

Animal Welfare League of Alexandria Becomes the First of Its Kind to Earn Autism Certification

IBCCES names the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) a Certified Autism Center™ marking the first animal welfare organization to earn this accolade.

ALEXANDRIA, VA, UNITED STATES, April 25, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) names the [Animal Welfare League of Alexandria](#) (AWLA) a [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC), marking the

first animal welfare organization to earn this accolade. The CAC program provides autism training and certification to AWLA staff and volunteers in order to better understand and assist autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals during their visit or camp.



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*Myron Pincomb, Board
Chairman of IBCCES*

"Whether looking for a new companion, visiting our pet pantry, or spending the day in our youth summer camp program, we want each member of our community to have the best experience possible while visiting the AWLA," shared Joanna Fortin, Director of Community Programs at the AWLA. "We are proud to have earned the IBCCES' Certified Autism Center™ designation and look forward to connecting with our visitors to help determine how we can make their experience most enjoyable."

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria has been a resource for the community and a shelter for homeless animals since 1946. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, education, community service, and outreach, the AWLA plays a key role in promoting responsible pet care across Northern Virginia. They care for more than 2,000 animals per year, including dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, iguanas, and chinchillas, and also assist area wildlife that has been injured or are in distress, with the ultimate goal of

releasing them back into their natural habitat if possible.

"At the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, we strive to be welcoming and inclusive. As a Certified Autism Center™, we continue to show our community that everyone is welcome at our facility," said AWLA Executive Director Stella Hanly.

The need for autism-specific training among community and city organizations has never been greater, with 1 in 36 children diagnosed with autism in the US (according to the CDC) (https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/ss/ss7202a1.htm?s_cid=ss7202a1_w#T1_down) and a growing number of adults receiving autism diagnoses later

in life. IBCCES training and certification programs help professionals in various fields better understand how to communicate and assist autistic individuals within their community.

In addition to staff training to support those with sensory sensitivities, the AWLA is proud to provide free sensory bags that include a pair of noise-reducing headphones, sunglasses, fidget devices, and an "I need/I feel" card, which may facilitate communication with nonverbal individuals. Sensory bags are available for checkout at the shelter's front desk. The AWLA also provides a low-sensory quiet area for visitors who want to decompress. For potential adopters, the League offers the option of a virtual meeting with adoptable animals through Zoom if a visit to our shelter may be difficult to manage. AWLA also plans on developing a social story to help visitors understand what to expect when visiting so they can plan their visit in advance.

"Partnering with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria to strengthen important community services to be more inclusive and welcoming to all is the core of our mission at IBCCES. We're excited to assist the League to implement lasting and impactful programs such as our certification to meet the community's needs and enhance services," said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES Board Chairman.

For more than 20 years, IBCCES has been a leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES programs include evidence-based content as well as the perspectives of autistic individuals, alongside other resources, ongoing support, and renewal requirements to ensure there is continued learning and a lasting impact.



IBCCES also created CertifiedAutismCenter.com, as a free online resource for families that lists certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About IBCCES

Delivering The Global Standard for Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

About Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Since 1946, the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) has been a resource for our community and a shelter for homeless animals. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, education, community service and outreach, the AWLA plays a key role in promoting responsible pet care across Northern Virginia. The AWLA has worked with the City of Alexandria to provide animal care, control, protection and sheltering services since 1989. AWLA operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, an open-admission facility accepting any and all animals brought to them from within the jurisdiction. They have made a commitment to help animals in need with the help of our amazing and animal-loving community. They care for more than 2,000 animals per year, including dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, iguanas and chinchillas. Their specially-trained staff also assist area wildlife that have been injured or are in distress, with the ultimate goal of releasing them back into their natural habitat or transferring them to licensed wildlife rehabilitators for care and eventual release.

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