

## The AUsome Social Group

Teen/Young Adult Recreation/Social Group

Sponsored by the Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM); <http://www.autismmadison.org/>

Contact: Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527

(608) 222-4378 or [ausome@hughes.net](mailto:ausome@hughes.net)

- What:** Experience the Fun of Improv Fun/Comedy with Host Brad Knight from Monkey Business Institute
- When:** Saturday, September 11, 2010; 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.
- Where:** Midvale Community Lutheran Church (4329 Tokay Blvd. - corner of Tokay Blvd. & Midvale Blvd. West side of Madison - see map on next page)
- Cost:** Free! Bring a snack to share with your AUsome friends

This is your chance to have a fun time and learn some acting techniques at the same time! If you've ever seen a Monkey Business performance or the TV show, "Whose Line is it Anyway?", you've seen some of the best of Improv Comedy. Improv stands for Improvisational – which means you basically make up (improvise) funny things to act out as you go along based on our leader's (host) directions. Our host, Brad Knight, will give us basic instructions on improv "games" and we get to use our fertile imaginations to make up the rest. It is a form of acting. I went through a class in improv comedy about 10 years ago given by the Comedy Sports organization. I still think it was the most fun I have ever had in my life.

Actual AUsome members will get to be the improv actors while parents, siblings and other support staff will act as the audience. The audience will play an active role by suggesting ideas for things.

Here are some of the improv "games" we will be trying (we might try different ones as well):

- **Count Down**  
The audience will be asked to suggest a short scenario that host Brad will help the actors develop into a 2 minute performance. Then Brad will have the actors speed everything up to do it in one minute and then do it again in 30 seconds. The challenge and humor is in trying to go faster and faster.
- **What Are You Doing?**  
Two actors will face each other. The audience will suggest a simple activity like "painting a fence". One actor will pretend to paint a fence. The other actor will ask "What are you doing?" Then the painting actor will have to reply that he is doing something else totally different – like "Eating a hot dog". Then the second actor will act out the hot dog eating while saying he is doing something else, etc.
- **The Genius Panel**  
Several actors will line up in a row facing the audience. They will form the panel. The audience will ask the panel a question. Then the panel will provide the audience with an answer, but each panel member can only say one word at a time as they make up the answer.
- **Storytelling**  
Several actors will form a team of story tellers. The audience will suggest a subject. Each story teller on the team makes up part of the story for a short time until the host points to another story team member. Then that storyteller has to pick up the story and keep adding to it.

Don't worry if this all sounds kind of confusing. Our host Brad has lots of experience getting all kinds of audiences to play these kinds of games – even if you've never done anything like this in your life. It's what he does for a living. It will be lots of fun! You can find out more about the Monkey Business Institute at their web site - <http://www.monkeybusinessinstitute.com/>. They have a show every Friday night at The Glass Nickel Pizza place on Atwood Ave.

Our "show" will last a little over an hour. After we're done, we'll relax with our snacks and lemonade. Brad will hang around to chat more about improv comedy. He will also have information about the

classes they offer like the one I took ten years ago.

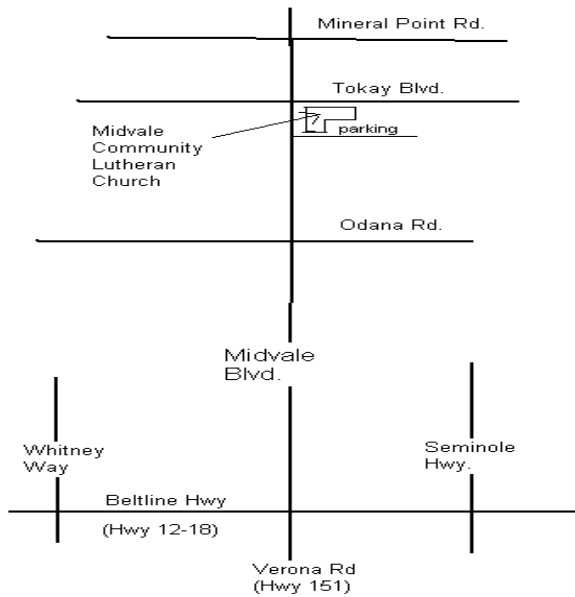
We're glad the major church remodeling is done so we can use the Midvale Community Lutheran facilities again. However, even though we are able to use the fellowship hall, the kitchen area is now the subject of remodeling so we won't be able to use those facilities for our September activity. The kitchen should be done in time for our annual video game night in November this year.

Be sure to bring a snack to share that doesn't need refrigeration. Also bring all necessary serving utensils. I'll bring cups, plates and lemonade.

**Important Items and Sensory Issues:**

- ☺ Bring a snack to share
- ☺ Bring your active imagination!

**Map to Midvale Community Lutheran**



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- What:** **A-Maze-ing Days for Autism at Treinen Farm – night tour of the corn maze with a bonfire and S’mores.**
- When:** **October 2, 2010 (Saturday), 7:00 - 9:00 pm (We’ll be doing the corn maze in the dark – spooky!) (A-Maze-ing Days continues on Sunday from 11 – 5)**
- Where:** **Treinen Farm 5 miles west of Lodi on Hwy 60. See web site/map below**
- Cost:** **Each AUsome member gets 1 free corn maze ticket - Additional Corn maze tickets are \$8 for adults, \$6 for age 6-11, age 5 and under free. You don’t have to go in the maze. Sitting around the bonfire and making S’mores is FREE.**

This is our 4<sup>th</sup> annual ASGM activity at Treinen Farm! A big thanks to Alan and Angie, owners of Treinen Farm for volunteering their location and working so hard with the ASGM board to make this exciting event happen. The picture in the corn maze is different every year. This year the corn maze is a giant Gecko.

The rest of the A-Maze-ing Days activities (raffle, games, food stand, wagon rides, etc.) actually end at 5:00 pm, but the corn maze is open until 9:00 pm. Like last year, we’ll have a big bonfire going. It’s kind of fun to try to find your way through the corn maze at night. Bus loads of people actually come out to the farm after dark just to do this. If you want to just hang out at the bonfire, you can join me there. If you want to go in the corn maze, **Remember to bring a flash light with fresh batteries!**

Gecko Corn Maze Details - This is the centerpiece of the farm activity. As you enter the maze you get 2 things, the first is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 8 pieces of the maze map and a stapled shut “cheat” copy of the whole maze map. You have to follow the clues on the 1<sup>st</sup> piece of the map to find the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece. If you make it back with all 8 map pieces without opening your “cheat” map, you win a piece of candy. There are 8 special places in the maze where you can find paper punches to punch holes in your map. If you find and punch 4 of them you win a bag of popcorn. Find and punch all 8 and you win more popcorn.

We’ll have an AUsome gathering around a bonfire with or without a trip through the corn maze. I’ll provide the fixings for the S’mores and sticks to roast marshmallows. This activity will go on rain or shine. If it looks like rain, bring an umbrella. If it rains too hard, we’ll eat the chocolate bars in the barn!

You can find directions and more details about the farm at <http://www.treinenfarm.com/>. The basic directions to get there are pretty simple. Take I90/I94 north of Madison to the Hwy 60 exit to Lodi. Follow Hwy 60 West through Lodi and out the other side. The farm is about 5 miles west of Lodi on Hwy 60 on your right.

A BIG thanks to Capital Times Kid’s fund for buying the S’mores fixings and paying for some of the corn maze tickets. You can find more details about the A-Maze-ing Days for Autism at the ASGM web site <http://www.autismmadison.org/>.

There will be a lot of things to do at A-Maze-ing Days if you want to come before 5:00 either Saturday or Sunday:

- **Raffle** – We have an incredible number of raffle items available including a entire week’s stay at a condo in the Colorado Rockies. Other prizes include \$300 in cash, Badger Homecoming football game tickets and a free year of movie passes. You don’t have to be present to win. Some tickets for the 5 biggest items will be sold in advance as well as at the farm.
- **Horse Drawn Wagon Rides to the pumpkin patch** – Pick out and buy your own pumpkin for Halloween. Ride to and from the patch in a horse drawn wagon.
- **Pond Slingshot** – buy 3 gourds for \$1 and then use the giant slingshot to try to hit the inner-tube target in the middle of the pond. If you hit the inner-tube, you win a free pumpkin.
- **Food** – The food has not been finalized yet, but we think we’ll have Hot dogs, chips and drinks available plus popcorn.

- **Volunteer Opportunity** – Contact ASGM at <http://www.autismmadison.org/> if you would like to help ASGM at this fun event.

### **Important Items and Sensory Issues:**

- ☺ The maze may be crowded, even after dark.
- ☺ Bring a Flashlight with fresh batteries
- ☺ Bring an umbrella if it looks like rain
- ☺ Dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy shoes.
- ☺ Bring a coat or heavy sweatshirt just in case. It can get quite chilly after dark.

### **This Year's maze picture.**



### **Important Information:**

1. **The ASGM Web site has a new look!!** The web site (including the links to AUsome information) has been totally redesigned. I still need to do some work with the website manager to make the links easier to use.
2. **Visit <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for other services and activities sponsored by the Autism Society of Great Madison (ASGM).** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evening of the month is either a parent support group meeting at the Midvale Community Lutheran Church or a special presentation.
3. **Volunteers needed for A-Maze-ing Days for Autism - October 2-3, 2010**  
If you are planning on attending our October AUsome activity at Treinen Farm, we do have volunteer opportunities available. We can use help on Sunday for cleanup.  
It would also help a lot if you can distribute copies of the information poster in your area.  
Give me a call at 608-222-4378 or email [nancy.alar@hughes.net](mailto:nancy.alar@hughes.net) to let us know if and when you might be able to volunteer.
4. **ASGM is doing a lot more fun activities for families this year to provide family friendly activities as well as help raise money for local autism support**  
There was the golf outing in August and there'll be an Apel Garten Orchard activity in September plus a bunch of other stuff. Check out the website at <http://www.autismmadison.org/> and get on the main ASGM electronic mailing list (which is separate from the AUSome list) if you aren't on it already.

## **What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?**

### **Miniature Golf at Bogey's followed by Taco Bell tacos and snacks; July 10, 2010 (Saturday) 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

We've been really lucky with the weather at all our activities this year. The mini-golf was no exception. It was a gorgeous (but warm) day. We had a great turnout of about 35 people.

Everyone had a good time golfing, judging from the amount of cheering and yelling coming from the course. I was so busy checking people in and taking orders for tacos that I didn't get a chance to golf myself.

I do know there was a lot of celebration for "holes-in-one". In one family, everyone got a hole-in-one except the dad (he (Scott) complained about the fairness of it all!). Richard got THREE holes-in-one all together, one with a group he played with and the last 2 in a second game he played by himself. He let me keep his scorecard for our scrapbook to make sure it went down in history. Ian got two holes-in-one.

After the golfing we all relaxed in the outdoor picnic area and enjoyed our lunch of tacos. Thanks to the Capital Times Kid's Fund grant for financing the golf and the tacos. I was amazed that I was able to actually take the lunch order for that many people and not mess it up completely. While we munched our tacos and cinnamon twists in the shade, we kept the Bogey's staff busy passing pitchers of soda and lemonade through the serving window to our thirsty golfers.

Jim Mooney shared with the group that he was graduating from college in Milwaukee next year. He is planning a big celebration party in Milwaukee and all his AUsome friends will be invited. Watch for a forwarded invitation from me on Jim's behalf next year.

After all the tacos were gone and the lemonade was drunk, we all went home with a little sunburn and good memories. However, Matt Ward had one final request. He wanted me to stop for dessert at Clausen's bakery a few blocks away. So Matt, I and Richard (who we were giving a ride home) enjoyed browsing through all the goodies there. Clausen's had a special on that day that ended up with me going home with 3 free loaves of bread. It was a fun day.

### **ASGM/AUsome combined Private Swimming Party at Monona Pool – Lunch at Rocky's Pizza – August 7, 2008 (Saturday), 9:00-11:00 A.M.**

We have been really lucky with our outdoor AUsome outing weather the past few years. The temperature was perfect and it was sunny. Even the horrific mosquitoes we've had this year stayed away. Because this was a combined AUsome and Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM) activity, we had a really great turnout! We had almost 50 people swimming and lots of others lying around on deck chairs. You don't have to be a swimmer to go to an AUsome/ASGM swimming party. We've got the life guards so well trained that they even let us immediately in the refreshment gate without having to be reminded that the AUsome group uses that special entrance.

We had the usual assortment of noodles to play with in the water. Dara brought her usual interesting swim fins. I don't think the water slide was ever empty. It usually had a line on it. The diving board was also well used. I saw some really creative (and painful) trips from the board to the water. We all shared popcorn and lemonade. Thanks to Dara's mom, Jeane, and Ian's grandma, Lucy, for helping me collect the registration fees. There were almost no bees around this year which was great.

After we got done swimming we went over to Rocky Rococo's Pizza for lunch and conversation. I really enjoy getting a chance to talk to so many of the AUsome families at this outing.

It was nice to be able to see a number of families there with all ages. It is one time that all the members of ASGM and AUsome can get together for a family centered outing.

## **AUSome Social Group Philosophy and Ground Rules**

### Group Sponsor:

The AUSome Social Group is sponsored by the Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM). Membership in the Autism Society is now unified -- when you join, you can join both the national organization and our ASGM chapter in one step. Even better, this new system means more of your annual dues comes directly to our chapter, enabling us to offer such educational and social opportunities as our Autism 101 workshops, Parent support groups, Pump It Up! Birthday parties and AUSome teen and adult groups. You can join or renew your membership using the attached form or by visiting [www.autism-society.org/join](http://www.autism-society.org/join).

It is possible that Autism Society membership may be required in the future as the AUSome group becomes larger and requires more resources. You can get more information about the Madison Chapter (including an extensive autism resource list), by calling (608) 213-8519, emailing [autismmadison@gmail.com](mailto:autismmadison@gmail.com) or sending a note to ASGM, 2935 Fish Hatchery Rd #101, Madison, WI 53711

See the ASGM website at <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for membership information and a link to the AUSome Group web pages <http://www.autismmadison.org/ausome/index.htm>. If you join the Autism Society of Greater Madison, this automatically gives you the chapter newsletter plus membership in the state (ASW) Autism Society so you will get their mailings as well. (However, if you join just the national Autistic Society, you will not get state and local mailings).

### Group Purpose:

The AUSome group was organized to provide recreation and social opportunities for people ages 12 and over who are challenged by sensory/communication issues related to Autism/Asperger's/PDD/Tourette's. However, anyone is welcome to join the activities. I try to set up activities that allow for social interaction between group members and between parents and siblings of the group.

### The AUSome Newsletter:

The AUSome Group has a separate newsletter that is sent out every other month, containing details for the next 2 outings and a summary of what happened the past 2 months. The AUSome newsletter will be sent out at least a week in advance of the next outing (I hope). Some things may be planned with short notice if something interesting comes up. If you have an e-mail address and are OK with receiving the newsletter that way, let me (Nancy Alar) know. It saves time and postage if notification can just be sent electronically. I will maintain a mailing list of participants, and will verify this list annually – usually in January in conjunction with a call about tickets to the juggling show. Our AUSome newsletter is also available on the web at <http://www.autismmadison.org/newsletter/index.htm>

### General Activity Plans:

The general plan is to have an activity about once a month that will last from 2 to 4 hours. The target day will be the first Saturday of the month. However, this is subject to schedule conflicts and availability of interesting activities. Activities that we have done include bowling, miniature golf, gymnastics, movies, a talent show, art gallery visit, fossil hunt, Little Americka (a local amusement park), swimming, horse back riding, Go Cart driving, farm market, airplane rides, pottery making and a limousine ride. Each January we attend the 47<sup>th</sup> annual Madfest Juggling show. In August we have a private pool party at the Monona Pool. Every November we have “video game night”. If you are especially interested in a particular activity or have suggestions, let me know.

### Sensory Issues:

Every effort will be made to accommodate sensory issues by limiting cigarette smoke, strong odors, unusual lighting, large crowds and high noise levels where possible. If an activity might involve some of the sensory problems mentioned above, they will be described in the AUSome newsletter. It will not be possible to accommodate everyone's needs all the time so individuals must decide their tolerance levels for each activity. Please let me know if you have any special requests in this area. Also, please be sensitive to requests from group members who have special sensory needs (such as problems with others chewing gum.).

### Logistics:

Some individuals may need to arrange for a support person to accompany them. Please use your best judgment in this area. Transportation will be the responsibility of each individual. However, effort will be made to provide help with transportation by designating central meeting points, etc. Please call me, Nancy Alar, (608) 222-4378 or e-mail me at [ausome@hughes.net](mailto:ausome@hughes.net) if you have transportation problems, and I'll try to help work out a way for you to get there. Since these activities are loosely organized social outings, each person participates at their risk.