

# SPECTRUM UPDATES

## January-March 2012

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

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*Dear Friends,*

*Why do projects always look so doable at the conceptual stage and become so monumental in the implementation stage? We started The End of the Spectrum wanting to create residences with therapeutic programming for autism. That seemed simple enough. Who could have imagined the need to change laws in order to create disability housing? And, not just change laws, but change an entire cultural mindset in order to change those laws. Severe autism still remains a somewhat closeted disability, and the entities in charge have a long way to go in understanding the needs of this population. Our work looms large, but when we keep in mind the suffering of our children, our resolve is up to the challenge.*

*Thank you for everyone's support,*

*Sheryl Grassie / Executive Director*

### Legislative Update

Legislative work dominated our first quarter. Two autism housing bills, HF1683/SF1412 & HF2252/SF1882, sought to create a pilot project of group homes with autism programming, and a larger autism residence like a boarding school, farm or treatment center. Government run social service agencies fought against our bills, calling the residences "institutions." We worked hard to demonstrate otherwise and both bills eventually passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.



This was a remarkable achievement, but there is more work to be done and the implementation of these bills could take years. We are pursuing other avenues to meet more immediate needs.

### Parent Impact

Parent testimony helped our bills pass. Behind the scenes horror stories brought to light suicide, group homes without therapy, long waiting lists for placement, children living out-of-state, and violent home lives.



One mother testified about her young daughter's group home stress. Over several

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months she has pulled out all the hair on her head.....

### Documentary

We are still hoping to move forward with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) in the creation of a documentary about the plight of children and families with severe autism. Significant funds still need to be raised for this project to go forward. The project would be a joint venture between TPT and End of the Spectrum, with Spectrum's half of the cost running close to \$40,000. Any contributions to this project would be greatly appreciated and can be made on our website at [www.endofthespectrum.org](http://www.endofthespectrum.org)

### Sensory is crucial for our kids!



It greatly increases their ability to be in the world successfully.

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

### Upcoming Pottery Sale/May 19<sup>th</sup>

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual pottery fundraiser will feature artist seconds and student's work from Northern Clay Center and St. Paul Academy.



From 8a.m.-3p.m. as part of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Sale, 40th Street and Chowen Ave. in SW Minneapolis.

### Interesting Research Facts

Minnesota is the #1 State for Cases of Autism Per Capita

- The autism population is primarily children under age 22
- 1 in 63.3 children born in Minnesota will have autism
- Approx. 70,000 children are born each year in MN
- A minimum of 1,105 new cases of autism per year
- 40%-60% or 445-663 cases per year will be severe non-verbal autism
- Most, if not all severe children will need residential placement at some point