

DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS

NEWSLETTER



A monthly newsletter for families of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics
at Boston Medical Center

Autism Acceptance Month!

April 2 is World Autism Day and the entire month of April is Autism Acceptance Month! We are dedicating this issue of our DBP Newsletter to highlighting the work of autistic individuals.

Keep an eye on our Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok pages all month long for more great featured resources!

Find us on Facebook: [HERE!](#)
Find us on Instagram: [HERE!](#)
Find us on Tik Tok: [HERE!](#)



Hannah Gadsby

Hannah Gadsby is an Australian comedian, known for her stand-up specials Nanette, Douglas and now Body of Work. She speaks openly about her diagnosis of ASD/ADHD in adulthood and has become a cherished performer all over the world, tackling themes of homophobia, sexism, mental illness, and assault. On neurodiversity, Gadsby says, "I think society could be helped by neurodiversity. I understand how to navigate this world because I have studied "neurotypical" but I think that people who aren't neurotypical have something to offer. If we learn to understand each other's languages that would be better."

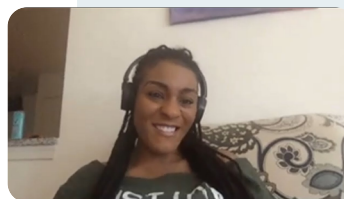


Joy Johnson

As we close out Women's History Month and welcome Autism Acceptance Month, we are excited to highlight Joy Johnson, an Autistic behavior analyst, clinical director, adjunct professor, author, and an advocate for Autistic individuals. She collaborates with organizations, individuals, and families to improve the lives of Autistic people. Joy created and runs the Black Spectrum Fund with the mission being to render behavioral services and support to families with Black Autistic children and Black adults at no cost to them. We encourage you to visit her website here and check out the incredible advocacy,

resources, and support she continues to create and provide to the Autistic community. We also encourage you to check out her book, Happy, Flappy, and Me!, which is a story about a little girl that stims (flaps) when she is happy. In Joy's own description,

the book "is intended to promote neurodiversity, autism acceptance, and provide Autistic children with a relatable character." It has become a personal favorite for members within our program! <https://www.lulu.com/shop/joy-j>



Del'or Ehade

Del'or Ehade is a senior at Southeast Regional Technical High School. He was recently named an Emerging Poet by Power Poetry and has been featured in the Boston Globe. 3 of his poems were recently displayed at Brockton Public Library. Below is a poem written by Del'or entitled; "A Different Black."

Tyler Lagasse

Tyler Lagasse an accomplished athlete and professional from Tyngsboro, MA. He has participated in Special Olympics for many years and is an accomplished golfer. He has won many medals at both the state and national level in addition to participating in 3 Special Olympic USA Games. He is a 2010 Special Olympics Massachusetts Hall of Fame Inductee and was honored with an honorary ESPY award for his enthusiasm and excellence in athletics in 2017. Tyler has been a member of the Special Olympics Global Messengers since 2007; spreading awareness and raising money for the Special Olympics through public speaking events. In addition to his work with Special Olympics, Tyler has also written a book with his mother entitled, "What Do You Say? Autism with Character" detailing his autism diagnosis and how he overcome the obstacles he has faced in his life. Tyler holds 2 college degrees from UMASS-Lowell and Middlesex Community College where he studied Environmental Science, Sustainability, and Liberal Arts. In the summer of 2018, Tyler describes himself as a person who is "passionate about the environment and sustainability and wants to contribute to the battle on climate change." He is currently interested in pursuing a career in environmental science or sustainability.



A Different Black

By: Del'or Ehade

Black people
There are only two words that I could think
Gangs, Traditional, Rappers,
Hip-hop, R&B, and basketball players
There are different groups that they are
And there are different things they like
Except me

I would like to ask you,
Am I a boy who is the hip hop type
A boy who has R&B taste
A boy who is part of the gangs
A traditional boy
A boy who is a rapper
A boy who is a basketball player

This is not me
This is a different
A boy who is a black sheep of the community
A boy who loves arts
A boy who is on the right side of the brain

I became the victim of their melancholic shadows
That is consuming me
Like there are ghosts
That haunts me

As I roamed in the shadows
I started to question myself
"Is different a good word?
Or is it just a metaphor?"

Until I stopped with an answer
"Maybe I am just a myth
Maybe I am alone
Maybe I am just a different boy
A different black."

One of our spring interns; Somaia, recently sat down and interviewed Diego Vargas and Erin Beal

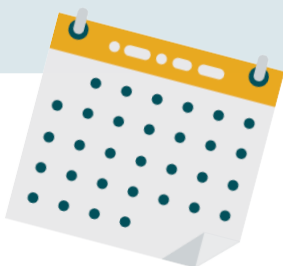
Diego Vargas

Diego Vargas, also known as DJ Ne10, caught my attention because of an album he had recently created called Spectrum EP. Spectrum EP is an album based on Diego's experiences with music as an individual with autism, and the first letter of each song spells out "AUTISM". Each of the songs is related to a specific aspect of autism that Diego wanted people to be able to hear. For the first song, Diego said, "I've always had thoughts that are very abstract, so I thought 'Abstraction' would be a good set name [to start]." My favorite song in the album was the fifth one, "Spectrum", which is a metaphor for the wide range within the spectrum of Autism. Diego says, "'Spectrum' is literally just a hyped up song, like hey, there's a broad range of things happening here. There's dubstep to hip hop to hard dance!" The entire album is a great auditory experience, and speaking to Diego really helped me understand how there are so many ways to express and show your feelings and experiences. These days, Diego is working on several projects, including collaborations with international artists on uplifting dubstep music.



Autism Awareness and Advocacy Day!

On Tuesday April 5, Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts (AFAM) is hosting a virtual event featuring guest speakers, legislators, self advocates and more. The theme of this year's event is: Restoring Services, Expanding Access. Discussions will center around "the current state of affairs and highlight priority legislative proposals that would restore and increase access to services, education, and training. The program runs from 10am-11am and registration is required. You can find more information and the link to register [HERE!](#)



Erin Beal

Erin Beal is a technical writer who had recently published a children's book called I Am Enough: Little One's Journey, a book that captured Erin's experiences as a child with undiagnosed autism. It wasn't until Erin was 30 years old that she was diagnosed with autism. When asked about what that process of being diagnosed was like, she said, "It's a really recursive process of learning more and being self-accepting, and then, you know, exploring other sides of yourself." After being diagnosed, Erin felt creatively inspired and she decided to write a book about a character named One, a number who is the only member within their to have no serifs. I asked Erin why she chose numbers as her characters, as opposed to human characters. She said, "In the editing process, I saw the benefit of keeping the characters nonhuman. I think it possibly, hopefully allows for more people to project their own image of themselves onto the character, because it's not a person with a preconceived history." Erin explained to me that many individuals with autism struggle with the stereotypes that are associated with their identity, including the misconception that people on the spectrum are more violent and often break families apart. Erin wanted a character that anyone could relate to, even outside the autism community, and to this end, she kept the characters gender-neutral and included details pertinent to other communities, including a character that pays homage to American Sign Language. I asked Erin if she had any advice for other individuals with autism pursuing careers in writing. She said that it's important to be resilient and keep going. "A rejection isn't a no from the universe, just a redirection."



Resources



Boston Medical Center is here to support you during this difficult time. Check out our new resource spreadsheet, which has links to online learning, social stories, music/animal/fitness programs, live online classes and more. See the second tab for free meals and financial services throughout Massachusetts. This spreadsheet is available in multiple languages and will be continuously updated as new resources become available. Know of something to add?

Email us at
autismprogram@bmc.org
 with suggestions.

For past recordings of our webinar series: Caring for Kids with Autism and Developmental Differences, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCifYfJKUuSa8XzytUcn-Anw>



Clinic

Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics clinicians are available by phone/Zoom for telehealth visits and consultations. Please call us at 617-414-4841 if you have any questions or are in need of support. To create a free zoom account, visit zoom.us/signup.



Our Clinicians

Marilyn Augustyn, MD
 Naomi Steiner, MD
 Arathi Reddy, DO
 Rachel Amgott, NP
 Christina Lazdowsky, NP
 Mei Elensary, MD
 Alyssa King, PhD
 Christine McGivney, DO
 Jocelyn Kuhn PhD
 Audrey Christiansen, MD
 Sarah Canale, MD
 Britany Weissman, MD

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is brought to you by the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center, a family support program of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. We are committed to supporting any family of DBP during this time, regardless of diagnosis. Please don't hesitate to reach out, and follow us on social media for more tips and information!



BMC.org/autism
Autismprogram@bmc.org



The Autism Program at Boston Medical Center



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