



**MACKAY**  
AUTISM  
SUPPORT GROUP

# NEWSLETTER

email: [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com) ph.0457961126 - December 2017

Providing Mackay and surrounding areas with

Up to date information

Coffee and chats

Parent register

Facebook

Library of resources

Autism awareness activities

Community links

“Lego” Social group

18's to 35 Social group

Basketball team  
(via PCYC)

**URGENT POSITION VACANT**



Volunteer Group Library Officer

## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - 3PM

VENUE – WHERE OUR LEGO GROUP MEETS at CASEY AVENUE, SOUTH MACKAY.

RSVP PLEASE TO [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com)  
LOOK FOR MORE DETAILS INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

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After 20 years as coordinator and this last year as group advisor and for the majority of those years the all jobs person, it is sad in a way that this will be my final newsletter to you, but good in other ways. It means that I feel my job has been done, goals have been reached and that the present day younger parents are in the position to now move on and take the group into the next decade and beyond.

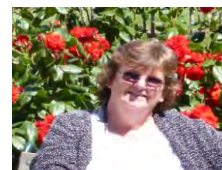
Autism over the past 21 years has become a much more common word in our everyday conversation with friends, family, professionals and general community. The community is slowly becoming aware of its challenges and its attributes and more importantly those on the autism spectrum are being accepted and acknowledged. There is still a way to go, but I find what has happened in our own community in the past 20 years has been in the main, positive. I only hope that we will continue to see this trend and their attributes will be seen and rewarded while their challenges are addressed as the individuals they are, so they can reach their true individual potential whatever they may choose that to be. It is critical though that when someone meets one person on the spectrum to be fully aware that is just that one person and to not see every person on the spectrum in the same way.

My parting words to you must be that to never under estimate a person with autism, but also be aware that their motivation to achieve and move forward and be happy must come from within them and in their own time as frustrating as that may be at times to the parent who is putting all their energy into helping them reach these goals. Take their lead to know in which direction they need assistance to reach these goals, be always there to support and encourage, while acknowledging their concerns and feelings and try to understand in the best way possible. Ultimately we want our ASD children to be as independent as they can be and most important resilient. It is up to us to ensure we teach them the skills for independence. These skills can become the building blocks to forming the motivation for them to move further forward, accept failures, but not give up. Their self-esteem will grow and their resilience will come from their experiences. Finally never assume you know everything and be open to learning and understanding more every day.

My position with the support group has always been a volunteer role, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank publicly my husband. Firstly for his support and acceptance of my role, allowing me to fulfill this role for 21 years. Assisting me at times when I needed to bounce ideas of someone, to listen to my various presentations, confirm things or to use his physical strength in getting something ready, just some examples. Although a volunteer job, there would be some weeks that it would be like a 30 hour a week position, especially in the earlier days of my role and while I took a call from a distressed Mum at 6pm at night, my husband would happily step in and take over the cooking of our dinner for our family, keeping my meal warm for me on my return. Putting together over 100 sample bags for information nights became a family event, but a fun one. He even understood when I suggested we return earlier from a Canadian trip than we really wanted to as I felt as coordinator, I really needed to be at one of the annual information events! So thank you Keith for your support.

Best wishes to everyone and good-bye.

Debbie Brooker – Coordinator 1996 -2016  
Group Advisor 2017



## Coordinator's Corner by LETITIA DAVESON

What a crazy year! Anyone else feel like 2017 has been a whirlwind year? December sees our group activities conclude with a Christmas get together down at our LEGO Group room at Souths Football sheds off Casey Avenue. I hope that many families will find the time to come down. Remember we have a special VIP in a jolly red suit coming so please bring a wrapped inexpensive gift clearly marked with your child(rens) names(s). Also, please bring a plate of food to share – more details further in the newsletter.

I also can't let December slip by without taking the opportunity to thank Debbie Brooker for all the time she has dedicated to our support group. Debbie has decided to retire from her duties after 21 years and we can't thank her enough for her commitment and passion to this group and raising Autism awareness within our community. Our group will then go on recess until Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> January when we will meet for our first Coffee & Chat for 2018. More details will be circulated closer to the day and of course Facebook will always be available for any Q & A's.

2018 will bring some big changes to our group. Now that we have our own Facebook Page up and running, on January 1<sup>st</sup> our FB Group will undergo a name change to "MASG Families" and we will farewell the professionals. We would like to thank all the wonderful professional therapists who have offered advice to our members over the years and we invite them to "Like" our new FB page.

Finally, a very Merry Christmas to all our members and their families and a big, BIG thank you to my wonderful executive team.

Letitia Daveson



### LEGO "Social Therapy" Group

Make the commitment to have fun and put Lego therapy group on your weekly calendar now.

Group meets every Sunday during school terms at 9am at Southern Suburbs Junior Rugby League clubhouse, Casey Avenue, South Mackay. No age restrictions, but parents must attend with their children. Contact Doug Knight at 0407159114 or [d\\_knight28@hotmail.com](mailto:d_knight28@hotmail.com) or Melanie for further information.

**Last Lego day for the year will be 10<sup>th</sup> December along with our group break-up.**

*Please be aware that attendance at all our group activities are at your own risk*

### SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GROUP BREAK-UP



The Mackay Autism Support Group is having a special Christmas Break-Up down at our Lego Group venue and a VIP guest in a jolly red suit will be making an appearance.

RSVP to this event is appreciated and we ask that attending families bring along an **inexpensive Secret Santa** for your children, clearly marked with their name, as well as a **plate of food** to be shared.

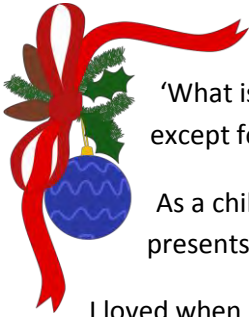
RSVP ASAP to [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com)

**SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 3PM**

**AT SOUTHS JUNIOR CLUBHOUSE WHERE OUR LEGO GROUP MEETS  
ON CASEY AVENUE, SOUTH MACKAY.**



# Ask an Adult on the Spectrum



The question is **“What is a perfect Christmas to you”**.

‘What is a perfect Christmas?’ I don’t think there is an answer to that, as there isn’t a perfect Christmas, except for in Christmas movies.

As a child I enjoyed Christmas at home with my Mum, Dad and younger brother, opening Christmas presents, having Christmas lunch, playing board games and singing Christmas carols and songs.

I loved when our family would go for drives at nights to see the Christmas lights on houses, playing Christmas music and listening to Dad’s silly jokes. I also loved to watch my Grandma bake for Christmas and helping her stir the Christmas pudding in the days before Christmas. It was just her and I and sometimes my brother and that was just great! So remembering back, it was a fun time and I enjoyed it, but there was a lot of stress involved when adding people to our immediate family.

Then Christmas became stressful and not fun, as I just wished everyone would go home and leave us to ourselves. I knew that it “had” to be that people visited, but I was just not into the social part of Christmas as everyone else was. As a teenager, it was the same, but by that age I could take myself away to my bedroom for some quietness away from all the noise of “entertainment”.

The magazines, advertisements and the movies show perfect families with perfect food and all with happy smiling faces all being kind and understanding to each other. But seriously this is not often the case sadly and we should not be thinking the perfect Christmas should look this way. Even if everyone is happy and kind, I would still not describe it as perfect, as perfect to me would not be lots of people around the table.

Now as an adult nothing really has changed, except I now know what is acceptable and I make the best of situations and know when everyone leaves I will be able to relax again. I still think a Christmas with just myself, Mum, Dad and my younger brother is the best there could be and I had it proved to me on a few occasions when our family went away for various reasons for Christmas and got to spend time together doing the same things at Christmas just in another place and with no visitors.

To a neuro-typical person this may sound harsh and unsocial and I guess it is, but truthfully I feel so much happier in our small family group to enjoy a special day like Christmas day in our own way.

As for Christmas shopping, that is definitely stressful, but I have learnt to shop at the quieter times of day, although choosing that “perfect” gift remains difficult, but I think that may be the same for lots of people.

So summing up, peace and quiet is my wish for any Christmas. I wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and enjoying themselves just as they most like.

Matthew



## *HOLIDAY TIPS FOR TRAVELLING*

- Ensure your child keeps up required fluid intake, so as not to dehydrate
- Make an itinerary of your planned movements and give a copy to your child (pictures or words depending on their level of reading and/or understanding and as much detail as they individually require to keep their stress in check)
- Exact times are sometimes important to include on itineraries, but if they cause stress if things change as they often have to due to crowds or traffic or other things of life, it may be less stressful for all not to include them.
- Ensure you only attempt one major outing per day with plenty of time for them to “chill out” in their own space and way afterwards. Too full a program can be far too stressful for them to handle especially away from home.
- If travelling outback or to the southern states, or anywhere you know have fly issues, buy a fly net to wear over their hat and face. Wave Rock in Western Australia and Mornington Peninsula in Victoria and various western NSW are all areas our family have had issues with flies in the past.
  - Ensure regular stopping opportunities if driving.
- Encourage use of a camera while sightseeing, it provides a socially appropriate barrier between them and the outside world and adds to developing new skills and interest and helps to communicate what is seen etc. afterwards. Good social skilling tool too, as you can teach what are appropriate photos to take while out and about in public places too.



- Consider the places you are going have some component that will appeal to your child (have strategies in place for those places that may become tedious for our ASD children). Also, if you know your child loves elephants, sometimes best to leave them until last, as they can be only too happy to leave once they have seen their favourite animal at the expense of the rest of the family's enjoyment.
- Encourage your child (including the siblings) to keep a diary (either their own writing, or in picture form, or you be their scribe, to document their travel. This helps them to communicate later about what they have seen and done and also is a tangible thing for them while sightseeing and something to do at the end of each day in a motel unit or back at Grandmas.

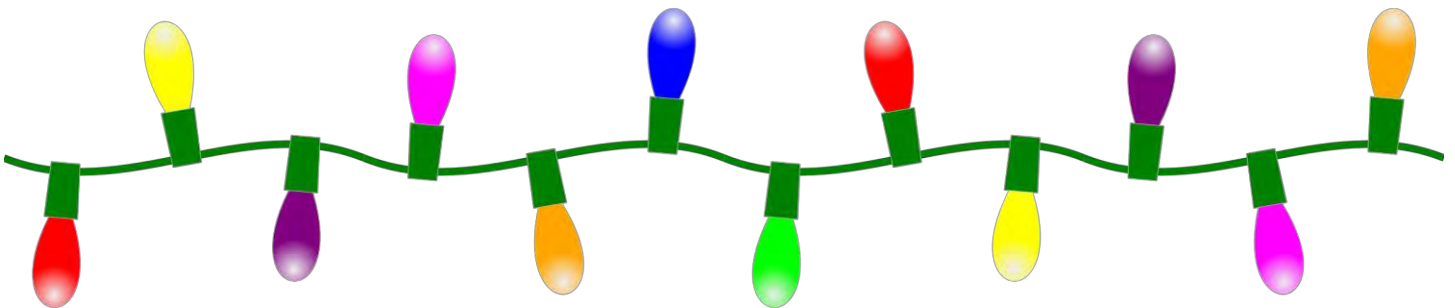
- Ensure minimum waiting times between flights if at all possible.
- Involve your child in preparations for proposed travel and inform them of things of interest that you find in books or on the internet or TV, related to where you are to travel, before the time.
- Remember Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre can provide respite to your family while you are travelling and away from your home too. Contact the local service for details. Ph. 1800 052 222





## Things to do to help Christmas Day go smoothly

- If this is your first Christmas after your child's diagnosis with ASD, talk to your friends and relatives that you plan on spending the day with, so they will understand if you have to leave abruptly if things get too much for your ASD child or you have to suggest they leave earlier than you anticipated.
- Have a schedule that your ASD child knows about, or a social story, or a What to Do Book whether in writing or in pictures. Letting them know such things, as who is coming and when and for how long, what is for lunch and where in the house, where they will be sitting for lunch and at what time if that is different to the normal day.
- Don't push an ASD child to do things other kids are very eager to do, as it may be a case of sensory overload to them. EG decorating the Christmas tree or home, may be just too much for an ASD child, change wise. They may wish to be involved, but not to the same extent.
- Consider asking relatives and friends to stagger their visiting times, so not everyone turns up at once
- If you are to have relatives staying with you, ensure your ASD child's room is never made the guest room
- Keep some regular day activities into the schedule, like story time, normal breakfast, DVD watching time.
- Provide a time out space for your child away from celebrations both at home and at other places you may be visiting
- Involve the ASD child in preparations for Christmas Day – e.g. cooking little plum puddings or chocolate truffles to be distributed to guests as they arrive, or deliver to neighbours prior to Christmas day.
- Take turns in opening gifts, so not everyone is opening at once. This is actually really nice, and the gift giving takes a much longer time than the usual 10 min. chaos, and you can really appreciate the gift giving and the thought that has gone into each and every gift by each family member. This also keeps the noise down. Even the constant crinkling of paper can be too much on the senses of those with ASD.
- Role/pretend play with teddies and dolls their Christmas Day before the actual day
- When writing lists for Santa, the ASD child may not know where to start, so it doesn't hurt to prompt them with a few ideas that they can then make their choices from that as to what to include. Keep the choices low in number depending on the individual child's stress by choices.



**Studio G** has entered its second year in Mackay.

Studio G is a **post-school transition program** running in Mackay as an initiative of Autism Queensland. It gives young adults on the autism spectrum between the ages of 16 and 24 the opportunity to engage in an interactive workshop and build skills based on their own interests. Participants are supported and assisted by mentors to pursue projects related to areas such as game development, animation, short film making, photography, graphic design, music and creative writing. Participants are assisted by mentors with experience in screen-based creative design, information technology and project development, generally studying at university and able to pass on knowledge and skills while building meaningful relationships with participants. These mentors are provided access to equipment and training that allows them to provide a cutting edge creative program that responds to the needs of learners who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The program operates from the Central QLD university in Sydney Street on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from one till four.

Contact Daniel McCartney for further information [david.mccartney@autismqld.com.au](mailto:david.mccartney@autismqld.com.au)





## HO, HO, HO – SANTA IS WAITING FOR YOU TO VISIT AT MT PLEASANT CENTRE

**Sensitive Santa** is organized at Mt Pleasant Centre for a session on **Wednesday December 13<sup>th</sup>** from 5pm to 7pm.

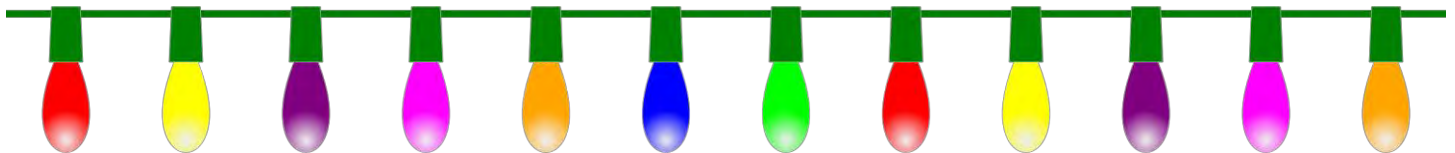
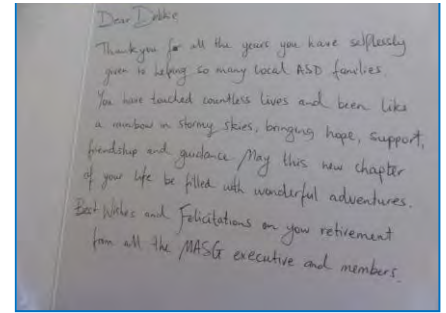
Contact Letitia at [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com) for a session spot.

We thank **Mt Pleasant Centre** for their continued support of Sensitive Santa for many years for our group.



Thank you to Letitia and the rest of the Executive and group for acknowledging my retirement in November.

The presentation was a lovely surprise and I truly appreciated the thoughtfulness in the gifts chosen featuring the colour blue and blue butterflies.



### JEN'S KITCHEN CORNER

#### CHRISTMAS GIFT OR PARTY IDEA....



Every year I have good intentions school wise in the lead up to Christmas. This year was even more so. I was thinking of buying lavish presents for teachers and now realise that this is not going to happen. BUT I have rediscovered a a very special treat concept that has already been a real hit amongst both children and grown ups out in the community. Somewhere around my late twenties I discovered that not only lavender has a beautifully relaxing scent but also makes certain treats explode with that incredible floral flavour and is perfectly edible. So I started regularly making lavender cookies. Now almost 20 years later, after forgetting all about this, I stumbled across an enormous bag of lavender in Canelands, which I snatched up without a thought. I use it for lavender infused icecream and now for Christmas – lavender shortbread. The recipe I am using, taken from google on [www.goodtoknow.co.uk](http://www.goodtoknow.co.uk), is so simple and delicious – I have only had wonderful feedback, EVEN from my very cautious 6 year old daughter. I have been making them in a love heart shape, but any shape will do – gingerbread man, Christmas tree, star, whatever you like. You can pre-make the dough and store it in the fridge for when you are ready to roll – I make several batches at a time so there is enough to share around or give out as gifts at short call. Definitely use a beater if you can – Thermomix just doesn't cut it for the texture, though it's great for the initial milling of the lavender and sugar. I haven't yet tried this exact recipe gluten free, but am sure it would work with GF flour. GF can be tricky to roll, so perhaps make balls and squash them, or bake the mixture in a slice tin and cut it in to squares. Here is the recipe. It is definitely going to be festive season go to at our place.

## LAVENDER SHORTBREAD

### Ingredients

100g raw sugar

2 tsp dried lavender flowers

200g butter, softened

300g plain flour

### Method

Mill the sugar and lavender flowers in a food processor until fine. Add the butter and beat together until nice and soft and pale. Add the flour and beat until the mixture has come together and combined nicely. Turn dough onto a floured surface, wrap in gladwrap and chill in the fridge for 30 mins (if you are short on time pop it in the freezer for 10 mins or so!). Preheat oven to 160 degrees (fanforced). Roll out dough on floured surface and cut into biscuit shapes. Sprinkle with demarera sugar or similar if you have some. Bake on a lined biscuit tray 15 minutes or so or until golden – don't overbake! Cool on a biscuit cooler and package when completely cold.



This January, why not start the year with an empty jar and fill it with notes about good things that happen. Then, on New Years Eve, empty it and see what awesome stuff happened that year.



A child with autism needs  
time to refill her well.

What some call  
"doing nothing" is her  
replenishing refuge and  
creative thinking haven in a  
sea of expectations.

[ellennotbohm.com](http://ellennotbohm.com)



"Interesting," "fun,"  
and "delicious" are  
opinions.

It's not weird, bad  
or disrespectful if a  
child with autism  
doesn't share yours.

[ellennotbohm.com](http://ellennotbohm.com)  
Photo: pixabay.com

@EllenNotbohm





## DEALING WITH RELATIVES WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND ASD

One of the hardest issues for any parent to deal with is that of relatives not understanding and/or accepting the diagnosis of ASD.

Many relations, including grandparents may deal with the issue by underestimating the importance of the diagnosis and common responses here include 'he will grow out of it', 'all kids do that', etc

Some just can not see past the 'behaviour' as being 'naughty' and may criticise or undermine the management strategies you put in place and say things like 'a good hiding will fix him'. As we know, children with ASD appear and often behave as other children do and, for this reason, ASD as a disability is a difficult concept to understand in practise (even when people seem to understand it intellectually), for instance when issues occur or incidents need to be addressed. Even relations who have been supportive may well show different responses when placed under pressure.

Many of these responses are simply showing the person's inability to cope with the situation and denial of the disability.

It is important to remember that these people will mostly be seeing your child for short periods of time and so do not see the pervasiveness of the disability for the child and his family. It is important that you do not take the issues on as your own but rather see them as problems for the person involved which are impacting on your relationship with that person.

So there are really 2 issues to deal with -

1. How to help the person involved understand and accept the diagnosis of ASD and
2. How to minimise and deal with the impact their reaction is having on you and your family.

### HOW TO HELP THE PERSON ACCEPT THE DIAGNOSIS OF ASD.

1. Short, accurate information sheets on ASD and its presentation. Perhaps highlight that information which is most relevant to your child. Most people do not want to be overloaded with information, and will seek out their own information if they want to understand more fully.
2. Where possible present the diagnosis in a neutral, factual way, mentioning both the difficulties and some positives.
3. Mention that, at times, your responses to particular issues may seem a little strange but they are aimed at long-term goals and changes for the child.
4. Talk about the particular difficulties that your child has as part of his ASD, such as anxiety, and how these impact on him. Discuss the likely types of behaviours he will display, how you will deal with them and why.
5. Talk about the prevalence of the disability, thus normalising it as just another aspect of the diversity of mankind. Many people see ASD as a weird and unusual disability, not as something that is quite common. By normalising the disability you are also legitimising it and hopefully, taking some of the fear out of it.
6. Discuss long-term outcomes and how your management of the child now is geared to helping him deal with his issues more appropriately as he becomes older.
7. Talk about the fact that many people with ASD are leading productive and appropriate lives as both children and adults. It may also be useful to throw in a few names of important people you have heard of who have this diagnosis and that, for many of them, the manifestations of the diagnosis have been what has made them important.
8. At times, agree to disagree on how you manage your child and his behaviours. You are the parent and know your child best. You do not have to defend your parenting skills.

### DEALING WITH THE IMPACT OF RELATIONS REACTIONS.

1. Most importantly realise that although your relation's responses are hurtful, they are not a reflection on you as a person but occur because of that person's inability to deal with and/or accept the diagnosis of ASD.
2. Unfortunately, it is very common for friendships and family dynamics to change dramatically when a person within the family has ASD. Realise that you are not alone, there are many other families going through the same issues.
3. Decide how important a relationship with the involved person is? Can you ignore their comments or emotionally minimise their impact on you. If not, you can either talk openly and honestly about how their responses have affected you or chat to other family members or friends about this and they may be able to approach the particular person on your behalf.



4. If approaching these people personally remember to remain assertive, not aggressive and try to clearly state your issues without blame or emotion.
5. Try to surround yourself with both professional and informal supports who understand and support your position. This will lessen the impact of the other person's responses on you and your family.
6. Be selective about whom you discuss problems with. Minimise any "in depth" discussions about your child with people who are not accepting of the diagnosis and the impact that this has on your family and seek out those who are supportive to be your sounding boards.
7. When meeting with these people it is useful to look at when, where and for how long you see people. For example, if you are visiting elderly relations who have lots of knick knacks in their house it may be beneficial to change the meeting to a local park etc where everyone can be more relaxed. It may also be useful to keep meetings fairly brief so that stress doesn't build up.
8. Remember that if it becomes too difficult you do have the option of walking away from that relationship. Many parents have done this and, while it is painful at the time, in the long term it may be beneficial for the family as a whole. Several mothers we know of in this predicament actually ceased contact with the involved relation for several years and then were able to re-establish positive relationships at a later date when time and experience had allowed change to occur in the people involved.



## Why be a Volunteer?

It's not for money, it's not for fame.  
 It's not for any personal gain.  
 It's just for love of fellowman.  
 It's just to send a helping hand.  
 It's just to give a tithe of self.  
 That's something you can't buy with wealth.  
 It's not medals won with pride.  
 It's for that feeling deep inside.  
 It's that reward down in your heart.  
 It's that feeling that you've been a part.  
 Of helping others far and near,  
 that makes you be a Volunteer!

Author Unknown



The library officer in our executive team is still available for someone. The job entails checking all books and resources are accounted for 2-3 times a year, and cataloguing new books (which has not been often recently). Contact Letitia for more details of this role by emailing the group.

# Lego Expo 2017

Our annual Lego expo was held on the Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November, we introduced a sensory session on the Friday evening but unfortunately had only one family turn up for it.

Some of the attractions we had this year were Lego designed facepaint, Sugar City Con, free play Lego, Lego designs of all shapes and sizes, and the 501<sup>st</sup> Legion of Stormtroopers.

The stormtroopers were a big hit with kids and adults alike.

Unfortunately we were competing with other events around Mackay but still managed to get approximately 400-500 people through South's doors.

Big plans are already underway for next year's event and I can't wait to update you all on details.

With the money raised this year we were able to purchase the Lego Boost robotics set, come down to Lego group on Sunday to see it in action.

I thank all our volunteers and our fantastic sponsors, South's Junior Rugby, South's League Club, for all there assistance.

South's League Club donated some bistro vouchers, Sugar City Con donated some Lego polybags, and Melanie Lester donated the Lego blanket, we thank you for the awesome prizes, our winners loved them!!!

Our Lego enthusiasts are already planning for next year so hopefully we can go bigger again.

Our wonderful enthusiasts this year are creating a Lego User Group for the Mackay region, for more details come down to Lego group or look for Mackay Lego on Facebook.

Can't wait to update you all about all the Lego related things throughout next year, see you all at Lego group.

Melanie Lester



## Quote of the month

'As this Holiday season gets into full swing, please remember that Autistic and PDD children have their own special talents and abilities to contribute, and even though their creations may not be traditional in nature, they are things of beauty, things to be treasured and remembered for a lifetime. Given the chance, they can brighten your holiday season and make it one to cherish. Perhaps this season should be the time when more than ever we look at the possibilities rather than the limitations, and give thanks that our children are who they are. All we have to do is look around and we will see that this is true'

Above quote reprinted from our special Christmas group newsletter 2007 – part of an article that no longer appears to be available on the net.

## *The Magic of Christmas Never Ends And its Greatest of Gifts are Family and Friends*



## BOOK CORNER

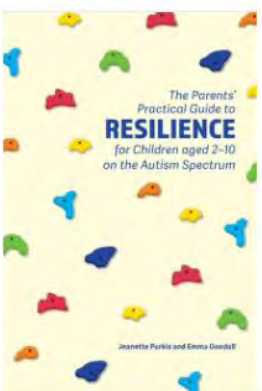


### Outsmarting Worry

*An Older Kid's Guide to Managing Anxiety*

Dawn Huebner PhD, illustrated by Kara McHale

This easy to follow illustrated book from a best-selling author presents strategies for 9-13 year olds with anxiety. It teaches them about a specific set of skills that makes it easier to face and overcome worries and fears, and normalizes their symptoms providing a set of concrete steps to overcome them. The tried and tested techniques are based on the most up-to-date psychological treatments of anxiety, including CBT and ACT.



### The Parents' Practical Guide to Resilience for Children aged 2-10 on the Autism Spectrum

Jeanette Purkis and Emma Goodall

Building resilience and independence in children with autism can be hugely beneficial in helping them live an independent and rewarding life. This book is a practical resource based around major life events; each milestone includes exercises that you can work through to more effectively build resilience and independence in your child.

Type a message...





# **Sensory Movie Day Mackay Christmas Party 8<sup>th</sup>** **of December at 3:30pm – 6:00pm**



**WHERE: Kidz Life Play Centre, 75 Evans Ave, North Mackay**

**Sensory Movie Day Mackay will be hosting a Christmas Party for all of our special families.**

**Santa will be there with presents so RSVP's are required via email, or txt.**

**[sensorymovieday.mackay@hotmail.com](mailto:sensorymovieday.mackay@hotmail.com)**

**0499843187**

**No food will be provided due to a huge range of dietary needs for everyone but the cafe will be open from 3:30-4:30 to purchase from or feel free to bring your own.**

**An adult must be present to supervise children as we will not have enough volunteers but we will have someone at the front door to make sure there will be no runners from the property.**

# **SENSORY MOVIE DAY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2017, 10:30am**



**Tickets are \$8.00 each**

**Companion I.D Card Accepted**

**Children 2yrs and under are free**

**Birch Carroll & Coyle Mackay North Cinemas**

**Grandview Drive, North Mackay QLD 4740**

**For more information email or call Katie on:**

**[sensorymovieday.mackay@hotmail.com](mailto:sensorymovieday.mackay@hotmail.com)**

**[0499 843 187](tel:0499843187)**

**Sensory Movie Day Mackay is an inclusive event for families with special needs.**

**Lighting on dim, sound lowered, volunteers at doors for those escape artists.**

**Children are free to move around, flap or stim.**

**This is a no judgment screening.**

**Refunds are available within the first 40mins.**

**No Diagnosis required, siblings and extended family are welcome.**

**FOR UPDATES LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/SensoryMovieDayMackay/>**

## AN IDEA SHARED

During Julie Cross' inspirational talk earlier this year she shared a letter that she gave at Christmas time to those in her child's class. Afterwards she sent me a copy of this and I have adapted to share with those that attend my son's birthday party in the Thank You text. My mission: enlightening those around him to create an overall caring environment.

The letter:

*Firstly, thanks to the children and families that attended or RSVP'ed for our son's party, we appreciate it greatly.*

*You may have noticed that he is a little bit different and well... rather unique.*

*Our son lives with Aspergers (Autism) and it is a journey we are still learning about and getting to know with regards to how to manage his triggers and how to help him socialise appropriately with others.*

*As we have gone through primary school together, and as we negotiate this journey forward, we want to thank you for your support, kindness and understanding. And we know for sure that in doing this you and your children will forever make an impact on our son's life and ours.*

*If he ever does anything to your children that is inappropriate then please let us know so that we can work with him in resolving this so that your children feel happy and safe around him.*

*Because we are full time working parents, emailing us would be the best method of communication. [christienappel@gmail.com](mailto:christienappel@gmail.com)*

*Thanks again for making today special and great fun.*

*Kind Regards*

*Christien and Eben Appel*

*This letter idea could also be used for multiple purposes, such as school, sport teams, church, hobby groups or in neighbourhoods. Thanks for sharing this Christien.*



FLASHBACK – JUST A VERY FEW OF PAST SUPPORT GROUP OCCASIONS AND EVENTS





## SUNSHINE STORIES

### Shane

Shane Cooks-Reynolds is no ordinary basketballer.

The 21 year old Mackay shooting guard has high functioning autism, and he's chasing a dream of one day representing the Australian Boomerangs. Shane is in the Special Olympics team but also in the mainstream competition too now. *Best wishes to Shane and reach for the stars!*



### Josh

Josh Crawley came away with three awards at his school's speech night: A Diligence Award, Subject award for Inclusive Curriculum and the P & F, Cathy Quinn Bursary award.

The Cathy Quinn bursary award (\$250) is in recognition of an outstanding student who has overcome educational and cultural obstacles to achieve success, has offered service to others and has made a positive contribution to the religious and academic life of the school. *Congratulations Josh and best wishes for the future*

*And then ... Two days later, Josh was in the Mater having his appendix removed, missing his final day of Year 10. By his mother's account, he handled it ok and is now at home recovering.*



### REGISTER NOW - AUTISM FOR DADS

**Autism for Dads Webinar** 5<sup>th</sup> December 7PM QLD time

<https://events.genndi.com/register/169105139238452108/4828b70283> to register

Nelle Frances presents the Autism for Dads webinar - a no-nonsense, easy to follow explanation of Autism in bloke's language. This innovative webinar is specifically for men with Autism in their life – dads, pops, uncles, nephews.

Learn about Autism characteristics, meltdown, what your partner needs after a rough day and parenting strategies that work for Autism.

The online delivery means you can access this training wherever you are - home, office, mining camp on your FIFO swing.

Benefit from Nelle's experience, research and lived experience of Autism!

Only \$45- so REGISTER NOW to change your understanding.



### 18-35 Group - ASD Social Group for both males and females

**All activities are at the individual participant's own risk -** If you wish to be part of this group, please contact [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com) for information on current activities. The group recently went mini golfing together and their final group get together for the year is out for dinner on December 10. This group is going well and it has been great to witness the group now more independent in their planning and organising of their own activities. Way to go! Thanks to Chris for taking the lead in organising things during the year.

## Things to Do This Month

- Consider donating a book in relation to autism, to your child's school library as a thank you gift and an awareness resource for the school
  - Attend Group Break up
    - Register for the Nelle Frances' Dad's Webinar (5<sup>th</sup> Dec)
    - Ensure your child has some down time in a quiet place at this busy time of year
  - Organise Christmas day and ensure all relatives you are spending the day with, are aware of your ASD child's possible needs, and that you may have to leave early if it becomes too much.
  - Have a plan for the school holidays – daily activities (but perhaps not too many or maybe just one a day) and as much structure as your child may individually need to keep them less stressed and you too!
    - Ensure your child drinks enough water during the hotter months
    - Make use of the Coles quiet shopping hour when available
  - Organise some time out for you and your partner while your ASD child and siblings are cared for elsewhere. It may only be an hour or two, but it can make a difference to stress levels and relationships. CRCC can be contacted for possible respite services Ph. 1800 052 222.
  - Laugh
    - Enjoy some family movies and board games together
    - Relax and enjoy the joys of this festive season

That's all for this month and for this year!

The group will be in **recess until January 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

Stay tuned for venue and time for first coffee and chat for 2018.

**Merry Christmas and best wishes for a Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year  
from the Executive committee of Mackay Autism Support Group.**



The Support Group Executive

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Nicky Shanks - Volunteer Secretary [autismmackay@gmail.com](mailto:autismmackay@gmail.com)

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Lesley Veitch - Volunteer Memberships Treasurer [treasurer\\_masg@outlook.com](mailto:treasurer_masg@outlook.com)

Doug Knight – Volunteer Lego social group contact Ph. 0407159114 [d\\_knight28@hotmail.com](mailto:d_knight28@hotmail.com)

Caralyn Straw – Volunteer general committee member [4straw@gmail.com](mailto:4straw@gmail.com)

Jen Britton – Volunteer general committee member [pi.britton@bigpond.com](mailto:pi.britton@bigpond.com)

Debbie Brooker – Group Advisor

Join our group also on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/133009150350/> Join our Aspies Adult Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/236622159754087/>

**Please be aware that attendance at all our group activities are at your own risk.**

Disclaimer: The articles in this newsletter are for information purposes only. Any views or opinions expressed may not necessarily be those of the "Mackay Autism Support Group". The Mackay Autism Support Group and the writer disclaim any liability arising directly or indirectly from the information provided in this newsletter.

