



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 24, 2009

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April is National Autism Awareness Month *The Arc's Family Support Services Increases Autism Awareness*

[ABERDEEN, MD] – Autism. The word paints many pictures. You may see a puzzle piece, a diagnosis or perhaps a cause you have donated to. For others, it is a way of life. Often, people focus on the challenges of Autism (of which there are many), but it's important to see the many successes. What's most important is seeing the person, not the diagnosis. Autism is defined as a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others.



Jacob is an 11-year-old boy who loves video games, Pokemon and building intricate Lego models. Jacob also has the diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, an Autism Spectrum Disorder, which affects him socially, emotionally and academically.

Jacob was struggling in school and had to spend many months out of the school setting. During this time, his skills regressed and he lost the aptitude to perform the most basic tasks such as sitting at a desk, using a keyboard or even holding a pencil to write.

With the patience, hard work and supports from his parents and educators, Jacob began to regain skills and happily returned to the classroom. Jacob now writes his own material and recently won his school's essay contest. The subject? His hopes for President Obama to lower taxes, encourage low-emission cars and "help schools adapt to kids with disabilities better."

These are the thoughts and concerns of an 11 year old, a young man who must work harder than most to achieve his goals. Imagine the world if we all were as concerned, involved and diligent as Jacob.

In order to highlight the growing need for concern and awareness about autism, The Autism Society of America has been celebrating National Autism Awareness Month since the 1970s. The United States recognizes April as a special opportunity for everyone to educate the public about autism and issues within the autism community. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region maintains their involvement in Autism

awareness by being involved in advocacy efforts at the local, state and national levels to support legislation benefiting those with autism and their loved ones.

For more information on Autism, contact Rhonda Creecy, Coordinator Family Support Services at 410-879-6785, extension 402.

The Arc offers a wide variety of services to individuals with developmental disabilities in Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties, both children and adults, to make informed choices with their lifestyles, vocations, education and recreational pursuits, and to assure stable and nurturing lives among their families and friends.