



# Adelaide Autism Adventures

Educate • Avocate • Love • Support

Howdy and welcome to the fifth issue of Adelaide Autism Adventures Newsletter!

My goodness what a busy month we have had - training workshops, emergency department trips, school placement offers and the daily ups and downs of raising ASD kids! Its fair to say that Mel and I are well and truly in need of a tropical holiday and with xmas approaching at break neck speed, we may be institutionalised before the year is out :P

As this is the Christmas/holiday season there aren't too many ASD specific contributions to the calendar this month, as most organisations/therapists go on break to enjoy spending time with their own families. So have a read through and decide if many of the open/outdoors events are suitable for your family as safety is always a big concern for many of our families.

This issue features family stories from three SA parents (including my own grandma!) and a special review from sibs who have attended Camp Autism SA's camps, straight from the kids themselves! And as always there's lots of useful info, news updates and a resource on how to include your ASD family member in the Xmas celebrations.

So take a break from your frantic present shopping and impending panic attack over how your ASD angel is going to cope with mayhem of this season and enjoy the December issue of Adelaide Autism Adventures.

We wish you and yours a merry and safe Xmas, Summer Solstice/Litha, Hanukkah, Rohatsu, and for the non-religious of us that you get to enjoy this break with family and friends  
~ Tara and Mel

Issue 5—December 2011

Like the puzzle banner at the top of the newsletter?

We are offering to feature five different ASD angels in the banner of each edition of the newsletter. These images will not be used for any marketing purposes; they serve purely to put a smile on your face.

This month we have Jackson, Amy & Alyssa, Pepper, Zeke & Izzy, and Tristan

Email us your pics to [adelaideautismadventures@gmail.com](mailto:adelaideautismadventures@gmail.com)

## In Focus — Rainbowland Autism Services



Rainbowland Autism Services (RAS) commenced operations in March 2009 and was incorporated in November 09 by co-founder and co-director Allison Dix, the mother of three children on the spectrum. Rainbowland Autism Services offer a wide range of services such as "Autism Rainbow Day," which is a global ASD awareness program. They also offer online services through their facebook page, national advocacy campaigns such as the "stand up 4 autism" and "special needs campaign," and local support services in South Australia. The organisation has also worked extremely hard in getting together a library full of ASD books and resources for the public to borrow from (coming soon). This will be a great resource and a time saver run from the Campbelltown area, and I hope to see this up and running soon.

I have also had the pleasure of attending a few events

that RAS have put on, including the "80's Quiz Night" and the "Christmas in July Dinner;" both of which were fun and greatly appreciated. Allison has also spoke with the Campbelltown Council and they have recently set up ASD holiday activities, like "Bugs and Slugs" which was held last school holidays that my 3 younger boys attended - a big hit with my 8yr old but not so much with my scared 5yr old lol. The council is now also holding a Christmas party for families with children with disabilities, which I must say is a first!

Thank you to Allison and Shane Dix and everyone involved in the running of RAS for your dedication and kindness!

~ Mel

Website—<http://www.rainbowlandautismservices.com/>

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## South Australian Families — Sue O'Brien

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*Sam at the footy*

I wanted to share my story because of all the support and help I have received over the years and I believe it is that support that has helped me on my amazing journey.

The first time I heard the word Autism used in reference to my son was when my son Sam was having a hearing assessment and would not cooperate. We were sat down and the Audiologist said "has anyone told you they think your son is Autistic, his behaviour is not normal". He was about 18 months and so began our journey of appointments, referrals and frustration at a lack of services. It was due to the lack of services that I decided to start Volunteering at Dept of Education and Children's Services and a local Family Support Centre so I could access their training and information services.

It was through this Volunteering that I was able to take time for myself and stop "obsessing" about the

difficulties and challenges of parenting a child with Autism and build my skills and knowledge at the same time. While Volunteering I met many families and professionals supporting families and will be forever grateful for their peer support and guidance

I guess what I am trying to say is that having Sam has made me who I am today, I have taken a completely different path than anyone ever expected of me or what I expected and I am grateful every day for those that have helped us along the way, family, friends, colleagues and professionals. Loving Sam for who he is has made me a better person and parent. Sam is now 11 years old and wants to be a plumber, with his mate Ben, when he grows up, not sure Ben wants to be a plumber but that's Sam's plan!

~ Sue, Sam's mum

*We want to thank Sue for all of her support in keeping us informed with events and other ASD related info. We really appreciate it :) xo*

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## South Australian Families — Christine Brown

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*Adam @ his 34th bday party*

Adam has Aspergers. When he was born in 1977 nothing much was known about autism. He was a very quiet baby; but I always thought that something was not quite right. I tried to get someone to listen to me but all I got was "your only his mother, what would you know." Finally

when he was 3 ½ years old, someone listened. He had some tests done and overall was developmentally about 12 months old. He went to Prospect Kindy for a while it wasn't the right place for him. After being assessed by the education department they put him in a mainstream school, which only lasted 1 ½ weeks. He was placed in Woodville Special School and the difference within a few months was fantastic - he would sit down for longer than five minutes and learnt to concentrate.

Taking him shopping was a nightmare! He had a thing about any presents he was given; he wouldn't open the packages but would carry them about with him. As he grew older he calmed down a lot more but he still had his moments. He developed asthma, so there were many trips to the women's and children's hospital with different doctors. Autism was never mentioned. When

he was 14 yrs old he was assessed by Disability SA and this was the first time that Aspergers had been said to me; since then its mentioned all the time.

When Adam was 18yrs old his father died, which was a big shock to him and us all. Adam didn't visibly react for at least six months, and then I had a bad time with him trying to help him understand that dad wasn't coming home. Just after this he started working at Hands On SA, and has been there for thirteen years now and loves the place and people he works with. He's been their health and safety officer for a few years now.

Adam loves his music, mostly 80's music, and port Adelaide football club. He is now 34 yrs old and has always lived at home with me. I still have days when I ask, "why my child? What did I do to have this happen to my child?" But there are no answers. The thing that makes it worth while is at 4:20pm each day; the door opens and Adam walks in, he puts his arms around me and says, "I love you mum." And I know that no matter what, I was put on this earth so that he has someone to come home to and we have each other to love. No matter the sacrifices I have had to make over the years, those four words are worth it.

~ Christine, Adam's mother and great-grandmother of Isaiah and Ezekiel (Tara's boys).

## South Australian Families — Simone Balestrin



*Simone and Josh*

After my son's Autism diagnosis, I felt alone and isolated. My circle of friends slowly dwindled and I didn't feel like I had anyone to talk to. I felt confined to my home because going out was such an ordeal. Josh didn't cope with shopping centres, other children entering the playground, and even my husband entering the room sometimes. My hopes and dreams for my child were fading away, and all my spare time was now taken up with doctor appointments and therapy sessions. I'm sure you can relate.

Within a few months I was invited to join a support group. Feeling tired and exhausted I wasn't sure I could even be bothered attending, but I'm so glad I did. I no longer questioned my parenting abilities and learnt about so many things like diet, toileting, therapy styles etc. But best of all, I no longer felt alone on this journey. I wasn't exactly alone, I had a great husband as well but the stress at home at the time made it hard for us to communicate.

I noticed that some of the mums were attending less meetings and soon we were catching up via email and text messages. Busy schedules and commitments stopped some people from being able to attend, so then it would be a whole month before we could catch up.

That's why I started up the Autism Adelaide Mum's Group on Facebook. At any time you can reach out to

to over 260 members, so you can guarantee that at any time, there is someone else online to chat to. On some days, Facebook is our only link to the outside world. People on our regular 'friends list' don't always get where we are coming from, or sometimes don't know the right thing to say without further aggravating us. It's nice to have a safe place to go where you can really express your feelings and frustrations. It's a closed group so only members can view posts.

I also organise family picnic's at Marshmallow Park in the city, its a great fully fenced area so we don't have to worry about road safety etc. Everyone brings a plate of food to share and this becomes a central place for us to mingle. I wanted to do something that involved the whole family, not just the mum's and child with ASD. Its great for siblings and dads to come along and meet as well.

My future plans are to hold monthly meetings where I can invite guest speakers and we can also catch up without the children. Surely once a month we can get out of the house :) I have a graphic design background and am currently working on a series of Autism Awareness t-shirts that our members can wear with pride. This will also help us to find each other at outings.

I look forward to meeting more of our members and getting to know your beautiful children. There are lots of exciting events coming up in 2012 that I am now finalising. If you haven't already, join our group and connect with others who 'get it'.

~ Simone, Josh's mum.



You can join the facebook group by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/groups/11039658105/>

There is also "Dads with kids who have Autism" for the fellas at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/139911866028555/>

Would you be willing to share your story?

We are asking for personal stories from parents/caregivers, family members, individuals and therapists/care workers.

There is no right or wrong way to write a personal story; it can be an overall intro to your family or can focus on a specific part of your journey, like diagnosis or a milestone achievement. It can focus on the highs or the lows. Stories can be between 400-600 words

Let us know if you would feel more comfortable remaining anonymous.

# December Calendar 2011

NOTE: Most services close down over December for the holidays and so there really aren't very many ASD specific inclusions in the calendar this month. We are not recommending that all events listed here are safe for all ASD individuals as some may find crowds and loud noises overwhelming. Also, some of these events are not fenced in so this poses a danger to children/individuals who are prone to wander/escape. Unfortunately you may face unfair community scrutiny whilst attending any of these events so take along your ASD advocate hat and info to hand out to uneducated people. Hold your head high; your family has a right to inclusion at general community events!

## Regional Disability Network IDPWD Expo

IDPWD expo with information stalls, food and drinks, live entertainment, show bags and activities for the kids.

When: Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, from 10am-2pm

Venue: Ramsay Place, Beach Rd, Norlunga

Cost: Free event

Website: <http://www.idpwd.com.au/>



## United Nations International Day of People with Disabilities

A day to celebrate the strengths and achievements of people with disabilities, with events being held all over the world.

When: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/idpwd>

Website: [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au)

See the website for events around SA

## IDPWD Masquerade Ball (BERRI)

Masquerade ball including dinner and dancing.

When: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, from 6pm-12am

Venue: Berri Town Hall,

Cost: \$35

Contact: 1800 440 385 or [idpwd@nican.com.au](mailto:idpwd@nican.com.au)

Website: <http://www.idpwd.com.au/>



## D4D Picnic in the Park

Come and celebrate IDPWD with the board members from Dignity for Disability (D4D) and Kelly Vincent MLC. The park itself is disability and child friendly. Byo chairs, rug, drinks and food.

When: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December from 12pm-4pm

Venue: Adelaide Aquatic Centre Park (Park 2), access from Jeffcott Rd.

Contact: for further info contact Rick Neagle (D4D President) on 0431 704 074 or [rickneagle48@bigpond.com](mailto:rickneagle48@bigpond.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/DignityforDisability](http://www.facebook.com/DignityforDisability)

Website: <http://www.d4d.org.au/>

## Peter Combe's Family Christmas Concert

Listen to all Peter Combe's Christmas songs along with performers from Theatre Bugs and the "Happy Christmas to You and You" band.

When: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December from 5pm

Venue: Maughan Uniting Church, Cnr of Franklin and Pitt St, Adelaide City

Cost: Tickets are \$16pp or \$55 for a family of four from Theatre Bugs.

Bookings: <http://www.trybooking.com>

Website: <http://www.petercombe.com.au/>

## ASD Family Christmas Party @ Orphanage Park (FULLY BOOKED)

Day of ASD family fun with face painters, sausage sizzle and a jumping castle! BYO chairs, picnic rug and drinks.

THIS EVENT IS NOW FULLY BOOKED

When: Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December from 11am -3pm

Venue: Orphanage Park



## Christmas Party for Special Kids @ The Adelaide Zoo (TICKET ONLY EVENT)

A fun filled day at the Zoo complete with wandering clowns, characters, magicians and face painters. Kids enjoy a free sausage sizzle, drink, ice cream, fairy floss, showbag and a present from Santa! Keep an eye out for the man himself.

When: Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December from 9am - 1pm

Venue: Adelaide Zoo,

Cost: free (TICKET ONLY EVENT)

Website: <http://www.christmasparty.com.au/>



## An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders (General Awareness Session)

The workshop outlines the diagnostic criteria, explores the unique characteristics of ASD and identifies strategies to help support individuals in the home, school and community environment. It will cover a range of topics including strength and weakness of ASD individuals, behaviour, social interaction, sensory integration, and communication.

When: Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December from 9:30am - 12:30pm

Venue: Autism SA, 262 Marion Rd, Netley

Price: \$70 for financial members, \$75 for non-financial members

Contact: call info line on 1300 288 47 to book or for more info

Website: [www.autismsa.org.au](http://www.autismsa.org.au)

Heard about or planning an event or workshop?  
Let us know about it at  
[adelaideautismadventures@gmail.com](mailto:adelaideautismadventures@gmail.com)

# December Calendar 2011



## MusicWorks Dynamic Day Gig

Disability and family friendly event.

Presented by Tony Doyle Visions, this is a disability inclusive event which often features musicians with disabilities and this month Santa will sing himself!

When: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, from 10:30am-2:30pm

Venue: The Governor Hindmarsh, 59 Port Rd

Cost: \$6 entry (support workers free)

Contact: 8212 0390 or [tdoyle.visions@bigpond.com](mailto:tdoyle.visions@bigpond.com)

Website: <http://www.tonydoylevisions.com.au/>

## Rotary Club Movie Screenings for Special Needs

### Families

The Rotary Club of Adelaide West has invited families who are registered for services with Autism SA to one of two special movie screenings - Arthur Christmas (Rated G) and Puss In Boots (Rated PG). Tickets include popcorn, drinks, showbags and face painters.

When: Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 9:30am start

Venues: Both movies are screening at Norwood and Salisbury Hoyts Cinemas

Tickets: limited tickets are available through Autism SA Infoline BEFORE Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Contact: Autism SA Infoline on 1300 288 476

## Christmas Carols in the Park (MT BARKER)

Pre-celebrations include children's rides and games, roving entertainment, creative workshops, face painting and food & drinks. Main carols program features, band, choir, community carol singing, guest artists, guest compare, children's entertainer followed by fireworks.

When: Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December from 4pm, with carols starting at 7:45pm

Venue: Keith Stephenson Park, Adelaide Road, Mount Barker

Cost: free

Contact: Reverend Lingoood on 8388 8847

Website: <http://www.dcmtbarker.sa.gov.au/>



## Early Days Workshp—Understanding

### Behaviour: A Step by Step Guide for Parents

Early days workshops are for parents and caregivers of children aged 6yrs and under who have been diagnosed or are in the process of being diagnosed with ASD. This workshop covers understanding behaviours, teaching new behaviours and promoting positive behaviours.

When: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December, from 10am—4:30pm

Venue: the Paddocks Centre, crn Kesters Rd & Bride Rd, Parafield Gardens

Cost: free

Contact: 1300 288 476 or [earlydays@autismsa.org.au](mailto:earlydays@autismsa.org.au)

Website: [www.autismsa.org.au/early-days-workshops](http://www.autismsa.org.au/early-days-workshops)

## Campbelltown Special Christmas Party

All families who live in the Campbelltown area and who have children with a disability are invited to a special Christmas party provided by the Campbelltown Council, which will include food, drinks, games and entertainment for the kids!

When: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December from 6pm-8pm

Venue: Campbelltown Function Centre, 172 Montacute Rd, Rostrevor

Cost: free

RSVP: Booking essential and needed by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December

Contact: Tracy Johnstone 8366 9214 or

[tjohnstone@campbelltown.sa.gov.au](mailto:tjohnstone@campbelltown.sa.gov.au)

Website:

## School Holidays Start

School is officially out for the xmas break after Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December!

## Cracker Christmas Cabaret at The Grove

Come along for a fun filled and disability friendly Christmas party! Celebrate the season with face painters, magicians, umbrella painting workshop, free BBQ and Santa!

When: Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December, from 10:30am - 2:00pm

Venue: Golden Grove Arts Centre, Cnr Tenison Place and The Golden Grove Way

Cost: free event

Contact: 8397 7429

Website: <http://www.teatreegully.sa.gov.au/>

## World Festival of Magic

The Rotary Club of Adelaide has invited families who are registered for services with Autism SA to a special event - World Festival of Magic

When: Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December with shows starting at 1pm, 4pm or 7pm (90min duration)

Venue: Thebarton Theatre, Henley Beach Road, Torrens-ville

Tickets: limited tickets are available through Autism SA Infoline BEFORE Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Contact: Autism SA Infoline on 1300 288 476

## Carols by Candlelight

Enjoy a Christmas concert with entertainment for the whole family, headlined by outstanding Australian acts plus a special appearance by Father Christmas and a spectacular fireworks finale.

When: Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December from 8pm - 10:45pm

Venue: Elder Park, King William Road, Adelaide City

Cost: gold coin donation

Contact: 8278 8335 or [natalie.falcinella@ihug.com.au](mailto:natalie.falcinella@ihug.com.au)

Website: <http://www.adelaidecarols.com.au/>

## November Calendar 2011

### Christmas Wonderland @ Loxton

30 stunning displays stretch over 250 metres and include the nativity scene in Bethlehem, Christmas Village, Santa's Boot, and Lolly Shop, popular cartoon characters plus more. Hidden throughout the displays are ten Where's Wallies. It's a challenge for young and old to try and find them all!

When: now until the 31st December. Best viewing times are between 8pm-11pm

Where: Fairweather Avenue, Loxton

Cost: free

Website: <http://www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au/>

P.S. While you are there, why not go and check out the Christmas light displays all around town.



### Novita and TeenZone's Christmas Cheer Party

Join us for lots of fun including a Christmas sing-a-long with the entertainers from Cool-4-Kids, and a visit from Santa himself! Bring along a plate of food to share lunch with all your new friends.

When: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December from 10am - 1pm

Venue: Novita Theatre 171 Days Rd, Regency Park

Cost: \$5

RSVP: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Contact: [teenzone@novita.org.au](mailto:teenzone@novita.org.au) or 8243 8282

Website: <http://www.novita.org.au/>

## Community Noticeboard



### Heartfelt thanks for all your hard work!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank a few individuals in our community who are stepping down from public roles for all of the hard work, dedication, support and care they have shown the SA ASD community at large. These people are parents/caregivers of ASD kids and are to be commended for the massive effort of parenting in addition to their community work. We want to thank Coby Hudson, who will be stepping down from her role as a co-ordinator for Camp Autism Inc SA at the end of this year, and Andrew Burston and Fiona Bray from ASD South East SA—a fantastic organisation which offers support groups, an online forum and a library for its members and is held in high esteem by the local community. These three beautiful people are stepping down from their leadership roles to focus on family commitments and we hope that new members will step up and continue the work of these trailblazers. So thank you for the difference you have made in the lives of so many families!



### Autism SA Closure and Stock Take

Autism SA will be closed over the Christmas and New Year break, from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December till Monday 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2012. During this time Autism SA will be doing a stock take of the resource centre, and they ask that all books and resources on loan be returned by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> of December (last day to borrow will be Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> of November).



### Batteries for Camp Autism Inc SA

Camp Autism is currently collecting old car batteries to raise funds to support families attend next year's camp's, and to restock much needed craft & activity stuff. If you have any old car batteries

that you want to get out of your life, let us help you so you can help us. Give us a call and we will arrange to pick them up, or give you a location to drop them off. Call Ian 0417 840 355

### DIR@ Floortime™ - "Empowering Children to Reach their Potential" DVD free offer—LIMITED TIME

Parents4kids have produced this DVD with the support of Adelaide families, educators, therapists, and two SA based grant funding bodies. This resource includes parent stories, an introduction to DIR@ Floortime™ by two certified practitioners, case studies, insights for educators, insights for therapists, and a special international feature. It is available for free for a limited time and people interested in obtaining a copy should visit the Parents4Kids website at [www.parents4kids.org.au](http://www.parents4kids.org.au)

### SURVEY - Investigation of Consumer Experience of Autism Services within South Australia

#### **SURVEY CLOSES FRIDAY 23RD DECEMBER!!!!**

Parents/caregiver, individuals with an ASD, and service professionals are invited to participate in either an online survey or a semi-structure interview (in person/over the phone/skype) to investigate their personal experiences with autism services provided by Autism SA. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes. The online survey can be accessed at

#### **PARENTS/INDIVIDUALS**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DH6B2WR>

#### **PROFESSIONALS**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8PBXJ3D>

You can contact Manya Angley, Director of MARAC, to register your interest or for any further questions on 0400 951 179 or by emailing [manya@marac.com.au](mailto:manya@marac.com.au)

## What's New in South Australia

### Riverland ASD Support Group

The Riverland ASD Parent Group is held once a month and involves an information session on topics related to ASD and disability. Information sessions are presented by the Disability Services Senior Developmental Programmer or guest speakers. Topics presented are based on feedback provided by families. Following the info session, parents/families are able to chat over lunch, which can be purchased at the venue. Free tea/coffee. The group sessions alternate between daytime sessions and evening sessions each month to accommodate working families.

Meets: Daytime sessions - Thursdays 11:00am - 1:30pm

Evening sessions - Tuesdays 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Venue: Vine Community Church, 1 Jellet Road, Berri

Contact: Narelle Sarakinis

[narelle.sarakinis@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:narelle.sarakinis@dfc.sa.gov.au)

Bring: Pen, paper and money for lunch if desired

Creche: Available free of charge

### EXPRESSION OF INTEREST SOUGHT



Hanen's "TalkAbility" and "More than Words"

@ Talk Speech Pathology

Talk Speech Pathology is looking for expressions of interest from parents who would like to attend the Hanen courses "TalkAbility" and "More than Words" - both of which are parent training courses designed specifically for children at different stages on the autism spectrum. Both programs are run over 8 weeks in small parent groups with a number of individual sessions. The trainings will be run by Penny Miller, who is Hanen® Certified Speech and Language Pathologist out of the Broadview clinic in term 1 2012.. For more information or to express your interest please contact them using the below info

Contact: 8367 6766 or email

[reception@talkspeechpathology.com.au](mailto:reception@talkspeechpathology.com.au)



School Holiday Social Skills Groups @

Headstart Intervention Service

HIS will be offering a six session social skills group, 4-6yrs old and 7-9yrs old, over the school holidays which will be facilitated by provisional psychologist Candy Fong. The program will target conversation skills, body language recognition, emotion awareness and management, sharing, helping others and turn taking. The groups will run on Mondays and Tuesdays starting on the 9th of January and will run until the 24th of January. Families are able to use HCWA package funding to attend and the total cost will be \$200. Families should be aware that sessions cannot be claimed on private health or medicare rebated due to Candy's current status as a provisional psychologist.

For more information please contact HIS on 8373 4531 or [admin@headstartis.com.au](mailto:admin@headstartis.com.au)

Website—<http://www.headstartis.com.au/>



ASD Awareness Clip by Gin & Vodka Productions

Gin & Vodka Productions, along with the cast from their latest stage production, *Gypsy*, have produced a fantastic youtube clip to raise ASD awareness. Gin & Vodka Productions work closely with The Army of Autism Awareness Angels and recently donated the proceeds of their silent auction to Camp Autism Inc SA. Thanks so much to G&V Productions for creating such an excellent and professional clip. You can view it by visiting their facebook page at [www.facebook.com/GnVProductions](http://www.facebook.com/GnVProductions) or by searching "the gypsy diaries: we're autism aware, are you?" "



PAKA is on hiatus

Parents Assisting Kids with Autism (PAKA) is taking a twelve month break to concentrate on family and work commitments. We would like to thank everyone who is involved with PAKA for all of their hard work and dedication to making the world a brighter place for kids on the spectrum, and hope they enjoy their well deserved break!

Rotary Club of Adelaide free ticket offer to either Special Movie Screening or World Festival of Magic

The Rotary Club of Adelaide has generously invited families who are registered for services with Autism SA to apply for tickets to two upcoming events; the World Festival of Magic or special screenings of either "Puss in Boots" or "Arthur Christmas" - each screening at the Salisbury and Norwood Hoyts Cinemas. Tickets to these events are limited and to secure them for your family call the Autism SA Infoline ASAP on 1300 288 476. See the Calendar for more info on each event.



Award for Autism SA's Telstra iModeling Program

Autism SA's Telstra "iModeling Program" (iPad app) won the 2011 Innovative Practice Award at the Inaugural South Australia Biennial Disability Sector Awards. This is a fantastic achievement and we offer our congratulations to Merel Purmer and the iModeling Team. Well done!

# Out and About in Adelaide



Adele, Locky and Charnie

## Credit Union Christmas Pageant with the Army of Autism Awareness Angels

This year the Credit Union Christmas Pageant was a little more exciting for ASD families than usual, and it was all thanks to the hard work of the Army of Autism Awareness Angels who managed to secure two ASD specific viewing areas. Both Mel and I were lucky enough to be invited to the balcony viewing area courtesy of Rachel Sanderson MP and we had a fantastic time! In previous years just the thought of even attempting the pageant with my boys has sent me in to a cold sweat - the crowds, noise, and no fences would have been a recipe for disaster! And my family is not the only one to have previously missed out on what so many of us consider a hallmark of our childhood and without the work by the Angels, many of us would have missed out again.

"Thanks from the bottom of our hearts for an opportunity to enjoy the pageant in our own special safe area. It was nice to feel comfortable and relaxed, knowing our children were safe and where nobody even gave a second glance if they had their hands over their ears for most of the pageant lol!! Hope many many more families get to go next year. Thanks for your hard work and to the church for making the facilities available afterwards. Merry Christmas everyone!!" ~ Quote from the Angels facebook page



Paul and Angus and our view from the balcony

All our kids enjoyed the balcony view and from the photos we can see that the kids in the second gated area certainly enjoyed their front row viewing too. The families in the second area also had access to a chill out room in the Wakefield St Cathedral which proved to be a big hit with families. We want to express our extreme gratitude to the people who made this possible and made Christmas shine a little brighter for our families; Brooke Clark and her Angels, Rachel Sanderson MP and her staff, Brian Gilbertson, Arthur Hodgson, Wakefield St Cathedral, and Sam Paor and her delightful son Ben who greeted us all as we got there :)

## Siblings Experiences from Camp Autism Inc SA



Amelia

### What it feels like to be a sibling at camp autism!!

Now I have been on two camps with Camp Autism, on the first day at the first camp I didn't really know what to expect but I settled in just fine. I had even started to make some new friends. The only downer to the first day was there where a few tantrums but you can kind of expect that when we are in a new place. I felt really at home because if one of my brothers has a melt down I don't feel like my family is different to everybody else and that I'm not getting weird looks from passers but when I'm with camp autism they help when they are having a melt down. I like most of the activities and all the people there are really nice, I feel as though we are all one big family and that they all understand what we are going through. On the second camp my brothers and I were all looking forward to going on this camp. This time there weren't as many tantrums but I did miss my dog but with a little more training she can come to the next camp. This year I got covered in shaving cream when my brothers covered me in it and then we all ganged up on dad. On a whole the experience is amazing and I recommend it for any family and I give it 12/10 :) ~ Amelia, age 12.



Claudia painting a rainbow

I have been to 3 camp Autisms. The best thing is that I get to meet other kids like me and we get to do fun activities. Claire Caravan Park was my faviroot because I liked the animals at the park and the cabins were cool. I liked the bunk beds... and Coby cooks the best pancakes ~ By Claudia Rister, sister to Joshua Balestrin

I had fun at Camp Autism. I liked the messy stuff we got to play with. I'm glad I got to go. I only got to go because my brother has Aspergers ~ Casey Biggs, age 8.



Casey

## Army of Autism Awareness Angels News

November saw the Angels out in force — pageants, media appearances, launches, meetings with members of parliament and an interstate mission to attend a fundraiser for The Little Learners Foundation in Melbourne to top it all off!



Karen, Mark Butler MP and Brooke

The girls are certainly getting ASD out there and Brooke herself has graced the airwaves multiple times this month, bringing awareness to the listeners of Peter Greco on Leisurelink and Amanda Blair on 5AA! Along with radio personalities, Brooke and second Angel in command, Karen, held a meeting with Federal MP Mark Butler to discuss issues pertinent to ASD individuals and their families. As a result of this, Mark Butler MP has invited them to attend a future meeting to discuss these issues in greater detail, and the Angels encourage the community to take up this opportunity to express our concerns which they will put forward to Mark. Send your letters to Karen at [autismawarenessangelsk@hotmail.com](mailto:autismawarenessangelsk@hotmail.com)



The Port Adelaide Twilight Christmas Pageant was awash in red this year with the Army of Autism Awareness Angels proudly marching along side other community groups. The Angels would like to thank the people and organisations who supported them in making this happen; Vince from Gin & Vodka Productions, Karen Butterworth, Rikki Tarura, Pure Skin and Body, Shirli's Wedding Supplies and Helen from TAFE SA for donating red wings for the Angels to wear, and Jon Paor for donating his beautiful red convertible for the parade.

Gin and Vodka Productions donated more than just red wings to ASD awareness this month, they also donated the proceeds from the silent auction at the official launch of their stage production, "Gypsy," to Camp Autism Inc SA as chosen as the beneficiary by The Army of Autism Awareness Angels. Also see "What's New in SA" to learn more about their contribution to ASD awareness.



The winning entry!!

The "Im Autism Aware Photo Competition" with Unleash Solar officially closed on the 22nd of November and has been hailed as a great success, with a number of entries from across the community. You can see all of the submissions by visiting the Angels facebook page and watching the youtube clip montage, which includes the top 10 entries and the official announcement of the winner. We want to congratulate Andrew Burston and family for their winning entry and hope they enjoy the brand new solar system valued at over \$2,249 from Unleash Solar.

The entry is a combination of three different photos which depicts the sensory overload issues which many ASD individuals contend with. Well done to everyone who showed that they are indeed 'autism aware,' The Army of Autism Awareness Angels for their innovative competition and Unleash Solar for their generosity in such an amazing grand prize!



Brooke with Amanda Blair



Angles Emma and Brooke with Ian Ward from Camp Autism SA at the launch of *Gypsy*



The Angels at the *Little Learners Foundation Fundraiser* in Melbourne  
Photo: Lisa Law Photography

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## Light and Laughter

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We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today." ~ Stacia Tauscher

Sometimes it feels like I never see my partner even though we sleep in the same bed. So today I gave him an extra special kiss when he came home. Isaiah came up to me and said loudly, "mummy leave daddy alone!" I laughed and said, "mummy loves daddy, its good that mummy wants to kiss him hello," to which Isaiah shook his head and said exasperatedly, "crazy mummy!"

~ Tara and Isaiah (6yrs old), Northern Suburbs

"If you want to live more, you must master the art of appreciating the little everyday blessings of life. This is not altogether a golden world but there are countless gleams of gold to be discovered in it."

~ HHenry Alfred Porter

My son's school teacher asked him to help her pass out the water bottles at school. She asked him to count heads to see how many there were. He looked around the room intently and then turned away with a very puzzled expression and responded, "everyone has just one!"

~ *Much More...Laughing & Loving with Autism: A Collection of 'Real Life' Warm and Humorous Stories*, 2002, R. Wayne Gilpin, Future Horizons Inc.

"Let's stop "tolerating" or "accepting" difference, as if we're so much better for not being different in the first place. Instead, let's celebrate difference, because in this world it takes a lot of guts to be different."

~ Kate Bornstein



Have you got a humorous ASD story?  
Send it to us at

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

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