

KAP Information:

The Kelly Autism Program

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Autism Awareness Festival Planned for April

We are delighted to announce the first annual Southern Kentucky Autism Awareness Festival which will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2008 on the South Lawn of Western Kentucky University's Campus. This will be a family oriented event which will offer an opportunity for families of individuals on the Autism Spectrum to meet and mingle with other families, therapists, volunteers, professionals and local autism providers. There will be games, food, activities, entertainment, information, support and lots of fun offered in a festival atmosphere.

The goal of this Autism Awareness Festival is threefold: 1.) Raise awareness about issues facing families affected by autism; 2.) Educate families about various treatment options for autism; 3.) Provide a festive, informative, family focused outing. The event will kick off with a Balloon Release and Fun Walk around Western's Campus at 1:00 pm.

From 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm on the South Lawn of Western's Campus, booths will be set up where local autism providers including therapists, school systems, therapy dogs, etc., will be present to offer information and resources about the services they can provide to families with individuals on the autism spectrum. This will be a unique event in that these local resources have never been together in this location to offer information and support.

In addition to offering information and support, the afternoon will provide many fun activities. There will be an Emcee with planned segments on stage throughout the afternoon. There will be face painting for the young and the young at heart. There will be games and inflatable activities for the children including a Giant Slide, an Obstacle Course, Kiddie Maze, a Moonwalk, a Velcro Wall and a Dunking Booth! We will even have a clown. Food booths will also be available. Activities are free!

We hope that everyone will mark your calendars and plan to join us at the 2008 Waiora Autism Awareness Festival!

WHAS Crusade for Children Award Presentation

Upcoming Events

- *Swim Social: **March 28th***
- *Parent Support Group: **April 4th***
- *Autism Festival: **April 19th***
- *Middle/High Canoe Trip: **April 23rd***
- *Last Day of KAP for Spring: **April 25th***
- *Guest Speaker—Temple Grandin: **September 4th***



Rebecca Jackson, CEO of the WHAS Crusade for Children, was at the CEC on Monday, January 14th, to present a check in the amount of \$87,430. A large part of this grant award will benefit the Early Childhood Center and the Kelly Autism Program.

Mary Lloyd Moore, Dr. Phillip Myers, Dr. Janice Ferguson, Rebecca Jackson, Vicki Beach, Dr. Marty Boman, and Lisa Murphy at Award Presentation

Director's Desk

Written By: Marty Boman

The Kelly Autism Program has been awarded another grant! This is exciting news as it brought national attention to KAP on the Autism Society of America's website!!

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – The Kelly Autism Program at Western Kentucky University has received a \$7,000 grant from the Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation to support its School-to-Work Transition Program.

The Excellence in Education, Engagement & Employment program provides opportunities for young adults diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder to learn job skills and pursue employment with community businesses, organizations and individuals who have received training as job coaches.

More than 10 businesses and organizations in the Bowling Green region provided job opportunities for the participants last year, and the hope is to increase this number as the number of participants at the Kelly Autism Program grows, KAP director Marty Boman said. The program would impact approximately 35 or more individuals.

The Kelly Autism Program, one of six programs within WKU's Clinical Education Complex, was made possible in 2004 through an initial gift and ongoing support from John and Linda Kelly. The KAP continues to expand and provide services for more families.

The mission of the Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation is to award grants to programs that enrich the lives of adolescents and adults with autism. The foundation's expertise encompasses developing, identifying, supporting and supervising exemplary programs.



Special Guest Speaker

Temple Grandin, Ph.D. will be at WKU on September 4th for the KAP first year celebration at the CEC! Dr. Grandin is known as the "most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world". According to the website, www.templegrandin.com, Dr. Grandin was non-verbal until she was three and a half years old,

communicating by screaming, peeping and humming. She was labeled "autistic" in 1950 and her parents were advised that she should be institutionalized. She tells her story of "groping her way from the far side of darkness" in her book *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*. Dr. Grandin moved on to become a successful livestock handling equipment designer, one of very few in the world. She has designed the facilities in which half of the United States' cattle are handled. Dr. Grandin will visit the WKU Agriculture Department on the afternoon of September 4th. Later that evening, she will present a lecture. Watch for more details in future editions of the KAP newsletter, CEC newsletter, KAP website at kellyautismprogram@wku.edu, or the CEC website at www.wkucec.com. We hope everyone will join us!



Spotlight On: Ethan Burden

Written By: Felicia Wells

Ethan Burden is a 7 1/2 year old fun-loving and energetic individual. He has been a participant at KAP for 9 months. He attends our after school program two days a week, with his work dog Tucker. Who is Tucker? He is a 1 year old yellow Labrador retriever that attends Ethan's school each day. Tucker is trained to specifically be with Ethan everywhere he goes. For example, he sits beside him in class, goes to the bathroom along with Ethan, recess, lunch, and home. He lives with Ethan around the clock, and they are best friends. The trainer (Ms. Jean) expressed how Ethan now gets up in front of class and talks with no hesitation when called upon by his teacher. Tucker provides a security for Ethan that a parent provides for a child. Ethan has gained friendships and engages in conversation with other classmates about his work dog. Tucker is a work dog that wears his jacket all day long. He is trained to act appropriately during all times with others. Yes, he is still a pup, but when you see these two together the bond they have is so amazing. I know firsthand that they are best friends because their eyes are always watching each other's moves. I have the privilege of working with both Ethan and Tucker, and I absolutely love being around the energy that they both bring to KAP. Ethan and Tucker give 110% each time they step foot in to KAP. I worked with Ethan last summer before Tucker, and now after Tucker the difference is so unbelievable. Ethan focuses on different tasks and meets every challenge head on with no reservations, and we have Tucker to thank for that. Thank You! This experience makes me excited about what opportunities are yet to come for children with autism. One would not think that a dog could give confidence to a child with autism, but the communication between these two is so special. So Ethan and Tucker thank you again for being a rainbow in my heart of hearts here at KAP.

Posters at the Capitol

Written By: Leisa Hutchison

On January 31st, several staff attended the Posters At The Capitol day at the state Capitol building in Frankfort. The purpose of this day was to share undergraduate research that has been conducted with legislators so that they may have a greater understanding of how research affects programming. Staff members designed a study and prepared a poster with the details displayed. KAP staff reported the significance of the collaboration process, as seen in KAP, in preparing them for professions serving persons with autism spectrum disorders. This event provides an excellent opportunity to share what we are doing in the KAP with legislators and others around the state who have specific interest in autism spectrum disorders. The event was well attended by legislators, students and faculty from other universities in the state. Some of the staff had the opportunity to speak with their legislators directly about our program. Overall, it was an interesting day with several fellow presenters from Western Kentucky University attending as well. Staff members from KAP who participated in the event were: Holly Conley, Kristina Rasmussen, Mirinda Thomas and Dr. Boman and Mrs. Hutchison. We hope to continue participating in this event so that our undergraduate students learn the value of research and its importance providing the best practices to our participants at KAP and

our professions.



Left to Right:
Leisa Hutchison, Holly Conley, Mirinda Thomas, Kristina Rasmussen, and Dr. Marty Boman in Frankfort for Posters at the Capitol

Special Olympics

Written By: Sarah McMaine

On February ninth the Special Olympics hosted their regional basketball tournament. Several of our participants took part in the tournament. I was fortunate enough to watch David Essler and John Michael Huffman play. They had a great game and really played good defense. They also had a lot of spirit and made sure their supporters were enjoying the game. The state tournament was held in Louisville on March 8th.

Parent Support Group

Written By: Carry Pritchard

The Bowling Green Area Autism and Aspergers Parent Support Group will resume meetings beginning Friday, April 4th from 6:00 to 7:30 PM at the Clinical Education Complex, 104 14th Street in Bowling Green. The support group has joined forces with the Kelly Autism Program (KAP) to better meet the needs of families in our area. The group's main goals are to provide information and support for families with children on the spectrum.

Two break out sessions are scheduled for April 4th, including a discussion group on early language issues and interventions, to be hosted by Leisa Hutchison, and a discussion group on steps toward developing an effective school IEP, to be hosted by KAP and group facilitators.

The support group will meet the first Friday of each month, about 7 or 8 times per year.

Meetings will typically include a speaker, followed by small-group sessions on topics of interest and a social networking time. Alternatively, we may plan whole meeting break out sessions followed by a social time during which we can network with the entire group. Break out sessions will be facilitated by an autism services provider or by parent facilitators, Karen Thomas and Carrie Pritchard. Break out sessions will be topic based or sometimes aged based, meaning they will focus on meeting the different needs of older and younger children.

Children are welcome to attend all meetings. Fun and food are provided. Parents of preschool children and those not currently enrolled at KAP need to request childcare one week in advance by calling KAP at 745-4527 and leaving a recorded message or an RSVP with a staff member.

We hope to see you on April 4th.



Alex Embry and David Essler participate in the Special Olympics basketball game.

Left to right:
Tom Durkhan, Aaron Thomas, Cody Swords, Victoria Kelly, and Collin Tones attended the 2008 Bowl for Kids' Sake.



Elementary Social

Written By: Holly Conley

On February 16th we had our first social of 2008. Families and participants were invited to join us for a night of food and friends. The social was held on the 4th floor of the Downing University Center (DUC) on WKU's campus. The 4th floor is a large game room with many activities to try. The participants ate pizza with their families and the KAP staff, and afterwards they had time to play ping-pong, pool, or go bowling with their friends and siblings. Bowling was a favorite activity among many of the participants. Two of KAP's staff, Stacy Edwards and Patrick Hammond, led a parent discussion on the 3rd floor, while the participants played games. Everyone had a wonderful time, made some new friends, and enjoyed a night of fun. We will keep you posted about our next upcoming social and we hope that you can join us!



At Left: Several KAP participants attended and were recognized at the annual VSA Art Show held in January. Great work, guys!

Middle and High School Update

Written By: Patrick Hammond

This past February was a very exciting and successful month for the middle and high school groups. Before the participants arrived for their first day, the staff prepared goals for them to work on. Then throughout the month of February, the participants and staff have been monitoring these goals to assure that progress is being made. When that goal is met the staff will select another goal targeting another area of concern.

In addition to monitoring goals, each day is structured so that a routine is followed. For example, the middle and high school group begins the afternoon with meet and greet time. During this time the participants will talk amongst themselves or with the staff. Next comes the task of the day, which can include anything from homework to work assigned by KAP staff (all task work is done individually with the help of staff if needed). Then the participants have snack, which is followed by group time. During this time all the participant's work together on a single task. These activities include completing a social skills game in which the participants respond to different social scenarios. Group time is aimed at trying to improve each participant's ability and willingness to work with their peers. The day finishes with group interactions and includes activities such as board games, computer, going outside, puzzles, homework, reading, or going to the sensory rooms. The staff tries to provide the participants with a structured day which makes it easy for them to follow a routine.

KAP has been blessed with a wide variety of participants each with different skills and attributes, all of which add to the wonderfully exciting and always changing atmosphere. This semester is proving to be a very successful and enjoyable time for each KAP participant, and the staff hopes that their success here is carried over into other aspects of their lives.

Scholarships and Charitable Giving

As always, we ask that everyone remember KAP and the benefits that are being brought to the community. KAP has an endowment fund or consider us in estate planning and other forms of giving. KAP can also grow through your effort of time, talent, and treasure.

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