

The AUsome Social Group

Teen/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:** 47th Annual Madfest Juggling Show at Wisconsin Union Theater
When: January 14, 2012 (Saturday) 7:00-9:30 P.M. (come between 6:30 –6:45)
Where: Wisconsin Union Theater - 800 Langdon Street - Behind the Memorial Union on the UW Campus at the corner of Park Street and Langdon Street (parking's scarce – come early)
Cost: 2 Free tickets per AUsome member (Thanks to Capital Times Kid's Fund Grant) – additional tickets are \$12

The Best Juggling Show in town! There is a juggling convention in Madison every January. The culmination of that convention is always a Saturday night juggling show where the best jugglers at the convention show what they can do. I like to call it an "object manipulation show" because they don't just juggle. They do yoyos, unicycles, jump ropes and many other things that seem to defy the laws of physics. The AUsome Group has gone to this every year since 1999. It is a hoot! There's lots of creativity, humor and slapstick in the show and the juggling talent is really good.

It's always freezing cold and parking is a challenge, but it's worth it! If you want to read more about the show at a creative and outrageous web site, see <http://www.madjugglers.com/madfest/>.

I will purchase all the tickets in advance (it's cheaper) for all of you who told me you were coming. I will give you all your tickets in the lobby the night of the show. If you ordered tickets and can't make it, let me know ASAP so I can save our grant money. If you can't remember if you ordered tickets (or how many), either call my home 222-4378 or send me an email at AUsomeSocialGroupMadison@gmail.com or Nancy.L.Alar@gmail.com.

The cost this year (\$12/person) is covered by our Capital Times Kid's Fund Grant (Yea!) for each AUsome member and one guest. **If you need additional tickets for other family members, mail me a check for \$12 for each extra ticket. Make the check out to Nancy Alar and mail it to Nancy Alar, 3802 Gala Way, Cottage Grove, WI 53527.** I know this is late, but I need the money no later than Thursday, January 12th. It might be possible for you to buy extra tickets from the box office the night of the show, but then they cost \$15. The show has sold out in many past years. Not sure if they will sell out this year. PLEASE let me know ASAP if you can't make it at the last minute so I can have an accurate seating count. Last year I had some tickets that I had to scramble to resell because some people didn't show up.

Please meet me in the lobby between 6:30 and 6:45 to pick up your tickets! The entrance to the theater is behind the Memorial Union right where Park Street ends at the Lake. The lobby is sort of crescent shaped with windows all along the side facing the lake. I'll be waiting for you with the tickets right in front of the windows. Look for the AUsome Social Group sign.

I get quite a big response to this outing (we had as many as 100 people signed up). This year's show coordinator will again be Mark Hayward (The guy with the mousetraps, blowgun and marshmallows in past years). As before, they are setting aside a special section for us so we can all sit together. We are the only group who gets special seating. All other audience members are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. We will be sitting in a reserved section in the center of the right hand side on the ground floor. This is the section closest to the exit ramp on the right. This will make it easy for you to get out if you need to. Don't worry if you have to leave early. Someone has to leave early almost every year.

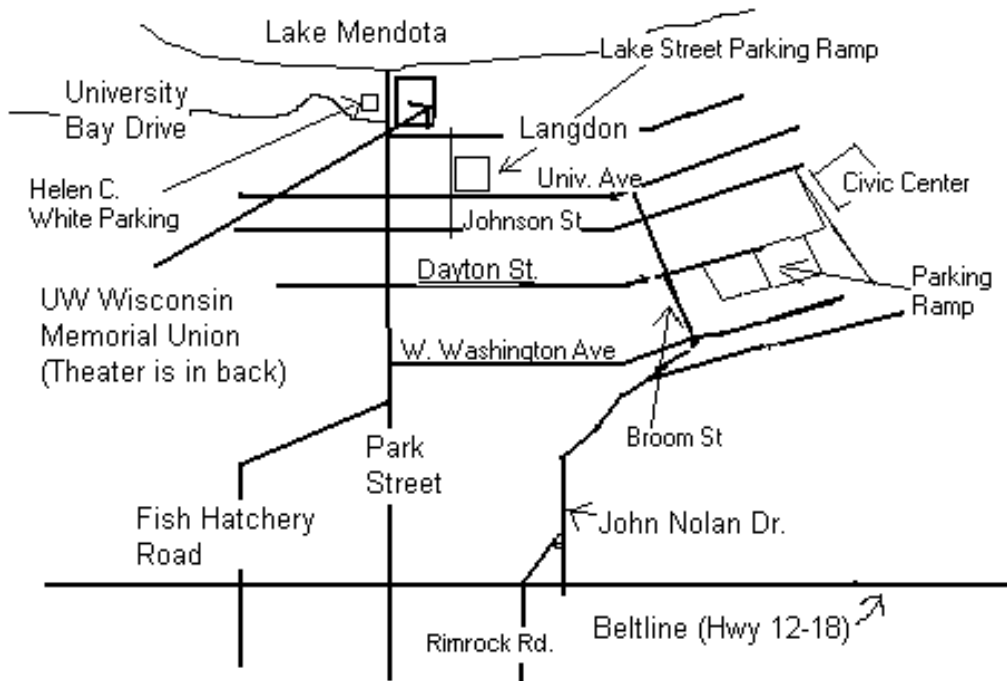
Note: The bathrooms are downstairs.

Plan to show up early if possible because **parking is a real problem on the UW campus**, and it is quite crowded. The best place to park is in the Lake Street Ramp, which is about 3 blocks from the Theater (See map below) or the Helen C. Wright underground lot across from the theater. We are not going anywhere as a group before or after because the show lasts so long. There will be soda available in the lobby and food in the Rathskeller part of the union during the 20 to 30 minute intermission. Plan to bring some extra money if you want to buy soda or other treats or a juggling show T-shirt.

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ The show is rather long and the theater is crowded.
- ☺ There also are lots of noisy people in the audience (we will be some of them!).
- ☺ Feel free to leave early if it gets to be too much.
- ☺ There may be balloons in the crowd and/or in the show.
- ☺ There is a 20 to 30 minute intermission in the middle, but the lines for the bathroom are long.
- ☺ Be sure to send extra ticket money so I have it by Jan. 12th if you need more than the 2 free tickets (\$12 each).

Map to the Wisconsin Union Theater (Location of January Juggling Show).



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What: Tour the new Madison Children's Museum (It's not just for kids!)
When: **Wednesday, February 1, 2012, 6:30 – 8:00pm.** (Free Pizza provided at 7:30 in the museum lunch area)
Where: Madison Children's Museum, 100 N. Hamilton St. (This is at the north east corner of the square in Madison - see parking suggestions below)
Cost: Free! This is a free event, Our AUsome Grant will be providing the pizza. Please RSVP if you are coming so I know how much pizza to order

Note that this activity is on a Wednesday evening. The first Wednesday evening of the month is "Twilight Wednesday", the only time that admission to the Children's Museum is free. A big THANKS to Erin Hoag and Angela Johnson at the Children's Museum for helping me set up this outing. You can learn more about the museum and its program at <http://www.madisonchildrensmuseum.org/>

Come explore this interesting museum with us!! This place is not just for children. My daughter, Liz, and I went to the monthly "Adult Swim Night" at the museum in December and we had a wonderful time. We were there for 2 hours and still didn't have time to check out all the interesting things. For example: they have the coolest interactive gear assemblies and marble runs I have ever seen; They have an incredible climbing structure that was too complex for me to attempt (I'm too old and stiff) and children under 6 are not allowed into. There's the "retro area" with an old working pinball machine. There's the "hamster wheel" that is built for 2 adults to run in together. There's also a large construction area with Lego's, blocks, giant tinker toys and many other construction activities. There's the dinosaur rib bridge, live animals (chickens, mice, fish, turtles, etc.), exhibits of all kinds and much more.

If you are into art, there is a hands-on art work area. The art theme for February is "texture" with a focus on the "Harlem Art Renaissance". The museum provides materials so you can work on your own collage art project to take home or contribute to group art works for the museum.

There is a snack area at the museum. This is served by Roman Candle Pizza. I will be ordering several pizzas for our group for delivery at 7:30. Let me know if you are coming so I know how much pizza to order (call 608-222-4378 or email AusomeSocialGroupMadison@gmail.com). You can also bring in food and drink and join us for a snack if you don't care for pizza.

Parking: If you can find a place to park on the street, that is free after 6pm. There are 2 parking lots associated with the museum. Both are kind of expensive (\$4), but convenient. The surface lot has an entrance on N. Hamilton St. The underground, covered lot (good if it is snowing) entrance is on E. Dayton Street. There are also municipal parking lots nearby. [Google map to museum](#)

Important Items and Sensory Issues:

- ☺ The museum is large and has multiple floors, you might find it confusing
- ☺ Allow time to find a place to park
- ☺ Dress appropriately for physical activity

What Happened at AUsome's Last Outings?

Video Game Night and Pizza at Midvale Lutheran Church

Saturday, November 19, 2011, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

As usual, this was a really great time!! We had it a little later than usual since I was out of town the first weekend of November. Since the church construction is now completely finished, we had the full kitchen availability and enjoyed the pizza from Pizza Hut. We had about 48 people attend and gaming systems galore.

Matt Ward challenged me to his new version of Tetris and (of course) blew me away. Some people bought and enjoyed board games as well as video games.

Those who were there as spectators enjoyed looking at all the AUsome scrap books of our past activities. A lot of family members and friends joined in the fun. Every one enjoyed the evening even after fighting hard fought video battles. A few people brought their Wii games along too. We made sure to give our athletes plenty of elbow room for their bowling arms.

We had about 10 TV's set up with game equipment of all kinds. (Thanks to all who brought TV/game setups and controllers!! It also was helpful that several people remembered to bring extension cords and power strips. I know it is a pain lugging that heavy stuff around, but we couldn't do it without you!). A special thanks to all the group members (especially Jeremy Gilomen) for their efforts on technical support. AUsome members should be proud of their skills with equipment.

AUsome now owns 2 (very old) surplus projection units to hook up to our video games instead of a TV! We'll use them until the bulbs burn out (a very expensive replacement proposition). These projectors are very useful because popular games can be projected on a screen or wall so others can watch.

We bought the pizzas this year at Pizza Hut on Mineral Point Rd. We ordered 18 large pizzas – 3 pepperoni, 3 cheese, 2 supreme (works), 2 veggie, 2 sausage/mushroom, 2 barbeque chicken, 2 ham + pineapple and 2 chicken ranch. We also had soda, carrots and Oreo cookies, and some other nice treats and munchies that people bought. Our goal is to make sure there are snacks for people with all kinds of food issues. We did have some pizza left but not much.

Another special thanks to the Capital Times Kid's Fund for buying the pizza, soda pop, cookies and other supplies and to all those who helped with the setup and cleanup.

Horse-drawn wagon rides at "Christmas in the Grove" with lunch afterwards plus a craft show where the AUsome Group members could sell their own craft items;

Saturday, December 3rd, 2011, 11:00 am – 1:00pm

We were all hoping for a white Christmas in the Grove, but we got a wet Christmas instead. But the horses pulling the wagons don't mind being rained on, so the wagon rides went on as planned. The lines of people waiting for rides were a lot shorter than usual, though. Along with the rain there was a fairly brisk wind.

The wagon we rode in was a covered wagon with a canvas top and wooden wagon bed – looked just like the old west. The operators told me the wagon was made by Amish carpenters. The only modern concession was the car battery under the driver's seat that ran the turn signals and tail lights. We also got a good chuckle out of the specially rigged "horse poop catchers" under the back end of both horses that insured Cottage Grove street crews didn't have any extra messes to clean up.

We talked with the wagon owners about the 2 horses. They were very strong looking and are called Percherons. They liked pulling the wagons, but were ready to rest by the end of the day. Even though it was windy and rainy, we stayed surprisingly dry inside the wagon.

Even though it was raining outside, there were a lot of enthusiastic people inside buying things at the craft fair, looking at the various exhibits and eating chili and sandwiches and Christmas cookies. They even had vegetarian chili. The craft fair had lots of interesting things. I bought a pair of very warm mittens made out of pieces of

recycled old wool sweaters that had been felted for extra warmth. I assume we will eventually get some snow that I will need warm mittens to shovel.

A BIG THANKS to Melissa and Amy of [WORC](#) (Work Opportunities in Rural Communities) for handling all the work to set up the booth for the craft fair where our AUsome folks could sell their creations. We had AUsome members selling things like poetry, earrings and note cards. Matt sold some of his origami tree ornaments. I know at least one pair of earrings sold since I bought them.

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. There is also sensory friendly Saturday movies on the last Saturday of the month and quarterly birthday parties at “Pump-it-up”. There are also many other special events (such as A-Maze-ing Days at the Treinen Farm Corn Maze) through out the year.
2. **The annual conference of the Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW) will be May 3 - 5, 2012 at the Hotel Sierra, Green Bay.** There will again be a special track of activities designed for those on the spectrum to learn information and meet others like themselves. About 10% of ASW annual conference attendees are people on the spectrum.

You can find out more details and registration forms at <http://www.asw4autism.org/> . At this conference we try to make those on the spectrum as comfortable as we can. We will take sensory issues and dietary restrictions into consideration as much as possible. Those who want to participate in the youth and self-advocacy strands will need to register for the conference and pay the registration fee (the fee for those on the spectrum is only \$90!). This conference is a place where those on the spectrum are valued for their differences. You are the reason this conference exists.

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, horseback 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.