



**AutCom 2010 Annual Conference**  
**October 15 - 16 in Milwaukee, WI**  
**Communication, Competence, Community:**  
**Nothing about Us without Us**

**Friday, October 15**

**8:30 – 9:00 am:** Registration and Continental Breakfast

**9:00 am:** Welcome **New Orleans Ballroom**

**Directors 2** will be available throughout the conference as a “crash room”.

**9:00 am to 6 pm: “Slow Clothes”** display by Erin Manning **Directors 7**

Erin Manning holds a University Research Chair in Relational Art and Philosophy in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada). She is also the director of the *Sense Lab* ([www.senselab.ca](http://www.senselab.ca)), a laboratory that explores the intersections between art practice and philosophy through the matrix of the sensing body in movement. In her art practice she works between painting, fabric and sculpture (<http://www.erinmovement.com>). Her current art project entitled *Folds to Infinity* is an experimental fabric collection composed of cuts that connect in an infinity of ways, folding in to create clothing and out to create environmental architectures.

**9:15 – 10:45 am:** Keynote Presentation: Judy Endow – “**The Culture of Autism**” **New Orleans Ballroom** Do autistic people have their own culture? What makes a culture? How do we go from here to wherever it is we hope to go in terms of being who and what we want to be as a cohort of diverse autistics living in a world that is not always conducive to our neurology? As autistics do we have a legacy to pass on to those who follow? This presentation is one person’s musing on aspects of a culture of autism designed with a hope toward uniting autistics of differing opinions and their friends and family who support them.

**Judy Endow**, MSW maintains a private practice in Madison, WI providing consultation for families, school districts and other agencies. Besides having autism herself, she is the parent of a son on the autism spectrum. Judy does workshops and presentations on a variety of autism related issues, is part of the Wisconsin DPI Statewide Autism Training Team and a board member of ASW. She is the author of three books: *Making Lemonade—Hints for Autism's Helpers* (2006 CBR Press), *Outsmarting Explosive Behavior—A Visual System of Support and Intervention for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (2009 AAPC), and *Paper Words—Discovering and Living with My Autism* (2009 AAPC). She brings a great depth of understanding and compassion to all the work she does.

**10:45 – 11:00 am:** Break

**11 am – 12:15 pm:** Concurrent Sessions

**Directors 1: “Communication Makes or Breaks a Life”** – Roy Bedward.

This presentation is in a Powerpoint format and contains text written by Roy along with many color photographs of his paintings. Roy’s paintings portray his acute sense of color and a raw, unrestrained energy while his essays and poetry reveal an extremely sensitive and loving heart. The presentation will end with an informal question and answer session where Roy will type his answers to questions from the audience.

**Directors 6: “Public Policy Advocacy Panel”** – Mike Hoover, Jacob Pratt & Rob Cutler

The presenters will share stories of individual and group advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national level. Attendees will get information on ways they can promote legislation, ensure compliance with laws for themselves and others, and get the word out through the media. Other ideas will include being effective on boards and commissions and promoting good candidates in their campaigns for office.

**Mardi Gras: “Identifying, Educating, and Empowering Allies”** – Phil Schwarz. This presentation will give attendees an inside view of the autistic self-advocacy movement. Attendees will learn about the following: Individual self-advocacy and collective self-advocacy, and the role of each; what the Deaf community can teach us about the social model of disability, as distinct from the medical model of disability, and why we need both; what the LGBT community can teach us about the constructive roles that allies can play in both individual and collective self-advocacy; how to be an informed and effective ally; understanding the opposition to autistic self-advocacy, how to deal with it, and how to engage in outreach that reaches beyond it; and how to identify and empower people in pivotal roles to become allies.

**Directors 5: “Being Autistic and Succeeding in College”** – Nancy Alar and Matt Ward.

I (Matt Ward) graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Madison In 2005 with a BS in Mathematics. In this session I will tell you about some of the (good, bad and surprising) things that happened to me during this educational journey. This will include my problems and triumphs, how I coped and how I felt. My education was a team effort. I did all the hard stuff like studying Spanish, taking actuarial tests and doing calculus homework. As much as possible, I “outsourced” the administrative tasks (like class registration) to my education team. My mother served as my Educational Case Manager. She will tell you about my Educational Team, what they did to help me, the creation/use of the Educational Power of Attorney, my SSI PASS Plan and how I and my team worked together to figure out how to fix problems and insure my success.

**12:15 – 1:15 pm:** Lunch **New Orleans Ballroom**

**1:30 – 3:00 pm:** Plenary Session: Paula Kluth – **“We Thought You’d Never Ask: Voices from the Spectrum”** **New Orleans Ballroom** In this presentation, Paula will explore the gap between the dominant discourse in autism and the stories of people on the spectrum themselves. She will share excerpts from her documentary film on the voices of people with autism and discuss what the messages from people with autism and Asperger syndrome mean for our work as advocates. A panel presentation following this discussion will focus on the

need for more voices (and more varied voices) to be valued, heard, and represented in professional presentations, films, autobiographies, blogs, and websites.

Dr. Paula Kluth is a consultant, teacher, author, advocate, and independent scholar who works with teachers and families to provide inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities and to create more responsive and engaging schooling experiences for all learners. Paula is a former special educator who has served as a classroom teacher, consulting teacher, and inclusion facilitator. Her research and professional interests include differentiating instruction, and supporting students with autism and significant disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

She is the author of the newly revised "You're Going to Love This Kid": Teaching Students with Autism in Inclusive Classrooms; the lead editor of Access to Academics, and the co-author of six texts: A Land We Can Share: Teaching Literacy to Students with Autism; Joyful Learning: Active and Collaborative Learning in the Inclusive Classroom; You're Welcome: 30 Innovative Ideas for Inclusive Schools, "Just Give Him the Whale": 20 Ways to Support & Honor the Passions & Interests of Students with Autism, From Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks: 100 Ways to Differentiate Instruction in K-12 Inclusive Classrooms; and A is for All Aboard.

**3:00 – 3:15 pm:** Break

**3:15 – 4:30 pm:** Concurrent Sessions

**Directors 1: *Debunking Another Myth: 'Classical' Autistics and Figurative Language***

Erin Manning, Ralph Savarese and DJ Savarese. Erin Manning, a professor in the faculty of fine arts at Concordia University, and Ralph James Savarese, a professor in the English department at Grinnell College, will lead a roundtable discussion of the myth of an obdurate literality in so-called "classical" autism. Just as Autistics have been described by experts as lacking empathy, so, too, have they been described as being baffled by figurative language. Nothing, Manning and Savarese contend, could be further from the truth. Indeed, they believe that "classical" Autistics have a special talent for such language, particularly metaphor, and that this talent reflects an abiding sense of relationality--with both the human and natural worlds. Briefly presenting their respective findings by referencing the writing of several AutCom members, Manning and Savarese will then invite the input—and corrections!--of autistic participants. DJ Savarese has agreed to serve as the first respondent.

**Directors 6: *"Living Life Panel"*** – Mike Pribek (healthy lifestyle), Jeremiah Swisher (social networking), Sara Miller (work life) and. Panelists in this session will each discuss areas of interest for them that have become important parts of their lives. Question and answer period will follow, if time allows.

**Mardi Gras: *"Crafting a Quality Life"*** – Wendy and Quinn Partridge. Quinn and Wendy will talk about their journey as communication partners, the critical need for believing in what many thought was impossible or not worth the effort and how it has led to self advocacy in everyday ways.

**Directors 5: *"Autism Pride"*** – Kelly and Zach Shariff. Participants in this session will exchange ideas and discuss their views with others attendees. Some questions for group discussion include: Should there be more focus on the positive aspects of ASDs? Who of you is involved in the Autism Rights Movement? Do you feel scientists should be looking

for a cure? What strengths do you possess that you wouldn't have without your autism or Aspergers? Let's turn the focus away from talking about what is *wrong* with autism and Aspergers and celebrate the strengths!

**4:30 – 6:00 pm:** On Your Own

**6:00 – 7:00 pm:** Dinner **New Orleans Ballroom**

**7:00 – 8:00 pm:** Evening Program: DJ Savarese and Rob Rooy **New Orleans Ballroom**  
**“Grandy and Bop” and “Plotting Hope” with Q & A to follow.**

**“Grandy and Bop”** is a 12-minute interview DJ conducted with his grandparents. In it he asks his grandparents about the future and together they reminisce about their relationships.

**“Plotting Hope”** is a 30-minute play written and assistant directed by DJ Savarese about his life as an Autist. Performed by DJ's classmates, the play received Outstanding Performance at the Iowa statewide high school competition. This segment includes three parts: 1) a filmed version of the 30-minute play "Plotting Hope"; 2) a sample of interviews DJ conducted with the cast; and 3) time for the audience to ask DJ and Rob Rooy about the documentary film on which they are collaborating.

**DJ Savarese** is a senior at Grinnell Community Senior High School where he studies creative writing, literature, and the sciences. He is currently collaborating with Rob Rooy on a documentary that shows "how free people with autism can be and yearns to teach teachers how to dearly include kids in Frees' schools." A member of the National Honors Society, DJ is also one of 15 lowans to win a Herbert Hoover Uncommon Student Award. DJ's project, entitled "Giving Voice to Non-speaking People," entails a website with advice and examples of how to promote meaningful participation and literacy development in the regular classroom and an online gallery of writings by people who type to communicate entitled "Finding Our Voices."

**Robert Rooy** is an independent film and video producer whose company, Rooy Media LLC, creates media products that engage and educate people about important human issues. He has worked in more than twenty countries for organizations such as UNICEF, the Grameen Foundation, Ashoka, Innovators for the Public and Rodale Institute. He is one of the foremost chroniclers of microfinance, an innovative anti-poverty strategy, and has also worked as first assistant director on more than forty Hollywood film productions.

### **Saturday, October 16**

**8:30 – 9:00 am:** Registration and Continental Breakfast

**9:00 am:** Welcome **New Orleans Ballroom**

**9:00 am to 6 pm:** **“Slow Clothes”** display by Erin Manning **Directors 7**

**9:15 – 10:30 am:** Keynote Presentation—Suzanne Oliver: **“Moving Forward: The Impact of Rhythm on Functional Movement and Independence”** **New Orleans Ballroom** Suzanne Oliver, MT-BC, NMT Fellow, Executive Director of NMTSA, started Music Therapy Services of Arizona in 1982 as the first private agency in the nation to provide home-based music therapy services. In 2001 she opened the first Neurologic Music Therapy clinic in the country and made NMTSA a non-profit agency in order to further her vision of providing community education about the benefits of NMT as well as therapy services and programs for those in need ([www.nmtsa.org](http://www.nmtsa.org))

**10:30 – 11:30am:** Time to visit the exhibits and network

**11:45am --12:45pm:** Lunch **New Orleans Ballroom**

**1:00 – 2:30 pm:** Concurrent Sessions

**Directors 1: “Dealing With the System”** – Barbara Cutler. One of the founders of AutCom, Barbara has just published this new book, which updates and adds extensively to her previous book, *You, Your Child and Special Education*.

**Directors 6: “ Neurologic Music Therapy (cont.) – Questions and Answers”** – Suzanne Oliver

**Mardi Gras: “Communication, Competence, Community Panel”** – Dman Johnson (The Role of Communication in Thought), DJ Svoboda (Acceptance and Respect for those with Autism and Introduction to Imagifriends, DJ Savarese (Giving Back to the Community) and Daniel McConnell (Belonging to the Community).

**Directors 5: “Introduction to Facilitated Communication”** – Jacob Pratt and Linda Rammler. Many of our presenters use facilitated communication, the only communication system they have found that works for them. This session will provide an introduction for those who want to learn more about it.

**2:30 – 2:45 pm:** Break

**2:45 – 4:15 pm:** Concurrent Sessions

**Directors 1: “Rated 'R': That Oh-So-Difficult Topic”**- We've watched Casablanca 17 times, and we know about the birds and the bees, but --uh -- love and s-e-x weren't taught as social skills or as PT, OT, or sensory integration ... How do we go about having mature relationships? And *how in the world* do we integrate support staff??

Jacob Pratt and Nick Pentzell invite you to join them in discussing the challenges of having adult relationships, romance, and sexuality on the spectrum. We don't have all the answers, but we hope you'll help us ask the questions. It's time they were voiced.

**Directors 6: “Mediation and Early Dispute Resolution Options”** – Jan Serak, Nissan Bar-Lev. **Dispute Resolution: What Are the Options?** This workshop contains basic information about options available under the federal law - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - for resolving disputes related to special education. The focus is on resolving disputes early and options available, including mediation, to families and schools. Session includes: how to prepare for and participate in informal meetings; how a

facilitated IEP, mediation, and resolution meeting differ; who can participate? what the role of a mediator or facilitator is; and where to find more information. A youth leader with ASD will also provide their perspective on what would be needed for a youth to meaningfully participate in a dispute resolution process.

**Mardi Gras: “Nonverbal Autism from the Parents’ Perspective”** – Mindy McConnell and others – Roundtable Discussion. A group of parents will engage in this roundtable discussion about the challenges and possibilities they face in creating a meaningful life for their young and adult children who are at this point in the spectrum. A panel of parents will present their experiences followed by open discussion.

**Directors 5: “Autistic-Like: Graham’s Story”** – Film and Discussion led by Phil Schwarz and Pat Edwards. The film showcases the relationship-based therapies pioneered by Dr. Stanley Greenspan, highlighting developmental areas which they address but which are not addressed by behavioral-based therapies such as ABA. As such, it is attractive to some of us as a vehicle for spreading awareness of relationship-based therapy alternatives.

However, the film and the promotional material for it (which reads in part "The CDC reports that 1 in 150 children born has autism. Maybe not") promote the notion that children who exhibit the sensory processing atypicalities seen in autism, but who respond to relationship-based therapies, are not autistic.

The Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation has promoted this film in its efforts to get Sensory Processing Disorder included in the DSM-5 as a condition separate from Autism Spectrum Disorder, and recognized by the public as such.

In the post-screening discussion we hope to hear from audience members about the things good and not-so-good that they see in all of this, on several fronts: how best to promote the kinds of therapy alternatives Greenspan pioneered, how best to bring better recognition of sensory processing difficulties into the DSM and into clinicians' and researchers' conceptions of the nature of autism, how best to combat the latent stigma still surrounding autism that seems to form an important part of the context for intended viewers of this film, and how best for AutCom to respond to the messages in the film and its promotion and to the directions in which other groups are trying to take the DSM-5.

**4:15 – 4:30 pm:** Proceed to the **New Orleans Ballroom** for the raffle drawing and The Last Word.

**4:30 – 5:00 p.m:** Raffle results. The Last Word: AutCom Board Members who are on the spectrum share their final words on this year’s conference

**Concurrent Speaker Biographies (in alphabetical order):**

**Nancy Alar** is Matt Ward’s Mother. Nancy is the Past President of the Autism Society of Wisconsin, a member of Toastmasters International and the coordinator of the Autism Society of Greater Madison’s AUsome Social Group for young people with autism and related challenges. In her “day job” Nancy is a web master/data administrator for the Wisconsin

Technical College System Office. She lives in Cottage Grove with her family (husband - Tom Alar, daughter - Elizabeth, dogs – Shanghai & Taipei, cat - Figaro).  
[nancy.alar@hughes.net](mailto:nancy.alar@hughes.net); phone: (608) 222-4378.

**Nissan Bar-Lev** is the Director of Special Education for Cooperative Educational Service Agency # 7, a consortium of 38 school districts, and a partner in the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System. Nissan serves on the Governor's Council on Autism, on the Wisconsin Insurance Commissioner Council on autism, and is the president of the Autism society of Wisconsin. Nissan chairs the State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council, and is a member of the DPI Special Education Stakeholders advisory group and the National IDEA Partnership Creating Agreement team. He also Co-Chairs a multi-organization task force on the Appropriate Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Special Education Programs.

**Roy Bedward** is a 31 year-old man with autism who is an artist, poet, and essayist. He has written extensively about his life as an individual with autism – from the time he was a little boy living in an institution to his life as a grown man living in the community. Roy uses facilitated communication and loves to tell his story. Roy has started his own business, Roy Bedward Enterprises. Cards, calendars, T-shirts and other products showing Roy's artwork will be available for purchase at the conference.

**Barbara Cutler** Barbara Cutler, EdD, has broad experience as a parent of a man with autism who has presented serious challenges to service providers and family; and many years of experience as a professional in human services and education as a consultant, trainer, organizer and program director. As a professional she is familiar and experienced in many areas of service: schools (community, public, private residential, inclusive, exclusive), residential (institutional, community based), day programs including supported work, and related health and support services for individuals, especially those on the spectrum, and their families. Her presentation will focus on strengthening parents and others to deal with systems, especially education, upon which their sons and daughters are dependent. She is a strong proponent of human rights and equal protection, and promotes respect for students and adults in need of services. She has a Master's degree from Harvard and her doctorate is from Boston University. Even more important she is Rob Cutler's mother.

**Robert Cutler** was the first President of AutCom who had autism (1999-2002). Since he began to communicate through FC in 1997, he has presented at numerous conference including AutCom, Northeast Regional Conference on Autism, Syracuse University, UNH, Fitchburg State College, UMass Medical School, Pennsylvania OMR, Mass. Department of Developmental Services, TASH and Mass. Advocates Standing Strong. He has been published in TASH Connections, Responding to the Challenge (Ed. Hank Bersani), the Communicator (Ask Rob column), and Sharing Our Wisdom (Eds. Gillingham & McClennen), addressing issues of communication, movement disorder, various health issues in autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, spirituality, institutionalization, the case against aversives, and community services. Mr. Cutler has sampled the array of services, unfortunately including five years in a state institution. He represented AutCom with Drs. Lehr and Maurer at the NIH Working Group on Autism and Genetics; later he attended an NIH conference on funding. For

the past several years he has been mentoring/counseling hundreds of young people in recovery from addiction and social difficulties. He is a strong advocate for social justice and is politically active. He has also served on the State Advisory Council of the Department of Developmental Services.

**Patricia Edwards, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Inclusive Services and Exceptional Learners in the Dwight Schar College of Education at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio. She has been a teacher since 1970 and has taught at Ashland University since 1995. Her areas of academic focus are communication with persons who have difficulty with speech and the education of persons with intensive need for educational intervention. She is completely committed to educating inclusive teachers and to the human rights of ALL people.

**Mike Hoover**, 38, of Boulder, CO, is a very interested lobbyist in the Colorado legislature, representing the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. He prepares his testimony ahead of time, but answers questions by using FC at the table. He thinks doing this public involvement has been very exciting. He has shown the legislature that people who do not speak have important things to say. He helped pass good bills and stop bad ones. He looks forward to more good bills this coming session. Mike has a job and lives in his own apartment.

**DMan Johnson** has been typing for only one and a half years. He is taking a class at Rutgers-Newark this fall. He has presented at the Society for Disability Studies annual conference. He is interested in being a disability rights advocate.

**Erin Manning** holds a University Research Chair in Relational Art and Philosophy in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada). She is also the director of the *Sense Lab* ([www.senselab.ca](http://www.senselab.ca)), a laboratory that explores the intersections between art practice and philosophy through the matrix of the sensing body in movement. In her art practice she works between painting, fabric and sculpture (<http://www.erinmovement.com>).

**Daniel McConnell** was born in Hawaii where he lived on Maui until he was sixteen. Due to lack of services in Hawaii, Daniel moved to La Crosse Wisconsin to attend a residential school in 2001. Always considered "low functioning" due to his loss of spoken language by age five, the emphasis of Daniel's education was on functional skills and vocational training. At the age of 23, Daniel began typing with facilitator Sally Young in Madison, WI, where he immediately demonstrated an adult vocabulary and an insight into himself that does not fit the popular paradigm of autism. Now 26, Daniel is pursuing his dream of attending college as well as working at Goodwill and Christ Episcopal Church in La Crosse.

**Mindy McConnell** is a professional artist and mother of Daniel, a young adult with non-verbal autism. She studied, lived and worked in Hawaii for 35 years. But, adequate school services were impossible to obtain for Daniel despite years of advocacy on his behalf. A lawsuit resulted in a private school placement for Daniel in La Crosse, Wisconsin in 2001. The family established a second home in Wisconsin so they could be close to their son. In 2007, Mindy took Daniel to be assessed by Sally Young, PhD for the ability to type with assistance. Since that day, Mindy has worked to assist Daniel to achieve his dream of independent



communication and attending an institution of higher education. Mindy continues to find great inspiration for her art through her experience and personal relationship with Daniel.

**Sara RS Miller** was diagnosed with PDD-NOS in January 1992 at age 37. In the years that followed, she experienced a sense of relief as she reviewed her past, revising the 'old' memories using the "new" knowledge of her sensory difficulties. Ms. Miller has found her professional niche as a computer programmer in the visual field of machine motion control. She is President of NOVA Systems Inc., a small electrical engineering firm in Milwaukee, WI, which now has a technical partner and 10 employees. The "rules" of the company have been developed to allow for the flexibility and support she needs. She has been married to Howard C. Miller since 1982, who now understands why he has had to help her evaluate some "rather easy" daily decisions. Sara RS Miller is the author of the column "Does the Princess have PDD?" which appeared in the ASSEW and ASW newsletters between 1995 and 2000, where she described her "Born Again, Autistic" interpretation of the world. She is planning on resuming her writing and putting her collections into a book. Ms. Miller was on the cover of the April 14, 1997 issue of *Computerworld* where she was featured in the article "Computer Savants." As a result of this article, she appeared in a segment on "Autism and Computers" on the MSNEC show *The Site* on August 18, 1997 with an article following the next day in the *Washington Post*. In 2005, she was interviewed for a documentary on the workings of the brain by ColourField, based in Germany. In 2007, she was interviewed for "The Sunshine Boy" a documentary on autism by Frontier Filmworks, based in Iceland.

**Quinn Partridge** is a Junior at Guilford High School in Rockford, Illinois. He enjoys swimming, music, biking, nature, and movies on his ipod.

**Wendy Partridge** is a parent and professional who cares deeply about supporting communication, opportunities for contribution, and community. As the Northern Illinois Field Organizer with the Illinois Association of Microboards and Cooperatives she guides people in making stronger connections and promotes self-determination. As she began the journey of understanding how to overcome society's view of disability, she worked as a parent trainer and educational consultant with a local school district. As Regional Consultant with the Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project she provided training and consultation with agencies and districts statewide. Wendy and Quinn are continually thinking of ways to invite community and have offered a series of cooking classes to young adults. Wendy is on the Steering Committee of the Microboards and Self Directed Supports, USA and is the President of Heroes of the Game, Inc.

**Nick Pentzell** is a Communication Arts major at Delaware County Community College in suburban Philadelphia. He is *determinedly* pursuing self-determination and increasingly living a more independent life (with supports). Meanwhile, he advocates for himself and others as a workshop/conference presenter and writer. Besides AutCom, he has done presentations for the Society for Disability Studies, Millersville and Temple Universities, Penn Autism Network, Networks for Training and Development, Values Into Action, and Youth Advocate Programs. His recent publications include a lengthy quotation in the "A Question of Sex" section of William Stillman's *Empowered Autism Parenting* (2009),

"Dissed Ability" in *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30:1 (2010), "Beyond FC" in *The Communicator* 19:1 (2010), and interviews in Sally Young and Ann Donnellan's forthcoming FC and quality of life book.

**Jacob Pratt** is currently Executive Director of the Autism Spectrum Differences Institute of New England, Inc. He has been a public policy activist, consultant, and trainer about autism issues, has presented in a number of states, and uses facilitated communication to express his humor, thoughtfulness, and overall poignant perspectives. Jacob is currently engaged to a woman who also types to communicate, is taking college classes, and serves on the Board of Directors of AutCom among other groups such as the TASH/New England Chapter Board.

**Mike Pribek** is nineteen years old and has autism. In April of 2007, Mike's physician advised him that in order for him to remain healthy, he needed to change his eating habits and begin exercising regularly. Mike took that advice to heart, and began an entirely new lifestyle, eating healthy foods, walking and running for cardio exercise, and incorporating weight strengthening into his exercise program. He went on to lose 40 pounds and still maintains this lifestyle today. Mike's other interests are NASCAR, video games and math.

**Linda H. Rammler, M.Ed., Ph.D.**, is an educational consultant/trainer, founder of the Autism Spectrum Differences Institute of New England, Inc., and developer of the Movement, Anxiety, Communication, and Sensory (MACS) approach to supporting individuals with autism at home and in educational, community, and other inclusive settings. She serves on a number of boards and advocacy groups alongside people with disabilities, including as a Board member of AutCom. Linda has been using supported typing to enable people without oral language to communicate effectively for about 20 years.

**DJ Savarese** is a senior at Grinnell Community Senior High School where he studies creative writing, literature, and the sciences. He is currently collaborating with Rob Rooy on a documentary that shows "how free people with autism can be and yearns to teach teachers how to dearly include kids in Frees' schools." A member of the National Honors Society, DJ is also one of 15 Iowans to win a Herbert Hoover Uncommon Student Award. DJ's project, entitled "Giving Voice to Non-speaking People," entails a website with advice and examples of how to promote meaningful participation and literacy development in the regular classroom and an online gallery of writings by people who type to communicate entitled "Finding Our Voices."

**Ralph James Savarese** is the author of *Reasonable People: A Memoir of Autism and Adoption*, which Newsweek called a "real life love story and a passionate manifesto for the rights of people with neurological disabilities." His son, DJ, wrote the final chapter. He is also the editor, with his wife, Emily Thornton Savarese, of a special issue of *Disability Studies Quarterly* entitled "Autism and the Concept of Neurodiversity," which features the work of some twenty people on the spectrum, including an AutCom self-advocate roundtable. He teaches at Grinnell College in Iowa.

**Phil Schwarz** is a board member of Autcom, the board vice-chair of the Asperger's Association of New England ([www.aane.org](http://www.aane.org)), and a member of the program committee for Autreat, the annual conference/retreat of Autism Network International ([www.ani.ac](http://www.ani.ac)). He is the father of an autistic son and a daughter in the broader phenotype, and an Asperger adult himself, married to a non-autistic spouse. Professionally, he is a software developer. Some of his thoughts on the role and importance of allies to autistic self-advocacy can be found in his essay, "Identifying, Educating, and Empowering Allies" ([www.autistics.org/library/allies.html](http://www.autistics.org/library/allies.html)), and in the chapter on collective self-advocacy that he contributed to Stephen Shore's anthology "Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum".

**Jan Serak, M.A.** is the Executive Co-Director of WI FACETS. She received her B.S. in Dietetics from the UW-Madison and M.A. in Educational Psychology and Dispute Resolution from Marquette University. She is the parent of two young adult sons, one of whom has autism. Serak is Co-Director of Wisconsin's Parent Training and Information Center and also serves as Co-Director of the Region 4 Parent Technical Assistance Center, providing technical assistance to OSEP-funding parent centers in 9 states. She is a partner in the WI Special Education Mediation System and serves on the IDEA Partnership *Creating Agreement* national training team, WI Department of Public Instruction's State Performance Plan Stakeholders' Group, and the North Central RTI Collaborative. Serak is an Autism Society of Wisconsin Board member and served 6 years on the Autism Society of America Board.

**Kelly Shariff** is a certified speech-language pathologist and parent of two young adults on the autism spectrum. Kelly is president of the Autism Society of the Lakeshore and a board member of the Autism Society of Wisconsin. She facilitates the Friendship Group, a socialization group for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum and has worked with children and adults with neurological, developmental, social, emotional and behavioral disabilities in a variety of settings. She resides in Manitowoc, WI with her husband, two sons and Fluffy, the cat.

**Zach Shariff** is an eighteen year old autism advocate from Manitowoc, WI. He is a member of the Autism Society of Wisconsin board of directors and promotes autism awareness and self-advocacy through public speaking and has twice testified at the Wisconsin State capitol on behalf of autism insurance. Zach and several friends recently began their own business, AsperGraphics, marketing and selling autism related merchandise. He enjoys politics, history and sports.

**D.J. Svoboda** was diagnosed with Autism at the age of three. During his school age years, he was often picked on and made fun of. It was from these experiences that The Imagifriends were born. The Imagifriends live in a place called Imagiville. In this imaginary place no one is ever picked on or mistreated in any way. Every-one is loved and accepted for who and what they are. Each Imagifriend he draws is different. They come in many sizes, colors, and designs. None of them are ever mean or cruel. They each have their own special job and purpose in Imagiville. DJ wants to use The Imagifriends to help others with Autism know that they are special "Just the Way They Are." He has designed a coloring book for children and wrote a book about his experiences with Autism. He also draws Imaginames where he takes letters of your name and designs an Imagifriend and connects them to make a name. His art

was also chosen by The Autism Society of America for their Autism Puzzle Project. DJ also now has Imagifriend Note Cards and Imagifriend Key Chains.

**Jeremiah Swisher** was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2 years and 10 months old. At that time he was non verbal, and to this day, by the grace of his family and friends, he was able to be who he is today, with all his great efforts of determination. These days he tends to love to give presentations to help other people with disabilities including autism to give them hands on experience in what he has dealt with in his life.

**Matt Ward** was born in 1978 and diagnosed with autism when he was 18 months old. He graduated from the UW Madison with a mathematics degree in May, 2005. Matt has lived in his own apartment since 2003. Matt is currently working 3 part-time jobs for a total of 20 hours a week. He has done extensive public speaking since 1996 on autism awareness and his mother often speaks with him on transition strategies that helped him in education and employment. His many interests include fractal mathematics, origami, Nintendo Games, Disney cartoons, Legos, hairless dogs, MAD Magazine, multi-lane freeways and fantasy characters such as Cynopians and Burmecians.

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