

FALL 2024

# THE EMPOWERING CONNECTION

Newsletter of the Autism Society of Greater Detroit



## Update from the Board

Our board members have been working diligently this year to increase our capacity to support our community. To that end, we hold charity poker & bingo sessions to bring in funds and have hired a PT staff to support our work.

### New Staff

#### Executive Program Director



**Heather Zielinski**  
313-687-4490  
HZielinskiASGD@gmail.com

We are blessed to have found a wonderful staff to help move us forward as we increase capacity and increase our service reach across our state. Please help us welcome Heather Zielinski of Macomb county. She brings a wealth of knowledge in marketing and networking to improve the community at large. She has a huge heart and a sharp mind and the board is so excited for her to join us with her passion and her expertise.

### BINGO

Every week we hold Bingo at Rosemack Bingo hall at 20791 E 13 Mile Rd, Roseville. Join us for some fun each Tuesday morning, Doors Open at 9:00 a.m. & Bingo Starts at 10:30 a.m.

### POKER

Every year we may hold 4 Poker sessions to support our programs. The 2024 dates can be found on our calendar and are as follows: June 27 – 30, 2025 & July 25 – 28, 2025 & September 5 – 8, 2025 & November 21 – 24, 2025 @ these sessions there will also be Blackjack!

### Therapeutic Garden

Receiving a grant for a local youth-led project the youth team create a Therapeutic Community Garden in Macomb county to promote healing & learning. This project is on-going, you can see their progress on our website.

**We are always looking for volunteers to enjoy and support this project! To sign up:** <https://www.autismsocietygreaterdetroit.org/volunteer/>

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# Upcoming Events

DEC 15, 2024



AUTISM SOCIETY OF GREATER DETROIT PRESENTS

## CHRISTMAS KARAOKE Night

**FREE ENTRY**

JOIN US

SUNDAY, DEC 15  
4 PM TO 7 PM

**CARTIER'S COMFORT CENTER FOR AUTISM**

23358 GRATIOT AVE, EASTPOINTE, MI 48021

FREE SLICE OF PIZZA PER PARTICIPANT  
ALL AGES WELCOME

APR 18, 2025



**2025**

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

**NIGHT AT Tigers BALLPARK**

Autism Society Greater Detroit

GAME STARTS **6:40 PM**

JOIN US FOR

## Autism Acceptance Month

Enjoy an evening out with the Autism Society & the Detroit Tigers

It's Harry Potter theme night!

**FOR ONLY \$35.00**

Be the first to secure your seats!  
Tickets available online at



JUL 31, 2025



Autism Acceptance Night at Jimmy John's Field

USPBL UWM Autism Society Greater Detroit JIMMY JOHN'S

July 31st, 2025

FIRST PITCH 7:05 PM | GATES OPEN 6 PM





**SAVE THE DATE!**

SEPT 20, 2025



Charitable **GOLF** Outing

Get ready to tee off at our 1st annual Charity Golf Outing!

Join us for a day of fun and friendly competition on the greens as we raise funds, awareness, & community acceptance. Bring the whole family to enjoy games & snacks inside while you golf.

**JOIN US!**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2025  
BEGINNING @ 11:00 AM

MAPLE LANE GOLF CLUB  
33203 MAPLE LN DR, STERLING HEIGHTS, MI 48312

517-220-0306

[www.givebutter.com/AutismGolfOuting-25](http://www.givebutter.com/AutismGolfOuting-25)

# EMBRACE Autism hosts Autism Community Engagement Studios

University of Michigan researchers are developing new sensory supports for autistic people. Join us to share how autistic people’s surroundings affect comfort and feeling overwhelmed.

## Who is invited?

- Autistic people
- Caregivers, parents, and other support persons
- Autism-focused service providers and educators

## What will happen at the Studio?

- Share your lived experiences with autism or supporting autistic people
- Discuss what supports and tools help autistic people to thrive
- Provide feedback on new sensory tools developed by the researchers

## How can I join?

**In-person** on **Sunday, December 8 from 2:00-4:00 PM EST**

U-M North Campus, Ann Arbor  
Free Parking • Snacks Provided

**Virtually** on **Tuesday, December 10 from 6:00-8:00 PM EST**

via Zoom



Learn more and  
sign up here!  
Space is limited.



**M | MICHR** MICHIGAN INSTITUTE FOR  
CLINICAL & HEALTH RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# UNLEASH THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS AND GO SEE THE 9TH ANNUAL BYOB CHRISTMAS LIGHT TROLLEY TOUR



🎅 CHRISTMAS LIGHT TROLLEY TOUR  
ROUTE 2024! 🎅

ROCHESTER BIG BIGHT LIGHT SHOW –  
DETROIT ZOO – CAMPUS MARTIUS

DATES: DEC 6TH, DEC 7TH, DEC 8TH, DEC  
13TH, DEC 14TH, DEC 15TH, DEC 20TH, DEC  
21ST, DEC 22ND, DEC 27TH, DEC 28TH,  
DEC 29TH.

THE MEETING LOCATION WILL BE IN TROY,  
MI (BUFFALO WILD WINGS PARKING LOT  
1873 E BIG BEAVER RD, TROY, MI 48083) AT  
5:15PM (SUNDAY AT 4:45).

# National ASA Capital Connections

Please take a moment this holiday season to review the Capitol Connections newsletter as well as the National Action Center page, stay abreast of all the national happenings affecting our community.

## Capitol Connections Newsletter: November 14, 2024

In this issue of Capitol Connection, see an initial election update and lame-duck plans. Continue to educate Members of Congress about the importance of reauthorizing the Autism CARES Act through our Action Alert. Thank you for your advocacy.

## Online Action Center

**National Autism Society of America (ASA) has a new Online Training and Resource Center (also referred to as the Learning Management Center or LMS).**

It is designed to provide an exploration of Autism, introducing basic concepts and key characteristics. These courses offer insight into aspects of Autism including information processing, communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation, and social interactions. Designed for individuals, parents, educators, and anyone else looking to understand Autistic experiences better. Empower yourself with knowledge and help create a more supportive, inclusive, and accepting tomorrow.

“As a parent, I felt the Foundations of Autism course shared great insight from Autistic voices as well as understanding the diagnosis and how to support those we love.”

- Testimonial from Foundations of Autism, course participant



If you have any questions or want to partner with National on a virtual training through the LMS, then please reach out to Kirsten Cooper, Director of Education and Training, [kcooper@autismsociety.org](mailto:kcooper@autismsociety.org).

COMMUNITY MEMBER SIGN UP: <https://www.training.autismsociety.org/#/public-dashboard>

## Advocacy: What are Transition Services?

Recently our Information & Referral volunteers have been receiving many requests for support and services surrounding transitioning from school to adulthood.

Transition from school to adulthood can be complicated and confusing, but it does not have to be that way. By providing a single comprehensive document explaining the transition process, services and supports, the Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT) can make this journey easier. The goals of their Guide is to answer your questions, connect you with services, and help you plan for a successful transition.

For the FULL GUIDE go to:

<https://www.autismsocietygreaterdetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/MITT-Transition-Guide-24-1.pdf>

### A Guide to Transition from Special Education into Adulthood



Excepts:

#### **Who is eligible for Transition Services?**

Autistic people often have Michigan youth between the ages of 16 and 26 who receive special education services and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are eligible for transition services. In Michigan, youth with disabilities may also be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services starting at age 14.

#### **What does The IDEA 2004 say about Transition?**

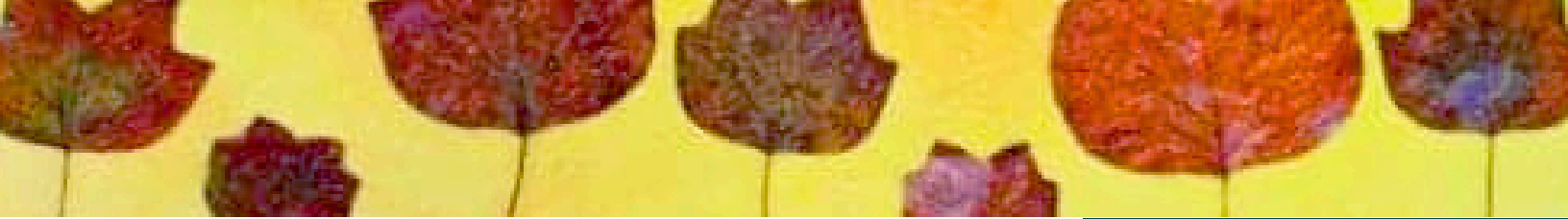
The federal civil rights law, known as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (The IDEA), defines transition services as including:

- Postsecondary education
- Vocational training
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

#### **What are the Special Education rules in Michigan?**

The Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) explain how federal special education laws are put into practice statewide. The MARSE has specific requirements that must be followed for special education in Michigan.

Links for Michigan's special education laws, rules and policies may be found at [www.michigan.gov/mde/services/special-education/laws-regs](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/special-education/laws-regs).



Self-Care for Autistic People came out just this March.

This book teaches you to ditch the stigma, celebrate your identity, and put yourself first with these 100+ exercises that reinforce the idea that neurodiversity is a strength and teaches you how to relax, destress, find your community, practice self-love, and more.

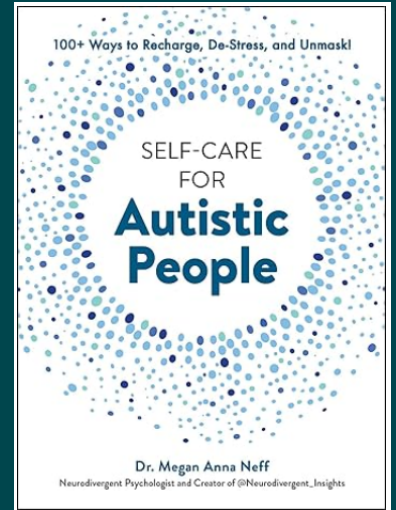
**When you're autistic, it can be tough to prioritize wellness.**

Self-Care for Autistic People can help you engage in some neurodivergent self-care—without pretending to be neurotypical. You'll find more than 100 activities that help you accept yourself, destigmatize autism, find your community, and take care of your physical and mental health.

With expert advice from therapist Megan A. Neff, this book will help you make the most of your life and your diagnosis.

## A Good Read

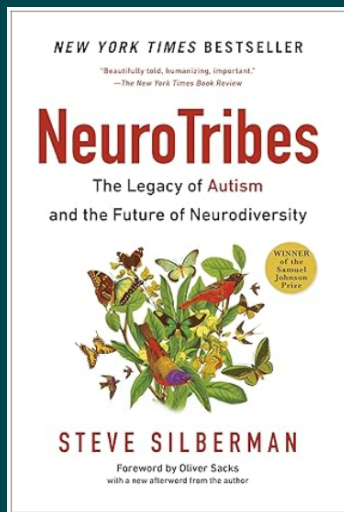
NEW RELEASE



## A Good Read

BEST SELLER LIST

This New York Times–bestselling book upends conventional thinking about autism and suggests a broader model for acceptance, understanding, and full participation in society for people who think differently.



From our family to yours, we wish you a  
**Happy Thanksgiving!**

## RESOURCE SPOT LIGHT

### **OpenSpot Theatre**

Brings bring fun and accessible theatre programs to people of all ability levels.

Through rehearsal and performance process, students will experience personal affirmation, empowerment, and build important skills.

Check out their comprehensive list of upcoming programs open to the public from Metro Detroit to Traverse City.

**Learn more Here:** <https://openspottheatre.com/program-regions/michigan/>



### **Michigan Families with Special needs Children**

A great FB group with [3.2K members](#) across the state.

This group is designed to help other families with special needs children find the help they need. By advocates, group chats events for the families and individuals with special needs. The founder is a Parent of a Child with Autism & knows the hurdles and struggles that families encounter every day.

**Find them HERE:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1538478673082976>

### **Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan**

The FHC resolves many reasonable accommodation requests for people with disabilities.

The following is the story of one FHC client who utilized the FHC’s advocacy to protect his housing rights and his health:

A man with physical disabilities contacted the FHC for assistance with a reasonable accommodation request. The tenant had requested to move to a first-floor unit for over a year and provided documentation from his medical provider stating he needed an immediate transfer. The tenant had fallen several times using the stairs to access his unit. Instead of accommodating the man, the landlord threatened to evict him. FHC, staff wrote a letter to the landlord's attorney demanding that the reasonable accommodation request be granted. FHC staff was also successful in having the eviction case dismissed.

**Learn more about reasonable accommodations HERE:** <https://fhcmichigan.org/know-your-rights/disability/reasonable-accommodations>

The following is the story of one FHC client who needed a reasonable accommodation for his emotional support animal: A man contacted the Fair Housing Center after a leasing agent rejected his emotional support animal (ESA) because it did not have an “ESA licensing number.” This caused a stall in his tenancy, preventing him from moving in. After FHC staff sent a letter to the property manager clarifying that support animals do not require licensing numbers, the landlord allowed the man to proceed in the application process and move into the unit the following week.

**Learn more about assistance animals:** <https://fhcmichigan.org/.../disability/assistance-animals/>  
[#disabilityrights](#) [#fairhousingforall](#) [#ESA](#)