

## 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:** Downhill Tubing at Cascade Mountain  
**When:** March 5, 2015 (**Thursday**) 6:30-8:30 P.M. (Arrive promptly at 6:30!)  
**Where:** Cascade Mountain, W10441 Cascade Mountain Rd, Portage WI (North of Madison; just off I90-94 at exit 106)  
**Cost:** **\$7 per AUsome group member (and their family) (Everyone else is \$15 per person). Bring a copy of this email with you to Cascade Mountain to get the special AUsome rate. Bring extra money to purchase refreshments.**

Sorry for such short notice on this, but the short month kind of snuck up on me. But this opportunity for fun was just too good to pass up. I know the paper copies of the newsletter did not make it out in time for this outing. I did try to call those who got only paper copies who I thought might be interested, but I don't have current phone numbers for everyone. Here is a link to the Cascade Mountain tubing FAQ web site <http://www.cascademountain.com/tubing-faq>. The best things about this activity (besides our special AUsome rate), is they provide the tubes to ride on and you don't have to pull them back up the hill. They have a special "moving sidewalk" that you just hang on to your tube and ride back up the hill.

In order to get our special rate, you MUST meet me at the lobby at Cascade at 6:30 on Thursday with the \$7 ticket fees in check or cash for everyone in your AUsome family group. We have to meet Danielle, the ASC President, to purchase our tickets as a group. If you are late, you will not be able to get the special rate.

It takes about 30 minutes to drive to Cascade Mountain from the East side of Madison. I intend to leave from the East Town Parking lot Culvers restaurant about 6:00. If others want to meet here for possible carpooling, it might be a way to save gas.

The weather forecast for March 5<sup>th</sup> says it will be well below freezing, but at least not below zero. Be sure to dress warm.

Tubing is not without risk. Please exercise caution on the hill. Everyone will need to sign a tubing waiver form. Those under 18 must have a parent or guardian sign.

### **Important Items and Sensory Issues:**

- ☺ Be sure to bring a copy of this email to confirm your AUsome Membership.
- ☺ Your fee is \$7 if you are an AUsome Group member (otherwise it's \$15)
- ☺ Dress warm! It will be about 12 degrees if the forecast is accurate.
- ☺ Feel free to contact Nancy Alar (608-222-4378 / [nancy.l.alar@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.l.alar@gmail.com)) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ [autismsouthcentral@gmail.com](mailto:autismsouthcentral@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.



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- What:** Special Art Program – Insights from Autistic Artists  
**When:** Saturday, April 11, 2015, 1:00 – 2:30 pm. (Presentations start at 1:30)  
**Where:** UW Madison McPherson Eye Research Institute's Mandelbaum & Albert Family Vision Art Gallery, Wisconsin Institutes for Medical Research; 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, On the northern side of the University of Wisconsin Hospital Building Complex in Madison at 1111 Highland Avenue, Madison, WI 53705 (see map on next page)  
**Cost:** Free!

This small UW art museum, hidden away on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of one of the northern parts of the UW Hospital building complex, is not well known to the public. It specializes in visually interesting artwork – hence the eye research connection. From January to May of 2015 this museum is featuring an exhibit composed completely of works by artists with disabilities. Three of the artists on the autism spectrum will be at the exhibit on April 11 to take part in a program showcasing their art contribution to the exhibit. Either the artist or their spokesperson will explain briefly what art means to them and the impact art has had on their life. There will be time to interact with the artists and to ask them questions. Some of the artists will have works available for sale. There will also be time to view the entire exhibit and learn about the background of the exhibit from the museum director, Gail Stirr. Refreshments will be served.

One of the autistic artists whose work is on display and who will be presenting is AUsome member Matt Ward. His part of the exhibit is a rolling electronic display of over 100 fractal graphic pictures, including a brief explanation of the mathematics behind the “Asian Pillow” series embedded within his display. (This will make sense if you see it.)

### **Parking and Elevator Logistics:**

As with anything on the UW campus, parking is a problem. The good news is since it is Saturday, parking is easier. See the map on the next page. You can park in the Waisman Center Parking Lot or Lot 82 for free if you can find a space there. Do NOT park in lot 74. You will get a ticket there. You can also park in the University Hospital parking lot (but that will cost money) and then walk down to Highland Ave and around the Health Sciences Learning Center to get to the starred entrance. The extension of Marsh Lane is a driveway where you can drop people off near the door and then go park.

Go through the block of entrance doors at the red star and across the lobby to the elevators. The elevators in the lobby are a bit unusual. Read the signs about how to operate them. You have to push the button in the lobby for the 9<sup>th</sup> floor and then read the display for the letter of the elevator to board to take you to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor. There are no buttons to push inside the elevators.

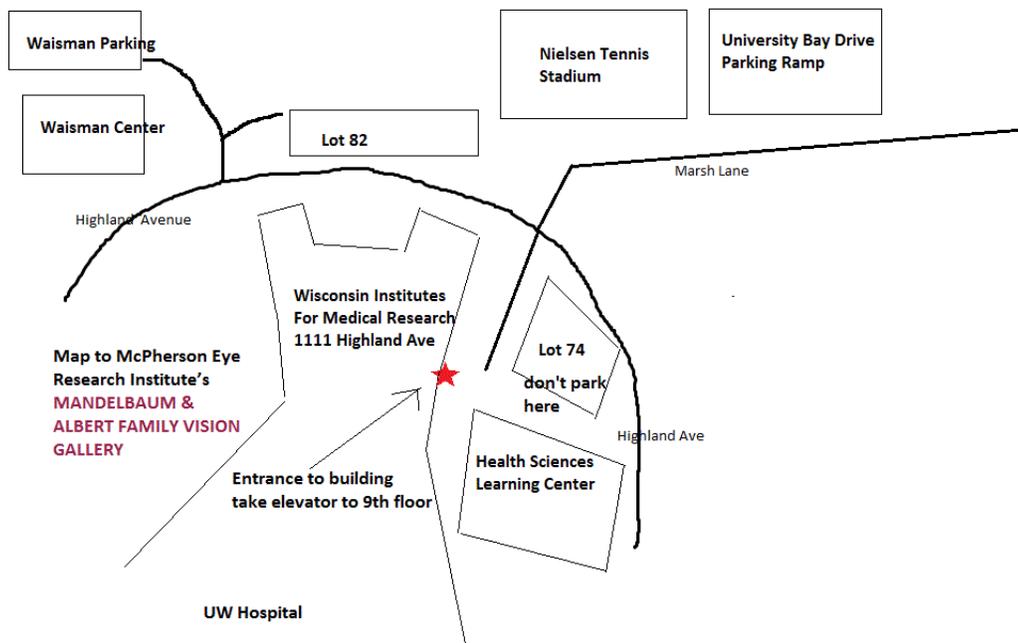
Please RSVP to Nancy Alar at (608-222-4378 or [nancy.l.alar@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.l.alar@gmail.com)) if you plan on coming so we have an approximate count for refreshments. Thanks in advance for doing this.

### **Important Items and Sensory Issues:**

- ☺ This should be a quiet activity and a friendly place for those with sensory issues.
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if you need to.
- ☺ Allow time to find a parking place.



## Map to Art Gallery for April 11, 2015 AUsome outing



### 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. 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/>
2. **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.
3. **One Walk, Big Strides for Autism, Sunday, April 12, 2015 at the Vilas Park Shelter in Madison.** There will be an AUsome team at the walk again this year. You can register for the walk for \$15 instead of \$20 if you register with the AUsome team. Here is a link to the walk portion of our website <http://autismsouthcentral.org/events-2/one-walk-big-strides-for-autism/> that has all the details about the walk. Contact either Nancy Alar (608-222-4378 / [nancy.l.alar@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.l.alar@gmail.com)) or the ASC office (608-630-9147/ [autismsouthcentral@gmail.com](mailto:autismsouthcentral@gmail.com)) if you have questions and don't have web access. Because of the special AUsome team, I recommend that you print out the registration form and mail it in rather than trying to register on-line.

## What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

### 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Madfest Juggling Show; January 17, 2015 (Saturday) 7:00-9:00 P.M

This was the usual screwball show but with a different MC this year. The New MC (Dan Holzman) inserted several funny and entertaining "bits" between acts. He did things like juggling 3 stuffed elephants, knocking a cigar from a volunteer's mouth with a paddle ball, teaching audience members to balance spinning bowls with balls in them and balance golf clubs. The folks sitting around me agreed that the new MC had his own kind of talent charm, but we still liked Mark Hayward the best. Maybe that was because those of us on the spectrum don't deal well with change and we've been watching Mark for so many years. We had a minor glitch this year when we arrived at the Barrymore and discovered that no one had roped off our special seating section for us. But we scrambled around and got some help to fix that and everything worked out fine.

The opening act was a truly impressive team of unicycle riders. I don't think any of them were older than 18 and the youngest was about 7. There were about 10 riders on the stage at the same time. They did tricks like pedaling with only one foot and pushing with the wheel instead of the pedals. They rode around the stage in a big figure 8 and other complex patterns weaving in and out with each other. They all looked so comfortable on those unicycles it was like they had ridden them all their lives.

Sam Karschnia was a really good juggler. He had a bunch of blue balls that he could juggle behind his back while balancing a white club on his head.

The Cool Guyz was the name of the team of local club passing jugglers this year (they change it every year). This team features my favorite juggler, Melon Head. This year Melon Head wore a rainbow wig which was rather tame behavior for him. It was clear that the Cool Guyz were fabulous jugglers as they stood in a circle and passed a hail of clubs across the center and did other complex patterns. They only dropped stuff once in a while, but they were having a great time.

Brian P Dailey did an unusual act that featured spinning whistling tubes and moving across the floor by balancing on 3 soccer-sized orange balls. This was one of those acts that are impossible to describe. You had to see it.

Book Kennison did a complex juggling act with clubs. He also came back later in the program with a different and even more impressive juggling act. Book must be double jointed and he showed off this unusual skill as part of this 2<sup>nd</sup> juggling act. It was weird to see someone juggle with his shoulders seemingly dislocated.

Hans Lieberdich was able to jump rope while standing on a big roller. That looked pretty impossible to me, but then he jumped rope on the roller again – blindfolded this time! He had everyone in the audience laughing when he brought an audience member (Mike) and Mike's girlfriend up to help him prove that the blindfold was real. Hans put the blindfold on Mike and while Mike verified that he couldn't see anything, Hans was making a pass at his girlfriend. The audience loved it. Then Hans continued his act by juggling knives (very sharp – also verified by Mike) and for the grand finale he juggled the knives blind-folded!

Gini Knight did a very impressive and lovely trapeze act.

Patrick McGuire was the final act. He used lots of props like an open umbrella, a whole bunch of white balls, a spinning suitcase and a set of red balls. I think he had once been featured in Cirque du Soleil. He was a really good and very unique juggler, using every part of his body to manipulate the objects, not just his hands. Once again, it is hard to describe what he did.

As usual, it was cold this year, but not near zero like it usually is. A special thanks to Steve at the Barrymore, the Madison Jugglers, and my daughter Liz and her friends who helped out as volunteers. A good time was had by all.

Also thanks to all attendees for your patience in working with us to adapt to the changes allowing for the on-line sign up for the juggling show tickets. We will be using this type of application more in the future.

## **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; Saturday, February 21, 2015, 4:00 – 6:30**

This was a great afternoon for anyone interested in sports, especially hockey. There was a bit of confusion around our ticket lists, but we did get this sorted out and there were plenty of good seats to choose from. A big thanks to Badgers With a Heart for their volunteer work helping to get everyone seated and passing out “fidgets”.

The game was really interesting to watch. Our team was the Madison Timberwolves. Our team captain was Evan Halpop, a longtime member of the AUsome Social Group. He was our goalie. Our opponents were the Chicago Blackhawks Special Team (formerly known as the Tomahawks). As arranged by our Autism Society President, Danielle Tolzmann, the hockey game environment was made more sensory friendly by reduced noise levels and lighting.

The game was played in a regular time frame with 3 fifteen minute periods. Unlike a regular game there was a “line change” every 2 minutes where the “first string” players would yield the ice to the “second string” players and vice versa. The first string players on both sides were really quite good. They could skate really well and there was a lot of action on the ice. The second string players were the rookies who were still learning, but it was really gratifying seeing them doing their best and seeing how proud they were to have “ice time”.

There was one adaptation that was kind of confusing for me and other audience members. In a normal hockey game, the goals switch team ownership at the end of each period. That didn’t happen in the special game. Each team used the same goal throughout the game. I think that helped the players who were still learning avoid confusion. But at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period, a lot of the audience thought the players were shooting for the wrong goals and loudly expressed that opinion. But the scoring soon cleared up the confusion. It would have helped if the announcer had made that fact about the goal ownership clear.

The good news is the Madison Timberwolves won 13 to 10.

After the game we went down to the basement of the coliseum to have pizza and refreshments. We were greeted there by Bucky Badger himself and also the Hawk mascot from the Blackhawk team. Team members from both teams and their fans, family and friends also joined us.

It was a big and noisy crowd with more sensory issues than the hockey game, but pizza covers a host of “issues”. In spite of all the noise and confusion, I didn’t see any meltdowns. Richard, Jack and Jonas decided to stay for the regular Capitol’s hockey game. But I’d had enough hockey so I went home. Thanks again to Badgers with a Heart for helping pass out the pizza.



## 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.