



The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHILDREN CELEBRATES AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH WITH FOCUS ON VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Events Include Employer Appreciation Breakfast, Interactive Quiz, ‘Light It Up Blue’ event and Fundraiser Runs

Southborough, Mass. – March 29, 2018 – The New England Center for Children® (NECC®), a global leader in education for children with autism, announced today its worldwide celebration of Autism Awareness Month in April. With a focus this year on vocational skills development for teenagers with autism, NECC will join the *Light It Up Blue* campaign in both its Massachusetts and Abu Dhabi, UAE, locations. Other activities include an NECC Employer Appreciation Breakfast, “Test Your Autism Awareness” educational quiz, Team NECC’s participation in the Boston Marathon, and promotion of the NECC Annual 5K Walk/Run for Autism.

April is also a time to draw greater awareness to kids like Liam, whose skills and heart make him a welcome addition at Community Harvest Project in Grafton, MA.

“One of the best things about NECC is the vocational program,” said Simone Pio-Clinton, Liam’s mother. “Liam works at a farm that grows vegetables and fruits that are donated to people in need. Liam has learned basic farm work, how to cut vegetables, weigh them, and wash them. And by contributing in this way, Liam is giving back to the community.”

NECC celebrates Autism Awareness Month with a variety of educational and fundraising events:

- **NECC Employer Appreciation Breakfast.** This event is scheduled for April 26 from 8:30-10:00 a.m. at NECC in Southborough. Current NECC employer partners will be honored for their work with NECC and potential employers can learn more about how they can help students with autism develop meaningful life skills while at the same time benefitting their workplace.
- **Autism and Vocational Awareness Educational Quiz.** NECC presents an interactive, online quiz that surveys one’s knowledge of employment statistics for those with autism and other developmental disabilities. To take the quiz please visit <https://www.necc.org/about-necc/understanding-autism>.

- **Light It Up Blue.** NECC will join the *Light It Up Blue* campaign with thousands of landmarks and buildings across the world to “light blue” in support of people living with autism. NECC’s John and Diane Kim Autism Institute in Southborough, Mass., and NECC Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, will be lit blue all during April. Staff and students will wear blue on World Autism Awareness Day on April 2.
- **Team NECC’s Run of the 2018 Boston Marathon.** On April 16, six runners representing Team NECC will run the Boston Marathon, with hundreds of parents, staff and students cheering along the 26.2 mile route. The runners have committed to raising funds to increase awareness and to support autism and vocational services.
- **Annual 5K Walk/Run for Autism.** In honor of World Autism Awareness Day, NECC will offer a special promotion for its Annual 5K Walk/Run for Autism, which takes place on Saturday, May 12. A \$10 registration discount is available for one day only, Monday, April 2, with code AUTISM18. Register at <http://necc.convio.net/5K>

“Employment is one measure by which we define our membership in society,” said Julie Weiss, Director of Vocational Services at NECC. “Work may also give us social status and provide opportunities for social interaction, which in turn leads to greater independence and improved quality of life.”

Vocational skill development at NECC begins at age 14 and includes vocational exploration, often starting within NECC’s on-site Career Development Center (CDC). The CDC is a first step for students to learn about various jobs, discover preferences for work, practice skills, and gain confidence.

As students at NECC age, the amount of time spent on vocational training increases, as does paid and volunteer work. The goal is to both advance their skill set and develop work endurance. Around age 18, when the transition to adulthood is not far off at age 22, the Vocational Training program focuses on developing adult career goals and securing long-term paid employment.

Seeking Employers Dedicated to Diversity

NECC has 140 students over the age of 14 who are ready to begin planning for their career and developing skills related to employment. NECC invites employers in Massachusetts to participate in NECC’s Vocational Services program. Please contact Julie Weiss, Director of Vocational Services, (508) 481-1015 x3193, jweiss@necc.org.

About The New England Center for Children

The New England Center for Children® (NECC®) is a world leader in education, research, and technology for children with autism. For more than 40 years, our community of teachers, researchers, and clinicians have been transforming lives and offering hope to children with

autism and their families. NECC's award-winning services include home-based, day, and residential programs; public school partnerships and consulting; the John and Diane Kim Autism Institute; the ACE[®] ABA Software System currently used by more than 6,100 students and teachers in 27 states and 10 countries; and ABAPlus, an online professional learning platform for educators. NECC received the 2017 Award for International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis (SABA). A 501c3 non-profit, The New England Center for Children is based in Southborough, MA, and also operates a center in Abu Dhabi, UAE. More information is available at www.necc.org.

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