

THE VOICE



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Calendar:

Board Meetings

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

6:30 p.m.

- October 10, 2022
- November 7, 2022
- December 5, 2022

Family Events

- Post Family Farm—10/3/22
- Fall/Thanksgiving Crafts—11/5/22
- Holiday Party—12/12/22

Social Groups for Teens and Young Adults

- Halloween Party—10/26/22
- Trip to Glow Golf—11/17/22
- Holiday Party—12/15/22

Parent/Caregiver Support Groups

- 10/4/22 (Speech Therapy)
- 11/29/22 (Legal and Financial Planning)

"Just Wicked" Fundraiser—

10/29/22

Theater Group Performances

- December 9 & 10, 2022



NEWS FROM ASK

Happy Fall! Hope you are all doing well and staying healthy.

Last week, I submitted the final documentation for a large grant we are requesting from the Kent County ARPA funds. In doing that, I found myself reflecting on some things that have taken place in the world of ASK since COVID.

In January 2019, we began to focus on and implement some social programs. We did this in response to many parents and families telling us of their autistic person's loneliness and lack of friends. As we fast forward to October 2022, I am amazed at where we are! Not only are we running our longstanding Support Groups and Family Events each month, but we now offer TEN social opportunities each month! How far we have come!

Although we are proud of the programs that we offer, I am more proud of the changes we see in the people participating. We have

seen many friendships blossom and be sustained. We have seen people with autism supporting each other, welcoming new faces, relying on each other, and having fun together. Some of the people in our programs have gotten jobs since joining one of our groups. Others are talking about working on a driver's license. Some friends get together outside of group meetings, too. In every single person, we have seen increased confidence and more smiling. We hear them laugh more than before. We see more hugs and communication and better regulation of their emotions. So many have truly come out of their "shells". And, maybe most importantly, we see people who are happy here. When our group members say that "ASK is like a second home to me" or they tell us that "they feel loved here", we couldn't ask for better compliments.

So thank you for helping us make some special people just a bit happier! Thank you for helping us make it through COVID. Thank you for your gifts, so we can continue to do what we are doing and even add more programs to reach more people.

Thank you for being part of ASK and for helping us financially and through your gifts of time, too.

I hope to see you soon!

Pam Liggett
ASK Executive Director



Save the dates of December 9th and 10th for the next Performances of the Full Spectrum Players!



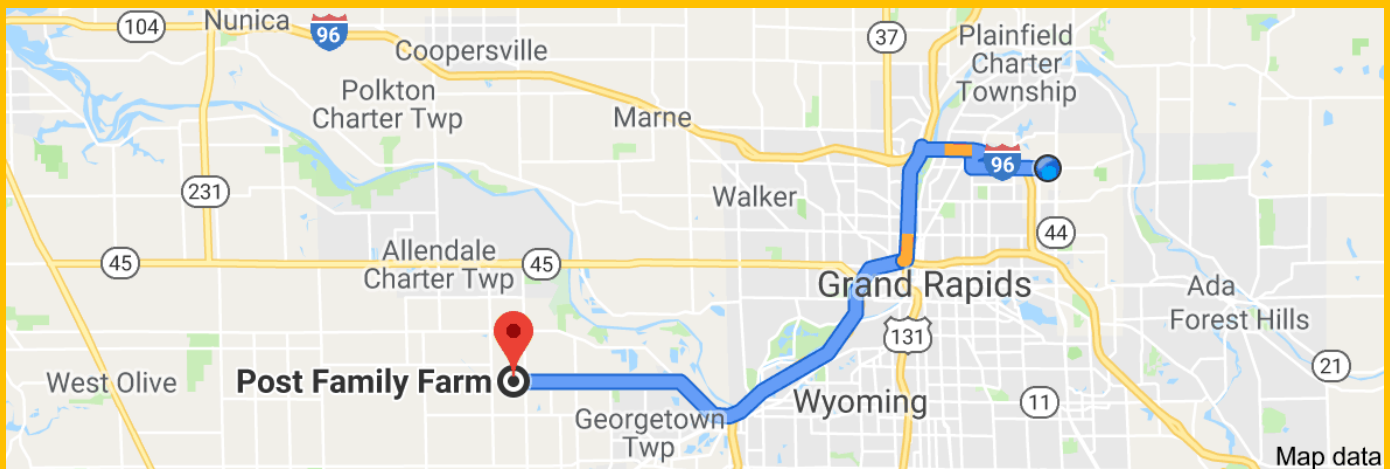
Post Family Farm and Autism Support of Kent County invite you to come out and enjoy an evening on the farm!

Monday, October 3
6:00 — 8:00 pm

Post Farm is a beautiful family-owned farm with tasty donuts, a playground, animals, pumpkin picking, and a hayride!

Cost is \$7.00 per person — Register and pay on the website:
www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org (click on "Events")

No walk-ins. This is open to the first 100 people.
You must RSVP to reserve tickets.



5081 Bauer Road, Hudsonville, MI 49426

FAMILY EVENT

Fall and Thanksgiving Crafts!

Saturday, November 5
1:00—2:30 pm



*JOIN US FOR A FUN FAMILY
EVENT WITH CRAFTS AND
SNACKS CELEBRATING FALL
AND THANKSGIVING!*

**This is open to anyone with autism
and their family.**

We will meet in a room in the new Special Olympics Building where we house the ASK office. The Center is in an old school located at 160 68th Street SW, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof.

Cost is \$5 per person. Click on the link to register. You will receive an email confirmation:

<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/new-products/11-5-22-family-events-crafts>

Theater Group News!

In December, for the first time ever, the **Full Spectrum Players** will be performing an original play! Director Laura Hall has written a special four-act play just for us and it is going to be amazing!

More information can be found on the website or by contacting Pam at PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

SAFETY WORKSHOP



On September 20, ASK was pleased to host a Safety Workshop featuring Deputy Natasha Smith from the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

If you would like to view the Facebook video, click on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/295631512467/videos/1145184452751952>

We Need Your Support — Ways To Give

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the United States, with 1 in 44 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) works every day to measurably improve the quality of life for individuals and families affected by Autism in our community. By donating today, you can help us in our mission to create connections and empower everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

Your tax-deductible gift to ASK will help support our many life-changing programs and enable us to

assist families living with Autism. Can you please join us to make life better for the special and capable people we serve? All amounts make a huge difference to us! Here are ways to donate:

- Via our website at:
www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/donate
- You can mail donations to:
Autism Support of Kent County, Inc.
P.O. Box 150348, Grand Rapids, MI 49515

**Donations to ASK are tax deductible
(Tax ID #27-0292064).**

Thank you for your support!

ASK GOLF CLASSIC — JULY 29, 2022

THORNAPPLE POINTE GOLF CLUB



Our Golf for Awareness Event was a great success and a ton of fun too! Thanks to our many generous sponsors, golfers, donors, and volunteers!

We appreciate you all!

Save the date for July 28, 2023!



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS
2022 GOLF FOR AWARENESS SPONSORS

Gold Sponsors



J SPENCER BARNES
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

TOM AND MICKIE FOX
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Rehmann
EMPOWER YOUR PURPOSE



Silver Sponsors



Beverage Cart Sponsor

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Hole-in-One Sponsor



Bronze Sponsors

DICK AND JOAN
ELIAS



OVD
INSURANCE

BRUCE AND BECKY
PIENTON



Tee Sign Sponsors



Spectrum Benefits, LLC
Employee Benefit Plans



WHAT'S NEXT COACHING
AND CONSULTING



Parent/Caregiver Support Group
Speech Therapy Options

Tuesday, October 4, 2022 (In Person)
7:00—9:00 pm

Join us for a presentation on options available in Speech Therapy!

This presentation will be given by a traditional Speech Therapist and a Rapid Prompting Method Practitioner.

As always, we will allow plenty of time for networking and questions.

We will meet in a room of the Special Olympics Center, where we house the ASK office. The Center is located in an old school building at 160 68th Street SW, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the main hall to a conference room.

Please RSVP to Pam at
PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

Parent/Caregiver Support Group
Legal and Financial Planning
Workshop

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 (In Person)
7:00—9:00 pm

Join us for a presentation on Legal and Financial Planning for individuals with autism.

Speakers will be Attorney Sarah Kirkpatrick and Financial Advisor Kevin Gardenier.

As always, we will allow plenty of time for networking and questions.

We will meet in the auditorium of the Special Olympics Center, where we house the ASK office. The Center is located in an old school building at 160 68th Street SW, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Head down the main hall to a conference room.

Please RSVP to Pam at
PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

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



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!

We have a new 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 WALK. A guardian must attend!

You must RSVP to Pam at:
PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

We meet up at 10:45 am, as the hike will leave promptly at 11:00 am. If you are late, you may be left behind.

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.

Check your email, the ASK website, and Facebook for upcoming hikes!

Hope to see you on the trail!



TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Halloween Party!

Wednesday, October 26, 2022
 6:30—8:00 pm

Join us for a Halloween Party with crafts, games, pizza, pop, and snacks! This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. We ask that a guardian accompany each participant. Costumes encouraged but not required.

We will meet in a room in the new Special Olympics Building where we house the ASK office. The Center is in an old school located at 160 68th Street SW, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof. Cost is \$10 per participant. (Parents do not need to pay.)

Please click on the link to register. You will receive an email confirming your spot:

<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/new-products/10-26-22-social-group-halloween-party>

TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: TRIP TO GLOW GOLF!

Thursday, November 17, 2022
 6:30—8:00 pm

Join us for fun, friendship, glow-in-the-dark mini-golf and arcade games!

This event is open to anyone ages 12 and up. We ask that a guardian accompany each participant.

We will meet at: Great Lakes Glow Golf, 3494 Plainfield Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Cost is \$10 each golfer, payable to Great Lakes Glow Golf.

Please RSVP to Pam at
PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com

**GREAT LAKES
 GLOW GOLF**

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/>

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>

AAOM — Navigating Autism Today Grand Rapids Conference

October 28, 2022 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

L.V. Eberhard Center (Grand Valley Campus)

301 West Fulton Street

Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Keynote Speaker: Kris Harrison, PhD

Presented by The Children's Foundation. The mission of this conference is to bring autism professionals in the fields of early diagnosis, education, independent living, employment and more directly to Michigan's autism community. To register:

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



JW Marriott

235 Louis St. NW

Grand Rapids

Sat, Oct 29, 2022

9:00 pm–1:00 am

Get those costumes ready, because **Just Wicked** is baaaaaack! We welcome you back to a haunted night of spirits, dancing, and fun. Twist and spin to music all night long presented by DJ Kung. Bring your best costume that speaks to your creativity and competitive spirit and be entered into our free contest to win a complimentary night at the hotel, cash prizes, or dining package.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online on Eventbrite or at the door. A portion of all proceeds will benefit Autism Support of Kent County.

Four R.I.P Sections coming soon! Must be 21 years of age and show valid ID to attend. Weapons and weapon props are prohibited with the exception of walking sticks or canes. Face mask must be able to be removed for ID verification. To purchase tickets before the event:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/just-wicked-2022-tickets-423595474467?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

COVID-19 POLICIES

- We ask all in attendance to self-screen before deciding to attend. Please do not attend if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or have recently been exposed to COVID.
- You will attend our events and programs at your own risk. All programs and services will be conducted in accordance with local restrictions and guidelines in effect at time of program.
- Please call Pam Liggett at 616-752-8577 with any questions or concerns.

ASK HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 12TH

6:00 - 8:00 PM



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

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE RETURN OF OUR REGULAR
HOLIDAY PARTY AND VISIT FROM SANTA!**

**MORE DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AS WE GET CLOSER
TO THE DATE. REGISTRATION WILL BE REQUIRED!**

TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Holiday Party!

Thursday, December 15, 2022
6:30—8:00 pm

Join us for a Holiday Party with bingo, crafts, snacks, and prizes!

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. We ask that a guardian accompany each participant.

We will meet in a room in the new Special Olympics Building where we house the ASK office. The Center is in an old school located at 160 68th Street SW, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the EAST lot and enter under the triangle roof.

Cost is \$10 per participant. (Parents do not need to pay.) Please click on link to register. You will receive an email confirming your spot.

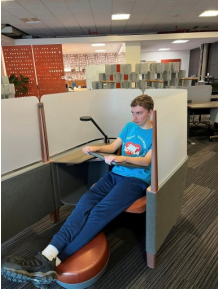
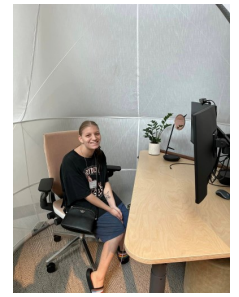
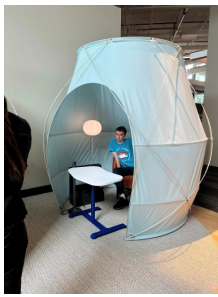
<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/new-products/12-15-22-teen-young-adult-holiday-party>

The 2022 *ASK Ride for Autism* event raised over \$12,000! The Ride consisted of a 25-miler, a 50-miler, a 100-miler, and even a free one-mile fun ride for kids!

Thanks so much to this hearty crew and to Rick Elias, ASK Board President, for making this happen!

Thanks also to Board Vice President Doug Domine for being on hand to help with refreshments and transportation.

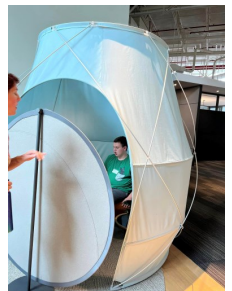
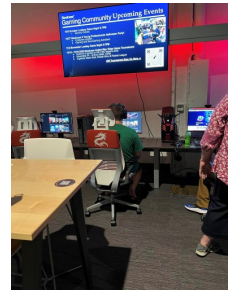




Steelcase

Wow! What an absolute joy it was to meet with designers from Steelcase. They are providing furniture for respite spaces for the Special Olympics Center. They wanted the opinions of some people with autism as to what the best comfortable, calming, and sensory-friendly spaces might look like. We felt listened to, valued, and seen. Thank you Steelcase for a very special day. Thanks also to Jen VanSquirer of Special Olympics for including us in this project.

"Nothing about us without us."



SOCIAL GROUPS

We currently offer three **Social Group Programs**. E-mail Pam, ASK Executive Director, at PamLiggettASKC@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 the EVENTS page, in our 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 Deters, ASK Social Programs Manager. Contact Jennie at 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 would be able to attend on your own.

To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with the Group Leader, Jennie. Events are only publicized by an email from Jennie.

AUTISTIC ADULT MEET UP 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.

To be eligible to join, you must have a short phone call with the 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

Coming soon! Stay tuned. We are working hard to make this happen!



Are you an adult with autism over age 30, or do you know someone who fits that description?

If so, join us for support, resource-sharing, understanding, and friendship.

If you are interested, please contact Pam: PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com or by phone/text to 616-822-0944.

Are you interested in a Social Group for Elementary-Age Kiddos?

We are gathering interest regarding the start of a Social Group for kids with autism who are in elementary school. Dates and times TBD.

If you are interested, please contact Pam: PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com or by phone/text to 616-822-0944.



FAMILY EVENTS

Cookout at Veterans Park
Blandford Nature Center



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.



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!



TEEN/YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

Bowling Party

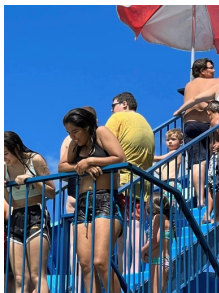


Once again, ASK was grateful to be chosen as Charity of the Month by the Mitten Foundation. Not only did we receive funds from the sales over the month of August, but we also received 50% of food sales from every meal on August 29th! This generous commitment to us resulted in ASK receiving a check for **\$2,950.00!** This donation will help to fund our many programs!

Thank you Mitten Foundation for all you do for us! It is truly appreciated!



THANK YOU MITTEN FOUNDATION!!



CLUBHOUSE SOCIAL PROGRAM

Bowling Party

Richmond Park Pool

Hearts for the Arts Studio

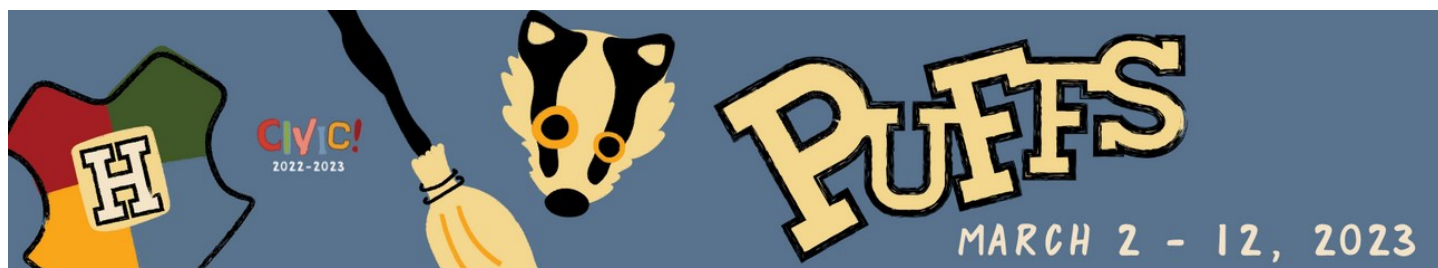
Deep Roots Produce Farm

John Ball Zoo





SAVE THE DATE FOR A
SENSORY-FRIENDLY
PERFORMANCE OF
"ELEPHANT & PIGGIE!"
Saturday, January 28, 2023
2:00—3:30 pm
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre



SAVE THE DATE FOR A SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE OF "PUFFS!"
Wednesday, March 8, 2023 • 6:00—7:30 pm • Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

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.