

PS COMMITTEE #1
March 11, 2019
Briefing

MEMORANDUM

March 7, 2019

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: **Briefing: Police Department's Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Alzheimer's, and Dementia Outreach Unit**

PURPOSE: Briefing on the Police Department's Autism/IDD/Alzheimer's/Dementia Outreach

Today the Public Safety Committee will be briefed on the MCPD's Autism/IDD/Alzheimer's/Dementia Outreach Unit.

Those officers who are expected to attend include:
Lieutenant Jennifer McNeal, Director, Crisis Response & Support Section, MCPD
Officer Laurie Reyes, Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities/
Alzheimer's/Dementia Outreach Unit, MCPD
Officer Tara Bond, MCPD

OVERVIEW

There have been several stories in the news recently about police interactions with individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental differences. For those with autism, dementia, and other intellectual or developmental challenges, safety is a daily concern. Individuals may be prone to elopement or wandering, and these are two behaviors that often bring individuals with autism/IDD/Alzheimer's/Dementia in contact with the police, who are attempting to locate and bring the individual back to safety.

In addition, there is an identified need to train police officers to recognize that certain individuals may have developmental differences, and that they may react differently than what the police officer would normally anticipate. MCPD has developed an Autism/IDD/Alzheimer's/Dementia outreach unit that provides community outreach and partnerships, as well as training for police officers. The outreach unit began to appropriately and effectively address calls for "critically at risk" missing person. As Officer Reyes will explain, the unit has since grown to provide resources and support for all types of interactions with law enforcement.

MCPD OUTREACH UNIT

MCPD's Outreach Unit has a layered approach to awareness and safety. The program initially started with Project Lifesaver RF bracelet tracing in 2004. It quickly became evident that tracking was a last step in preventing wandering. Proactive education and outreach were critical to help prevent elopement. Two main components of this approach are officer training and community outreach.

Officer Training: MCPD has been providing officer training since 2010. Training is given to all incoming recruits, as well as Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) officers, and Emergency Service Unit (ESU) officers. The training is regularly updated to address new challenges and concerns in the community.

Public Outreach: The Outreach Unit has also provided community education to different partners such as public transportation systems, school transportation, local hospitals, nursing homes, the Chamber of Commerce, caregivers, and other interested members of the public.

DISCUSSION ISSUES

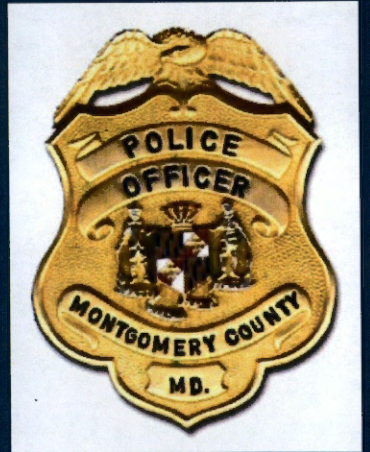
1. What is involved in Police Officer training? What if an individual is non-verbal? Some non-verbal individuals with autism know American Sign Language. Is this part of Officer training?
2. Have Emergency Communications Center (ECC) call takers been trained on how to possibly identify that a person has an intellectual disability or dementia?
3. Is there a different response to a call if this issue has been identified (i.e., Outreach Unit, CIT unit or other specialized officers are dispatched along with regular patrol officers?)
4. Are the number of police contacts with individuals with autism/IDD/Alzheimer's/Dementia tracked? If so, how many are there annually?
5. Does MCPD partner with surrounding jurisdictions to provide either education or outreach?
6. Is there any outreach/education provided by MCPD to students in schools? Are MCPD School Resource Officers provided with training?
7. Are there any identified needs or resources moving forward?

This packet contains

MCPD PowerPoint	1-21
"The Police Need to Understand Autism," <i>New York Times</i> (09/19/17)	22-25
"Congressional Briefing on Law Enforcement Interactions with the Autism Community," <i>Autism Speaks</i> (05/01/18)	26-31

Montgomery County Police
Autism/IDD (Intellectual and Developmental
Disabilities),
Alzheimer's/Dementia Outreach Unit

Officer Laurie Reyes
Montgomery County Department of Police



The Montgomery County Police Autism/IDD, Alzheimer's/Dementia Outreach Unit provides a "total approach" to safety and awareness through education, outreach, follow up, empowerment and response.

What began as a way to address calls for "critically at risk" missing persons has since grown to provide resources and support for all types interactions with law enforcement.

Recognized as program model to follow by national advocacy organizations as well as the Department of Justice.

What are we doing to create a safe and supportive community for those who have Autism/IDD, Alzheimer's/Dementia?



Officer Training

- ▶ MONTGOMERY COUNTY SINCE 2010
- ▶ ALL INCOMING RECRUITS
- ▶ CIT OFFICERS
- ▶ ESU OFFICERS
- ▶ USE OF SELF ADVOCATES

***WE CONTINUOUSLY ADDRESS NEW CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS IN THE AUTISM/IDD, ALZHEIMER'S, DEMENTIA COMMUNITIES.

- ▶ -INCREASE IN AGE OF THOSE WHO HAVE AUTISM
- ▶ -CHANGES WITH HEALTH CARE COVERAGE/CARE
- ▶ -CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
AS OUTREACH...

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (RIDE ON/METRO
SYSTEMS)

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION (All MCPS have
been trained as of 2018)

LOCAL HOSPITALS/NATIONAL HOSPITALS

NURSING HOMES/GROUP HOMES/ASSISTED
LIVING FACILITIES

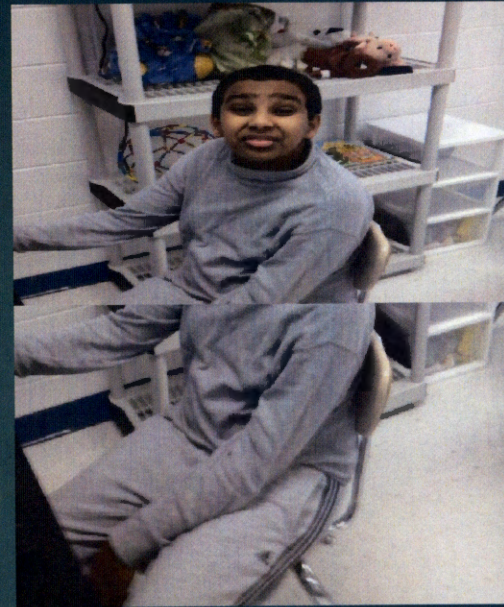
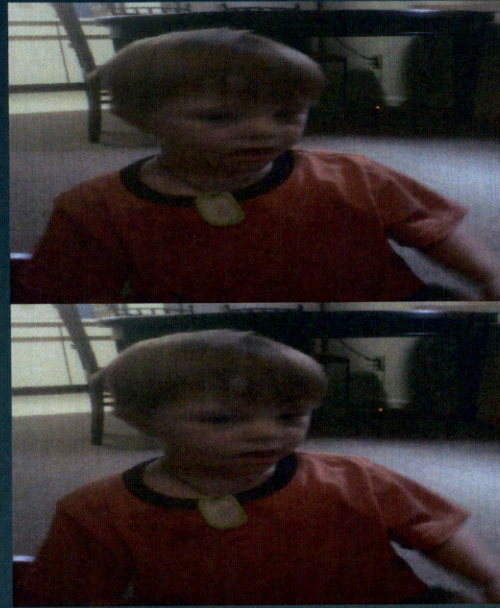
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**CAREGIVERS

**INDIVIDUALS

Community Partnerships

- ▶ Dementia Friendly America, Montgomery County
- ▶ Alzheimer's Foundation
- ▶ Autism Speaks
- ▶ Down Syndrome Network, Montgomery County
- ▶ Grows
- ▶ Adult Protective Services
- ▶ Child Protective Services
- ▶ Department of Aging and Disability
- ▶ Montgomery County Public Schools
- ▶ Montgomery County Fire Rescue



Community Outreach

Community Events Education and Understanding Through Exposure...

6th Annual Autism/IDD Night Out (Save The Date)
Thursday May 30th (6-9PM)
Public Safety Training Academy

Spectacular Kids Night!

Help us promote autism awareness
& support families of children with
special needs

Thursday, June 25, 2015
4:00 pm - 10:00 pm

20% off your
meal



20009 Century Blvd.
Germantown, MD



Join "The Village" on Facebook
A support group for families of children with special needs
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/thevillageconnection/>



AUTISM SPEAKS®
It's time to listen.
www.AutismSpeaks.org

Autism Night Out

Safety Fair for Individuals with Autism and their Families/Caretakers

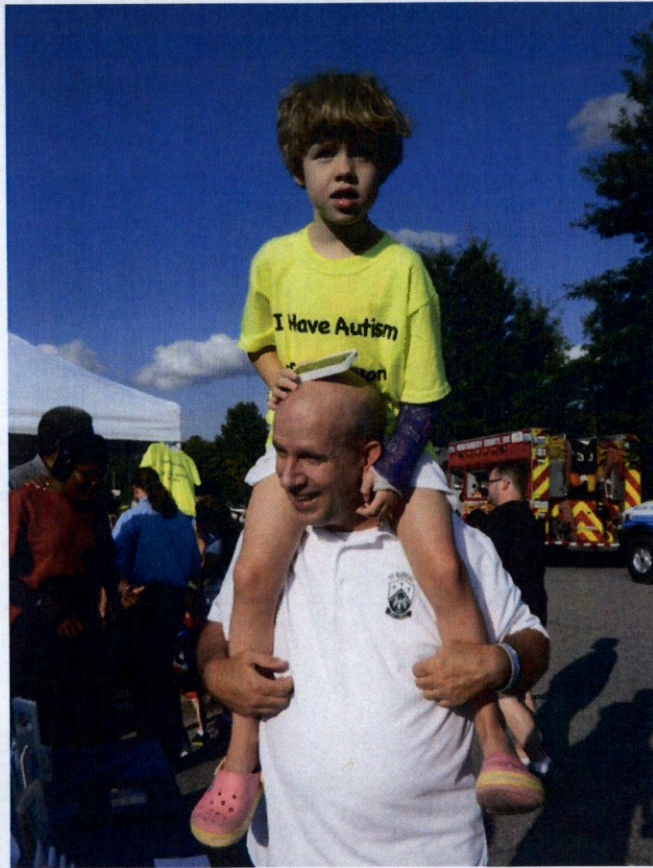
- ✓ Resources and Tools to Help Keep your Children Safe
- ✓ Meet K-9 Unit, Handlers, and Search & Rescue Officers
- ✓ Pictures with Police Officers
- ✓ Elopement Prevention: Project Lifesaver & Safety Tips
- ✓ Fun for Everyone: Food, Face Painting, Tattoos, and Moon Bounce
- ✓ Tour Emergency Vehicles
- ✓ Meet Fire Rescue Personnel
- ✓ Special Olympics, Therapeutic Horseback Riding, and Swim Lesson Information

Friday, May 30, 2014
6:00 – 9:00 pm

Montgomery County Police Academy
9710 Great Seneca Hwy, Rockville, MD 20850

For more information please contact:

Officer Laurie Reyes: laurie.reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov
Officer Tara Wimmer: tara.wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov



Autism Legislation Local/National

ICD-9 House Bill
Coverage for “wandering safety
tools”

Avante/Kevin's Law

Ethan's Law

Media Outreach



Local

(TV, Radio, Department
Media Section)

National

(TV, print, radio)

Social Media

(Facebook, Twitter,

Department website

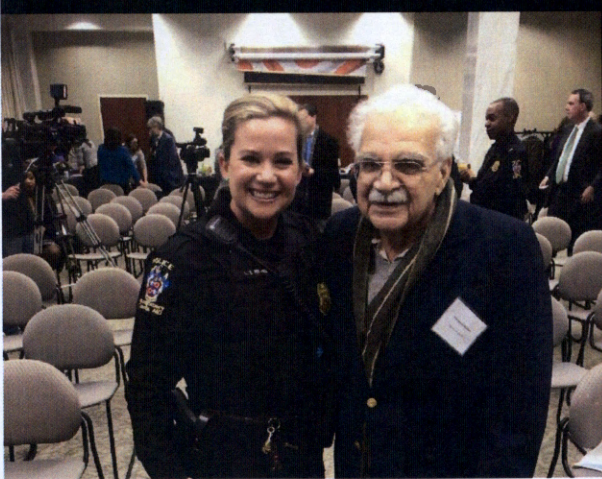
Caregiver/ Self Advocate
Participation



EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CHIEF'S AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES
ASSISTING MCPD



Autism Night Out





MCPD Autism/IDD Outreach Program receives White House
Champions of Change Award for Youth and Law Enforcement

MD Governors' Award

Attorney General's Award, Distinguished Service in Policing

EDUCATION OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE MCPS and Private Schools

Law Enforcement and Autism/IDD

"Ensuring positive/effective AND safe interactions
with Law Enforcement"

The program uses officers experiences as well as the
Be Safe curriculum to give the students an
extensive overview of how to **be safe** in the
community and have positive interactions with
law enforcement.

FOLLOW the law to be safe

STAY where you are when you
meet the police

KEEP your hands to yourself (don't
touch their stuff).

WHEN the police tell you to do
something, do it.

TELL the police about your
disability.

TELL where you are when you call
911

DON'T run from the police

We provide students with the
knowledge that if they feel an
encounter was unjust or unlawful,
they can absolutely make a
formal complaint.

We only ask that they obey the
officers instructions at the time of
the encounter.

“Officer can I show you my ID Bracelet?”
“Can I tell you a little about me?”

ID BRACELETS...

WEIGHING SAFETY VS INDEPENDENCE

Why should I have my child get used
to showing an officer their ID bracelet?

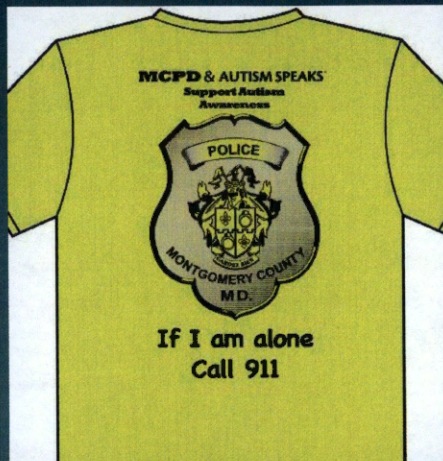
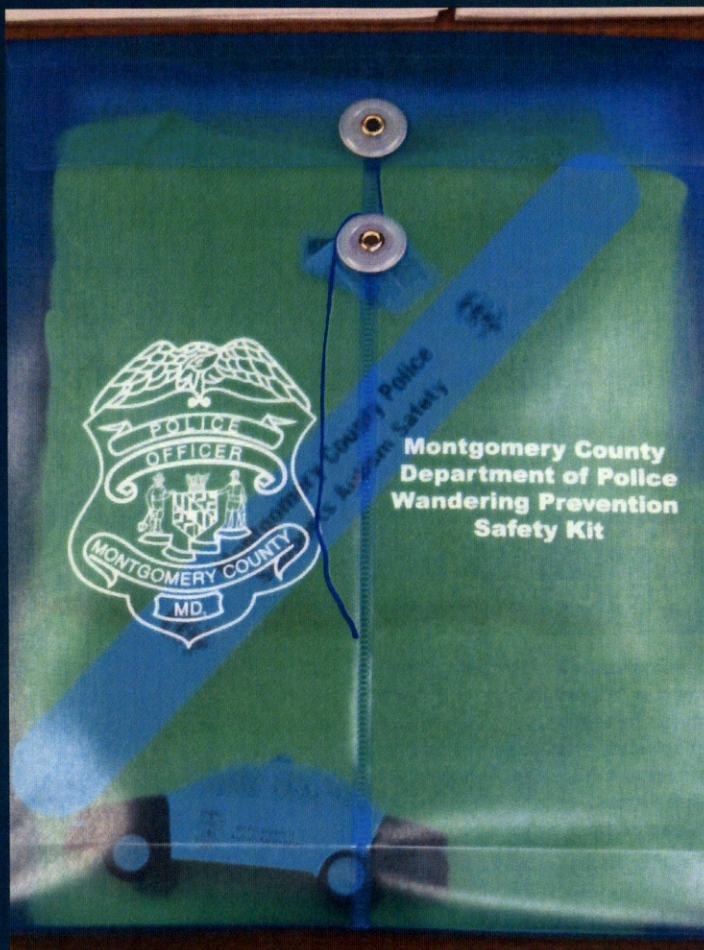
There may be “BUMPS”
on the road to
Independence, our job is
to make the bumps navigable.



Wandering/Elopement Concerns...

MCPD averages 3-8 "found
and or "critically at risk" missing
persons a week who have
Autism/IDD,
Alzheimer's/Dementia

***THIS TOTAL DOES
NOT INCLUDE ALL
OTHER "CRITICAL AT
RISK" PERSONS IN
OTHER CATEGORIES.



MCPD SUPPORTS AUTISM / ID AWARENESS

An awesome person who has Autism/ID might be a passenger in this car. In the event of an emergency check the glove box for more information. For information on how the Montgomery County Police supports Autism/ID awareness please visit the following montgomerycountymd.gov/Lifesaver



Montgomery County Police Department (official)

MCPD Wandering Prevention Safety Kit/Safety Shirts
These shirts are ONLY designed for those that Can Not Speak for themselves and are at immediate risk!

Kit Contents...
Window Clings, ID Bracelet, Program brochure,
MCPD Sensory toy, stop sign, coordinators contact info

WHY TRACKING TECHNOLOGY IS THE LAST STEP IN SAFETY?

GPS Tracking

vs.

RF Tracking



Questions/Concerns???

Program Coordinators

Officer Laurie Reyes

Laurie.Reyes@Montgomerycountymd.gov

Officer Tara Bond

Tara.Bond@montgomerycountymd.gov

Prepare a 911 script

What info may be helpful in the event of an elopement?

Include a Google Map of your area and mark off possible destinations of travel as well as bodies of **WATER!**

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

The Police Need to Understand Autism

By Steve Silberman

Sept. 19, 2017

Diane Craglow was caring for a 14-year-old autistic boy named Connor Leibel in Buckeye, Ariz., one day in July. They took a walk to one of his favorite places, a park in an upscale community called Verrado. She was not hesitant to leave Connor alone for a few minutes while she booked a piano lesson for his sister nearby, because he usually feels safe and comfortable in places that are familiar to him, and he learns to be more independent that way.

When Ms. Craglow returned, she couldn't believe what she saw: a police officer looming over the boy with his handcuffs at the ready, pinning him to the ground against a tree. Connor was screaming, and the police officer, David Grossman, seemed extremely agitated.

As Ms. Craglow tried to piece together what had happened, more officers arrived, spilling out of eight patrol cars in response to Officer Grossman's frantic call for backup. Soon it became clear to Ms. Craglow that the policeman was unaware that Connor has autism, and had interpreted the boy's rigid, unfamiliar movements — which included raising a piece of yarn to his nose to sniff it repeatedly — as a sign of drug intoxication.

As a graduate of Arizona's Drug Evaluation and Classification program, Officer Grossman is certified as a "drug recognition expert." But no one had trained him to recognize one of the classic signs of autism: the repetitive movements that autistic people rely on to manage their anxiety in stressful situations, known as self-stimulation or "stimming." That's what Connor was doing with the string when Officer Grossman noticed him while he was on patrol.

Images from Officer Grossman's body camera show how the encounter turned into a situation that rapidly escalated beyond Connor's ability to make sense of what was happening to him.

POLICE BODY CAMERA: Arizona officer detains teen with autism



When an unfamiliar policeman rushed up to Connor and asked, “What are you doing?” he was honest, as autistic people usually are. “I’m stimming,” the boy said brightly. But Officer Grossman was unfamiliar with the word. On the body-cam audio, you can hear the officer’s uncomprehending response: “What?” You can also hear Connor try to calm himself down by saying “I’m O.K., I’m O.K.,” as he sustains abrasions on his back, arm and cheek by being held on the ground by the officer.

This is basically a worst-case scenario for anyone who cares for someone with a developmental disability, as well as for disabled people themselves, who live every day in fear that their behavior will be misconstrued as suspicious, intoxicated or hostile by law enforcement. And the encounter could have ended up a lot more tragic. Imagine if instead of being fair-haired and rail-thin, Connor had been powerfully built and black or Hispanic. A tense police officer, approaching a young man he thought was a threat to himself or others, might have been tempted to reach for his Taser or service weapon instead of his handcuffs.

That’s precisely what happened last year in North Miami, Fla., when a young autistic man named Arnaldo Rios briefly wandered from a group home to play with his toy truck on the street, and a passer-by called the police to report an “armed and suicidal” man sitting in the road.

When Officer Jonathan Aledda arrived, he had no idea that Mr. Rios had autism; no idea that the black man trying to calm him down, Charles Kinsey, was his behavioral therapist; and no idea that the flashing silver object in Mr. Rios’s hands was a toy, not a weapon. Officer Aledda fired at Mr. Rios. The bullet missed him, but struck Mr. Kinsey in the leg. The therapist survived, but the trauma of the incident resulted in Mr. Rios’s being placed into more restrictive institutions. He

was unable to eat, suffered from night terrors and said to himself over and over, "I hate the police." In April, state prosecutors charged Officer Aledda with attempted manslaughter and culpable negligence.

Studies show that these kinds of interactions between disabled people and law enforcement are terrifyingly common, and often go unreported. A white paper published last year by the Ruderman Family Foundation reported, "Disabled individuals make up a third to half of all people killed by law enforcement officers."

Connor Leibel's mother filed a complaint about her son's treatment that resulted in an internal investigation by the Buckeye Police Department. It not only cleared Officer Grossman but also came to the unsatisfying conclusion that because the autism label covers a large spectrum of symptoms and behaviors it "would be very difficult to teach officers to recognize them all."

That's certainly true: Another way to frame the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's estimate that one in 68 American schoolchildren is on the spectrum is that autistic people make up a large and extremely diverse minority population. But police officers do not have to become experts in every aspect of autism to learn how to recognize people on the spectrum and treat them with respect.

Last year I attended a presentation by Rob Zink, an officer from the St. Paul Police Department in Minnesota, who started the Cop Autism Response Education Project to train his fellow officers how to interact with autistic people, inspired by his experience of having two sons on the spectrum. Officer Zink pointed out that sirens and flashing lights alone can be catastrophic sensory overload for people with autism, while a calm voice and a reassuring demeanor can go a long way toward de-escalating a tense confrontation.

He also stressed that law enforcement personnel should not expect autistic people to behave in the ways that non-autistic people do. For example, officers should not regard a refusal to look them in the eyes as a sign of guilt, as Officer Grossman did with Connor Leibel. In fact, many autistic people find it easier to interpret spoken instructions if they're *not* compelled to simultaneously look the speaker in the eyes.

Similar programs are underway in several police departments across the country and around the world, but they are still too few and far between. The scarcity of these programs is a sad legacy of the decades when autism was mistakenly believed to be a rare condition, and many autistic people lived out their lives in state-run institutions.

Now that we know that autism is common, and comes in all the hues and shades of a broad human spectrum, we need to give law enforcement officers the knowledge that they need to avoid turning a routine call into a life-altering calamity.

Correction: Sept. 21, 2017

An earlier version of this article incorrectly described a detail of the encounter between Connor Leibel and Officer David Grossman. It is not the case that Connor was handcuffed.

Steve Silberman is the author of "NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity."

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Congressional Briefing on Law Enforcement Interactions with the Autism Community

May 1, 2018

On Thursday, April 26th, Autism Speaks hosted a briefing in coordination with the Congressional Coalition on Autism Research and Education to highlight challenges and opportunities to improve law enforcement interactions with the autism community.

Youth and young adults with autism frequently experience interactions with law enforcement agencies and first responders for a number of reasons. For example, first responders are increasingly called upon to respond to and assist in cases of wandering and elopement. Therefore, the ability for these two communities to interact in a positive way is paramount.

The 2018 World Autism Month Congressional Briefing highlighted the need for increased awareness of individuals with autism as well as the best practices and emerging innovations that are being developed to help prepare law enforcement, first responders, parents, and individuals with autism have positive interactions.

Paul Turcotte, began the conversation by sharing specific survey and census data reflecting the numerous encounters between individuals with autism and law enforcement. He also described how the ASERT program in Philadelphia works throughout the state to execute justice initiatives to improve such interactions.



Congressman Lou Correa (CA-46) briefly joined the panel to share his support for initiatives that benefit individuals with autism.

The Congressman described the prevalence of autism as a "huge challenge that is unfolding for our society".

Congressman Correa also recognized the opportunity advocates and policymakers have to address the needs of individuals with autism. He encouraged advocates to continue to build serious support for autism research, treatment, and services.

Pointing to the autism insurance reform he championed as a state legislator, Rep. Correa encouraged attendees to focus on national solutions because

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"[autism] effects all of us, and it especially effects our loved ones."

We are grateful for Congressman Correa's support as well as the leadership of the Congressional Autism Caucus co-chairs, Congressman Chris Smith and Congressman Mike Doyle.



Vijay Ravindran, CEO of Floreo, presented on their virtual reality learning technology that provides a supplementary method of teaching social and communication skills for individuals with autism.

Through supervised monitoring and tracking of the user's progress, individuals with autism can practice and rehearse encounters with law enforcement in various contexts. The use of virtual reality is one emerging innovation that is yielding positive results.



Officer Laurie Reyes, Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Outreach Officer for Montgomery County Police Department, provided a law enforcement training perspective and described a layered approach to educating and instructing law enforcement, caregivers as well as those on the spectrum.

She encouraged proactive outreach by using their Safety and Wandering Kit, written and social media, and the empowerment of community members and officers.

Officer Laurie also stressed the importance of self-disclosure and ID bracelets as well as breaking down barriers of what people in uniform are like so that people view them as helpers even when interacting in uniform.



Finally, Jake Edwards shared his story as a self-advocate and the Chief Autism Ambassador at the Montgomery County Police Department.

He shared that

”

"We want to be friends with the police... All law enforcement around the country need these trainings on how to best interact with my friends and me."

As Jake said, "we all have gifts" so each community member can play a unique role in increasing awareness and improving interactions between law enforcement and individuals with autism.



For more information, the briefing can be viewed via a Facebook Live [recording](#).

Panelists

The Justice System and Autism in Pennsylvania

Paul Turcotte, MPH., Data Director for the Autism Services, Education, Resources & Training Collaborative (ASERT) Eastern Region at the AJ Drexel Autism Institute

Promising Practices and Innovations in Training

Vijay Ravindran, CEO of Floreo, Inc. a venture-backed start-up developing virtual reality learning for people with autism spectrum disorder.

Perspectives from Law Enforcement

Officer Laurie Reyes, Project Lifesaver/Autism Outreach Coordinator at Montgomery County (MD) Police Department

Perspectives from a Self-Advocate

Jake Edwards, Chief Autism Ambassador at Montgomery County (MD) Police Department

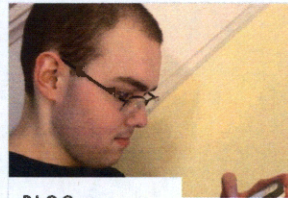
Additional Resources & Tools

**EXPERT
OPINION**

[My child is nonverbal. Anything new that might help him communicate better?](#)

**TOOL KIT
EXCERPT**

[Know Your Rights to Access Assistive Technology](#)



BLOG

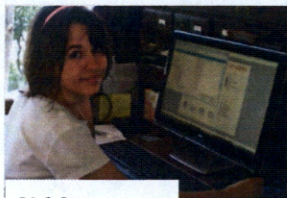
[How an iPhone taught my son self-sufficiency](#)

**TOOL KIT
EXCERPT**

[How Technology Can Help](#)

**TOOL KIT
EXCERPT**

[Accommodations on the Job](#)



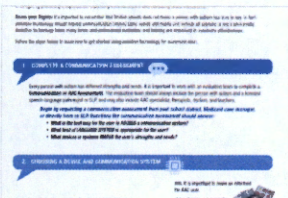
BLOG

[15 year-old Jennifer Uses iPad to increase Her Independence](#)



WEBSITE

[VCU Autism Center for Excellence Webinar: Smartphones and Tablet as Cognitive-Behavioral Aids in Autism](#)



WORKSHEET

[Assistive Technology for Communication Roadmap](#)

Need Personalized Support?

Our Autism Response Team (ART) is specially trained to connect people with autism, their families, and caretakers to information, tools, and resources.

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