



Facts About Els for Autism

Who

Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) ages 16 months through adulthood and their families are served through a variety of programs and services at the Jupiter, Florida campus and throughout the world via telehealth therapeutic and virtual programs.

What

Els for Autism provides evidence-based programs and services to develop the full potential of all individuals on the autism spectrum, provide training and consultation to companies that employ individuals with autism, and extend guidance and direction to families impacted by autism and professionals in the field, locally, nationally, and globally. Els for Autism also has foundations in Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, each independent of the other.

When

World of Golf Hall of Famer and four-time major champion Ernie Els, his wife Liezl, and Marvin R. Shanken, publisher & founder of M. Shanken Communications, founded the Els for Autism Foundation in 2009 following the diagnosis of the Els' son, Ben, with ASD.

Where

The Els Center of Excellence® campus in Jupiter, Florida is 26-acres with the capacity to serve hundreds of individuals with ASD, locally and globally through telehealth. Designed as a global hub to connect the international autism communities, the facility creates shared best practices and the latest research for improved practice and collaboration. The campus also houses two independent Palm Beach County public, tuition-free charter schools.

Why

Knowing first-hand the frustration and anguish families face in trying to find services, The Els Center of Excellence was created to bring all needed services – from diagnosis through education, vocational training, and job placement -- under one roof and to share best practices, research, and curricula internationally. It provides a community for families and individuals with ASD to connect, find support, and engage in cutting-edge programs and services.

About the Stoops Family Foundation Adult Services building

The new 21,000-square-foot adult services building, to be completed in the second half of 2023, brings The Els Center for Excellence campus full circle, from diagnosis through the life span, providing the tools and guidance adults on the autism spectrum need to navigate their futures. Within the walls of the \$8 million facility will be:

- Employment Training, Support, and Placement – providing training/coaching and job placement with business partners. The building will contain vocational training labs focusing on retail, grocery, business, and food services, including a café with drive-through service; and a gift shop area for the signature microbusiness “Sea of Possibilities”.
- Day Training – to build on each participant’s skills in the areas of socialization, recreation, and community involvement to increase independence.
- Supported Living – a two-bedroom suite serves a dual purpose as a vocational lab for the hospitality industry (hotel employment) and a lab for teaching independent living skills.
- Post-Graduation – support in transitioning to life after school through vocational and independent living skills training post-graduation.
- Microbusiness – Creating, marketing, and selling artwork to teach transferable business skills such as communications, customer service, money management, and product creation.

What Makes Els for Autism Unique?

While many other programs for children or adults on the autism spectrum exist, most focus on a few services and specific age groups. Els for Autism provides one-stop shopping for families – from diagnosis, education, recreation, therapy, and job skills training and employment placement across the lifespan. It also expands its reach globally with foundations in four countries to share evidence-based practices, curricula, and research. Els for Autism provides a community for families to feel supported and understood through wrap-around services delivered by a transdisciplinary team of highly skilled educators and clinical staff.

What does it mean that Els for Autism has a global impact?

Over twenty countries have been served through direct client and family interventions and training, virtual programs, two global multi-site research projects, and international students and professionals participating in training and hands-on experience at The Els Center of Excellence campus through practicums and internships, along with webinars for parents and professionals offered in four languages. Telehealth and virtual programs allow the Foundation to reach individuals and families impacted by ASD worldwide.

Top Funding Needs

• Recreation Complex - \$12 million (future build)

The combined Cafeteria and Gymnasium will host large group gatherings, events, and meetings, in addition to the core functions of a cafeteria and gymnasium. Locker rooms/changing facilities will also serve the Aquatic Center and the concession facility. The building will also serve as an emergency tornado /hurricane shelter for special needs children in the Jupiter /North Palm Beach County community.

On weekends and after school hours, the building can serve as an important link to community sports programs, summer programs, and related programs serving Els for Autism clients, charter school students, and the neighboring community.

- **The Stoops Family Foundation Adult Services building**

Els for Autism is just \$250,000 from reaching its goal of \$8 million to complete this building which will expand life-span programs and services for adults with autism, employment, and therapeutic services, day training, and recreational and social programs. Many naming opportunities are also still available. Just call us at (561) 625-8269

- **Program Support**

- Mental health support is vital to all, but even more essential for individuals on the spectrum, their caregivers, and siblings. Funding is needed to supplement fees not covered by insurance or grants. (\$10,000)
- A portable modular unit with a bathroom and small learning space will allow our clients and students to actively participate in sports activities on campus knowing shelter and restrooms are just steps away. (\$35,000)
- The Adult Day Program needs a wheelchair-accessible van for community outings such as volunteer work and vocational training. (\$80,000)

About Els for Autism Foundation

The Foundation was established in 2009 by World of Golf Hall of Famer and four-time major champion Ernie Els and his wife Liezl (residents of North Palm Beach, FL) shortly after their son, Ben, was diagnosed with ASD. The Foundation's global mission is to transform the lives of people with autism and those who care for them through lifetime services and collaborative partnerships. Els for Autism locations are in the United States, Canada, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. To help fulfill its mission, the Foundation is developing a state-of-the-art center of excellence in Jupiter, FL, with a local, national, and global reach.

The Els Center of Excellence

The Els Center of Excellence campus is a world-class facility hosting leading-edge programs and services for people on the autism spectrum, their families, and caretakers. The campus contains thoughtfully planned spaces designed to meet the specific needs of individuals with autism—from a possible early diagnosis to their school-aged years, and throughout adulthood. The campus houses two independent Palm Beach County public, tuition-free, charter schools that serve students with autism using evidence-based practices.

- The Rupert Education Wing houses The Learning Center at The Els Center of Excellence, serving students with autism ages 3-14. (www.thelearningcenter.org)
- The Shanken Education Wing houses The Learning Academy at The Els Center of Excellence, serving students with autism ages 14-21. (www.tlacad.org)