

# KiDS CAN CHRONiCLES

[www.kidswithautismcan.org](http://www.kidswithautismcan.org)

Ok folks this is a long one but we couldn't decide what to take out. We thought all the information was valuable so let's make this fun! There are 4 capital letters in the middle of words throughout this newsletter! Find all 4! The first two people who email us with the letters they found, paragraph titles and line number where they found the letters, will win a Target or Starbucks gift card!

## An Extreme Year of Events!

We started with bowling and skating and as the year progressed we went to "Extremes"! By year end we were scaling walls, zip-lining, riding horses, and going to the "North Pole" (Ok, that wasn't an expedition, we did it on the Polar Express thanks to the Grand Canyon Railway). October provided some indoor climbing opportunities at AZ on the Rocks, due to the great volunteers, while some climbed others wanted to sway and they accommodated. Those climbing ropes make some great big swings! We met up in the pines with a trip to Flagstaff Extreme. Approximately 50 people participated in the various courses. Most of the younger kiddos did the youth course several times with the help of great staff, they gained courage and confidence and so did their parents! On the adult courses, we had some ambitious climbers and special congrats two of our teens who finished all four courses. It was amazing to watch their determination and how they completed climbs most of us wouldn't be willing to try! November brought hayrides, horses and s'mores, oh my! We enjoyed another Fall Festival at MacDonald Ranch. The Polar Express was a thrill as always, allowing families the opportunity to make memories, surrounded by others who "get it". December will be quiet at Kids with Autism Can, we will post some new events but for the most part we will be spending time with our family and focusing on our blessings and baking lots of cookies!!!



Winter 2013  
Volume 4, Issue 3

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### Coming Events! Details to follow soon! It's all Fun and...

Phoenix Suns



AZ on the Rocks



Phoenix Theatre



# “FUN”d Raising and Grants

(These are not the capital letters you are looking for!)

We hope you will take a little time on Saturday, Dec 21<sup>st</sup> to join us for a few minutes of shopping, champagne and cupcakes! Kendra Scott Jewelry is kindly donating 20% of sales we generate from 1-4 pm. I thought it might be a chance to enjoy a few goodies and friends during a busy time. RSVP is required for this. We hope you will take time to join us. We wish to thank CVS Pharmacy for a generous grant that will help us provide more events in 2014. It will provide more social opportunities for our families. We have also applied for another grant through Diamondback Charities, the Diamondbacks have been an amazing support to our organization. We will also find out in December, if we progress to the next level in the Fast Pitch Grant application process. We turned in our JCL Gives grant today.



“Many Hands Make Light Work” – Haya Proverb

This was one of my mom’s favorite sayings. It lightens your load and your heart. We work as a community. This being said, we have few ways you can help us. We tend to have the same 10 or 15 families who will often shout out “yes, what can we do?” when we ask for help and there are a few others we always know we can call on but we would ask that if you benefit from what we do you find a way to help out if you can. We know this won’t be the right time for everyone but if we all take our turn we can keep Kids with Autism Can going and growing! If each family who benefits shows a little support in whatever way they can, everyone can hold a small part and no one needs to carry a heavy load. Here are some ways to help.

Here are some ways to help!

- Save the Date! Plan to attend our silent auction on May 9<sup>th</sup>! It is a win/win, last time we had amazing items and people got great deals! If you can help us secure donations that would be great. If every family who reads this was able to secure one donation, we would be off to an incredible start. I know, it is one of my least favorite things to do too, but if you believe in what we do, I hope you will consider asking a place you frequent or your workplace. Places like Godiva informed me they make donations to organizations at their employee’s request. So some of you have ways that we do not to collect items. If you really hate to ask but have the financial capacity you can also feel free to donate gift cards or items that are difficult to collect, like electronics. Even \$10 and \$20 items can help us make money, handmade items are also well received.
- The Holiday are here! Go to <http://astore.amazon.com/wwwkidswithau-20> for your amazon purchases and we will receive a percentage on qualifying items!

- As the new year rolls in and you start to clean things out, if you have space to hold the items we would love them for our spring rummage sale. We made over \$600 last year and it required a minimum amount of work.
- Watch for grant possibilities we are happy to try for them but it is impossible to know about them all! Also we are registered with United Way so if you donate from your paycheck, please consider us. We would also ask that you check for corporate matches. Some businesses will match your donations. We love that!!!
- Please support our partners, Katie will be a chocolate demo in the morning at:



*Seeds for Autism  
Holiday Sale  
and Open House*

Date: Saturday, December 7th

Time: 10:00 to 3:00

THEME:

DECORATE, DESIGN & DINE  
LOTS OF HANDS ON ACTIVITIES:  
WREATH MAKING IDEAS  
HOW TO CREATE BOWS  
GIFT WRAPPING TECHNIQUES  
TABLE SCAPE DESIGNS  
FABULOUS APPETIZER IDEAS  
NO COOK DESSERTS  
FUNDRIK IDEAS...AND MORE

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## On A Personal Note

We hope you will share in our excitement! Nicholas was accepted to ASU and we are thrilled, Nicholas seems at best, fine with it. We are not sure it will be the right choice for him, but having options is a great thing. For a kiddo who was diagnosed with moderate to severe autism, with a possibility of mild mental retardation he has progressed beyond anything we could have imagined! We hope you understand as you read this we are not trying to brag but we believe it will help you feel hopeful. For us, it makes every time we had to peel his exhausted body from the floor or the walls at elementary school worthwhile. It makes every night we sat at the kitchen table for hours doing homework and asking him to lift his head off the table, the right decision, even though it didn't always feel like it at the time. His progress makes every time I said, "Nicholas what do you have for homework?" and he said "I don't know!" and I said "You have to know!" and he said, "Mom, you are making me crazy!" the conversations we needed to be having. Each of those events and there were 100's, needed to be handled with firmness but also with love and understanding. No matter what decisions we all make together for Nicholas future, there will be more times of growth and learning but if someone would have told us this was our future when he was 5, I think that would have been beyond our wildest dreams.

## World LessoNs in Our Home

We have been fortunate to have wonderful friends, families, teachers and advocates throughout Nicholas' school career. One of our most interesting experiences has been two years of foreign exchange students in our home! We are not saying this is a great idea for everyone, but for us it brings many new life experiences into our home, that is always a goal for us, new experiences in a controlled environment. Our student this year is Ali, he is from Yemen and culturally quite different from our family, but we are all blending, Nicholas is included, every day, in a relentless game of "slug bug" on the way to school. Ali, does not treat Nicholas like a kid with autism, he treats him like a teenage brother and he slugs him with a little force, never to hurt, but a solid slug. Nicholas started the year yelling "ouch", each time the fist came from the back seat. Then came Ali's guidance! "Nicholas, yell out slug bug first and then reach around and hit me." He wanted a fair game. The best thing so far this year happened last weekend. We went to have Nicholas' senior pictures taken. I was slightly stressed, a bad hair day, a bad attitude day, acne, rain, all were possible. We arrived and I began to fix Nicholas' shirt. I started to roll up his right sleeve and looked over and saw Ali working on his left, sleeve! I was so touched. That is how family treats family, with tender, loving care! And an occasional hearty "slug bug".



Thank you Kimberly Clark Photography for the amazing pictures!

Here is what our exchange student from last year had to say:

### 10 Months Living With Autism

My name is Lene Søstuen and I'm from Norway. For 10 months I lived in Arizona as an exchange student. 10 days before I left I got a call where they told me about the family I was going to live with and they told me that one of my host brothers, named Nicholas, had autism. I didn't really think much about this because I didn't really knew what autism was. I was really excited to meet my host brother and get to know him and I looked forward to learn more about this. The first days I noticed that it was a little bit more difficult to get to know him and I was a little bit afraid that he was intimidated by me. However, as the weeks and months passed by we got to know each other and I think I can say with confidence that he learned to love me as a sister just as I loved him as a brother.

Every day was a new experience because he taught me something new every day. He was full of surprises and he always showed me something new about himself. I learned quickly that he was a truly caring person who only wanted the best for everyone around him. He was also funny and smart, sometimes maybe too smart: there was several times where I couldn't understand his jokes because the facts he used to make the joke funny was way beyond my knowledge to understand. Several times he amazed me with all his knowledge about everything from kings in Britain and Scotland from hundreds of years back in time to the name of someone who had the number 32 (or something) in the NASCAR.

Within those 10 months I developed a close relationship to my host family who treated me as one of their own and I learned to know and understand Nicholas which I didn't really knew how to handle in the beginning, but I learned that he just needed some time to get comfortable. I learned to give him his space, but at the same time to stay on top of him to try to learn him something too. I couldn't ask for a better family and if I could do it again I would definitely choose them! As an exchange student living with someone who had autism, I learned so much more than I could ever imagine. I didn't just learn English better or how to be on my own away from my family and friends, but thanks to Nicholas I learned to be more patient to others and to accept other people's ways of doing things in their own way.

## A True Story of Inspiration

### The Real Life Story of Charlie Threatt – In His Own Words

Charlie Threatt was born on April 8 1995. He grew up and spent most of his life in Kansas City, Missouri. He was a child born with an autism syndrome P.D.D.N.O.S. He didn't talk much when he was a baby. He was very quiet and always distanced himself from people. He had poor communication skills and anxiety and stress issues. His parents had to take him to a bunch of different therapists to help him out through his disorder. He's also in special education at school and got held back a grade. As though he had enough to deal with, when Charlie was little at a daycare, he and another kid got into a fight over power rangers. The kid overpowered Charlie and slammed his face so hard to the ground it messed up his teeth structure. He was left lying on the floor with his blood all over the place and his head was soaking the blood up like a sponge. He was so terrified and thought he was going to die. This incident changed Charlie's life forever. Because of this incident he had a lot more trouble coping with his autism syndrome. Kids would constantly make fun of him because of the way his teeth looked and he didn't know how to respond to it. He just took all the pain in for all that time, and all the kids treated him like trash, and he didn't have a single friend at school. He was always by himself and cried all the time. He was a loner. Like any other person with autism, he was clueless and didn't know how to deal with it. He was the school laughing stock. He slept with his parents for the longest time and never slept in his own bed by himself because he was so afraid and had nightmares. Charlie didn't know how to deal with all his anxiety and stress issues put on him. He was always terrified to leave his house because of what happen to his teeth and thought it was going to happen to him again. He always hated going to the dentist because he didn't want to be reminded of what happen to his teeth.

At some point he decided to fight back. When someone made fun of his teeth he responded with violence and would fight anybody who made fun of his teeth. He always used to think that violence was the way to communicate when someone made fun of him. He felt like they were trying to harm him so he wanted to hurt them so they would not be able harm him. He always talked back to teachers and had temper tantrums in class and didn't care about his schoolwork. He felt the teachers were also trying to harm him. He felt like everyone in the world was trying to get him. Charlie was still a loner but not because he had autism it's because all the kids became afraid of him. No one dared to try him or else they'll be sorry. He thought he was taking care of himself the right way. He thought he was facing things like a man and always wanted to fight his own battles. When Charlie was 13 years old he started doing martial arts training. At first he wanted to do it to find a way to hurt others who ever made fun of him. Overtime he spent training slowly he realized that violence wasn't the answer to solve his problems. Now Charlie couldn't care less if anybody made fun of him because now he only fights strictly for justice. He is now behaving better in school and actually doing his school work. He has better communication skills than he did before and doesn't have any more anxiety and stress issues. He overcame his autism syndrome. Charlie's goal is to become a martial arts instructor so he can prevent anyone else going through the same violent things he went through. He wants to end the cycle of violence. He has passion for helping others and can't think of a better job than that. He wants to help people with any disabilities similar to his autism because he wants to help them deal with them better than he did. He wants to share the happiness of martial arts that it has given him to others. He wants to make sure everyone is taken care of so they can all live happy healthy lives by helping them in every aspect of their lives. He truly believes if he can overcome his obstacles, he believes anyone can overcome their own obstacles and better themselves from them. Because he also believes that all the greatest experiences in life are the ones you learn from.

Join us on:   

## Family Play Directory

One of our very clever moms has a fun idea! It would give families and kiddos opportunities to meet up one on one or in small groups. She will be directly in charge of this project so all emails should go to her at [KatieMobley71@yahoo.com](mailto:KatieMobley71@yahoo.com). We want to support her in getting this set up and we think many of our families would find it a great tool. Katie is planning a directory of families who want to set up individual playtimes.

The directory will include: Parents First Name and Last Initial, Kids First Name/s and Age/s: (with ASD) and their Interests, Siblings Name/s and Age/s and their Interests, Zip Code and Email and/or Phone #.

You will only be on this list if you choose to! By contacting Katie Mobley, with your information, you accept any and all liability for these times. Since these won't be Kids with Autism Can events and we will not be on the premises, we are not asking for a liability waiver.

# Recipes

## Auntie Laura's Cut Out Cookies

Combine dry ingredients: 3 c. flour, 1/2 tsp. baking powder, 1/4 tsp. salt. Cream 1 c. butter, beat in 2 eggs, add 1 c. sugar, 1 tsp. vanilla. Add dry ingredients. Divide into three equal parts, wrap tightly in waxed paper and chill several hours. Roll out and cut with your favorite cookie cutters. Thicker dough will provide a more cakey cookie, thinner dough, a more crispy cookie. Bake at 350 degrees, 10-12 Minutes. Frost with buttercream icing or my friend prefers browned butter frosting.



## Aunt Nancy's Healthier Muffins

Preheat oven 400 degrees. Line muffin pans with paper liners.

- 1 c. oatmeal
- 2 lg bananas, mashed
- 1 c. All Bran cereal
- 1 c. orange juice
- 1/2 c. non fat dry milk
- 1/2 c. packed brown sugar
- 1/3 c. canola oil
- 1 egg or 1/4 egg substitute
- 1 cup flour (white / wheat or 1/2 and 1/2)
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1-1/2 cups dried cranberries or chopped dried apricots or raisins
- 1/2 c. chopped walnuts



In a medium bowl combine oatmeal, bran cereal, bananas, orange juice, dry milk powder and brown sugar, mix well add egg and oil, mix. In a small bowl whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and pumpkin pie spice. Add to oatmeal mixture. Mix until just moistened. Stir in dried fruit and nuts. Fill muffin cups about 2/3 full. Bake at 400 degrees for 12-15 minutes. Makes 12-15 muffins.

## Links We Like

The first two come directly from Charlie!

Here is a link if you want to search or follow me on twitter <https://twitter.com/ThreattCharlie>

Here is another link if you want to see proof of my real life story getting 2nd place in spring speak in the blue valley north writing competition:

<http://www.bluevalleyk12.org/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=78494&>

What is it like to have an autistic brother?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akuy-nNDeHA&feature=youtu.be>

# Need A Little Holiday Help?

Thanks to Boys Team Charity we have some donated gift cards for gas and groceries. If you know a family or are a family facing financial challenges and have a child with autism, we would like to help some of you out this holiday season. We work on the honor system, do not ask for these if you do not need them. We will choose a few families, just send an email with a couple of lines of info. How much we give and how we divide it will be based on responses and how we feel the cards can have the most impact. All requests are due back by Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## What's Next?

2014 will bring more fun! In January we will have our annual Suns game. We will be the Community Partner so if you can help with selling raffle tickets at the game, we would love it. We are also working on another night at CrackerJax. February will probably hold a rock climbing experience at AZ on the Rocks. We have something new for March and we are thrilled! PHX Theater will be presenting a play just for Kids with Autism Can families and their guests. It will be performed in a gym so we will provide varied seating! Some chairs will be available if that works well for your family. We will also encourage you to bring blankets and sit on the floor if that is more comfortable for your group. The production will only be about an hour so this will allow anyone, especially those who might not be able to sit in a theater for a full length performance, the opportunity to share in a live show with professional actors with an accommodating environment. We also believe we have found a chef interested in working with us for some cooking experiences! We have been working on this for a while but I think we are finally getting there. We are so happy to continue finding new opportunities for Kids with Autism Can families and happy to be invited back to previous locations because they find our families such a pleasure to work with!



## Warm Wishes

We wish you times filled with peace. We hope you are able to see past your challenges and find the joys in today and celebrate the special moments of this season! We feel fortunate to have the support of so many and we are honored to provide opportunities for the families who are a part of Kids with Autism Can. We are proud to know you and we are touched by your family's presence in our lives. You inspire us and we thank you.

The Murwin Family

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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