

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 ausomesocialgroupmadison@gmail.com

What: Video Game Night and Pizza at Midvale Community Lutheran Church

(Please! Bring your TV set/video game setup, Extra controllers and extension cords)

When: Saturday, November 19, 2011, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Where: Midvale Community Lutheran Church (4329 Tokay Blvd. - corner of Tokay Blvd. and Midvale Blvd. On the West side of Madison - see map on next page)

Cost: Free! Pizza and soft drinks provided by Capital Times Kid's Fund

Bring an item for the church food pantry if you can

Please RSVP (phone or e-mail) by Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2011 so I know who is coming, what game gear/TV setups you can bring and how many pizzas we need. We should have a fairly good turnout, since this has been one of our most popular activities in past years. This church is the same place we have had it (except for last year when the church was under construction) and where the autism parent support group usually meets. The Midvale Community Lutheran Church is truly a community church. There are so many meetings of different kinds held here, that the parking lot is often full every night of the week. The parking lot is in back or you can park on the street.

Our video game night activity will be in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the West wing under the main church. As you face the building from the parking lot, the door to this basement room is labeled Fellowship Hall/Kitchen. There is a map attached below. Call if you need more detailed directions and to discuss which game gear you'll be bringing. Cost is FREE and includes all the pizza and soda you can eat! Thanks to our Capital Time's Kid's Fund Grant for the food! Parents are welcome to stay but don't have to if your family member can manage on their own. I'll need some help with cleanup. We must leave the building by 9:00.

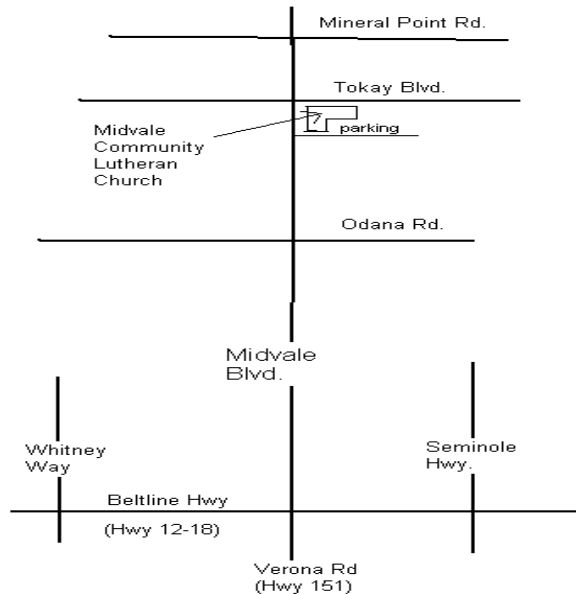
We are bringing 2 projectors and Matt Ward's Nintendo 64 (with race games). I know this is old technology, but it still works. **I do need others to bring your complete TV/game setups. The TV's and extension cords are the most critical since TV's are hard to lug around and lots of things need to be plugged in. If you can bring a "splitter" for extension cords, that helps too. Even if you can't bring a TV/game setup, bring any extra controllers you have!** With multiple controllers, up to 4 can play Nintendo 64 at once. Note that a game machine without a TV is not usable, so either bring the whole thing or just your extra controllers. The emphasis here is on fun with multiple players, so try to bring games that more than one can play. **Please don't bring really violent games or other inappropriate things.** If anyone has a Play Station or an X-box, that would be great if you could bring it with a TV. Please come even if you have no game gear to bring. With multiple player setups we should do fine. Even if we don't have enough, we'll take turns. Even if you don't like to play you can come to watch and eat pizza. If you have a dance-dance revolution game, be sure to bring the mat and cables.

I'll arrange for the pizza (from Pizza Hut) to be delivered between 7 and 7:30. Soft drinks will be provided. **Please bring a non-perishable food item to donate to the church pantry as a way of saying "Thank You"** to Midvale Community Lutheran for letting us use their building.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- There will be a noise level with some yelling (There will be a "quiet room" area to get away).
- Bring your food pantry item(s)
- Bring your TV/game gear setup
- Bring any extra game controllers you have even if you don't bring a full setup.
- **Bring extra extension cords** – the church has a power outlet problem.

Map to Church for Nov 19 video game night



Important Information:

1. Visit <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for other services and activities sponsored by the **Autism Society of Great Madison (ASGM)**. The 3rd Tuesday evening of the month is either a parent support group meeting at the Midvale Community Lutheran Church or a special presentation.
2. **The annual conference of the Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) will be May 3 - 5, 2012 at the Hotel Sierra, Green Bay.** The early bird registration deadline is Dec. 23, 2011. There will again be a special track of activities designed for those on the spectrum to learn information and meet others like themselves. ASW conferences have had as many as 900 attendees in the past. About 10% of them are people on the spectrum.

You can find out more details and the early bird registration form at <http://www.asw4autism.org/>

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- What:** Horse-drawn wagon rides at “Christmas in the Grove” with lunch afterwards plus a craft show
(We have a table where the AUsome Group members can sell your own craft items!)
- When:** Saturday, December 3rd, 2011, 11:00 am – 1:00pm (craft show is from 10 - 3)
- Where:** Glacial Drumlin Middle School, 801 Damascus Tr, Cottage Grove (on Cottage Grove Rd. just west of Cottage Grove. See map below)
- Cost:** Free! Bring money for food and craft items

Our official activity will be the Horse-drawn wagon rides followed by lunch/snack with the school food vendors. Meet at the wagon ride boarding area at 11:00 so we can all ride together. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather. The wagon rides last about 20 minutes and wind through the back streets in the area. After the ride, we'll go into the school to warm up, look at the crafts and have something to eat.

There will also be interesting displays involving trained rescue dogs, fire engines, the Cottage Grove Historical Society and other stuff.

In addition, the organizers of “Christmas in the Grove” craft show have donated a booth space to our group to sell anything we would like and publicize the cause of autism awareness. It is also our chance to show off the creative talents of people on the autism spectrum. For example, Matt Ward has some Origami he has made to show and sell.

The artworking support staff from [WORC agency](#) have volunteered to organize the craft table sales and exhibit since they support Matt Ward and several other AUsome members who do art work. **If you are interested in showing your art work, please contact Amy Elmer at WORC at 221`-2102 x107 or elmer994@gmail.com by Monday, November 28, 2011 to work out the details.**

Rules for AUsome members selling items at the craft show:

1. Only AUsome members can submit items for the craft sale (not parents/siblings, but they can help you make something)
2. Space is limited. If we don't have enough room for all who want to display items, it will be first contact – first served.
3. You must put a price tag with your name on your items (Amy can answer questions about labeling and pricing.) It is helpful if you have a list of your items to give to Amy to help her keep track of your things.
4. You can bring your items to Amy before the show or bring them to the outing. Remember the craft show starts at 10 am so you should have your items there by 9:30
5. All we have for display purposes are several tables. Be sure to think about how your items should be displayed in a small space. You will need to provide any display materials. Some of Matt's origami will be hung on a small Christmas tree that we will bring.
6. Remember that there is no guarantee that anyone will sell anything, so don't be disappointed if your items don't sell. As a general rule, small, inexpensive items sell better than larger items.
7. If you don't want to stay around until the end (we can have the craft booth open until 3:00), you can take your items (and any money you've earned) home when the activity is over. If you want to leave your items until 3:00, arrange with Amy to pick up any money or items later.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- It might get kind of crowded. As always, feel free to leave if necessary.
- The food will be in a large, open lunch room area. Other parts of the craft show will be in the gymnasium. These large areas may be "echoey".
- **Bring your craft items to sell and any materials you need to display your items.**
- There will be dogs inside the building
- There might be a fire engine siren.
- Bring money for food and if you think you'd like to purchase craft items.



Map to Cottage Grove

What Happened on AUsome's Last Outings?

UW Institutes for Discovery (NewBuilding) – First Saturday of the Month Science Program – Antarctica Presentation and Town Center Tour; Saturday, September 3, 2011; 10:00 A.M.–Noon

This was so VERY interesting! A big thanks to Troy Dassler of the UW Institutes for Discovery for helping me set up this activity. We heard from 3 different presenters covering 3 different topics about Antarctica (Weather, Sampling sea water, and the under-ice Neutrino detector telescope). This presentation was open to the public, and by the time it started there was standing room only. It was also supposed to be a day for kids, but by the time half of the presentations were over, the kids had mostly disappeared out into the exhibit areas because the discussions were kind of over the kids' heads.

In the exhibit areas, you could practice using a hand-drill to drill holes in a chunk of ice as big as a sofa; you could try on clothing worn in the extreme cold of Antarctica; you could handle a bowl full of penguin feathers; you could blow soap bubbles into a fish tank full of dry ice (the bubbles sink and don't pop for a long time); you could look at posters of information about Antarctica; you could inspect a 3-D printer. You could even sign a red UW shower curtain that will be sent to Antarctica as an emissary from the day's activities.

But all the adults (and the 3 AUsome folks) were really into the presentations. I learned a lot of interesting things. The weather guy showed pictures of the weather stations used in Antarctica. Some things we learned included:

- The lowest recorded temperature was -129 degrees Fahrenheit
- The fastest wind speed was 137 MPH during a storm
- The Antarctic summer is warmer than the Wisconsin Winter
- McMurdo Station is the biggest settlement and has its own power station and snow school with survival training
- The weather stations get buried by snow all the time and have to be dug out and set back in the "weather".
- Their longest "day" lasts 4 months and so does their longest night.

The guy who talked about water temperature sampling was a teacher from Monona Grove High School – Juan Botella. He spent several weeks on an ice-breaker ship with 55 other people sailing half way around the edge of Antarctica sampling sea water for temperature, chemical composition, salt content and other things that would give a picture of how the sea is changing. They lowered a "rosette" of plastic tubes as big as a Volkswagen into the water every 4 hours (day and night) and then analyzed the water they "captured". It was very physical, exhausting

(and cold) work. But it was a great adventure.

I thought the Ice Cube Neutrino Telescope described by Mark Krasberg was the most interesting. There are 5000 light sensors buried a mile and a half under the Antarctic ice in a cube formation that's as big as 3 Empire State Buildings on each side. It is designed to detect Neutinos –very energetic particles that fly all the way through the earth and seldom interact with anything. The telescope array is pointed at the inside of the earth because it is more likely to see the flash of light that occurs when a neutrino does hit an atomic nucleus. Each light sensor is sunk in a hole in the ice drilled with a hot water drill. The hole has to be drilled and the sensor placed in less than 24 hours or the hole will freeze solid again. Those sensors will stay there in the ice until Antarctica melts – maybe millions of years. All the presenters had great pictures and power point slides to illustrate everything.

After the presentations we got a private tour of the “Town Center” and one of the private teaching labs of this exciting new UW building. There was something called “Fibanachi Walls” (that's probably spelled wrong). That had indoor waterfalls that interacted with special soft auditory chimes when you stood in the right place in front of it. There was the indoor Mesozoic Garden of living plant species from millions of years ago. There was the Rennebohm Dairy bar that sells ice cream during the week. It's called that because the original Rennebohm Drug store used to be on that site. There were public computers available in a grove of trees. But the things I liked best were the interactive media walls. Pictures are projected on the walls and a camera captures when someone touches the wall. So the wall becomes a giant touch pad screen. In one of these sites you can read through more details about the building and what research is done there. In another one you could interact with moving graphics like gas jets, a waving wheat field and blood cells in a vein. It was all very “high tech” and interesting.

After we saw all this stuff, we went over to the Aldo Leopold Café for a light lunch.

**A*Mazing Days for Autism – night tour of the corn maze with a bonfire and S'mores.
October 2, 2010 (Saturday), 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

I was out of town on vacation for this activity. A huge thanks to my daughter, Liz, and her friends for running this activity for me. I also appreciate all the help from Lori Wing with moral support and transportation. Also a big thanks to Angie Treinen for helping me set this up. Although the actual AUsome outing was in the evening, we had a full range of activities all day. I heard a rumor that Richard won 8(!) pumpkins this year in the pumpkin sling shot. That's got to be some kind of a record.

The weather for the evening AUsome activity was perfect for a spooky night trip through the corn maze. It wasn't too cold and it didn't rain. My daughter told me the whole thing went well and there were a number of people at the bonfire.

The Treinens really have the maze experience well organized. They give you a maze map, but it is in the form of an 8 piece puzzle and you only get the first piece to start. You have to find a mail box in the first part of the maze with the second piece of the puzzle so you can find the 2nd mail box and the 3rd piece of the puzzle, etc. Besides finding the maze puzzle pieces, there are 8 posts with paper punches scattered around the maze. If you find one, you put the punch on your map. If you get 4 punches, you get a prize. If you find all 8 punches, you get a bigger prize. There is also a reward of a piece of candy if you don't open your “cheaters” map that they give you in case of emergency. Everyone always asks what happens if they get lost. The maze workers always reply that they always find everyone when they harvest the corn in November! That always gets a laugh.

They ate half a bag of giant marshmallows plus some regular ones, a double box of graham crackers and 6 packages of chocolate bars. It was a stellar night.

AUSome Social Group Philosophy and Ground Rules

Group Sponsor:

The AUSome Social Group is sponsored by the Autism Society of Greater Madison (ASGM). It is possible that ASGM membership may be required in the future as the AUSome group requires more resources.

See the ASGM website at <http://www.autismmadison.org/> for membership information and a link to the AUSome Group web pages <http://autismmadison.org/ausome-social-group/> . You can get more information about the Madison Chapter (including an extensive autism resource list), by calling (608) 213-8519, emailing autismmadison@gmail.com or sending a note to ASGM, 2935 Fish Hatchery Rd #101, Madison, WI 53711 if you don't have web access. 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 Autism Society, you will not get state and local mailings). ASGM offers such educational and social opportunities as our Autism 101 workshops, Parent support groups, Pump It Up! Birthday parties, golf outings, orchard trips and AUSome teen and adult groups.

AUSome 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://autismmadison.org/category/ausome-social-group-newsletters/>

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 Amerricka (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 47th 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 Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com 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.