

Autism Acceptance Month Proclamation – April 15, 2025

April is Autism Acceptance Month which, according to the Autism Society, “celebrates and honors the experiences and identities of autistic individuals [and] emphasizes understanding, inclusion, and support — moving beyond awareness towards meaningful acceptance.”

Autism Awareness Month was first recognized in 1970. Then, in 2011, autistic activist Paula Durbin-Westby organized the first Autism *Acceptance* Month, noting that, “Acceptance is: pro-neurodiversity,” focuses on supports and services tailored to the needs of the Autistic individual, and rejects cure-oriented projects.

The autistic community has chosen the colors blue and gold, and the infinity loop to represent itself. Blue is associated with calm and peace, and the valuable element, gold, is abbreviated on the periodic table as AU, which is also the abbreviation for autism. The infinity loop represents endlessness, just as expressions of autism can be limitless because no two autistics are alike. Viewed together, these symbols represent peace and calm, treasured value, and the limitless potential that is possible when a community accepts autism and neurodivergent and neurotypical people.

The autistic community is diverse and includes people of all ages, cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic status, race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Autistic traits manifest in various ways, including: hyper-empathic, hypo-empathetic; low eye contact, high eye contact; non-speaking, hyper-verbal; hyper-interoception, hypo-interoception. Not all autistics express these traits, nor do these traits always mean a person is autistic.

Unfortunately, autistic adults, even those with post-secondary degrees, are often underemployed or unemployed. However, autistic adults provide a workforce opportunity for many employers because they can be dependable, loyal, and trustworthy colleagues, entrepreneurs, and business partners. True acceptance of autistic individuals requires practical progress and support for all ages within educational settings, the workplace, and recreation programs.

The Autism Society notes, “It is vitally important that we work together to advocate for the services and supports necessary for those with Autism, based on their unique needs and experiences, which are vastly different and individualized – not categorized or boxed in.”

The City of Alameda is committed to ongoing training, resident engagement, and future networking to remove barriers and encourage open pathways for autistic people of all ages that reflects our unofficial motto, “Everyone belongs here.”

Now, therefore, I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, hereby proclaim April 2025 as

Autism Acceptance Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage the community to support Autism Acceptance through equal employment opportunities, increased inclusion in education and community programs, and by volunteering, attending programs, and donating financial resources to groups and organizations engaged in this work, including: ARPD Leisure Club, Helping Hands East Bay, H.A.T.C.H., Embracing Autism Collaborative Services, and Special Olympics

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor