



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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All in for autism

Annual community event to raise awareness and acceptance, promote inclusion

SPOKANE, WASH. – Northwest Autism Center will take over Riverfront Park for its 9th annual Steps for Autism 5K walk presented by Spokane City Credit Union. On Saturday, April 27 at noon, hundreds of walkers, runners and strollers will take to the Centennial Trail starting at the Ice Age Playground to walk in solidarity with those with ASD/IDD and their families and cultivate an inclusive space for raising awareness of autism.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 1 in 36 children have an autism spectrum disorder, and it is estimated that up to 48,000 children in Washington State have some form of autism. Each registration for Steps for Autism contributes to providing resources and services for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities and their families through Northwest Autism Center.

This annual event also promotes community inclusion and integration and is an opportunity to demonstrate the care and investment in each other that our region is known for.

“It provides a common access point for all individuals and families to join together with friends, providers, teachers and the community at large in celebration of neurodiversity.” says Executive Director, Dawn Sidell, “The walk, run and roll is about building a sense of belonging and being part of something bigger than ourselves.”

Throughout the event several businesses and resource providers dedicated to an alliance of care will be present to answer questions, offer resources and provide a variety of sensory-friendly activities. In addition, participants will be greeted along the route by OTTO the Spokanasaurus and Doris, costumed characters from CYT Spokane and Disney princesses from Wish Upon a Star Events.

Rain or shine, the Spokane community is encouraged to join the fun and help make this the most inclusive stroll ever! The event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with the 5k walk/run/roll beginning at noon at the Ice Age Playground.

For more information visit www.stepsforautism.org or follow us on [Facebook](#).

Northwest Autism Center:

Northwest Autism Center is a federally approved nonprofit 501c(3) organization established in 2003 through the grassroots efforts of the Spokane community under the guidance of Dawn Sidell, Executive Director. NAC is a nationally accredited Behavioral Health Center of Excellence. Services through our community connections program include free screenings for autism spectrum disorder and providing information and resource referrals to families and providers. Direct services offered include interdisciplinary care providing on-site and community based applied behavioral analysis treatment, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. NAC also offers an after school social skills program and a newly opened skill and recreation center.

About Steps for Autism:

In 2013, a local mom of a child with autism, wanted to show her appreciation for the services and support provided to her son and family through Northwest Autism Center. The energetic and thoughtful mom approached Northwest Autism Center and requested help in developing an awareness walk welcoming those with autism, their families and friends, and all those from the broader community in which we live and work. She wanted to create an annual event bringing everyone together in a spirit of inclusiveness and fun. Out of that initial vision, the first Steps for Autism event was born in 2015. The event was so well received by families, Northwest Autism Center committed to continuing the truly inclusive event and reached out to other organizations to participate in and expand its annual launch.

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