AUSM SUMMER RECREATION CATALOG

Including
AuSM's Guide to
SensoryFriendly
Minnesota
2024









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WELCOME

TO SUMMER

Summer sizzles with social and recreational activities that, on the surface level, appear to be – pure and simple – just plain fun. And sure, they are fun. But harmlessly hidden inside those fun-sized summer days of respite and recreation are meaningful growth opportunities, where life lessons sneak up, settle in nicely, then stick around. As much as education is about learning to learn, it's about learning to socialize – and recess rules the day. Bonds are built in classes that don't really seem like classes – with camaraderie among classmates becoming friends and allies.

Recreation builds relationships when students fall into friendship through their shared learning journey. This recreation guide comes benignly disguised as an education catalog and social calendar, but we hope that flipping through these pages creates a welcome summer breeze for our autism community.

We've curated the social and recreation programs presented in this catalog to help you and your family connect with our community through classes, community events, and other opportunities to learn organically in social and classroom settings.

On the following pages, you'll find activities designed to meet the needs of autistic and neurodiverse youth and adults. We celebrate autistic individuals and all who support them by providing a welcoming place to learn, access services, and develop skills for navigating emotions, information, and life.

AuSM's social, recreation, and education programs are an integral part of our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the autism community with the resources needed to live fully. Wherever you are on your journey into the autism community, AuSM has something for you – this summer and beyond.

Enjoy your summer, every summer.









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Join these companies in making a difference in the lives of individuals touched by autism in Minnesota.







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If you are interested in becoming an AuSM Premier Partner, please contact Zephyr James at 651.647.1083 ext. 123 or email zjames@ausm.org.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

REGISTRATION OPENS

FEB. 1



PAYMENT

Check with your county case manager to see if your selected AuSM education program can be paid for under the Brain Injury (BI); Community Alternative Care (CAC); Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI); or Developmental Disability (DD) waiver. Scholarships are available for those who qualify. Scholarships can be requested through the registration forms.



EDUCATION REGISTRATION TIPS

- Call 651.647.1083 or email education@ausm.org with registration questions. Classes have a maximum enrollment. Register early to ensure placement in a class.
- If a participant requires more support than the class provides, they may participate with a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The DSP will be responsible for supporting the individual with communication, behavior, and daily living skills. Contact us at education@ausm.org for more information.
- Schedules and instructors are subject to change. Visit www.ausm.org for current information.
- If a class is canceled or postponed, AuSM will notify you via phone or email and will post on www.ausm.org.
- Cancellation by registrant: Refunds less a \$25 processing fee will be assessed for cancellations received in writing to education@ausm.org seven business days prior to the start of the first class in the session. Following this date, no refunds will be given. Requests for transfer of registration to another individual or program will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Cancellation by program organizer: AuSM reserves the right to cancel a class due to low registration or other circumstances that make the class non-viable. If AuSM cancels a class, registrants will be offered a full refund. If the class is postponed, registrants will have the option to either receive a full refund or transfer registration to another class.

SOCIAL AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

AuSM programs are conducive to youth and adults who fall within the wide range of the autism spectrum. Social and recreation programs are staffed at a 1:4 staff-to-participant ratio. If an individual is able to participate safely in a program but requires more support than 1:4 staffing provides, the individual may bring a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The DSP will be responsible for supporting the individual with communication, behavior, and daily living skills. Call 651.647.1083 ext. 120 or email education@ausm.org for more information. AuSM is committed to making your class experience positive and rewarding.

Pricing is listed after each session. M=member. NM=non-member.



SPRING

CsZ Improv Skills (ages 14-26)



AuSM is pleased to continue its partnership with CSz Twin Cities to offer classes based on the principles of improvisational theater.

Have fun while learning how to respond to the unexpected, engage in reciprocal interactions, and support fellow participants in keeping a scene moving forward. No prior improv experience is necessary. Experienced improv participants may register for the Advanced class; Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor.

Location: Center for Performing Arts, 3754 Pleasant Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55409

Session	Day/Dates	Time	Price
Beginner	Saturdays, Feb. 17-March. 23	1-2:30 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)
Advanced	Saturdays, Feb. 17-March. 23	3-4:30 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)



SUMMER



Minnesota Zoo

The Minnesota Zoo is excited to partner with the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) to offer summer camp opportunities for youth with autism. Scholarships available. Visit mnzoo.org/scholarships for information. Registration is through the Minnesota Zoo website and opens on Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. for Zoo Members, and on Feb. 13 at 10 a.m. to the general public.

Location: Minnesota Zoo, 13000 Zoo Blvd. Apple Valley, MN 55124

Minnesota Zoo: Ocean Odyssey (Ages 8-11)

Dive into an underwater world teeming with sea turtles, sharks, and seahorses. Each day, explore a different ocean habitat including coral reefs, tide pools, and estuaries.

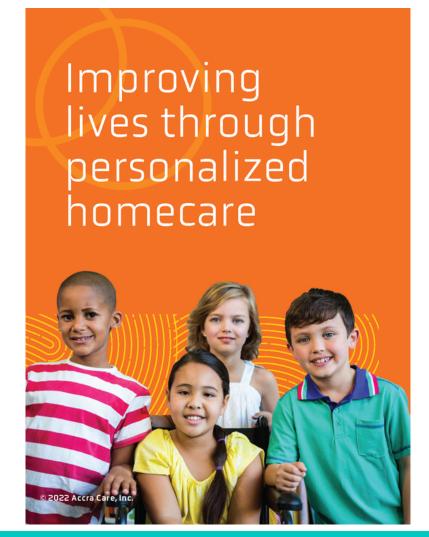
Minnesota Zoo: Photo Safari (Ages 12-15)

Pack your field bag and camera (both provided) to explore Zoo animals and the countries their wild kin call home. Practice taking photos and field notes to help see animals in a whole new light. A link to view and download camper photos will be emailed at the end of camp. Our animals are ready for their closeup— are you?

Minnesota Zoo: Zoology (Ages 16-19)

Get a glimpse into the most popular major for zoo professionals. The animal kingdom is a big and fascinating world to discover, and the Zoo is the perfect place to investigate. Explore the diversity of the animal kingdom through special talks and animal behavior studies. (No dissections will be performed in this camp.)

Session	Day/Date	Time	Price
Ocean Odyssey	June 17-21	1:30-4:30 p.m.	\$225
Photo Safari	June 24-28	1:30-4:30 p.m.	\$225
Zoology	July 8-12	8:30-11:30 a.m.	\$225



Accra helps families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder that need support in their homes. We are one of the largest providers of homecare services in Minnesota, proudly serving more than 9,000 clients across the state. Our mission is to improve lives by providing individualized homecare services and support to people living at home. Our personcentered philosophy focuses on treating each person as a unique individual.

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Social and Recreation Programs

- Home Health Care
- · Mental Health Services
- Senior Assisted Living

To learn more, call 866-935-3515 or visit accrahomecare.org



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SOCIAL AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

Lowry Nature Center (ages 8-18)

Explore the forest, pond, and prairie habitats! Build a survival shelter with other campers. Start a campfire using different techniques and make a s'more. Try canoeing in our nearby lake. Meet our resident animals. Gain skills to navigate and overcome obstacles in the forest. Make friends and engage with others during safe, off-trail adventures away from the comforts of home. This program is entirely outdoors.

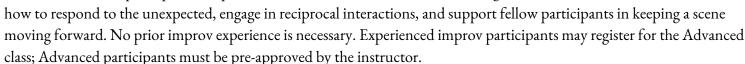
Location: Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr. Victoria, MN 55386

Session	Day/Date	Time	Price	Ages
Outdoor Adventure Skills for Autistic Teens	July 15-18	9:30 a.m12 p.m.	\$100	13-18
Outdoor Adventure Skills for Autistic Youth	July 15-18	1-3 p.m.	\$100	8-12



CsZ Improv Skills (ages 14-26)

AuSM is pleased to continue its partnership with CSz Twin Cities to offer classes based on the principles of improvisational theater. Have fun while learning



Location: To be determined. Check the website for additional updates.

Session	Day/Dates	Time	Price	
Beginner	July 22-26	1-3 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)	
Advanced	July 22-26	3:30-5:30 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)	

Toneworks (ages 6-20)

TONEWORK Work together to create interactive art exhibits using different creative arts mediums. Rotations include exhibit design, music, movement, and visual art. Each rotation is led by a teaching artist or therapist with extensive experience working with youth of all ages and ability levels.

Location: Toneworks Music Therapy, 5666 Lincoln Dr. Suite 280, Minneapolis, MN 55436

Session	Day/Date	Time	Price	Ages
Morning	July 29-August 2	9 a.m12 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)	6-12
Afternoon	July 29-August 2	1-4 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)	13-20

MIA: AuSM Artists (ages 12-18)



Social and Recreation Programs

Be inspired by the art seen in the galleries and make your own masterpieces in the studio while practicing social skills and making friends. Learn about new materials

from air-dry clay to acrylic paints. This class will be co-taught by Mia art instructors and an AuSM education specialist.

Location: Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2400 3rd Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55404

Session	Day/Dates	Time	Price
AuSM Artists	August 5-9	9:30 a.m12 p.m.	\$275 (M)/\$325 (NM)



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

Traveling with your child with special needs can seem intimidating. Navigating MSP helps ease the anxiety with practice runs through MSP Airport.

This FREE program is offered monthly and will allow you to:

- Experience TSA security
- Prepare for takeoff
- Explore the terminal

meet a pilot

- Board a plane and
- Gather helpful tips, information and resources

To learn more or to register for a session, go to MSPAirport.com and search for Navigating MSP.

For more information contact: Shelly Lopez at 612-726-5239 or Shelly.Lopez@mspmac.org



YES, AND...

A Flexible Perspective: AuSM Comedy Improv

Comedy Improv can seem intimidating to some, but the concepts included are meaningful to all – plus it's a whole lot of fun. Like life, improv is unscripted, but follows a loose set of rules to help guide us forward. One of the main rules of improv is "yes, and.." meaning you accept what has been passed to you – and try to move it forward as best you can. For many years, AuSM has partnered with Comedy Sportz to provide comedy improv classes tailored to neurodivergent youth and young adults. Many autistics have found AuSM improv classes to be great experiences.

Comedy Sportz to provide comedy improv classes tailored to neurodivergent youth and young adults. Many autistics have found AuSM improv classes to be great experiences.

"I enjoy AuSM's comedy improv classes because it is an opportunity to not worry about saying the 'right thing' because if you say the 'wrong thing' we just laugh

Michael's Favorite Game

"I love Taxi Cab, What are

You Doing, Freeze,

Surprise Party, to name a

"Improv helps build confidence," said Scott Anderson, Tatum's father. "The experience performing in front of people has translated to more expansive social interactions on a day-to-day basis. When people learn my daughter is doing improv, they get a whole new view of what she can accomplish."

about it," said Tatum Anderson, a longtime participant. "And I enjoy it because I have memory issues – and there

is no memorizing lines. There is no pressure in this class, and it gives me a break from life's pressures."



Tatum's Favorite Game:

"Advice Panel. because I like to make a joke out of whatever character I play

 but use the joke to answer serious questions." Class instructor Michael Bruckmueller has been doing improv for 27 years. As these programs enter a second decade, he appreciates them as much as ever. "I feel very fortunate to be able to share my love of improv with the amazing students at AuSM... [the] process involves so much laughter. I get to go to work and laugh all the way through it. That's pretty hard to beat."

Through his work with AuSM, Bruckmueller found he has a passion for working with autistic and neurodivergent students. So much so that he teamed up with special education teacher Kelly Kautz to create MNprov, a nonprofit that uses improvisational theater with a range of students who are neurodivergent or have social/emotional learning needs, and their teachers.

Find out more information about AuSM Comedy Improv classes at ausm.org.

AUSM COFFEE CLUB

Coffee Club is a space where autistic and neurodiverse adults can connect with each other, foster friendships, and build community while enjoying a favorite beverage and/or snack. Adults are welcome to bring items that make them feel comfortable, stay as long as they'd like, stim, and parallel play. While it's free to participate in AuSM Coffee Club, we ask that participants purchase something from our venue.

AuSM provides a concierge staff person to assist with questions, check-in, ordering, or to manage any issues that may arise during the club. AuSM provides a number of resources, including a social narrative providing club details, parking info, menus, and more.

Location: Dogwood Coffee, 825 Carleton Street, St. Paul, MN 55114

UPCOMING DATES

Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m.

- Feb. 6
- March 5
- April 2
- May 7
- June 4

AuSM Coffee Club is free thanks to the generous sponsorship of AuSM Premier Partner Best Care.

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AUSM SUMMER CAMPS

AuSM Summer Camps are tailored for autistic children, youth, and adults. Parents and caregivers can rest assured knowing that their campers are being cared for by highly trained staff, while campers experience success, meet peers, and make memories. To participate in an AuSM camp, you must be a current member of AuSM (see page 20).



Camp Registration in 2024

Camp placements for Camp Discovery, and Camp Hand in Hand will be determined through a lottery system. The online application is available from January 1st–March 22nd. In order to enter the camp lottery, you will be asked to complete all required camp paperwork except proof of an annual medical exam. Please select only **one** session of camp when applying for the lottery. Once all required forms have been completed and submitted, you will receive a confirmation email saying that your camper is on the waitlist. **All campers** are on a waitlist until the lottery is complete.

Waivers and Camp

AuSM has created a resource to help you navigate paying for camp with a waiver.

Visit

www.ausm.org/camps to view the resource!

CAMP SESSIONS

Camp Discovery

Session 1: July 1-5, ages 18+ Session 2: July 7-11, ages 11-17

Camp Hand in Hand

Session 1: June 19-23, ages 18-24

Session 2: June 25-29, ages 14-17

Session 3: August 5-9, ages 10-13

Session 4: August 11-16, ages 25+



Camp Discovery

Camp Discovery is a great choice for autistic individuals who do well in small groups. Most successful Discovery campers are mainstreamed part-time, in a transitions program, or working part-time in their communities. Campers should be able to positively interact and safely participate within small groups. At Camp Discovery, you can look forward to swimming, live action role-playing games, nature experiences, arts and crafts, kayaking, canoeing, and small group discussions focused on special interests.

Cost: \$1999

Location: True Friends Courage South, 8046 83rd St. NW, Maple Lake, MN 55358 Support level: Small group

Camp Hand in Hand

Camp Hand in Hand is the place for campers who need the most support, and can meet the needs of all campers except those who are medically vulnerable. AuSM-trained camp counselors and experienced cabin leaders carefully plan and maintain a well-run, relaxed, and rewarding camp experience. Our campers are paired with a single counselor who works with them throughout their camp week, with activities like boating, tubing, horseback riding, crafts, archery, biking, music groups, swimming, paddleboards, ropes courses, nature exploration, and more!

Cost: \$1999

Location: Camp Knutson, 1148 Manhattan Pt. Blvd. Crosslake, MN 56442 Support level: One to one, with each camper receiving an assigned counselor

If you have questions about which camp is the best fit for your camper, or other camp questions, please contact Director of Camp Programs Melinda Harris at camp@ausm.org.



Work At AuSM Camps!

It takes a lot of staff to make camp happen. Every summer, we hire more than 150 people to work at AuSM camps. Here's what we're looking for:

- Two nurses (RN, NP, PA, or MD required) per session.
- Up to 40 counselors per session.
- Six Cabin Leaders per session.
- A core team of counselors and cabin leaders/group leaders who will work all seven camp sessions.

Strong hiring preference will be given to qualified applicants who can work all camp sessions.

Go to www.ausm.org/camps/work-at-camp to apply.

AUSM MULTICULTURAL CAMP

"Never stop this camp! It was truly magical and amazing!"

As part of AuSM's growing multicultural initiatives, in 2023 we piloted a family camp session for Somali and Oromo families affected by autism. Culturally, open dialogue about autism was relatively new to many of these families – and with much to learn, they learned fast. Anyone who's been to camp knows it's a powerful social experience where bonds are built quickly, and a sense of community forms fast. We now know that summercamp feel comes on just as strong in the fall – during just one long October weekend.

It dawned on one of our autistic adult presenters that he and his community, in this moment, were breaking new ground, together, as he remarked, "This is the first time I've talked about my autism in my own language – Somali." He wasn't the only autistic individual who found new experiences. One parent cautioned staff early on that their son didn't like bikes – just before this camper self-regulated by hopping on and biking for over an hour.

In order to plan for this new program, AuSM joined forces with some of our best partners: the Multicultural Autism Action network, the DHS Innovations department, and Camp Knutson. Together, leaders from this collaboration planned a weekend of classic fall activities for autistic campers, their siblings, and accompanying parents and grandparents. Families of all sizes were welcomed to stay on camp together, and special attention was made to make sure that all spaces, meals, and activities felt welcoming and familiar to guests. Some facets or programming separated children and adults to create space for parents to more deeply dialogue about their experiences, and all adult sessions were, in part, facilitated by autistic adults. Meanwhile, kids and siblings were supervised by expert camp staff, and introduced to a slew of favorite camp activities, many of which were new experiences for Somali and Oromo campers. Each day of program also prioritized time for families to enjoy programming together, so that we might center our experience around inclusive and judgment-free joy.

The effects of the weekend were remarkable.

"My favorite part was everything. Especially, being able to start at ground zero with a group that has never been to camp, then introducing them to the 'simple' things I deal with every day at camp and watching their eyes light up as we have introduced them to something new."

One counselor shared a story of a camper: "(Camper) joined my group halfway through morning rotations Saturday. He was not meant to be with our group, but we got him to join our group after he'd been doing his own thing most of the morning. At first, he was not interested in joining in on activities, but by the time we got to our second activity with him, nature, he began to become interested. His involvement continued to increase as the day went on. In the afternoon, he was very excited to go biking and, in the evening, even joined in on the dance with his mom. The next morning, he was a part of our group again and tried EVERY activity. Sometimes campers just need a little extra push or a little extra talking to in order to feel comfortable trying new things. He grew so much throughout the weekend, and it was truly incredible to witness."

While learning about common characteristics of autistics, a parent of one of the campers stood up and said, "I think I might be autistic myself." This lightbulb moment of acceptance was shared by another mother who likewise said she intended to get tested.

Plans are underway to extend camp opportunities for more multicultural families in our community.

This multi-cultural session was a first for camp staff who now want to replicate the experience for more families. A sampling of comments from camp staff:

"The best part about working with these new families is providing an extremely positive experience for them and their children – one with no judgement, only love and support. Getting to experience the family members really let in the staff to their families and allow us to help take care of their children. In turn, they were so grateful and surprised that we can take care of and love their children as they do. I saw their walls break down and their trust in others build up, as well as seeing weight being taken off of their shoulders."

"I loved getting to see families with their children and embracing what we know as camp. It was amazing to see the joy on their faces all weekend. It was also really cool to hear about how well the parent sessions went and that a majority of parents trusted us to care for their children while they were in session."

"Overall, the experience was enlightening, not only for myself, but for the families as well. They seemed to really enjoy spending quality time with their children in a new scenery, while not having to worry about caring for them on their own."







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TRAINING AND CLASSES

ASD Direct Support Certification

This program is an in-depth dive into understanding the autism diagnosis, common traits in autism, and some of AuSM's favorite support strategies. It's ideal for support staff, PCAs, group home staff, educational aides, and anyone who works directly with autistic individuals. Individuals on the spectrum also are welcome and encouraged to attend for increased self-understanding and to share their unique perspectives. Email education@ausm.org for information about discounted group rates.

Training Objectives

- Identify how people with autism think
- Understand how differences in thinking lead to differences in behavior
- Understand how different tools/interventions address the strengths and challenges of ASD
- Identify tools to support clients and loved ones in different situations

Location: Held Virtually

Session	Day/Dates	Time	Price
Summer Session	Mon-Fri June 10-14.	9 a.m12 p.m.	\$300



Understanding Autism is AuSM's introductory class. You'll learn all about the diagnosis, common characteristics, and some basic evidenced-based best practices to support autistic individuals and sensory processing sensitivities. This class is ideal for caregivers, parents, grandparents, group home and day program staff, Personal Care Attendants, and health care staff.

*Note, this is a single-session class. Content is the same for all sessions. AuSM offers these sessions at different times to accommodate as many schedules as possible. When registering, select the session that works best for you.

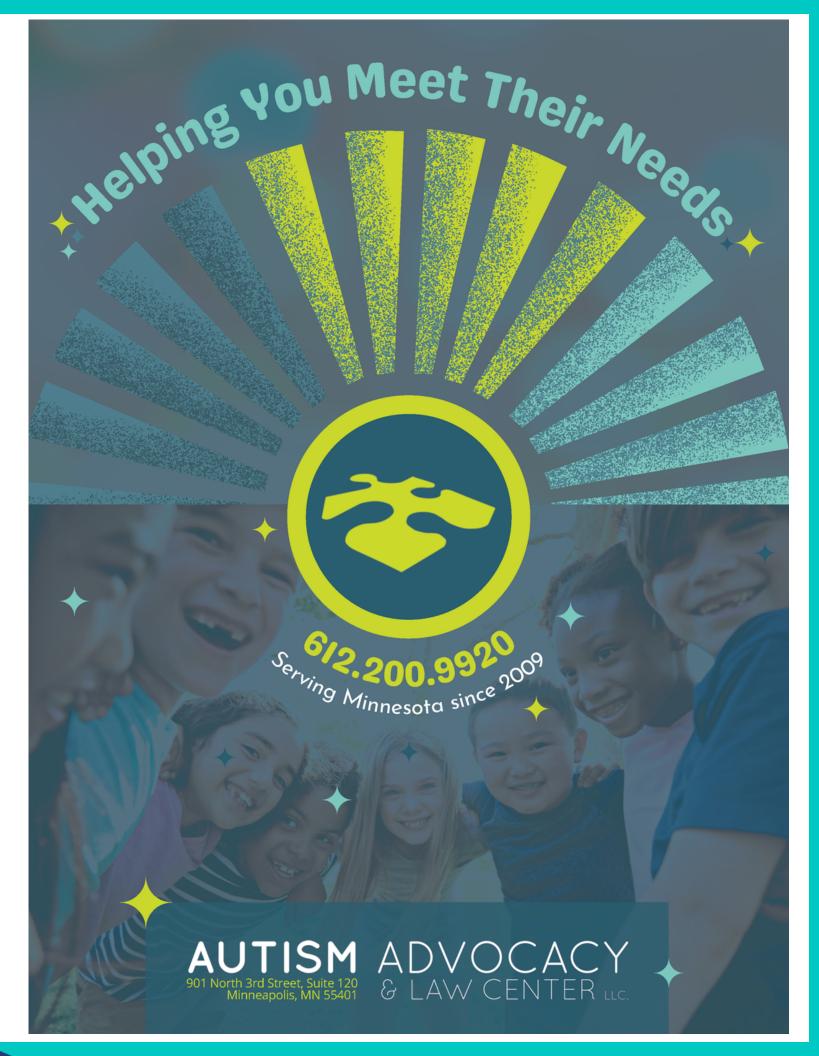
Location: Held Virtually

Day/Date	Time	Price
Monday, Feb. 12	10 a.m12 p.m.	Free
Monday, Apr. 8	10 a.m12 p.m	Free

2024 Understanding Autism classes are generously sponsored by Best Care an AuSM Premier Partner.

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AUSM WORKSHOPS

AuSM workshops are offered throughout the year and offer insight from experts on autism-related topics. You'll find information for family members, educators, professionals, and of course autistic individuals, All workshops are presented virtually unless otherwise noted.

Please note that pricing is listed as follows:

- NM=Non-member
- M=Member
- A=Autistic individual

AuSM Workshops are generously sponsored by our Premier Partners: Accra, Autism Advocacy and Law Center, Best Care, Minnesota Independence College & Community, PICS, and Swim Possible.

Learning to Drive While Autistic

Date: February 20, 2024; 7-8:30 p.m.

Presented by: Kathy Woods

Pricing: \$25 (NM), \$15 (M), \$10 (A)

Driving is viewed as a rite of passage as we enter later teenage years or early adulthood. This workshop will share information and invite discussion on the critical skills needed for driving, how being autistic may impact learning to drive, assessment of driver readiness and driver training, ideas for things that can be initiated in the home, community services and therapies that may improve safe driver potential, and review ideas related to modified independence in the community through use of alternative transportation and delivery services.

Language Development in Neurodivergent and Other Gestalt Language Processors: Part 2

Date: March 7, 2024; 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Presented by: Marge Blanc

Pricing: \$55 (NM), \$45 (M), \$35 (A)

This three-hour training is a deeper dive into the use of Natural Language Acquisition supports for students who are gestalt language processors (GLPs). Continuing from the three-hour training presented on Dec. 7, 2023, this workshop will go further into more specialized topics, including identifying and supporting older GLPs, gathering and scoring language samples, more specific supports to late-stage GLPs, and using the related supports of self-regulation, AAC assessment, and music.

Speed Friending for Teens with MNeurodivergent

Date: March 19, 2024; 7-8:30 p.m. Presented by: MNeurodivergent Pricing: \$25 (NM), \$15 (M), \$10 (A)

Location: Lionsgate Academy Shoreview, 599 Cardigan Rd. Shoreview, MN 55126

MNeurodivergent

AuSM is partnering with MNeurodivergent to host a speed friending event. Based on the concept of speed dating, you'll get the chance to meet tons of new people in a quick and structured way. We'll break up into groups: each group will sit on one side of a table and be paired with another group to talk to each other for 3-5 minutes. Once the time is up, the people on one side of the table then get up, move one seat down, and then start talking to the next person on the other side of the table. You'll be able to tell event organizers who you felt connected with and they'll put you in touch with any mutual matches! This workshop is for ages 13-18.





AuSM Workshops

Minnesota Service Navigation

Date: May 21, 2024; 7-8:30 p.m. Presented by: Jillian Nelson

Pricing: \$25 (NM), \$15 (M), \$10 (A)

Join Jillian Nelson, AuSM's Community Resource and Public Policy Advocate, as she discusses the nuances of Minnesota service navigation. Jillian will also provide her own perspective of service navigation as an autistic adult. Learn what services are available and which ones may work best for you and your loved ones. Services vary on an individual and family basis; Jillian is not able to provide what an individual will qualify forin services. However, she can walk you through what the process is like and how to find out what someone qualifies for in the state of Minnesota.

Plain Language and Easy Read: An Introduction to **Cognitively Accessible Formats**

Date: June 6, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Presented by: Donnie Denome Pricing: \$65 (NM), \$55 (M), \$35 (A)

This presentation will cover the basics of cognitive accessibility and cognitively accessible formats when writing for autistic people and other people with IDD. We will talk about the difference between plain language and Easy Read, strategies when writing in plain language or Easy Read, and the basics of illustrating and formatting plain language and Easy Read documents. No prior experience in cognitively accessible formats is required; however, please come prepared to try writing in these formats.

Helping Your Child with ASD Learn to Ride a Bike

Date: June 18, 2024; 6-7:30 p.m.

Presented by: Alex Uhler

or her own bike.

Held in person at the AuSM office, 2380 Wycliff St. Saint Paul, MN 55114 in the parking lot Pricing: \$25 (NM), \$15 (M), \$10 (A)

Challenges with body awareness, balance and motor control, and hand-eye coordination can make riding a bike difficult. Learn a number of tips for successful bike riding including purchasing equipment, making bike adjustments, breaking down riding into smaller steps, clothing protection, practice makes perfect pedaling, staying positive and patient, and working toward the sense of independence and accomplishment that your child will experience when learning to ride his

Note: This workshop is limited to eight children, ages 5-12. If someone outside of this age range is interested in attending, please email education@ausm.org to discuss if it will be appropriate. Support adult and child attend together. Child should bring bike and helmet.

Adaptive 1:1 Swim Lessons

AUSM ADVOCACY

As we head into 2024, the AuSM Advocacy Committee has been hard at work setting our priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Following up on a year of wins in 2023, we're continuing some of our ongoing priorities and adding new bills to our agenda as well. If you'd like to be involved in AuSM Advocacy, visit www.ausm.org to learn more about the committee!

AuSM 2024 Policy Agenda

- 1: Sub Minimum Wage: In 2023, Minnesota passed legislation making historic investments in the move to pay people with disabilities the minimum wage or higher, as well as increase customized and integrated employment for that population. Those investments include support and education for families, technical assistance for providers and lead agencies (counties), and ongoing training for case management. In 2024, we are looking to guarantee minimum wage for people with disabilities, the final step in taking our previous work to its fruition.
- 2: Medical Assistance-Employed Persons With Disabilities (MA-EPD): This proposal seeks to eliminate the premiums that are charged to individuals who receive MA-EPD, and prevent the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) from discharging individuals who cannot afford to pay their current MA-EPD premium. The proposal to eliminate MA-EPD premiums was on the verge of passing last session. A mistake from DHS related to the fiscal note caused the provision related to the premium elimination to be removed from the omnibus bill at the 11th hour. Prior to that removal, the proposal had broad support from the house, senate, and governor's office.
- **3: Event Licensing:** We are continuing to work on legislation that would create event permit requirements for large event approval to include requirements to provide sensory friendly space or accommodations for any public event that includes more than 1,000 participants.
- 4: Disability System Accessibility Project: In a new strategy we are shifting our previous bill which would have created a task force for reporting on accessibility issues within disability services. Our new bill will launch a project using journey mapping to create a realistic look at the experiences of people accessing services and supports in MN. This shift is coming in reaction to DHS concerns about cost and capacity to complete the goals of the task force.
- 5: Special Education Parent Accessibility: We have been working on a bill outlining requirements for educators to
- accommodate parents with disabilities in the IEP process to allow better access to special education for families with multiple generations of disability. This year we will be updating this to include preferred language requirements in cooperation with Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN) and The MN Deaf and Hard of Hearing Council.
- 6: Disability Justice and Anti-Ableism in Education: We will be supporting (MAAN) in legislation to require anti-ableism and disability justice training for all special ed teachers as a move towards cultural competency for the disability community.



ausm

swimpossible

feel what you can do

At Swimpossible, we value authenticity and inclusivity. We believe that everyone deserves to be seen and heard and we create a safe and welcoming space for all. We celebrate diversity and encourage swimmers of all backgrounds and abilities to join us in the water

Contact us @ swiminfo@swimpossible.org to schedule lessons

G GUTHRIE THEATER

> A frightfully funny musical

June 22 - Aug 18 612.377.2224 guthrietheater.org



benefit from a more relaxed environment. For details, visit www.guthrietheater.org/relaxed

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Autism is a complex developmental disability, and navigating autism resources can be daunting. As a free service to the autism community, AuSM endeavors to provide practical advice for individuals and families struggling to navigate systems, understand options, and obtain services and support to fit their needs. With empathy informed by our own experiences, AuSM's Information and Resources team is available to listen, discuss options, and help connect you to programs, services, therapists, and support.



651.647.1083



info@ausm.org



651.321.2909 NEW



- Recommendations on testing and obtaining a diagnosis
- County service guidance; advice on first proactive steps
- Locating providers for different types of therapies
- Autism-related questions that are not clinical
- Recommendations of general employment services
- Resources regarding social and support opportunities
- Recommendations of tools and adapative tech
- Book and media recommendations
- Information about disability rights and laws related to autism
- And more, ask us!

ONLINE RESOURCES

AuSM is Minnesota's First Autism ResourceTM, and we are here to provide you with resources, help navigate systems, and disseminate information to support you on your journey. One of the easiest ways to get support from AuSM is through our online resources, which are always free to use! In the resources section of the AuSM website, you'll find all kinds of supports, from social narratives to toolkits, informational articles to interactive resources. You can browse by topic or by type.

AuSM Resources by Topic

- About autism
- Advocacy
- Emotion regulation
- Executive function
- Living skills
- Navigating the community
- Rituals, routines, and managing change
- Sensory regulation
- Services, supports, and accommodations
- Social and communication supports

AuSM Resources by Type

- Social narratives
- Videos
- Informational articles
- Worksheets and interactive tools
- Technology, apps, and databases
- Infographics
- Toolkits

Find resources at www.ausm.org/ausm-resources.





We are passionate about creating innovative and genuine opportunities for people with disabilities or disadvantages at home, at work and in the community.

MRCI can assist your family in whichever ways best suit your needs. Whether that be utilizing a waiver, helping to find and maintain employment, or gain new skills.

"MRCI is the best. You have taken care of us for many, many years, and we have never had an issue with anything. Thank you for your support!" - 2023 Satisfaction Survey Respondent



THERAPY

AuSM's services are outpatient only. If you require a higher level of support, we may refer you to another provider.

The Autism Society of Minnesota's highly-trained therapists have committed their careers to helping individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder understand their diagnosis. They provide strategies to support each person's unique autism experience, addressing both the challenges and gifts it can bring. AuSM therapists help individuals with autism from youth through adulthood as they grow at their own pace in a safe, compassionate, and respectful environment. AuSM's clinic is LGBTQIA-friendly and takes a neurodiversity-friendly approach to therapy, with many neurodivergent therapists on staff. We are a leader in adult and gender-affirming mental health services for autistics. Our therapists practice a variety of types of therapy, including EMDR, ACT, CBT, and hold licensures including LMFT, PhD, MA, MS, MSW, and more. Contact us at autismcounseling@ausm.org to set up an appointment.

Counseling Services:

- Individual therapy
- Marriage, couples, and family therapy
- Psychoeducation
- Second opinions on autism evaluations
- Trauma therapy
- Evaluations for autism for ages 16+ (limited availability)
- Onsite consultations for high-intensity challenges when staff or family need additional support

SUPPORT GROUPS

AuSM provides a variety of support groups to meet the needs of our community. Support groups offer those affected by autism the opportunity to share problems, solutions, joy, and sorrows with one another.

- Women's Support Group: first Thursday of each month
- LGBTQIA+ Support Group: second Thursday of each month
- Family Members of Adults on the Spectrum Support Group: third Thursday of each month
- Independent Adults with ASD Support Group: fourth Thursday of each month

RSVP at www.ausm.org. Held virtually. Check the website for details.



AUSM IS A

NEURODIVERSITY-

AFFIRMING CLINIC

AuSM Support Groups are generously sponsored by Premier Partners Accra, Best Care, and PICS.







MAY 19, 2024

Help build an inclusive Minnesota by donating or registering as a fundraiser (or both!) to show your support for autistic people in your life.

ROC AT THE ST. LOUIS PARK RECREATION CENTER



WWW.AUSM.ORG



KEYNOTES

DEVON PRICE
DR. PAULA KLUTH
LYDIA DAWLEY

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HILTON DOUBLETREE MINNEAPOLIS AIRPORT

The Minnesota Autism Conference, hosted by AuSM, is here to help you learn more about ASD through educational content, community connections, and resources like exhibitors and the AuSM Shop. Whether you are new to autism or have decades of experience, there's information for you here as you connect with our community.



BIS



About Our Study

Who Is Eligible?

About Your Visit

Contact Us



Infant Brain Imaging Study

The goal of this NIH-funded brain imaging study is to identify autism symptoms earlier in life.

Families with an infant 6 months old or younger with an older full sibling diagnosed with autism. Expectant parents are encouraged to contact us.

Your infant and a parent will:

- -Travel to Masonic Institute of the Developing Brain at 6-, 12-, and 24-months old for developmental testing and MRI scan during natural sleep
- -Receive up to \$475 compensation and reimbursement for travel expenses at each in-person visit
- -Complete remote visits with questionnaires and phone interviews at 9-, 18-, (\$50 compensation) and 36-months (\$100 compensation)

For additional information or to enroll, call Samantha Lee at 612-624-4533 or email ibis@umn.edu. Visit the IBIS website for more information at ibis-network.org



FOR IRB USE ONLY IRB ID#: 201901013 APPROVAL DATE: 03/15/21 RELEASED DATE: 03/15/21 EXPIRATION DATE: 01/24/2



2024 GUIDE TO SENSORY-FRIENDL' SENSORY-FRIENDL' MINNESOTA









WELCOME

TO AUSM'S GUIDE TO SENSORY FRIENDLY MINNESOTA

In this section, we provide space for organizations and venues to share their upcoming sensory-friendly events and activities with our community. A growing number of venues and organizations are creating sensory-friendly spaces and events on their own by following the documentation and tools we provide for free at ausm.org. In the Resources section on our website, you can find information like "Creating Sensory Friendly Spaces" and another resource called "How to Create a Sensory Kit."

Anyone can take simple steps to make spaces more sensory friendly for visitors – our goal is to provide resources empowering orgs and venues to attract more autistic and neurodiverse visitors. Sensory spaces also benefit many people outside of the autism community, like people with ADHD, those with anxiety, and neurotypicals who also prefer relaxed settings. Everybody benefits from increased accessibility, in an inclusive community where all can thrive.

If you're looking for more sensory friendly events, we collect and publish them on our website's events calendar, which is on our Events page. As community builders, our intent is to maintain a timely and robust events calendar that serves people statewide. Once an event is on our website's calendar, it will also be listed once (automatically and for free) in our twice-monthly e-newsletter, AuSM Connections, in the section where we highlight upcoming community events happening in the next half-month. We want to share as many events with our community as possible – it's win-win for all of us.



AuSM appreciates the support of advertisers. AuSM does not endorse any commercial products, processes, or services.

Special thanks to Allegra Downtown St. Paul, the official print sponsor of AuSM's Guide to Sensory Friendly Minnesota 2024.

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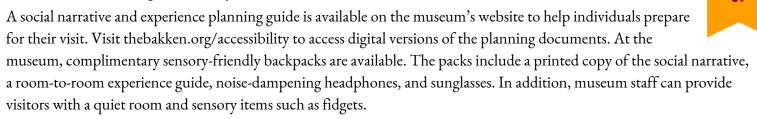
SENSORY FRIENDLY LISTINGS

Events and activities listed in this guide have been submitted by community partners and are subject to change. AuSM encourages you to visit the websites provided at least one month prior to attending an event or activity, as they may require advance registration and/or have limited capacity. An event or activity may be postponed or canceled without notice. AuSM does not endorse events and activities included in this guide.

The Bakken Museum

Location: 3537 Zenith Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55416

Website: thebakken.org/accessibility



Bell Museum

Location: 2088 Larpenteur Ave. W. Saint Paul, MN 55113

Website: www.bellmuseum.umn.edu

The Bell Museum is fully committed to creating an inclusive environment. Visitors are welcome to check out additional resources like our quiet spaces, visual timers, weighted lap pads, and hearing protection if it helps makes the visit more enjoyable. Visitors can also download our Social Narrative on our website to prepare for their visit.

Dates

February 17, 4:30-6:30 p.m. March 16, 8-10 a.m. April 20, 8-10 a.m.

Children's Performing Arts

Location: 4941 Long Ave. White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Website: childrensperformingartsmn.org

rts hosts a relaxed performance. This allows patrons with

M bell museum

For every mainstage show in our season, Children's Performing Arts hosts a relaxed performance. This allows patrons with sensory, social, physical, and cognitive needs to attend a production in a safe and welcoming environment. Modifications to this performance include lights remaining dim in the audience, elimination of intense lighting and sound effects, and audiences being free to move around the space and make any noises they need to make.

Dates

February 17, 2 p.m. Finding Nemo Relaxed Performance, Forest Lake High School June 22, 2 p.m. Freaky Friday Relaxed Performance, Hanifl Performing Arts Center July 11, time TBD: Ashti's Journey to Jazz Relaxed Performance, Hanifl Performing Arts Center August 3, 2 p.m. Legally Blonde Relaxed Performance, Hanifl Performing Arts Center August 10, 2 p.m. Seussical Relaxed Performance, White Bear Lake District Auditorium



30

HISTORICAL

MINNESOTA

ORCHESTRA

Sensory Friendly Listings

SENSORY FRIENDLY LISTINGS

Children's Theatre Company

Location: 2400 3rd Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55404

Website: childrenstheatre.org

At our Sensory Friendly performances, sensory modifications are balanced with preserving the engaging theatre experience desired by all children and families. Audience lights are left on low and the sound is reduced throughout the entire performance.

Noise-reducing headphones and disposable ear plugs are also available. Aspects of productions may be modified including changes to lighting, sounds, and performance qualities such as eliminating strobe effects, lessening the intensity of a sound effect, and modifying actor-audience interaction. Volunteers from Fraser are onsite for additional support, and audience members are welcome to bring their own manipulatives, seat cushions, comfort objects, and extra support items to the show.

Dates

February 16, 7 p.m. The Carp Who Would Not Quit and Other Animal Stories

March 29, 7 p.m. Alice in Wonderland

June 14, 7 p.m. A Year With Frog and Toad

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

Location: 1225 Estabrook Dr. St. Paul, MN 55103

Website: comozooconservatory.org

Come to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory for Sensory Friendly Mornings! Sensory Friendly Mornings are from 9-10 a.m. on select dates. Spend time exploring exhibits before general public hours without the crowds. This inclusive experience is designed for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. Upcoming dates for Sensory Friendly Mornings can be found on our website in the Visitor Map & Hours section.

Laura Baker Services

Location: 211 Oak St. Northfield MN 55057

Website: laurabaker.org

Laura Baker offers Family Support Services throughout the year, including Saturday Fun Respite Events, Saturday Night Gaming, and Family Support Meetings. Family Support Services are intended to alleviate some of the stress of managing disabilities by creating opportunities for respite, community connections and information sharing.

Dates

Saturday Fun/Respite Day (1-5 p.m.): February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14

Saturday Gaming Night (6-9 p.m.): February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14



Minnesota Historical Society

Location: 701 S. 2nd St. Minneapolis, MN 55401

Website: www.mnhs.org/events

MNHS Sites creates atmospheres of inclusivity through offering events outside of regular hours with adjusted sound levels, information about experiences, lighting adjustments and staff trained in the additional considerations of working with families of and those with neurodiverse considerations such as Autism.

Dates

children's

theatre

company

COMO PARK ZOO

LAURA BAKER

CONSERVATORY

February 10, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Valentine's Day at the Mill City Museum

March 9, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Snoopy Day at the Minnesota History Center

May 11, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Springtime Farm at Oliver Kelley Farm

May 25, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Day at the James J. Hill House

August 17, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Bridges and Trains Day at Mill City Museum

December 14, 9 a.m. Sensory-Friendly Hill House Holidays at the James H. Hill House

Minnesota Orchestra

Location: 1111 Nicollet Mall Minneapolis, MN 55403

Website: minnesotaorchestra.org

Sensory-Friendly concerts feature individual musicians or small ensembles in the Target Atrium at Orchestra Hall. Relaxed Family Concerts feature the full Orchestra in the main auditorium, plus a variety of pre/post-concert activities in the Orchestra Hall lobby; these activities always include hands-on art activities, a movement activity, and opportunities to meet Minnesota Orchestra musicians. During Relaxed Family concerts, a quiet space is available in the Green Room, as well as a movement space with a livestream of the performance. Braille and large print programs are available for these performances, as well as sensory materials including noise-canceling headphones, ear plugs, and fidgets.

Dates

Feb. 13, 11 a.m. Winter Sensory-Friendly Concert

March 26, 11 a.m. Spring Sensory-Friendly Concert

April 7, 2 p.m. Relaxed Family Concert: Here, There, Everywhere

Minnetonka Fire Department

Location: 14550 Minnetonka Blvd. Minnetonka, MN 55345

Website: www.minnetonkamn.gov

Minnetonka Fire offers a Sensory Friendly open house every spring. We turn down the lights and sirens in the station and invite those with Autism and other sensory disorders to come in, see the trucks, meet the firefighters and experience our fire station first hand. We offer cookies to all who attend and a chance to sit in a fire truck and meet firefighters at the station.

Dates

April 20, 10 a.m. Open House

MNeurodivergent

Location: 1105 Rushmore Dr. Burnsville, MN 55306

Website: facebook.com/groups/mneurodivergent

We are a social organization run for and by Neurodivergent Minnesotans. Check the website for specific events.





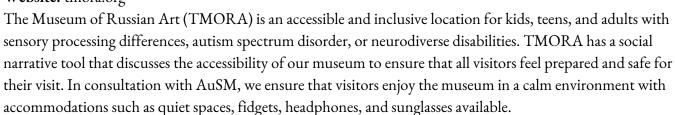


SENSORY FRIENDLY LISTINGS

The Museum of Russian Art

Location: 5500 Stevens Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55419

Website: tmora.org



Northern Starz Center for the Performing Arts

Location: 5300 Alpine Dr. #200 Ramsey, MN 55303

Website: northernstarz.org

Northern Starz creates an inclusive atmosphere by producing classes, shows, and camps to include individuals with any disability. We have professionals on staff that work with our students

one-on-one, when necessary, to help with any sensory-processing difficulties during their time at Northern Starz. This includes, but is not limited to noise earmuffs and a quiet/sensory space with calming music.

Dates

January 24-March 26: Registration for The Penguin Project (theatre for individuals 10-23 with disabilities) August 18-23: Camp Under the Starz: Sleep-away musical theatre camp for all abilities. Held at Camp Courage.

November: Penguin Players (theater for individuals with disabilities ages 16+)

Park Square Theatre

Location: 20 W. 7th Pl. Saint Paul, MN 55102

Website: parksquaretheatre.org

Sensory aids (such as fidgets, ear defenders, and ear plugs) are available at

all performances and during all classes. There are also designated sensory break spaces for performances and classes. Additionally, Park Square Theatre offers specific sensory-friendly performances for certain shows. Park Square Theatre's educational programming is intentionally designed with accessibility in mind. Classes have structured routines, readily available support, and a welcoming atmosphere. Park Square Theatre is committed to staying up-to-date with trainings, and partners with AuSM to make this happen.

Reach for Resources

Location: 5900 Green Oak Dr. #303, Minnetonka, MN 55343

Website: www.reachforresources.org

Reach plans adaptive recreation programs for individuals of all abilities. We host a wide variety of programs so there is something for everyone! Examples of possible activities are movie nights, dances, bingo, karaoke, crafts, singles nights, social clubs, fishing activities, sports, and more! Everyone is welcome and we can make accommodations upon request or help direct you to the most appropriate program(s). Reach has quarterly newsletters with programs going on most days of the week. Please check out our calendar for the most up-to-date activities!

See Me Neurodiverse

Location: 6100 McColl Dr. Savage, MN 55378

Website: www.seemeneurodiverse.org

See Me: Unlocking Resources for the Neurodiverse is a non-profit organization developed to support the neurodiverse and their families by increasing connections and offering support through community events, support meetings, resources, and assistance for families in crisis.

Dates

February 18: Unlock the Einstein Inside Speaker & Support Group at Savage City Hall

February 21: Virtual Support Meeting

March 6: Embracing Neurodiversity While Organizing Speaker & Support Group at Savage City Hall

March 20: Virtual Support Meeting **April 17:** Virtual Support Meeting

Walker Art Center

Location: 725 Vineland Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55410

Website: walkerart.org

PARK SOUARE

STEPPINGSTONE

THEATRE FOR YOUTH

Sensory Friendly Sunday is a monthly event designed for kids, teens, and adults with sensory processing differences, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental disabilities. The galleries will be closed to the general public, allowing visitors to enjoy the museum in a calm environment with accommodations such as quiet spaces, fidgets, and sunglasses available. Experience a selection of current exhibitions, make art, or watch a short film. All friends and family members are welcome.

Dates (all sessions are 8-11 a.m.)

February 11, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 8, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8

SENSORY FRIENDLY SUNDAY

SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH 8-11 AM FREE

Learn more at walkerart.org/sfs



WALKER











Vaccine Initiatives

AUSM'S VACCINE INITIATIVES

As an affiliate of The Autism Society of America, we share the national org's belief that improving the vaccination experience is a critical step toward achieving more equitable healthcare for people with autism and all neurodiverse individuals. As part of our strategic partnership on health equity, the Vaccine Education Initiative (VEI) is a national program that AuSM implements locally to address systemic barriers while promoting vaccine education, confidence, and access. In Minnesota, AuSM's VEI partners include The Kid Experts at Children's Minnesota, The Olmsted Medical Center, RT Autism Awareness Foundation, and the Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN), with recent vaccine clinics in Brooklyn Park, Maple Grove, Rochester, and St. Paul.

"No one should have to go without a vaccination because of fear. Our intent is to help our healthcare partners remove the barrier of intimidation by fostering a sensory-friendlier clinical experience for people with autism," said AuSM Executive Director Ellie Wilson. "Doctor visits for vaccination can be especially stressful for autistics, and we're particularly grateful to our friends at MAAN for helping reach out to multicultural communities to better serve families affected by autism throughout our diverse community."

By rewriting the vaccine experience, we're creating a path for increased vaccination rates for autistic individuals and those with disabilities and complex support needs. Participants in AuSM-assisted vaccination clinics can expect:

- longer appointment times, allowing patients to take their time
- availability of support tools to help prepare for the appointment
- a private, sensory-friendly area for vaccine distribution
- availability of sensory-friendly tools for comfort and engagement
- patient and family guidance from onsite experts in autism, disability, and accommodation

Here's an outline of our shared commitment to providing the resources and connections that improve outcomes for patients, providers, caregivers, and our community:

Breaking down barriers: Address the health equity challenges faced by people with autism across their lifetime – specifically around accessible, inclusive healthcare.

Educating and vaccinating: Ensure anyone in the autism community has access to info, resources, support systems, and specialists – especially to expand access to vaccinations an overall health.

Training healthcare providers: Bridge the gap so that healthcare providers are equipped with training and resources needed to address the unique healthcare needs of the autism and disability community.

Creating access: Ensure that all individuals and families who want a vaccination are able to receive a vaccination in safe and supportive environments.

Find resources and information about ongoing vaccine efforts at autismsociety.org/vei.

EMPOWER YOUR FUTURE



Embark on a journey to independence, tailored for autistic and neurodiverse adults.







Careers

July 2024

Advance your career with an accredited Century College certificate in food service / hospitality through our vocational training program.

Five-month program.

Summer

June 2024

Explore new interests, build career and social skills, and foster meaningful connections

One-week dayprogram; offered June 10-14 (ages 18-24), and June 24-28 (ages 16-18)

College Fall 2024

Prepare for independence by learning essential life skills, career development, and social engagement.

Three-year, campusliving program

Find the next step of your independence journey at MICC. miccommunity.org | 612.876.9408 | info@miccommunity.org



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AUSM MEMBERSHP

Whether you are a family with a child who is newly diagnosed, an adult on the spectrum, an educator who serves individuals with autism, or a business that wants to learn how to better serve customers with autism, AuSM provides you with resources and services you need to help you accomplish your goals. Your AuSM membership helps you find the most comfortable way to participate and grow.

- Member-only rates on classes and annual Minnesota autism conference
- AuSM Summer Camp eligibility
- \$20 off any AuSM workshop or class
- AuSM Connections, twice per month e-mail newsletter
- Advocacy updates and alerts

MEMBER

Household: \$60 (everyone living at a single address)

Individual: \$40 (membership for a

single adult)

Autistic Individual: \$20 (membership

for a single autistic adult) Non-Profit: \$150 (includes memberships for employees) Corporation: \$350 (includes memberships for employees)

Visit www.ausm.org or call 651.647.1083 to become an AuSM Member today!