

THE KENNEDY CENTER

A UTISM PROJECT



For More Information, visit
www.thekennedycenterinc.org

ABOUT THE KENNEDY CENTER

Established in 1951, The Kennedy Center is a 501(c) 3 non-profit rehabilitation agency supporting more than 1,500 children and adults with disabilities with vocational, residential, educational, therapeutic, social and recreational programs throughout Connecticut.

Our mission promotes the empowerment of individuals with diverse abilities, disabilities, and experiences toward optimal participation and inclusion in the community.

Guided by its mission and history, The Kennedy Center is committed to providing services and supports to families of children with autism spectrum disorders. Recognizing the growing need within the community, The Kennedy Center established The Autism Project in 2006 to increase and develop services for children and young adults - birth through 21 years of age.



WHAT DOES THE AUTISM PROJECT DO?

Established by The Kennedy Center in 2006, **The Autism Project** aims to support children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. The mission of The Autism Project is to provide these children and families with:

- Information, referral and resources
- Family support & service coordination
- Financial assistance
- Support for children in community activities
- Behavioral services
- New services for unmet needs within the community

Recent Accomplishments and New Programs:

With guidance from a knowledgeable Advisory Board comprised of local professionals and parents, The Autism Project provides an array of programs and services to help meet the needs of families across the region. In addition to numerous initiatives completed in its first three years, The Autism Project has recently:

- Started 3 new parent support groups including a group for Spanish-speaking parents, a group for parents of preschoolers, and a group for parents of children of all ages and abilities.
- Offered several trainings on "Inclusive Practices for Children with ASD" for over 200 teachers and paraprofessionals in 3 school districts.
- Provided more than 100 families and professionals with assistance in coordinating services and locating appropriate resources.
- Successfully completed the "Stepping Out" program, a unique "wraparound" social skills development program funded by an Autism Speaks Community Grant.
- Created and implemented a pilot after-school program for children in the Bridgeport public school system.
- Successfully ran 8 social activity groups for children in all age groups from 3-21.
- Offered 10 workshops on topics including behavioral strategies, visual supports, health care needs, and the role of extended family members in the life of a child with autism.
- Provided children with one-to-one support to allow inclusion in activities at local summer camp programs.
- Provided behavioral and educational consultation and support services, as well as ABA programs for families and local agencies.

Plans for 2010:

In addition to continued growth and expansion of the many programs and services now in place, some of The Autism Project's current plans and goals are:

- In partnership with the CT Department of Children and Families, to develop a model therapeutic service program for adolescents and young adults with autism and psychiatric challenges, which will include in-home coaching services for parents and caregivers to attain skills and strategies to support their child's development and growth.
- To conduct new workshops for parents, professionals and extended family members on various topics, including daily living skills, functional skills, and other behavioral and health issues.
- To provide training and consultation to Birth to Three staff, and strengthen family support services for children's transition to school.
- To expand behavioral services to meet the increasing needs of local families.
- To work with area agencies and school boards to develop after-school and summer programs for children across school districts.

For more information, contact **Rose Abreu-Sanchez, Manager of The Autism Project**, 203-332-4535, ext. 247 or email: rsanchez@kennedyctr.org

The Autism Project depends on its annual **Magic Moments** fundraising event to sustain and develop these programs. The next event will take place on **May 1, 2010 at the SoNo Fieldhouse**, a new events and sports complex in South Norwalk.

All contributions benefit The Autism Project and are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

The Kennedy Center, Inc.

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