

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders Conference:

*Unlocking Potential Through Assistive Technology*

May 4 & 5, 2012

Lesley University Graduate School of Education

University Hall

1815 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

## **Friday, May 4, 2012: Author Reading & Signing**

**7-9:30 pm**

*Join us for a wine and cheese reception as local author Susan Senator reads from her latest novel, *Dirt: a story of gardening, mothering and other messy things*. Susan is the author of three books on autism.*

## **Saturday, May 5, 2012: Autism & Assistive Technology**

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

*Dr. Rosalind Picard (MIT Media Lab), Marie Duggan (Technology for Autism Now), Russell Ewell (Hope Technology School/Quicktalk), Dr. Brenda Matthis (Lesley University), Russell Ewell, CEO, Digital Scribbler (via Skype) and Jennifer Leighton (Communication and Technology Lab, Spaulding Rehabilitation at the Lurie Center) join us for a day of learning and discussion. PDPs available.*

## **May 4-5: Artism art + autism**

Please join us for **Artism: art + autism**, an art show featuring the art of people with autism. Artism will be jointly curated by Dr. Robert Shreefter of Lesley University's Creative Arts in Learning Program, and Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, faculty in the Graduate Special Education Program. Art will be displayed during the month of April for Autism Awareness month and for sale during the conference events this year, with all proceeds benefitting MAC.

On May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, well-known Autism experts join Lesley University's Graduate Autism Intervention Program to support [Massachusetts Advocates for Children \(MAC\) Autism Legal Support Center](#). 100% proceeds from these events will directly support the work of MAC, a private non-profit organization dedicated to being an independent and effective voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational and life opportunities. Since its inception in 2002, the Center has become a vital force within the autism community in Massachusetts, providing training, legal assistance, advocacy, and services to thousands of parents and professionals to ensure that children with autism overcome lowered expectations and receive equal educational opportunities.

**Who Should Attend:** special education teachers, paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, principals, administrators, parents, social workers, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists, consultants, advocates, and other specialists.

**Location:** Lesley University Graduate School of Education, University Hall Amphitheatre, 1815 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

**Fee:** The fee for this event is \$75. All proceeds go directly to support the Massachusetts Advocates for Children Autism Legal Support Center.

[To register for this event, click here.](#)

**PDPs available:** 7 We apologize, but at this time, CEUs are not available.

### **Schedule of Events: May 4 cost: \$25**

7:00 PM Susan Senator, local author, reads from her novel, *Dirt*

8:30 PM Book signing and wine and cheese reception

### **Schedule of Events: May 5 cost: \$75**

8:00 am - 9:00 am Check-in and Registration

8:30 am - 9:00 am Welcome & opening address: *Elizabeth Stringer Keefe*

9:00 am - 10:15 am Dr. Rosalind Picard, *Founder & Director, Affective Computing, MIT Media Lab*

10:15 am - 11:30 am: Marie Duggan, Founder, Technology for Autism Now

11:30 am - 12:00 pm: Elizabeth Stringer Keefe

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch (on your own in Cambridge)

1:00 pm - 2:15 pm: Russell Ewell, CEO, Digital Scribbler

2:15 pm - 3:30 pm: Jennifer Leighton, MC-CCC/SLP

3:45 pm - 5:00 pm Dr. Brenda Matthis

## Speaker Bios

**Susan Senator**, writer in Massachusetts and the author of “Dirt: a story about gardening, mothering and other messy things,” “[The Autism Mom’s Survival Guide](#)” and “[Making Peace With Autism](#).” Susan’s writing career began in 1997 with her first article, published in Exceptional Parent Magazine, “How to Make Crisis Stories.” Shortly after, she became a columnist at the Brookline Tab, with a bimonthly column called “Schools of Thought,” which later became “Social Studies.” From 2001 to 2006, she served the Board of Education for Brookline, Massachusetts. In 2008, she began teaching writing and English at Suffolk University in Boston. Her blog, [All Happy Families Are Not Alike](#), was awarded a 2011 babble.com distinction as a Top 25 Autism Spectrum Blog.

**Rosalind Picard, ScD**, *Founder & Director, Affective Computing research group at MIT Media Lab; Co-Director, Things That Think Consortium, Director, Autism & Communication Technology Initiative, MIT; Co-founder, & Chief Scientist, Affectiva, Inc.* Picard holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering with highest honors from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and master's and doctoral degrees, both in electrical engineering and computer science, from MIT. Prior to completing her doctorate at MIT, she was a member of the technical staff at AT&T Bell Laboratories, where she designed VLSI chips for digital signal processing and developed new methods of image compression and analysis. In 1991 she joined the MIT Media Lab faculty, where she became internationally known for constructing powerful mathematical models for content-based retrieval of images, for creating new tools such as the Photobook system, and for pioneering methods of automated search and annotation in digital video. Dr. Picard is the author of the award-winning book *Affective Computing*, which was instrumental in starting a new field by that name, and author of nearly 200 scientific articles and chapters in multidimensional signal modeling, computer vision, pattern recognition, machine learning, human-computer interaction, and affective computing. Picard is an international leader in envisioning and inventing innovative technology. She has been awarded dozens of distinguished and named lectureships internationally, and in 2005 was honored as a Fellow of the IEEE for contributions to image and video analysis and affective computing. She is recipient of a best paper prize for work on machine learning with multiple models (with Tom Minka, 1998), and recipient of a best theory paper prize for work on affect in human learning (with Barry Kort and Rob Reilly, 2001). She holds multiple patents, having designed and developed a variety of new sensors, algorithms, and systems for sensing, recognizing, and responding respectfully to human affective information, with applications in autism communication, human and machine learning, health behavior change, marketing, advertising, customer service, and human-computer interaction. Picard interacts regularly with industry and has consulted for companies such as Apple, AT&T, BT, HP, iRobot, and Motorola. She is a popular keynote speaker and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The London Independent*,

*National Public Radio, Scientific American Frontiers, ABC's Nightline and World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, Time, Vogue, Wired, Voice of America Radio, New Scientist, and the BBC's The Works and The Big Byte.*

**Marie Duggan, Founder,** Technology for Autism Now, Inc. (TAN). TAN is dedicated to developing alternative and augmentative communication (ACC) tools that help children with autism lead fuller, more functional lives at home, in school, and in their communities. Marie Duggan leads TAN's ideas for creating iPad and iPhone applications for users with autism, which has generated support from Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Children's Hospital Boston and Massachusetts General Hospital, schools, and technology leaders such as the MIT Media Laboratory and FableVision, a Boston-based educational media developer and publisher. Marie is parent to six children, including Michael, who is severely affected with autism, and whom Marie helped find his voice.

**Russell Ewell, Founder, Hope Technology Group & Hope Technology School., CEO, Digital Scribbler; Founder, E-Soccer.** Russ is the founder of Hope Technology Group, a non-profit focused on using technology to overcome human limits. In 2001, Hope Technology Group started the Hope Technology School, which is a nationally recognized full-inclusion school. Hewlett-Packard recently featured the Hope Technology School in its [Hacking Autism](#) advertising campaign. As CEO of Digital Scribbler, Russ' work is focused on developing assistive technologies for iPhone and Android devices. His Digital Scribbler blog covers ideas, insights and the practical application of technology in the field of education. Recently, Digital Scribbler released its first app, *Quick Talk*, an assistive tool that helps those who are non-verbal to communicate. In 2000, Russ founded E-soccer, an all-volunteer inclusive soccer program. The program is dedicated to empowering both typical and special needs children of all abilities to reach their full athletic and social potential. For his work with E-soccer, Russ received the Jefferson Award and a Congressional in recognition of his impact on youth and special needs children in the San Francisco Bay Area. Russ and his wife Gail are parents to three children, two of whom have disabilities.

**Dr. Brenda Matthis, EdD.** *Associate Professor, Director, STEM Division (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics); Managing Director, Technology in Education Program, Graduate School of Education, Lesley University.* Dr. Matthis' professional career began as a software programmer and designer before receiving a master's degree in Technology & Education and a PhD in Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University, where she explored her interests in social construction of educational software and authorship in educational software. Dr. Matthis joined CAST (Center for Applied Special Technologies) as Director of Professional Development, to help educators improve learning opportunities and outcomes for all individuals through Universal Design for Learning. In 2001, Dr. Matthis joined the faculty of Lesley University. She was a Fulbright scholar at the Fukuoka University of

Education, Japan. Her research includes the use of technology for children with disabilities, the use of multimedia and technology for children with severe cognitive and communication disabilities. Her latest research is the use of iPads for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

**Jennifer Leighton, M.A., CCC-SLP, Advanced Clinician, Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) Clinic, Spaulding Outpatient Center for Children at the Lurie Center (previously LADDERS).** Jennifer is a Speech-Language Pathologist with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorders and neurogenic, voice and swallowing disorders. Jennifer's work focuses on making language visual for children and in encouraging parents and professionals to do the same, through low tech visual supports such as picture symbols, text cues, picture schedules, use of PECS and/or static display communication books, Aided Language Stimulation, and visual positive behavior support systems. She is tremendously interested in the role that literacy plays with regard to language development and has incorporated literacy learning via use of picture symbols and text, into language based sessions to facilitate a variety of language functions including sentence formulation and language comprehension; assistive technology plays a very important role in addressing some of these skills. One of the goals of the AAC Clinic is to ensure adequate teaching of a device within the family unit, and with personnel within school, work and home environments, to ensure adequate carry over and generalization so that children can carry over and generalize their communication skills across a variety of people and contexts.

**Now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, the Lesley University Focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders Series is an initiative to provide training beyond standard teacher licensure for those who work with students with ASD, given the precipitous increase in the number of students identified with the disorder and the limits of what can be included in teacher education programs. In recognition that the cost of training is sometimes an impediment to teachers, parents and other professionals, a second initiative is to provide low-cost, accessible and affordable professional development for anyone working/living with an individual with ASD. Lastly, each year, this effort supports a non-profit community partner whose work and mission support children, families and professionals outside of school settings. As a result, all events in the series are charity events for a non-profit, with 100% of proceeds going to support the organization.**

**For further information, contact Elizabeth Stringer Keefe: <mailto:estringer@lesley.edu>**