

**Fall
2013**

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**Comments?
Tips?
Suggestions?**

To send in comments, suggested topics for our next newsletter, or grandparent tips, please [email to us.](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

Welcome to Our New GAN Members!

*GAN members are a vital resource for autism
... and each other!*

The **G**randparent **A**utism **N**etwork is an all-volunteer, international nonprofit organization that supports grandparents of children with autism and their families. GAN's mission is to promote awareness and understanding of autism and to enhance the resources essential to community responsiveness.

The Board of Directors is pleased to extend membership to grandparents internationally. The rate of autism is rapidly increasing *everywhere* and we support grandparents who want to make life better for their families and increase autism resources in their communities..

GAN's current focus is on the development of lifetime supports for people with autism. Our eNewsletters and websites address issues that universally impact grandparents. *All of GAN's programs and projects may be replicated, however, GAN's name and logo are trademarked and may not be used without permission.*

We know that the best recommendations come from our members and we welcome your feedback and suggestions about how we can increase support for you and your family.

Got Too Much Stuff? Donate it to GAN!



**Got Too Much Stuff?
Donate to GAN's eBay Site, [gan_charities!](#)**

Grandparents have lots of "stuff" like

collectibles, unused gifts and household goods, clothing, vintage jewelry and things in good condition that our children "do not want."

Your "stuff" can benefit other grandparents and families affected by autism. The Grandparent Autism Network welcomes donated goods, each valued at \$25 or more.

You can drop off tax deductible items at Jay's Catering, 10581 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA - or send them C/O GAN at 23785 El Toro Road, #103, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (USPS flat rate boxes may lower mailing costs!)

Please contact GAN at info@ganinfo.org for additional options. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Tax ID #20-5230144

Plan Now for Better and Less Stressful Holidays

This fall issue of our eNewsletter is intended to jumpstart your planning so your family events will be the best and most comfortable for everyone. There are many holiday ideas and tips for grandparents of younger grandchildren on the GAN website [here](#).

Many of us have grandchildren who are teens and adults. The following suggestions may make your holiday celebrations better and less stressful for everyone.

Before Events

- Have realistic expectations
- Discuss the schedule of activities and the other guests who will attend, before you go or entertain at home
- Modify traditional celebrations to meet needs
- Plan ahead for alternative activities, respite sites or early departures, if necessary. Eliminate or modify sensory triggers that you know will be disturbing
- Suggest an activity in which everyone can participate
- Bring a CD player, electronic device or other favorite activity to reduce anxieties
- Describe the holiday foods that will be served. If they are not appealing, let your hostess know you will bring some favorite food that you know will be consumed and enjoyed

Gift Giving Ideas

- Try a free trial membership at a local gym
- Locate a new activity to join, e.g. bowling league, laser tag, YMCA or city sponsored group

- Watch CD's or movies about a destination you want to visit and plan a trip to go there
- Give an annual membership to a favorite museum or other local attraction
- Gift certificates for personal care services, e.g. haircuts, manicures, massages, spa services
- Tickets for amusement parks, movies, concerts, sporting events
- Shop together for clothing, books, hobby or special interest items or research online for requested gifts
- Download apps for productivity and entertainment
- Commit time to sharing a favorite activity, once or on a regular basis throughout the year.

Give a *Care Notebook*, The Gift that Keeps Giving!

Families that have special needs children are typically overwhelmed with school, medical and therapy reports that need to be easily accessible when when needed for Independent Education Planning sessions, progress evaluations and for filing insurance claims. Giving your family a **Care Notebook**, may be the *best gift they will receive for years to come*. It helps them to organize the huge amount of paperwork they have and relieves a lot of stress. It is easy to find the components at any office supply store and should cost approximately \$25. Here's how you can make one:

Care Notebook Contents

- A plain 3-ring binder with 2 inch rings. To personalize the binder, select one with a clear pocket on the front where you can insert a picture of your grandchild.
- A notebook 3-hole punch, a small stapler, colored small "post it" note pads, a highlighter pen and paper clips
- A 3-hole vinyl business card holder
- A vinyl pen/supply pocket holder with zipper
- Notebook index dividers with 10 sections

Suggested Categories for Index Tabs

- Emergency Information
 - Medical Records
 - Education Reports
 - Therapies
 - Insurance Claims
 - Local Service Agencies
 - Autism Resources
 - Activities
 - Child Care/Respite Help, If applicable
- Extra Blank Tabs can be filled in by Parents (

Assembling the Notebook

Place the 3 ring hole punch at the front of the notebook and add the additional vinyl pockets for supplies and business cards. Put the stapler, "post it" notes, pens, clips, etc. in the supply pocket.

Label the dividers with the appropriate categories and place them behind the vinyl pockets in the notebook.

Offer to Help Organize and File the Records

If possible, offer to help sort and file the paperwork in the notebook with the most recent reports on the top. Set aside, but *do not discard duplicates*, or any of the paperwork. Label them so that your children can decide what to do with the extra copies.

You may want to purchase additional binders. Some families have a binder for every year, but the current academic year is typically the main focus for schools, physicians and therapists to review. If you are mailing the Care Notebook, consider using a USPS flat rate box.

Gift Ideas and Certificates for the Holidays or Any Day

The GAN website has many gift suggestions that are cost-free or affordable for every budget. Go [here](#) to see suggestions and visit other pages with holiday ideas for your family.

Get gift certificates to personalize for your children and grandchildren [here](#). Just print them, fill them in ... ***and your gift giving is done!***

Get Advice About Tax and Estate Planning Issues.

GAN recently received an inquiry from grandparents regarding the tax deductibility of their payments for their grandchild's medical and therapy related expenses. The following response is from Cline, Carroll Clark & Bartell, LLP (www.cccbllp.com):

"There are some potential income tax benefits for parents or qualifying relatives of special needs children, one of which is deductible medical expenses above a certain floor. The rules to determine if grandparents are able to be a qualifying relative and what can be included as a medical expense can be somewhat complex, therefore please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific situation. Also, when the grandparents are not qualifying relatives they should consider discussing other estate planning strategies, such as gifting, with their estate attorneys and tax advisors."

GAN encourages grandparents to learn how they can fund care over and above what the government will provide for their grandchildren. Consult with reputable estate attorneys and accountants to learn about the options you have in order to not disqualify them from receiving income from other sources such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, vocational

rehabilitation or subsidized housing and other benefits based upon need.

The board of directors of the **Grandparent Autism Network** and I wish you and your family good health and happiness this holiday season and in the New Year. We invite you to share this newsletter with your family and friends.

Thank you for making GAN members
... a vital resource for autism ... and each other!

Warm regards,

Bonnie Gillman
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