

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 19, 2019 (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: \$20 (\$15 if ASC members) See ticket ordering details below

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 may do yoyos, spinning tops, unicycles, jump ropes and many other things that seem to defy the laws of physics. It’s different every year and you never know what you are going to see these crazy people do. Sometimes the stuff is just impossible to describe if you weren’t there to see it! 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 the juggling convention web site, see <https://madjugglers.com/madfest/>

The base ticket price is \$20, however, we are going to give a \$5 discount to members of the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin (ASC) who purchase the tickets for themselves and their group in advance from us (Note that an individual annual ASC membership costs \$15 while a family membership is \$30 so this is a great membership value). Show attendees who want to sit in our special autism-friendly section, but are not ASC members will be able to purchase tickets at our cost of \$20. This allows you to sit in our special seating section and also avoids the on-line processing fee. 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 events like our February winter pool party and reduced cost to other ASC activities. You can check your ASC membership status at any time by emailing info@autismsouthcentral.org or calling the ASC office (608-630-9147). Include your full name, family name and email address in your verification request to help us check your status. If you call, speak slowly and clearly and be sure to include the return phone number for the call back.

Do NOT order tickets from the Barrymore or Juggling show website if you want to be part of our special seating section for the AUsome Group and get the \$15 reduced cost.

In the past, there has been a lot of confusion about who had a current ASC membership when purchasing juggling show tickets at the ASC ticket link. To avoid this confusion and simplify things, we’re asking those ordering juggling show tickets at the reduced \$15 membership rate to check with the ASC office if they are not completely sure they have a current ASC membership. ASC memberships need to be renewed each year for either \$15 (individual) or \$30 (family). You get a new ASC membership card each time you renew. Our office staff will process your juggling show ticket order and check your membership status. If your ASC membership is not current, but you ordered tickets at the member price, the office will send you an invoice for a single membership to bring your membership up to date.

To give us time to process your order, the deadline for ordering tickets is Tuesday, January 15th. Here’s the link to the ASC ticket ordering website. <http://autismsouthcentral.org/event/juggling/>

At this link you can indicate how many tickets you would like. You can also indicate if you are ordering at the reduced member price (\$15) or at the regular price (\$20). If you know you are not a current ASC member and would like to become one, there will be a link on this juggling show page to our membership page. There you can join and pay the membership fee to qualify for the lower ticket price. When you order tickets, you will also be asked to provide a cell phone number for emergency contact the night of the show. You’ll be able to pay for the tickets with a credit card or with a PayPal account. After you order your tickets, the office will verify your ASC membership.

Our Executive Assistant (Catherine Streiffer) will be out of town for much of the early part of January. So **get your ticket orders in as early as possible**, especially if you need help in checking your membership status.

If you want to pay for your tickets with a check instead of using the web site, contact the ASC office (608-630-9147/ info@autismsouthcentral.org) to confirm the ticket count, membership status, emergency cell phone number and the total cost before you mail your check to the ASC office. We must have the payment at the office by Tuesday, January 15 to be able to get your tickets. **I hope you can join us for this always fun activity.**

The show has sold out in many past years. It kind of depends on the weather. I will be buying all our tickets at once from the theatre on Thursday Jan. 17th (so we can give our membership discounts) which is why our deadline for payment is Tuesday, Jan. 15th. 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 the ASC office 608-630-9147 or me (Nancy Alar – 608-222-4378) 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. **Do not go to the regular ticket window to get your tickets unless you arrive very late.**

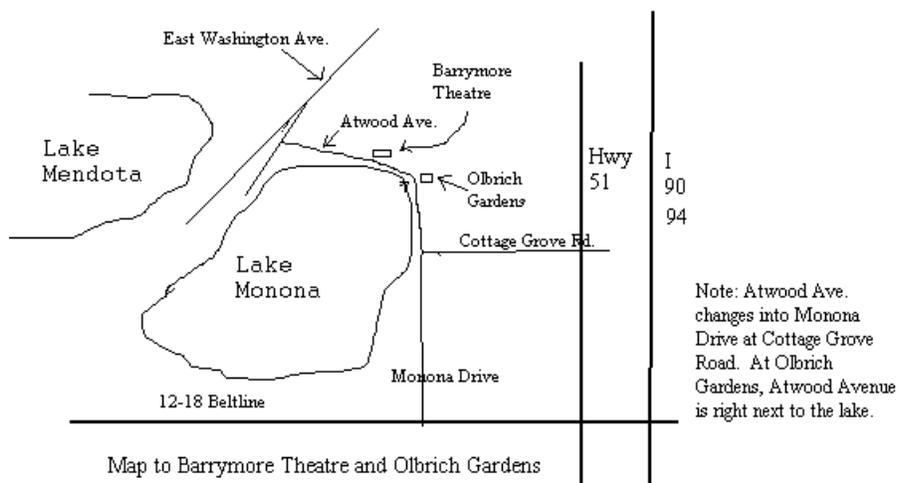
As before, they are setting aside a special section for us so we can all sit together. We are the only group who gets special seating. All other audience members are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. We will be sitting in a reserved section in the back on the right side on the main floor. This 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. Come early if you don't want to walk a long ways from a parking spot. There is the usual theatre food available for purchase. 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 at intermission 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 tickets from ASC online is Tuesday, Jan. 15th.
- ☺ 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/ info@autismsouthcentral.org) 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:** Tour (again) of the Fantasmical Epic Systems Company Campus; Snack afterwards at Culver's in Verona, 430 E Verona Ave.
- When:** February 24, 2019 (Sunday) 11:00 am -1:00 P.M. (Meet in the Andromeda Building Lobby at 11 am – be sure to arrive on time. You must be with the tour group to do the tour)
- Where:** Epic Systems Campus – 1979 Milky Way, Verona, WI 53593
- Cost:** Free – pre registration required due to limited space

Deep in the heart of Verona lies one of the area's best kept secrets, a magical world filled with angels, wizards, castles and dragons (oh, so many dragons)! Built by the architectural firms that designed Google Headquarters and Disney World, Epic Systems is a functional workplace in charge of creating medical software used all over the world. Many have driven past it on the highway, but few know that guests can tour this extensive fantasyland for free. Our tour guide today will be Mark Huntsman who has led many of these tours in the past.

In fact, he led a tour for our AUsome group in March 2018. It was such a big hit, that everyone that went wanted to do it again! So here we are, doing it again. Normally in February, ASC has a winter swim. We may still have the winter swim, but we have lost access to Swim West as a location. So we are looking around for another place to swim in the winter time.

Although the campus is far too large to see in a couple hours, our AUsome Social Group will take a tour of two of the most fascinating sections of this extensive labyrinth: The Central Park Campus and the Wizarding School. The tour will begin in the Andromeda building, decked out in unusual public art and full of conference rooms with a variety of Wisconsin themes such as a boathouse, a north woods cabin, and an ice palace. From there we will proceed through a variety of themed buildings featuring a multi-story slide, an elevator that goes from the top of "heaven" to the bottom of "hell," a lair of dungeons and dragons, and a Wild West Saloon. At the end of this section, across a giant "train station," is a world that is sure to delight: a familiar Wizarding School. Due to copyright reasons, its source material may not be named, but many of you will instantly recognize the inspiration for the moving pictures, owl cages, and wand shops found throughout. This area consists of five buildings ranging from a fortress, to an observatory, to a magical library.

With more than two miles of passages, this tour is quite extensive, but it may be the most scenic way to exercise in Wisconsin during winter. Thanks to several skyways and underground passages, the entire tour is indoors and heated, with elevators available in every building. Those who tire early are welcome to leave early, while those who stick around may join us at Culver's after the tour has concluded. Drinking fountains are found throughout, but all food and drink is for employees and clients only, so be sure to have a lunch beforehand. As it is a weekend, the tour should be much more sensory friendly than during the busy work week, although we may encounter the occasional employee or tourist.

Due to Epic company regulations, the size of this tour is limited to 14 people – first come/first served. **You must pre-register to go on the tour due to our limited space.** To register, go to <http://autismsouthcentral.org/event/epic/> to register on-line or call the ASC office at 608-630-9147 by noon, Thursday, February 21. If we have more than 14 people register, we will take a waiting list. Email the ASC office at info@autismsouthcentral.org or call 608-630-9147 if the registration is full and you want to be put on the waiting list. If you do register and decide you can't make it, please contact the office ASAP to free up your space for someone else.

To get to the tour start location, take Verona Road/Highway 151 to Exit 76. Follow Epic Ln to Milky Way, and then wind around until you reach a statue of the Tin Man. Follow the fork to the right into the Visitor Parking and park under the solar panels. Parking is free. Locate the statue of Humpty Dumpty, climb the stairs under the nearby trellis, and enter the Andromeda building, where we will be waiting in the lobby. **Be sure to be on time! If you are late, the tour may leave without you!**

Join us for a snack at Culver's after the tour. We should be ready for a snack after all that walking.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ Be sure to pre-register
- ☺ Wear comfortable walking shoes. It will be about 2 miles of walking
- ☺ Eat lunch before you come. Any food or drink on the premises is for Epic employees only.
- ☺ Arrive on time so you don't miss the tour.
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if it gets to be too long.

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 our monthly email newsletter 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! Registration is required. You can register at this Waisman Website - <https://www.waisman.wisc.edu/event/experts-autism-2019/>
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/>.
7. **The annual ASC family winter swim is tentatively being planned for Saturday, February 16, 2019 at a location to be determined.** We have always had this activity at Swim West in the past. However, Swim West has had a change in their insurance coverage and will no longer allow these types of private parties. We are checking out other locations such as the McFarland School district pool and the YMCA to see if we can find an alternate location. If this is not possible, we are considering having a family outing to the Sky Zone trampoline park in place of the swimming activity.

What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

Video Game Night and Pizza at McFarland Community Center Saturday, November 11, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

This was the 3rd year we had Video Game Night at the McFarland Community Center. It was sure handy having the pizza place (Spartan Pizza) right across the street so picking up the pizza was really easy. They even had the door locks set correctly this time so we didn't get locked out. We also didn't have the problem with the excess football game traffic that made several attendees late last year. And we dodged another bullet when I went to pick up the key for the kitchen on Friday and found out that somehow they had not properly recorded our reservation for the room on Saturday night. If I hadn't checked the reservation, we wouldn't have even been able to get in the building!

As usual, this was a really great time!! We had about 30 people show up. There was a conflict with the Badger football game which caused some traffic problems all over town and may have discouraged some attendees. We had about 18 large pizzas from Spartan Pizza – about 4 each pepperoni and sausage, a barbeque chicken, 2 sausage/mushroom, 3 veggie and 4 cheese. We did have some pizza left over because of fewer attendees, but only a few. It was a surprisingly hungry bunch. But next year we probably need somewhere between 12 and 14 pizzas. As usual, the dessert cookies disappeared completely by the end of the night, but there were plenty of carrots left. We had a good selection of soda. I had found a special deal on soda, so I'd bought some extra bottles. Those extra bottles of soda were saved for use at the monthly Monday evening board game night.

We also discovered that the McFarland Food Pantry has a collection bin right outside the door of the room we play in. Probably next year we will ask attendees to bring a food pantry donation to video game night. We used to do that at the church we played in and it was a nice way to say thank you for the use of the facility.

This year we only had 3 video game setups and several board games. I especially enjoyed learning to play a board game called Sequence. 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! At least the newer flat screen TVs are not as heavy as the older bulky models. A special thanks to all the group members for their efforts on technical support. AUsome members should be proud of their skills with equipment. A lot of folks still seem to enjoy our old Nintendo 64 system. We bring it every year. And our old projectors are still working too.

Those who were there as spectators enjoyed looking at the 21 AUsome scrap books of our past activities. A lot of family members and friends joined in the fun. There was a lot of visiting and discussion going on besides the friendly competition. There were also at least one board game set up that generated keen interest.

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 all those who helped with the setup and cleanup and putting the chairs back the way we found them. One of these days I'm going to find out where they hide the extra garbage bags. Also thanks to those who brought treats to share – especially the brownies.

Breakfast with Santa (Help as a volunteer and/or visit with Santa); December 8, 2018 (Saturday), 9am – Noon;

This activity was 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 was to provide a place where families with children with autism and other disabilities can have a good breakfast and a fun morning together. Adults with autism and other disabilities were also welcome to eat breakfast and join in the fun. Attendees could visit Santa in a relaxed and sensory friendly environment, have a nutritious free breakfast and participate in some fun craft activities.

The Knights cooked a great breakfast of pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon and juice. They even had gluten free pancakes available. The food was really good! You could tell they had done this kind of cooking before. Good thing, too, because we ended up feeding that breakfast to almost 200 people. We had 134 attendees and 60 volunteers. There might actually have been more since we may not have actually captured all the attendees on our list.

All of the attendee families were assigned a family guide to help them find their seats and decide which activities to participate in and visit Santa if they wanted to. This worked out well. We will need even more volunteers next year if more families show up to eat breakfast. I was assigned as a family guide for a mom and her 2 boys. They were especially happy to have the gluten free pancakes available. They told me they can't usually come to these events because the boys are so sensitive to gluten. We even had gluten free little donuts available. The boys also got to play in our "sensory seeking/noisy" room. I know this family had a great time.

We had some craft activities available for kids and families to participate in if there was a wait for breakfast seating. They could either decorate mini-donuts, color holiday coloring pages or create an origami swan Christmas ornament. A special thanks to Lindsey Bessy for taking charge of the donut making and decorating. She managed to keep all those sprinkles corralled. And another thanks to Fischer Olson who was our volunteer origami expert. Fischer came all the way from Viroqua with his family to help Matt Ward (our own AUsome Origami expert) lead the origami swan making craft. We also had some jumbo coloring books available as gifts from Santa that were donated by Tom Heffron.

Santa came to visit with help from the Knights of Columbus. He had a selection of small gifts that kids could choose from including a number of beanie babies donated by Liz Alar. And a very special thanks to all the other volunteers from Badgers with a Heart, the Waisman Center, ASC Board members, the Knights of Columbus and Tim Markle. Tim makes the best door greeter you could find anywhere. We were also very happy to have 2 adult volunteers on the autism spectrum (Scott Allen and Jess Vargas) there to answer questions and give advice to families who were interested in this resource.

This activity was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun and provided a great service to our families in the autism community. We will likely do it again next year.



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 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 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.