



# Connecting the Pieces

serving families along the gulf coast for 10 years

## Kick-off the New Year with Kids for Camp



Application period for the 2015 Kids for Camp summer learning lab program will open Feb. 3. Autism Pensacola will hold an informational meeting for parents interested in participating.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 3, at the Pollak Training Center, Arc Gateway. Childcare will be provided, but reservations must be received before Friday, Jan. 30.

Kids for Camp is a data-driven program using best-practice techniques, specifically Applied Behavior Analysis, to contribute to both the skill acquisition of the individuals with autism and the continuing

### CAMP PHILOSOPHY

*Kids for Camp is a data-driven program using best-practice techniques, specifically Applied Behavior Analysis, to contribute to both the skill acquisition of the individuals with autism and the continuing education of the teachers, support staff, and college students who work with those with autism.*

education of the teachers, support staff, and college students who work with those with autism. API is committed to continuously improve the camp experience, thus remaining a model of quality and integrity to the community.

Kids for Camp serves individuals with autism, ages 2-25. The dates for camp will be June 22-July 23, 2015, Monday through Thursday.

As part of our commitment to meeting the needs of those living with autism in our two-county area, Kids for Camp will be expanding our Young Adult program in the New Year. The Community Life Skills Program will be open to individuals ages 20-25. Come learn about this new program as well as other exciting changes planned for 2015 and how you can be a part of making camp happen!



For more information, go to [www.autismpensacola.org/camp.html](http://www.autismpensacola.org/camp.html), or call the office at (850) 434-7171. Parents may also email Jessica Lapen, program director, at [camp@autismpensacola.org](mailto:camp@autismpensacola.org).

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## Know your student's rights with Wrightslaw training

Knowing your student's educational rights and becoming an effective partner and advocate with the school district is the focus of a one-day workshop presented by Autism Pensacola.

The workshop will feature Wrightslaw founder Pete Wright, Esq., one of the most well-respected special education law advocates in the country.

The event is set for Saturday, January 24th, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Marcus Pointe Baptist Church, 6205 North W Street, in Pensacola.

Pete Wright is an attorney who represents children with special needs. As a child, Wright was diagnosed with a learning disability and ADHD. His experiences informed his future career. Wright has a degree in psychology and also

graduated from law school at the University of Richmond (VA). He is the co-author of many books on special education law, IEPs, and advocacy. He and his wife, Pam Wright, are the founders of Wrightslaw.com, the number one ranked web site on special education law, and education advocacy.

Wrightslaw programs are designed to meet the needs of parents, educators, health care providers, advocates and attorneys who represent children with disabilities regarding special education. The program is not disability specific.

The one-day special education law and advocacy program will focus on four areas:



Pete Wright

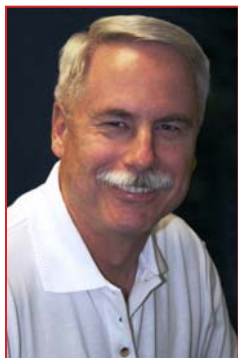
**Wrightslaw training, continued on page 6**

## From the President's Pen



*This month I have yielded my President's Pen to our outgoing board chairman, Julian Irby. I just want to add my thanks to him for all he has done to support Autism Pensacola not only this year as Chairman of the Board, but over all the years of API's history. My gratitude extends to his dear wife, Marilyn, who was one of my co-founders.*

**-- Susan**



**Julian Irby**

This past year has been very good for Autism Pensacola!

One of our primary strategic plan goals is to diversify our sources of funding. This year, we saw cumulative event fundraising exceed all past years. In addition to our annual auction dinner, the walk was also a huge success as were several smaller fundraisers. Our incredible staff and volunteers also put together several successful grant applications fur-

ther diversifying our funding.

Another goal we achieved was to add new board members who bring a broader community perspective. I was pleased that we were able to add Malcolm Thomas and Tim Wyrosdick, the Escambia County and Santa Rosa County school superintendents, as well as several others who keep our community presence strong.

Another focus area this year was improving our business practices. In that regard, Susan and I have worked to ensure we are doing the "right thing" for our paid staff. We have clarified roles, documented job descriptions, and formalized contract arrangements. In addition, we have begun development of a formal personnel policy manual. I also took Susan to meet my labor law attorney who was kind enough to educate us a bit and answered many of our questions. We still have work to do, but we have made great strides this year!

On a personal note, the highpoint of the year was the video of Rocky Parra and my wife, Marilyn, which we presented at the auction dinner. Hearing two mothers' heartfelt perspectives on caring for a child with autism is moving to say the least.

As my year as chairman of the board Autism Pensacola draws to a close, I would like to say a big thanks to Fred Donovan for a seamless board chair transition, each of our board members for their time and efforts, Susan and the rest of the staff for their sustained performance, our members, and all our supporters in the community! Also, I want to offer my sincere appreciation to Cate & Collier Merrill for hosting the Connecting the Pieces gala this year—they are the best!

Lastly, I want to thank John Peacock for agreeing to chair the board in the new year. I am confident John is the right person for the job and will take Autism Pensacola to the next level!

### API Council

Joan Fitzsimmons, Council Chair  
Rebecca Aman, Jean Brown, Bobby Cochran,  
Wanda Cochran, Holly Hoskamer, Kat Lea,  
Rita Lung, Katie Owens, Michael Owens,  
Rocky Parra, Autumn Weeks, Jonathan White,  
Sarah Penaloza, Regina Williams

API Council is a group of volunteers dedicated to making a difference. Everyone is welcome to attend council meetings and find their own place to serve. We have a variety of committees where you can make a difference.  
Email [info@autismpensacola.org](mailto:info@autismpensacola.org) for information on council needs.

### API Staff

Susan Byram, President/CEO  
Jessica Lapen, Program Director  
Rebecca Aman, Bookkeeper  
Jacqui O'Connell, Webmaster  
Amy Scott Lorton, Executive Assistant to CEO,  
Special Needs Education Consultant  
Brienne Riverla, Office Assistant

### 2014 API Executive Committee

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| John Peacock, Board Chair  | Cate Merrill      |
| Becca Boles, Vice Chairman | Dr. Dave Suhrbier |
| Peg Nickelsen, Secretary   | Scott Remington   |
| Bonnie Sferes, Treasurer   |                   |

### Board of Directors

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Leasha Barry | Teri Levin       |
| Jodi Bell        | Cecilia Nanni    |
| Dana Bledsoe     | Dr. Brett Parra  |
| Stephen Burgess  | Sergio Penaloza  |
| Judy Burns       | Sue Straughn     |
| Logan Fink       | Malcolm Thomas   |
| Larry Hutcheson  | Andrew Trommelen |
| Julian Irby      | Joe Webb         |
| Ted Kirchharr    | Amy Willson      |
| Kat Lea          | Tim Wyrosdick    |

**Past Chairs:** Quint Studer, Fred Donovan,  
Ted Kirchharr, Julian Irby



## Reader's Corner

# "The Power of Positive Parenting" by Dr. Glenn I. Latham

## Book Review by Beckee Edge

This book is based on behavioral principles but in a very loving manner. Dr. Latham is a father and grandfather. As I read the book, I felt like I was being reminded how to lovingly guide my children to make better choices. Throughout the book, he talks about how to generalize to multiple ages, settings, and the importance of multiple opportunities to practice. I know as the mother of teenagers, it often feels like parenting books are only geared to the little guys. I often expect my teenagers to learn and use what I have taught them immediately after I teach it to them. "Nowadays it seems that parents are so anxious to set their children straight (perhaps out of fear of what might happen if they don't!) that they feel compelled to "nip trouble in the bud" by getting after their kids every time they do something wrong. Unfortunately, this ultimately produces just the opposite of what is desired."

The first two chapters of the book explain how behavior develops and how to apply the behavioral principles within your home and family. I promise, these are not boring chapters. I highlighted and underlined so many things in the first chapter. The writing is easy to read and not overly wordy. They are also little boxes within the margin that emphasizes the key points.

The book has 27 chapters; I did not sit down and read it cover to cover. Instead, I read through the first few chapters and then jumped to the subjects that I needed the most help with first. So many of the things he brings up in the book are good reminders. I often found myself saying, "Oh yeah, I know that," but when you are in the "trenches" it is hard to remember to ignore or reteach.

If you keep this book in a central location, you will refer to it often.

## Card Corner

### By Dr. Christine Ogilvie, CARD consultant, Pensacola office

We've been busy here at the Pensacola CARD office. Consultant Debbie Dubus and I have been visiting a lot of elementary schools, giving "Autism 101" trainings that have been well received. We hope to do more soon!

We have a lot of different workshops in progress. Our Gamer's Delight workshop is focused on middle and high school age students who would be considered as being high-functioning autistic. For each session, we have an hour of direct instruction in necessary social skills for middle and high school students. This is followed by about an hour of game time in which participants must play games that are at least two player games and must negotiate time, game choice, and turn taking while using our two Wii systems. The Gamer's Delight Workshop also includes the group formerly known at Making Sense of Middle School.

Our Girls' Day Out workshops are for middle and high school girls on the autism spectrum. We typically will meet somewhere in the community doing "girl" things (which is decided by the group) while discussing current topics in their lives (dating, social networking, health and hygiene, etc).

This past fall, we benefited from the generosity of the owners of the Wide Awake Cafe in Milton. About every other week, they open their doors specifically for us to host a game night (no electronics) for young adults with autism. We will continue this bi-weekly event into the New Year. We are also working to set up a game night in Escambia County, as well. The locations are not county specific; any one from either county can attend the events.

For those middle schoolers who are less verbal, we have the "Let's Hear It for the Boys" group. This group meets at Sacred Heart Autism Center twice a month to work on social and functional skills such as greeting a peer, taking turns, and interactive play with a peer. Because of the intensity of this group and the need for me to staff it (with volunteers) to be one-on-one, it's imperative that you contact me at 850-324-6245 for more information.

Debbie Dubus and I have a lot of exciting plans for the New Year! We will be starting to create the protocol and guidelines to develop model classrooms for inclusion of children with autism at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Our hope is to roll out at least one model classroom in the fall of 2015 in each county, with hopes in increasing the numbers in the future.

## Save the Date!

### Autism Summer Institute

**When?** August 3-6

#### Location:

The Russell Center Milton

#### Who?

For teachers, family members, service providers

Brought to you by CARD,  
Autism Pensacola, Santa Rosa County  
ESE, Escambia County ESE, the  
Sacred Heart Autism Center, and FDLRS.

For more information, contact Dr. Ogilvie,  
[Christine.ogilvie@med.fsu.edu](mailto:Christine.ogilvie@med.fsu.edu)



## With Heartfelt Gratitude

Autism Pensacola is blessed to be a part of a caring community. This area has shown its support by giving to help us further our mission and purpose. As we close out 2014, API would like to thank some very special partners.

For the second year in a row, Bob Tyler and the sales team at Bob Tyler Pre-Owned



**BethAnne Parra at Art Across the Spectrum**

Cars promoted a giveback program during the month of August. For every pre-owned car purchased during the month, the company donated \$100 to API. In October, Mr. Tyler and his team presented a check for \$15,900 to the organization.

Also this fall, Paul Chestnutt and his organization, Matthew Chestnutt Scores!, presented API with a check to help us continue meeting the needs of individuals with autism in the Greater Pensacola area.

Our incoming board chairman, John Peacock, and the Panhandle Charitable Open, presented a check for \$3,000 to API at our December board meeting. We appreciate John's passion for this community and his leadership on the board.

Another board member, Scott Remington, connected us with the Seville Rotary Club and their 4th ever Arrogant Steak Cook-Off. This event raised more than \$1,200 for API!

Finally, PHS IB senior BethAnne Parra's art show, Art Across the Spectrum, raised funds to purchase iPads through our Give

Kids A Voice program. This event funded 10 iPads for families who had successfully completed the Parent Empowerment Program classes.

We are grateful to these individuals and organizations for their commitment to this community. We are looking forward to the great things we can do together in 2015.



**One of the artists, Micah Lapen, with his mother, Jessica**



**Bob Tyler's Pre-Owned Cars staff presenting API with a check to further the work of the organization.**



**Panhandle Charitable Open donates to the API mission.**



**Bob Tyler and his team with API staff members Susan Byram and Amy Lorton.**



**Paul Chestnutt presents the check from Matthew Chestnutt Scores! to API.**

# New membership program in the New Year

We are bringing in the New Year with a revamped membership program at API. We will kick off an annual membership campaign in October 2015. This is in an effort to place API members on the same renewal schedule. You will still enjoy the same membership perks and membership card.

For 2015 only, new members and those renewing will be able to do so at a prorated rate.

## There are many benefits to membership in Autism Pensacola!

Please join the families, professionals, and friends which make up Autism Pensacola's growing network. Together we can make a difference in the world of autism.

### As a member you will receive the following:

- Membership card that entitles you to receive discounts at area businesses
- Reduced rates to workshops and conferences presented by API
- Eligibility to apply for Kids for Camp
- Discounts on social activities throughout the year

- Priority assistance with IEP preparation through our PPSP program
- Full voting rights in the election of API board of directors – have a voice in the local autism community
- Be part of a unified voice to advocate for persons on the autism spectrum in the greater Pensacola area
- Satisfaction in knowing you are making a difference in the lives of individuals with autism in our local community

If you are interested in becoming a member of Autism Pensacola, we have different membership rates to choose from. Our individual membership rate is \$20/year. The family rate is \$25/year and includes two membership cards.

For business owners, API offers two rates. Business and community members can enjoy a yearly membership for \$50. Our Business and Community Leader rate is \$150/year.

To sign up, go to our web site – [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org) and click on "Membership."

## Welcome to our new staff member



**Brianne and Joshua Rivera**

Welcome to API's newest staff member, Brianne Rivera. Brianne is the office assistant, replacing Suzie West who is now a part of the Arc Gateway's newest program, PALS.

Brianne is a Chicago native. She and her husband, Joshua, who also hails from Chicago

and is an ensign in the US Navy, recently relocated to the Pensacola area. They are proud parents to two fur babies – an American Cocker Spaniel and a golden retriever.

Brianne recently received her Master's degree in Social Work from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She did a clinical military concentration and an internship at Fort Meade in Maryland for two years.

"I have always had a special passion for helping those in need, and I feel as if I can carry out my mission to help here at Autism Pensacola. I look forward to meeting the families and those who make Autism Pensacola such a special place!"

## Parent Empowerment Program



Autism Pensacola, in partnership with the Sacred Heart Autism Center, is proud to bring this amazing hands-on opportunity to explore innovative tools & techniques for teaching your child with autism. Discover what Applied Behavior Analysis can do for your family!

### PEP I Class Schedule

January 15, 22, and 29  
February 5, 12, 19

- Group Classes with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Individual consultation with student intern
- Two Wrightslaw books
- Web-based lectures on the IEP process and advocating for your child
- Use of an iPad

### PEP II Class Schedule

February 26, March 5  
March 12, March 19

- For families who have successfully completed PEP I.
- For those parents with Early Language Learners
- More in-depth teaching on ABA and Verbal Behavior

There is a cost for PEP, but it is low and generous scholarships are available based on need.  
Open to all families living with autism and related disorders of communication.

For more information: Call 434-7171; [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org)





## Local families welcome fall at annual picnic

Providing opportunities for families to socialize and network with other autism families, the Fall Family Picnic, held in October at Bagdad Park, was once again a successful event. With delicious food from The Happy Pig, bounce castles for all ages provided by Froman's Fun Inflatables, and volunteers from Teens With A Dream playing with the kids, families enjoyed a safe place to relax and enjoy the cool fall weather.



### Wrightslaw... Continued from page 6

- Special education law, rights and responsibilities
- Tests and measurements to measure progress & regression
- SMART IEPs
- Introduction to tactics & strategies for effective advocacy

Registration for this opportunity is now open. Continuing Legal Education credits (CLEs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for an additional fee.

Light refreshments will be provided during the morning and afternoon breaks. Lunch is included in the registration fee. Also

included in the fee, registrants will receive four Wrightslaw books.

#### Registration fees:

*Individual API Member rate: \$75*

*Family API Member rate (one additional person attending): \$95*

*Individual Non-Member rate: \$90*

*Family Non-Member rate (one additional person attending): \$110*

*Professional rate (includes certificate for CEUs and CLEs): \$110*

Go to [www.autismpensacola.org/whatsgoingon.html](http://www.autismpensacola.org/whatsgoingon.html) for all the details and to register.

For more information on Wrightslaw, go to [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com).

Questions? Contact Amy Scott Lorton, email: [info@autismpensacola.org](mailto:info@autismpensacola.org); phone: (850) 434-7171.

# Calendar of Events

**Check our website often for additional events and details!**

## JANUARY

**Friday, January 9 – 11 a.m.** – Escambia Support Chat, API office, 3916 N. 10th Avenue, Pensacola. Bring your own lunch.

**Saturday, January 10 – 10 a.m.** – Girls Day Out. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

**Saturday, January 10 – 1 p.m.** – Gamer's Delight at CARD office, Sacred Heart Autism Center. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

**Saturday, January 10 – 1 p.m.** – Respite at Living Truth Church, 8897 Byrom Campbell Rd., Pace. Registration is required, space is limited. Register online at: <http://livingtruthchurch.com/respitecare.htm>

**Friday, January 16 – 10 a.m.** – GAP Chat, API office.

**Saturday, January 17 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** – Respite at Marcus Pointe Baptist Church, 6205 North W Street. Register by calling 850-375-4790. Must call at least 7 days in advance to ensure a spot.

**Thursday, January 22 – 10 a.m.** – API Council meeting, API office.

**Saturday, January 24 – 9 a.m.** – Wrightslaw Workshop, Marcus Pointe Baptist. You must register to attend – go to [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org) to register.

**Saturday, January 24** – Miracle League Registration period opens. Go to <http://miracleleaguepensacola.net-at-hand.com/registration--forms> to download registration forms.

**Saturday, January 31 – 10 a.m.** – Girls Day Out. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

**Saturday, January 31 – 1 p.m.** – Gamer's Delight at CARD office, Sacred Heart Autism Center. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

## FEBRUARY

**Tuesday, February 3, 6 p.m.** – Camp Kick-Off Meeting, Pollak Training Center, Arc Gateway, corner of Fairfield Dr. and 10th Ave. Childcare is available. Reservations needed before January 30.

**Friday, February 6 – 11 a.m.** – Escambia Support Chat, API office, 3916 N. 10th Avenue, Pensacola. Bring your own lunch.

**Saturday, February 7 – 10 a.m.** – Girls Day Out. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

**Saturday, February 7 – 1 p.m.** – Gamer's Delight at CARD office, Sacred Heart Autism Center. Must be registered with CARD to attend this event. Contact Dr. Ogilvie at 850-324-6245.

**Saturday, February 14 - 1 p.m.** – Respite at Living Truth Church, 8897 Byrom Campbell Rd., Pace. Registration is required, space is limited. Register at: <http://livingtruthchurch.com/respitecare.htm>

**Friday, February 20 – 10 a.m.** – GAP Chat, API office.

**Friday, February 20 – 7:05 p.m.** – Ice Flyers game, Pensacola Bay Center. Tickets are available online or by calling the API Office. Call (850) 434-7171 for details.

**Saturday, February 21 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** – Respite at Marcus Pointe Baptist Church, 6205 North W Street. Register by calling 850-375-4790. Must call at least 7 days in advance to ensure a spot.

**Thursday, February 26 – 10 a.m.** – API Council meeting, API office.

## MARCH

**Friday, March 6 – 11 a.m.** – Escambia Support Chat, API office, 3916 N. 10th Avenue, Pensacola. Bring your own lunch.

**Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m.** – Sexuality and autism – a workshop with Dr. Kim Spence, UCF-CARD consultant. Register on the API web site – [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org).

**Saturday, March 14, 9 a.m.** – Male Caregivers Chat. Golden Corral, Ninth Avenue.

**Saturday, March 14 - 1 p.m.** – Respite at Living Truth Church, 8897 Byrom Campbell Rd., Pace. Registration is required, space is limited. Register online at: <http://livingtruthchurch.com/respitecare.htm>

**Friday, March 20 – 10 a.m.** – GAP Chat, API office.

**Saturday, March 21 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** – Respite at Marcus Pointe Baptist Church, 6205 North W Street. Register by calling at (850) 375-4790. Must call at least 7 days in advance to ensure a spot.

**Thursday, March 26 – 10 a.m.** – API Council meeting, API office.

## INFORMATION ABOUT ONGOING PROGRAMS

**PPSP – Parent Partner Support Program** – Becoming an effective advocate for your student with special needs is the purpose of PPSP. It is an individualized special education support program for families in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The program pairs families with a trained consultant who will offer support services. For more information, call the API office at (850) 434-7171 or contact Amy Lorton at [iephelp@autismpensacola.org](mailto:iephelp@autismpensacola.org).

**PEP – Parent Empowerment Program -- Level I & II --** Series of classes to train parents/caregivers on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis. Classes include group training with a Board Certified Behavior Analyst; individual consultation with intern at the Sacred Heart Autism Center; two books by Pete Wright of "Wrightslaw"; access to web-based lectures on the IEP process; use of an iPad for your child during the class. For information, contact Susan at (850) 434-7171 or (850) 450-0656 or visit [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org) to register.

**Special Olympics Escambia/Santa Rosa** – Michael Stone is the area's new director. To join a sport, call (850) 291-6234 or email him at [mstone@specialolympicsescambia.org](mailto:mstone@specialolympicsescambia.org) or [mstone@specialolympicssantarosa.org](mailto:mstone@specialolympicssantarosa.org).

**Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)** – FSU-CARD is dedicated to providing individuals with autism or related disabilities, their families, and professionals who work with them, free consultation, resources, and educational support to build knowledge, confidence, infrastructure, and sustainability within the community. Please check the CARD web site at <http://autism.fsu.edu> CARD is located at 5190 Bayou Blvd., Seton Medical Office Park, Bldg. 2, Pensacola.



## API Contact Information

To donate, pay dues, obtain membership forms or for other correspondence  
**mail to address below or visit [www.autismpensacola.org](http://www.autismpensacola.org)**

Email: [info@autismpensacola.org](mailto:info@autismpensacola.org)

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*Connecting the Pieces*  
**Autism Pensacola**

serving families along the gulf coast

P. O. Box 30213

Pensacola, Florida 32503-1213

## Awareness night at The Hangar



**When:** 7:05 p.m. February 20<sup>th</sup>

**Where:** Pensacola Bay Center

**Cost:** Free for person with autism with a  
\$5 chaperone ticket; other tickets \$10

**Deadline:** Feb. 6

Special guest Reid Soria, of Autism Sings,  
LLC., will present the National Anthem.

Purchase your tickets on the API web  
site or through the office. (850) 434-7171.

## Give Kids A Voice



**Give Kids a Voice** will provide area families  
with iPads to open their kids' worlds of  
communication and learning. Families must  
complete the PEP training to qualify.

Tell your friends and family to visit  
**[www.globalgiving.org/projects/give-kids-a-voice-ipads-for-autism](http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/give-kids-a-voice-ipads-for-autism)**  
and help make a positive impact  
on our families' lives today!