



# Angels Bridging Gaps

Palm Bay Autism Support Group  
www.angelsbridginggaps.org

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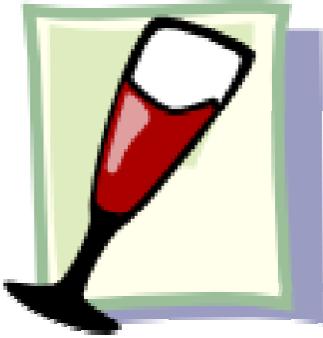
# Newsletter

## Jan 12, 2010

## Happy New Grants!

By Jennifer Rentrope

It's that time of year where you are probably re-examining your goals and re-structuring your plans. Many times, included in this overhaul is one's budget. Yes, along with the resolution to park at the far end of the parking lot when going to the grocery store there exists the aim to utilize more with less. Many Americans are doing this right now with unemployment rates being at an all time high. Yet as many of us know, Autism and Recession do not hang in the same social circles. In fact, I don't even believe they live in the same zip code.



Funding treatments for autism is expensive and money is definitely required. So where can one find assistance? Well... I did a little late Christmas shopping and found a couple of gifts for you: Grants and Interest-Free Microloans. Read on and let me know how they fit.



### ACT TODAY Autism Care and Treatment Grant Program

ACT Today! has provided grants to fund the following treatments, however if you need help funding another type of service for your family, do apply. The ACT Today! Board considers all types of treatments that help a family living with autism.

- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA Therapy)
- Bio Medical Treatment
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Programs
- Auditory Integration Training (AIT)
- Fencing for the home
- Prescriptions/Medications

**Completion of grant application:** The application must be completed in its entirety to be reviewed. Partially completed applications will be kept on file for one year and additional information may be submitted to make the application complete within that timeframe.

**Amount of grant request:** Typical grants awarded range between \$100 - \$5,000.

**Household income:** While we have not set an income level cap, incomes below \$100,000 per year are reviewed first.

**Type of treatment requested:** Our mission is to fund effective treatments and needed assessments.

**Numbers of family members with ASD diagnosis :** Applications from families with multiple children with ASDs are reviewed first.

To apply visit [www.act-today.org/act-today-grant-program.php](http://www.act-today.org/act-today-grant-program.php)  
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## Events

**1/12 - Adaptive Tennis Classes**  
*Veterans Memorial Park /Palm Bay Parks and Recreation, Palm Bay*  
5:00pm Adaptive tennis classes for special needs players of all ages. Certified instructor John Massetti (Coach Poppie). Call 952-3443.

**1/14 - Healthy Eating on a Budget**  
*Brevard Library, Eau Gallie* 2:00pm  
Beth Shephard of the UF Extension Office provides information on healthy dieting on a budget. Refreshments. Call 255-4304

**1/18 - PECS Basic Training Orlando.**  
Gain a fundamental understanding of how to implement PECS. \$395/\$295 for parents. Call 1-888-732-7462  
[www.pecs.com](http://www.pecs.com)

**1/18 - Tribute to Dr. King Melbourne Auditorium, Melbourne** 10:00am-4:00pm. For more information, call 242-7676

**1/20 - Town Hall Meeting - Autism: What We Know and What We Need**  
*Orlando Science Center, Orlando.*  
2:00pm Open to the community. Call 407-303-1700

**1/26 - FDLRS Production Lab for Parents - Brevard Schools, Viera**  
10:00am Develop materials and programs to assist your child and teacher in school. Contact Ginny Gleason at 633-1000 x 389  
[Gleason.ginny@brevardschools.org](mailto:Gleason.ginny@brevardschools.org)

**1/28 - FIT Workshop FIT Scott Center, Melbourne.** 6:30-8:30pm. Strategies for creating agreement in special education. Free. Call 674-8104

### Our upcoming Events

**1/18 - Bowling** - Shore Lanes, Palm Bay 4pm-5pm Come out and join us. \$2.99 including shoes. (February bowling date 2/1)

**1/19 - Parent Support Meeting** - Malabar Baptist Church, Malabar 6pm-7pm. Call 723-1602. (February meeting date 2/2)

**2/13 - Horseback Riding** - Rescued Horses Saves Kids, Malabar. 10-12noon. R.S.V.P. By 11/11. Contact [jbyearby@angelsbridginggaps.org](mailto:jbyearby@angelsbridginggaps.org)

# Treatments & Therapies

## Ping Pong Ball? Find Out

By Bonita Darula

Autistic children do play ping pong ball. Yes, it is true, autistic children do and are able to play the game of ping pong ball. But, what is the purpose? Most children with autism have a passion for playing some kind of sport, which helps them to be on common ground and connect with their peers.

The main purpose for teaching ping pong ball to children with autism is that it develops coordination in the arms and wrists, improves leg movement, motor skills, attention span, and offers an excellent exercise work out without requiring expensive equipment.

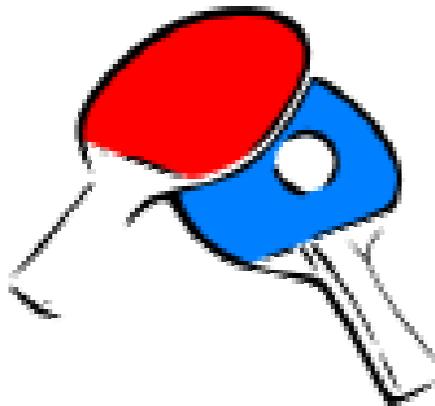
Introduce your child to the game of ping pong ball by allowing them to examine a ping pong table along with the net that goes across the table, the paddles and the white ping pong balls. Let your child hold the balls and paddles to get the feel of them until he or she feels comfortable holding these items. Start to bounce the ping pong balls slowly back and forth with the paddles.

Teach the individual to hit the ball back and forth to the other side of the table with the paddle so it will be a back and forth hit touch, hit touch, over to the next side across from the net on the table. By doing this, the child will have a better understanding of how to play. You may want to play a game or two at first with another person and have the child watch what you do to give them an idea of what to expect.

Playing ping pong ball with children who have autism is great not just for the purpose of exercise but also to help individuals learn and discover how to have fun, laugh, be a part of a team, have a challenge and gain self-confidence. It also helps the individual from being isolated, full of anxiety or depressed. Those are great additions to developing hand and foot coordination, eye contact, and the building of muscles.

One important thing to recognize when playing ping pong ball is that it will bring about fun and laughter. This builds stronger relationships and improves communication skills which is sometimes difficult for people with autism.

When playing ping pong ball the purpose is not to stress winning but to just have a fun, joyous time. Be mindful not to take the game too seriously because if the child loses or makes a mistake, he or she may go away in tears. Instruct



the child that it is okay to lose and that one does not have to be a winner to enjoy the game.

It is imperative that the ping pong game is not controlled by rules or goals which could confuse the child and cause them to not want to play and walk away in tantrums or anger outbursts. Instruct the child to play the game with love and encouragement and lots of patience.

Purchase an inexpensive ping pong ball table. Play the game. It will enrich both you and your child.

### About the Author

"Bonita Darula is known world-wide for her knowledge and insights in the prevention and understanding about autism. Visit ==> <http://www.autismintoawareness.com> to learn more about the truth on autism. Take action now and download your valuable e-book and bonus products. You and child are worth it."

### Family Network on Disabilities of Florida's Fourth Annual Heart and Hope Statewide Family Conference

February 20, 2010

Southwest Middle School  
6450 Dr. Phillips Blvd Orlando Florida 32819

Designed to help bring individuals who are at risk, families who have children with disabilities and the professionals that serve them in regards to the options and rights that are available to them in the school system and beyond.

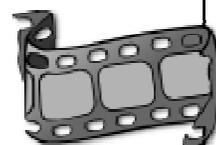
Call 800-825-5736 for more information

### Spotlight Theater

A Dance Theater for special needs children and young adults of all ages, boys and girls

Henegar Center, Melbourne

Registering now. Call 951-2420



## Florida Hospital Hosts Distinguished Lecture Series Town Hall On

### Autism: What We Know and What We Need

January 20, 2010  
2:00-3:00pm

**This Town Hall meeting, open to the community,** features three national autism experts. Together, they will describe the latest diagnosis and treatment options for autism and will discuss research findings including the role of genetics.

Orlando Science Center. 777 E. Princeton Street Orlando, FL 32803  
To R.S.V.P. call 407-303-1700. Space is limited.

For more information visit: [www.floridahospitalnews.com/autism-what-we-know-and-what-we-need](http://www.floridahospitalnews.com/autism-what-we-know-and-what-we-need)



**Helping Hand Financial Aid for Families**  
(National Autism Association)

The Helping Hand Program provides families with financial assistance in getting necessary biomedical treatments, supplements and therapy services for their autistic child. Do not apply for this grant if you are seeking funds for respite care, fencing, trampolines, swingsets, trips to Disney World, etc.

- Your child must meet all three basic criteria to apply:
1. Birth to age 18
  2. Reside in the United States of America.
  3. Diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

*Completion of grant application:* If you meet all three basic criteria, then you must complete a grant application. You must attach a letter from your child's physician that confirms your child's diagnosis. You must provide a copy of your most recent tax return. If you were not required to file a tax return, other proof of income is required.

*Amount of grant request:* The maximum amount awarded per child is a one-time grant of \$1,500.

Grant funds are not paid directly to families. All grants awarded are paid directly to the vendor or service provider to pay for tuition, supplements/medication, medical evaluation or testing, therapies, etc. If you have health insurance you can still apply for assistance.

Applications must be postmarked by May 15, 2010 and will be kept eligible through the end of the year. Please email questions to [ann@nationalautism.org](mailto:ann@nationalautism.org). National Autism Association begins accepting applications February 15, 2010.

NAA also accepts donations to the program.

For more information visit:  
[www.nationalautismassociation.org/helpinghand.php](http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/helpinghand.php)



**Lend 4 Health.org**

This next program called Lend 4 Health is not a grant but an interest-free microloan. I had the opportunity to speak with it's founder Tori Tuncan about the unique program. The following is an explanation of the program in her own words. Thank you Tori!

Lend4Health is a community service organization that facilitates small loans for families pursuing biomedical treatment of autism spectrum disorders. These small loans are made by visitors (friends, relatives, other autism families, and complete strangers) to the Lend4Health website. The loans are collected until the full amount of the family's loan request is reached. The family repays the loan over time, and completely interest-free. Once the loan has been repaid in full, all of the lenders for that family receive their money back. Lenders are encouraged to re-loan their money to another Lend4Health family, thereby leveraging a small amount of money to help potentially countless families.

Lend4Health was created by 37-year old mother of two Tori Tuncan. After learning about biomedical treatment and implementing the GFCF diet and basic supplementation for her then 3-year old son with Sensory Processing Disorder, Tuncan became attuned to the challenges many families face with affording the costs of biomedical interventions, which often are not covered by insurance. Inspired by the

successful micro-lending organization Kiva, which facilitates online loans for poverty alleviation, Tuncan created Lend4Health as a blog in June 2008 from her dining room table. Since then, 75 micro-loans totaling more than \$46,000 have been disbursed. Twenty-nine loans have been repaid in full, and none have defaulted.

Lend4Health currently is only open to those pursuing biomedical treatment, and loans are used for related costs (e.g., testing, DAN! doctor appointments, conference costs, travel to DAN! doctors, HBOT dives, and supplements). To date, loan requesters have had children with autism, but Lend4Health is also open to receiving loan requests from adults with autism who are pursuing biomedical treatment. Although most Lend4Health families have children with autism diagnoses, loan requests are also accepted for related issues, including Sensory Processing Disorder, ADHD, and Lyme disease, as well as children who are as yet undiagnosed. There are no financial or income-related criteria, as Tuncan believes "nobody can afford autism, regardless of their socio-economic standing."

*Completion of application:* Currently, loan requesters apply for the program via an online form on the website.

*How the programs differs from a grant:*  
Lend4Health is unique for several reasons. For one, these are not grants but loans. As such, Lend4Health is not the best option for families who are struggling financially to the point that there is no room in the budget for an extra \$20 or \$40 loan repayment each month. However, Lend4Health is an opportunity for families who could afford a treatment protocol, or a doctor visit if it were paid in small amounts over time, as opposed to one lump sum. So, for example, instead of saving \$30 a month for 10 months to afford a stool test (and "losing" those 10 months of progress), the family can get a loan today, get the stool test done, and then pay it back at \$30 per month over 10 months. Lend4Health also is unique because the loans are interest-free. Instead of using a credit card with a high interest rate (not to mention dealing with unfriendly, face-less banks), families can make interest-free repayments to a friendly Community of lenders. Third, Lend4Health enables the autism community to help itself. We are very familiar with swapping advice, recipes, and recommendations, but with Lend4Health we can now also swap dollars. Finally, Lend4Health provides the potential for huge returns on very small investments. An individual can lend just \$5 to a family and then, if he/she continues to re-lend it after it is repaid by the family, that \$5 can go on indefinitely to help several families. The microlending website Kiva facilitates about \$1,000,000 \*each week\* for poverty alleviation. Just think what the autism community could do with \$1,000,000 in loans every week!!!

The successes are immeasurable on Lend4Health. One interesting aspect of Lend4Health is that the families provide periodic updates on their child's progress (or regression), and these updates are sent out to all of that family's lenders. So each lender knows how their loan has been used, but also the impact it has made on the health of the child and the overall well-being of the family. In many cases, a family's Lend4Health loan is a clear point at which the trajectory of a child's health changes for the better. Because of a loan, a family can do an important test, which indicates a certain excess or lack of something, which enables the doctor to begin the appropriate treatment, which then helps the child. And the fact that the loan was provided by friends and, many times, strangers, makes the success that much sweeter. We have families whose children are sleeping better, talking more, eating better, self-injuring less, and feeling just overall happier -- all because of a few bucks lent online. The successes so far have been many, and they have been seriously breathtaking.

For more information please visit:  
[www.lend4health.org](http://www.lend4health.org)



## VSA Arts of Florida

### Seventh Annual Exemplary Participant Recognition Program

Education professionals throughout the State of Florida are asked to nominate students in one of two categories: the first category is a student with a disability that has shown exemplary work in the Arts, the second category is a student with a disability that has shown dramatic personal growth or leadership through participation in the Arts. We ask that you submit a piece of artwork\* from the students so that we may showcase their accomplishments. All nominations of individuals kindergarten through age 22 in Literary Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Drama or Dance will be considered.

A five member committee comprised of VSA arts of Florida Board Members and ESE General Education, Art and Music teachers will select the winning entry and runner up in each category. The winning students and runners-up in each category, along with the nominating teacher will receive a gift certificate and recognition at an awards ceremony.

This year's nominations must be received no later than **January 15, 2010**. Feel free to contact me with any questions and or concerns. You may mail, fax or email the nomination forms to:

Wendy Finklea  
3500 E. Fletcher Ave. Suite 234  
Tampa, FL 33613  
813/558-5093 office  
813/975-6596 fax  
wfinklea@coedu.usf.edu

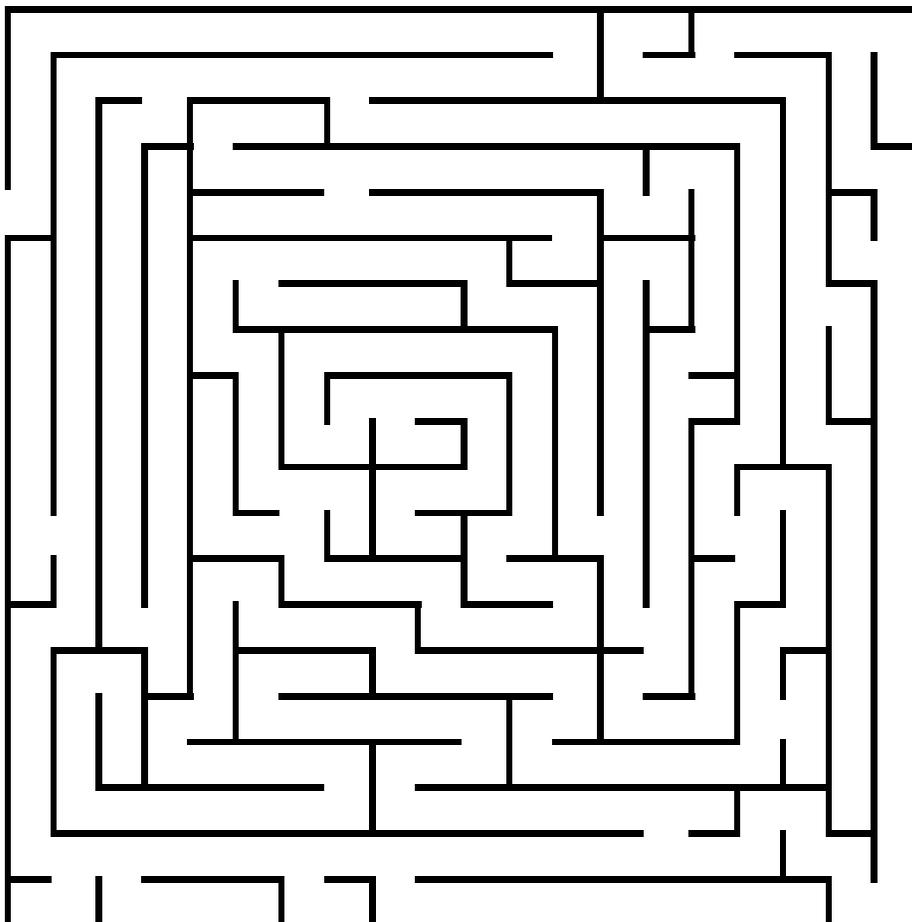


[www.vsafll.org](http://www.vsafll.org)

The winners will be notified by February 15, 2010. Please remember to submit samples of student's artistic abilities along with a completed nomination form. Artwork becomes the property of VSA arts of Florida and will be exhibited throughout the state of Florida in the upcoming year.

\* If you would like the artwork returned, please let me know.

**Directions:** Help the bowling ball through the maze so it can hit the bowling pin.



Come join us at Shore Lanes in Palm Bay!

