

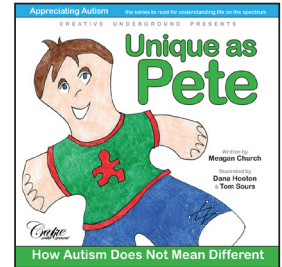
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SOUTH BEND, Ind. – A group of local artists called the Creative Underground (Cu) has teamed with the Autism Society of North Central Indiana, South Bend Chapter (ASNCISB) to develop the Appreciating Autism book series to educate people on the often-misunderstood spectrum disorder. The first book in the series, *Unique as Pete: How Autism Doesn't Mean Different*, is now available for purchase at www.authorhouse.com or at most booksellers. A portion of the proceeds will go to support the ASNCISB's dream of opening an Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy center in the South Bend area.

“This has been an exciting project to work on,” said Dana Hooton, project coordinator, book illustrator and founder of Cu. “We first met with the Autism Society in late 2006 and we wanted to find ways to work with them to help them reach their goal of opening an ABA center. So many families have been deeply affected by autism and we wanted to find a way to give them something, to ease their struggles even if just in a minor way.”

Created to educate people of all ages about autism using unique characters and a smart script, the picture book focuses on the daily life of an autistic child, Pete. The book also contains a resource center to help readers better understand the disorder. Local writer, Meagan Church, and local illustrators, Hooton and Tom Sours, teamed up to create the book. Visit www.AppreciatingAutism.com or contact Church or Hooton at pr@creative-underground.net for more information or for an opportunity to have the Cu and ASNCISB attend an event.

The Creative Underground's goal is to help others who have a passionate message to tell the world. Founded in 2005, the Cu is a network of artists, musicians, writers, designers, performers and other creative people who have a wide range of talents who, when put together, serve the promotional needs of their clients. Visit www.creative-underground.net for more information.

The Autism Society of North Central Indiana, South Bend Chapter, consists of a group of parents who have autistic children and who want to share their knowledge and success stories so that others may learn how to meet the challenges associated with autism. The ASNCISB works with the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College students who provide them with quality services. The group has learned a lot about how to better understand and treat autism, and it hopes to raise awareness on how autistic spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities affect children and families. For more information, go to www.myspace.com/appreciating_autism.