



Reaching Out Providing Exceptional Service



# R.O.P.E.S



Exceptional  
Family  
Member  
Program-Family Support



## 7TH ANNUAL WALK FOR AUTISM



JBSA EFMP Coordinator's partnered together under the direction of Team Captain (Ms Audrey Jolivette) and formed a JBSA EFMP team to participate in the 7th Annual Walk for Autism San Antonio Texas. Event was held 16 Apr 2011, at the AT&T Center Sombriilla. Tally for donations raised overall was \$140K+, participant count was over 5,500. JBSA EFMP team's participation helped break the Guinness World Record for Largest Charity Walk category. (A certificate was presented at the walk from Mayor Castro to the sponsors for this tremendous feat).  
 Thank you for your participation, donation and support for such a worthy cause



REACHING OUT PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE



Submitted by  
LANGDON "DON" KELLOGG,

**T**he recent case of Adam Benhamma continues to highlight the ongoing issue of wandering by those with autism. In fact, drowning has been cited as the leading cause of death for children and adults with autism, with a large majority of these incidents occurring during wandering episodes. Exposure to elements has also been responsible for many autism-wandering deaths.

The issue has become so problematic, some of the largest autism non-profits in the country have partnered to form The Autism Wandering Awareness Alerts Response and Education (AWAARE) Collaboration. The group's mission is to prevent wandering incidents

*"Mission is to prevent wandering incidents and wandering related deaths within autism community"*

and wandering-related deaths within the autism community through education, resources and awareness. The organizations that comprise AWAARE include Autism One, Autism Speaks, Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation, Hollyrod Foundation, National Autism Association and Talk About Curing Autism (TACA). In addition to awareness and education, technology is also being implemented to address this widespread problem. Products such as SafetyNet by LoJack and SecuraPAL by SecuraTrac offer solutions for parents and caregivers to track and locate those with autism.



Despite these efforts, it's clear that much more needs to be done to address the recent slew of tragic wandering cases. Just a few of those include:

James Delorey - December, 2009. A seven-year-old boy with autism from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, went missing after following his dog into a wooded area. He was later found huddled in the fetal position in thick brush and snow less than a mile from his home. He was rushed to the hospital, but eventually passed away from severe hypothermia and exposure.

Mason Medlam - July, 2010. Five-year-old with autism who died of his injuries after being pulled from a small pond in a town outside of Wichita, Kansas. Medlam wandered from his home out of a partially opened window and had been missing for more than a half-hour before being discovered.

Zachary Clark - August, 2010. A five-year-old boy with autism from Tucson, Arizona who was pulled from a golf course pond located less than a half-mile from his home.

Despite efforts at CPR, Clark was pronounced dead short after being airlifted to a nearby hospital.

Nathan Kinderdine - August, 2010. A seven-year-old with autism from Ohio, wandered away from his class during a summer enrichment program at school. Kinderline was found by a custodian at the bottom of the school's indoor swimming pool and although school

nurses tried to revive him, he was pronounced dead shortly after his arrival to the hospital Skyler Wayne October, 2010.

An eight-year-old boy with autism who was found in an Idaho river three houses away from his home. Wayne was in the care of a babysitter at the time of the incident and was found in less than two feet of water. Savannah Martin - February, 2011. A seven-year-old girl from Oklahoma who was found face-down in a chilly pond about 50 yards from her home. Her two-year-old brother was also found with her in the water, but was face-up and buoyed by the Styrofoam in a bicycle helmet he had been wearing. Despite the efforts by the girl's mother to revive her, Savannah was later pronounced dead.

Jackson Kastner - March, 2011. Four-year-old who drowned in a Michigan river after wandering from his home. The river was located 300 yards from Kastner's home and swept him away - he was later found a mile-and-a-half downstream. The boy was airlifted to a hospital but attempts to revive him were unsuccessful.

Adam Benhamma - April, 2011. A three-year-old boy who is both non-verbal and deaf has been missing since Sunday. Behnamma disappeared during a game of hide-and-seek while his father briefly went inside the house they were visiting. Police believe the boy fell into a nearby icy river. As of today's date, he has not been found and is presumed to be deceased by authorities.

These are just a few of the many heartbreaking stories that continue to play out around the country and world involving wandering individuals with autism. As we continue on with Autism Awareness Month, hopefully more attention will be brought to this problematic issue to ensure wandering-related deaths are minimized or completely eliminated altogether.



Submission by SSgt Kristal Gaylord



**M**y daughter was born with a Median Cleft face Syndrome and Nasal teratoma, she was hospitalized in the NICU at WHMC for 6 weeks after I delivered her in the O.R., being a first time parent I did not know what my pregnancy was going to be like and what to expect. I found out when I was 36 weeks that my unborn child was possibly going to be born with Down syndrome or some sort of serious medical condition.

*"I was so careful throughout my entire pregnancy and did everything that I possibly could"*

I was completely devastated and wondered why me, what did I do wrong? How could this happen to my baby? I was so careful throughout my entire pregnancy and did everything that I possibly could have to make sure that I had the perfect child. I had only 4 weeks to gather my strength and pray that my child was going to be okay and that by some miracle she would be cured and everything that my doctors had told me and all the tests that I had done would disappear. It was the hardest time of my life.

After I had my daughter and saw her in the O.R. for that split second after I gave birth, I had no idea how drastically my life would change, not only with a baby, but a baby that had serious medical issues. She had a cleft palate and a tumor that

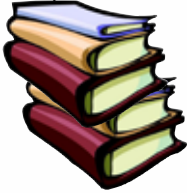
stemmed from the base of her skull and causing a cleft palate, protruded out of her mouth, causing her to have breathing complications. Being only 6 days old she had her first surgery of many. After 6 weeks of her NICU stay, she was finally able to come home and had to be feed through a tube that was inserted through her stomach.

My husband and I had to see so many specialists and had to have numerous tests done to try to figure out what caused this syndrome to happen. We were told that she may never walk, may never speak, and never is all we heard. We finally gave up on trying to find an answer and just loved her as she was. We treated her with the best love and care that a parent could ever give a child. All we could do was hope that time would heal and that she would develop at her own pace.

Now, our daughter is a healthy 3 year old that runs and plays with her friends at daycare, sings and dances to all her favorite songs and has no other medical issues. Her palate was repaired and she began to eat on her own and finished with physical and occupational therapy by the age of one. It was a lot to go through as first time parents, but it made our family stronger and gave us the ability to help other expecting parents and families with special needs children and provide hope. We are so blessed to have her in our life and thank everyone for all their love and support.

## "HAPPENINGS"

Stop by and visit our Resource and Loan Library located at the Airman and Family Readiness Center (Bldg 1249). Be sure to provide us feedback on what information you would like to see available in the library.



The Lackland AFB Integrated Service Delivery (IDS) team is planning the Lackland AFB 2011 Caring for People Forum, and we need you in order to make it a success. We're looking for military families with Special Needs, officer or enlisted, married or single, with or without children to participate in special needs discussion groups that will recommend ways for us to improve quality of life at Lackland AFB specifically, and in the Air Force generally. Please consider registering for the forum so that you can share your observations, concerns, and ideas with us!

**WHO: YOU!!!!**

**WHAT: The Lackland AFB 2011 Caring for People Forum**

**WHEN: 10 May 2011, 0800-1630 (lunch and snacks are projected to be provided)**

**WHERE: The Gateway Club**

**WHY: Identify quality of life issues impacting our Airmen and their families**



Please contact your EFMP-FS Coordinator for registration information

### Projected Workshop/Seminar:

**EFMP presents: Special Needs Legal Seminar**

**Date: 20 May 2011**

**TIME: 1130 to 1300 (brown bag, feel free to bring your lunch)**

**Where: Airman & Family Readiness Center (bldg 1249)**

**Presenter: Anna M. Torres, Senior Attorney, Anna M. Torres & Associates, licensed attorney with experience in Estate Planning, Probate and Guardianships.**

