

I. Who we are

Founded in 2003, New York Collaborates for Autism (NYCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people living with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) right now. We accelerate change in the way services are provided by identifying national leaders to help us shape innovative programs, partnering with leading community-based organizations, providing technical expertise, assisting in early stage management and raising seed money for these initiatives. NYCA creates nationally recognized models for support that are sustainable and replicable.

II. Our mission

We help develop comprehensive, evidence-based community services and resources that support people living with ASD right now. NYCA sees the possibilities for people with ASD and creates the path to achieve them.

III. Our work

By practicing collaborative entrepreneurial philanthropy, we have accomplished much:

■ Education

The NYCA Charter School. As New York State's first charter school solely for students with ASD, this is one of our greatest successes. Located within a NYC public school since it opened its doors in 2005, the school currently provides a year-round program for students ages 5 to 19.

Hunter College Autism Center. Created by NYCA in 2008, the Center provides evidence-based coursework and training for educators and related service professionals. More than 200 professionals have already been enrolled.

■ Communication, socialization and employment

BOOST! After-School Programs, based on the well-respected Have Dreams program in Chicago. Together with local JCCs and Ys, we initiated these after-school programs in New Jersey, Long Island and New York City. Here,

children with ASD, ages 6 to 17, spend time with typical peer mentors to acquire communication and socialization skills while learning about the world around them.

Project SEARCH Collaborates for Autism.

Partnering with Arc of Westchester, New York-Presbyterian and Southern Westchester BOCES, we launched this program (built on Project SEARCH created at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center), which helps students with ASD transition from their last year of high school into employment. NYCA has created an autism-specific curriculum that will be disseminated nationally.

■ Public policy

Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism (AFAA). Co-founded by NYCA, this national consortium of organizations has developed a policy agenda and led a Congressional Briefing in Washington, D.C.

■ Medical and professional services

Center for Autism and the Developing Brain

(CADB). In partnership with New York-Presbyterian and its affiliated medical schools of Columbia and Weill Cornell, NYCA helped create CADB. In a single setting, CADB will conduct innovative clinical research and provide comprehensive state-of-the-art medical and professional services for individuals living with ASD and other developmental disabilities of the brain - at all life stages, along with their families.

IV. What we are planning

Using our successful collaborative approach, NYCA will join with national leaders to create additional vocational programs, employment opportunities, recreational and community living options that balance independence and safety.

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NYCA sees the possibilities & creates the path