Archibald University

Expanding Services for Students with Autism

Board of Trustees Committee on Growth & Development
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What is Autism?

Office of Disability Services
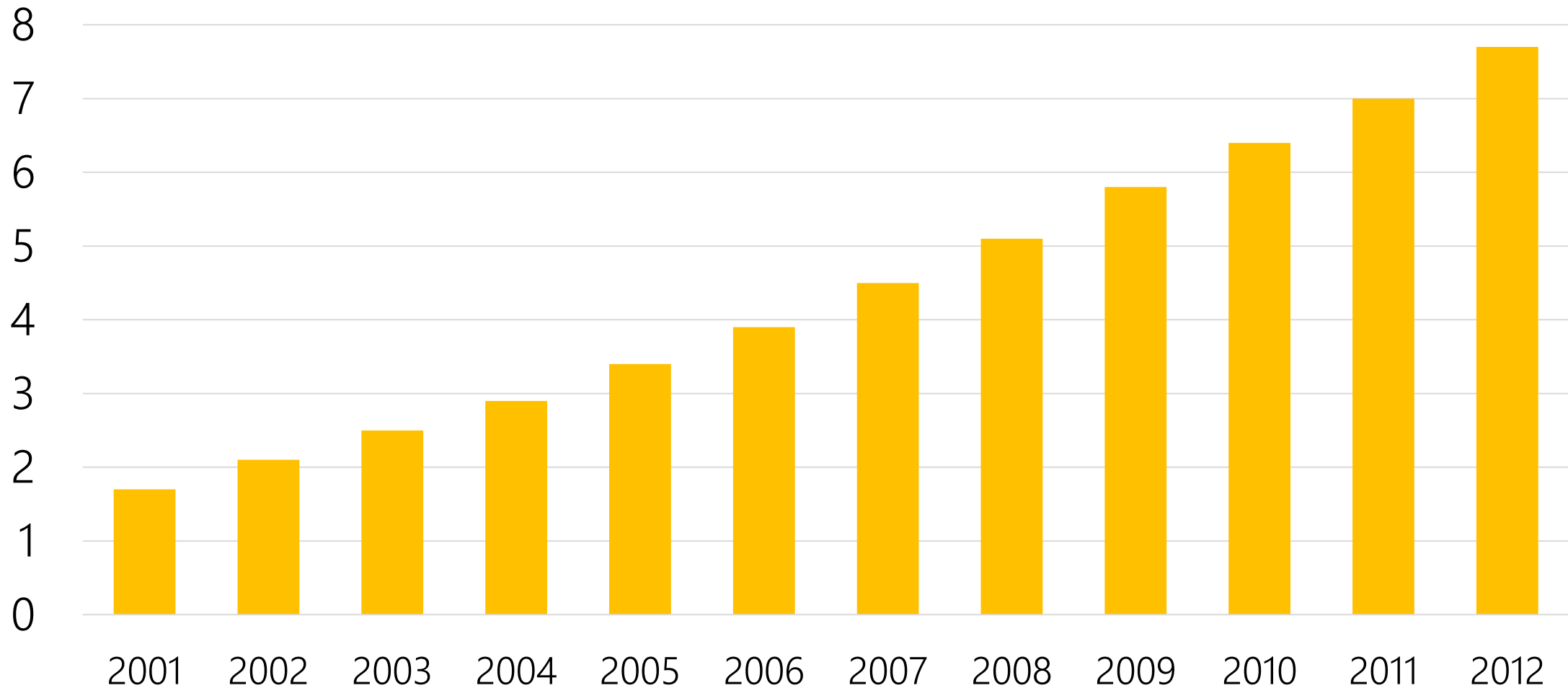
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges.
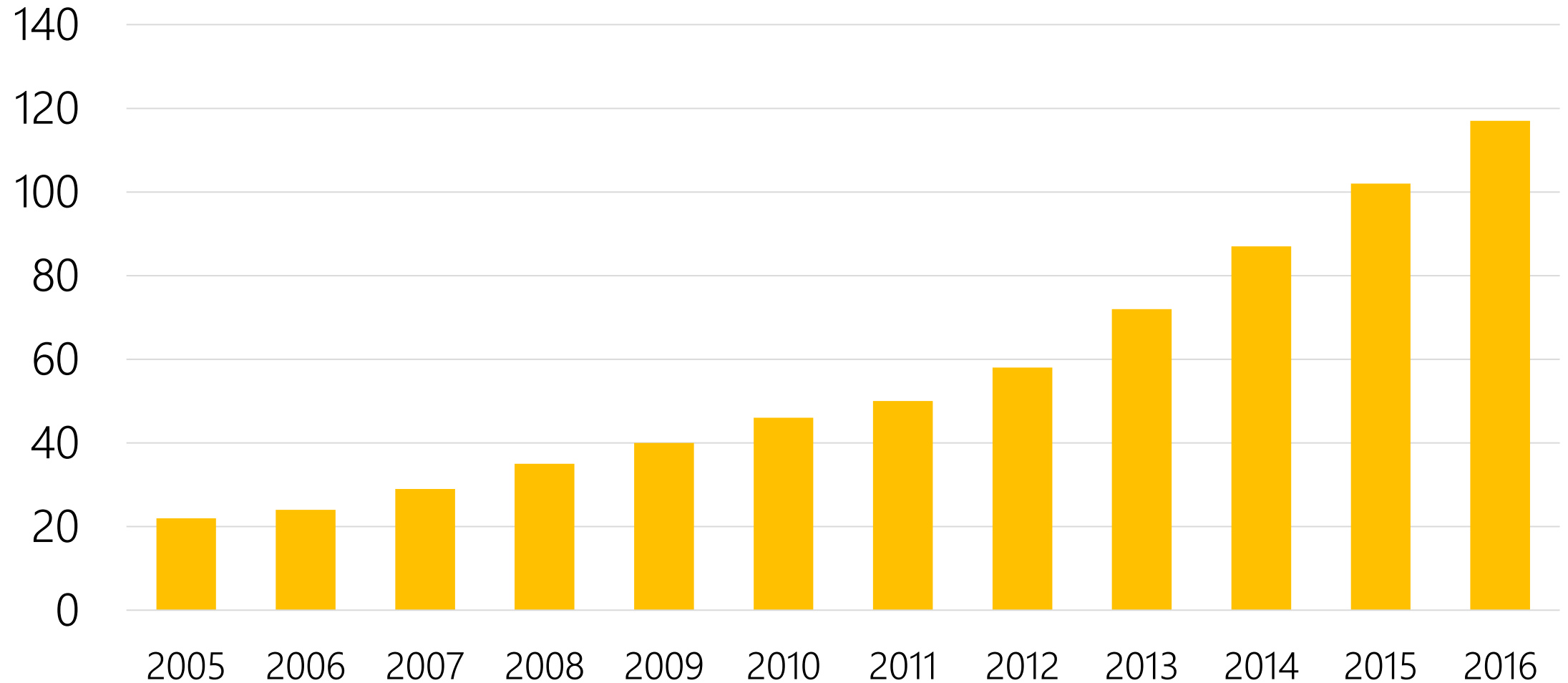
The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged.

(Division of Birth Defects, 2016)

Children per 1,000 Receiving Special Educational Services for ASD

(Zablatsky et al., 2015)

Archibald University Students Receiving Services for ASD

Challenges for College Students with ASD

"I was anxious and went off my meds. I'd forget to shower and brush my teeth."

"I started skipping classes. I didn't really know how to study, so I fell behind quickly. I ate too much."

"I behaved irrationally to people."

(Hoffman, 2016)

Challenges for College Students with ASD

Social Interaction
- Communicating and interacting with peers and faculty
- Anxiety and depression

Adjustment to New Environment
- Unpredictability and lack of routine
- Sensory overload

Executive Function
- Goal setting and independent living
- Planning and pacing of readings and assignments

(Longtin, 2014)

Current Support at Archibald University

Office of Disability Services

Academic Support Services

- Test accommodations (reduced-distraction environment, extended time)
- Tutoring through the Learning Strategies Center
- Counseling through Health Services

Student Organizations

- Archibald Students for Disabilities Awareness (ASDA)
- Autism at Archibald (AaA)

Grant Recipient

Drexel Autism Support Program (DASP)

- Robust one-on-one peer mentoring and coaching program with trained students

- Workshops on learning strategies, transitioning to college, leadership development, networking, and self-advocacy

- Regular social events for program participants

(Drexel Autism Support Program, 2017)

Pace University

Ongoing Academic and Social Instructional Support (OASIS)

- Regular meetings with academic coaches
- Personalized study plans
- Campus life coordinators and social coaches assist with integration into campus
- Collaboration with Career Services and outside agencies to provide internships and future employment

(Pace University Oasis Program, 2017)

University of Missouri–St. Louis

SUCCEED Program

- Centered on pillars of Academics, Vocational Experiences, and Residential and Student Life

- Offers elective courses to assist social skills and critical thinking

- Provides vocational experience and professional development

- Residential program designed to promote independent living

University of Missouri St. Louis

WINNER 2013

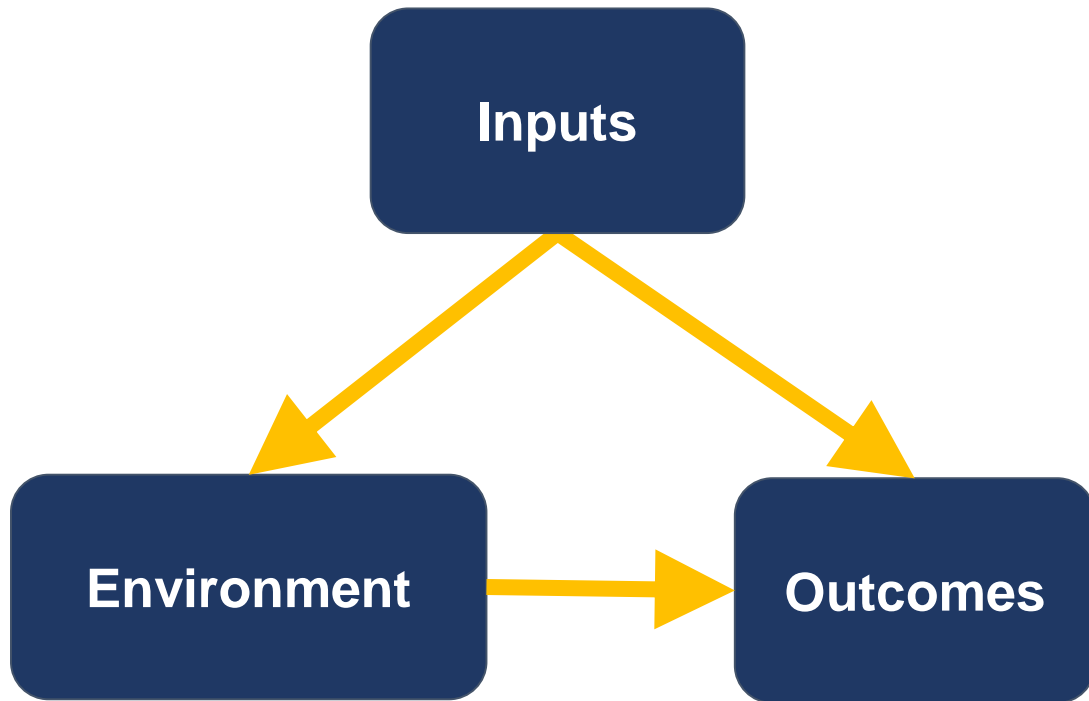Governor's Council on Disability Annual Inclusion Award

(SUCCEED Program Information, 2017)

An Opportunity & Responsibility

We have an opportunity to position Archibald University as the **premier higher education institution** for students with autism spectrum disorder.

As student affairs practitioners, we strive to uphold the professional standards of our field by empowering students and fostering an environment that supports student growth and development **for all**.

(Wells, 2015)

Theory Informing Our Proposal

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      ┌──────────┐
      │  Inputs  │
      └──────────┘
       ↙        ↘
┌─────────────┐  ┌──────────┐
│ Environment │→ │ Outcomes │
└─────────────┘  └──────────┘
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Student outcomes like learning and retention are a function of inputs (background, demographics) and environment (classes, cocurricular engagement, college services), as suggested by **Astin's Inputs, Environments, and Outcomes (I-E-O) model**. This framework is commonly applied to help understand challenges faced by students with disabilities.

(Cox et al., 2017)

Theory Informing Our Proposal

Developing Competence

Managing Emotions

Moving Through Autonomy to Interdependence

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Establishing Identity

Developing Purpose

Developing Integrity

Student development researchers have identified three key challenge areas for college students with ASD, based on **Chickering & Reisser's Seven Vectors of Development.**

(VanderVeen, 2013; White et al., 2016)

Proposed Services Expansion

Pre-Orientation Program

- Comprehensive introduction to campus and resources

- Information and support sessions for parents

- Workshops assisting with transition challenges and autonomy, such as time management, organization, independent living, social integration, stress management, and communication skills

- Enrollment in cocurricular career and professional development program

Campus-wide Awareness Programming

- Participation in Autism Awareness Month
- Speaker series featuring successful professionals with ASD

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Proposed Services Expansion

Faculty/Staff Training Program

- Workshops on understanding ASD student needs, strengths, and challenges
- Consultation services for faculty on supporting ASD student learning, including curriculum and test design, communicating with and understanding literal thinkers, etc.
- Assistance in building relationships with ASD students

Peer Support Program

- Mentor groups (1 mentor and 3-5 students) that meet weekly for social activities and campus engagement (i.e. group dinners, campus events)
- Weekly study groups for tutoring and time management support
- Monthly all-program socials and service events to foster community

Proposed Services Expansion

## Archibald Autism Spectrum Disorder Online Community (AASDOC) Mobile App and Website

- Adults with ASD who use social media are more likely to have close friends and report closer relationships.

- Online communities can reduce stress for adults with ASD and allows them to practice and experiment with peer interactions.

- Isolation felt by parents of individuals with ASD can be reduced through online peer interaction.
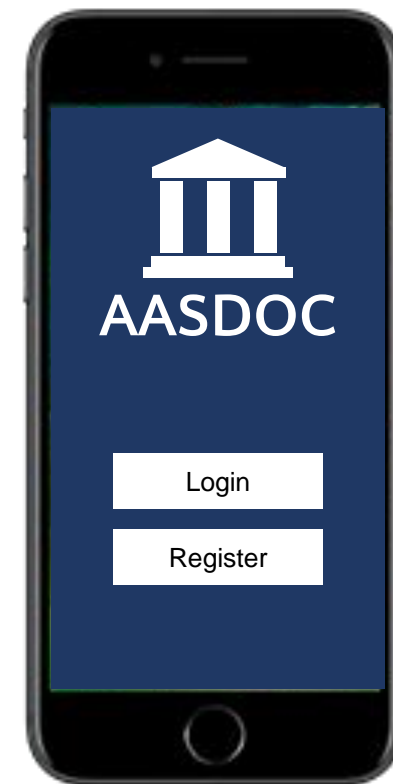
(Mazurek, 2013; Burke et al., 2010; Jordan, 2010)

Proposed Services Expansion

Archibald Autism Spectrum Disorder Online Community (AASDOC) Mobile App and Website

- Provides an online network, beginning before orientation, to ease transition, create community, and facilitate relationships

- Features virtual tour to help students become familiar with physical surroundings before arriving on campus

- Integrates reminders for assignments, medication, meetings, etc.

- Offers easy access to campus resources, tutoring, and counseling

- Includes an online community for parents to interact with each other

- Staff and mentors will monitor and engage in online discussion with students

AASDOC

Login

Register
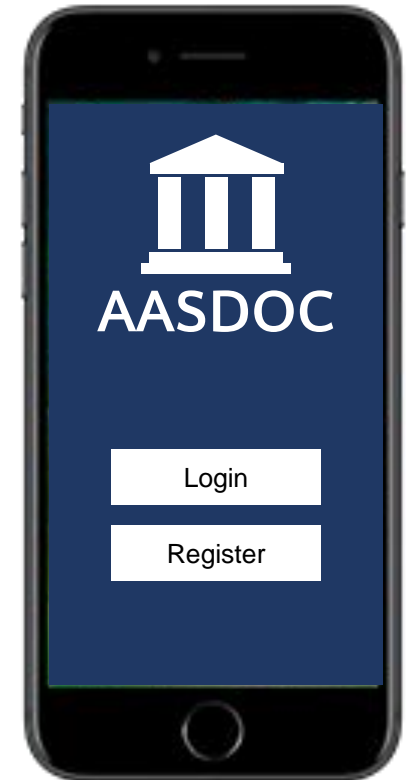
Proposed Services Expansion

Full-time Associate Director of Autism Services

- Coordinates Pre-Orientation Program, Faculty/Staff Training Program, Peer Support Program, and other ongoing services

- Provides personalized support for students

- Serves as resource for parents, families, faculty, and administrators

- Collaborates across campus divisions to facilitate integration of students with ASD, including Residential Life, Student Activities, Student Leadership, Career Services, Health Services, and the Learning Strategies Center

- Consults on assessment and determination of student needs and accommodations

Proposed Budget for Services Expansion

Operating Costs

Full-Time Associate Director of Autism Services (salary & benefits)	$100,000
Orientation Program	$8,000
Annual Awareness Programming	$3,000
Faculty/Staff Training Program	$4,000
Peer Support Program	$5,000
Operating Subtotal	**$120,000**
Online Community & Mobile App Development	$20,000
Total Costs (FY18)	**$140,000**

Office of Disability Services

Estimate by Crew, a network of freelance designers & developers (www.howmuchtomakeanapp.com)

Funding Opportunities

- **Autism Speaks** provides substantial monetary grants to college programs, which could be used to fund the mobile app development.

- The son of Archibald University alumnus **Francis Tarkington III '79** has recently been accepted to the Class of 2021 and is diagnosed with ASD. Mr. Tarkington serves on the Autism Society Board of Directors and has the capacity and inclination to make a $2,000,000 gift to endow the Associate Director of Autism Services position.

- We recommend leveraging this gift to solicit further support for the proposed expansion of services.

Questions?

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Resources & Further Reading

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