

**Subject:** College Autism Network - September 2022 Updates

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**COLLEGE AUTISM NETWORK**  
ADVOCACY | RESEARCH | TRAINING

## College Autism Network News and Notes

September 2022

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### **Summit Early Bird Rates Are About to End!**

Make sure you register by September 15 to get the discounted rate if you plan to join us in Nashville for the 6th **College Autism Summit**, October 12-14.

In addition to our opening speaker, **Eric Garcia** (author of "We Are Not Broken:

Changing the Autism Conversation”), our closing speakers (the creator and cast of the Amazon series, “**As We See It**”), and our preconference workshop on starting or upgrading your autism program, you can look forward to three intriguing panel discussions on these topics:

- Making Employment Transitions Work For Everyone
- Mentorship in a Neurodivergent World
- Student Advocacy on Campus and Beyond (in partnership with **ASAN**)

And here’s a sample of the more than 30 concurrent sessions you can attend:

- Meaningful Campus Engagement for Students
- How to Help Families Support Independence in College
- The Impact of Covid on College Students with Autism
- Nothing About Us Without Us: Cultivating Neurodivergent Leaders on College Campuses
- Starting a Neurodiversity Center: Lessons Learned Over 5 Years
- Collaboration with Case Management and Threat Assessment for the Autism-Serving Professional
- Living Learning Communities and Students With ASD
- Coaching the Coaches: Strategies to Support Staff Learning and Retention

But wait! There’s more!

- Networking opportunities with other professionals (surveys tell us that connecting with new colleagues is a vital part of the Summit, so come make new friends).
- Exhibitors with new initiatives, programs, services and ideas that you need to know about.
- Two lunches, two continental breakfasts, an opening reception and an evening of live music.

Please read our Covid-related plans, available on the website. We hope to see you in Nashville in October. **[Register here.](#)**

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## Science Friday Features Two CAN Members

We're so excited to see CAN friends (and occasional presenters) TC Waisman and Patrick Dwyer featured on the radio show/podcast Science Friday. Read or listen to "[Meet Two Autistic Researchers Changing How Autism Research is Done.](#)"

Nice work, Patrick and TC! So good to see your excellent work getting noticed.

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## This Month's CANVAS Call: Research with a Personal Story

Join the CANVAS (CAN Virtual Association of Scholars) for our monthly call highlighting research initiatives around the world focused on higher education and autism. This month:

*Friday, Sept 9 at 1 pm ET*

**Kayden Stockwell** (Ph.D. Student, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia)

**Presentation Title:** "I just had to figure out what I was doing and hope I was correct": Autistic young adults navigate higher education



**Description:** To understand the University of Virginia's campus climate towards autistic students, we conducted interviews with the intention of providing feedback to the university on where supports have been working and recommendations on how they could be improved. As we examined the responses, we noticed many students shared experiences of not knowing about resources or difficulties in accessing resources. Here, we'll discuss the patterns of barriers that occurred across institutional, social, and sensory domains.

Meeting Agenda: [Be sure to sign up, listing your name and affiliation](#)

Meeting Link: <https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/96562754170>

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## Upcoming Neurodiversity Conference Boasts Great

## Lineup of Speakers

**The INAS Neurodiversity Conference** is a one-day event full of learning, happening on Saturday, September 24. The speakers' lineup is terrific, the cost is low (you can attend all day and evening for under \$40), and there are both in-person (Endicott, NY) and virtual options available. Kudos to Dawn-Marie Solais for organizing this packed event.

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## Exciting New Programs from CAN's Member Schools



We love a good partnership, and a new one between Marshall University's West Virginia Autism Training Program and CAI Neurodiverse Solutions is one of those. **Read more** about how these big players in the autism field are figuring out the puzzle of effective transition between college and employment.

A little further north and west, Aurora University (IL) is **opening a new residence hall** that will include space for students in its Pathways program. The residence hall was built with sensory-supportive spaces to alleviate anxiety through adjustable lighting, pale colors, flooring that reduces



sound, and patterns that limit visual stimuli, so while not all students in the hall are part of Pathways, its design recognizes the neurodiversity present among all students.

If you're seeking guidance about employment transition or creating new autism-friendly residential space, we encourage you to reach out to the staff of these two exceptional programs.

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## Able Eyes: Helping Prepare Students for the Transition to College Through Photos and Video

While working with students with disabilities, Meegan Winters recognized that families with autistic



children have far fewer experiences outside of the home compared to other families due to difficulty with changes in routine and transitions-both are common characteristics for an autistic person. In 2017, Winters started **Able Eyes**, a virtual tour search platform that allows users to explore locations virtually from the comfort of home prior to physically visiting to decrease anxiety and assess accessibility. The virtual tours on the platform are in a variety of industries like retail stores, grocery stores, hotels, and tourist attractions. Able Eyes has now begun creating virtual tours of colleges and universities with the same purpose in mind: reduce the anxiety felt by autistic students about to visit or enroll. Able Eyes is working with colleges across the US to create virtual tours of residential, dining, and educational spaces to decrease anxiety for all incoming students, staff, and parents that may be visiting campus.

If you would like to be able to offer this valuable resource to prospective or incoming students, contact Meegan through her website, [www.AbleEyes.org](http://www.AbleEyes.org)

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## **An Autistic Perspective on “Acceptance” versus “Awareness”**

This [essay in Psychology Today](#) is a good tool and conversation starter to use for staff and faculty training. “Acceptance without awareness becomes hollow.” What might people think if they saw this scene at an airport gate? Or, closer to home, what if a student responded this way upon learning the dining hall closed early? Can we relate to someone whose “brain felt like it had been lit on fire”?

If you have an article you think is worth sharing, [send it our way](#) and we will link it in an upcoming newsletter.

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*This newsletter is published monthly by the **College Autism Network**, an independent 501(c)3 organization supporting the success of autistic college students and the professionals who work with them. Want to share an article? Feature an upcoming event? Post a job opportunity in autism support services? Our monthly newsletter reaches over 1500 self-advocates and professionals. Send it [to Lee](#) and we'll share it.*

