



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

**NAASLN Membership News & Views
Issue Twenty-Three – November/December 2008**

NAASLN Membership News & Views is an outgrowth of the NAASLN Vision to offer our members a centralized hub of information, professional development, technical assistance, communication on issues and trends, and advocacy initiatives on behalf of adults with special learning needs.

Stay tuned in and connected by renewing your membership.
Go to www.naasln.org/membership

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President’s Message—

Joan Hudson-Miller, NAASLN Acting President

As I reflect back upon 2008 and look forward to the coming year, I am reminded of the successes we accomplished, as well as the challenges we continue to face.

Throughout this year the NAASLN Board has been acutely aware that the continuing

economic downturn is requiring every organization be extremely vigilant in balancing the need for a well-trained professional staff with ever-tightening budgets.

Because of this we have made a renewed commitment to support our members and all adult educators, knowing that we are the **only** adult education association that addresses the issues of adults and adolescents with special learning needs transitioning to the workforce. With most professional development funds cut and services for disabled adult learners being downsized, we have created new cost and time-effective ways for you to continue to gain the skills you need to help your special needs students, to be informed about national and regional issues, and to stay connected with your profession.

Read on and find out what we have waiting for you in the coming year, from a concentrated and intimate hands-on 2-day regional conference, to our ongoing Webinar Series of monthly Internet-based seminars, to our bi-monthly E-newsletter and our informative web site, www.naasln.org.

This is what we want to offer you, but in turn to help NAASLN keep going in these rough times, we really need you to get more involved. We have just launched our 2009 Membership Drive. Our dues are very low, but it makes the difference between NAASLN continuing to exist or not. So please learn more about our association and renew or join and help us help you stay connected. And the best way to really support NAASLN and help us make a difference is to become a Board Member. In February we will be putting out the call for nominations for the new 2009-2011 Board. If you are interested or want to learn more contact me at info@naasln.org.

I look forward to an exciting year, knowing that together we can successfully meet any challenges and make a positive difference in the professional development of our members and other service providers. And, as a result, help many more adults and adolescents with special learning needs successfully meet their life goals.

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Regional Conference to Focus on AD/HD and Asperger's

Richard Cooper, Ph.D., and Pat Walsh, NAASLN Board Members and Conference Co-Chairs

Access to the Workforce for Adult and Adolescent Learners with AD/HD and Asperger's Syndrome is the theme of NAASLN's Mid-Atlantic Conference Feb. 22-23, 2009, at the Bon Secour Conference Center (BSCC) in Marriottsville, Maryland.

The current economy presents specific challenges to adults with special learning needs. We are emphasizing the inclusion of adolescents in this conference because of the many transition issues inherent in the targeted populations. This is a not-to-be-missed opportunity for professionals, parents, and adult learners with any of the spectrum of AD/HD and Asperger's Syndrome, who soon will be entering postsecondary education or the workforce.

Located near Baltimore, with a convenient shuttle available from both BWI and Amtrak, this regional conference is designed for easy access to professionals in the Northeast. Registration is limited to 70 full overnight registrants and 80 day-only registrants.

Access to the Workforce for Adult and Adolescent Learners with AD/HD and Asperger's will feature three plenary sessions:

- *ADD and Entrepreneurism...Links that Work!*
presented by Richard Cooper, Ph.D., Learning Specialist
- *Asperger's Syndrome, Part I: The Adult Education Class*
presented by Bevan Gibson, M.S. Sp. Ed., Director of the Southern Illinois Professional Development Center
- *Asperger's Syndrome, Part II: Transitioning to Postsecondary Education*
presented by Melissa Arnott-Cox, Ed.D., L.P.C., C.A.C., Director, Academic Success Center, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ

There will also be ample time for small-group discussions of how these breakthrough strategies apply to the evolving economy, issues affecting the new workforce, transition to postsecondary education and the workforce, advocacy issues and techniques, Webinars, leadership options, and more.

Full registration of \$250 covers a day and a half of program activities, overnight accommodations, all meals, and 24-hour access to a hospitality suite. \$190.00 covers full registration without the overnight accommodations. Day-only registration of \$135 covers one day of sessions and all meals.

BSCC is a beautiful, self-contained, countryside facility surrounded by rolling hills and woods with comfortable meeting facilities, customized meals, on-site gym, and acres of walking trails.

For more information, or to register, go to http://www.naasln.org/Regional_2009_conference.htm#2009_NAASLN_CONFERENCE_S or call 888-5-NAASLN (888-562-2756).

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NAASLN's Got It Covered!

Pat Walsh, NAASLN Board Member and Membership Co-Chair

Let's face it. The economic downturn requires that every organization be extremely vigilant in balancing the need for a well-trained professional staff with ever-tightening budgets. Not to worry—NAASLN's got it covered.

We know, for example, that many state agencies now have imposed travel restrictions on their employees and it may be much more difficult for them to justify a trip now compared to prior years. They might be told to attend by conference call. NAASLN's got it covered with hot-topic webinars. See our 2009 line-up below, or go to <http://www.naasln.org/webinars.htm>.

Those who are able to travel may be asked to look for a cheaper hotel than the meeting site. Or arrive late and depart early so they only have one night of hotel costs. You guessed it. NAASLN's got it covered. Our upcoming regional conference features a tight two-day, one-night agenda that is less expensive than any hotel with miles—and includes meals.

(http://www.naasln.org/Regional_2009_conference.htm#2009_NAASLN_CONFERENCE).

Sadly, many agencies are not only cutting expenses. They have been forced to cut positions as well. NAASLN's there, too. By joining the only the only association for those who serve adults with special learning needs, you can network with a national affiliation of professionals while honing your leadership skills on one of our committees. In fact, we've listed ProLiteracy's notice for a director of public policy and government affairs following the Calendar of Events section below.

And while NAASLN's got *your* needs covered, *we're* suffering, too. As a volunteer-based virtual association with one part-time paid administrator and a consulting webmaster, our bloodline is membership and our heart—the Board—is straining under double and triple duty as committee chairs. We need dues, new Board members, and fresh ideas. Membership is a bargain at \$35 per year—that's less than 10 cents a day. We are probably the only professional association that has not increased its dues in years. We also offer organizational and student membership rates.

Now more than ever NAASLN is at the forefront of providing the best professional development to the most providers of services to adults with special learning needs at the lowest costs. We can offer more if you can offer more. What are you waiting for? Renew or join today. And while you are at it, consider joining one of our committees: Policy and Procedures, Communications, Conference, Legislative, Fiscal, Partnership, Membership, or Recruitment.

For a complete listing of all of the membership benefits and a 2009 Membership Form, go to www.naasln.org/membership.htm. You may pay online with a credit card using our

secure online site, or with credit card or check, by fax or by mail. Secure online registration will soon be available.

Visit <http://www.naasln.org/membership.htm>.

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2009 Webinars—Internet-Based Seminars Focus on Hot Topics

Peg Kennedy, M.S., Development Support Specialist, Olney Central College, Robinson, IL

Looking ahead to 2009, we've got a great year of webinars planned. NAASLN's Webinar Series of Internet-based seminars offers topics that impact your student or client populations. Many sessions have companion handouts and video versions available after the live session.

The line-up below includes many names familiar to those who have attended NAASLN conferences. These are nationally recognized experts whose expertise includes the hot topics facing adult learners. They will come right into your office for a fraction of what it would cost to travel to them. Mark you calendars now:

January 28—Donita Kaare, *Learning Styles*

February—Rich Cooper, *Test Anxiety*

March—Robin Schwarz, *Culture and Its Impact on Adult ESOL Learners*

April—Robyn Rennick, *Soft Social Skills*

May—TBD

June—Robin Schwarz, *Visual and Hearing Issues in Adult ESOL Learners*

July—Rich Cooper, *Structured Learning*

August—Pat Hardman, *Brain Research on Dyslexia*

September 14—Laura Weisel, *Emotions 101*

October 5—Laura Weisel, *Emotions 102*

November—Pat Hardman, *Brain Research on ADHD*

So if you are looking for a high impact, low cost, pertinent national conference in a convenient, comfortable, cost-effective, and locale venue, just pull a chair up to your computer, dial in the conference number, join in, and learn!

NAASLN offers an added bonus—either attend the live on-line session or purchase the video session, \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members. You can even do both.

For up-to-date details, go to <http://www.naasln.org/webinars.htm>.

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Spotlight Topic of the Month

ADA Amendment Holds Good News for Adult Learners

Laura Weisel, PhD, NAASLN Board Member and CEO, The TLP Group, Columbus, OH

The recently signed Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA) of 2008 makes it possible for Americans with learning disabilities to access accommodations on high stakes exams (such as the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, medical boards, and others) and in the workplace in keeping with the original intent of the law.

According to Bill Leonard, senior writer for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Online, the ADAA of 2008 clarifies and strengthens worker protections guaranteed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It takes effect January 1, 2009.

“Both houses of Congress passed the ADA Amendments Act (S 3406) with overwhelming bipartisan support,” Leonard said. “The measure was introduced to make legislative fixes for several federal court rulings and restore the original intent of Congress when the law was enacted.”

Laura Kaloi, director of public policy at the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), clarified the law’s impact on adult learners. “One of the greatest wins is the explanation that adult students with learning disabilities deserve the same protections under the law as any other student with a disability,” she said. “While the signing of this bill is a victory for all Americans with disabilities, we have fought hard for and are proud of this important distinction.”

Court decisions had limited worker protections offered under the existing statute and had “excluded individuals who should have been covered under the ADA,” according to a letter sent to Congress from a coalition of business-related and disability advocacy groups, including SHRM, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Diabetes Association, and the National Disability Rights Network.

In a written statement released prior to signing the bill, President George W. Bush said, that the ADA is “instrumental in allowing individuals with disabilities to fully participate in our economy and society, and the administration supports efforts to enhance its protections. The administration believes that the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 is a step in the right direction, and is encouraged by the improvements made to it during the legislative process.”

For more specific information, including the foreword by President Bush and the executive summary, go to:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/freedominitiative/freedominitiative.html>

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Advocacy Update—

NAASLN Backs Proposals to New Administration and Congress

Anne Murr, M.S., Coordinator, Drake University Adult Literacy Center, Des Moines, IA

The election is over and pretty soon things will start to heat up as Washington prepares

for a new administration and new members in the House and Senate. The National Coalition for Literacy (NCL) and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) have issued several recommendations for the new administration and Congress.

NAASLN is a member of NCL, which works to advance adult education, family literacy, and English language acquisition policy and programs in the United States. A key recommendation is that “adult education programs should maintain provisions for the least educated adults in our country.”

NCL has prepared recommendations for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization. The following recommendations refer to the section titled Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. NCL’s recommendation is to retain the current law. It is the purpose of this title to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services, in order to:

1. assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
2. assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and
3. assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

NCL proposes the additional services:

4. assist immigrants and other individuals with limited English proficiency in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and listening/comprehension skills in English, and mathematics skills and acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship; and
5. assist adults served under this title to transition to postsecondary education and training.

For more information about the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, part of WIA, see the National Coalition for Literacy’s recommendations: <http://www.national-coalition-literacy.org/analysis.html>.

NAASLN urges all policy and legislative decisions to include special learning needs of adults (vision, hearing, learning and other disabilities).

NCSDAE Recommendations for the Obama Transition Team

This list of priorities, compiled by NCSDAE, offers advocates for adult basic education a concise description of issues facing our field in the coming year:

1. Increase access for adult education and family literacy services.
2. Reauthorize the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act as a part of WIA or as a separate bill.
3. Incorporate English Literacy/ Civics into the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

4. Refocus NIFL to its original purpose—supporting adult education and family literacy.
5. Re-establish a national adult education research center.
6. Strengthen the delivery system by expanding Career Pathways and Transition to Postsecondary.
7. Establish a line item in the Labor WIA Title I budget for One Stop infrastructure funds.
8. Uncouple the WIA Incentive grants.

For more information about NCSDAE, go to <http://www.ncsdae.org/>

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Success Story— Life Coach Shares Experiences Overcoming Prejudice, Ignorance, and Bias Against Disabilities

Helen Hipp, Life Coach Specializing in Special Needs Coaching for Young Adults and their Parents

Helen Hipp knew something was wrong. Her three year old son didn't act normal at all. He'd rock back and forth and bang his head again and again. He wasn't even trying to talk. His communication skills were simply not up to his playmates level. Something was wrong here. Way wrong. He needed help. She needed help.

They went to a team of specialists. The doctors said his development was delayed. After a battery of tests, her son was assessed by the doctor as displaying "autistic tendencies" but not enough to support a diagnosis.

"Your child is functioning beyond his abilities," one doctor said before he diagnosed her son as "globally mentally retarded."

Stunned and upset and confused, she struggled about what to do. She didn't feel that the doctors had it right at all. She learned that people have serious prejudices when dealing with people with special needs.

And she learned to sidestep the dismal attitudes she encountered.

It took many years. Her son was eventually diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and properly treated.

It's been over 20 years now, but the prejudice and ignorance about disabilities still abound. She has worked with her son and found people who believed in his strengths. She has learned that what is needed is proper care, patience, and caring.

"Use a diagnosis as a suggestion, a springboard for possibilities, not a straightjacket," Helen says. "A *diagnosis* is only a label that is used to *help*. Embrace it; it is only a snapshot in time. It can/probably will change. Know that the diagnosis can change...just as your child changes...so use the support system to your advantage, but exceed it. Go

beyond it...don't let it be the end.

"When dealing with a person with a disability it is crucial to acknowledge the person's worth," she said. "It's crucial to value them as individuals and nurture them. Family, friends, and professionals need to go slow and be non-judgmental."

Helen did that with her son and as a result, he grew up to be resilient and holds an ever-present positive attitude. He has taken hold of the life he wanted for himself, rather than having outside services determine his future.

Today Helen's son is healthy, happy, independent twenty-three-year-old living in Vermont. He lives as he sees fit, shares an apartment with a roommate, and works at a local retail store.

For more information visit Helen's website www.withinlifecoaching.com.

Calling All Success Stories!

*Are you a success story? An adult who overcame a special learning need? If so, **NAASLN Membership News and Views** is looking for you? **Send us your stories.** A look back in your life can be an inspiration for others to look ahead.*

NAASLN is committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs so that they can become successful and productive lifelong learners. Join in NAASLN's commitment by sharing your own story or one about someone else. Send your stories to newsletter@naasln.org or info@naasln.org.

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Website of the Month

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (<http://www.nclld.org/>) is a comprehensive online guide to essential information about learning disabilities, support for adolescents and adults with learning disabilities, public policy, and advocacy tools. NCLD was founded in 1977 by Pete and Carrie Rozelle as the Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities. Since then, the organization has expanded its mission and scope of work to include adults.

In addition to its work promoting the ADA Amendments Act, NCLD's Washington, D.C. office works with policymakers and their staff and with other national organizations to ensure that the specific needs of people with learning disabilities are fully considered in the development of national policies.

The *LD Advocate's Guide*, a complete how-to reference on all aspects of public policy advocacy that offers invaluable information for both first-time and experienced advocates, is available on the website in online and downloadable formats.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events

NAASLN 2009 Regional Conference

Access to the Workforce for Adult and Adolescent Learners with AD/HD and Asperger's Syndrome

February 22-23, 2009

Bon Secour Conference Center, Marriottsville, MD

PAACE Yourself: Keeping Up with Adult Education

Pennsylvania Adult Continuing Education

February 11-13

Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA

National Center for Family Literacy

March 1-3

Annual Conference, Orlando, FL

****30th Annual IACEA Conference***

IACEA—The Voice of Adult Educators in Illinois

March 4-6

Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL

Uncharted Mountains, Forging New Pathways

March 25-29

TESOL Convention, Denver, CO

****COABE Annual Conference***

NAASLN Pre-Conference April 18

April 18-22

Louisville, KY

CCAЕ State Conference

California Council of Adult Educators

April 30-May 1

Pasadena Hilton, Pasadena, CA

****Missouri Valley Adult Education Conference***

June 3-9

Westin Crown Center, Kansas City

****Features a NAASLN Road Trip Track***

NAASLN Road Trip Tracks

Watch the NAASLN Website Calendar for more information on events where NAASLN

will be presenting special tracks, pre-conferences, or sessions. As they are confirmed, they will be posted on our website: www.naasln.org/calendar.htm.

If your state organization wants to feature a NAASLN-on-the-Road track, please contact Bevan Gibson at bgibson@siue.edu or Laura P. Weisel at powerpath@aol.com. It's a great way to add a national angle to your local professional development conferences.

NAASLN conferences often are described as national in scope, but local in intimacy. Along with our 2009 regional conference, the **NAASLN Webinar Series** of Internet-based seminars brings our conference sessions to the comfort of your own office or home. For more information read the article in this newsletter or go to the Webinar page on the NAASLN web site: www.naasln.org/webinars.htm.

ProLiteracy Seeks Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs

ProLiteracy seeks a director of public policy and government affairs for a newly-created Washington D.C. office. Primary responsibilities include managing the public policy and legislative advocacy activities, the development of public policy issues, creation of legislative proposals to Congress, and representing the organization to coalitions, policy-makers, government representatives and potential funders. The ideal candidate must have knowledge of adult literacy policy issues as they relate to disability, health, finance and immigration. A Masters Degree in public policy and/or related field with equivalent experience preferred but not required. Candidates should have experience in lobbying and federal government relations. ProLiteracy is the oldest and largest nongovernmental literacy organization in the world. EEO.

<http://www.proliteracy.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=352&srcid=191>

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Membership Update

Did you enjoy this issue? Continue to be a part of NAASLN's dynamic e-community. If you have not yet done so, please by send in your \$35 annual membership fee today. NAASLN is the only national association for those who serve adults with special learning needs. Members are people like you—educators, trainers, employers, human service providers, and adult learners—who are committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs to become successful and productive lifelong learners.

For a complete listing of all of the membership benefits and a 2008 Membership Form, go to www.naasln.org/membership.htm. You may pay with credit card or check, by fax or by mail. Secure online registration will soon be available.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

NAASLN is devoted to enhancing the opportunities for life-long learning for adults with special learning needs by improving the efforts of adult educators working with these individuals in the full range of life-long learning programs, i.e., ABE, ESL, GED.

Future Newsletter Submissions

Help us meet your needs. Recommend or submit an article, event announcements, book reviews, and web sites links. Either E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or send to: Joan Hudson-Miller, 3849 Albright Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90066 or Fax to 310-354-2601.

All submissions will be reviewed for appropriateness for our readership and will be selected at the discretion of the newsletter editors.

Sharing information

Do you have ideas on how you would like to better network with other members? Are there other features you would like to see in this Newsletter and on our website? E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or leave a message on at 888-5NAASLN (888-562-2756).

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Help Spread the Word

Please forward this newsletter to other educators and interested parties. If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to become a member of NAASLN and a regular subscriber, send an email to info@naasln.org for membership information or visit our web site: www.naasln.org/membership.htm.

We practice Permission Marketing. Go to our website to read our Privacy newsletter@naasln.org.

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Send comments or questions about this newsletter by email to newsletter@naasln.org.

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