

# THE VOICE



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## Calendar:

### Board Meetings

ASK Office—160 68th St. SW  
Grand Rapids, 49548 — 6:30 pm

- October 9, 2023
- November 6, 2023
- December 4 2023

### Family Events

- 11/6/23—Hearts for the Arts
- 12/19/23—Holiday Party

### Elementary Age Social Group

- 10/25/23—Pumpkin Painting
- 11/8/23—Lego Day
- 12/6/23—Ornament Making

### Social Groups Halloween Party

- 10/19/23

### Teen and Young Adult Social Group

- 11/16/23—Glow Golf

### Full Spectrum Players Performances

- 12/8/23 — 7:00 pm
- 12/10/23 — 2:00 pm

### Support Group Meetings

- 10/17/23 (Dr. Kelsey Woolner of Pine Rest)
- 11/28/23 (Michigan Rehabilitation Services)



## NEWS FROM ASK

On September 27th, we said farewell and thank you to **Pamela Liggett** for her 12 years serving as Executive Director of Autism Support of Kent County.

Pam, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and constituents, we thank you for your years of service to our autism community.

You boldly led us through the COVID years — continuing and even increasing programming. Your development of Clubhouse and Social Groups for all ages has made a tremendous impact on our autism families.

The Support Groups and Family Events connected families to each other, helping those who often experience isolation and loneliness after learning of an autism diagnosis within the family.

The new Full Spectrum Players Theater Group has been ground-breaking for the young actors who are participating in terms of increased self-confidence and improved social skills. None of this would have been possible without your excellent organizational skills and tireless fundraising efforts.

Pam, your departure from ASK marks the end of an era, but your legacy will live on through the work you did and that we will continue to do. You leave very big shoes to fill and we are grateful for the time you spent with us. We wish you the best of luck in your future adventures!

Sincerely,

Richard Elias III, DDS  
Board President



## WE'RE HIRING!

Position: Executive Director

[Click here to learn more or to apply!](#)



## Elementary, Teen and Young Adult Social Groups -- Halloween Party!

Thursday, October 19, 2023  
6:30—8:30 pm

We are **combining** the Elementary, Teen and Young Adults Social Groups for extra Halloween fun!

Join us on Thursday, October 19, for pizza, treats, games, crafts, bingo and music! We are so excited to be able to dance to and enjoy Halloween music courtesy of our very own **K-Rock Band!**

This event is open to anyone ages 6 and up. No siblings please, but parents must attend too.

The Special Olympics Building is located at 160 - 68th Street SW, Grand Rapids, between US131 and Division Avenue. Park in the WEST parking lot, near the gyms, and look for greeters there.

Cost will be \$5 per person. (Parents can pay \$5 if they want to eat pizza.) REGISTER by clicking here:  
<https://www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org/new-products/10-19-social-group-halloween-party>

\*The cart may be hard to see, so check the top and bottom corners. You will pay and be sent an email for confirmation.

## GREAT LAKES GLOW GOLF

### INDOOR MINIGOLF

#### TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP: Trip to Glow Golf!

Thursday, November 16, 2023  
6:30—8:00 pm

Join us for glow in the dark mini golf, arcade games, and tons of fun!

This group is open to anyone ages 12 and up. A guardian must also attend as we are not insured for drop off.

Great Lakes Glow Golf is located at 3494 Plainfield Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Cost TBD — please check your email and the ASK Facebook pages for updates on this event.

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



## Best Prom Ever Halloween Homecoming for Teens and Adults

October 21, 2023  
Sparta High School  
475 W. Spartan Drive  
Sparta, 49345  
6:30 — 9:30 pm

Registration is now open through October 10, 2023! **Important change — There will be NO ONSITE REGISTRATION.** As we continue to keep Best Prom Ever a safe event, we are unable to allow anyone entrance who has not pre-registered. There will be absolutely no exceptions. Registration and more information can be found here:  
<https://www.bestpromever.org/registration/>



## NOVEMBER FAMILY EVENT: **Hearts for the Arts Studio**

Monday, November 6, 2023

6:00 – 8:00 PM



This Family Event is open to anyone with autism and their family. Cost is \$25 per artist, and you will take home a beautiful project! Family members can paint too.

Hearts for the Arts Studio is located on the NW side of Grand Rapids, near Mitten Brewing. Please RSVP by emailing [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



1141 Quarry Ave NW,  
Grand Rapids, 49504

## Elementary Age Social Group!

Wednesday, October 25, 2023  
6:00 – 7:15 pm – **Pumpkin Painting**

Wednesday, November 8, 2023  
6:00 – 7:15 pm – **LEGO Day**

Wednesday, December 6, 2023  
6:00 – 7:15 pm – **Ornament Making**



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

Please join for a fun night of friendship, crafts, and snacks! 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 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 ASK at 616-752-8577, or by email to [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com). We can't wait to see you!!



# JOIN US FOR THE FALL 2023 PERFORMANCES OF THE FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS!

Friday, December 8, at 7:00 pm  
Sunday, December 10, at 2:00 pm



We will perform in the auditorium of the Special Olympics Building. Park in the WEST lot and enter through the gYm doors. Check the EVENTS page on the ASK website and the ASK Facebook page for specifics as we get closer to the performances. Tickets are \$5.00 at the door.

We are proud to be able to offer each and every interested individual a part in this play! Our goal is — and always has been — inclusivity! You may see mentors on stage. You will see scripts, as memorizing lines isn't required. You will also see actors challenging themselves, becoming more confident, and stretching themselves!

**OUR FULL SPECTRUM PLAYERS ARE AWESOME!** Contact ASK for more information at 616-752-8577, or by email to [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)

**United  
Way**



**Heart of West Michigan  
United Way**

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

**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:

[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)

**Parent/Caregiver Support Group  
Tuesday, November 28, 2023  
7:00—8:30 pm**

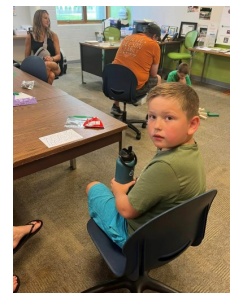
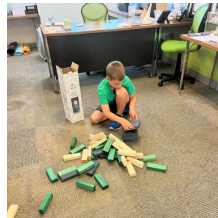


This group is open to anyone, including children if they can amuse themselves. (We do not provide childcare.)

November's speakers will be Cassandra and Nick from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). MRS helps with job training, job coaching, job placement, and much more. It's never too soon to be thinking about life after school. There will be plenty of time for families to talk with each other too.

We will meet in the ASK office, which is located outside of the auditorium of the Special Olympics Building. Enter the building via the Main Entrance, from the EAST parking lot, and head down the main hallway through the double doors, and you'll see the ASK sign. Please RSVP to:

[PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



## Elementary Social Group — Crafts, Games and Puzzle-Making



## 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/>

### (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/>

### #TalkingAAC 2023 In-Person Conference

October 19, 8:00 am - October 20, 4:00 pm

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center

219 South Harrison Road East Lansing, MI 48824

#TalkingAAC is the only conference of its kind in Michigan, focusing exclusively on topics related to augmentative/alternative communication (AAC).

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/talkingaac-2023-in-person-conference-registration-662452151217?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

### Autism Alliance of Michigan

#### Navigating Autism Today: Grand Rapids Conference

November 17, 2023

GVSU Eberhard Center

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

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>

10/7 – Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie

The Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program is accepting applications now! We are excited to be able to grant funds for the needs of autism families. Funds will be granted to autism families in November. **The FIRM deadline is October 15 at 5:00 pm** and no late applications will be accepted. To qualify, you must live in or close to Kent County and the applicant must have an official autism diagnosis.

Email [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com) for an application form.



## 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 [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com) or call (616) 752-8577 or more information on any of our groups.

### TEEN & YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP.

This group is run by Jennie Miller, ASK Social Programs Manager. 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.

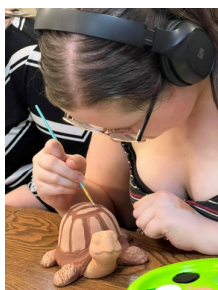
This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. Individuals must be at least age 18 to participate. This group is run by Jennie Miller, ASK Social Programs Manager. Contact Jennie at [PuzzlePartnersYA@gmail.com](mailto:PuzzlePartnersYA@gmail.com). This group 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.

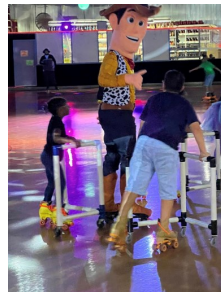
**AUTISTIC ADULT MEETUP GROUP.** This is a closed group that is ONLY for individuals with Level I autism and social challenges. This is a group for anyone with diagnosed or suspected autism who is over age 30. This group is run by Ann Mary Dykstra, longtime ASK volunteer and group leader. Contact Ann 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!

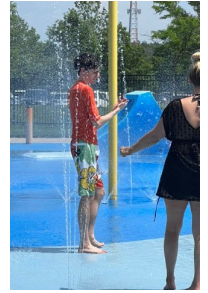
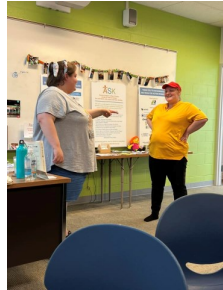
This group is run by Jennie Miller, ASK Social Programs Manager. This group meets monthly and is open to any child age 6—11 who has an autism diagnosis or is awaiting diagnosis. Events are publicized on our EVENTS page, email blasts, and on Facebook. A parent or guardian must accompany each child.



## FAMILY EVENTS — Ceramic Painting and Roller Skating Party







## CLUBHOUSE SOCIAL PROGRAM

*Improv Party*

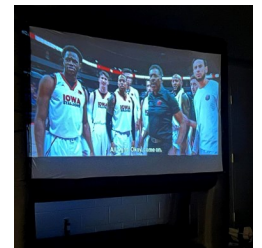
*Millennium Park Splash Pad*

*End of Summer Picnic*

*"Champions" Movie*

*Drawing Workshop at  
Hearts for the Arts*

*Mitten Brewing Company*





# ASK GOLF CLASSIC — JULY 28, 2023

## THORNAPPLE POINTE GOLF CLUB



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS  
2023 GOLF FOR AWARENESS SPONSORS

**Gold Sponsors**

**Silver Sponsors**

**Meal Sponsor**



**Bronze Sponsors**

**Hole-in-One Sponsor** **Tee Sign Sponsor**



It was a hot but wonderful day spent golfing and raising money for our programs. Thanks so much to the 32 foursomes who came out to support ASK!

A very special thanks to Laura Hall, Theater Director, Ryan Hall, Full Spectrum Player Actor, and Rachel Brott, ASK Clubhouse Member, who welcomed and thanked guests. Having our people talk about what ASK means to them is so special!

This event would not be possible without the efforts of Dr. Rick Elias and Larry Andrus and the many Board Members and volunteers who spent the day with us. *Thank you all!*

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





# RIDE FOR AUTISM — SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

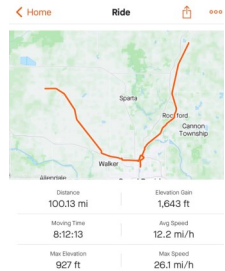


***This awesome group came out to Ride for Autism on September 16th and raised \$10,000 for ASK programs!!!***

Thanks so much to Dr. Rick Elias, President of the ASK Board, for making this happen and to Mary Kay Anderson for helping with the event.

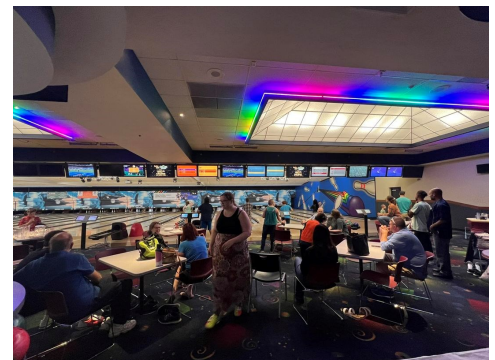
Thanks to the group of riders who rode 50 miles! Congratulations to Rick and Tyler who competed the 100 mile ride! Wow — that's a lot of time on a bike!

***Thank you all!***



## TEEN/YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

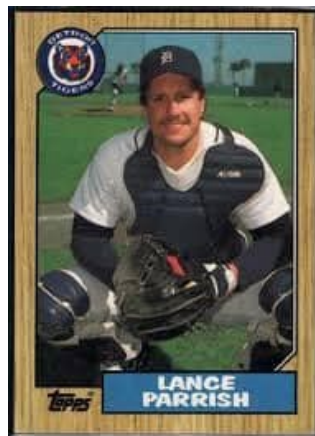
Game Night  
Amped Reality  
Bowling Party







It was a great day on August 5th at Maple Hill at the **Jacks Voice Golf Outing** to benefit the new Family Assistance Program and ASK. It was awesome to see **Jack**, the adorable honoree of the outing, **K-Rock**, and **Lance Parrish**! Thanks so much to Ryan and Dan for your hard work in helping and supporting autism families. You are appreciated!



**JACKS VOICE**

**SECOND ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**  
 August 5, 2023 At Maple Hill Golf Course  
 COST: \$360 per TEAM of 4  
 Morning Session: SOLD OUT  
 Afternoon Session: 2:00 pm shotgun start.  
 Dinner provided afterwards  
 Sign Up By Emailing: [jacksvoice7@gmail.com](mailto:jacksvoice7@gmail.com)  
 First Come First Served!  
 100% of proceeds go to ASK and Jacks Voice Family Assistance Program

HOLE IN ONE WINS A CAR!

SPECIAL GUEST  
**LANCE PARRISH**

501c #27-0292064



**CALLING  
ALL  
TEACHERS**

Hello ASD Teachers! Join our email list to keep your families informed of all that we offer in terms of events and programs. We also have a membership to the Grand Rapids Public Museum just for your use, so let us know if you want to take your ASD class to the museum and/or planetarium! For more information, email [PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com](mailto:PamLiggettASKC@gmail.com)



**December 19, 2023**

**Save the date for the ASK Holiday Party!**  
**Location and details TBA!**

## We Need Your Support

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the United States, with 1 in 36 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](http://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!***

*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.*

**Autism Support  
of Kent County**

**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.**



### ***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.

#### **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.

