

AGENDA

Adult Sibling Conference Presented by The Fox Valley Sibling Support Network “Looking At The Big Picture” – The Big Picture Theatre, Appleton

Sunday, April 30

- 5:30-6:15 PM Networking/Resource Fair (food & music)
6:15-9:00 PM Comments by Dr. Darold Treffert, consultant to movie
 Showing of the Movie “Rain Man”

Monday, May 1

- 8-8:45 AM Continental Breakfast/Registration/Resource Fair
8:45-10 AM “Our Siblings; Ourselves” presentation by Don Meyer, Director of the Sibling Support Project, the Arc of the United States

Break

- 10:30-11:45 Panel of Professionals:
 Social Security, Legal, Financial, Behavioral, Housing, Social Worker
12N-1:15 PM Box Lunch, Resource Fair, movie option (TBD) and 3 workshop choices:
 --Looking at the Big Picture: The Tools (and encouragement) needed to get Started
 --The Family Circus – You, your parents, your siblings with and without disabilities
 -- Sorting through Local Services – Where to begin?

- 1:30-2:15 PM “One Sibs Journey” presentation by Susan Hamovitch, movie producer and sibling

Break

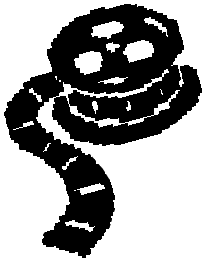
- 2:30-4:00 PM Panel of Siblings moderated by Don Meyer
5-6:45 PM “On The Town” - Dinner on your own
 Dinner with Don Meyer and Susan Hamovitch for FVSSN Facilitators, Board members and guests (By invitation only)
7-9:00 PM Special Screening of “Without Apology”
 Discussion/Q&A by Producer Susan Hamovitch

Tuesday, May 2

- Morning Special presentation by Don Meyer for GRANDPARENTS who have grandchildren with special needs. (Don Meyers is author of several books, articles and presentations on the special role of grandparents and their concerns when their grandchildren have special needs.)

Place To Be
Announced

ABOUT THE MOVIES



FVSSN Adult Sibling Conference Presents

Two Inspiring Films

Showing at the Big Picture Theatre, Downtown Appleton

Sunday, April 30 5:30—9:00 pm “Rain Man”

... A true movie classic—winner of four academy awards in 1989. Starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. Dr. Treffert was a consultant on the film “Rain Man”.

Awards:

Won four Oscars plus 18 other awards between 1989-1991. Best actor in a leading role; best director; best picture; and best writing for original screenplay in 1989.

Review:

RAIN MAN is a movie about Raymond Babbitt, an extraordinary man with autism and Savant Syndrome, played by Dustin Hoffman. Raymond has a brother, Charlie, played by Tom Cruise. Their father dies and leaves a fortune—to Raymond, the institutionalized savant brother that Charlie didn't know he had. They set out on a cross-country journey of discovery. By the end of the movie Charlie has changed from referring to his brother as "weird" or a "retard" to viewing him as only different, and in many ways very special. There is no six-day cure of autism. Raymond returns to the institution at the end of the movie. But it is clear both Raymond and Charlie have changed. Raymond is a bit more self-sufficient and tolerates some affection; Charlie is trying less to stamp out his brother's odd behavior learning more to accommodate to it. Charlie, like Raymond, also has learned something more about feelings and affection. Just as Raymond's wall of autism has yielded a bit, so has Charlie's wall of callousness yielded as well. They were just different kinds of walls.

From an article which appeared in the Wisconsin Medical Society magazine—“Your Doctor, Your Health” by Dr. Darold Treffert who worked on the movie *Rain Man*.

\$10 admission includes a glimpse of the Resource Fair, reception, and comments from Dr. Darold Treffert, internationally recognized researcher on Savant Syndrome.

Monday, May 1 7:00—9:00 pm “Without Apology”

...An award-winning documentary written and directed by Susan Hamovitch.

The documentary explores the social and medical stigmas still attached to autism and chronicles what happened to the Hamovitch family after the birth of Alan, in 1950. Alan was born with striking blue eyes and a brain so severely damaged he would never the ability to speak. The story is told from Alan's sister (Susan) point of view and focuses on the transformation which took place for each member of the family.

Awards:

Best Feature Documentary at the International Film Festival (May 14, 2005)

Reviews:

“An honest, tender must-see documentary for anyone who cares about people with significant cognitive disabilities and their families. “Without Apology” tells a tale once lived by thousands but until now revealed by few. The result is a heart-rendering gem of history, biography, and self-reflection—and the triumph of truth over secrets.” By Rachel Simon, author of [Riding The Bus With My Sister](#)

“It's a remarkable achievement, a testament to love without apologies. A film you won't soon forget.”

By Don Meyer, Director Sibling Support Project

“I saw a showing of Susan Hamovitch's wonderful movie, *Without Apology* at the University of Chicago. It was the 4th time I saw it and the first time I got through it without crying. I would encourage anyone who has not seen to go see it. It is very powerful and Susan really puts herself and her family's story out there in a very brave and honest way. My husband went with me and he was just blown away by it.”

By Nora Fox Handler, sibling of three brothers with disabilities and member of the Development Advisory Board of the Pioneer Center in McHenry, IL.

\$10 admission includes film, comments by Susan Hamovitch, Producer and sibling. Popcorn and soda.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

Fox Valley Sibling Support Network Adult Sibling Conference

“Looking At The Big Picture”



Don Meyer

Don Meyer is the director of the Sibling Support Project of The Arc of the United States. Don is probably best known for creating Sibshops, lively programs just for young brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. There are over 200 Sibshops in eight countries. Don also created SibKids and SibNet, no-cost listservs for young and adult brothers and sisters which allow hundreds of siblings from around the world to connect with their peers. Don was a founder of the SEFAM (Supporting Extended Family Members) program at the University of Washington, which pioneered services for fathers, siblings, and grandparents of children with special needs.

As a sought-after speaker, Don has conducted hundreds of workshops on siblings, fathers, and grandparents of children with special needs and trainings on the Sibshop model throughout the United States, Canada, Ireland, England, Italy, New Zealand, and Japan. Don is the senior author and editor of five books: *Sibshops: Workshops for brothers and sisters of children with special needs*; *Uncommon Fathers: Reflections on Raising a Child with Special Needs*; *Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs: a Book for Sibs and Views from our Shoes: Growing up with a brother or sister with special needs* and **THE SIBLING SLAM BOOK**.

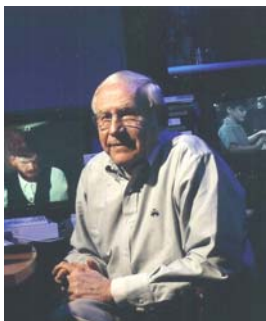
Don has been interviewed by ABC News' 20/20, Newsweek, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Newsday, Ladies Home Journal, National Public Radio, Good Housekeeping as well as numerous local news outlets for stories regarding siblings' concerns.



Susan Hamovitch, with her
Brother Alan

Susan Hamovitch is an independent film maker who lives in Brooklyn, New York. She has produced several programs for public television including her short, *On The Road To Choice*. She holds degrees from the University of Chicago and Brooklyn College, and teaches courses in video production at New School University.

Susan speaks to a variety of groups on sibling issues in conjunction with the screening of her production “Without Apology”. Issues that constitute the “sibling experience”, including what happens if/when the sibling becomes legal guardian—how professionals in the field and siblings can actually talk to one another are her area of expertise. Fitting to our theme—she also talks about how siblings have been portrayed in major Hollywood films. In Susan Hamovitch's own words: “In the early 90's, I set out to do what families fear the most — to tell the world, in my case through a video documentary, our most protected secret. “Well, you've certainly dropped a bombshell,” my mother said, after a long pause, when I told her my intention. The secret was my brother, Alan, who in 1950 was born with striking blue eyes and a brain so severely damaged he would never develop the ability to speak.”



Dr. Darold Treffert
Researcher, author, professor

Dr. Darold Treffert completed both his medical training and psychiatric residency at the University of Wisconsin Medical School in 1962. He then joined the staff of Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh, Wisconsin where he developed the Child-Adolescent Unit. In 1964, he was named Superintendent of the facility, a position he held for 15 years. Following that, Dr. Treffert maintained a private practice at the same time as he served as Executive Director of the Fond du Lac Community Developmental Disability, Mental Health and AODA programs. Dr. Treffert is an internationally recognized researcher on Savant Syndrome and maintains a very popular and respected web site at www.savantsyndrome.com. In 1989, he published the first comprehensive book on that remarkable condition entitled *Extraordinary People: Understanding Savant Syndrome*. The book, with an epilogue update, was re-issued by iUniverse.com in April 2000 and provides insights into the hidden potential that resides within each of us. Darold continues to serve as a Clinical Professor at the University of Wisconsin Medical School and is on the staff of St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin