

KIDS CAN CHRONICLES

www.kidswithautismcan.org

It's All Fun and ...More Fun!

Well, Fall and Winter have been busy. In September, we partnered with Paws2Read and SEEDs. Along with our Psi Chi volunteers we created some amazing opportunities to read with and love on some really special animals; a group of extra loving dogs and 2 Macaws. At the next event, we breathed in the beautiful air of The Japanese Friendship Garden, as Wendy led us in yoga and peaceful meditation. Another of our Fall days was filled with hayrides, pony rides and a huge campfire complete with S'mores. Our families enjoyed amazing climbs at Flagstaff Extreme, building self confidence as they moved along the courses! We took a trip to the North Pole by train on the Polar Express and other families joined us as we passed through the portal to The North Pole Experience, checking out all of the elves work at they prepared for Christmas. The end of 2015 was full of fun as we welcomed some new families to our events.



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What's Next?

There are more opportunities for growth coming this Spring: we still have plenty of seats left for PHX Theatre on February 13th. We recommend you use this event to give you kids a chance to extend an invite to a friend! We have plenty of availability. The theater has 200 seats and they are all ours. We have had a smaller response for this event and we hope you will consider attending.



What's Next? (cont.)

It is such a perfect way to work on theatre manners in a non-judgmental environment. I laughed a ton at the play last year! This is a school age performance, but I was surprised how much fun my older kids had. We also have the Arizona Coyotes game and AZ on the Rocks coming up soon. Those both filled up quickly, but there will be more events to come. There is still space for CrackerJax available and we are working on the final details of Ice Skating, so hopefully sign up for skating will be coming soon.

Nicholas' Sophomore Year

You often tell me you love the stories about Nicholas and he is still moving along and some days he is still finding his way. I will say I am always surprised when I don't see him for a few weeks that he is still growing and changing and maturing in small but very important ways! We are getting excited about Nicholas's new puppy! Addie has a new home since she didn't mesh well with our other dogs. So that's the quick update on Nicholas.

In this newsletter, we have chosen to focus on a different boy instead. I think it helps to explain why we exist and when we get to "fun" raising, why it is important. Events are filling up more quickly, which proves we are doing something of value. The best way to keep events available to all is to raise more \$\$\$ and host more events. We can do the work as long as long as we can cover the costs. So we ask for your help in making our fundraisers a huge success! For some of you that might mean attending the auction and the rummage sale and inviting a couple of friends. We have already collected some great items for the auction.

We already sent the story below in an email but we feel it was worth a reprint.

A Boy Rode a Horse Today!

Does that title deserve an exclamation point? Doesn't it happen everyday!

Well it does, but this is different. I won't lie, sometimes we question if running a not for profit is the best thing we can do. Raising money is hard.

Coming Events! It's All Fun and...

February 13th
Phoenix Theatre

phx
THEATRE

April 4th
Cracker Jax

CRACKERJAX
SPORTS & FUN FOR EVERYONE

Date: TBD, tentative
Ice Skating

ICE DEN
SCOTTSDALE



One of these sweet puppies will become Nicholas's service dog.

A Boy Rode a Horse Today! (cont.)

We write grants but we are small compared to others, our friends and family give generously but at what point are we burdening them? We try not to constantly be sending out emails asking for donations from our supporters. So how do we keep going? Sometimes requesting help is just a part of the job, but we are proud to share this story and a reason for you to support us.

As many of you know we are what I call “God people”. We have a faith that allows us to feel comfortable in uncomfortable situations. Sunday November 1, we were hosting an event at MacDonald Ranch it was fun; S'mores and hayrides and time to be with animals and nature! Often we see families enter social opportunities with a grimace on their face, after joining us a few times and being a part of what we offer those grimaces turn into smiles and confidence.

So here is the story as I understand it. Little did we know driving down Scottsdale Road at that very time of our event, was a family of four deciding on their plans. A boy with autism was riding in that car and his parents were trying to decide what they might do to get him outside and enjoy the day. Dad suggested they stop at MacDonald Ranch, mom said she didn't think that was a good idea but they decided to stop. There were no signs at the road, no way they would have known there was an event for kids with autism being held there, they were just drawn in. Call it luck or God or good vibes but they came and spoke with Todd and felt comfortable enough to join our event. Remember many families who have kids with autism say, “We don't leave our house very often, it's just too hard.” We provide a place that isn't “hard”.

Dad walked in by the horses with their son while mom stayed a bit longer to talk. By the time Todd walked in the boy was riding a horse, clearly something he had not done before. His mom had tears streaming down her face, she was thrilled and touched to learn he could do something new. She said to Todd, “you made my year!” When I met with her, she just kept saying, “He rode a horse!”, “He rode a horse!”. She was literally stunned. She was filled with pride and deeply touched. We talked a little about what we do as an organization and she was excited to hear about us. Then, the best part, her sweet little daughter said “Mom. It's like your dream come true!”



I guess now we can say by making donations to Kids with Autism Can, you are helping to make kids and parents dreams come true and we find ourselves honored to touch the lives of such special families. We hope we can count on your support, so more kids can “ride a horse” or “climb a ropes course” or “enjoy a Christmas experience”.

Recipes

Are You Ready for Some Football?!

Ok, Let's admit it, most of us wish the Cardinals were playing, but since they aren't, I say we bury our sorrows in awesome food. I do that a lot. The advantage to turning 50 (which will happen this summer) at least means, if you cook, you have developed a pretty good recipe collection. So here are my two favorite dips. You can only make the spinach and artichoke for your close friends! All that Asiago cheese makes it smell pretty stinky when it bakes (I learned that the hard way!) but it is sooooo good.

Nacho Dip

- 1 can (nonfat) refried beans
- 2 cans diced green chiles
- 8 oz. low fat cream cheese (easier to work with if it has been out of the fridge for an hour or so)
- 8 oz. sour cream (low fat is ok)
- 1 envelope Chili Seasoning
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salsa
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded monterey jack cheese
- 2 shakes of Tabasco sauce



Mix all ingredients except the cheese. I use a hand mixer. Then mix in half of the cheese. Spread dip into an oven proof pan and top with the remaining cheese. Bake at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Serve warm with tortilla chips.

Artichoke and Spinach Dip

- 1 cup mayonnaise (I like Best Foods)
- 3-4 scallions
- 10 oz. box chopped spinach thawed and drained really well
- 1 jar artichokes drained and chopped
- 1 cup grated Asiago cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Mix together and spread in an oven proof pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Serve warm with Pita and/or Tortilla Chips.

We talk so much about leaving a better planet to our kids, that we forget about leaving better kids to this planet. *Gerry Burnie*

“Fun”draising

We are excited to announce our upcoming fundraising events. They are very different, but each will be significant help to our 2016 budget. One is a rummage sale in April and the second is our auction in May. We have tried fundraising a variety of ways and these seem to give us, as they say, “the most bang for the buck”! So with less of those little fundraisers, we are hoping these two events will cover us for the year.

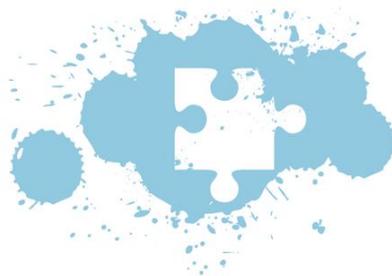
Help Us Out It’s Easy! As you do your spring cleaning, please donate your new and used items to our events. Starting in the end of February we will be accepting things at our home and will hold them until the events. I have to get my garage cleaned out first ☺. New items such as gifts that aren’t your style, a game your kids already had or something you found on clearance but find yourself not using can all be used. We will work to find a valuable place for it. We would also be happy to accept any gift cards you may not plan to use or any that you might like to purchase and contribute. If there is anyone you know who owns or manages a business, we hope you would consider asking them for a donation.

We would like to thank our first sponsors for our 2016 Auction!



Heartland Therapy, Inc.
and
Theracare Pediatric Services.

We hope you will consider helping us to make Auction 2016 a huge success. We have included the information for those who are interested in sponsoring.



These links are for Auction 2016. If you are interested in sponsoring, sharing the date with others, or collecting donations, please click on the link below.

SPONSORSHIP

<http://kidswithautismcan.org/admin/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-Silent-Auction-Sponsorship-Letter.pdf>

SAVE THE DATE

<http://kidswithautismcan.org/admin/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-KWAC-auction-Save-the-Date.pdf>

DONATION LETTER

<http://kidswithautismcan.org/admin/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-Silent-Auction-Donation-Request.pdf>

This and That's- Info That Has Crossed Our Paths-

Northbridge College Success Program- NorthBridge supports students with learning differences enrolled in college or vocational programs. We specialize in working with students with a diagnosis of dyslexia, ADHD and high functioning autism. The comprehensive design of the program features a multi-layered support system that focuses on both academic success and personal development. Our holistic approach empowers students to develop confidence, achieve their goals and find success in their future. Go to NorthBridgeAZ.org for more details and to schedule a tour.



A Student is Creating Amazing College Opportunities!

<https://chs.asu.edu/safe-space-outreach-and-fun> Students can go to 'sundevilsync' and search Autistics on Campus to get more info.

I am also looking forward to meeting with the folks from Dax's Farm and learning more about what they do as well as catching up with PAL Experiences, Paws2 Read, and SEED's to see how we can work together. I will also be reaching out to the people overseeing the Autistics on Campus Program at ASU. We are proud to be sponsoring the ASU Chapter of Psi Chi at their conference this coming weekend, where we will be hosting a table. We will also be sharing our information at a table at Autism Awareness Night with the Coyotes on March 19th.



Strider Bikes -Thanks to AZA United and an amazing couple Bob and Stacy Goodrich kids have a great opportunity to learn something that is a challenge to so many! Arizona Autism United (AZA United) has launched the Lady La Strides for Autism Program! Families had shared that their children with autism were struggling to learn to ride a bike. AZA United has purchased a small fleet of Strider Bikes to loan to local families. These special balance bikes give kids the skills and confidence they need to learn to ride. Strider bikes are available for Valley of the Sun families to borrow, at no cost. To inquire about a Strider Bike loan, please contact Stacy at: Stacy@AZAunited.org or 480.524.1118.

Mailing List Glitch!

In the next few days, I am going to send out a save the date for our auction to everyone on our general email list and a second to our events family. If you do not get both of them, and you are a family who wants to be notified when new events are posted, please email us and let us know you are not getting both and if possible send us an additional email address. Our system seems to just remove some names after things bounce back, so we are always trying to get it the best we can. You can always go on line and check for new events. I have also been trying to post on Facebook so there is another way to get info, but we realize those are not quite as effective.

Happy 2016

We are looking forward to another year filled with fun but we couldn't do it without you. Thanks to Boys Team Charity for helping out at so many events. The Polar Express and North Pole Experience for their awesome ticket donations. All the individuals who contribute, from the U of A student who needed some service hours, to my sweet aunt who spent part of her vacation updating our mailing list. We would also like to thank Bella Vista NHS, the volunteers from ASU's Psi Chi program, the moms who show up for Monday morning meetings and work diligently to make us a better group and all of our families who eagerly help out when we call. This group is better than we could ever have imagined and we are blessed to know you.



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 yours.



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