



Autism Spectrum Disorders

Goodhue County Education District

Teen Makes ‘Sit With Us’ App That Helps Students Find Lunch Buddies

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A new app makes finding friends in the school cafeteria a piece of cake. “Sit With Us” helps students who have difficulty finding a place to sit locate a welcoming group in the lunchroom. The app allows students to designate themselves as “ambassadors,” thereby inviting others to join them. Ambassadors can then post “open lunch” events, which signal to anyone seeking company that they’re invited to join the ambassadors’ table.

Natalie Hampton, a 16-year-old from Sherman Oaks, California, is the designer of Sit With Us, which launched on September 9. She was inspired to create it after she ate alone her entire seventh grade year, she told LA Daily News. The situation left Hampton feeling vulnerable and made her a target for bullying.

Hampton told Audie Cornish on NPR’s “All Things Considered” that the reason why she felt an app like this was necessary is because it prevents kids from being publicly rejected and being considered social outcasts by their peers.

This way it’s very private. It’s through the phone. No one else has to know,” she explained to Cornish. “And you know that you’re not going to be rejected once you get to the table.”



Hampton might be on to something even more, especially since she’s asking fellow students to take the stand against bullying.

When students — especially the “cool kids” — stand up to bullying, it has a significant impact, according to a study conducted by Princeton, Rutgers and Yale University.

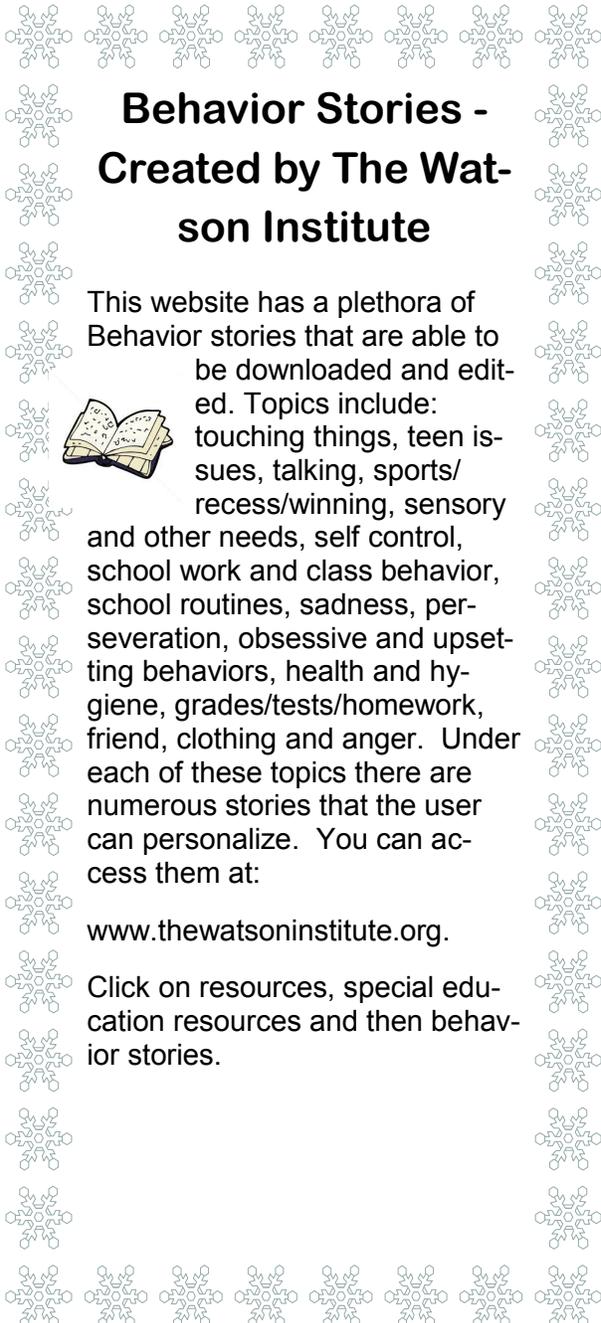
During a 2012-2013 school year, over 50 New Jersey middle schools provided their most socially competent students with social media tools and encouragement to combat bullying, and saw a reduction in student conflict reports by 30 percent.

Hampton told All Things Considered that since she launched the app last week, she’s already getting positive feedback from her peers.

“People are already posting open lunches at my school,” she told the program. “So I’m very excited that things are already kicking off with a great start.”

Inside this issue:

Behavior Stories	2
Social Narratives	2
Big Red Safety Tool Kit	3
Sesame Street Workshop	3
Upcoming Events	3



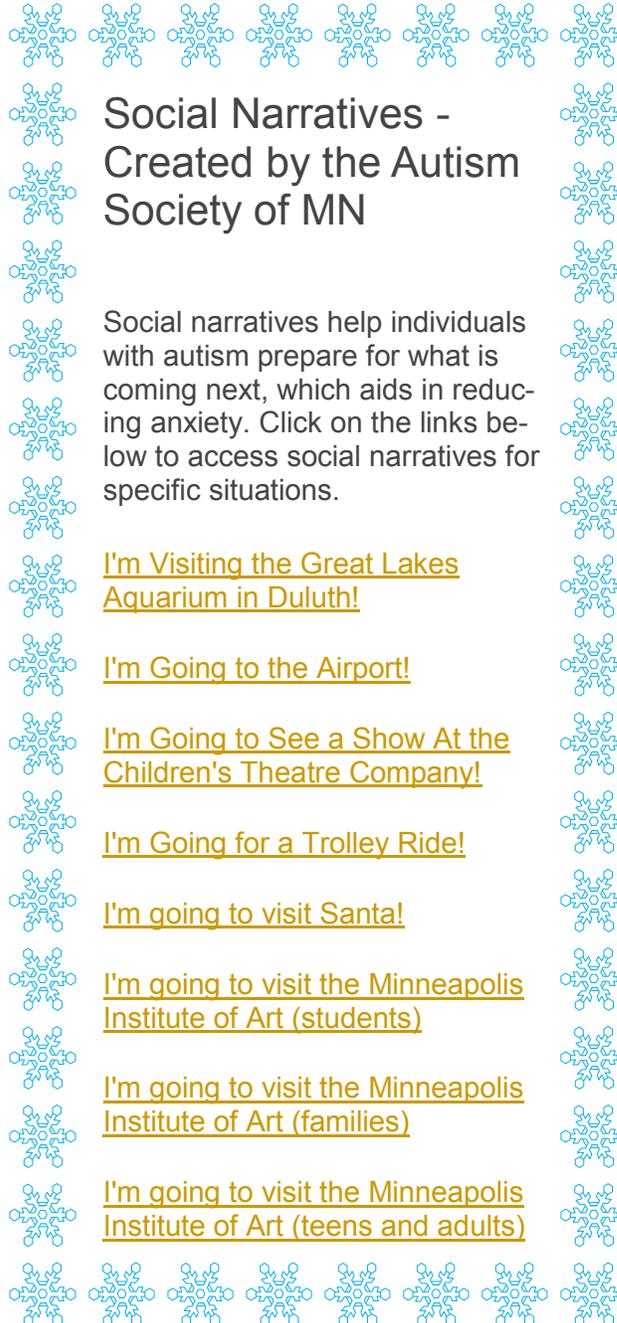
Behavior Stories - Created by The Watson Institute



This website has a plethora of Behavior stories that are able to be downloaded and edited. Topics include: touching things, teen issues, talking, sports/recess/winning, sensory and other needs, self control, school work and class behavior, school routines, sadness, perseverance, obsessive and upsetting behaviors, health and hygiene, grades/tests/homework, friend, clothing and anger. Under each of these topics there are numerous stories that the user can personalize. You can access them at:

www.thewatsoninstitute.org.

Click on resources, special education resources and then behavior stories.



Social Narratives - Created by the Autism Society of MN

Social narratives help individuals with autism prepare for what is coming next, which aids in reducing anxiety. Click on the links below to access social narratives for specific situations.

[I'm Visiting the Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth!](#)

[I'm Going to the Airport!](#)

[I'm Going to See a Show At the Children's Theatre Company!](#)

[I'm Going for a Trolley Ride!](#)

[I'm going to visit Santa!](#)

[I'm going to visit the Minneapolis Institute of Art \(students\)](#)

[I'm going to visit the Minneapolis Institute of Art \(families\)](#)

[I'm going to visit the Minneapolis Institute of Art \(teens and adults\)](#)



NAA has created three digital safety toolkits that can be downloaded here:

[Caregiver Toolkit](#) | [First Responder Toolkit](#) | [Teacher Toolkit](#)

Take Action in Your Home & Community:

Download and begin using your Big Red Safety Toolkit today.

About This Initiative

In the U.S., 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In fact, almost every school and university in the country has students with autism. While the diagnosis is common, public understanding of autism is not. The lack of understanding around the condition

contributes to discrimination, verbal abuse, even physical violence. A recent study reveals that children with autism are five times more likely to be bullied than their peers—treatment no child should endure. While the differences between people with autism and their peers may seem significant, children share something far more important: unique qualities and

talents that make the world an interesting place.

That's why Sesame Workshop created Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children, a nationwide initiative aimed at communities with children ages 2 to 5. Developed with input from parents, people who serve the autism community, and people with autism, See Amaz-

ing in All Children offers families ways to overcome common challenges and simplify everyday activities. At the same time, the project fosters an affirming narrative around autism for all families and kids.



Julia is a Sesame Street character introduced in 2015. She first appeared in the digital storybook "We're Amazing, 1,2,3!" Julia is a young girl with bright orange hair and big green eyes; she's also autistic. She is friends with Elmo and Abby.

Autism.sesamestreet.org is a wonderful resource for children, families, and friends. Stories, songs, videos, apps, daily routine cards, parent and sibling resources are all featured.

Upcoming Events



January 23-26, 2017 - Zones of Regulation and Practical Strategies to Teach Executive Functioning and Social Skills to students. Register at www.aepconnections.com \$220.00 for both days

January 31, 2017 - ASD/DCD Cohort 8am or 12 pm River

April 4, 2017 - ASD/DCD Cohort 8am or 12 pm River Bluff

April 23-25, 2017 - Charting the C's

April 26-29, 2017 - Autism Society of MN annual spring conference

June 20 - 21, 2017 - Hamline Summer Institute