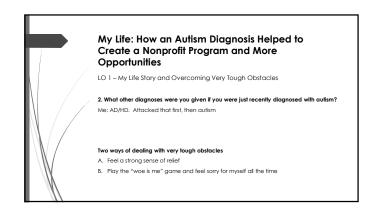
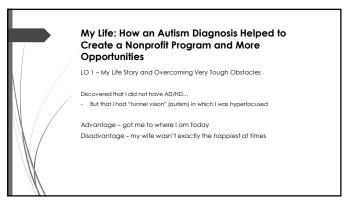
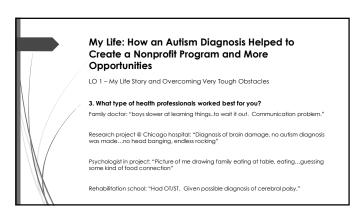


My Life: How an Autism Diagnosis Helped to Create a Nonprofit Program and More Opportunities LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles I wanted to learn more about my own experiences growing up. my life story, and the obstacles I had to face. Question 1 – "What type of education did I receive.... elementary and up... public or private. If public did I have an IEP in place? and if so what services most benefited you." (remember, we're talking late 1940's to mid 1980's here for Scott) My mom: "K teacher: do not pass go, do not go to regular 1st grade" Attended rehabilitation school in 1st grade, didn't think I should be there No IEP at the time, special education = strong stigma at time







LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles

4. When was I diagnosed and what prompted me to seek an evaluation – did I $\,$

- I was "different" and just been fired from yet another job in 2007
- Licensed physician told me I could be autistic & AD/HD but didn't give me written confirmation
- Waited three years to get a written confirmation, but only after a psychologist confirmed I was highly likely to be autistic after psychological evaluation

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5. What was your school experience? Did you feel that you were "different"? Do you think other kids and teachers perceived that you were? Was bullying an issue?

My mom: "I really do not remember any specific comments other than you would not be recommended for 1st grade. The specific reason for that I do not recal. Probably due to the language issue."

Scott: - $3^{\rm rd}$ grade: first one done with math assignments and tests, "different"

- college: first one done with tests in music history class, "math/music" Grandin
- taunted by two neighbor kids during summer between 3rd and 4th grade

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5. What was your school experience? Did you feel that you were "different"? Do you think other kids and teachers perceived that you were? Was bullying an issue? Conflined...

- Moved around a lot, teachers may not have known who I was
- Taunted briefly as high school freshman by high school seniors
- Struggled during ST sessions with therapist in high school

Wouldn't trade what I went through because it made me stronger (military family)

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6. What do you wish your parents knew about Asperger's when you were growing up? What advice would you offer to a parent of a child with AS or ASD?

- I knew nothing and apparently neither did professionals
- Never heard about it until had client at VR (she worked for Indiana VR for 15 years)
- Parents: be the advocate for your child, you know child better than doctor
- Parents: keep plugging away in best interest of child

LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles

6. What do you wish your parents knew about Asperger's when you were growing up? What advice would you offer to a parent of a child with AS or ASD? (continued)

Scott:

Talk with someone with experience of developing an IEP plan

If student going to college:

- Qualify for services with Georgia VR
- Attend New Student Orientation/Disability Resource Center, ask lots of questions
- Become part of a group on campus he/she comfortable about being involved

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LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles

Childhood – Phenobarbital, Dilantin, Depakote, Tegretol Adulthood – Carbamazepine (generic for Tegretol), meds for colon cancer Anti-convulsants

Meds available to treat autism, never took anything for it

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LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles

1990s

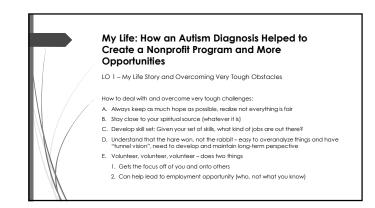
- A. Greater stability lived in one city the entire decade
- B. Graduated with associate's degree in accounting 1992 C. Got driver's license at 25 in 1992 (epilepsy)
- D. Worked towards bachelor's degree in financial planning 1996
- E. Had several girlfriends during this decade
- Worked underemployed type jobs mainly: dishwasher, custodian, cook
- G. Run of being fired from jobs began

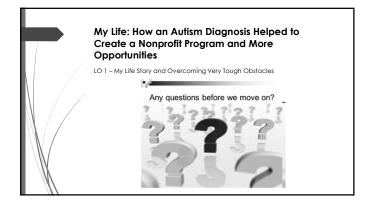
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LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles

- A. Graduated from Purdue with bachelor's in financial planning (2000). Hired. Let go due to not having enough manpower to train further. Couldn't land another financial planning related position.
- Started and completed master's in higher education administration from the University of Kansos (2005). Hired. Had micromanager. Would have been fired one day later if I had not submitted resignation. Couldn't land another administration position at a college or university.
- C. Got divorced the first time in 2002 (married in 1999). More hirings and firings.

My Life: How an Autism Diagnosis Helped to Create a Nonprofit Program and More Opportunities LO 1 – My Life Story and Overcoming Very Tough Obstacles 2010s: A. Received written documentation of diagnosis. Started GCA Centre for Adult Autism (the nonprofit program). Later in presentation on GCA. B. Started and completed bachelor's in accounting (2014). Hired, then fired eight months later. C. Reflected on previous experiences of my life to determine where my strengths and limitations were. D. Met current wife in 2011, married in 2015. E. Developed Stage 3 colon cancer in 2017, Stage 4 in 2018







2. How my life story resulted in GCA and more opportunities

Timeline 2010-2015

2010: Founded GCA on December 31 as an inside joke to New Years 2011

Jan 2011: Named Greater Chattanooga Aspies (later shortened to GCA, with
Centre for Adult Autism added after that)

Feb 2011: GCA became part of the Chattanooga Autism Center to present. First meeting. Advisory board about one year in 2011.

Mar 2011: Met current wife in person the first time, has been with GCA the longest as Parents Outreach Coordinator.

2011-Summer 2015: monthly adults-only adult support group. People hear more about it, telephone calls and emails start pouring in over time. Marries current wife on May 31, 2015 after dating for over four years.

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2. How my life story resulted in GCA and more opportunities Timeline 2015-early 2019

Fall 2015: GCA establishes a set of groups in GA

2016: Newsletter, founding of Southeast Adult Autism Symposium, website 2017: First annual symposium. Scott gets diagnosed with colon cancer and recognized as North Georgia volunteer of the year. First ever reverse job fair takes place.

2018: Scott working on bed between rounds of colon cancer. Recognized as Chattanooga Autism Center volunteer of the year. Does search on adult autism support groups (approximately 30+) in Metro Atlanta. How many? 0.

GCA goes into Metro Atlanta. Hire program coordinator for Chattanooga. Volunteer for Metro Atlanta program coordinator joins. 2 reverse job fairs.

2019: Adult social support groups meet at two locations in Metro Atlanta

My Life: How an Autism Diagnosis Helped to Create a Nonprofit Program and More Opportunities

2. How my life story resulted in GCA and more opportunities

The moral to the story?

- A. Never give up and always believe for the best
- B. You may find your niche later in life, not when you turn 18 $\,$
- C. You never know who you will run into that could be your next opportunity
- $\hbox{D. Volunteer, volunteer-volunteering a gateway to opportunity}\\$

My Life: How an Autism Diagnosis Helped to Create a Nonprofit Program and More Opportunities

LO 2: Learn how you can take the skill set you have and do amazing things

- 1. Needs to start in freshman year of high school, no later than $2^{\rm nd}$ year HS
- 2. Vo Tech programs need to make a comeback to the high schools
- 3. Not everyone is cut out for college (autism community included)
- 4. If under 18, may want to contact guidance counselor at high school for guidance and direction... also consider autism FB groups
- 5. If graduated from high school, may want to get GVRA's assistance

https://gvs.georgia.gov/find-location

LO 2: Learn how you can take the skill set you have and do amazing things Someone who has expertise in the area of skill set development needs to sit down with student/individual.

E.G. Let's say that you have an interest in airplanes.

- 1. Do you have 10,000 hours of registered flight time? No
- 2. Do you have a degree in aeronautical engineering? No

Flying a plane may not be for you. What is it about airplanes you like? "I like watching planes being fixed while they are on the ground"

- 1. How much mechanical experience do you have?
- 2. What has your mechanical experience been like to date?

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LO 2 – Learn how you can take the skill set you have and do amazing things

What kinds of things might interest a young teen in wanting to work? Any interests a parent might notice in his child that stands out? That might be an area to explore.

If the child has a special talent that might be valuable to an employer, even at a young age, definitely a possibility.

Wouldn't worry a lot about the interview process with a young teen. "How will he be able to function if around a lot of noise and customers?"

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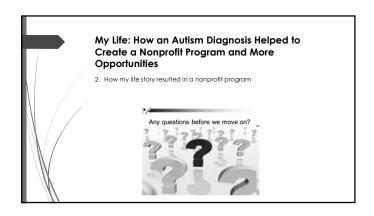
LO 2 – Learn how you can take the skill set you have and do amazing things

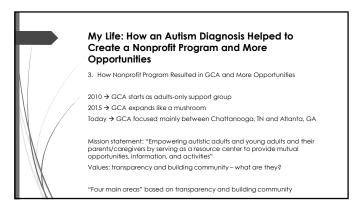
- Develop interest → full-time job
- Funny way of looking at life, dry humor
- Strong truth, social justice values
- Compliance-based, whistleblowers
- "Systems and Research People" logic "Good with foreign languages/speech" statisticians/mathematicians/accountants interpreters, linguistics
- "Big picture types" inventors, creators, great visualist, painters

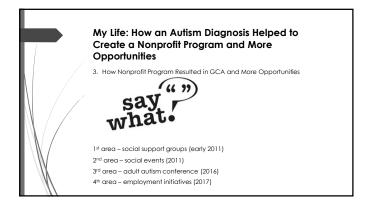
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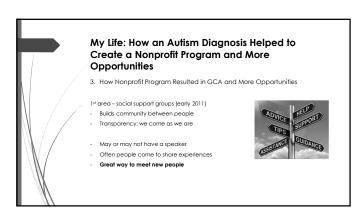
LO 2 – Learn how you can take the skill set you have and do amazing things

- Inflexible, way too structured
- Fascination with one particular topic Dealing with loud noises & odors
- (hypersensitivities)
- With Facial Expressions/Body Language
- Usually the last one picked on teams
- Strong amount of being taunted

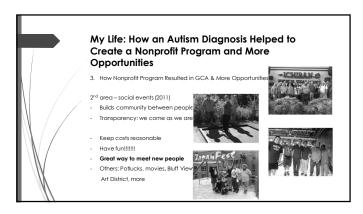


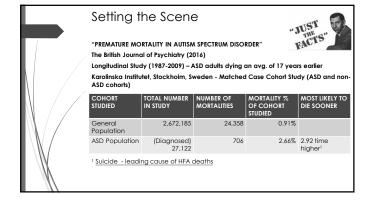


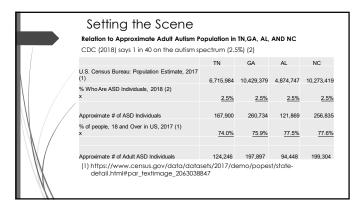




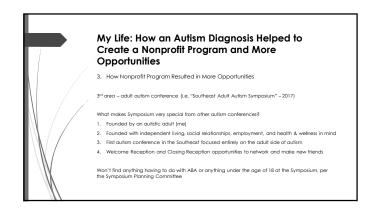


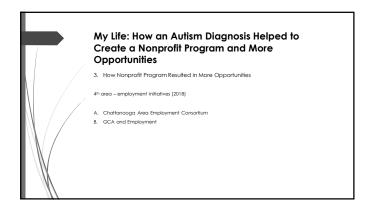


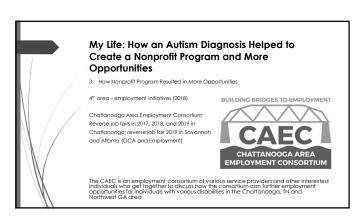












My Life: How an Autism Diagnosis Helped to Create a Nonprofit Program and More **Opportunities** LO 3 - Realize that opportunities came come when least expected

GCA Metro Atlanta - Jamie



- 1. Social support groups East Roswell and East Atlanta locations
- 2. Social events (e.g. Game Days, GA Aquarium, JapanFest 2019)
- 3. Adult autism conference Inaugural Autism South Conference Atlanta, GA – Location/Cost TBD & Date (approx. mid-February 2020)
- 4. Employment initiatives quarterly reverse job fairs

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LO 3 - Realize that opportunities came come when least expected

- 1. Where is there a need that exists and no one else is filling it?
- 2. Are you ready to be called on if no one else is filling that need even if you don't know what you're doing or how it will get done?
- 3. It's all about networking in the community the more people who know you, the more you'll be able to help others
- 4. Referrals: phone calls, emails, FB groups, FB messenger, LinkedIn, etc.

See a need in your community and would like to brainstorm about it? Email me at Scott.Kramer@chattanoogaautismcenter.org

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If you go to the Matthew Reardon Autism Center website at matthewreardon.org, you will see this PowerPoint presentation there.

Thank you for coming to this presentation. Please see Jamie, April, or me afterward or at the GCA Centre for Adult Autism exhibitor booth if you have questions.