

# weap: The People

Volume 4, Issue 1

Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Inc.

2010

## Jam for Autism

By Justin Sallows

Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Inc.



An Autism Benefit Concert will be held on Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at the High Noon Saloon nightclub in Madison. The event will be hosted by Wisconsin Early Autism Project to raise funds for the Friends of Autism Family Grant Program.

Proceeds will be distributed to families who apply for assistance. These funds can be used to pay for therapy, or other emergency requirements.

The show will kickoff with the up and coming Beaver Dam band A Royal Clark. This band brings a folksy, soul rock to the show that appeals to all ages and backgrounds.

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## Temple Grandin: Struggles and Stardom

By Joan Raymond

MSNBC

[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35150832/ns/health-mental\\_health](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35150832/ns/health-mental_health)



*Author, scientist and professor Temple Grandin is portrayed by actress Claire Danes in the HBO film, "Temple Grandin." (Chris Pizzello / AP)*

Temple Grandin knows she's different. But she wouldn't have it any other way. In 1950, Grandin was diagnosed with autism. The disorder, seen in about 1 in 110 U.S. kids, spans a range of complex neurodevelopmental problems: an inability to make social connections, language difficulties and bizarre, repetitive behaviors. Some children may have a mild form of the disorder, yet have difficulties holding down a job in adulthood. Others may never be able to live on their own.

And some, like Grandin, defy the odds.

Grandin is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University, a noted lecturer, best-selling author and an autism advocate. Her designs for creating a more humane livestock slaughter process earned her recognition from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Now actress Claire Danes is playing Grandin in an HBO movie which aired Feb. 6th. The film "Temple Grandin" is based upon Grandin's memoirs, "Emergence" and "Thinking in Pictures." That's heady stuff for a woman who admits that at age 62 she

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Next up is The Delta Nine Band. A 5 piece rock band, Delta Nine has a sound varying from reggae to funk to folk rock.

The Madpolecats is a band made up of family members. On banjo is frontman Jesse. Backing him up on drums is his father "Papa "Ski". Jesse's cousin Paul plays guitar and accordion along with his uncle Bobby Evans from The Alimony Blues Band on lap steel and guitar. Jesse's cousin "J" fills out the quintet on stand-up bass. All members sing and engage in multiple part harmonies. The Madpolecats play reggae, ska, punk, psychobilly and bluegrass versions of favorite songs.

Screamin' Cyn Cyn and the Pons are a dance band keeping the 80's spirit of UB-40 and Human League alive. A delightful mix of punk and new wave, Screamin' Cyn Cyn and the Pons promises to get the crowd on their feet.

Topping off the night is Knuckel Drager. A Madison institution, Knuckel Drager bills itself as "the world's heaviest surf band". They have opened for huge acts like Slipknot and Dick Dale and have played approximately 300 shows in the last 14 years spread over 32 states.

The Wisconsin Early Autism Project, in conjunction with Jesse Kaftanski of Madpolecats, have planned this event to assist Friends of Autism in raising money to help families in need of services. "The money from these shows is really helping," said Tamlynn Graupner, Wisconsin Early Autism Project cofounder and CEO. "I know it's making a difference in the lives of our clients."

"This is our second benefit show for Friends of Autism.", says Dr. Glen Sallows, WEAP President and Clinical Psychologist. "These are fun events that get the autism community together with the rest of the city to celebrate our unity and commitment to helping families affected by autism."

This event is sure to rock The High Noon Saloon while simultaneously providing much needed assistance to families affected by autism. A raffle will also be featured. The High Noon Saloon is located at 701 E. Washington Avenue in Madison. Tickets are \$10 at the door.♦



*The Madpolecats engaging in a family jam*

**Name of Study:** Brain Development in Autism: Infant Siblings

**Location:** Washington University School of Medicine -- St. Louis, MO

**Eligibility Criteria:** Infants under 12 months of age with an older sibling diagnosed with autism

**Principal Investigator:** Kelly Botteron, M.D.

**Contact Information:** Lisa Flake or Helen Valencia, phone: (888) 845-6786

Dear Parent,

The Autism Research Program at Washington University School of Medicine-St. Louis, Missouri is proud to announce a new study of very early brain development in infants at risk for autism. This multi-center study, which is funded by the National Institute of Health, involves the collaboration of five sites (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Pennsylvania, University of Washington, Washington University, and Montreal Neurological Institute) collectively known as the ACE Baby Sibs Network and projects to enroll over 100 families of children with autism at the Washington University site alone.

Under the direction of Dr. Kelly Botteron, the researchers at WU are studying brain development in autism by studying brain development in infant siblings of autistic individuals (i.e., who have older siblings diagnosed with autism). Additional collaborators at WU include Dr. John N. Constantino and Dr. Robert McKinstry. This study builds upon earlier findings of our collaborator Dr. Joe Piven's (UNC) work which indicates that brain enlargement in autism appears to start late in the first year of life. This innovative research will be using some of the most advanced brain imaging technology available to examine how brain structure changes during this important period from 12 to 24 months of age. The data gathered in this study will provide important information regarding early brain development in autism, which may in turn provide clues leading to earlier intervention strategies and better outcomes for children with autism.

**If you have an older child who has been diagnosed with autism and are currently pregnant, or have an infant less than 12 months of age, your infant may be eligible for our study.** Participating infants will receive developmental and behavioral assessments, an MRI scan of the brain, and screening for Fragile X Syndrome. Participation at the WU site is currently limited to residents of MO, IL, KS, AR, IA, IN, and OH, as travel to the research facilities for a 2-3 day time period is required. Travel arrangements will either be provided for you or, if you choose to drive, your travel expenses will be reimbursed.

For more information about how you can participate, please visit our website at [www.infantsibs-stlouis.org](http://www.infantsibs-stlouis.org) or call toll free to the WU Infant Sibling Study at (888) 845-6786. Thank you for your support in the advancement of autism research.

Sincerely,

Kelly Botteron, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Psychiatry (Child) & Radiology  
Washington University School of Medicine

still relates better to animals than she does to humans. She talks to msnbc.com about how autism affects her life, a life that she believes is different, but not less.

### **Msnbc.com: Where do you fall on the autism spectrum?**

Temple Grandin: I am much less autistic now, compared to when I was young. I remember some behaviors like picking carpet fuzz and watching spinning plates for hours. I didn't want to be touched. I couldn't shut out background noise. I didn't talk until I was about 4 years old. I screamed. I hummed. But as I grew up, I improved.

### **What made the difference for you?**

I had people in my life who didn't give up on me: my mother, my aunt, my science teacher. I had one-on-one speech therapy. I had a nanny who spent all day playing turn-taking games with me. For the last 30 years I've been on a low-dose antidepressant. I'll never give it up. It helps with the panic attacks. The most important thing people did for me was to expose me to new things. I was so afraid to go out west to my aunt's ranch. But the only choice my mother gave me was to go for two weeks or all summer. I wound up staying all summer. And that's where I learned about cattle. I could relate to their behavior, their fears.

### **Why do you think that is?**

I'm a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images. If someone says the word factory, most people think of a vague place. I think in detail of every factory I ever saw, like the John Deere plant in Moline. Animals are sensory thinkers, thinking in pictures, smells, sounds. They don't think in terms of language. I don't either.

Didn't observing cattle give you your idea for the "squeeze machine" you developed to help autistics reduce stress? I saw cattle held in a squeeze chute while they were waiting to get some veterinary attention. Some of the animals relaxed once pressure was applied to their bodies. I built a prototype for myself when I was 18, and found that if I used it for about 15 minutes I would feel better, calmer. Now a lot of people and programs use the machine.

### **What help do you think most people with autism need?**

Little kids, especially ages 2 through 5, need one-on-one interaction with an effective teacher. I don't care who that teacher is. It could be the mother, an aunt, a grandma, someone from a church, a synagogue, maybe a student. You just need someone who clicks with that kid. The worst thing you can do is nothing. You can't let these kids sit and watch TV all day.

The other thing is, teach these kids manners. I was raised in the '50s and '60s, and manners were drilled into me. I see kids [on the spectrum] today that have no manners. That's going to hurt them. You can't punish a child who is acting out because of sensory overload. But it's unacceptable to see kids throwing things and slapping people. I see kids with Asperger's [a mild form of autism] who can't hold a job because they are constantly late. Teach kids to use an alarm clock. This is common sense and sometimes we forget about common sense. Autism is used too much as an excuse for bad behavior.



*Actress Claire Danes in the HBO film "Temple Grandin."*

### **Cases of autism are rising. Why do you think that is?**

Some of it is probably due to the way autism is diagnosed. I saw people on the HBO lot that probably have Asperger's but never got a diagnosis as a child. There has been an increase in regressive autism, children who develop normally, have speech, and then lose it. I think there's something going on with some type of environmental contaminant. Some insult is getting to the child whose genes are susceptible to autism.

### **"Autism pride" or neurodiversity is a growing movement. Do you think there needs to be a "cure" for autism?**

I believe there's a point where mild autistic traits are just normal human variation. Mild autism can give you a genius like Einstein. If you have severe autism, you could remain nonverbal. You don't want people to be on the severe end of the spectrum. But if you got rid of all the autism genetics, you wouldn't have science or art. All you would have is a bunch of social 'yak yaks.'

### **Have you gotten more social as you've gotten older?**

I have friends now. But it's about shared interests. We talk about engineering or animal behavior. Chit-chat bores me. I'm always sure about science. I had to learn about social cues. But I've learned to talk about the weather a little bit.

### **What was it like to see someone portray you?**

It was like going in a weird time machine. The movie was set in the '60s and '70s, and I was very severe back then, very anxious. This was before I went on antidepressants for the panic. Puberty and high school were horrible for me. I spent time with Claire [Danes], and her portrayal of me back then is very authentic. She was me.

### **You are well known within the autism community. Are you worried about becoming a celebrity, more of a household name?**

No. I think about the responsibility. There was a responsibility to get this right. I'm very pleased. The things I do, my work, it gives meaning to my life. I don't understand people's fascination with celebrity and all the psychodrama. What turns me on is helping a parent of an autistic child, or having someone say my work [with animals] helped them understand their dog better. Something that makes a beneficial change is what turns me on. But I did meet Steven Spielberg. He was nice. He told me he liked my book. That made me happy.♦

*Joan Raymond is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in Newsweek, the New York Times, MORE and Woman's Day.*

## Upcoming Events

### La Crosse Area Parent Group

Join this vibrant group of parents to discuss topics of interest, create change & find comradery.

Childcare provided.

#### La Crosse

3rd Wed

6:30-8:30

Free

1825 Victory Street

Steven or Rena Cash

[http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/AutismFYI-](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/AutismFYI-LaCrosse/)

[LaCrosse/](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/AutismFYI-LaCrosse/)

[lax-autismgroup@charter.net](mailto:lax-autismgroup@charter.net)

608-782-6480

Due to the change in funding for some kids in our program and kids waiting to receive services, WEAP will be starting a number of new children throughout the year. We would really like to make sure that all current employees receive the opportunity to add children to their caseload first before we begin to hire new therapists. All of our WEAP clinics are looking for experienced therapists to join a number of new teams getting started. If you are interested in joining new teams, please contact the Human Resources Department in the clinic in your area.

## Groups and Classes

Location	Group	Age/Level	Facilitator	Fee	Days	Time	Start Date
Madison	Parents/ Caregivers	Open to Community	varies	\$30/session \$4/child daycare (rgstr 2 wks in advc.)	2nd Tues each Month	5:30- 7:00PM	Ongoing
Madison	Teen Group	Ages 13-16	Matt S	\$30/session	Mondays	4:00PM- 6:00PM	Jan. 25th- Ongoing
Madison	Social Skills: Dolphin Pod	Ages 3-4	Kim W.	\$30/session	Thursdays	11:30AM- 2:00PM	Jan. 14th- April 15th
Madison	Social Skills: Lion Pride	Ages 7-9	Andrea W	\$30/session	Thursdays	4:00PM- 5:30PM	Jan. 14th- April 15th
Madison	Social Skills: Elephant Group	Ages 10-12	Katie K	\$30/session	Tuesdays	4:00PM- 5:30PM	Jan. 19th- April 13th
Madison	Sibling Group	All Ages	Kim W.	\$30/session	Saturdays	10:30AM- 12:00PM	Feb. 27th- May 29th
Madison	Speech Adventurers	Ages 2 ½-4	Angie L	\$50/session	Mondays	1:00- 2:30PM	Jan. 11th- April 12th
Milwaukee	Play group	Ages 3-5	Stephanie	\$30/week	Wednesdays	9:00- 10:00AM	Jan. 13th- Feb. 17th
Milwaukee	Flexible Thinkers	Ages 4-6	Stephanie	\$30/week	Tuesdays	4:30- 6:00PM	Jan. 12th- Feb. 9th
Milwaukee	Friendship Club	Ages 11-14	Stephanie	\$30/week	Thursdays	4:30- 6:00PM	Jan. 14th- March 11th
Milwaukee	Worry Busters	Ages 8-11	Stephanie	\$30/week	Tuesdays	4:30- 6:00PM	Feb. 16th- March 16th
Milwaukee	Monday Night Kids' Group	Ages 8-12	Amanda	\$30/week	Mondays	4:30- 6:00PM	Jan. 11th- March 15th

## Current Openings

MADISON	MILWAUKEE	GREEN BAY	EAU CLAIRE
608-288-9040	262-432-5660	920-338-1610	715-832-2233
Beaver Dam	Burlington	Appleton	Buffalo City
Janesville	Cedarburg	Florence	Danbury
Madison	Dousman	Green Bay	Eau Claire
Mazomanie	Germantown	Shawano	Edgar
Portage	Hartford		Ellsworth
Watertown	Juneau		Hazelhurst
	Kenosha		Hixton
	Nashotah		Hudson
	Menomonee Falls		
			Marshfield
			Osseo
			Stevens Point
			Wausau/Weston
			Westfield
			Wheeler