



Aspiehelp / The Aspire Trust

April/May 2018 Newsletter

Edited by Anna Melling

AGM and Pizza Night, Free public lectures, In Our Office, “Living with Autism” - workshop with Dr. Olive Webb, Jeanette Purkis - “Why I’m not friends with 2nd April”, Poster

AGM and Pizza Night

On Wednesday the 6th of June we will be holding our AGM for the new financial year, you are all welcome to attend.

This will also be a social night, and we will have pizza. The cost is \$10 to cover pizza and drinks. Please RSVP to info@aspiehelp.com, so we have an idea of how many to expect.



Upcoming Fundraising Sausage Sizzles

Here are the dates for the upcoming Sausage Sizzles at Fresh Meats Barrington (Barrington Mall):

Saturday the 12th of May

Saturday the 26th of May

Saturday the 9th of June

Saturday the 23rd of June

If you’re in the area, come and visit, say hello and perhaps buy a sausage! We are always grateful for volunteers to help out with the sausage sizzles, even 2 hours now and then is very helpful (contact the office in advance if you want to help out)

Poster

I’ve included a poster on the last page, based on a slide from one of Stephen Shore’s presentations.

Free public lectures at the University of Canterbury

Not aspie-related, but perhaps of interest to some. Click the link, or use the QR code to learn more and register.

To swim or not to swim? That is the question

Presenter: Professor Jenny Webster-Brown, Waterways Centre for Freshwater Management



Computer Science in the school curriculum? What's the big idea?!

Presenter: Professor Tim Bell, UC Computer Science and Software Engineering



Lessons in Politics from the Christchurch Earthquakes

Presenter: - Dr Ann Brower, Geography, UC Science



In Our Office

Julie and Leith hit the road with energy just after Easter, to go to Motueka and Nelson presenting information and the opportunity for discussion to willing ears! We took a selection of books and also inveigled Debbie Ball from Moutere to come with her books and colouring in cards to promote “Adventures in Natural learning” which she has written from all her experience bringing up 7 ASC children in the countryside. It’s a winner, according to our Chairman, who gave one to one of his daughters to use with her toddler.

We learned a lot from this, our first foray into the wider world. In the end we didn’t get to Nelson but we did meet clients old and new and an interesting architect, Richard Cullingworth, who is a member of the Barrier-Free Trust- an organisation which works to incorporate better accommodations for disabled people in building design. We hope to see him at the roundup in November.

We came back through Kaikoura in a howling storm and were awed by the scale of the devastation and the works to deal with them. Top marks to the road people who waved enthusiastically to EVERY car on the road!

There has been much to-ing and fro-ing between us and Lifelinks regarding a couple of clients, trying to set them up with a Needs Assessment and suitable support.

Leith has been doing a lot of advocacy with a large firm on behalf of one of our clients, with mixed but mainly positive results.

Our most recent Board of Trustees meeting was held on 26 April in the evening and we will be holding them on Wednesday evenings in future. Andrea Graves has been co-opted to the Board as Event Manager for the Aspie Roundup (yay). She will be working with various other members to deliver the whole package!



*Our staff from top:
Leith, Julie, and Anna*

Social evenings

Our regular social evenings are on the first and the third Wednesday of the month, in Cashmere from 7pm - 9pm.

We have board games, hot drinks and biscuits, and a selection of books from the Aspiehelp library available at every meeting. Please bring a \$2 donation.

The next meetings are on the 16th of May, 6th of June, and 20th of June. Aspiring members should make an appointment to meet Julie and Leith first.

Our Patron is Stephen Mark Shore, PhD.

The Aspire Trust, Inc is a registered Charitable Trust. Charities Services registration number is CC46192.

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Living With Autism

For people with Autism /Asperger's and their families.

You are invited to this one day workshop that gives people the opportunity to discuss and learn about the challenges and celebrations experienced by people with Autism / Asperger's - people who often think, problem-solve and relate to others in different ways

Presenter: Dr Olive Webb, ONZM, PhD, DipHSM (dist), DipClinPsych, FNZPsS

Olive is a clinical psychologist with some 45 years' experience. She has specialised in Autism and its effects on education, relationships, careers and day-to-day living. Olive is a founding director and chair of the Institute of Applied Human Services

Date: Saturday, 26th may 2018

Time: 10.00 am-4.00 pm

Place: Kowhai Lounge, Cashmere Presbyterian Centre
2 McMillan Ave, Christchurch (underneath the ASPIEHELP rooms)

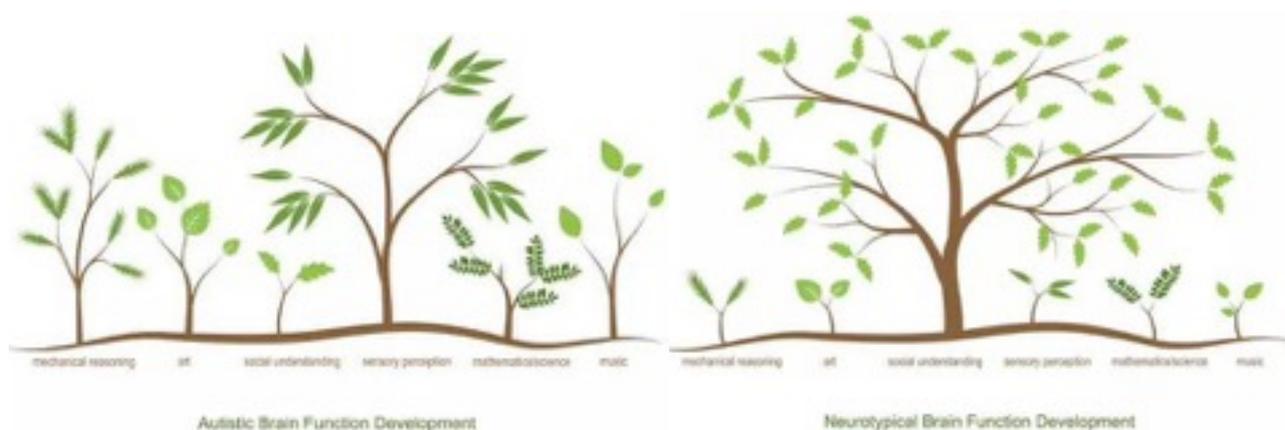
Cost: \$115 (gst incl) per person. A lower rate is available to people who will struggle with this fee. Talk to Olive directly on 03 3180880.

Morning tea, Lunch and Afternoon tea provided

To register:

Email owebbnz@gmail.com and provide your **name**, contact **phone number** and any **dietary restrictions**

Payment by Direct Credit to bank account number 03-0802-0192286-000 making sure to put ASD and your surname in the reference section
For enquiries phone Olive or Carol at 03 3180880



-Tony Atwood, from Irish Autism Action

Why I'm not friends with 2nd April and some suggestions to improve this

Jeanette Purkis

Republished with permission from

<https://jeanettepurkis.wordpress.com/2018/04/02/why-im-not-friends-with-2nd-april-and-some-suggestions-to-improve-this/>



I will warn you in advance this piece is a little bit of a diatribe. I should first acknowledge that there are some distinct positives around having a time to promote understanding around autism and many groups – Autistic-run and otherwise – do some great work using Autism Awareness April as a starting point. I would not want to ‘throw the baby out with the bathwater’ in this. However I struggle with Autism Awareness April quite a lot. Some of my struggles include:

- It is an odd premise that awareness alone is a good thing. Every bully I have ever been victimised by in my life has been acutely aware of my autism – or at least that I was somehow different.
- Awareness alone is an unhelpful concept. Awareness is the very first baby step in inclusion. There are many other steps which should be promoted as well. Things like empowerment, understanding, love and acceptance.
- Many of the ‘awareness’ activities are not done in consultation with Autistic people. I see April as an event done ‘for’ us not ‘with’ us. I tend to think the first rule of inclusion is not to do things ‘for’ a group of people who face disadvantage. The disappointing irony is that April – which is meant to be about autism is so often not experienced as inclusive by many Autistic people.
- April as autism awareness month was not initiated by Autistic people themselves. It is something we have been ‘gifted’ by the UN. I really have difficulty in this. I see it as a bit like creating and promoting an event around celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures but with no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander involvement and then expecting Indigenous Australians to get on board with it. I often feel like ‘Autism Awareness’ has nothing in it at all for me.
- It generates some very difficult conversations. The world outside of the autism community often does not know a lot about issues within our community. This is quite understandable. I mean if they don’t have a connection to autism why would they know about issues facing us in any great detail? I find I get genuinely well-meaning neurotypicals proudly telling me they are wearing blue for April which makes me feel very conflicted indeed, to the extent that I have a prepared statement for this situation. I dislike having to repeatedly explain why I am not delighted it is April and why I am not wearing blue and a bunch of puzzle piece-themed things.

So I have posed a number of issues around April and autism awareness here but I try to never pose an issue without offering a solution. The solutions in this issue are potentially quite numerous and they can be applied at a number of levels. SO in keeping with the need to limit length in my blog, I have picked one audience for my suggested strategies. Here is a selection of things I would like to see in happening April aimed at non-autistic individuals and organisations.

- Be aware that there are many, many different viewpoints in the Autistic community. There is not one Autistic position on the issues around April and people's opinions and thinking will most likely change over time.
- Take on board Autistic requests around events and branding, such as not wanting to 'light it up blue.'
- Remember that we are not usually being 'radical'. Things like autistic involvement in events and services which impact us is a reasonable request. Radicalism usually happens where there is a need for it such as when there is discrimination or abuse.
- Be aware that we may be more stressed and sensitive than usual on April for a range of reasons
- If you are planning an event, have autistic involvement in it at as many stages as possible.
- Read some blogs by autistic writers. There are plenty of them out there and there are some great ones which have loads of helpful advice and information.
- Remember that being given the blue cupcake at the work morning tea might be the final straw for an autistic person and they might just feel totally 'over' April.
- And be aware that an Autistic person might happily embrace and celebrate April 2 as 'their day' and they might want to celebrate with you. We are all quite different.



The 3 A's of Autism

What steps will you take to climb the stairs of Awareness, Acceptance, and Appreciation of people with differences in your lives?



APPRECIATION

ACCEPTANCE

AWARENESS