 7-9 PM

Not Just Child's Play

Bullying

Worcester Public Library

6:30-8:30 PM see page 8

February 12, 2014

Classic Autism Support Group

7-9 PM

February 17, 2014

Center Closed

Family Fun & Fitness Walk

St Vincent's Hospital 6 PM

February 18, 2014

Floortime for Parents 7-9 PM

VACATION WEEK FUN

February 18, 2014

Roller Skating & Pizza

Roll On America

90 Duval Rd, Lancaster MA

10 :30 AM Cost \$2.00/pp

February 19, 2014

WE BOUNCE

FOR TEENS (13 & up) & YOUNG ADULTS

Sky Zone Trampoline Park

290 Turnpike Road, Westborough Ma

Arrive at 9:30 AM

\$5.00/pp

FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12

Pump It Up

810 Boston Turnpike, Shrewsbury

10 AM

Cost \$2.00/per child

Jump n Play

486 Chestnut St Gardner MA

11 AM

Cost: \$2.00/per child

Zoinks

7 Pioneer Drive North Oxford MA

11:45 AM

Cost \$2.00/per child

February 20, 2014

Bowling & Pizza Party

Fico's Bowling

300 East Central St, Franklin Ma

10 AM

Cost \$2.00/pp

February 21, 2014

Friends & Family Movie

West Boylston Cinema

10 AM

Cost \$2.00/pp

February 22, 2014

Floortime 1:1 coaching

February 24, 2014

Family Fun & Fitness Walk

St Vincent's Hospital 6 PM

February 25, 2014

Floortime for Parents 7-9 PM

February 26, 2014

Parents of Teens Support Group

7-9 PM

Teen socialization group meets concurrently



**71 Sterling Street
West Boylston MA**

Phone: 508-835-4278

Fax: 508 -835-3723

Email: autism@HMEA.org

www.autismresourcecentral.org

Sue Loring RN - Director

Cid DeLeo - Assistant to Director

Kris Gregoire , Autism Waiver Supervisor

**Kathy Taylor, David Iborra - Autism Waiver
Support Brokers**

Kathy O'Neill - Autism Information Specialist

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM– 9 PM

Tuesday 9AM –5 PM Friday 9 AM–3 PM

We are the Center of the autism community



The Resource CONNECTION is a quarterly publication of The Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts

The Autism Resource Center does not endorse any treatments, programs or products. Articles, announcements and resources are provided for information purposes only.

Not Just Child's Play

Please join us for the second in a series of FREE Presentations by Professionals and discussions to address aggression, bullying & other community responses to violence, especially for those parenting youth with special needs

***Second in the “Not Just Child’s Play” series:
“How to empower Vulnerable Populations to Deal with Bullying “***

**February 11, 2014 (Snow Date March 11th)
Worcester Public Library 1 Salem Square Worcester Ma
6:30 – 8:30 pm**

Register at : www.autismresourcecentral.org

Collaborators: **ALEC** The Autism Resource Center of Central Massachusetts, Kennedy-Donovan Family Support Center, NAMI, Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL), and UMASS Medical Center, UMass Memorial Health Care



Light Refreshments and Door Prizes



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