



AuSM Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

Social Narrative

Presented by:

BEST CARE
YOUR CARE. YOUR WAY.

ausm
autism society of minnesota



How to Use this Guide

The information in this social narrative is intended to help prepare guests to attend AuSM's 9th Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition 2026.

AuSM welcomes participants to come as their authentic selves! We recognize that everyone has different communication and socialization styles, self-regulation needs, accessibility concerns, and more.

If you have questions or concerns during the event, please seek assistance from AuSM staff who can be reached at events@ausm.org.

General Information

I am attending AuSM's 9th Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition at the Mall of America. The competition is on Saturday, October 3. Puzzling starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. CST. There will be many teams of puzzlers both in person and virtually. I may be signed up for just one division, two divisions, or all three!

I can come to this event whether I am a serious puzzle-building competitor or to have fun building a neat puzzle with my friends and family.



Event Details

- Date: Saturday, October 3, 2026
- Time:
 - 8:30-10:30 a.m. Four-Person Division
 - 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Two-Person Division
 - 1:30-3:30 p.m. Free-For-All Division
 - This division can be any number of people! Compete solo or as a team of two, three, or four.
- Location:
 - Mall of America
Huntington Bank Rotunda
60 E Broadway
Bloomington, MN 55425
 - Virtually through Zoom



Directions

From North of Bloomington Take I-35 South to I-35W South to I-494 East, exit on 24th Avenue S.

From South of Bloomington

Take I-35 North to I-35W North to I-494 East, exit on 24th Avenue S.

From West of Bloomington Take I-94 East to I-494 South to Highway 77

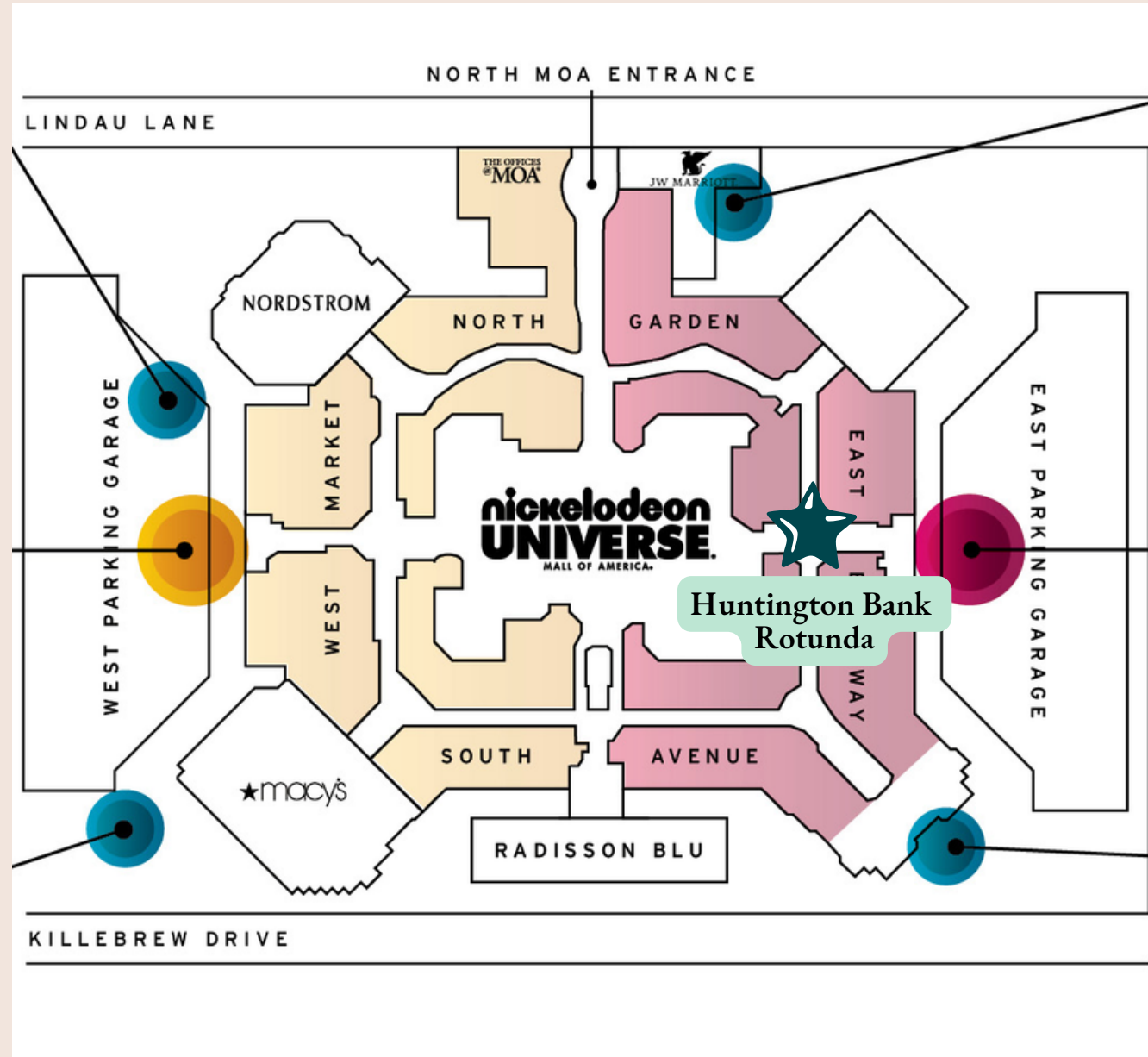
South, exit on Killebrew Dr. or 81st Street/Lindau Lane.

From East of Bloomington

Take I-94 West to I-494 South, exit on 24th Avenue S.

For additional transportation options, visit:

<https://mallofamerica.com/plan-your-trip/hours-directions>



What is the Jigsaw Puzzle Competition?

Organized by the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) in partnership with PuzzleTwist and Games by James, the AuSM Jigsaw Puzzle Competition offers the opportunity for teams of up to four, located anywhere in the U.S., to put their jigsaw puzzling passion to the test by competing for the fastest puzzle completion time.

The event will feature three divisions. Each one will complete a 500-piece puzzle and each puzzle will be different. Because these puzzles are designed by Puzzle Twist, please be advised that the picture on the box will vary slightly from the actual puzzle design.



Arrival and Check-In

I will receive my confirmation email with details for the jigsaw puzzle competition. If I am participating in this event virtually, I will receive a Zoom link and details regarding my group's participation.

There will be an AuSM table for check in. My team and I will go here to register. When it is my turn, I will give the AuSM volunteers my name and/or team name. Once they locate my name in their records, my team and I can pick a table where we will build our puzzle. All the puzzles will be laid out on the tables. If I am participating in the 4-person division, the room will be split between beginner and advanced. I can look on the tables to see which puzzles are which, or ask a staff member.

AuSM Resource Passport

When I am registered, I will receive an AuSM passport. There will be resource tables to get information and ask questions about autism and local supports. I can bring my passport to each resource table. Each resource table will check their spot on the passport.

Once I check off all the resource tables on my passport, I can turn my passport into the AuSM table for a prize.

AuSM Jigsaw Puzzle Competition 2025 Passport

Find each of these sponsors in the resource fair around the Huntington Bank Rotunda and get their checkmark. A completed passport will earn you a prize, which can be picked up at AuSM's table.

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In-Person Competition Rules

- No 'peeking' at the puzzle graphic prior to starting the competition – my puzzle must remain in the bag until competition begins.
- No early starts! If I open my bag and begin the puzzle before AuSM says 'GO!' I will not be eligible for prizes.
- Teams cannot use puzzle tools, cutting devices, flashlights, or use phones/cameras to take pictures of puzzle, etc. New this year in 2026: each team **can** use one sorting tray per person.
- When my team completes our puzzle, I'll make sure to write down my completion time on the time sheet provided and return it to the registration table.
- First, second, and third place winners will be announced as they finish. A list of all official participant times will be listed on the AuSM website no later than Tuesday, October 6.
- Prizes will be awarded to the 1st places teams. Certificates will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams of each division.

Virtual Competition Rules

- My puzzle is wrapped in a bag to keep the design a secret until competition day, October 3rd. No peeking at the puzzle graphic prior to the start of the competition. The bag can be removed when the puzzle competition begins. If my team is participating in more than one division, I should open each puzzle when that division begins.
- To be eligible for prizes, my team must complete our puzzles during their respective times on the date while visible in our assigned Puzzle Zoom Room. Rooms will open 15 minutes prior to the start time.
 - Puzzle Zoom Room links will be sent to the email I shared during registration. I will get my link by October 2, 2026. If I do not receive my Puzzle Zoom Room link by Oct. 2nd, I can contact AuSM at events@ausm.org.

Virtual Competition Rules Continued

- Teams cannot use puzzle tools, cutting devices, flashlights, or phones/cameras to take pictures of puzzle. Only hands can be used. ****New in 2026:** each team member is allowed to use one sorting tray.
- AuSM staff will monitor each Puzzle Zoom Room throughout the competition. If I need assistance or have questions while in the Puzzle Zoom Room, I can use the Zoom chat feature to connect with the AuSM staff monitor.
- I must submit my puzzle finish time (including hours, minutes and seconds); team name; and division by 4 p.m. on Oct. 3, 2026 to events@ausm.org. Puzzle times and winners will be announced on AuSM's website by Oct. 6, 2026.
- Prizes will be awarded to the 1st place teams of each division. AuSM will contact winning teams to coordinate prize and medal pick-up or delivery. Certificates will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place teams.

Puzzle Divisions

- 8:30-10:30 a.m. Four-Person Division, beginner and advanced options
- 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Two-Person Division
- 1:30-3:30 p.m. Free-For-All Division. This division can be any number of people!
Compete solo or as a team of two, three, or four.



The Competition

AuSM will begin the jigsaw puzzle competition with announcements. After the announcements have been made, there will be a countdown.

Once the countdown is finished, the jigsaw puzzle competition begins!

Each team will have two hours to work on their puzzle. If my team finishes early, I can choose to stay, hang out or leave. If my team does not finish within the two-hour window, I will have to pack up and leave. I cannot stay and finish the puzzle. There may be some announcements during the competition. There will also be ambient music and the noise of people at the mall. I am free to bring any accessibility tools such as noise cancelling headphones to assist me.



MC Host

I can expect that there will be announcements made at specific times during the event by the host Miss Shannan. She is pictured on the left. Here is more information on the host:



Miss Shannan Paul is a professional comedian, corporate speaker, voice actor, event emcee, and certified benefit auctioneer who has helped organizations raise millions for causes they love. She brings a warm, funny, and infectious energy to every stage — whether she's hosting a gala, calling bids for a live auction, or making a room full of strangers laugh like old friends. Shannan is also a full-time single mom to her autistic teenager, which means she brings not just professional polish but personal understanding to events like AuSM's Puzzle Competition. She believes joy is part of the resistance, and she's honored to lend her voice to a cause that hits so close to home.

Thank You for Attending AuSM's 9th Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

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