RP Moodley School (RPMS) is a day school, situated in Reservoir Hills, Durban, that offers education and therapy to learners with special needs, between the ages of 5 – 18 years. The mission of the RPMS for learners with disabilities is to empower children with disabilities in an environment of compassion, dignity, and respect. It promotes and maximises individual potential through a full range of individualised education, social integration, vocational, therapeutic and skills programmes and services.

Each child’s education is based on his/her functionality through individualised education programmes (IEP) set up by a transdisciplinary team (Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Professional Nurse, Educators, Social Worker and Educator Assistants).

Our facilities include: reception, junior, intermediate, practical and prevocational classes with the addition of all therapies offered at school. Our skills building programme includes basket-weaving, car wash, gardening, catering, woodwork and pottery. These skills were introduced to help learners acquire skills to enable them to seek employment and become independent, integrated members of society.

The school is aligned with Department of Education’s policy on inclusion (Education White Paper 6), and therefore caters for learners with varied disabilities. Over the past few years, our school has shown a marked increase in the numbers of learners on the autistic spectrum. These learners are integrated into our classrooms have therefore inadvertently persuaded all staff to acquire the skills to manage an autistic learner in the classroom setting. Our relationship with Autism South Africa has made available to us resources which was imperative to our professional development and for this, the school has grown and continues to strive towards better education for all our learners.

The staff of RPMS has engaged in numerous training courses and workshops to obtain development in the field of autism – the latest workshop held at the school was presented by Maggi Golding on the TEACCH method of instruction within the classroom and the Makaton Vocabulary Development Project. Again this course has been the initiative of Autism South Africa who we are truly indebted to.

The vision of the school is to provide our learners with a holistic programme which enables them to achieve optimal educational, social and physical development. This would, therefore, facilitate the creation of an independent set of learners who pass its doors so that they may take their rightful place in society and provide inspiration to others.

To Contact the RP Moodley School call +27 (0) 31 262 9095

PR Moodley school grounds.

One of the caring teachers at RP Moodley.

Your Child’s Magnetic Weekly Planner

This easy to use weekly planner is designed to:
* Help your child understand what is happening in his/her weekly schedule.
* Anticipate the sequence of events with reference to morning, afternoon and evening.
* It is designed with easy visual images for your child to recognise and requires no reading.
* The chart is designed for one child.
* The chart should be hung at eye level in his/her bedroom.
* You will need to place the magnetic pictures on your child’s weekly planner once a week (preferably on a Sunday evening) and all your child needs to do is move the “Today is…” magnet.

The ‘easy to use’ magnetic weekly planner comes with one “Today is…” magnet and 175 individual magnetic pictures to include activities both on school days and during the weekend.

For orders or enquiries, please contact:
Deena Sharfman (deena.sharfman@gmail.com / 083 604 0149)
Ruth Wittels (ruth@wittels.co.za / 082 857 7887)
It is with heartfelt gratitude that the National Executive Committee of Autism South Africa sincerely thank the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund for the exceptionally generous donation of R1 410 000.00.

This funding as per direction from the NLDTF will be allocated as follows:

- Brochures: R 120 000
- Equipment for Out-Reach targeted Schools: R 95 000
- Out-Reach salaries and fees: R 195 000
- Personnel for Provincial Development:
  - Full-time National Education Facilitator
  - Provincial Development Officer to develop a Free State and Northern Cape branch
  - Provincial Development Officer to develop an Eastern Cape branch
  - Provincial Development Officer to develop a KwaZulu-Natal branch
  - Provincial Development Officer to develop a North West branch
  - Provincial Development Officer to develop the Mpumalanga and Limpopo branch

This sponsorship from the NLDTF is going to make a mammoth difference in the lives of our children and adults with autism in all areas of South Africa; a difference like none before in the history of Autism South Africa.

SpecialU is a unique product design and manufacturing company specializing in innovative ideas geared towards assisting child development and caregiving. An exciting range of products have been designed to assist a wide range of conditions. One of these conditions being autism.

To find out more about the products please contact:
Yvonne Romyn(yvonne@romyn.co.za)
Tel: +27 (0) 21 701 2749 * Fax: +27 (0) 86 612 6078 * Cell: +27 (0) 82 596 8547
www.specialu.co.za
Most parents of children with autism first begin to be concerned about their child's development when early delay or regression occurs in the development of speech and language. The time between diagnosis and intervention is often a very difficult time for parents and starting appropriate treatment as soon as possible after diagnosis is important. It is often only once the therapeutic process has begun and some progress is seen that parents feel some relief from this often very distressing time.

Management of communication difficulties often results in improved relationships and behaviour and empowers parents to make a difference to their child's development. Parents of children with autism are vital to the therapeutic process and essential members or directors of the team providing intervention. Therapists and teachers will come and go but the parent is the constant in a child's life. Different therapists have different styles of working and it is the parents who must decide on the therapy they want for their child. It is important for the parent to feel comfortable with those who work with their child. All people involved with the child need to work together for carry-over and generalisation of learned skills.

Children with autism often have severe auditory processing difficulties combined with sensory integration and emotional difficulties. Difficulty with meaning and making sense of the world makes communication very hard and it often takes repeated practice of the use of utterances in different contexts with different conversational partners to develop basic verbal communication. The level of communicative competence achieved by people with autism is closely related to the development of social behaviour and cognitive ability. People with autism need empathy, structure and organisation that exist between objects and events and providing their own structure and organisation.

We should persevere as children often tend to become over-involved in visual stimuli or objects. Provide structure and prepare the child for changes in routine to decrease anxiety and try to maintain sameness in the child's environment and a predictable routine where possible. We need to use visual cues and prompts such as gestures, signs, pictures or schedules by providing simple concrete guides to the world such as picture timetables or placing activities in a sequence. Intervention should focus on functional communication as gains in communication skills can reduce challenging behaviour. Encourage the child's strengths, which are usually visual skills and rote learning and be aware of the difficulties with processing and formulating verbal utterances, understanding of relations that exist between objects and events and providing their own structure and organization.

A child with ASD may take longer to learn new skills. Introduce new activities gradually, practise skills in different contexts and keep repeating at the child's level. Treat each child individually and persevere.

We need to observe and find the specific pattern of responses each child shows as we see different clusters of symptoms in different children. Ongoing evaluation should be part of treatment and should involve observations of responses to sensory and general environmental stimuli that often change over time. We need to get to know the child and find what motivates and what bothers him so that therapy can be adapted to be more effective. What works successfully for one child may not always work for another.

Autism is treatable. Identification, intervention, parent support, knowledge and understanding can improve the quality of life for all people with autism and their families.

Speech therapy needs to focus on the various components of language: the form, content and use. We work on various areas – oral sensory, articulation, language and vocabulary, auditory processing, pragmatics (the use of language) and prosody (the intonation and rhythm of speech).

It is important to reduce linguistic complexity as children with autism often say more than they understand. We should avoid verbal overload, irrespective of the person's apparent level of language ability and speak gently but in a firm, clear manner. We need to keep our sentences short and clear, allowing time for processing of information. It is important to allow extra time for formulation of verbal utterances.

Visual and auditory distractions should be minimised as children often tend to become over-involved in visual stimuli or objects. Provide structure and prepare the child for changes in routine to decrease anxiety and try to maintain sameness in the child's environment and a predictable routine where possible. We need to use visual cues and prompts such as gestures, signs, pictures or schedules by providing simple concrete guides to the world such as picture timetables or placing activities in a sequence. Intervention should focus on functional communication as gains in communication skills can reduce challenging behaviour. Encourage the child's strengths, which are usually visual skills and rote learning and be aware of the difficulties with processing and formulating verbal utterances, understanding of relations that exist between objects and events and providing their own structure and organization.

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Autism is treatable. Identification, intervention, parent support, knowledge and understanding can improve the quality of life for all people with autism and their families.
The “tax season” for the submission of 2010 tax returns began on 1 July 2010. It is with great pleasure that I am able to advise that parents whose children are autistic have already had substantial amounts of tax refunded to them. The tax refund season for taxpayer’s with “disabilities” within the family – such as autism, has thus well and truly also begun.

The sooner tax returns are submitted it follows the sooner tax refunds will be paid. There are a lot of success stories regarding refunds having been paid and many more in the pipeline.

Notwithstanding this, a number of concerns have arisen lately regarding the extent to which parents have not fully benefitted (if at all) in the past from the fact that they are able to obtain the maximum amount of refunds as a consequence of autism. SARS and The Treasury published statistics for the 2005 to the 2008 tax years. For those interested in reading the disturbing facts, visit www.bendelsconsulting.co.za and under “Press Box”, the relevant article is: “Tax Law and Medical Science – The Twain have Met!”.

To provide a short summary, for the 2008 tax year only 20 407 taxpayers claimed their medical expenses under the “disability” code (that code included blind, deaf, wheelchair users, people who required artificial limbs and all “mental illnesses” (including autism, ADD/ADHD, depression, learning differences etc). Since autism figures affect approximately 1 in 110, the figure of only 20 407 taxpayers who claimed in 2008 would clearly suggest that many parents who have children with autism have not claimed in the past.

In addition to the above disturbing facts, of the 20 407 taxpayers that did claim (there is no specific statistics regarding autism), the total amount of medical expense tax deductions claimed for the 2008 tax year was only R905 million. This figure would, therefore, imply an average claim of only R44 347 (this figure is not tax saved but the total amount of the medical expenses claimed which would include medical aid contributions, irrecoverable expenses plus expenditure incurred in consequence of the “disability”).

The majority of Parents with autistic children will bear testimony to the fact that these figures are out of all proportion to what the total expense should be and specialist tax law advice in this area is thus recommended. While each child’s case and medical interventions, schooling, therapy, etc differs, a specialist tax law advisor who deals with these cases on a daily basis is probably best placed to ensure that Parents maximize their claims for tax purposes.

Where taxpayers already have tax consultants, it is recommended that Parents ensure that full medical expense claims were made in the past. If claims where made Parents should confirm that they were fully maximized in the past (it is recommended, in the best interests of Parents, that such confirmations be obtained in writing, as the compelling evidence, in general, suggests otherwise) and that they will be for the 2010 tax year.

Often specialist tax law advice in this area is required. In every case that I have seen, either no claim was made at all or the actual claims made fell way short of what should have been claimed, in full and strict accordance with the law. To be sure, we are dealing with a complex and highly specialized area of tax law as it requires detailed knowledge of the tax laws and also medical issues related to autism. In every case that I am aware of the benefit of seeking specialist tax advice in this area has far outweighed the cost of obtaining the advice itself.

Where claims for prior-year’s have not been made, or fully maximized, it is open to taxpayers to object to those years (within certain time limits) and obtain tax refunds for the respective prior-years. In most cases, taxpayers can object to at least the 2007 to 2009 tax years (in other cases, we can object to tax years prior to 2007). In other words we are talking about tax refunds for at least 3 prior-years and the 2010 tax year.

For the 2010 tax year, there are new rules and SARS requirements in order to claim for the deduction of medical expenses under the “disability” provisions. Care should be taken to ensure that the correct procedures are followed and that claims are fully maximized. While each case needs to be based on its own facts and circumstances, experience shows that a refund of more than R50 000 is not unreasonable. And for four years, the refund can thus amount to over R200 000.

In summary, therefore, the fact that the historic figures are so low, implies that it is almost certain that not all claims for autism have been made in the past. Where claims have been made it is similarly clear that the amounts claimed have not been fully maximized. The statistics are in line with my experience of dealing with matters in this specialist area since February 2007.

For enquiries and advice, please email me at ebendel@bendelsconsulting.co.za

Eugene Bendel
Bendels Consulting
www.bendelsconsulting.co.za

“I am a big believer in early intervention.”

Temple Grandin
The 2010 Autism South Africa Golf Day that was held at the Parkview Golf Course on the 29th of July, was a great success.

The golf day was well attended and fun was had by all! Although the golf day was for a serious cause there were many moments of laughter which lightened the mood and made it an all round success. Enough funds were raised to “assist with the provision of appropriate intervention and services to increase the prognosis for the ever-increasing number of children”, states Jill Stacey, National Director of Autism South Africa. The cause was truly a remarkable achievement due to the kindness displayed by all players and benefactors of the day. Due to their thoughtfulness it will help Autism South Africa in sustaining the foundation that will further enhance awareness throughout South Africa.

It goes to show that “a little goes a long way” and Autism South Africa appreciates the support received. With the funds raised Autism South Africa can take a step forward in achieving greater awareness.

Again we would like to thank everyone who supported us on our annual golf day. Look forward to seeing you on Thursday, 28 July 2011!

For the first time Autism South Africa held a comedy evening to raise funds for the organisation. ‘Comedy for Autism’ was a great success and laughter was provided for all! It was held at Parker’s Comedy and Jive in Montecasino. The evening started out with some great music by the band Alter Irving. While guests had snacks and drinks from the bar, the national director Jill Stacey welcomed and thanked everyone for participating in such a great cause. The three comedians, who so generously donated their time, were Mel Miller, Martin Jonas and John Vlismas. The audience were in hysterics as each comedian performed. Following the show was a ‘lucky draw’ with great prizes that were generously donated by Sun City and Rietvallei Wine Estate.

Autism South Africa would like to thank everyone who made time during their busy week to come and support us! We would again like to thank the comedians and the band who took time out of their busy schedules to support Autism.

Due to the great success of the evening, ‘Comedy for Autism’ will become an annual event. We look forward to next years event, spreading the laughs and making new friends.
World Autism Awareness Day
2nd April 2011

UNITE AND WALK FOR AUTISM

Join us in raising awareness for Autism Spectrum Disorders

UNITE AND WALK FOR AUTISM
When: 26 March 2011
Time: 09h00 - 13h00
Where: Zoo Lake, Johannesburg
Who: Everyone is invited!!!!!
Cost: Persons with Autism FREE
      R100 with a T-shirt
      R50 to Walk for Autism

The Road Not Taken
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost
Source: http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-road-not-taken/
WAAD is celebrated on 2 April every year

To be part of UNITE AND WALK FOR AUTISM, please contact:
Trishana Soni (+27 (0) 11 484 6448)
autismjhb@autismsouthafrica.org
Accessibility to Education for Autistic Children in South Africa, a resource limited country

Lorna Jacklin – University of the Witwatersrand
&
Jill Stacey – Autism SA

AIMS OF STUDY

- Establish how many of the State registered schools for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) accommodate ASD children?
- Establish the characteristics of the school: location, type of children accommodated, cost of education?
- Establish the number of children with ASD accommodated in LSEN schools?
- Assess the quality of Autism specific education offered to ASD learners as measured by:
  - Teacher: learner ratio
  - Teacher training
  - Use of Autism specific assessment and teaching tools

WHAT % OF CHILDREN WITH ASD IN SCHOOLS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>ASD in school</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Estimated ASD</th>
<th>% in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>2,327,100</td>
<td>2,327</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>348,700</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,456,100</td>
<td>1,456</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>859,900</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2,846,400</td>
<td>2,846</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>127,790</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1,958,000</td>
<td>1,958</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Province</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>995,100</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Zulu Natal</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>3,591,200</td>
<td>3,591</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prevalence of 10: 10,000 Fombonne, 2002

Quality of Education offered to ASD learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>N=81</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to education</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81/269 schools accept ASD children (30%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher child ratio</td>
<td>29 (36%)</td>
<td>34% of schools ratio 1:15 &gt; 13% &lt; 52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of ASD specific assessment tools</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25% Yes (ICD 10, DSM IV, PEP, ADOS, M-CHAT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of ASD specific intervention</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>52% Yes: AAC 26; Makaton 22; SI 20; PECS 15; Dietary 12; CARD 10; TEACCH 10; Facil Communication 10; Combination 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100% Yes: General workshop 57; ABA 33; AAC 33; Makaton; Observation in ASD specific schools 21; Specific ASD support 13; TEACCH 13; SI 11; ABA 7; Combination 42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

- The survey only covers 68% of LSEN schools & results must be treated with some reservation.
- 30% (81/397) of the LSEN schools in RSA provide for learners with ASD.
- Clearly only a fraction of learners with ASD in LSEN schools have been identified.
- There is a wide discrepancy between the quality of education offered by different schools.
- It is essential that local teaching tools are developed to meet the specific needs of Educators of ASD children taking local needs / challenges into account.
- The data collected will be used to establish a database and for informing the DET and lobbying.
Hello Everybody

I have so much to report due to an eventful and interesting year. The first thing I would like to say, before I continue though, is Congratulations to Marietjie Greyling and Deon Alers who were married on September 13, 2010. I'm sure I speak for everyone who has experienced your infectious laugh and those with whom you have unselfishly shared your valuable knowledge in countless presentations at both Workshops and Information Sessions over the past years.

It has been an exciting “white knuckle ride” of exposure, learning and understanding for me and I would like to thank everyone for teaching me different aspects of the autism spectrum that I was previously unaware of. I have come to the conclusion that we are all prisms of light contributing somewhere to the spectrum of the same rainbow in some or other way. Thank You All for showing me the droplets that make up the rainbow.

My enthusiasm has not waned, on the contrary, I feel energized by the growing awareness of autism, the enthusiasm of those driving projects, the parents initiating support groups, the development and resourcing of autism units in schools and the up skilling of educators and therapists and the generosity of our sponsors who make our contribution possible. I am amazed by the number of dedicated, generous and caring people that we have in our community.

The arm of a;sa's outreach has been able to stretch far and wide in the last six months due to wonderful support from our sponsors. But the importance of parent support cannot be over emphasised. Mary Moeketsi, one of our moms - who has a son with autism - has been kind enough to offer her assistance in setting up much needed parent support groups. Starting with Chris Hani Baragwanath and then Natalspruit Hospitals with much success, soon we will be setting up the same in as many hospitals as possible. The Children’s Library in Orlando has gladly offered to host awareness campaigns for their community. We are looking for any venue where people in the area can gather to share their experience with other parents and glean information from our awareness team. We are hoping that in the new year we can target one hospital, clinic or community centre per month, so that we can reach more people.

I am excited by the growth of a;sa in the past few months and we are looking at employing 5 Provincial Development Officers whose job it will be, amongst other things, to identify the needs of children, parents, schools and professionals in the field. Have a wonderful summer and rest hard.

Well done everybody – Keep up the Great work!

Outreach report April to October - 2010

Information Sessions

April and May 2010
Noluthando Khayalitsha, Western Cape - Monthly site visits
Thusanang School Bela Bela - 120 Delegates
Vumanisabelo in Osizweni - 45 Delegates
Witkoppen Combined School - 18 Delegates
Randburg Montessori - 5 Delegates
Welkom Medic Clinic - 90 Delegates
June and July 2010
Kimberley Hospital - 120 Delegates
Cloudy Angels, Jhb - 20 Delegates
Sinethemba School, East London - 120 Delegates
August and September 2010
Kyayalethu Special School - 25 Delegates

Training

On a monthly basis, Margaret Golding trains teachers at Noluthando School in Khayalitsha, Western Cape.

Vera Intense Training Course for Educators 2011
Vera School, Cape Town
9th - 20th May
To book 021 696 2844
Unica School, Pretoria
9th - 20th May
To book 012 460 6539

PECS Workshops
25th, 26th and 27th July, Gauteng
Please see page 45 and 46

R P Moodley School in KwaZulu-Natal were thrilled when Maggi spent 10 days upsckilling their staff’s knowledge on TEACCH, The Autism Unit of the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Hospital School that caters for over 120 children, regularly host Maggi for a one or 2 weeks at a time to train their staff in TEACCH and Makaton.

Outreach 2010

OUTREACH 2010

a word from the outreach development officer

Information Sessions in Kimberley and Witbank

To request an Information Session, Workshop or training, please contact Louise Taylor on Tel: 011 484 9909, Fax: 011 484 3171 or email: outreach@autismsouthafrica.org

Workshops

Mpumalanga May
Nelspruit 38 Delegates
Witbank 36 Delegates
Western Cape September
Claremont 65 delegates
Limpopo October
Thohoyandou 265
Polokwane 54
Thabazimbi 23

Plans for early 2011
Workshops in Eastern Cape and Free State
I was fortunate to drive the team to Mpumalanga for another fun trip and workshop. We picked Jill up, bubbling with excitement having ticked 5 out of 5 on the list of ‘Big Five’ that weekend, then we stopped to fuel my gas guzzler, and let’s not forget the ‘padkos’ to sustain ourselves for the long road ahead, when the starter motor overheated, and for those who don’t know, the car will not start again until it cools or unless you know exactly where to hit the starter with a brick or like object. Luckily I do, and we were off to pick up Marietjie in Witbank and pushed on to Nelspruit. Four girls in a confined space, no wall climbing possible, all trying to catch-up at 200 words a minute. It was hilarious and an experience to behold!

As we arrived in Nelspruit we realised that John (our Tom Tom with a John Cleese voice over) was still in Johannesburg. Having found our B&B with not too much fuss, we agreed to locate Learveld Laer. There we were, in a town we barely knew, searching desperately for the school basing our directions on occasional drive bys using memories seldom recalled.- ‘take this right, I mean left, no wait... here …..no there …..oh no we were down here 5 minutes ago... ah I think it’s here, no that robot, go around the block again I think we missed it.’ we laughed to tears. Eventually, with the incentive of a good meal and a much needed glass and…

Tuesday morning, earlier than the birds, we set off to Laerskool Laer to knuckle down to some hard work, each having our own tasks to get on with. Jill, our techno boff, on computers, big screen and sound. Me on hard labour duties, carting and carrying, banners and handouts, brochures and fact sheets, later teas and lunch.

Marietjie and Reinette, prepping their presentations and whatever else they could help with along the way. The workshop was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by all.

Elated, that everyone was so complimentary, we raced the sun to Witbank where we arrived at our B&B just as the darkness came in. We met with Liesl Rhom, a mom that wanted to start a school and parent support group as well as lobby to government for the rights of our autistic children. Go Gal, we are right behind you! Having had a relatively early night Marietjie and I were up to greet the magnificent sunrise, cameras in hand, then we all set off the Witbank High School for the next leg of the trip. We were met by eager delegates some of whom came from as far a field as Limpopo Province. Thanks for your effort!

Both workshops had a great turnout with the usual mix of parents, Occupational, Speech and Physiotherapists, some social workers, teachers from semi- and private schools as well as a few delegates from the Department of Education Mpumalanga. Dr Pieterse, thanks for all your assistance and insistence that teachers from various schools in your area join us.

Everyone that attended, commented on how much they had benefited from the information and interaction provided and on the value of being able to network during the breaks especially helpful to parents. Workshops are a great benefit to ASA, as they provide important information on what is being done and what still needs to be done, in various towns around the country.

We would like to thank everyone for attending our workshops and information sessions and for giving us the input that we so desperately need!

Our Thanks to:
Mr van Baalen of Laerskool Lear, Nelspruit and Mr Buyers of High School Witbank for hosting and accommodating the workshops. Jill Stacey, Marietjie Alers and Reinette Palmer for excellent presentations and all the delegates for your attendance, support and crucial feedback and suggestions.

**Autism: My Brother is Different**

By Barbara J. Morvay, MA
Retired Superintendent, Special Services School District (NJ)

Autism affects everyone in the house: the child with autism, his parents, his siblings. Often, however, professionals forget that the “so-called” normal children, the brothers and sisters, are also impacted - having a sibling with autism creates lots of stress, it makes their life different. Thus my new book, My Brother is Different. Based on my decades of experience, My Brother is Different offers families a therapeutic guide for helping them deal with the stresses, strains, and uncertainties that autism imposes on them. It helps parents help all their children. It directly addresses the other children’s reactions and feelings about having a brother (or sister) with autism.

My Brother is Different may be used as a therapeutic tool to help: families, relatives, and friends, school districts, teachers, social workers dealing with families of Autistic children, counselors, psychologists, children who have an Autistic child in their classroom, college students in teacher preparation programs and anyone interested in learning about how the Autistic child effects the family.
This trip was a whirlwind, rather, hurricane force trip. Jill, Claudia, Marleen and I arrived in Cape Town after a long but productive flight. In short, I met a gentleman of influence from Limpopo and enticed him to attend our Limpopo workshop at the end of October.

Luckily we remembered “John” our Tom Tom this time, so we were able to find the Fisherman’s Wharf in Hout Bay to have a truly magnificent meal before racing back to Pinelands for our meeting with Helen Heyes of Autism Western Cape to discuss the bright future. After that we raced off to Newland to meet a mom with an Aspergers child having difficulties with being bullied at school. We then settled at our B&B to tweak our reports for the OET (outreach, education and training) meeting early the next morning. Phew! A fruitful but very long day.

I had a guided tour of the very beautiful and superbly equipped Vera School. A most impressive facility that is apparent in the smiles and confidence of the children I saw. I hope that we will be permitted to do an in depth review on the school in the next edition of Aut;Talk so that we can all learn more from this winning recipe. Great work Fanie and Team!

Petra Dillmann arrived from Autism and Asperger’s Namibia that evening so we were up late doing the necessary ‘catch up’ in between tweaking and printing, as the night before. Friday morning my colleagues were up early for the NEC (National Executive Committee) meeting, as I am not a member, I was able to spend a leisurely day with family, before racing back to join the girls for dinner. All exhausted, we settled for a delivered take away but proceeded to have a late night - just for a change - to ensure all was on track and printed for the AGM on Saturday morning before the workshop.

Sunday, our day off, we treated ourselves to a lunch in Hermanus and whaling boat trip. Were we blessed to see many whales frolicking about behind the surf, it’s no wonder they beach! We drove back to the City for a few more meetings and returned to Jozi on the Monday. Thereby ending another truly memorable trip with ASA!

Our Thanks to:
Fanie Minnaar, Principal, and Cecil Reed Deputy Principal, from the Vera School for arranging the workshop. All the Presenters for their spectacular presentations and catering staff for their delicious lunches from the Vera School.
Mr Gerhart Swart, Principal, Batavia School for hosting the workshop and all the delegates for your enthusiasm and participation.

Call for Exhibitions
Autism Conference 2011
Association for Autism
Theme:
Autism: Towards the Future
Venue:
Saint George Hotel & Conference Centre,
Pretoria
Date:
3 - 4 March 2011

For more information, please contact:
Anna Atkins
(012) 993 4628
(012) 993 4675
afautism@iafrica.com
development@iafrica.com

Requirements:
1. Exhibitions are the responsibility of the exhibitors
2. Poster and table exhibitions are to be displayed for the full duration of the Conference (i.e. from Thursday opening - Friday closing)
3. Exhibitors must ensure that they provide all the materials required for their display (e.g. drawing pins, adhesive materials, etc).
4. All exhibitions must be erected before the conference opening 09h00, 3 March 2011
5. All exhibitions must be cleared from the Hall by 17h30 Friday, 4 March 2011
On Wednesday, 20th October I arrived at work more than a little deflated contemplating cancelling the tour due to lack of response. More was the pity as those who had registered were in desperate need of information on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Also, I felt it only fair to inform our hosts and the presenters of the pending decision. The words weren’t cold out of my mouth when the faxes started streaming in, emails and calls, the office became a Mad House and then we got the call regretting an unavoidable change of venue.

By Friday morning we had 130(Thohoy), 38(Polo) and 50(Thaba) and we had to "spark" to get the hand-outs copied in time and “Pewh” we! Just made it! At 16:30, packing the bus, I received a call from Mrs Mathivha, Director of Health and Social Development in the Vhembe District, saying she needed to increase her number of delegates(70), to a staggering 160. A logistically nightmare at that time of the day, but I have to say “Mrs Mathiva for President!” You cracked your whip…and did a remarkable job getting those numbers up. Please accept our sincere thanks and admiration for your effort.

The tour – Louise, Lulama(a:sa), Nerina, Reinette, Kirsty (CDC) and Nerina Nel, Director of CDC, who had just returned the previous day from 4 week trip around Italy that included attending the Autism Europe Congress. All present and correct to a staggering 160. A logistically nightmare at that time of the day, but I have to say “Mrs Mathiva for President!” You cracked your whip…and did a remarkable job getting those numbers up. Please accept our sincere thanks and admiration for your effort.

On Tuesday morning, waking to realise that I had slept in unwashed sheets, I rose at 4am and eagerly waited for the girls to rise for breakfast and get going to our hosts at the Thshlizini Hospital. We were greeted at the recreation hall by over a 100 delegates; to say they were eager would be a gross understatement! Some people were told by the Department of Education to be there by 7am though our programme started 8am, so we must apologise to those of you who waited over an hour for us, but as it turned out at least you got a chair!

By the time we got started there were 265 delegates! There were so many people crammed into the hall that twice we had to call for more chairs until in the end there were none left to bring. People were standing inside the hall, they were craning their necks around corners, jockeying for position in the corridors outside the hall to get an earful of the presentations.

We ran out of handouts and had to ask people to share and copy them back at their school. At teatime, we decided to serve Oros and biscuits due to the heat – chaos as the delegates clambered for the refreshments! At the end of the session we gave out the brochures and business cards we had; they were ripped out of our hands, fought over and torn in half! Kirsty was literally bowled over and crushed in the rush for information. Some delegates came from over 200km away and desperate for information. We are so awestruck by the need of this area and its people’s desire to learn more about Autism, that we feel it absolutely necessary to repeat the trip in the near future for smaller groups in surrounding towns. Some schools are so rural that they don’t have telephones and faxes let alone computers and e-mail. We have taken cell numbers in the hope of reaching people directly by SMSing in the future. One teacher stated that in 18yrs of teaching, no-one has ever come to the region to present a workshop or info session such as this. Tears welled up in her eyes with gratitude. We’ll be back!

Our thanks to:

Prince Mare, Tshhizini Hospital, Mrs Mathivha, Health and Social Development. Mount Horeb Presbyterian Church, Eleanor Nel and Sue Altenroxel, Stephina Selepe, Wimpy Savana Mall, for great service on both days and a helpful discount. Mr Koos Venter of Thshabazimi Laerskool, CJ van Rooyen, Thshabazimi Hospital. Sandra de Wet, Department of Basic Education Waterberg.

Presenters: Dr Cobie Lombard, Ilze Pansegrow and Roma Beukes from the Unica School in Pretoria. Nerina Nel, Reinette Palmer, Kirsty Maclean from Childrens Disability Centre(CDC)