

# Direct Connection

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



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## 2016 Mental Health Champions Banquet

The Mental Health Champions Banquet is scheduled for Tuesday evening, June 14, 2016. The event will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, 415 W. McCarty Street, Jefferson City, Missouri.

The Mental Health Champions Award recognizes three individuals who make positive contributions to their communities, exemplify commitment and vision, and whose actions have increased the potential for independence in others with similar mental health conditions. One award goes to an individual living with mental illness, another goes to someone with developmental disabilities, and the third award goes to an individual in recovery for addiction disorders.

In addition to recognizing and celebrating award recipients and nominees, the banquet also provides an opportunity for people who share a common goal of raising awareness and public understanding of matters that impact individuals and families living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and addiction disorders to socialize and enjoy a fun-filled evening.

The keynote speaker will be Ron Suskind, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and best-selling author. His groundbreaking book, *Life, Animated*, lifts a curtain on the Suskind family's 20-year struggle with their youngest son, Owen, and his diagnosis of autism. Ultimately, Suskind's guide and teacher was Owen, who found his voice and place in the world through the power of old Disney movies, myth, fable, and legend.

For more information about this event, call the Missouri Mental Health Foundation at 573-635-9201 or visit:

[http://www.missourimhf.org/?page\\_id=353](http://www.missourimhf.org/?page_id=353)

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**CONNECTING WITH THE  
DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

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Disabilities

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"A little consideration, a little thought for others,  
makes all the difference"

A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh

# April was Autism Awareness Month



April 2<sup>nd</sup> was World Autism Awareness Day, and April marked Autism Awareness Month, dedicated to the recognition of Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a developmental disorder which affects as many as 1 out of 68 children in the United States today. Each year during Autism Awareness Month, organizations around the world sponsor unique educational and fundraising events to increase awareness and understanding about autism and individuals who are affected with autism in communities worldwide.

Several cities and countries around the world took part in “Light it Up Blue,” an international campaign launched by Autism Speaks, an autism advocacy group, to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day and Autism Awareness Month by shining bright blue lights from iconic buildings and landmarks around the globe. The campaign aims to help raise awareness and bring focus on autism as a growing public health crisis.

Many awareness events occurred across Missouri including:

- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) held an awareness event on April 6<sup>th</sup> at their central office facility in Jefferson City, Missouri. Guests from local provider agencies including the Special Learning Center, Day Solutions, and the Thompson Center in Columbia attended and spoke at this special event.
- On April 8<sup>th</sup>, The Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) and the Office of Administration (OA) Wellness Committee sponsored a Capitol Complex area Go Blue Day Wellness Walk. Participants, many of whom wore blue, walked 1.1 mile around the Capitol and through downtown Jefferson City.
- Some Missourians recognized Autism Awareness Month during Autism Family Legislative Day on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the State Capitol Building in Jefferson City. This event was sponsored by the Missouri Parent Advisory Committee on Autism. Families and providers from across the state shared information and cupcakes with state legislators to help raise awareness about autism and to thank Missouri lawmakers for their support of the autism community.

By increasing awareness through activities that occur during Autism Awareness Month, there is hope for better understanding and acceptance of individuals with autism.



## Navigating Autism Services: A Community Guide for Missouri

Families often say that they are not given enough direction after a family member is diagnosed with autism, and they report confusion and frustration when faced with navigating the seemingly endless maze of services from the medical, educational, and community provider fields. The Division of Developmental Disabilities, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the University of Missouri – Columbia, developed an autism-specific resource guide to help people navigate the service delivery system.

Originally published in 2009, this navigation guide represents its second comprehensive revision, reflecting the many advances in law, policy, and supports for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) since then.

To access this guide, click on: <http://dmh.mo.gov/dd/autism/docs/navigationguide.pdf>.





## Missouri Autism Centers

### **Cardinal Glennon Knights of Columbus Behavior Clinic**

St. Louis, MO 63110  
314-577-5609

[www.cardinalglennon.com](http://www.cardinalglennon.com)

### **Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, Developmental Center/Autism Center**

KC, MO 64108  
816-234-3674  
866-512-2168 (Toll Free)

<http://www.childrensmery.org/Autism/>

### **MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities**

University of Missouri  
Columbia, MO 65211  
573-884-6052

<http://Thomsoncenter.missouri.edu/>

### **Southeast MO State University Autism Center for Diagnosis and Treatment**

Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
573-986-4985

[autismcenter@semo.edu](mailto:autismcenter@semo.edu)

### **Washington University School of Medicine Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Center**

St. Louis, MO  
314-286-1700 (scheduling)

<http://wuchild.wustl.edu>

## DD Contracts with Washington University for New Autism Center

In April 2015, funding became available for priorities including \$300,000 for a new Autism Center at Washington University. The Center will be under the direction of John Constantino, M.D.

Dr. Constantino is partnering with the Directors of the other four Autism Centers in Missouri to enhance the quality of services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Through this contract, Washington University aims to:

- Decrease the amount of time individuals wait on a waitlist before receiving an appropriate diagnosis, an updated comprehensive intervention plan, or both.
- Avail children with ASD who have co-morbid behavioral or psychiatric abnormalities to an array of mental health services available at Washington University.

With the prevalence rate for autism now estimated to be 1 in 68, Missouri's investment in diagnostic services continues to pay dividends for children and families.

## Family Resource and Autism Specialists

Six Family Resource and Autism Specialists (FRAS) are available throughout the state to provide technical assistance, outreach, training, and resources to Support Coordinators and stakeholders regarding autism, autism services, and supporting families. Family Resource and Autism Specialists act as advocates for individuals and families and advance the principles of best practice.

Contact information for Family Resource and Autism Specialists can be found on DD's website:

<http://dmh.mo.gov/dd/docs/familyresourceautismspecialistregion-satellite.pdf>



# Community Calendar

**May 16 – 17, 2016** Association on Aging with Developmental Disabilities 2016 Conference, St. Charles, Missouri  
More information will soon be posted on AADD's website: [www.agingwithdd.org](http://www.agingwithdd.org)

**June 2 and 3, 2016** – 2016 Spring Training Institute, Tan-Tar-A Resort, Osage Beach, Missouri  
For more information and to register, visit: <http://www.springtraininginstitute.com/>

**June 14, 2016** – 2016 Mental Health Champions Awards Banquet, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, Missouri  
For more information, visit: [http://www.missourimhf.org/?page\\_id=353](http://www.missourimhf.org/?page_id=353)

**August 21 – 23, 2016** – Real Voices, Real Choices Conference  
For more information, visit: [http://www.missourimhf.org/?page\\_id=242](http://www.missourimhf.org/?page_id=242)

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



Improving lives THROUGH  
supports and services  
THAT FOSTER self-determination.

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DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH