

It's Autism Awareness Month: Go get informed!

By JENNIFER COSTLEY

Have you ever wondered how it's possible that there are so many months, weeks and days designated to different causes — and what's more, how everyone knows about them? Keeping up can be a challenge, especially for librarians who are tasked with creating timely displays paying homage to the subject of said days. Confession: I am tired of making Women's History Month displays and done pretending I think minor holidays (ahem, St. Patrick's Day) warrant immediate action. But when an

event comes along that genuinely inspires me, I am thrilled — thrilled! — to organize information, books, movies, art, etc. that will inform and inspire other people.

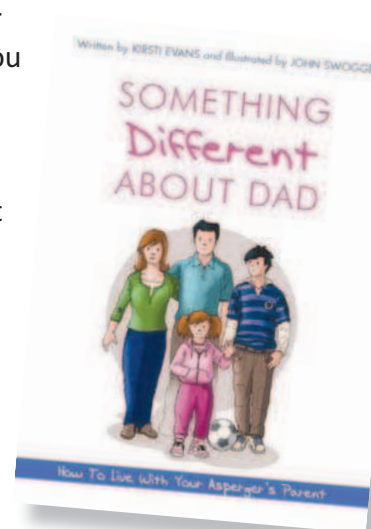
Case in point, if you haven't heard, April is Autism Awareness Month ... and in this librarian's perspective, it's kind of a big deal. According to the Autism Society, the incidence of autism is 1 in every 68 American births and that number increases yearly. You likely know someone on the autism spectrum and your children most

certainly will in their lifetime. Whether you have personal experience with autism or are interested in learning more about it from an outsider's perspective, the library is a great place to get started.

I recommend the following titles for talking to children about autism, working with people on the spectrum, and educating yourself. With the prevalence of autism increasing by 6 to 15 percent annually, not being informed is a poor option.

Read-alouds:

My Brother Charlie by Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Elizabeth Peete
Russell's World: A Story for Kids About Autism by Charles A. Amenta III
All Cats Have Asperger's Syndrome by Kathy Hoopman



Informative texts:

Sisterhood of the Spectrum by Jennifer Cook O'Toole
Something Different About Dad: How to Live with Your Asperger's Parent by Kirsti Evans
Autism the Invisible Cord: A Sibling's Diary by Barbara Cain
What to Feed an Asperger by Sarah Patten
Asperger's Rules:

How to Make Sense of School and Friends by Blythe Grossberg

The Secret Rules of Social Networking by Barbara Klipper and Rhonda Shapiro Rieser

The Everything Parent's Guide to Children with Autism by Adelle Jameson Tilton

Jennifer Costley is the Youth Services Librarian at the Pendleton Public Library and blogs regularly at pplteens.weebly.com/blog.html.

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 Pendleton Book Co. 125 S. Main
brownpapertickets.com



Special needs events in the area

What's going on locally during Autism Awareness Month? Check out the following events.

The Pendleton Public Library will host a month-long display called "Life on the Spectrum" as well as screening the 2007 documentary "Autism: The Musical" on April 13 at 6 p.m.

Special Needs Families Connect (a group whose mission is to support families dealing with special needs challenges) will host the two activities:

- Special Needs Open Gym on Sundays from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Pendleton Rec Center
- Special Needs Family Connect Support Group on Monday, April 25 at 5:30 pm at First Christian Church in Pendleton.