

# MASC Matters

## 10 Year Anniversary Edition

January 2016

Volume 1, Issue 8

### 10 Years Ago...

**Gas cost:** \$2.58/gal

**The #1 Movie:**  
Pirates of the Caribbean:  
Dead Man's Chest

**The #1 Song:**  
Irreplacable by Beyonce

**The #1 TV Show:**  
American Idol

**Popular Christmas Gift:**

Wii, Elmo TMX & Dora  
the Explorer

### Fun Facts:

Facebook became available to anyone over 13.

The Pittsburgh Steelers won the Super Bowl.

Pluto was downgraded from a planet to a dwarf planet.

The one millionth song was purchased on iTunes.

## History of MASC

The Mea'Alofa Autism Support Center, MASC, was opened in 2006 so that children with autism could receive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) - a science based on principles of learning that uses techniques related to the theory that learning occurs as a result of the consequences of behavior.

The idea to create MASC originated when a local family realized the effect that ABA had on their daughter's life. ABA was used to teach their daughter new skills, academic and social, while reducing her inappropriate behaviors. The gains made by their daughter with her speech and language, convinced them that this therapy, which is not provided by the school system, should be available to children with this life-long disability. With this in mind, the family partnered with Christine Passaretti, M.Ed., BCBA to establish

a place where children can work to reach their fullest potential and their families can come for practical and professional support.

MASC opened with only one employee and about 15 clients. Therapy sessions took place in a small, brick building. MASC grew quickly, doubling in size each year until it was necessary to move to a new building in 2008.



MASC then continued to grow and in 2014 it the center knocked out a wall to expand into it's current location. MASC now serves over 50 clients and employs 7 therapists, 3 BCaBAs and 2 BCBA's, as well as an office manager and

assistant. Families have access to support services such as a support group, lending library, and referral services at no cost. MASC also provides opportunities to both parents and professionals in the Tidewater Area to learn about autism and it's empirically validated therapies by conducting scheduled classes and on-site training.

Additionally, MASC provides insight on what a diagnosis of autism means for families and the importance of early intervention and services, as well as the need for more training for police officers on how to interact with individuals on the spectrum through interviews with local new stations.

MASC has grown leaps and bounds over the past ten years, making a huge impact on it's community and we cannot wait to see what will happen in the next ten years!

# MASC Memories

*"My favorite memories at MASC are the first time I saw our kids surf at Surfer's Healing and all the first times of kids saying my name."* -**Michele R**

*"One of the memories that I will always take with me is the story of a boy who came in with a diagnosis of selective mutism. He would only talk to his mom and dad even after having many different therapies. I began to implement things that I read and he began to nod*

*and shake his head, then he began to write and then to whisper and finally to talk to me. However he still would not talk to others. I slowly began to introduce other therapists and family members, then Skyping grandparents and finally people in the community. After two years in ABA therapy he was able to transition to a regular classroom and graduate from MASC. I recently saw him and he is making new friends and is no longer afraid to talk to new people.* -**Lily J**

*I love celebrating the holidays with my MASC family! Since I am from PA I don't have any family here, but MASC has turned into my second family. I love our staff potlucks and how we are always so festive for holidays! Spirit weeks are also a blast, especially when they are silly themes!* -**Sarah M**

*"My favorite memory at MASC is when I fell into the wall in my room and made a hole with my bottom!"* -**Joi R**

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*Love. Support.  
Advocate.*

## Check it Out!

MASC is celebrating our 10 year anniversary ALL YEAR LONG! Check out the following information to see what's going on and how YOU can get involved!

### February: Things We Love About MASC

Have something you love about MASC? Let us know! We will be displaying the best things about MASC in the waiting room for the month of February.

### March: Proudest Moments

This month we're going to celebrate our proudest moments! Did you kid learn something awesome? Did you do something as a family that you never thought you could? Write us!

### April: Picnic

We're going to have a picnic this month to celebrate 10 years at MASC

and all of our wonderful families. More details to follow, but keep April open to come celebrate with us!

### May: Memory Lane

Take a trip down memory lane with us! Check out the lobby to see all the changes MASC has made over the years!

### June: Raffle

We will be giving 5 gift cards away to families this month! Each family will be entered to win at no cost to you!

### July: Staff Celebration

The staff will be celebrating 10 years of MASC this month.

### August: All About the Kids

We will be celebrating our awesome kids this month. Be on the lookout for fun games, a week of snow cones and maybe even some goodies!

### September: Letters to MASC

We will be collecting letters to MASC this month from all of our current and former clients to go in a time capsule we will open in the next ten years!

### October: Pumpkin Carving Contest

Submit pictures of your best pumpkins to our Facebook page. You may even win a prize!

### November: Sponsor a Charity

This month we will be collecting food for our local food bank. Keep your eye out for the box to donate in the lobby.

### December: Time Capsule

We will be creating a time capsule this month including all of the awesome things we've done this year!