

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 140297)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing April 2014 as Autism Awareness Month in honor of individuals living with Autism, their families and those working to improve the quality of life for the entire Autism community.

WHEREAS, April is National Autism Awareness Month. Autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), describes a group of brain disorders that affect social interactions, communication and other behaviors; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 1 in every 68 children, that is 1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls, in the United States are on the Autism Spectrum; and

WHEREAS, The CDC's findings, demonstrating a significant increase in the prevalence of Autism, echoes the findings of the Pennsylvania Autism Census Project led by the ASERT Collaborative at Drexel University, which found that the number of Pennsylvanians with Autism receiving services nearly tripled from 2005 to 2011; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Autism Census Project found that, in Philadelphia alone, the number of individuals receiving services has more than doubled and statewide individuals with Autism are experiencing alarming rates of contact with the justice system. Of additional concern, is despite increased awareness many adults with Autism remain mis- or un-diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been an international leader in the fight for individuals with Autism. Under the Department of Public Welfare, the Office of Developmental Programs was created along with the Bureau of Autism Services; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has been recognized as one of the top five cities in America to live for people who have Autism; it is the home of cutting edge research, experimental studies that identify best practices and inclusive approaches to support individuals living

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with Autism and expand their mainstream opportunities, contributing to an enhanced quality of life for individuals with Autism and their families; and

WHEREAS, Terri Matthews, a mother of a son with Autism, and founder and CEO of Jaden's Voice, a Philadelphia based non-profit designed to meet the needs of underserved families impacted by Autism in the Philadelphia Area, is dedicated to improving the access to and quality of services and supports for families impacted by Autism; and

WHEREAS, Jaden's Voice is comprised of two distinct programs: the Jaden Cares Program addresses the physical and support service needs for children and families living with Autism and the Jaden's Family Care Program provides advocacy and outreach services for families through support groups and educational opportunities for parents and caregivers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Craig Newschaffer, Lindsay Shea, Dr. James Connell and Dr. Jennifer Plumb of the A. J. Drexel Autism Institute at Drexel University, through support from the Lurie Foundation and the Philadelphia Eagles, have demonstrated their commitment to improving access to information and services via their Mobile Resources and Education for Autism and Community Health (REACH) van, which will provide mobile outreach specifically targeting individuals and families in underserved and underrepresented communities; and

WHEREAS, Drexel University's Professor Diana Nicholas and her team of students from the Antoinette Westphal College of Media and Design, ensured the Mobile REACH van accounted for special interests, sensitivities and needs of individuals living with Autism, with necessary storage space for outreach materials and the capacity to allow clinicians to conduct assessments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize April 2014 as Autism Awareness Month in honor of individuals living with Autism, their families and those working to improve the quality of life for the entire Autism community.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Terri Matthews of Jaden's Voice, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the third day of April, 2014.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Brien

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Brien, Greenlee, Kenney, Goode,
Quiñones Sánchez, Johnson, Council President Clarke,
Councilmembers Blackwell, Jones and Oh