



# Autism Society of Minnesota

Annual Meeting President's Report

Data presented: June 2010 – May 2011



# Mission and Goals

The Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) is an organization of families, educators, care givers and professionals committed to supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It was established in 1971 and over 40 years has only focused on autism and is the local presence in the state of Minnesota on education and advocacy.

***Mission:*** AuSM exists to enhance the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorders. AuSM seeks to realize its mission through education, support, collaboration and advocacy.

***Goals:*** to inform and educate, to advocate for appropriate services, to support through services and relationships.



## Information and Referrals

The Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) provides telephone and email services to all who are looking for community resources, referrals, and packets of information. Parents of recently diagnosed children can request parent packets which explain autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and offer helpful tips for families. Supports also include parent-to-parent networking.

*We responded to 4,282 requests. Lending Library: 175 requests.*

*AuSM's facebook account has 1,445 fans*

*Membership is at an all time high 1,300*



## Education – families/parents

The Discovery Series is a series of classes for parents of children recently diagnosed with ASD or Asperger's syndrome. The classes, which include insights from a variety of professionals, parents, family members, and individuals on the spectrum, present basic information on diagnosis, helpful intervention strategies for the home, proactive behavioral strategies, and suggestions for working with schools and service agencies.

*AuSM presented 8 Discovery Series sessions which were attended by 50.*



## Education – professionals, educators

Workshops and lectures presented by national speakers are offered throughout the year in both evening and all-day formats, including an annual symposium. Designed for educators and parents who need the latest in ASD research and intervention strategies, AuSM's workshops deliver ideas, tips and protocols that ensure everyday success for individuals living with ASD.

*AuSM organized **six** workshops for **300** attendees.*

*Minnesota Symposium drew **250**.*



## Education – specific topics

Skill-shops are a series of workshops designed for people working with children and adults with ASD and reflects AuSM's ongoing commitment to helping people learn individual skills and information for work and family life. Classes are intended for small groups with a "hands-on" approach, encouraging participation, discussion and problem solving on the latest and traditional concerns.

*AuSM held 8 Skill-shops had 110 people attended.*



# State Conference

The Minnesota Autism Conference is held each spring, attracting hundreds of participants. The conference features national and international speakers on research and scientific findings. Local speakers present in breakout sessions where parents, teachers, and other professionals share best practices. The conference also includes a special section for individuals who have ASD and their families.

*Nearly 600 participants attended the 15th Annual State Conference.*



# Autism & Employment Forum

The 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Annual Autism & Employment Forum was held in February of 2011. Co-founding companies: Best Buy, 3M and Cargill brought together a forum that allowed employers to talk with employers about the growing issue of unemployment rates especially with those affected by ASD. The keynote speaker was Dr. Temple Grandin, with 21 co-sponsors from around the state.

*Nearly 1600 participants attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Autism & Employment forum.*



# Eagles Nest and Camp Programs

Eagles Nest is designed for children who are high functioning that can take part in a small group setting to encourage positive peer interactions and growth in social cognition skills. 1 to 1 family consulting is also available.

**150** children attended and with the start of consulting **10** families have benefitted.

AuSM offers residential camps for children and young adults. The camps offer recreation in a woodland setting with activities such swimming, boating, biking and group activities. Camps can be 1 child to 1 staff at our Hand in hand location (we are the only MN based agency to offer this unique experience for those who require it). Camp Discovery is also an overnight camp with 5 to 1. Our Day Summer programs are also well attended.

**285** children attended camps



# Mental Health Clinic

*AuSM provides behavioral consultation for families and agencies, provided by licensed clinical psychologist. The focus is to blend current research on autism with practical experience. In the process, families and individuals discover the causes of behavior problems and work towards changes using practical proactive strategies.*

*822 clients were provided therapy*

*779 adults participated in support groups*

*4 interns built knowledge and hours to be licensed.*



# Advocacy

The Minnesota State Capital Autism Task Force was lead by AuSM' s board chair.

- current bill pending on extending task force

Partners with the MN Department of ED

Collaboration with the MN Department of Human Services

Committee work with the Department of Health

Community Partners:

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

Coalition for Children

Insurance Parity

Board of Teaching - License



## Awards:

- We were selected as charity of choice to receive a new website free improving search, navigation, content and messaging improving our posture in the market improving methods to reach existing /new members tracking and reporting improvements (data driven decisions)
- We were awarded the following grants
  - Parent IEP instructional design \$15,000 from MDE
  - Emergency Preparedness for ASD \$185,000 from DHS
  - Employment Services \$50,000 from VRS / Governor's Council DD



# Fundraisers

AuSM puts on two large fundraisers each year – Steps of Hope and it's golf tournament. We are also fortunate to be the beneficiaries of community events throughout the year. We can not say thank you enough to our many, many donors and supporters.

*AuSM held 7 fundraisers which brought in approximately \$180,000.*

*13 scholarships were provided to AuSM members for: camp and eagles nest and parent workshops*



## The People

A very special and heart-felt thank you to the AuSM staff for all of their hard work, dedication, and versatility. Our families are extremely fortunate to have such passionate and caring advocates.

Thank you, also, to the countless volunteers. From the board of directors to the event helpers, AuSM's community presence is defined by the help each of you provides.