

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact: Betty VanDeventer at 402.471.4537 or betty.vandeventer@nebraska.gov March 30, 2010

NEBRASKA EVENTS RECOGNIZE NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

The Nebraska Autism Spectrum NETWORK has scheduled events during April in recognition of National Autism Awareness Month.

The events include the seventh annual ASD NETWORK State Conference on April 8th and 9th. More than 600 educators, administrators, family members, community providers and individuals will attend the conference at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Kearney. The Friend of Autism Award will be presented to a Nebraska educator at the conference.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Table Tents will be available in each of the five network regions across Nebraska to distribute ASD information as well as other materials, including information about online training resources.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. It is typically evident in the first three years of a child's life and symptoms can range from very mild to severe.

Research shows that one in every 110 individuals is diagnosed each year with ASD, making it more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined. ASD occurs in individuals in all racial, ethnic and social groups and is four times more likely to strike boys than girls. Research shows that one in every 70 boys is diagnosed with ASD each year.

Parents are usually the first to notice unusual behaviors in their child or their child's inability to reach appropriate developmental milestones. Parents who are concerned about their child's development are encouraged to speak to their pediatrician about the appropriateness of an ASD screening. Early intervention can result in significant improvements for young children. For Information, call 402.472.4194 or visit the ASD NETWORK website at <http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/>.