

Legislation Text

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Recognizing April 2022 as Autism Acceptance & Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia, and commending the creators of the Autism 365 Collection at the Wynnefield Library.

WHEREAS, April is National Autism Acceptance and Awareness Month, a time to educate our community about autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (“ASD”), a complex neurological condition that affects, in varying degrees, language and social skill development, characterized by challenges in communication and social interactions, repetitive behaviors and movement, impacting individuals of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 Pennsylvania Census Report identified over 4,167 individuals in Philadelphia County with autism receiving services - more than double the previously documented number - the majority of whom are between the ages of 5 and 17 years old, with the number of adults over 21 years old increasing as the population ages; and

WHEREAS, According to estimates from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (“ADDM”) Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), 1 in 54 children have been identified with ASD, yet another indicator that this intellectual disability is, if not increasingly frequent, more likely to be diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, Whatever the cause, this uptick in diagnoses means that more individuals with autism, as well as their loved ones and caregivers are showing up at community institutions like neighborhood libraries, often in search of resources and programming; and

WHEREAS, In response to the growing need that they were seeing, Ethel Funches and Mary Kachline of the Wynnefield Library, a branch in the Free Library of Philadelphia system, created the Autism 365 Collection - its name reflecting the fact that autism doesn’t only occur thirty days a year; and

WHEREAS, Ethel and Mary thoughtfully curated a multimedia collection of materials of interest to adults and children on the spectrum, as well as their caregivers, which includes books, DVDs, and “Autism Borrowing Bags” containing books and sensory-friendly items; and

WHEREAS, The Autism 365 Collection also hosts programs for people with autism and their families, including a monthly Autism Block Party and disability- and special education-rights legal clinics; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby recognize April 2022 as Autism Acceptance & Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia, and commends the creators of the Autism 365 Collection at Wynnefield Library.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be forwarded to representatives of the Wynnefield Library, as evidence of the sincere sentiment of this legislative body.

