Dear Parent,

I am writing to you to invite you and your family to be a part of a very important study being conducted through California State University San Marcos. Sara Connelly-Brejnak, B.A. is a current master’s student in the Psychology program and is conducting an investigation of sibling relationships in families of autistic children under the direction of Dr. Sharon Hamill. We are asking for your help by encouraging you to share your family’s experiences by participating in a short telephone survey study.

Whereas there is an abundance of information regarding how parents are affected when they have a child with autism, there is very little research available to help researchers understand how siblings of children with autism may be affected. We are seeking information regarding general family functioning, responsibilities of family members, and perceptions of adolescent behavior. Your responses as a parent will help the researchers understand how families of autistic children function.

In order to participate in this study, your family needs to meet the following criteria:

1. Have a male autistic child between the ages of 10 and 14 in 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

2. An older brother or sister between the ages of 13-19, attending high school and living in your home.

3. The older brother or sister does not have any disabilities.

4. One parent must be willing to participate.

5. You and your adolescent are comfortable speaking English .

Participation will involve a 25-minute phone interview for one parent and a separate 25 -minute phone interview for the brother or sister in high school. Phone interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. Parents will be asked about their family demographics (number of family members, ethnicity), their autistic child’s behaviors, and the behaviors of their high school student. High school students will be asked about the kinds of chores they complete at home, how they help with their autistic sibling, and questions about their own behavior.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact the lead researcher, Sara Connelly-Brejnak at conne013@cougars.csusm.edu to set up a future telephone interview. Consent forms and answer keys to help you provide responses to the telephone interview can be either emailed or mailed to you. You must sign the informed consent form and return it either through email or mail before you can participate in this study. To thank you for your participation, you will be entered into a drawing for a $25.00 gift care to Target and your adolescent will be entered into a drawing for a $25.00 gift card to a movie theatre!

If you have questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me at 760-470-6353 or conne013@cougars.csusm.edu for more information.

Sincerely,

This document has been approved by
the Institutional Review Board at
California State University San Marcos
**Expiration Date: January 3, 2013**

Sara Connelly-Brejnak, B.A

Psychology Graduate Student