

ASBC Board of Directors expresses our thanks to all the **2008** volunteers who spent their time contributing and supporting the ASBC community. Look for our volunteers to be featured monthly! We are very grateful for their service.

JANUARY

Desiree Vandelac moved to Colorado from Hawaii, January 2005, and loves living here. Her Great-Great Grandparents were homesteaders in northern Colorado and her family still has a cattle ranch there. Desiree began writing "Ask the Advocate" in 2006 and appreciates the opportunity to help others through the column. With a degree in psychology, that included an emphasis on child development and multicultural studies, Desiree was a counselor in multiple residential facilities for adolescents in California. She has experience with the special education systems in CA, WA, the Department of Defense Dependent School System (DoDDs), HI and CO. She began her volunteer advocacy work 6+ years ago and now is a fee based advocate with the Law Offices of Louise Bouzari. She received her advocacy strategies and IDEA training via a special education attorney, in Hawaii, who was also an Independent Hearing Officer. Desiree is the wife of a Retired Navy Chief Petty Officer (21 years) and the mom of two children, her oldest son is twice-exceptional (gifted and has Asperger's Syndrome and dyslexia); her youngest son is believed to also be twice-exceptional (gifted and dyslexia). Desiree and Rob celebrated their 17th Wedding Anniversary August 2007. Thank you Desiree for your sincerest concern for all humans with all abilities. ASBC appreciates your volunteerism.

FEBRUARY

In 2003 **Bob Sargent** was pulled into the autism cause when his son was diagnosed with CDD, a rare form of late onset regressive autism. Since 2004, Bob has been organizing support group meetings for parents of offspring with autism. In 2006 he joined the ASBC board to coordinate the ASBC Support Group and Speaker Series. Bob has a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering from CSU. During his tenure with Boeing, he supported airline maintenance organizations (in 26 countries) implementing human factors programs, as a human factors engineer. Currently, he is a senior human factors engineer for Alion Science and Technology. He enjoys watching most sports and was a sports writer for the Rocky Mountain Collegian, during his college days at CSU. The Avalanche is Bob's favorite pastime. He also likes participating in ice hockey and loves playing with his kids. He is a proud soccer coach of his daughter team. Bob and wife Bridget, (ASBC Treasurer) returned home to Colorado in 1999 to raise their children, son now 9 and a vivacious daughter almost 5. Thank you Bob, you are a caring and nurturing father and member of the ASBC Board. We are privileged to have your volunteer service.

MARCH

ASBC introduces and welcomes **Ryan Judd** and his musical mastery during ASBC's 5th Annual Wine Tasting & Silent Auction. If you were in attendance at ASBC's Meet & Greet event, this past September, you will remember the magic of his music. Ryan is a talented instrumental guitarist specializing in contemporary finger-style guitar. His repertoire includes music from guitarists such as Michael Hedges and Billy McLaughlin, as well as standards from the classical tradition. He has composed his own pieces and has a CD called *Fingerstyle* that features his compositions. In addition to being a professional musician, Ryan has a private practice called Boulder Valley Music Therapy. He specializes in providing music therapy services to children and adults with ASD. Music Therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals of all ages. Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship. Thank you Ryan for the beauty you bring to music and volunteering.

APRIL

Julie Darrow moved to Colorado from Houston, TX in 1996. She received a Bachelor of Science in Geological Sciences from Texas A&M University in 1995. After relocating to Colorado, she received another Bachelor of Science in Microbiology from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, CO in 2000. She worked

at a small research laboratory in Ft. Collins for a year and a half after graduating until the birth of her daughter, Catherine. After a few years as a stay at home mom, she rejoined the workforce at Amgen, Inc in Boulder, CO in May of 2004. She worked as a Quality Laboratory Associate in the Microbiology Dept until her daughter was diagnosed with High Functioning Autism in January of 2007. Since then, her focus has shifted to overseeing the education (IEP), therapies, and social growth of her daughter and volunteering for ASBC to help immerse herself in the autism community while helping other families navigate through a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. Since joining the Autism Society of Boulder County, Julie has helped us revise and update our community resources directory. She is also being mentored to take over the responsibilities of ASBC Events Coordination and Fundraising. Julie is the wife of Joe Darrow, a Senior Manager of Manufacturing at Amgen, Inc. They have one 6 year old daughter, Catherine, two cats, Roger and Susie, and one questionable Maltese puppy, Willie (named after country legend Willie Nelson).

MAY

Emmy Conroy hosts the Gluten/Casein Free Support Group for the ASBC community. Her interest in the GFCF diet began when she started the diet for her son. "I wanted it to be easier for the next family who decided to go down this path," said Ms. Conroy. The group has evolved to include others who are not on the diet but like to discuss and share issues regarding Autism with friends. "Our meetings are usually spent laughing about our lives. I have met some amazing women by starting this group," said Emmy. Ms. Conroy is also conversational in Spanish and has reached out to mothers in the community who only speak Spanish. Emmy moved to Colorado in the fall of 1998 from Dallas. A mother of three she enjoys cooking, travelling with her children, sewing and volunteering. Emmy is also the Advocacy Chair for Autism Speaks. ASBC thanks Emmy for her dedication.

JULY

Beth Cole, our Grant Writer, is the parent of a 15-year-old with autism (diagnosed at 2- 1/2) and a 19-year-old who just completed her freshman year at the University of Montana Western. Beth is a native of Colorado who plays the harp, loves to hike, read, and travel. A widow since 2000, she recently married. When Beth's son was 3-1/2, she got involved in the parent support group 'Spokespeople' (now Exceptional Families). She quickly became recruited as one of the co-coordinators, and when she finished her term she became employed as the office administrator for the Part C office (later called Kids Connections). In 2004, she received her Master of Nonprofit Management degree from Regis University, and when the Part C system changed over from oversight by the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services, she was hired as the Executive Director of Jeffco First Steps (the Part C office in Jefferson County). A year later, Jeffco First Steps merged with the Developmental Disabilities Resource Center (DDRC) and she became their Part C Coordinator for all the counties they serve (Jefferson, Gilpin, Clear Creek and Summit). As part of her MNM degree, Beth took a grant-writing class and has volunteered with ASBC for 4+ years utilizing those skills to help ASBC put together various grants. In 2005, her son was one of the students followed in the documentary, 'Song of Our Children' which demonstrated successful inclusion of children with disabilities at all levels of education. He was in middle school at that time. Beth was, and continues to be, a strong proponent of inclusion. She believes inclusion has done a world of good for her son now a junior at New Vista High School. New Vista HS is a totally inclusive environment, and he has seen the successes without a para (this after MANY years of many different kinds of intervention). Thank you Beth for your sincerest efforts to support disabilities throughout Colorado! We appreciate your wisdom!

SEPTEMBER

Leah Walton and her family moved from Texas in 2005. She began her service with ASBC in October 2007, was appointed to the board in January 2008 and elected to a first term as Secretary in May 2008. Leah has completed her internship in Arapahoe County and is completing her degree from the Denver Academy of Court Reporting . Leah was voted the 2007 DACR "Student of the Year" and serves as a student representative on the Institutional Effectiveness Program. She is also active with the Veterans History Project and sits on the DACR Institutional Effectiveness Plan Committee. She is actively involved in the programs and events presented by ASBC and most recently attended Autism Society of America "Day on Capital Hill" in Washington, DC. Leah believes in the power of self-advocacy and the educational rights of all children. She is a passionate participant in her own child's education and therapy program and is determined to help others receive early intervention support and guidance. She feels compelled to give back to the autism community through her active volunteering. In this manner, Leah hopes she can support other

families affected by autism and give back to those who have so graciously helped her and her family when her son was first diagnosed. Leah is a wife and mother of two children. Her son was formally diagnosed with Autism in May 2007. Her hobbies are photography, traveling, reading and she likes spending time with family and friends.

OCTOBER

Deb Ward has recently joined ASBC as a volunteer, assisting with website updates, changes and support. She has worked in the marketing and finance industries for most of her career, but recently went back to school and received her Technical Certificate in Multimedia Graphic Design. Deb grew up on the east coast near Philadelphia, moved out to Colorado to get her MBA at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is currently living in Lafayette. She is married and has a daughter, a senior at Monarch High School. She loves all manner of creative projects including photography, scrapbooking and cooking. She is an avid reader, skier and hiker and loves all things "Colorado." She is skilled in InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver and Power Point and has been providing graphic design services on a freelance basis for several years.

NOVEMBER

Eugenia Brady and her daughter Raquel moved to Boulder, Colorado from Costa Rica, almost 11 years ago. Eugenia is a Community Liaison and Translator for the Boulder Valley School District. She is also a member of the Leadership Team of the Parent Engagement Network (PEN), an organization intended to build open communication and understanding between parents and children, and through workshops and lectures, provide parenting tools and strategies to parents of students of all ages. Eugenia believes in the power of self-advocacy, the educational rights and the potential of all children. Her experience includes many years of work in the —Patronato Nacional de Ciegos in Costa Rica, a government's agency for the Blind and work with students with special needs at the University of Costa Rica. Being a Community Liaison has given Eugenia the opportunity to witness the many struggles of members in our community, many of them, immigrant families of children with special needs who often don't speak English. She is currently, a board member of Nuevo Horizonte, a group of 47 Spanish speaking families with children with ASD, located in Denver, and is working on a project with the purpose to get information and resources for parents in any language. Eugenia is passionate about helping and empowers parents of children with ASD and encourages them to take a look into the other side of the Spectrum. She is a single mother of three children, Raquel (19), Brittany (8) and Benjamin (5), who was formally diagnosed with ASD when he was 2 ½ years old. Eugenia enjoys spending time with her children, and her hobbies are sewing, jewelry making and crafts in general

December

ASBC was proud to provide our first Spanish translation at our 2008 Wrightslaw conference. ASBC thanks our two volunteers Eugenia Brady (November Volunteer Spotlight) and **Rosabelle Rice**, who provided their skills to provide Spanish translation to the Spanish families that were our scholarship recipients. These families were able to gain valuable information for their children with special needs that are on IEPs. *Rosabelle Rice lives in Lafayette with her husband and her two sons. She has a diverse background and has volunteered as an interpreter trainer for Adams County School District. She founded her Language Solutions company in 2002. Her company specializes in providing interpretation services for Federal Courts nationwide, medical and insurance companies. She is the founding Director of Interpreters Network of Colorado. She is the founding Board member of Latino Advisory Board to the Lafayette City Council.* Rosabelle enjoys cross country skiing with her family and friends in the winter. She is a volunteer baseball coach at the City of Lafayette Recreation Center. ASBC thanks these two ladies for volunteering their time and expertise in helping us meet our mission to help all ASD individuals, their families and professionals.