



# Family Quarterly Newsletter

November 2008

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Jessica Irwin

*Executive Director*

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*Family Support Liaison*

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*Office Manager*

## Welcome Baby Owen!

Congratulations go out to Cherise and her husband Arik on the arrival of their son, Owen. Owen was born on Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00pm. At birth he weighed 5 pounds and 10 ounces and was 19.5 inches. Cherise and her therapy dog Guerry have been



Arik, Owen, and Cherise

missed around the clinic while she is on maternity leave, but they will return soon enough, along

with little Owen sometime in the beginning of the new year.

## Provider and Family Vacations

The holiday season is approaching and many providers and families will be traveling. Please take some time to discuss your holiday schedules now. This will allow us time to find your family temporary help if you are in need of a provider over the holidays. This is also the time for providers needing extra hours, to turn in their

availability to our offices so that we can match them up with other families.

If any of your providers have requested time off during the holiday season please let us

know if you are in need of extra help. Though a replacement is not guaranteed, early notice allows us the best chance to assist you in your scheduling needs.

### S.E.E.K. Arizona Food Drive

**Our goal is to collect 1,000 pounds of food to benefit St. Mary's Food Bank. If you would like to donate, they suggest peanut butter, can goods (tuna, veggies, fruit,) rice, pasta, beans, and non-perishables. Items can be dropped off at our offices during business hours till Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Camp PHOTOS



Happy Campers!



Making Smores!



The Camp Bus



Climbing up to.....



...the Zip Line!

**Camp Runamuk is a HUGE success!**

S.E.E.K. Arizona's first annual Camp Runamuk was a huge success! Thirteen families attended our 4 day, 3 night camp for families this past October in beautiful Prescott, Arizona. We couldn't have asked for a better first year camp experience! Children spent their mornings participating in various activities with music, movement, and arts and craft themes, while their

parents took in lectures, scrap booked, did yoga or just went for a stroll. Families then spent the afternoons together on horseback, out hiking, or zipping down the zip line. Each night ended with story telling, singing and smores around a roaring campfire. Once children were tucked away in their family's suite, parents had the option to join in on the adult activities, which included a trip down to

Whiskey Row. Fun was had by all who attended, so much in fact, that we've increased the number of cabins so that we can take more families next year. So save the dates and register early as space is limited. Pre-Registration for S.E.E.K. families starts Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. Next year's camp is Oct 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Check out the services page of S.E.E.K.'s website for 2009's Camp flyer.

**S.E.E.K. Arizona's Chess Academy to Begin in 2009**

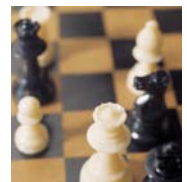
Studies show that the game of chess significantly improves a child's problem solving abilities, creative thinking processes, mathematical comprehension and spatial relations skills. Chess provides an engaging and thoughtful approach to learning and developing cognitive processes in a fun and social way. S.E.E.K. Arizona is trying to

improve both social and personal goals of children with special needs through chess.

We hope families will take advantage of our upcoming Chess Academy to help learn the fun game of chess. Our goal is to begin offering a series of one-hour weekly meetings starting in January that will provide a short lesson and then play time to follow. Kids will

also have opportunities to play in tournaments, win trophies, or obtain one-on-one lessons with their instructor who is very experienced in coaching kids with special needs. No experience is required!

Interested parent please call Coach Brian Pfungstl at 602.625.3030 for more information or to reserve a spot in our Chess Academy.



**Meet Our New Receptionist**

We warmly welcome Sandra Ocasio to S.E.E.K. Arizona as the new receptionist. Sandra hails from New York and just recently made the move with her husband and two children, to Chandler.

We have her on board and feel that her previous experience working at a professional therapy agency that served the birth – 3 population, will be very useful at S.E.E.K. Arizona.

here to assist any of our families or employees that have bilingual service needs.

Best wishes are extended to Lizeth as she settles into her new career and new home in Surprise.

We are very excited to Sandra is bilingual and is

## Spring Sibshop Schedule Set

The schedule has been set for our next semester of Sibshops for siblings who are 8 to 15 years in age. We will meet Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, Mar 7<sup>th</sup>, and Apr 18<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 12. The cost is \$45 for the semester and space is limited so reserve your spot today.

What is Sibshops you ask? It's a place where siblings come together to interact and develop friendships with others who understand what it is like to have a sibling with special needs.

Siblings get to play fun

games and activities, make cool crafts, and do group cooking activities, while the instructors create an open forum that allows them to express their triumphs and frustrations that come with having a sibling with special needs.

S.E.E.K. Arizona's Sibshops are agency sponsored and led by experienced staff to provide a supportive and consistent environment for these extraordinary sibs. Call your Family Support Liaison for more information or to reserve your space.



***Siblings work on projects that increase self esteem and provide an open forum for discussing their experiences.***

## Respite Program Schedule

*For upcoming quarter*

**December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**January 18<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>**

**February 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>**

The respite program is held on alternating Saturdays from 12 – 5 pm. Reservations must be made by 5 pm on Friday to ensure that staff is available, but can be made as early as the Monday before.

**Reminder:** If your child is unable to attend, please call us to cancel. We often have a waitlist and this allows us to give your spot to another child or call off our staff in advance.

## Upcoming Changes in Weekend Social Groups

Our Social Groups started as a pilot program a year ago with a handful of kids coming to the center on the weekends to play with other kids with similar play repertoires. Today the groups have grown in size and are one of our most popular clinic programs at S.E.E.K. Arizona.

Due to the nature of the program, the consistency needed in staff for successful social groups, and the administrative work that goes into managing the groups, we will be making a few

changes to the groups that will go into effect starting in January.

The groups will take on the structure of our other clinic programs by moving to a semester schedule. Each year we will hold two 8-week semesters and one 4-week summer semester. The groups will continue to meet every other Saturday during these semesters, and breaks will occur between semesters. Children will need to be registered for the entire semester in order to reserve their

place. It is our hopes that the shortened number of sessions held each year will provide the groups with more consistent attendance, which is key to a successful social group.

An additional change will be made to the registration process. In order to provide families with more consistency, program registration, scheduling, and questions will now go through the Family Support Liaison at S.E.E.K. Arizona. The

weekend staff will no longer direct this portion of the program. Due to the dynamic nature of the groups, the Executive Director will begin assessing new children as they join the groups to ensure that they are in the group that will provide them with the most success, as well as provide continuity to the program.

Any questions or concerns about the upcoming changes can be brought to the Executive Director.

### Early Childhood Program

Mon. / Wed. / Fri.

8:45 am – 11:45 am

### Facilitated Habilitation Program

Tue. / Thur. / Fri.

2:45 pm – 5:45 pm

*Fridays alternate between home and community sessions.*



## Enrollment for Spring Hab Programs Starts Now

The Early Childhood Program and the Facilitated Habilitation Program are starting the enrollment process now for the upcoming Spring semester. Assessments begin the week of January 26<sup>th</sup> and the classes run through May 1<sup>st</sup>. Space is limited and children are taken on a first come, first served basis.

Each of these center based programs focus on:

- Positive Behavior Support
- Increased communication
- Cognitive Development
- Social skills
- Adaptive Skills

Individual programs are developed for each child along with one-on-one support at all times. Due to the group learning approach to the program, children also leave with School Readiness skills.

The programs are 14 weeks long and are available through private pay or the use of habilitation hours.

## Winter Session Social Program

For families feeling they need some consistency over their holiday break from school or between our fall and spring programs, we will be once again offering a winter session social program. Children may attend some or all of our sessions on M/W/F mornings from 9 –

noon. The winter sessions will run from Dec 1<sup>st</sup> through January 16<sup>th</sup>. These sessions will run similar to our classroom in that structured activities will be planned and circle time will occur. The staff to child ratio is approximately 2:1 and respite hours or private

pay will be billed for attendance. This is an excellent way to maintain consistency and gain socialization over the break. Reservations must be made so that appropriate staffing can be secured. For more information on these sessions, contact Joy.

## Support Groups

*The Greater Phoenix Chapter of ASA and ROK have combined their monthly meetings!*

**Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>**

**6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

At Coco's Restaurant at the Paradise Valley Mall. 4514 E. Cactus Road, Phx

Susan Golubock, M.ED., OTR/L will be speaking on "Interpreting Misunderstood Behaviors from a Sensory Perspective."

Light refreshments are provided

during the meetings and parents may order dinners during the meeting, but are not required to do so.

The general public is always invited to attend and there is no admission fee.

<http://www.phxautism.org>

*If you have support group information that you'd like to share, let us know!*

*HF Autism/Asperger Family Network*

*"Life Issues in a Tolerant Atmosphere"*

This is a new Phoenix Support Group. Their meetings are usually the last Wednesday of the month from 6:30 – 8 p.m., though November, December, and summer dates vary. They meet at Scottsdale Bible (7601 E Shea Blvd. at Miller) in Scottsdale, in Room E 102. The entire family is invited.

Contact: [hfautism@cox.net](mailto:hfautism@cox.net)

<http://phoenixautism.com/>

## Upcoming Trainings

### Asperger's Syndrome Seminar

December 17<sup>th</sup>

7:30 am – 3:30 pm

Hilton Garden Inn at the  
Phoenix Airport

3422 E Elwood, Phoenix

Check website for details:

[CrossCountryEducation.com](http://CrossCountryEducation.com)

1.800.397.0180

Registration \$189 by Dec 7

### Four Corners Association for Behavior Analysis

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

April 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Radisson Poco Diablo  
Resort in Sedona

Check website for details:

[www.4caba.org](http://www.4caba.org)

Or contact Anne Kupher

[Anne.Kupher@asu.edu](mailto:Anne.Kupher@asu.edu)

### Parent Trainings

#### Responding to Children with ADHD

Nov.22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am – 12 pm

#### Rhymes, Rhythms, and Fun

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm – 8 pm

#### Helping Children to Manage Their Anger and Aggression

Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 am – 11 am

For more information or to register, call 602-266-5976, ext. 6180



## Family Events

### Sensory Friendly Films

Sponsored by AMC and ASA

These films are presented for families affected by autism to allow them to enjoy films in a safe and accepting environment. During the films, the lights will be brought up, the sound will be turned down and the audience is welcome to get up and move about, shout, or sing.

The movies are being offered at:

AMC Deer Valley 30

and

AMC Mesa Grand 24

Dec 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00

"Bolt"

Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>

"Marley and Me"

Jan 31<sup>st</sup>

"Hotel for Dogs"

ASA-Greater Phoenix Chapter's

### Pump It Up Family Night

Tuesday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>

6 -7:30 pm

\$7 / child. Adults are free

RSVP is required and there must be at least one adult per child.

### Pump It Up – N. Phoenix

22515 N 18<sup>th</sup> Drive,  
Phoenix

RSVP to Monica Archer at  
623.580.9630 or

[Monica@phxautism.org](mailto:Monica@phxautism.org)

### Pump It Up – Scottsdale

9378 E Bahia Drive

Scottsdale 85260

RSVP to Marcie Levie at

[Marcie@phxautism.org](mailto:Marcie@phxautism.org)

### Pump It Up – Tempe

1325 W Auto Dr, Ste 101

Tempe 85284

RSVP to John Dyster at

[John@phxautism.org](mailto:John@phxautism.org)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk 'n Roll

Saturday, Jan 31, 2009

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Registration begins at 9.

Tempe Town Lake

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

## Family Events

*Continued....*

### Batter Up!

Looking for a supportive environment for your child to learn about and enjoy the sport of baseball?

The sign up for MASD's baseball Minors program for children five years old and older, is Jan 10, from 10:00 am – 12:00. The sign up for the Majors program is Jan 17. Both held in Mesa at 2009 Countryside Park.

The cost is \$40 for the season.

[www.arizonadisabledsports.com](http://www.arizonadisabledsports.com)

### The Cruise...with a cause!

*Support Down Syndrome Research*

Come sail and help support Down Syndrome research! Join the DS network of Arizona for a 3 night Baja Mexico Cruise departing June 5, 2009 from Long Beach, CA and visiting Ensenada, Mexico.

Rates start at \$295 for inside rooms and \$345 for ocean view plus taxes and fuel charges. Prices are based upon availability and some restrictions may apply.

This package includes shipboard accommodations, fabulous entertainment, onboard meals, some beverages and more!

**Hurry! Deposit of \$25/person due 12/31/08**

Contact:

Erika Villanueva at  
480.293.4689 or  
ERIKA@VIAJESTOGO.COM

## HOLIDAY EVENTS IN THE VALLEY

### Las Noches de las Luminarias

Nov. 28 – Dec. 23

5:30 – 9:30 p.m. at  
*Desert Botanical Garden*

1201 N Galvin Parkway

Phoenix

*See website for prices.*

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

Enjoy musical acts and the Chihuly glass exhibit each night while walking through the 7,000 hand-lit luminarias.

### Holiday with the Arts

Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> 11 am – 4 pm

*Promenade Shopping Center*

16427 N Scottsdale Rd

Scottsdale

*Free with a donation of 2 or more cans of food.*

Features carriage rides, photos with Santa, AZ Puppet Theater performances, carolers, and live music.

### Gingerbread Village

Dec. 3 – Jan. 4

Sun.'s through Sat.'s

*JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort and Spa*

5350 E Marriott Dr

Phoenix

*Free*

[www.jwdesertridgeresort.com](http://www.jwdesertridgeresort.com)

See Santa's Secret Gingerbread Village, a 12x12 foot work of art. Children can write and mail letters to Santa too.

## Lights and Festivals

### 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Lights Kick-off Party

Nov 29<sup>th</sup> 11 am – 7 pm

Desert Foothills Park

*Free Admission to Festival, rides and games have a fee.*

Entertainment includes:  
group performances  
(dance, choir, theater).

### Peoria Oldtown Holiday Festival

Dec 5<sup>th</sup> from 5-9pm

83<sup>rd</sup> Ave just south of Grand.

*Free admission.*

Festival has 20 tons of snow to play in, carolers, lights, food, craft vendors and a visit from Santa.

Carnival games, rides, and bouncers.

### APS Electric Light Parade

Dec 6<sup>th</sup>.

Parade starts at dark and runs Central Ave from Montabello to Camelback, east on Camelback to 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and south on 7<sup>th</sup> St to Indian School Road.

Watch the light parade filled with floats, bands, twirlers, and dogs.

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

### Phoenix Zoo

#### Zoo Lights

Nov 27<sup>th</sup> – Jan 11<sup>th</sup>

Open nightly from 6 – 10 pm

455 N Gavin Parkway,

Phoenix

*\$9 for non-members, or \$7 for members.*

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

