## Community Report

### 2019-2020

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Autism Spectrum Disorder

THE FACTS

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges.

There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less.

A diagnosis of ASD now includes several conditions that used to be diagnosed separately: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. These conditions are now all called autism spectrum disorder.

PREVALENCE

- About 1 IN 59 CHILDREN has been identified with ASD.
- ASD is about 4 times more common among boys than among girls.
- ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- Among children identified with ASD who had IQ scores available, nearly a third (31%) also had intellectual disability.
- Even though ASD can be diagnosed as early as age 2 years, most children were not diagnosed with ASD by a community provider until after age 4 years.
- Recent changes in the clinical definition of autism had little impact on the percentage of school-aged children identified as having ASD.

Source: National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Dear Friends,

We are pleased to share with you the 2019-20 Els for Autism Foundation Community Report. We hope this report provides a kaleidoscope of photos and stories that brings into clear focus many of the individuals and families touched by the Foundation. Through our mission, we are committed to better understanding the aspirations of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and help them fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive, and rewarding lives.

In 2019, we experienced a year of growth, as we introduced an Advisory Board consisting of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as expanded our Board of Directors. The Advisory Board was created to ensure that the Foundation receives input and direction from people with autism. The Foundation was named ‘Nonprofit of the Year’ by the Palm Beach North Chamber of Commerce, recognizing our strategic vision, passion, and perseverance leading to extraordinary outcomes in the community. We also received the highest level of transparency on GuideStar, the world’s largest source for nonprofit information.

We are looking forward to continuing on a growth path throughout 2020. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Els for Autism Golf Challenge, one of the largest, charity-driven, amateur golf tournaments in history. The first nine years of the Golf Challenge raised 24.6 million dollars, which has enabled us to focus on fulfilling our mission. We hope to break all previous year’s fundraising records, making this tenth year momentous.

In February, we launched a brand-new adult day program. The Foundation’s Adult Services team has been developing and delivering programs in three critical segments: employment, independent living, and social/recreation. The new day program will encompass all areas and will be a significant addition to our adult program offering.

We thank you for being a part of this journey with us—together we are making a difference.

With gratitude,

Marvin R. Shanken, Founder and Chairman
Ernie Els, Founder
Liezl Els, Founder & Secretary
The Nonprofit of The Year award is given to an organization whose strategic vision, passion and perseverance have led to extraordinary outcomes for the community it serves. Recipients of this award generally utilize new approaches in overcoming obstacles to achieve its mission.

About The Foundation

Els for Autism Foundation was established in 2009 by Liezl and Ernie Els. The Els’ son, Ben, is impacted by the disorder which affects 1 in 59 children in the U.S. The world class pro golfer and his wife have devoted their efforts to a game-changing, philanthropic project – The Els Center of Excellence.

The Foundation offers innovative, evidenced-based programs for families and individuals across the lifespan in six focus areas:

- Adult Services
- Education
- Global Support
- Recreation Services
- Research
- Therapy Services

For current, comprehensive information and schedules on the Foundation’s Programs and Services, please go to WWW.ELSFORAUTISM.ORG.

Vision

Els for Autism is a game-changing resource, delivering and facilitating programs that are leading examples of what can be available to people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Mission

We are committed to better understanding the aspirations of people with autism spectrum disorder and helping them to fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives, through:

- Understanding the nature of ASD and facilitating the development and delivery of treatment therapies, educational programs, training programs, recreational programs and independent living programs
- Ensuring the development of global outreach that will facilitate the sharing of best practices and programs
- Raising awareness and promoting the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with ASD

“Together, our collective efforts have helped Ernie and Liezl realize their awe-inspiring vision to open and continually expand on The Els Center of Excellence. One visit to this incredible center, in which every detail has been thoughtfully incorporated to meet the needs of its neurodiverse students, reaffirms the critical importance of this endeavor.”

- Robert Enslin, President, Cloud Sales, Google
The Els Center of Excellence™

JUPITER, FLORIDA

The Els Center of Excellence campus hosts world-class, leading-edge programs and services that are accessible to families and caregivers around the world. Based in Jupiter, Florida, the 26-acre campus provides on-site education for over 250 students who attend The Learning Center and The Learning Academy. With all the essential components on one location, the campus is the perfect hub for a variety of global outreach activities. This ensures that positive influence of The Els Center of Excellence campus is felt far beyond the boundaries of its walls. Once the campus construction is completed, the impact will be magnified!

On The Campus

• The Learning Center at The Els Center of Excellence is a tuition-free, nonprofit, Palm Beach County public charter school, serving students with autism ages 3-14. The goal for every student is to maximize his or her potential using evidence-based practices. WWW.THELEARNINGCENTER.ORG

• The Learning Academy at The Els Center of Excellence is a tuition-free, nonprofit, Palm Beach County public charter high school serving students with autism ages 14-21. The school helps individuals with ASD in the areas of academics, vocational, functional life skills, social and communication skills. WWW.TLACAD.ORG

• The Administration Building hosts the Foundation staff offices, 305-seat auditorium, meeting rooms and spaces to conduct therapy sessions

• The Pavilion is a multipurpose classroom/studio for art shows, and other gatherings

• The 26,000 square foot courtyard, fence enclosed, central area with grass and sidewalks

• A practice golf course facility featuring 3 greens and 9 holes is perfect for running the Ernie Els #GameON Autism™ Golf program

• Outdoor, covered basketball/tennis play court

• Sensory Arts Garden, a therapeutic and educational destination for children and adults of all abilities

• Two playgrounds
We are thankful for our donors, employees and volunteers whose generosity and commitment are making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families impacted by autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

**OPERATING REVENUE & SUPPORT**

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Contributions</td>
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<td>Business Contributions</td>
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<td>Foundations and Grants</td>
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<td>Programs, rents and other</td>
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<td><strong>Total Support &amp; Revenue</strong></td>
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**OPERATING EXPENSES**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Administrative</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,072,893</strong></td>
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*Unaudited*
Capital Campaign

The Els Center of Excellence™ campus is a world-class facility designed to serve as a model for the nation and the world of what services can and should be available to individuals on the autism spectrum. To deliver on this, a capital campaign is underway to complete the construction of the campus by the addition of:

**ADULT SERVICES CENTER**

The Adult Services Center is planned to be an on-campus, life-span services building for transition-aged adults who have exited the school system. The Adult Services Center will be the future hub for the programs developed by the Foundation in three critical segments; Employment, Independent Living, and Social/Recreation.

**MEDICAL & RESEARCH FACILITY**

The Medical & Research Facility is planned to be an on-campus building to host medical services and study the causes and treatments for ASD. The Foundation’s goal is to continue to create partnerships with prestigious medical and research institutions to develop collaborative research programs.

**SPORTS COMPLEX**

Physical activities are vitally important for children and adults, with and without disabilities. They promote healthy lifestyles but can benefit individuals with autism in unique ways. In the U.S., the prevalence of overweight children with ASD is 19%. This puts children at an increased risk for numerous health problems including; diabetes, cardiovascular disease, bone and joint problems, and even depression. The Sports Complex will feature an air-conditioned gymnasium, athletic fields, play courts, golf course practice facility, and a swimming pool.
Celebrating 10 Years of the Golf Challenge

2020 marks the 10th year of the Foundation’s largest fundraising activity, the Els for Autism Golf Challenge. The first nine years of the Golf Challenge brought the Foundation $24.6 million! Looking back to the beginning, Liezl Els, Co-Founder and Managing Director, was asked whose idea was the Golf Challenge? She responded, “It was a combination of Ernie, Susan Lampl, and me. Golf was our life, so it was always going to be the natural way for us to raise money.”

In 2011, the first Golf Challenge was comprised of 30 tournaments, all in the U.S. In 2012, one location in Canada was added and more the following years. The kick-off tournament was held at the PGA National Champions Course in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. That first year, Mark White’s team was the very first Els Cup winner, fundraising $50,284.

“The first few years of the Golf Challenge were heavy lifting and we could not have done it without the support of many grass-root teams,” said Liezl, “We were educating people on what autism was and we were asking people to fundraise for a dream, a vision of what The Els Center of Excellence could be.”

In March of 2014, the story changed with the ground-breaking ceremony, which marked the start of construction of The Els Center of Excellence campus. “Many of our main Golf Challenge supporters came to the groundbreaking ceremony,” said Liezl, “With land purchased and architectural designs in place, we could finally demonstrate what
the Golf Challenge fundraising efforts were accomplishing. The vision was becoming a reality."

In addition to recognizing the highest fundraising teams each year at the Grand Finale, the Foundation established the $100,000 Club to acknowledge the teams hitting this milestone. As of 2019, two teams—Team Lucas Steps and Tanner’s Team—both have raised over $300,000!

Before the auditorium building, two education wings, golf facility, Sensory Arts Garden, and pavilion were opened on the campus, the Grand Finale took place in Las Vegas (2011–2016). In 2017, the event moved to Palm Beach, to enable the participants to experience the campus.

"We couldn’t be prouder to showcase The Els Center of Excellence to the Golf Challenge family of supporters," Liezl said. "Developing programs and services to help individuals and families impacted by autism is what our Foundation stands for and we thank the Golf Challenge family for enabling us to make this happen on a local and international level."

For more information about the Golf Challenge, visit www.E4AGolf.com
When young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) graduate from high school, some will continue their education at colleges and universities, others will gain paid employment in the community. But there is a group of individuals with complex needs, who face increased barriers in accessing services as they transition into adulthood and may need additional training and specialized supports to attain their personal goals. There also may be adults who are only able to work part-time and want to take part in social and community activities on the days they are not working. In order to serve this group of individuals, the Foundation has developed and will pilot a specialized Adult Day Training (ADT) program in 2020.

ADT is defined as a daily life enhancement program to provide participants the tools to live productive, meaningful lives and the opportunity for integration into their communities. Using the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), the program will host activities within the areas of communication, daily living, health/wellness, and employment with a focus on each participants’ individualized learning needs. ADT will provide an environment that supports personal growth, learning, empowerment, and self-determination.

The ADT program pilot will commence with 6 participants, with a plan to expand to 48 participants by the third year. Els for Autism will provide a 3:1 participant to staff ratio, in order to ensure all adults are actively engaged and supported throughout the program.

For additional information on the ADT program, contact

Dr. Kerri Morse, Adult Services Manager
Email: Kerri.Morse@elsforautism.org
Phone: 561-320-9523

“
When our students graduate from The Learning Academy, we care greatly about their next stage in life. Many of our students have complex needs and require a continuation of specialized programs. We have considerable expectations for the Els for Autism Adult Day Program and hope to see this as a productive next chapter in the lives of our students.

- Dr. Toby Honsberger, Executive Director, The Learning Academy

“
Els for Autism Foundation is committed to engaging in research to further knowledge in the field of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In 2019, the research team contributed to various journals and presentations in order to share information and findings.

In August 2019, the research team published the article, "The Utility of a Golf Training Program for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder," in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. This paper described the Ernie Els #GameOn Autism™ Golf Program and provided an evaluation of the potential of the program to facilitate motor, social, and communication gains in participants diagnosed with ASD, ages 6 to 24 years.

In May 2019, The Seaver Els Institute team, presented research results as part of a poster session at the International Society for Autism Research Conference in Montreal, Canada. The title of the research project was "Bridging the Gap: Access to Genetic Testing in a Community Sample of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder." The poster discussed access to genetic testing in the South Florida community and the frequency with which children with autism obtain genetic testing based on a set of selected factors including the presence of comorbid physical medical conditions, global developmental delay (GDD), epilepsy, and attention hyperactivity disorder.

Additionally, the research team collaborated with The Learning Academy, The Learning Center, and Palm Beach Atlantic University to examine the extent of alterations in static balance and gait alterations within individuals with ASD. Overall, these findings are consistent with clinical observations that abnormalities of movement performance are an associated feature of ASD in children and young adults. These results were presented as a poster session at the International Society for Autism Research Conference. The project was titled, "Changes in Muscle Strength, Static Balance and Dynamic Plantar Pressures in Autism Spectrum Disorder."

At the Florida Association of Behavior Analysis (FABA) annual conference in September 2019, the Els for Autism research team collaborated with Dr. A. Gutierrez, L. Dezavas, and L. Camafreita with the University of Miami and Dr. J. Weber to present the poster, "Evaluating the use of Technology to Promote Social Communication and Engagement." The purpose of this study was to compare the impact of technology versus traditionally presented activities on the use of social communication skills by children with ASD.

Throughout 2020, the research team will continue to share their knowledge and findings to contribute to the autism community and advance our knowledge of ASD.
2019 Autism at Work
SUMMIT EAST/FALL

This past October, the Els for Autism Foundation™ hosted the 2019 Autism at Work Summit East/Fall at The Els Center of Excellence™ campus in Jupiter, FL. The summit was sponsored by SAP, EY, DXC Technology, JPMorgan Chase, and the Olitsky Family Foundation.

Launched in 2016, the Autism at Work Summit supports SAP’s vision to provide for a more neurodiverse workplace. The objective has been and continues to be—creating a collaboration platform for private and public sectors, academic/educational institutions, civil societies, sports and entertainment leaders, philanthropists and members of the community at large.

While the national unemployment rate in the United States is expected to remain at or below 4 percent throughout 2020, this rate stands at 85 percent for individuals on the autism spectrum. The summit was a significant opportunity for participants to engage with leaders across multiple sectors, advancing career options for job candidates on the autism spectrum.

The East/Fall summit expanded the scope from previous summits to include content highlighting employment across ability levels and industries, from self-employment/entrepreneurship to professional, and non-professional jobs.

“I get to go to a lot of conferences and I would tell you that this is my favorite conference I go to all year. And the reason I love the summit so much is because it brings together people from every different discipline who are doing the work necessary to empower people with autism.”

- Thomas D’Eri, Co-founder and COO, Rising Tide Car Wash

THE STATISTICS SPEAK TO THE ENERGY & DRIVE OF THE SUMMIT

- 290 Onsite attendees from 15 countries
- 60 Participants with autism
- 21 Speakers and panelists with autism
- 10 K-12 Education Institutions
- 42 Higher Education Institutions
- 6 U.S. Government Organizations
- 72 Enterprises—small, medium & large
- 56 Nonprofit organizations
- 54 Ecosystem companies
- 7 Philanthropists
- 18 local businesses, many of which are Els for Autism Foundation Employer Partners, participated in the Employer Expo and Reception

Jose Velasco, Lead, Autism at Work U.S., SAP, speaking at the summit.

Employees on the autism spectrum share their journeys and perspectives during a breakout session.

Ernie & Liezl Els speak during the Executive Summit.

Sami Gershenhorn opens the 2019 Autism at Work Summit with a piano performance. Sami is diagnosed with autism.
Autism Spectrum Award
2019 WINNER HALEY MOSS

The Els for Autism Spectrum Award honors an individual with autism spectrum disorder who has shined a positive light on autism through his/her character, positive attitude, and contribution.

ABOUT HALEY MOSS
Haley Moss is a South Florida native who was diagnosed with autism at age three. Upon receiving her autism diagnosis, her family was told that she would be fortunate to make a friend, graduate high school, or obtain her driver’s license.

Haley has defied the expectations set forth within her initial diagnosis.

Today, she is an attorney, author, artist, and autism advocate who writes and speaks publicly about her journey and gives hope for other autistic people and their families and friends.

PREVIOUS WINNERS
2018 ADAM JONES
2017 RACHEL BARCELLONA
2016 GLORIA MENDOZA
2015 JOSHUA DEER

“Different isn’t bad. It’s just different. And different can be extraordinary! – Haley Moss”
Oceana Coffee, Palm Beach County’s first specialty coffee roasting business based in Tequesta, Florida, had been engaged with the Els for Autism Foundation for several years, mainly through events in the local community. When they heard that there was an opportunity to work with an intern with autism from The Learning Academy at The Els Center of Excellence, they were eager to give it a go. When this rewarding experience with the intern ended, and an opportunity arose to hire an adult through the Foundation’s Adult Services Program, Oceana Coffee was eager to see if they could make it work successfully.

The hiring process started with defining the position and its requirements. It was then a matchmaking process. Amy Duell worked with the Foundation to interview several candidates until they found the person who could work well within the defined requirements of the position. The person they hired is Bryan Jaimes. Bryan has been working at the roasting house since January 2019 and has been a valuable addition to their team. He started out with an eight hour per week schedule, and within two months was given additional hours because of his proven ability. Bryan is now working three days a week creating K-cups and packaging them into boxes.

Bryan participated in the Foundation’s Adult Services Work Experience Program, completing his 18-week program at Jupiter Medical Center. The program taught Bryan specific work skills and he now uses them to help him prosper at Oceana Coffee.

Amy’s advice to other companies on the fence about hiring an adult on the spectrum is, “Don’t be scared to try it out, meet the individuals that are out there. It’s an amazing opportunity to help someone and to grow your team and your business.”

“We had such a great experience with Els for Autism events, with the community, and with our intern, it was no question if we could make it work with an adult, we were definitely going to give it a try.

– Amy Duell, General Manager, Oceana Coffee Roasters
HOW TO
Get Involved

FUNDRAISING EVENTS
Each year the Foundation’s development team plans various fundraising events. Please visit ELSFORAUTISM.ORG for a current schedule of up-coming events.

PLAN YOUR GREATEST LEGACY
Planned Giving enables you to arrange philanthropic contributions to maximize your personal objectives. Establishing a planned gift, can secure the Foundation’s mission, not for just one year or a generation, but in perpetuity.

ON-CAMPUS RENTAL SPACES | SPECTRUM VENUES
Whether you are hosting a day meeting, board meeting, luncheon, team-building session, workshop/training, conference or cocktail reception, there are many spaces on the campus that can fit your event requirements.

VOLUNTEER
Volunteers are an essential and invaluable resource to the Foundation. Our volunteers share a common desire to make a difference. Visit ELSFORAUTISM.ORG/VOLUNTEER to complete an application.

BECOME A PART OF THE CENTER

ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM
This program raises funds to pay for programs, services, maintenance and staff not funded by other sources.

AUDITORIUM SEATS
The state-of-the-art auditorium is the heart of The Center’s global support programs. Seats are available for naming.

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK PROGRAM
Have your name, message and/or child’s drawing set in stone in The Center’s courtyard, a permanent focal point. Make this a gift in memory or in honor of someone special, or simply to express your support.

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES
Many spaces at The Els Center of Excellence can be dedicated in honor of your family. The naming opportunities across the campus range from the Adult Services Center, gymnasium, and classrooms.

PATRON OF THE GARDEN
The Sensory Arts Garden sets a precedent for specialized outdoor environments for people with autism and other related disabilities. By becoming a Patron of the Garden, your name will be displayed prominently on the signage within the garden.

For more information on how to get involved, please visit ElsForAutism.org or contact Nicole Poundstone: nicole.poundstone@elsforautism.org or 561-598-6197.
WAYS TO GIVE

As a nonprofit organization, Els for Autism Foundation relies on charitable financial support. Donations received help sustain the Foundation’s mission to better understand the aspirations of people with autism and help them fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives. Make a tax-deductible donation today—there are many ways.

ONLINE
Our online donation form is fast, easy, secure, and available any day of the week. Visit our website: WWW.ELSFORAUTISM.ORG/DONATE

BY MAIL
If you prefer to mail your donation, make the check payable to ‘Els for Autism’. Send your check to:
Els for Autism Foundation
18370 Limestone Creek Road
Jupiter, Florida 33458

BY PHONE
Call Nicole Poundstone at 561-598-6197 or Shelly Hedge at 561-320-9526.

IN-KIND GIFTS
Find out how to donate items to help fulfill specific needs for Els for Autism by contacting Paige Scollard email: Paige.Scollard@elsforautism.org or phone 561-320-9532.

MONTHLY GIVING
Sign up for a recurring donation and make every month Autism Awareness Month! Monthly donors receive an Els for Autism ribbon car magnet. Go to: WWW.ELSFORAUTISM.ORG/DONATE

CORPORATE GIVING
Find out how your company can support Els for Autism through their corporate giving program.

MATCHING GIFTS
Many companies encourage employees to donate by matching contributions. Find out if your employer will match your donation and if your company participates, follow their instructions to sign up for their matching gifts program.

Els for Autism a US public charity (EIN #26-3520396), recognized by the IRS as exempt from Federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code.
ELS FOR AUTISM FOUNDATION
18370 Limestone Creek Road, Jupiter, Florida 33458
561-598-6200 • www.ElsForAutism.org