

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:** **Game/Socialization Night and Pizza at McFarland Municipal Center** (same place as last year - If you bring a TV set/video game setup, bring extra controllers and extension cords)
- When:** **Saturday, November 10, 2018, 6:30 – 8:30 pm**
- Where:** **McFarland Municipal Center (5915 Milwaukee St, McFarland, WI 53558 - see map on next page)**
- Cost:** **Free! Pizza and soft drinks provided by ASC**

For many years in the past we had this activity at the Midvale Church, but the McFarland location has worked out better for us for a bunch of reasons. One problem is the McFarland location is not on a bus line. If you need help with transportation, please give Nancy Alar a call at 608-222-4378 and we will try to find someone to give you a ride. The good news is there is no steep stairway we need to negotiate and we should get cell phone reception unlike at the church. I will bring all our old scrapbooks to look through and the newest pictures.

Please RSVP by Thursday, Nov. 8 so I know who is coming, what game gear/TV setups you can bring and how many pizzas we need. You can RSVP on-line at this website <http://autismsouthcentral.org/events/video-game-night/> or you can call Nancy at 608-222-4378. We will probably order the pizzas from Spartan Pizza in McFarland again. We should have a fairly good turnout, since this has been one of our most popular activities in past years. Even though the address for the building is Milwaukee Street, the main parking lot is on the side of the building facing Anthony Street. The sign on the building entrance from the parking lot says McFarland Municipal Center.

Come in the front door that faces the parking lot, we will be in the big meeting room on the left. There is a map attached below. Cost is FREE and includes all the pizza and soda you can eat! Thanks to the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin for covering the cost of the food! Parents are welcome to stay but don't have to if your family member can manage on their own. I'll need some help with setup and cleanup. We will start setting up at 6:00. We will need to leave the room as we found it. We should be out of the building by 9:00.

We are bringing 2 projectors and Matt Ward's Nintendo 64 (with race games). I know this is old technology, but it still works. **I do need others to bring your complete TV/game setups. The TV's and extension cords are the most critical since TV's are hard to lug around and lots of things need to be plugged in. If you can bring a "splitter" for extension cords, that helps too. Even if you can't bring a TV/game setup, bring any extra controllers you have!** With multiple controllers, more than one person can play a game. Note that a game machine without a TV is not usable, so either bring the whole thing or just your extra controllers. The emphasis here is on fun with multiple players, so try to bring games that more than one can play. **Please don't bring really violent games or other inappropriate things.** Please come even if you have no game gear to bring. With multiple player setups we should do fine. Even if you don't want to play you can come to watch and eat pizza. If you have a dance-dance revolution game, be sure to bring the mat and cables.

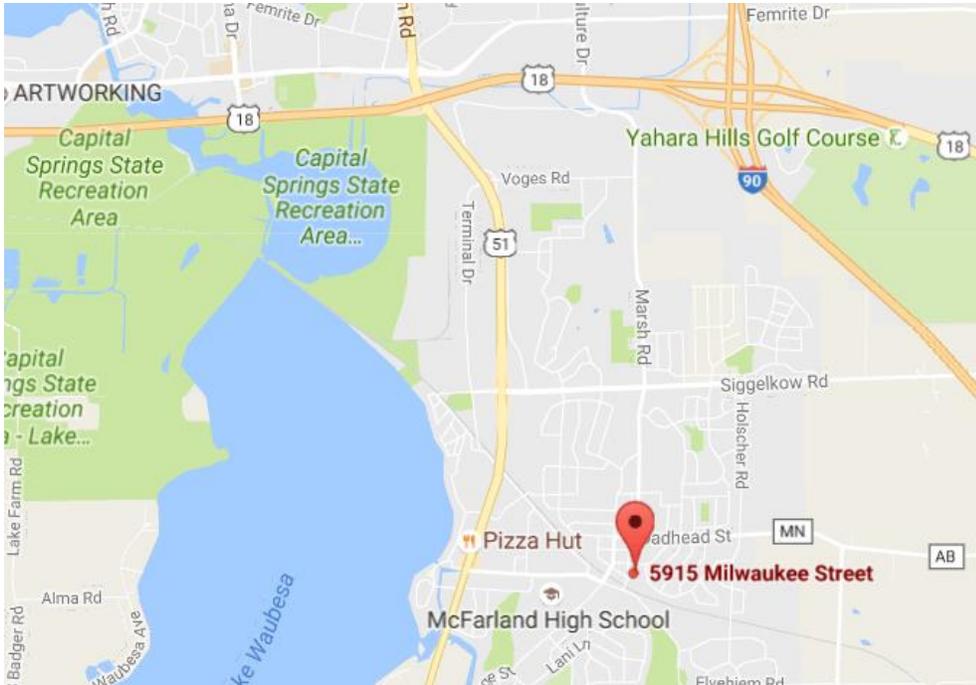
Feel free to bring board games or other such activities if you would prefer something non-electronic. There should be plenty to do. As always, feel free to leave early if you need to. I'll arrange for the pizza to be delivered at 7:00. Soft drinks and carrots will also be provided. If you would like to bring a dessert to share, that would be appreciated.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

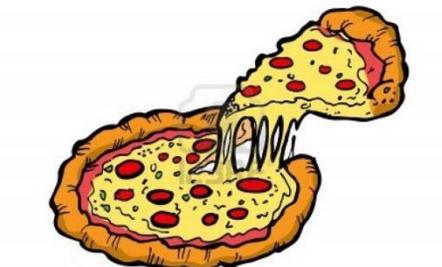
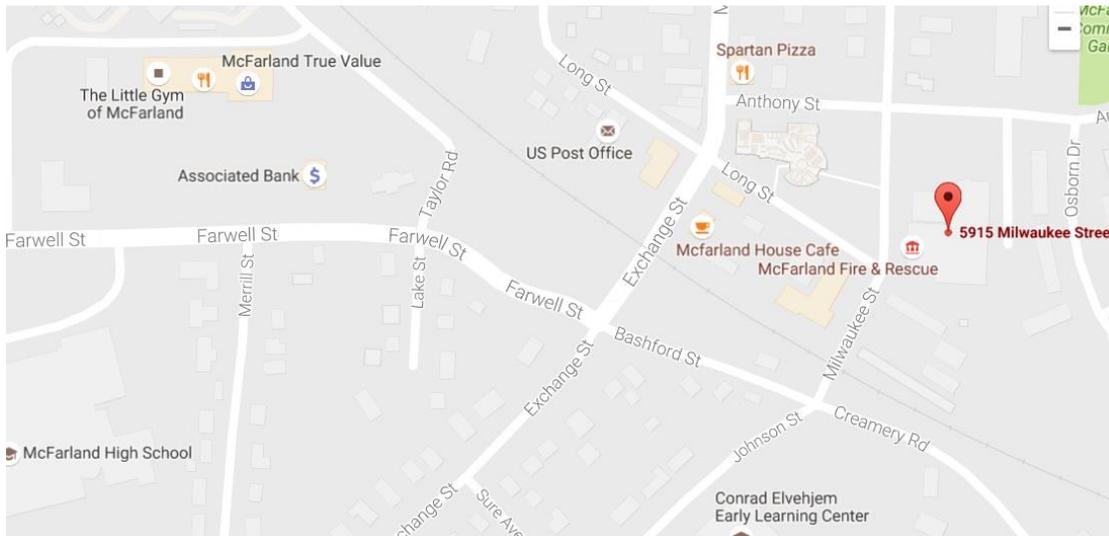
- ☉ **Label everything that you bring with your name – There are often duplicate game items**
- ☉ There will be a noise level with some yelling
- ☉ Bring Board games if you prefer
- ☉ Bring your TV/game gear setup; Bring any extra game controllers even if you don't bring a full setup.
- ☉ **Bring extra extension cords** – the power outlets are scattered.
- ☉ Bring a dessert to share if you want to.

Maps to McFarland Municipal (Community) Center

Go south on 51 from Beltline toward McFarland. Turn left at Farwell Street by Culvers



Here's a more close up map. Parking lot is on Anthony Street.



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- What: Breakfast with Santa (Help as a volunteer and/or visit with Santa)**
When: December 8, 2018 (Saturday), 9am – Noon; (You don't have to come the whole time)
Where: Good Shepard Catholic Church, 1128 St. James Ct., Madison, WI
Cost: Free; Breakfast of bacon, eggs and gluten free pancakes included.
Volunteers will help families with breakfast seating and craft activities.
See Instructions below to register to attend

This activity is the result of a new partnership between the Knights of Columbus Madison Council #531 and the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC). The goal of this activity is to provide a place where families with children with autism and other disabilities can have a fun morning together. Adults with autism and other disabilities are also welcome to eat breakfast and join in the fun. Attendees can visit Santa in a relaxed and sensory friendly environment, have a nutritious free breakfast and participate in some fun craft activities.

The Knights are donating their time and cooking expertise to make the breakfast for us and all the other attendees. They will be serving us juice, scrambled eggs, bacon and gluten free pancakes. ASC volunteers (this is where AUsome Social Group members may want to help out) will assist families as they get their breakfast to help them get seated, carry trays, locate extra syrup, etc. and just make them feel welcome. It will be especially helpful for families with younger children to get a chance to interact with older folks on the spectrum.

Along with the good food and socializing, attendees (especially kids) will be able to participate in some simple fun activities either before or after eating. These activities will also be an opportunity for AUsome volunteers to help out and interact some more with families. We currently plan to be doing the following activities (but we may change this list a bit depending on creativity and supply availability) :

- Making, frosting and decorating mini-donuts (some gluten free donuts will be available)
- Folding origami cranes for tree ornaments
- Coloring in Holiday coloring books

Our other helping volunteers from the UW – the “Badgers with a Heart” Student group are planning on also joining us as volunteers, but we can all work together to make this a fun time. We will need folks to cook the donuts in our electric donut maker and help attendees with the frosting and sprinkles application. We'll need experienced (or trainable) origami crane folders to help attendees fold their paper birds and put hanging threads through them. And we'll need helpers at the coloring table. We will also need some helpers for Santa. Since everyone gets to eat breakfast, we'll need enough volunteers to give other volunteers a break to eat.

So if you want to volunteer for the autism community, have a fun time and interact with families with younger children on the autism spectrum, come join us for a great free breakfast. If you just want to get a chance for a free breakfast and/or socialize and see Santa, come join us too. This event was organized with a focus on the autism spectrum but everyone dealing with a disability and their families are welcome.

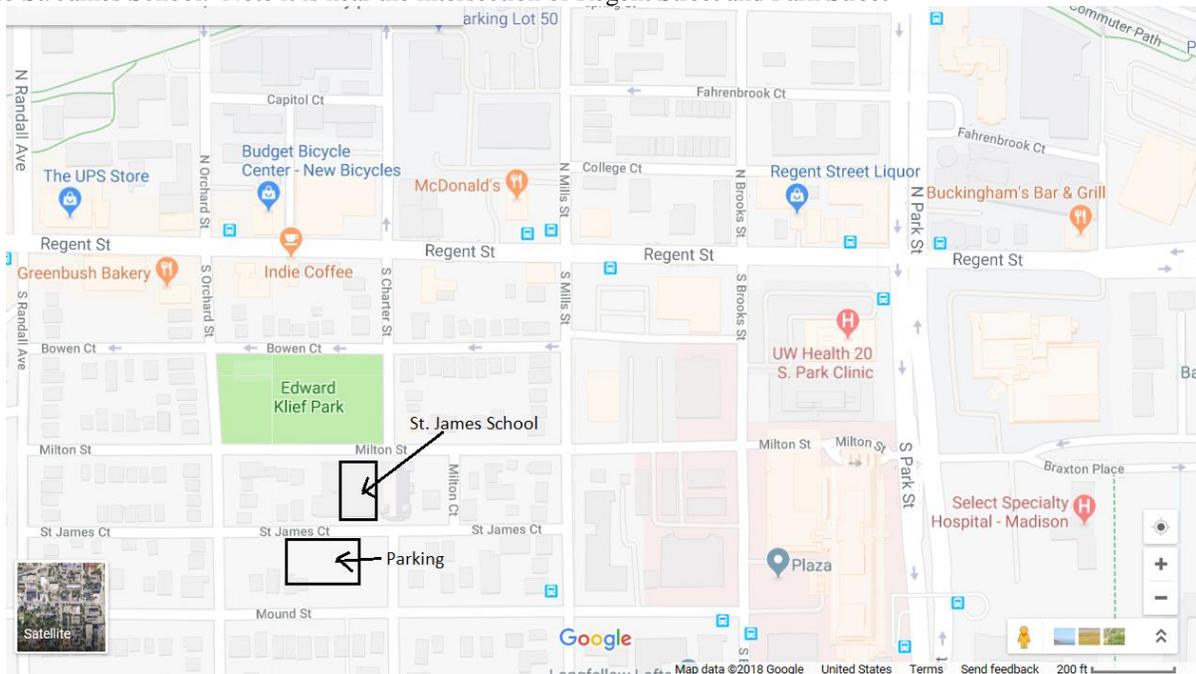
The breakfast and activities are free but please pre-register at <https://autismsouthcentral.org/events/breakfast-with-santa/> or call the ASC office at 608-630-9147 by November 27 so we know how much food we will need.

Parking is free in a parking lot across St James Ct. from the school. Look for signs on the doors for the breakfast. A BIG thanks for the Knights Of Columbus for all their planning, hard work, cooking skills and financial support for this great activity!

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ⊙ There may be an increasing noise level in the breakfast area if we have a large turnout. We will have a “quiet room” available where attendees can take a break. Consider coming early or late if crowds are a concern.
- ⊙ There may be a need to wait in line for a short time to get food and/or see Santa
- ⊙ Some people on the spectrum are sensitive to being with other people when they are eating. There will obviously be a lot of people eating at this activity.

Map to St. James School. Note it is near the intersection of Regent Street and Park Street



What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

Treinen Farm – night tour of the corn maze with a bonfire and S'mores; September 22, 2018; 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

We had a lovely evening and beautiful weather, really warm for this time of year. It was even light enough when we got there that they were still running the pond gourd sling shot game just a few yards away from our bonfire. Richard is always up for trying this game and is a great shot with it to boot. As always, he did manage to win a pumpkin by hitting the floating pond target with a gourd. So I gave him some money and he won me a pumpkin!

It was very peaceful and beautiful. I still have one bad knee so I had no desire to go into the maze. Most of the folks who showed up were up for the challenge of the maze so I spent a lot of time burning up wood (which was fine with me – keeping a fire going is my favorite activity). We had a lovely fire that was just right (except when it really flamed up as I loaded it with a new round of logs) for roasting marshmallows. And we made good use of it.

We had about 14 people go into the maze and 3 just sat around the fire. I got smarter this year and brought a stand up lantern so we didn't have to rely completely on flash lights. It made it a lot easier to handle the Smore's supplies.

Angie Treinen came and hung out with us for a while, telling us details about the maze and the changes they continue to make to the farm. A big thanks to the Treinen's for donating the bonfire location and corn maze entry to the AUsome Social Group this year. We really appreciate their generosity. It was a relaxing evening. We went home content and smelling of wood smoke.

ARC Dane County Halloween Dance and Costume Party at Pooley's - October 28, 2018 (Sunday), 2:30 – 4:00 pm

This dance was a really big deal! I had never gone to this before. The ARC Dane County does this every year and has for a long time. It is one of their biggest events. They sent out over 400 tickets to various agencies and they had a bigger turnout than usual this year. I think when I got there a little after 2pm there were over 200 people in their large dance hall.

When you combine that with the fact there was a Packer game that afternoon which filled up the rest of Pooley's sports bar, the parking lot was completely full. I was really lucky to find a parking spot when someone left, especially since it was raining lightly when I got there.

There were even more attendees than it looked like since buses kept coming to drop off a new bunch of attendees and then pick up earlier arrivals in a transportation rotation. They started passing out the pizza and snacks at 2:00. So the fact that we started our activity at 2:30 lined up well with the important events. They had a couple rounds of pizza and snacks that were passed out by volunteers. When you checked in you got a ticket to turn in for a soft drink at the bar. I think they ran out of soft drinks about 3:15 because they had such a big turnout.

They also awarded costume prizes more than once, but I didn't get close enough to the dance floor to figure out what the rules were for that or even what the prizes were. The dance floor was crowded and even had a fog machine. The DJ did a good job with the usual fun things like the chicken dance, YMCA, etc. Also there were a lot of interesting costumes. David was dressed as Shrek while another AUsome member was decked out as Waldo.

I ended up helping the ARC staff take care of the registration table and check people in. The music and the crowd were really loud, but things quieted down a bit after 3:00 because the crowd started to thin out then. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

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 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 month to discuss life issues and support one another. Time 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Location Vantage Place II Building, 2nd 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/>
3. **Monthly Screen Free Game Night Activity**. This activity for teens and young adults is 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 to get on our volunteer list if you are available to help out with any of our activities.
 5. **Day with the Experts: Autism** is being planned for **January 26, 2019** 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 the registration coming soon and on the Waisman Website - <https://www.waisman.wisc.edu/outreach/waisman-center-day-with-experts/> .
6. **The annual conference of the Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) will be April 11-13, 2019 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells**. 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/>.

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 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/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 our 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 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.