



The Autism Project – East Bay Support Center



The incidence of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has been growing exponentially throughout the Country, with Rhode Island having over 10,000 reported cases in 2013.

The toll it takes on the parents with an ASD child is substantial both emotionally and financially. Ultimately it is up to the parents to understand how to deal with their child's disorder and to find the treatment or training that may be available - not an easy task. Since there is no cure and no identified cause, this is a lifetime commitment.

ASD has risen to the level of a crisis in our communities. As in any crisis, local community support can often provide the first level of relief to the affected parents and children. Distance and cost of professional help can be key factors impeding needed support to almost 200 families that we were able to reach with a survey designed to identify the needs in Bristol County.

The proposal is that a support center be established in Bristol County initially and eventually for the East Bay, staffed by professionals, parent advocates and supported by the community to aid ASD families get local and affordable support.

An Advisory Council has been formed to identify programs, structures and resources needed to launch, fund and publicize a local ASD Support Center. Members of this Council come from several community, business and professional organizations:

Bristol Warren Regional School District (Mario Andrade)
Bristol County Town Councils (Mary Parella, David Frerichs)
Bradley Hospital (Christine Brown)
The Autism Project (Joanne Quinn)
Bristol Rotary Charities Foundation (Bruce Cox, Chris Woodard, Scott Pickering, Jacques de Labry)

The objective of Council 's survey was not only to identify services most desired by the ASD families but also to find locations for the Center closer to these families. Three sites have been identified for different services and will be announced soon. We estimate that beyond the 200 families surveyed, there are almost 700 total families in Bristol County with children or adults with ASD and about 2,000 in the East Bay as a whole.

Bristol Rotary Charities Foundation is seeking funding for this Center from the communities it will serve, and will launch a fundraising effort this Fall - targeting an opening of the Center in September 2015.

Help us bring help closer to our ASD families.

Make check out & send donation to: Bristol Rotary Charities Foundation (BRCF)
353 Spinnaker Lane
Bristol, RI 02809