

AUTISM SOCIETY
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
 Central Virginia

Building Relationships Through Virtual & Community Programming

VCU ACE "Lunch and Learn" Series
 Sarah Doyle, PhD: ASCV Program & Outreach Director



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ASCV: Our Mission & Vision

Mission: To improve the lives of all impacted by autism by maximizing the self-sufficiency, independence, and quality of life for all living with autism

For over 30 years, the ASCV has served as one of the region's premier sources of education, advocacy, services and support for individuals with autism, their families and friends, and professionals.

Vision: Every individuals with ASD receives early identification, appropriate treatments, support, and a quality of life that helps each person achieve their highest potential.

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ASCV: Services & Supports

We provides services and supports at any age, and any stage, from diagnosis throughout the lifespan.

- Social, Recreational & Support Programming
- Educational Workshops
- Training in the Community
- Information & Referral Services
- Scholarships
- Advocacy




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The Importance of Connection

Our local autism community's need for support, programs, and resources has never been greater.

- Loss of familiar routines
- Fragmented support structures
- Financial hardship

Times of disruption are especially difficult for individuals with autism.

Given the current pandemic, individuals with autism are particularly vulnerable to social isolation, compromised mental health, and interruptions to academic, behavioral, and social progress



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"From online Zoom meetings and support groups to the COVID-19 Relief Fund, the ASCV is adapting to what members need. It's easy to feel isolated when you're parenting a child with ASD, add current events and it can feel like you're an island alone in a storm beyond your control. It is so nice to have the ASCV to turn to for support."

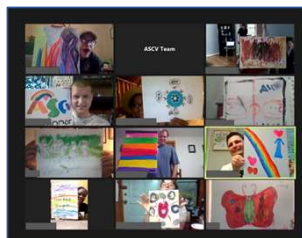
- ASCV Caregiver



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"Having the ability to connect with others virtually when we are unable to do it in person is very valuable to me. The ASCV is always thinking of new ways to engage the autism community, no matter what age you are."

- ASCV Adult Social Group Participant



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"I plan to come to every Sibshop as a way to help me through this."
 - ASCV Sibling

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"The ASCV has meant so much to me in these past months. I met some of my closest friends here and virtual programs such as Teen Social Group and ComedySportz Improv Workshops have helped us stay in touch. I also enjoy doing the programs with the SMV and ART 180 as well as virtual workouts with GEMA and RCIG. I'd probably be really bored and lonely without the ASCV."
 - ASCV Teen Participant




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"This was our daughter's first trip to the pumpkin patch, and she had a fantastic time. It was really great for her to be in a place where she could be herself. The farm gave her space to physically and vocally 'spread out' without having to be self-conscious about others looking at her... something she has only recently gained awareness of."
 - ASCV Caregiver




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"Sam, a very social guy, has loved the many virtual opportunities and events offered by the ASCV during the pandemic. He looks forward each week to the RCIG workout, the SMV class, and other events. Thanks so much, ASCV, for keeping Sam connected to the community during these difficult times."

- ASCV Caregiver

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"The ASCV has helped me build a new community in an accessible way. The staff, facilitators, and fellow program attendees created welcoming and positive environments. It felt like, though we were all coming from different places and spaces, we were familiar with the same language."

- ASCV Adult Participant




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The Power of Relationships

Creating unique opportunities that:

- Promote the development of important life and social skills
- Increase self-sufficiency, independence, and quality of life
- Encourage self-determination and meaningful participation in our local community
- Strengthen supports available to, and relationships between, individuals with autism and their families

Using connections and relationships to:

- Spread awareness
- Promote acceptance
- Ignite change



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