



Reaching Out Reaching In

Celebrating 21 Years Volume 25 Issue 5 October 2018

C a l e n d a r

Autism Rocks Friends & Family Camp 2018

Ugly Sweater Contest

The annual KindTree-Autism Rocks' Holiday Ugly Sweater Contest is coming to Mac's at the Vet's Club on Saturday, December 15, 2018 from 3-6p. Mac's is located in the Vet's Building at 1626 Willamette Street, Eugene. The afternoon activities include live music by the Corn Stalkers, a raffle, holiday sweater contest, and art sale. Prizes will be awarded to the ugliest sweater. Food and drink will be available to purchase. Plan on joining the fun with or without your sweater and help raise funds for KindTree-Autism Rocks' programs and services. Stay tuned for more details but get out those ugly sweaters, save the date, and plan to attend for a lively evening of fun, music and fellowship.

Holiday Art Sale

KindTree-Autism Rocks' artists will be featured at the Springfield Second Friday Art Walk on Friday, December 14th, from 5-8p at the Cascade Center for Spiritual Living at 741 Main Street in Springfield, OR. One-of-a-kind beaded jewelry, holiday gifts, ornaments, and cards will be available for purchase. Please stop by to support our local artists and purchase art for yourself or as gifts.

Bridgeway House/KindTree "Autism Rocks" Family Swim, Tamarack Pool
October 14, November 11, December 16, January 13, February 10, March 17, April 21. *Suggested donation \$5 or \$10 per family. No one will be turned away.*



Brian Rands and Josh Schwartz



Lisa Jiang, Maoqing & Yitong Chen



Boffing Fun for the kids

Meet our newest STiLE instructor



David Helfand is a multi-instrumentalist who composes and performs original instrumental music on Celtic harp, mandocello, octave mandolin, guitar, and keyboards. David has a degree in therapeutic recreation and joined the STiLE team as an instructor this fall for our **Music Writing and Performance** training, which meets on Mondays from 4-5:30p at CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. Over the years David has recorded six albums and taught music classes for Adaptive Recreation and Oregon Supported Living's Arts and Culture program. David is currently an instructor with the 4j Transition Education Network (TEN) at Sheldon High School. To learn more about David please visit his website at www.davidhelfand.com.

To register for this training please visit www.kindtree.org or call KindTree-Autism Rocks at 541-780-6950.

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KindTree-Autism Rocks is a grassroots non-profit located in Eugene since 1997 that enhances and celebrates lives in the autism community. KindTree-Autism Rocks: celebrating autism, changing perceptions and creating community.

Letter From the Editor

Dear Friends,

The late-summer fragrance of blackberry and fennel will soon be surrendering to wet earth and soggy leaves. As autumn approaches and winter looms, we at KindTree "Autism Rocks" will be coming in out of the rain.

Our 16th Autism Rocks Friends and Family Camp at Baker Boy Scout Camp was our largest yet: 287 people, over 25 above our usual head-count. My personal high points were seeing guests and young kids volunteering, and watching people enjoy the activities started and led by guests and other volunteers. What makes our camp unique is that it's fueled entirely by the inspiration of our autism community, who come from all walks of life. As an activity leader for the arts and crafts, I am always inspired by people's creations—the brilliant watercolors, the crazy collage marionettes, and the whimsical architecture of the cork birdhouses. As usual, the food was succulent, and the bands and theatrical performances rocked the Buck Badley Lounge.

This autumn brings monthly Fall Gatherings (see page 5 for schedule) for adults on the spectrum. The Fall Gatherings will meet at "C" Space, 530 C Street in Springfield. Talk, eat and socialize.

"Say say two thousand zero zero party over, oops, out of time/So

tonight I'm gonna party like it's nineteen ninety-nine" at our Halloween Disco Dance (Friday, October 26, at the Vets Club Ballroom). Delve into your future at the Fortune Telling table. Sneak a kiss with Deano at the Kissing Booth. Compete tooth and nail in the costume contest. Have fun and win prizes!

Mosey on over to the Lincoln Gallery before October 28th for the "Look Me in the Eye" show, which includes art by KindTree artists (including myself).

Don your gaudiest holiday sweater for the Ugly Sweater Contest on December 15 (Saturday) afternoon at Mac's at the Vets Club. If you don't have a holiday sweater, there will be a sweater uglification table for you to doll up your otherwise overly tasteful one.

Shop 'til you drop for art by KindTree "Autism Rocks" artists at Springfield's Second Friday Art Walk on December 14th at Cascade Center for Spiritual Living (741 Main Street in Springfield).

Keep your eyes peeled, your nose to the ground and your finger to the wind for other late-breaking news and activities on our website.

Boo!

With autistic hugs and affection,
Mary-Minn Sirag, Editor

I Am Autism

"My Date With Autism", a performance monologue by Alisa McLaughlin

I found him late in life when I was tired of it all, I had no job, never been in love. Few friends and no income. The only relationship I had was with depression and it was not healthy. Maybe I could get disability. Depression never helped me get a job, all she did was lie around and complain about how life sucked. So there I was at the library perusing the DSM- that's the psychological bible known as The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual—and as I read the pathology for Autism, and—bam!—there he was.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological condition affecting the ability to communicate and interact with others. Behaviors include difficulty making eye contact, narrow, intense interests, and sensory sensitivities.

Oh my God, it was a perfect match. Autism was super focused and understood me like no one else, even the specialist I went to agreed "Oh yeah you are definitely made for each other," Autism showed me why I was rejected at work, romance and friendships. I was elated! It was relief to discover why I was a tactless, self absorbed neat freak. Depression left while I doted on my new suitor.

"Yeah, baby. It's who you are and it's not going to get better so get used to it. You will still be dismissed and marginalized by so called normal people."

Wait, what do you mean it's not going to get better? After my initial excitement died down, depression came strolling back and parked herself on the couch.

"Autism ain't going to fix your life, honey, merely define it." said the girlfriend from hell.

How true, when I look back, I can see the symptoms were obvious. I was an temperamental child, I arranged the toys in my crib, was furiously impatient with people when I deigned to notice them at all. I was absorbed with subjects others found uninteresting. Apparently not everyone is fascinated with opera or sumo wrestling. Turns out, autistics can be endearing but insufferable bores. I had been cheated of awareness of ASD and a semi-normal life- no thanks to my well meaning parents who shielded me from it. If I had known earlier maybe I wouldn't have felt like a failure or be driven to near suicide.

"Meltdowns are a constant source of stress for autistics. A normal person sees problem in degrees, like a dimmer switch, with ASD it's a light switch; all the way on or off."

Being obsessive- an autistic trait apparently-I learned everything I could about the disorder. Autistics have difficulty reading subtle social cues- whatever they are. They prefer to be alone, well, not really, but a child sitting by themselves with odd quirks is usually judged to be weird and easy to ignore. They would socialize if they knew how.

You see, conversation is like jazz. You take a melody, hand it to someone, they change it a bit and hand to back, and so forth. The autistic, unfortunately, does not know how to improvise. They take the

melody and hand it back unchanged. This will happen several times until the recipient looks puzzled and the autistic wonders what they did wrong—again.

Autism was once considered a rare mental defect defined to extreme cases of cognitive dysfunction- now, it's downright fashionable. "Oh I must be on the spectrum, I'm so bad at social gatherings," people will gush.

This at the top of the list of things *not* to say to someone with ASD. Other things not to say: "Why do you let things bother you? You don't look disabled, I hear you people have no empathy, I bet you're great at math or music." We're not all Rainman. I don't have any cool savant skills like playing Mozart on the piano perfectly the first time, but if you want to make me crazy -and you will- just fold a map incorrectly.

Meltdowns are a constant source of stress for autistics. A normal person sees problem in degrees, like a dimmer switch. With ASD it's a light switch; all the way on or off. Meltdowns can be triggered by misplaced keys, the rearrangement of the environment, flashing lights or noises. For me, it's leaf blowers, sirens and phones. The opposite to these I call the simple joys. Mine is floor plans. Looking at or drawing them relaxes me instantly.

You may be mildly annoyed you can't find your keys. For an ASD it's hysterical panic. "Dammit, I missed a phone call again." Should this happen, give me a floor plan, I'll be fine.

So I'm stuck with autism, it's not what I expected in a beau but then I'm at an age where I'm tired of pretending to be normal. I've decided this is me folks, take or leave it.



Fall 2018 Skills Trainings

Register online at www.kindtree.org or

call 541 780-6950

STiLE is a KindTree "Autism Rocks" educational program that provides small group skill training to individuals on the autism spectrum and others with developmental disabilities. The program offers individualized support and education in group settings to encourage community engagement, healthy habits, communication, socialization, independence, and work readiness. Individuals must be eligible for DD services with the State of Oregon and have an Individual Service Plan and agency Personal Agent or Service Coordinator to receive funding for these trainings, or to enroll using private funds. For more information please contact KindTree-Autism Rocks/STiLE at 541-780-6950.

How to Register Payment must be included unless the training is free or being paid by a brokerage, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation, or DD Services of Lane County. Register online: www.kindtree.org/stileregister using Visa, MasterCard or PayPal. Phone-in: Call Stephanie Dahl at 541-780-6950. For more information contact autism@kindtree.org.

Youth Theatre & IMPROV

Wednesdays 6-7:30p, Sept. 5- Oct. 24, Nov. 7-Dec. 19, 2018. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. This on-going training is designed for individuals diagnosed on the autism spectrum and others ages 11-24. Students will have fun, build assets, and develop friendships while learning drama and participating in IMPROV activities. Cost: \$100 for 8 sessions *or* 12 hours of instruction.

Music Writing and Performance,

Mondays 4-5:30p, Sept. 24-Dec. 17, 2018. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. A training designed for individuals interested in learning to play musical instruments, writing and/or performing music as part of a group. Cost \$165 for 13 sessions *or* attendance and the agency hourly contract rate based on 18 hours of instruction.

Community Outings and Adventures

Tuesdays 2-6p, Saturdays 10a-5:30p, Sept 4-Dec 22, 2018 and Jan 7-Jun 22, 2019. Locations vary. This training is for older teens and young adults interested in discovering more about their community. By using community group outings as a venue, this training will allow students to learn and practice life skills such as personal problem solving, communication, manners, self-management strategies and self-reliance. Cost: Based on attendance and the service agency hourly contract rate. Please contact KindTree-Autism Rocks at 541-780- 6950 to inquire if space is available.

Jewelry Expressions

Mondays 10:15a-12:15p, Sept 17-Dec 10. Ebbert Memorial United Methodist Church, Fireside Room, 532 C St., Springfield. Instructors will provide support in designing, marketing, production and selling of students' art. All supplies included. Cost: \$225 for 13 sessions *or* 24 hours of instruction, or the hourly agency rate based on attendance.

Make it Tasty Cooking

Fridays 10:15a-12:30p, Oct 5 - Dec 21. Catholic Community Services of Lane County, 1025 G St., Springfield. Learn how to cook, store leftovers, and determine healthy portion sizes. Cost: \$235 per session *or* the agency hourly rate based on attendance for 12 trainings with 27 hours of instruction.

Tuesday Performance Art & Video Production

Tuesdays 6-8p, ongoing. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. This training is designed for individuals diagnosed with autism who are interested in film making, theatre performance, writing or directing plays. Cost: \$205 for 12 sessions *or* rate based on attendance and the agency hourly contract rate.

STiLE 2018 Fall Skills Trainings.

Register online at www.kindtree.org or

call 541 780-6950



Wednesday Performance Art & Video Production

Wednesdays 6-8p, On-going. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. This training is designed for individuals diagnosed with autism who are interested in film making, theatre performance, writing or directing plays. Cost: \$205 for 12 sessions *or* based on attendance and the agency hourly contract rate.

Women's Empowerment

Tuesdays 2p-3:30p, Sept 18-Dec 18. Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA), 20 E. 13th Ave., Eugene. Using curriculum-based training material and personal sharing, individuals identifying as women will practice personal safety, self-advocacy, and communications skills. They will also learn about important friendship values, different levels of relationships, social rules and dating. Cost: \$165 per session for 13 sessions *or* based on attendance and the agency hourly contract rate.

Fall Gatherings

3rd Thursday of each month, 6 - 8:30p: Sept 20, Oct 18, Nov 15, Dec 20. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. Come to this sensory friendly meet-up. Talk and eat, connect and laugh. You may even meet your soul mate. Each gathering is a low-stress environment where our community can come together and create a positive social experience for everyone. Come for the whole time or just for a few minutes. All are welcome. Bring a side dish to share. Free.

Dating on the Spectrum

Thursdays 6-8p, Sept-Dec 2018. CSpace, 530 C St. Springfield. This training focuses on the skills related to dating and sustaining relationships. Other topics will include empowering the individual through positive thinking and developing a further understanding of what it means to be on the autism spectrum. Cost: \$205 for 12 sessions *or* based on attendance and the agency hourly contract rate.

Video Gaming Social Group

Thursdays 4-6p, ongoing. CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield. This group brings gamers together in a social context. Individual group members will review games with each other and share their gaming interests. The group will learn about the history of gaming to provide context and where we are in the gaming world today. The group will build social skills and knowledge that are transferable into professional fields. Please contact KindTree-Autism Rocks at 541-780-6950 to inquire if space is available. Cost is based on attendance and the agency hourly contract rate.

Let's Meet Up for Men

Saturdays 1-4p, Oct 6-Dec 29. Location varies. Designed for young men interested in meeting weekly on an on-going basis to support one another and participate in a variety of community activities and events. Activities will be determined by the students and may include bowling, playing pool or video games, hikes, visits to area businesses, out-of-town trips, sports and music events. Individuals will receive individualized support with their ISP goals and encouragement in working on their personal life goals while learning how to access adult services and having fun together. Transportation may be available to and from the activity and to and from home if necessary. Cost is based on attendance and the service agency hourly contract rate. Please contact KindTree-Autism Rocks at 541-780-6950 to inquire if space is available.



CALENDAR OF GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Oct 1 (Monday): Cottage Grove Support Group 4:00–5:30 pm. The Healing Matrix. (See below for details)

Oct 8 (Monday): Eugene Support Group 4:30 to 6 pm. St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Oct 12 (Friday): Second Friday Social from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Reality Kitchen.

Oct 14 (Sunday): Bridgeway House/KindTree "Autism Rocks" Family Swim from 1 to 3 pm at Tamarack Aquatic Center. Suggested donation: \$3/person, or \$10/family. No one will be turned away.

Oct 18 (Thursday): Fall Gathering from 6:00 to 8:30 pm at CSpace.

Oct 19 (Friday): Eugene A.V.O.I.C.E Advocacy Group 4:30 to 6 pm.

Through Oct 26: OSLP "Look Me in the Eye" art exhibit from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, on weekdays, Lincoln Gallery, 309 W. 4th St., Eugene, OR 97402.

Oct 26 (Friday): Disco Halloween Extravaganza (all ages), 6-10 pm, Vet's Club Ballroom. \$15/adults, \$5/kids 16-under.

Nov 5 (Monday): Cottage Grove Support Group from 4:00–5:30pm at the Healing Matrix.

Nov 9 (Friday): Second Friday Social from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Reality Kitchen.

Nov 11 (Sunday): Bridgeway House/KindTree "Autism Rocks" Family Swim from 1 to 3 pm at Tamarack Aquatic Center.

Nov 12 (Monday): Eugene Support Group from 4:30 to 6 pm at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Nov 15 (Thursday): Fall Gathering from 6:00 to 8:30 pm at CSpace.

Nov. 16 (Friday): Eugene A.V.O.I.C.E Advocacy Group from 4:30 to 6 pm at LILA Peer Support Club.

Nov 19 (Monday): Eugene Social Skills class from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Nov 22 (Thursday): Zombie Apocalypse. Nearest street corner. Free. None will be turned away.

Dec 3 (Monday): Cottage Grove Support Group from 4:00–5:30pm at the Healing Matrix.

Dec 10 (Monday): Eugene Support Group from 4:30 to 6 pm at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Dec 14 (Friday): Second Friday Social from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Reality Kitchen.

Dec 15 (Saturday): Annual KindTree "Autism Rocks" Holiday Ugly Sweater Contest from 3:00–6:00 pm, Vets Club.

Dec 15 (Saturday): KindTree "Autism Rocks" Holiday Art Sale from 5:00–8:00 pm at the Cascade Center for Spiritual Living, 741 Main St., Springfield.

Dec 16 (Sunday): Bridgeway House/KindTree "Autism Rocks" Family Swim from 1 to 3 pm at Tamarack Aquatic Center.

Dec 20 (Thursday): Fall Gathering from 6:00 to 8:30 pm at CSpace.

Dec 21 (Friday): Eugene A.V.O.I.C.E Advocacy Group from 4:30 to 6 pm at LILA Peer Support Club.

SUMMARY OF GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Asperger's Family Support Group:

Weds. 6 to 7:30 pm at 105 W. Q St. in Springfield. Call Rebecca for more information 541 221 0900. Support for people who have loved ones with Asperger's Syndrome.

Q Club: 3rd Thursday of the month 5 to 6pm at OSLP Lincoln Gallery, 309 W. 4th in Eugene. A social gathering for members of the LGBTQ community.

Cottage Grove Support Group: 1st Monday of the month 4 to 5:30 pm at the Healing Matrix, E. Main St. & 7th in Cottage Grove. Facilitated by Loren Goodman.

Eugene Support Group: 2nd Monday of the month 4:30 to 6pm at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, at 1300 Pearl St. Facilitated by Michael Omogrosso.

Eugene Social Skills Class: 3rd Monday of **odd numbered** months 6:30 to 8 pm St. Mary's Church, 13th and Pearl. Taught by Doris Germain. The group selects activity for the subsequent **even numbered** month. Sponsored by the Autism Society of Oregon.

Fall Gatherings, 3rd Friday of the month from 6:00 to 8:30 pm at CSpace, 530 C St., Springfield, OR 97477. 541-780-6950.

2nd Friday Night Social in Eugene for adults and transition-aged youth from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Reality Kitchen, 645 River Road, Eugene 97404. Hosted by Sheila Thomas and Mary-Minn Sirag.

Eugene A.V.O.I.C.E Advocacy Group: 3rd Friday of the month 4:30 to 6pm at LILA Peer Support Club, 990 Oak St. Facilitated by David Olson.

News You Can Use

Raven's: KindTree-Autism Rocks NEW community partner

Our newest community partner is Raven's located at 790 Willamette Street, Eugene. The store features clothing, art and jewelry, and is owned and operated by the brother of one of our STiLE students. This summer, Raven's hosted a First Friday ArtWalk fundraiser for KindTree-Autism Rocks. Working collaboratively we have plans for our artists to showcase and sell their work next summer on Saturdays in front of his store. Please visit Raven's and show your support, and look for his donations in our raffle baskets.

Lane Art Council Community Arts Program Grant

This summer KindTree-Autism Rocks was awarded a \$1,800 grant to provide three (3) artist workshops, a 2019 "Autism Artism Gala" event in April, and a series of community art shows and sales. The workshops will be held next year and are free and open to artists with and without autism. Visit www.kindtree.org for more information and registration.

Marketing Your Art: Learn practical tips on using social media, personal connections and family to increase name recognition and sales.

The Art of Display: Learn from professionals' inexpensive ways to display your art, pricing formulas and ways to increase profit and sales.

Marketing Yourself as an Artist: Learn to write a good artist statement, photograph and digitize your art, and to submit applications to juried art shows.

If you are interested in participating in the workshops or helping with the "Autism Artism

Gala", please contact us at 541-780-6950 or email us at autism@kindtree.org.

Sensory Storytime

Registration for the Downtown Eugene Public Library's next Sensory Storytime begins on Sunday Sept. 23rd. The storytime session starts October 6th at 3pm and runs all four Saturdays in October. Storytime is a 30-40 minute program including 20 minutes of early literacy-based activities followed by time to explore interactive materials and browse selected books available for checkout. Sensory Storytime is designed for children ages 2-8 who experience sensory needs, have developmental delays, or are on the autism spectrum. Registration starts Sunday Sept. 23rd at Cara.e.haakanson@ci.eugene.or.us. Include your child's name and age. Space is limited, so please register early.

SOON! There will be a Sensory Resource box in the Children's Department at the Downtown Eugene Public Library. This box will have items such as cloth interactive books, and a variety of fidgets. More items such as sound canceling headphones, dark glasses, weighted vests and lap pads, weighted stuffed animals, a wiggle seat and more will be available by request at the Children's Reference Desk. Look for these new resources in our Children's Center after September 15th!

Youth Improv video

STiLE's Youth Improv group is alive and kicking. Check out their short video and see for yourself: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjbA9nsl4y8&t=3s>

Gender Identity Research Study

My name is Dr. Ruth Milanaik and I'm a developmental pediatrician at Cohen Children's Medical Center in New York.

Gender identity development remains very under-examined in this population, but a few studies have nonetheless suggested that gender-related concerns may be 4-5 times more prevalent in individuals with ASD.

In order to examine gender identity development in youth with ASD, my research colleagues and I have developed an anonymous and confidential questionnaire for parents of children ages of 6-25 years who have been diagnosed with ASD. In order to get a large representative sample, please forward the following message and questionnaire link to parents of children with ASD as well as to professionals or organizations that are focused on helping children with ASD. This study has been reviewed and approved by our Institutional Review Board.

To participate in this study, please email AAdesman@northwell.edu.

Ki Society Introduction Class

Tues Oct. 23, 6:30-8:30

Ki is living energy. Learn to let Ki flow and be more calm, effective and resilient with daily challenges. Join us for an introductory class where we will learn meditation, balance and mind/body coordination for a healthier life. *\$12 for new students. No extra fee for regular students.*

eugene.oregonki.org

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Disco Halloween Extravaganza

A Benefit for KindTree - Autism Rocks
Friday Oct 26, 6-10pm Vet's Club Ballroom
\$15 adults - \$5 Kids 16 and under

Trick or Treat with...the Great Pumpkin
Costume Contests
Dance Contests
Family Friendly
Fortune Teller
Kissing Booth
Face Painting
Boo! Raffle
Fright Box

Dance like Everybody's Watching


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Keepin' It Current

We don't want you to miss a thing...Please let us know if you have any **NEW** changes.

Email to: admin@kindtree.org.

Mail to: PO Box 40847, Eugene, OR 97404.