

# NEWS FOR NETWORKING

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## The Joy of Mono-tasking

by Carol Barnier

I'm confused by the catch phrase Multi-tasking...not because I don't know what it means, but because I can't imagine wanting to do more of it. Parents have been masters at multi-tasking for thousands of years. You probably are too. Think about pretty much any given moment of your day.

A child spills some juice so...what do you do?

You grab a towel off your shoulder to catch it--at the same time you quickly slide the school books out of the way...because...*the juice is coming!*

Now with both hands frantically engaged in a save-the-spelling books campaign,

you also have to pause, just for a moment, to level the plate of creamed corn that the three year old is bringing to the table.

You also need to mention that  
=the bath water is still running up stairs,  
=the dog wants to be let in,  
=the sought-after shoe that matches the one your child is wearing is in the vegetable crisper and  
=that the missing gerbil just ran under the couch. This is all happening pretty much simultaneously...all...day...long.

And in the midst of all of this, have you noticed? No one stops by to visit saying "Hey there, why don't you step

away from all this for awhile and go...oh I don't know...maybe read a delicious book that will keep you absorbed for hours." That visitor hasn't dropped by yet.

If you're like me, you don't want more training in multi-tasking, thank you very much.

You want a break from it. You want to MONO-task. Ah...the luxury.

Before I had kids I had this wonderful thought routine. I started a thought. I thought about it. I finished the thought. What a concept. I even sometimes sat the thought on my back burner

***Mono-tasking continued on Back Page***

## This is My Story

By Victorine Nde

*This story and the stories that follow were submitted by attendees of the IEIC Parent Conference and Retreat. Thank you to all that shared your story.*

I have been blessed with five boys. Four of my own

and one stepson. They range in age from 10 years to 15 months old.

I have been able to attend this seminar due to the circumstances with my 3 year old, Clovis. We are not sure of his diagnosis at this time

but the School District has discovered some issues with him at school and it has been most often the same at home. While my husband and I are hoping he grows

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News for Networking is brought to you by the Dakota County Interagency Early Intervention Committee

Serving Children Birth to Pre-kindergarten with Disabilities

## Our Family Story

By Carlyn Miller-Gore

Our son Gabe recently began to receive special education and occupation therapy services under the umbrella of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). To say autism and Gabe in the same breath is still shocking for me. Gabe was diagnosed with ADHD last summer and has been involved in OT to assist with sensory issues and fine motor skills, as well as home and recreational therapy activities. We decided to try and avoid medication and try other methods first, especially since Gabe is only six years old. Everything seems to be getting better, Gabe doesn't have so many meltdowns and he seems more able to talk about things that are affecting him like getting distracted or forgetting things.

We recently sat down with school personnel to discuss the results of intensive assessments, including IQ, speech and motor. We decided to create a 504 plan under the ADHD diagnosis. Then in a

*"We're still trying to understand autism... but plan to begin my research here at this conference"*

follow-up meeting, the district's autism specialist suggested we review the eligibility criteria for ASD. I think we were all

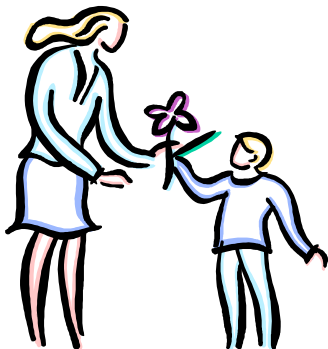
reeling from surprise and shock when we discovered that Gabe qualified.

Not all of the professionals involved with Gabe agree with this assessment and that makes this more difficult. We're still trying to understand autism and if it is truly what Gabe has. I understand that many kids with autism are also dealing with ADHD. I ordered some books to read but plan to begin my research here, at this conference, in hope that other parents and professionals can help us better understand what Gabe needs.

## Love for a Child

By Tracy Lilja

As a mother of three beautiful children I've learned a lot about unconditional love but I never knew that I could love someone in every way possible. My special 4 year old boy is the sweetest and happiest kid ever. But in these short years we've had to adjust to this new lifestyle and challenging circumstances. But I know that it's all worth it when he can still wake up everyday with a beautiful smile on his face.



Looking back on these trying years I've learned not to take anything for granted like walking, talking, and understanding. Everyday is a challenge but the reward of seeing him smile or laugh makes it worth it.

I've learned that life is truly a blessing and that everyday I am extremely thankful to be his Mommy. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to love someone and be loved back even when they can't say it but they can show it.

I have enjoyed my special time away to come to this educational parent retreat. I've enjoyed being able to listen to all the great families, learn from the informative conferences, eat great food, and most of all enjoy my first night of rest in over two years.

Thank you for the delightful experience.

## Save the Date



**The Dakota County  
Early Childhood  
Parent Conference and  
Retreat will be  
held on  
April 24 & 25, 2010  
at the Marriott South  
west in Minnetonka**

Look for your registration brochure in the mail in February from your child's school program

# DAKOTA COUNTY SUPPORT GROUPS

## Arc Sibshops

Connections and Support for Siblings of All Ages  
Having a family member of any age with a disability can be stressful for the entire family – including siblings, who may sometimes feel overlooked. Children and adults who have brothers and sisters with intellectual or developmental disabilities can connect at Arc's Sibshops, which give siblings a place to explore their feelings, learn about disabilities and help each other with the issues they face.

Arc has Sibshops for two age groups: Sibshop I for kids ages 6 - 8 and Sibshop II for kids ages 9 - 12. At Sibshops I and II, kids enjoy age-appropriate games and activities that give kids an opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences. Sibshops meet once per month during the school year.

To join a sibling group please call Arc at 952-920-0855 and complete a pre-registration form. Sibshops are free for Arc members. The cost for non-members is \$10 per participant for each monthly session.

### Courage Center

100 Cobblestone Lane, Burnsville  
Sibshop I & II (ages 6-12)  
First Saturday of the month, 9:30-11:30 AM  
Meeting dates: Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5, Jan 9 (date change), Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 10 (date change), May 1  
In collaboration with Courage Center of Burnsville

### Shephard of the Valley Church

12650 Johnny Cake Ridge Road, Apple Valley  
Sibshop I&II (ages 6-12)  
Third Monday of the month 6-8 pm  
Meeting Dates: Oct 19, Nov 16, No Dec meeting, Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 15, Apr 19, May 17  
For children whose parents attend the South of the River Group for Parents of Children with Down Syndrome

## Networking groups

### Down Syndrome Group

South of the River Group for Parents of Children with Down Syndrome  
Shepherd of the Valley Church  
12650 Johnny Cake Ridge Road  
Apple Valley  
Third Monday 6-8 pm  
Meeting Dates: : Oct 19, Nov 16, No Dec meeting, Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 15, Apr 19, May 17, June 21

For more information on Sibshops, Networking groups and other Arc programs and services please go to [www.arcgreatertwincities.org](http://www.arcgreatertwincities.org)

## NAMI PRESENTS: Parent Connections Group

Are you concerned about your child's behavior?

Are you looking to connect with other parents?

Are you looking for resources and ideas?

Join other parents to discuss your children's challenging behaviors, learn new ideas, and connect with resources in the community. Childcare is available for children ages 4 to 14 at the Apple Valley and Burnsville group. Information on monthly speakers and other events for families can be found on the NAMI website.

### Apple Valley

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month  
Dakota Ridge School  
4629 144<sup>th</sup> Street  
Apple Valley, MN 55124

### Burnsville

9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Every Wednesday  
Jo Jo's Rise and Wine  
Nicollet Avenue  
Burnsville, MN 55337

### Eagan (adult family members)

7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month  
Christ Lutheran Church  
1930 Diffley Road  
Eagan, MN 55123

### West St. Paul

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Dec. 16th  
St. Stephens Church  
Noreen Center  
1575 Charlton Ave  
W. St. Paul, MN 55118

### NAMI Minnesota

800 Transfer Road, Suite 7A  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-645-2948  
1-888-NAMI-HELPS  
[www.namimn.org](http://www.namimn.org)

to simmer for a time while I thought of other things.

But now that I have kids, practically every thought I start is interrupted and I have to place it into a sort of holding pattern over my head, where it cycles around and waits for me to retrieve it to eventually give it its rightful completion. There is a virtual Jell-O salad hanging over me, with chunks of incompleting thoughts, just whirling and waiting.

I mean this next statement though very seriously. I didn't realize the value of a completed thought until I wasn't permitted any more of them. This constant interruption to my thoughts???...it's not JUST inconvenient...it has actually changed me. I am not the multi-tasking, plate spinning woman of wonder that I once was. For example, I no longer *have* a back burner. Somewhere along the line, someone snuck in and removed my trusty four burner model and stuck me with a single burner only unit. Truly, I can handle about one thought stream at a time.

Here's how I know this.

I walk up to two women who are talking and I have a question. I know that I have to pause before I interject my question. That's just common courtesy, right? I know that. But now I also know that when there is a pause in the conversation, I will no longer have a clue...why I'm standing there. I know this about myself. All my back burners are gone.

Finding a solution to this particular dilemma and many others required that I first own up to some truths about myself. I had to admit that I was not a naturally ordered woman, no matter how I might try to be one, no matter how many great books I read on *Ordering Your Life*. Martha Stewart had nothing to fear from me. But then, with that truth firmly in hand, I began gathering strategies that worked with the non-linear mind (remember, we're not disordered or befuddled. We're NON-linear)

And the theme of my strategies became...

*Store all needed information somewhere other than your brain, because it is the least reliable place that you have.*

Once I owned that truth, I finally found strategies that worked.

So what did I do to keep from having that blank look on my face when the two women paused and looked my way? It was then that I realized I knew the Sign Language Alphabet. (It's really easy to learn.) And I began to hold a letter in my hand that would prompt as to what I wanted to ask. If I needed to ask about the date of the upcoming Women's Brunch, I might hold a letter "B" in my hand. And when it was my turn to speak, I checked my hand (cause, you know, it's always with me), saw the letter, and jumped into my question with barely a pause.

## Dakota County IEIC Vision

*Believing that children do best in strong families and that the existence of a disability does not equal a child's life, and trusting that families need to make their own choices, Dakota County early intervention services will:*

- A. Focus on family-identified concerns and needs*
- B. Be the least intrusive possible*
- C. Preserve and promote family competence*
- D. Keep authority control and decision making in the family*
- E. Offer information so families can make informed decisions*
- F. Honor existing relationships and build services around those relationships as much as possible.*

This method has saved me over and over again. I use it on the phone. I use it in conversations when I need to wait my turn. I use it any time I have to wait and hold a thought. It keeps both my thought and my manners intact (for a change).



Carol Barnier's business cards read: *Delightful Speaker, Entertaining Author, Adequate Wife, Pitiful Housekeeper.* She will be presenting at the Dakota County Parent Retreat and Conference on April 24 and 25, 2010. Parents with children ages birth to pre-kindergarten are eligible to attend. Look for a registration form from your school district in February.

### *My Story continued from Front Page*

as a healthy child, we are grateful that with help from an organization such as ARC we will be able to raise him with all the resources available. I would like to thank all the organizations involved for giving us this opportunity to learn more and to help us cope with such challenges as raising our son.

Thank you so very much ARC Greater Twin Cities.