



CHARITIES Committee

Tom Meade, Chairman



The RISAA Charities Committee exists to lend a helping hand to others in need, and is a way of giving back to our community.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTION



The Autism Project

Report by
LYNN
MEDEIROS



So many of us have loved ones or friends who's life has been effected by autism. With that in mind this months RISAA charitable donation was presented to "The Autism Project."

I met with **Erica Busillo Adams** who is in charge of development at the Autism Project, which is located 1t 1516 Atwood Avenue in Johnston, RI. This unique collaborative of parents, professionals and community members provide quality support, training and programming that is accessible to all for children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families and those who work with them.

By definition, Autism Spectrum Disorder is a serious neurodevelopmental disorder that impairs a child's ability to communicate and interact with others. It also includes restricted repetitive behaviors, interests and activities. These issues cause significant impairment in social, occupational and other areas of functioning.

Autism spectrum disorder is now defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as a single disorder that includes disorders that were previously considered separate — autism, Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified.

The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity. Although the term

"Asperger's syndrome" is no longer in the DSM, some people still use the term, which is generally thought to be at the mild end of autism spectrum disorder.

The number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder is rising. It's not clear whether this is due to better detection and reporting or a real increase in the number of cases, or both.

While there is no cure for autism spectrum disorder, intensive, early treatment can make a big difference in the lives of many children.

Every day, the staff of The Autism Project works to ensure children with an ASD benefit from an appropriate education and related therapeutic services within their local school, community and at home. Their programs educate parents and families in their newest role as teacher, but more importantly as mom and dad.

The work to support their mission: providing multiple training programs, running social skills groups and a summer camp for children with an ASD and related communication disorders, hosting a national speaker conference, their parent resource specialist lends support to families across our state, and they increase awareness at our annual "Imagine Walk and Family Fun Day."

To learn more call their office at 401-785-2666 or visit their web site at www.TheAutismProject.org.



Erica Adams, Development Manager, accepted the RISAA donation

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