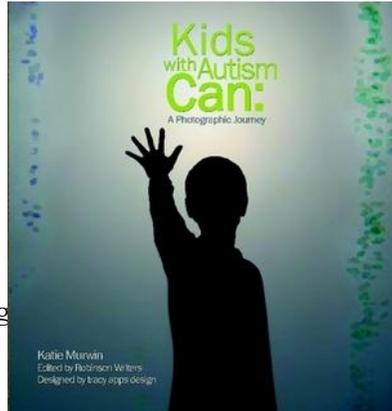


KIDS CAN CHRONICLES

www.kidswithautismcan.org

The Book

In April of 2010, our book *Kids with Autism Can: A Photographic Journey* was published. It is available for purchase through our website or Lulu.com. We are thrilled with the impact. Pediatricians and other professionals working with young children have requested copies to have available for families receiving the diagnosis of autism. The book helps to provide hope during challenging times. It was also showcased on the Lulu blog during Autism Awareness Month. The link can be found on pg. 3 in Link It Up.



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Meet Alec



As we search around on the internet, we come across people who we will probably never meet in person, but who we respect immensely. Alec and his mom are two of those people. Alec is a teenager and has been written up in Canadian Dog Digest for his work with dogs, he trains and shows them. He volunteers at the local humane society. Dogs are clearly one of his passions and they have been for years. He also plays clarinet, sings and swims. He sketches amazing pictures of dogs. He has friends over for movie nights and lunch; oh and guess what? He is diagnosed with Autism. His mom works diligently to support his interests and help him succeed in many different aspects of life. This summer Alec has attended both band and art camp and continues to share things he enjoys with others. He shows us over and over again that a diagnosis doesn't diminish who you are or what you become.

We thank Alec and his family for their contribution and hope this will inspire others to add their accomplishments to our website.

We Are Growing

As an organization...

There are things we most definitely wanted to be when we started this organization. We know it will take some time to become all of them. First and foremost we hope to be a source of support for families who are living with a diagnosis of autism whether the diagnosis came a week ago or ten years ago. We want to point out that although it is challenging and sometimes very tiring, parts are amazing and all children are a gift, they just come in differently wrapped packages. We are hoping to be a source of support during times of transition. We have two main areas of transition, initial diagnosis and the adjustment period that follows; we are working to create a "Hopeful Parenting" class as well as the book and website to provide a place to go and feel positive as you face the challenges associated with the diagnosis. Our second area of transition is teenager into young adulthood. We are beginning to work with the ASU Polytechnic campus regarding college transition programs. We have also been speaking with others about creating a workplace that would hire young adults with HFA/Asperger's. Creating a pathway or better yet several pathways for young adults would allow them opportunities and help to inform and remind parents that this diagnosis doesn't necessarily mean their child will not have a successful and productive future. We are also working on projects like grants and other charity events. For example: We are hoping to get one train car on the Polar Express for one night when we could try to better control the volume etc. to allow kids who might not otherwise take the trip to be able to experience the magic of The Polar Express. We are also hoping to provide other experiences in the future where we can have a bit more control over the environment to make it a more pleasant experience, meeting kids' sensory needs. We know some of these things will come more easily than others but we will keep you informed as we try to create a better environment for kids with autism.

As a family...

I am writing this mostly for my benefit but hopefully for yours too. Since this organization has been very personal, I would like to share something with you. We are getting ready for Nicholas to start high school next week! The transition to a typical school means he has come farther than we could have dreamed, the flip side is it's scary!!!! Switching classes, new students who won't know his quirks, teachers who might think he is being disrespectful if he talks out of turn, switching classes in a timely manner, opening his locker lock and a hundred other things we think about as we lay in bed tossing and turning. We have transitioned so many times in his life one would think it would become easier. In a way it has, now only the big things are considered transitions. It used to be that everything right down to putting on pajamas used to be a transition, probably 50 each day. So as I write this it helps me to remember I used to feel this way every day about almost everything. Wow! Talk about progress! So if you have a child starting school or starting back to school, remember you are not alone. We are all in this together and we will work hard come out ok on the other side. Look how many times we have transitioned in the past and wondered how it would possibly work out. Then we met a special teacher or aide or friend or the strength inside ourselves and found out we would make it through. So now my worries are on paper, I would encourage you to put yours there too. Somehow it helps to see a bigger picture, it helps to reflect. When I think about 5 years ago when I spent 30 minutes peeling Nicholas off the brick wall at the elementary school when it was 105 degrees and carrying him to the car screaming because he was overwhelmed and exhausted I know that next week won't be that bad and even if next week is really hard I will still make it through and somehow Nicholas will also make it through and we will grow. I am proud that I am Nicholas' mom and he will help students and teachers learn about honesty and compassion and intelligence and about not making assumptions based on a first meeting and we will be reminded of what he brings to us and this world every day.

Try this:

Maybe laughter is the best medicine. We understand that each day brings with it new challenges. For us, that means some days it is tough to be “a happy family”. Our whole family is quirky. We’ve decided not only is that ok, but it is great. We embrace the craziness and really enjoy each other. We turn things into a joke when others might see

them as a frustration. So we all laugh at the movie lines that get repeated over and over again. No one is being laughed at, but everyone is being filled with joy and laughter. Stop comparing yourselves to the families around you and enjoy being you. For us, this doesn’t mean no rules, but it means not apologizing for who we are. Find your favorite things as a family and do them as often as you can.

Our family enjoys:

- Mini golfing
- Making food
- Going to the zoo
- Playing sports
- Reading books
- Watching movies

We’ve grown into some of these activities. When we started, mini golf was 15 minutes; reading books was 5 minutes and going to the zoo was, at best, an hour. We started with small successes and have allowed them to grow.

What’s next?

Keep checking our website!

We are adding art, stories and information frequently. We are looking for your contributions. We will also be updating the site as we work with different organizations to educate others in the community.

Join our Facebook group:
Kids With Autism Can 

A great place to share information.

“To love someone is to see a miracle invisible to others.”

-Francois Mauriac

We have some great handmade jewelry for sale. We will have the details available on our website in the near future. Kids with Autism Can will earn a portion of the profits for each piece sold.

Link It Up

In this section, we will share links pertaining to all different aspects of autism. These links do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Kids With Autism Can. We want to provide many different sources of information.

Our Book featured on Lulu.com!

<http://www.lulu.com/blog/2010/04/02/focus-autism-awareness/>

Walk Now for Autism (Phoenix, Arizona)

Join our team *Kids with Autism Can*

<http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=347972>

Follow the instructions on *our* website to sign up.

The search engine is a little tricky.

AOL article on baby babble

<http://www.aolnews.com/science/article/autism-study-babys-babble-may-contain-vital-clues/19559884>

What's Cooking? Nicholas' Banana Cake

We use cooking to work on sensory issues, math skills, fine motor skills, communication and other aspects of autism. Kids also think it is fun.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, softened

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sour cream

2 eggs

3 very ripe mashed bananas

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup mini chocolate chips

This recipe requires constant adult supervision.

Heat oven to 350 degrees, grease 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 baking pan. In a bowl beat butter and sugar until creamy. Beat in sour cream and then eggs one at time, beating well after each addition. Beat in bananas and vanilla. In another bowl, stir together flour, baking soda and salt. Slowly add to butter mixture until combined. Do not overbeat. Pour batter into greased pan. Sprinkle with mini chocolate chips. Bake about 35 minutes or until golden brown and toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool and enjoy.



Lend a Hand

There are many ways to participate in the success of Kids With Autism Can.

Each person brings a unique gift to our community and we need all of you.

We would encourage you to participate in a way that works for you. If you are not sure how you can participate, we would be happy to find a place for you.

Here are some simple ways anyone can contribute:

- Use the Amazon link on our website; we will receive a referral fee from each order.
- Share your children's stories and artwork to help us encourage others.
- If you are considering a cash contribution, see if your employer has a matching gift program.
- Think outside the box. We are always trying to think of new ways to raise awareness and funds.

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