Rethinking Autism

State Conference

April 15-18, 2015

FEATURING:

TRACY THRESHER & LARRY BISSONNETTE

FROM ***WRETCHES & JABBERERS***

Sponsorship Packet

Hosted by:

Optimal Rhythms | ACCESS Academy

WRETCHES & JABBERERS ROADTRIP FILM SHEDS PERSONAL LIGHT ON THE GLOBAL FACE OF AUTISM

"Banishes the myths about autism and reveals its global face." – Parade

"An eye-opening and most entertaining doc... nearly perfect" – The Hollywood Reporter

"Autism finds its voice." – Newsweek

"Ingenious documentary about real autistics" – Wall Street Journal

Oscar® winner and twice Academy Award® -nominated filmmaker, Gerardine Wurzburg, has completed a compelling feature documentary called Wretches & Jabberers. Wurzburg's inspiring documentary chronicles the world travels of disability rights advocates, Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, in a bold quest to change attitudes about the intelligence and abilities of people with autism.

Until the 1980s, most children and young adults with autism in the US were excluded from normal schooling. Some were placed in mental institutions. Like many children with autism, Tracy and Larry grew up unable to speak. They faced a future of social isolation in adult disability centers. When Tracy was 23 and Larry 34, their lives changed when they learned to communicate by typing. Larry notes, "nothing I did...convinced people I had an inner life until I started typing."

In the film, Tracy and Larry take to the road to promote awareness of the hidden intelligence in those who face speech and communication challenges, connecting with others like them across the globe who struggle to find a means of expression. Tracy, Larry and their support team, Harvey Lavoy and Pascal Cheng, visit Sri Lanka, Japan and Finland, giving interviews and presentations and learning about the lives of people with autism in these countries. Viewers share in their eye-opening experiences as the men negotiate the terrain of travel, culture and new friendships on what they aptly named The World Intelligence Magnified Tour.

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Conference, Workshop, and Movie Screening

Sponsorship Opportunities

April 15 – April 18, 2015 **Evansville, Indiana**

The **RETHINKING AUTISM** Conference will bring together hundreds of voices as a passionate network to inspire hope and ignite change. Speakers, educators, students, paraprofessionals, therapists, psychologists, medical professionals, caregivers, parents, individuals on the spectrum, and many other interested persons will learn from Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, stars of the world renown documentary, *Wretches & Jabberers*; Marilyn Chadwick, Speech/Language Pathologist and Senior Consultant for the Institute for Communication and Inclusion at Syracuse University; Casey DePriest, Board-Certified Neurologic Music Therapist, owner of Integrative Music Therapy and CEO/Founder of Optimal Rhythms, Inc./ACCESS Academy; and John Smyth, 17 year old self-advocate and founder of *Saved by Typing* in Carmel, Indiana.

Wednesday, April 15, 2015: University of Evansville – Movie Screening/Workshop with Q & A

Thursday, April 16, 2015: Proposed Movie Screening / Educator Trainings, EVSC and WCSC

Friday, April 17, 2015: RETHINKING AUTISM Conference, The Crescent Room, Evansville

Friday, April 17, 2015: #RETHINKAUTISM Reception, The Crescent Room, Evansville

Saturday, April 18, 2015: Wretches & Jabberers Community Forum - Movie Screening and Panel Discussion, The Crescent Room

Events hosted by:

Optimal Rhythms | ACCESS Academy



Make a true impact in our community this year during Autism Awareness Month! Please consider sponsoring one of several upcoming events in April, featuring the stars of *Wretches & Jabberers*! With your help, we will educate, challenge, and encourage our community to RETHINK AUTISM, creating a community that better supports all people, despite our differences.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

CHANGE-MAKER

RETHINKING AUTISM Conference Sponsor - $15,000

- Conference naming rights (*brought to you by X*)
- Company logo on handouts and materials
- Acknowledgement during speaker intros
- One large poster displayed at conference location
- Signs on keynote presentation podiums and Q & A Table
- Exhibit/display table at conference event
- Logo and company link posted on www.optimalrhythms.org
- Promotion in Optimal Rhythms social media
- Ad display at registration table and acknowledgement at workshops
- Four (4) conference registrations
- Table of eight at evening reception

HOPE-GIVER

University/ School Trainings Sponsor - $5,000

Two available

- Announced as the workshop and screening sponsor on Wednesday and Thursday
- One large poster displayed
- Logo and company link posted on www.optimalrhythms.org
- Promotion in Optimal Rhythms social media
- Acknowledgement on workshop and screening materials
- Two (2) conference registrations

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Community Forum Sponsor - $2,500

Two available

- Announced as the movie screening /Q & A sponsor at Saturday's community forum
- One large poster displayed
- Logo posted on www.optimalrhythms.org
- Link to your company's website posted on www.optimalrhythms.org
- Promotion in Optimal Rhythms social media
- Acknowledgement on community forum materials
- Two (2) conference registrations

ADVOCATE SPONSOR

#RETHINKAUTISM Reception Sponsor - $1,500

Four available

- Company logo on materials
- Acknowledgement during speaker intros
- One large poster displayed at reception location
- Signs on presentation podiums and by Q & A Table
- Exhibit/display table at event entrance
- Logo and company link posted on www.optimalrhythms.org
- Promotion in Optimal Rhythms social media
- Ad display at registration table
- Two tickets to Evening reception

Vendor Information

Conference Exhibitor - $ 200 (Spots are limited)

Exhibitors have a reserved space for the entire conference day

- One eight-foot, table with two chairs
- Promotion in Optimal Rhythms social media
- Listing in conference materials
- Listing on www.optimalrhythms.org
- One conference registration
- Electricity at your table, if needed.



Tracy Thresher is an advocate for people with disabilities. He lives and works in Vermont. Tracy began typing to communicate in 1990 and was one of the first individuals with autism at Washington County Mental Health Services (a community-based service provider) to be introduced to it. Prior to finding his voice, Tracy was excluded from normal education and was presumed to be unintelligent and incapable. However, in addition to starring in the nationally recognized documentary, *Wretches & Jabberers*, Tracy has now presented at local, statewide, and national workshops and conferences. He has consulted with local schools, is a former member of the Developmental Services State Standing Committee, and has worked for the Green Mountain Self-Advocates in Montpelier, Vermont. In Vermont, he mentors teenagers and adults. Most recently, Tracy has consulted at Syracuse University as a Lead Trainer.



Larry Bissonnette is a disability rights advocate and artist who lives in Milton, Vermont. He has been painting and drawing since he was a young child and exhibits his art regularly both locally and nationally. In June 2015, he will have a solo exhibition of his art in the Amy Tarrant Gallery in Burlington, Vermont. His work is in the permanent collection of GRACE (Grass Roots Art and Community Effort), Hardwick, Vermont and in the Musée de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland. Larry is both the subject and writer of an award winning film about his life, called, *My Classic Life as an Artist: A Portrait of Larry Bissonnette* (2005). Most recently, he starred in a feature length documentary directed by Gerardine Wurzburg about adults with autism called *Wretches and Jabberer (2010).* In 1991, Larry learned to communicate through typing and began combining words with his art to express his thoughts and ideas. Over the past 15 years, he has been a featured presenter at many national educational conferences and has written and spoken on the topics of autism, communication and art.



Marilyn Chadwick is a Speech/Language Pathologist and has been a part of the Institute on Communication and Inclusion at Syracuse University since 1992. She has previously played the roles of Director of Training and Assistant Director of the FCI, developing the various levels of training and working to publish standards on the method of supported typing. Marilyn has been a leader in supporting FC users to work toward independent typing and speaking. Now as the Senior Consultant, she continues to contribute to the Institute on Communication and Inclusion through conferences, independence clinics and the Training of Trainers program at Syracuse and around the country. Marilyn recognizes the role that rhythm plays in support for individuals with movement differences and communication struggles. She participated in neurologic music therapy training to learn more to assist her in her own work. Marilyn is in private practice, based in Syracuse, New York.



Casey DePriest is a Certified Neurologic Music Therapist and a 1994 graduate of the University of Evansville. Casey began her career working in physical rehabilitation, then child/adolescent psychiatric treatment at Welborn's Mulberry Center. In 2002, Casey started a private practice and became an Indiana Medicaid Waiver provider to serve individuals with developmental disabilities. Since that time her practice, Integrative Music Therapy, has grown to reach over 160 clients per week through the addition of six other talented and qualified music therapists. Casey is the Chair of the Indiana Music Therapy Task Force and a member of the Executive Board for the Association for Indiana Music Therapists, which work to raise awareness and provide increased access to quality music therapy services in Indiana. Casey has specialized in autism treatment through nearly 20 years of experience, advanced training, and professional supervision. She recognized a need for increased access to services and educational opportunities for individuals on the spectrum, recognizing their movement differences, neuro-connectivity differences, and related sensory and communication struggles. In 2014, Casey founded Optimal Rhythms, Inc. (501c3) and a new therapeutic school program, ACCESS Academy, to help support the needs of these individuals in our community. Casey is partnering with Colorado State University to further study the impact of rhythm on movement in individuals on the autism spectrum. Casey was recognized in 2014 as a Health Care Hero by the Evansville Courier & Press and is a 2015 Leadership Evansville Nominee.



John Smyth is a 19 year old young man with diagnoses of autism, communication disorder and seizure disorder. John has been nonverbal since he lost his speech to regressive autism at about 20 months of age. For years he was unable to communicate even his most basic needs; he was considered to have the mind of a 3 year-old, and he struggled with severe behaviors. He was placed in life skills classes for most of his education, having taken a couple of years off to do Verbal Behavior Therapy/ABA in a private setting. At the age of 16 ½ he began taking lessons in Supported Typing. To his parents' complete surprise; he began communicating age appropriate thoughts immediately. At the age of 19, John now attends Brownsburg High School, in Brownsburg, Indiana. Having recognized his high level of intelligence, his school placement was changed to a general education placement which includes some necessary accommodations and supports and he will be graduating with a core 40 diploma in May, 2015. John plans to attend college. His mission in life is to share this story with other families of nonverbal children so that "their children will not have to suffer the years of loneliness that I suffered." He was a presenter at the 2014 ICI Summer Institute at Syracuse University. John is the co-founder of the not-for-profit organization, Saved By Typing, in Carmel, Indiana.



The *Wretches & Jabberers* Support Team

Pascal Cheng (far left), Tracy Thresher (center left), Larry Bissonnette (center right) & Harvey Lavoy (far right)

Harvey F. Lavoy, III

Harvey F. Lavoy, III has worked for Community Developmental Services (CDS), a Division of Washington County Mental Health Services in Montpelier, Vermont since 1994. He has a B.S. in Special Education and has worked in the field of Human Services since 1973.

He currently is the Director of Communication Training and Resources at CDS and provides education, training and technical assistance to adults and children with complex communication needs as well as their families, support staff, educational teams, schools and agencies. He has been a member of the Vermont Statewide Communication Task Force since 2000 providing statewide trainings, workshops, and conferences to enable adults in Vermont with developmental disabilities to communicate, make social connections, and participate in community life more fully.

He is a member of a National network of Master Facilitated Communication Trainers. He received a Certificate of Recognition as a Master Trainer in Facilitated Communication in 2006 from the Institute on Communication and Inclusion, School of Education, Syracuse University and provides introductory and skill building training at the institute two to three times a year.

Pascal Cheng

Pascal Cheng has a M. Ed. and C.A.S. in Special Education from the University of Vermont and has worked for over 30 years with children and adults with developmental disabilities in school and community settings.

He currently works for the Howard Center in Burlington, Vermont as an educational and communication specialist, providing training and consultation in the areas of augmentative communication, assistive technology and literacy for children and adults with developmental disabilities. He has developed specific expertise in facilitated communication, an augmentative communication method for individuals with limited speech. Through his work with individuals served by the Howard Center and continued training at the Institute of Communication and Inclusion at Syracuse University, he has gained extensive skill and experience in the use of this method of communication. As part of a national network of Master Trainers in Facilitated Communication, he works as a consultant to schools and agencies and regularly participates as a trainer in local, regional and national workshops and conferences.

His professional associations involve membership on three different statewide committees: the Vermont Communication Task Force, the Vermont Autism Task Force, and the Vermont Assistive Technology Advisory Council.

April is Autism Awareness Month

Plan to join us for these exciting community events:

- **April 17 – Rethinking Autism Conference** 7:30am-5:00pm, Crescent Room, 621 S. Cullen Ave., Evansville
- **April 17 - #RethinkAutism Evening Reception**, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Crescent Room, 621 S. Cullen Ave., Evansville
- **April 18 – 2015 Walk for Autism & 5K**, Vanderburgh 4-H Center
  - 8:00am 5K
  - 9:30am Kids Fun Run
  - 10:00 1 Mile Walk
  - Visit www.iasf4u.org for details
- **April 18 – Rethinking Autism with *Wretches & Jabberers* Movie Screening and Community Forum**, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, Crescent Room, 621 S. Cullen Ave., Evansville