

SPECTRUM UPDATES

January-March 2014

The End of the Spectrum: Helping Families Find Solutions to Their Autism Housing Needs.

Dear Friends of Autism,

Again this year, at the end of our first quarter, we sit on the cusp of winter and spring; some days we continue to endure the frigid onslaught, other days the warm rays of what is to come. I hold our weather as a metaphor for our work, looking at the challenging years (which constitute our present) and hoping for that warm ease of the future that will begin to blossom with more fruits of our labor.

This year I have reexamined our approach to accomplishing goals. Rather than keeping focused on the big picture, the big donations and the big accomplishments, I have dedicated myself to a more grassroots and incremental approach to both fundraising and spreading the word about classic autism. This approach is reflected in new and smaller goals that we hope will allow us to make progress in a more consistent fashion.

Enjoy Spring,

Sheryl Grassie / Executive Director

Please donate on-line at:

www.endofthespectrum.org



Autism Fundraiser for the Governor at Garrison Keillor's



Garrison Keillor has become a self-appointed advocate for the disability community in Minnesota. In January he hosted an autism sponsored fundraiser for Governor Dayton at his home. I was able to bend the Governor's ear on behalf of Spectrum, with the promise of follow-up meetings on the topic of housing.

Autism Group Homes

Our Autism group Home Bill that passed in 2012 continues to remain stalled in the bureaucratic red tape of DHS. We were promised the homes would open by mid-2013, but now find ourselves in 2014 with little to no progress. Families need placements for their children, but government's response is ongoing apathy. Our goal is to make some headway with DHS and to be able to report something more positive in the near future.

Pottery Sale May 17th, 2013

Mark your calendars for our 5th annual Pottery Sale and Fundraiser Saturday May 17th from 9am to 3pm in Linden Hills.



Linden Hills Festival

Stop by our booth and get more information about classic autism during this year's Linden Hills Festival Sunday May 18th/Linden Hills Park

Other Housing Initiatives

This year, a number of groups have coalesced in forming the **Coalition for Choice in Housing**, which has sponsored legislation to increase housing options to better accommodate a wider spectrum of needs. Outcomes are still pending, but opposition from DHS and ARC have been substantial. Education needs to take place so that opposing entities can better understand the different needs in our communities.

Documentary/Photo Exhibition

Although we continue to raise funds for our larger goal of a documentary about the needs of the severely disabled/autistic, we have launched a project idea to do a preliminary photo exhibition detailing this same topic. Look for details in future newsletters.



On a person note, my son Seth continues to thrive in his placement at the Laura Baker School in Northfield. I cannot say enough good things about how life has improved for Seth living on this small campus. He now belongs to a community, something he never had while isolated in a group home. I am so grateful for places like Laura Baker.

Thank You to everyone who supports work with autism in Minnesota!

