

The Howard County Autism Society

2013 Annual Report

The Howard County Autism Society Celebrates 20 Years



The Howard County Autism Society current and past board members celebrate 20 years at the 8th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala. Pictured back row, left: Marianne Doremus, Lori Krausz, Stephanie Maric, Jennifer Palmer, Steve Lewicky, Roger Thibaudeau, Theresa Ballinger; middle row: Patrick Boxall, Mary Anderson, Nora Hart, Kristen Detwiler, Jenny Goldszmidt, Christi Hanks, Jenn May, Debbie Clutts, Steve Mendelsohn, Pam Beck; bottom row: Beth Benevides, Sherri Braxton-Lieber, Lee Welch, Madhu Thibaudeau, Dena Taylor, and LouAnn Spring.

The Gala honored Howard County Executive, Ken Ulman, who spoke at the event.

Additional speakers included Judy Grusso, Howard County Autism Society Executive Director, and keynote speaker and Gala co-sponsor John P. Hussman, Ph.D, founder of The Hussman Foundation.

We were also delighted to premiere a pendant celebrating autism that was specially designed by Sam Coyne of Craig Coyne Jewelers. For every pendant ordered during the Gala, Craig Coyne donated \$150, for a total donation of \$1,800!

We hosted more than 250 individuals, and raised approximately \$80,000 through corporate sponsorships, advertising, ticket sales and auction donations. Our community was extremely generous in their donation of goods and services, and equally generous were the bids of our guests.



Our Programs and Services ...

Three Support Groups met monthly during 2013; *30 meetings were attended by more than 400 individuals.* Topics included:

- A report by the Howard County Public School Staff about new and ongoing programs and the recently awarded MSDE Building Bridges grant program,
- Information on applying for Low Intensity Support Services (LISS) funding presented by Penn-Mar Human Services,
- A discussion by Officers from the Howard County Police and Fire Departments regarding their training protocols for incidences when a person with autism is involved, information on the 911 Call Center Flag Program, and their continued search for a tracking device that would aid families in finding a loved one with autism who wanders.

Family Advocacy and Parent Education Program, funded by a grant from the Howard County Office of Citizen Services, offers one-on-one advocacy to parents on special education topics and sponsors several seminars each year. This grant is not specific to autism; anyone with special education concerns in Howard County benefits from its offerings. *350 families contacted HCAS, and 80 families benefitted from 1:1 consults with a special education attorney ... at no cost to the family.*

Four Brown Bag Seminars were held throughout the year (co-sponsored by Pathfinders for Autism); the four seminars were attended by approximately 100-125 individuals. Topics included: ASD and Managing Aggression; Autism Community Updates: Understanding DSM-5, ADHD and Language; Positive Behavior Reinforcement Strategies; College Opportunities for Individuals with Autism.

Managing Life's Transitions ... Tuesday, April 9, 2013, Michelle C. Reynolds, Ph.D., from the University of Missouri, led a discussion about the complex questions and decisions involved in raising a child with autism, developmental disabilities, or special health care needs. Dr. Reynolds discussed the importance of family supports and building an infrastructure based on resources available in the community that are responsive to the family. She stressed that contributions are required elements from all aspects of the community throughout the lifespan. *52 attendees joined us for this full-day seminar.*

HCAS Social Events ...

Pool Parties

Two pool parties were attended by more than 350 children and families.



Sensitive Santa and Easter Bunny



Fitness First at Columbia Gym

Last year four Fitness First events were held. More than 200 families enjoyed games, swimming, pizza and friends!



Annual Great Wolf Lodge Outing

Brought together more than 35 families!



\$2,500—\$14,999

Community Foundation of Howard County
John P. and Selena Benevides
Dart Group II Foundation
Karen Mead
First Baptist Church of Guilford
The Lisa Higgins Hussman Foundation
Merry Acres Farm, LLC

Thank You to All Our Donors

\$15,000+

Howard County Office of Citizen Services
The John P. Hussman Foundation

\$1,000—\$2,499

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The Mangione Family / Turf Valley



2013 Walk & 5K Run Raises Over \$58,000



The Howard County Autism Society typically operates on a balanced budget, and relies on the generosity of the community to support its programs and services. The net revenue in 2013, due primarily to lower than budgeted expenses, brings us close to our financial stability goal of maintaining one year of operating funds available at all times.

