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Autism Delaware, Lower Delaware Autism Foundation Merge
Combined Organization Will Help Advance Autism Awareness and Services in Delaware

NEWARK, DEL., June 23, 2010 — Autism Delaware (AD) and the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation (LDAF) announced today, under the name of Autism Delaware, that the two organizations have merged to unify support services and programs for people and families throughout Delaware who are affected by autism.

Autism Delaware, along with the resources dedicated to the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation, will continue to offer a broad range of services to adults and children with autism throughout the State of Delaware.

“The combination of our two strong organizations is a logical step that will enhance our capability to serve the people and families affected by autism in Delaware,” said Autism Delaware Board President Rob Gilsdorf. “We are confident the combination of our two organizations will solidify our voice in the state and enable us to actively pursue our goal of offering cutting edge and highly needed innovative services throughout the state as efficiently as possible.”

The merger has direct benefits for Delaware families:

- Within two years, Autism Delaware will implement its POW&R services in southern Delaware. POW&R helps ensure that adults with autism have an effective transition from school to adult life.
- By speaking with one voice, the advocacy messages of the united autism community will be that much louder with state officials, with school districts and in communities throughout the state.
- By centralizing administrative and program expenses, the combined organization will be able to extend programs and services while operating with increased efficiency.

“The two organizations have worked well together for years in Dover, and elsewhere, advocating for our friends and loved ones with autism spectrum disorders,” said Gilsdorf. “Our two missions have always had one very special aim in common – to serve those affected by autism in Delaware. Now it is time for us to join forces. Combining our efforts will ensure that we provide a strong voice and leadership statewide. Both The Lower Delaware Autism Foundation Board and Autism Delaware’s Board are very enthusiastic about this opportunity.”

As a result of the merger, five LDAF board members, all parents of children with autism, will join the Autism Delaware board. The new Autism Delaware board members are John Willey, Karen Shaud, Dale Oberender, Dorian Kleinstuber and Nancy Bellinger. In addition, Melissa Tice Martin from LDAF will join Autism Delaware and staff an office in Lewes.

“With the overlap in the missions of the two organizations, this combination allows us to make more effective and efficient use of the charitable contributions we receive,” said John Willey, President of the

Lower Delaware Autism Foundation. “Our Board believes this arrangement creates the best opportunity to serve people with autism spectrum disorders and their families in lower Delaware, which has been our aim. In keeping with the donors’ intentions, we are using the funds the Lower Delaware Autism Foundation has raised in the past to support programs in Sussex County. For the future, we are excited to be part of a single organization, Autism Delaware, serving the entire State of Delaware.”

The mission of Autism Delaware, a not-for-profit Delaware corporation, is to improve the lives of people with autism and their families; Autism Delaware educates, advocates and raises public awareness in order to promote lifelong opportunity and community acceptance for people with autism throughout Delaware.

For more information, please visit Autism Delaware's website at www.delautism.org.

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About Autism Delaware

Autism Delaware is a non-profit advocacy organization made up of family members, professionals and friends of people with autism. The organization aims to improve the lives of people and families affected by autism. Autism is a complex, developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. Autism Delaware serves the entire state of Delaware, with its offices in Newark, Lewes and Milford. For additional information about Autism Delaware, visit www.delautism.org.

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