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Hope Restored... Families Empowered...

MyGOAL Celebrates Second Annual Gala Function (October 30, 2010)

The 2010 MyGOAL Gala was held on October 30 at the elegant Pines Manor in Edison, New Jersey with over 100 people in attendance and live music provided by the Time Perfect Band. The second Annual Gala, themed "Aspire to Inspire," was definitely a celebratory occasion for the MyGOAL family. It was an opportunity to reflect on the organization's efforts to raise autism awareness and provide resources/services to families with autism, and be grateful for the outpouring of support that has helped MyGOAL continue its mission since its inception three years ago. This event also marked the time when MyGOAL gives back financially to members of its community—families, professionals, and other providers—who work tirelessly to benefit individuals with autism [see article on MyGOAL Gala awards for more details].

The evening was filled with special highlights,



Supporters of the MyGOAL family join Dr. Genevieve Kumapley (standing—far right) in commemorating the 2010 Annual Gala Event

such as an interpretive modern dance by dancer and choreographer, Mark Travis Rivera, and a poetry reading by guests Lucille Bar-David and Aaron Bar-David, a writer/author with autism. Mark Rivera is trained in modern, jazz,

contemporary and African dance and is the Artistic Director of Hand-Cap Dance, a dance company for disabled and non-disabled dancers. Aaron Bar-David maybe silent in voice, but his words, revealed through his writing, convey his profound understanding of this world and beyond. Both showcased pieces embodied stories of hope and the ability to prevail in the face of disability, and truly added sparkle to an already star-studded evening. The night was sponsored by several local business, physicians, pharmacists, and nurses, whose blessings and unwavering support has been integral to MyGOAL's success.

As the band played on and people danced, MyGOAL raised \$5,000 and was already looking towards 2011 and beyond to find ways to address the many unmet needs of autistic individuals.

A Resource Like No Other

Why the Abalo Family Values MyGOAL

"When Genevieve spoke of her journey with autism, I felt like she opened a window for me. MyGOAL is not preachy. The people genuinely want to help and simply offer tools that work."

Jennifer Abalo first heard of Genevieve Kumapley and MyGOAL on a routine visit to her son's neurologist. During the appointment, she shared her concerns with Dr. Brenda Harris about 6-year old Mateo's tendency to wander off often unbeknownst to her. Jennifer also admitted to her own struggles with balancing the day-to-day stressors at home, work, and the special needs of a child on the

autism spectrum. Dr. Harris recommended that Jennifer attend a MyGOAL support group session and talk to parents who may have had similar experiences. Convinced that this was going to be an hour spent with a group of crying women, Jennifer was initially skeptical. However, what drew her into the first meeting was the offer of child care while she could participate in the group session.

Jennifer felt that she connected with Genevieve's story right from the start. When she talked about her son's habit of frequently leaving the home, one attendee suggested placing chimes on the inside of every door as a potential solution. What struck Jennifer as such a simple solution, worked like a charm! From that point on, Jennifer attended as many group sessions as possible, opening up about her journey with



MyGOAL Rallies Around Families

Monthly Support Group and Men's Domain Sessions

At the core of MyGOAL's mission is to provide resources and programs that serve as immediate and practical tools for families affected by autism. In keeping with this philosophy, Dr. Genevieve Kumapley and the Board of directors designed monthly support group sessions not only to facilitate sharing of similar experiences among families living with autism, but also to inject simple and practical strategies from professionals in the field. The benefits are two-fold: 1) the experts come to you; 2) parents can take away key tips from these sessions to put into use within their home or other environments immediately upon leaving the meeting. Some of the support group topics over the last year have included stress management, biomedical interventions, cooking a

gluten-free meal, creating balance out of chaos, navigating through special needs services, and many more. Each session is like attending a mini-seminar and it is provided free of charge to the participants. Understanding that child care for children with special needs is a challenge and that many parents may not be able to make the time commitment, MyGOAL also offers child care to facilitate the participation of parents.

As the support group session grew in popularity, Robert Kumapley, co-founder of MyGOAL, hit upon an idea to provide a forum for fathers, family members, and friends who are involved in caring for autistic individuals. The incidence of stress and divorce among families with

special needs children is significantly higher than in other populations. The vision for the Men's Forum is to offer an outlet to help deal with the challenges faced by families. At the end of the very first meeting in December 2010, the men in attendance unanimously voted to continue the Men's Domain sessions on a monthly basis.

"It is my hope that the meetings will provide a platform for men to share experiences and encourage one another on the journey with autism." - Robert Kumapley

For more information on MyGOAL support group sessions or men's discussion groups, call MyGOAL at 877-88-MyGOAL (69462).

"MyGOAL's support group sessions offer practical information that I can put to use right after I leave the meeting. Regardless of how my day was going in, I always come away with something good."

The Abalo Family Story...

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autism and some of the challenges she faced, especially with her work schedule. Jennifer is employed at FedEx, where her schedule of working Sunday through Saturday delivering packages left her with little downtime for herself or family. At one support group meeting, Jennifer expressed that her stress level was having a negative impact on her work performance and relationships with colleagues. Upon hearing that, Genevieve and Dr. Harris offered to pen a letter to Jennifer's employer on her behalf. They appealed to her

employer for a Monday to Friday work schedule, which would allow Jennifer to create a stable routine for her and improve her ability to care for her family. FedEx responded to Jennifer's claim to hardship and accommodated her request.

Her overwhelmingly positive experience with the organization led her to encourage her husband, David, to participate in MyGOAL's Men's Domain Group Sessions. After attending the first session as a reluctant observer, David came home energized and enthused, especially

about the discussion on the several iPad apps that are available to help children on the autism spectrum.

Jennifer is now a vocal advocate for MyGOAL and the organization's existence to meet the needs of families in New Jersey living with autism. She credits the stability in her life with her husband and two sons, Mateo and David Lucas, to MyGOAL and her employer, whose understanding and supportive gestures have made all the difference to her world.



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We Could Not Have Done It Without You

In the summer and fall of 2010, MyGOAL hosted unique and fun-filled events to raise awareness and funds to benefit individuals with autism. One such event was a Dance Benefit Concert on June 19, featuring choreographers and dance companies from all over New York and New Jersey: Lauren Handleman, Andrea Kramer, Lauren Connolly, Pascal Rekoert/Flexicurve, Hand-Cap Dance Project, Moe-tion Dance Theater, Randy James Dance Works, Rock Rouletter Productions, and Six Degrees Dance Company. All in all, there were 20 dancers and 45

audience members. A special note of acknowledgement goes to Lauren Handleman for coordinating the entire event. We would also like to recognize supporters of the event Epstein Arlen LLC, Waterlillies, Hillsborough Hustle girls softball team, Reformed Church of Highland Park, Royce Brook Golf Club, and Montgomery Girls Scout Troop.

Another event was a first-ever "Hy Levy" Day on held on September 14, at the Regency Clubhouse in Monroe. Over 125 people were in attendance for a day of tennis, golf, and dining.

Together, we raised \$6,000 towards autism. MyGOAL sincerely thanks Lorraine Zimmerman and the Regency Clubhouse members for coordinating and supporting this event.





Giving Back: Daryl Matthew Gosein Memorial Fund

Service and Grant Award Programs

The proudest moment of the year for MyGOAL is when the organization gives back a large portion of the funds raised throughout the year to families in need, and in recognition of professionals and providers who tirelessly work toward getting autistic individuals on the path to recovery.

The vetting process to determine eligibility for MyGOAL scholarship and grant awards is based strictly on pre-defined criteria. The Family Grant Award is intended to assist in paying non-reimbursable medical expenses, including first-time visit to a Defeat Autism Now (DAN) Doctor or other Autism-related specialist; to purchase vitamins or other nutritional supplements that are specifically designed for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD); to provide for the personal needs of the individual



with ASD. If interested in applying, the applicant (primary care-giver of individual with ASD) must provide proof of household income, number of dependents, number of dependents with ASD, proof of diagnosis, information on current funding being received, a 250-word summary describing need, a copy of the previous year's tax return, and a completed application form.

The MyGOAL Outstanding Autism Service Award Program is established

to acknowledge outstanding special education teachers, paraprofessionals or therapists (speech, occupational or physical therapy) in the instruction of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The award is given to the individual who has demonstrated commitment and dedication to the education or therapy of individuals on the Autism spectrum. The Award recipient is selected based on a nomination by another individual.

At the 2010 gala, MyGOAL presented the Family Grant Award in the amount of \$1,000 each to 4 families, double the number of awards from 2009! In addition, MyGOAL honored a paraprofessional with \$1,000 and donated \$1,000 to the Saint Peter's University Hospital Autism Program.

Application forms for 2011 will be available June 1, 2011. For more information, please call 877-88-MyGOAL.

Sponsors for MyGOAL 2nd Annual Gala

- Americana Hospitality Group
- Progressive Nutrition Solutions
- Law Office of Jodi F. Bouer, LLC
- Creative Communicators
- Artech Information Systems, LLC
- Traci Lynn Fashion Jewelry
- Saint Peter's University Hospital
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- Eunsoo Lee
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Putting the Children First!



MyGOAL is piloting a project to assist high functioning adolescents/adults [ages 16 to 21 years] with Asperger Syndrome, form and maintain social connections. This endeavor, called Get a Social Life, offers peer-based, weekly social

experiences in the most natural settings. Adolescents who may qualify to participate include those with Asperger's who are able to enjoy community activities on their own but just do not make plans, those who are in mainstream classes but may be left out by peers during after school activities, or someone who wants to be out with friends but is afraid of bullies.

"Get a Social Life" will revolve around weekly community-based activities in the Middlesex County area. If you know anyone who might benefit from this activity, please call MyGOAL at 877-88-MyGOAL(69462).



On December 12, MyGOAL sponsored a holiday party at Saint Peter's University Hospital as a celebration of children as God's gift on earth. Children played games, made snowmen, had their faces painted, while munching cookies

and brownies. Parents took the time to talk to each other, share their experiences, and took courage in knowing that they were not alone in this journey. The 75 attendees at the party got an early sighting of Santa and elves as they gave thanks and prayed for continued progress in the journey to recovery.

To attend a similar gathering sponsored by MyGOAL, please visit our website at www.mygoalautism.org or call 877-88-MyGOAL (69462).

Working in Tandem for a Worthy Cause

MyGOAL Partners with Akhil Autism Foundation and St. Peter's

MyGOAL, Akhil Autism Foundation and St Peter's University Hospital banded together and organized a one-day seminar on June 12, 2010 to assist parents in prioritizing their intervention efforts for children with autism. They invited nationally known autism experts to provide the latest information on autism treatment modalities. The speakers were Barbie Zimmerman-Bier, MD, Kenneth Bock, MD, Xue Ming, MD, and Karen Umstead M.Ed., BCBA. Talks were also presented by the

founder of Akhil Autism Foundation, Manisha Lad, CNC, and MyGOAL's Executive Director, Genevieve Kumapley, PharmD, BCOP.

Topics included: Novel Approaches to Autism Research and Treatment Across the Life Span, Using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to Intervene in Individuals with Autism, The Broad Spectrum of Autism, Neurological Comorbidities in Autism, Autism Diets and Nutrition Healing Principles, and Life After the Diagnosis: Putting the

Pieces and the Family Together. Physicians, allied health professionals, and parents of autistic individuals attended the one-day program and all found the information very useful to implement within their environment. There was discussion and sharing of ideas among the participants during and after the lectures.

For more information on this or other educational programs, please contact MyGOAL at 877-88-MyGOAL (69462).





My Gateway to Overcoming Autism in Life Inc.

For additional information or to make a donation, please contact:
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MyGOAL Exists To Assist Families Living with Autism

We do this through education, marriage counseling and advocacy as families navigate through the complex challenges associated with the journey of autism – diagnosis to recovery or a better quality of life. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a vision to restore lives and families affected by Autism through Education and Empowerment.

MyGOAL, Inc.® is a gateway to information regarding:

- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Treatment(s)
- ◆ Advocacy
- ◆ Support services for families

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Autism Myths and Facts

Myth: Everyone with autism behaves the same way.
Fact: Autism affects 1 out of every 110 children in United States and 1 out of 94 children in the state of New Jersey. Some are affected with severe communication, social interaction, and daily living skills deficits and some are affected with only slight delays. Some engage in repetitive behaviors that may be self-injurious and some have mild repetitive behaviors.

Myth: Autism is caused by bad parenting.
Fact: Autism is diagnosed across a variety of households with different parenting styles from all races, creed and nations. Although the exact cause of autism is not known, autism is considered a syndrome regarded to be of neurobiological origin. Research has found people with autism to exhibit abnormally high amounts of heavy metals in their body.

Myth: A person with Autism is unable to feel emotions or develop any relationships.
Fact: A person with autism can express emotions, desires and needs.

Myth: Autism is untreatable.
Fact: There are several treatment strategies that may reduce many of the behaviors that people with autism exhibit and provide good quality of life. These include behavioral and biomedical interventions. The early identification and treatment is the key to restoration.

This journey continues with your support. Please partner with us at My Goal as we continually strive to restore hope to families. Call MYGOAL today at 877-88-MYGOAL (69462) or visit us online at www.mygoalautism.org

