Let ME spread the word on AUTISM

The Autism Society of Maine (ASM) is a non-profit organization founded in 1976, whose membership consists of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families, members of the community, and the professionals who work with them. As an affiliate of the Autism Society, our mission is to promote lifelong access and opportunity for all individuals on the autism spectrum to become participating members of their communities. Education, advocacy, support and public awareness form the cornerstones of the Autism Society of Maine’s efforts to carry forth our mission.
ASM holds a summer camp program for children with autism between the ages of five and fifteen years old. Because children with autism have difficulty initiating and maintaining social relationships with their peers, emphasis is on developing appropriate social skills. This summer program consists of structured activities supervised by two professionals and twelve to sixteen college students working toward degrees in social work, psychology or special education. These students will be participating on a practicum level and earning credits toward their degrees.

**Goals of the summer camp:**

1) It will provide a positive learning environment where children can mature and grow socially in a setting especially created to respond to their unique sensory, motor and cognitive needs.

2) It will provide an invaluable learning experience for college students to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and hopefully make a career dedicated to working with individuals with autism.

Camp Summit is free. Applications need to be filled out. For more information, visit [http://www.asmonline.org/programs_summercamp.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/programs_summercamp.asp)

The Autism Family Retreat Weekend, held in July, is for parents, grandparents, children, and any family member wanting to meet and learn from other families. The retreat is held at St. Joseph’s College in Standish. Families stay in dorm rooms for a two-night stay with 5 meals provided. Respite is provided for the children with ASD, adults with ASD, and typically developing children. The children will be entertained with swimming, rock climbing, art and crafts and activities in the gym. Parents can attend workshops or just relax and meet other parents. Entertainment is provided on Saturday night for all to enjoy. There is a small registration fee for this event.

Our Lending Library is a valuable resource for individuals, parents, caregivers, educators and professionals working with children and adults on the autism spectrum. The Lending Library is a free resource for Maine residents. Our entire collection can be viewed on the ASM website. Or you can have a printed list be sent to you. Stop by the office or have library material mailed to you. (We will include return postage) Call: 1-800-273-5200 or email: library@asmonline.org

Our resource collection is specific to Autism Spectrum Disorders and related issues. We have over 850 library items include books, dvd’s, videos, cd’s, and periodicals. The library has its own room with a TV to watch DVD’s. Children are always welcome to play with toys or read.

For more information, visit [www.asmonline.org/library.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/library.asp)

To become a member of ASM, sign up online at [https://www.asmonline.org:4441/memberapps/online-member.asp](https://www.asmonline.org:4441/memberapps/online-member.asp)
ASM monitors bills each Legislative Session. ASM website has a great legislative page with valuable information for families and professionals. Connecting families with up to date information on bills is a process that can be difficult, but ASM makes it easy by posting relevant bills on the legislative page with links directly to the bill's language. Don't know who your Representative or Senator is? ASM can help you find them with one click. There are valuable short video clips to give families directions about how to look for your Representative or Senator, find a bill with the bill number, or write and deliver testimony.

For more information, visit http://www.asmonline.org/involved_legislative.asp

Autism Information Specialists (AIS) contract with the Autism Society of Maine and have varying degrees of expertise. Some concentrate on attending and participating in educational, transitional, and vocational planning meetings such as Early Childhood Team meetings (ECT's), Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Person Centered Planning meetings (PCP's) or Individual Educational Plan meetings (IEP's). Others work with first responders and corrections professionals who interact with individuals who have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Some Autism Information Specialists give presentations and workshops on various topics related to autism for agencies and community organizations across the state.

Autism Information Specialists also provide resource information for families, schools, the work place, and the community to foster empathy, understanding, and compassion for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. To find out if there is an AIS near you, call ASM.

For more information, visit http://www.asmonline.org/programs_training.asp

ASM embarked on a mission to educate law enforcement, fire/rescue, EMS, and other first responders about Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dennis Debbaudt, a Florida-based law enforcement professional and father of a young man with Autism, has been the trail blazer in this mission. Through his lectures around the globe and his video, he has "has gotten the ball rolling" in terms of making the importance of this training known to law enforcement officers far and wide. In 2004, inspired by his efforts, the Autism Society of Maine developed a 2 hour training program which was approved by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Since that time, thousands of state and local police, correctional officers, state game wardens, firefighters, EMT’s, search and rescue personnel and dispatchers have received the training. Homeland Security airport screeners, hospital security staff from around the state, and many others have received this training. Each new class of police recruits receives the training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. In addition, officers involved in Crisis Intervention Teams ("CIT") have been receiving the training for several years thanks to a long lasting partnership with The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maine.

The most effective training sessions are those that involve participants from various agencies in the community, including first responders, special educators, case management agencies, and persons with autism and their family members.

Matt Brown, one of the Autism Society of Maine’s Autism Information Specialist’s, is a veteran of law enforcement who has been employed as a U.S. Probation Officer for over 20 years. He is an instructor at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and is also a CIT Instructor. Matt has conducted training sessions in several states and Canada.

For more information, visit http://www.asmonline.org/programs_training.asp

ASM sponsors several Sibshops. Sibshops are best described as opportunities for brothers and sisters of children with special health and developmental needs to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context. They reflect an agency's commitment to the well-being of the family member most likely to have the longest-lasting relationship with the person with special needs. Sibshops events are held in various locations around the state.

For more information, visit http://www.asmonline.org/sibshops.asp

Autism Society of Maine 72B Main St, Winthrop ME 04364 1-800-273-5200 or (207) 377-9603 www.asmonline.org asm@asmonline.org
Walk for Autism

ASM held the very first Walk for Autism in 2003 in Biddeford, Maine. The Walk was originally started to raise money for the very first summer camp for autism. As it turns out, it did a lot more than raise money - it raised awareness! The Walk for Autism is the biggest autism event held in the state. We now have 4 walks around the state and over 1,200 people participating each year. The walks are held during April Autism Awareness Month on the last Sunday of the month.

For more information, visit [http://www.asmonline.org/involved_walkathon.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_walkathon.asp)

Ride For Autism

The Ride for Autism was added in 2007 by a parent from a cycling family who wanted to “give back”. At the first event we had 12 riders. Now our event has over 100 riders. The route takes each rider along the beautiful coast-line through Biddeford and Kennebunkport. There are three rides to choose from: 10 mile, 25 mile, or 50 mile. Many families ride together.

For more information, visit [http://www.asmonline.org/involved_ride.asp](http://www.asmonline.org/involved_ride.asp)