

## **WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY IS APRIL 2, 2010**

April 2, 2010 will mark the third annual celebration of World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD). The Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network takes this opportunity to raise awareness about autism and encourage early diagnosis and intervention.

The Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network (KAN) is an organization dedicated to helping families deal with all aspects of autism as it affects their lives.

“Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are developmental disabilities that typically last throughout a person’s life. They include autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS, including atypical autism), and Asperger syndrome. People with ASDs have significant impairments in social skills and communication.” (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Fact Sheet”)

On April 8 KAN will screen “Adam” at the Fox Theatre in recognition of World Autism Awareness Day. Admission is a \$1 donation toward Autism Awareness. Doors open at 6:00; the film begins at 7:00 p.m.

“A sensitive film of much charm, ‘Adam’ stars Hugh Dancy in the title role as a brilliant young electronic engineer. He's nice-looking but awfully uptight. Not long after the death of his father, with whom he shared a Manhattan apartment, Adam meets new neighbor Beth (Rose Byrne), who's beautiful and outgoing. Intrigued by Adam, Beth gradually attempts to break through his perplexing shell.” (Kevin Thomas, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jul/29/entertainment/et-adam29>)

Please note that “Adam” is rated PG-13, for thematic material, sexual content and language. For more information about this film, visit <http://www.foxsearchlight.com/adam/>.

“Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person’s ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a ‘spectrum disorder’ that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.” (Autism Society, <http://www.autism-society.org>)

KAN hosts workshops throughout the year. This year topics have included Back To School Basics With Special Needs Children; Behaviors, Tantrums and Meltdowns in the Home; Lanterman Fair Hearing; and Conservatorship and Special Needs Trust.

Our April 24 workshop, “Brainstorming with Occupational Therapists,” will address strategies to help your child improve their functional activities. Our presenters are Debi Hazel and Liz Ladabouche. Debi Hazel, M.S., OTR/L, has been an occupational therapist in Bakersfield since 1994. She has worked in pediatrics since 1998 and in Kern County public schools since 2000. Liz Ladabouche, COTA/L, received her training in New Hampshire, graduating in 2003. She has worked in the Vermont school systems since 2004 until coming to Kern County for the 2009-2010 school year.

Our May 22 workshop, “Fathers and Autism: Coping and Support,” will address dealing with an autism diagnosis, relationship issues, job issues, and a father’s role. Our

speaker, Terry Willey, has 27 years of experience as a Marriage Family Therapist and currently works for the Kern County Mental Health Department. He has been married for 30 years and has an eight-year-old son with autism.

An Adult Support Group for Individuals on the Spectrum, ages 18 and up, meets monthly to encourage new friendships within their community.

“It is estimated that between 1 in 80 and 1 in 240 with an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States have an ASD.” (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>)

KAN holds an annual conference in February in Bakersfield. Our 2010 speakers were Dr. Stephen Shore and Dr. Blythe Corbett.

Diagnosed with "Atypical Development with strong autistic tendencies," Dr. Shore was viewed as "too sick" to be treated on an outpatient basis and recommended for institutionalization. Nonverbal until four, and with much help from his parents, teachers, and others, Stephen completed his doctoral dissertation at [Boston University](#) focused on matching best practice to the needs of people on the autism spectrum. In addition to working with children and talking about life on the autism spectrum, Dr. Shore presents and consults internationally on adult issues pertinent to education, relationships, employment, advocacy, and disclosure.

Blythe Corbett, Ph.D., is a pediatric neuropsychologist at UC Davis MIND Institute and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. She has been working with children with autism since 1991 and has published over 25 scientific papers and chapters. Dr. Corbett's research program, the Social Emotional Neuroscience Endocrinology (SENSE) laboratory, was developed to expressly investigate emotion regulation and the neural correlates of stress that contribute to the perception of and response to various social situations.

“If 4 million children are born in the United States every year, approximately 36,500 children will eventually be diagnosed with an ASD. Assuming the prevalence rate has been constant over the past two decades, we can estimate that about 730,000 individuals between the ages of 0 to 21 have an ASD.” (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>)

The Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network provides support, information and education to families, professionals and the public throughout Kern County. We work towards cooperation, coordination and the creation of services between individuals and agencies.

Please call or visit our website if you would like information about workshops or the support group. Let us know what topics would interest you for our workshops or conference. New members are always welcome.

Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network  
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## Autism Facts and Quotes

On December 18, 2007 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 62/139 declaring World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) to be celebrated April 2, in perpetuity. This UN Resolution is one of few official disease or disorder-specific United Nations Days and will bring the world's attention to autism, a pervasive disorder that affects tens of millions.

([www.worldautismawarenessday.org](http://www.worldautismawarenessday.org))

"[People with ASDs] often have repetitive behaviors and unusual interests. ASDs can often be diagnosed in children as young as 18 months. Symptoms of ASDs vary from person to person and range from mild to severe."

(The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Fact Sheet")

(<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/>)

"Today we're looking at situations where autism doesn't necessarily have to be a bomb. It doesn't have to mean the destruction of happiness, hopes, and the things we wish for the children. With proper intervention, those of us leading fulfilling lives can become the rule rather than the exception."

(Dr. Stephen Shore, 2010 Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

"You find children with autism everywhere. It looks remarkably the same. There is no social class difference."

(Dr. Fred Volkmar, 2009 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

"Number one, people with disabilities don't have all weaknesses. They also have strengths. For the most part, they have strengths. The disability is a relatively small part. First and foremost, they are a human being, a human being that has overcome an obstacle."

(Dr. Robert Koegel, 2008 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

"The window of opportunity for learning never closes. A lot of people in their 20s and 30s were misdiagnosed. Or they thought they were weird. When they were given the label, most of them felt a sense of relief because then they knew where to look for help. They learned things when they were older that they never mastered earlier."

(Chantal Sicile-Kira, 2009 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

"Problems in diagnosis are relatively common. ... The problem is we have no test for autism. Although we are getting there. We are now seeing children as young as three months that we are worried about. The good news is we can get them services earlier."

(Dr. Fred Volkmar, 2009 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

"What really makes a huge difference in all of the ASD disorders is educational, speech and language therapy, behavioral approaches. There is overwhelming, important, good, scientific information with that. It makes a huge difference in functional outcomes."

(Dr. Linda Copeland, The Evidence on Complementary & Alternative Medical Interventions for Autism, Kern Autism Network Workshop, April 19, 2008)

“Our kids get picked on. Some of our kids are lucky enough to be placed in environments where they are cherished and loved and nurtured. But the majority are picked on. Until they educate more people, until teachers know more about this, our kids continue to be picked on. ... If we can intervene earlier to stop the teasing and bullying, we could save these kids and make them wonderful citizens in our society.”  
(Jeanette McAfee, 2007 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

“I have discovered that people with developmental disabilities will have up to seven times more contact with law enforcement than a member of the general population. Don't we want to know about people who will have seven times more contact with us?”  
(Dennis Debbaudt, 2007 Autism Society of America Chapter-Kern Autism Network Conference)

“All kids with autism are different. The real advocacy you can do is understanding what his particular deficits are and what services he needs to meet those.”  
(Bryna Siegel, Ph.D., The Developmental-Behavioral Approach to Treating Autism: Applying Principles of Development and Motivation, Kern Autism Network Workshop, July 9, 2007)