

1. Needs Assessment (1 page)

According to the CDC, about 1 in every 88 children are identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These developmental disorders occur across all racial and ethnic groups, and affect children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. These children, and their families, are a part of our library's community, and deserve educational and social programs tailored to their unique needs.

Children with ASDs and their families face many challenges in their daily life. Autism and other developmental disorders are often not well understood by the general population, and thus autistic or developmentally delayed children may not feel welcome in many public places. We want to work to ensure that these children, as well as people of any age with ASDs or other developmental disorders, can turn to the library as a safe place to learn about themselves, their disorder, and society as a whole while also encouraging interaction both within and outside of the autistic community.

Because ASDs are often times characterized by impaired social skills, and are complicated medical issues with many related issues and concerns, our program will focus on outreach, education, and social functions as a way to increase the community's awareness of autism and autism related issues, educate both the autistic and non-autistic community, and provide opportunities for children with autism and their families to interact and socialize with people in both the autistic and non-autistic community.

Serving a population of 136,872 people, the Midland County Public Library community could greatly benefit from an autism outreach and education program like the one we plan to implement. Our community has limited medical and educational resources compared to many larger and more central cities. Our community's program attendance was 14,947 in 2011, with attendance at children's programs accounting for 13,473 of those visits. We feel that by providing programming for both adults and children we could better reach our community, and provide much needed support and education.

2. Program Design (2 pages)

Our Autism Outreach and Education Program would include many smaller projects and programs designed to help both our staff and our community better understand Autism. Projects and programs funded by this grant would include:

Staff Training

There will be ongoing staff training in regards to providing services to people affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families. The staff specialist will provide this training to the staff in order to create a understanding not only of what Autism Spectrum Disorders are, but also the sensitivity needed in order to provide services to this population and their families. The training will go on at the start of this program and ongoing as needed. It will be a requirement for new staff to attend this training.

What is Autism?

Although Autism affects many families, a large amount of our community may be wondering, "What is Autism?" In order to answer this question, a "What is Autism?" workshop will be held quarterly throughout the grant year to educate not just the families that are affected with Autism but the whole population. This would be in a form of a brochure and workshops open to the whole community on Autism. Some things that would be addressed are things like people first language, and specific therapies available to support people with Autism. Another issue that would be addressed is how the community as a whole can better support people with Autism. This would launch off the program and then other activities listed would follow. This "What is Autism?" workshop would be held quarterly throughout the grant year.

Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders

Early Childhood Intervention Services will provide free screening to test children aged birth through five for developmental delays. Screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders would be held at the library on quarterly basis, in conjunction with "What is Autism?" workshop. This program will work with the Texas Department of Early Childhood Intervention and agencies specifically trained to implement screening for Autism. This will rotate between the two libraries in Midland.

Story Time and Stay and Play

This grant will support specialized storytime targeted for children with Autism. This storytime would not be limited to children with Autism; it will also include typically developing children and their families, and will be held in conjunction with stay-and-play hours. Both story time and stay-and-play will be held in the story area of the childrens area

of the library. This program would not only allow children with Autism to have exposure to other children with Autism, but also support in socialization with typically developing children and their families. Parent socialization would also be incorporated in during this time, as parents will meet other parents of children with Autism and meet on common ground. A simple storytime program like the one this grant could support at Midland County Public Library would support socialization, language development and early literacy for a portion of our community that very much needs that support.

Sharing the Journey

This program will be modeled after a program provided at a family resource center in California that supports children and family with special needs. "Sharing the Journey" will be for newly diagnosed children and their families, and will consist of 6 weeks of regular meetings where the families gain the exposure to what navigating the system would look like for a child with Autism. The system in this case includes schools, social service/non-profit agencies, government agencies and other entities that provide services to children with Autism. This program would be held twice a year. The program would address things such as early intervention services, Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individual Education Plan (IEP), and other needs specific to a person diagnosed with Autism. Sharing the Journey would be a collaborative project with the local family resource center. The program would be held in the library and if there is an increase in attendance and need for more space, there would be an option to hold it at the resource center.

Social Group

The grant would support in hosting a monthly social group open to all members of the community to meet in open forum to discuss issues around Autism. This group would be more flexible in the sense that it would be what the group made of it. Initially it would start off with set topics and the hope is regular attendees would support in creating the regular agenda for the group. This group would be open to parent and child or if attendees feel a need to be parent support it could change to parent and child every other meeting.

Adults with Autism

"Adults with Autism" will be a series of workshops, held three times during the grant year, which target adult community members with ASDs. The program would be put on with Easter Seals, an agency that specializes in providing services to people diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders, from early childhood to adulthood. Adults with Autism program will teach this target group activities such as job placement, housing, and socialization skills, and show them what libraries and other community agencies can do for them.

3. Project Impact (1 page)

Multiple organizations are providing services and advocating to people with Autism. The program that will be funded through this grant will support the Midland community in understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders, and the needs of people diagnosed with it.

The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitate Services, specifically works with programs providing services to people with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Within this department is the Early Childhood Intervention Services(ECI) department that specifically tailors it's services to children 3 years and younger. This program provides free screening to families who may a concern that their child had Autism or another developmental delay. ECI works with service providers in order to diagnosis as early as possible. It has been found in multiple studies that the sooner a child is diagnosed and receives services on a regular basis the less likely they will need to have longer term services, as well as a lower incidence of common "symptoms" of Autism. Of course this does vary per person and child. The joining of Early Childhood Intervention Services, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitate Services and the Midland library; with the ongoing screenings will help in diagnosing children at an earlier rate.

The program will support in not only socialization for the parents and families to interact with people going through similar situations, but also the person diagnosed with Autism. The multiple programs that Midland library will implement through this grant will start a foundation for a neutral setting for parents and families to interact with each other and express their concerns, wants, needs and even hopes for their family member with Autism. The hope is for this program to not only impact those people specifically affected by someone with Autism but the larger community as well. Through workshops and discussion groups, it is the hope of the Midland library to create a safe space for communication and interaction around discussions of Autism. There is an ongoing social stigma of what Autism is or even looks like that may frighten people. Often times when people think of Autism it is in the context of a child rocking in the corner and not communication, or having a tantrum on the floor kicking and screaming. While there may be some truth to those descriptions there is more to a person diagnosed with Autism and not all people with Autism are non-verbal.

This program will be a model for nearby communities and nationwide libraries. There are libraries around the country, starting with a special needs story time. This program wants to go beyond one event, but create multiple events so people with Autism and their families feel welcomed in the library setting. This model will support in getting the word out to the community about Autism and the many things that go along with being diagnosed with

Autism. More specifically it will create exposure to things such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1975) and the government services that are provided free of charge.

4. Personnel (1 page)

Monica Lozano - Library Director; Lozano will monitor and administer all grant funds, assist with hiring the part-time program coordinator, be responsible for evaluating the quarterly reports filed by the head librarian, and participate in the all-staff training regarding best practices related to working with individuals with developmental delays. Lozano has been heavily involved in fundraising for new library construction and programming, and has many years of experience overseeing library functions.

Estimated time required: 1 hour/week for administration of funds; 6 hours for assisting with hiring; 10 hours of miscellaneous oversight of program, including reading quarterly reports; 10 hours of training

Total: 78 hours

Laura White - Head librarian; James will oversee all program activities and file quarterly reports with the library director. She will attend two workshops during the grant year to evaluate their effectiveness, and coordinate the part-time program coordinator hiring process. White was appointed head librarian at MCPL in 2006, and has led fundraising efforts and implemented many new programs.

Estimated time required: 40 hours for hiring; 20 hours for administration; 10 hours of staff training; 10 hours for miscellaneous oversight of programs, including workshop attendance

Total: 80 hours

Jamie Edwards - Children's Librarian; Edwards will be responsible for coordinating the additional storytimes and stay and play hours. She earned her MLS in 2007 after a five year career as an elementary school special education teacher, and has worked at MCPL since 2009. Her background makes her uniquely qualified to work with children with autism during storytimes and stay and play hours.

Estimated time required: 2 hours every other week for storytimes and stay and plays; 10 hours training

Total: 62 hours

Volunteer Support Staff - (5 Volunteer Assistants) Two volunteers will assist with each "What is Autism?" workshop, one volunteer will assist with story times and stay and plays, one volunteer will assist with the social group, and one volunteer will assist with the "Adults with Autism" workshops. Duties will include the creation of marketing materials, and participating in setup and cleanup at events.

Estimated time required: 32 hours assisting with "What is Autism?" workshops; 72 hours assisting with storytimes; 24 hours assisting social group; 12 hours assisting with "Adults with Autism" workshops

Total: 140 hours

Program Coordinator - This part-time employee will be responsible for implementing many of the new Autism education and outreach programs. The program coordinator will arrange for staff training, design and develop workshop materials, coordinate and promote the "What is Autism?" and "Adults with Autism" workshops, and facilitate the social group and the "Sharing the Journey" program. She will report to the head librarian, and be responsible for tracking program attendance in order to measure the success of programs as a whole.

Estimated time required: 20 hours a week for 45 weeks

Total: 900

5. Timetable (1 page)

Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays

Responsible Staff: Jamie Edwards

August Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 8/3/13, 8/17/13, 8/31/13
September Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 9/14/13, 9/28/13
October Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 10/12/13, 10/26/13
November Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 12/9/13, 12/23/13
December Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 12/7/13, 12/21/13
January Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 1/4/14, 1/18/14
February Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 2/1/14, 2/15/14
March Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 3/1/14, 3/15/14, 3/29/14
April Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 4/12/14, 4/26/14
May Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 5/10/14, 5/24/14
June Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 6/7/14, 6/21/14
July Storytimes and Stay-and-Plays: 7/5/14, 7/19/14

Part-time Program Coordinator Hiring Process

Responsible Staff: Laura White and Monica Lozano

List Program Coordinator job posting: 8/1/13 - 8/14/13
Hire part-time Program Coordinator: 8/15/13 - 9/19/13

Staff Training

Responsible Staff: Program Coordinator

9/30/13 - 10/4/13

Social Group Meetings

Responsible Staff: Program Coordinator

10/10/13, 11/8/13, 12/13/13, 1/10/14, 2/7/14, 3/14/14, 4/11/14, 5/9/14, 6/13/14, 7/11/14

“What is Autism?” Workshops + Screenings

Responsible Staff: Program Coordinator

10/28/13, 1/27/14, 4/28/14, 7/28/14

“Adults with Autism” Workshops

Responsible Staff: Program Coordinator

12/2/13, 3/3/14, 6/2/14

“Sharing the Journey”

Responsible Staff: Program Coordinator

12/30/13 - 2/14/14; 6/13/14 - 7/25/14

6. Evaluation (1 page)

The Midland library will use multiple evaluation tools in order to measure the success of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Program. Program attendance will be monitored by the Program coordinator for all events attended.

There will be pre- and post-evaluations at the start of the program, at the six month mark and at the end in order to measure the success. The pre-evaluation will be held at the “What is Autism?” workshop. This evaluation will be done for all “What is Autism?” workshops done throughout the year. At the end of year there will be a post-evaluation. The hope is to have all staff and attendees take the evaluation.

This evaluation will be done on a volunteer basis. The evaluation will be for both library staff and attendees of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Program. The evaluation will be in written format.

The pre-evaluation will look at similar questions to the six month and post-evaluation. The following questions will be addressed:

There will be general questions addressing general knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders and possible skills the person hopes to attain from attending the different workshops. There will be questions on behaviors and attitudes around Autism and library services. There will a question around what is the person’s position answering the evaluation in relation to Autism and people with Autism to address status. Finally there will be questions around life conditions such as what are daily interactions like in regards to addressing Autism or are there any interactions.

The following will be addressed at the six month evaluation and post-evaluation.:

It will include questions on what skills and knowledge where acquired, such as how to interact with people with Autism and knowledge on Autism. There will be questions on behavior and attitudes centered around Autism and library services. Another set of questions will be centered around status, what is the person position who is answering the evaluation in relation to Autism and people with Autism. The last set of questions will center around life conditions, such as what has change in the persons daily life in regards to interactions of knowledge of people with Autism.

This data from the evaluations will be imputed into a data base specific to the Autism Spectrum Disorder program. This data will be used for support in writing quarterly reports. Accommodations will be made for people are not able to do the written evaluation and would still like to leave feedback, specifically for participants with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

7. Budget (2 pages)

Budgeted Expenses

The following table shows the projected expenses for the grant year:

Expense	Pay Rate + Fringe Benefits	Total Cost
<i>Personnel</i>		\$26,377
• Monica Lozano	\$29.67/hr x 78 hrs = \$2,314 2,314 x .23 = \$532	\$2,846
• Laura White	\$24.83/hr x 80 hrs = \$1,986 1,986 x .23 = \$457	\$2,443
• Jamie Edwards	\$23.14/hr x 62 hrs = \$1,435 1,435 x .23 = \$330	\$1,765
• Part-time Program Coordinator	\$18.35/hr x 900 hrs = \$16,515 16,515 x .17 = \$2,808	\$19,323
Other Expenses	Number and Rate	Total Cost
<i>Marketing Expenses</i>		\$825
• Brochures	1,000 x .22 = \$220	\$220
• Bookmarks	1,000 x .056 = \$56	\$56
• Flyers	1,000 x .069 = \$69	\$69
• Local Newspaper Ad	\$10/column in x 4 column in = \$40 \$40/ad x 12 = \$480	\$480
<i>Programming Expenses</i>		\$1,400
• Workshop instructors (2 per workshop)	\$100/workshop x 2 = \$200/workshop \$200 x 7 = \$1,400	\$1,400

Expenses Justified

Personnel and Programming Expenses

The bulk of the Autism awareness and outreach program costs are related to personnel. Currently library staff, the newly hired part-time program coordinator, and the paid workshop instructors are all essential to the success of this program.

Current library staff will be paid from local funding sources, and their fringe benefits are calculated as 23% of gross pay, according to Midland County's pay classifications.

The newly hired part-time program coordinator will be funded by this grant, and will receive fringe benefits at a rate of 17% as prescribed by Midland County's pay classifications.

Workshop instructors will be paid \$100 per workshop by grant funds.

Marketing Expenses

Marketing will be a very important aspect of this program. Because the storytimes, workshops, social groups, and the "Sharing the Journey" program are all designed to reach a portion of the population that may not currently be active library users, it is important to spread the word about this exciting new education and outreach programs.

Grant funding will be used to print flyers, brochures, and bookmarks. The pricing above was provided by UPrinting.com, and represents full color printing on gloss paper. These flyers, brochures, and bookmarks will be used not only for marketing the new library programming, but also for educating the public about Autism and related issues.

Grant funding will also be used to run 12 ads in the local newspaper. These ads will market the 7 workshops presents during the grant year, as well as highlight the new storytimes and social group meetings, and announce the beginning of each "Sharing the Journey" session.

Total Expenses

$\$26,3775 \text{ (Personnel)} + \$825 \text{ (Marketing)} + \$1,400 \text{ (Program costs)} = \$28,602$

$\$28,602 + \$5,434 \text{ (indirect charges at 19\%)} = \$34,036 \text{ total cost}$

8. Sustainability (1 page)

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Program will have such a strong impact that the Midland library hopes to partner with multiple community agencies in order to sustain the life of the program beyond the grant year. The Midland library will not only look at monetary avenues of sustainability but also volunteers from the community and organizations that provide services to people with Autism. There will also be some altering of the amount of workshops provided through the year.

The Midland library will look at outside funding resources in order to continue the Autism Spectrum Disorder program. The Midland library will apply for the Autism Speaks Family Services Community Grant. This grant is granted through Autism Speaks. Autism Speaks calls itself an Autism advocacy organization for people and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders, per their website. The Family Services Grant funds agencies that support education, recreation and community activities for people with Autism. The Midland library will also apply for another grant through Autism Speaks. This grant is called Autism Speaks Neighborhood Grant program. This specific program is a partnership between Sprouts and Autism Speaks that provides funds for organizations that provide services tailored to people with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The establishment of partnering with agencies will have already been established throughout the grant year. These agencies have made a commitment to continue to support the library in providing the services that have been established at minimum with support once a year free of charge to the library. This commitment has been made by Easter Seals. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services along with Early Childhood Intervention Services has agreed to continue the free screenings as long as funding is available through their departments.

Volunteers are going to be from within the community and the specific agencies. The local chapter of Autism Speaks, West Texas Autism Speaks, has agreed to provide volunteers to support the Autism Spectrum Disorder Program at Midland library. Parents of children with Autism and their families have agreed to support in workshops and story time/ stay and play specifically.

The workshops will all be cut down based on the outcomes of the evaluations. The “What is Autism?” workshop will go down to once a year, as it has gone multiple times throughout the grant year and will be recorded. The workshops will be recorded and made available online through the Midland library website. All handouts and flyers will be posted online as well, and will be available as soon as the workshops are first run at the library. There will also be an online resource guide available all the different resources gathered and discussed throughout the grant year. This resource guide will be put together by volunteer staff, and will be free of charge to the library.