

## Autism Grad Certificate

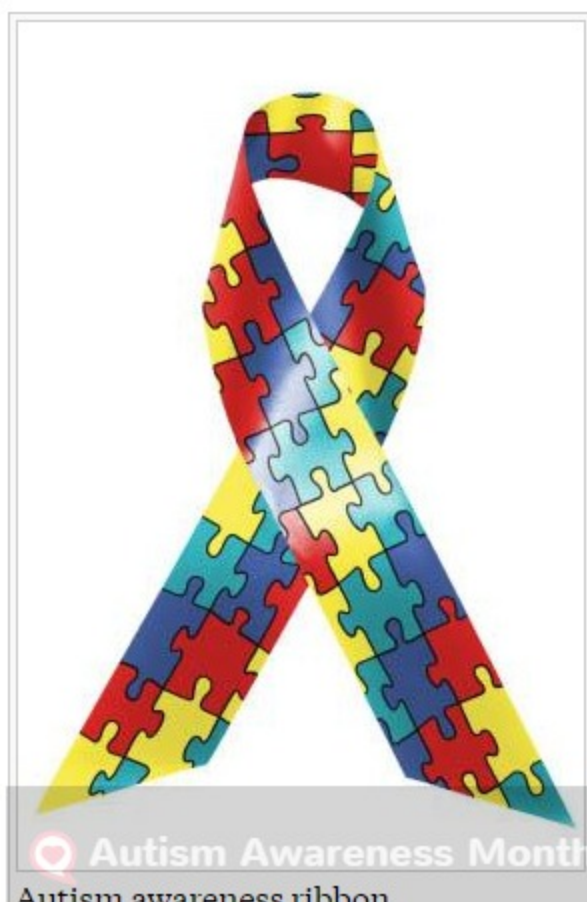
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## Autism Awareness Month

By Adrienne Warber



Autism Awareness Month  
Autism awareness ribbon

April is Autism Awareness Month. This is a time when people express their support while educating others in the process. Yet, awareness should not be limited to a month or holiday. Autism awareness plays a vital role in improving the quality of life for people on the spectrum and their families.

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### Role of Awareness

Increasing awareness helps the autism movement in a number of areas. Some the ways awareness activities help the autism movement include:

- Awareness helps the general public gain a better understanding of autism
- Dispels common misconceptions about autism
- Family members, friends and caregivers of people with autism can participate in activities to show their support for their loved ones
- Events and related activities can raise money for autism programs
- Public understanding and support can lead to larger goals such as helpful programs and funding for research
- Develop an environment of understanding, tolerance and acceptance

### Autism Awareness Activities

Many autism support groups participate in awareness activities year-round. However, there are certain times of the year when more activities take place.

#### Autism Awareness Month

Many awareness activities take place during April, the official month of autism awareness. During April, you may notice more news stories about autism and hear of events that support autism research. Many events involve educational outreach to help the public understand pervasive developmental disorders. This month is a good time to learn more about autism because of the wealth of information that is readily available.

#### World Autism Awareness Day

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day. Autism Speaks organizes the annual event. The event typically involves a series of international events to raise awareness. Celebrities often participate. For current information, visit the official site. Other autism support organizations hold various fund-raisers and educational events each year on this day.



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### Types of Activities

There are many types of activities that can educate people about autism. Awareness activities can include:

- Pledge drives for walks and marathons
- Fund-raisers such as luncheons and fashion shows
- Rallies
- Conferences
- Autism support organization sponsored events
- Media stories about autism in newspapers, TV and radio

### How to Help

It is easy to get involved in autism awareness. You can support the cause in many ways. No matter how much time you have, there are awareness activities to meet any schedule. Some ways to raise awareness include:

- **Autism merchandise:** Purchase merchandise with autism slogans. Merchandise such as T-shirts, mugs, pens, mouse pads and bumper stickers are available.
- **Volunteer:** Give your time to a local autism support organization. Volunteers are needed for special events, answering phones, staffing a reception desk or stuffing envelopes. Non-profit organizations also need volunteers to lend professional services such as writing newsletters.
- **Write an editorial:** Write an editorial about autism for your local newspaper.
- **Write to legislators:** Write letters to your legislators and let them know more about the importance of government funding for autism research. Call local autism organizations for more information on how to write these types of letters.
- **Learn more about autism:** Participate in educational outreach activities that teach more about autism. Research autism at the library and on the Internet.
- **Donate money:** Donate money to a local autism charity.
- **Events:** Go to an awareness event such as a rally or conference.

Contact local autism support organizations to find out ways you can help in your community. For a list of organizations throughout the country, visit the Autism Society of America's website.

### Online Awareness Resources

If you would like to know more about autism awareness, there are many helpful online resources. The following sites offer information on awareness:

- **Autism Society of America:** The site educates people about autism and has contact information for local support groups.
- **Autism Speaks:** Autism Speaks has a great deal of helpful information and resources for families dealing with autism.
- **Autism Research Institute:** The Autism Research Institute's site provides helpful articles on autism and details about their Defeat Autism Now (DAN) program.
- **Autism and Aspergers Help:** The Autism and Asperger's Help site provides detailed information on autism and Asperger's Syndrome.
- **Talk About Curing Autism:** The TACA site has comprehensive information about autism statistics and the latest related news.
- **National Autism Association:** NAA has autism and family support information.
- **Generation Rescue:** Jenny McCarthy's Generation Rescue has information about the autism spectrum disorder and how parents can get involved in their child's treatment.
- **Autism Link:** is a valuable resource that allows visitors to find services by state. The site has a fundraising store as well as a helpful program that sends the latest studies and information directly to your email.
- **ADAP Autism Training** for advocacy and awareness in Alabama.

### Conclusion

Autism awareness is more than educating the world about pervasive developmental disorders. Awareness is a major component in making progress in finding better treatments for autism. The public support and funds raised through awareness pave the way for more research and programs. If you participate in autism awareness on any level, large or small, you are making a significant difference. Your help matters.

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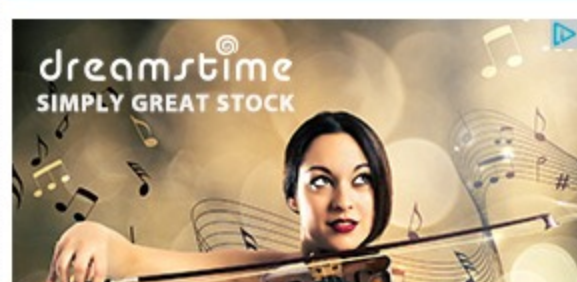
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