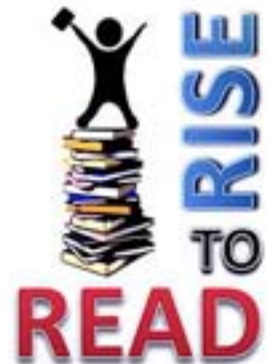




IN TOUCH

the official Voice of Autism Connect

March 2014



02 April 2014 is
World AUTISM DAY

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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7785 MITCHELLS PLAIN

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ASHLEY FORTUIN - Ash@zamserve.co.za

FinServe Creative & Media

Cover Art: SUPPLIED

IN touch Issue: 03

AUTISM CONNECT
Unlocking Greatness Since 2012

In This Issue

- Letter from our Editor ...pg03
- New Faces ...pg03
- Wearing our new UNIFORM with pride ...pg03
- The signs of Autism ...pg04
- Upskilling our Staff ...pg05
- Join us at our EVENTS ...pg05
- Airing my Autism Laundry ...pg06
- Read to Rise with OAKY ...pg07



Light it up Blue for Autism

The 02nd of April is world Autism Awareness Day and we would like to encourage you to show your support by doing the following:

- Participate virtually by framing your pics in a blue frame
- Educate someone on Autism
- Host a blue themed party
- Wear blue on the on the day from head to toe
- Make this image your twitter/facebook /BB and WhatsApp profile picture

WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the third edition of In Touch Magazine!

Packed with features, stories, and inspiration and practical advice - I have no doubt that the content will bless you! The year kicked off on a very positive note for me personally - as I moved from the centre's premises into my little hole in the wall called home - and Tyler and Tammy are loving the

view from where we at as the sea is practically on our doorstep! I'm bubbling over with excitement and not sure what to share with you first so bear with me as I filter my thoughts. New staff appointments, renovations, upgrade of the centre's playground, workshops, our learners undergoing assessments at Beacon school to mention a few - Read about it in the coming pages.

The Autism Connect team and I wish you blessings in abundance...so open up your heart to receive during this month!

Till we meet again!

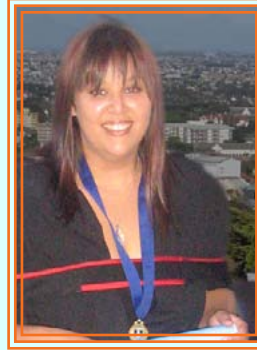
Happy Reading!

Nicky
info@autismconnect.org.za

visit our website:

www.autismconnect.org.za

New Faces



We would like to welcome **Tamlin Klein and Calista Mc Vitty** to the Autism Connect Family!

Tamlin Klein comes highly recommended and will be joining our team in the capacity of an Occupational Therapist.

Tamlin obtained her bachelor's degree in 2009. She is passionate about children with special needs and she has a heart of gold overall.

Calista Mc Vitty joins the Family in the capacity of programme manager. Calista came to Cape Town in 2006 from East London. In 2007 she started her journey in the ASD field. For four

years she worked for two different centres learning different skills and obtaining experience working with children, not only on the ASD spectrum, but with all sorts of learning and behavioural difficulties. At the end of 2011, Calista decided to go out on her own doing mainly child facilitations at various schools, and providing one on one tutoring in the afternoons which she is thoroughly enjoying.

We look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship.



Wearing our uniform with pride!

Wearing a uniform is a badge of pride at Autism Connect this is no different. We are trying to create an identity at the centre which is as important a part of being a learner. Uniforms show that you are part of an organisation – wearing it says we're all in this together.

Your child can be kitted out in our new uniform.

The summer uniform kit will consist of a peak cap, golf shirt and navy shorts.

E-mail

info@autismconnect.org.za for more info.





How do I tell someone that their child may have Autism?

Guideline for this difficult task:-

Just because we not trained physicians doesn't mean we don't have the capacity to identify whether a child could possibly be on the spectrum and alert their parents accordingly. Although this is a very sensitive subject we as the Autism community have a responsibility to share knowledge – after all knowledge is power and ignorance is not bliss!

Below is a list of early indicators.

Early signs in babies & Toddlers:-

- Doesn't make eye contact (e.g. look at you when being fed).
- Doesn't smile when smiled at.
- Doesn't respond to his or her name or to the sound of a familiar voice.
- Doesn't follow objects visually.
- Doesn't point or wave goodbye or use other gestures to communicate.
- Doesn't follow the gesture when you point things out.
- Doesn't make noises to get your attention.
- Doesn't initiate or respond to cuddling.
- Doesn't imitate your movements and facial expressions.
- Doesn't reach out to be picked up.
- Doesn't play with other people or share interest and enjoyment.
- Doesn't ask for help or make other basic requests.

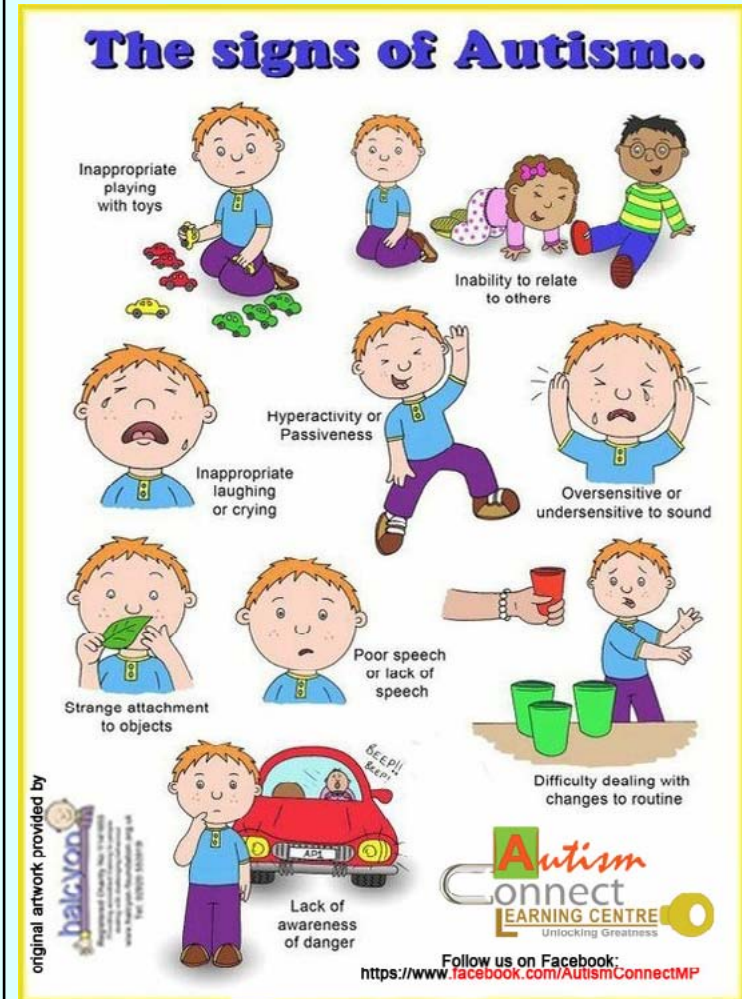
If a child displays the above symptoms pass this information onto the parents along with a short summary of the Autism spectrum. Talk it over with them in a very gentle way (bring any supportive relatives you can find). I stress: gentle. This is devastating news; comparable to telling them that their child has died! Telling a parent you suspect their child has autism is like telling them: "your child will always need your help", "your child will be in an institution", "your child will never have a job", "your child will never go to college", "your child will never marry", etc. None of these are necessarily true, but they are the fears that parents have about autism and other disorders. Ensure that you let the parents know that you are merely concerned and that you will advise them to seek professional advice in this regard.

Anticipate some opposition if after talking to the parents they deny the problems and/or get angry or some other unexpected result occurs, do not pursue the matter vigorously. If you are a constant irritant to this family, they may avoid you. You will have done your duty - just be around in case they seek your help later. The parents will have to decide what to do next. If they ask for help, fine. But do not continue to push them into hearing more about autism if they refuse to accept the idea. You have planted a seed of truth and it will grow. There is no child with autism who, if left untreated, will not eventually come to someone's attention. Unfortunately it may be later in childhood. The earlier you start treatment the better.

Finally, and most important of all, pray. God knows autism, He knows the human heart, and He can open doors when they are closed. Be a support to the family, be a help to the family. Hopefully, your fears will be unfounded and the child will not have Autism - don't worry about this possibility - just share their joy. You are not a professional diagnostician (make sure the family knows this) - you are a concerned friend.

It takes a village to raise a child – play your part!

Guidelines for how tell someone that their child may have **Autism!**



Up skilling!

On the 18 January 2014 we privileged enough to have Calista McVitty, an Autism specific Applied Behaviour specialist provide our staff with training on the methodology of ABA.

Our teachers now have a greater and holistic understanding of the methodology in how to work with our children and to devise their structured individual developments plans.

- Attention span and stamina
- Transition to new activities
- Play skills
- Need for personal space
- Responses to touch or other types of stimuli
- Motor skills such as posture, balance, or manipulation of small objects
- Aggression or other types of behaviors
- Interactions between the child and caregivers

The overall goal of occupational therapy is to help our children improve their quality of life at home and in school. Our teachers now have the soft skills to introduce, maintain, and improve skills so that our children can be as independent as possible.

Thank you Calista for your invaluable contribution and for always having Autism Connect at heart!

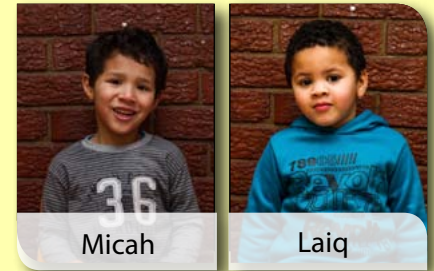


Where there's a need we feed!

Autism Connect is a feeder Centre to Beacon and Vera schools for learners with Autism. Our aim is to ensure that our learners develop and grow from strength to strength and to promote

school readiness. Micah Davids and Laiq Edwards both underwent a two week observation programme in January this year at Beacon School and have been accepted at Beacon and Vera Schools.

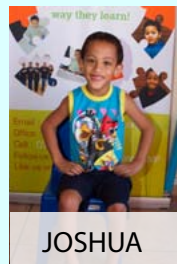
**Congratulations big boys!
You have done us proud!**



MEET OUR FAMILY: AUTISM CONNECT 2014



MICAH



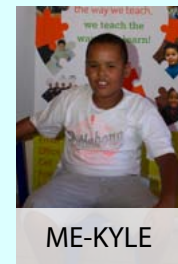
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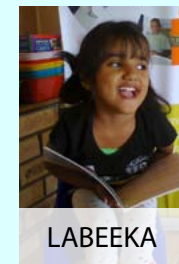
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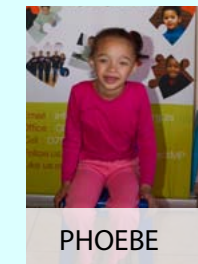
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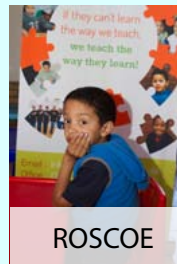
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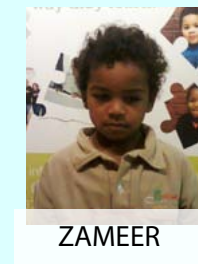
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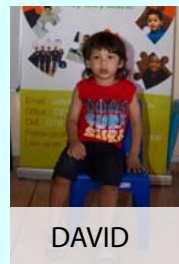
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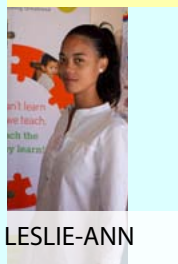
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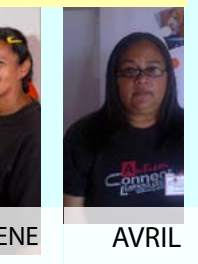
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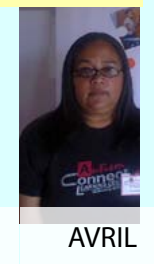
LESLIE-ANN



RONEL



CHARLENE



AVRIL

STAFF

What's Happening at Autism Connect!

We are a hive of activity as usual!

Cycling for a Cause

The latter part of last year, Autism Connect was adopted by a group of enthusiastic cyclists who participated in the Pick n Pay Argus Cycle Tour on Sunday the 9th of March. In a fund-raising effort, these generous individuals raised R4500.00 which was handed over to the school in a fund-raising handover ceremony in Saturday (01 March 2014).

With hearts of gratitude we wish The Autism Connect/Oro Africa Cycling Team well in their Cycling Ventures.

Cyclists:

- Waaheb Assur
- Garth Meiring
- Mark Syce
- Heinrich Hendricks
- Lionel Manuel
- Heidi Julies
- Almerick Harker
- Maurice De Waal
- Vernon Singe
- Brent Lawrence



Upcoming Events -
Keep your eyes peeled and ears to the ground for info!

We count on your support!

March 29th – Market Day

- With sponsors donating items we envisage to sell of items for profit to Autism Connect
- Parents are welcome to purchase a stand and sell off their wares also

May 25th –

Family Fun Day: Karaoke

- Directed at a time of leisure for family and friends
- Tickets will be sold at R20 per person

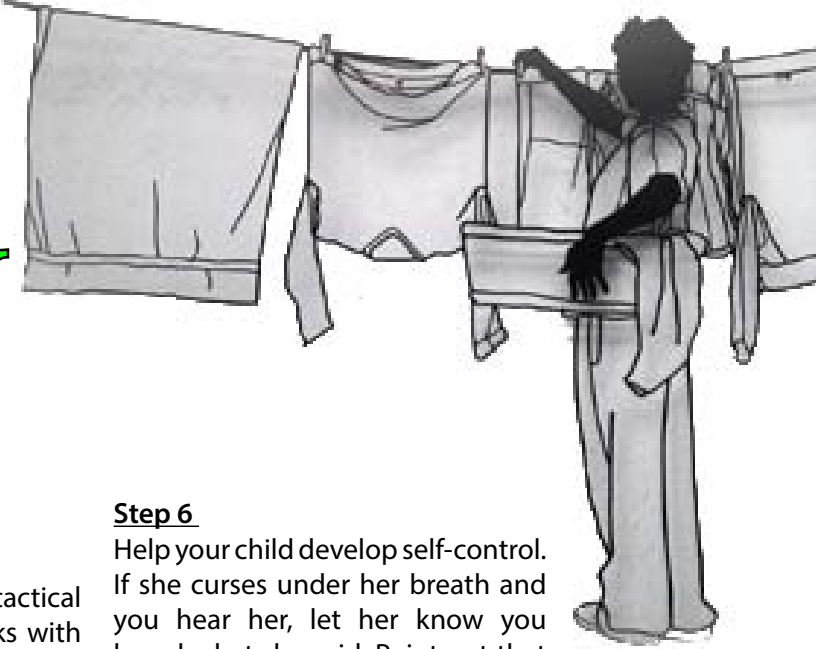


Last year we ended the year in style at our annual Gala Dinner in November! Thank you to all the beautiful people who supported! *Check them out here!*
More Pictures available on our Facebook Page



THANK YOU

Airing My Autism Laundry



What the ...!

As a parent of an Autistic child I'm sure you've had your fair share of "embarrassing moments"! With that said we count it all joy, we live, we learn then we move on!

One Sunday morning on our way to the chapel our son was more hyperactive than usual! Besides the run of the mill tantrums – which resulted in me wiping the spit ... I mean sweat from my brow – and spit from by brow – or both... I knew my day could only get better! As we placed our feet on holy ground, I could immediately feel that we were touching heaven and hoped and prayed that earth would change if only for an hour and boy did it!

As we sang the open chorus – For you are Great – my son decided to a remixed version – and out of respect I have altered his version to Fork you are Great! Singing at the top of his lungs and playing that tune on shuffle even during the next few choruses.

Flabbergasted, I knelt and said I welcome the rapture! On our way home I dialed up my best friend Google on my tablet the one I took for my headache after that ordeal – get it? And found some steps to share with you – should you find yourself into similar situation!

Step 1

Watch your own language. Autistic kids and kids with Asperger's often mimic the words and phrases they hear the adults around them use. Model the behavior

you want your child to take up.

Step 2

Ignore your child's swearing. Known as tactical ignoring, this behavioural strategy often works with children on the autism spectrum who scream and swear to get attention. Even though you are aware of the behaviour, by not responding to it, your child may eventually stop once he realizes it no longer gets him attention.

Step 3

Keep your own emotions under control. Give yourself a momentary time-out before dealing with the situation. Stop and take a deep breath. Overreacting when your child curses could actually make the behaviour worse.

Step 4

Make your child accountable for her actions so that she learns appropriate behaviour. Like other unacceptable behaviour, give your child consequences for using curse words and then follow through. Consistency is the basis for discipline, notes the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. If you aren't consistent, your child receives mixed messages, which can be confusing.

Step 5

Choose consequences that are fair and reasonable.

Step 6

Help your child develop self-control. If she curses under her breath and you hear her, let her know you heard what she said. Point out that using profanity is unacceptable behaviour. Give her examples of other words she can use instead to express how she is feeling.

Step 7

Read stories together and role-play various situations to teach your child how to behave in stressful situations. Kids with autism generally have difficulty controlling their emotions. Asperger's kids, in particular, often find other people's behaviour irritating and therefore may respond inappropriately.

Step 8

Use positive reinforcement to encourage your child to demonstrate good behaviour. Let him know you notice when he behaves appropriately. Reward him with lots of praise and a special privilege if he goes an entire day without using any profanity.

Here's to a lifestyle of embarrassing moments!

Cheers!



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.aut2know.co.za
www.autismspeaks.co.za

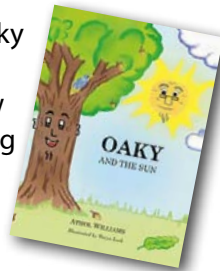


Read to Rise is an initiative supported by **Taurus School Solutions** which aims to encourage reading and to make high quality books available to young learners. The Read to rise team donated Oaky and the Sun books to our centre. The learners enjoyed paging through the brightly coloured illustrations.

Read to Rise

We have incorporated reading Oaky & the Sun as fun activity into our daily program and we can see how its improving our childrens learning and social skills.

Thank you Taryn Lock- Williams and The Read to Rise Team!



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