

Autism Awareness presents to the United Nations in New York, 1 June 2011



Following recent NGO membership to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), Autism Awareness was invited to present at the annual NGO Orientation Program commencing on Wednesday 1 June 2011 in New York (EST)

Autism Awareness was selected to present as an inspiring NGO and leading autism education and advocacy organisation. The presentation detailed the vital educational and awareness campaigns they facilitate throughout Australia, to increase awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism Awareness is the only Australian autism related NGO, and one of only a handful of autism organisations globally, to have been accepted as a member of this UNDPPI.

"It's such an honour to be invited to present to the United Nations and this amazing group of NGO's" said Nicole Rogerson, Director and Founder of Autism Awareness. "The response to our presentation today was overwhelmingly positive. Through our new UN affiliation we aim to take Australia's message, for better understanding and awareness of ASD, to an international audience."

As part of the program, Jacqueline Aidenbaum, of the Policy Development and Studies Branch, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also shared how autism was first introduced to the UN agenda, and how a briefing regarding the issue led to a General Assembly resolution and the beginning of "World Autism Awareness Day", which is now held annually on the 2nd of April.

The conference commenced today at the United Nations headquarters in New York and concludes tomorrow.

About Autism

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that typically lasts throughout a person's lifetime. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is our nation's most common developmental disorder. People with ASD have problems with social and communication skills. Many people with ASD also have unusual ways of learning, paying attention, or reacting to sensations.

In Australia, 1 in 160 children have an autism spectrum disorder and more children are diagnosed with ASD than childhood AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined. In most cases the cause is unknown and at this stage, there is no cure.

About Autism Awareness

Autism Awareness is an Australian-based not-for-profit organisation, which was founded in February 2007. Since then, we has grown into one of the nation's largest autism education and advocacy organisation, dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in our community.

Most recently, we were proud to host the first National Autism Summit and 'Light it up blue" campaign in Sydney during World Autism Awareness month in April 2011. During this time, Autism Awareness was granted NGO membership to the United Nations Department of Public Information, a huge honour, and one that gives us the opportunity to partner with a global network of organisations to promote our common goals.

Some of our many successful events and campaigns to date include;

- 3 free Autism Expos in Sydney
- A television community service announcement campaign
- Distribution of 'The Early Warning Signs' childhood developmental booklet to medical centres nationwide
- Creation of a comprehensive nationwide online directory of professionals and services
- Hosting a concert, Altered State, to raise funds and awareness for ASD
- A series of free Autism Information Days in regional QLD, VIC and NSW
- "Building Positive Outcomes" - a parent and professional development seminar, in Melbourne
- "What are you doing?" – a documentary film for primary school children

It is our hope that increased awareness and understanding of ASD within the community will lead to earlier diagnosis and more effective treatments, helping to reduce the impact autism has on a child and their family.

Visit www.autismawareness.com.au

About United Nations Department of Public Information

The NGO Relations Cluster is the link to over 1,500 Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs associated with the Department of Public Information and supports their efforts to interact effectively with the United Nations in their areas of expertise.

The Cluster is also responsible for facilitating the exchange of information and developing partnerships with civil society. It plays a coordinating role within the UN Secretariat to reach out to civil society partners around the world and enhance their interaction with, and understanding of, the work of the UN.

The Cluster proactively reaches out to representatives of civil society who seek information about the UN and look for opportunities to support the Organization at the international, regional, national and community levels.

Visit <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/dpingorelations/index.html>

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