

KIDS CAN CHRONICLES

www.kidswithautismcan.org

It's All Fun and ...2018!

CrackerJax is coming soon! If you haven't signed up to join us, please do. It's always a great time for families. We also want to remind you that Boys Team Charity will be there and at Rock Climbing in March. Parents, please take advantage of these awesome helpers! They can be great typical role models for your kiddos and someone for them to hang with a little bit at the events and even more importantly they can ride the bumper boats and go carts with your kiddos so you don't have too!!!! I will try to be sure they have tags with our logo so you can know it's ok for your kids to be with them. They still need your supervision but they are some amazing young men and one of the BTC parents will be there with them also.

We have been having a little trouble with sign up confirmation. So if you are not sure if you are approved, feel free to email us.

AZ on the Rocks will be back in March, April we will be taking the month off for Paige's wedding and in May we will be back with Shrek, The Musical. We may also have another chance at Suns tickets, but those are donated and come with very little notice but still such fun.

Arizona Coyotes



A special thanks to the Arizona Coyotes for choosing us as a community partner for the 2017-2018 Hockey Season, providing us with 4 great fundraising opportunities and other ongoing support.

Helpers for 50/50 raffles with Coyotes. It is an honor to be chosen! Only 8 non profits were picked for the whole season. (2 dates- Mar 3, Mar 15, we need 20 adults for each date, we can also have 6-8 teens in addition to the adults, if we can't provide them with 20 adults we will be required to give the date to another organization, that would be a big loss!). To volunteer for 50/50 or sign up for events, go to: <http://kidswithautismcan.org/be-informed/events/>

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Coming Events All Fun And...

Cracker Jax



February 12th, 6-9 PM

AZ on the Rocks



March 17th, 7-9 PM

Foothills Youth Theatre
Shrek: The Musical



May TBD

It's All Fun and... The End of 2017

It's been quite a while since our last newsletter, which means lots of fun and learning have occurred. The end of 2017 brought trips to the North Pole by train and by trolley. A huge thank you to both The Polar Express and The North Pole Experience for your generous ticket donations. You brought some big smiles and new experiences to so many families! We had our biggest turn out yet at MacDonald Ranch and everyone seemed to have such a great time. Let's face it, how could we go wrong with horses, hay bales, campfires and S'Mores? We also enjoyed Suns and Mercury games. Thanks to the Phoenix Suns for the tickets. We also had our first opportunity to partner with Desert Foothills Youth Theater, there will be more collaborating in the future. Charlotte's Web was so well done by the youth group and our families got to hang out with the actors and walk on stage after the show.



Desert Foothills Youth Theater!

A very special thanks to Amanda Lewis for connecting us up with Desert Foothills Youth Theater! We now have the pleasure of working with Ms. Reeves, a woman who understands the value of everyone being able to participate in theater. So when we combine their productions with a showing for our events group, it allows everyone to come and see a play. Ok, maybe the first time your family won't make it through the whole show but it is set up so everyone can come and goes as they need to and work on manners. But, we don't expect perfect behavior and we are all on the same path, so let's show understanding and support to each other as our kids grow and learn. That also means if you want a completely quiet show this isn't the place for you. They run several productions, if you want to support the theater in a more typical setting please check for their other times and days. Next in May, Shrek-The Musical, we are so excited!



"I don't want to be perfect. I only aim to be fearless and resilient and myself"



Sensory Cooking

An update on Sensory Cooking, we have the business license and the logo is moving a long. It's an exercise in patience because we need to work around other things but we are getting there. Slowly, but surely. The Facebook page is waiting for the logo. The website falls near the bottom of the Murwin to do list so if anyone is willing and able to help with that we could speed it up a bit. I know a couple of you said you might want to help with the cooking aspect. Please email and remind me if you are interested in helping. Hoping to offer some trials in summer.

I get up every morning determined to both change the world and have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning my day difficult.

E.B. White

Citrus Season

For those of you with citrus trees here we go! More lemons, limes, oranges and grapefruit than anyone knows what to do with. I have to personally say, grapefruit and limes are great for Margaritas for the grown ups but here is another great use for all that citrus juice.

Marinades work great with citrus juices. Flank steak marinated in OJ, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce and garlic, is amazing (and I believe GF). Chicken or shrimp marinated in lemon juice, olive oil, fresh herbs, salt and pepper is delicious. If you have Meyer lemons, they are better. They are still lemony, but a little less acidic. Short marinating time is important for chicken and shrimp, you don't want to overpower the meat. Citrus juice is acidic and can actually "cook" the shrimp. Think of ceviche, or Google it if you don't know what it is. Here is a pretty simple recipe for a salad that looks fancy. Once again let me say how much I love Trader Joe's for quick, easy cooking.

Easy Spring Shrimp Salad

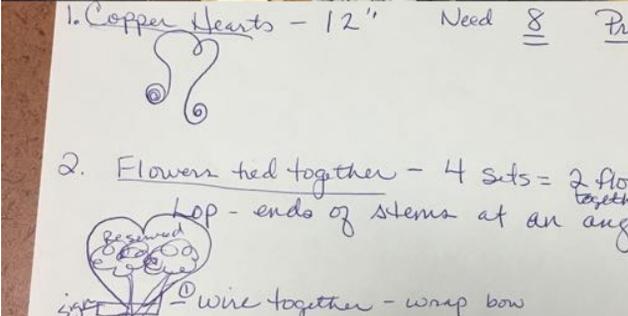
- 12-15 large peeled shrimp, marinated in juice of 2 lemons and 2 T. olive oil, salt and pepper. Grill on hot grill until pink and no longer translucent. About 3-4 min per side.
- Trader Joe's baby green beans, also called Haricot Vert. The cook in the microwave in three minutes.
- Your favorite bagged Caesar Salad.
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Lemon Wedge, we go very light on the dressing and squeeze a nice wedge of lemon on the salad.



Assemble as in picture. It looks fancy and it is so simple, if your kiddos are not shrimp fans you can certainly use chicken instead.

SEEDs for Autism

As many of you know, I love SEEDs for Autism! Paige and I went down for a visit to their new location for the first time since it was completed. Well, mostly completed. They are always growing and changing; that is one of the things I really like about what they do. We wanted to share pictures of their new shop and show how fun it is to take a little road trip down to visit them and check out some info on the new things they are incorporating. This includes more opportunities for young adults, beautiful gifts (which are also for sale at several Summer Winds Nursery locations) and perhaps, partnering in some culinary ideas.



February's Educational Lecture
**Using Positive Behavior Support Strategies
to Increase Your
Adult/Young Adult's Motivation**

Sat, February 10th | 10am-Noon | \$15/family

This training is for parents and loved ones of adults on the autism spectrum who want to support and increase the independence of their children. Parents/loved ones are encouraged to bring their adult child or relative with ASD to participate in this interactive training.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER:
www.seedsforautism.org/events

Autism Information for Young Adults

Vocational Rehabilitation Announcement (VR): Specific for Ages 14-22

The Vocational Rehabilitation program provides a variety of services to persons with disabilities, with the ultimate goal to prepare for, enter into, or retain employment.

NEW VR CONTRACT:

The purpose of this new contract and training is: To provide a comprehensive spectrum of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with one or more disabilities between the ages of fourteen (14) and twenty-two (22) who are enrolled in a secondary, post-secondary or other recognized education program including vocational training.

Contact SEEDs for Autism, a VR vendor, for more information on how your students or young adults can participate in workshops and curriculum based training for this new contract.
602-253-4471

SEEDs for Autism is a local nonprofit organization that teaches social, life, and vocational skills development in a 11,000 sq. foot industrial building. The program focuses on classroom curriculum and vocational training. This organization has a variety of skill building opportunities all centered around hands on project and activity based learning in real life applications and opportunities. Visit our website to learn more about this exciting program and what it offers. www.seedsforautism.org



High School and College Tools

We would like to offer a couple of suggestions for college students attending on going education. Depending on your needs as a young adult, here are some ideas. Most are available through the Disabilities Resource Center, if the student is approved for services.

1. Some students can request note takers and additional test time. See if you are eligible.
2. There is a program called Kurzweil, it allows books to be downloaded and can use a tablet to read along with the student and highlight as it reads. This is done through the DRC at ASU
3. This is a private purchase and not just for college but would benefit most people who struggle with note taking. Check it out. It is available on Amazon. It is called a Smart Pen, it was suggested to Nicholas in high school and he had no interest but in college it has been a life saver.
4. Check if there is an Autism Group on your campus. ASU Tempe has Autistics on Campus. A great place for socialization and growth.

Raising Kids with Autism (and Other Diagnosis or No Diagnosis at All)...Grit, Faith, Preparation and a Touch of Stubbornness

So, as always, life is interesting at the Murwin House. We have a wedding upon us soon – an event that doesn't look like it does for most. Nicholas is a groomsman and he will be awesome with some preparation. The wedding party will sit and not stand for most of the service: this will be easier for Nicholas to be more comfortable and a bit less wiggly. The bigger issue is that Nicholas, in every day life, needs to come in and go out the same door. I don't mean he prefers it – I mean he needs it! Now this isn't an option during the wedding; he will need to enter from the side and exit to the rear. So somewhere between bouquets, decorations, and brunch choices, we need to consider paths that will not freak out the participants. I wonder if our kids even realize they are adapting at this stage of the game. I think for the most part it has become a way of life. My future son-in-law wants to know why I always get everywhere early. It's hard to explain that after 20 years we are retrained. I assume there will be a time suck somewhere along the line: A freak out (they aren't like they used to be thank God) or an "I forgot". Although they aren't as common as they were, I don't really know how to stop assuming they will happen. The other big challenge for Nicholas is the realization that he does not have a relationship with a young woman and it is something he really wants. We have some work to do on that yet, but I feel sure he will get there. A young woman would be quite lucky to have him but starting up a conversation is tricky, so how does he start a relationship? I have no idea! But we will try to work toward that with him. Remembering names is tough for him so even when he sees people more than once, starting up a conversation is a challenge. But he is still growing and maturing and it will come!

Faith is an interesting thing. I am personally a big God person as many of you know, but whatever your belief system, it seems just believing matters. It seems to provide hope and boy do we need that. I have a friend who was telling me she had both of her kids in the ER in the same week; she has a son with autism, two kiddos with immune system disorders, and a husband with Lewy Body Dementia! I ask how she could do it and her exact words were, "I'm still positive it will be ok. Life has an interesting way of doing that..." That is what I call an inspiration. She gets through life with amazing grace and love. I have another friend, some of you will know of her. She is the teacher from Peoria who has been on the news. She has had her skin attacked by a flesh eating bacteria. They have removed about 30% of her soft tissue, and today they are removing her breathing tube. She has literally been fighting to stay alive for the last three weeks. Yesterday I saw her awake for the first time since this all started and the first thing she did was to smile at me. I am not underestimating the power of serious pain meds; the thing I realized while she was laying there with the breathing tube, heavily sedated was this: other than that time, I have never seen her without a smile. It's not in any way that her life has been easy, but for the most part she faced it with a positive attitude. It is how I know she will face some major struggles as she goes through upcoming surgeries and grafts but she will come out on the other side a stronger and a more beautiful human being.

The reason I am sharing this is I really believe we will all face huge challenges in life. A woman I know at church said she doesn't usually share when we talk about struggles because "my life is pretty good". She has a mother in law with cancer and four kids. I will guarantee she has challenges but from her view point things are pretty good. So I guess what I want to say, is look around you and see what is good and try to stay focused there. It's not always easy but I hope it will make things at least a little easier.

I watched a TED talk on grit. I thought it was pretty fascinating. It basically said we know kids with "grit" do better withstanding all that can be thrown at them in life, but... (and it's a big but) we don't know how to help kids develop "grit". The relevance of this is, I believe, what helps our kids and young adults be strong, independent, deep thinking humans is not having everything go their way. I strongly suggest your kids learn:

- To Wait...So they learn Patience
- To Think...So they can Learn
- To Listen...So they will Hear
- To Problem Solve...So they won't think "Life's Not Fair" but will know it is filled with challenges
- To Love Unconditionally...So they won't Judge
- To Earn...So they know everything will not be given to them
- To Laugh ... sometimes it makes all the difference

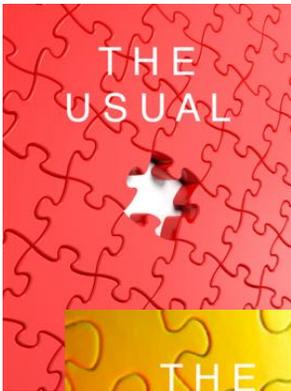
I know most of the time it is easier to give in but I encourage you to think before you say yes or no and fight the fights when they are little people. As a parent, questions fly at us by the 100's and answering becomes habit but thinking and then answering is important. I am not unreasonable: "What color is the sky?" doesn't require a lot of thought but some questions do. With autism, this all takes on a new level of difficult, but please think as you parent. I know they were born with the direct code to your "completely irritated button", but cancel the code and remember what is important (when you can). This is coming from a woman who argued for 45 minutes with her 23-year-old daughter about how to spell the word honour on her wedding invite. None of us parent as well as we wish we could. So sometimes life is just a struggle and you have to get through the best you can.

I am going to start with the word persistence. That's like stubborn but nicer. I was at a conference for MOMs a couple of weeks back and we talked about a two-degree change and that small changes can make a huge difference. I agree with that but the other thing we talked about that had more impact on me was our ability to bend. "Just a little change, small to say the least. Barely even friends, then somebody bends, unexpectedly" put some *Beauty and the Beast* music behind those words and you are there. Bending is not giving in, but it is an essential part of meeting in the middle. I think the combination of bending while holding stable on the ground is challenging but necessary. Think about it physically: we do it every time we lift our children off of ground. Not only do we have to keep ourselves stable but we are responsible for their safety and stability as well, so when we can no longer pick them up we need to continue to bend toward them and provide stability in a more emotional way. What I really mean by stubborn is being stable and consistent and finding common ground but on terms that are acceptable to you as the parent. You are the grounding force and a little stubbornness is sometime ⁷ required to keep boundaries and families strong.

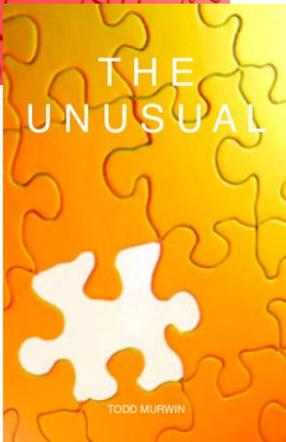
As you can probably tell, life is moving quickly; as our children grow, we have learned hard lessons about things that do and sometime don't work. I don't have a degree but I have tons of experience and had a great role model. I wish she was here today: sometimes I could still use my mom to keep me in line. This is not so much about autism as life and parenting and loving and growing. I hope my thoughts might provide some new perspectives or remind you of some of your ongoing parenting goals.

Best New Author (Ok, I Might be Biased)

We are excited to announce, Todd has completed two fictional books and they are off for final edits as he writes the third. Autism is a fascinating part of these stories and we are excited to share these books with you. Initially, they will probably be on line books, we will let you know when they are available. Here's a little peek into the story!



Ross Ito sucks at writing novels; he's known this for seven years. He has intriguing and creative ideas, but has been unable to turn that into publishable novels. When he decides to enroll at the local Community College to learn more about story writing; he receives feedback from Ben, a student with autism, who has complimentary skills surrounding structure and format of writing. Ross has no idea how to interact with Ben, but quickly learns that his grades are much higher when Ben is around and also learns that Ben, who is a Computer Science major, only needs to take one writing class. Ross is determined to ensure Ben continues to give feedback on his homework.



The next semester, Ross meets an intriguing young female student, Neska and he must learn how to balance his new relationship and trick Ben into helping him. Not only does Ross trick Ben into helping with homework, but he starts to interject chapters of his latest book into the reviews. Neska suspects Ross is misleading Ben and confronts him. Ross must decide whether to pursue his passion for writing or risk losing Neska.

Let's Use Social Media Better!

One of the best ways to share information is using Facebook and there is no reason we cannot provide information nationwide and even worldwide! Please share autism events going on anywhere!

Kids with Autism Can regularly updates their website. Please check back frequently for events and new information. Take time to dive into the stories and perhaps share some of yours.



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