

**NAA – NEW YORK METRO CHAPTER
ACTIVITY REPORT
January 2010 – December 2010**

CORPORATE BUSINESS

May 2010 Federal 990-N and New York State CHAR-500 annual tax documents filed

**THE 2010 NATIONAL AUTISM ASSOCIATION –
NEW YORK METRO CHAPTER BOARD**

In 2010, the NAA – NY Metro Board was comprised of three Officers and the Chairs/Co-Chairs of six committees, as well as liaisons for our Staten Island and Westchester County branches. At the end of 2010, the Board Members were:

Officers

President:	Sabeeha Rehman, FACHE
Vice President/Treasurer	Kim Mack Rosenberg
Secretary:	Peggy Becker

Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs

Advocacy:	Khalid Rehman
Fund Raising:	Stuart Flaum
Membership:	Peggy Becker
Parent Mentoring:	Dara Berger/Kathleen Reily
Program:	Mark Raisbeck/Sujata Setya/Katie Wright
Website:	Amy Fisch/Kirstin Boncher
Staten Island Liaison:	Mary Hernandez
Westchester Liaison:	Lisa Rudley

Board business meetings were held on the following dates in 2010:

January 20	February 16	March 17
April 20	May 5	May 19
June 15	July 21	October 19
November 23		

Board meetings are held either in person or via conference call. Each year we hold an extended board meeting to conduct strategic planning for the upcoming year. The 2010 strategic planning session was held on January 20, 2010. Prior to each board meeting, the Secretary circulates an agenda of action items identified by the Officers and Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs for the upcoming meeting as well as the minutes of the immediately preceding meeting. Prior to each board meeting, the board members also submit written reports updating the board regarding chapter and committee activities.

Agendas, minutes and board member reports are available upon request.

INITIATIVES - 2010

Our 2010 goals, identified at our January 20, 2010 strategic planning meeting, included:

1. To be a resource to families and the community;
2. To educate;
3. To advocate;
4. To increase awareness; and
5. To fundraise

To reach these goals, our officers and committees have continued or launched the following programs:

1. Educational Programs;
2. Parent Networking Exchange Meetings;
3. Staten Island Branch events;
4. Westchester Branch events;
5. Beth Israel Medical Center Collaboration;
6. Helping Hand Grants;
7. NAAvigators, our parent mentoring program;
8. Support Group;
9. Summer Program to fill the gap between Extended School Year (ESY) and regular school year services;
10. Workshops and Other Special Events (including book readings);
11. Bowlathon Fundraiser;
12. Advocacy & Awareness, including continued collaboration with Autism Action Network to provide information to our constituents about important legislation and other issues relevant to the autism community;
13. Media, including response to inquiries on newsbreaking events;
14. Annual Autism/Asperger Conference in collaboration with Autism Conferences of America, Inc.;
15. Membership; and
16. Social Media

STATEN ISLAND AND WESTCHESTER BRANCHES

In addition to our primary sites in Manhattan, we now have branches in Staten Island and in Westchester County. The [Westchester County Branch](#), our newest, officially became part of NAA – NY Metro in October 2010, when we joined forces with two Westchester-based parent groups, the Biomedical Learning Cooperative and Healing with Homeopathy.

Mary Hernandez is our Branch Leader on Staten Island and Lisa Rudley and Tricia Zarro are Co-Branch Leaders in Westchester. Both branches conduct local meetings, giving parents and professionals who cannot travel to all our Manhattan events the chance to hear NAA – NY Metro speakers as well.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Educational presentations are held every month, with the exception of August and December. Details of the programs are posted on our [website](#) and on our [blog](#).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
January 27, 2010	Laura Hynes, LMSW & RDI Program Certified Consultant	Relationship Development Intervention: A New Approach to Remediating the Deficits of ASD
February 23, 2010	Pierre Fontaine, RSHom (NA), CCH	Classical Homeopathy and Autism
March 24, 2010	Susan Luger, MS, LCSW	Educational Advocacy
April, 27, 2010	David Kirby	Autism, <i>Animal Factory</i> , and How the Two Intersect
May 26, 2010	Raphael Kellman, MD	The Autism-Thyroid Connection
June 22, 2010	Jeffrey Bradstreet, MD	Common Problems and Effective Treatments (DVD presentation)
July 28, 2010	Darin Ingels, ND	The Role of Allergies and Immunotherapy in Autism
September 22, 2010	Jeffrey Becker, O.D.	How Vision Effects the Learning Process in Autistic Children
October 26, 2010	Harry Schneider, MD, PhD	New Research and Treatments to Restore Language in Children with ASD
November 16, 2010	Raun K. Kaufman	The Son-Rise Program® - Unique Ways to Reach, Teach and Have A More Meaningful Relationship With Your Child

PARENT NETWORK EXCHANGE MEETINGS (PNEM)

PNEMs are moderated by a presenter/facilitator in a more informal, interactive setting than the monthly education presentations, allowing parents to learn and to share their experiences. PNEM sessions are held approximately monthly.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
March 5, 2010	Mark Berger, CPA Kim Mack Rosenberg	Tax Deductions for Families with Special Needs
April 7, 2010	Sarah Birnbaum	Transitioning from EI to CPSE and CPSE to CSE
April 22, 2010	Fred Pescatore, MD, MPH, CCN, Karen Paris, RPA, and Geri Brewster, RD, MPH, CDN	Biomedical Therapies – A Practical Approach
June 19, 2010	Eric Chessen	Bike Riding Clinic
September 16, 2010	Geri Brewster, RD, MPH, CDN	How Food Influences Immunity and Behavior in Children
October 14, 2010	Mary Somoza	How to be Your Child’s Best Advocate
November 10, 2010	Kim Stagliano	Book reading and signing for <i>All I Can Handle: I’m No Mother Teresa</i>

STATEN ISLAND BRANCH

The Staten Island Branch, led by Mary Hernandez, organizes a variety of meetings, workshops and other events throughout the year.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
February 11, 2010		NAA NY Metro Staten Island Branch Meeting
February 24, 2010	Julie Matthews, CNC	DVD Presentation: Dietary Interventions (2008 NAA Conference), with discussion following
March 4, 2010		NAA - NY Metro Staten Island Branch Meeting
March 13, 2010	Devin Houston, PhD	The Role of Enzymes in Autism and Gut Issues
June 17, 2010	Raphael Kellman, MD	The Autism-Thyroid Connection
July 28, 2010	Chantal Sicile-Kira and Jeremy Kira	Transitioning to Adulthood with Autism: Hope, Inspiration and Information

WESTCHESTER BRANCH

The Westchester Branch, led by Tricia Zarro and Lisa Rudley, was formally announced to our constituency on October 19, 2010. Lisa and Tricia, in coordination with the Program Committee, organize speakers and roundtable discussions on a wide variety of topics. Beginning in early 2011, the Branch will hold meetings and plans to host approximately 1-2 events each month.

COLLABORATION WITH BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PEDIATRICS

NAA – NY Metro began collaborating in 2010 with Dr. Asma Sadiq and the Beth Israel Medical Center Division of Developmental Pediatrics to bring to the hospital's patients and staff critical information for newly diagnosed families and cutting edge information on treatments for autism. We work closely with Dr. Sadiq, the hospital's Chief of Developmental Pediatrics, and Stacey Purro, her social worker. Originally we anticipated scheduling 3 or 4 events a year as part of this collaboration but have found that the needs of this community supported presenting more events and, to meet those needs, we have been working with Dr. Sadiq and Ms. Purro to schedule additional events.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
May 20, 2010	Sarah Birnbaum	Transitioning your child from EI to CPSE and from CPSE to CSE
July 29, 2010	Chantal Sicile-Kira and Jeremy Kira	Transitioning to Adulthood with Autism: Hope, Inspiration and Information
September 30, 2010	Geri Brewster RD MPH CDN and Kirstin Boncher	How Food Influences Behavior in Children and How to Keep Your Child's Immune System Strong

SPECIAL EVENTS

In addition to our regularly scheduled events, the Chapter occasionally has the opportunity to present special events and workshops.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
March 10, 2010	Life After High School Workshop For Parents of Children with Special Needs, presented by Ms. Helene F. Craner, L.M.S.W., the Associate Director of the Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc. for the benefit of our Chapter
July 8, 2010	An evening with Andrew Wakefield. Dr. Wakefield discussed his book, <i>Callous Disregard</i> , and his research, and answered many questions from the standing-room-only audience
August 15, 2010	NAA – NY Metro and Super Soccer Stars for Special Needs Soccer Clinic for

Children 6-16 in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY

[October 2, 2010](#) NAA – NY Metro and Katie Wright hosted a book party for Dan Olmsted’s and Mark Blaxill’s *Age of Autism*

[December 7, 2010](#) Holiday Party honoring our speakers and volunteers, with delicious GF/CF food prepared by Kirstin Boncher of [What to Feed Your Kids](#) and gift bags created by Kathleen Reily of [Autism Help at Home](#) – both NAA – NY Metro Board members

NAAVIGATORS – PARENT MENTORING PROGRAM

NAA – New York Metro has developed a roster of parent mentors, called NAAvigators, with knowledge of a wide range of issues relevant to ASD. Currently approximately twenty NAAvigators are registered to provide mentoring services. Parents (and others) can either contact NAA – NY Metro through our telephone line or access the NAAvigator program through our [website](#). NAA – NY Metro conducts an assessment of the family’s needs and then matches the parent in need with a NAAvigator best suited to address those needs. Most NAAvigators are parents of children with special needs, though some professionals, such as nutritionists, also serve as NAAvigators. NAAvigators provide guidance to, among others, parents of newly-diagnosed children, parents looking to explore new treatment modalities, or parents challenged by changing circumstances (*e.g.*, changing schools, moving from school-aged services to adult services, or residential and employment issues for adults on the spectrum).

Social workers and other professionals are also beginning to reach out to us for help, as are siblings and other relatives of those with autism (this is especially true with respect to adults with ASDs).

We currently are updating our NAAvigator list and recruiting new NAAvigators to help address the needs of the several referrals we receive weekly.

SUPPORT GROUP

The Parent Mentoring Committee continued to oversee the Support Group begun in October 2009. Dr. Lauren Tobing-Puente, a psychologist at the Rebecca School, has continued to moderate the group. Meetings generally are held on the first Thursday of each month and in 2010 the Support Group met on the following dates:

January 7	February 4	March 4
April 8	May 6	June 3
July 15	October 7	November 4
December 2		

Thanks to Dr. Tobing-Puente’s generous donation of her time, we are able to operate the support group at no charge to participants. We do, however, limit the number of attendees and require RSVPs so that everyone attending can fully participate and feel comfortable. Unlike our other

regularly scheduled events, out of respect for the participants' privacy, attendance at our support groups is limited to parents and other caregivers.

FUNDRAISING

On March 21, 2010, NAA – NY Metro held its first fundraiser. Our [bowlathon](#) raised over \$50,000 for the Chapter and we received tremendous support from donors and sponsors. The money raised will allow NAA – NY Metro to run in late August 2011 a professionally staffed summer programs for children in NYC to fill the gap between the end of ESY (summer) services and the beginning of school, a difficult time for many families. Because of the generosity of our donors, we are able to charge only a small administrative fee of \$50 to families for each weeklong session. Our fundraising efforts also allowed us to kick off our local “Helping Hand” Grant Program, modeled on the national program. We announced our first round of grants in November 2010 (with a December 31, 2010 deadline). We initially intended to give 8 one-time \$500 grants but in early 2011, after reviewing applications, we awarded one-time grants of \$500 to 10 families. A second round of grants will be announced in mid-2011.

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

NAA – NY Metro continues to work individually and collaboratively with other organizations to impact legislative, executive and other legal matters at all levels – local, state and national. In particular, NAA – NY Metro works in collaboration with [Autism Action Network](#) to make its membership aware of opportunities to impact (through phone calls, faxes, emails, etc.) important measures in New York State and elsewhere.

2010 Legislation NAA – New York Metro Supported:

- NYS Health Insurance Bills A6888/S6123 to amend the current health insurance laws to include explicit coverage for autism related issues
- NYS A880 Child Vaccination (to strengthen medical exemptions) and A883 Religious Exemption (to strengthen religious exemptions)

2010 Legislation NAA – New York Metro Opposed:

- NYS A6702/S4779 Mandating HPV Vaccine
- NYS A10372/S7000a – Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Related Disorders, which would have likely reduced services provided to those with autism spectrum disorders. This bill ultimately was vetoed by Governor Paterson
- NYS Regents' cuts of related services to children with ASD.

Other 2010 Advocacy and Awareness Activities:

- April 19, 2010 Autism Awareness Month Event at City Hall
 - NAA – NY Metro in collaboration with Commissioner Matthew Sapolin, of the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities commemorated Autism Awareness Month in the Council Chamber at New York City Hall. 50-75 people attended,

including representatives of autism related schools, service providers, agencies, government, the United Nations and other autism organizations.

- The NAA – New York Metro Chapter honored Kim Stagliano with its Spirit of Hope Award
- Christine C. Quinn, Speaker of the NYC Council, issued a proclamation honoring NAA – NY Metro for outstanding support to all individuals affected by autism
- On May 24, 2010, NAA – NY Metro Chapter Officers Sabeeha Rehman and Kim Mack Rosenberg, along with many others, [gathered in front of NBC's Today Show](#) to offer support to Andrew Wakefield, who appeared on the show that morning.
- On behalf of the Chapter and its officers, Kim Mack Rosenberg submitted [written testimony on behalf of NAA – NY Metro](#) to the NY Office for People with Disabilities Forum held on August 23, 2010.
- On September 13, 2010, several representatives from NAA – NY Metro helped to organize and participated in a meeting with Polly Tommey of [Autism Trust](#) and others to discuss housing, educational, vocational and medical needs for people on the autism spectrum as they reach adulthood.
- On October 14, 2010, Khalid Rehman, Lisa Rudley and others participated in a rally and press conference in front of Governor Paterson's NYC office to urge him to veto the autism insurance bill S7000b.
- Khalid Rehman, Chair of the NAA – NY Metro Advocacy Committee, sent a letter to Fox Studios encouraging promotion of its movie "My name is Khan," a Bollywood/Hollywood production in which the main character is on the spectrum.

[Advocacy](#) and [Awareness](#) initiatives are posted on our website

COLLABORATION & OUTREACH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
January 21, 2010	Board Members Sabeeha and Khalid Rehman, Kim Mack Rosenberg, Mary Hernandez, Stuart Flaum attended the Action for Autism Gala and Sabeeha and Kim accepted a donation from Next Generation Beverage on behalf of National Autism Association.
February 9, 2010	NAA – NY Metro's Staten Island Branch organized and participated in a Special Diets for Autism Fair on Staten Island.
March 8, 2010	Kim Mack Rosenberg and Peggy Becker attended a benefit for the Learning Spring School, a Manhattan school for children with ASD.
April 14, 2010	Kim Mack Rosenberg and Peggy Becker attended a screening of <i>The Horse Boy</i> benefiting S.N.A.C.K. , a local sports and activities program for

children on the spectrum.

- [May 3, 2010](#) Several board members from NAA – NY Metro and many active NAA – NY Metro members attended a cocktail party to support the [Elizabeth Birth Center for Autism Law and Advocacy](#) held in New York City. The event honored John Gilmore, Robert Krakow and Mary Coyle.
- May 26, 2010 NAA – NY Metro Chapter was a [participating organization at the American Rally for Personal Rights](#) and Kim Mack Rosenberg participated in planning the Rally and attended. A satellite rally was held in NYC.
- May 27, 2010 Kim Mack Rosenberg presented at the [Elizabeth Birt Center for Autism and Advocacy Training](#) at the [AutismOne](#) Conference in Chicago, IL, with Rick Ellis, a forensic psychologist, on the topic of expert witnesses. Kim, who is a lawyer, is on the [EBCALA](#) Board.
- [June 13, 2010](#) NAA – NY Metro took a table at the 2010 NYC Autism Speaks Walk
- June 25-26, 2010 NAA – NY Metro took a table at the First Annual Creative, Expressive and Performing Arts and Autism organized by [Touching Humanity, Inc.](#) and held at Hunter College in New York City.
- July 2010 Kim Mack Rosenberg joined the board of the [Center for Personal Rights](#).
- [Oct 23-24, 2010](#) For the third year in a row, NAA – New York Metro, in collaboration with Autism Conferences of America, participated in a 2-day conference in New York City. With high-interest speakers, including Temple Grandin, there were many attendees and exhibitors on hand. We received positive feedback again this year and hope to continue our collaboration with ACA.

These forums and organizations have been and will continue to be a source of networking, collaboration, and outreach. With respect to events, after each event, an email is sent to those with whom a contact was established, re-introducing oneself and offering an opportunity to collaborate.

PRESS & MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
February 3, 2010	The NY Post featured Sabeeha Rehman, NAA – NY Metro’s President, in an article concerning Dr. Andrew Wakefield and The Lancet’s retraction of the 1998 study authored by Dr. Wakefield and others
February 7, 2010	NAA – NY Metro Responded to New York Times February 6, 2010 Editorial, “A Welcome Retraction” Feb. 6, 2010
February 8, 2010	New York Magazine quoted NAA – NY Metro President Sabeeha

Rehman in [*Hollywood's big on autism... within reason*](#)

- February 18, 2010 DNA Info featured NAA – New York Metro Secretary Peggy Becker in [*Autism Reported in High Numbers, but Manhattan Parents Still Grasp for Understanding*](#)
- April 7, 2010 Sabeeha Rehman, NAA – New York Metro’s President, was featured on WNBC’s [*The Debrief with David Ushery*](#) during Autism Awareness Month
- July 21, 2010 [*Age of Autism*](#) reported on NAA New York Metro Chapter’s event featuring Dr. Andrew Wakefield
- August 18, 2010 [*NAA – NY Metro participated*](#) in a [*press conference*](#) urging New York’s Governor Paterson to veto autism insurance bill S7000b
- December 11, 2010 [*Huffington Post featured a story on NAA - NY Metro Chapter Board Member Mark Raisbeck’s son's remarkable recovery*](#)

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee has developed a mailing list and a roster of NAA members.

- # of individuals on Constant Contact mailing list: 2,474
- # NAA members: 900 [*This is an estimate, based on self-reporting and partial reporting*]

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our website, www.naanyc.org, provides those in our community with a great deal of information organized in the following main categories (several of which are further divided into subcategories):

- <http://www.onelittlebiteatitime.blogspot.com/>
- About Us
- Join Us
- Help For Parents
- Calendar of Events
- All About Autism
- Advocacy
- Awareness
- Press/Media
- Our Sponsors
- How You Can Help

Our blog, www.naanyc.blogspot.com, provides readers with colorful, first person accounts of past chapter events, including, when possible, Power Points, videos, and other materials from events, and resources for families and caregivers, such as recipes, holiday shopping tips, GFCF products, and personal stories by families. Readers can offer their comments on the postings. We also have a [YouTube Channel](#) featuring videos of some of our speakers. Some of our officers and committee chairs also blog and these blogs can be additional sources of getting the

word out about NAA-NY Metro events and other important autism information. Some examples include <http://www.whattofeedyourkids.blogspot.com>, <http://onelittlebiteatatime.blogspot.com> and <http://www.embracingwellness.blogspot.com>.

NAA – NY Metro also is active on [Facebook](#), where 705 Facebook users like us, and Twitter, where we have 177 followers.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2011 we hope to continue our established programs and:

- Update, revise and relaunch our website and blog to be more professional and user-friendly;
- Start an e-newsletter;
- Fundraise for additional and expanded programming;
- In collaboration with Watch Me Grow, a sensory gym, provide several low-cost summer programs to provide a structured program to children during the gap between the end of ESY services and the beginning of the school year;
- Continue our Helping Hand Grant Program;
- Increase our membership;
- Continue to raise our profile in the local community, particularly in the areas in which we do not yet have branches of our Chapter;
- Utilize social media to get NAA – NY Metro’s message out;
- Continue to be active not only in our own Chapter but in other organizations that help our community and provide us the opportunity to get NAA – NY Metro’s name better known;
- Bring in well-known speakers, both local and national experts, on a variety of treatment modalities and, where possible, hold longer workshops led by these experts;
- Continue to look for opportunities to have special events for our families, which offer parents and children a safe, comfortable environment as well as a fun day; and
- Create YouTube videos of speakers at our monthly events so that those unable to attend may view the talks online.