



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

a division of THE ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

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### Autism Doesn't Slow Down Keene State's Pierce

**Keene State College**  
**Staff Writer**

Keene, N.H. 10/10/08 - **Heather Pierce** will justifiably have a few butterflies in her stomach when she steps to the starting line at Saturday's New England Cross Country Championship in Boston. Although the Keene State freshman has three collegiate races under her belt, the Buckland, Mass., native has yet to compete in an event the magnitude of the Championships, which includes runners from all three divisions.



It's not the running that's the problem. Pierce has already demonstrated that she can compete with some of the top Division III runners in the region. Her concern is the crowd and the over 300 competitors that will run in the women's varsity race.

"The toughest part is the start when everybody gets bunched together and I can't pass anyone," said Pierce. "I don't want to get lost in the crowd."

In many ways, Pierce will never get lost in the crowd. Born with Autism, a complex development disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others, Pierce stands out in a crowd with her strong will and determination to succeed.

One of 10 freshman of this year's KSC cross country team, Pierce has already stood out. In three previous races, she has solidified a spot on the varsity as the Owls' third runner. Competing last Saturday at the KSC Invitational, she finished seventh overall (19:31), earning Little East Conference rookie honors for the second week in a row.

Impressed with Pierce's competitiveness, Keene State Coach Peter Thomas said, "Heather has the talent and drive to be a very good college runner. She's been a great addition to the team."

While Pierce is making tremendous strides on the trails, the initial off-the-trails social part of team membership has been a challenge for the freshman. "A lot of students run cross country for the social aspect, but it's actually the toughest part for me," said Pierce. "Making friends can be difficult."

Pierce tried many sports growing up, but the frustration of trying to put a ball in a hoop, score a goal, or hit a ball eventually led her to running.

Her mother, Ruth was not surprised. "We used to go on walks, and she would run ahead of me and stop right where I was going to turn around," said Ruth Pierce. "When I got there, she'd run all the way back."

Running became an outlet for Pierce. "It wasn't easy at first, but I felt this is something I can do without getting frustrated," she said. "It makes me feel good afterwards."

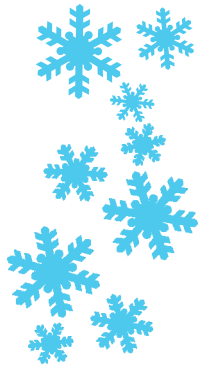
Pierce saw her hard work pay off when she made the Mohawk Trail Regional Varsity in ninth grade. As a freshman, she earned the first of her three All-Western Mass. honors with a second place finish, right behind teammate and current Owl, Rita Marcotte.

While at Mohawk, Marcotte noticed many subtle ways she impacted the Warriors. In addition to religiously showing up for practice, Pierce also got the rest of her teammates to express their feelings. "She taught a lot of us about opening up and talking about our emotions."

**continued on page 6**

**Remember to look for us on the web!**  
[www.communityresourcesforautism.org](http://www.communityresourcesforautism.org)





**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**  
 FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM  
**DECEMBER 2008**



	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	Family Holiday Party 6:00pm - 8:00pm	13
14	15	16	17	18	19		20
21	22	23	24	25	Office Closed	26	27
28	29	30	31				

## DECEMBER EVENTS

# Celebrate

*the holiday season with*

***Community Resources for People with Autism***

*Let's enjoy the evening with  
friends, food, entertainment, Santa,  
and presents for every child!*

*Friday, December 12, 2008*

*6:00 pm - 8:00 pm*

*St. Paul's Episcopal Church*

*485 Appleton Street; Holyoke, MA*

*Potluck--if your last name begins with:*

*A-M please bring a dessert*

*N-Z please bring an appetizer*

*So that we have a gift for every child,  
please RSVP by December 8 to:*

*Community Resources at (413) 529-2428*

*or email Amy Pinney at [pinneya@theassn.org](mailto:pinneya@theassn.org)*

*\*\*We will need each child's name, age, and gender\*\**



## SAVE THE DATE: Upcoming Events

### Insight Into Autism Spectrum Disorders

Date & time: Saturday, January 10; 10:00 am to 12:30 pm; RSVP by Wednesday, January 7.

Speaker: Jason Litto

Location: SCAN 360; 11 Wilbraham Rd., Springfield, MA

An interactive workshop designed to introduce families and caretakers to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Characteristics and strategies to help individuals are discussed, as well as some of the social and cognitive difficulties that people with autism experience. The workshop will also provide an opportunity to meet other parents of children and young adults with an ASD. We encourage friends, family members, and support persons to attend this valuable workshop.

For more information or to register, please contact Amy Pinney at (413) 529-2428, [pinneya@theassn.org](mailto:pinneya@theassn.org)

### Strategies for Effective Advocacy

Date & time: Thursday, January 15; 6:30 - 8:30 pm; RSVP by Monday, January 12.

Speaker: Jeanne Troxell Munson

Location: Holyoke Community College--Kittredge Center 301 (303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA)

Does your child need a 1:1 paraprofessional, longer day or longer year, social skills training, or a particular related service not currently in your IEP? This workshop will help you learn how to use strategies for effective advocacy to turn your child's needs into appropriate services and supports.

For more information or to register, please contact Amy Pinney at (413) 529-2428, [pinneya@theassn.org](mailto:pinneya@theassn.org)

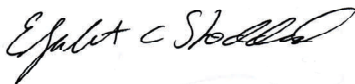
Dear Families and Friends,

I have been employed here at Community Resources for about six months as an Autism Specialist. One of the things that I love about my job is that I have so many roles and can affect a great number of families in many different ways. I feel that we are well equipped here to work directly with families when certain issues arise, are able to go to families' homes to implement new programs based on their child's needs, and have great resources to provide families with information within the community. One thing, however, which is overwhelmingly requested through phone calls from families, is "where to find a Parent Support Group". Unfortunately, we know of none.

After searching for parent support groups in the community for parents of children with ASD, my colleagues and I decided that, as the only Autism Resource Center in the area, Community Resources could act as a meeting place for parents to get together and support one another. We are more than happy and eager to have parents convene in our conference room for meetings. While Community Resources can be the common ground, we are still looking for interested parents to coordinate these meetings.

**If you are interested in helping to organize or even lead this group, please email me at [stoddare@theassn.org](mailto:stoddare@theassn.org) with your thoughts and suggestions.** We are looking forward to your input and hope that this effort will evolve into something that will provide the support so many of our parents have been asking for.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Stoddard  
Autism Specialist

\*\*When dates and times are finalized, we will be sure to post this information in future newsletters.

## *Boston College Drawing Strategies Study*

Researchers at Boston College are studying the drawing strategies used by children and adolescents classified on the autism spectrum who have a strong ability to draw realistically. We invite children and adolescents of all ages to join our study. Participation takes approximately one hour and will be arranged at your convenience, taking place at Boston College or at your home.

### **What is involved?**

- Complete a short cognitive test.
- Make a drawing from observation.
- Complete a pattern-making task using colored blocks
- Your child will work with a Boston College undergraduate student majoring in Psychology and Education

### **How to get started?**

Please contact Amanda Redash at [redash@bc.edu](mailto:redash@bc.edu) or (516) 459-5868. Please indicate in your message the age of your child.

## *Local Artist Chosen for 2009 Institute on Disability/UCED University of New Hampshire Calendar*

Hannah Flavin, an 18 year old artist from Longmeadow, was recently chosen to have one of her beautiful paintings printed in the 2009 Institute on Disability/UCED University of New Hampshire calendar. Her piece was chosen after a panel reviewed 128 diverse works of art submitted by artists from all over the country.

Hannah's brightly colored painting is aptly titled: "Rainbow Picture." There are several characters floating weightlessly across a background of yellows, greens, blues and oranges. Underneath the painting appears the quote: "Cherish your visions and dreams as they are the children of your soul; the blueprints of your ultimate accomplishments." -- Napoleon Hill

Hannah has been creating colorful masterpieces since childhood. She excels in the visual arts and has created some stunning, thought provoking, moving pieces. She continues to paint and draw on a daily basis, and has recently started to explore sculpture and pottery. Hannah hopes to someday have a career in art.

Please stay tuned: We hope to announce a local art show for Hannah coming up in 2009!

Calendars are being sold for \$10.00 each and would make great gifts for the holidays!

If you would like to order a copy of this gorgeous calendar, please write, call, or visit the website:

Institute on Disability/UCED  
10 West Edge Drive  
Durham, NH 03824-3522  
(603) 862-4320  
[www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu)



## Keene State's Pierce, cont. from cover

Conversely, the team helped Pierce with her social skills. "Heather has come a long way," said Marcotte. "She used to show up at practice and give everybody a hug. She learned that people have a little bubble around them and sometimes need their space."

Pierce also had to overcome a different type of adversity when she slipped and broke her leg in two places while running in the Mohawks' opening meet last fall. "Running was her life," said Joe Chadwick, her high school coach at Mohawk. "It was like her world was falling apart. It told her that it was part of being an athlete."

Getting over the injury, both physically and psychologically, Pierce went undefeated in dual meets as a senior and placed fifth in the two-mile race at the Western Mass. championships.

Pierce faced another adjustment coming to Keene State. A bright student, Pierce chose KSC in part because of its proximity to home and the support provided by the school's office of disability services. To help with the transition, Pierce enrolled in Keene State's Link Program that exposes students to the academic and social expectations of college during the summer.

"The hardest thing about the program for students with autism is that sense of community," said Lisa David, a counselor in the office. "But for Heather and her association with a team, it was almost pre-built."

"We talked to the members of the team and made sure they understood her situation," said Thomas. "She's everyone's favorite little sister, and they try to keep an eye on her."

Heather says she's surprised herself with her success so far. Although the work outs have increased in college, she's enjoyed the challenge of going against the stiffer competition. "In every race, I'm almost guaranteed to have somebody pushing me," Pierce said.

Back running with Pierce, Marcotte marvels at her work ethic. "For her, there are no distractions," said Marcotte. "She just keeps on plugging along."

Heather is also making progress in the social area as well. "Sometimes I don't know when someone is joking, or I'd say something that might be offensive to somebody," she said. "At first when I heard Pete yelling at me, I thought he was angry at me. But then I found out he was only yelling to encourage me."

There will be plenty of encouraging words for Heather not only on Saturday, but throughout her career at Keene State. "We run on a self-determination mode in our office," said David. "We really helped Heather transition in....our next focus is giving her the skills and confidence over the next four years to transition out."

"There are so many places for her to go to get a push along the way," said Marcotte. "I know she'll bound out of here."

**(Note: Heather and her parents are one of the many families served by Community Resources for People with Autism)**

## Boston University Survey

Boston University graduate students are interested in learning about the experiences of families of children with autism spectrum disorders in Massachusetts Early Intervention. If you have more than one child on the autism spectrum, please fill out this survey for each child using the website listed below.

This survey will take just a few minutes and all responses are anonymous. If you make a mistake, you can go back and change your answers until you click "Done" on the last page. There is a space at the end of the survey for you to add general comments and information. Remember: all questions pertain to your child's time in Early Intervention.

Feel free to send this survey to other parents who might be interested in participating. All responses must be in by December 1, 2008, but quick responses are greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your time.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pHQdPUEjxgFqDO3Z GkXE5w\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pHQdPUEjxgFqDO3Z GkXE5w_3d_3d)



## Family Swim Sessions Thursday Evenings Sponsored by Community Resources



Community Resources for People with Autism's Berkshire Autism Projects Committee has joined with the Berkshire County ARC and Berkshire Family and Individual Resources to sponsor an hour of family swim at the Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center. There will be lifeguards on duty however children will need to be accompanied by parents or care providers.

Swim sessions will be every Thursday evening (excluding holidays) from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. from now until the end of May at ***no cost to families.***

If you have any questions please contact Megan Sherman at 413-443-4780 x. 15 or [shermanm@theassn.org](mailto:shermanm@theassn.org).

The Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center is located at:  
165 East St.  
Pittsfield, MA



### Resources for People with Disabilities During Financial Crisis

MNIP News (Massachusetts Network of Information Providers for people with disabilities), coordinated by New England INDEX, has compiled a wealth of helpful information in their latest newsletter. In these difficult economic times many people are finding themselves facing financial hardship. These resources can be of great financial help and are available to people with disabilities. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.disabilityinfo.org/MNIP/news/20081106.html>

New England INDEX is a program of Commonwealth Medicine, the University of Massachusetts Medical School, located at the Shriver Center in Waltham, Massachusetts

### *Family Compiled Resource List*

The following list of resources was compiled by a family served by Community Resources for People with Autism. They have found these resources to be very helpful and wanted to pass along this list to aid in the benefit of others.

- ◆ **The Boy Who Loved Windows: Opening the Heart and Mind of a Child Threatened with Autism**  
By: Patricia Stacey
- ◆ **The Child with Special Needs: Encouraging Intellectual and Emotional Growth**  
By: Stanley I. Greenspan
- ◆ **Louder Than Words**  
By: Jenny McCarthy
- ◆ **Mother Warriors**  
By: Jenny McCarthy
- ◆ **Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew**  
By: Ellen Notbohm
- ◆ **1001 Great Ideas for Teaching and Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders**  
By: Veronica Zysk & Ellen Notbohm
- ◆ **Getting the Best for Your Child with Autism: An Expert's Guide to Treatment**  
By: Bryna Siegel
- ◆ **The Late Talker: What to Do If Your Child Isn't Talking Yet**  
By: Marilyn C. Agin, Lisa F. Geng & Malcolm Nicholl
- ◆ **Autism Speaks: Family Services 100 Day Kit**  
[http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/family\\_services/100\\_day\\_kit.php](http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/family_services/100_day_kit.php)

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

# Insight Into Autism Spectrum Disorders

**Speaker: Jason Litto**

An interactive workshop designed to introduce families and caretakers to Autism Spectrum Disorders. Characteristics and strategies to help individuals are discussed, as well as some of the social and cognitive difficulties that people with Autism experience.

This workshop will also provide an opportunity to meet other parents of children and young adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We encourage friends, family members, and support persons to attend this valuable workshop.

Taller interactivo diseñado para introducir a las familias y guardianes acerca del desorden espectral del autismo. Estrategias y características para ayudar a individuos serán discutidas al igual que dificultades que experimentan personas con autismo en áreas cognitivas y sociales.

Este taller proveerá también la oportunidad de conocer otros padres son niños y jóvenes adultos con autismo.

Encomiamos a familias, amigos, y personas que proveen apoyo a que asistan a este taller tan valuable.

*Date and Time / Fecha y Hora:*

Saturday, January 10, 2009; 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 pm  
Sábado, 10 de enero de 2009; 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

*Location / Lugar:*

SCAN 360; 11 Wilbraham Rd., Springfield, MA

*R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, January 7, 2009 / Favor de confirmar: Lunes, 7 de enero de 2009  
(two weeks notice required if translation services needed)*

*Servicios de traducción estarán disponible con dos semanas previo aviso*

### Community Resources for People with Autism

116 Pleasant Street; Suite 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027

Phone: 413-529-2428

[www.communityresourcesforautism.org](http://www.communityresourcesforautism.org)

## *COMMUNITY RESOURCES*

FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

### **Attention Parents of School Age Children!**

## **“Navigating Your Way Through The Special Education Maze”**

Designed for parents and caretakers of school age children who are on the autism spectrum.

An educational series offered by  
Community Resources for People with Autism  
as part of our Parent Education Program.

*Save the date for the next sessions in the educational series starting in January:*

**\* Strategies for Effective Advocacy**

Thursday, January 15, 2009

**\* When the School Says “No.” What Can You Do?**

Thursday, February 12, 2009

**\* The Hidden Curriculum**

Thursday March 12, 2009

**\* Mediation & Conflict Resolution**

Thursday, May 14, 2009



**Workshop Series Location:**

Holyoke Community College

303 Homestead Ave.

Kittredge Center (KC) 301\*

\* note: May 14 workshop in KC 302

**For information and to register, please contact:**

Amy Pinney

(413) 529-2428

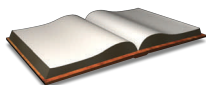
pinneya@theassn.org

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Every school district in Massachusetts has to have a Special Education Parent Advisory Council or PAC. A PAC is a group of parents and educators that meet at least once a month in order to discuss a variety of topics related to special education. The main purpose of a PAC is to educate and empower parents about the laws and regulations so that they can make informed decisions about their child's education.

At a PAC meeting one can expect to receive support from other parents as well as an informative workshop. Each PAC will choose the workshop topics, but all focus on how parents can advocate to ensure the best possible services. Parents can become informed about educational rights while making connections with other local parents in one's school district. A PAC can be a powerful force in a school district. Information regarding your local PAC can be found at your child's school. Our monthly CRPA newsletters will also begin listing the schedule of events for local PAC's as we receive the information.

### ***New Editions to Community Resources' Library***



**What do I do when...The answer book on Individualized Education Plans (third edition)**

By: John W. Norlin, Esq.

**What do I do when...The Answer Book on Special Education Practice and Procedure**

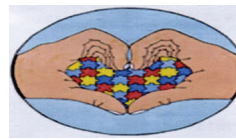
By: Steven E. Lake, Esq.

**What do I do when...The Answer Book on Special Education Law (fifth edition)**

By: John W. Norlin, Esq.



## ***Voces Por Autismo***



VOLUNTEER RESOURCE GROUP HOSTED BY  
**COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM**

*For more information, please contact:  
Community Resources (413) 529-2428*

Or

*vocesporautismo@hotmail.com*

Fue formado por padres con niños con autismo para ofrecer apoyo a familias que también tienen un relativo en el espectro. Invitamos a todas las familias a unirse a **Voces Por Autismo** para que compartamos experiencias y celebremos juntos nuestros logros y sueños.

Nuestras vidas traen retos diariamente y juntos podemos ofrecernos ayuda y apoyo que tanto necesitamos.

### SAVE THE DATE:

Look For Upcoming Meeting Dates  
Beginning In January

### ***Do you have a story or resource to share?***

Send story or resource (pictures are welcome) to:

Community Resources for People with Autism  
(Attn: Amy)  
116 Pleasant St.; Suite 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027

Or

[pinneya@theasn.org](mailto:pinneya@theasn.org)





## Community Resources Goes Green!!!

Community Resources For People With Autism is striving to achieve our strategic Technology goal and help the environment by “going green.” Beginning in January, our newsletter will be delivered via e-mail. Recipients for whom we have a current e-mail address will receive the newsletter electronically. This will not only reduce our postage, supply and labor costs, but recipients will get the newsletter much sooner. *And, most importantly, it will be good for the environment!*

Please complete and return the form below to verify we have your current email address.

**Together we can all help the environment and keep costs down!**

### MAILING LIST UPDATE!

**Help us help you!** We would like to take this opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information in our mailing list database. Please take a few moments to fill out the form below and return it at your earliest convenience.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Community Resources For People With Autism  
116 Pleasant Street; Ste. 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027

**The Association For Community Living  
Community Resources for People with Autism  
116 Pleasant Street, Suite 366  
Easthampton, MA 01027-2740**

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 24  
EASTHAMPTON, MA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

«FIRSTNAME» «LASTNAME»  
«ADDRESS1»  
«STREET»  
«CITY», «STATE» «ZIP»