



Changing the paradigm for how adults with autism thrive

A statement from Gillian Leek, CEO, NEXT for AUTISM as we embark upon Autism Acceptance Month

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, April 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This last year has been a remarkable and challenging year for everyone. We have all experienced incalculable loss -- of life, of opportunity, and of our daily patterns of living. For the community [NEXT for AUTISM](#) proudly serves, the isolation brought on by COVID-19 restrictions has only magnified the many disparities that individuals with autism face at work, at home, and in our communities.

NEXT for AUTISM is keenly aware of how disconnected from their larger communities individuals with autism and their families often feel, even in the best of circumstances. With renewed demands for social justice, calls for greater equity, and increased focus on diversity across our country, it is also time for autistic individuals to not only be seen, but to join in, to be included in this important movement toward acceptance, representation, and true belonging, no matter our perceived differences.

This April is different than in past years when it comes to autism. NEXT for AUTISM and our colleagues across the disability community are formally calling for a change to the terminology we use to recognize this month, moving away from the previous moniker of "Autism Awareness Month," to the more relevant and meaningful "Autism Acceptance Month." This shift speaks volumes, and not in name alone.

Autism Acceptance Month signifies a necessary evolution in expecting a deeper understanding, value, and inclusion of individuals with autism in society. It also ushers in a new era for NEXT for AUTISM as an organization intent on growing our mission impact and core areas of work to best support autistic individuals. Adults living with autism deserve equity in the workforce, homes that are safe and welcoming, a rich social life—life experiences that all adults crave.

NEXT for AUTISM is a critical part of the solution. We are committed to building needed resources that promote opportunities and choice and truly move the needle to make foundational changes for adults with autism. The team at NEXT for AUTISM is working hard to bring this vision to reality, sharply attuned to projects that will have the greatest impact, particularly in the areas of home, work, social, and health & wellbeing.

We know this important work takes a village. Valuable partnerships are essential to NEXT for

AUTISM, and we are working with like-minded groups and individuals at the community, non-profit and corporate levels committed to challenging the status quo. In teaming with others, our aim is to develop innovative content and meaningful offerings that build capacity, improve outcomes, and ultimately, enhance the lives and experiences of autistic individuals.

This year, we are embarking on several exciting efforts to quickly address some of the most pressing issues adults on the spectrum now face. Read about [our 2021 priorities](#), as outlined by SVP of Strategic Initiatives, Patricia Wright, PhD, MPH.

It is time to change the paradigm for how individuals with autism thrive throughout their adult lives – and NEXT for AUTISM is completely committed to being a leader in this movement. We are doing whatever it takes to make the world a better, more inclusive, and more equitable place. We are working tirelessly to change the narrative, to ensure that all people with autism are valued, contributing members of society – living their very best lives. We work every day toward one goal: advancing our vision of a world where differences are embraced, where people with autism are your neighbors, your colleagues, and your friends.

And it begins with acceptance, by all. Remember: Someone you know loves someone with autism.

ABOUT NEXT FOR AUTISM:

NEXT for AUTISM transforms the national landscape of services for people with autism by strategically designing, launching, and supporting innovative programs. We believe that individuals with autism have the potential to live fulfilling, productive lives when supported by excellent services and connected to their communities. We continually ask, what's next for people on the autism spectrum? www.NEXTforAUTISM.org

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