

ASF HONORS PAT SCHISSEL

Congratulations Pat!!!



Pat Schissel, LMSW
President, AHA
June 2011

Editor's Note: Pat Schissel and her team at AHA do great work!!! We are proud to represent her quality information/ work!!! See below!!!

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On Sunday May 8, 2011, the Autism Science Foundation (ASF) and JCC of Mid- Westchester honored/ celebrated families raising children with special needs at its annual "Celebrating Families Mother's Day Brunch". This year the inaugural **Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award**, named in memory of autism advocate Caryn Schwartzman will be awarded.

The Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award will be presented annually to the parent advocate whose energy, tenacity, and commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals with autism best emulates Caryn. Caryn was a loving and dedicated mom, and a tireless advocate who worked with the National Alliance for Autism Research, Autism Speaks and the Autism Science Foundation to support autism research and improve the lives of children around the country. The award is presented in her memory by her daughter Allyson, her son Robby, and her husband Marty. **This year's award goes to Pat Schissel, president of the Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association, Inc. (AHA)**, a support and education advocacy group for parents and professionals, with members across the state, country and world. Ms. Schissel is the parent of two; one an adult on the autism spectrum who was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in his 20's and the other an attorney who works in public interest law.

At the Mother's Day Brunch Karen London, Co-Founder of NAAR and the Autism Science Foundation introduced Caryn's twins Allyson and Robby who then introduced Pat:

Caryn Schwartzman, who passed away tragically last year at the age of 47, was a person who left an indelible mark on autism research and the LI autism community. Caryn, wife of AHA Advisory Board Member, Marty Schwartzman and mom of twins Allyson and Robby co-chaired the 3rd annual "Walk FAR for NAAR/National Alliance for Autism Research" in Long Island. With infectious enthusiasm, Caryn rallied neighbors and senior citizens to volunteer on walk days and helped organize the celebratory awards ceremonies to follow. But the Walk FAR for NAAR that Caryn co-chaired in 2002 blew out all of the stops. It was the first time a NAAR walk anywhere in the US raised over \$1 million. It attracted so many walkers that even Eisenhower Park was unable to accommodate our numbers. It made the NAAR walk the exemplar for other charity walkathons to emulate. The revenue raised from this walk facilitated NAAR's first

significant increase in autism research funding. Caryn was a model for her daughter Allyson who at age 10 spoke at a NAAR walk kickoff luncheon as the sibling of an autistic brother. Her speech moved this highly motivated audience. Caryn embodied all that was most special to me at NAAR...a fearless and passionate parent dedicated to helping our children and the autism community that we helped create and embrace.

ASF – Autism Science Foundation

The Autism Science Foundation's mission is to support autism research by providing funding and other assistance to scientists and organizations conducting, facilitating, publicizing and disseminating autism research. The organization also provides information about autism to the general public and serves to increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders and the needs of individuals and families affected by autism.

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