

# Psyc E-Newsletter

Winthrop University

April 2016



## AUTISM awareness

### Welcome to Autism Awareness Month

By Lindsay Gaynor

The CDC defines autism spectrum disorder as “a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges.” In 2013 the DSM-5 Diagnostic Manual created an umbrella diagnosis called autism spectrum disorder, including: autistic disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, and Asperger syndrome. Autism is one of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the United States. In the year 2000, 1 out of every 150 children had autism, but today the rates have increased to 1 in every 68 children. There are treatments available, but unfortunately there is no cure currently. Treatment may include: behavior and communication approaches, dietary approaches, medication, and complementary and alternative medicine.

### CDC Diagnostic Criteria

- Persistent problems in social communication and social interaction in multiple situations
- Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
- Symptoms must be present in the early developmental period
- Symptoms cause significant problems in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning
- These disturbances are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or global developmental delay

#### this issue

What is Autism	2
Internship Spotlight	3
Student Spotlight	4
Interview with Mother and Professional	5
Autism Statistics	6
Faculty Spotlight	7
What is ABA?	8
Dr. Temple Grandin	9
Want to Know More?	10



**APRIL IS**  
**NATIONAL AUTISM**  
**AWARENESS MONTH**



#AutismUniquelyYou

# AUTISM Awareness

## What is Autism? By Cody McKay

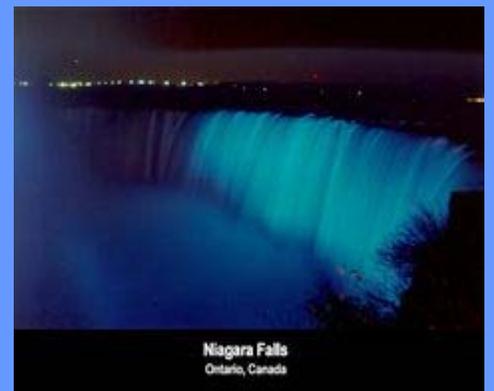
April is the time of year where blue becomes a common color for people to wear and organization and businesses to promote. With the help of social media outlets, autism awareness month continues to become more and more popular throughout the years with an immense number of people showing out to help raise awareness for such a special cause. The real question is, do people really know what they are raising awareness about? If somebody asked you what exactly autism spectrum disorder is, would you be able to give them correct information?

The most important factor to remember is that ASD is a group of complex and unique disorders of development in the brain. It is on a spectrum, which means the symptoms and levels of disability are very wide-ranged. Individuals can either be mildly or severely affected with this disorder depending on the severity of their symptoms.

Some symptoms of ASD include: restrictive or repetitive behaviors, problems with social communication, and problems with people skills. Many individuals who have this disorder tend to get upset when there is a change in their daily routines, offer little eye contact, and have a slow reaction time. Another behavior that was just recently discovered is the unusual use of facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice that don't normally match what is being said by the individual.

Sometimes we are quick to judge someone with ASD as unable to do anything for themselves and tending to learn slower than their peers in a classroom setting. This is true for just over half of people with ASD, but fortunately, those judgments and stereotypes are not always true. Some people who have ASD have shown some serious strength and abilities that people would not normally recognize. According to the CDC report, about 44% of people with ASD showed average or above average intellectual ability. Some of these people with higher functioning forms of ASD also have the ability to learn and recall information for lengthy periods of time, as they may have very strong auditory and/or visual skills.

If we as a Winthrop community use this time to help teach people factual information about this disorder, we can help break the stigma. Please join the Department of Psychology this month as we help raise awareness for this disorder. Have a happy Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month everybody!



# Internship Spotlight—Amber Stroud

By Ayana Crawford

Amber Stroud is a graduating senior in the department of psychology. She recently completed an internship in autism, and I got the chance to talk with her about her experiences.

## Where are/have you interned?

I interned at Chrysalis Autism Center right off Oakland Ave

## What did you do at your internship?

I was a Line Therapist and did ABA therapy with autistic children ages 3 to 7.

## Was it a positive experience? Why or why not?

Yes, it was a very positive experience. Seeing the children's progress was so uplifting and encouraging.

## What do you want to do as a career?

I want to be a family mental health nurse practitioner. Working mainly with adolescents.

## Do you feel as though your internship helped you with your future aspirations?

It definitely piqued my interest even more into mental health. I also could see how mental health is lacking severely in this country and want to help as many children as I can.



## Chrysalis Autism Center

Chrysalis Autism Center has been providing Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention (EIBI) to children with autism in Rock Hill, South Carolina since 2008. EIBI is based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, a research-proven method of treatment for children with autism.

Early Intervention is crucial towards developing young children with autism to their full potential. EIBI focuses on the "Learning to Learn" skills necessary for children to become successful participants in their families, community and educational environments. Our quality programs are both exciting and effective, emphasizing language, communication, imitation, play, social and self-help skills.

Our commitment to offer superior programs is our continued mission, giving children with autism, "Their Wings to Fly!"





# Student Spotlight—Lindsay Gaynor

By Ayana Crawford



Picture used with permission of parent

**Lindsay Gaynor celebrating with a client at Monkey Joe's on his last day of therapy.**

Lindsay Gaynor, a junior psychology major with a minor in business administration, has a heart and passion for people with ASD. During the summer, she works at the Project HOPE Foundation as a Line Therapist, also known as a Certified Behavior Technician, for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Lindsay is also our newsletter editor!

## **When did you start working as a Line Therapist?**

I began working as a Line Therapist the summer after my freshman year of college. Before that I was a volunteer at the Project HOPE Foundation.

## **What made you want to work as a Line Therapist?**

The Project HOPE Foundation began as an inclusion school with small classes that included both typically-developing students and students with autism. I went to the school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and it had a huge impact on me. I learned so much from my peers that I knew I always in some way wanted to work with children with autism. In 2008, when the foundation added Hope Reach, a clinical option for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy services, I began researching what it takes to begin in the field and the different levels of therapists they had.

## **What do you plan to do once you graduate from Winthrop?**

I plan to get my masters through the Project HOPE Foundation's program through the Florida Institute of Technology in Behavioral Analysis with the hopes of becoming a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst. Once I am certified, I would like to

help create therapeutic programs for children with autism and help children reach their fullest potential.

## **Have any of your clients made an impact on you?**

I think that every client I have had taught me something new about life and helped me appreciate each day. One experience that always comes to mind is a child who could only speak one or two words when I began with them. After a few months the child's language was improving. So much in fact that when I went to my last team meeting for them I walked in and without prompt or any prior teaching they said "I love, Lindsay!" This made all the hard work that goes into therapy worth it because it showed me that this child finally had a voice to speak to the world. Now when I visit this child, they have so much to say and even has a great sense of humor with many jokes to tell.

## **How does someone go about becoming a Line Therapist?**

You can become a Line Therapist with a high school diploma. The clinic will take care of the training, so all that you need to do is apply! There are multiple clinics located in Rock Hill and Charlotte, two being Chrysalis Autism Center and The Early Autism Project.

# Interview with Mother and Professional By Lindsay Gaynor

I had the pleasure of interviewing Lisa Lane, the mother of a 21 year old son with autism and co-founder of Project HOPE Foundation, a foundation located in Greenville, SC that provides a lifespan of services to the autism community. Her story is inspirational and all of her work has helped so many children and families in the area.

## What was your career before starting the Project Hope Foundation?

I was an attorney practicing environmental law. As an undergraduate, I majored in philosophy and then got a Master's in English before attending law school. Susan Sachs, the co-founder of Project HOPE Foundation, had a degree in education, with a career in social work and then sales. We have found that all of those experiences have been extremely helpful in nonprofit work!

## What gave you the idea to start your own foundation?

We started this nonprofit organization to provide an inclusion-based preschool, allowing children with autism to learn and play side-by-side with "typical" peers. At that time, the rate of autism was 1 in



2,500, and was relatively unknown in our area. The organization was born out of a need for services.

## Did you know about autism before your son was diagnosed?

I had some limited knowledge of autism. As a high school student, I had read a book about a child with autism. I had also had several conversations with a family member who was a school administrator serving one family with autism. However, nothing prepared me for the extremely disheartening information that I initially encountered when I started researching autism after his diagnosis.

## Were there services available locally when your son was diagnosed with autism?

At the time he was diagnosed, there were only about 20 Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy providers across the country. None were located in the state of South Carolina. I called every one of them when he was first diagnosed at the remarkably young age of 18 months, but initially every provide turned us down because he was "too young."

## If not, what did you have to do to provide your son with services?

I finally found a consultant in California who would work with us. Susan located someone from New York. We each flew in those consultants to provide workshops so that we could start therapy with our sons. We recruited and trained our own therapists, usually local college students. At that time, there were no funding sources established to support ABA therapy, which meant that we also had to raise money ourselves. One of the reasons we started Project HOPE Foundation with a preschool program was because we were unable to locate any programs that would accept children with autism.



# Interview with Mother and Professional (continued)



## What kind of services does Project Hope provide?

Over the years, the rate of autism has increased and the need for services is more urgent than ever. To meet this need, we have expanded Project HOPE Foundation to provide a lifespan of services, ranging from toddlers to young adults. Our range of programs serves the full autism spectrum, from those who are struggling to gain a basic communication system to those who are college students working to better understand the nuances of social interaction. We provide ABA therapy to over 150 children, serve about 80 students in a variety of classroom models, and work with about 20 adults to provide life skills, social opportunities, and employment. Through a collaborative project with Vested Partners, we are also using trained dogs in our programs. Knowing that autism impacts the entire family, we provide family support and trainings, meeting individually each month with every family in our therapy program. We also provide community workshops and presentations.



## If an undergraduate is interested in helping people with autism, how do you suggest they get involved?

Winthrop University has a wonderful expert in the field of autism, Dr. Debra Leach, who could guide you to local needs. Families often struggle to find babysitters for their children – and young teens and adults frequently need someone to be a buddy.

If you are interested in working in the field of autism in the Upstate (Greenville/Spartanburg/Anderson areas), Charleston, or Greenwood, please check out our website ([www.projecthopesc.org](http://www.projecthopesc.org)) and contact us!

**A**lways

**U**nique

**T**otally

**I**nteresting

**S**OMETIMES

**M**YSTERIOUS



- Autism now affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys.
- More than 3.5 million Americans have ASD.
- Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S
- Autism costs a family \$60,000 a year on average.
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases.
- Boys are nearly five times more likely than girls to have Autism.
- There is no medical detection or cure for ASD.
- Only 56% of students with autism finish high school.

## Newsletter Editorial Staff

Lindsay Gaynor, Student Editor

Ayana Crawford, Writer

Cody McKay, Writer

Dr. McKemy, Faculty Supervisor





## Faculty Spotlight—Dr. Alderman By Lindsay Gaynor



I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Alderman, a professor in the School Psychology Graduate Program at Winthrop. As a school psychologist, he has had experience working with students on the autism spectrum.

Dr. Alderman began as a special education teacher and worked in a center for students with severe emotional problems. At that time, children with autism were classified as severely emotionally disturbed (SED), and he found that applying the principles for children with SED was not effective for the children with autism. He said it was beneficial that later on autism was given its own diagnostic category.

As a result of his experience in this program, he worked for six years on an innovative, inclusive, integrative camp for twelve children, with and without autism, in a two-week residential camp. There were six counselors who helped integrate the children into the camp and worked one on one with them. Being with the children for 24 hours for two weeks was eye opening to Dr. Alderman because he began to realize what it was like to be a parent of a child with autism. He observed within the camp that not only did the children with autism benefit from the inclusion, but the typically-developing

children also benefited with knowledge, empathy, and the ability to teach appropriate social skills to their peers.

I asked Dr. Alderman to explain an inclusion class, and he said it is when students with special needs participate in a general education classroom alongside typically-developing peers. This provides the student with socialization and exposure. However, the effectiveness and level of inclusion depends on the functioning of the child with autism.

Dr. Alderman has observed benefits to both the students with autism and the typically-developing students in inclusive classrooms. The higher functioning students with autism began modeling appropriate behaviors, learned social skills, and received exposure to typical situations with facilitated growth that was beneficial later when leaving school and entering into the work world. The typically-developing students learned empathy, that peers can be different, to accept differences, understand, and include. Their interactions caused the most benefits.

Dr. Alderman suggests that students who are interested in helping children with autism should take Psyc 510: Behavioral Analysis and Behavior Change, an undergraduate course that gives an overview on Behavioral Analysis and how it can be applied in different settings. When Dr. Alderman teaches the course, he provides students with practical experience. Another option is to get further training on helping families to teach parents and focusing on identified behaviors with the children.



# What is Applied Behavior Analysis?



One of the most common treatment approaches for autism spectrum disorder is applied behavior analysis.

## What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

Many children with autism and related disorders exhibit unwanted behaviors, such as head-banging or slapping others. For parents and other caregivers, trying to reduce these behaviors can be difficult and frustrating. In fact, efforts at discouragement often end up making the behaviors more frequent.

One approach for dealing with these issues is applied behavior analysis, or ABA. One of the most widely accepted autism therapies,

32 out of the 50 states in the U.S. have laws that require health insurers to cover it.

ABA is based on the idea that people are more likely to repeat behaviors that are rewarded than behaviors that are not recognized or are ignored. Since the 1960s, researchers have recognized that ABA can help children with autism. ABA does this by helping them develop a number of skill sets while reducing the likelihood of their engaging in problematic behaviors. The technique is endorsed as a treatment for autism by the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the U.S. Surgeon General.

## How does Applied Behavior Analysis work?

In traditional ABA, a trained therapist spends 20 to 40 hours per week working one-on-one with a child. Often, though, a therapist will use a version of the therapy known as “modified ABA.” With modified ABA, the therapist spends 10 -15 hours per week with the child to allow the child time for other therapies such as speech and occupational therapy. All children with autism are unique and have specific learning needs. Consequently, the therapist will develop an applied behavior analysis program that is tailored to meet those needs.



The treatment begins with an assessment by the therapist. The purpose of the assessment is to determine which skills the child already possesses and where the child has deficits. The therapist next develops a program aimed at increasing the child's skills in many areas. The program will likely include goals related to the child's:

- Academic development
- Communication skills
- Social skills and overall interaction with the environment

After identifying the goals, the therapist creates a series of steps to help the child reach them. The ABA therapist can employ a number of different procedures to teach the child with autism a given skill.

Adapted from <http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/autism-therapies-aba-rdi-and-sensory-therapies>

**Important Information for APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS PROFESSIONALS**

**3 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW**  
About Earning a Degree in Applied Behavior Analysis

Over the past 40 years, several thousand published research studies have documented the effectiveness of ABA across a wide range of populations, interventions, settings, and behaviors.

**1**

Autism therapies include: Applied Behavior Analysis, Relationship Development Interventions, and Sensory Therapies.

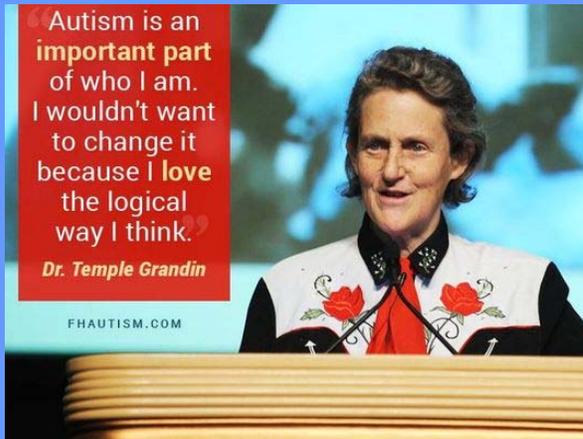
**2**

One of the 7 dimensions of applied behavior analysis is generality which is the idea that ABA interventions are designed from the outset to operate in new environments and continue after the formal treatments have ended.

**3**



# Dr. Temple Grandin



Dr. Grandin didn't talk until she was three and a half years old, communicating her frustration instead by screaming, peeping, and humming. In 1950, she was diagnosed with autism and her parents were told she should be institutionalized. She tells

her story of "groping her way from the far side of darkness" in her book *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*, a book which stunned the world because, until its publication, most professionals and parents assumed that an autism diagnosis was virtually a death sentence to achievement or productivity in life.

Dr. Grandin has become a prominent author and speaker on the subject of autism because "I have read enough to know that there are still many parents, and yes, professionals too, who believe that 'once autistic, always autistic.' This dictum has meant sad and sorry lives for many children diagnosed, as I was in early life, as autistic. To these people, it is incomprehensible that the characteristics of autism can be modified and controlled. However, I feel strongly that I am living proof that they can" (from *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*).

Even though she was considered "weird" in her young school years, she eventually found a mentor, who recognized her interests and abilities. Dr. Grandin later developed her talents into a successful career as a livestock-handling equipment designer, one of very few in the world. She has now

designed the facilities in which half the cattle are handled in the United States, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald's, Swift, and others.

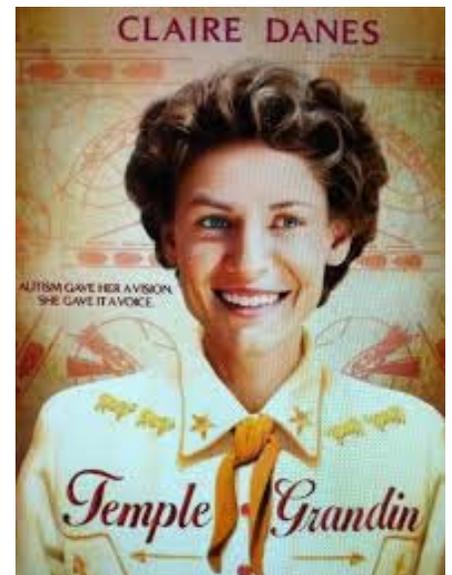
Temple Grandin, Ph.D., is now the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world. Dr. Grandin presently works as a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. She also speaks around the world on both autism and cattle handling.

From <http://www.templegrandin.com/>



## Temple Grandin The Movie

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society put on a cultural event that taught students about Autism Spectrum Disorder and showed the movie *Temple Grandin*. "Temple Grandin is all about a woman with autism who used her unique mind to change the world," they described. Before showing the movie Tina Vires, the Program Director for the Office of Disability Services at Winthrop, spoke about what autism was and her experience with her own children on the spectrum. At the end of the event Sara Tennant, a psychology senior, collected donations for her client with autism to receive a service dog.



**"Normal people have an incredible lack of empathy. They have good emotional empathy, but they don't have much empathy for the autistic kid who is screaming at the baseball game because he can't stand the sensory overload. Or the autistic kid having a meltdown in the school cafeteria because there's too much stimulation."**

**-Temple Grandin**



**Want to know more?**

## **Winthrop Courses**

**You can take courses here at Winthrop to learn more about autism.**

- Psyc 213 - Abnormal Psychology
- Psyc 512 - The Exceptional Child
- Psyc 520 - Child Psychopathology
- Sped 281 - Introduction to Special Education

**You can also take courses to learn more about behaviorism and learning theory, which are used in Applied Behavior Analysis.**

- Psyc 409 - Principles of Learning
- Psyc 510 - Behavior Analysis and Behavior Change

**And you can complete an internship in a place that serves people with autism spectrum disorder.**

- Psyc 463 - Academic Internship in Psychology

## **Rock Hill Autism Sites**

### **Early Autism Project**

2460 India Hook Road  
Suite 104 & 105  
Rock Hill SC 29732  
(803) 366-6250



### **Chrysalis Autism Center**

410 Oakland Avenue  
Suite 101  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Telephone: (803) 792-0771  
Fax: (803) 656-0764



## **Online Resources for Learning More about ASD**



**Autism Speaks** - <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>

**Autism Spectrum Disorder Fact Sheet** - [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism/detail\\_autism.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/autism/detail_autism.htm)

**Autism Society** - <http://www.autism-society.org/>

**Autism Spectrum Disorder** - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder/basics/definition/con-20021148>

**Temple Grandin's Experience with Autism Video** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wt1Y3ffoU>

**In My Language Video** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnylM1hI2jc>

**Carly Fleischmann Video** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMBzJleeOno>