

# Volunteers move us toward our mission

by **Melanie Matusheski**

As the volunteer coordinator for Autism Delaware, I'm often asked "What do your volunteers do?" My answer is "Everything! Our volunteers contribute in every way imaginable."

The most visible volunteers help with social and fundraising events. At social events like the Fall Festival and the beach picnic, these volunteers are always the first to arrive to hang banners, register participants, serve food, and organize crafts for the children. For big fundraisers, these volunteers help plan the events, solicit sponsors, organize auction items, sell raffle tickets, and provide entertainment. As the events get bigger every year, we rely more and more on the efforts and talents of these dedicated and talented volunteers.

Many volunteers also work at smaller events or behind the scenes. These volunteers do administrative tasks, write articles for *The Sun*, organize bowling night, make autism awareness pins, hand out informational materials at public awareness events, and decorate the hall for the Autumn Auction for Autism. Volunteers were also a big help in moving us into our new Milton office this winter.

"So, who volunteers?" Everybody! Parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, neighbors, Autism Delaware's founding members and new members, all volunteer their time and talents. Entire families donate their time—and many have no direct connection to autism. Teenagers volunteer at game night for 9 to 19 year olds with Asperger's syndrome. University of Delaware students contact us every fall and offer to help in any way they can. Kohl's employees help at the Walk-Race for Autism. Amateur photographers record our many events for us. And nurses and doctors come to our big fundraisers in case they're needed.

"What stands out for me?" People volunteer just to help. As a result, no job is more important than any other. Some jobs may require many hours while others take little time at all, but all the jobs help Autism Delaware move toward its mission: creating better lives for people with autism and their families in Delaware.

Our volunteers are responsible for all this. And we are grateful to them.



Helping People and Families Affected by Autism

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