

More than Just a Paycheck: NFAR-funded Study Looks at Self Employment Options for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

With the assistance of grant funding awarded by the National Foundation for Autism Research (NFAR), Michelle Lazar, MA, MT-BC, Autism Specialist and Dr. Bonnie Kraemer of San Diego State University conducted a research study that investigated the area of autism and self-employment. Given the difficulty individuals on the spectrum often face in finding meaningful employment, Ms. Lazar and Dr. Kraemer were interested in exploring this "out of the box" employment option which has received minimal attention in the research literature or real-world transition settings.

Results found that the majority of individuals had a high satisfaction rate with their self-employment work and were able to successfully access their special interests, talents, or hobbies in their work environment given this model of employment. In particular, those with other sources of income outside of their self-employment were more likely to report satisfaction with their work.



Financial difficulties and/or requiring others to assist with business affairs were indicated as primary disadvantages.

The research findings are significant in that they indicate that adults with Asperger's Syndrome and high-functioning autism are successfully able to not only generate an autonomous and self-sustaining source of income, but to also productively and creatively contribute to society.

Two common themes of self-employment among study participants included:

- **Computers** (repairs, web design, programming, online sales)
- **Media** (writing, newsletter development, illustrations, publishing, photography, art, music instruction, editing, public speaking)

Conducted in spring 2006, the study was comprised of a survey completed by 52 adults diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, autism or PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified) who had been self-employed for at least 3 months. The respondents largely represented higher functioning and relatively independent individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, predominantly male (59%), older (67% aged 38 or older), Caucasian (87%), and with at least some college education (81%).

NFAR Teacher's Networking Forum Coming Feb. 4th 2009!

NFAR is excited to host our first **Teacher's Networking Forum** for educators of students with autism. Educators from across San Diego County are invited to come, eat, mingle and learn about programs, and strategies teachers are using successfully to teach students with autism.

Learn more about future NFAR teacher's grant opportunities too.

Teachers, aides, parents and professionals are welcome!



Wed., Feb 4, 2009
Marshall Middle School
San Diego Unified School District
5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Free, with RSVP
Sign-ups available on-line starting next month

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2009 Calendar
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The results from this survey will be included in a future publication in order to provide a resource for those considering self-employment as a career option.

To access the Research Brief on Self-Employment: [More Than Just a Paycheck](#) click here.

COMPASS Family Center presents Transition to Adulthood Seminar



COMPASS Family Center

As part of the Adult Transition Study being funded by NFAR, COMPASS Family Center is presenting a seminar designed for parents of children age 14 or older who are preparing for transition to adulthood.

This seminar reviews the components of the Transition Plan, discusses the laws that govern the transition to adulthood for youth and adults with autism, as well as provides important

information regarding the decisions parents and youth will make during the process. Parents will be given an opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A session with a special education attorney.

This seminar is FREE of charge

Date: Tuesday, January 13th, 2009

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: University of San Diego, Degheri Alumni Center 112

For questions, please contact *Sharna Langlais, Director of Development and Community Relations* at 619-260-7667

[Register by clicking here](#)

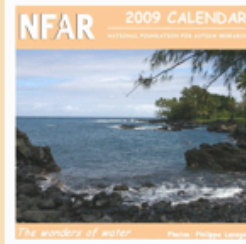
Leverage Your End of Year Gift to Help Increase Your Impact

Autism is one of the most critical issues facing our society. Children with autism have incredible potential and ingenuity. It is important to continue to fund and develop programs and services that support those with autism as we research underlying causes. More importantly, we need social programs, business education classes and supports that integrate individuals with autism into the fabric of our social and business communities.

We encourage you to participate in year-end giving and ask for your help in supporting NFAR and our efforts to make a difference in the lives of San Diego children living with autism. Plus, every dollar you donate is tax deductible.

Talk to your company's Charitable Campaigns chair to add NFAR to your giving list. Or if you prefer, simply click here to Donate directly.

Donate

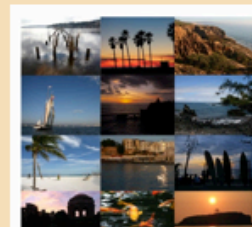


**Want the Perfect
Holiday Gift that
Gives Back Every
Day of 2009?**

Enjoy our 2009 calendar, with beautiful, panoramic photos by local photographer Philippe Lesage.

Each calendar is only \$12.50 and all proceeds benefit NFAR. Help us to continue to make a difference in San Diego by visiting www.nfar.org to purchase your calendar today!

[Order Your Calendar Now!](#)



Happy Thanksgiving!



We wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving Holiday