



ERNIE ELS
ELS FOR AUTISM®



**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN
FOR THE RECREATION COMPLEX**

AT THE ELS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE® CAMPUS



Make a Lasting Impact - Naming Opportunities

Els for Autism Foundation is providing naming opportunities for the Gymnasium, Aquatic Center, and Splash Pad. This is an opportunity to make a powerful and enduring impact on individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), now and for generations to come. Create a life-changing legacy in honor of your family today.

Gymnasium



Aquatic Center



Splash Pad



In-Kind Donations are always needed and highly appreciated

If you are interested in naming opportunities or making an In-Kind donation for the Gymnasium, Aquatic Center, Splash Pad, or other offerings at the Recreation Complex, contact the Els for Autism Development Office at development@elsforautism.org or **561-598-6197**. With any location you choose, know that your generosity will change the lives of people with ASD now and in the years to follow.

Make a lasting impact.

WHERE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

Participating in recreational activities is critically important for people with ASD and other developmental disorders. Recreation activities and experiences produce emotions of achievement, enjoyment, and promote inclusion, self-confidence, and increased quality of life. Sports and fitness activities not only improve one's physical health but mental health as well.

To expand the recreation activities available at The Els Center of Excellence campus, and to provide individuals with autism with a full range of recreation choices, the Els for Autism® Board of Directors and Leadership Team is announcing a new Capital Campaign to support funding a Recreation Complex to include a Gymnasium, Aquatic Center, and Splash Pad. These will be in addition to the existing three-green/nine-hole golf course practice facility, outdoor basketball/tennis court, play courts, Sensory Arts Garden, and the 26,000 square-foot courtyard.



Name the GYMNASIUM

People impacted by ASD, of all ages, need to get daily exercise. South Florida can experience months of inclement weather including excessive heat, high humidity, and heavy rainfall. The gymnasium will be an indoor, air-conditioned space that will provide year-round use for recreational activities including basketball, kickball, yoga, and other fitness programs.

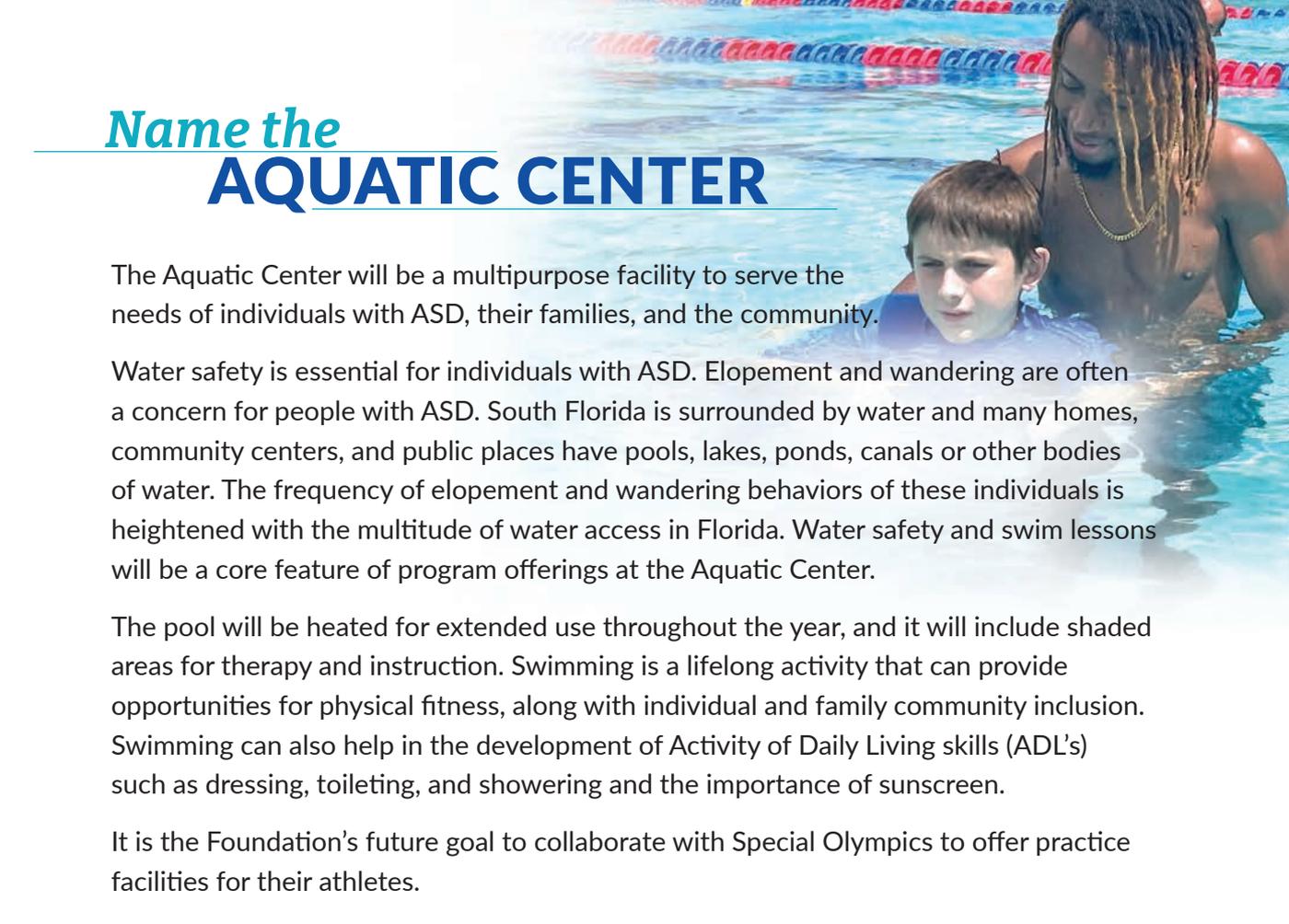
“The purpose-built gymnasium will be a sensory-friendly, stress-relieving, and welcoming place to mitigate hypersensitivity to bright lights and loud noise, for those who are nonverbal and have a difficult time socializing,” said Dr. Marlene Sotelo, Executive Director, “Keeping our participants healthy through learning about nutrition and other well-being programs, and being active through tennis, fitness, golf, kickball, tennis, and yoga is our goal.”

Els for Autism staff believes recreation activities, specifically sports and fitness, can provide effective supplemental therapy for individuals with autism. Our programs incorporate activities to target coordination, balance, hand-eye coordination, and gross motor skills. We utilize a variety of traditional and adaptive fitness equipment, and we integrate FUN into each program to keep our participants motivated.

“Since starting the Els for Autism Foundation® programs and services in 2015, it has always been our vision to provide the autism community with a robust offering of sports, fitness, arts, leisure, and healthy living programs.” said Liezl Els, Managing Director, “Our clients and families deserve a Recreation Complex, so let’s get it built!”

In the U.S., the prevalence of obesity among children with ASD increased by 19% with an additional 36% at risk for being overweight. Being overweight can put children at increased risk for numerous health problems, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, bone and joint problems, and even depression. Source: Autism Speaks: Sports, Exercise, and the Benefits of Physical Activity for Individuals with Autism





Name the **AQUATIC CENTER**

The Aquatic Center will be a multipurpose facility to serve the needs of individuals with ASD, their families, and the community.

Water safety is essential for individuals with ASD. Elopement and wandering are often a concern for people with ASD. South Florida is surrounded by water and many homes, community centers, and public places have pools, lakes, ponds, canals or other bodies of water. The frequency of elopement and wandering behaviors of these individuals is heightened with the multitude of water access in Florida. Water safety and swim lessons will be a core feature of program offerings at the Aquatic Center.

The pool will be heated for extended use throughout the year, and it will include shaded areas for therapy and instruction. Swimming is a lifelong activity that can provide opportunities for physical fitness, along with individual and family community inclusion. Swimming can also help in the development of Activity of Daily Living skills (ADL's) such as dressing, toileting, and showering and the importance of sunscreen.

It is the Foundation's future goal to collaborate with Special Olympics to offer practice facilities for their athletes.



Name the **SPLASH PAD**

The inclusion of a Splash Pad in the Aquatic Center will allow individuals that cannot or will not swim in the pool to have the opportunity to engage in water play. It will be used to promote social opportunities and offer water experiences for individuals that cannot swim or are fearful of immersion in the pool. The Splash Pad will be a place to have FUN getting wet on a hot day.

Ernie Els #GameON Autism® Sports Programs



Through the Ernie Els #GameON Autism Sports Programs, the Els for Autism staff strive to spread autism awareness across the global autism community. By educating professionals in the field of sports and fitness on how to teach people with ASD, we are improving the culture of sports. Therefore, individuals with autism feel welcomed and included in recreation activities when they take individual lessons or group classes. We believe recreation, specifically sports, can be an effective supplemental therapy for individuals with autism.

GOLF

The Ernie Els #GameON Autism Golf program is infused with evidence-based practices for teaching golf to people with ASD. Participants learn golf skills while practicing specific autism learning concepts, including communication, emotional regulation, motor, and social skills. The goal of the program is for participants to achieve their individual golf successes, and build confidence and self-esteem, in a fun, welcoming, and supportive environment.



FITNESS

The Ernie Els #GameON Autism Fitness program is unique because instructors not only deliver fitness instruction but also incorporate specific autism learning objectives into the lessons. Instructors teach fundamental components of fitness within the framework of structured, organized lessons with specific communication methods that allow for the effective delivery of autism learning concepts. It incorporates the use of traditional fitness equipment, as well as music, dance, and video games as a means of motivating student participation in fitness activities. The program is focused on cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and strength training.



TENNIS

Ernie Els #GameON Autism Tennis program aims to extend the reach of the Ernie Els #GameON Autism Sports Programs to provide more options for individuals with autism. The sport of tennis teaches skills that place a greater emphasis on movement, footwork, and reaction to the ball, and improving cardiovascular strength.

In addition to the Ernie Els #GameON Autism Sports Programs, recreation programs are offered in art, dance therapy, inter-ability chorus, kickball, music therapy, and yoga. The programs are available to ages 6 – 18+ after school, during spring/fall breaks, and during summer camp.

Official Program Providers

Interested in bringing golf, fitness, or tennis programs to your community? The Els for Autism organization offers various opportunities to become an Official Program Provider. Contact sports@elsforautism.org

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MAKE A LASTING IMPACT



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