

# FYI Newsletter April 16, 2007

Quick Scan:

- Building Leadership Series Recruitment for 2007
- Pennsy Trail Art Fair and Music Festival
- Stages - Age is Just a Number
- Feature: Family Stress and Autism Go Hand-in-Hand
- Library Corner

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## Building Leadership Series Recruitment for 2007

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Last fall, 18 adults with cognitive disabilities from across Indiana participated in a pilot series designed to build leadership and advocacy skills in persons with disabilities. The Series consisted of three two-day workshops over a course of three months. Recruitment has begun to identify 20 additional individuals to participate in the fall 2007 series. Training dates and topics are:

September 26-27, 2007

Choice: What choices am I really making? What are my rights and responsibilities?

October 17-18, 2007

Self-determination/self-advocacy: I hear these words, what do they mean for me?

November 7-8, 2007

Person-Centered Planning: What does it mean for me and what is a good plan?

All sessions will be held at the Bloomington Convention Center. Selected participants will receive a \$60.00/workshop attendance stipend, meals, and overnight lodging. Support staff receive compensation, meals, and lodging.

These workshops are co-trained with staff from the Center on Aging and Community at the Indiana Institute. There is a good mix of interactive activities, video, discussion, role play and lecture. Workbooks accompany each topical area. Past participants have commented on how much they learned and committed to personal action steps upon arriving back home. New friendships developed and personal growth was evident for all participants. Help us spread the word to potential participants and provider agencies for the 2007 Series. The deadline for registrants is May 31, 2007.

The Building Leadership Series project is a collaborative endeavor between Indiana's Developmental Disabilities Network consisting of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University, Bloomington, the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, and Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services. For more information and applications contact Jennie Todd at (812) 855-6508 (e-mail [jeptodd@indiana.edu](mailto:jeptodd@indiana.edu)) or visit <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cac/>.

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## Pennsy Trail Art Fair and Music Festival

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The Mental Health Association in Hancock County is pleased to invite you to participate in the 5th Annual Pennsy Trail Art Fair to be held on Saturday, June 23, 2007 in Greenfield, Indiana from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Art Fair offers a unique opportunity for artists to sell their creative works in a natural and historic setting and to promote art appreciation in children and adults. A component of the Fair is an art exhibit by clients of local mental health services and group home residents from Shares, Inc. Exhibit space is made available at no charge for persons with disabilities to exhibit and sell, if they desire, their works of art. All mediums are accepted.

Other activities include children's art activities, all day musical entertainment, a classic car show, and more. Some exciting changes this year include extended hours, a Blue Grass music festival, and expanded food and beverage stations.

The Art Fair is developed through the cooperation of the Hancock County Arts Council; Hancock County Visitor's Bureau, The City of Greenfield, and the Greenfield Parks and Recreation Department. The Pennsy Trail Art Fair is a member of the Indiana State Festival Association. For more information, contact Ann Osborne at (317) 462-2877 or e-mail [pennsytrailfair@aol.com](mailto:pennsytrailfair@aol.com).

## Stages - Age is Just a Number

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Phil Stafford, Director of the Indiana Institute's Center on Aging and Community, will present at the 14th Annual Conference on Ministry with the Aging, May 15-16, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, Columbus, Indiana. While "aging in place" has become a commonly accepted goal for individual and community planning, we don't often stop to seriously reflect on the deep meaning of home and place for elders. Stafford's presentation entitled Aging and the Meaning of Home, will explore the "dwelling experience" with elders, and pick up some practical tips about sustaining that asset we call home. For conference registration information, contact Phyllis Hawkins at Baptist Homes of Indiana, Inc. at (317) 873-3371 or e-mail [phawkins@baptisthomesofin.com](mailto:phawkins@baptisthomesofin.com).

## Family Stress and Autism Go Hand-In-Hand

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When children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), their families often find themselves dealing with financial and social challenges, as well.

The additional stress can be substantial, taking its toll on the whole family and even contributing to a high divorce rate, said Cathy Pratt, Director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, which is part of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University Bloomington.

Fifteen years ago the incidence of autism was 1 in 5,000, compared to today's rate of 1 in 150, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While an ASD diagnosis can alter parents' dreams for their children, they should not lose hope, Pratt said. Much has been learned about ASD in the last 15 years, she said, and research into causes and interventions continues to grow at an amazing rate. Below are tips to help parents and families.

Set priorities and make a plan. Identify the top few issues and needs for your family and then develop a plan and enlist others in achieving the plan's priorities.

Intensive and ongoing interventions can have a positive long-term impact on your child. In addition to pursuing structured programming/educational options, realize that your child is learning continually. Be prepared to continually teach, coach and guide your child in simple and complex learning and social situations.

You will serve as your child's case manager and lifelong advocate, so organizing information about your child is crucial. IRCA has a Record Book for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders -- more information about this tool is online at <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/fpublications.html>.

Take care of yourself and your health. You need exercise, rest, laughter and time with friends and others. Families comment that having a child with autism is not a death sentence; it is a life sentence. Maintain your stamina. Practice staying calm and finding humor each day.

Simplify your and your child's life. Establish routines and structure, although your child's routine should not be too rigid. Use visual supports in your home to clarify expectations and routines.

Learn to be consistent with praise and positive information. Minimize negative comments and punishment. Children will not learn by being told what not to do; instead, they need continual and direct guidance on expected behavior.

Work on establishing positive relationships with professionals. You will need to work together closely to resolve difficult issues. Focus your efforts on attacking problems -- not each other.

Celebrate and build upon your child's interests and accomplishments. Be creative. Realize that these interests and strengths could lead to a career.

Small steps may be major accomplishments for your child. Acknowledge these and celebrate.

Find leisure and recreational activities that the family can enjoy together. Work with the school to teach skills that will facilitate your child's involvement in these activities.

Kids grow up, so start early to encourage and enhance behaviors that will help your child become more successful as an adult. Do not encourage behaviors that will minimize opportunities.

You can't do it alone, so ask for and accept help from others.

Facts about autism:

What: Autism is a pervasive developmental disability that impairs one's thinking, feeling, language and the ability to relate to others. It begins before age three and extends throughout an individual's life.

On the Spectrum: Autism is referred to as a spectrum disorder to signify differences among a group of people who share a common diagnosis. Even though individuals diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder share a common set of behavioral characteristics, no two individuals will be alike. Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified are often called autism spectrum disorders.

Cause: Once thought to be caused by inadequate parenting, science has shown Autism Spectrum Disorder to be a neurological disorder rooted in genetic and metabolic causes.

Cure: None.

Treatment: Many individuals with autism can make great strides in developing skills that will allow them to be independent in most features of daily life. Such progress, however, depends very much on early diagnosis paired with early and continuous intervention programs designed to promote the social, communication and adaptive abilities of

young children and families. Special thanks to Elisabeth Andrews, Indiana University Office of Media Relations, for assistance in the development of this feature.

## Library Corner

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New Items: The following new materials may be borrowed by Indiana residents from the Center for Disability Information and Referral (CeDIR) at the Institute. To check out materials, contact the library at 1-800-437-7924, send e-mail to [cedir@indiana.edu](mailto:cedir@indiana.edu), or visit us at 2853 East Tenth Street in Bloomington.

Center on Community Living and Careers. (2006). A roadmap to choosing an employment agency. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Institute on Disability and Community.

Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A.N., & Kuhl, P.K. (2001). The scientist in the crib: What early learning tells us about the mind. New York: Perennial.

- See more at: <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageld=40&newsId=70&newsType=2#sthash.aZ18C2zC.dpuf>