

# AuSM 2021 Summer Recreation Catalog

including  
AuSM's Guide to  
Sensory-Friendly  
Minnesota 2021  
3rd Edition



**ausm**  
autism society of minnesota

[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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# Building opportunities to keep our community connected to AuSM and to each other



Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, AuSM continues to be dedicated to creatively bringing you the information, resources, and connections you need to thrive. We delayed the release of our summer schedule in order to craft offerings that prioritize safety and fun.

On these pages, you'll find a summer line up of both virtual and in-person activities designed to meet the needs of youth and adults with autism, and to match your personal comfort level for interaction.

For activities that will take place in person, AuSM will apply a personal safety plan that includes social distancing, disinfecting, and proper health practices while still engaging participants with instructors and each other.

In this our 50th year, we celebrate individuals with autism by continuing to offer a welcoming place to learn, access services, and develop skills for navigating emotions, information, and life. Keep connected with AuSM and this amazing community by joining us for an activity, camp, or class!

*AuSM appreciates the support of its education catalog advertisers. AuSM cannot endorse any commercial products, processes, or services. Special thanks to Allegra Downtown St. Paul, the official print sponsor of the AuSM 2021 Summer Recreation Catalog.*

## Thank you, AuSM Premier Partners!

Join these companies in making a difference in the lives of individuals touched by autism in Minnesota.



If you are interested in becoming an AuSM Premier Partner, please contact Kelly Thomalla at 651.647.1083 ext. 25 or e-mail [kthomalla@ausm.org](mailto:kthomalla@ausm.org).





# Improving lives through personalized homecare



Accra helps families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder that need support in their homes. We are one of the largest providers of homecare services in Minnesota, proudly serving more than 9,000 clients across the state. Our mission is to improve lives by providing individualized homecare services and support to people living at home. Our person-centered philosophy focuses on treating each person as a unique individual.

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- Senior Assisted Living

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# SPEND YOUR SUMMER AT MINNESOTA INDEPENDENCE COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY (MICC).

Learn Skills. Experience Life.

**Summer Session 1: June 21–25 | Ages 18–23**

**Summer Session 2: July 12–16 | Ages 16–18**

Our **Summer Program**, consists of two one-week day program sessions to choose from and is designed for young adults ages 16–23. We seek to provide our participants with a taste of independence supported by our instructors and staff. Our experienced and diverse staff come from a variety of backgrounds; supporting health and wellness, social skills, and vocational experience. We work alongside our participants on the autism spectrum and with learning differences to:

- Create lasting friendships.
- Explore a variety of careers through industry tours, speaking to professionals, and hands-on learning.
- Gain and practice social skills and social engagement.
- Be introduced to basic independent living skills including cooking.
- Practice general self and community safety skills.

To learn more about our Summer Program, admissions requirements, or to apply visit, [miccommunity.org/summer](http://miccommunity.org/summer)

Contact us at **612.876.9409** or [admissions@miccommunity.org](mailto:admissions@miccommunity.org).



MINNESOTA  
INDEPENDENCE  
COLLEGE &  
COMMUNITY  
**MICC**  
Learn Skills. Experience Life.

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Our therapists can help you overcome challenges, improve daily functioning, and achieve a more balanced lifestyle. AuSM Membership includes reduced rates for AuSM programs and gives you access to resources and services to help you accomplish your goals.

## AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota *page 33-47*

Opportunities for families and individuals with autism to come together and enjoy fun activities in welcoming environments, both in-person and virtual.

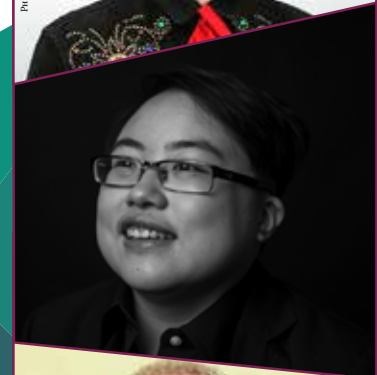
## AuSM Education Tips

- Register for AuSM education programs online at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org). Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) with registration questions. Classes have a maximum enrollment. Register early to ensure placement.
- Check with your county case manager to see if your selected AuSM education program can be paid for under the Brain Injury (BI); Community Alternative Care (CAC); Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI); or Developmental Disability (DD) waiver.
- Schedules and instructors are subject to change. Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) for current information.
- If a class is canceled or postponed, AuSM will notify you via phone or e-mail and will post on [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).
- Cancellation by registrant: Refunds less a \$25 processing fee will be assessed for cancellations received in writing to [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) seven business days prior to the start of the first class in the session. Following this date, no refunds will be given. Requests for transfer of registration to another individual or program will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Cancellation by program organizer: AuSM reserves the right to cancel a class due to low registration or other circumstances that make the class non-viable. If AuSM cancels a class, registrants will be offered a full refund. If the class is postponed, registrants will have the option to either receive a full refund or transfer registration to the same class at the new, future date.
- AuSM wants to make its programs available to as many as possible. Scholarships are available for those who qualify. Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) and click on the Resources section to learn more.



# VIRTUAL AUTISM CONFERENCE

April 21-24, 2021



Register today  
[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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autism society of minnesota

[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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support that's  
frustration free.**

### **Ready to discover self-direction?**

With self-direction, you can choose to stay in your home *and* choose who supports you, including friends or family members that you love and trust.

### **The choice is yours**

Ready for support that matches your life? Learn how Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) and the Consumer Support Grant (CSG) can work for you.

Bringing CDCS or CSG to life takes some work—but GT Independence is here to make it easy.



### **Want to know more?**

**P:** 651.247.7107

**E:** [jdrganc@gtindependence.com](mailto:jdrganc@gtindependence.com)

# Summer Recreation



AuSM will offer four sessions of morning and afternoon recreation programs that will meet in person at a variety of community venues once per week for five weeks. Programming will engage participants in nature activities, museum and zoo visits, and other activities to foster learning, friendships, and fun.

AuSM’s summer recreation sessions offer low-stress, accepting environments that promote learning and growth while celebrating neurodiversity. AuSM programs are conducive to youth and adults who fall within the wide range of the autism spectrum. Programs are staffed at a 1:4 staff-to-participant ratio.

If an individual requires more support than 1:4 staffing provides, the individual may bring a Direct Support Professional (DSP). The DSP will be responsible for supporting the individual with communication, behavior, and daily living skills. Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) for more information.

## Registration

AuSM wants to make its programs accessible to as many as possible; scholarships are available for those who qualify and some classes are waiver-eligible. Visit the Resources section on AuSM’s website to learn more. See page 6 for AuSM’s cancellation policy. Activities have limited capacity; register early to ensure your placement.

Call 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) with questions.

**Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).**



# for Youth and Adults

## Youth and Young Adult Summer Recreation Session Notes

- In order to make these programs accessible to as many community members as possible, individuals may register for only one session from March 1-31. On April 1, we will open remaining available spots for multi-session registration.
- Sessions are limited to 12 participants.
- Locations are subject to change. Admission/activity fees are included in the registration fee.
- Drop off and pick up are at locations indicated on each date.
- Participants will be asked to complete a COVID-19 waiver as part of the registration process, and a personal safety plan will include social distancing, disinfecting, and proper health practices while still engaging participants with instructors and each other.

### Summer Recreation Session 1

June 16, 2021: Silverwood Park  
June 23, 2021: Bakken Museum  
June 30, 2021: Minnesota Zoo  
July 7, 2021: Minneapolis Institute of Art  
July 14, 2021: Elm Creek Park Reserve

**Morning 9-11:30 a.m., Ages 12-17**

**Afternoon 12:30-3 p.m., Ages 16-24**

#### Cost

Member: \$275  
Non-Member: \$300

### Summer Recreation Session 2

June 17, 2021: Silverwood Park  
June 24, 2021: Walker Art Center  
July 1, 2021: Como Park Zoo & Conservatory  
July 8, 2021: Minnesota History Center  
July 15, 2021: Wood Lake Nature Center

**Morning 9-11:30 a.m., Ages 16-24**

**Afternoon 12:30-3 p.m., Ages 12-17**

#### Cost

Member: \$275  
Non-Member: \$300

### Summer Recreation Session 3

July 21, 2021: Silverwood Park  
July 28, 2021: Science Museum of Minnesota  
Aug. 4, 2021: Minnesota Zoo  
Aug. 11, 2021: Minneapolis Institute of Art  
Aug. 18, 2021: Long Lake Regional Park

**Morning 9-11:30 a.m., Ages 12-17**

**Afternoon 12:30-3 p.m., Ages 16-24**

#### Cost

Member: \$275  
Non-Member: \$300

### Summer Recreation Session 4

July 22, 2021: Silverwood Park  
July 29, 2021: Mill City Museum  
Aug. 5, 2021: Como Park Zoo & Conservatory  
Aug. 12, 2021: Walker Art Center  
Aug. 19, 2021: Wood Lake Nature Center

**Morning 9-11:30 a.m., Ages 16-24**

**Afternoon 12:30-3 p.m., Ages 12-17**

#### Cost

Member: \$275  
Non-Member: \$300







# Improv Skills

## Ages 14-26

Have fun while learning how to respond to the unexpected, engage in reciprocal interactions, and support fellow participants in keeping a scene moving forward. Advanced participants must be pre-approved by the instructor. [Register at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

### SPRING – Saturdays

**Advanced: 12:30-2 p.m.**

**Beginner: 2:30-4 p.m.**

April 10, 17, 24, and May 1, 8, 15, 2021

### Cost Per Session

AuSM Member: \$250

Non-Member: \$295

### SUMMER – Consecutive Days

**Advanced Class: 3:30-5:30 p.m.**

**Beginner Class: 1-3 p.m.**

July 5-9, 2021

### Location

VIRTUAL



# AuSM On the Job

## Ages 14-26

Designed to provide workplace readiness training, this eight-session program will include small group instruction and employment-focused experiential learning opportunities. Applications will open March 1. This program will be offered FREE of charge thanks to a Minnesota State – Career & Technical Education grant. Program participants will be selected via lottery process and notified of their placement in the class one week prior to the start date. [Apply at www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

### SPRING – Thursdays and Saturdays

April 8, 15, 17, 29, and May 6, 13, 15, 2021

from 6:30-8 p.m. on Thursdays and 1-2:30 p.m. on Saturdays

### Location

VIRTUAL





# Music and Art

## Ages 6-17

Work together to create interactive art exhibits using different creative arts mediums. Rotations include exhibit design, music, movement, and visual art. Each rotation is led by a teaching artist or therapist with extensive experience working with youth of all ages and ability levels. Exhibits will be open from 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. on the last day of each session.

**Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).**

### SUMMER SESSION 1 – Consecutive Days **Location**

June 21-25, 2021 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Toneworks Music Therapy  
5600 Lincoln Dr., #280  
Minneapolis, MN 55436

### SUMMER SESSION 2 – Consecutive Days

July 19-23, 2021 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

### **Cost per Session**

AuSM Member: \$250  
Non-Member: \$275



# Nature Center

## Ages 13-18

### Outdoor Adventure Skills for Teens on the Autism Spectrum

Explore the forest, pond and prairie. Build a survival shelter with other campers, start a campfire using different techniques and make a s'more. Meet animal ambassadors and gain skills to navigate and overcome obstacles in the forest. Make friends and practice communicating your needs during safe, fun, off-trail adventures. **Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).**

Registration Code: #5LNC5215

Registration opens through Three Rivers Park District on March 24, 2021.

### SUMMER – Consecutive Days

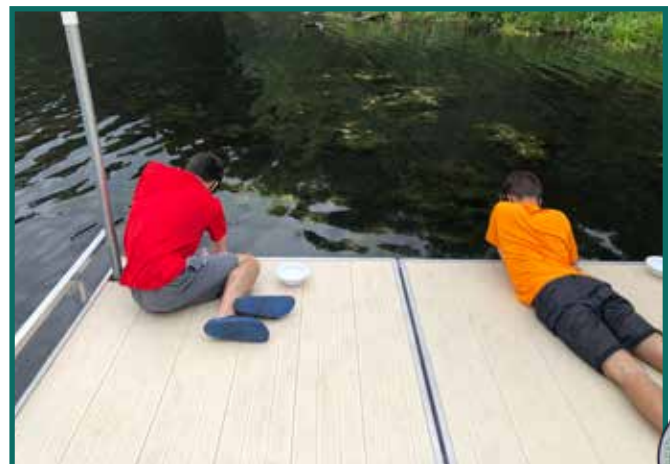
July 12-15, 2021 from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

### **Location**

Lowry Nature Center  
7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria, MN 55386

### **Cost**

\$100



# Duluth Opportunities

## Explore Duluth

### Ages 14-26

Explore Duluth and have fun while safely participating in team-building adventures. Participants must have their own transportation to and from each site. Locations are subject to change and will be updated on [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org). **Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).**

### SUMMER – Sundays

July 11, 18, 25, and Aug. 1, 8, 2021 from 1-3 p.m.

### Activities

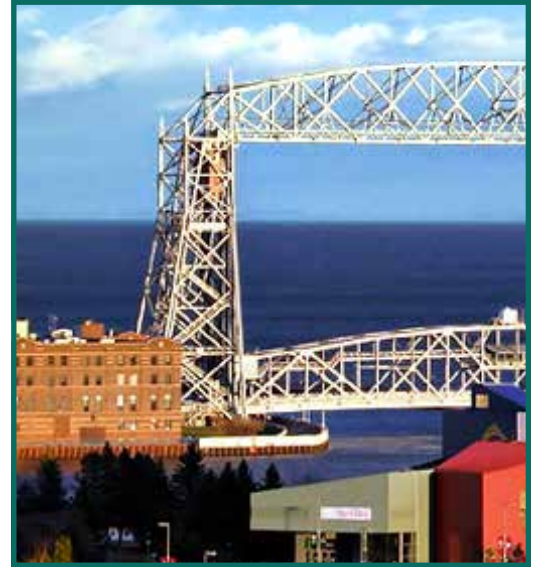
July 11: Lester Park	Aug. 1: Canal Park
July 18: Great Lakes Aquarium	Aug. 8: Lester Park
July 25: Lester Park: Interest Groups	

### Location

Drop off and pick up are at weekly locations.

### Cost

AuSM Member: \$100  
 Non-Member: \$125



## Zookeeper Camp for Youth with Autism

### Ages 8-12

At the Lake Superior Zoo, learn what it's like to be a zookeeper by preparing animal meals, making enrichments, cleaning exhibits, observing animal training, and more.

**Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).**

### SUMMER – Consecutive Days

July 19, 2021 from 9-10 a.m. Orientation  
 with Parent/Guardian  
 July 20-23, 2021 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

### Location

Lake Superior Zoo  
 7210 Fremont St., Duluth, MN 55807

### Cost

\$115 (includes T-shirt)







# YOU belong HERE.

Discover our services for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder available via telehealth, in homes, community settings and our Minnetonka and Minneapolis locations.

## **Autism Day Treatment**

(Preschool and School Age) | Ages 2-10

**Autism Support Services** | Ages 2-26

**Occupational Therapy** | Ages 1-12

**Speech Therapy** | Ages 1-12

**Therapeutic Recreation** | Ages 11+

**Floortime Family Project** | Ages 4-10

**[stdavidscenter.org](http://stdavidscenter.org)**

Call **952.548.8700** to get started.





# Camps

AuSM camps are tailored for youth and adults with autism. Parents and caregivers can rest assured knowing that their campers are being cared for by highly trained, experienced staff, while campers make memories that last a lifetime.

The AuSM Summer Camps team and partnering camps are working diligently on preparations for an adapted summer camp season. Keeping the safety of our community paramount and following the evolving pandemic regulations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Health, we are being thorough and thoughtful in the planning process.

**To participate in an AuSM residential camp, you must be a current member of AuSM.**



## Important Camp Dates

March 1-8, 2021: Application period for Camp Discovery and Camp Hand in Hand

March 19, 2021: Camp placements/waitlists announced via e-mail

April 15, 2021: Camp payment due

April 30, 2021: Camp packets, including physical forms, due

May 2021: Complete camp guidelines available

**Apply for AuSM Camps**  
[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)





# 2021 Guidelines

As the pandemic continues, regulations change daily. A complete list of guidelines for this 2021 summer camp season will be available in May. Below are possible precautions that will be put into place to keep our campers and staff as safe as possible.

- AuSM and partnering camp locations reserve the right to make specific asks for campers to provide official copies of COVID-19 test results within a certain window of time and to minimize risk of exposure in the week before camp.
- Campers may need to be transported to their camp session and picked up at the end of their camp session by a caregiver. Drop-off and pick-up times may be staggered to reduce crowds and contact. Final transportation details will be available soon.
- Campers must be willing to have a daily forehead temperature taken.
- Campers must be able to follow social distancing guidelines, wash hands and use hand sanitizer, follow verbal or visual prompts for safety guidance, and be willing to wear a mask.
- Additional changes to elements of the camp experience may include meal service, sleeping quarters, activity offerings, and interaction with others.

## Camp Wahode Returns in 2022

Due to pandemic-related programming restrictions at Camp Butwin, AuSM's Camp Wahode will not be held 2021. We look forward to offering Camp Wahode in 2022.





# Camp Discovery

Camp Discovery has a high degree of structure and small group activities. Campers should be able to positively interact and safely participate within small groups. This camp provides 1:4 staff-to-camper support.

Camp Discovery is held at True Friends/Courage North on Lake George near Bemidji, Minn. Campers will stay in cabin groups of four, according to age, gender, and interests. Cabins have restrooms and electricity. Campers will enjoy meals in a dining hall or on an outdoor deck.

Camp activities include swimming, kayaking, canoeing, hiking in Itasca State Park, arts and crafts, nature experiences, recreational games, live action role-playing games, and more. Camp Discovery also includes special evening activities. Campers participate in small group discussions and activities that focus on special interests and making a connection with others.

## SESSION 1

June 13-18, 2021 (all genders, ages 17+)

## SESSION 2

June 20-25, 2021 (all genders, ages 10-16)

## Campers Per Session

24

## Location

True Friends/Courage North  
37569 N. Courage Lake Dr.  
Lake George, MN 56458

## Cost per Session

\$1,400



## Pandemic Precautions

- Sizes of camp groups will be reduced.
- Rather than eight campers per cabin, there will be a maximum of four campers per cabin.
- Masks will be required in almost all areas of camp.
- Many activities that your camper expects to be able to participate in while at camp can still occur. Activities that historically have been indoors will move outside.
- While socializing and participating in activities outside, social distancing guidelines will be enforced.



# Camp Hand in Hand

Camp Hand in Hand is held at Camp Knutson, north of Brainerd in Crosslake, Minn. This serene camp location features modern air-conditioned cabins and bathrooms. Nutritious meals are served in a group dining room. This camp provides 1:1 staff-to-camper support.

Activities include swimming, boating, geocaching, tubing, horseback riding, fishing, crafts, archery, nature exploration, biking, and music groups led by a board-certified music therapist.

Camp activities focus on social interaction and communication. The camp also offers a small ropes course, paddleboats, and canoes for additional fun. Evenings include bonfires and other fun activities. Each week of camp will have a reduced number of campers, divided into groups determined by age, gender, and interests.

## SESSION 1

June 27-July 2, 2021 (all genders, ages 14-20)

## SESSION 2

July 25-30, 2021 (all genders, ages 21+)

## Campers Per Session

26

## Location

Camp Knutson  
11148 Manhattan Pt. Blvd.  
Crosslake, MN 56442

## Cost per Session

\$1,425

## Pandemic Precautions

- Sizes of camp groups will be reduced.
- Camper numbers per cabin will be reduced.
- Masks will be required in almost all areas of camp.
- Many activities that your camper expects to be able to participate in while at camp can still occur. Activities that historically have been indoors will move outside.
- While socializing and participating in activities outside, social distancing guidelines will be enforced.





# Learn the Basics, Obtain Valuable Resources



## Understanding Autism and Best Strategic Practices

Learn common characteristics of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and sensory processing disorders. Obtain valuable insight on evidenced-based practices for supporting individuals across settings.

### Who Should Participate?

Caregivers, parents, grandparents, group home and day program staff, Personal Care Attendants, and education and health care staff will benefit from this class.

\*Note, this is a single-session class. Content is the same for all sessions. AuSM offers these sessions at different times to accommodate as many schedules as possible. When registering, select the session that works best for you.

### Dates and Times

- May 17, 2021 from 6-8 p.m. **FULL**
- June 14, 2021 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- July 12, 2021 from 2-4 p.m.
- Aug. 16, 2021 from 6-8 p.m.

### Location

VIRTUAL

### Cost

Due to a generous sponsorship from Best Care, 2021 sessions are offered for FREE. Space is limited and registration is required.

**BEST CARE**  
YOUR CARE. YOUR WAY.

Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).





# Individualized Consultation and Support

## Life with Autism Series revised to meet needs

In response to community needs, AuSM's newly revised Life with Autism–Individualized Supports is re-centering the individualized approach. AuSM will offer individual consultations in order to delve deeper into customized topics like behavior, communication, independent living, and developing supports and accommodations.

Our new LWA–Individualized Supports seeks to meet you where you are, offering customized tools, resources, and strategies to ensure you feel prepared and equipped for navigating systems, developing supports, and accessing your communities.

Tapping into our network of self-advocates, educators, and more, we will develop personalized support plans that you can implement into your daily practices to ensure the neurodiversity of your household/community is supported and celebrated.



## Who should participate?

Life with Autism–Individualized Supports is a great resource for families seeking training, support, or individual consultation. AuSM knows that autism is in the fabric of all our communities and that each community, household, and individual will flourish when the entirety of its members is supported.

Whether your family has a newly diagnosed member, your child is transitioning into adolescence and young adulthood, or the autistic adult in your life is in need of supports beyond your capacity, AuSM can assist you in navigating and thriving through these periods of life.

AuSM staff will coordinate with you and your family to designate a time, location, and group size, as well as the information you would like covered, and bring this material to you.

## How do I set up a consultation?

Please complete a consultation form on [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org). If you have questions, reach AuSM's education team at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org).

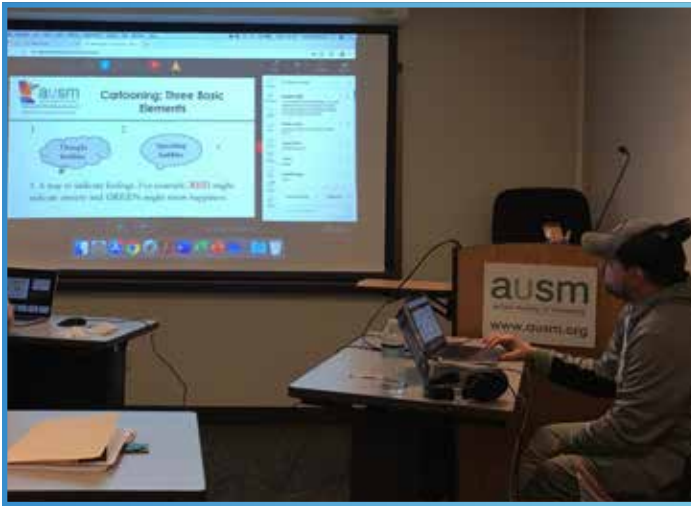
## Cost

Family: \$25 per hour/two participants

Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) for more information.



# Information and Strategies for Better Service Provision



## Autism Direct Support Certification Program

This program is designed for professionals and caregivers who work with or support individuals with autism and want to provide better service and care. Individuals on the spectrum also are welcome and encouraged to attend for increased self-understanding and to share their unique perspectives.

### Training Objectives

- Identify how people with autism think.
- Understand how differences in thinking lead to differences in behavior.
- Understand how different tools/interventions address the strengths and challenges of ASD.
- Identify tools to support clients and loved ones in different situations.

### Dates and Times

#### SUMMER

Daily from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.  
June 7-11, 2021

#### FALL

Fridays from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.  
Sept. 10, 17, 24, and Oct. 1, 8, 2021

### Location

VIRTUAL

### Cost

\$260 per person

A group discount is available for three or more participants from the same organization. Contact AuSM at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 to register three or more for the same session.

Certification is available for groups at your specified location or via Zoom. Contact AuSM's education team for more information.

Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

## AuSM Autism Training and Consulting



Your brother. Your daughter.  
Your student. Your neighbor.  
Your customer. Your client.

With a prevalence rate of 1 in 44 in Minnesota,

Autism Spectrum Disorder is the fastest growing disability in our state.

As a business owner, organization member, educator, or direct support professional, you encounter individuals with autism every day. By learning more about the diversity of the autism spectrum, you're taking proactive steps toward support, acceptance, and inclusion.

For more information about AuSM's custom-tailored autism training and consulting, contact AuSM's Education Department at [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) or call 651.647.1083 ext. 26.



# Training for Officers and Emergency Responders

With a national prevalence rate of 1 in 54 and a local prevalence rate of 1 in 44 for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it is inevitable you will encounter individuals with ASD in your work as an emergency responder. All emergency responders and law enforcement officers should receive specialized, informed training to effectively and equitably serve our robust and diverse community. Together, we want to ensure safer interactions between peace officers and all people with autism, in every community in Minnesota.

According to a bill passed by the MN legislature in 2020, law enforcement agencies now are required to provide autism training to every peace officer. The training must consist of four continuing education credits, be POST Board approved, and include consultation with individuals with autism, family members, autism experts, and peace officers. AuSM is ready to assist agencies as well as individual peace officers in fulfilling these critical requirements.

AuSM provides training that supports peace officers and in their ability to:

- Demonstrate a broad and diverse understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Demonstrate understanding the benefits of autism-informed policing
- Demonstrate understanding of how to use strategies and practices that promote safe, effective, and positive outcomes in situations involving individuals with ASD
- Identify tools and technologies that may be useful in interacting with people with ASD

In addition to law enforcement training, AuSM provides high quality training to a variety of professionals in emergency response, including emergency medical professionals (mobile or center-based); fire responders; and others associated with environmental or personal crisis.

**Contact AuSM at 651.647.1083 ext. 26 or e-mail [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) to schedule your training.**





# Topic-specific, two-hour mini workshops



## AuSM Skillshops

Based on topics suggested by the Minnesota autism community, AuSM Skillshops are mini-workshops designed for individuals with autism, parents, caregivers, family members, support staff, educators, therapists, and other professionals.

Due to the pandemic, AuSM Skillshops will be held virtually in 2021. Sessions will be available in real-time only and will not be accessible after the AuSM Skillshop has taken place.

Upon request, AuSM Skillshop participants may receive a certificate of attendance to submit to licensing boards for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) consideration.

AuSM Members receive a certificate for a FREE AuSM Skillshop and save \$10 on each AuSM Skillshop registration.

### Location

VIRTUAL

### Cost Per Skillshop/Individual Registration

AuSM Member: \$15

Non-Member: \$25

AuSM Member with ASD/Current Student: \$10

2021 AuSM Skillshops are generously sponsored by GT Independence.



Register at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).



## March 23, 2021 Self-Advocacy

**Presenter:** Jillian Nelson (*Pronouns: she/her*)

**Date:** Tuesday, March 23 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

An autistic policy advocate, Jillian Nelson advocates on capitol hill for our community and helps people navigate resources. She has learned through personal and professional experiences that the ability to self-advocate is one of the most important skills a person with a disability can learn to create the life they want to live. Learn about the history of self-advocacy, your rights and responsibilities when advocating for yourself, and tools needed to effectively advocate for yourself.

Jillian Nelson, Community Resource and Policy Advocate at AuSM, was diagnosed with autism as a young adult. With a degree in human services and a background in self-advocacy, she has dedicated her career to helping others with autism achieve their goals, advocating for system change, and spreading a message of education and autism acceptance. Nelson currently sits on the Governor's Council for Developmental Disabilities and has worked in employment services helping others with autism secure and retain appropriate, successful employment.

## April 13, 2021 Aging Autistic Adults

**Presenter:** Philip King-Lowe (*Pronouns: he/his*)

**Date:** Tuesday, April 13 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

Learn about the barriers autistic seniors can encounter related to self-care, health care, and needed resources. While there is a lot of work to be done, there are things we can do to begin to encourage change to create a better future for aging autistic adults. Learn how to advocate for yourself.

Philip King-Lowe was diagnosed with autism in 2011. Before being diagnosed, he wondered why he had so many problems with social interactions, keeping jobs, and reading body language. Once he received his autism diagnosis, King-Lowe became passionate about autism and the autistic community. He works

as an education assistant for the Autism Society of Minnesota and is the owner, producer, and host of *Today's Autistic Moment: A Podcast for Autistic Adults by An Autistic Adults*. King-Lowe lives in Edina with his husband, Jason.

## April 27, 2021 Friendship: How To Find and Keep Friends As An Adult with ASD

**Presenter:** Beth Pitchford, MA, LPCC

(*Pronouns: she/her*)

**Date:** Tuesday, April 27 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

Many people on the spectrum report that although they struggle with socializing, they still want connection, friendships, and community. Explore common challenges in making and keeping friends, discuss ways to meet new people and initiate friendships, and obtain tips for building strong friendships. With a special focus on maintaining friendships while social distancing, this session will offer strategies for building friendships in your life.

Beth Pitchford earned a Master's degree in Psychology from the Adler Graduate School (AGS), where she focused on learning about autism and how various aspects of Adlerian psychology could compliment the standard use of cognitive behavioral therapy with people on the autism spectrum. Pitchford became passionate about working with people on the "invisible" part of the spectrum (formerly known as Asperger's syndrome) after she realized that many people close to her are on the spectrum and have spent most of their lives wondering why they felt so different. Using cognitive behavioral approaches and her Adlerian training, Pitchford's goal is to help people better understand not only themselves but also the people in their lives.





## May 11, 2021 Supplemental Needs Trust Planning

**Presenter:** Rachel Schromen, JD (*Pronouns: she/her*)

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

Learn about best estate planning practices to protect and provide for those you love with autism. Obtain knowledge on estate planning basics, planning for guardianship of minors, and how to use Supplemental and Special Needs Trusts. With proper preparation and the appropriate legal documents, families can best plan for the protection and security of their loved ones, as well as plan for extending the longevity of their assets in providing such care.

Rachel Schromen is an estate planning and elder law attorney and owner of Schromen Law, LLC located in St. Paul. Schromen works with families to plan for the security and protection of their children, providing guidance and expertise with Supplemental Needs and Special Needs Trusts.

## May 25, 2021 Planning for the Unexpected: Emergency Preparedness for Autistic Adults

**Presenter:** Eric Ringgenberg (*Pronouns: he/his*)

**Date:** Tuesday, May 25 from 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

Unexpected emergencies are challenging for everyone, however there are multiple reasons why autistic adults may face increased challenges and difficulty with navigating these situations. Review the basic items that make up an emergency kit, how to prepare a basic emergency preparedness plan for you and others, and discuss resources that you can access after a disaster strikes. This session will also cover interactions with first responders, including disability disclosure, interaction strategies, and community concerns.

Eric Ringgenberg, AuSM's Education Director, has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a master's degree in Special Education-Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of St. Thomas.



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# Compassionate Support, Safe Environment



AuSM therapists have dedicated their careers to helping individuals with autism understand their diagnosis. They provide strategies to support each person’s unique autism experience, addressing both the challenges and gifts it can bring. AuSM therapists help individuals from youth through adulthood as they grow at their own pace in a safe, compassionate, and respectful environment.

## Counseling Services

- Diagnostic assessments for adults
- Functional or behavioral assessments
- Training and behavior consultation
- Marriage and couples therapy
- Individual and family therapy

## Consulting Services/Social Coaching

AuSM’s Counseling and Consulting Services team is available to assist therapists, group home staff, community organizations, employers, day training and habilitation groups, and other professionals who work with individuals with autism with general training or strategies related to a specific issue or topic. We also offer social coaching for individuals who want to build specific skills.



## We Are Ready to Meet with You

During the pandemic, we are accepting new clients in Minnesota for individual therapy via telehealth. We accept many different insurance carriers. Please contact our office at 651.647.1083 ext. 13 or e-mail [autismcounseling@ausm.org](mailto:autismcounseling@ausm.org) for more information.

## Support Groups

While we are observing pandemic restrictions, AuSM is offering five virtual support groups through Zoom: Women, LGBTQIA, Independent Adults, Topic, and Family Members of Adults. Please contact [info@ausm.org](mailto:info@ausm.org) to receive the Zoom link for the online support group(s) in which you would like to participate.



# Meet Our AuSM Therapists



## Amy Carrison, PsyD, LP, LADC

*Pronouns: she/her*

Dr. Carrison uses cognitive behavioral strategies in therapy to help clients change problematic behavior patterns. She has experience in psychological assessment and testing with the goal of providing individuals with targeted interventions to overcome areas of need. Dr. Carrison has been licensed in Minnesota as a drug and alcohol counselor since 2002 and has worked

in a variety of substance abuse treatment settings with both adults and adolescents.



## Sara Lahti, MA, CCTP

*Pronouns: she/her*

Lahti has worked with children with ASD and individuals with ASD and other disabilities in a day program facility. She developed a passion for working with adults on the autism spectrum and uses Adlerian and person-centered therapeutic techniques to help clients better understand themselves and their strengths. She works with clients on thought patterns and how they affect daily living

and also helps clients develop social interest within themselves and their communities.



## Barbara Luskin, PhD, LP

*Pronouns: she/her*

Dr. Luskin is a licensed psychologist who has worked closely with children and adults with ASD for more than 30 years in professional and home settings. She specializes in providing both assessments and counseling to individuals with ASD and those who support them. Dr. Luskin's services include diagnostic and functional assessments, individual therapy for adults and adolescents, and training and consultation for caregivers. She helps

them understand ASD, teaches them creative and effective interventions, helps them evaluate progress, and provides guidance when adjustments are needed.

Dr. Luskin serves the local autism community in multiple capacities including professional consultation, training, certification instruction, and individual work with clients. As such, her schedule usually is at capacity. Please speak with the AuSM Counseling and Consulting Services appointment scheduler to identify the AuSM therapist who can best meet your needs.



## Beth Pitchford, MA, LPCC

*Pronouns: she/her*

Pitchford became passionate about working with people on the "invisible" part of the spectrum (formerly known as Asperger's syndrome) after she realized that many people close to her have autism and spent most of their lives wondering why they felt so different. Pitchford values working with adults who want to decode the neurotypical world in order to decrease barriers to community acceptance and

increase feelings of success. She works with adolescents as they navigate the super-social world of the teenage years. Using cognitive behavioral approaches and her Adlerian training, Pitchford's goal is to help people better understand themselves and the people in their lives.



## James Rechs, LICSW

*Pronouns: he/him*

Rechs, located in Rochester, Minn., provides individual therapy for adults and teens as well as psychoeducation and support for parents, families, and caregivers. Rechs believes that social and emotional struggles are not a sign of abnormality, but rather a reflection of the diversity and challenges of human experience. His top priority is helping clients achieve goals that are most im-

portant to them, and to help them live lives of meaning and satisfaction. Rechs specializes in working with those seeking to transition to greater independence, and especially enjoys helping clients pursue their areas of interest in ways that stimulate personal growth and connection. Rechs has a master's degree in social work from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and an undergraduate degree from Grinnell College in Iowa.



## Meg Spires, MSW, LICSW

*Pronouns: she/her*

Spires is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and is the parent of a child with autism. She uses a strengths-based approach and counsels clients through identifying and building on the unique gifts they possess. She uses a variety of therapeutic frameworks, including narrative, family systems, solution-focused, trauma-informed, and dialectical behavioral approaches.

Her greatest joy as a therapist is watching people become their authentic selves and build lives that meet their needs. She is open to feedback and strives to provide a safe and empowering environment to help people achieve their therapeutic goals.



## Bjorn Walter, MA

*Pronouns: he/him*

Walter earned his Bachelor's degree in psychology from Southwest Minnesota State University, and his Master's degree in Adlerian psychotherapy and counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy from Adler Graduate School (AGS). Since graduating from AGS, Walter spent time working at a group home dedicated to adults with autism and schizophrenia near his home-

town in Sweden. He uses Adlerian and cognitive behavioral techniques to help individuals and their families understand the true nature of autism. He recognizes the importance of familial relationships and friendships and strives to help his clients realize how they affect us and our lives. Walter promotes encouragement, openness, and honesty.





# AuSM Membership

Whether you are a family with a child who is newly diagnosed, an adult on the spectrum, an educator who serves individuals with autism, or a business that wants to learn how to better serve customers with autism, AuSM provides you with resources and services you need to find the most comfortable way to participate and grow.

- Member-only rates on classes, AuSM Skillshops, workshops, and other programs
- Discount registration for annual Minnesota autism conference
- AuSM Summer Camps for members only
- One complimentary AuSM Skillshop per year – \$25 value
- Access to AuSM Lending Library
- *AuSM Connections*, twice per month e-mail newsletter
- Advocacy updates and alerts



## Basic AuSM Membership

- \$60 Household: 2 adults and children or grandchildren, ages 21 and under
- \$40 Educator/Professional: individual membership for professionals
- \$20 Person with ASD: individual membership for adults over 21

## Group AuSM Membership

- \$150 Non-Profit: includes memberships for employees
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# AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota

**3rd  
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# Welcome to AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota

Welcome to the third edition of *AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota*, a reference tool and planning guide for families and individuals with autism and other sensory sensitivities. Learn why sensory-friendly events and activities are important, discover how to make accommodations in your own spaces, read about statewide sensory-friendly initiatives, and check out the listing of sensory-friendly businesses and organizations that support those with sensory sensitivities.

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Photo Credit: The Bakken Museum



# When the community opens

## Sensory-friendly especially relevant and necessary

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schedules have been scrapped; work and school accomplished at home; and individuals, families, and businesses have had to adapt to having less access to those activities that bring them joy and connect them to our community.

During these months of pandemic, and when the pandemic subsides, needs for accommodations and inclusion remain.

Over the past decade, organizations in Minnesota and across the country have increasingly committed to providing “sensory-friendly” experiences to the public. Such programming acknowledges the very real challenges posed by sensory processing issues, which is one of the hallmarks of Autism Spectrum Disorder. As autism prevalence rates continue to rise, so, too, does awareness of the many ways in which the characteristics of autism can make it difficult to access and engage in community activities and spaces.

Meaningful community participation and recreational opportunities support an enhanced quality of life, and there are steps organizations and businesses can take to make their spaces and activities inclusive to a neurodiverse audience. Training staff and volunteers about autism and other disabilities, as well as how to best support those

with different communication and learning styles, is a crucial component. Other efforts may include offering sensory-friendly early open and/or extended hours of operation to better accommodate those who benefit from environmental modifications and reduced crowds.

Creating an inclusive venue opens the door to increased participation overall. When individuals and families attend an event or program tailored to meet their needs, it gives them an opportunity to experience an environment and gain an understanding of what to expect when they return. This can help everyone develop the skills and confidence to participate in such programs in the future, whether during a special event or during general hours of operation. As such, these inclusive spaces and programs promote long-term participation and greater levels of individual independence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges, but we have learned that being as prepared as we can be for what’s next is important. Seeking out autism education now will lead to increased access and opportunities for all in our community.



The Autism Society of Minnesota is dedicated to helping create sensory-friendly opportunities for our community. AuSM offers a wide range of services, including general consulting, sensory and accessibility inventories, customized

training, preparing social narratives, and more. Our partners have included zoos, museums, theaters, community centers, and sporting venues.

Contact AuSM’s education department at [education@ausm.org](mailto:education@ausm.org) or 651.647.1083, ext. 26, for more information about how we can help you support the Minnesota autism community. 🌈



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- Coach Andy



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# Sensory-friendly at home

## Adapting your personal space to fit your needs

Over the past year, many have seen their homes turn into the adjunct school, workplace, or therapist office. Where previously many needs would have been met outside in the various pillars of our communities, COVID-19 has forced us to adapt.

If you're struggling to make your home meet your sensory needs, consider the following steps to creating a space that works for you.

### Step One: Take Stock

Before you can alter your living space to meet your needs, you need to identify your needs. Spend some time listing your physical, mental, sensory, and other needs. If creating a list feels overwhelming, seek out support from a loved one, therapist, or trusted colleague to help you. Take all of your senses into account, including those beyond the basic five of sight, taste, touch, sound, and smell:

- Interoception: perception of sensations from inside the body
- Proprioception: sense of self-movement and body position
- Vestibular Sense: Awareness of body balance

### Step Two: Add Preferences

An important element to add to your list of needs is your additional preferences. You may have specific times, places, or people who help you meet certain needs. As you create this list, consider adding an "a.m." or "p.m." after each item to help you determine when you prefer to do it. Perhaps add the name of someone who helps you support that need. This list will be your starting point for building routines to meet your sensory needs.

### Step Three: Find Solutions

Finding solutions is perhaps the most challenging step. Now that you've identified the needs you have, start considering your options in meeting those needs. This may mean setting aside time and space during which you have minimal sensory input. For



example, if auditory input is overwhelming, consider noise-canceling headphones. On the other hand, if you need input, consider adding fresh activities to your day. These could include a daily walk, time spent mindfully listening to music, or time with a weighted blanket.

If you're struggling to find tools that can meet your needs, you can seek out lists of sensory suggestions. Try searching the Internet for ideas. Write down a variety of options so that you can try more than one and see what you prefer.

### Step Four: Create a Schedule

Once you have your detailed list, you can create a daily checklist using times and locations to strategically complete tasks. Routines and checklists are beneficial for a number of reasons, including alleviating anxiety around future activities. Daily schedules are another useful executive function tool that provide structure to your day and can be modified to plan for weeks and months ahead. These supports are especially important as we work through days that have been drastically altered by Covid-19.

Don't be afraid to add daily reminders for yourself to meet your sensory needs. For example, if you struggle with interoception, you may not notice when you are hungry. Set an alarm at mealtimes to remind yourself when it's time to eat.

### Step Five: Adjust Your Living Space

Now that you know the actions you can take to help



meet your sensory needs, start looking at your space and resources. This will help you establish expectations and healthy boundaries that benefit all members of the household.

Begin by doing a walkthrough of your home. What is the area like and how are spaces currently being used? Do you feel comfortable in the current space? What elements make you uncomfortable? Which places do you gravitate toward?

With this information in mind, you can turn to your list of personal needs and examine how your space may or may not be meeting your needs. If you live in a household with multiple individuals, it will be beneficial to have each of their lists on hand as well. Think about things like lighting, the layout and selection of the furniture, carpet, the décor on the walls, noise levels, colors, and organization. Creating clear pathways and flow can make it easier to manage your vestibular and proprioceptive senses. Clean design will limit the amount of visual input you receive. Consider all of the senses as you lay out your rooms.

### **Step Six: Designate Spaces**

One of the most helpful things you can do in making your home sensory friendly is to set some spaces aside

for quiet activities like regulation, study, or relaxation, and designate others for community, conversation, or activity. These expectations can act as house rules and will be most effective when each member of the household contributes to naming them and all agree on space usage.

A good place to start is to consider the most important sensory needs you have. Do you need a space that is absolutely quiet? Do you need somewhere with minimal light? Are you sensory-seeking and need a space where you can jump, climb, crash, or spin? Prioritize meeting those needs first. Once you have a space set aside for your biggest needs, you can think about designating other rooms for less important needs.

This may require revamping your living space. You may end up with a home that doesn't look like a traditional home. What's important is that it meets your needs.

The process of reassigning meaning to different rooms or household items may be lengthy and challenging. Be patient with yourself and your housemates as transitions can be exceptionally difficult particularly during the pandemic. Don't be afraid to ask for help and input from others who have tailored their living spaces to fit their needs. 🏡



# Appreciating nature, valuing diversity

## Three Rivers Park District welcoming to all

It is the first day of class at the Lowry Nature Center and the sun is nowhere to be seen. Rain falls and drips from the leaves as the group moves along the trail. With each passing minute, shoes get muddier and attire gets damper.

Things couldn't be better.

2020 was the seventh year that AuSM and Three Rivers Park District have offered partner programs, which first started at Eastman Nature Center, and have since expanded to multiple Park District sites. Cristina Palmisano, Interpretive Naturalist at the Lowry Nature Center, was integral to the initial development of these partner programs.

Palmisano looks back fondly on the first memories of building shelters out of sticks, bark, and mud while the rain came down. "I keep a photo of that memory on my desk because it was such a magical moment," she said.

For Palmisano, these programs are important because they provide opportunities to experience nature for individuals who may not otherwise have them. Such experiences have been shown to have a number of positive effects on health and well-being. These programs also create personal connections among those who are involved.

Palmisano notes, "The partner programs have been some of the most rewarding of my career. I am grateful for the relationships I've gained through this project. I have learned a lot from the participants and their families and as a result, the programs have gotten better. I am eager to create more connections as we move forward."

Community participants in the partner programs also find multiple aspects of the experiences to be valuable.

Zac has been attending the AuSM/Three Rivers Park District partner programs for several years, and has enjoyed participating in sessions held at multiple sites.

Zac's mom Susan said that Zac especially loves anything with animals. "We really appreciate the staff



who help run these programs; they are very caring and respectful of the participants," she said.

Last summer, one of Zac's favorite activities was still-life charcoal drawing at Silverwood Park. As a part of this visit, participants made their own charcoal to use for drawing, and also learned about some of the art installations during a hike within the park. Zac looks forward to going back to Gale Woods Farm in the future, as well as visiting additional Three Rivers Park District sites yet to be explored.

Palmisano also looks forward to more programs like this, both within Three Rivers Parks, as well as in other park systems throughout the state. "Making these opportunities possible and inclusive helps more people in our communities appreciate the natural world in new ways," she said. 🌈

# Advocating for accessibility

## Fulfilled sensory needs fosters inclusion



Sensory-friendly communities are becoming widely recognized as an important element of accessibility. In order to promote accessibility for neurodiverse individuals, the AuSM Advocacy Committee is looking to

the 2021 session with a focus on sensory needs.

In 2021, AuSM is proposing a large accessibility bill with components that can be packaged together or seen as separate bills. Each of the components address an area of accessibility that historically has gone unnoticed, but that would have a major impact in allowing individuals with disabilities to actively participate in their communities.

The package includes the following bills:

- 1. Special Education Parent Accessibility**  
A bill outlining requirements for educators to accommodate parents with disabilities in the IEP process to allow better access to special education for families with multiple generations of disability.
- 2. Sensory Friendly Grant Appropriation**  
Reintroduction of our 2020 legislation for a grant appropriation for sensory-friendly projects in public access spaces.
- 3. Sensory-Friendly Event Licensing**  
A bill amending permit requirements for large event approval to include requirements to provide sensory-friendly space or accommodations for any public event with more than 1,000 participants.
- 4. Courtroom Accessibility**  
Legislation to require accommodations for witnesses, jurors, and other participants with disabilities who need supports.

### 5. Plain Language Bill

A bill requiring that all documents related to rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities be provided in plain language, and wider-spread law that requires that any document that can be requested in another language also be made available in plain language.

### 6. County and State Service Accessibility Investigative Workgroup

A bill that creates a workgroup of community stakeholders and departmental members focused on ensuring all state and county disability services are accessible. This group will analyze the accessibility of navigation for people with disabilities accessing services independently or parents with disabilities seeking assistance for children.

### 7. Emergency Shelter Accessibility

Legislation to create guidelines for equitable access to homeless and domestic violence shelters for individuals with neurological and intellectual disabilities.

### 8. Legislative Process Accessibility Workgroup

Create a legislative workgroup with stakeholders from groups impacted by the in-person requirements to participate in the legislative process.

If you're interested in getting involved with the AuSM Advocacy Committee to help move these bills forward, learn more at [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).





# 2021 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

The COVID-19 pandemic has foiled plans for sensory-friendly experiences in the community, so the third edition of AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota looks a little different. Below you will find a listing of organizations that have featured sensory-friendly offerings and plan to reinstate those when it is safe to do so. We encourage you to visit these organizations' websites to learn more about their offerings and when sensory-friendly events and activities will take place, what is required for registration, and how their spaces are accommodated for safe, sensory-friendly experiences.

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## Autism Allies

2400 Prairie View Ln.  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
[www.autismallies.org](http://www.autismallies.org)



Autism Allies is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with autism and their families by providing support, education, and awareness, helping them to reach their fullest potential. We support and conduct education and informational activities to increase public awareness of autism, and partner with schools to help them effectively develop individuals with autism. For adults with autism, we provide employment services that connect businesses with reliable workers.

## Bell Museum of Natural History

2088 Larpenteur Ave. W.  
St. Paul, MN 55113  
[www.bellmuseum.umn.edu](http://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu)



While we are unable to offer our monthly Sensory Friendly Saturdays series during COVID-19 restrictions, the quietest time to visit the museum when we are able to be open is late afternoon, as we have fewer visitors and our space is generally uncrowded. Visitors are welcome to use additional resources like our quiet spaces and new sensory packs (containing sensory tools and resources). A social narrative is available for download to prepare for your visit. We hope to return to offering Sensory Friendly Saturdays in June 2021. Please visit [www.bellmuseum.umn.edu](http://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu) for the most up-to-date information.

## Children's Theatre Company

2400 3rd Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
[www.childrenstheatre.org](http://www.childrenstheatre.org)



Children's Theatre Company values creating accessible theatre experiences for all individuals in our community and is committed to increasing access and inclusion for individuals with sensory sensitivities including those with autism, Sensory Processing Disorder, and other neurodivergent conditions and disabilities. Currently, we are proud to offer two sensory-friendly classes, made possible by U.S. Bank. Adventures in Sensory Drama for ages 7-12 and Storytellers for ages 13-18 are specifically designed for neurodivergent and disabled young people to explore, discover, and create in a collaborative community. We look forward to offering sensory-friendly performances again when we return to in-person productions.

# 2021 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

## Como Park Zoo & Conservatory

1225 Estabrook Dr.  
St. Paul, MN 55103

[www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org)

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory is an energetic, colorful place full of sensory stimuli, and we know this environment can be overwhelming for some guests. We invite individuals on the autism spectrum and their families to join us one hour before opening to the public, from 9-10 a.m., and spend time exploring exhibits at Como Park Zoo & Conservatory. Advanced registration is required.



## Lake Superior Zoo

7210 Fremont St.  
Duluth, MN 55807

[www.lszooduluth.org](http://www.lszooduluth.org)

The Lake Superior Zoo is located on 19 picturesque acres home to hundreds of animals including bears, big cats, wolves, otters, kangaroos, and primates. Our mission is to provide close-up animal experiences that inspire connections to wildlife and action towards conservation in our region and around the world. The zoo hopes to offer an inclusive experience for all guests including those with sensory needs. Guests may borrow a sensory bag with fidget tools and noise-canceling headphones. A weighted lap pad also is available upon request. We also have a social story available to help with your visit.



## Metropolitan Airports Commission/MSP Airport

4300 Glumack Dr., Suite LT-3000  
St. Paul, MN 55111

[www.msairport.com/navigating](http://www.msairport.com/navigating)

Having a child with special needs can make travel intimidating. Navigating MSP Airport helps ease the anxiety with free, monthly practice runs through the airport. A partnership between the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Autism Society of Minnesota, and Fraser, this program allows you to:

- Experience TSA security
- Explore the terminal
- Board a plane and meet a pilot
- Prepare for takeoff
- Gather helpful tips, info, and resources



# 2021 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

## Mill City Museum

704 S 2nd St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
[www.mnhs.org/millcity](http://www.mnhs.org/millcity)

Discover the lively Mississippi riverfront – the very birthplace of Minneapolis – and experience the fiery past and dynamic present of this National Historic Landmark. Built within the ruins of what was once the world’s largest flour mill, Mill City Museum is packed with fun for all ages. Mill City Museum welcomes all visitors. We recognize the diverse needs of our audience and strive to offer accessible programming to enable all visitors to explore this historic site.



## Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)

2400 3rd Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
[www.new.artsmia.org](http://www.new.artsmia.org)

Inspiring wonder through the power of art. The Minneapolis Institute of Art enriches the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world’s diverse cultures. Mia is proud to offer social narratives designed for members of the neurodiverse community. Intended to increase comfort while visiting the museum, these illustrated documents are useful tools for anyone planning a trip to Mia.



## Minnesota Orchestra

1111 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
[www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org)

The Grammy Award-winning Minnesota Orchestra, now in its second century and led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, ranks among America’s top symphonic ensembles and offers Sensory-Friendly and Relaxed Family Concerts for all ages and abilities, including individuals on the autism spectrum and those with sensory sensitivities. Each of these concerts takes place in a relaxed environment where audience members are welcome to be who they are and enjoy music together with family and friends. Sensory-Friendly Concerts feature individual musicians or small ensembles, and Relaxed Family Concerts feature the full Orchestra.



## Minnesota History Center

345 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
[www.mnhs.org/historycenter](http://www.mnhs.org/historycenter)

Through inspiring exhibits, thought-provoking programs, live performances, and action-packed discovery, the History Center feeds your curiosity about Minnesota’s stories, people, and places. The History Center welcomes all visitors. We recognize the diverse needs of our audience and strive to offer accessible programming to enable all visitors to explore this historic site.





# 2021 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

## Minnesota Zoo

13000 Zoo Blvd.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124  
[www.mnzoo.org](http://www.mnzoo.org)

We are open! The Minnesota Zoo is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with special Minnesota Zoo Member hours starting at 9 a.m. All guests must purchase or reserve tickets online ahead of time for the selected date and time.

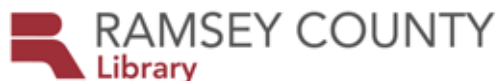


MINNESOTA ZOO

## Ramsey County Library in Shoreview

4560 Victoria St. N.  
Shoreview, MN 55126  
[www.rclreads.org](http://www.rclreads.org)

Ramsey County Library in Shoreview has a Sensory/Comfort Room, located in the children's area, which features comfortable seating, dimmable lights, a soothing sound machine, and sensory supports. Pick up a copy of our Social Story: Going to the Library, which explains what to expect on your library visit. Check out our newsletter and website for special Sensory-Friendly programs, such as Sensory-Friendly performances and group activities.



## REM-5 VR Lab

4950 W. 35th St.  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416  
[www.rem5forgood.com](http://www.rem5forgood.com)

Virtual reality for education and entertainment in a safe and comfortable environment. Food, beverages, and fun for the whole family.



## Science Museum of Minnesota

120 W Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
[www.new.smm.org](http://www.new.smm.org)

We exist to turn on the science: Inspire learning. Inform policy. Improve lives. We envision a world where everyone has the power to use science to make lives better. We value collaboration, equity, and learning. We have a variety of tools available to help our visitors with sensory issues make the most of their visit. We also have quiet spaces available for the community.



Science  
Museum  
of Minnesota®

# 2021 SENSORY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS

## Stages Theatre Company

1111 Mainstreet  
Hopkins, MN 55343  
[www.stagestheatre.org](http://www.stagestheatre.org)



Stages Theatre Company is committed to the enrichment and education of children and youth in a professional theater environment that stimulates artistic excellence and personal growth. Stages Theatre Company is dedicated to creating a space where diverse opinions, courageous dialogue, and local, national, and international community engagement is not only valued, but vital to our shared artistic and educational success. We make this pledge in the hope of curating a welcome home for all.

## Three Rivers Park District

3000 Zenium Ln. N.  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
[www.threeriversparks.org/accessibility](http://www.threeriversparks.org/accessibility)



Three Rivers offers sensory-friendly services at select park locations where you will find:

- Sensory support kits to borrow that include: noise-reducing headphones, ear plugs, nose plugs, sunglasses, a variety of fidgets, weighted blankets, and other sensory supports.
- Three Rivers staff who have received training from the Autism Society of Minnesota.
- A quiet space to take a break.
- Social narratives and virtual tours also are available on the website for you to review before you visit.

Sensory-Friendly Sundays are offered at French Regional Park typically on the fourth Sunday of the month. Three Rivers' sensory-friendly services were developed in partnership with the Autism Society of Minnesota.

Three Rivers also offers public programs for teens and adults with autism:

- Lowry Nature Center offers summer day camps in partnership with AuSM.
- Lowry also offers single-day programs once per month, such as Winter Explorations, Maple Syruping, Fire Building, Bike Riding, and other on and off trail adventures.
- Look for programs at more Three Rivers locations in the future.

## Walker Art Center

725 Vineland Pl.  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
[www.walkerart.org](http://www.walkerart.org)



The Walker Art Center is a catalyst for the creative expression of artists and the active engagement of audiences. Focusing on the visual, performing, and media arts of our time, the Walker takes a global, multidisciplinary, and diverse approach to the creation, presentation, interpretation, collection, and preservation of art. Walker programs examine the questions that shape and inspire us as individuals, cultures, and communities. The Walker Art Center is open to visitors, and time-specific tickets are available on [www.walkerart.org](http://www.walkerart.org). Tickets are required for entry.

# Bringing the Autism Community Together

AuSM is pleased to offer opportunities for families and individuals with autism to come together and enjoy fun activities in welcoming environments, both in-person and virtually. We also offer events and fundraisers that support our mission of enhancing the lives of those affected by autism. Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) and click on the Events section to access a frequently-updated listing of community gatherings and for more information.

**April 21-24, 2021**

## **Inform, Influence, Innovate Together Virtual Autism Conference**

Get all of the latest information on autism, all in one place. Spend your conference days learning from high-caliber speakers, shop the online AuSM Bookstore, and gather information from key autism exhibitors.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

**May 23, 2021**

## **Steps for Autism in Minnesota—Hybrid Edition**

Moved to a warmer month, Steps for Autism will be held outside in 2021 and will feature both virtual and in-person activities and resources. Fundraise to celebrate inclusion and appreciation of those with autism in Minnesota.

**Location:** More details to come!

**July 17, 2021**

## **2nd Annual AuSM Community Unity Challenge**

This exciting, family-friendly event will feature a scavenger hunt of fun activities that teams will compete to accomplish within a set amount of time.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

**Aug. 2, 2021**

## **26th Annual AuSM Golf Classic**

During this 2021 fundraising event, participants will play a round of golf on a pristine course in support of individuals with autism in Minnesota.

**Location:** ROYAL GOLF CLUB, LAKE ELMO



**September 18, 2021**

## **4th Annual AuSM Autistic Community Summit**

The 4th Annual AuSM Autistic Community Summit will include a keynote presentation and breakout sessions. This event is for adults with autism by adults with autism.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

**Nov. 13, 2021**

## **4th Annual AuSM Connections Puzzle Competition**

Put your jigsaw puzzling passion to the test during the 4th annual AuSM Connections Jigsaw Puzzle Competition held virtually through the Zoom platform and supported by PuzzleTwist®. Gather your friends and family into teams of up to four that will compete for the fastest completion time.

**Location:** VIRTUAL

**Visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) for the latest community events information.**





## Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff St. #102

St. Paul, MN 55114

651.647.1083 • education@ausm.org

[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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# You have an AuSM community.

The Autism Society of Minnesota offers a place to learn, access services, and develop skills that enhance your life. AuSM membership connects you to a common community that acts without judgment, nurtures potential, advances knowledge, and supports acceptance.

To learn about AuSM's member benefits and become an AuSM Member today, call 651.647.1083 or visit

[www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org).

Minnesota's First Autism Resource®