

THE VOICE



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Calendar:

Board Meetings

ASK Office—160 68th St. SW
Grand Rapids, 49548

6:30 p.m.

- January 10, 2022
- February 7, 2022
- March 7, 2022

Social Groups for Teens and Young Adults

- January 5 and 20, 2022
- February 2 and 16, 2022
- March 24, 2022

Parent/Caregiver Support Groups

- 1/18/22 (Newly Diagnosed)
- 1/25/22 (Transition Age)
- 2/22/22 (Newly Diagnosed)
- 2/22/22 (Transition Age)

Family Bowling/Pizza Party

- January 9, 2022

Family Movie Night

- February 11, 2022

Dragons Love Tacos at GRCT

- March 10, 2022

Family Ice Skating Party

- March 20, 2022

Theater Group Audition/Practices

- January 11, 18, and 25, 2022
- February 1, 2022



NEWS FROM ASK

Wow! It seems impossible that in July, I will celebrate 10 years as the Executive Director of ASK! I guess it is true that time flies when you are having fun!

When I took this position, I knew little about autism. What I have learned in ten years is amazing! Autistic people, I have found, are wonderful, kind, smart, capable, artistic and musical, determined, opinionated, loving, friendly, and honest.

One of the things I appreciate most about people with autism is their genuine and forthright nature. It's refreshing to be surrounded by people who will tell you exactly how they feel. The relationships I have formed with our ASK families are truly the best part of this job, and I thank you for

inviting me into your lives and letting me get to know your awesome kiddos.

At ASK, we really do a lot of stuff — more than almost any other organization our size. Of that, I am very proud. Only because we have dedicated and committed people behind the scenes can we do what we do. Thank you to our wonderful Board of Directors for ten fantastic years.

When we look to the future, we hope to continue to meet the greatest needs of the autism community with resource sharing, social programs, expanding our events, support groups, collaborations with other nonprofits, and connection to each other. We expect to be here for the long haul as the most active autism organization in West Michigan, and as always, we welcome your input in what we can do more of or do better.

Thank you for being part of the family of ASK! Cheers to 10 more years!

Pam Liggett
ASK Executive Director

ASK Elects 2021 — 2022 Board of Directors

Autism Support of Kent County is proud to announce its 2021-2022 Board of Directors. See pages 10 and 11 for Board Member bios.

Executive Board:

Richard Elias III, President
Doug Domine, Vice-President
Mary Kay Anderson, Treasurer
Jenny Shumard, Secretary

Directors:

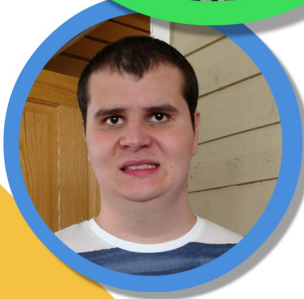
Jennifer Amorose
Nancy Cool
Lynne Kindy
Judi Kuiper
Tasha Oltman
Renee Walter

SAVE THE DATE!

2022 WALK FOR AUTISM — SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022

SOCIAL GROUP

TEENS AND
YOUNG
ADULTS



Wednesday, January 5, 2022

UNO Tournament

6:30 – 8:00 pm

\$5.00 payable at the event (free for guardians)

Special Olympics Unified Center

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Trip to the Grand Rapids Art Museum (Free)

6:30 – 8:00 pm

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Trip to Amped Reality – Virtual Reality Studio

6:30 – 8:00 pm

\$10.00 payable at the event (free for guardians)

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Valentine's Day Party

6:30 – 8:00 pm

Special Olympics Unified Center

\$5.00 payable at the event (free for guardians)

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Make Your Own Pizza Night

6:30 – 8:00 pm

Special Olympics Unified Center

\$5.00 payable at the event (free for guardians)



160 – 68th Street SW

Grand Rapids, MI 49548

Details on the ASK Website



2022 FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS Theater Group

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 6:30 — 8:00 pm: “Auditions” and First Practice
 Tuesday, January 18, 2022 6:30 — 8:00 pm: “Auditions” and Practice
 Tuesday, January 25, 2022 6:30 — 8:00 pm: Practice
 Tuesday, February 1, 2022 6:30 — 8:00 pm: Practice

SPRING 2022 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION:

We plan to perform two plays:

- one shorter one to be performed at the ASK Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 16, at 10:00 am.
- a longer play to be performed on Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30.

“AUDITION” AND PRACTICE INFORMATION:

Everyone is welcome in our group, and everyone WILL be given a part! The group is open to anyone ages 12 and up.

We will hold practices starting January 11, and will assign roles based on availability and performance at the first practice.

If you are interested in this group, you must come on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 6:30 pm for the first set of “auditions”.

Practices are probably going to be every Tuesday, beginning January 11, at 6:30 — 7:45/8:00 pm. (The cast of the shorter play may have some weeks off.)

We will meet in the auditorium of the Special Olympics Center. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the blue triangle roof. Head down the hall to the auditorium.

Please contact Pam to RSVP and if you have questions at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com



Conferences, Workshops and Webinars

Michigan Alliance for Families On-Demand Free Webinar Series

A webinar is an online presentation you can attend without having to leave your home or office. It's an opportunity to hear an expert speak for about an hour on a topic that interests you. These webinars can be viewed at any time on the Michigan Alliance for Families YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MichiganAlliance/videos>

Online Learning Opportunities

<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/>

20th Annual Autism Conference (Virtual)

January 14, 2022

The Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) is thrilled to host the 20th Annual Autism Conference as a dynamic virtual event featuring real-time sessions delivered by experts working in the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) field. To register:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p92bu9j>

(MAC) Annual Michigan Autism Conference (Hybrid)

March 2–4, 2022

This conference is geared to parents, educators, mental health professionals, and practitioners working with individuals with autism.

<https://www.michiganautismconference.org/>

Autism Alliance of Michigan

2022 Navigating Autism Today Conference

Friday, March 18, 2022

Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi, MI

To register: <https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/2022-conference-registration/>

Autism Alliance of Michigan List of Virtual and In-Person Community Events:

<https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/events/>

21st Annual START Conference

May 2, 2022 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center

219 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing, MI 48824

Focus: Secondary Transition

<https://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/start-conference-167.htm>

Annual Michigan Autism Conference

October 6–7, 2022

Radisson Plaza Hotel at Kalamazoo Center

100 W Michigan Avenue

Kalamazoo, MI 49007

<https://wmuace.com/mac>

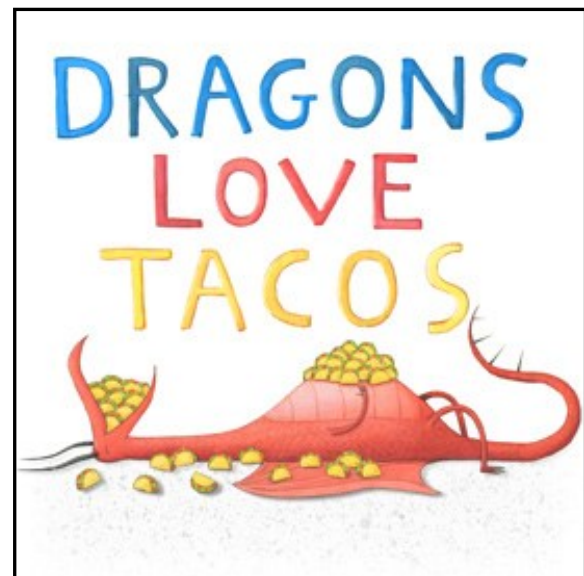


Dog Man: The Musical Sensory Friendly Performance

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2022 AT 1:30 PM
Wharton Center for Performing Arts—E, Lansing

Tickets:

www.whartoncenter.com/events/detail/dog-man-the-musical-sfp



Dragons Love Tacos! Sensory Friendly Night at the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2022 AT 6:30 pm

Tickets go on sale soon, so stay tuned!



Music Therapy Videos!

MUSIC THERAPY UPDATE: Thanks to the awesome creativity of the therapists at the Franciscan Life Process Center, we are able to offer and deliver Music Therapy — despite not being able to go into classrooms. Now everyone can get Music Therapy, too! ALL 30 of our custom-made-just-for-you Music Therapy Videos are up on our website now!

Thanks so much to the awesome Music Therapists at the Franciscan Life Process Center!

Anyone is welcome to use these anytime they wish. They are fantastic and can be found under the Resources tab on the ASK website. Enjoy!

<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/resources>



AUTISM SUPPORT OF KENT COUNTY EVENTS

BOWLING CLIQUE LANES

533 STOCKING AVE NW, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49504

Sunday,
JAN 9

4:30 to 6:30 PM

\$5
Per
Person



BOWLING, SHOES, PIZZA AND POP ARE INCLUDED IN ENTRY FEE. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED AND NO WALK INS ARE ALLOWED AS WE HAVE A STRICT CAPACITY OF 50 PEOPLE. REGISTER ON THE WEBSITE AT [AUTISMSUPPORTOFKENTCOUNTY.ORG/EVENTS](https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/events)

COVID-19 POLICIES

We ask all in attendance to self-screen before deciding to attend. You will be asked to sign a waiver of liability, as you attend our events and programs at your own risk.

- Check temperature. If above 99 degrees, please do not attend.
- If you have an irregular cough, please do not attend.
- If you have shortness of breath not related to exercise, please do not attend.
- If you have a persistent sore throat, not related to allergies, please do not attend.
- If you lose your sense of taste or smell, please do not attend.
- If you have been within 6 feet for 10 minutes of anyone with Covid-19 in the past 14 days, please do not attend.
- If you have traveled outside of Michigan in the past 14 days by bus, train, or plane, please do not attend.

AUTISM SUPPORT OF KENT COUNTY

It's
Showtime!*

Movie Night

\$5.00 per family

Special Olympics Unified Sports and Inclusion Center
160 68th Street SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49548

MOVIE TBD

Friday,
February 11
6:30 p.m.

Open to anyone with autism and their families. Includes pop, popcorn and candy!
PLEASE RSVP ON THE WEBSITE -- NO WALK-INS.

Masks
required if
not
vaccinated



FAMILY EVENT— Grand Rapids Public Museum

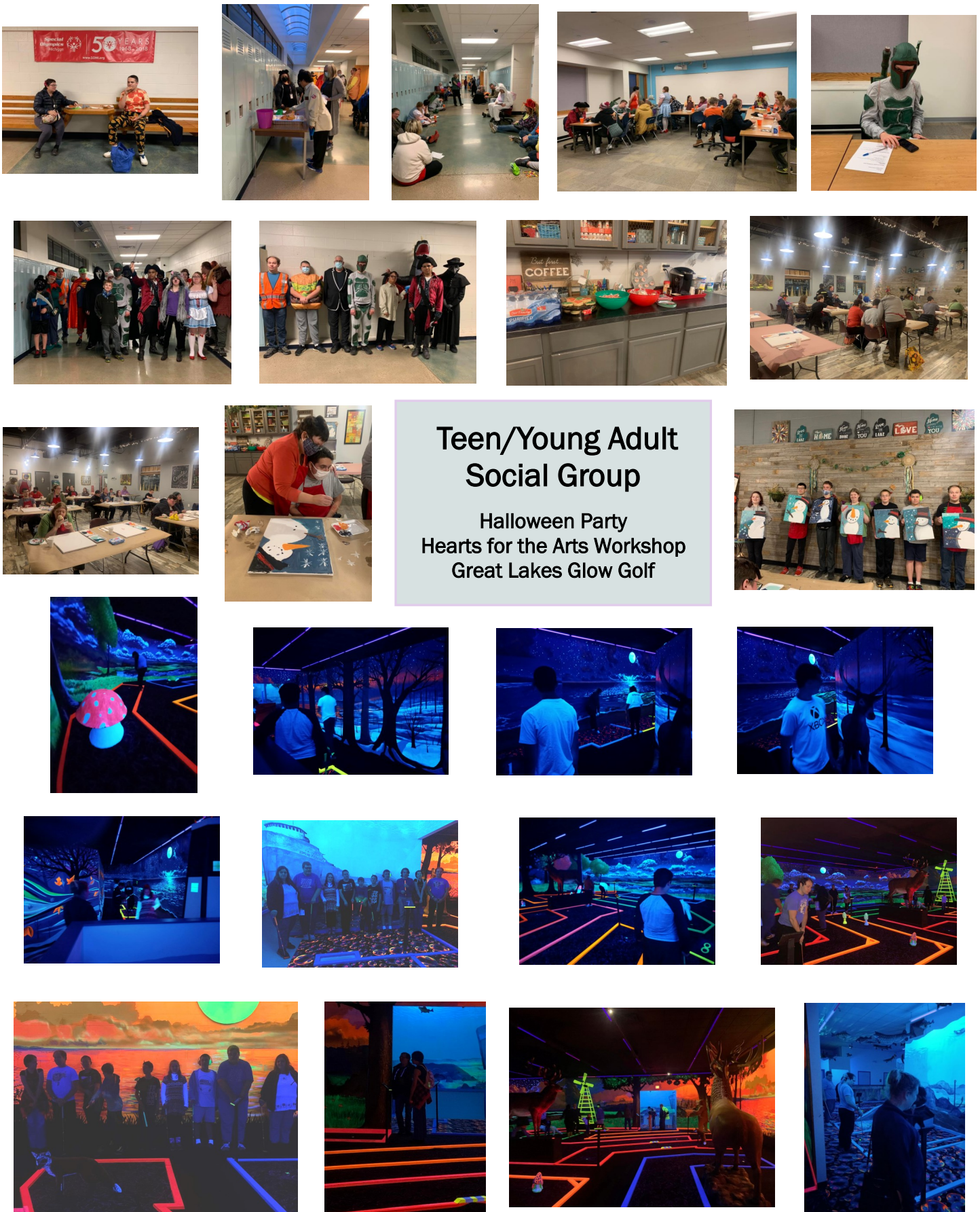
The Public Museum is always so much fun and so accommodating! We had 48 people come for a planetarium show and museum tour on November 13th.



Clubhouse Social Program

This group has grown in countless ways! They are more mature, better able to manage and control their emotions, more independent, more confident, and are forming wonderful friendships. We can't wait to see what 2022 brings for the Clubhouse members!







THE FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS THEATER GROUP

We were so proud to have produced our first performances in November 2021: "Explorers and Aliens" and "The Quest for Pixie Dust". Additionally, we had a few actors showcase talents outside of acting, such as singing, ventriloquism, comedy, music and art. It was a wonderful weekend!

CONGRATS TO THESE AMAZING ACTORS! WHAT A SHOW! We are so proud of these hard-working, talented, capable, energetic, funny, and awesome actors! CHECK IT OUT ON YOU TUBE! SEARCH FOR "FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS" OR GO TO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y-3qN-wgSE>

AS DIRECTOR LAURA SAID TO THE ACTORS: "DON'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN'T DO!"

Special thanks to our amazing Director, Ms. Laura Hall, and to Assistant Directors Christine Arnold, Holly Russell, and Madelin Hamlin!



When you shop at **AmazonSmile** and designate Autism Support of Kent County as your charity, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to ASK. For more information, and to add ASK as your charity of choice, visit:
<http://smile.amazon.com>

*Thank you and
happy shopping!*





Parent/Caregiver Support Group For Newly-Diagnosed Families

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 (Virtual) 7:00–8:30 pm
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 (In Person) 6:00–7:30 pm

This group is open to anyone, but will focus on issues facing newly-diagnosed families.

The group will be facilitated by ASK Executive Director, a School Social Worker, and an Autism Teacher Consultant.

Contact Pam with questions or to RSVP: Voicemail at 616-752-8577, text at 616-822-0944, or email at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

For the virtual meeting on January 18, the Zoom Link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86906327695>

Please contact us with questions on how to access Zoom meetings. We are happy to help!

For the in-person meeting on February 22, We will meet in room #5 of the Special Olympics Center where we house our office. It's located at 160 - 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids, between US131 and Division, on the south side of the street. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the BLUE triangular roof, and head down the hall to room #5.

Parent/Caregiver Support Group For Transition-Age Issues

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 (In-Person) 7:00–8:30 pm
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 (In Person) 7:30–9:00 pm

This group is open to anyone, but will focus on issues facing kids exiting the school system into employment, recreational programs, and housing.

The group will be facilitated by ASK Executive Director, a School Social Worker, and a seasoned parent. The January 25 meeting will feature a presentation by Lynn Lowe from Oasis Community on their housing endeavors.

We will meet in room #5 of the Special Olympics Center where we house our office. It's located at 160 - 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids, between US131 and Division, on the south side of the street. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the BLUE triangular roof, and head down the hall to room #5.

Contact Pam with questions or to RSVP: Voicemail at 616-752-8577, text at 616-822-0944, or email at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

**Visit our website to view and/or
download the ASK Community
Resource Directory:**
www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org



Meet the ASK Team

Staff

Pam Liggett, Executive Director

Pam is about to celebrate her 10th anniversary as Executive Director of ASK. The best part of 2021 for Pam was working to help create the Theater Group and expanding ASK's social programming. She is looking forward to raising more funds in 2022 to expand the impact of ASK. Pam loves the connection she has to the many special and awesome people ASK serves. Outside of ASK, Pam volunteers for Degage and Park Church programs and enjoys hanging out with friends and family. Pam is married to Jeff. Together, they have two kids, Abby, age 20, and Jeff, age 17, and two rescued pit bulls.

Celia Andrus, Newsletter Editor/Social Media Coordinator

Celia has been involved with ASK since 1999 and has served in several capacities, including Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Social Media Coordinator. Celia and her husband Larry have three sons—Christopher, Bradley, and Joshua. Joshua was diagnosed with ASD in 1991 at the age of six. While serving on the ASK board, Celia also represented Forest Hills Schools on the Parent Advisory for Special Education Committee for three years. Celia's background is in administrative management. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

Executive Board

Dr. Richard Elias III, President

Rick is serving his 14th term as President of ASK. He is an implant and cosmetic dentist in East Grand Rapids, taking special interest in individuals with ASD. Rick and his wife Amy have been married since 1989 and are parents of three sons — Jake, Luke, and Peter. Peter was diagnosed with classic autism at the age of 18 months in 1999. Rick is involved in many ASK projects throughout the year, including fundraising, Project Lifesaver, and the promotion of speakers and events. Rick chairs the yearly ASK Golf Classic and this year organized the second annual Ride for Autism, which raised over \$10,000. Dr. Elias looks forward to serving on the Board of Directors again this year and helping to promote autism awareness and ultimately benefiting those with ASD and their families.

Doug Domine, Vice President

Doug is a semi-retired business professional with a 31-year-old son diagnosed at an early age on the ASD bandwidth (PDD – NOS). He is a compassionate parent-advocate supporting young adults and their families in the Greater Grand Rapids area since 2012. Doug has been on the ASK Board since 2015 and is currently Vice President. Doug brings broad management and leadership experience from the public sector along with a parental insight on the transitional scope of late teens and adults with ASD. Doug has a BBA and MA in management and contributes on the ASK team with his perspective and proactive style.

Mary Kay Anderson, Treasurer

Mary Kay graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. She worked for various non-profit agencies for 15 years before going back to Grand Valley to get a Bachelor of Science Degree with an emphasis in Special Education and then completing her Master's Degree in Educational Technology. Mary Kay worked for Grand Rapids Public Schools for 17 years, 12 years as a Special Education Teacher and 5 years as

Assistive Technology Consultant. She worked 3 years for Montcalm Intermediate School District teaching students with Autism. Mary Kay currently runs ASK's Clubhouse Program and Puzzle Partners Social Group.

Jenny Shumard, Secretary

Jenny graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology. After graduating, Jenny worked with children with disabilities until 2008, when she started working as a Program Instructor in a Skill Building Program at Hope Network. She was also a Supports Coordinator for Hope Network, supervisor of a day program for Muskegon County, and a Home Supervisor for MOKA in Ottawa/Allegan counties. Jenny currently works as a Supervisor of Community Supports with MOKA and is looking forward to serving on the ASK Board again this year.

Directors

Jennifer Amorose

Jennifer is a graduate of Adrian College and Oakland University and has a Master's Degree in Special Education with a teaching endorsement in Autism. Jennifer is in her 18th year as an educator working with students with autism. She has worked on both the east and west side of the state and is currently the Autism Teacher Consultant for Caledonia Community Schools. She is also active in the professional group KENT CAN and is the Kent County Peer-to-Peer/LINKS Coach. Jennifer is passionate about connecting those with autism and their families with the resources to pursue a vision and a change for a better future. Jennifer and her husband Steve reside in Grand Rapids and keep busy with their three boys — Nick (10), Luke (7), and Jack (5).

Nancy Cool

Nancy graduated from Oakland University with a Masters Degree in Special Education. She worked for Grand Rapids Public schools for 39 years, 36 of those years teaching children with autism. She also coached gymnastics and was a special events coordinator from 1980 to 2000 for the gymnastics company now known as Gymco. While teaching at Pine Grove Learning Center, she used her Master Gardener degree to help maintain the sensory garden. Her final year of teaching was for Kent ISD while battling throat cancer. She is excited to be cancer-free and a part of this wonderful organization.

Lynne Kindy

Lynne was a social worker for GRPS for 28 years and now is proud to be employed by KISD. Lynne earned her B.S. in Psychology from the University of Michigan and her Masters in Social Work from GVSU. She has been attending monthly meetings of Autism Support of Kent County since 1991, and has been a board member since 1994. Lynne has also volunteered as a crisis counselor for B93.7's Roofsit For Kids — a fundraiser for abused and neglected children — for several years. Lynne and her husband Steve enjoy traveling and camping with their miniature dachshunds, Gretel and Buster.



Meet the ASK Team — Continued from Page 10

Judi Kuiper

"I have recently retired from teaching after 30 years with GRPS and KISD. I taught in a variety of various positions but my focus and heart were with the transition-aged students with Autism. I received my degree from Grand Valley with endorsements in Gen Ed/EI/MI and ASD. I received my Masters in Administration from Grand Valley and Oakland University. I have 5 children throughout the US and have been blessed with 10 grandbabies. I do love to travel (thank-goodness) along with camping, gardening and various hobbies. I am excited to be part of the ASK board. I want to continue to make a positive impact in helping each individual grow, gain skills and work towards independence while building confidence in their abilities."

Tasha Oltman

Tasha has been working in the social services field since 2006, with a heart for those who have disabilities. She currently serves as Supervisor of Community Supports with MOKA, in a program that provides opportunities for individuals to learn valuable skills for increased independence, and lead fulfilling lives through community involvement and employment. Tasha and her husband, Will, live in Grand Rapids and enjoy spending time antiquing, gardening, dancing, and finding a variety of interesting things to do in the area. Tasha is grateful for the opportunity to serve with ASK again this year.

Renée Walter

Renée is an Administrative Assistant for Purposeful Wealth Strategies. She is a graduate of Central Michigan University and was a preschool teacher for nearly 10 years. She brings with her a great attention to detail and strong organizational skills. She has always had a passion for helping people build better lives for themselves. Renée lives in Grand Rapids with her fiancé and when they are not reading or binge-watching shows, they enjoy spending time with family, being outdoors, and traveling.

Advisory Board:

Larry Andrus

Retired Business Professional/Parent

Doug Campbell

Campbell Consulting

Doug Domine

Retired Business Professional/Parent

Laura Enos

Self Determination Coordinator, Community Living Services

Sarah Frisch

Author, Person with Autism

Dave Gorman

Vocational Services Coordinator, Peckham, Inc.

Rebecca Johnson, RN

Anesthesia Practice Consultants/Parent

Carmencita Perdomo, M.A, LPC

Professional Counselor/Parent

Bruce Pienton

Senior Vice-President, Investments, Wells Fargo
Advisors/Grandparent

Dr. Anthony Richtsmeier, M.D.

Helen DeVos Children's Hospital

Joe Russo

Retired Business Professional/Parent

Dr. Michael Wolff, PSYD, ABPDN

Neuropsychologist/Co-Owner, BRAINS

Liz Zeisner, CPA, CBA, Principal

Rehmann Technology

FAMILY ICE SKATING PARTY



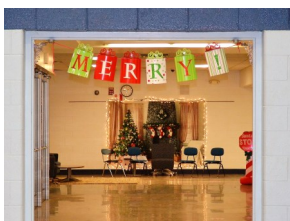
SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2022
12:00 - 2:00 pm

\$5.00 PER SKATER SNACKS PROVIDED!
DETAILS COMING SOON!

KENTWOOD ICE ARENA
6230 KALAMAZOO SE | GRAND RAPIDS | 49508



We had so much fun at our Holiday Party! We loved seeing everyone. Special thanks to Celia Andrus, Doug Domine, Judi Kuiper, Lynne Kindy, our volunteer helper elves, and Santa for making it such a great night!





In addition to the generous sponsors for our **Walk for Autism and Golf Outing**, many loyal supporters give to us each and every year. Thank you for your gifts in 2021 which allow us to do the important work that we do!

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT GAGE:

Vicki Hill
Troy and Amy Jo Short
Douglas and Tracy Warsen
Todd and Shay Shelton
Danny and Shari Dugard
Amy and Michael Wigger
Debra Nowicki
Shelly Marshall
Michael and Michelle Palma
James and Nicole Finney
Old Trail Foundation
Charter Industries
Recycling Concepts of West MI
Ken and Linda Owen
Karen and Joe Nordyke
Lauralee Rupke
Ruth and Ralph McDonald
David and Tammi Shymanski
Warren and Lillian Overton

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT PAWLOSKI:

Ruth Reed
Shonna Geels
Daniel and Nancy Pawloski
Sarah Haines
Marilyn and Robert Pawloski

IN MEMORY OF JOANNE BURDO:

Dr. Thomas Burdo, DDS
Paul and Pam Schwallier
David and Gwen Omara

RIDE FOR AUTISM DONORS:

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Jeff Hammock
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Jayne VerLee
Kerrie VerLee
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Laura Finelli
Mike Garbaty
Ted and Marty Damstra

GENERAL DONORS:

The Mitten Brewing Company
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The Brause Family
The Deasy Family
Eileen DeVries Foundation
Gun Lake Casino
J&H Family Stores
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NALS of West Michigan
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Dr. Tony and Jane Richtsmeier
Rockford Construction
Mitch and Belinda Stapley
The VanSweden Family
Great Lakes Communications Sales
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Jonathan Arnold
Steve McClure
Madeline Hamlin
Kevin Antel
Daphne Eastman
Daniel Orris
Thomas Westemeier
Jake McCarter
Don Pawloski
James Finney
Heather Fosket
Marjorie May
Clay West
Gary VanDuine
Dean Arnold
Stephanie Tromp
Quincy Butts
Robin Easley
Richard Toole
Dana Hiemstra

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS 2021 WALK FOR AUTISM SPONSORS

Event Sponsor



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Sign and Resource Fair Sponsors



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS 2021 GOLF FOR AWARENESS SPONSORS

Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Beverage Cart Sponsor



Meal Sponsor



Hole-in-One Sponsor



Bronze Sponsors



Tee Sign Sponsors



Autism Support of Kent County



2021 was a good year for Autism Support of Kent County. In fact, we *doubled our programming!* We provided over \$70,000 worth of programs and services to make life better for people with autism and their families.

New programs this year include the Full Spectrum Players theater group and Clubhouse – a young adults social and life skills group.

ASK's tried-and-true programs continued to provide **safe, healthy opportunities for fun and learning.** Our bi-monthly Social Group activities for teens and young adults with autism continued to flourish and became a place where friendships formed, fun was had, and individuals could be themselves. Monthly support groups – both

in-person and virtual – continued to be the place for parents to go for help along the autism journey.

Sharing resources may be one of the most important things we do. ASK answered over 340 calls, emails, and requests for help this year alone. In addition, we provided \$4,000 worth of programs and resource materials to enhance education in 16 local ASD classrooms. With your support, we will continue to do and be much, much more!

Autism Support of Kent County is funded 100% by donations, and 100% of the money we raise stays in West Michigan. **Please remember ASK in your giving this year. Together, we can continue to impact the lives of those with autism.**

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

Sincerely,
Pam
Pamela Liggett, Executive Director

THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THE ASK FAMILY.

As the most active autism organization in Michigan, our programs and services are needed now more than ever.

Please complete your reply card to make a donation today.



AUTISM SUPPORT OF KENT COUNTY



In 2021, ASK doubled program offerings to ensure that as other social experiences became less accessible due to the pandemic, individuals would still have support. Adding virtual options created a safe opportunity for those who couldn't participate in person.

2x PROGRAMS OFFERED
16 ASD CLASSROOMS SUPPORTED BY GRANTS TOTALLING \$4,000

340+ RESOURCE CONNECTIONS MADE
\$70K+ SPENT ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Programs + Services
Operations + Administration



SOCIAL + SKILLS

Several groups meet weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly for people with autism of different ages and interests to socialize and learn life skills.



FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS

This new theater group is off to a great start. In 2021, 19 actors performed in two productions for more than 350 people in total.



CLUBHOUSE

Young adults with autism can feel very isolated, especially during a pandemic. The new Clubhouse program provides weekly opportunities to make friends, discuss important things, exercise, make art, play games, and practice life skills.

"He was always different from the other kids...He was in soccer and Cub Scouts and, although the kids were not directly mean to him, they did look at and treat him differently because of his stimming, small size, and lack of coordination. Discovering ASK and the theater group was life changing for both of us. In the process he discovered comedy and learned to accept and even be proud of his diagnosis. PRICELESS!"

"This COVID quarantine has been extremely difficult for our daughter. Without her normal routines and social interactions, she has struggled with depression and suicidal thoughts. Now that she is able to have some social events to participate in and look forward to, she has a brand new outlook on life! We are so grateful for the opportunities that ASK provides for her to attend fun events with her peers and get to know people. This has truly been a lifesaving service and we could not be more thankful."

"Just want to say thank you to you and the ASK group for all of the great events you continue to host and the awesome work you do! Even during the time of COVID. Very impressive! Thanks for helping kids and families!"

"It's been a rejuvenating boost for me each time I get one of your updates. I'm excited to hear more about it!"



Remember ASK in Your Estate Plan

We often receive gifts in memory of an individual who has been touched by autism. Thank you to these special families who think of ASK at such a sad time.

Please remember ASK in your estate plans, too. These gifts are treated with the utmost care and respect. Contact us for more information on how you can include ASK in your charitable giving plans at 616-752-8577.



Heart of West Michigan United Way investors can choose to designate all or part of their annual contributions to Autism Support of Kent County.

To designate your gift to ASK, use the United Way Designation Form and write: *Autism Support of Kent County, Grand Rapids, Michigan*. Thank you!

Do you facebook ?

To find our Facebook page, simply type ***Autism Support of Kent County*** in the "Search" bar located in the upper left corner. Click on "like" to join our page and receive updates. *Be sure to tell your friends and family!*

Disclaimers

Articles, conferences, workshops, presenters or information contained in this newsletter or at meetings are not endorsed by Autism Support of Kent County. Articles occasionally offer information about medical/pharmacological research, treatment and therapies or legal issues. This information is given for informational purposes and is not intended to act as a substitute for professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult with their own practitioners for individual or specific advice.



Autism Support of Kent County

Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of parents, school staff, and others who actively seek to support and advocate for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families.

ASK is committed to partnering with local schools and agencies to promote the welfare of individuals with ASD in our community.

Please note that Autism Support of Kent County does not endorse any specific therapy, product, treatment, strategy, opinions, service, or individual.