

## 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](mailto:Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com)

- What:** Flying Drone Demonstration Put on by the TATTS (Taking Autism to the Sky) Project
- When:** Sunday, July 19, 2015, 1-2 pm; Snack afterwards at Culver's in Middleton
- Where:** Indian Lake Park, 8183 Hwy 19, Cross Plains, 53528 (but we will be at the picnic shelter accessed from Matz Road - [pdf map of Indian Lake park](#)); Culver's is at 2906 Parmenter St., Middleton, WI 53562
- Cost:** Free!

Paul Braun and his TATTS (Taking Autism to the Sky) project is partnering with the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin in the summer of 2015 to make it possible for young people ages 7 – 15 to experience the excitement of learning the new technology of flying drones. This includes using video technology to film what you can see from the drones perspective. You can learn a lot more details about this project and see pics and videos at the TATTS blog website <http://taking-autism-to-the-sky.blogspot.com/>. Paul planned 4 TATTS sessions this summer for kids on the spectrum. These sessions are over now, but some of these kids will be helping Paul with his demo for our AUsome Group. If this project really intrigues you, talk to Paul about getting involved. Even if you are older than 15, Paul might be able to help you can learn about drones.

Learning about drone technology is a lot like most other things in life. There's a certain amount of studying involved that may seem kind of boring and has nothing to do with handling the machines directly. There is some "flight school" you have to go through to learn about the safety rules of flying. To actually fly drones you also have to log a certain amount of hours on the flight simulator (think drone flying video game) where the goal is to learn how to fly a drone without crashing. The real drone equipment is pretty expensive so you want to prevent crashing the real thing.

Some of the TATTS drones are pretty sophisticated. They have satellite communications that keep them centered in a location in the sky regardless of wind or other disturbances. These are some of the things you will learn about at this activity. You will also learn about the video technology used with drones. This is a new field of employment that is being used in all kinds of areas from movie making to surveillance to search and rescue and construction monitoring. You will be able to see drones up close and see them fly (assuming the weather cooperates) and some examples of recorded videos made using drones (even if the weather doesn't cooperate).

**Directions:** Indian Lake Park is just North West of Middleton and directly west of Waunakee on Hwy 19 about 2 miles west of Hwy 12. Matz Road goes south to the shelter from Hwy 19 about the middle of the park.

Even if the weather is bad, we will still meet at the park shelter and decide what to do from there.

### Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ Dress appropriately for the weather
- ☺ Bring money for a snack at Culver's



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- What:** Private Swimming Party at Monona Pool -- **pre-registration required – see below**
- When:** August 8, 2015 (Saturday evening), 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.
- Where:** Monona Pool at 1011 Nichols Road in Monona. Because the time is so late, we will not be going out for pizza afterwards. See map below.
- Cost:** There is no cost for families/individuals that are members of the Autism Society. Cost is \$10 per family if not members – pay at the pool (you can also join the Autism Society at the pool).

Swimming in the Monona Pool in August has become an Autism Society/AUsome tradition. The Monona Pool changed their rental policy 2 years ago to private evening swims rather than morning. They also moved the time this year to a half hour later so we are starting at 7:00pm instead of 6:30. Because we won't be out of the pool until after 9:00 we decided not to go out for pizza because it is so late. We just have to hope we don't have thunderstorms.

The cost of swimming is free for members of the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (the ASC). So this might be a good time to join the ASC if you aren't a member already. See the ASC web site at <http://www.autismsouthcentral.org/> for more details on membership cost (\$30 for a family; \$15 for an individual), how to join and details about the August swim. You will also be able to join (and save \$10 on swimming) at the pool as you check in.

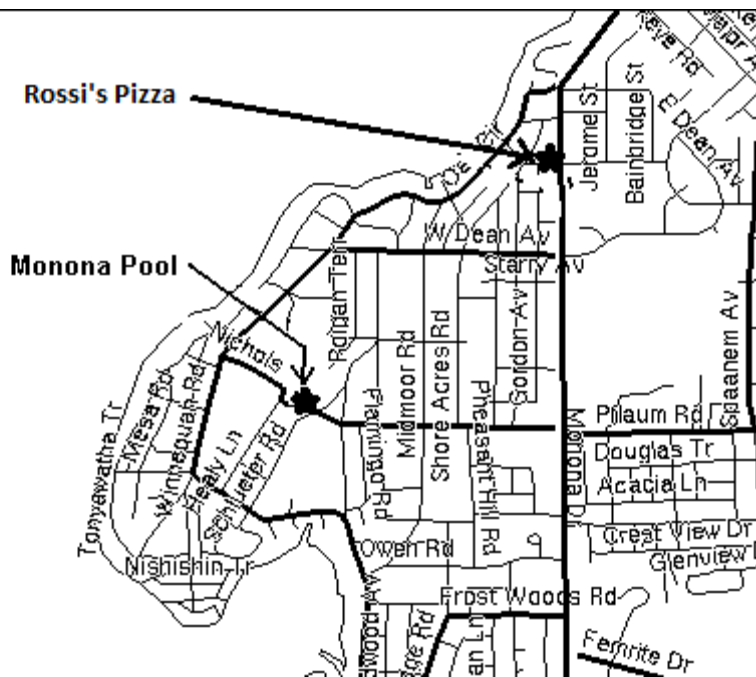
**Pre-registration is required because we need a count for the number of lifeguards. You can RSVP in one of 3 ways. Please choose ONLY ONE. You may RSVP on our webpage (<http://autismsouthcentral.org/events-2/member-pool-party/>), or you can email Nancy Alar ([Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com](mailto:Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com)) with *Monona Swimming* in the subject line and include how many people are coming and how many plan to swim. Or call Nancy Alar ( at 608-222-4378. If no one answers, please leave a message with your name, number attending -both swimming and not swimming - and your phone number. Please speak slowly and clearly.)**

As before, we have been able to reserve the entire Monona pool. They have a large shallow end, diving boards and a great water slide. The pool is very large and you can bring your pool toys. There are changing rooms with showers to get dressed and into your suits.

The Monona Pool is located Behind the Monona Community Center at 1011 Nichols Road (which becomes Pflaum Road at Monona Drive - see map below). Go West on Nichols road about 8 blocks from Monona Drive, past the Monona Library/City Hall sign, and down the hill. The pool is on the right. There is a big parking lot next to the pool entrance. **Don't forget your suit and towel!** Bring shampoo, a comb and an extra towel if you want to wash the chlorine out of your hair. Bring pool toys if you have them.

If you forget to pre-register and we don't have enough lifeguards, it will be first come, first admitted. However, parents or others who come but don't swim can be in the pool area and don't count toward the lifeguard requirement. There's a large selection of lounge chairs if you just want to come and "hang out" (you don't even have to change into a swimsuit). We will also have lemonade and snacks available near the pool. We can get in the changing room at 6:45. We have to be out of the pool at 9:00.

**If the swimming gets rained out (horrors!):** Watch your email for info on this since the pool folks make cancellation decisions at the last minute. But the lifeguards don't let a little thing like cool and cloudy weather stop them. If you don't have email or the weather is "iffy", meet me in the pool parking lot at 7:00 and we'll make a final decision with those who show up. If the lifeguards cancel, I will probably suggest going to Rossi's Pizza Vintage Video game place to hang out since the Monona Library (our previous fall back place for bad weather) isn't open in the evening.



**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](mailto: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. **The AUsome Adult Group** is a support Group for those 18 and older on the autism spectrum that meets at the Goodman Center in Madison every other month on Wednesday evening. You can get more details on this group at <http://autismsouthcentral.org/find-support/ausome-adult-support-group/>
3. **There will be a trip to the Mallard’s game available this year.** July 12, Sunday afternoon at 4 pm. The game is against the Battle Creek Bombers. You will have an option to get dinner (\$18) or a baseball cap (\$10) along with your game ticket.
4. **We are also always in need of volunteers** for our many activities sponsored by the ASC. Please contact [autismsouthcentral@gmail.com](mailto:autismsouthcentral@gmail.com) to get on our volunteer list if you are available to help out with any of our activities.
5. **A-Maze-ing Day 2015 at Treinen Farm in Lodi** Saturday, September 26. More details coming soon on ASC website
6. **Youth Autism Football Camp:** Saturday, October 10 in McFarland. More details coming soon on ASC website.
7. **The annual banquet** has been scheduled for Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, at the Monona Terrace. (This is a scheduling change – it used to be in April). More information will be available soon.

## What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

### Tour of Roxie Stillman's animal farm just east of Madison on Buckeye Rd.; May 17 (Sunday) Noon-2:00 P.M

We had about 20 people turn out for this event. An entire herd of hungry goats and miniature horses rushed up to the fence to greet all of us because they were so glad to see us! Actually, they were so glad to see the carrots we had in our hands. Roxie had to be out of town today, but her sister Mary and her other helpers had provided us with a big bag of carrots to share with the animals. The horses and goats were so enthusiastic about the carrots they literally climbed over each other trying to be the first one in line to snag a carrot.

Some of the animals were a little less pushy. The potbellied pig looked like a small barrel with legs. He was just too fat to go anywhere fast. The llama with the bent nose was a bit shy, but she got her share of carrots too. The big cows were in a pen too far away to have access to the carrots. But the baby calves were in a separate enclosure near the parking lot so we got to see them and feed them separately. Only the guinea hens and the chickens weren't interested in the carrots at all. We even got some visits from (and close up pictures of) the little gophers (ground squirrels?) that were living in the retaining wall.

One little baby goat was so tame several of our party were able to pick it up and carry it around. We got a number of cute pictures of that. Once the original excitement died down, we were able to go into one of the pen with a few of the tamer animals (just 2 of us at a time) so we could get real close and personal with them.

When most of the carrots were gone, it was our turn to get fed. It was a pretty windy day, but Roxie has arranged for one of their garages to be set up with a table and chairs so we could have our lunch there. They had prepared a very nice meal for us with hot dogs, chips, soda and cookies. We were able to sit down out of the wind and enjoy each other's company. We were also able to chat with Mary and the others and ask questions about the farm and the animals. Since the AUsome group had gone to the Roxie's farm in 2001, we do have a scrap book from that time with pictures from that outing 14 years ago. The scrapbook is in pretty rough shape because of its age and handling, but we were gentle with it. Two of the original attendees from 14 years ago (Matt Ward and David Stowell) were also at today's outing.

A big THANKS to Roxie, Mary and the rest of the crew that worked so hard to make it such a fun time at Roxie's farm. Also a big thanks to Rob Streiffer for taking so many great pictures and sharing them with me.

If anyone missed this outing and would like to see the animals at Roxie's place, just get on Buckeye Rd and go east out of Madison. Roxie's place is only about a mile past the interstate on the left. You can stop along the road anytime and see all the animals on the other side of the fence. Many people do this all the time.



## What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

### Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin Summer Picnic at Demetral Park; Saturday, June 6, 2015; 4:00 – 7:00 PM

I am not sure exactly how many AUsome members attended our ASC picnic. In fact, I'm not sure how many people in general attended the picnic. There were just too many to count. However, I do know that about 90 people signed up to attend. I also know that the weather was PERFECT... 70's, no rain, nice breeze. We went through almost 9 gallons of lemonade.

The food was good and plentiful. The pulled pork sandwiches got rave reviews. But some kids wanted to know where the hot dogs were – maybe next year. Thanks to everyone who brought a dish to pass. We had a great variety. No one went home hungry. Many (I was one) kind of wished they hadn't eaten that last piece of cake.

It was nice to sit down and share some personal stories and talk about our common concerns over some good food. It was a relaxing and accepting environment.

There was a nice playground there. A number of people brought some yard games to play. The bubble blowing equipment was a hit. But the wind was kind of strong so it made blowing big bubbles a bit difficult. At least until someone got the bright idea to bring the big bubble pan inside behind the wall (Thanks! you know who you are). Then we were able to make quite a few big bubbles. The automatic bubble blowing machine ran so long the batteries went dead. We made bubbles until the soap ran out.

Because it was so windy we decided to give the kite we bought a try. It was allmmooost windy enough. What an exercise in frustration! Four of us tried for 20 minutes to get the rainbow kite up in the air. It almost made it so many times, but in the end it just wasn't quite windy enough. Maybe next year.

A big thanks to everyone who worked hard to make the picnic a success. Thanks to Harriet who brought the buns and all the supplies from the office, to Danielle who purchased so many of the picnic items, to Julie who made the pulled pork, to Char and Diane who helped set up, to Jack who brought the brooms and helped clean up and, of course, to all those who brought a dish to pass. A good time was had by all.



## 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](mailto: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/find-support/social-and-support-programs/ausome-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 47<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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.