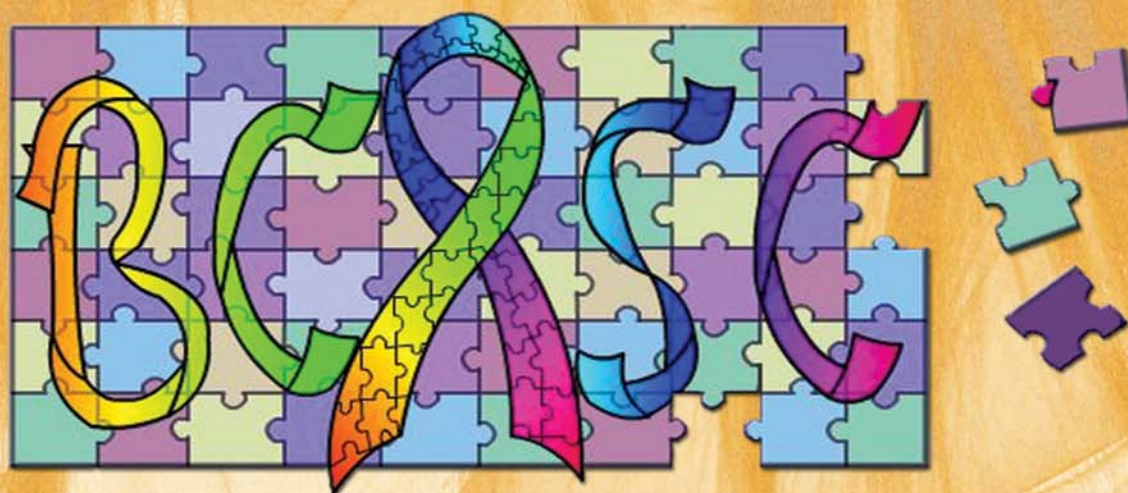


Bucks County
Autism Support Coalition



2009 Annual Report

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Letter from the President

Looking ahead and reflecting back, that is what this letter hopes to do. In reflecting on the three years the Bucks County Autism Support Coalition has been in existence is somewhat of a contradiction to me. Three years young for the length of time we have had to build memberships and community connections. The youngness still serves to ignite enthusiasm and cement the need for this organization. Three years old, what we have accomplished in this time; organization, events, funds, a solid mission and goals and hopefully a positive reputation within the community. I would no longer categorize us as “new”. The BCASC has a solid organizational structure. We have a solid financial base. Educational programs and fund raising events have been created, tested, and organized for success. Our accounting and government processes are finalized, utilizing wonderful resources for review and forward planning.

Now that we have established practices and procedures, as a board, we set out to strategic plan for the future. Meeting for two full days this summer, the BCASC board came together to celebrate our path and to look forward to where we want to go next. In these two days of strategic planning we revisited our mission statement and goals. The spirit in which the mission statement was created still stands. Our goals are still relevant to our programs and path. What was missing was a redefined focus. Although there is need in so many areas, we felt it important to focus on activities for post-21 in our community. This is an area of great need for Bucks County. This does not mean we will abandon other activities or practices. With this renewed focus, we will investigate organizations that support individuals on the spectrum in the adult world. This includes meeting with organizations that provide great opportunities for individuals in the adult world and facilitating these organizations in creating opportunities in Bucks County. Our goal has always been not recreating the wheel, but supporting those who have a great organization.

Strategic planning served to solidify those activities that were and continue to be a great success; the educational programs, the website, the conference, the 5K run, and the family fun activities. We have redefined our grant process. Three different types of grants will be given, start up grants, ongoing grants, and service grants. For more information, visit our website www.bcasc.org. Our new adventure will be investigating post-21 organizations and activities for the future.

As always, we run this organization on a few very broad shoulders. The members of the BCASC board put in countless hours, all dedicated to making this community a better place for individuals on the autism spectrum. We continue to need people! People who share this goal, people who have a passion and vision, and people who are willing to put some time into making our mission come to life. If you are interested in being part of our organization, we would love to have you!! Information on getting involved is on our website. We meet on the first Monday of every month as a board. The Education Committee meets on the third Thursday of every month. The Conference Committee is now gearing up for March and would love a large pool of workers. Jodi Schmon is actively seeking members to help with the Family Fun Committee. Any help that can be given is always appreciated.

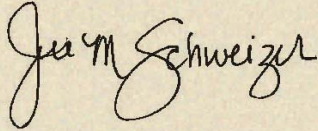
On my final note, I could not reflect without feeling very grateful to those who have made this organization such a great experience. The BCASC board as a whole, collaborative and hard working, all volunteer, all working, giving their time and talents freely. Thank you! Eileen Ryan, our treasurer, organizing and a step ahead always. Thank you. Dustin Polis, Conference Chair, who will be leaving the board in January. We will miss your insight, but we are thrilled you will be staying on as Conference Chair. Thank you.



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Paul Rokuskie, Education/PR Chair. Paul does our website, our education committee, one of the facilitators of the parent forum, our “look” creator, and our annual report. He is the sender of information and the link between people communicating ideas. We would not be who we are without him! Thank you! I would also like to thank outgoing board member Kathy Winters for her time on the Education Committee developing workshops, presenting workshops and participating in the videos. Kathy was part of the group’s foundation and we thank her for her time and energy.

Jill Schweizer



Contact Information

Bucks County Autism Support Coalition (BCASC)

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Education & Communication:	Paul Rokuskie
Family Fun:	Jodi Schmon
Finance & Organization:	Jill Schweizer & Eileen Ryan
Gala:	Heather DeGroot
Membership:	Jennifer Durkin

Status: The BCASC is incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the state of Pennsylvania and has received a determination letter from the IRS granting tax-exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRC.



Conference Committee

The BCASC's Second Annual Autism Conference was held on March 29, 2008 at Central Bucks High School South. In only its second year, the conference brought in approximately 400 presenters and attendees. The conference expanded this year to offer a keynote address by a nationally known and respected professional in the field of autism. Dr. Jed Baker Ph. D. provided the keynote address entitled "No More Meltdowns".

With 41 presentations offered throughout the day, attendees could choose from a wide variety of topics in the field of autism. Presentations covered areas from social skills training to sensory techniques to early intervention to adult programming and so much more. A goal of the conference committee was to create an event that would bring in parents and not just professionals. The goal was met as 40% of attendees were either parents or individuals on the spectrum. The number of vendors increased dramatically allowing parents and professionals to network with local resources. Also, the BCASC sponsored an autism book sale to provide additional information on a variety of topics to parents.



The conference committee worked extremely hard in putting together this important event. Feedback from presenters and attendees was very positive. The use of the new online registration system proved to be a success as attendees were able to access more information about presentations and allowed for a more streamlined process of registration and payment. This year the conference expanded to offer ACT 48 continuing education credits for teachers and professionals and BACB continuing education credits for Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

Most importantly, the conference addressed a growing need for providing parent and professional training in the area of autism, raising autism awareness, and providing parents the opportunity to network with local service providers. Given the excellent growth of the conference in only its second year, the conference committee anticipates a larger and more successful third annual conference. The next conference is scheduled for March 20th, 2010 at Central Bucks High School South.



Education Committee

The Education Committee had successful endeavors in four key areas in 2009.

- Talks in the community
- Resource Tables at local events
- Parent Forum
- Website

All our talks to the community were requests made of us for information. Requested topics ranged from general Autism information to specific information for Business groups and Job Coaches. The presentations our Coalition provides are unique in that they are given by two speakers, one is either a medical or education professional and the second is a parent. This ensures that all presentations have a dual perspective for the audience. It also reflects the Coalitions collaborative membership of parents, medical & education professionals as well as community members. We have found this to be an important component in how we educate the community about ASD. Talks were presented to:

- Counseling Psychology program at Delaware Valley College
- NHS' Early Intervention staff
- Pennridge School District
- Elkins Park Rotary
- Action Karate
- Bucks County Family Friends
- Pt. Pleasant Pediatric Special Care
- YMCA of Philadelphia and Vicinity Ambler Branch
- Early Intervention of Bucks County



Our final presentation of the year: Looking Beyond the Cover: Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders, was open to the general public and was held at the Doylestown Hospital Health and Wellness Center in November. Approximately 25 people attended. In all, we reached over 300 people thru all our talks.

We had resource tables at several events in the Philadelphia area during the year. These events gave us an opportunity to have more one-on-one conversations with individuals. Committee members at these events discussed the goals of the BCASC and its desire for increasing Autism awareness in the Bucks County Community. Brochures and business cards were distributed and families were encouraged to attend future meetings and events. A contact list was created of those interested in learning more about the BCASC and the Committee members invited these individuals to consider joining the organization. Many expressed an interest, and to date, new members have joined to help our organization further its goal. We had tables at the following events:

- Centennial School District Resource Fair
- BCASC 2nd Annual Conference
- Bucks Intermediate Unit Resource Fair
- 10th Annual Autism Awareness Day @ Philadelphia Zoo
- BCASC Bridge Valley 5k/1 mile fun run
- Makefield Women's Association Harvest Day



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- Autism Speaks Walk Now for Autism Philadelphia event
- Kids First Highpoint in Chalfont
- Autism Awareness Night at CB West High School
- Perry Family Chiropractic
- ASCC (Autistic Support Coalition Club) Basketball Night at CB West High School

Combined at all these events, we provided general information about Autism and the BCASC to several hundred people.

The Parent Forum was a new initiative in 2009. It was open to all, including parents, grandparents and guardians of children, teens and adults on the Autism spectrum in the Bucks County and surrounding areas. Parents of children with Autism spectrum disorders often feel socially isolated and have difficulty finding information and support. With that in mind, the goals of the BCASC Parent Forum are:

1. To provide an opportunity for parents of children on the autism spectrum to meet, socialize and make new friends
2. To share information with each other on such topics as behavior concerns, meeting medical needs, different therapies, diet, sensory processing needs, education, etc.
3. To be a source of support, understanding and hope to parents as they care for their ASD children
4. To keep parents informed and involved in activities of BCASC, such as volunteer opportunities, family fun nights, speaker series meetings, fundraisers and the annual conference

The group is an open forum, with no pre-planned agenda. Discussions revolved around areas of concern or interest to the parents in attendance. The group met five times during the year and had over 45 different non-BCASC members attend. Due to the popularity of the initiative, there are four scheduled Parent Forums in 2010.

Our website has been an invaluable resource for information on the Coalition. We re-designed the website in 2009 to further meet the needs of the Coalition and make it a repository of content as well as an information site. We created new pages to house content including individual committee pages, a video page, posting presentation materials, print resources as well as a blog. The blog is tied into the Coalitions Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter pages to provide several avenues of communication with our membership. These new pages and blog will allow us to provide articles on each committee's activities, what their current initiatives are and what is upcoming. We are also updating our list of Frequently Asked Questions and Links to better represent the Coalitions goals. In addition, we will be upgrading our membership database so it is more robust and able to grow with the Coalition. This upgrade will allow better communication with the many volunteers our Coalition has.

In addition, a new committee for Communications and Public Relations was created by the Board in mid-2009. This committee will take over responsibility for the website as well as several other Coalition initiatives in 2010 like a monthly eNewsletter and regular blog updates. This will allow the Education Committee to focus exclusively on community education and not have to handle technical responsibilities.



Family Fun Committee

The Family Fun Committee is a newly formed committee of the BCASC. The Family Fun Committee's goal is to plan and coordinate events where families can unite and enjoy themselves. The Committee aligns with the BCASC's mission to empower individuals with autism to reach their maximum potential and act as a resource for networking opportunities. The Committee is currently working on planning a variety of activities that have appeal to different age groups in an attempt to attract the participation of individuals who span the entire school-aged range. There is always room for those interested in serving on the Family Fun Committee.

Finance & Organization Committee

Key accomplishments of the Finance and Organization Committee for 2009 were as follows:

Register with the Department of State Bureau of Charitable Organizations – BCASC registered as a charitable organization with the Department of State's Bureau of Charitable Organizations and is authorized to solicit charitable contributions under the conditions of the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act. In conjunction with our registration, we also engaged a public accounting firm to conduct a review of our Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets- Modified Cash Basis and the related Statement of Support, Revenue, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets and Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended December 31, 2008.

File Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax with the Internal Revenue Service – We filed Form 990 for the year ended December 31, 2008, our first year of operation.

Award grants to organizations aligned with the mission and goals of the Coalition – During the year ended December 31, 2009, the Coalition awarded \$12,500 in grants to organizations aligned with the mission and goals of the Coalition. These organizations were:

- Camp Concepts
- Camp Friendship
- Central Bucks YMCA
- Bucks County Coffeehouse

Formalize process for the awarding of grants to organizations aligned with the mission and goals of the Coalition – The Coalition formalized the process for awarding of grants in three categories. Service grants are awarded to organizations to provide financial assistance to families in acquiring services for individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Start Up Grants are awarded to organizations to provide funds for start up costs to create a service or activity to support individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Expansion Grants are awarded to organizations to provide funds for expansion of services or opportunities for continued growth of the organizations.

Conduct Board Planning Day – The Coalition conducted Board Planning sessions over two days to set priorities for 2010, as well as to discuss strategic direction. Based on our discussions we restructured our committees as follows: Conference, Education, Family Fun, Finance and Organization and Race for Autism 5k. Two other committees (Fundraising and Gala) may be added in the future.

Board Re-Election – Four current Board Members, Jill Schweizer, Paul Rokuskie, Jodi Schmon and Eileen Jonas Ryan, were presented to the membership at the October 5th meeting for re-election to three year terms beginning January 1, 2010



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Fundraising Committee

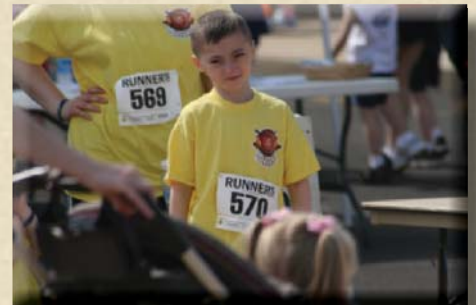
The second annual Bridge Valley Trail Blazer Race for Autism occurred on Saturday April 25, 2009. The event brought 1,155 registered participants, 100 plus volunteers and hundreds of spectators. In the end, the event exceeded all of our expectations.

Our first place male finisher, Larry Hannon, crossed the line in 17 minutes and 28 seconds (5.37 mile pace). The first female finisher was 18-year-old Sarah Simonetti with a time of 20.07. Although we did not sell enough tickets to give the Lexus away, the winner of the raffle walked away with \$2,650.00. The day brought many people, many celebrations and even more smiles. It was an amazing day that is best summed up by a Central Bucks family. We received the e-mail below shortly after the event.



Thank you so much for once again orchestrating a wonderful event! Everything was PERFECT - even the weather! My entire family so much appreciates the efforts of all of the many volunteers that made this day so successful. All of the money that was raised will one day go to benefit our beautiful Matthew, and we are forever grateful. You all have spent so many hours organizing, planning, preparing - time that could have been spent with your own families. You chose instead to dedicate your time to an event that will help make a difference in the lives of so many individuals in our community, both young and old, affected by this heartbreaking disorder. So many people gave so much time and effort to benefit a cause that is so dear to my family's heart.

Thanks again for everything!



We invite you to visit our website at www.bvraceforautism.com to get a look at what you made possible. On the web site you will find the complete list of race results, video clips of the 5k race and the one mile fun run/walk, news stories, testimonials as well as pictures and a photo gallery capturing the spirit of the day's events.

We are already looking forward to April 24th 2010 and hope that you will join us along with the thousands of people who came out to the Bridge Valley Trail Blazer Race for Autism in 2009 to celebrate and bring awareness to autism spectrum disorders. If 2009 was any indication, 2010 will be quite a year!



Speaker Series


On Monday, February 2, 2009 BCASC members and other interested community members had the opportunity to hear Ms. Susan Reimer speak at our meeting at Central Bucks South. Ms. Reimer has two young sons. Her youngest son, who was two and a half at the time, has severe food allergies and her older son, who was then five, has Autism Spectrum Disorder in addition to some food allergies. She spoke about her experience with both of her sons but the title of her presentation reflected her focus, "One Mother's Journey into the Importance of Nutrition and its effect on her Son's Autism." It was an excellent discussion and we were grateful for to Ms. Reimer for sharing her experiences and insight.

On Monday, October 6, 2009 at our meeting at Klinger Middle School, Mr. Steve Haines and Ms. Stephanie DeSouza gave a presentation about Camp Expressions, a unique recreational summer day camp designed for preschoolers up to teenagers who have social skills deficits. Camp Expressions was the recipient of a 2009 grant from BCASC given to provide scholarship money to families. It was a delight to hear about the program's philosophy and design and see some of the pictures of camp.

BCASC looks forward to providing an exciting series of speakers at our meetings in 2010!

Sponsors

These are sponsors from our 2nd Annual Autism Conference

- 
FOUNDATIONS
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
- Richard Newman
- Magellan
- Elwyn
- Philadelphia Mental Health

Donations

- JL Stradley Foundation
- Makefield Women's Association
- Dantzig Family
- Central Bucks West Football
- Moe's Southwestern Grill
- Camp Nativity
- Central Bucks West Autism Club
- Perry Family Chiropractic



Check presentation from Makefield Women's Association

