



It was more than two years ago that Willie first donned his now trademark Nemes, a striped headcloth fashioned after the pharaohs in ancient Egypt. The remnants of a Halloween costume, it is a reminder of his obsession with Ancient Egypt, though now Willie says he wears it more out of habit than anything else.

# Catching a snowflake

A photo story of  
Asperger's Syndrome  
by Leah Nash



Above, left to right, Willie, Dale, Tobi and Jacob Rates outside their Portland home. Though Tobi and Dale are not on the autism spectrum, Tobi has a twin sister whose children are, laying credence to the generally accepted belief that autism is a genetic disorder. In fact, there is no one certain cause for autism because autism is not a medical condition. Instead, it is a definition given to those that exhibit a specific set of behaviors. It is those behaviors that define autism, not a specific medical condition.



Left: Four are better than two. "I remember right before fifth grade, Willie asked me if he had to walk bipedally at school or if he could walk quadrupedally," says mom Tobi about the time Willie first started walking on all fours. In late 2010, Willie morphed his interests in ancient Egypt and dinosaurs to create his own creature, the Phananosaraptorosaurus (Species: Marinus Subspecies: Domesticus) which he imitates by walking on his hands and feet.

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