

Bruce & Barbara Bell Endow New Relationship Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities at JARC Florida

Participants Will Learn About Friendship, Dating, Emotional Intimacy and Consent in a Safe, Inclusive and Supportive Environment

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[JARC Florida](#), a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that provides programs and services to educate and empower adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, is proud to announce a new initiative made possible through a generous \$100,000 endowment from longtime supporters Bruce and Barbara Bell. The program will serve clients within the Dr. Allen & Annette Stone Adult Day Training (ADT) Program at JARC, which helps adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities build vocational, social, and life skills.



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Bruce and Barbara Bell

The Bruce & Barbara Bell Relationship Program addresses one of the most profound yet often overlooked needs among neurodivergent adults—understanding and navigating human relationships. Participants in the program will learn about friendship, dating, emotional intimacy, and consent in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.

“Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities seek the same fundamental life experiences as everyone else: a safe and welcoming home, meaningful employment, genuine friendships, and fulfilling intimate relationships,” said Bruce and Barbara Bell. “Through this program, we hope to empower JARC clients with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to form healthy, respectful, and enriching connections.”

Without clear guidance, individuals with intellectual or development disabilities may face challenges in recognizing appropriate social boundaries or may be vulnerable to manipulation, such as catfishing or emotional abuse. To help mitigate these risks, JARC's facilitators use interactive lessons and guided discussions to help participants build self-awareness, communication skills, and emotional intelligence.

Sessions begin with foundational concepts—like distinguishing between friends, acquaintances, and strangers—and gradually progress to more advanced topics including trust,

dating, and consent. Each class encourages dialogue and peer engagement, helping clients learn to navigate complex emotional and social situations with confidence.



Bruce and Barbara Bell and Jeff Zirulnick, CEO of JARC

Gordon, a JARC client participating in the Bruce & Barbara Bell Relationship Program, said: "I hope to learn about how to develop a friendship. I am looking forward to using what I learn."

Rebecca, another JARC client, added: "Relationships are complicated. This class will let me feel better prepared to face challenges."

"JARC Florida's mission is to educate and empower adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, through housing, vocational training, and community-based programs that promote independence and inclusion," said Jeffrey Zirulnick, CEO of JARC Florida. "The Bell family's commitment ensures that relationship education will remain a cornerstone of JARC's holistic approach to supporting the well-being and lifelong growth of its clients."

About [JARC FL](#)

JARC Florida, a non-sectarian organization based in Boca Raton, provides programs and services to educate and empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism. The organization's vision is to remove barriers to independence so that each person with intellectual and developmental disabilities is better able to reach his or her potential. JARC currently operates ten group homes in the Boca Raton and Delray Beach area for adults with developmental disabilities. JARC offers apartment living for those who do not require 24-hour supervision as well as vocational training in the Mel & Elaine Stein Living and Learning Center. The organization was created in the mid 1980's in response to the needs of families with adult

children with developmental disabilities. Learn more at <https://jarcfl.org>.

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