PENN AUTISM NETWORK's 5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
“Promoting Healthy & Successful Lives for Individuals with ASD”
Friday, April 23, 2010, 8:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
New Location! Williamson Restaurant, 500 Blair Mill Road, Horsham, PA

PRESENTER BIOS

KEYNOTE PRESENTER

John Elder Robison grew up with Asperger Syndrome at a time when the diagnosis didn't exist, and with no inkling of how to pass for normal. (He was finally diagnosed at age forty.) In his compulsively readable, bestselling memoir, Look Me In the Eye, Robison recounts his incredible life, with illuminating insight. The brother of Augusten Burroughs (Robison appears in many of his books), he captures the irreducible strangeness of the human mind and the irrepressible strength of the human spirit -- and provides us a fresh perspective on autism.

BREAKOUT PRESENTERS

Cathleen Albertson, MA, BCBA, is the Clinical Coordinator for Devereux CARES in Downingtown, PA. She received her BA in Psychology from the University of Richmond and her MA in Psychology from Brandeis University. She has been a Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2006. Ms. Albertson went on to work with children with autism at Melmark New England, an educational and residential facility for individuals with development disabilities. She then worked for Melmark in Berwyn, PA, where she gained extensive experiences working with a multi-disciplinary team as a Program Manager, Behavior Analyst and finally as the Director of Children’s Residential Services.

Kate Altman, MS, works as a psychotherapist at Alternative Choices, where she primarily treats adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum and leads a weekly support group for college-bound teens with ASD. Ms. Altman is completing her doctorate in Chestnut Hill College's PsyD program. Her dissertation research involved lengthy one-on-one interviews with college students with ASD, focusing on their perception of what helped them to be successful in the social realm. Ms. Altman also serves as PA Psychological Association Graduate Student Division’s Chair-Elect and as President of the Chestnut Hill College Psy.D. Student Advisory Committee.

Brandee El Attar, MS, received her degree in psychology from Shippensburg University. She currently holds a dual role at Devereux CARES where she works as both an educational consultant, assisting area school districts with students with ASD's within their districts, as well as the project manger on the transition grant. Ms. Attar has had a variety of experiences working with individuals with autism, from early intervention consulting, to serving as the clinical director and clinical coordinator for two adult programs, Keystone Service Systems and The Chimes. The latter positions were focused on providing residential and vocational options. Currently, she assists school-aged students to transition to adulthood.
Caroline Beischer is pursuing her doctoral degree in school psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is the student assistant for the COMPASS program’s Academic Coaching component in which she provides guidance to the School Psychology doctoral students who serve as Academic Coaches to the COMPASS students. Ms. Beischer holds a BS in Business Administration-Marketing and Psychology from Ramapo College and a MA in School Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson. She has 10 years of experience as a school psychologist in the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District with a special focus on students with ASD. She has personal experience raising a 17-year-old son on the spectrum along with a neurotypical 14-year-old daughter.

Mary Riggs Cohen, PhD, is a licensed psychologist in New York and Pennsylvania who is an autism specialist. As a Clinical Associate Professor in the Social Learning Disorders Program of the Penn Psychiatry Department, she developed the Social Skills Seminar for young ASD adults. The program has been taught in Philadelphia for over 6 years and most recently in New York City. Dr. Cohen’s clinical practice is based at the Center for Neuropsychology and Counseling in Warrington, PA. Dr. Cohen is a consultant to several schools and autism programs. She is a frequent presenter at autism organizations, colleges and universities, and conferences in PA, NJ and NY. Dr. Cohen is the author of Social Literacy: Learning to Read Social Interaction published by Brookes Publishing, available in 2010.

Melissa Conway is pursuing her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is the research coordinator for the COMPASS program, and also co-leads a social-skills group for the COMPASS students. She coordinates the research being conducted on the development and outcomes to-date of this specialized support program. She holds a BA in Psychology from Harvard University.

Katherine K. Dahlsgaard, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist with expertise in cognitive-behavioral therapy for children and young adults. She specializes in the evaluation and treatment of anxiety and social developmental disorders, particularly Social Anxiety Disorder, Selective Mutism, OCD, and ASD. Dr. Dahlsgaard received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was recipient of a National Science Foundation Fellowship award. She completed an internship in the Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota and a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Anxiety and Mood at the NYU Child Study Center. Dr. Dahlsgaard has published widely on mental health and human virtue. She has taught courses on human development, child psychopathology, and cognitive-behavioral therapy and is a frequent guest speaker on these topics. She is also Associate Director of the Social Developmental Disorders Program at CHOP.

Kathleen Davis, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School Psychology department at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is the faculty coordinator of the Academic Coaching component of COMPASS and provides in-vivo and one-on-one supervision of clinical and school psychology doctoral students working with COMPASS students. Dr. Davis holds a PhD from Ball State University, is a licensed psychologist, and is a graduate of the LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) program.

Roy Diamond is the parent of a 20-year-old son with autism and epilepsy. He has served as a developer, consultant and legal counsel in support of the development of affordable housing for over 30 years. Mr. Diamond is currently the principal of Diamond & Associates, a consulting firm, Multifamily Management Services, a property management company, and the president of Autism Living & Working. In his various capacities, Mr. Diamond has been responsible for the financing, development, and operation of over 5,800 homes and apartments for low-income persons, including those with disabilities. located in PA and NJ. Mr. Diamond was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1979 and the Graduate School of Fine Arts with a Masters in City Planning in 1978. He was a member of DPW’s Autism Task Force and the Bureau of Autism Services workgroups on Housing and on the Autism Waiver.
**Judy Dotzman, MEd**, holds a Master’s of Education in Recreation and Leisure Studies with an emphasis in Administration from Temple University. Judy has been supporting the needs of people with developmental disabilities for over 25 years and has been employed at SPIN, Inc. since 1986. Currently, Ms. Dotzman is the corporate officer of professional development and is dedicated to achieving nationally recognized success in the area of professional workforce development. She has spearheaded the development of this professional development model for persons with disabilities and has recently secured a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to disseminate the model across Intermediate Units throughout PA to promote the successful employment of young adults with developmental disabilities.

**Beth Eagen** is the parent of two young adults, one with cognitive disabilities and ASD. She has consulted with families and individuals to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities since 1994. Ms. Eagen is inspired to promote education and training to build social and practical capacities as the individual matures. She has been actively involved with creating and developing programs and advocating for better services for children and adults. Ms. Eagen has worked in public schools, private communities, and adult agencies. As an advocate, she has served on grievance committees and advised various adult service providers. Ms. Eagen instructs a life skills class and is a program coordinator and returns home each day to a Chester County Life-Sharing home.

**Ira M. Fingles, Esq**, a partner in Hinkle, Fingles & Prior, Attorneys at Law, has devoted his entire legal career to the representation of individuals with disabilities and their families. He has provided legal representation to individuals with disabilities and their families in a variety of areas, including educational rights for children with disabilities, benefits and services for adults with disabilities, guardianship, and estate planning for families of individuals with disabilities. Mr. Fingles has written extensively on a variety of topics relating to disability law and has presented to disability-related groups across the nation. He is immediate past president and current vice president of the Autism Society of America, Greater Philadelphia Chapter, and serves as a director and advisor to several other autism and other disability advocacy groups in PA and NJ. He received his J.D. degree from Temple University School of Law in 1992 and is a member of the PA, NJ, and FL Bar.

**Marian Frattarola-Saulino** leads Values Into Action, one of the few organizations in PA that supports people with disabilities exclusively in their own homes and communities. She co-founded the organization in 2005 with the intention of offering individualized services in partnership with individuals, their families and communities. Ms. Frattarola-Saulino has worked in direct support positions, leadership roles and as an adjunct faculty member at Widener University’s School of Social Work. She led the “All Our Own” project where she helped individuals and their families in creating microboards, organizations designed and dedicated to supporting one person, and co-facilitated the development of the PA Microboard Association.

**Hillary D. Freeman, Esq**, is a practicing attorney with Hinkle, Fingles & Prior, Attorneys at Law. She is deeply committed to her work representing people with disabilities and their families. As the sister of a man with autism, Ms. Freeman is able to combine personal experience with her legal training to help families advocate for services and supports. She has experience before administrative agencies and Superior Court in special education issues, section 504, and guardianship and adult services. Ms. Freeman is a member of the American Association for Trial Attorneys, the International Dyslexia Association and COSAC. She holds a JD from Widener University School of Law and is licensed to practice in both PA and NJ.
Dena L. Gassner, MSW, is the 2009 winner of the Jo Andrews Award from Nashville’s Mayor’s Committee on Disability for outstanding disability advocacy by a person living with disabilities. Ms. Gassner has been featured in the No-Myths public service announcement (no-myths.org) and an online video for the Dan Marino Foundation. She is a faculty member for Health-Education Network presently preparing for her second national tour speaking about vulnerabilities in Asperger Syndrome. Her personal mantra empowers persons to leave shame and inadequacy behind for an empowered life embracing autistic authenticity. She recently opened a private coaching practice, the Center for Understanding, in the Greater Nashville area. Ms. Gassner is an advisory board member for the Autism Society of America; an executive board member for GRASP and a collaborator with the Autism Self-Advocacy Network as well as many other groups.

David Gates, Esq, is the policy director and senior attorney for the PA Health Law Project, a nonprofit public interest law center. He has been representing families and adult consumers regarding issues involving Medical Assistance and other forms of health insurance since 1976. Mr. Gates has worked for the Bucks Co. Welfare Rights Organization, Bucks Co. Legal Aid, State Sen. Roxanne Jones, and the Nat’l Health Law Program in Washington, DC. Since 1991 he has worked for the PA Health Law Project representing persons with developmental and behavioral disabilities and their families. Mr. Gates was a member of DPW’s Autism Task Force. He currently serves on PA DPW’s Bureau of Autism Services’ Advisory Board and consults on implementation of the Autism Insurance Law.

Joseph Gousie, Sr., has worked in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities for nearly 40 years. He currently serves as the director of non-traditional services for Elwyn, a nonprofit human services organization, at its Work Services office in Aston, PA. Previously, Mr. Gousie was the executive director of Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children (CSAAC), the largest nonprofit in the country serving exclusively individuals with autism. Mr. Gousie also spent 35 years as the executive director of agencies serving individuals with developmental disabilities in RI and PA. He has extensive experience as a workshop presenter on both the national and local level, most recently presenting a workshop on employment and social security issues in conjunction with ASCEND and Elwyn. Mr. Gousie is inspired from the personal experience of having a son and grandson diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome.

Todd Harris, PhD, is presently the director of autism services for Devereux PA. He was previously director of Devereux’s Center for Autism Research and Education Services (CARES). CARES is an approved private school, a consultation and training program, and a community-based adult program located in Downingtown, PA. He received his PhD at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he focused upon the use of applied behavior analysis techniques to instruct and support students with autism and their families. Along with teaching the Autism Specialization courses at the University of Delaware in the past, Dr. Harris has also published and presented research in the areas of teaching functional communication skills and PECS, staff and family support and training practices, community-based transition programming, and methods to reduce unwanted behaviors through positive approaches. He is presently on the advisory board for the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies and a member of the peer review committee for the Delaware Autism Program.

Holly Kofsky is the parent of two young adults with ASD. She is a board member of the Autism Society of America, Greater Philadelphia Chapter, and is chair of the Adult Services Committee which created a listserv for families of adults and has produced informational brochures. Ms. Kofsky has been actively involved with creating programs and advocating for better services for children and adults with ASD for over 25 years. She has served as an advocate on several committees and offered many parent and professional workshops through CASSP. She is the co-author of a book on parenting and has written several articles on parenting children and adults with special needs. For the past five years, Ms. Kofsky has focused on adult services for those with ASD.
Carol Moog, PhD, is a licensed psychologist with over 35 years of experience working with children, adolescents and adults. Her private practice is diverse, with a particular emphasis on helping people with social learning/anxiety disorders and Asperger Syndrome. Dr. Moog’s clinical orientation is relationship-based and geared to facilitate the discovery of unique personal resources, goal clarification and skill development. Using a wide range of creative modalities, she draws from her training and experience as a theater improviser/actor, professional blues/swing harmonica player, and communications/advertising consultant. Dr. Moog has been the psychologist at The Miquon School since 1977 and is an artist-in-residence at Green Tree School. As a consultant to the Social Competency Program at the Center for Autism, she designed and conducted acting groups to facilitate relationship-building. Dr. Moog earned her MS and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania.

Diana T. Myers has 40 years of experience in the field of housing and community development as a consultant, director of private and public agencies, and through university and government-related research and training. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and also holds a MA from Penn. As president of Diana T. Myers and Associates, she works extensively with government agencies and nonprofit organizations to plan for and develop housing for the homeless, frail elderly, and people with disabilities. Through her firm’s efforts over $180 million has been brought into PA since 1992 for homeless housing and services. In addition, 400 people with disabilities moved to their own homes during Diana’s tenure with the Self-Determination Housing Project of PA. Ms. Myers has assisted in the formation of 42 Local Housing Option Teams throughout the state that have created over 1000 new housing opportunities for people with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders. Ms. Myers’ firm facilitated the Housing Work Group for the PA Bureau of Autism Services.

Dorota Novitskie is pursuing her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is the coordinator of the COMPASS program, where she co-leads a social skills group and conducts individual counseling and family meetings with the COMPASS students. Ms. Novitskie holds a BA in Psychology and Administration of Justice from Rutgers University and a MA in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Nancy Nowell, MPA, MEd, is an autism consultant and sexuality educator for people with developmental disabilities. She has worked with adults and students with a wide range of disabilities for over 35 years. For the past eight years, she has taught relationship skills—including the social and sexual changes that occur in adolescence—to middle school and high school students with mental retardation, autism, and Asperger Syndrome. The curriculum includes understanding boundaries, developing healthy relationships, sexual abuse prevention skills, identifying illegal sexual behavior, and much more. Currently Ms. Nowell teaches 33 classes twice a month in multiple Southeastern PA schools and school districts.

Maleita Olson, LSW, has served as social educator and counselor to adults and children with disabilities for the past 15 years. She has presented workshops on the local and national level on talent identification and interviewing skills for both individuals and potential employers/service sites. Currently, Ms. Olson supports clients in a private practice, including adults with ASD. She also provides social education to several adult women in her work with The Arc Gloucester, in NJ. Ms. Olson has a young son who was diagnosed with AS at the age of five, a brother diagnosed with a spectrum disorder at the age of 30, and a husband and father who exhibit many “spectrum traits.” Through articles, private consultation and workshops, she combines her social work background and family experience to provide insight into the unique challenges and opportunities that affect individuals and families with multiple members with diagnosis and/or traits characteristic to persons on the spectrum.
**Parin Patel, MS**, is a third year Doctoral Student at Chestnut Hill College’s Clinical PsyD Program. She has a wide range of experiences working with children and adults in the areas of Social Learning Disorders, AD/HD, and Traumatic Brain Injuries. In her work, she has practiced cognitive behavioral techniques, specifically towards behavioral modification with children on the autism spectrum. Ms. Patel is particularly interested in the unique characteristics and neuropsychological functioning of individuals with organic disorders, such as Asperger Syndrome, autism, AD/HD, and Traumatic Brain Injury, hoping to develop and implement creative interventions that fit into the scope of individual contexts.

**Jean Ruttenberg** has served as executive director of The Center for Autism since 1985. In this position, she provides strategic leadership and advances the organization’s mission of improving the quality of life for individuals with ASD and their families. In addition, Ms. Ruttenberg actively provides consultation and training services to individuals and families affected by autism, as well as school districts and county programs throughout the Delaware Valley. She is the author of the Profile Assessment Book, which aims to sensitize and train staff and families with autistic individuals. She facilitated the transition committee in 2004 as a member of the PA Autism Task Force. Ms. Ruttenberg serves on the board of the Autism Society of America, Greater Philadelphia Chapter, and is a past president of the Philadelphia Alliance. She holds master’s degrees in Education/Elementary Counseling (Villanova) and Special Education (Arcadia). Ms. Ruttenberg received certification in the Family Studies Program from the Family Institute of Philadelphia.

**Anne Seals, MSW, LSW**, is the behavioral health specialist/team leader for Keystone Autism Services. She obtained a BA in sociology with a minor in social work (Lebanon Valley College) and a MA in social work (Temple University). In addition, she has completed Penn State’s Professional Certificate in Autism. Prior to joining KAS, Ms. Seals worked for the Community Behavioral Health Care Network as a clinical care manager, supporting hundreds of individuals and families affected by ASD. In previous roles, Ms. Seals directly supported individuals living with ASD in a mental health group home, in residential treatment facility, and as an outpatient and school therapist.

**Beverly J. Smith, MEd**, is the Director of Special Education at the Garnet Valley School District in Delaware County, PA. Smith has worked in the field of special education for over 30 years as an educator and administrator. She was named educator of the year in 1998 by the ARC of Delaware County for her services to students with developmental disabilities. Smith has been instrumental in creating innovative, inclusive programming at Garnet Valley School District for students on the autism spectrum. She served on the PA Autism Task Force in 2003. Throughout her career, Smith has strived to create programming to meet the needs of all students with special needs.

**Matthew Smith** is pursuing his doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University. He co-leads the two social skills groups for COMPASS students and helped to develop the model on which these groups are based. Mr. Smith previously worked as a social coach with young adults with Asperger Syndrome at the University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of Dr. Mary Riggs Cohen. He holds a BA in psychology from Hamilton College.

**Annie Steinberg, MD**, is a clinical associate professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Dr. Steinberg’s research examines the experiences of marginalization and disability in our culture and the impact of parental values on the decisions made on behalf of a child. Her clinical work includes the establishment of school-based mental health programs and community based specialty programs to meet the needs of underserved communities such as the deaf community. Currently, Dr. Steinberg maintains a private practice in Narberth, PA, and consults regionally. She has worked with children and adults with ASD since 1975.
Edward Toyer, PhD, is the director of clinical services for Keystone Autism Services. He holds his PhD in clinical psychology from The University of Mississippi and completed his residency and fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Through his academic and professional activities, Dr. Toyer developed a strong commitment to using evidence-based treatments and applied behavior analysis in the support of individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. With special interests in ASD, psychological assessment and evaluation, functional communication training and the use of positive behavior support approaches, Dr. Toyer has provided a wide variety of services to individuals with behavioral, emotional and social challenges in rural mental health clinics, large hospital-based programs, regular and alternative schools, sheltered workshops, daycare centers and outpatient clinics in MD, PA and MS.

Stefanie Ulrich, PhD, holds her doctorate in clinical psychology from Fordham University. She is the director of the Fairleigh Dickinson University Center for Psychological Services, the mental health clinic associated with the University’s doctoral programs in Clinical and School Psychology. Dr. Ulrich developed and directs the COMPASS Program, NJ’s first campus-based, comprehensive, support program for residential college students with Asperger Syndrome.

Tim Wilson is a college senior majoring in anthropology at Millersville University, where he lives on campus. He was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome in the summer of 2005, when he was about to enter his senior year of high school. Mr. Wilson is interested in studying different cultures, as he did when he spent a semester in Ecuador in the fall of 2008. He later presented at a conference on the topic of studying abroad as a student with AS.

Pat Wray has worked for the past 22 years to advance opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work in their communities. She has been the Director of Employment Services at SPIN, Inc., since 1996. In this role, she oversees the employment process of over 125 individuals with disabilities and mentors 12 Employment Specialists. Ms. Wray is committed to growing the philosophy that individuals should be expected to contribute to the workforce to the best of their ability. With the right education, training, and support each person can be successful in the community workforce. The Professional Development Series at SPIN provides participants with a path to personal and professional growth, which impacts their entire life.

Jason Zervoudakes is a self-advocate from Westbury, NY. He has been an advocate for individuals with ASD since his own diagnosis on the spectrum in 2004. Mr. Zervoudakes’ professional speaking engagements include presenting at the PAN conference in 2007; as a panelist for the Long Island Center for Independent Living; and with Birch Family Services in New York City. He actively participated in the recent Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism Town Hall meeting sponsored by a coalition of autism advocacy groups. Mr. Zervoudakes has been an active member of the Nassau County Chapter of the Global & Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership (GRASP) since 2004 and contributed to Michael John Carley’s book, Asperger's from the Inside Out. He currently works for the Nassau County Board of Elections.