Complicated disorder calls for unique strategies
by Yaneli Banda

Autism is a complicated disorder. To understand the impact autism has on students, we must first understand the meaning of autism and the strategies needed to help children be successful. School age children with autism require special intervention in order to succeed in school.

Autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is a mental condition, present from early childhood. Signs of ASD usually appear by age 2 or 3. Often, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. According to autismspeaks.org, ASD affects an estimated 1 in 59 children.

Characteristics of ASD may consist of difficulty in communicating and forming relationships with other people and in using language and understanding abstract concepts. Many people with autism also have sensory issues. These can include aversions to certain sights, sounds and other sensations.

Julie Bird, director of special programs in the Moniteau County R-1 School District, oversees the education of autistic students in the district.

"Symptoms and characteristics of autism can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations from mild to severe," Bird said.

In the California school district about 1% of the total student population has been identified as having autism. Each building has autistic students who have been identified as needing special education services, so it is likely that all students in the district have some interaction with ASD.

Teachers are able to speak generally on the subject of autism, but cannot share specific information about a student who has been identified as having autism.

"If students have general questions about autism or want more information, any of our teachers and/or staff in our Special Education Department can visit with them," said Bird.

Kristy Gatlin is a special education teacher at CHS. She has been teaching for ten years and has a certification in the area of special education. Gatlin was also trained in Discrete Trial Training, which is used to help struggling students meet an individual goal. These goals usually include reducing challenging behaviors and teaching language, social, adaptive, and education skills.

Having students with autism as well as other physical and cognitive challenges in a public school has many learning benefits for both the entire student population and for the teachers. Gatlin points out that until one is exposed to someone with a disability of any kind, they will not know how to interact with them.

"You can learn a lot from them. I think the most important thing I have learned from my students is how important it is to truly listen. The depth of their wisdom is incredible. Working with special education students challenges me to think outside of the box. If something doesn’t work, I have to modify lessons and adjust teaching strategies until we can find a way to make it work.”

To engage all of her students, Gatlin incorporates elements of music and physical activities.

“Students with autism are not any different than anyone else in that they want to be a part of social groups and socialize just like other high school students,” said Gatlin. “The only difference in students with autism is that they just do not always know how to do that, but they are often able to be successful when given the opportunity and appropriate social support.”
Elementary students share progress with their parents
By Kayla Wehmeyer

Student-led conferences are conferences where the students lead instead of teachers. These conferences have many advantages.

Students get to show their parents how far they have come in school and show them their achievements. Showing their parents everything they have learned makes the students and parents feel proud.

“Students show their parents their progress and may also showcase their work or activities they do in the classroom,” Taylor Grellner, kindergarten teacher, said.

Student-led conferences are different from parent-teacher conferences. “The biggest difference is who is sharing the student’s progress. At teacher-led conferences teachers talk about progress and behaviors,” Grellner said.

California Elementary holds parent-teacher conferences during the fall and student-led conferences during the spring.

Each grade level has their own way of conducting student-led conferences. For example, the kindergarten students explain the different items they have learned throughout the year.

Third grade students have a pre-made agenda (pictured above) for their parents’ visit. One item on the list is to play math connect four (pictured here).

California Kids continue to grow
by Kody Briggs and Hayden Green

Stacy Friedrich has been the director of the California Kids since 2002 when she started teaching at California Elementary School. She is the only second director of the California Kids since it was started in the late 1970s by Mrs. Ginger Moore.

Auditions are typically held in September where the students are required to sing “America” and then a song of their choice. Under Moore, only 20 or so fifth and sixth graders were selected for the group each year. Now only fourth and fifth graders can try out for California Kids, and each year Friedrich keeps 40-60 students.

“The amount of students that make California Kids depends on the talent level of each grade level,” said Friedrich.

Being in California Kids allows the students to perform with other students of the same talent level; also, they get more opportunities to perform along with singing multiple different genres that the regular music class doesn’t cover.

Along with the increased size of California Kids, the next huge influence on the program has been the Performing Arts Center. The addition of the Performing Arts Center has created a quality place for the students to showcase their talents during concerts.

“The building of the Performing Arts Center made a huge impact to the music department,” said Friedrich.

California Kids not only performs at the Performing Arts Center but also at community functions like the Ham and Turkey Festival. There are usually five to six performances a year plus a talent show.

This year has the largest number of students in California Kids with 63. Each year the program is looking into more performances to be able to display the talents the students have to offer.

The 2019 California Kids talent show is scheduled for April 30th at 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; talents can range from playing the piano to juggling.

In my room . . . Hands on learning in Pre-K classroom
by Rebekah Farmer

California pre-kindergarten students use a more visual and tangible approach to learning and discovering how all things correlate.

Recently, they studied magnet and weather-related projects. Lessons about the properties of magnets and the four seasons led to teaching students about the order of rainbows and prisms.

Kimberly Scheidt, pre-k teacher, said, “[the students] enjoyed making the season of the year trees and also the three types of clouds project.”

The class discusses the weather daily to increase their weather knowledge. Scheidt plans activities based on the weekly themes and creates a weekly hands-on experience for the students. She believes that giving the students hands-on learning experience gives them a better learning experience.

One such activity was a magnet observation experiment to help her students learn what type of items are magnetic and the different qualities of items that can be magnetic. The students were placed in groups, using clipboards and pencils, and walked around the room testing objects with magnets. They soon discovered that most metal items made of iron are attracted to metal. They also learned that some non-metal items have smaller pieces, such as pens, that have magnetic properties.

Scheidt’s classroom does a daily exploration on whatever the current lesson is. This was her idea behind using magnets and other classroom items to test the magnetability of different objects.
In my room . . . Art class brings new challenges to CMS students
by Micheal Almazan & Hayden Gensler,
CMS students
Walker Friedmeyer works on his Claus Oldenburg inspired 3D sculpture. He chose to create the Viking's logo.
Art class is for kids to get better at sketching and sculpting and Ms. Maggie Long helps all the grades with their art skills. A lot of kids can be pros at art and they can get better and better. Long challenges students to do projects they have never done before.
“I try and choose projects that I think will interest students but also get them out of their comfort zones,” she said.
Through art class Long wants students to use art to communicate with the world.
“My hope is that students would gain an understanding of how to appreciate and interpret visual art,” said Long. “It’s a fantastic tool for communicating that I wish students would feel more comfortable using.”
“Music is a way to communicate and express things that you are thinking and feeling when you don’t know how to say it,” said Long. “Music gives you the avenue to express what you want to say. CMS is so lucky to have a great art teacher like Ms. Long. She is nice to all her students, and she does lots of fun activities with her classes.

from CMS Pinto Pulse (Micro Google class)
taught by Ms. Jeanne Beck
Future ag students
by Andrew Cutt
Eighth grade students are already preparing for high school and planning out their classes, and many hope to take the agriculture classes at CHS.
Students are looking forward to the many different agriculture classes including woodworking and intro to Agriculture, Foods, and Natural Resources. Taking AFNR opens up many other ag classes.
Eighth grade student Will Lingle is looking forward to welding class.
“I want to do pipeline because I can weld for the union and make bank,” he said. “I am also looking forward to learning new skills because I’m looking forward to make money.”
Some students are looking forward to upperclassman courses to work on other things in ag.
Eighth grader Madisyn Moreland said she’s looking forward to ag classes “because later on I get to work with animals.”
Eighth grader Enrique Garcia likes plants and is looking forward to taking woodworking. “I plan on going into ag construction,” he said.
There will be many students attending the ag classes next year. All of them are entering for different reasons. Whether it be to work with animals, grow their own plants, work in construction or work on vehicles, whatever their goals are the teachers at the high school are sure to support them.

CMS hosts middle school track meet
Tuesday, April 2, middle school students took over the high school campus for a California track meet.
Twelve schools competed from 3:00-11:00 p.m. The top three in each event medalled.
Fifteen adult volunteers along with both the high school and middle school track coaches ran off six field events and nine running events. At left, Lanie Holtsclaw and Sarah Kirby (second and fourth from left, respectively) ran the 100-meter hurdles for California.
Many non-track students and family were on hand to support their favorite athletes.

CMS CHORAL CONCERT
Tuesday, May 7
7:00 p.m.
CPAC

SCHOOL DISTRICT BAND CONCERT
Sunday, May 5
2:00 p.m. in CPAC
High School Concert & Jazz ensembles
Middle School Concert ensembles
Raffle tickets for a hand made table will be sold prior to the concert in the lobby.

Many teachers throughout Moniteau R-1 schools have participated in jeans week. Jeans weeks are when teachers can pay five dollars for the week to wear jeans to work.
“A jeans week is a great way to collect funds for a variety of important causes such as the American Cancer Society, The Food Bank of Central Missouri, a family that lost everything to a house fire, and many other worthy causes. Not to mention, our staff really enjoy an opportunity to dress down sometimes,” said Sanders.

Jeans weeks have been utilized for decades in school districts across the nation. Some districts take advantage of them more than others and some not at all. California typically has one district-wide jeans week per quarter.
According to Sanders, the criteria of a jeans week is fairly simple.
“With any fundraiser, we want to make sure that there is a need for the funds and that it is for a worthy cause. We also don’t want one fundraiser to interfere with another, and so we try to make sure that only one fundraiser is going on at any given time.”

Jeans week is also special to the teachers because not only does it allow the schools to raise money for a cause, but it allows the teachers to dress down and relax at work. Typically the dress code for teachers is business casual, which does not allow for jeans.
On a typical school day, if teachers were not to dress in the appropriate attire, they would be asked to adjust their attire by their immediate supervisor.
“Most professions have a standard of dress that creates an image of professionalism,” said Sanders. “An employee’s physical appearance portrays something about their competency in the work that they do. While this may simply be a perception that folks have, it can impact how others perceive them.”

Jeans week is a great way to raise money to support funds dear to the school staff. This also gives the teachers the opportunity to dress casually during their day in the classroom.
Moniteau County clay used in ceramics class
by Georgia Hoellering and Rebekah Farmer

A winter hike brought a unique opportunity to California art students.

Michael Baepler, CHS science teacher, recently discovered several pounds of raw clay near an old barite/tiff mine north of Jamestown when he was hiking with his wife during Christmas break. This clay was later donated to the CHS art department.

“I was excited to introduce the clay to my Advance Ceramics students to work with and see what they could create and what kind of comparisons they would make between the raw clay versus our usual white earthenware clay,” said Brad Friedrich, CHS art teacher.

“We do mostly hand built pottery using the pinch-pot, coil, and slab method of clay construction,” Friedrich said the students used the Moniteau County clay to create pinch pots.

Friedrich believes he had possibly used raw clay one other time. The raw clay that Baepler brought in was a different texture as compared to the treated clay that is typically purchased for class projects.

The raw clay had more grog, which is the difference in sizes of the particle deposits in the clay compared to the processed clay. The more grog that is in the clay, the more likely the clay will break in the kiln because the particles do not seal in with the other particles.

Also, this clay was white in color instead of grey but fired at the same temperature of a Cone 06 (1828 degrees F).

Baepler remarked that clay has been used in his geology class a few times before. He brought some home for his children as well, and then donated a couple pounds to the CHS art department.

The location of the clay is not known by many locals. Baepler believes that there had been an early pottery work somewhere in the area in the 1800’s.

“I keep an eye out for good examples of geologic specimens when I am outside,” said Baepler.

He brought the clay to school because it seemed unfamiliar in its form.

“The clay is white and unusual in its purity as compared to most of our local clay,” therefore, he thought it might have been good for some ceramics projects. The exact type and composition of the clay is unknown, but it is different than the clays that Baepler had discovered at other clay sites.

“I am grateful to the landowner for letting me collect samples from the historical barite mine,” said Baepler. “The science department appreciates having local specimens of both geological and biological materials. Local landowners are great resources for us science teachers.”

Baepler encourages landowners to share their finds with local schools.

Contest teams build knowledge, experience
by Kody Bisges

FFA contests started in 1928 because of a livestock judging contest at the American Royal. Contest teams are fun and rewarding for all students that participate in them.

FFA contests, otherwise known as career development events (CDE), are contests that high schoolers compete in based on the knowledge they have in a particular subject. Being on a team, students learn a lot that gives them real-world experience in the agriculture field.

Around fifteen contest teams are offered ranging from agriculture mechanics to forestry. The only requirements to participate are the students “must be in an ag class, and they must show up to some of the practices,” Adam Bieri, agriculture instructor/FFA advisor said.

Schools often offer practice contests as well so that participants can get a sense of what the district contest will look like. Along with going to practice contests, different schools usually hold several practices to help prepare for district contest.

The three levels of competition are districts, state, and nationals. To move on to the next contest, the team has to place in the top three in their specific contest.

The California Agriculture Mechanics group (Garrett Burger, Dawson Gump, Tucker Bieri, and Tagen Higgins) practices wiring up light switches for their upcoming contest.

The knowledge students gain from these contest teams is something they can use for the rest of their lives. They get not only hands-on experience in that field but also scholarship opportunities. The contest also gives students the chance to “put what they learn in the classroom into practical, real-world use,” Bieri said.

Being a part of one or more of the FFA judging teams throughout high school can lead to future employment and practical skills, like judging an animal, that student can use the rest of their lives.