

The AUsome Social Group

Teen/Young Adult Recreation/Social Group

Provided by the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC); <http://autismsouthcentral.org/>

Group Coordinator: Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

(608) 222-4378 or Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com

- What:** 47th Annual Madfest Juggling Show at the Barrymore Theater
When: January 17, 2015 (Saturday) 7:00-9:00 P.M. (come between 6:30 –6:45)
Where: Barrymore Theater – 2090 Atwood Ave, Madison (limited parking behind the theater – come early)
Cost: **Sorry no free tickets this year. See ticket cost structure below*.**
Members of the ASC can get 1 or 2 half-price tickets depending on membership.

The Best Juggling Show in town! There is a juggling convention in Madison every January. The culmination of that convention is always a Saturday night juggling show where the best jugglers at the convention show what they can do. I like to call it an “object manipulation show” because they don’t just juggle. They do yoyos, unicycles, jump ropes and many other things that seem to defy the laws of physics. The AUsome Group has gone to this every year since 1999. It is a hoot! There’s lots of creativity, humor and slapstick in the show and the juggling talent is really good.

It’s always freezing cold and parking is a challenge, but it’s worth it! If you want to read more about the show at a creative and outrageous web site, see <http://www.madjugglers.com/madfest/>.

*I’m not sure why, but the juggling show ticket cost went from \$15 last year to \$20 this year. Because of this, we are no longer able to cover the full cost of some tickets. However, we are going to give some half-price ticket opportunities to members of the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC). Those with an individual ASC membership can purchase one half-price ticket for \$10. Those with a family ASC membership can purchase 2 half-price tickets for a total of \$20. (Note that an individual annual ASC membership costs \$15 while a family membership is \$30). Additional tickets can be purchased at our cost of \$20. Note that being a member of the AUsome Social Group is free and is not the same as being a member of the ASC. Also remember that ASC membership will give you other “perks” like free admission to the annual swimming party and reduced cost to other AUsome activities like the upcoming February Hockey game. You can check your ASC membership status at any time by emailing autismsouthcentral@gmail.com. Include your name and address to help with verification.

To make ticket purchasing easier, we have developed an on-line web site application to help you order tickets. Do NOT order tickets from the Barrymore website if you want to be part of our AUsome Group. The deadline for ordering tickets is Sunday, January 11th. Here’s the link to the ASC ticket website. <http://www.zapevent.com/listactivities.aspx?eventid=6639>. At this link you can join the ASC and order juggling show tickets (both half and full price) and pay for it all with a credit card. There is a credit card processing fee for the transaction that is explained on the web site. If you want to pay for your tickets with a check instead of using the web site, contact either me (608-222-4378 / nancy.l.alar@gmail.com) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ autismsouthcentral@gmail.com) before **Jan. 11th** to confirm the ticket count and the amount before you mail your check to the ASC office. You will need to provide a cell phone number for contact the night of the show. I hope you can still make it in spite of the cost increase this year. I’m sure the show will be even better than before.

The show has sold out in many past years, and I think it did last year. That may be why they keep raising the ticket prices. I will be buying all our tickets at once from the theatre on Jan. 12th (so we can give our membership discounts) which is why our deadline is Jan. 11th. You will still be picking up your tickets from me in the lobby the night of the show just like last year. Feel free to call me if you have any questions about the ticket purchasing process. I can walk you through our ticket website if you need help.

Please meet me in the lobby the night of the show between 6:30 and 6:45 to pick up your tickets! I or one of my helpers will be waiting for you with the tickets -- Look for the AUsome Social Group sign.

As before, they are setting aside a special section for us so we can all sit together. We are the only group who gets special seating. All other audience members are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. We will be sitting in a reserved section in the back on the right side on the main floor. This will make it easy for you to get out if you need to. Don't worry if you have to leave early. Someone has to leave early almost every year.

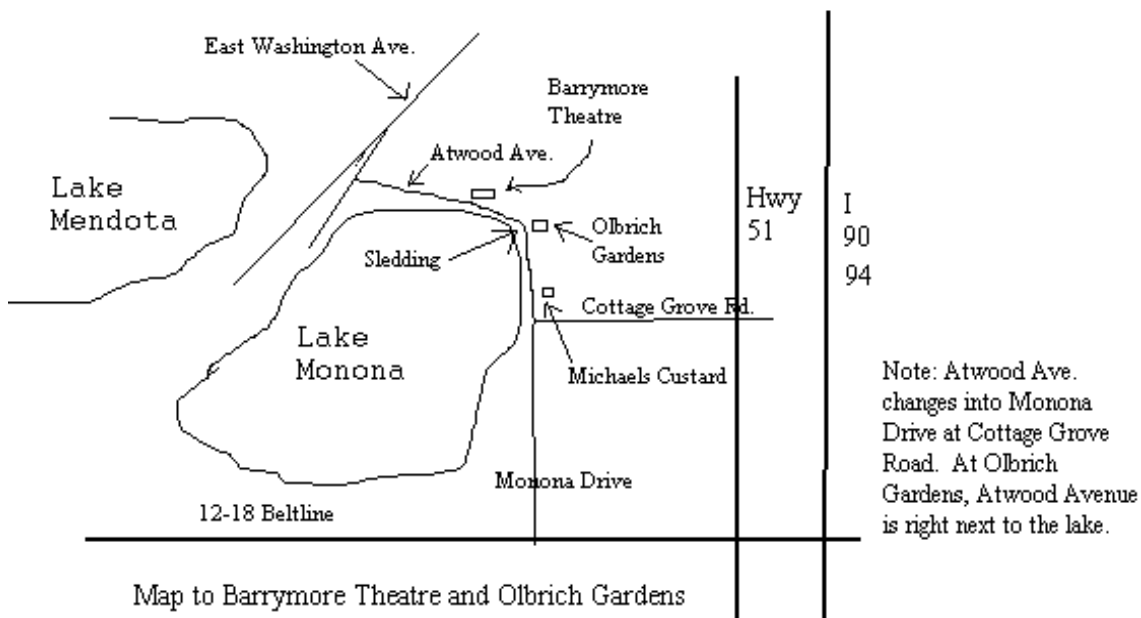
There is a parking lot behind the theatre, but it is rather small. There is the usual theatre food available there. Plan to bring some extra money if you want to buy popcorn, soda or other treats or a juggling show T-shirt.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ The show is rather long and the theater is crowded.
- ☺ There also are lots of noisy people in the audience (we will be some of them!).
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if it gets to be too much.
- ☺ There may be balloons in the crowd and/or in the show.
- ☺ There is a 20 to 30 minute intermission in the middle, but the lines for the bathroom are long.
- ☺ Deadline for ordering and paying for tickets is Sunday, Jan. 11th
- ☺ This all may seem confusing. Feel free to contact Nancy Alar (608-222-4378 / nancy.l.alar@gmail.com) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ autismsouthcentral@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



Map to Barrymore Theater (Location of January Juggling Show)



The AUsome Social Group

Teen/Young Adult Recreation/Social Group

Provided by the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC); <http://autismsouthcentral.org/>

Group Coordinator: Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

(608) 222-4378 or Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com

- What:** Special Teams Hockey Game between the Madison Timberwolves and the Chicago Tomahawks followed by a Pizza Party with option to attend the Regular Madison Capitols Hockey Game vs USA U18 team (the U18 stands for under 18 years old)
- When:** Saturday, February 21, 2015, 4:00 – 6:30 pm. (Capitol's Game starts at 7:00)
- Where:** The Coliseum, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, Madison, WI
- Cost:** \$6 per person for those in the AUsome Social Group who are also ASC members. AUsome ASC members, their family and guests also get the reduced \$6 rate when they buy their tickets together. (AUsome members who are not ASC members pay \$10 per person). All tickets include both hockey games and the pizza party. See instructions below for purchasing tickets**. Parking is \$7 per car so plan to car pool if possible. There are the usual coliseum refreshment stands so bring money if you want to get something there.

This is an activity for all you hockey fans out there. The Madison Timberwolves and the Chicago Blackhawks are special hockey teams whose members all have some disability. Many of the Timberwolves members are on the autism spectrum and some are members of our AUsome Group. These teams will play a special hockey game before the regular Madison Capitol's Hockey game at the Coliseum. The special game will start at 4:00 and last until about 5:30. During this special teams game, there will be sensory modifications to the environment (lower announcer volume, no dramatic lights, less banging on the glass, sensory break area, UW volunteers, etc.). A social story about this game will be available on the ASC web site (<http://autismsouthcentral.org/>) about a month before the game.

After the game (about 5:30), there will be a pizza party for the ASC and AUsome Group members and the hockey players. This is your chance to collect some player autographs. Some Madison Capitol team members will also be available to provide autographs (ASC will provide team pictures). We may even have Bucky Badger and the Capitol's mascot – DC Eagle - joining us. Hope you can join us too.

** To make ticket purchasing easier, we have developed an on-line web site application to help you order tickets. This ticket purchase process is similar to the juggling show. Do NOT order tickets from the MadCapTickets AutismAwarenessNight website address that will be mentioned in other ASC emails. It does not have the special reduced AUsome rate. The deadline for ordering hockey tickets is Saturday, February 7. **Here's the link to the ASC AUsome Hockey ticket website.** <http://www.zapevent.com/listactivities.aspx?eventid=6694> At this link you can join the ASC (if you're not already a member) and order hockey tickets (both \$6 and \$10) and pay for it all with a credit card. There is a credit card processing fee for the transaction that is explained on the web site. If you want to pay for your tickets with a check instead of using the web site, contact either me (608-222-4378 / nancy.l.alar@gmail.com) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ autismsouthcentral@gmail.com) before Feb 7th to confirm the ticket count and the amount before you mail your check to the ASC office.

Please note that the Autism Society is subsidizing part of the cost for AUsome Social Group ASC member participants and their families and guests to attend this event as a courtesy. Please DO NOT share this very special discounted ticket portal with others outside of the AUsome Social Group. Remember the Pizza party & Meet-the-players is only for ASC and AUsome Members. It is not open to the public.

The night of the game you can pick up your tickets to the hockey game at the Will Call window at the Coliseum. Your name will be on a list of tickets ordered through the ASC. Be sure to remember exactly what name you used when you ordered your tickets. Your vouchers for the special post game pizza party session will be available separately at the ASC display table just inside the coliseum concourse doors right after you pick up the hockey tickets. They will give you directions to the pizza party area when you pick up the vouchers.

The official AUsome outing will be over after the pizza party ends about 6:30. However the cost of your ticket includes entry into the following Madison Capitol's hockey game at 7:00 which will last until about 9:30 pm. This game will have all the usual sensory overload of a regular hockey game with loud horns, flashing lights, etc. But if you are really into hockey and can handle a long day, feel free to attend this game also.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ This is a hockey game so there will be some sensory issues even in the special game.
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if it gets to be too much.
- ☺ Plan to carpool to save on parking.
- ☺ This all may seem confusing. Feel free to contact Nancy Alar (608-222-4378 / nancy.l.alar@gmail.com) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ autismsouthcentral@gmail.com) if you have questions.

What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

Video Game Night and Pizza at Midvale Lutheran Church

Saturday, November 22, 2014, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

As usual, this was a really great time!! It was nice that we had a pull down projection screen for the video projector. We enjoyed the 18 pizzas from Pizza Hut. We had about 50 people attend. Ben Wakely was very helpful in providing me an official count of 47, but I think one family left before he counted. We only had one serious video game system going, but a number of people brought board games. And EVERYONE brought hearty appetites. We plowed through all of the pizza. The cookies and other sweet treats were a hit and I made some gluten free Chex Mix. But we had plenty of carrots left over.

Those who were there as spectators enjoyed looking at the 17 AUsome scrap books of our past activities. A lot of family members and friends joined in the fun. Every one enjoyed the evening even after fighting hard fought game battles. The biggest technical difficulty we had turned out to be with the door to the building. For some reason the church door lock timing system was not set correctly and the door to the Fellowship Hall locked at 6:30. It was supposed to be open until 9:00. But luckily we were already there before it locked us out. We used a low tech solution (a cardboard box and surveillance team) to keep the door open.

Thanks to all who brought TV/game setups and controllers!! It also was helpful that several people remembered to bring extension cords and power strips. I know it is a pain lugging that heavy stuff around, but we couldn't do it without you! A special thanks to all the group members for their efforts on technical support. AUsome members should be proud of their skills with equipment.

AUsome now owns 2 (very old) surplus projection units to hook up to our video games instead of a TV! We'll use them until the bulbs burn out (a very expensive replacement proposition). These projectors are very useful because popular games can be projected on a screen or wall so others can watch. Thanks to Brad Wing for organizing a hot game of Scattergories that had a nice team of participants. Jim came all the way from Milwaukee and played some tunes on the piano for us.

We bought the pizzas this year at Pizza Hut on Mineral Point Rd. We ordered 18 large pizzas with a mixture of hand tossed and thin crust – 3 pepperoni, 3 cheese, 2 supreme (works), 2 veggie, 2 sausage/mushroom, 2 barbeque chicken, 2 ham + pineapple and 2 chicken ranch. Pizza Hut also gave us plates and napkins. The delivery guy told me it looked like we were having so much fun he wanted to stay and join us. We also had soda, carrots and Oreo cookies, and some other nice treats and munchies that people bought. Our goal is to make sure there are snacks for people with all kinds of food issues.

Thanks to all those who helped with the setup and cleanup and putting the chairs back the way we found them. I especially appreciated the help with breaking up all those pizza boxes for recycling. Also thanks to those who brought treats to share and food for our food pantry donation. We did have a very nice amount of food to donate including several unopened bottles of left over soda pop.

Learn to Ice Skate at Madison Ice Arena; December 13, 2014 (Saturday), 3:30 – 5:30

This was a fun afternoon with lots of good exercise. We had a great turnout with over 30 people showing up. The folks at Madison Ice Arena were super helpful in getting us outfitted with skates and letting us use their party room for our after-skating snacks. They also let us have their training rink all to ourselves. This was a good thing since some of our skaters were very enthusiastic but not very controlled. Ian had an especially interesting skating style that looked like he was about to wipe out any minute, but he almost never fell.

Almost everyone who came got out there on the ice. At one time there were over 20 people whizzing around out on the ice. Richard wasn't planning on skating, but even he was persuaded to give it a try. The rink had some special equipment that was a walker adapted for use on ice. Richard made good use of the walker. Even though Richard's form wasn't exactly elegant, you could tell by his big smile that he was sure having a good time out there on the ice. I really wanted to get out there and give it a try also in spite of my recent knee replacement. But after I put on the ice skates and had to walk about half a block from the snack room (where we had our safety briefing) to the rink, it was clear that my left ankle wasn't up to skating. I was really disappointed, but I had to take my skates off and watch everyone else have fun. At least I got some good pictures. But I sure got cold standing around watching. A special thanks to Jack Steinberg and his mother Jill for their help at this ice skating event. Their family has been active at area ice rinks for many years and are very experienced skaters. They were helpful to those who needed "advice on the ice". Also thanks to Madison Ice Arena for donating their time, location and skates to our activity. And a final thanks to all those who brought treats to share, especially the Heibel family who thoughtfully brought lemonade. It turned out the refreshment stand had closed so it was great to have something to drink other than water and the vending machines.

For those who are interested in doing more ice skating like this activity, the Madison Ice Arena has a free adaptive ice skating program almost every Sunday afternoon. You can find all the details about this opportunity at <http://www.madisonicearena.com/page/show/457174-adaptive-learn-to-skate>.

Important Information:

1. Visit <http://www.autismsouthcentral.org/> for other services and activities sponsored by the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC). Be sure to sign up for their email group to get the "News you can Use" messages on current happenings. Email autismsouthcentral@gmail.com to communicate with the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin and request addition to the email contact list. There are autism related activities happening almost every month now.
2. **Day with the Experts: Autism** is being planned for **January 24th, 2015** at the Waisman Center. It's your chance to learn cutting edge information on UW autism research plus network with others in the autism community. Best of all – it's free! Watch for more information on registration soon.
3. **Save The Date – Saturday, March 14, 2015 – ASC Employment Conference at Monona Terrace** It's said that around 70% of adults and teens on the autism spectrum are unemployed or under employed. We'd like to change that. In partnership with The Board for People With Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Wisconsin, and the Department of Health Services - we are making plans for a comprehensive conference day specifically for teens and adults, and their families. It will cover important topics like disclosure, self-employment options, agency resources, the role of parents in offering support, the impact of employment on benefits, and more. Judy Endow is the Keynote Speaker. Watch on [Facebook](#) as our plans progress!
4. **The annual conference of the Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) will be April 30 – May 2, 2015 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells.** The keynote speaker this year will be the very famous and popular Temple Grandin. There will again be a special track of activities designed for those on the spectrum to learn information and meet others like themselves. ASW conferences have had as many as 900 attendees in the past. About 10% of them are people on the spectrum. You can find out more details and the early bird registration form at <http://www.asw4autism.org/> At this conference they try to make those on the spectrum as comfortable as they can. Those who want to participate in the youth and self-advocacy strands will need to register for the conference and pay the registration fee (the fee for those on the spectrum is only \$90!). This conference is a place where those on the spectrum are valued for their differences. You are the reason this conference exists.

AUsome Social Group Philosophy and Ground Rules

Group Sponsor:

The AUsome Social Group is a service provided by the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC). **It is highly recommended that you join the ASC.** Chapter membership will save you money at future AUsome Group activities and other ASC events. Individual ASC membership is only \$15 annually. To get more information about the ASC, call 608-630-9147, email autismsouthcentral@gmail.com or send a note to Autism Society, 437 S Yellowstone Dr, Suite 217A, Madison, WI 53719. See the Autism Society website at <http://www.autismsouthcentral.org/> for membership information. The website also has a link to the AUsome Social Group web pages on the left side (there is also an AUsome adult support group for those on the spectrum).

Membership to the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin does not include membership to the Autism Society of Wisconsin or the Autism Society of America. That being said, as separate, equal and peer organizations, we usually extend the courtesy of member rates for conferences to those who are members of the Autism Society of Wisconsin, and they have often extended the same courtesy to our members when it comes to their conferences. It should also be noted that those considerations are made on a case by case basis and may end at any time. Membership to the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin assures local programs, services and supports are able to continue, and includes several free or discounted events right here in the Madison area.

Group Purpose:

The AUsome group was organized to provide stimulating, fun, and educational social opportunities for people ages 12 and over who are challenged by sensory/communication issues related to Autism/Asperger's/PDD/Tourette's. However, anyone is welcome to join the activities. We try to set up activities that allow for social interaction between group members and between parents and siblings of the group. We also strive to provide new and interesting experiences that will broaden the world view of participants and expose them to educational and potential job environments.

The AUsome Social Group Newsletter:

The AUsome Group has a separate newsletter that is sent out every other month, containing details for the next 2 outings and a summary of what happened the past 2 months. The AUsome newsletter will be sent out at least a week in advance of the next outing (I hope). Some things may be planned with short notice if something interesting comes up. The ASC will maintain a mailing list of participants. The newsletter will be sent out via email. If you need to have a paper copy mailed to you, that can be done by special request. But remember that it saves time and postage if notification can be sent electronically. Reminders and special messages will only be sent electronically. Our AUsome newsletter is also available on the ASC website at <http://autismsouthcentral.org/category/ausome-social-group-newsletters/>

General Activity Plans:

The general plan is to have an activity about once a month that will last from 2 to 4 hours. The target day will be the first Saturday of the month. However, this is subject to schedule conflicts and availability of interesting activities. Activities that we have done include bowling, miniature golf, gymnastics, movies, a talent show, art gallery visit, fossil hunt, Little Amerricka (a local amusement park), swimming, horseback riding, Go Cart driving, farm market, airplane rides, pottery making and a limousine ride. Each January we attend the 47th annual Madfest Juggling show. In August we have a private pool party at the Monona Pool. Every November we have "video game night". If you are especially interested in a particular activity or have other suggestions, please let me know. Some activities will coincide with general activities planned by the Autism Society such as the annual August swimming party.

Sensory Issues:

Every effort will be made to accommodate sensory issues by limiting cigarette smoke, strong odors, unusual lighting, large crowds and high noise levels where possible. If an activity might involve some of the sensory problems mentioned above, they will be described in the AUsome newsletter. It will not be possible to accommodate everyone's needs all the time so individuals must decide their tolerance levels for each activity. Please let me know if you have any special requests in this area. Also, please be sensitive to requests from group members who have special sensory needs (such as problems with others chewing gum.).

Logistics:

Some individuals may need to arrange for a support person to accompany them. Please use your best judgment in this area. Transportation will be the responsibility of each individual. However, effort will be made to provide help with transportation by designating central meeting points, etc. Please call me, Nancy Alar, (608) 222-4378 or e-mail me at Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com if you have transportation problems, and I'll try to help work out a way for you to get there.

Since these activities are loosely organized social outings, each person participates at their own risk.