

Crystal Coast Autism Center (Continued from page 1)

The Crystal Coast Autism Center, chartered in October 2012, is a non-profit, grass-roots organization, the outgrowth of a committed group of volunteers and an impassioned director, Lynne Choate, searching for a means to provide their children community-based services and resources. Every child's needs are different; every family's needs are unique. "Our goal," explains Mrs. Choate, "is to listen to parents and understand their needs and the needs of their children." The center's mission is threefold.

- To provide resources and support for those who care for individuals with ASD
- To identify areas of need for individuals and families affected by ASD and to help them find the resources available to meet those needs
- To bring individuals with ASD together to form friendships through social events and shared interests

"Our mission is ambitious," admits Mrs. Choate, "and can be daunting at times." Mrs. Choate further explains that the countless hours spent with caring parents, who are pleading for community-based services to help their children, replenish her enthusiasm and build her energy.

The autism center is located at 5242 Highway 70 West in a red brick home that was upgraded to be accessible to those with disabilities and supplied with furniture, electronic equipment and a lending library—all with the help of volunteers, grants and generous contributions from local businesses. There is a large fenced-in backyard and room inside for student groups and parent classes.

Certified therapists provide occupational therapy and speech therapy and also respite and mentoring services. An additional provider, Embracing Differences, partners with the autism center to coordinate therapeutic social skills groups for the children as well as parent education classes. Other services offered by the center include therapy dogs, music therapy, art therapy, parent support groups and video behavior role modeling. The possibility of a private school in Carteret County dedicated to serving the autism community is being explored.

Presently, the center serves an average of 40 children per week. Some of the children are home-schooled, and others access services in addition to those received in their public schools. Some higher-functioning children need services that are not offered in the public schools and benefit from the one-on-one and group therapies provided at the center. Mrs. Choate states that "parents tell us we are truly making a difference in their and their children's lives. We know there are many families in the community that need us and many more businesses and civic organizations who would be willing to financially support our mission." The center is presently applying for a grant, offered by Bellagurl, Inc., for a professionally designed website to help raise awareness of what the center has to offer families as well as how those wishing to make contributions can do so. Pine Knoll Shores resident Jean Turner, co-chair and treasurer of the center's Board of Directors, is spearheading the grant application process.

Plans for the future include applying for additional grants to offer scholarships to families who could benefit from services not covered by insurance. "Our hope," explains Mrs. Choate, "is for no child to be denied needed services due to finances."

For further information about Crystal Coast Autism Center, go to www.ccautismcenter.org or call 240-2255.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire And EMS

Personnel participated in 152.5 hours of training during January.

There were 9 false alarms and false calls, all of which have to be investigated; 2 fires; 1 good-intent call; 2 hazardous conditions (no fire); 12 rescue and emergency medical service incidents; 2 service calls; and 1 severe weather call.

Police

During January a total of 1,525 events were recorded. These included 18 investigations for 31 offenses, including a rape (an arrest was made); 8 arrests for 16 charges; 1 accident; 9 citations for 12 charges; and 15 warning tickets. Other incidents included 2 assaults, 580 beach access/park checks, 2 disturbances, 81 extra patrol requests, 75 residential foot patrols, 122 business foot patrols, 6 "I'm OK" calls, 7 mutual aid/assist other agencies, 4 unlocked doors, 66 stationary traffic observations, 12 suspicious people/vehicles, 5 trespassing incidents, 1 impounded vehicle, 4 well-being checks, 3 hang-up calls to 911, 6 activated alarms, 11 assist fire/EMS, 3 reports of damage to property, 1 domestic, 5 calls for K-9 search, 3 motorist assists, 91 residence checks. Two subpoenas were issued and 6 warrants were served.

REMINDER: Lock your doors and report suspicious people or vehicles to the police department.

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ARTICLE DEADLINE

DUE DATE	ISSUE
Fri., Mar. 14	Apr.
Mon., Apr. 14	May
Fri., May 16	June
Mon., June 16	July
Mon., July 14	Aug.
Fri., Aug. 15	Sept.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE:

The 19th of the month prior to desired issue

Articles always welcome.