



## RETHINKING **AUTISM** CONFERENCE

April 20-21, 2017 • 8:30 AM-4:30PM

St. Mary's Manor | 3700 Washington Ave | Evansville, IN

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# Registration Packet

Hosted by:





**April 20-21, 2017**

**Evansville, Indiana**

The **Rethinking Autism** Conference was founded to bring together hundreds of voices as a passionate network to inspire hope and ignite change.

Come explore compelling research that challenges our original understanding of autism spectrum disorder and establishes the evidence behind innovative and neurologically-based sensory supports and accommodations that are increasing functioning through improved regulation, reliable communication, meaningful social relationships, and lasting behavioral outcomes for individuals on the spectrum.

**Conference participants will hear from autistic self-advocates who have experienced a range of challenges with and without communication. Listen as they challenge us to presume competence and understand the motor differences that impact so many aspects of an individual's life on the spectrum. Engage in multi-modal learning experiences from Christine King, COTA/L, Director at Project CHILLD; and Casey DePriest, Certified Neurologic Music Therapist, Founder of Optimal Rhythms, Inc. / ACCESS Academy; as well as an esteemed panel of autistic self-advocates who will discuss critical issues related to educational access for students on the autism spectrum.**

**Thursday, April 20, 2017:      **RETHINKING AUTISM** Conference**

**Day 1**

**St. Mary's Manor**

**Friday, April 21, 2017:      **RETHINKING AUTISM** Conference**

**Day 2**

**St. Mary's Manor**

The **2017 Rethinking Autism Conference** was designed with you in mind. In the most recent report, the Centers for Disease Control announced that the new autism prevalence rate is now 1 in 45. If we applied these statistics to our Southwest Indiana region alone, nearly 2,000 children experience autism spectrum disorder – and of those, 500 children are non-verbal or non-reliably verbal.

We are a team that is passionate about supporting individuals on the autism spectrum to move toward independence. As a result, we have established the following goals for this conference:

Conference Participants will:

- Recognize autism-related symptoms and difficulties consistent with movement disorders
- Discover the latest neuroscience research that uncovers connectivity differences in the autistic brain that impact motor planning, movement, and sensory regulation
- Understand the role rhythm plays in organizing movement, increasing attention, supporting communication, and overall executive functioning
- Learn brain-based therapy strategies that are improving sensory-motor functioning in individuals on the spectrum with complex communication challenges
- Discover why assuming competence is the least dangerous assumption during assessment, treatment, and education of individuals on the autism spectrum

It is our intention that you will be challenged to discover uncovered and valuable information regarding autism spectrum disorder. More importantly, it is our desire that participants will better understand individuals with autism spectrum disorder and respect them for who they are as well as give them an opportunity to demonstrate their unique gifts through more inclusive communities.

We look forward to meeting you and sharing with you in this conference. In this packet, you will find our conference agenda, highlights on our speakers, registration pricing, and vendor registration information. You can register online or by mail. Please visit our website:

[autism.optimalrhythms.org](http://autism.optimalrhythms.org) or contact us at [admin@optimalrhythms.org](mailto:admin@optimalrhythms.org) or (812) 490-9401.

Sincerely,

Your 2017 Rethinking Autism Conference Planning Committee

# Rethinking Autism

## Conference Agenda

### Day I

- 8:00 AM Registration / Exhibitor Area Open
- 8:30 AM Welcome / Announcements / Introductions
- 9:00 AM Keynote Session by Matt Hayes, Self-Advocate  
*Look at me NOW – My Journey Toward Independence*
- 11:00 AM “Parent Talk” by René Hayes and Film Trailer
- 11:30 AM Exhibitor Fair / Lunch (Included)
- 12:30 PM Rhythm-Based Sensory & Tactile Support Training
- 1:00 PM Afternoon Session by Tracy Thresher, Self-Advocate  
(with Casey DePriest, Founder of Optimal Rhythms, Inc.)  
*The Missing Piece: Understand my Movement Differences*
- 3:00 PM Break / Snack
- 3:15 PM Education Panel Discussion  
(Self-advocates share their education stories)
- 4:15 PM Q / A and Announcements
- 4:30 PM End of Day 1

### Day II

- 8:00 AM Registration / Exhibitor Area Open
- 8:30 AM Welcome / Announcements / Introductions
- 9:00 AM Keynote Session by Christine King, COTA/L  
*Dyspraxia – What if my body doesn’t listen to my brain?*
- 10:00 AM Rethinking Autism in Clinical Work and the Classroom - Panel
- 11:00 AM Exhibitor Area Open / Lunch (Included)
- 11:30 AM Film Screening Premier

#### *My Voice: One Man’s Journey to Overcome the Silence of Autism*

Watch the inspiring true story of Matt Hayes, as he navigates life and finds his place in the world as a defender of human rights for non-communicative autistic people. This young autistic man fights to help others, like him, who were born without the ability to communicate.

- 12:30 PM Roundtable Discussion about the Film
- 1:30 PM Break / Exhibitor Area Open
- 2:00 PM Sensory Motor Training – A Hands-On Experience
- 4:15 PM Wrap-Up / Conference Evaluations
- 4:30 PM Conference Ends

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Matt Hayes** is an advocate in the Facilitated Communication Training (FCT) movement. FCT uses physical and verbal support to bring communication to individuals who suffer from speechlessness. Autistic from birth, Matt began communicating at the age of five through Facilitated Communication Training, an alternative and augmentative form of communication. At age 6, he wrote his first poem, “Trapped in Silence”. A member of the Saint Louis Poetry Society since the age of 15, he is an active participant in their writers’ workshops. Currently the subject of a PBS documentary on autism which will be featured at the 2017 Rethinking Autism

Conference, Matt is eager to build bridges between autists and neurotypical individuals everywhere. His primary writing focus is poetry. Reading the works of poets eager to expand the boundaries of their craft is both his inspiration and challenge. Matt has spoken at Yale University, presented his works as the featured guest poet at the Telluride Talking Gourds Poetry Society, been interviewed on KOTO radio, was selected as a featured emerging poet on a Daniel Ladinsky CD of poetry, presented at various autism conferences and communication workshops, and regularly contributes critiques to various published poets. He currently collaborates on a forthcoming book of friendship tentatively titled The Possibility of Joy. After years of dedicated practice, Matt is now nearly independent in his typing and is able to speak what he types. A sunshine and water fan, Matt splits his time between a tiny Lake Erie island and his native Saint Louis, Missouri. (Matt Hayes Headshot © Alex Kendall Photography)



**Tracy Thresher** is an advocate for people with disabilities. He lives and works in Barre, Vermont. In 1990, Tracy was one of the first individuals with autism at his service agency, Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS), to be introduced to typing as a means to communicate. He presents at local, statewide, and national workshops and conferences. Tracy also consults with local schools, is a member of the Vermont Statewide Communication Task Force, and does ongoing work with Green Mountain Self-Advocates of Montpelier, Vermont. Now an employee of WCMHS as an advocate and educator, Tracy mentors teenagers and adults and leads trainings on communication. In 2013, Tracy was recognized as a

Master Trainer by the Institute on Communication and Inclusion at Syracuse University. He is one of the stars, along with Larry Bissonnette, in the documentary film *Wretches and Jabberers* directed by Gerardine Wurzburg.



**Christine King, COTA/L** has worked in the field of Occupational Therapy for over 20 years. She has experience in both public school setting as well as private clinics. She has spent the past 12 years at Project CHILLD, a pediatric sensory integration clinic in Beverly, MA, where she has worked with children with autism spectrum disorder and other sensory motor challenges as an OT as well as the coordinator of integrated listening therapies. Christine is an FCT Trainer and believes the least dangerous assumption is to presume competence in clients with sensory motor and communication difficulties, in order to appropriately support them to reach their full potential.



**Casey DePriest, MT-BC**, is a Certified Neurologic Music Therapist, FCT Trainer, and Founder of Optimal Rhythms, Inc. / ACCESS Academy, a non-profit organization committed to educating the community on the latest autism research related to movement differences in autism. ACCESS Academy is a therapeutic day school and alternative placement that utilizes a neurologic approach with autistic students with complex communication challenges who have struggled to make adequate academic progress in their previous educational placement. Casey has over 20 years of clinical experience and has presented at state, regional, and national conferences and is the Indiana Music Therapy Advocacy Task Force Chair.

Your conference committee is excited to welcome these esteemed self-advocates and professional, as well as others who will participate in our Conference Education Panel, Roundtable Discussions and Self-advocacy Spotlights.

# Registration Information

## Rethinking Autism Conference

St. Mary's Hospital Manor  
3700 Washington Ave. Evansville, Indiana

April 20-21, 2017 | 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
(Registration and exhibitors open at 8:00 AM)

Welcome to the Rethinking Autism Conference registration! General conference registration includes access to full conference offerings.

**Conference Website:** Additional information about the conference and specific details about CEUs offered are provided online at [autism.optimalrhythms.org](http://autism.optimalrhythms.org).

**Conference Hotel Accommodations/Travel:** Comfort Inn Evansville Airport. Make hotel reservations by calling 812-423-5818. Group name is: Rethinking Autism Conference and group rate is \$89/night. Hotel provides free shuttle service to and from Evansville Regional Airport and will also accommodate guests with transportation by shuttle to/from St. Mary's Manor for the conference. Continental breakfast is included with your hotel reservation.

All attendees must register. Please register online at [autism.optimalrhythms.org](http://autism.optimalrhythms.org) or on the form provided.

Registration cancellation requests received by March 15, 2017 will be processed without a cancellation penalty. A full refund will be granted. Registration cancellation requests received after March 15, 2017 will be processed minus a \$50.00 cancellation penalty per registration.

Professional group registrations must be submitted together. Per-person discount is available for a minimum of 5 registrations when all registrations in the group are submitted together or on the same day, if submitted online. All names must be listed on the registration form.

Individuals on the spectrum/self-advocates with financial needs, please call us at (812) 490-9401 to request help with registration fees. A small number of needs-based scholarships are available on a first come – first served basis.

If you would like to speak with a person about conference registration, you can reach us by calling (812) 490-9401 or email [admin@optimalrhythms.org](mailto:admin@optimalrhythms.org).

## Conference Registration Form

Thank you for your interest in attending the **2017 Rethinking Autism Conference**.  
Please fill in one conference registration form below for each individual or for each person attending from your group, company, or organization. Group registrations must be submitted together.

**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Company/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title/Discipline:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CEUs Requested:**  yes  no

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate if you require special accommodations (physical, dietary, etc.):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Registration Fees:

	<b>Early Bird</b> <u>Before March 18, 2017</u> <small>(bold rates include free t-shirt)</small>	<b>Regular/Onsite</b> <u>After March 18, 2017</u>
*Box lunch included each day		
<b>Professional Registration</b>  <small>(See website for pre-approved CEU offerings)</small>  <div style="text-align: right;">                     Day I only                      Day II only                 </div>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$169</b> T-Shirt size _____  <input type="checkbox"/> \$89 <input type="checkbox"/> \$89	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$199</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> \$109 <input type="checkbox"/> \$109
<b>Group Discount Rate</b>  <small>(5 or more Professionals)</small>  *Group registrations must be submitted together to qualify.*	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$149</b> T-Shirt size _____	N/A
<b>General Registration Rate</b>  <div style="text-align: right;">                     Day I only                      Day II only                 </div>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$109</b> T-Shirt size _____  <input type="checkbox"/> \$65 <input type="checkbox"/> \$65	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$139</b>
<b>Student Registration Rate</b>  <div style="text-align: right;">                     Day I only                      Day II only                 </div>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$75</b> T-Shirt size _____  <input type="checkbox"/> \$45 <input type="checkbox"/> \$45	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$95</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> \$65 <input type="checkbox"/> \$65

**I'm paying for \_\_\_\_\_ total registration(s) for a total cost of \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**TOTAL DUE: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Please mail completed form with your check, money order, or credit card payment to:

**Rethinking Autism Conference**  
**c/o Optimal Rhythms, Inc.**  
**8122 Robin Hill Road**  
**Newburgh, IN 47630**

Card Type: Visa / Discover / Mastercard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Online Registration Also Available:  
 Visit our conference website at  
[autism.optimalrhythms.org](http://autism.optimalrhythms.org)

# Rethinking Autism Conference

## Exhibitor Information

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April 20-21, 2017

Evansville, Indiana

### CONFERENCE EXHIBITOR - \$ 200

Exhibitors have a reserved space for both conference days

- One eight-foot, table with two chairs
  - Promotion in [Optimal Rhythms](#) social media
  - Listing in conference materials
  - Listing on [www.optimalrhythms.org](http://www.optimalrhythms.org)
  - One conference registration
  - Electricity at your table, if needed – (you are urged to bring extra electric cords to ensure access to no-charge electricity)
- 

Please complete form and return with payment:

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be selling items:  Yes  No

If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need electricity?  Yes  No

Are you willing to donate an item for the Attendance Drawing?  Yes  No

If yes, describe item to be donated: \_\_\_\_\_

Value of item to be donated: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Submit Name and/or Logo by March 15 to be included on the Conference T-shirt.

## The 2017 Rethinking Autism Film Screening

# ***My Voice: One Man's Journey to Overcome the Silence of Autism***



Watch the inspiring true story of Matt Hayes, as he navigates life and finds his place in the world as a defender of human rights for non-communicative autistic people. This young autistic man fights to help others, like him, who were born without the ability to communicate.

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Meet the filmmaker:



Bailey Pryor © 2017 Telemark Films, LLC All Rights Reserved



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