

2018

## [VOLUNTEER WELCOME PACKET]

This document includes an overview of AutismOklahoma and casts a vision of the team that all volunteers are a part of. This should be paired with the Volunteer Code of Conduct document.



**WELCOME TO AUTISMOKLAHOMA**

Dear AO Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with AutismOklahoma (AO). We are pleased to welcome you to our team. At AO, volunteers are a vital part of achieving our mission and goals. We cannot do it without you!

We hope that you find your volunteer experience with AO to be rewarding, and that you come to love our participants and their families as much as we do.

The enclosed packet is designed to give you an overview of the organization and a better understanding of what you can expect from your experience with AO. We are a growing organization, and our volunteers are the primary reason we are now able to serve 300 children, youth, and young adults with autism and regularly communicate with over 4500 families every year. Because volunteers are such a big part of what we do, it is important that everyone understands their commitment to the organization, and the policies and procedures that govern our activities.

Thank you again for your support and commitment.

Sincerely,

Melinda Lauffenburger

AutismOklahoma Executive Director

## WHAT IS AUTISMOKLAHOMA?

AutismOklahoma (AO) is a 501c3 charitable organization that supports families affected by autism. Our organization is heavily dependent upon donations and, with only a small staff, heavily dependent on volunteers. Unlike many autism focused organizations, we are not a service center. AutismOklahoma provides a collaborative platform that allows parents to invest in their own children and contribute to the enrichment of others. We also create a village of support that enables interested members of the community to create a substantial and positive impact for families affected by autism in the state of Oklahoma.

Our dream is to bring hope, empower our kids, and help Oklahoma become more autism-friendly and aware! We want every person and family affected by autism to have the opportunity to reach their potential and do great things!

**MISSION:** Investing together to grow, learn, and serve the families of Oklahoma affected by autism.

**VISION:** We bring hope and empowerment as we help Oklahoma become more autism-friendly and aware!

## HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH OUR VISION?

AutismOklahoma's goals are to:

- 1) Help **INDIVIDUALS** reach their full potential
- 2) Help **FAMILIES** thrive
- 3) Help **COMMUNITIES** understand and embrace differences

## **INDIVIDUALS** REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Autism affects an individual's ability to communicate, reason, and interact with others. Because of these challenges individuals with autism often find it easier to connect with others who share the same interests with them. Whether it's the love of animals, art, Legos, Star Wars, MineCraft, or Avengers, we encourage parents and volunteers to form interest-based groups such as Social Clubs, Pre-Employment & Mentoring Clubs, or Summer Camps to help foster friendships and connections.

## SOCIAL CLUBS

Some of our parent support groups offer social clubs for teens and young adults. These clubs are a great way to build social skills and make friends in a safe place.

- **Teen2Teen** - for Edmond teens with autism and their peers
- **Avengers of Autism (AOA)** - a group of college-aged students with autism who meet in Edmond
- **Heroes** - an Edmond group for Young Adults with autism
- **Connection Point**- for Canadian Valley teens with autism and their peers
- **Girls with Voices** - for Canadian Valley girls ages 10-11 with autism
- **All-Star Bowling** - a weekly league open to wide range of abilities
- **InspireU** - a session-based program for those interested in art

#### PRE-EMPLOYMENT AND MENTORING CLUBS

One of AutismOklahoma's primary objectives is to empower youth and young adults living with autism to use their unique talents to achieve independence, job skills and self-sufficiency. Our clubs offer the opportunity to excel, and participants get to show off their creations and share their work.

- **Bee's Knees** is an arts-based program for adults that builds entrepreneurial skills and self-sufficiency, and provides a great venue to interact with customers and the public at-large.
- **Invisible Layers Productions** is a film club for adults who want to pursue a career or livelihood in video production and/or film. Invisible Layers provides video production services for nonprofits, and participants receive mentoring and film production experience.

#### SUMMER DAY CAMPS

Camp experiences are designed around identified interests, and are specifically designed to provide both a social outlet and mentoring opportunities for campers. Participants come from parent support groups, PieceWalk or other community project. Camps include an end-cap event to share with others and are a great opportunity for AO to connect with the media.

Examples of recent camps include –

- Swanky Art Camp for young adults interested in art
- Little Swanky for children ages three – nine (partnership with Mercy Good Shepherd)
- Camp Noggin for children eight – 11
- AKON for young adults interested in Anime
- ComicCamp for teens 12 – 17
- Chef Camp for students interested in cooking
- MineCraft Lego Camp for those who love the game

Camps are one of our best ways to serve individuals with autism and their families, and we are always exploring new camp interest areas. Parent leadership is required to create new camp opportunities.

#### FAMILIES THRIVE

**Parent Support Groups:** AutismOklahoma began as a parent support group in Edmond. Our Parent Support Groups are delineated by geography, culture, or interest. Today, we have 13 support groups including: AutismBlanchard, AutismCanadianValley, AutismEdmond, AutismLatino, AutismMuskogee, AutismNorman, AutismOKC, AutismShawnee, AutismStillwater, AutismGuthrie, AutismTulsa, AutismSchoolChoice and our Writer's Group. Parent Support groups provide education, emotional, and social support for families. It's a chance for caregivers to share resources and experiences as well as materials by utilizing resource libraries. Many parents appreciate the opportunity to fully engage in programs while childcare is provided. Some of the groups offer social groups for students and young adults with autism and are geared towards specific age groups, interests, or gender. Parent Support Group participants look forward to **Family Fun Nights** so the whole family can be involved in a safe environment.

#### COMMUNITIES UNDERSTAND AND EMBRACE DIFFERENCES

Community programs are designed to educate the general public about autism, and provide an opportunity to "show our strength in numbers" for legislators and community leadership. Community

programs provide a safe way for families to be involved without fear of judgment when there are behavioral challenges. Some community programs provide funding for the AO programs.

- **Community Programs & Events**

- **PieceWalk & 5K** has become the largest community awareness experience in our state! Attended by more than 8,000 people, this is a day of sharing and coming together for families throughout Oklahoma. The PieceWalk is held on the first Saturday in May at the Bricktown Ballpark.
- **Drive for Autism** is our annual golf tournament held in the fall.
- **Dash Bash** an evening of fundraising fun.

- **Autism-Awareness** - There are many ways that AO tries to raise awareness about autism. From our website acting as a resource for many, to our friendly mascot attending community functions we want our community to become more aware. Below are some of the ways we do that:

- ***Mascot Dash - our beloved red puzzle piece mascot***
- **Think Differently**
- **Movies** - Even in Death & Swanky
- **Team and Community events**
  - Restaurant nights, these are give back nights that teams host for team fundraising.
  - Chili cook offs, bake sales, Zumbathons and more.
- **Website** provides information for the community, caregivers, and friends.
- **Facebook, Twitter, & E-Newsletter** provide regular updates on programs and offer opportunities to get involved

## CORE VALUES & BELIEFS

AutismOklahoma upholds the following core values and beliefs:

- Personal preferences and values of individuals with autism and their families are respected.
- Each person with autism resides in the least restrictive environment, ideally his or her own home.
- Individuals with autism and their families are encouraged to participate in activities in their community by accessing natural supports, such as community services and organizations that are available to individuals without disabilities.
- Information and services are based on the most current information and research available.
- Families are supported to stay together. The family is provided support and information that empowers them to make informed decisions that best fit their child and family

## VOLUNTEER ROLES & GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

With a small staff, and a big mission, we celebrate individuals who desire to use their skills and talent to start programs or join the leadership teams of our current programs. If you have a knack for cheering others on and implementing ideas and desire to help in bigger ways, encourage you to participate in Volunteer Trainings offered throughout the year and be in contact with your Program Leader or Volunteer Coordinator about ways to best use your skills and interests to move the AO mission forward. Below is a list of our current volunteer structure.

**Level 1:** As a level 1 Volunteer you may help out by providing support to our Parent Support Group Leadership Team, AO Staff, or at our Community Events. These roles may include:

- **Mentor** for kids, youth or young adults at Social Clubs or in Childcare area during Parent Support Groups (Background Checks required)
- **Greeter** helps families feel welcome and find rooms at Parent Support Group
- **Photographer/Videographer** be on call to take pictures and capture fun activities and events
- **Hospitality Team** helps set up and clean up family fun days and community events
- **Office Volunteer** helps make phone calls and do administrative tasks to support AO staff or groups
- **Day-of Volunteer** signs up to help in specific areas during community events

**Level 2:** As a level 2 Volunteer, you are a chair of the PieceWalk (PW) Planning Committee that meets monthly or you oversee an AO program (not a parent support group). Roles may include:

- **Logistics Chair** – coordinates information/needs from all of the committees and plans the flow and layout of the event.
- **PW Volunteer Chair** - oversees recruitment and communication with the day-of volunteers.
- **Safety Logistics Chair** – acts as a liaison between the PW committee and the city
- **Resource Vendor Fair Chair** – identifies vendors for the PieceWalk and maintains contact with new and previous vendors.

There are dozens of ways to get involved and additional chair positions ranging Entertainment coordinating to Food & Hospitality planning.

**Level 3:** Level 3 volunteers make up the Parent Support Group Leadership Teams for each geographic or interest-based group. These individuals are invested in the success of the Parent Support Group and programs that develop from the group. These positions may include:

- **Parent Support Group Leader** - coordinates the meetings and oversees Leadership Team
- **Childcare Coordinator** - oversees volunteers who mentor in the childcare area
- **Social Group Leader** - oversees a social club or interest group for students or young adults
- **Event Coordinator** - plans family fun nights and other events
- **Volunteer Liaison** - helps Level 1 volunteers plug into their roles and provides information to the AO Volunteer Director
- **Summer Camp Leader** - has a love for sharing their interests or experience in a certain field (i.e. art, cooking) with individuals on the spectrum. The Leader develops and oversees an AO approved summer camp.
- **Lending Library Coordinator** - oversees resources that are loaned to parents.

Through the amazing work of our volunteers, AutismOklahoma continues to grow in the number of programs offered and community events put on - ultimately providing more resources and support for families and individuals and more awareness to the greater community. As a volunteer, we value your ideas and ambitions, please talk with your Program Leader or the AO Director of Volunteers if you want to be involved in varied or additional volunteer opportunities.



**2018**

## **[VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT]**

This is the partner document of the Volunteer Welcome Packet and outlines our Volunteer Code of Conduct that all AutismOklahoma volunteers are expected to follow.



## VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a volunteer, you are a valuable resource to this organization, its staff, and its participants.

Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated fairly, the right to effective supervision, the right to meaningful involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the agency.

## VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a volunteer, you become an important part of our organization and a valuable member of our community. We can't do this without you! In your role as a volunteer, you are a representative of AutismOklahoma and your behavior reflects on the organization.

In addition to some specific examples of prohibited behavior, we expect all AO staff and volunteers to follow these basic rules of conduct.

- Respect the mission and goals of AutismOklahoma.
- Take your commitment to our organization to heart, performing your duties to the best of your ability.
- Be willing to learn and take part in orientation and training sessions, and accept direction from AO staff, volunteer supervisors, and peers.
- Follow through on commitments and advise your group leader or staff if you are unable to work as scheduled.
- Honor confidentiality.
- Respect the property of AutismOklahoma.
- Do not accept valuable gifts or money in your role as an AO volunteer.
- Be courteous, friendly and cooperative. When conflicts arise deal with it in an appropriate manner as outlined in this document.
- Demonstrate respect for the direction and decisions of AO staff and fellow volunteers. Offer constructive feedback about our organization in an appropriate manner.
- Treat co-workers (paid and unpaid), participants and members of the public fairly and without discrimination.
- In addition to AO policies for conduct, all employees and volunteers are required to comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations and with AO's policies and regulations.

## SAFETY

Although we do our best to provide safe conditions for our volunteers, we count on volunteers to be the best protector of their own personal safety. Volunteers should always be aware of where they are and what they are doing. Volunteers should pay particular attention to safety instructions and proper equipment use. Volunteers should speak up if they have a safety concern and report any injuries to the person in charge as soon as possible.

Safety for kids and program participants is extremely important to us. For Volunteer roles that work directly with children or students, we require volunteers to have a **Background Check** on file with AO.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY & HARASSMENT

AO maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. We recruit, accept, train, promote and dismiss volunteers on the basis of personal competence and position performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability. The organization strives to maintain a quality environment free from intimidation and insult. We expect all volunteers and employees to conduct themselves with dignity and with respect for fellow volunteers, employees, participants and the community. Harassment of others based on age, gender, race or national origin or any other reason will not be tolerated.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Most disagreements or conflicts are easily resolved with a conversation. However, if you have a grievance that you are unable to resolve, please talk to the AO Volunteer Director (volunteer@autismoklahoma.org). They will be able to guide you through the AO grievance procedure so that your concern can be resolved.

## OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUNTEER MATCHING/SELECTION PROCEDURE

We want you to love what you do! Our online volunteer form includes a section on volunteer interest so that the best match can be made. Volunteers may request specific opportunities or type of job (child care, PieceWalk, etc), and jobs will be assigned based on availability and organizational need. Please note - Some positions require specific job skills or experience, and assignments will be made accordingly. Please know we will make every effort to make your volunteer experience enjoyable. Let us know if you need our help in connecting with the right opportunity.

## VOLUNTEER GROWTH & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Once you get involved in AO, you may find yourself desiring to take on more leadership responsibilities. We celebrate that and encourage you to participate in Volunteer Trainings offered throughout the year and be in contact with your Program Leader or AO Volunteer Director about ways to best use your skills and interests to move the AO mission forward. *Please refer to the Volunteer Roles & Growth Opportunities section found in the Volunteer Welcome Packet for specific opportunities.*



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT FORM**

***Receipt and Review of AO Volunteer Code of Conduct Document***

Your Signature on this receipt acknowledges that you have received and reviewed the AO Volunteer Code of Conduct Document.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received and reviewed the AO Volunteer Code of Conduct Document.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required, I am indicating that I agree to comply with the code of conduct outlined in the Document.

Signature

Date