Autism Awareness Events 2016

School Information Package for Autism Awareness Activities

Evening Event – Thursday, March 31st, 2016
School Based Activities – Friday, April 1st, 2016
Thank you for volunteering to be a representative for Autism Awareness at your school!

**Included in this package:**

1. Steps to find *Autism Awareness 2016* on portal
2. Steps to find “We Are Family” *Dance instructional videos* on portal
3. List of Resources
4. Five Daily *Announcements*
5. Additional ideas for *whole-school activities*
6. *Poster* to advertise the “We Are Family” dance - An electronic version can also be found on the Autism portal
7. *Invitation* to the 6th *Annual Autism Awareness Evening* at the CEC on March 31, 2016, “*We Are Family*” - An electronic version can also be found on the Autism portal. Please circulate to interested staff and families in your school community.

If you have any questions please contact Franca Dellorso at franca.dellorso@tcdsb.org

Last March, an inspiring number of schools participated in raising awareness and understanding about autism. As well, on March 11, 2015, more than 15,000 staff and students joined as a community to perform a board-wide dance in honor of Autism Awareness Day. This year our goal is to reach even more schools and students. This event exemplifies Pope Francis’ message about Autism Spectrum Disorders:

*“Everyone should be committed to promoting acceptance, encounter and solidarity through concrete support and by encouraging renewed hope.”*

Over 1,400 students across the Toronto Catholic District School Board have an autism spectrum disorder. Autism Awareness Day provides an invaluable opportunity to recognize these students and all they bring to our schools. During this school year, the board wide dance will take place on *Friday April 1, 2016*.

**Please note**

*It is not appropriate for school staff to disclose the diagnosis of a student.*
Steps to Autism Portal

1. Go to TCDSB Intranet
2. Click on ‘Application’ – found in the top banner
3. Click on ‘Autism Services’
4. Click on ‘New Announcements’ – found on the left side
5. Click on ‘Autism Awareness 2016’

PowerPoint

We have created PowerPoint presentations that can be found on the Autism Team portal. There are 3 PowerPoints available for a school assembly, differing only by the embedded video.

As well, there are PowerPoints for Staff Professional Development. Please feel free to adapt them to suit your school’s needs. Some of the information was taken from the resource Growing Up Together developed by the Autism Society of America and Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA). This is a great resource that can be used by teachers to help promote understanding and acceptance of peers with autism. There are 2 versions:

- Growing Up Together Booklet – for Elementary-aged School Children
- Growing Up Together Booklet for Teens

Pdf versions can be found on http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/?pageld=3567

Instructional Dance Video

A new dance was choreographed this year to the song “We Are Family” by Sister Sledge. We would like to thank, from Blessed Mother Teresa Catholic Secondary School, teacher Christina Sangalli and the RAP (Regional Arts Program) Dancers for choreographing and performing the dance. The dance video can be found using the above steps to the portal. Here are some ways to facilitate learning the dance before April 1, 2016:

- Have student leaders teach the dance to individual classes
- Use as a DPA activity
- Use as warm up in gym class
- Dance squad to demonstrate

While on the Portal, Make Sure to Check Out.....

*Teaching Materials
*Visual Supports
*SMART BOARD resources
**Raise the Flag**

Each school in the TCDSB was provided with a flag from Autism Ontario (secondary schools in 2013 and elementary schools in 2014). Last year over 340 municipalities and 300 schools raised the flag. “The simple act of raising a flag is monumental in ensuring that government officials, community members, classmates and teachers learn more about autism and the families affected by it.” (autismontario.com) Please locate your school’s flag and join together to raise the flag in recognition of Autism Awareness.

If you have misplaced your flag the following link can be used to purchase a new flag: http://raisetheflagforautism.com/

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**Autism Awareness Evening**

**March 31, 2016**

We invite families and staff to participate in an evening dedicated to promoting the gifts and talents of our students. Please join us at a bistro inspired entertainment event featuring refreshments, light snacks, student performances and artwork.

Date: Thursday, March 31, 2016
Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Catholic Education Centre
80 Sheppard Avenue East, 2nd Floor

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**Autism Awareness 2016 Slideshow**

We greatly appreciate all the great work and dedication our TCDSB schools devote to World Autism Awareness Day. We kindly ask each school to e-mail us some pictures of all the great things that were done to promote Autism Awareness. This may include, but is not limited to, dance, decorated bulletin boards, school activities, posters, flag raising, and art work.

Please send pictures to:
tcdsbautismawareness@gmail.com
by April 4th, 2016.
Video Links

• “More Than Autism-Empathy Heroes”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSUndQQcK2M (song geared to primary students to promote acceptance and empathy for peers with autism)

• BBC-My Autism and Me
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejpWWP1HNGQ (documentary style video: 13-year-old Rosie takes viewers into her world to explain what it's like to grow up with autism)

• Autism: See the Potential
  https://vimeo.com/144769608 (A 9 minute video by Autism Ontario that explains the basics of Autism Spectrum Disorder)

• 10 Things you Should Know
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5m5vqrFZpc (teen with ASD describing 5 things you should know about people with autism and 5 tips about how to care for people with autism)

• Clay Marzo
  https://www.claymarzo.com (a professional surfer and young adult with Aspergers)

• Stephen Wiltshire
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNfDikR2-fU (British architectural artist. He is known for his ability to draw from memory after seeing a landscape just once.)

• Sam the Starbucks Barista
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukDKrwoL36g (Youtube’s new Starbucks sensation!)

• Rosie King
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ95xlZeHo8 (Storytelling activist on TedTalks)

• Jacob Barnett
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXmss3exFsA (An American physics student and child prodigy – Maclean’s)

Additional Website Resources to support students in your class

Sesame Street: http://autism.sesamestreet.org/
  Sesame Workshop created Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children, a nationwide initiative aimed at communities with young children. Developed with input from parents, people who serve the autism community, and people with autism. See Amazing in All Children offers families ways to overcome common challenges and simplify everyday activities. At the same time, the project fosters an affirming narrative around autism for all families and kids.

GoNoodle: https://www.gonoodle.com/
  GoNoodle helps teachers and parents get kids moving with short interactive activities. Desk-
side movement helps kids achieve more by keeping them engaged and motivated throughout the day. GoNoodle provides many different options for short (or long - depending on the time you have available) movement breaks that get kids up and moving. Some are dances, some are songs, some simulate running, jumping, and some are calming breathing exercises.

**SET BC:** [https://www.setbc.org/pictureset/](https://www.setbc.org/pictureset/)

A great free resource where you can find premade visuals and social scripts supports.


Devin Smyth lives in Lethbridge, Alberta. He is 11 years old and has Asperger's. He and his mom, Wendy Smyth share an essay they wrote together about what life with Asperger's is like for Devin.

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**Autism Facts**

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological disorder that affects the way a person’s brain and body works.
- A person with Autism may have difficulty communicating with others, making friends or following directions.
- Autism affects 1 out of 68 people. It is more common in boys than in girls.
- People with Autism are different from one another.
- There are dozens of treatments but no cure.
- Autism is the fastest growing serious developmental disability.
- Autism disorders affect all nationalities, all creeds, all religions, all races and both sexes.
- The puzzle piece represents Autism.
- No two people will have the same symptoms and characteristics.
- World Autism Awareness Day is celebrated on April 2nd every year.
Books about Autism

The following books can be read to students to increase their understanding and awareness of Autism.

Kindergarten to Grade Two

- *In My Mind: The World through the Eyes of Autism*, by Adonya Wong
- *My Friend Has Autism*, by Amanda DoeringTourville
- *Odd Velvet*, by Mary E. Whitcomb

Grade Three to Grade Six

- *My Friend with Autism*, by Beverly Bishop
- *My Brother Charlie*, by Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete
- *Ian’s Walk: A Story about Autism*, by Laurie Lears and Albert Whitman
- *A Friend Like Simon*, by Kate Gaynot
- *Leah’s Voice*, by Lori DeMonia
- *My Best Friend Will*, by Jamie Lowell and Tara Tuchel
- *Odd Velvet*, by Mary E. Whitcomb
- *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee*, by Mary Thompson
- *I’m like You, You’re Like Me, A Child’s Book About Understanding and Celebrating Each Other*, by Cindy Gainer
- *The Autism Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone with Autism*, by Ellen Sabin
- *Dinosaur Diego, The World’s Smartest Dude*, by Jill Bobula and Katherine Bobula

Grade Seven and Eight

- *Rules*, by Cynthia Lord

High School

- *The Reason I Jump*, by Naoki Higashida
- *Mockingbird*, by Kathryn Erskine
- *Cowboys & Wills*, by Monica Holloway
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon

Autism Awareness Committee Picks for Staff

- *Life Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes & Autism*, by Ron Suskind
- *The Spark*, by Kristine Barnett
- *How to Talk to an Autistic Kid*, by Daniel Stefanski

*Note: These books can be found at your local library, bookstore or Parentbooks. For an additional booklist, please visit: http://www.parentbooks.ca/Autism_Spectrum_Disorders.html*
Announcements for week of March 28 - April 1, 2016

Announcement 1 - Monday, March 28th, 2016

In following our pastoral plan ‘We Are Family,’ this week the Toronto Catholic District School Board is celebrating Autism Awareness. Each day, you will hear about one famous person who has autism. People with autism have wonderful talents and can make meaningful contributions to our society.

Today you will learn about Andy Warhol, the famous Pop Art artist.

Andy was famous for his advertising, TV, and comic books inspired art. This was known as “Pop Art”. Andy would duplicate objects or images over and over again. It all began when Andy worked as a commercial artist to help stores sell their items.

His prints and paintings became so popular in the 1960’s that everyone wanted one of his works. In fact, his works were so high in demand that they were selling faster than he could make them! Some of Andy’s popular works include Campbell’s soup cans and Coca-Cola soda bottles. As Andy’s success grew, he decided to hire other artists to help him. They opened a studio called The Factory.

Andy began meeting lots of famous people and he started creating portraits. His art style remained similar, that is, he continued including rating duplicates. Some famous works include Pop Art portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, Liv Taylor, JFK and Queen Elizabeth.

Andy was known to be a shy, quiet person, but attended many parties. In fact, he didn’t like to be interviewed, and as a result, created his own magazine called Interview.

Andy’s story reminds us that people who are on the autism spectrum can have amazing creative talents. His unique Pop Art still impacts the world of art today. Andy Warhol will continue to remain famous for many years to come!
Announcement 2 - Tuesday March 29th, 2016

Today’s famous person with autism is Matt Savage.

Matt Savage, is a jazz prodigy and also was diagnosed with Persuasive Developmental Disorder, which is a form of autism. He learned to read and walk by the age of 18 months! At a very young age, he developed a passion for music, specifically classical. He grew fond of jazz music. At the age of six, Matt taught himself to read music and play the piano. Matt decided to pursue his interest in music and later attended New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

Matt is now an accomplished musician and composer. He has performed with famous musicians such as Chaka Khan. He currently has eight albums and has received many awards for his outstanding musical talent. He was signed to Bosendorfer Piano in at the age of 11, making him the first child to be signed with the piano company. In 2009, Matt applied to Berklee College to continue pursuing his musical career. After completing his music degree in 2015, Matt gives master classes and workshops locally and internationally both in English and Spanish!

Matt has also toured the world, taken part in documentaries, and performed on various television and radio shows such as Late Show with David Letterman.

Announcement 3 - Wednesday March 30th, 2016

Today we are learning about Dr. Temple Grandin. Dr. Temple Grandin is a famous American Professor of Animal Sciences, teaching at Colorado State University. She also has Asperger’s syndrome, which is a form of autism. Grandin is also a consultant, and advocate for Autism and the livestock industry of animal behavior.
Grandin’s interests include science fiction, documentaries, bio-chemistry, horseback riding, and animals. Grandin has a passion for animals, especially cows. She spent a lot of her childhood and adult life working with animals. She felt she was able to understand them. In fact, Grandin designed and created new facilities for them, which would make them more animal-friendly.

Also, Grandin is the inventor of the deep touch device called *Hug Box*. This device is used to apply deep pressure to calm individuals on the autism spectrum. This is beneficial for individuals with sensory needs.

Dr. Temple Grandin is an extraordinary individual who has embraced her exceptionality and has used it to improve the world.

**Announcement 4 - Thursday March 31st, 2016**

Jessica-Jane Applegate is famous for being a gold-medal Great Britain Paralympics swimming champion in 2012, at the age of 16! Jessica also has a diagnosis of autism and intellectual disability.

Jessica began swimming at the young age, and by the age of 13, she began setting regional records. By 2011, she showed potential as an international competitive swimmer. Jessica-Jane was determined to be successful even though she had an exceptionality. Throughout her swimming career, Jessica-Jane broke many records and obtained gold, silver and bronze medals. Jessica-Jane is also an ambassador for INAS, which is a non-profit organization that makes it possible for people with intellectual disabilities to be able to compete at an international level. In 2013, Jessica-Jane was also appointed as a member of the Order of the British Empire.
Today you will learn about Clay Marzo, a professional surfer who resides in Hawaii. Clay has a diagnosis of Autism. This 26 year old surfer is known for his unique surfing style and was featured in various films. Growing up, Clay spent most of his time in water, as he felt it was his ‘happy place’. He felt calm, engaged, connected and at ease.

Clay began swimming and surfing competitively at a very young age. In fact, when he was only 10 years old, he won the 200 meter freestyle event at the Hawaii State Swimming Championships! At the age of 15, Clay became the first surfer to receive two perfect 10’s in National Scholastic Surfing Association, National Competition. His surfing career continued to blossom and he won many other competitions and awards. Clay was featured in magazines and films such as “Stranger than Fiction.” A 2008 documentary film titled, “Clay Marzo: Just Add Water” looks at Marzo’s life, and his experience as a surfer with Asperger’s Syndrome.
Additional Activities

There are a variety of activities in which your school may decide to participate. The following are some suggestions:

- “Wear Blue” day on April 1.
- A school raffle.
- **Puzzle Pieces** – puzzle pieces are another symbol associated with Autism. Students can write their strengths on a puzzle piece and these can be collected and connected in a display around the school. These can be displayed as a chain or inside letters making up a word (eg. “Together”).
- Make blue ribbon pins for teachers and students to wear. Blue is the color used to globally represent Autism.
- During the month of March, leading up to World Autism Awareness Day, a “Fact a Day” about Autism can be read as part of the morning announcements. These facts can be written on a puzzle piece and added to a bulletin board.
- Dedicate a bulletin board in the school to Autism Awareness for the month of March and April.
- **Famous Faces of Autism** – have intermediate students research some famous people with Autism. They can decorate a bulletin board with their findings.
- **Develop a Class or School Code of Conduct** – classes can develop their ideas for how to be inclusive, welcoming places inside and at recess for all students.
- Create a school Autism banner. Staff and students who participate in the board wide dance may write their name on a yellow star cut out and glue/tape their star to the banner. This encourages participation and shows support.
- Flag raising of the Autism Awareness flag.
Autism Awareness Ribbon Display

The Autism Awareness Ribbon Puzzle Piece Pattern symbolizes the mystery of autism. The different colours and shapes represent the diversity of people and families living with autism and the brightness of the ribbon signals hope and awareness.

Each student in your school can colour their ribbon and they can then be displayed either on a bulletin board or in another prominent location in your school.
We Are Family Display

In keeping with the TCDSB’s Pastoral Plan, and theme of our dance “We Are Family”, a bulletin board could be created to decorate the walls of your school. Complete the cut outs after a discussion about how we can achieve our goals together. Have students complete, cut out and decorate the walls of your dance area.
Puzzle Piece for “Fact a Day”

The following puzzle pieces can be used to write a “Fact a Day” about Autism which can be used as part of the morning announcements. The pieces can be enlarged and joined together to make a larger puzzle.
Autism Awareness Bookmark

The following template can be used to create a bookmark. This can be completed after a class discussion to further develop the understanding Autism. Facts can be added to the bookmark along with a blue ribbon.