

# THE VOICE



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## Calendar:

### Board Meetings

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

6:30 p.m.

- July 10, 2023
- August 7, 2023
- September 2, 2023

### Family Events

- 7/8/23—Cookout
- 8/8/23—Ceramic Painting
- 9/10/23—Roller Skating Party

### Social Groups for Teens and Young Adults

- 7/6/23—Game Night
- 8/15/23—Trip to Amped Reality Virtual Reality Studio
- 9/24/23—Bowling and Pizza Party

### Summer Theater Workshops

- 7/10/23
- 7/24/23
- 8/7/23

### Parent/Caregiver Support Group Meetings

- 9/19/23 (IEP Information)
- 10/17/23 (Dr. Kelsey Wollner of Pine Rest)

Golf Outing—7/28/23

Ride for Autism—9/9/23



## NEWS FROM ASK

Thank you so much for attending the Walk for Autism! What a great day! We loved seeing so many old friends and new faces. As an organization that exists solely on donations, we greatly appreciate all of your efforts to attend, raise money, and sponsor the event. You are appreciated!

The start of summer has been busy here at ASK. Our programs are going strong and new participants are joining us every day. Thank you to our staff—Jennie, Laura, and Ann Mary—for pouring their hearts into these special people. Our Board of Directors and Advisors are amazing too. Thanks to all of you for partnering with us to make what we do possible.

We are very excited to start offering a Social Group for Elementary Age kids! Individuals who come to our other social groups are more confident, less lonely, smile more, have more fun, and they

make friends! We are confident that this group for younger kids will offer all of these things too.

For the first time ever, we offered assistance directly to families via our new **Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program**. With the funds raised by Ryan and Dan and the support of the ASK Board, we granted funds to four families for therapy costs, headphones, a new mattress, clothing, music therapy, and even part of the cost of a power wheelchair. This program is growing, so stay tuned as we open applications again this fall.

As I close out my 11th year as Executive Director, I see the power of belonging. Being part of a community where you can be yourself is what makes life better for our people with autism and for their families. We welcome you into this community and would love to see you soon! We invite you to join us at a Family Event, Hike, Social Group, or other event this summer.

As always, please feel free to reach out for any reason.

Enjoy your summer!

Pam Liggett  
ASK Executive Director

## There is new signage at the Special Olympics Unified Sports & Inclusion Center!



Until further notice—and unless specifically mentioned—please enter via the EAST entrance under the triangle roof for all ASK events and programs. There will be a few exceptions, but we will be very clear when those take place.





**TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP: Game Night!**

Thursday, July 6, 2023  
6:30—8:00 pm

**OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR  
FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!**

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up.  
A guardian must attend too.

July's event is a Game Night at the ASK Office in the Special Olympics Building. We will play various indoor or outdoor games and have snacks. Cost is \$10 per participant. (Parents do not need to pay.)

The Special Olympics Center is located between US131 and Division Avenue on the south side of 68th Street. Park in the EAST lot, and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the main hall and look for the ASK sign.

Please RSVP to Pam at  
[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



**TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP: Trip to Amped Reality  
Virtual Reality Studio**

Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
6:30—8:00 pm

**OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR  
FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!**

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up.  
A guardian must attend too.

August's event is a trip to Amped Reality for Virtual Reality! The staff is great, and they have tons of games to choose from! No experience is necessary.

Cost is \$16 per player— half price—payable to Amped Reality.

Please RSVP to Pam at  
[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



**TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP: Bowling & Pizza Party**

Sunday, September 24, 2023  
1:00—3:30 pm

**OUR TEEN AND YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL  
GROUP IS A GREAT TIME! JOIN US FOR  
FUN AND FRIENDSHIP!**

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up.  
A guardian must attend too.

September's event is a Bowling and Pizza Party at Spectrum Lanes. Stay tuned for registration information!

Please RSVP to Pam at  
[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)





**AUTISM SUPPORT OF  
KENT COUNTY**



# GOLF CLASSIC

**JULY 28th, 2023**

**1:00 PM SHOTGUN START**

Proceeds from this event will be used to make life better and more productive for individuals with autism.

**THORNAPPLE POINTE  
GOLF COURSE**

7211 48TH STREET SE  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49512

**SPONSORSHIPS  
AVAILABLE!**

**\$125**

PER PERSON

**\$480**

FOURSOME

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL US AT  
**616-752-8577 or 616-822-0944**  
OR EMAIL: [pamliggettaskc@gmail.com](mailto:pamliggettaskc@gmail.com)

This event has been taking place for over 15 years, has a great following of loyal golfers, and event proceeds go to the important programs of Autism Support of Kent County. We provide over \$80,000 worth of programs and services annually that benefit the special people we serve!



# RIDE FOR AUTISM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023 @ 9 AM  
(RAIN DATE SEPTEMBER 10)



100 MILE, 50 MILE, OR 25 MILE RIDE ALONG  
MUSKETAWA AND WHITE PINE TRAIL

**\*\*\*ONE-MILE RIDE FOR KIDS AT RIVERSIDE PARK \*\*\***  
*(free entry and each rider will get a t-shirt)*

**PROCEEDS BENEFIT AUTISM SUPPORT OF KENT COUNTY**

*To sign up or make pledges, contact Rick Elias  
at (616) 516-6856 or richardeliasdds@hotmail.com*

- ★ \$100 ENTRY FEE. FREE ENTRY WITH \$250 IN PLEDGES/SPONSORSHIPS
- ★ LUNCH PROVIDED AT 25 MILE STOP
- ★ ALL RIDERS RECEIVE A CYCLING SHIRT
- ★ CABOOSE TO FOLLOW IN CASE OF BREAKDOWN





**NEW!!!**

## Elementary Age Social Group!

Wednesday, July 12, 2023  
6:30 — 7:45 PM

**WE ARE SO EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO  
OFFER A SOCIAL GROUP FOR  
ELEMENTARY AGE KIDS!**

Please join for a fun night of fun, friendship, crafts, and snacks! We will be making sensory bottles!

This group is open to any child ages 6–11 who has an autism diagnosis or is awaiting diagnosis. A parent or guardian must accompany each child.

Cost to attend is \$10 per child. (Parents do not need to pay.) Please RSVP and plan to

pay the fee at the event. RSVP by email to [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com).

We will meet in the ASK office at the new Special Olympics Center. The Center is located at 160 - 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids, between US131 and Division Avenue. Please park in the EAST LOT, which is the one closest to Division Avenue. Enter via the doors under the triangle roof. Head down the main hall.

Feel free to contact Pam at 616-752-8577, or by email to [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com).  
*We can't wait to see you!!*

**\$2,337 was raised for ASK from  
Big E's Sports Grill's soft opening  
at the start of June.**

**Thank you so very much, Big E's  
Sports Grill — you are the best!**



## SUMMER THEATER WORKSHOPS ARE A GREAT WAY TO TRY OUR THEATER PROGRAM, MAKE SOME FRIENDS, AND HAVE A GREAT TIME!



Join us to try out our Theater Program on a few Mondays this summer:

**July 10, July 24, and August 7**  
**6:30—8:00 pm**

These workshops are open to anyone ages 12 and up and will prepare you for our Theater Group!

Official casting and rehearsals will begin in early September and will take place on Tuesday evenings from 6:30—8:00 pm.

We rehearse and practice in the Auditorium of the Special Olympics Center, located at

160 - 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. It's between US131 and Division on the south side of the road. Enter via the EAST lot, which is closest to Division. Go in under the triangle roof and head down the first hallway. The auditorium is just past the double doors and the ASK office.

Performances will take place in late November or early December.

For more information, please email Pam at [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com).

*We can't wait to see you on stage!!*



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.*





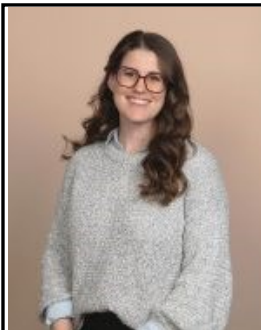
## Parent/Caregiver Support Group IEP Information and School Help

Tuesday, September 19, 2023  
7:00–8:30 pm

Join us to hear advice from an ASD Teacher Consultant on all things related to IEPs and school services! There will be lots of time for questions too. This is open to anyone.

We will meet in the ASK office in the Special Olympics Center, at 160–68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. The Center is located on the south side of 68th Street between Division and US131. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the hall to the ASK office.

Please RSVP to Pam at  
[PamLiggetASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggetASKC@gmail.com)



## Parent/Caregiver Support Group Advice from Neuropsychologist Dr. Kelsey Woolner of Pine Rest

Tuesday, October 17, 2023  
7:00–8:30 pm

How can you get the best out of your child with autism? How can you increase independence, motivate them, and set them up for success?

Join Dr. Kelsey Woolner, PhD, from Pine Rest, as she will help us navigate the challenges of autism. There will be lots of time for questions too. This is open to anyone.

We will meet in the ASK office in the Special Olympics Center at 160–68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. The Center is located on the south side of 68th Street between Division and US131. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the hall to the ASK office.

Please RSVP to Pam at  
[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



## 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.

Visit our website to view and/or  
download the ASK Community  
Resource Directory:  
[www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org](http://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org)





## JULY FAMILY EVENT: **COOKOUT!**

**Saturday, July 8, 2023**

**12:30 — 2:30 PM**

**Johnson Park**

**2600 Wilson Ave. SW, Walker, MI 49534**

Join us for a fun cookout picnic at Johnson Park! Family Events are open to anyone with autism and their family. Cookout includes hot dogs, chips, cookies, and pop for just **\$10.00** per family. **Specific meeting location is PICNIC AREA B2.**

Click here to register:

<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/new-products/7-8-23-family-cookout-registration>

(You will need to go to the cart to complete registration. The cart can be hard to see, but is usually located in the top or bottom right of the screen.) You will receive an email confirmation after registering.



## AUGUST FAMILY EVENT: **CERAMIC PAINTING!**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2023**

**6:00 — 7:30 PM**

Join us at our August Family Event when we will paint ceramic pottery!

This event is open to anyone with autism and their family. **Cost is \$10 per artist.** \*\*Financial assistance is available for all of our programs and events.

We will meet in the ASK office in the Special Olympics Building, located at 160—68th Street SW, Grand Rapids. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the main hall. You'll see the ASK sign.

Please RSVP to Pam via email at:

[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com), or by phone at 616-752-8577. We hope to see you then!

## SEPTEMBER FAMILY EVENT: **ROLLER SKATING PARTY**

**Sunday, September 10, 2023**

**2:00 — 5:00 PM**

**Kentwood Fun Spot**



## JOIN US FOR OUR SEPTEMBER FAMILY EVENT: A ROLLER SKATING PARTY!

We are so excited to be partnering with **Kentwood Fun Spot** for a fun roller skating party!

Save the date for Sunday, September 10, from 2:00 — 5:00 pm.

Cost is \$10 per skater with \$5 coming back to ASK! Food will be available for purchase with food specials available too.

**More information coming soon!**



## 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/>

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

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

### MSU Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders Family Professionals Conference

July 27, 2023 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center

219 South Harrison Road, East Lansing

Topics: Transition to Adulthood and Aging, Guardianship and Alternatives, and Education + Resource Fair.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8vbdfk>

### (MAC) Annual Michigan Autism Conference

October 12–13, 2023

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

<https://michiganautismconference.org/>

### Autism Alliance of Michigan

#### Navigating Autism Today: Grand Rapids Conference

November 17, 2023

GVSU Eberhard Center

<https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/>

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### 23rd Annual START Conference

April 22, 2024

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center

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



### Lights Up. Sound Down. Enjoy The Movie!

Showtimes - 11:00 am (It's always a good idea to check theater listings.).

<https://www.celebrationcinema.com/events-series/detail/Sensory-Showtimes>

7/1 – Ruby Gilman, Teenage Kraken

7/8 – Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny

7/29 – Barbie

8/12 – TMNT: Mutant Mayhem

9/30 – Next Goal Wins

10/7 – Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie

### The first round of grants from the **Jacks Voice Family Assistance Fund** have been chosen!

We had a huge number of requests, and it was very difficult to choose from so many worthy families. We wish we could have funded everything.

We are proud to have funded music therapy, headphones, a new mattress and clothing, therapy support, and part of a power wheelchair for some awesome individuals with autism.

Thank you for submitting applications. We plan to do this twice each year, so there are more opportunities for assistance coming!



## What is Jacks Voice?

Jacks Voice is dedicated to raising awareness and providing solutions for West Michigan families with autistic children. Jacks Voice, in conjunction with ASK, makes a difference by providing relief through Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program.

### Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program

Jacks Voice has joined forces with ASK, Autism Support of Kent County, to create Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program. Through this families with autism will be able to apply twice a year for relief and to help cover extra expenses they are dealing with.

## SOCIAL GROUPS

We currently offer four **Social Group Programs**. Email Pam, ASK Executive Director, at [PamLiggett@ASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggett@ASKC@gmail.com) for more information on any of our groups. Pam can be reached by voice or text at 616-649-2665.

### TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP.

This group is run by Pam Liggett, ASK Executive Director. This group meets either monthly or twice each month for fun and friendship. It's open to anyone ages 12 and up. Events are publicized on our EVENTS page, email blasts, and on Facebook. A guardian must accompany each individual to the events.

### YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP—PUZZLE PARTNERS.

This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. Individuals must be at least age 18 to participate. This group is run by Jennie Miller, ASK Social Programs Manager. Contact Jennie at [PuzzlePartnersYA@gmail.com](mailto:PuzzlePartnersYA@gmail.com). This group meets 3 times each month for fun, friendship and support. To participate in this group, you must be verbal

and able to communicate back and forth 3-4 times, be free from behaviors, and be able to attend on your own. To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with Group Leader Jennie. Events are only publicized by an email from Jennie.

**AUTISTIC ADULT MEETUP GROUP.** This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. This is a group for anyone with diagnosed or suspected autism who is over age 30. This group is run by Ann Mary Dykstra, longtime ASK volunteer and group leader. Contact Ann Mary at [PuzzlePartners@gmail.com](mailto:PuzzlePartners@gmail.com). To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with Group Leader Ann Mary. This group meets monthly for fun, friendship and support. Events are publicized through emails from Ann Mary only.

### ELEMENTARY AGE SOCIAL GROUP—NEW!

This group is open to any child age 6–11 who has an autism diagnosis or is awaiting diagnosis. A parent or guardian must accompany each child. The first meeting of this group is on Wednesday, July 12, from 6:30 — 7:45 pm. See page 5 of this newsletter for more information!

## FAMILY EVENTS

### Meijer Gardens — Creating with Clay — Hearts for the Arts Studio







## TEEN/YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

John Ball Zoo  
Hearts for the Arts Studio



## OPENING NIGHT!

MAY 12, 2023



Full Spectrum Players  
Presents

## Legends and Revolutions



Two Plays and Four Variety Acts



What may be "just another play" to the outside world is something much, much more to us. Being on stage and taking part in something like this is a lot more difficult for someone with autism.

What we see, however, when time and energy and love and resources are poured into these individuals by Director Laura, volunteers, and donors, is a new found sense of belonging, more confidence, friendships, tons of fun, increased flexibility, communication, and independence.

They change. They grow. They are proud. They smile. People clap and cheer for them. They support each other. They are part of something that is theirs.

It's pretty awesome. Thank you to Laura, Holly, and Madeline who make this possible!!

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS  
THEATER GROUP  
PRESENTING SPONSOR







## CLUBHOUSE SOCIAL PROGRAM

Meijer Gardens

Brian Harder — Falconer

Tye Dyeing Shirts

Steelcase E-Sports Area

Woodworking Project

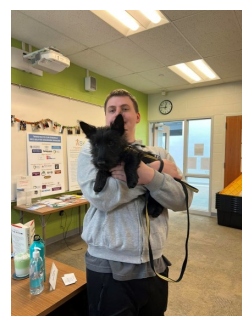
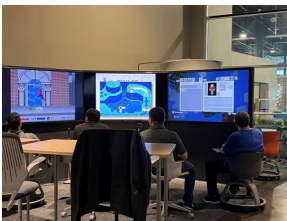
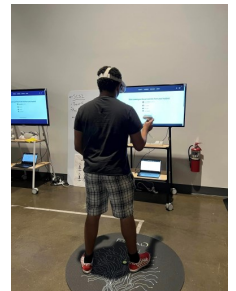
Keegan's New Puppy

Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding

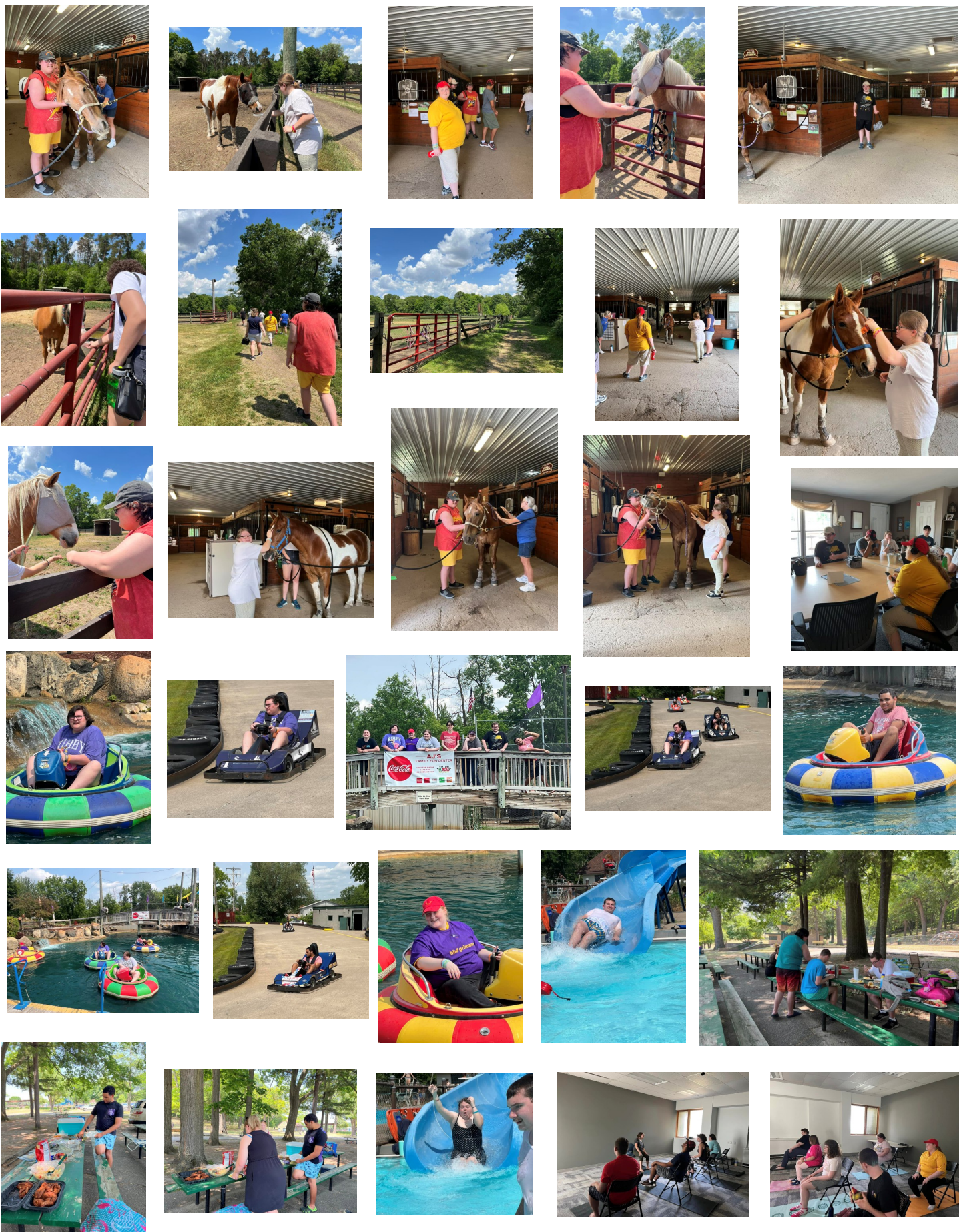
AJ's Fun Center

Potluck Picnic Pool Day

Yoga Day











**\$27,000!**

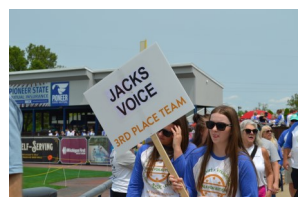
*We are thrilled to announce that the 2023 Walk for Autism raised \$27,000 after expenses!*

*Thank you so very much to our loyal and generous sponsors, to our many amazing donors, to our awesome walkers, to our terrific teams, and to our dedicated and committed board members and volunteers! Without all of you, we wouldn't exist. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving of your time and financial resources.*

*Special thanks to our amazing emcee, Larry Andrus, the Plainfield Township Fire Department, the Kent County Sheriff's Department, Karin's Horse Connection, and Whitecaps Mascots Crash and Franky!*

**Visit the ASK Facebook page to see more photos!**

**<https://www.facebook.com/autismsupportofkentcounty>**







THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS  
2023 WALK FOR AUTISM SPONSORS

### Event Sponsor



### Gold Sponsors



We see the world differently too



ADHD ONLINE  
DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT



DEVELOPMENTAL ENHANCEMENT  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



THIRD COAST  
ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY



Christian  
Mental Health  
Services



### Silver Sponsors



North America Fuel Systems  
REMANUFACTURING



REFINED  
SENSORY SOLUTIONS



### Bronze Sponsors



## Hiking Group!

Join us for some exercise, fun, and meeting new friends!

This is open to anyone ages 10 and up and their family who can safely complete a 60–90 minute walk. A guardian must attend. Please bring your own water! You must RSVP to Pam at [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com).

Please meet up at 15 minutes before the scheduled walk time as each hike will begin on time. If you are late, you may be left behind. For day of event emergencies, please text Pam at 616-822-0944.

The trails we hike will all be located in various areas of Kent County. We will meet at the actual trailhead to begin each hike. We'll plan on announcing a week in advance to firm up each respective hike, as they will be cancelled in bad weather. There will be a representative from ASK at each hike to lead the group.

*The tentative schedule (pending weather conditions) is as follows:*

*July 8: 10:00 am—Aman Park at Indian Trails Camp*

*August 12: 10:00 am—Cascade Peace Park*

*September 23: 10:00 am—Crahen Valley*

*Hope to see you on the trail!*



**Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) is on Facebook, so visit our page for updates on our programs and events. Don't forget to "like" our page to stay up to date on what's happening. Click [here](#) to visit us on Facebook.**

*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 ASK does not endorse any specific therapy, product, treatment, strategy, opinion, service, or individual.*

### 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**

