



IN TOUCH

OFFICIAL VOICE OF AUTISM CONNECT

July 2014

What is inside?

Bigger, Better - Workstations

Learn from the Experts
Gastrointestinal issues are real

Volunteers Paying it Forward

Who are we:

Autism Connect is a specialised learning centre for children on the Autism Spectrum. Based in Mitchell's Plain the organisation aims to bridge the gap for families not able to afford one on one therapy , but whose children are still awaiting placement in Autism specific schools/ units. Our aim is to ensure our children are accepted and not declined placement at Autism specific schools.

Why we exist:

To make specialised Autism care accessible to low and middle income families.

How we do it:

We base our intervention strategies on the philosophy of TEACHH (Treatment and Education of Auditory and communication – Handicapped children) established by Eric Schopler in 1964.

Working from the premise that people with Autism are predominantly visual learners , intervention strategies are based around physical and visual structure , schedules , work systems and task organisation, concepts, sensory processing , change and relating to others. Whereas some interventions focus on addressing areas of weakness, the TEACHH approach works with existing strengths and emerging skill areas.



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AUTISM CONNECT
Unlocking Greatness Since 2012

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Old Mutual for the sponsor and the craftsmanship of Donovan Crowie.

Our staff compliment continues to grow and I'm overwhelmed and excited at the same time about the amount of people that has opened up their hearts and would like to partner with us - God remains good!

June saw us attending an insightful workshop at Vera school known as ABC (Autistic Behavioural Cognition) The Autism Experience! WOW...words fail me, nothing I can say can do this course any justice - you have to experience it for yourself. As a mother of a severely autistic child myself and an educator on the subject - it reiterated the core of this condition, our children are perfectly unique and it's our obligation to be patient, to love and provide them with all the necessary resources and intervention strategies for them to adapt, develop one step at a time.

Continue to be a blessing and share the love!
Regards,

Nicolette
info@autismconnect.org.za

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings AC Friends & Family, and welcome to the July edition of In Touch Magazine. The official voice of Autism Connect. It's that time of the year where staying indoors and hot chocolate is the order of the day, as winter is upon us. However at Autism Connect we keep on moving - the cold and rain doesn't stop us but propels us forward to do and know better.

I have so much to share with you - the centre has undergone a bit of a metamorphosis with the renovation of our new Sensory Room and our learners making use of their brand new and improved individual workstations, thanks to

Visit our Website for more information and back dated Magazines

www.autismconnect.org.za

SO WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT AUTISM CONNECT?

Something fishy....

On the 2nd of April we celebrated World Autism Day in style by accepting an invitation by Autism Western Cape to visit the Two Oceans Aquarium. Learners, parents and educators were treated to lunch and great time was had by all! Thank you Two Oceans for opening your hearts to us!



A laugh, a song and a dance

Our Karaoke fundraising initiative held on the 24th May 2014 at the Sunrise Villas Club House in Muizenberg was epic to say the least. We took a trip down memory lane while dancing our way on this wet winters day, yet the support was astounding by friends and family! Both the veterans and amateurs were out in full swing either annihilating or bringing the crowd to their feet with their selection of pop songs, girl anthems, crowd pleasers & duets!

A special thanks to Andre Palmer our MC for the night and to everyone who contributed to making this event a huge success and for your continued support!



Dominique Adams and Andre Palmer (MC) delivering a goose bump rendition of the hit "Endless Love"



Professional Fund-raising Workshop with People's First Foundation

I had the privilege of attending a Professional Fund-raising, Proposal Writing, Marketing, Board Development and Labour Legal Compliance Workshop – hosted by **People's First Foundation**. I benefited from the course immensely and encourage you to check out their website for further info.

BIGGER, BETTER WORKSTATIONS

Donovan Crowie, an educator from Vera school and friend of Autism Connect built our learners individual workstations based on the TEACCH methodology. **What is TEACCH?**

(Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children)

Due to the fact that organisation is difficult and that our learners

are easily distracted - this method of teaching provides visual structure in the learning environment at the learner's level of understanding.

Why the need for TEACCH workstations?

Learners with Autism need to be able to work independently without adult support and thus develop vocational skills. They need to learn to ask for help. Skills are taught in a naturalistic setting and when established transferred into a

WORKSTATION. This is a place with limited stimulation/ distraction where it is easier



for a learner to focus. The visual work system works from left to right and top to bottom.

A jack of all trades and a champion of our organisation, he is indeed an integral part an invaluable asset to Autism Connect –

**Thank you
Donovan
Crowie and
Old Mutual!**



*Limited tickets
available –
Book NOW an event
not to be missed!*

SAVE THE DATE 

Annual
Gala Dinner

29th November 2014 at 7pm

Venue:

m a r i m b a

RESTAURANT

more: info@autismconnect.org.za

Airing My Autism Laundry

Puzzle...

We all know that kids say and do the darndest things and our children are no exception. I'm reminded of this book that I read by Jackie Picoult's - House Rules - the heartfelt story of a boy diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. I laughed and cried at his inappropriate gestures, his lack of filtering as well as his and his literal view of on life, love and everything else. I thought it would be fun to share some of these online unavoidable moments!

Enjoy and have a good chuckle!!!

The other day, my daughter came home from school upset that a teacher took away the paper plane that a friend had given her. After explaining to her why paper planes aren't allowed at school, she asked me to help her make one. Since my husband was out of the state on business, I googled "How to make a paper airplane." As I started to follow the You Tube video instructions, she became very angry with me because I was "doing it wrong." Although she couldn't remember every step, she did remember some of the steps and the particular way I was doing it was not the same way as her friend. She became very angry and said, "I am not following those erections!" Thankfully, she stormed out of the room before I burst out laughing. - Mary age 5

Anna: So mom, if we eat chickens, pigs and cows, do

we eat the farmer, too?

Me: No dear. We don't eat people. A farmer is a person. Silence

Anna: Well, that's good. Somebody has got to pluck those feathers and I am NOT doing it.

Me: {laughing so hard I can't breathe}

- Anna age 4

"...As my husband begin to put some shelves up on the wall Chris' dad asks, Chris do you know how many millimetres are in an inch? He was expecting Chris to tell him because Chris is very good with math - Chris looks up at him and said have you thought about looking on the ruler....I had to leave the room"

"My twelve year old daughter has low functioning autism. She is semi verbal and cannot hold a conversation, but she can certainly comment about what is on TV.

Today she was watching TV with Dad and there was a movie on the Science fiction channel. When the hero was about to kiss the leading lady my daughter piped up and warned her "He's going to bite your face off!"

Then, when they were actually kissing she said "Oh no! He's biting her face off!"

My husband said that he laughed for at least twenty minutes.

Who says autism isn't funny?"



The Logo for Autism – Something to Ponder on!

Autism is a very complex disorder and the needs of these children vary greatly.

It is also important to mention that parents and professionals are beginning to realise that the symptoms are treatable, there are many interventions that can make a significant difference.

Autism doesn't take away the person it's an addition to the person!

The Logo for autism is a picture of a child embedded in a puzzle, Most of the pieces are on the table, but we are still trying to figure out how they fit together.

We must also keep in mind that these pieces may fit several different puzzles.

Fundraiser for Autism Connect Learning Centre

Have fun, Raise funds

Join us for a great time, for a good cause

Date: 30th August 2014 @ 7:30pm till late
Host: Solutions Yellow
Venue: Baseball Club House, Chukker Road Sports Complex, Wotton
Cover Charge: R70.00 per person
Entertainment: Karaoke & Dancing with Hilton Carelse

Table snacks will be provided
A selection of hot foods will be on sale
Bring your own XYZ

CASH BAR FACILITIES

A glimpse of the inside

The Autism behavioural cognition Experience

Why a glimpse of the inside?

The saying "Unknown, unloved" applies very much to autism. Autism friendliness can grow in our society when we know better what autism is and how it affects a person. Autism friendliness does not mean pity, but keeping an open mind to see strengths and challenges in every person with autism. People with autism want what we all want and that is to be understood the way we are. Understanding autism opens the door to an autism friendly society. To have a better understanding, you can read about autism in books and articles. Or you can watch a documentary or movie, or you can listen to stories. That is good, but these don't tell you how it feels to have autism. Of course, it is impossible to understand completely how another person experiences the world. As people without autism we will therefore never fully feel and know what it is to have autism.

But, what if you could take a glimpse?

Not by reading about autism, or watching, or asking, but by direct experience. What if you could experience a little what people with autism experience hours a day, 7 days a week...? That is what the Autism Behavioural Cognition experience is offering you: a glimpse of the inside of autism through 10 different activities. Each activity does not only give you an experience of autism, attached to these activities is a brief, accessible explanation about autism and a tip for autism friendliness. Autism is an extraordinary style of thinking and way of being, not to be compared with anything else. Autism is the consequence of a brain working differently. Science still has not solved the mystery. We don't know yet what causes autism or where in the brain the "autistic wiring" can be found. But we do know that the brains of people with autism process information in a different way:

- More straightforward
- More detail and
- More literal

People with Autism observe and think differently

People with autism show a preference for details and find it hard to add all the pieces of information into a meaningful whole. They have a different way of processing what they sense. For instance, people with autism do not see your entire face at a glance, but rather specific items like an eye, a freckle, an eyebrow, a mouth, etc. This does not make it easy to rapidly read changing facial expressions. Not to hear the voice that is talking to you between all the sounds that surround us. Autism is often like looking at the pieces of a puzzle without seeing the complete picture.

People with autism are very literal and factual in their observation. You could compare it to the working of a computer: what you see is what you get. It is hard for them to see beyond the literal meaning of everything they sense. Imagining things that you don't see or know is a tough job for a person with autism. To capture the underlying meaning of things and events is also difficult.

A raised hand can mean Hello, or stop, or high... or.... The meaning depends on the situation, the person, the place, etc....where you can see this hand. In other words: meaning lies in the context.

Autism is a kind of blindness:

Context can be described as the background and circumstances of our perception. The context of an object, a word or a behaviour is the circumstances surrounding that object, word or behaviour. The context of a word, for example, is the other words in the sentence, the person using the words and the way they are said. For example: if John goes to the bank, is he going to a financial institution or the side of a river?

Context is difficult for people with autism, both the visible and invisible and invisible context.

People with autism do try to make sense of situations, like everyone else. But making sense of the world around them is difficult for them since meaning depends on context and therefore meaning can vary.

In a world without:
Fixed meanings
Logic or straightforwardness.

HAVING AUTISM CAN BE EXTREMELY CHALLENGING



Gastrointestinal issues in autism are real

By Dr. Elizabeth Mumper, TACA Physician Advisory Member

Parents have been telling their clinicians that gastrointestinal issues (GI) have plagued their children with autism for several decades. Unfortunately, in many cases, the reported symptoms were written off as part of the autism and may not have received the thorough attention and evaluations that were warranted.

McElhanon and her colleagues have searched the medical literature for relevant articles published between 1980 and 2012 (1). The pool of studies that met criteria for analysis included 2,215 children. The authors discovered documentation through a careful meta-analysis that children with autism spectrum disorders experience significantly more general GI symptoms than comparison groups. In fact, children with autism are 4.42 times more likely to have gastrointestinal symptoms than other children.

In particular, children with autism are:

- 3.63 times more likely to have diarrhea
- 3.86 times more likely to have constipation
- 2.45 times more likely to have abdominal pain

At the first meeting of the Autism Research Institute sponsored Defeat Autism Now! Think Tank in 1995, smart people from around the globe met to discuss GI problems in children with autism and what to do about them. [Read More http://tacanowblog.com/](http://tacanowblog.com/)

Kim De Wet, a first year B Comm student at the University of Western Cape, recently visited the centre as part of the research process for her Information Systems project.

She had to identify an NGO or small to medium business enterprise and advise which information systems they utilise on a day to day basis and include their benefits.

Kim received a bursary from Dell Computers and will be paying it forward by volunteering at the centre on an adhoc basis throughout the year.

Thank you Kim for choosing Autism Connect! We wish you well with your studies and look forward to having you spend time with us.





This list is not exhaustive and is open for correction and/or addition. Please mail info to info@autismconnect.org.za

Support and Counselling

Autism Western Cape -021 685 9581

Diagnosis:

Red Cross Children's Hospital
Phone: 021 658 5005
Paediatric Neurologist
Adri Van de Walt - 021 930 0250

Schools & Learning Centres:

Beacon School - 021 371 7665
Vera School - 021 696 2844
Cheri Botha - 021 948 9134
Alpha School - 021 447 1212
Chamelzon Inclusive School - 021 696-5888

Occupational Therapist:

Tamlin Klein- ot@autismconnect.org.za

ABA Programme Manager

Calista Mc Vitty- pm@autismconnect.org.za

Nutritional Consultant:

Michelle Lewis -079 622 4088 email -perezlc01@gmail.com

Audiologist:

Debbie Leigh Schalker - 021 683 1393

Integrative Medical Doctors:

Dr Louise Lindenburg - 021 914 1640
Dr Emdin - 021 696 2957

Other Helpful Contact

Planet Kids Play Centre
and Party Venue - 021 788 3070

Bizzy Bodies - 021 702 0505

Little Creek Spur - Tokai

Green point urban park

Helpful website and blogs:

www.auf2know.co.za

www.autismspeaks.co.za

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