



The connection is you.™

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The Autism Society Lehigh Valley is an all-volunteer organization, serving individuals and families living with Autism in the Lehigh Valley. Since 1989, we have made it our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. We connect through groups, host community activities, provide informational resources and support, and encourage community building. Our collective vision is to create a world where everyone in the Autism community connects to the support they need when they need it. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and accepting society full of opportunities for Autistic individuals to maximize their potential.

In 2021, we had eight outdoor activities for our families, seven monthly online groups for individuals, as well as parent groups. We provide important information and resources for individuals with autism and their families in the Lehigh Valley. One out of every 44 children are diagnosed with Autism, and our activities and events continue to be valuable to our local families.

### **Our mission.**

We create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

### **Our vision.**

Creating a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.

During these challenging times, as we emerge from the pandemic, we advance our mission and vision creating connections with our Autism community; hosting our groups and activities, we enable our children, youth, adults, and caregivers to remain connected in a way that makes them feel happy and accepted more than ever before.

Sincerely,

Autism Society Lehigh Valley (*EIN: 23-2578768*)

Mimi Ludwig, President,

Karen Williams, Vice President

Anthony Romano, Treasurer,

**Birthday celebrations and activities for children 12 & under:** We host unique birthday celebrations for children with autism and their families with a fun, nonjudgmental environment. Our children with autism love birthdays but are often not invited to other children's parties.

**Children's Groups and Activities:** We have a pre-school parent support group and added a monthly pre-school fun with music online session. We continue to have fun with our online group for 7 - 11-year-old children. We have hosted outdoor events (following all CDC guidelines), such as our Trunk or Treat for Halloween, Holiday parties and are now planning to expand our children's activities and groups.

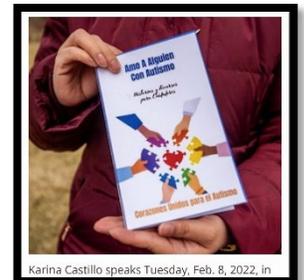
**Teen Group and Teen Theater:** We currently offer preteen/teen online groups for social and game activities facilitated by a professional board-certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA). In the near future, we plan to expand the offerings of this group to include fun in-person outdoor activities and indoor groups following CDC guidelines. We are proud of our virtual Teen Theater program for creating an online movie for teens and their families' enjoyment.

**Young Adult Group and Young Adult Theater:** We have had a strong young adult group for the last 5 years. We went online in the beginning of the pandemic and now are back in person, (following CDC guidelines). We meet monthly for our young adult social group with a professional board-certified behavioral analyst (BCBA) facilitating the crafts, karaoke, music and more. We sponsored another Young Adult Theater program online this past summer and the participants had a wonderful time playing their favorite characters.

**Autism Support En Espanol:** In collaboration with Corazones Unidos para el Autismo (CUA), Autism Society Lehigh Valley supports Spanish-speaking parents with workshops, a parent support group, work with TechOWL, and host educational workshops in Spanish. This year we are proud to announce that Corazones worked with Grace Publishing Co. to publish several local family's stories in Spanish in a book called *Amo Alguien Con Autismo*, now available on Amazon. Now we are working on an English version with additional family stories published at the end of April titled *United Hearts for Autism*.

**Creative Abilities Group:** started in 2018 for youth and young adults, this group's mission is to provide opportunities for individuals with autism to participate in a variety of fine arts, performing arts, music, and craft activities in their community, helping to inspire them, enrich their lives, and help them to realize their full creative potential. We completed a public mural project with artist Matt Halm (3/7/2020), highlighted in the Lehigh Valley Arts Council's documentary *Champions of Inclusion* on the local PBS39 station (9/15/20). Our Creative Abilities group also completed workshops in fiber arts, acrylic painting, cartooning, fused glass, hand-made paper, storytelling, and an online theater on Zoom in 2020 and 2021. We recently completed a class in printing/collaging at Cedar Crest College and now work in collaboration with the Baum School of art for art classes.

Visit us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Autism-Society-Of-Lehigh-Valley-308529559183851>



Karina Castillo speaks Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022, in

