

## 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

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- What:** Bus Trip to Cave Of The Mounds with stop afterwards at Culver's in Verona
- When:** Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017, 1 -7pm;
- Where:** Bus leaves from and returns to parking lot of Autism Society office, 437 S. Yellowstone Dr., Madison WI 53719
- Cost:** \$7 per person includes entry to the cave plus bus ride. Bring extra money for food at Culver's

Thanks to our Capital Times Kid's Fund grant, we are able to rent a bus to take us for a tour of the Cave of the Mounds this year. The bus only holds 38 people so you must register to reserve your seat. The cost for the whole bus trip and one hour cave tour is only \$7. This is a really good deal since admission to the cave alone is usually \$17.50. The bus will be stopping at Culver's in Verona on the way back, so bring money for treats there. We anticipate being back at the office parking lot about 7pm. If you want to come with us on the tour, but want to drive there in your own car, you can do that for the reduced tour cost of \$7. Friends and family members are welcome to come along for the same \$7 price.

You can register and pay for the trip to Cave of the Mounds at this link. <http://autismsouthcentral.org/events/cave-of-the-mounds/> If you don't have internet access, you can call the ASC office at 608-630-9147 to confirm there is still space. Then mail a check to the Autism Society of South Central WI, 437 S Yellowstone Dr Suite 217A, Madison WI 53719. The check must be received by Wednesday, Sept 13.

**The bus will be leaving from the parking lot of 437 S. Yellowstone Dr. at 1pm so be sure to arrive on time so you don't miss it.** If for some reason you do miss the bus you can drive to the Cave of the Mounds and catch up with our tour there. Here is a link to the Cave of the Mounds web site if you want to know more about the tour there. <https://www.caveofthemounds.com/>

The Cave tour lasts about an hour. It takes about half an hour to drive to the cave, but there will be some extra time needed to load the bus on each end. Plus we will spend a few minutes in the gift shop before we leave. We will probably spend an hour at Culver's in Verona on the way back. We estimate a return to the parking lot about 7pm.

For the Cave tour be aware that it is always 50 degrees inside the cave so dress accordingly. The guided tour of the Cave takes you past a varied collection of colorful stalactites, stalagmites, columns and other formations. The walking tour follows paved and lighted walkways on a stroll that's easy for all ages.

### Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ If you are riding the bus, be sure to be in the parking lot at 1pm so you don't miss the bus
- ☺ It will be 50 degrees in the Cave - Dress appropriately
- ☺ Bring money for a snack at Culver's in Verona
- ☺ Bring money if you might want something from the gift shop.



**What:** Treinen Farm night tour of the corn maze with a bonfire and S'mores.  
**When:** October 14, 2017 (Saturday), 7:00 - 9:00 pm (We'll be doing the corn maze in the dark – spooky!)  
**Where:** Treinen Farm 5 miles west of Lodi on State Road 60. See directions below  
**Cost:** Bonfire is free. Each AUsome member gets 1 corn maze ticket courtesy of ASC- Additional Corn maze tickets for family and friends are \$10 for 6 and older, \$6 for age 3 - 5, age 2 and under free. You don't have to do the maze. Sitting around the bonfire and making S'mores is covered by ASC funds.

A big thanks to Alan and Angie, owners of Treinen Farm for working with us to make this exciting event happen. The picture in the corn maze is different every year. This year the corn maze picture features a big trilobite and other ancient creatures (see picture below)

Because of some Autism Society Staffing changes, we aren't having the full A-Maze-ing Day activities this year. But we decided we can still do our traditional AUsome night bonfire. For our AUsome Group activity, we'll have a big bonfire site reserved where we can sit around and enjoy burning up some wood, making S'mores and hanging out. If you want to just hang out at the bonfire you can join me there. I'm not planning to go in the maze. When you enter the farm, be sure to mention that you are with the AUsome Group. They will direct you to the bonfire area where I will record your arrival and direct you to where you can get your maze tickets if you want to do that. **Remember to bring a flash light with fresh batteries, especially if you are going to do the maze!**

We'll have an AUsome gathering around a bonfire with or without a trip through the corn maze. I'll provide the fixings for the S'mores and sticks to roast marshmallows. This activity will go on rain or shine. If it looks like rain, bring an umbrella. If it rains too hard, we'll eat the chocolate bars in the barn! **RSVP's to Nancy Alar at 608-222-4378 or [Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com](mailto:Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com) are appreciated but not required.**

If you are feeling adventurous, it's kind of fun to try to find your way through the corn maze at night. Busloads of people actually come out to the farm after dark just to do this.

Corn Maze Details - This is the centerpiece of the farm activity. As you enter the maze you get 2 things, the 1<sup>st</sup> of 8 pieces of the maze map and a stapled shut "cheat" copy of the whole maze map. You have to follow the clues on the 1<sup>st</sup> piece of the map to find the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece. If you make it back with all 8 map pieces without opening your "cheat" map, you win a piece of candy. There are 8 special places in the maze where you can find paper punches to punch holes in your map. If you find and punch these special places, you can win prizes.

You can find directions and more details about the farm at <http://www.treinenfarm.com/>. The basic directions to get there are pretty simple. Take I90/I94 north of Madison to the State Road 60 exit to Lodi. Follow State Road 60 West through Lodi and out the other side. The farm is about 5 miles west of Lodi on State Road 60 on your right. Parking is across the road on the left and you walk through a tunnel under the road to reach the farm. It takes about 45 minutes to drive there from the east side of Madison.

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

- ☺ The maze may be crowded, even after dark.
- ☺ Bring a Flashlight with fresh batteries
- ☺ Bring an umbrella if it looks like rain
- ☺ Dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy shoes.
- ☺ Bring a coat or heavy sweatshirt just in case. It can get quite chilly after dark.

Treinen Farm 2017 Corn Maze features a trilobite and other ancient creatures (Angie Treinen designs the maze each year herself using a computer package.)



### **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 [info@autismsouthcentral.org](mailto:info@autismsouthcentral.org) 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** This support group is for adults (18 and over) with Autism Spectrum Disorders and those who suspect they may have an ASD. The group meets the third Wednesday of every other month (Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov) to discuss life issues and support one another. Time 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Location Vantage Place II Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, ASC Office conference room - 437 S. Yellowstone Dr. Madison, WI. You can get more details on this group at <http://autismsouthcentral.org/find-support/ausome-adult-support-group/>

Note that the AUsome Adult Group (AAG) will be holding the election for the group Facilitator (the person who leads the meetings – currently Jack Steinberg) and the group Administrator (the person who maintains the mailing list and other administrative functions – currently Ben Gruhl) in January 2018. The Autism Society Office will be accepting nominations for these positions starting in November 2017.

3. **Monthly Game Night Activity.** This is a new activity for teens and young adults separate from the AUsome Social Group. The focus is on board and card games. This happens every month on the 4th Monday of the month; 6:30 – 8:30 pm. The location is the Madison College Health Education Information Technology Building, 1705 Hoffman St (across the street from the main Truax campus), Room 101 (room is subject to change – look for signs).
4. **We are also always in need of volunteers** for our many activities sponsored by the ASC. Please contact [info@autismsouthcentral.org](mailto:info@autismsouthcentral.org) to get on our volunteer list if you are available to help out with any of our activities.

## **What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?**

### **Miniature Golf at Vitense Golfland; Saturday, July 8, 2017, 6 - 8 pm**

We had 41 people show up for our AUsome mini-golf outing. And we had great weather for it too. We planned it for later in the evening so we didn't have to spend a lot of time out in the hot sun. This worked out very well. They have 2 outdoor and one indoor mini golf course at Vitense. Even though the weather was really great, one person decided to do the indoor course due to sensory issues.

At least one person was having such a good time they decided to go around more than once. I (Nancy Alar) ended up sitting in the club house talking to people instead of golfing. A combination of bad knees, the need to sign in late comers and the joy of chatting with old friends kept me from getting out on the course. But I do know there were plenty of challenges with things like water hazards and booby trapped holes. I just can't tell you who won the rounds and who made the great "hole in one" shots.

Thanks to Hallie Evenson of the Vitense staff for her help in setting up this activity. She even arranged for us to be able to get some "treat tickets" at a reduced price for those who wanted to get some simple snacks afterwards. But some of us bypassed the chance for the simple snacks and ordered full meals of sandwiches from the club house menus. Also thanks to the Capital Times Kid's Fund for their financial support of this activity. It helped us keep the cost down to a very reasonable level.

### **Private Swimming Party at Monona Pool – August 5, 2017**

Just like last year, the weather was perfect at swimming time. We started swimming at 7:00 in the evening. It was sunny and in the high '70's when we started. We had our usual great turnout with about 60 people. Most of them even went swimming. Those who didn't swim had a good time relaxing in the deck chairs around the pool.

As usual, the water slide was a big hit. I tried to get pictures of those coming out of the water slide, but with mixed results. It's hard to catch the shot at just the right moment as the slider goes "whooshing" by. The diving boards and the deck lounge chairs got a lot of use. Some people bought pool "noodles" and other water toys. Jack brought his cool submarine toy again that could "fly" underwater. It didn't even have a motor. All you had to do was throw it in the water at an angle. He even lost it for a while when it tucked itself into a corner of the pool, but he eventually found it before we left. Jack even went home with an extra pool noodle. If anyone is missing one, check with Jack.

Thanks to the lifeguards at the Monona Pool for all their help getting us set up and assisting our folks getting ready for swimming. As the evening wore on and the sun started to go down, the air started to get a bit chilly. By 9:00pm the swimmers didn't need much encouragement to get out of the pool and dry off.

Also like last year we had popcorn and lemonade for refreshments. We ate an entire gigantic bag of popcorn and then half of another bag. There wasn't any lemonade left either. Others brought chips and they were gone by the end too. Thanks to those who brought something to share with the group. It was a great time.



## 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 ASC, call 608-630-9147, email [info@autismsouthcentral.org](mailto:info@autismsouthcentral.org) or send a note to Autism Society, 437 S Yellowstone Dr, Suite 217A, Madison, WI 53719. See the ASC 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).

The Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin is an affiliate of the Autism Society of America, a nationwide organization. However, membership in ASC does not include membership in the Autism Society of America. The ASC serves South Central Wisconsin with reach into Southwest Wisconsin – Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Iowa, Rock, Green, Lafayette, Grant, Richland and Crawford counties are in our service area. Membership in 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 our local 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/ 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 Americka (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 annual Madfest Juggling show. In August we have a private pool party at the Monona Pool. Every November we have "video/board game/socialization 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.