



Aspirations Newsletter

November 2008

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ASPIRATIONS NEWS:

Welcome to our newest members of Aspirations! Group 15 is off to a great start. We hope to see all of the new members at our events. Feel free to send them an email to welcome them to the group!

Dylan Bias	breakdown91@hotmail.com
Jeffrey Dapkins	dapkins.1@osu.edu
Craig Klieman	craigk1979@aol.com
Kerry Megan Perdy	FightingSpirit60@aol.com
Adam Shands	shands.2@osu.edu
Brian Scharp	irishpride212000@yahoo.com
Emil Slobodnick	american@gmail.com
Laurel Smith	laurelrsmith@warppmail.com
Andy Willmore	salavan@sbcglobal.net

Dessert and Discussion:

The YATC members are hosting a seminar about college options. Representatives from OSU and CSCC will be present to talk about admissions, scholarships, disability services, and financial aid. Current and perspective students are welcome to attend as well as family members. Feel free to bring a dessert to share with the group! This event will take place on November 10th at 6:00 pm. It will be held in room 100 of the Northwood-High Building, 2231 North High St. Columbus, Ohio. If you have any questions you can call Alison at 292-9894 or email alisone@yatcoho.org.

ASPIRATIONS EVENTS:

NOVEMBER RECAP MEETING

Wednesday November 5th 6:30pm-8:30pm.

On Wednesday, November 5th we are having the Reunion at the Nisonger Center in room 235 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. We will have board games and discuss updates as usual. Do not miss this exciting recap and the chance to meet new Young Adult Transition Corps Members! Hope to see you there!

Pre OSU-Michigan Party

November 16th 2:00pm-4:00pm

WoA and Aspirations Guys will meet together at the Buckeye Hall of Fame Café. 1421 Olentangy River Rd. We will have a table to mingle and eat at, but we can also play the games at the café. Wear your OSU clothes... or Michigan clothes. Bring around \$20 for food and games.

Aspirations Book Club

The book club meets every Thursday at 8:00 pm at the Gateway Barnes and Noble. The book club is currently reading "The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-time".

WOA EVENTS

Pumpkin and Apple Picking

November 2nd, 2:00-4:30pm (may vary slightly depending on travel time). We will carpool to and from the farm from Graceland Shopping Center's parking lot. More details will be available closer to the event. It is recommended that you bring around \$20, but you probably won't use it all.

Movie Event

November 30th, 2:00pm-5:00pm

Marcus Cinema. 200 Hutchinson Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43235. We will choose a movie closer to this date for the exact time. This will be a great way to relax and catch up with friends after Thanksgiving. The cost will be \$6.50 for a movie ticket. Bring extra money (around \$5) if you'd like any snacks or drinks.

Study Break

December 7th, 2:00pm-4:00pm

Meet at the McDonalds at 2865 Olentangy River Rd. (near the corner of Ackerman and Olentangy). Finals for OSU and CSCC start on Monday of that week so this is a chance for everyone to relax and de-stress before finals. This is also a chance for everyone not in school to come hangout and help with the de-stressing process!

Zoo Lights and Ice Skating

December 20th, 6:00pm-8:00pm.

Celebrate the holiday season with your WoA friends at the Columbus Zoo. We're going to go to the zoo lights and if you choose to you can ice skate at their rink. If you are interested in carpooling, details will be sent out closer to this event's date. Bring \$10 for admission to the zoo and \$5 for parking. There will be additional costs for ice skating.

Karaoke at MoMo2

January 4th. 2:00pm-4:00pm

MoMo2 is located at 2885 Olentangy River Rd. Bring in the New Year singing... or at least listening. We will be in one of MoMo2's private group karaoke rooms that only WoA members can use to sing or listen. Bring between \$5 and \$10 depending on how many people come.

ASPIRATIONS GUYS EVENTS

Bonfire at the Harwood's House

November 1st, 7:30 pm

Bonfire at Joel Harwood's house. 4070 Jackson Pike Grove City, Ohio 43123. Phone number: 875-8767. Directions from OSU Campus area: Take 315 South to 71 South to the Stringtown Rd. exit. Turn left. Stringtown Rd. dead ends into 104. Turn right and then almost immediately turn left into the Harwood's driveway, just past the white fencing.

Please bring snacks and beverages to share with the group.

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

November 9th 1:30pm-4:00pm

The Columbus Zoo is located at 4850 Powell Rd. Powell, Oh. 43065. We will meet at the zoo entrance at 1:30 sharp. Dress warmly! Cost is \$10 for admission into the zoo and \$5 for parking. Bring additional money if you want to purchase food, beverages and/or gifts.

Holiday Party

December 6th Time to be announced

Patrick Meehan is hosting a holiday party at the Westgate Park Party House. The address is 455 South Westgate Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43204. More information will be available closer to the event.

Being Part of the Disabled Community Versus Being a Member of a Minority Group

By: Benzion Chinn

I attended the recent Autism Speaks Walk as a member of Aspirations. I assumed that the event would be a show of unity and support for autistics across the spectrum. The event was held at the Schottenstein Center, the

basketball arena for the Buckeyes, and over nine thousand people attended. I loved the whole atmosphere and being there with my friends from Aspirations. My joy at being at this event lasted up until the moment the first speaker started talking and went down from there. I had to sit in the stands and listen as a parade of people got up and spoke about autism, how it is an “epidemic,” and a “disease” that needed to be “cured.” Sitting in the crowd and listening to these speeches, I felt like I had been used and taken advantage of. This was not what I came for. Imagine a black person going to a civil rights rally only to find himself being called an N-word and hearing that his blackness was a disease that needed to be cured.

Believe me, I recognize the incredible difficulties that parent of low functioning autistic children must go through. For that matter I know that I was not an easy child for my parents to raise. I am sure my parents would have benefited from having someone to explain what was going on with me and to offer support. And parents of autistic children need all the help and support they can get. But that is the point; help and support is not a cure. Even in terms of support there are differences. What my parents needed was not a medical professional to make me “functional” or to act like a “normal” person. Their needs were not all that different from that of parents of gay children. They would have benefited from having a professional tell them that yes I was “different,” that this was not a bad thing, that it was not their “fault” that I was who I was and that there was nothing they could do to “fix” me. All they could do was accept me for who I was, to try to understand my alternative way of thinking and be the advocates and supporters that I needed. (All in all I think my parents did a pretty good job without any professional help.)

As someone with Asperger syndrome, I do not see myself as disabled in any fashion. On the contrary I thank God every day for giving me the gift of Asperger syndrome. I look at other people and I wonder how they live such dull neurotypical lives. My life may be lonely much of the time but it is certainly interesting. If you offered me a cure for my Asperger syndrome I would laugh at you and throw it in your face. More than that, though, the very notion that I would need to be “cured” is an insult; it implies that my way of life is somehow less than other's peoples. This is no different from those who would suggest that homosexuals should be “cured.”

Ultimately, there were different interests at stake at this Autism Speaks Walk. It was organized primarily by parents of low functioning autistic children. For them autism is a disability that needs to be cured. For me, and others with Asperger syndrome, autism is an alternative way of life. These interests directly conflict with each other; the mere existence and public visibility of each side harms the other. Having low functioning autistics in play is detrimental to me because it opens up the charge that I,

as an autistic, am disabled as well. Whether it is fair or not I am tainted by mere association. On the other hand, while I may be useful as an advocate for autism, I present a tremendous inconvenience for those dealing with low functioning autism. I take away from the narrative of autism as a disability. No one is going to come away from meeting me overwhelmed with pity at the horrible state of those living with autism. Furthermore the fact that I am as functional as I am raises an implicit challenge to those less fortunate than me. If I could succeed what does it say about those who do not? This may not be fair but it taints them with failure.

I have Asperger syndrome and I am proud of it. My way of life is equally legitimate to that of other people. I will continue to fight for myself and for others with Asperger syndrome so that we should be able to have our stake in our multicultural society.

For more information about Aspirations please visit our website at
<http://aspirationsohio.org/>
or email alisone@yatcoho.org