

# CVASA Spring 2007

## A YEAR IN REVIEW

Happy New Year from all of us at CVASA! We are all excited about this year - so many new families, new projects, and ideas will surely keep us busy. Having said that, ***we need your help!*** Volunteers are needed for upcoming CVASA events, to help out at the resource center, to fold newsletters, or to help with the children at the parent support group meetings. Please consider volunteering to show your support.

The parent support group meetings continue to be well-attended by both English and Spanish speaking families. Spanish translation is available at support group meetings. Please call to reserve a spot. Beth Aune-Nelson continues to work with the children at our new location, Pump it Up in Indio, while parents listen to presentations in another room. Our move to Pump it Up has been a great success, and the kids really enjoy playing on all the fun bouncing equipment that the facility has to offer.

We have new board members adding new energy to CVASA. Both Misty Hogan and Regina

Vasquez have taken on a number of duties and planning tasks. Thank you to Misty, who has also taken on the task of secretary. Families are discussing ideas (big and small) of how to get involved and help provide more information about autism and assistance for families in the Coachella Valley.

The holiday party was one of the biggest yet. There were lots of fun activities, plenty of delicious food, once again provided by the Palm Springs chapter of the National Charity League, and Santa showed up to the delight of all the children (and some of the parents too!)

The resource center has some new books on the shelves. We've added many new and current books, videos, and other materials, so be sure to stop by and check them out.

Fundraising efforts continue to provide financial support to needed to further CVASA's efforts to inform and assist the many families living in the Coachella Valley.

Thanks to everyone for your generous support. Special thank yous go to Lumpy's, Desert Healthcare, and Desert Classic Charities

for their tremendous contributions.

Eddie Fagin has accepted the position of 2nd Vice President for the Autism Society of California.

Our home visitation outreach program is also moving forward. CVASA members have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with families newly diagnosed with autism. Be sure to let any family that has a child recently diagnosed with autism know that we provide this outreach free of charge.

This year, we began our efforts to help teachers in the valley who work with our children. The program grants up to \$200 to buy materials that will be used to help our children learn. CVASA also sent two more families to the Son-Rise program.

All of these new and exciting outings, picnics, charity events, outreach, and other activities could not be done without the tireless efforts of those behind the scenes. To all of you, CVASA wishes to express a heartfelt "Thank You". **It couldn't be done without you.**

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# CVASA Upcoming Events Page

## CVASA Parent Support Group

Auditory Integration Therapy  
Presented by  
Terrie Silverman

**When:** April 5th at 6pm

**Where:** Pump It Up  
82-740 Atlantic Ave, Indio

Pump it Up is located off of the 10 FWY at Jackson. Currently, there is road construction in the area but the location is open for business.

**Why:** To meet and discuss information that may help our family members.

Parents can meet and talk while their children play in the facility. An Occupational Therapist (Beth Aune-Nelson OTR/L) will be available to help with activities in the play area for the children.

Auditory Integration Training (AIT) is a noninvasive educational and therapeutic technique that helps people to hear all frequencies more evenly, to improve in the processing of auditory input, and to decrease hyper- or hypo- sensitivity to specific environmental or speech sounds. AIT has been used with individuals with autism, PDD, dyslexia, learning disabilities, hearing sensitivities, auditory processing challenges, attention deficit disorders, and behavioral challenges. For more information, visit [www.AITforYou.com](http://www.AITforYou.com).

**Knowledge is power!**

## CVASA's Annual Picnic at the Park

**When:** March 31st, 2-4 PM

**Where:** Palm Desert  
Country Club Park

**Why:** Talk, Eat, & Meet other families in the Valley

This year's picnic will be held at the same location as last year, The Palm Desert Country Club Park. This park is ideal for many reasons-

- \* There is only one entrance and exit. This will make it easier to control the flow of children and others who may want to wander off.
- \* It has plenty of space to run, sit, blow bubbles, fly kites, throw a frisbee, play catch, play volleyball, basketball, play on the two jungle gyms, and of course, it has swings, too! There is also a giant water mister that could be fun if it is hot.
- \* There are picnic tables and benches for sitting. There are grills for grilling food. CVASA will provide pizza, chicken, beverages, eating utensils and napkins, so all we really need is for you to come and bring your family. You can also bring a side dish or dessert if you would like to bring something. It is sure to be a good time. Don't be shy, come by and say hi!

For more information contact Gina (760) 327-5287. Please RSVP to the Resource Center (760) 779-0012.

**Directions:** The park is located on Avenue of the States off Washington Street in Palm Desert. Look for the Shell Gas Station on the corner of Avenue of the States and Washington Street. As you drive on Avenue of the States, veer to the left and you will see the park on the right hand side.

## National Autism Awareness Month 2006

April is National Autism Awareness Month. It provides the perfect opportunity for individuals and organizations across the nation to educate their communities about autism.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact the resource coordinator.

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## Lumpy's Scramble for Autism

Lumpy's and CVASA are very pleased to announce the winners of this year's Son-Rise Program Scholarships - Tiffany and Kent Biswanger, and Adriana Azria and Jeffrey Fortson. The winners of the drawing will attend an upcoming Son-Rise Program.

This year's Lumpy's Scramble for Autism promises to be no less spectacular than previous events. Surrounded by great people, great food, and a great cause, how could you go wrong?

The event is already sold out, but to inquire about making a donation, please contact chairperson and CVASA board member, Randy Corti.

**Volunteers are still needed for this event.** If you would like to help, please call Regina Vasquez at 310-738-0290 or Beth at 779-0012.

# More CVASA Upcoming Events

## Annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

We're still a couple months away from this annual event, but be sure to start think about the teachers, aids, shadows, OTs, Speech Therapists and others who are instrumental in helping our children achieve their potential.

**Saturday, June 2nd**  
**Sun City Palm Desert**

This year's event is sure to be as wonderful as last years event. We are looking for volunteers to paint vases again this year. Painting will be done at Empty Pockets Crafts, 40775 Yucca Lane, Bermuda Dunes. Painting times are Saturdays, May 5 and May 12 from 10 am- 1pm, Tuesday May 12, 10-3, Wednesday May 9, 10-3, and Thursday May 10, 10 am- 9pm. Please call Regina Vasquez for questions, or if you are interested in volunteering.



## Annual Uptown Luncheon at the Gardens on El Paseo

Back from a one year hiatus, the preparations for the annual luncheon and fashion show to benefit CVASA are again underway. This year's event is sure to a big success. The luncheon will be held in November and will include a silent auction. Invitations will be sent out in early May.

Be sure to get your tickets early so that you will not miss this great event!  
Silent auction items and speakers are always a highlight of the luncheon.

**Volunteers are needed. CVASA** also needs items for the silent auction. Items can be golf packages, gift certificates, art, jewelry, etc.... Contact CVASA if you have items you wish to donate. If you would like to volunteer for the Luncheon at the Gardens, contact Beverly Viramontes or the Beth at the Resource Center (760) 779-0012.

## Webcasting Across the Valley

The Coachella Valley Autism Society of America (CVASA) has begun a pilot project to webcast information over the internet. The project was started to try and reduce the barriers many families face when it comes to getting information and participating in activities in the community. Limitations because of time, money, transportation and childcare often preclude families from participating in events, conferences, and support group meetings. A webcast can reduce this problem by providing the same information at a more convenient location for the family to travel to.

As part of this project CVASA has done a few test webcasts to the UCDD program located at the Workforce Development facility in Indio. Ruth and Angelique have been a big help coordinating

the UCDD side of the webcast by alerting parents at the UCDD program about the webcast and the information that is available about autism treatments, services, recreation, etc. through these webcasts. (Thanks, Ruth and Angelique!)

The first test webcast involved a recent parent support group meeting led by a panel of 6 parents of kids with autism. The parents shared and discussed issues they felt were of the most interest to them and wanted to pass on to other parents. The second webcast was on the issue of transition. We are hopeful that this project will continue to grow and meet the needs of the ever increasing population of families facing the challenges of autism.

For more information on this project, please contact Eddie Fagin, Parent Support Group Chair, at 779-0012. The parent support group meetings are regularly held on the second Thursday of the

month from 6-8PM at Pump It Up. (Please note the change of date for the April meeting.) For more information about upcoming events put on by the Coachella Valley Autism Society, log on to [www.cvasa.org](http://www.cvasa.org) <<http://www.cvasa.org/>>

## The Resource Center now accepts Visa/MasterCard for memberships fees and/or donations.

### CVASA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**NOTE:** You may receive a notice to renew your membership from the ASA National Office in Bethesda, Maryland. Please renew using this form and mail it to us at the address below. This way you will be a member of all three ASA organizations. Membership includes six CVASA newsletters per year.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
Please include both spouses' first names if family membership.

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ALTERNATE PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: You may NOT \_\_\_\_\_ You MAY \_\_\_\_\_ give my phone number to other members of CVASA and add my name to the membership directory.

Individual membership	\$40 _____	\$30 will be sent to ASA (Autism Society of America and \$3 to ASC (Autism Society of California)
Family membership	\$50 _____	\$40 will be sent to ASA and \$4 to ASC

Please check one: New membership \_\_\_\_\_ Membership renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: Person with autism/family member \_\_\_\_\_ Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check and application to: CVASA, PO Box 11052, Palm Desert, CA 92255-1052

## Remembering Dr. Rimland

**Dr Bernard Rimland, pioneering founder of Autism Research Institute, dies at 78. Dr Bernard Rimland, whose 1964 book debunked the then-prevalent belief that parents' behavior made their children autistic, died on November 21.**

Dr Rimland, who was 78, "will go down in history as the person who ended the 'dark ages' of autism and spearheaded the fight to bring hope and help to autistic children," said Dr Stephen M. Edelson, his successor at the Autism Research Institute founded by Dr Rimland.

Dr Rimland began researching autism after his son, Mark, was diagnosed with the disorder. The result was the landmark book, "Infantile Autism: The Syndrome and Its Implications for a Neural Theory of Behavior."

After marshalling extensive evidence and argument that showed the disorder had a biological basis, Dr Rimland wrote: "To add a heavy burden of shame and guilt to the distress of people whose hopes, social life, finances, well-being and feelings of worth have been all but destroyed seems heartless and inconsiderate in the extreme."

In recent years, Dr Rimland helped to introduce medical treatments for autism that some parents say have significantly improved, or even cured, their child's condition. Mainstream medical groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics reject such approaches and say there is no evidence they are effective.

Dr Rimland attributed the rise of autism diagnoses in the 1980s and 1990s to increasing use of vaccines - another idea embraced by some parents and a minority of researchers but rejected by public-health officials. Dr Rimland was also one of the founders of the National Society for Autistic Children (NSAC), now known as the Autism Society of America (ASA).

On November 21, the ASA and the Autism Research Institute announced a strategic partnership to collaborate on conferences, publications and services which will improve the lives of all those affected by autism in the United States.

The ASA declared: "By joining forces, ASA and ARI aim to continue the important stewardship of their founder, Dr Bernard Rimland. A pioneer in the area of autism diagnosis and treatment, Dr Rimland transformed the prevailing pessimistic view of autism in the medical and scientific community and built the largest parent support organization in the United States."

Dr Cathy Pratt, chairwoman of the ASA Board, said: "Bernie Rimland was among the first to realize the importance of combining a focus on medical interventions with treatments, supports and services. There is not one parent or professional who has not been impacted by the knowledge, dreams and thinking of Bernie Rimland. The ASA/ARI partnership is our way of ensuring that Bernie's vision will continue to guide the autism community for the long term."

A major purpose of the ASA/ARI partnership is to promote awareness that autism must be treated as a whole-body condition. Projects in 2007 will include biomarker conferences, distribution of scientific journals and collaborative efforts to serve over 100,000 members and supporters of these two organizations.

"I founded ASA in 1965 as a parent advocacy organization to work on behalf of autistic children and their families at local, state, and national levels," Dr Rimland once said. "I founded the Autism Research Institute in 1967 to conduct and sponsor scientific research on the cause and treatment of autism. ARI, through its Defeat Autism Now! (DAN!) project, has made enormous progress in the past few years - hundreds of the DAN! doctors, and thousands of parents world-wide, have reported bringing dramatic improvement, and sometimes recovery, of formerly autistic children. It is clearly time for ASA and ARI to capitalize on the progress that has been made. My colleague, Dr Steve Edelson, with whom I have worked for 25 years, will play a major role in these efforts."

Dr Lee Grossman, president and chief executive officer of ASA, and Dr Edelson, associate director of ARI, will oversee this strategic partnership.

ASA is the largest parent-based, autism organization in the US, with over 100,000 members and supporters and 200 local chapters. ARI, with over 70,000 supporters nationwide, has pioneered the study of medical problems of individuals with autism and effective treatments.

(Sources: United Press International, Autism Society of America, November 21, 2006)

## Planning for Successful Transitions Across Grade Levels

Contributed by Cathy Pratt, Ph.D.

Transition is a natural part of all educational programs. Students with and without disabilities are expected to adjust to changes in teachers, classmates, schedules, buildings, and routines. The transition from one grade to the next can be especially challenging for the student with an autism spectrum disorder. However, these students can more easily make this shift if careful planning and preparation occurs. Below are suggestions for facilitating a smooth transition:

- Preparation for transition should begin early in the spring. Whether a student is moving to a new classroom or to a new building, it is helpful to identify the home room teacher, or general or special educator who will have primary responsibility for the student.
- Once the receiving teacher is identified, involve this person in the annual case conference process so that they may gain information about the student's current level of functioning and can provide input into projected goals.
- Written transition plans may facilitate the student's successful movement. A meeting should be conducted to allow key participants to exchange relevant information. Responsibilities and timelines for individuals involved in the transition should be clearly stated.
- Either during the annual case conference or at the transition planning meeting, information should be exchanged about effective instructional strategies, needed modifications and adaptations, positive behavior support strategies, and methods of communication. The receiving teacher should learn about the strategies that have worked in the past so that precious time is not lost at the beginning of the new school year.
- The receiving teacher may find it helpful to observe the student in his/her current classroom or school setting. This will provide important insight into the student's learning style and needed supports.
- Instructional assistants who will be involved in the student's daily education should be identified, educated, and informed about their role in the student's education.
- Many teachers may not have previous experience with students with autism spectrum disorders. Therefore, they will need basic information about autism spectrum disorders and about how autism impacts the student with whom they will be working. Student-specific information about learning styles, communication systems, medical issues and behavior supports is also critical. Remember to include cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, the school secretary, and the school nurse in the training. Classmates of the new student also may need information. This should be provided in a respectful manner and without stigmatizing the student with autism spectrum disorders.
- Before entering a new school, work to alleviate any anxieties the student with autism spectrum disorders may have about the new setting. Preparation for this move can be facilitated by providing the student with a map of the school, a copy of his/her schedule for the fall, a copy of the student handbook and rules, and a list of clubs/extracurricular activities.
- Develop a videotape about the new school and provide written information about specific situations so that the student can learn and rehearse for the change at his/her own pace.
- Visitations should be conducted to allow the student and his/her family to meet relevant school staff, to locate the student's locker, and to become familiar with the school culture.
- Identify key people or a mentor the student can contact if she/he is having a difficult time adjusting or understanding a certain situation. It may also be helpful to find a location where the student can go to relax and to regroup. Provide the student with a visual menu of coping strategies.
- Parents should receive information about bus schedules, parent-teacher organizations, and available resources (e.g., counselors, social workers, nurses).
- Prior to the new school year, it will be helpful to establish methods and a schedule for communicating between home and school. Suggestions for maintaining ongoing communication include journals, daily progress notes, mid-term grades, scheduled appointments or phone calls, informal meetings, report cards, or parent-teacher conferences.

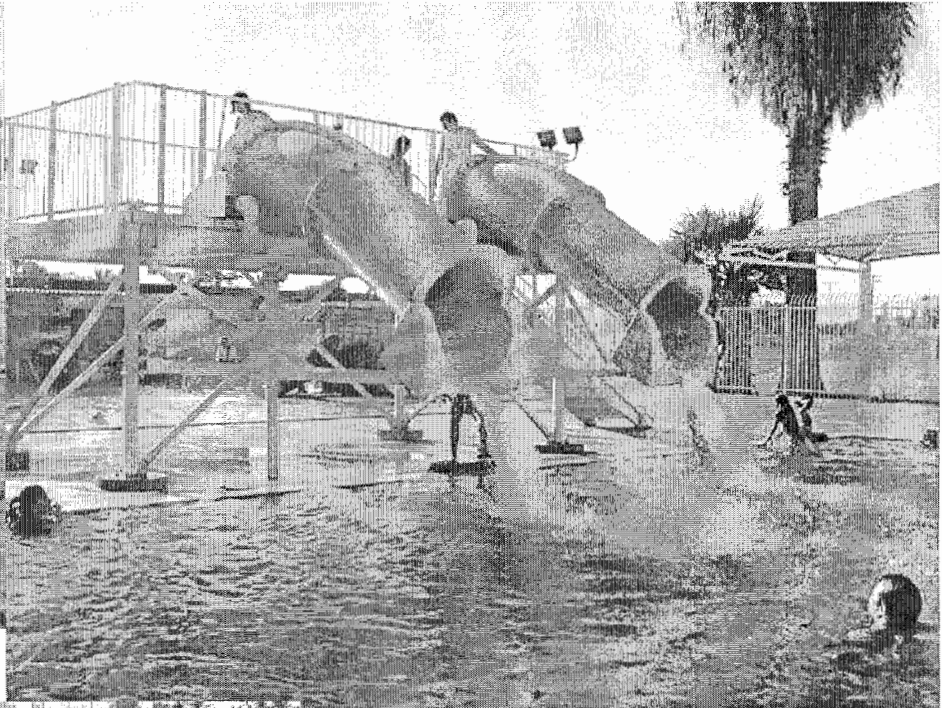
Once in the new school, ask for peers who are willing to help the student with the transition and acclimation to the new school. By gaining the support of a friend without a disability, the student with an autism spectrum disorder may have greater access to social opportunities during and after school. The ultimate goal is to promote a successful experience for both the student and the rest of the school community. By systematically addressing the transition process, students with autism spectrum disorders can be prepared to participate in their new school experience.

Pratt, C. (2000). Planning for successful transitions across grade levels. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

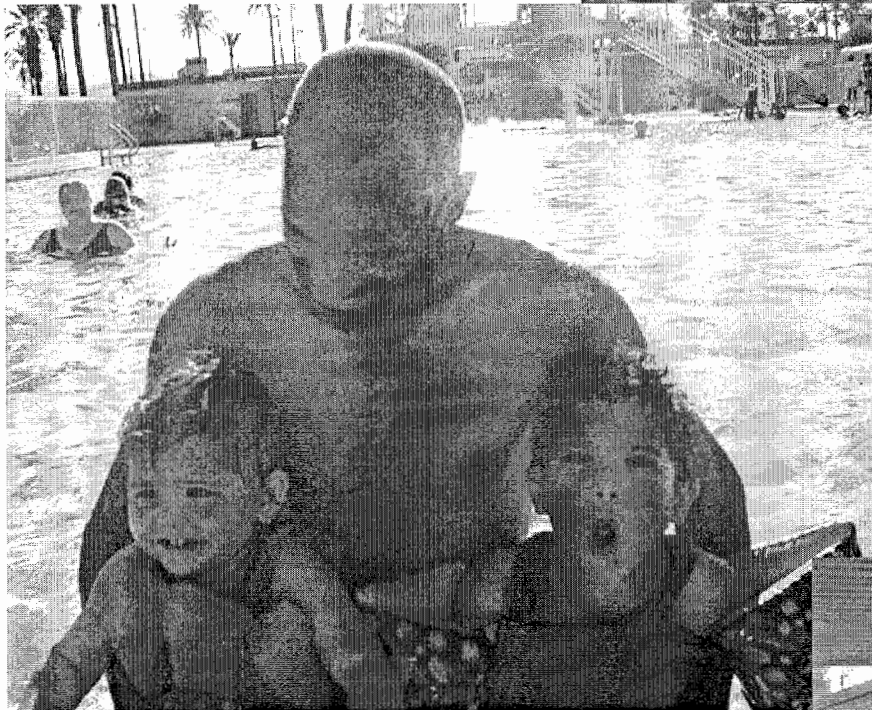
Dr. Cathy Pratt is the Director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community located at Indiana University. Dr. Pratt also serves on the Panel of Professional Advisors for the Autism Society of America. She serves on the Advisory Board for the Autism Spectrum Quarterly.



# August 2006 Summer Pool Party



Summer Pool Party



# ASA 38<sup>th</sup> National Conference and Exposition



ASA's 2007 National Conference theme, Together a Brighter Tomorrow, reflects our mission that it takes the perspectives of all those affected by autism -- individuals, families, professionals and friends-- to achieve success. During this conference, ASA will bring together experts from various disciplines with the creative ideas and energy to address the diverse challenges individual with autism and their families face. Our goal is to provide conference attendees with the opportunity to learn from innovators and access critical information to improve their lives and those of the people they love, treat and inspire. In collaboration and armed with knowledge, ASA is sure that there will be a Brighter Tomorrow for the autism community.

**Phoenix, AZ. July 11-14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

*Together a Brighter Tomorrow*

KiddieCorp is pleased to provide a children's program during the ASA's 38th National Conference. KiddieCorp is in its twenty-first year of providing high quality children's programs and youth services to conventions, trade shows and special events. We take watching your children very seriously. KiddieCorp has enjoyed long-time partnerships with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Autism Society of America and countless others, which have helped to establish KiddieCorp as a premier provider of event children's program services.

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## Autism One 2007 Roadmap to Recovery

May 2007 marks the fifth annual Autism One Conference. Over the years we have grown and changed to meet your needs and the expanding needs of our community. Listening to and learning from fellow parents exposes not only the urgent need for change, but provides the impetus as well. The past can no longer serve as a proper prologue of the future.

This year will be a watershed time in the continuing devolution of autism. On all fronts, parental inventiveness has replaced the murky dark outlines of autism with precision and purpose, and in doing so helped reveal many of the causes, environmental contexts and treatments for autism.

We are tremendously pleased, therefore, to bring you Autism One 2007: Roadmap to Recovery. Join us and the increasing number of other families whose children continue to improve on their singular and simultaneously similar paths to recovery.

Main Conference: Friday, May 25 - Sunday, May 27

Presentations in the main conference are divided into five tracks

1. Biomedical Treatments
2. Behavior / Education / Communication Therapies
3. Complementary and Alternative Medicine
4. Adolescence and Adulthood
5. Government / Legal / Personal Issues



## Autism & Medical Breakthroughs 2007

*TACA is pleased to welcome back: Jerry Kartzinel, MD and David Kirby*

**Saturday April 28, 2007**

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (lunch on your own)

<b>Jerry Kartzinel, MD</b>	<b>David Kirby</b>
Dr. Kartzinel's practice is solely devoted to the research and treatment of autism and other neurodegenerative disorders. His approach includes a comprehensive history and physical exam, and laboratory investigations that seek to find what is biologically different in a child. Once found, he implements therapeutic interventions and monitors closely how they affect restoration of health and behaviors. Dr. Kartzinel is now working with Dr. Julie Buckley at <u>Pediatric Partners</u> . Dr. Kartzinel will present "Common Medical Problems and Treatment Options for Children with Autism" with important new findings.	Mr. Kirby is the author of the groundbreaking book <i>Evidence of Harm</i> . David Kirby has been a professional journalist for more than 15 years, and has written for <i>The New York Times</i> for the past eight years. Kirby was a contracted writer with the weekly City Section at <i>The Times</i> , where he covered public health, local politics, art and culture, film and theater, architecture, zoning and land use, among many other subjects. David will present the findings from his book, the latest news, important new research and the upcoming Omnibus hearings.

**Location:** Vineyard Newport Church, 102 East Baker St, Costa Mesa, CA

**Registration Fees:**

<b>Cost Per Person</b>	UNTIL April 1st	AFTER April 2nd	AFTER April 20th and On-Site
Parents	\$25	\$35	\$45
Professionals	\$50	\$60	\$70

## DAN! 2007 Spring Conference

DAN!® is known throughout the world as the premier conference (for both parents and clinicians) to come and learn the safest and most effective biomedical interventions for successfully treating autism. DAN!® provides a decision making framework for addressing biomedical issues presented by individuals with autism. DAN!® brings the most credible speakers on the subject of treating autism to the podium.

Science illuminating the metabolic, intestinal, immunologic, and detoxification abnormalities in children with autism is moving at breakneck speed. The Defeat Autism Now! network of parents, clinicians and researchers is at the forefront of connecting research that makes a difference to treatments that can lead to improvements in the quality of life for autistic children and their families. Listen, learn and ask questions of the experts. Don't miss the spring DAN!® conference in Alexandria, Virginia!

**The Schedule at a Glance: Thursday, April 19, 2007 – Evening Workshops Friday, April 20, 2007 – General Session Saturday, April 21, 2007 – Parent Session or Saturday, April 21, 2007 - Science Session Sunday, April 22, 2007 – General Session Monday, April 23, 2007 – Clinician Intensive Training**

# CVASA Annual Picnic at the Park

(CVASA will provide pizza, chicken, beverages, eating utensils and napkins) March 31st, 2007 from 2-4PM

This year's picnic will be held at The Palm Desert County Club Park. This park is ideal for many reasons.

- 1) There is only one entrance and exit. This will make it easier to control the flow of children and others who may want to wander off.
- 2) It has plenty of space to run, sit, blow bubbles, fly kites, throw a frizz bee, play catch, play volleyball, basketball, play on the two jungle gyms, and of course it has swings too. There is also a giant water mister that could be fun if it is hot.

There are picnic tables and benches for sitting. There are grills for grilling food. CVASA will provide pizza, chicken, beverages, eating utensils and napkins. So all we really need is for you to come and bring your family. You can also bring a side dish or desert if you would like to bring something. It is sure to be a good time. Don't be shy. Come by and say Hi.

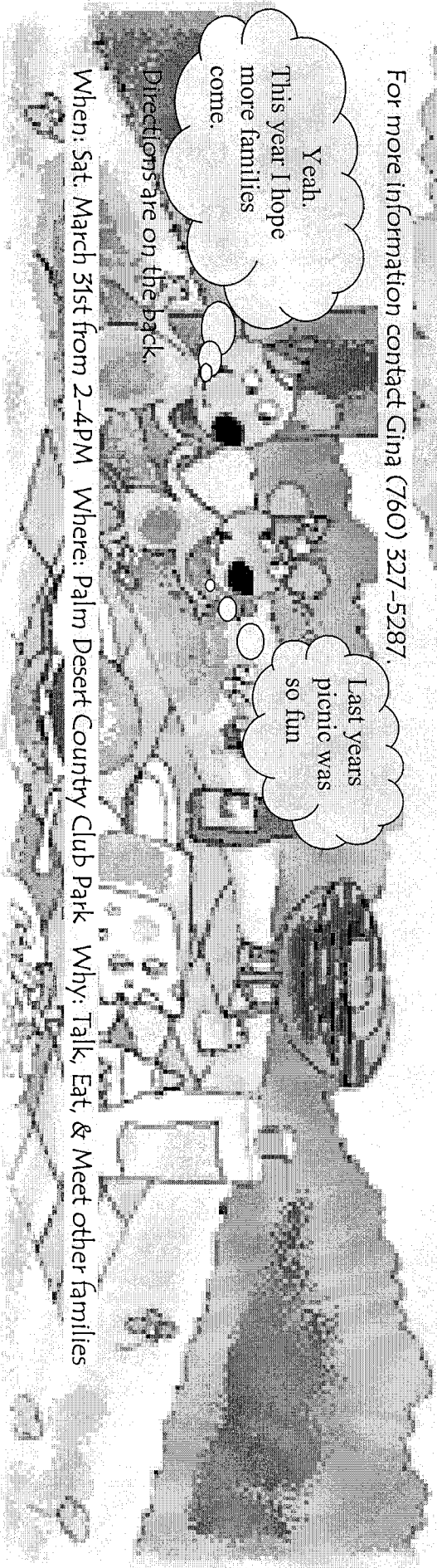
For more information contact Gina (760) 327-5287.

Yeah.  
This year I hope  
more families  
come.

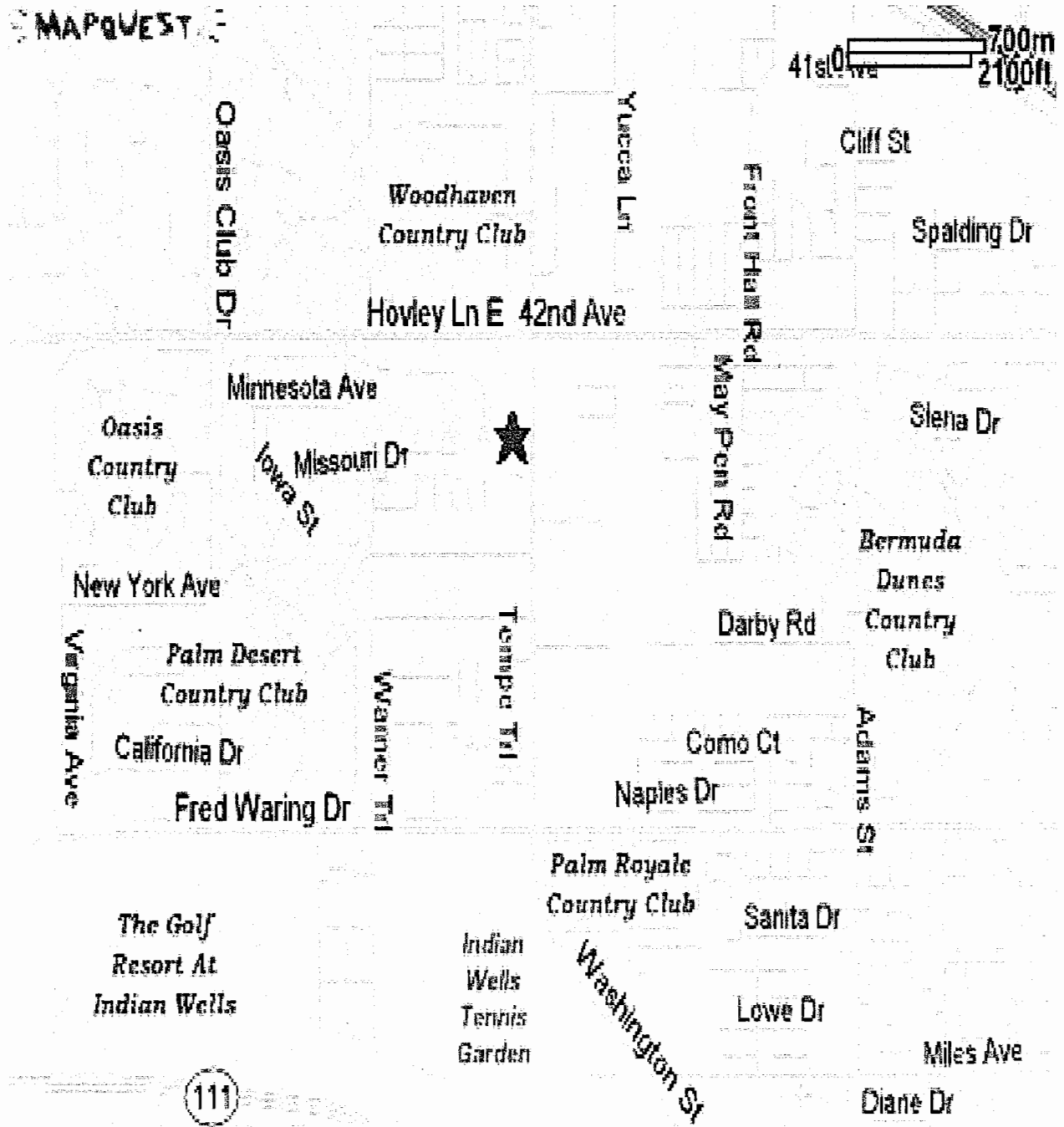
Directions are on the back.

Last years  
picnic was  
so fun

When: Sat. March 31st from 2-4PM Where: Palm Desert County Club Park Why: Talk, Eat, & Meet other families



Directions: The Palm Desert Country Club Park is located on Avenue of the States. The map below is of the main area. Washington Street is the closest street. You can get to Washington Street from Highway 111 or the 10 FWY. Avenue of the States is between HWY 111 and the 10 FWY. You know you are getting close to the Avenue of the States when you see the Albertsons. There is a Shell Gas Station on the corner of Avenue of the States and Washington Street. As you drive on Avenue of the States you will see the park on the right hand side. **The picnic will go from 2-4pm March 31st** RSVP by calling the resource center (779-0012) or Gina (327-5287).



## Autism Has High Costs To US Society

It can cost about \$3.2 million to take care of an autistic person over his or her lifetime. Caring for all people with autism over their lifetimes costs an estimated \$35 billion per year. Those figures are part of the findings in the first study to comprehensively survey and document the costs of autism to U.S. society. Michael Ganz, Assistant Professor of Society, Human Development, and Health at Harvard School of Public Health, authored the study, which appears in a chapter titled, "The Costs of Autism," in the newly published book, *Understanding Autism: From Basic Neuroscience to Treatment* (CRC Press, 2006). Ganz hopes his research will help policymakers allocate scarce resources to its treatment and prevention as well as provide a useful reference for policymakers and advocates to help them more fully understand the financial impact of autism on U.S. society.

Ganz's analysis of the costs includes direct and indirect medical costs associated with the disorder. But he believes the \$35 billion annual societal cost for caring for and treating people with autism likely underestimates the true costs because there are a number of other services that are used to support individuals with autism, such as alternative therapies and other family out-of-pocket expenses, that are difficult to measure. In addition, Ganz believes that the level of cost could be higher if there were more useful and widespread treatment options available.

"Given that the federal autism research budget has been historically less than \$100 million per year and given that research budgets for other conditions with similar numbers of affected individuals are sometimes orders of magnitude higher, I hope that my research can help focus more attention on directing more resources toward finding prevention and treatment options for autism," Ganz said. (For comparison purposes, he notes estimated annual costs of other conditions, including Alzheimer's disease (\$91 billion); mental retardation (\$51 billion); anxiety (\$47 billion); and schizophrenia (\$33 billion).)

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) that involves severe deficits in a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Children with autism often have trouble using their imagination, have a limited range of interests, and may show repetitive patterns of behavior or body movements. The disorder is often associated with some degree of mental retardation. Autism is the most prevalent PDD and the most common of all serious childhood disorders. It affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans and is increasing at a rate of 10-17 percent each year. It is four times more common in boys than in girls. The exact cause of autism is not known and there is currently no cure for the disorder.

Ganz broke down the total costs of autism into two components: direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include direct medical costs, such as physician and outpatient services, prescription medication, and behavioral therapies (estimated to cost, on average, more than \$29,000 per person per year) and direct non-medical costs, such as special education, camps, and child care (estimated to annually cost more than \$38,000 for those with lower levels of disability and more than \$43,000 for those with higher levels).

Indirect costs equal the value of lost productivity resulting from a person having autism, for example, the difference in potential income between someone with autism and someone without. It also captures the value of lost productivity for an autistic person's parents. Examples include loss of income due to reduced work hours or not working altogether. Ganz estimates that annual indirect costs for autistic individuals and their parents range from more than \$39,000 to nearly \$130,000.

Since people with autism receive services from a wide variety of sources, Ganz believes future research efforts should focus on identifying those sources and linking those costs to non-financial data about the burdens of autism. These complementary sources of data can provide a richer picture that will be useful to policymakers in the future to assist them in devoting resources to address the financial and non-financial effects of autism.

Todd Datz  
Harvard School of Public Health

**A Daily Reminder to Tutors and Teachers**  
(on first page of school logbook)

**Challenges in Peer Relations and Play**

Many children with social problems, particularly children on the autism spectrum, face serious challenges learning how to play and socialize with peers. Autism is a complex condition that impedes children's spontaneous development of reciprocal social interaction, communication, play and imagination. Despite opportunities for play, these children do not naturally acquire capacities to pretend and coordinate social activities with other children. Problems conveying and interpreting social-communication cues make it difficult to join peers in play. Attempts to socialize are often subtle, obscure or poorly timed and mistaken as signs of deviance or limited social interest. Many children spend inordinate amounts of time alone pursuing repetitive and unimaginative activities. Without appropriate intervention, they are at high risk for being excluded from their peer culture and leading impoverished play lives.

**Importance of Play with Peers**

Research shows that children learn and develop in a multitude of ways through shared experiences in play. Play's significance is far reaching as a social and cultural context through which children acquire symbolic capacities, interpersonal skills and social knowledge. Moreover, peers perform a distinct role in fostering children's socialization and development that cannot be duplicated by adults. While playing with peers, children acquire many interrelated skills that are necessary for attaining social competence and forming meaningful friendships. They learn to communicate effectively, solve problems, negotiate and compromise, understand the feelings and perspectives of others and work out emotional conflicts. Particularly within a social-pretend framework, children practice and assimilate these skills while exercising their imaginative potential. Considering play's social, cultural and developmental significance, enhancing opportunities for children with autism to become competent in play with peers is of prime importance.

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**Elections of CVASA Officers**

The time has come to elect officers to represent CVASA and its continued efforts to serve the Autism Community.

Please begin thinking about this upcoming election of officers.

The President serves a 2 yr. term with a maximum of 2 consecutive terms. Duties include presenting a progress report at the annual meeting, and presenting a budget for the following year with the treasurer to be approved by the board.

Other officers responsibilities are described in the bylaws which can be viewed at the resource library.

Compensation--Officers and Directors cannot be paid "for their services in their capacities as officers or Directors."



# Autism Prevalence In The U.S. Rises To 1 In 150

The Autism Society of America (ASA) welcomed the new CDC studies on the prevalent numbers of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the United States as tremendously significant data that will help the cause of improving the lives of all those affected by autism. **In data collected from its Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM), a population-based, multi-state surveillance network that surveyed 8-year-olds in 2000 and 2002, the CDC found that the data confirm that ASD prevalence affects approximately an average of 1 child in every 150.** The data represents 10 percent of the U.S. population of 8-year-old children.

ASA believes the CDC numbers are tremendously significant. "Finally, we can end the debate on the prevalence of autism in our nation and focus on getting the services and supports the families need," said Lee Grossman, ASA president and CEO. "Autism is a treatable lifelong condition that affects tens of millions of Americans today. It is time to aggressively address this national health crisis." The CDC is recommending public health actions to improve early identification of ASD.

The CDC study includes children with behaviors consistent with autism, Asperger's and pervasive developmental delays -- not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS). The data came from 14 sites in five states (Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, South Carolina and West Virginia). The study also found higher prevalence in boys than girls (a range of 2.8 -- 6 boys to girls, depending on the state) and no statistically significant difference among non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic black children.

Colleen Boyle of the CDC noted that the study showed the age of diagnosis (at between 4-5 years of age) was much later than the age at which developmental concern was registered (before 24 months), underscoring the need for earlier identification of autism.

To read the study in full, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/autism>. For information on support, services and identification, please visit <http://www.autism-society.org>.

ASA is the oldest and largest member organization dedicated to autism in the world. ASA's mission is to improve the lives of all affected by autism- individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact. For more information on autism or ASA, visit <http://www.autism>.

Autism Society of America  
<http://www.cdc.gov/autism>

# CVASA 2006 Annual Report

*Dianne Russom, President*  
*January 4, 2007*

The mission of the Autism Society of America is to promote life long access and opportunities for persons within the autism spectrum and their families. This mission includes public awareness, education, advocacy and research related to autism. Through our mission we strive to fully include persons with autism as participating members of their community.

Our organization's Mission Statement is a carefully crafted statement designed to articulate what CVASA is all about. But after all, it is just words on paper. What CVASA is, more this year than ever, is the people behind the statement. It is the families, the professionals, the board members, the volunteers all those that make up what CVASA really is. It's their commitment, passion and dedication to making those words on paper a reality for CVASA.

I'd like to take this opportunity of the Annual Report to not only highlight some of the programs and services CVASA has provided this past year, but more importantly to recognize the people behind the programs the doers, the worker bees, the very heart and soul of CVASA.

I think one of our biggest accomplishments this past year is the success of the monthly CVASA Support Group Meetings. We recently celebrated our one year anniversary for these meetings. Initially funded as a pilot project by the Desert Healthcare District grant, our support group owes its success to Beth Aune Nelson, O.T. extraordinaire and board member Eddie Fagin. Beth provides a fantastic therapeutic program for the children with a training component for paraprofessionals, while Eddie works tirelessly in facilitating the meetings with a wonderfully selection of speakers. New to the Support Group is our Spanish translation equipment and translator funded by a generous grant from the Gannett Foundation. Eddie, by the way, in his spare time, is also the CVASA Newsletter editor.

Lumpy's annual Scramble for Autism is now our biggest fundraiser and it wouldn't happen without board member Randy Corti who handles every aspect of the big event from organizing volunteers to bringing in the golfers. The Scramble is also the "one and only" charity golf tournament that is a sell out every year. The proceeds from the tournament have continued to fund scholarships to the Son-Rise treatment program and Kris' Kamp summer program for children with autism. And as if that is not enough, Randy serves on the CVASA board as Treasurer. One of the administrators for the Palm Desert Foundation recently commented to me that what CVASA needs is a few more Randy Corti's. I, certainly second that.

The CVASA Sensory Integration room was built this year at Cielo Vista Elementary School.

was written and presented to Starbucks by CVASA member Gabrielle Lawrence and at \$30,000, the largest grant ever received by CVASA.

Our Family Events this year were awesome thanks to the Board members who organized and facilitated the events. Events back this year were the annual spring Picnic in the Park, the summer Swim Party at Pawley Pool and our winter Holiday Party. New this year was the six-week My Gym program, a fun family night at Pump It UP! and the very popular Movie Day this past summer.

Many more accomplishments, many more people to recognize. . .

In collaboration with National Charity League we present a series of puppet shows to all third grade children in the PSUSD thanks to board members Teri Hargreaves and Beverly Viramontes.

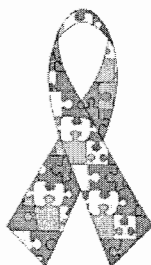
Continued participation in the CBS Charity Challenge organized by board member Gina Davis.

>- In June we hosted our sixth annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon to give our sincere appreciation and thanks to all of the wonderful professionals working with our children. Special thanks to CVASA member' Cortney Weir for chairing this event.

And very special appreciation and thanks go to our CVASA Resource Library Coordinator, Beth Gilmore. She keeps us organized, on task and maintains the sanity in an otherwise all-volunteer organization.

This coming year we welcome new board members, Regina Vasquez and Misty Hogan. We also sadly say not goodbye, but "see you again" to founding board member Teri Hargreaves. Teri recently resigned from the CVASA Board to devote more time to her household of teenagers. We will dearly miss her honesty, integrity and her years-long dedication to bringing CVASA from a couple of parents with a basket of books to the full-fledged organization that it is today.

**This year, 2007, may be the biggest year yet for CVASA. Along with our new board members, upcoming elections will bring new officers to the board with new ideas, new programs to implement and hopefully lots of energy. But what they will really need is YOU. . . your time, your energy, and your commitment to be a part of CVASA. Please make this the year that you say yes and join us in our efforts to make the words of our Mission Statement a reality for our families, our community. . . our children.**



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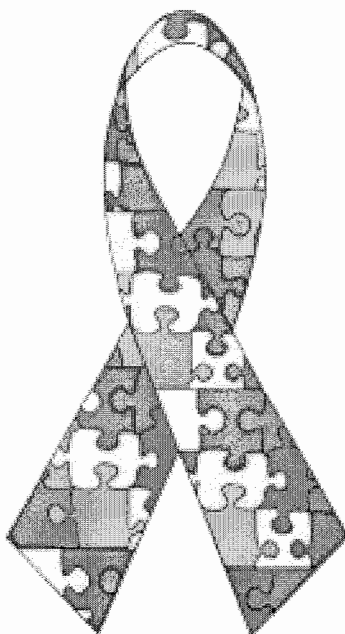
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NOTICE: The Coachella Valley Autism Society of America (CVASA) does not endorse individuals, groups or programs. References regarding programs, meetings, resources, treatments, etc. should not be interpreted as an indication of endorsement by CVASA. They are provided for informational purposes only.