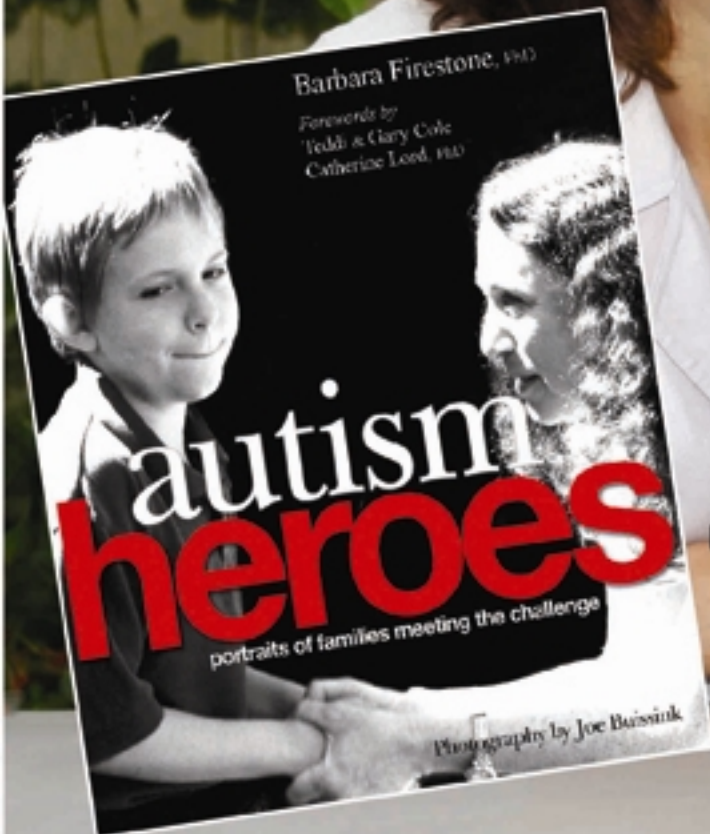


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The **AUTISM** magazine
TAP INTO IT.
perspective

Barbara Firestone, PhD
*President & CEO,
The Help Group*



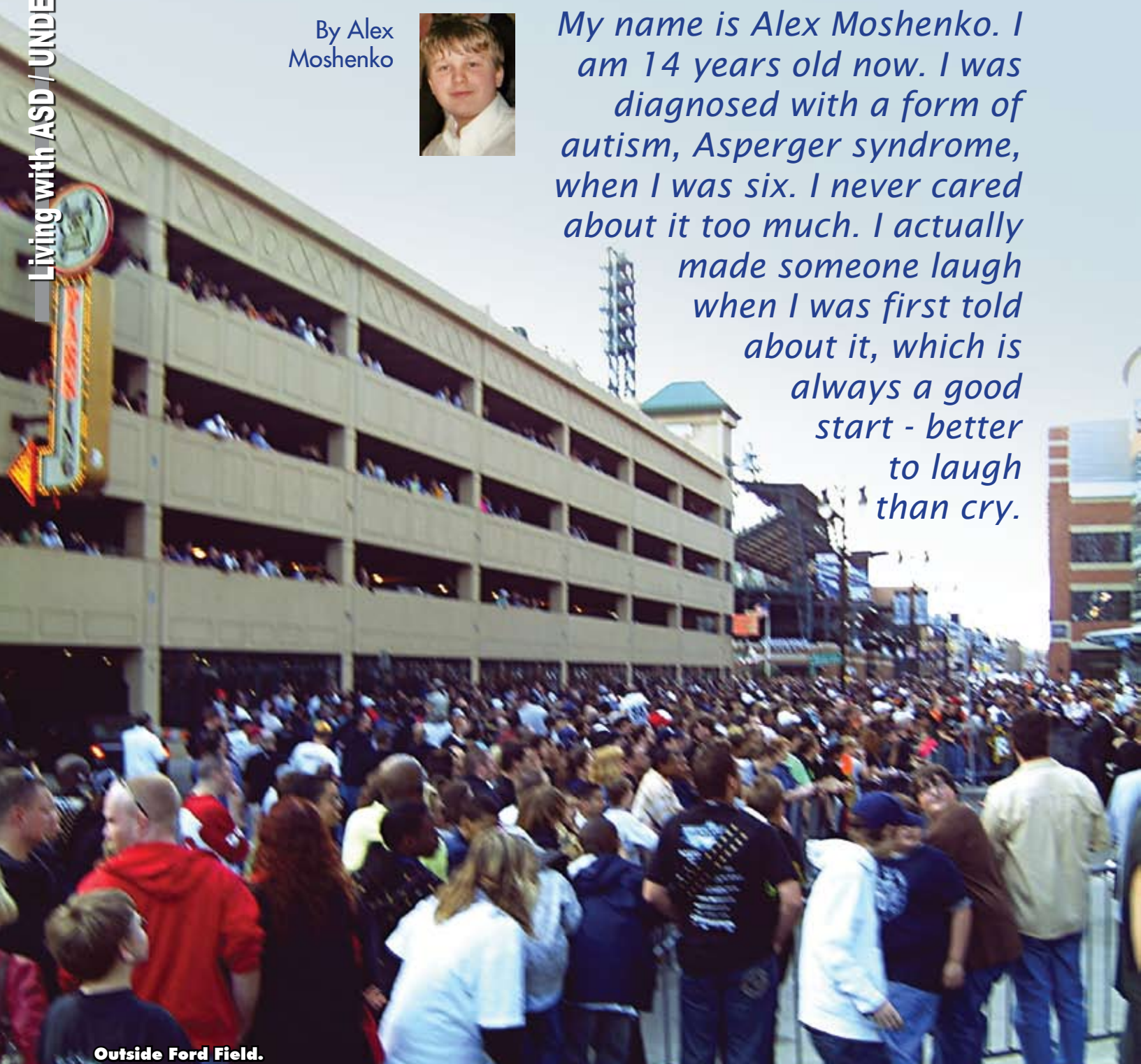
dr. barbara firestone
talks to
**families meeting
the challenge**

Who is Big Al of Al's Wrestling Talk?

By Alex Moshenko



My name is Alex Moshenko. I am 14 years old now. I was diagnosed with a form of autism, Asperger syndrome, when I was six. I never cared about it too much. I actually made someone laugh when I was first told about it, which is always a good start - better to laugh than cry.



Outside Ford Field.

Ever since then, I have had sensory issues and social skills problems, but I am able to stick to something and learn all I can from it. I have been on TV multiple times and in the newspaper a few times too. I have been an advocate for autism since I was about eight years old. It was then that I first found out about wrestling.

I was flipping through the channels on a Monday night and something caught my eye; it was WWE Raw. It amused me for a moment, but I changed the channel shortly after. I had no idea what I was missing. I became a wrestling fan in late 2003 when I was almost 10. Since then it has taken me by storm. I really enjoyed my wrestling in 2004, but I was still learning about everything, and mainly coping with the fact that wrestling on TV is not real wrestling, but entertainment.

After learning the basics, I was able to gather more info into my mind like a sponge. I could name half of the WWE ros-

ter and their pet holds, or as they are called today, finishers, by 2005. By the middle of 2005, I could name all the moves in a wrestling match as they happened; I was almost 12 when this happened.

What always got on my nerves was that I could never go to a live wrestling event because of my sensory issues, especially sensitivity with hearing issues. The fireworks and explosions were the main reasons for my not attending. I have to say the WWE was so gen-

Wrestling Autism is a great fundraiser for kids like me who are wrestling with autism. Even though I already powerbombed my autism into oblivion doesn't mean other kids have.

erous over the years before I attended a live event. They found out that I was a huge fan and sent me a box of wrestling items, which included pictures, WWE videos, The Rock blanket, key chains, and T-shirts. It was like Christmas when the box of wrestling items arrived the next day! Then I finally was able to conquer my fear and go to a live event, which was quite fun. I was interviewed in this time period by our favorite local news station, WGRZ-TV2, an affiliate of NBC, and I told Maryalice Demler, the news reporter, that watching wrestling is like a dash of good and evil, except sometimes evil wins. I was pleasantly surprised as Channel 2 had made special arrangements for me to go to a press conference for WWE's "Smackdown PPV, The Great American Bash" which was held in Buffalo, New York, for my birthday. It was then that I got to do my first TV interview with the World Champion at the time, Batista The Animal. It was amazing!



Big Al outside a wrestling Pre-Show.



Big Al in front of the RV.



Big Al in the RV.

Last year my mother and I decided that we want to take our radio shows cross-country in an RV, so we rented one to travel...

famer Jimmy "mouth of the south" Hart.

Wrestling Autism is a great fundraiser for kids like me who are wrestling with autism. Even though I already powerbombed my autism into oblivion doesn't mean other kids have.

I have reason to be grateful to the four people who gave me a wider scale audience than before, so let me personally thank Niko, Yeti, Big Joe, and JT. I owe them, not just because of my second talk show, but also because I was able to go to the Super Bowl of all wrestling - Wrestlemania 23. It was a wonderful experience.

Last year my mother and I decided that we wanted to take our radio shows cross-country in an RV, so we rented one to travel from Buffalo, N.Y., to Detroit, Michigan, and boy was it fun. I was able to bring along one of my co-hosts on my show, Captain Obvious, my brother David, and we loved every second of it. When we arrived in Detroit for Wrestlemania23, we put up a

In early 2006, I wanted to have my own wrestling show - like my mom has her own disability talk show, DisAbility News & Views Radio. After a while of asking, having a website developed and learning how to use the broadcast system, I began hosting my own radio show in June 2006 which I loved. I was able to have some of my good friends who were fans of wrestling on my show as co-hosts and take phone calls from fans during the live show every Saturday at 7PM ET.

Before I started Al's Wrestling Talk, or AWT, a career in wrestling wasn't the biggest thing for me. I had wanted to become a play-by-play announcer or a color commentator and utilize my vast knowledge of wrestling.

There aren't a lot of recognizable announcer names other than Jim Ross, also known as JR, and Joey Styles, but that makes the job even more prestigious for me, because that's what I want to do as a career.

After about five months of hosting my radio show, I was contacted by a few guys who thought I was amazing and wanted me to become a part of their fundraising efforts for autism called Wrestling Autism. Funds raised through Wrestling Autism are being given to the National Autism Association. After I got this call, I was in shock and awe and started to cry shortly after. I accepted their invitation, of course, and now I have a show every Wednesday as well as Saturday. I have even interviewed hall of



Inside Ford Field.

I hope to be one of the best ringside announcers, like Jim Ross (JR), who was inducted in the WWE Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2007.

huge banner that said Al's Wrestling Talk and we parked a few blocks from Ford Field. I was interviewed on another wrestling talk show while I was in Detroit and had a great time with everything there. I stood outside of Ford Field surrounded by thousands of wrestling fans from all over the country and broadcasted my live radio show there. It was a huge thrill! When everyone got outside the stadium and waited for the doors to open, several wrestlers came out and greeted the fans. Rob Van Dam, Batista, Ron Simmons, The Brooklyn Brawler, Triple H, and Stephanie McMahon were all within 15 feet of us. When the doors opened and the show began, we were amazed at how many people were there - over 80,000! The whole experience was amazing. There were two streakers as well, one before the doors opened, the other ran in during the main event! We witnessed history in the making: the piledriver was done on the stairs (a feat not seen in



years), the eight-man "money in the bank ladder match," The Undertaker winning his fifth world title in five years, and the ECW originals first-ever Wrestlemania. My mother was actually able to meet Tommy Dreamer and several other ECW originals when she went to the snack bar!

I hope to be one of the best ringside announcers, like Jim Ross (JR), who was inducted in the WWE Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2007.

All together, my life of wrestling has been more than a blessing to me and I thank God for that. I've loved every day I get to watch my favorite wrestlers, past and present, entertain me on a weekly basis, and then my voice gets heard when I com-

ment about it. I love to do what I do, but this wouldn't be possible without my wonderful mother. She's guided me, taught me, and helped me find what I wanted to be. I love her more than anyone could ever know. She's the one who helped give me my voice, and now I do what I do best every week, speak.

Remember, "Big Al knows and that's how it goes!" **TAP**

You can listen to my show every Saturday at 7PM ET live online at www.alswrestlingtalk.com and on Wednesday at 8PM ET. Contact Big Al at 866-369-8058 or email bigal@alswrestlingtalk.com