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NAANT NEWS & VIEWS

By Nagla Moussa

In the past two months, many Texans who live near the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Houston and surrounding areas were devastated by Hurricane Harvey. We all watched the news and were shocked to see the flooding, the families stranded in high water and the general carnage that this hurricane caused in the area. Thankfully, we also so many rescue efforts, and much generosity and help from all over the state to help the folks affected get to safety and to find shelter and rebuild.

What we didn't see in the news is the private devastation, and the magnitude of the disaster that this hurricane had on families of children with autism. We all know that many children with autism have a difficult time with transition and change in routine. They do not understand natural disasters and the reasons why they are forced to leave their homes, their rooms, their schools, their favorite belongings, and their routine and schedule. What ensues is confusion, frustration, and anger and the only way that these children know how to communicate their feelings is with meltdowns and aggression, at times. Some of these children had to move with their families to shelters, and if the family was lucky enough, to a hotel. This living situation lasted for an extended period of time. Some are still away from home, and life has been very difficult for these children and their families. Sometimes life has been down right hellish with daily behaviors, lack of sleep, lack of help and appropriate support.

NAA-NT was very humbled by the courage and persistence of many of these families. We were able to play a small part in relieving some of the needs of the families through emergency grants that allowed some to bridge the gap financially to move to a hotel, or extend their hotel stay until FEEMA funds were available. NAA-NT replaced some of the children's important lost items like iPads, clothes, and toys with granting some financial help to their parents. NAA-NT was also able to provide some emergency grants to help with rebuilding homes, and paying monthly bills that were in arrears due to lost wages. NAA-NT was in touch with other relief organizations regarding families with children with autism in their care, and we were fortunate to be of some help in facilitating some relief in their living situation. NAA, our parent organization, and our community was very generous in contributing to the Hurricane Harvey emergency grant fund so that we were extremely pleased to grant every single request presented to us.

We are very proud of the efforts NAA-NT exerted on behalf of the families affected by Hurricane Harvey, and we are very grateful to the North Texas Community for their generosity and compassion.

MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Parent Get Together and Support Group Meeting

For parents of children with autism of all ages:

When: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 9:30a.m.-11:00a.m. (**Original Pancake House**, 2301 North Central Expwy #156, Plano, TX 75075)

3rd Tuesday of each month, 11:30am — 1:00pm (**Corner Bakery 2401 Preston Rd A**, Plano, TX (In the Whole Foods Market Parking lot))

Please note our new venue!

Spanish Parent Get Together and Support Group Meeting

N Grupo de Apoyo Para Padres en Español

Fechas de las reuniones: 4 de Noviembre del 2017, 2 de Diciembre del 2017, 6 de Enero del 2018

Cuando: El primer Sábado del mes

Donde: The Hill Community Center

2121 Bay Hill Dr.

Plano, TX 75023

Hora: 4:00pm-5:30pm

******No habrá guardería para niños pero pueden traerlos.*** Por favor contáctenos si necesitan más información o ayuda para encontrar el edificio. **July Talavera Bekker** (214) 802-5767 (cell)

Self-Advocacy Group

For Teens (7th Grade and up) & Adults with Autism Participants will learn about autism and its effect on their lives, while developing a great appreciation for their individual gifts and talents. It is important that participants know they have autism. Trained volunteers, including some with autism, facilitate this group. Bring an object, book, picture or other item that represents your talents and interests, \$5.00 to pay for pizza, snacks and drinks.

When : 1st Tuesday of each month, during the school year, at 7:00 pm

Where : St. Andrew UMC, 1401 Mira Vista Blvd. Plano, TX 75093. Please check in at the Theater room upstairs on the 2nd floor),

Sibshop Group

Siblings ages 6 to 10 years old will have a fun time with activities, snacks and friends who share their same experience of having a brother or a sister with ASD

Cost : \$5 per child

When: November 4th & December 2nd, 2017 4pm – 5:30 pm

Where: 2121 Bay Hill Dr. , Plano, TX 75023 (**Please note our new venue!**)

Hosted by : Rose Henke . To register and request scholarship email : Rosehenke@yahoo.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Autism Insurance Seminar

When: Tuesday, November 7, 2017 (7-9pm)

Where: St. Andrew United Methodist Church, 5801 W. Plano Pkwy, Plano, TX 75093

What: We will have experts in this field to help you understand the complexities of autism insurance coverage, the changes happening in the industry and answer all your questions.

Who: **Jill Briesch**, MS, CPA, Autism parent/Insurance expert; **Justin Boulet**, Vice President - Hipson Benefits, Insurance broker; **Christina Martin**, MS, CCC-SLP, BCBA, Therapy & Beyond



Annual Holiday Party

It is time for our annual holiday party. Bring your entire family to this not-to-be missed event where the kids take a picture with Santa, make crafts, play in a bounce house and enjoy holiday lunch and allergen free desserts, This is one holiday party where your child can be their true self. Every child is paired with a buddy, so that the parents can enjoy an uninterrupted holiday meal. Admission is free

When: Saturday, December 16, 2017 (11:30a.m.-2:30p.m)

Where: Prince of Peace Catholic Community (Cana Center) 5100 Plano Pkwy Plano, TX 75093



PARENT RESOURCE PACKET

Looking for an autism friendly pediatrician, dentist, private school, hair salon, attorney , therapy providers for speech, OT, ABA, or just about any services that make your child lives easier?

Email **Nagla Moussa** at nagla_alvin@verizon.net for a comprehensive parent resource packet. It's invaluable!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Our highly popular annual Mom's event was hosted on September 19, 2017 at the iPic Theatre, Fairview. About 150 moms enjoyed an evening of drinks and dinner while enjoying the company of other moms on this journey. Every one of them walked away with a prize. The evening was topped off with a viewing of the movie "Home Again". Thank you to all our volunteers who helped make this happen, and to all our generous sponsors for helping us pamper this group of deserving moms! You help us make this event better every year!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

A huge THANK YOU to all our 2017 Moms' event sponsors.....

Archana Dhurka, All Behaviors Considered

Cristina Busu, Help Hope Solutions

Carla Robbins, Wren's Wellness

Hunter's Glen Baptist Church

Therapy & Beyond

The Wayman Center

Concept Connections

Stacy's Sensory Solutions

Betsy Williams, TOP Pediatric Therapy

Julie Liberman, Speech TX

Jill Hornok, Pala Photography

Lifetime Care

Behavior Pioneers

David Schulze

Anna Popp

Special Strong

Peggy Hawkins

Corliss Mitchel

Denise Jackson

Kelly Barnes, Sherry Pearson, William and Sharion Bostic, Lindy Tiffen, Bree Clarke, Ipic, Kure Cryo Medical Spa, Plano Nail Bar, Macy Stout, Wholesome Grub, Trader Joes, Kelsey Barber, Sephora, Prime Lending, American National Bank of Texas, The Montfort Group, Hair by Amy

Candi Cosgrove

Bal-A-Vis-X (BAVX) is a series of Balance / Auditory / Vision and (brain-brain/brain) eXercises of varied complexity, most of which are deeply rooted in rhythm an integral part of all learning. These exercises assist in body coordination, focused attention and multiple midline crossings with a single exercise. The program utilizes sandbags, racquetballs, balance boards, and multiple principles and activities from Kinesiology. It demands cooperation, promotes self-challenge and fosters peer teaching. It is school-friendly useful for all ages (currently this program is being used from 3yrs. to 103yrs.) and just plain fun.

Bal-A-Vis-X exercises number more than 200+ and growing. Individual exercises vary in complexity from one hand tossing/catching a single sand-filled bag (filled with fine grain sand) to both hands bounce-juggling four racquetballs in rhythmic sequence. Partner exercises vary from (HOH) hand-over-hand sand-filled bags in coordination with stepping or to as many as six balls to be in simultaneous motion.

Balance Skills via research shows that mature balance often happens by 12 years of age. Two forms of **Balance** improvement - Static: ability to hold body and head in a fixed position (i.e., watching a teacher, posture control or chalkboard reading)

Dynamic: ability to maintain head and body position when in motion (i.e., bike riding, sports copying from chalkboard).

Continual work to improve balance and coordination will sharpen attention, vestibular and proprioception systems thus one's learning skills.

Auditory Skills are enhanced via Doing the instruction vs. verbalization. This allows the auditory component (clap, catch and bounce sounds) to teach, emerge and maintain rhythm creating integration across/with both hemispheres.

Bal-A-Vis-X benefits students whose auditory skills are inadequate for academic success. Such students "hear" but do not attend to the precise details of:

- Pronunciation
- Verbal instructions
- Discussion

For these students, the rhythmic patterns of Bal-A-Vis-X create a new awareness of the nuances of sound.

Vision Skills via BAVX requires and enhances Joint attention - attention to the same object, task etc., Visual prioritization - to track in the present, predict or see what comes next without verbalization, Visual tracking - ability to follow a moving object (i.e. printed words on a page), and Focal vision - directing ones attention directly to an object/page (i.e., reading). Regardless of your age - "where the eyes go, attention goes.... If you are not in control of your eyes, your eyes will control you, and life will be random and chaotic" Bill Hubert

Bal-A-Vis-X is for students whose visual acuity may be 20/20, yet whose vision remains deficient in:

- Ocular motility (tracking)
- Binocularity (eye teaming)
- Visual form perception (discrimination of details)

Brain & Brain/Body eXercises develop a rhythmic inter-limb coordination. Bi-manual coordination involves integration and sequencing between arms and legs to create a self-organizing system. Additional sequencing with Hands/Feet coordination involves same side (homolateral) and opposite sides (contralateral) simultaneous with upper and lower limbs (bimanual) coordination.

BAVX - CAN IT HELP MY CHILD?

These exercises are not designed for the athletic and daring, rather they are for everyone. Kindergartners are fully capable of more than half of them. Eight-year-olds can master all but the most intricate. Even the non-athletic and physically challenged find Bal-A-Vis-X well within their abilities.

Bal-A-Vis-X (BAVX) is effective for students who are labeled:

- **Learning disabled:** Results include improved cognitive integration
- **Behaviorally deficit disordered/attention deficit hyperactive disordered:** Results include decreases in impulsivity and increases in attention span
- **Gifted:** Results include improved physical coordination and diminished stress headaches
- **Regular:** Results include improved academic success yet requires less effort

For all students, the gains in eye-hand coordination and subsequent growth in overall confidence and hence self-esteem are readily observable. All of the above information can be changed, enhanced and strengthened through the Bal-A-Vis-X program in conjunction with one's daily school program. For a closer look at Bal-A-Vis-X, midlines and education:

A Quick Look at the Three Dimensions and Bal-A-Vis-X

The Three Dimensions	Focus	Centering	Laterality
Midline			
Part of the Brain	Front to Back	Top and Bottom	Side to Side
Helps Student with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penmanship • Focus • Eye tracking & Auditory • Grasping • Rhythm & pace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • Column charts • Sitting • Copying from white board • Eye tracking & Auditory • Grasping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Math • Spelling • Writing • Curricular activities • Grasping
Bal-A-Vis-X Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-tag Oval, single or partner with "switch" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-ball Oval with partner, with "switch"; • Two-ball Dance, two hands, single or partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-leg Rectangle or two-ball Rectangle with partner, with "switch"; • Two-ball Rectangle, tuggle

Bal-A-Vis-X® was originated by Bill Hubert who instructed language arts Primary grades through University levels. He along with his chosen instructors and assistants currently teach and consult BAVX worldwide. www.bal-a-vis-x.com

Excerpts from:
 Creating Connections with Candi Cosgrove - www.candicosgrove.com
 The Illustrated Bal-A-Vis-X® book by Francis Norsworthy and Bill Hubert's BAVX DVD Discs 1-3

Julie Hornok

As I drove my daughter with autism to six parties on the last week of fifth grade, I realized being intentional with her friendships had paid off.

“One big misconception with autism treatment is that when an individual acquires language, the social skills will follow. This couldn’t be further from the truth because social skills are a core deficit and require the same amount of programming and intervention as language skills do,” says Cristina Busu, MS, BCBA, Clinical Director of Help Hope Solutions.

Friendship with typical kids is problematic, so when you add a disability into the mix, it becomes overwhelming for all involved. Along with the simple give-and-take skills, there are expectations, past experiences and many different personalities to consider. It is so complex when you try to break it down to teach a child with autism about friendship, it can sometimes feel impossible.

As parents of special needs kids, we all know life is not fair. So, it won’t come as a surprise to you that in helping your child make friends, you are going to have to, once again, do all the work. But when you sneak around the corner and hear your child giggling with another peer, it is worth all the blood, sweat and tears you put into it. Here are five ways to cultivate your child’s friendships:

- 1. Be the Inviter.** Families lead such fast-paced lives that even typical kids rarely get together for a good ‘ole fashion playdates. Many parents don’t have time to deal with the planning and organizing involved. Yes, it would be nice if you invited someone over one time and then your child was immediately invited back in return. Unfortunately, the reality is when the other child does invite someone over, your child with special needs is not likely to be on the top of their list. Keep inviting over and over and over and eventually a return invite will come.
- 2. Plan Fun Activities.** My idea of a great play date is a friend coming over, and then she and my daughter disappear for two hours. Someday....maybe! Until that day comes, it is my job to help her understand how to entertain a guest. Before the play date, we plan and prepare fun activities both kids will enjoy. I help her think through the other child’s interests and what she might want to do; then I prepare her to take turns with her friend in choosing from the list of activities. On the play date, if the conversation lulls, I jump in with a new topic. If the kids aren’t meshing in an activity, I help them gracefully switch to something else. If nothing is working, I bring out the super messy, fun activity no other parent in their right mind would allow their kids to do. For example, if the play date goes downhill, the shaving cream comes out. We do shaving cream on the trampoline, shaving cream wars in the yard, or shaving cream hairstyles. I also keep a stash of cool arts and crafts projects most any kid would enjoy.



CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIPS

3. **Engage in Random Acts of Kindness.** Thoughtfulness is so important in any friendship. I help my daughter think of what her friends like, and then we write random notes, drop off little fun gifts and go the extra mile with each friend. This way the friend feels loved even though my daughter is sometimes unable to express her genuine interest when they are together. I am amazed at how much my daughter enjoys doing this and often comes up with her own ideas to tell her friends how much she loves them.
4. **Arrange Regular Outings.** The more frequent the play dates, the better chance your child has to get to know his/her peers. We took my daughter's interests and tried to incorporate other kids into things she already loves to participate in. For example, we set up a gymnastics class for her and her friends at a local gym. We hired a yoga teacher and had a yoga class at our house. We invited friends to church on Wednesday nights and drove them both ways. The more things you are in charge of, the more you can tailor them to ensure your child will stay engaged.
5. **Show Gratitude.** Yes, you are putting in more effort than the typical parents, but don't forget to show your gratitude anyway. Make sure to let the other parent know how much you appreciate them allowing their child to come over or participate in an activity. Sometimes if a parent realizes they are really making a difference in your life, they will want to do more to help.

This article was originally published at ParentingSpecialNeeds.org on 7/12/2017. http://magazine.parentingspecialneeds.org/publication/?i=422979#{%22issue_id%22:422979,%22page%22:10}

Julie Hornok is a warrior mom as well as a short story writer, blogger, editor and advocate for families living with autism. She can be reached at julie_hornok@yahoo.com.

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RBC Wealth Management (Plano)

Therapy and Beyond - Regina Crone Ph.D

Help, Hope, Solutions – Cristina Busu

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Support families with Autism all year round just by doing your normal shopping! Just click <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-8388811> to support the National Autism Association when you purchase at amazon.com. Your Amazon prices remain the same, and with each purchase, NAA-NT receives a donation. Thanks for your support!

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DO YOU HAVE A CHILD THAT WANDERS?



The National Autism Association's Big Red Safety Box is back in stock! If you have a child that wanders or know one that wanders, please click on this link <http://nationalautismassociation.org/big-red-safety-boxes-now-available> to learn how you can get this box with tools to help keep children with autism safe.

BUYING OR SELLING A HOUSE?

We are excited to have the generous support of a real estate agent, Kirk Iverson! Kirk will donate 25% of net proceeds directly to NAA-NT anytime someone buys or sells a home and mentions NAA-NT as a referral.

Check out his page <https://www.facebook.com/kirk.iverson.942?ref=ts> or <http://BuyHousesSellHomes.KWRealty.com>

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