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# MFEATnews

## MFEAT's Annual General Meeting

MFEAT's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Saturday, June 16, 2007** from 10:00 am until noon at St. Amant Centre, 440 River Road, Wpg. We will be discussing many issues and need the support of the entire membership in order for us to be successful in our quest. Agenda for this meeting is on page two.



Interested in a *Parent Networking* session? There will be a *Parent Networking* session as part of the AGM. Plan to attend!

## President's Report

**School Age Funding/Advocacy Update:** There is very little to report as there was a lull in ongoing advocacy as a result of the provincial election campaign. We did send a letter to the premier prior to the election call, but did not receive a meaningful reply before the campaign was underway. The government is scheduled to resume sitting

on June 6 and at that point MFEAT can once again begin to correspond with the appropriate departments in order to address some of the issues we currently have with the school age interim funding arrangements.

*(continued on page 3)*

**Manitoba Families for Effective Autism Treatment**

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**Our Mission Statement:**

*Our mission is to ensure Manitoba children with Autism Spectrum Disorder have access to Effective treatment.*

**Calendar**

- MFEAT Annual General Meeting .....June 16, 2007
- Parent Network Session (part of AGM).....June 16, 2007
- National Service Dog fundraiser in support of Alec.....Sept 29, 2007
- St. Amant Conference.....Oct 4 & 5, 2007
- MFEAT Conference.....Oct 22 & 23, 2007

# Manitoba Families for Effective Autism Treatment

**Annual General Meeting Agenda  
Saturday, June 16, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.**

**West Dining Room  
St Amant Centre**

**Welcoming and Introductions 5 mins**

1. Introductions ..... Eldon

**MFEAT Business 55 mins**

1. Adoption of Agenda..... Eldon
2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting .....All
3. President's Report ..... Eldon
4. Treasurer's Report/ Approval of Audited Financial Statement.....Stephen
5. Election of Directors.....All
6. Appointment of Auditor.....Stephen
7. Old Business ..... Eldon
- a. Annual Conference ..... Eldon
  - b. Pre-school Program Update ..... Kevin/Eldon/Teresa
  - c. MFEAT Parent Support Network.....Lori
8. New Business
- a. School Age ABA funding/advocacy update..... Eldon
  - b. Other New Business Items.....All
  - c. Next Meeting .....All

**Parent Networking 60 mins**

1. Parent Networking Group..... Lori

(President's Report – continued from page one.)

### **MFEAT Conference:**

This year's event has been set. It will take place on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Canad Inn Polo Park. Conference registration brochures have been printed and will be mailed out to the general membership in August. A copy of the form is also available on the MFEAT website [www.mfeat.ca](http://www.mfeat.ca)

### **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event:**

The MFEAT organization is very excited to be celebrating it's 10th anniversary this spring. We are in the final few days of planning as I write this report and the event will likely have happened by the time you are reading this newsletter. I'd like to thank Rhonda Cenerini for leading the planning for this event and the other board members who supported Rhonda in this venture. We are proud of our accomplishments over the past ten years and look forward to continued success in our future goals and objectives.

### **Education Student Services Forum:**

MFEAT was invited to take part in the annual Student Services Forum sponsored by the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) and the Student Services Administrators' Association of Manitoba (SSAAM). The yearly event, which hosts approximately

400 school clinicians, administrators, counsellors and resource teachers from across the province, is held to provide information and training to school personnel. MFEAT was very pleased to partner with St Amant at an information booth distributing information on school age ABA and our parent organization. We would like to thank MECY and SSAAM for the invitation to take part in this event.

### **MFEAT Representation at ABA:**

Kevin Augustine, Vice President of MFEAT, once again attended the Association of Behavior Analysis Annual Conference which was held this year in San Diego. In addition to attending information sessions, Kevin's role included promoting MFEAT and assisting St Amant Centre with manning the booth for the St Amant ABA program in Manitoba. This event serves as an excellent opportunity to promote the Manitoba ABA program and establish connections with ABA professionals worldwide. I'd like to thank Kevin for volunteering his time to this worthwhile venture.

### **AGM:**

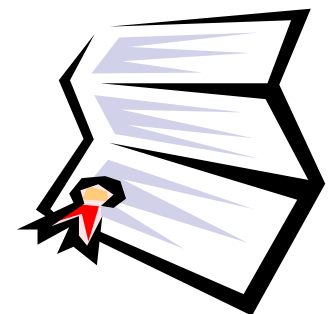
The date has been set for this year's annual general meeting. The event will be held at St Amant on Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 12PM.

There are many important functions which take place at this meeting including approval of the audited financial statements and election of the MFEAT Executive Board for the upcoming year. We are also anticipating information on the current status of the school age interim funding and subsequently the number of families we can potentially serve in the existing budget year.

### **Other Initiatives:**

We are also continuing to work on a new brochure and creating a parent networking event. In closing I would once again emphasize the importance of attendance at the annual meeting. We need you support now to collectively voice our concerns in order to ensure the ongoing development of school age ABA services in our province. In the meantime please feel free to call me with any concerns or questions you may have in regard to the MFEAT organization.

*MFEAT President  
Eldon Strachan*



## Parent Networking

Parents interested in a *Networking Group* will meet during the latter part of the AGM on **June 16, 2007**. It will consist of introductions, exchanging contacts and making future plans. All parents welcome!



## St. Amant Conference



The St. Amant Conference

**2007 Developmental Disabilities and Autism.**

**Oct 4-5, 2007**

**440 River Road  
Winnipeg, Manitoba,  
Canada**

Western Canada's premiere conference on developmental disabilities and autism returns Oct 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, to Winnipeg's Canad Inn – Fort Garry. A record number of responses – both national and international – were received for the St. Amant Conference 2007's Call for Papers. If you have a personal or professional interest in developmental disabilities or autism, you won't want to miss the St. Amant Conference 2007!

Registration is now open: Please call (204) 256-4301 extension 3270 to register.

For more information, please visit: [www.stamant.mb.ca](http://www.stamant.mb.ca)

## A Fundraiser in Support of Alec & National Service



### Dogs



**"We're going to the Dogs!" .....**

*Hot and cold buffet!  
Fabulous auction prizes!*

**Saturday September 29<sup>th</sup> /07  
Assiniboia Downs Racetrack  
3975 Portage Avenue**



All proceeds from this social event will be going to National Service Dogs. Since 1996, National Service Dogs (NSD) has been training Labrador and Golden Retrievers to assist children and families living with Autism.

Please visit: [www.nsd.on.ca](http://www.nsd.on.ca)

## Thank you / Merci Ecole Lacerte



On Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, MFEAT hosted a family barbeque event in honor of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

A great big "thank you" to Ecole Lacerte for very generously donating the use of their school and school grounds for our event.

Thank you Principal Victor Perrin and Vice Principal Claudette Grenier.

**For tickets and information,  
please call  
Rhonda or Rich  
at  
284-5419**



# The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Parents Raising Children with Special Needs

by Sharon Gabison  
(modified from Stephen Covey's The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People)

**1. Be Proactive. You will end up becoming your child's best specialist and your child's best advocate. To be your child's best advocate, you need to learn what it is you need to advocate for. Educate yourself.** Become an autism expert. Autism can present itself along a spectrum in the areas of social interactions, behavior and language abilities. There are many different yet similar symptoms of autism. No two children with autism are the same. There are numerous interventions for the treatment of autism that claim effectiveness. Do your homework. Research. Do not believe everything you read and hear. Familiarize yourself with local services available to you and your child.

**2. Begin with the end in mind. The "end" can reflect the next 10-minutes, the end of the day, or 20 years down the road. Regardless of where the "end" is, plan. You would never venture out on a road trip without a map. A map is a plan. The future, whether immediate**

**or long term is a ride that needs a plan. Your child's roadmap to the future is your plan. For the immediate future:** Outings and functions are challenging, coupled with unpredictable behaviour. Be prepared. Have a "just in case bag" packed and ready to go, full of items that will keep your child entertained if all else fails. You can keep the bag in your car or in your hall closet ready when you need it for easy access. Plan ahead for the long term future. Preparing a will, taking out life insurance and planning for our children's education is something that most parents consider once they become parents. When raising children with special needs, this is more important. The natural course in life is that our kids will grow up, move out and have a family of their own. When raising a child with special needs, we may need to think of their adult living arrangements well before they are adults.

Exploring future living arrangements is something that we may not consider when our children are young but a vital necessity in anticipation of lengthy waiting lists. Visit [www.specialneedsplanning.ca](http://www.specialneedsplanning.ca) for a wealth of information.

**3. Put First Things First. Try to maintain a sense of "normalcy" as best as possible. Your life does not have to be completely defined by your child's disorder. You are still a family. Don't forget other**

**family members.** Siblings need to feel some sense of "normalcy". It is easy for parents to encourage siblings to "help out". It is not uncommon for younger siblings to assume a super-ordinate role in the care of their older sibling on the spectrum. Children need a childhood. It is not fair for adults to expect children to take on adult responsibilities, nor is it fair to deprive a child of their childhood. Don't let autism stop you from doing family things. Don't forget your spouse/partner. Have regular dates with your partner. Go out and do adult things. **Don't forget the "others" in your life.** Try not to isolate yourself from the rest of the world, including your friends. Although a diagnosis of autism can completely engulf your life, and keep you very busy, it is important to keep in mind that your life, and your family's life is not all about autism.

**4. Think Win/Win. Learn how to get what your child needs by helping others understand how helping your child will help them. If others understand how they will benefit by helping your child, then they may be more apt to help.** Dale Carnegie, in his book "How to Win Friends and Influence People", first published in 1936, provides twelve suggestions on how to influence people. Here are some favourites:

\* Begin in a friendly way. Start off your interactions by being friendly. To get the best out of an argument is to avoid one. Do not turn your advocacy efforts into a boxing match.

\* Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong." There will be plenty of times along your journey where you know the person you are negotiating with is wrong. Don't ever tell them what you think. It will burn your bridges very quickly.

\* If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.

\* Get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.

\* Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.

\* Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.

\* Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.

\* Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.

\* Appeal to the nobler motives.

\* Dramatize your ideas.

\* Throw down a challenge.

Use these strategies. You will have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

**5 .Seek first to understand then to be understood. You can't expect others to understand and help you or your child if they don't understand the disorder. You may need to educate other parents/family members and those interacting with our children on a day to day basis.**

Many parents of children with special needs feel that others, including parents with "neurotypical" children just "don't get it". Your child may not participate like other children at parks, birthday parties and other functions. If you are open enough to discussing your child's needs, then do so. There is nothing to be embarrassed about. Not only will it help to inform them, but you may find that they are surprisingly supportive. You may be pleasantly surprised at the reception you receive.

**Educate, educate, educate.** If you work, your employer and co-workers may not understand your need to be on constant "call". The numerous appointments for specialists and therapists, requires flexibility in your work schedule. Hopefully, you may be lucky enough to have an understanding employer. **If you need to educate a stranger, than you have educated one more person in this world.** There are many well intentioned individuals who may provide you with "good advice" on how to manage your child in the middle of a meltdown. There are people who will blame you for your child's behaviour. There are some people who would like to help but just don't know how. If the need arises, you may consider handing out autism information cards so that you don't have to explain.

**6. Synergize. Connect with Other Parents/Families. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.** You are not alone, and should not feel alone. There are other parents out there who are experiencing the same fears, frustrations and sadness that you may feel and longing for a connection. There is no need to be alone. Virtual (internet) communities are a great place to start to meet people. Local chapters (Autism Societies, Asperger's Societies) can be a vehicle to get connected with other parents. Join email and advocacy groups (see resource page). Your new "Autism Family" will ground you in ways that others may not be able to.

**7. Sharpen the Saw. Take care of yourself. Look after yourself spiritually, mentally, physically and socially.** Life is busy and hectic. If you are unable to look after yourself, then who will? Your need to maintain a healthy lifestyle including good nutrition, regular exercise and plenty of sleep is vital to optimum functioning. In order to maintain your sanity, you need to keep yourself as emotionally and physically healthy as possible. Set aside some regular weekly or twice weekly "me time" in which you can refuel. Hire a babysitter. Get out and watch a movie. Go out to a local coffee shop and read your favourite magazine.

## Autism Speaks



Autism Speaks created a media blitz on behalf of autism awareness in its first year (2005) through regular appearances in a variety of media venues, including *The Apprentice*, *The View*, *Access Hollywood*, *The Don Imus Show*, *The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch*, and more.

Their launch in February 2005 coincided with a weeklong series devoted to autism on the NBC News networks, including segments on *The Today Show*, MSNBC, CNBC, and *NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams*. All told, these segments reached 40 million viewers.

As a result, more Americans than ever are aware of autism and its many challenges. In addition, Autism Speaks began work on its high-profile public service campaigns with the Advertising Council. The campaign, which was created pro bono by BBDO, focused on raising awareness of autism and on the importance of early intervention.

In 2006, Autism Speaks and the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) merged, creating the world's largest autism advocacy organization. Autism Speaks and Cure Autism Now (CAN) announced in November 2006 their intent to merge. Autism Speaks passed its two-year anniversary on February 25, 2007. To find out more about the highlights of their first two very busy years visit: <http://www.autismspeaks.org/> There is a link to Autism Speaks Canada.

## Outcome for Children with Autism who Began Intensive Behavioral Treatment Between Ages 4 and 7

*A Comparison Controlled Study by:*

**Svein Eikeseth** - Akershus University College, Norway

**Tristram Smith** - University of Rochester, NY

**Erik Jahr** - Akershus University Hospital, Norway

**Sigmund Eldevik** - Nordvoll School & Autism Centre, Norway

This study extends findings on the effects of intensive applied behavior analytic treatment for children with autism who began treatment at a mean age of 5.5 years. The behavioral treatment group (n = 13, 8 boys) was compared to an eclectic treatment group (n = 12, 11 boys). Assignment to groups was made independently based on the availability of qualified supervisors. Both behavioral and eclectic treatment took place in public kindergartens and elementary schools for

typically developing children. At a mean age of 8 years, 2 months, the behavioral treatment group showed larger increases in IQ and

adaptive functioning than did the eclectic group. The behavioral treatment group also displayed fewer aberrant behaviors and social problems at follow-up. Results suggest that behavioral treatment was effective for children with autism in the study.

For further information, please click on the attached link for the abstract online:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0145445506291396>

