

PARENTING AUTISM & ASPERGERS NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 1
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Welcome to the very first edition of

"The Parenting Autism & Aspergers Newsletter"

This newsletter is being put together by my colleague John Hillage (who some of you may know already as he had a big hand in the book and answers most of the emails that come to the website).

He's a real experienced social worker and has worked with both autistic children, adults and their families for many years.

So without further ado I will hand you over to John and I hope you enjoy the newsletter.....

Regards Dave Angel

Hi John here and I am really excited to be bringing you the first edition of "The Parenting Autism & Aspergers Newsletter"

Inside this very first edition you will find:

1. Hot Topic of Discussion – The Son Rise Program: Does it live up to it's own hype?
2. In the News – New study into the effects of fish oil on behaviors of autistic children
3. Famous Aspies - Craig Nicholls lead singer of rock band The Vines
4. And Now for Something Completely Different . .
..Wacky Halloween stories all the way from Germany.

I hope you enjoy this first edition.....

Best Wishes

John Hillage

The Son Rise Program: Does it live up to it's own hype?

I recently attended a live 3 hour event hosted by Raun F. Kauffman who speaks around the globe about the Son Rise program.

For those of you unfamiliar with this treatment program; it started off in the United States and is now in a number of countries around the world.

It began from when it is claimed that Raun himself was diagnosed as severely autistic at 18 months old and “cured” of autism by the intensive teachings and input of his parents in his early years.

From this experience the family launched The Son Rise Program which has worked with over 22,000 families and professionals in the world of autism since.

There has been a great deal of cynicism and controversy about the program's claims.

One of the major issues being the accuracy of Raun’s original diagnosis (i.e. was he really autistic).

A second issue is the apparent lack of outside studies as to the success of the program (although in a recent telephone conversation one of their staff ensured me that such a study is currently being conducted).

My personal take is that the program seems to use a great deal of common sense behavioral techniques, psychological techniques and dietary approaches that will certainly help the autistic child and parents.

But to be honest a lot of it isn't rocket science and it can be found elsewhere.

They do though offer it in a very intensive and focussed way which I guess makes them pretty unique.

As they admit in their literature they will not “cure” every child but always make some improvements in every child.

Which seems fair enough.

The other point I would make is that it really is an intensive program that involves the parents doing a great deal of work with the children over many months and probably years.

For parents who have got the time, energy and ability to do this I would certainly say they should look at it further for themselves and decide if it looks right for them.

But clearly for many parents who do not have all of these abilities I would say that it will probably be just a pipedream that would be unlikely to help.

And it may even give unfair and unrealistic expectations, which can only add further heartbreak.

Because the crux is that for it to work (like anything really) you must follow the teachings accurately and consistently.

It is no overnight miracle and, to be fair, is not billed as this either by the Son Rise people.

My other problem with it is the language of "curing autism".

Whilst I know that for parents it can be extremely frustrating and challenging to have a child with autism.

I just don't like the language of "disease" and "cure".

My point being that autistic children are just "different" and not "wrong" or "ill" and to talk about "curing autism" indicates that autistic children must be "wrong" or "ill" and need a cure.

Which just isn't the case.

Whilst I am 100% behind any genuine approaches to help both the child and parents to improve their quality of life, I also think that every individual child should get the love and respect that they deserve for who they are as children and young people.

They are individuals and part of society just as you and I and certainly don't deserve the label of being "diseased" and in need of a "cure".

Well that's my take on it all, but I would love to hear your thoughts too.

Please email me with any ideas, thoughts or stories you know of in relation to the Son Rise Program and I will return to this thread with your comments in the next newsletter.

New study into the effects of fish oil on behaviors of autistic children.

Recently a 6 month study was carried out at a school for pupils with autism ,aspergers, ADHD and related special needs in Norwich, England.

Over the 6 months pupils were given Eye Q fish oil and a healthy diet (reduced salt, transfatty acids, sugar, preservatives and additives).

The results were pretty staggering!

The number of violent incidents involving pupils dropped from 112 to just 36; which was a huge 68% reduction.

At this stage I don't know how rigorous the testing was around this and whether other factors may have had an impact too.

Also I would advice some caution when looking at the results because clearly Eye Q fish oil is a product and the company obviously want to promote it to sell.

Now that doesn't mean it's not effective but just remember the results may not be 100% objective.

But to be honest they are some great results and really show you the effects of food and supplements on autistic children, so are definitely worth a second galnce.

This kind of approach appears to ring true for all children as I know similar works have been done and found similar positive effects on mainstream school children.

If you want to know more about this research I would suggest that you read the whole story at <http://www.pnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=182885>

Craig Nicholls - Lead singer of rock band the Vines

This is the first in a series of articles on famous aspies/autistic people.

What I aim to do with this is provide some inspirational stories and examples of people succeeding in the neurotypical

world.

Who knows if we get big enough maybe some of these "stars" will agree to an interview for the newsletter!

Craig Nicholls is from Sydney, Australia and fronts the internationally best-selling rock band The Vines.

He dropped out of high school in Tenth Grade and then went to Art School where he met his future band members.

They practised together and then got some gigs and up until that point Craig had not written any songs.

At this point he began to write songs, loved doing it and then wrote a whole bunch of songs one after the other.

He is quoted as saying that song writing became a "good outlet" for him.

The band then went on to big success with an album "Highly Evolved" selling over 1.5 million copies and they were the first Australian band to grace the cover of Rolling Stone magazine in 20 yeras.

More controversially they were banned from the Jay Leno show following allegations that Craig trashed the studio whilst rehearsing.

It appears that Craig's, at this point undiagnosed, Aspergers was making it very difficult to cope with the stress and lack of routine that go with the territory of an international touring rock band.

Craig is known to crave routine and privacy.

At that point he would drink only Coca Cola and eat McDonalds food, and constantly seek reassurance of the whereabouts of his skateboard when on tour.

By 2004 Craig was in court being charged with assaulting a photographer; now the penny dropped and the realisation that there was something "different" about Craig surfaced.

A roadie on tour with The Vines downloaded some information on Aspergers Syndrome from the internet following concerns he had about Craig.

This was presented in court and Craig's case was dismissed and he was referred for medical input.

In fact the world famous Aspergers expert Tony Attwood was called upon to provide a report to the court.

The band are still now going strong with a 3rd album released this year called Vision Valley.

But they are all now very aware of Craig's needs and he has gone from being considered as an "arrogant and indulgent rock star" to someone with his own unique set of needs.

An example of this is that they never do long tours anymore due to the intense disruption to Craig's routine and the problems that this can bring.

So it seems that even in the crazy cut throat world of rock n' roll a little education and understanding can go a long way in helping people with Aspergers and Autism.

For any of you who are interested in hearing some of The Vines music, but not interested enough to pay out the \$18.98 price tag! Go to:

<http://www.amazon.com/Vision-Valley-Vines/dp/B000EMGJJU>

Scroll down the page to the "Listen To The Samples" section on the left hand side, and click on any of the tracks for a short free taster!

But be warned - they are quite hard rock so may not be everyone's cup of tea!

And Now for Something Completely Different . . .

Maybe the Halloween season has left us all spooked.

Maybe frequent and widespread terror alerts have set everyone's nerves on edge.

Or perhaps we need to curb our caffeine intake after consuming so many high-octane espresso concoctions.

In any case, it appears that some folks could benefit by stepping back and taking a deep breath (or a "chill pill," as the case may be).

As the following stories reveal, things aren't always what they seem to be . . .

Two women in the small, northern Germany town of Bad Zwischenahn were shocked to see what appeared to be masked bank robbers through the tinted windows of a car in front of a bank.

Both women hurried to notify police, but the vehicle left before officers arrived.

Two hours later, police caught up with the suspicious vehicle and detained its driver, along with the passengers-three children in Halloween masks and costumes.

After bringing the "suspects" in for questioning, authorities quickly determined that there had been a misunderstanding.

Officers thanked the two "witnesses" for being observant!

And in another story from Germany a large-scale security alert was triggered when some people in Berlin noticed a red, orange, and green substance in a pile on the side of the road.

Biochemical experts, firemen, and police responded to the scene.

A wide area was closed to traffic as investigators donned chemical warfare garb to examine the substance.

Hours later, after conducting a variety of tests, authorities determined that the jelly-like substance posed no risk.

The offending blob, originally believed to be some form of toxic waste, was, indeed, jelly-or Jell-O, as it's known in the United States.

Turns out the jelly was leftover from a wedding celebration that had occurred earlier.

Police tracked down the groom, who acknowledged that the substance was a discard from the wedding party.

The groom promised to clean up the mess, according to police.

Well that's all for the first edition and we hope you

enjoyed it.

Please email us to let us know your thoughts on this first edition, as we really value your feedback.

We really want this newsletter to be as interactive as possible for all you parents.

So please send in any inspirational stories that you know of, any questions that you would like our team of experts to answer, any topics that you wish to be discussed and news stories that you want to share.

We will publish as many as we can.

Until next month.....

Best Wishes

John Hillage

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P.S. Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends.

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The write of the material present in the “The Parenting Autism & Aspergers Newsletter” believes that a multi-disciplinary approach to parenting aspergers children is of extreme importance. This means combining the approaches of a wide variety of disciplines involved with aspergers children and their parents such as social workers, nurses, teachers, doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, speech therapists. Also it involves using the knowledge and information of parents them selves. The author recognizes that within scientific, educational, social and medical fields there are widely divergent viewpoints and opinions. This material is written for the express purpose of sharing educational information gathered from the experiences of the author

and other people in the areas mentioned above. None of the information contained in this email is intended to diagnose, prevent, treat, or cure aspergers, nor is it intended to prescribe any of the techniques, materials or concepts presented as a form of treatment for aspergers. Before beginning any practice relating to aspergers it is highly recommended that you first obtain the consent and advice of a qualified health, education or social care professional. Should you choose to make use of the information contained herein without first consulting a health, education or social care professional, you are prescribing for yourself, which is your inalienable right. However, the author assumes no responsibility for the choices you make after your review of the information contained herein and your consultation with a qualified health, education or social care professional. None of the statements in this article or in the book have been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), or the American Medical Association (AMA). This material is not warranted for any particular or general purpose whatsoever. Viewers of this material assume any and all risks for any use of this material. This material may not be reproduced in any way.
