

## AUTISM

Autism is a complex neuro-developmental disorder appearing from birth or early childhood. A "spectrum" disorder, its effects range from mild to severe, impacting essential human behaviors such as language; the communication of ideas and emotions; imagination; self-regulation; and, the ability to engage in relationships. Four times more prevalent in males, autism is estimated to affect **1 in every 91-110** children in the US, occurring more than cancer, diabetes and any other childhood disease.

*CURRENTLY, THE CAUSES OF AUTISM ARE UNDETERMINED, TREATMENTS ARE NOT FULLY EFFECTIVE AND THERE IS NO KNOWN CURE*



## WORKING FOR YOU

### Information, Referral and Family Support

Helping you to **discover options**, and to find the best available services, providers, support and resources in the Inland Northwest and beyond...

### Domino Project

Providing **early education, evidence-based intervention** and **professional training** through **Domino Project**. Future plans include development of adolescent and adult residential services...

## OUR MISSION: *BUILDING A STRONG NETWORK OF SUPPORT*

Autism is a world-wide health concern, but the real challenges occur at home, in our families, schools and neighborhoods. Formed in 2003, Northwest Autism Center exists to support, facilitate and build accessible and comprehensive, community-based approaches to helping children and adults with autism spectrum disorders in the Inland Northwest.

## OUR VISION: *PROMOTING THE WORTH OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL*

Each individual with an autism spectrum disorder living in the Inland Northwest will have access to early diagnosis and treatment, best practices in public education and healthcare, and the social supports necessary for optimal personal growth and the fullest level of participation within family and community.



### Opportunities for Learning

Offering **conferences, workshops, presentations** and **consultations** to families, professionals and community groups...

### Health Care Initiative

Working with health care communities to improve early identification, diagnosis and referral, and to build **integrated service provision through the lifespan** of individuals with autism...

### Online Connections

Delivering up-to-date information, news and events; providing a gateway to autism on the web; **connecting families, educators and providers...**

### Advocacy for Improved Policy and Law

Giving voice to the complex needs of affected individuals and families; contributing key ideas, information and values to current local, state and national debates impacting the future of people with autism and other disabilities. We promote:

- **BEST PRACTICES IN EARLY IDENTIFICATION, DIAGNOSIS AND INTERVENTION**
- **MEDICAL HOMES OFFERING INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY-CENTERED CARE**
- **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES (EBP) IN EDUCATION AND TREATMENT**
- **INTEGRATED, COMPREHENSIVE CARE AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE LIFESPAN**
- **GROWTH OF A HIGHLY TRAINED NETWORK OF AUTISM PROFESSIONALS**
- **MEANINGFUL, SUSTAINABLE HEALTH CARE AND INSURANCE REFORMS**
- **AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY WITH FULL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERY PERSON**

## DOMINO PROJECT

In 2005, Northwest Autism Center launched Domino Project in collaboration with **Eastern Washington University** and Sacred Heart Children's Center.

Committed to best practices in educating young children with autism spectrum disorders, Domino Project uses a framework of Applied Behavior Analysis in a program that is:

*YEAR-ROUND AND INTENSIVE*

*FAMILY-CENTERED AND INCLUSIVE*

*INDIVIDUALIZED AND RESEARCH-BASED*

Housed on the campus of Eastern Washington University, Domino serves as an observation, training and consultation center for university faculty and students, area educators and related autism service providers. This multi-agency collaboration contributes to the development of a robust network of autism professionals in our region, demonstrating the power of partnership to provide effective and innovative solutions to complex challenges.

### Domino Project Director



**DR. SHIRA A. ACKERMAN** joined Northwest Autism Center in 2007. She holds a PhD in Applied Behavior Analysis from Columbia University, and is a veteran special education teacher with **expertise in early verbal development.**

Dr. Ackerman brings effective research-based practices to Domino Project and to families in the Inland Northwest.



is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Spokane, Washington. We are governed by a highly qualified board of directors, and depend upon community support for our continued work.

### BOARD MEMBERS

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*Northwest Autism Center*

### Executive Director

#### DAWN SIDELL

is a registered nurse and mother to four children, one of whom has autism. In 2001, Dawn cofounded and led Spokane's Autism Task Force, a group of committed parents, educators, health care providers and community members whose goal was

to determine Spokane's best response to meeting the challenges of autism in our region. In 2003, led by the recommendations of that task force, Dawn founded **Northwest Autism Center.** Dawn works locally and at state and national levels to promote understanding, transform systems of care and advance law and policy changes essential to individuals with autism.

