

AUTISM Fits:

Your Piece of the Puzzle

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USF President



USF[®]
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

SUPPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS & ORGANIZATION

The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida (CARD-USF) is a free community-based project that provides information, training and consultation to individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and related disabilities, their families and professionals. Operational for over 15 years, CARD-USF serves over 2,300 Florida families and 1,500 professionals within a 14 county area.

For your business, CARD-USF can provide support and training to assist in your efforts to become a recognized business leader and partner with the autism community. We can do this in several ways.

Technical Assistance & Consultation: Examining your business location, practices/procedures and advising on adjustments that you can make to be better prepared to meet the needs of this population.

Professional Training: Provide instruction to your employees on how to welcome and approach your customers who are affected by autism through multiple strategies such as on-location workshops or lunch and learn sessions.

Employee Relations: Provide training to business owners and managers that may be in the position of hiring and supervising an employee with an autism spectrum disorder.

Marketing Awareness: CARD-USF encourages our families to seek out businesses that have been trained by our professional CARD consultants and are now considered “Autism Friendly”. Your business will be part of an online database for our families. In addition, all businesses that receive CARD-USF training and technical assistance will receive a CARD “Autism Friendly” sign to display in their business as a sign of your support and collaboration.



AUTISM FITS...

Your Customers

An estimated 25,000 people in the Tampa Bay area are diagnosed with autism or an autism related disorder. The families of children with autism often find themselves unable to do the day-to-day tasks we all take for granted: grocery shopping, watching a movie in a theater, shopping for clothes, or just sitting in a restaurant to enjoy a meal as a family.

You can play a key role in making the lives of these families a little bit easier through no cost or low cost accommodations to make their experience with your business more enjoyable. The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida (CARD-USF) is here to help. We can assist you in designing and implementing the strategies that work best for individuals with autism and their families.

Welcoming people with autism spectrum disorders into your business also comes with a number of financial benefits. By making small changes to your business operations, you can potentially increase your customer base, improve your business image in the community, and show that you are sensitive to the special needs of your customers of all abilities.



*Carmen Inclan
AVP/Area Sales Manager
Residential Lending Division
Fifth Third Bank*

*Brian P. Keenan
Pres/CEO
Fifth Third Bank*

AUTISM FITS...

Your Current & Future Employees

As an employer, you can apply some simple solutions to your place of business that would enable current employees with a family member on the autism spectrum to be more productive and feel supported on the job. Additionally, applying customized employment strategies can assist you in hiring individuals with autism, feeling confident that you and the employee will experience long term positive outcomes. The Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) Job Accommodation Network conducted an examination of the costs of providing accommodations to people with disabilities and the benefits those accommodations would offer employers. Among their findings:

- Nearly half (46%) of businesses reported the accommodations implemented cost absolutely nothing.
- Similarly, 45% experienced only a one-time cost.
- The median one-time expenditure for employers was only \$500.
- 75% reported that the accommodations implemented were either "very effective" or "extremely effective".
- Direct benefits of the accommodations included: retaining a valued employee (86%), increasing an employee's productivity (71%) and eliminating costs associated with training a new employee (56%).

A CREATIVE SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYEE RETENTION:

PepsiCo supports employees with family members on the autism spectrum in a number of ways, including an employee resource group that devotes part of its agenda to autism. Some of the group's activities include:

- Newsletter articles with tips on managing care
- Communications about walks and other fundraising events
- Personal stories

In addition, PepsiCo has a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Their “goals are to attract, hire, train and retain the most talented people.” In valuing their employees as their most important resource, they are “ensuring that PepsiCo is the kind of company where talented people of all backgrounds want to work.” Their commitment includes creating “rewarding job opportunities for people with different abilities.”

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR INCREASING THE CUSTOMER BASE:

Initiated by a local teacher, the Citrus Park Regal Cinemas has begun offering movie days that attend to the sensory needs of the audience. Turning lights up, bringing the sound down and showing no previews or advertisements allowed individuals to comfortably enjoy their experience. Audience members were welcome to get up and dance, walk, shout or sing.

The Autism Society of America and Pump It Up, an indoor playground franchise, host “Autism Nights” at locations around the country. This allows children with autism and their families to gather on a regular basis and socialize while having fun and improving their motor skills.

In honor of Autism Awareness Month, many facilities are also hosting “Bounce for Autism” events in April to raise money for research and to help families living with autism get the support they need.



*Pam Iorio
Mayor, City of Tampa*

Your PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

CARD's goal is to build a more welcoming community for citizens of all abilities through partnering with businesses interested in making a difference in the lives of those who are diagnosed with autism and related disabilities and their families. We do this at no cost to you. So what can you do? The list below provides a variety of ways to work in conjunction with CARD-USF to enhance your business or organization's outcomes.

WHAT IS *your* "PIECE OF THE PUZZLE"?

PARTNER ∞ I would like CARD to provide training for my business to become "autism friendly" and be listed as such in CARD's database for families and professionals

SUPPORTER ∞ I would like to actively participate in or host future CARD events

FRIEND ∞ I would like to know about upcoming CARD events

VOLUNTEER ∞ I would like to volunteer for CARD

EXPLORER ∞ I would like to learn more about CARD training and services

REFERRAL SOURCE ∞ I know a family that would benefit from CARD's services

CLAIM YOUR PIECE TODAY!

In Florida: 1-800-333-4530

or 813-974-2532

<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu>

We seek to partner with businesses interested in making a difference in the lives of those who are diagnosed with autism and related disabilities and their families.



*Jorge Diaz, Manager
Flemings Restaurant*



Florida's First Choice for Autism Support

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