



CITY OF KIRKLAND
City Manager's Office
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager
From: David Wolbrecht, Communications Program Manager
Date: March 24, 2022
Subject: Autism Acceptance & Appreciation Month

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor proclaim April 2022 as Autism Acceptance & Appreciation Month in the City of Kirkland.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Autism and other types of neurodiversity are quite common in our society – an estimated 1 in 44 children and more than 5 million adults in the United States are autistic. Autism is a neurological difference that can impact a person's social skills, communication, relationships, perspective, and self-regulation. Differences in communication, hearing delays, or sensitivities in physical and visual stimuli can all contribute to autistic people being misunderstood in our society.

There are many common misconceptions on what it means to be autistic, and labels such as high or low functioning autism are not helpful and can cause harm. Autism is not a line of least-to-most autistic but is a spectrum of abilities that vary for each autistic person.

Many autistic people are proud to be autistic, citing common autistic features such as attention to detail, deep focus, observational skills, creativity, accepting of others' differences, a commitment to integrity and loyalty, unique thought processes that lead to novel approaches and innovations, and more. Autistic people are capable members of our society and contribute in many meaningful ways, and more work is needed to encourage acceptance of neurodiversity that exists in our communities.

This proclamation supports Kirkland's Resolution R-5240, declaring Kirkland a safe, inclusive and welcoming community for all people and helps foster a welcoming community where people of all physical, mental, and sensory abilities feel like they belong. By proclaiming April as Autism Acceptance and Appreciation Month, the City encourages all community members to promote acceptance of autism and celebrate autistic people as family members, friends, classmates, co-workers, and neighbors making valuable contributions to our community.

Accepting the proclamation will be local business owner and autistic adult Jessica L. Drake (she/they).



A Proclamation of the City of Kirkland

Proclaiming April as "Autism Acceptance & Appreciation Month" in Kirkland

WHEREAS, autism and other types of neurodiversity are quite common in our society, and an estimated 1 in 44 children and more than 5 million adults in the United States are autistic; and

WHEREAS, autism is a neurological difference that can impact a person's social skills, communication, relationships, perspective, and self-regulation; and

WHEREAS, autistic people can have differences in communication, hearing delays, or sensitivities in physical and visual stimuli that can contribute to autistic people being misunderstood in our society; and

WHEREAS, there are many common misconceptions on what it means to be autistic; and

WHEREAS, functioning labels, such as high or low functioning autism, are not helpful and can cause harm, as autism is not a line of least-to-most autistic, but is a spectrum of abilities that vary for each autistic person; and

WHEREAS, intersectional factors of sex, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, and other indicators of difference can contribute to barriers in discussions of autism acceptance and diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, autistic people have identified firsthand what is important in their own therapies, including promoting positive outcomes, preventing harm to people with disabilities, protecting people's autonomy, advocating for inclusion, being sensitive to past trauma, and supporting cultural competency; and

WHEREAS, autistic people are capable members of our society and contribute in many meaningful ways; and

WHEREAS, many autistic people are proud to be autistic, citing common autistic features such as attention to detail, deep focus, observational skills, creativity, accepting of others' differences, a commitment to integrity and loyalty, unique thought processes that lead to novel approaches and innovations, and more; and

WHEREAS, neurodiversity should be a valued and celebrated aspect of our community's diversity, autistic and other neurodivergent people should be accepted and included in society, and more work is needed to encourage acceptance of neurodiversity that exists in our communities; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to making Kirkland a safe, inclusive, and welcoming place where people of all physical, mental, and sensory abilities belong;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Penny Sweet, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim April as "Autism Acceptance & Appreciation Month" in Kirkland, and encourage all community members to promote acceptance of autism and celebrate autistic people as family members, friends, classmates, co-workers, and neighbors making valuable contributions to our community.

Signed this 5th day of April 2022

Penny Sweet, Mayor