

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

Magazine

West Virginia Autism Training Center at
Marshall University

2019

The West Virginia Autism Training Center @ Marshall University

West Virginia Autism Training Center

Andrew Nelson

Marc Ellison

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/ac_magazine

The West Virginia

AUTISM

Training Center

@ Marshall University



Possibilities

A Passion for Diving

Sensory-Friendly Train Ride

College Program Expansion

ZONES CAMP 2019

WV ATC FACTS

THE MISSION OF THE AUTISM TRAINING CENTER is to provide support to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder as they pursue a life of quality. This is done through appropriate education, training, and support for professional personnel, family members, guardians, and others important in the life of the person with autism.

- WV ATC serves the entire state of West Virginia
- WV ATC serves individuals of all ages
- WV ATC provides training in autism for more than 2000 people annually
- Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III services are provided no cost to registered families
- WV ATC sponsors the College Support Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- WV ATC collaborates with the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Special Programs and the Autism Society of West Virginia

For more information contact:
WV Autism Training Center
Old Main 316
1 John Marshall Drive
Huntington, West Virginia 25755
Toll Free: 800-344-5115
All others: 304-696-2332



in this issue

Greetings

- 5 Note from the Executive Director
- 5 Editor's Note

Trainings, Events, and News

- 6 Autism Across the Lifespan Conference 2019-2020
- 7 WVATC and ASA West Virginia Resource Guide for West Virginia Schools
- 7 West Virginia Autism Mentor Training - New Online Option!
- 11 News from the ATC Lending Library
- 8 Meet the Autism Training Center Staff: Hillary Adams

Possibilities

- 9 A Passion for Diving by Carol Giles
- 12 Sensory-Friendly Train Ride with Santa by Leigh Saville
- 14 WVATC CPSASD, Shepherd University, and Updates by Jackie Clark
- 15 Technical Assistance Center Success Story by Michael Powell
- 17 Leadership and ASD in West Virginia by Andrew Nelson
- 18 Zones Camp 2019! by Bonnie Marquis and Julie O'Malley

Creative Community

- 19 Artist Profile – DJ. Svoboda
- 20 Jerry's Movie Reviews

Autism State Updates

- 21 ASA-WV
- 21 West Virginia APBS Network Update
- 21 West Virginia Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- 21 West Virginia Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- 22 Project AWARE



WVATC

@ Marshall University

Dr. Marc Ellison
The West Virginia
Autism Training Center
Executive Director

Andrew Nelson
Dr. Marc Ellison
Editors

Members of the WV Autism Training
Center Advisory Board

Tracy Hunt (Chair)
Melanie Britton
Julie Dial
Carol Giles
Christy Robinson
Nathalie Henchey
Susan Beck
Lynn Browder
Dr. Teresa Eagle
Dr. Vijay Shah
Dr. Bill Bissett
Aarthy V. Shah
Dr. Christine Chambers
Cathy Jo Higgins
Cathy Wallace, J.D.

WV ATC website
www.marshall.edu/atc
One John Marshall Drive
316 Old Main
Huntington, WV 25755

Tel: 304-696-2332
Fax: 304-696-2846
Toll Free (WV only) 1-800-344-5115



*Cover photograph courtesy of
Kids Sea Camp/Carol Giles*

A photograph of Marshall University. In the foreground, a brick wall features a silver metal band with the text "MARSHALL UNIVERSITY" in dark blue, serif, all-caps letters. Below the wall is a garden bed with pink, white, and blue flowers. In the background, a large, multi-story red brick building with a prominent tower and arched windows is partially obscured by lush green trees and bushes under a clear blue sky.

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

Greetings

From the Executive Director



From the Executive Director

Marc Ellison, Ed.D.

Greetings, from the West Virginia Autism Training Center!

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Me? In my early teens I told people who asked that I wanted to be a mechanical engineer. I had no clue what a mechanical engineer did, but I thought the title sounded cool. A few years later, after spending some time around professionals who did that sort of work – and recognizing my math skills were very poor – I realized that engineering (of any kind) was not in my future.

Soon after arriving at college I met someone diagnosed with ASD and started working for Dr. Ruth Sullivan. I was hooked! I knew immediately that my personal path was to carve out a career supporting folks with autism.

It was experience that helped me understand that I was not well suited for engineering, and experience that opened for me the possibilities of a career in human service. Without the experience I would have just continued to guess at what I wanted to do.

Experience presented me with *possibilities*. And possibilities presented me with real options.

WVATC's Fall 2019 magazine reminds us that possibilities exist. Whether we're learning new skills like scuba diving, participating in cool holiday activities in our neighborhoods, learning skills that help us grow professionally, or learning new skills that help us improve our life quality, our success often comes down to recognizing and believing in possibility.

What possibilities exist for you?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Ellison'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marc Ellison, Ed.D.
Executive Director
The WV Autism Training Center

Editor's Note:

Dear Readers and Friends,

Thank you for your support and interest in our magazine and all of the stories and news it holds. We are excited to let you know that our past, present and future magazines will be available as part of the Marshall University Digital Scholar archives. All issues are accessible via the following link: https://mds.marshall.edu/ac_magazine/. Please let us know what you think about this resource and collection!

As always, we strive to bring you the highest quality magazine experience possible. We want to hear from you and welcome any letters, suggestions or inquiries. Please contact the editor at nelsona@marshall.edu.

Thank you for reading and please keep in touch.

Andrew Nelson

Trainings, Events, and News

Autism Across the Lifespan Conference 2019-2020

Our third annual Autism Across the Lifespan Conference was held on the Marshall University Campus in Huntington, West Virginia Sept. 5-6, 2019. People with ASD, parents, professionals and other community members gathered to hear local and national speakers presenting on a variety of topics and strategies to support individuals with ASD of all ages. We look forward to hosting our fourth annual conference Sept. 10-11, 2020.



Save the Date

September 10-11, 2020
*** 4th Annual**

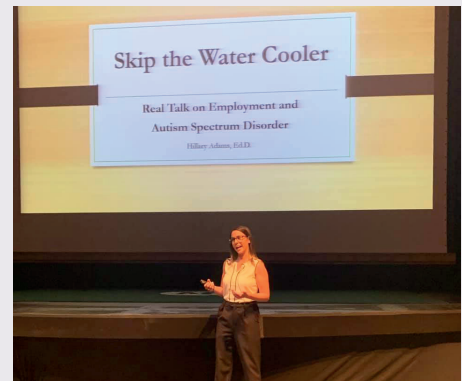
Autism Across the Lifespan Conference
Topics and times to be announced
Conference will take place at Marshall University



**WEST VIRGINIA
AUTISM TRAINING CENTER**
AT MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
West Virginia

Please watch our social media pages for updates on the Autism Across the Lifespan Conference happening Sept. 10-11, 2020!



Dr. Hillary Adams shares her expertise on employment supports



Former Michigan State basketball player Anthony Ianni talks about his life as a person with ASD



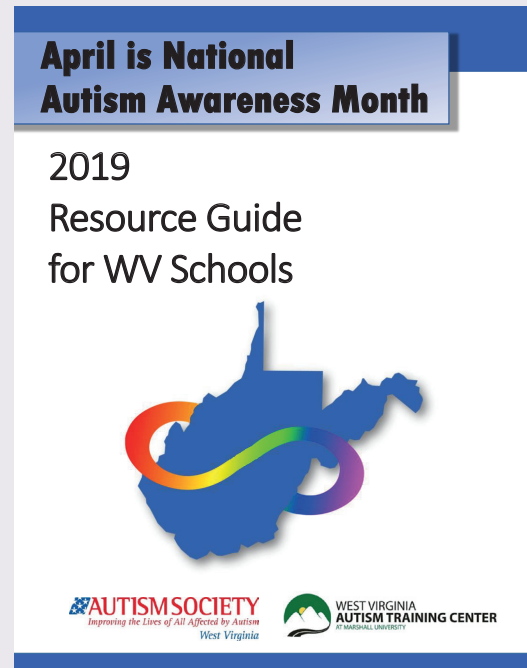
Dr. Jim Ball presents on Video Modeling techniques

West Virginia Autism Training Center and Autism Society of America – West Virginia Resource Guide for West Virginia Schools

WVATC Autism Specialist Leigh Saville worked with members of the Autism Society of America West Virginia to create an autism awareness resource guide for West Virginia schools. The guide is designed to help educators increase ASD awareness in their schools and classrooms, and is applicable year-round. Content in the guide covers a wide array of topics:

- School-wide and classroom awareness ideas
- Sample lessons and activities
- Links to resources
- Information about ASD-specific community organizations in West Virginia

The resource guide is free to all. Please download from the WVATC website at the following link:
www.marshall.edu/atc/files/2019-WV-Autism-Awareness-Toolkit.pdf

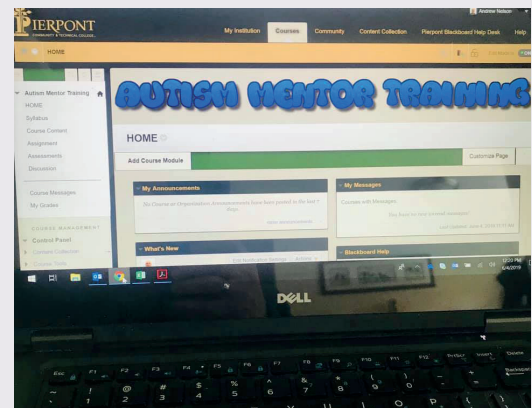


West Virginia Autism Mentor Training - New Online Option!

The WVATC has conducted Autism Mentor training at various in-person locations for nearly two decades. This training is designed to help aides working in West Virginia schools meet the training standards required to become an autism mentor according to policies established by the West Virginia Department of Education. Due to travel and geographic limitations, a percentage of aides were unable to access these trainings.

Recently, the WVATC and Pierpont Community and Technical College formed a partnership to offer an online option for autism mentor training. Registrants participating in the online course receive 10 weeks of instruction and course material similar to the in-person training and can apply the hours to their autism mentor training requirements. The course is open to anyone interested in growing their knowledge and skills, but is designed specifically for those seeking autism mentor certification.

To learn more about this course and access registration, please contact Kimberly Cale at Pierpont Community and Technical College at 304-534-7887



Meet the Autism Training Center Staff:

HILLARY ADAMS, Ed.D.



Title/Role: Employment Coordinator for the College Program for Students with ASD

How long have you worked with the WV ATC?

Eight amazing years!

How did you become interested in supporting individuals with ASD?

I am very lucky to have found my career in supporting individuals with ASD. I truly stumbled into it. One day I had a random meet-up with Dr. Marc Ellison, director of the WVATC and someone I knew from Marshall University's counseling program, and I learned from him of an opening in the College Program for Students with ASD. On my first day, I was introduced to about 25 college students with ASD in the span of an hour. It was a whirlwind and I was hooked. The talents and interests of those individuals stood out immediately and I wanted nothing more than to see them flourish in college. I am just fortunate enough to be a tiny cog in their success stories the past eight years.

What interests/passions drive the work you do each day?

I have had the pleasure of watching many students with ASD cross the stage at their graduation ceremonies. It's a momentous day. Yet even with the degrees, the drive, the intelligence, and the skills to succeed in a job, many graduates with ASD are challenged to find full-time work – even positions that are far below their skill level. For years, individuals with ASD have worked tirelessly to meet the standards that society places on them. Be enthusiastic and eager for the job, but not too eager. Flaunt what you are good at, but be humble. Tell us your weakness, but not your actual weaknesses. The expectations in the employment process are outdated and flawed. Employers are finding the employees that interview best, not the employees who can do the job best. It's finally time for the rest of us to change the standards, embrace differences and nurture the talents and intellect of people with ASD. I believe it's my duty to push for this change and I think employers are ready. They just need the education and support to make it happen.

What are some essential things employers can do today to develop ASD-inclusive workplaces?

First, employers must recognize the loyal and highly qualified workforce they are missing out on. People with autism have average to above-average intelligence. Some may have social communication difficulties that stand out, particularly in an interview. The hope is that employers will see past awkward verbal and nonverbal communication and recognize the skills, in-depth knowledge, and diversity that someone with autism can bring to their workplace.

Second, employers can make their work environment very autism friendly in low-cost, meaningful ways. Employees with autism generally need things such as written instructions, a supervisor or peer to go to for questions, permission for small work breaks, a workspace that sets away from distracting noises or lower-wattage light bulbs. These very simple, but effective, accommodations result in quality work with little inconvenience.

Finally, the WVATC provides the "Allies Supporting Autism Diversity" training tailored to employers. By learning more about the diagnosis, recognizing how autism may affect someone on the job, and learning simple strategies to become allies, employers and coworkers can embrace diversity while gaining fantastic employees.

Any future trainings or workshops we can watch for?

Please reach out to the WVATC or the College Program for Students with ASD to learn more about the Allies Supporting Autism Spectrum Diversity Training. We tailor each 1-2 hour training to the specific needs of participants. Help us spread the ally mentality!

Contact Information:

Hillary Adams: Brown235@marshall.edu

WVATC Phone: 304-696-2332

<https://wvatcasd.wixsite.com/allies>

<https://www.facebook.com/asdalliesinitiative/>

Possibilities: A Passion for Diving

by Carol Giles

I believe that one of the best things we can do is provide the support and opportunities to build on the strengths of our ASD kids, allowing their potential to shine. It is one of the most important things we can do. With help and support from my husband and myself as well as some very supportive, educated, dedicated individuals, at 15, our son Chris has his PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors, one of the most well-known dive certifiers) Open Water Certification. The certification involves developing knowledge via online education or books, taking an online and written test and demonstrating practical use of the knowledge through both confined (often pool) water dives and then open water dives.

Chris has always loved the water – swimming, snorkeling, floating. A lot of that seemed sensory. Coupled with heat sensitivity, it followed (once we got past the runner stage) that our go-to vacations in the summer would involve water.

My husband and I are avid both scuba divers. We were at a dive shop picking up some equipment and had Chris with us when he was about 9. He walked in to where they had a pool for their confined water dives and one of the dive masters who had been a principal at one of the local schools and has worked with a number of kids noticed his interest and asked if Chris could try diving. That is when we first realized that maybe Chris could do it and influenced what we did moving forward.

We used to take a separate vacation just for diving, but realized that one of the places we enjoyed diving, Roatan, also had a kid's camp we could take Chris to. The camp involved snorkeling, a "bubble-makers" intro to scuba where he used scuba equipment in 3 to 6 feet of water under supervision, and working with dolphins. The camp did not normally accommodate special needs, but after discussion, they allowed Chris to participate with a dedicated aide. It was so successful, and he enjoyed it so much, that after that, we took more water vacations, one that included snorkeling with dolphins in the open ocean and another snorkeling with whale sharks (the 40- to 60-foot ones). I became



convinced that with Chris' comfort level in the water, improved comprehension and capability to follow directions, that he could become certified in scuba diving. However, just because I was convinced didn't mean it was easy.

On our whale shark trip, I scheduled one-day snorkeling with whale sharks and then a resort diving course a couple of days later just to gauge his diving capability in a situation that doesn't have a lot of requirements and is very controlled. We had our own instructor who was very patient and helpful. I explained what I wanted and worked side by side with the instructor to make sure Chris listened and understood the instructions, often pointing, repeating or showing a drawing. When Chris did the pool demo, he was relaxed and performed perfectly. The instructor commented that he was impressed and he really learned a lot about how to work with special kids, especially how to tailor communication. He saw what the possibilities were. Next step was onto a boat in amazingly clear blue water. Everything was going great. Chris, his dive master and I waited until the rest of the boat went into the water and then we did giant strides into the water. As we started down the boat line, Chris started getting visibly agitated and pointed to his ears. Thinking he was having a problem equalizing, we had him go back up a little to equalize. He continued to be agitated so we went up, kicked back to the boat and got out. Back on the boat, he said his ears hurt. We explained several times about equalizing, but he said it hurt.



Then I noticed the back of his ears were raw – from no sunscreen (not allowed) on the whale shark trip. His ears didn't burn in the pool, but the salty water caused them to burn. Needless to say, diving was over for the trip.

It was a rocky start, but we moved on to try to get a PADI Jr. Open Water scuba certification. PADI certification (Professional Association of Diving Instructors), one of the most well-known dive certifications, involves developing knowledge via online education or their books, and demonstrating practical use of the knowledge through both confined (often pool) water dives and then open water. My diving certification was pre-online study and I was amazed to discover that the PADI online training, geared to provide a positive educational experience was also perfect for ASD students. The knowledge was presented so that it could be read while a narrator also read it to you, and the modules included video demonstrations, reviews of the information and frequent quizzes to test the knowledge. The information and reviews could also be reviewed multiple times to reinforce concepts.

After doing the online training, we signed up for the water skills with a local dive shop. In the group classes, it was necessary to learn and demonstrate specific skills. Some of these Chris did well with. Others, he didn't and we had to go home, explain it a little differently, show some more examples and practice, practice, practice the following week before Chris could demonstrate them in the next class. It took a little longer to master some areas and he fell behind the rest of the class. The training goes through demonstrating skills. In one session, they went through checking their air gauges underwater. Then the dive master signaled out of air so that Chris could demonstrate sharing air. Unfortunately, my son did not want to give up his air to someone who he had just seen wasn't out of air. There was no doubt we struggled and Chris struggled because we didn't fit the normal process. Even though we had discussed the process up front, the dive master, who had not previously worked with ASD students, indicated that he wasn't comfortable certifying Chris.



Photo courtesy of Kids Sea Camp



We were trying to get Chris certified prior to a family trip to Jamaica, and failed, but when we got there, we talked to the dive master in charge of the dive shop. He had worked with ASD individuals before, met Chris, and said he would work with him. He worked with Chris in the pool and in the ocean demonstrating skills. Chris loves diving and the sea life but prefers to dive rather than train – like most of us! He did very well on most of the skills. One of the skills, however, we had to work with Chris to do (and convince him he HAD to do it to finish his training so he could just dive) was taking his mask off in salt water, putting it back on and clearing the water out (the salt burned his eyes!) The dive master worked with Chris one on one. We also observed so that we were comfortable every step of the way, and Chris got his Jr. Scuba certification since we were restricted on time. That still left all the online training we had done for the Open Water (a higher level of certification), which was expiring after a year.

On a snowy day in January, I saw an article in a dive magazine on a woman who had won the Sea Hero Award, who not only worked with kids, but kids with special needs. Her name is Margo Peyton. She was recognized as a Sea Hero because she created Family Dive Adventure and Kids Sea Camp to provide places where families can go and dive together and to offer ocean-related kids programs and activities around the world in amazing dive locations. Their moto is "Give Them a Week They Will Remember Forever" and they work to "inspire and motivate people to go beyond their self-perceived borders" – what could be more perfect for ASD! They offer special needs services and with enough notice and information they can cater to all types of special needs including high functioning autism, hearing impaired and disabled individuals.

I called their office, explained what I needed, we had a long talk and they worked with me to select the right camp location with the right instructor to meet our needs. (They bring in instructors from all over the world that specialize in working with the kids and they had the perfect one for us.) So, after a long roundabout journey, we were finally in the right place, and



Chris went to Kids Sea Camp. No exaggeration – it was happily ever after. We chose the camp in St. Lucia. Chris had a dedicated instructor who has been successful working with ASD kids. At the camp, the plan was to review everything and for Chris to do the dives demonstrating his skills from Sunday through Wednesday at his own pace. Chris was done on Monday and certified and was able to dive with us the rest of the week. His instructor dove with us and continued to work on his skills. Chris' gluten free-dairy free diet was accommodated and he enjoyed the daily scheduled activities for both the kids and adults relating to the island and ocean education (and there was wi-fi). Most of all, he is capable and certified to do something he enjoys.

We have gone on a dive trip since – and Chris rocked it! The dive shop was aware he has ASD, and checked to see if we wanted a dedicated dive guide, but we declined, and it was unnecessary. Chris impressed the dive guides as well as a number of the other divers on the boat with his comfort level, buoyancy (where you don't sink like a rock to the bottom and damage the coral) and skills under water. Even though he does not have a lot of dives under his belt, he did so well we allowed him to use an underwater camera – building on his strengths and interests. Our goal was for him to practice and continue improving his skills and we have scheduled another one with a Kids Sea Camp to get his next level of certification (so he can dive anywhere in the world with us and see amazing things)! Now he can come with us to see large sunken ships, stingrays underwater in Grand Cayman, sea horses in Roatan and monk seals in Hawaii.

The biggest takeaway is that, as with anything with our ASD kids, persistence and optimism pay off, and they are often capable of more than they are often given credit for and frequently rise to challenges, especially with things they love doing. They really deserve us to have faith in what they can do and give them every opportunity.

Footnote: Chris attended another Kids Sea Camp in June 2019 in Grand Cayman working with another awesome dive master named Conrad where he obtained his Advanced Open Water Certification. His dive master suggested he take the next step to get certified as a Rescue Diver.

News from the Autism Training Center Lending Library

We recently added new titles to our lending library, including this book for grandparents!

Grandparent's Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders: Making the Most of the Time at Nana's House by Nancy Mucklow (2012, AAPC Publishing)

Help make time at grandma and grandpa's house better for everyone! Nancy Mucklow's book, *Grandparent's Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders: Making the Most of the Time at Nana's House*, serves as a practical guide to help grandparents build relationships of acceptance, confidence, and realistic expectations with their grandchildren with ASD. Full of intriguing and thought-provoking anecdotes and rules of thumb, *Grandparent's Guide to ASD* includes tried-and-true recommendations on how to deal with sensory issues, new and unfamiliar environments, dietary considerations, emotional meltdowns, communication, selecting the right toys, participating in school and family events, and much more. More knowledgeable and better prepared after reading this positive and upbeat book, grandparents can stay relaxed as they use the helpful strategies that allow them to better connect with their grandchild.

To learn more about this title and our lending library at the West Virginia Autism Training Center, please call **304-696-2332** or visit our website at **www.marshall.edu/atc/lending-library**.

Sensory-Friendly Train Ride with Santa

by Leigh Saville



Perhaps one of the busiest times of year is during the months of November and December. Throughout the holiday season towns and businesses across the state and nation celebrate annual traditions and introduce new ones by hosting a variety of events and activities. Their promotional ads appear in newspapers, social media posts and are broadcast over the radio...all promising a fun-filled adventure and describing the joy that is sure to accompany participation.

When most families see or hear these ads, the opportunity to make cherished family memories brings joy and anticipation. However, this may not be the scenario for some families who love and care for an individual on the autism spectrum.

"I desperately want to take Carson out in public to do activities that typical children do every day," says Bethany Stump, mother of a 7-year-old son with Autism Spectrum Disorder. "I shouldn't always have to get a sitter for him while my husband and I take his brother on outings. I don't want to leave him out of everything we do. I want him to have fun like every other kid, but I also want him to be himself and to be accepted and respected for who he is. We are all different in our own way." For families like Bethany's, the initial excitement of going to an event or participating in an activity is quickly followed by other emotions. "It gives me great anxiety to even take Carson into a grocery store," says Stump. "Will he run off from me? Will others judge my parenting and say 'she needs to control that kid!?' What will I do if he falls to the floor in a meltdown and I can't get him up (he weighs 80 lbs. now)?"

These are not the only concerns faced by families of an individual on the autism spectrum. Perhaps even more difficult are those related to the social stigma that may accompany participation. "It takes a lot of pre-planning and preparing when I decide to take Carson somewhere. I have a lot of anxiety about how he is going to behave and how the public will perceive him," shares Stump. "Sometimes he is so happy and joyful, but how he displays that can be disturbing to others, like squealing loudly, touching people without their permission, jumping up and down, or running into people because he doesn't know personal space. I can't help but wonder what if someone says something to him or myself that is hurtful or unkind? How will I respond? Will I be nasty back or just ignore it? Anywhere we go he is noticed and stared at, and I am judged....not always in a positive way."

According to an article published on social participation rates, the majority of adolescents with an ASD experience major obstacles (Shattuck et. al, 2011). Research findings stated that experiences with peers was more likely to occur one on one, and in the home environment, rather than in community setting. In addition, information presented in the 2015 National Autism Indicators Report

stated, "for young adults with ASD, nearly one in three had no community participation in the past year - no volunteer or community service activities, no lessons or classes or other community activities outside of school" (NAIR, 2015, p.16).

A local group of volunteers is trying to change this reality for parents and families in the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia. This past December the Potomac Highlands Autism Support Network (PHASN) hosted their first sensory-friendly event, a holiday train ride on the Snowflake Express. The idea for the event was born during a discussion at one of the group's monthly meetings. "I remember talking about how for the past couple years, I have wanted to go on a Christmas-themed train ride with Carson," said Stump. "I would see it advertised in the newspaper and Facebook, and imagine how nice it would be to take my kids. I would get so envious of people with typical kids who could participate in Christmas activities that I felt he couldn't. Just things like standing and waiting in line to get a picture with Santa or getting holiday family pictures are difficult. I had been thinking about how awesome it would be if we could organize a special-needs, sensory-friendly train ride, and I could take Carson and my whole family! He would be immediately accepted and we wouldn't get any stares or judgements. I knew he would be understood on that type of train. And I could connect with other parents who are going through the same challenges we face."



It wasn't long before the volunteers of the PHASN were busy making phone calls. With multiple holiday train events held in the area every year, there were several options to consider. When event logistics made the group's first contact fall through, volunteers didn't give up. Instead they approached Eileen Sindledacker, manager of the South Side Depot in Petersburg, West Virginia. Sindledacker, who has organized the annual Snowflake Express train ride for the past nine years, was excited about the idea and more than willing to discuss it with PHASN volunteers. During their discussions, Sindledacker shared her experience with railroad and train event logistics, and the network's volunteers shared their understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Together they felt confident that with enough planning the event could be a success.



Once the group decided to move forward with the idea, they quickly realized each aspect of the train ride would have to be examined carefully from beginning to end.

Families board the Snowflake Express at the South Side Depot and travel by rail to view a holiday light display located in Welton Park just outside of town. Along the way the children are entertained with live carolers, cookies and hot chocolate, and even Santa himself makes an appearance. Altogether the round trip adventure lasts approximately 45 minutes to an hour. While this timeline and schedule work fine for most, the network immediately identified several areas of potential concern for families with children on the autism spectrum.

"When we first discussed the idea about a sensory train, I thought it would be an excellent event for families that have not had an opportunity to take their children on a holiday train ride because of the train being noisy and crowded," said Solveig Gruber, a developmental specialist with West Virginia Birth to Three and volunteer with the PHASN. "But it was also overwhelming to realize there were so many challenges we had to address to make this event a success." Wait time before departure, the sound and movement of train cars on the tracks, the train whistle, the lighting in rail cars, wheelchair accessibility, visual and auditory stimulation associated with the carolers and Santa, and even potential dietary issues related to ingredients in the cookies and hot chocolate were just some of the details the group needed to consider and address. The team also identified several possible concerns related to how passengers move between train cars when the train is in motion.

Despite the challenges, Gruber said, "I continued assisting on this event, knowing if we can try it this year, the following years will be a bit easier. I also knew this event would be so worthwhile for the families to enjoy a Christmas activity together." With careful planning, PHASN volunteers were able to identify accommodations and modifications to the train car environment and strategies to address environmental and sensory concerns. Sindledecker spoke with the train conductor and engineer to reduce the number of times the whistle was blown and also to reduce the overall length of the trip. During the event, several PHASN volunteers were available in each train car to help monitor for safety and provide support to families if needed. The group also encouraged pre-registration so information could be shared with

families in advance, such as the train's layout, the location of restrooms, cars with special lighting or blinds drawn, and even recommendations for sensory supports that might be helpful for families to bring. In the end the team was able to address all of their concerns and the event was a success.

"My whole family enjoyed the Christmas train ride together," said Amanda Sandridge, mother of a nine-year-old son with ASD and a resident of Hampshire County, West Virginia. "The entire trip was very well organized and planned. We immediately felt comfortable and at ease. This was a very special treat for us to be on an adventure with a train full of people who understand us, accept us and welcome us. This experience made wonderful memories that will last a lifetime." Amber Engle Crites of Hardy County, West Virginia, shared the following about her family's experience, "As a mom to two kids on the spectrum, we often feel like we're stuck at home. My kids are considered high functioning but that doesn't always mean easy. Outings are difficult for us and home feels safe for them. The sensory-friendly train ride was so much fun for all of us! The environment was perfect for my children and it was a space where as a parent I didn't feel judged. We were accepted exactly as we are. We can't wait for next year!"

In total 68 tickets were sold for the train ride and families traveled from throughout the Potomac Highlands region to enjoy this unique sensory-friendly holiday event, the first of its kind in the region. The PHASN volunteers are already discussing improvements and ways to provide an even better experience for families and individuals with ASD. "Though it was a big undertaking, through the combined efforts of the members from PHASN and Eileen Sindledecker from the South Side Depot, the group persevered," says Gruber. "Remembering that many families would enjoy the excursion allowed us to keep going despite the challenges!"



The 2019 Sensory Friendly Train Ride with Santa will occur on December 14 this year. All 100 tickets were sold out and the event continues to grow in popularity. If you would like more information about future sensory friendly train events or about the Potomac Highlands Autism Support Network, please contact Leigh Saville at leigh.saville@marshall.edu or join the network's Facebook Group.

*Participation in Social Activities among Adolescents with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Paul T. Shattuck, Gael I. Orsmond, Mary Wagner, Benjamin P. Cooper

PLoS One. 2011; 6(11): e27176. Published online 2011 Nov 14. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0027176

**Roux, Anne M., Shattuck, Paul T., Rast, Jessica E., Rava, Julianna A., and Anderson, Kristy A. National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood. Philadelphia, PA: Life Course Outcomes Research Program, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University, 2015.

WVATC CPSASD, Shepherd University, and Updates

by Jackie Clark

The West Virginia Autism Training Center's College Program for Students with ASD has expanded to Shepherd University starting fall 2019. The program at Shepherd University will be the third established college support program, modeled after the program at Marshall University (est. 2002) and Concord University (est. 2016). The College Program plans to provide individualized academic, social, and independent living supports for six enrolled Shepherd students. The College Program also hopes to create a campus of understanding through trainings on effective supports for students with ASD for Shepherd faculty and staff.



Daniel Patterson, Shepherd University's first College Program student, fall 2019

On Aug. 6, 2019, the College Program at Shepherd University hosted an Open House event, where several prospective future students and their families attended to find out more about the program. Dr. Rebecca Hansen, director of campus-based supports at the ATC, spoke at the event noting, "Having an

established program on a college campus such as Shepherd's is rare and if you even Google autism in college, Marshall University is going to come up as one of the top three schools. It's the exact same model here at Shepherd, so we know what we're doing, it's just a matter of having the people to serve."

The College Program at Concord University will be supporting six students this fall. Student Support Specialist Zach Bailey has been working over the summer to create more partnerships on Concord's campus. One partnership is with Concord's Esports Program, the first collegiate Esports team in West Virginia. Zach provided Allies Supporting Autism Diversity training to the Esports Head Coach, Jacob Neerland, in early August. The new partnership is exciting in terms of what opportunities this will bring for future students of the College Program at Concord University.



The College Program's 4th Employment Preparedness Workshop occurred in early June with four participants. The 3-day Employment Workshop incorporated lecture- and activity-based learning activities. Participants learned how to best prepare resumes and cover letters; learned



how to develop a LinkedIn profile and JobTrax account; participated in a speed-networking session with Career Services staff; went through web-based and in-person mock interviews; learned information important to self-advocacy and workplace disclosure; learned how to request for accommodations; learned about workplace relationships and communication; gained information about various employee evaluations; and participated in a four-member panel of local employers who discussed employment expectations. Students spoke about the employee panel being one of the stand-out sessions of the workshop because it allowed them to ask questions, comfortably, about what employers expect and look for in potential employees.

The College Program for Students with ASD hosted its 11th five-week Summer Transition program. A mix of 15 rising high-school seniors and incoming Marshall freshmen made up the group that participated this summer. Students were enrolled in one college-level course, lived on Marshall's Huntington campus in the residence halls, and took part in weekly social-skills-building groups and planned social events. The goal of the summer program is for students to get a real-life experience of what college will be like, with supports that are specific to ASD. Students gain a sense of community during the summer session, and particularly on social events, like Billy Bob's Arcade in Barboursville, West Virginia or seeing "The Little Mermaid" at the Ritter Park amphitheater by the Huntington Outdoor Theatre group (photos attached).

The College Program at Marshall University has supported 51 students this fall 2019 semester, with 19 of the 51 being new to the College Program. Brent Fragnoli, (staff head shot attached) became student support specialist in October of 2018. Brent came from Troy, Michigan, where he received his master's degree in higher education leadership from Albion College, as well as a graduate certificate in ASD from Oakland University. Brent has been a natural addition to the College Program team and has a wonderful ability to build rapport with students quickly. Last semester Brent started a new group coined "Man Lyfe" in which the curriculum was built with student's suggestions and input.

To learn more about the West Virginia Autism Training Center's College Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder please visit: www.marshall.edu/collegeprogram/.

Technical Assistance Center Success

by Michael Powell

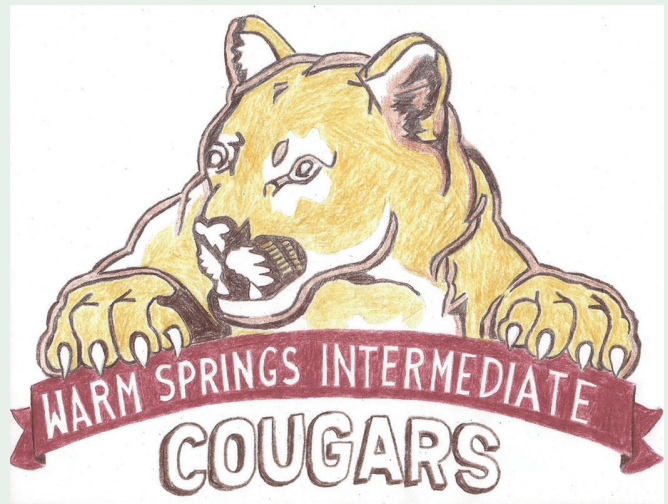
This story is about a school that saw a possibility where most would see a disappointment. When a team of educators at Warm Springs Intermediate School (WSIS) were informed that their grant funds would be cut drastically due to the West Virginia legislature discontinuing funding, they spent little time grieving. Instead, the team began thinking of ways to best utilize the funds they would still receive. The grant was designed to support schools in their efforts to create alternative learning services for students with behavioral and emotional difficulties. The WSIS team wanted to not only help their students but also help the teachers spend more time teaching and less time writing discipline referrals. In order to do this beyond the life of the grant, which was cut from five years to just a year and a half, the team had to find something that was evidenced-based and cheap. After researching their options the team decided to try Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

PBIS is an implementation framework that helps schools select and use evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum to support the academic, social, emotional and behavioral competence of all students. Critical to the success of PBIS is establishing a strong Tier 1, which is the universal tier that includes services, supports, and expectations for all students and staff. Choosing PBIS was the easy part, because of the robust amount of research proving its effectiveness and it is as close to free as anything in education can get. The hard part would be implementing PBIS with fidelity and at the same time not adding more to the plates of their already overwhelmed teachers.

Help with figuring out how to implement PBIS with fidelity came from the staff at West Virginia PBIS. By attending the West Virginia PBIS Summer Leadership Conference and the fall academies, the WSIS PBIS team learned how to utilize the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) as their roadmap to implementation. In addition, the team learned how to increase staff buy-in by taking advantage of interventions and supports already being used as well as by introducing PBIS as a framework that would help organize their efforts, not add more to their plates. After their PBIS team was trained they introduced PBIS to school staff as a whole and prepared them for what to expect. Then the WSIS PBIS team began building their Tier 1.



Critical to the building and sustaining of their Tier 1, the team continually provides opportunities for everyone's input by sharing and gathering information at weekly grade level and specialty area team meeting. Each grade level/specialty area has a representative on the PBIS team. So when information needs to be shared or before a major decision is made, the representatives get input from their teams then bring it back to the PBIS team. Another



important feature of their Tier 1, is a designated time period at the start of each day for "Community Cougars". This time is dedicated to teaching expectations and the school's social emotional curriculum, Positive Action.

In order to make it as easy as possible on their teachers, the WSIS PBIS collaborates with a community organization, Morgan County Partnership, to deliver the Positive Action lessons. The Morgan County Partnership comes in weekly to teach Positive Action lessons and they also created video lessons that teachers can show their students during the Community Cougars time. Other important aspects of their Tier 1 include consistent use of Class Dojo to provide feedback and acknowledgement as well as parent-school communication; calming corners in almost all classrooms where students can self-regulate; and Zones of Regulation in almost all classrooms to teach and communicate states of regulation.

So what have been the fruits of their labor? Well, since the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, when they first started implementing PBIS, major discipline referrals have been cut by over half. Five students who were receiving intensive behavioral intervention during the 2017-18 school year, now only require Tier 1 supports and services to be able to meet school and classroom expectations. Their school discipline policy and procedures have become more consistent, concise and clear. Out-of-school suspensions went from one of the top consequences used to no longer in the top four. Now detention, in-school suspension, conferences and parent contact are the top consequences. Most teachers report that PBIS has helped improve their school's climate and culture and foster strong relationships. Students meet expectations and staff focus more on positive behaviors instead of negative behaviors.

Team members Jennifer Fox and Tia Myers both have seen improvements in students' behavior, but credit different reasons. Ms. Fox reports that consistent, school-wide expectations that are visually posted throughout the school help students meet those expectations, while Ms. Myers sees how stronger relationships and

acknowledgement for expected behavior have contributed to improvements in students' behaviors. However, WSIS's PBIS journey has not been without its fair share of obstacles. Just to name a few, they have had to overcome replacing the majority of their PBIS team members, sustaining teacher buy-in, finding an efficient method of data collection, and making sure everyone follows the discipline procedures correctly. Many staff will honestly tell you that implementing PBIS has not fixed all their problems, but it has helped the school organize and streamline its efforts.

A struggle for most schools implementing PBIS is teacher buy-in, and WSIS is no different. According to the PBIS team leader, Crystal Boyles, WSIS now has "a more cohesive consistent community for staff and students" but there are still "a few who do not fully buy-in (to PBIS)." Ms. Boyles reports that the vast majority of their staff do buy in and are invested in PBIS. Buy-in has been achieved by recruiting teachers who are leaders, sharing data, listening to concerns, allowing everyone to voice opinions before major decisions are made and sharing the positive results that have come from PBIS.

Implementing PBIS is not a quick fix or something that can be eased off; correct implementation takes place over a few years and involves constant self-assessment with adjustment. Now in their second year of implementation, the staff at WSIS are realizing that PBIS is not "this year's new thing" but instead can be their anchor in the fickle waters of public education.



WSIS "Chill Spot"



Leadership and ASD in West Virginia

by Andrew Nelson



Marshall University is home to a variety of graduate-level degrees focusing on leadership development. Several employees of the West Virginia Autism Training Center (WVATC) are current or former doctoral students in the leadership studies program at Marshall, and the center has a strong culture of leadership as a result.

In 2018, the WVATC took steps to create the Leadership Institute: a place for leaders with ASD to unite, develop personal leadership plans, and network with others with similar passions and interests. The campus and facilities of Marshall University were used to host five leaders for three days of discussion, planning, and socializing. Institute participants left with ideas for their own leadership growth and new connections with others living in West Virginia and surrounding areas. During debriefing and wrap-up discussions, leaders provided excellent feedback on the design of the institute and its activities. The inaugural meeting was a success, and several key changes were planned for year two. For example, organizers determined the institute would invite all original institute attendees to return and serve as paid guest instructors in 2019. The guest instructors would also take over the majority of content development based on their lived experiences as leaders with ASD. These exciting changes brought a whole new dimension to the flavor and energy of the second leadership gathering.

In order to fund the instructor, housing and travel costs for 2019, a key partnership was formed with the Autism Society of West Virginia, which provided financial support for the two guest instructors who were able to return. Once all attendees arrived, instruction centered on several key themes: support for newly diagnosed attendees, sexuality, community outreach, art and creativity, and personal leadership styles.

One of the most powerful moments from the 2019 institute was a Facebook Live event hosted by two guest instructors and two attendees. The hourlong live discussion tackled common myths about ASD, suggestions for ways to interact with and support people on the spectrum, trauma, deep and focused interests,

friendships and many other topics. People were able to view the event and comment in real time as the leaders discussed each topic. Between the live event and downloads, the talk has been viewed nearly 1,500 times. It was yet another example of the importance of empowering people with ASD to share their experiences. If you wish to view the discussion, please visit the West Virginia Autism Training Center YouTube channel or go to the following link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKa6GSKuuXM

Plans are in the works for the Leadership Institute 2020, where the focus will continue to be on connecting and developing leaders with ASD. We hope to add more activity-based (art, cooking, budgeting, etc.) content this coming year. If you or someone you know is at least 21 years old and interested in learning more about the 2020 institute, please e-mail Andrew Nelson at nelsona@marshall.edu.



Zones Camp 2019!

by Bonnie Marquis and Julie O'Malley

It's all just fun and games until somebody learns something. Then it's camp! For the third consecutive year the ATC has hosted a camp for middle-school students on the beautiful Huntington campus of Marshall University, and every year the fun and learning seem to grow almost as much as our campers. The week is designed to be a balance of skill-building activities and campus exploration. This year



we returned to the Rec Center for rock climbing and Studio X, as well as the gaming lab with Professor Matt Mundell (always a must). New this year was a tour of the Robert C Byrd Institute for Advanced Manufacturing and the amazing world of 3D printing as well as a visit to the campus TV studio in Smith Hall.

Our second year of camp brought into use the Zones of Regulation curriculum, which is a great conceptual framework for teaching students about the importance of managing both attention and behavior. With a heavy emphasis on sensory strategies, it helps set the stage for a variety of fun and engrossing experiences; from "fireworks" painting and glitter

slime to calming bottles and spiky rings, there was always a way to engage and "adjust your zones."

This year, with a few new elements to the week, we applied the zones to successfully navigate a range of different and sometimes challenging experiences. The concepts and corresponding strategies help focus our expectations and can teach us to use a variety of methods to maintain self-control, patience and attention. Whether it was riding the bus downtown, waiting (and waiting) for lunch at the Herd Café or navigating the exit during the very unplanned fire alarm, the campers engaged and participated fully and successfully. Most importantly however, they also managed to build or re-ignite friendships with peers, knowing from the beginning that the main goal of camp, as it always is, was to have fun and build relationships.

We had our first Junior Counselor, who was a third-year participant. No longer technically a middle-school student, Carl Fairchild was willing to invest a little extra time and effort to be our assistant, coming to campus in advance to prepare for his role. Knowing we had a visit to the TV station. Carl took up the challenge of introducing our crew and led the way behind the news desk, forging a path and making it just a bit easier for the fellow campers who wished to do so to get behind that desk and in front of the camera.

As most of us know by now, kids with ASD are as diverse and unique as any group of typical kids. As such there is always a range of interests and talents and always fun and fascinating to see what the kids reveal about themselves. This year we had a drummer, a singer, a NASA enthusiast, an

immunologist, a history buff and, of course, several that are destined to be digital dynamos and take to the gaming, coding and programming activities with Professor Mundell like, well, a fish to water. Yet there were things that they all found mutually enjoyable. Bubble Talk (think Apples to Apples with pictures and 'bubble captions') actual bubbles, noodle ball and glitter slime were all universally popular.

Perhaps nothing brings people together quite like sharing a meal, and this year we added lunch to our program. Camp always starts with an activity focused on the campers "favorites" – color, food, school subject, etc. Through this, we learned two campers shared their love of pizza that MUST be WITHOUT any sauce. This little thing was a source of consideration, connection, and self-advocacy as one camper made a special order pizza at the Harless Dining Hall on behalf of himself and his new friend and then shared the culinary sophistication brought on by the added sprinkle of parmesan cheese. Trying new things to eat can be hard and scary but it's made so much easier when a friend you trust recommends it.

This camp has been such an amazing learning experience for all involved, the coaches in particular. The concentrated period of time



that camp allows seems to be a crucial element to its success. The momentum built by the daily continuity and familiarity with one another, combined with an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance and the critically important element of self-determination (stemming

from making all activities optional) creates a unique opportunity for everyone to experience the positive connection and shared experience essential to meaningful relationships. Some campers return year after year because of it and there have been reports that for some it's "one of the best parts of summer." For others, it launches them with a bit of confidence to face other challenges previously out of reach or too overwhelming to consider. And, as Carl pointed out for the TV camera, "Marshall's camp is a FUN way for kids with ASD to make real friends and meet people like themselves." It seems abundantly clear to us that with real friends and true acceptance there is no limit to what our friends can do. Next year can't get here fast enough!



Artist Profile – D.J. Svoboda



Tell us a bit about yourself.

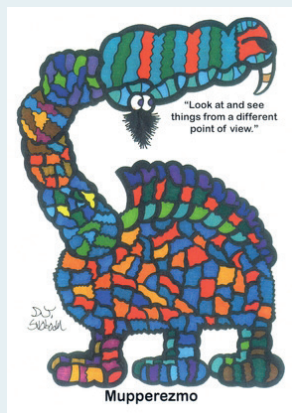
I am 36 Years Old. I was Diagnosed with Autism at The Age of 3. I am Very Determined and Dedicated to Spreading and Sharing Autism Acceptance and Autism Inclusion all Around The World and I sure am Greatly Determined to show the World that Autism is to be Greatly Known and to be Greatly Understood and Not to be Judged or to be Criticized in any kind of Bad Way. I have a

Mission and Company based on My Artwork The Imagifriends of Imagiville and as Part of My Ultimate Dream I believe for it to be as Big and Productive as Disney, Nickelodeon, Chick Fil A and Much Much More. I Love a Lot of Different Toys and Games and Special Characters that Lots of Children Love and Enjoy Like on Disney Junior, Nick Jr. and PBS KIDS. I want to be Accepted and Loved for who I am and I am Very Dedicated to Making The World into an even better place for all with Autism, Disabilities and Special Needs and Everyone Around The World.

When did you first begin creating art?

I first started Creating Art when I was In Middle School. I just Sketched and Doodled for Fun at First, But when I did Start High School in 1997 I felt that it was time to get more Serious about The Art. After a Couple of Years of Practice and Lots of Drawing, The Imagifriends were Officially Born on October 19, 2001 Along with Their Very First Website.

What is Imagiville and who are the Imagifriends?



Imagiville is a Place that I created in My Imagination where Everyone and All With Autism are Welcome and Loved and Accepted for who They Are. It is also a Place where I went in My Imagination to escape some Bullying that I have Faced Growing Up with Autism. Imagiville is a Place of Love, Acceptance, Joy, Care, Laughter and Much Much More and The Home of The Imagifriends. The Imagifriends are Special Characters that I have Created based on The Different Challenges that I have Faced

Growing Up with Autism. They are based on a lot of Different Things that Lots of Young Children Love and Enjoy and They are based on Different Special Lessons Like-Acceptance, Laughter, Acceptance, Kindness, Dream Big, Believe Big, Friendship, Never Let Quit or Giving Up be an Option, Determination and Much Much More. I

have Over 120 Big Big Dreams and Visions for them and for Our Mission and Company which Started on July 16, 2011. Just Like Pepsi Cola The Imagifriends were sure Born in The Carolinas.

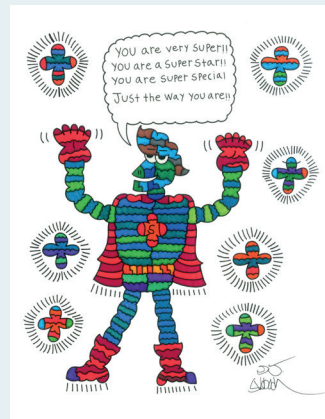
How has art played a role in your personal story?

Art has Played a Very Incredible Role by helping Me to know that it is Very Important for Me to Be Myself and that Creativity has No Limits and that I can sure Use it to Inspire and to Encourage Many Others and that it can sure spread Love and Joy and Lots of Happiness when You share and Show Your Happiness, Just Like How I Love to show it in My Art. And It helped Me to know that I can make a Big Big Difference and That Just Because I have Autism Does Not Mean that I can't Do Great Great Things, Because I can, Even with The Art that I Love to do a lot.

Do you have anything you would like to tell your peers or other artists with autism?

I Would Love to say that It is Very Important to Dream and to Believe and to Expect Big Everyday. Never let Negative or Doubtful Talk or Excuses Stop you or Get in your Way. Be Your Very Amazing and Very Awesome and Very Incredible Self Always. You have a Great and Amazing and Awesome Place in this World. Believe in Your Very Amazing and Very Awesome Selves and Remember that All Great and Amazing and Awesome Things are sure Pure Possible Everyday and Night!

Where can others find your work? Do you have a website or online store?



So Far Others can Find My Work on My Website at WWW.MYIMAGIVILLE.COM. We are in The Process of Getting it Redone and giving it a Great Makeover Very Soon. My Art can also sometimes be Seen on The Imagifriends Facebook Page and UNC-TV who shows PBS Here in NC have Chosen The Imagifriends to be Part of Their Awesome Kindness Campaign. The Imagifriends have become Animated for it too and The Videos can be

Seen on YOUTUBE under Rootle Imagifriends and Sometimes I do Share New Art on Facebook and Imagifriends Merchandise can sure be Ordered from My Website too.

Anything else you would like to say?

Remember that Big Big Dreams are Pure Great and Amazing Reality! Life NEVER has The Final Say! All Great and Amazing and Awesome Things are sure Pure Great Reality! Be Your Very Amazing and Very Awesome and Very Incredible Self Always! Together with The Great Power of Teamwork We can all put a Complete and Total Stop to Bullying! There is No Such Thing as Impossible Or Impossibility! You have a Great and Amazing and Awesome Place in this World!

Jerry's Movie Reviews



Jerry Westfall is a movie buff living in Preston County

The Mule: is loosely based on the story of 90-year old WWII vet turned drug mule Leo Sharp. It stars Clint Eastwood (*Gran Torino*) as well as Bradley Cooper (*American Sniper*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *A Star is Born*). It is also worth noting that *The Mule* was written and directed by Clint Eastwood. Honestly, I thought the movie was well written, and I also thought the acting was some of the best of 2018. I give this movie a 4/5.

Hellfest: is a horror movie from executive producer Gale Ann Hurd (a well-known producer on *The Walking Dead*). The movie takes place at an amusement park at on Halloween night. Unknown to the people in the park there is a masked psychopath on the loose in the park targeting and killing people at random. The concept was original but with a low body count of 6 and only half-decent acting I am only giving this movie a 2/5.

American History X: is one of the best movies of 1998. It tells the story of a former skinhead named Derek Vinyard who gets released from prison after serving 3 years for killing two cryps who were trying to steal his car. After his release from prison, he tries to teach his neo-Nazi brother the error of his ways and keep him from following down the same path as him. *American History X* stars Edward Norton as Derek Vinyard and Edward Furlong as his younger brother Daniel Vinyard. The story was extremely well written and tackles the issue of racism, a topic that is unfortunately still relevant in today's society. It featured some the best acting I have ever seen in a movie. I believe it is one movie everyone should watch at least once in their life. For this reason, I am giving it a 5/5.

Autism State Updates

Autism Society of America West Virginia Update

 **AUTISM SOCIETY**
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
West Virginia

Our third annual Autism Across the Lifespan Conference, presented through a partnership between the Autism Society of West Virginia and the West Virginia Autism Training Center, was held on the Marshall University campus in Huntington, West Virginia on Sept. 5-6, 2019. People with ASD, parents, professionals and other community members gathered to hear local and national speakers presenting on a variety of topics and strategies to support individuals with ASD of all ages. We look forward to hosting our fourth annual conference Sept. 10-11, 2020. Please watch our social media pages for updates on the Autism Across the Lifespan Conference happening Sept. 10-11, 2020!

WV Association of Positive Behavior Support Network Update



The West Virginia Association of Positive Behavior Support (WVAPBS) network has been working on the following goals for this year: establish administrative support for WVAPBS, develop PBS resource maps, expand PBS digital presence and resources, integrate PBS in conferences and webinars, offer Tier I trainings and expand resources across the PBS Professional Endorsement process. Some recent activities toward those goals include:

- The WVAPBS Network announced some exciting news that the network was awarded a grant by the Developmental Disabilities Council to help assure improvements in the quality of PBS services in our state and to further expand the PBS endorsement process.
- An online application process for PBS endorsement is under development and a new option for endorsement enrollment for emerging professionals is under discussion. A registry of PBS Endorsed Professionals can be found the WVAPBS website at wvapbs.com.
- To further support the provision of quality PBS services, the WVAPBS network submitted recommendations to the Bureau of Medical Services regarding recommendations for changes in the manual for behavior support professional services.
- The international Association of Positive Behavior Support conference was held in March in Washington, D.C., and a number of WVAPBS network members attended and brought back resources to share.
- The mental health committee is developing a needs assessment survey for distribution statewide and is currently defining the target audience.

- The marketing committee has developed a PBS handout for families and consumers to help in making informed choices about services and has plans to incorporate interactive resources to help drive traffic to the network website.
- A new member from the children's office for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities has been charged with working with a wrap-around pilot project and helping with Children coming back home from out of state. They are building a statewide initiative to incorporate fidelity and show positive outcomes. She plans to brainstorm what the process will look like and they plan to send people to obtain PBS Endorsement.
- At the March network meeting, a free training with CEU credits in Person Centered Planning and Effective Teaming was held and was well-received. The WVAPBS network plans to offer trainings on a periodic basis.

The WVAPBS Network meets monthly and encourages participation from stakeholders involved in positive behavior support services. For further information, please visit our website at wvapbs.com.

West Virginia PBIS/ECPBIS



WV PBIS
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports



WV ECPBIS
Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

West Virginia Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (WVPBIS) hit its stride this academic year. For the first time since 2014, the academies are already booked for both early childhood and school-wide personnel. We have seen an incredible increase in the interest for both projects. We attribute the interest to the work occurring across the state. Our regional behavior support specialists and coordinators are providing technical assistance, which includes face-to-face trainings, creating book studies, presenting at multiple conferences and meetings, and coordinating the annual West Virginia PBIS Conference, to name a few. We are thrilled to not only continue to train new school teams, teachers and aides, but to followup

with each of them on their progress and roadblocks. It is our opinion that ongoing technical assistance is a key element for the success of PBIS in our schools.

You can find more information on our website at www.wvecpbis.org and like us on Facebook at West Virginia ECPBIS @wvecpbis



WV Project AWARE



Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education (AWARE). Although the West Virginia Department of Education *Now Is The Time Project AWARE* 5-year grant is coming to an end, the essential work to expand and sustain capacity to address the mental health needs of children, youth and their families continues! WV Project AWARE has expanded the capacity of the WVDE and local education agencies (LEAs). The scope of this work is tremendous, and the systems change needed to support districts, schools and communities takes time; however, we have seen significant increases in mental health awareness in large part due to Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid. Nearly 8,500 first aiders have been trained across the state providing schools and communities with important information and tools to support a youth or adult who may be developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in an emotional crisis.

Demonstration LEAs in Berkeley, McDowell and Wood counties have worked diligently to build partnerships with local service providers and communities for a coordinated and integrated multi-tiered system of mental health supports. They have significantly increased the number of schools implementing school-wide PBIS. Professional learning for school and communities in numerous areas of evidence-based practices include systems for identifying signs and symptoms early and linking youth and families to existing services; coordinated referral systems for students identified with a potential mental health issues; and increasing access to school-based mental health services across the full continuum. ALL ARE ESSENTIAL to supporting the whole child! Understanding the critical link between social and emotional wellness and academic success, the WVDE is sustaining this important work including the partnership with the West Virginia Behavior and Mental Health Technical Assistance Center and awarded funding grants for 2019-2020 to ALL 55 LEAs for services and supports specifically for school mental health, substance misuse and trauma.



source - www.cdc.gov



What is Autism?

Autism is a disorder of the brain. Symptoms of autism occur during the first three years of life, although an individual might not receive a diagnosis until much later. Individuals with autism have problems with communication and socializing with others. In young children, autism affects the development of "typical" play behaviors. Autism is considered a developmental disorder in that some normal developmental milestones, such as when a child says their first words, are absent or abnormal. Autism is considered a pervasive developmental disorder in that these developmental differences affect many aspects of life and may last throughout a person's lifetime. Currently, there is no one specifically known cause of autism and no one treatment. Early special education programs using behavioral methods have proven to be the most helpful treatment for persons with autism.

A person with ASD might:

- Not respond to their name by 12 months of age
- Not point at objects to show interest (point at an airplane flying over) by 14 months
- Not play "pretend" games (pretend to "feed" a doll) by 18 months
- Avoid eye contact and want to be alone
- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings
- Have delayed speech and language skills
- Repeat words or phrases over and over (echolalia)
- Give unrelated answers to questions
- Get upset by minor changes
- Have obsessive interests
- Flap their hands, rock their body, or spin in circles
- Have unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel

Examples of social issues related to ASD:

- Does not respond to name by 12 months of age
- Avoids eye-contact
- Prefers to play alone
- Does not share interests with others
- Only interacts to achieve a desired goal
- Has flat or inappropriate facial expressions
- Does not understand personal space boundaries
- Avoids or resists physical contact
- Is not comforted by others during distress
- Has trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about own feelings

For more information on autism, please also visit: www.marshall.edu/atc

MOVING?



We want to keep in contact

If you move or change your contact information, please don't forget to let the WV ATC know.

Please call
1-800-344-5115
to make changes in your contact information.

GIVE NOW!

Donations to support the Autism Training Center can be made on-line at:

www.marshall.edu/atc



AUTISM TRAINING CENTER



Marshall University
The West Virginia Autism Training Center
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755
marshall.edu/atc

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 206
Huntington, WV