

**DEFINING AUTISM:  
FROM NONSPEAKING  
TO PROFESSIONAL  
SPEAKER**



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KERRYMAGRO.COM

**Interactive activity**  
**We will be starting  
shortly.**  
**In the chat box  
please tell us...**

- Your name
- When were you first introduced to the topic of autism (when your child was diagnosed, educator, therapist, etc.)

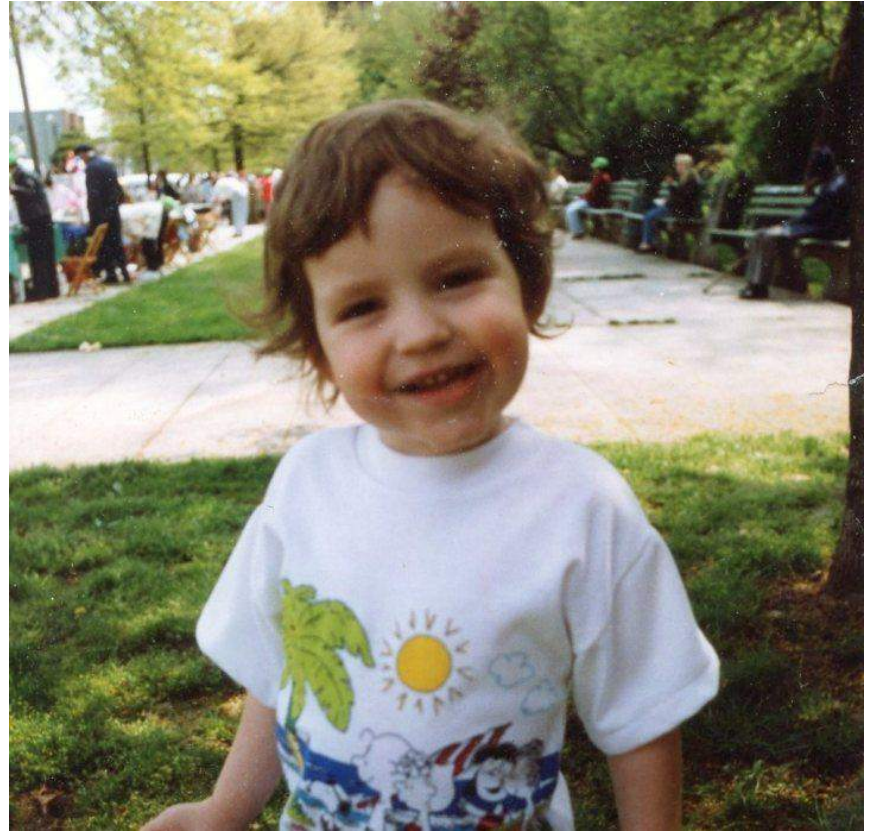
PREVIOUSLY RECORDED



# My Diagnosis

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- Non-verbal till I was 2.5
- Diagnosed w PDD-NOS-at 4
- Speech delay, expressive and receptive language disorder, Severe sensory integration dysfunction, auditory processing disorder, twirling, dysgraphia, motor challenges
- Emotional issues throughout adolescence due to limited speech



# My challenges with sensory processing (began at two)

- Deathly afraid of bells, sirens while hypersensitive to sounds
- Couldn't go out in wind, rain, snow
- Couldn't be bathed, wouldn't go swimming, or take showers
- Didn't want to be touched, hugged
- Would only eat certain foods (bologna sandwiches)
- Couldn't put stamps on hands would scream to take it off
- Had to have in house Occupational therapy with Pediatric SID specialist
- Began with gak, rice to increase tolerance of different textures. Brush skin to increase tolerance
- Gradually liked water would run under showers at pool



# Dr. Kerry Magro EdD: Professional Speaker

From nonverbal to professional speaker:  
Spoken at over 1150 events in the past 11 years.

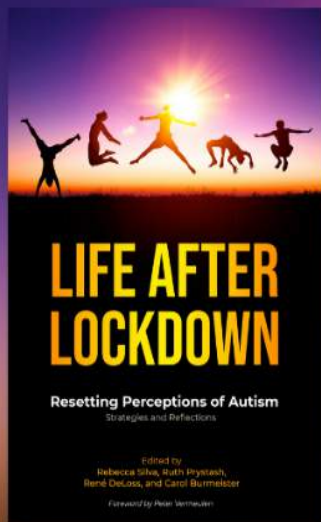
Films: Joyful Noise &  
Jane Wants A Boyfriend

TV: HBO's Mrs. Fletcher

Books: Defining Autism  
From The Heart, Autism  
and Falling in Love & I  
Will Light It Up Blue  
(available on Amazon)

CEO: KFM Making A  
Difference





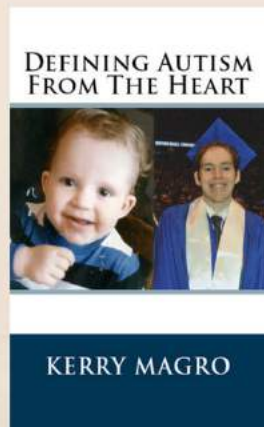
## RESETTING PERCEPTIONS OF AUTISM

This one-of-a-kind collaboration with over 40 well-known professionals and individuals with ASD provides wisdom, humor, and a hefty dose of reality for autistic and non-autistic readers.

As the world engages in plans for reopening, the adjustment to rebuilding social connections, returning to school, and navigating a post-COVID world can be extremely anxiety-inducing for those with autism.

CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS AND WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE IN THE FIELD, INCLUDING:

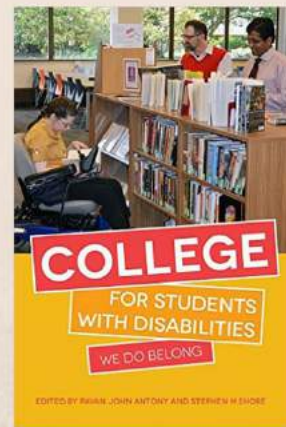
TEMPLE GRANDIN  
KERRY MAGRO  
TONY ATTWOOD  
KELLY LONDENBERG  
AND OVER 40 MORE!



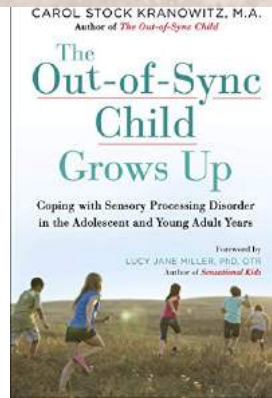
#1  
on an Amazon  
Best-Seller List



#3  
on an Amazon  
Best-Seller List



Contributed to  
book with  
Temple Grandin  
and Stephen  
Shore



REAL PEOPLE.  
REAL STORIES.  
REAL HEART.



# AUTISTICS ON AUTISM

STORIES YOU NEED TO HEAR  
ABOUT WHAT HELPED THEM  
WHILE GROWING UP AND  
PURSUING THEIR DREAMS



EDITED BY KERRY MAGRO

Making a Difference for Autism  
Scholarship Program & Grant Opportunity for Small  
Businesses That Hire Disabled People

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- Filled out paperwork for non-profit status in 2011
- Given out 100 scholarships for adults with autism to attend college in past 8 years
- Given out 6 small business grants in 2020
- Give out scholarships every Spring,
- Apply for our Grant and/or Spring scholarship here: [www.kfmmakingadifference.org](http://www.kfmmakingadifference.org)
- [Autistics on Autism came out March 29<sup>th</sup> on Amazon](#)
- [Thrilled to announce we reached an Amazon best-seller list for Autism & Aspergers Syndrome](#)





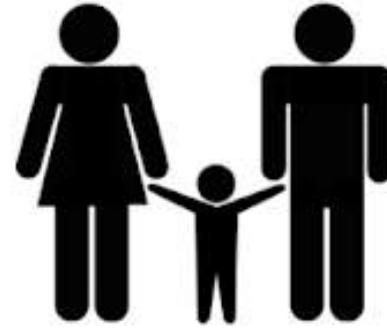
# Talks I give

- Offer work on retainer in a technical advisor role with to help assist students with special needs, their families and schools through events in district, schools, online, and social media presence.
- Schools
  - Student assemblies
  - Professional development for teachers
  - SEPAC/PTA presentations for parents/community
- Businesses
  - ROI benefits of hiring people with disabilities
  - Powerpoint best practices
- Skype presentations for those with limited budgets
- Keynotes and breakout sessions at conferences and other special events on early access to care, transition to adulthood, bullying prevention and much more



Not all disabilities  
← look like this

Some  
→ look like this



We need to normalize in our classrooms  
that “Disability has no look”

## Prevalence of Autism

- 1 in 44 (1% U.S. Population)
- Over 7 million
- 1 in 27 boys
- 1 in 116 girls
- Over 70 million people worldwide
- Cost a family an average of \$60,000 a year across the child's lifespan
- Over 700,000 children will reach adulthood within the next decade.
- 35% of people with autism will not go to college
- Majority unemployed or underemployed
- 63% of children with autism are bullied
- 81% of adults with autism still live with their families
- 49% percent of people with autism wander and go missing as a result



Facebook.com/KerrysAutismJourney  
Support my nonprofit's video series at  
Patreon.com/ASpecialCommunity



**Things NOT to say  
during April & Autism  
Acceptance Month  
(or anytime really)...**

**"You don't look  
autistic."**

**"I'm sorry."**

**"But you seem so  
normal."**

**"We're all a little  
autistic."**

**"What's your special  
ability."**

Dr. Kerry Magro Ed.D.  
Professional Speaker  
Have me give a virtual talk with your  
company: [Kerrymagro@gmail.com](mailto:Kerrymagro@gmail.com)  
My new book 'Autistics on Autism'  
is now out on Amazon.

# 10 questions I'm most frequently asked about



**SCAN ME**

- Public vs. Private vs. Homeschooling
- Picky-eating challenges
- Medications
- Transition to adulthood
- Making friends
- Bullying
- Challenging Behaviors
- Toilet training
- ABA
- Communication/Nonspeaking autism

Created a Frequently Asked Questions List with information based on what I've learned from my journey: [bit.ly/autismfaqlist](https://bit.ly/autismfaqlist)



## Consider lesson plans on success stories: Celebrity Disability Bingo

- Did you know Michael Jordan was diagnosed with ADD at a young age?
- Magic Johnson – ADHD
- Leonardo Dicaprio – Dyslexia
- Justin Timberlake – ADD and OCD
- Michael Phelps- ADHD
- Dan Aykroyd - Autism

# Learning about my diagnosis at 11

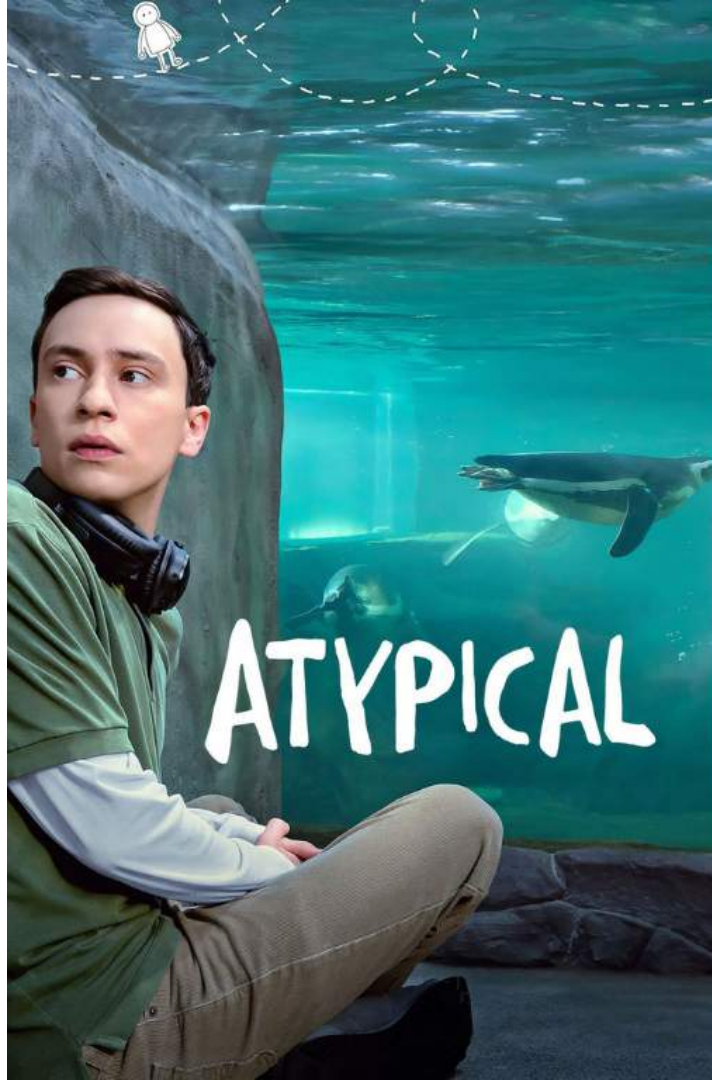
- Helped me self-advocate and learn more about my diagnosis
- Advocated for myself throughout the IEP meetings to learn more about my strengths/weaknesses
- Started on a novice level, “You have something called autism but it doesn’t make you any less of a person.”

# Introducing entertainment to discuss autism

- Daniel Tiger's neighborhood (PBS Kids)
- Hero Elementary (PBS Kids)
- Julia on Sesame Street (HBO)
- Teens/Adults – Atypical (Netflix), Temple Grandin (HBO), Joyful Noise (VOD)



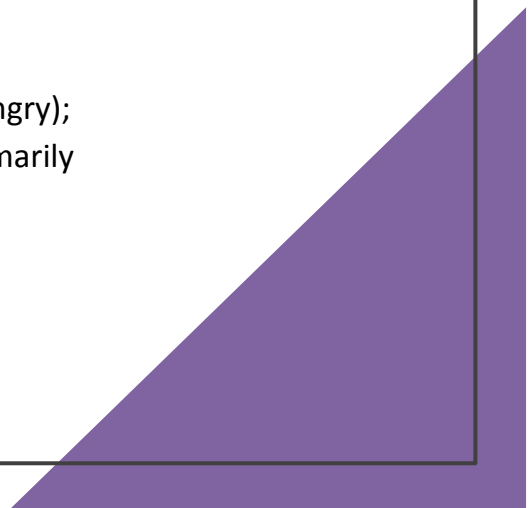




# Communication Matrix

- Before doing anything else – complete this skills assessment designed to evaluate your children's communication abilities.
- Looks at possible communicative behaviors
  - pre-intentional (involuntary actions, including crying when wet or hungry);
  - intentional (actions such as fussing and turning away that are not primarily intended for communication);
  - unconventional (tugging, crowding to get attention);
  - Etc.)

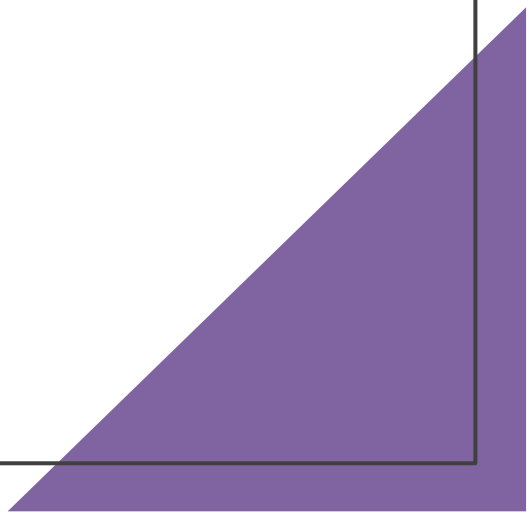
<https://communicationmatrix.org/>



# Continue promoting visuals through video modeling

- They watch the task and then follow through with the task
- Also consider video prompting (breaking down the task into different steps for younger learners)
- Pursue social stories (make them personalized if possible)
  - Utilize via photos of students – Very easy to do via Powerpoint presentations

# More inclusive events for your classrooms

- Sensory trick or treat
  - Unified playgrounds
  - Unified P.E.
  - Unified after school sports
  - Sensory-friendly Santa/Easter events
  - AMC Theatres – Sensory-friendly movie outings
  - Learn how you can make an event 'sensory-friendly' at [pautism.org](http://pautism.org)
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# PECS Board For Schools who have nonverbal students

- Learn more on how to get one by contacting the Elizabeth Town Education Foundation



<https://www.elizabethtowneducationfoundation.com/>





# **I Want to See More Autism Acceptance in Schools to Help Put an End to Bullying**

**-DR. KERRY MAGRO ED.D. FOLLOW ME AT  
FACEBOOK.COM/KERRYSAUTISMJOURNEY  
I SPEAK VIRTUALLY ABOUT  
ANTI-BULLYING EMAIL ME AT  
KERRYMAGRO@GMAIL.COM**

# Victim of bullying

- Didn't have the social abilities to defend myself.
- Often was alone in my classes so I was an easy target
- Need to help our students define the following terms...
  - What is a bully
  - What is a friend
  - When someone is being sarcastic
- Encourage roleplaying situations and what to do when you are being bullied.
- October is National Bullying Prevention Month

# Ways to combat bullying

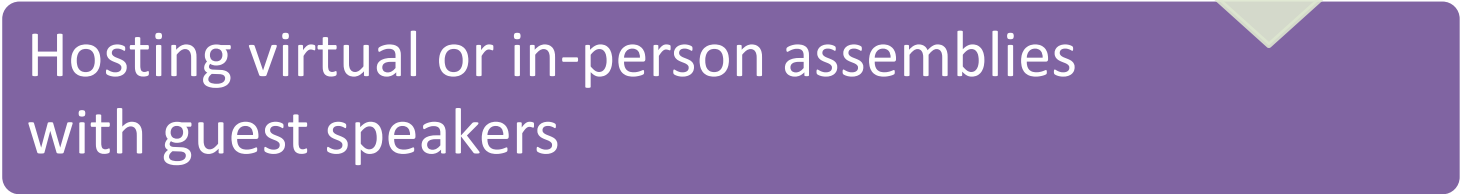
Cool2BeKind Anti-Bullying Clubs –  
Napab.org



Lunch buddies



Hosting virtual or in-person assemblies  
with guest speakers



Some students will prefer identity first versus person first language (I.e. A deaf person versus a person who is deaf)

- Validation from identify first language
- Neurodiversity movement is leading to a larger conversation around Disability Acceptance instead of Disability Awareness
- Try to avoid functioning labels
  - “Kerry is high-functioning”
  - Instead “Kerry’s strengths are communication and his weakness is sensory challenges”

Tag me in your social media posts  
from today’s event @KerryMagro



# 10 Things That Helped Me With The Journey To Adulthood

- Dude Where's My IEP?
  - We need to educate schools that transitional services must be provided at 14 for those with an IEP
- Roleplaying
  - Mock interviews, dating scenarios, etc.
- Servant Leadership
  - Received Presidential Service Award for 400 hours of community service.
- Learning from other self-advocates
  - Becoming friends with Temple Grandin & Stephen Shore
- Peer mentoring
  - All schools, businesses and nonprofit organizations should have a strong mentoring program to help others on their journey

# 10 Things That Helped Me With The Journey To Adulthood

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Helped me collect positive thoughts when transitioning to adulthood
- Self-reflection – Begin with the end in mind
  - Each January writing at least 3 short-term and long term goals in a Journal
- Physical activity
  - As we learn more about how the brain it's important to understand the benefits of daily exercise when it comes to positivity endorphins AND retention of information (Depression on the rise for those with an ASD)
- Finding support networks such as the Autism Society of America
- Writing a blog: [Kerrymagro.com/blog](http://Kerrymagro.com/blog)
  - Hundreds of self-advocates write everyday. Great went to vent as well.



**Autism doesn't  
come with an  
instruction  
guide. It comes  
with a family  
who will never  
give up.**

**While this is sometimes true  
(for autistic people like me  
whose parents became my  
greatest advocates) we also  
need to help those who don't  
have that family support.**

**Have Dr. Kerry Magro Ed.D, an autistic  
public speaker give a talk with your  
school/business. Email: [Kerrymagro@gmail.com](mailto:Kerrymagro@gmail.com)**



**“**

**Autism  
can't  
define  
me.  
I define  
autism.**

**DR. KERRY MAGRO EDD,CAS  
PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER  
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