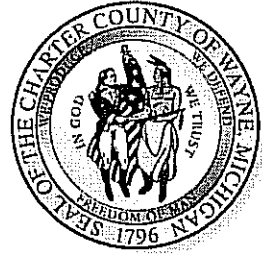




**Detroit-Wayne County  
Community Mental Health Agency**

*Always here... whenever you need us.*



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Mental Health Agency recognizes Autism Awareness Month - April 2008**

The Agency recognizes April as Autism Awareness Month. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) or Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) are characteristics of psychological conditions which represent a widespread of abnormalities of social interactions, communications, severe restricted interests and highly repetitive behavior. The three main forms of ASD are autism, Asperger Syndrome and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) each subset of this disorder has a very specific subset of diagnosed criteria however, often identified as autism or autistic because of certain common traits that may be thought to be stereotypical regarding the disease. Autism is usually first diagnosed early in childhood before age three. Children with autism might have problems talking with you or they may avoid looking you in the eye when you talk to them. They may have to line up their pencils before they can pay attention or they may say the same sentence repetitively, again and again to calm themselves down. They may flap their arms to tell you they are happy or they might hurt themselves to they are not. Some people with autism never become verbal. Because people with autism can have very different symptoms it is described medically using the spectrum disorder. Asperger syndrome is the milder version of the disorder.

The cause of Autism is still unknown and presently there is no cure, however treatment helps including behavioral, and communication therapies. There are also some medicines which may control symptoms of the disease.

Child advocate and mother of child who has autism, Ms. Celena Barnes says “ an informed parent is advantageous for any child with autism, getting information, learning about the condition and options for traditional and alternative treatment for care is very important. Also linking up with parents who have autistic children provides additional support it lends itself to the potential that what has worked for them, may work for you, it’s invaluable to have the collective experiences of other families facing the challenges that the disorder some time creates.”

The Center for Disease Control (CDD) reported that some 560,000 children have some form of autism. For more information about services for Autistic Spectrum Disorders contact Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency toll free at 1 800 241-4949.