

KIDS CAN CHRONICLES

www.kidswithautismcan.org

What's Next?

We are thrilled to be using our grant from Cardinals Charities to create some great social events for families who share a diagnosis of autism or similar challenges. When our son was younger the hardest things to do were what everyone else thought was fun! Ice skating, the zoo, or going out to dinner, to name just a few. For us, those were times filled with anxiety. Would he have a meltdown? Would we have to leave 5 minutes after we arrived with our other 2 children telling us they wanted to stay? It was really difficult, so we had an idea to create environments that allow for kids to succeed or at least try out different experiences.

We would like to introduce our series of events, the first of which occurred in early April in partnership with AZ Assist. We helped sponsor approximately 35 young adults with ASD as they attended "Video Games Live" at the Mesa Arts Center. We would like to thank AZ Assist for doing an amazing job setting up the event and Mesa Arts Center for their generosity and for being a gracious host.

As the series, "**It's All Fun and ...**" continues, the future events include: ice skating at Alltel Ice Den, an afternoon at MacDonald Ranch and more. We hope by managing the music, limiting the number of people and surrounding our families with support, our kids can have some positive interactions and thanks to Cardinals Charities the events will be at little or no cost to the families. We do ask that you reserve a space if you plan to attend. These are family events, not drop off events, so at least one parent will need to remain with their child but we really hope you will use this as an opportunity for your whole family to enjoy time together. For upcoming events, check our link

<http://kidswithautismcan.org/be-informed/events/>



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**CARDINALS
CHARITIES**

Events planned! It's all Fun and...

Ice Skating – May 1

Horses - TBD

Pictures from
Video Games Live

“Be the *Change* You Want to See In the World”

Mahatma Gandhi

Ghandi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” That is exactly what Lea (11) and Sierra (8) have done; they are sisters who live in Watertown, Wisconsin. Their cousin has autism. During the holidays Kids with Autism Can received a check for \$46 from them!

The girls had decorated jars and left them at local businesses for people to make donations. Not only will the money help the organization but teaching our kids to give back is essential to creating a successful community. A big thanks to Lea and Sierra, their parents and all of the people in Watertown who supported the girls in their fundraising efforts. They are amazing!



Leah and Sierra
Watertown, WI

Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me...
Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.

~ Shel Silverstein

What's Been Happening?

Our first talk at ASU Polytechnic was a success. We have had positive feedback about the ideas and support we were bringing to the community. The speakers were both informative and optimistic about options in higher education for some young adults on the spectrum. We enjoyed being able to inspire others on their journey and share some of our successes. If you have a group you would like us to speak with please feel free to contact us to discuss options. info@kidswithautismcan.org

We have also been making connections with music and art groups who might be interested in working with kids and young adults with Autism. We hope to set up some more interesting opportunities with these groups as we continue growing our relationships.

Playing Basketball

Try not to ever limit your child because of what you think might be best for him. My son is 11 years old and has autism. He has played basketball on a team at The Boys and Girls Club for the last three years. The first two years he did pretty well and the league was not strongly competitive or demanding. This year he moved up a division. He was no longer the tallest on his team, in fact, he was the shortest and the lightest not only on his team, but in comparison to most in his division. Before the season even started, I caught wind that the coach of the team my son was to be on was very intense, highly competitive, very vocal and really pushed the importance of winning. I immediately turned to my husband and said that I thought we should switch teams. Our son, Jake, wouldn't be able to handle the pressure, the physical demands, and the "yelling" of the coach. We decided to at least have Jake attend the first practice and see how things went.

I spoke with the coach to let him know that Jake had some "processing delays" (my husband and I don't like to throw the autism card out right away if we can help it), and that he didn't seem to be up to speed with the abilities of the rest of the team. (The players all knew each other and were extremely good players for 10 and 11 year olds). In this conversation, I noticed that the coach was truly listening to me, sincerely said "no problem" and for some reason, I had a good feeling about him. Jake not only survived the first practice, but hung in there quite well and really enjoyed himself. For the first time he was actually learning rules and skills of the game and was being pushed to achieve them. This coach and his team are very aggressive. Jake is not. However, I watched the boys on the team literally push and pull Jake into position amongst chaos and Jake went with the flow. I think he really felt good about being a part of such a strong team. These boys weren't being forceful with him in a cruel way, they were doing it with honest and helpful intentions...and somehow I think Jake sensed that and therefore wasn't bothered by the commotion.

Long story short, Jake's team was the strongest in his division and was winning each game they had. In the 4th quarter of perhaps the 3rd or 4th game of the season, the coach pulled the team aside on a time out and was showing them something on his clipboard. They came back on to the court and at one point the coach yelled out, "Jake - fence!". Instantly, 3 of the boys on Jake's team stood side by side and built a "fence" (which looked to me like the most incredibly tall, wide and strong wall ever built), between Jake and the basket. Another team member fed Jake the ball. This "fence" was protecting Jake from anyone on the opposing team getting to him or distracting him so he could shoot a basket. Swoosh! Jake had scored his first basket of the season. The crowd went crazy, Jake was beaming with his hands in the air, and I was lost in a most memorable moment that will forever be with me - for so many reasons. Of course I was thrilled for my son to have scored 2 points, but I was also amazed at such a huge response from the crowd. I guess over the weeks, word traveled that Jake had some "challenges" that not all kids have. It seemed everyone was so happy for Jake and it truly warmed my heart. I was most impressed by the young men on Jake's team and how they worked together to help him be successful — that these competitive players sacrificed another chance for them to put points on the board and look great, to give Jake a chance. That they did it without pity or making Jake feel as if he didn't do it all on his own. Throughout the season, the team and the coach have been incredible. Understanding, accepting, kind and patient. All these things while behaving as if Jake was a total equal team player and was as important to the team as anyone else. This coach did not have to include Jake on his team, but he did. He did it graciously and with style. The regular season is over and Jake's team took first place in their division. Jake made 4 baskets the entire season. Those were the biggest 8 points ever scored.

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.

<http://earcandycharity.org/>

http://www.smartknitkids.com/contact_us.html

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/41255697#41255697>

Spring has Sprung!

We are sharing a special springtime treat. These birds' nests are great to make and decorate with kids of any age. Please remember the ingredients will be hot, work closely and safely with your children.

Birds Nest Cookies

1-12 oz. package of butterscotch chips

(or semi-sweet chocolate chips)

1/3 cup peanut butter

1-6 oz. bag of crunchy Chinese noodles

Melt chips and peanut butter together in a double boiler. When completely melted, gently mix in crunchy noodles. Spoon mixture onto wax paper, forming a nest. When the cookies are hardened, decorate with Easter candies. We used Peeps, jellybeans, and foil eggs.



Auction Info

Wondering what happened to the May Auction? Our 2nd Annual Auction is planned for September 18, 2011. Details will follow. We would love your support in collecting or creating items for the baskets. Think outside the box, you can auction some pretty interesting stuff! (Tickets to events, handmade goods, sports items) If you have a talent, or just happen to know someone famous who likes to sign autographs, consider using it for a good cause. It's also spring cleaning time so if you live in the Phoenix area and have NEW items that you would like to donate we would be happy to have them. I'm personally famous for stocking up on gifts when they are on sale and finding I have more than I need. Consider us as another option. We are a great way to re-gift! If you think you will be able to get auction items let us know and we will be happy to get you the letter with our tax ID number to provide to the company making the donation. Remember we are still a few months out so if they are giving a certificate with an expiration date, please let them know the item won't be sold until September.

Kids with Autism Can regularly updates their website. Please check back frequently for events and new information. Take time to dive into the stories and perhaps share some of your own.

Kids with Autism Can

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