COMMUNITY REPORT
2017-2018

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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, and recreational programs as well as residential 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
Dear Friends,

Each year we are pleased to report to you the progress we continue to make at the Els for Autism Foundation.

In 2017, The Els Center of Excellence campus in Jupiter, Florida continued to grow. In August, we opened The Shanken Education Wing for The Learning Academy, a tuition-free Palm Beach County charter school serving students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ages 14 to 21. We now have more than 240 students on campus, ages ranging from 3 to 21! Our showcase Sensory Arts Garden and Pavilion opened in October, and it already has been a tremendous therapeutic and educational nature experience for our students, clients, families and the local community.

The Foundation's Development team concluded the seventh annual Golf Challenge, hitting our fundraising target of $2.9 million. We could not do this successfully year after year without our incredible and dedicated sponsors and fundraising teams. To everyone who participated in this event, we thank you for your continued support.

Our Programs and Services team served over 6,076 individuals with ASD—an amazing 66% increase over 2016. We experienced significant growth across all six of the program's focus areas of education, research, global outreach, recreation, therapy and adult services. Our work impacts more than our local autism community, as our global outreach activities continue to expand.

The Foundation's goals are still in place to construct the remainder of the campus including the Sports, Medical & Research Services and Adult Services facilities. We continue to drive a capital campaign to finance this construction.

Through the Foundation's mission, we are committed to better understanding the aspirations of people with ASD and helping them to fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives.

We are extremely grateful for your generosity and support.

Marvin R. Shanken, Founder and Chairman          Ernie Els, Founder          Liezl Els, Founder and Secretary
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).

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 68 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 Els Center of Excellence is a world-class facility hosting 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 300 students, ages 3 through 21. With all the essential components on one campus, the facility is the perfect hub for a variety of global outreach activities. This ensures that The Els Center of Excellence campus’ positive influence is felt far beyond the boundaries of its walls. Once the campus is completed, the impact will be magnified!

Our 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).
Our five-year strategic plan is an aggressive and purposeful undertaking, focused on the Foundation’s goals of:

- Providing high quality information, intervention, education and support to local, state, national, and international families of diverse cultures
- Providing programs based on best practices and developing innovative interventions through investigative study and analysis
- Engaging in research to further knowledge in the field of autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Establishing funding required to sustain the mission and program goals through grants, donations, and events

Supporting individuals with autism, across their lifespan, requires a significant financial commitment. To achieve our goals, we depend on our donors, sponsors, grants and fundraising activities. We could not do this without you. Together we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families impacted by ASD.

*Unaudited revenue for the calendar year 2017
AUTISM, THE FACTS

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that is caused by differences in how the brain functions. People with ASD may communicate, interact, behave and learn in different ways. Signs of ASD begin during early childhood and usually last throughout a person’s life.

Prevalence

• About 1 in 68 children has been identified with ASD.
• ASD is about 4.5 times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189).
• ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

Risk Factors and Characteristics

• Studies have shown that among identical twins, if one child has ASD, then the other will be affected about 36-95% of the time. In non-identical twins, if one child has ASD, then the other is affected about 0-31% of the time.
• Parents who have a child with ASD have a 2%–18% chance of having a second child who is also affected.
• Children born to older parents are at a higher risk for having ASD.

Diagnosis

• Research has shown that a diagnosis of autism at age 2 can be reliable, valid and stable.
• Even though ASD can be diagnosed as early as age 2 years, most children are not diagnosed with ASD until after age 4 years.
• Studies have shown that parents of children with ASD notice a developmental problem before their child’s first birthday. Concerns about vision and hearing were more often reported in the first year, and differences in social, communication, and fine motor skills were evident from 6 months of age.

Source: Center for Disease Control’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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DR. MARLENE SOTELO
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS
Measuring Success

2017 By The Numbers

EDUCATION
2,145 Conference, Workshop and Seminar Attendees
1,313 TEAM | E-TEAM
The Learning Center: 137 Students (2017-18 school year)
The Learning Academy: 110 Students (2017-18 school year)

GLOBAL OUTREACH
GOALS: 34 Families
Outreach Conferencing Services: 702 Registered Attendees
64 Volunteers | 873 Hours Volunteered
12 Countries

THERAPY
CADI: 7 Evaluations
Spring into Action: 13 Families
BASE: 13 clients | RUBI: 7 Families
Speech & Language Therapy: 23 Clients
Mental Health Services: 5 Clients

RESEARCH
Research Initiatives: 7 Active Projects | 3 Completed Projects
Research Partners: American University in Cairo, Autism Project of Palm Beach County, Biostream, Florida Atlantic University, Golf Trust UK, Institute of Technology Tralee, Keiser University, Nova South Eastern University, University of Central Florida, University of Miami and UNESCO

RECREATION
#GameON Autism ™ Sports Programs U.S.: 96 Participants
#GameON Autism ™ Golf Worldwide: 336 Participants
#GameON Autism Golf Clinics through the Golf Challenge: 40 Participants
Reach and Teach Through the Arts: 90 Participants
Movie Night: 177 Attendees
Summer Camp: 28 Campers

ADULT SERVICES
Work Experience Program | Jupiter Medical Center + PGA Resort & Spa: 31 Participants
Bridge Program: 4 Participants
SALSA Cooking & Fitness Program: 25 Participants
Vocational Rehabilitation: 41 Clients
Spoken Wheel Social Group: 14 Participants
Measuring Success
2017 Milestones

OUR CAMPUS
The Shanken Education Wing opened in August for the beginning of the 2017-18 school year and hosts 110 students attending The Learning Academy (TLA) at The Els Center of Excellence.

The outdoor basketball/tennis play court was completed in September and will be put to good use by both TLA and the Foundation’s Recreation Services staff organizing after-school and summer camp fitness sessions.

The Sensory Arts Garden, an internationally recognized and award-winning space, opened in October and is a tranquil retreat providing a meaningful experience of nature through an exploration and stimulation of the senses.

The Pavilion, a multipurpose classroom/studio for art shows and other gatherings, was completed in October and hosted the 2017 Els for Autism Golf Challenge Grand Finale as its inaugural event.

OUR FUNDRAISING EVENTS
The seventh season of the Els for Autism Golf Challenge took place across 16 events in the U.S. and Canada, raising $2.9 million for the year, for a total of $18.4 million raised since the Golf Challenge was established. In 2017, the Golf challenge expanded its reach by supporting Affiliate Events throughout North America, with outstanding results!

The second annual Awe in Autism Expo took place on March 31st, showcasing the awesome talents of people with autism. The event culminated with an amazing piano performance from Matt Savage, the accomplished musician and composer.

The months of March and April were busy with multiple fundraising events, starting with the Wine Spectator & Cigar Aficionado Pro-Am, which raised over $700,000 for the Foundation. Fun was had at Liezl’s Tea Party, where ladies joined in for an afternoon of fundraising and celebrating the culture of Greece. Light It Up Blue was an enjoyable evening of viewing the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse bathed in blue lights, to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day.

OUR FOUNDATION
The Adult Services Group expanded the Work Experience Program to a partnership with Jupiter Medical Center, in addition to the existing partnership with PGA Resort & Spa. 31 adults with developmental disabilities participated in these 18-week work experience programs, with the goal of gaining valuable job training in healthcare or hospitality environments, enhancing social skills in the workplace and learning skills to obtain paid employment. As a Florida Vocational RehabilitationSupported Employment provider, the Foundation assisted 21 of the program participants to seek paid employment opportunities and provided job support, once hired.

In April, over 175 professionals, self-advocates and community leaders gathered for a two-day conference, hosted by the Foundation. The conference featured presentations from leaders in autism science, practice and public policy from around the globe. The Autism Innovations and Global Impact Conference: The State of the Science more than delivered on its promise to inspire and motivate attendees. The next conference hosted by the Foundation is targeted for May 2019 and will focus on teaching companies how to recruit, employ and retain employees with autism and other related developmental disorders.

ASD can be diagnosed as early as age two years, yet most children are not diagnosed until after the age of 4. The Foundation’s therapy staff hopes to change this with their focus on early intervention and diagnosis. In 2017, the Foundation conducted seven Collaborative Autism Diagnosis and Intervention (CADI) assessments and has a goal to see this number increase significantly in 2018, as early identification allows children to enroll in programs that improve social, cognitive, language and academic outcomes.
EDUCATION
Providing learning opportunities for individuals with ASD as well as parents, university students and professionals, both onsite and online.

Teaching Educational Autism Methods (TEAM)
The TEAM service provides learning opportunities for university students seeking placement for internships, externships, practicum work and student teaching. Our E-TEAM digital resource library, online presentations and webinars on a variety of topics and, in several languages, are accessible to parents and professionals around the world. Presentations included in the E-TEAM digital resource library range from assessment and diagnosis to guardianship and employment. To access the digital resource library, go to: elsforautism.org/webinars

RESEARCH
Supporting the continued understanding of effective interventions for individuals with ASD.

The Foundation’s research is designed to support the continued understanding of effective interventions for individuals with ASD. Research topics include early identification and intervention, sports and fitness, and the application of evidence-based interventions for adults.

GLOBAL OUTREACH
Serving as a hub for the autism community to disseminate best practices, while providing direct services to families from around the world.

Global Outreach Autism Learning Services (GOALS)
The GOALS program provides families around the world the opportunity to access a highly qualified transdisciplinary team of professionals that work together to develop unique, individualized programs for children with ASD, along with direct coaching and training of parents and therapists. The GOALS program is available either at The Center or by video conferencing.

Outreach Conferencing Services
The Center’s state-of-the art auditorium serves as a hub for professionals in the field of ASD to disseminate and gather research findings, best practices, and connect the global autism community via lectures and video conferencing. The Foundation hosts conferences to facilitate sharing of best practices.
An active lifestyle is essential for a healthy mind, body and spirit.

**Ernie Els #GameON Autism™ Golf**
This golf program is especially tailored for individuals on the spectrum. Infused with evidence-based practices for teaching golf to people with ASD, #GameON Autism Golf is designed to build self-esteem and confidence in a fun, welcoming and supportive environment. The program encourages participants to learn golf skills while practicing specific autism learning concepts including communication, emotional regulation, motor and social skills.

**Ernie Els #GameON Autism Fitness**
This program is an innovative, family-supportive, research-based fitness and wellness program for individuals with ASD. It incorporates the use of traditional fitness equipment, music and dance as a means of motivating student participation in fitness activities including cardiovascular, strength training, flexibility and common recess games.

**Soccer**
A team sport that teaches children on the spectrum to work on physical and social skills. Peer buddies are an integral part of this program.

**Tennis**
A structured tennis learning experience that includes basic strokes, eye hand coordination, racket handling, and components of the game-based process.

**Yoga**
Special needs Yoga/Fitness enhances stamina, flexibility, energy, and strength in a fun and motivating social environment. Classes include warm ups, breathing exercises, developmentally appropriate yoga poses and relaxation techniques, while offering a full body experience of physical fitness and philosophical traditions of yoga.

**Reach & Teach Through the Arts**
A unique therapeutic and creative arts program featuring music, art and dance therapy, tailored specifically to the unique interests and needs of individuals on the autism spectrum. Exploration of music, art and dance can facilitate personal growth for people on the spectrum in many areas, including gross and fine motor skills, speech, and language through song, memory and mental agility, social skills, confidence, and self-expression.

**Movie Night**
The first Friday of the month, join us at The Center in the auditorium for a great movie, popcorn, activities and a lot of FUN.
THERAPY SERVICES

The Foundation’s Therapy Programs and Services utilize evidence-based practices for individuals on the autism spectrum and other related disorders. Therapeutic programs are offered across disciplines, to individuals of all ages.

**Behavior Analytic Services and Education (BASE)**
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the application of the principles of learning and behavior to bring about a change in behavior that is socially significant. The Foundation’s BASE program provides individualized, 1:1 ABA services across age ranges. Programs may be designed to increase appropriate communication, social, adaptive and vocational behaviors and decrease inappropriate or challenging behaviors.

- **Parent Training for Disruptive Behaviors** The RUBI Autism Network parent education program teaches parents to use techniques in applied behavior analysis to manage their child’s challenging behaviors. The program was created for families of children with ASD between 3-10 years of age, who display challenging behaviors, and is available either at The Center or by video conferencing.

- **Picky Eating Services** A systematic, step-by-step procedure is used to introduce new foods into the diets of children who are picky eaters. This program is designed for children who eat a limited number of foods, with no medical reason associated with this behavior.

**Speech and Language Therapy**
Services provide individuals with access to speech, language and a means to communicate their wants, needs, thoughts and feelings. The objective is to optimize an individual’s ability to communicate, thereby improving quality of life.

**Mental Health Counseling**
Services offer support to individuals and families experiencing mental health issues associated with living with a disability. Individual and group counseling services are specifically designed to address issues with depressive symptoms, anxiety, social isolation, and other comorbid diagnoses. The objective is to improve one’s overall quality of life and increase community participation.

**Occupational Therapy**
Services support and promote an individual’s ability to participate in daily life activities including play/leisure, social participation and functional self-care, as well as facilitates development of fine motor skills, visual motor integration, bilateral coordination, motor planning and sensory processing.

**Early Education, Intervention and Diagnostic Programs**
Early identification of ASD allows children to enroll in intervention programs that improve social, cognitive, language and academic outcomes.

- **Spring into Action Programs (SIA)** SIA programs are early education services designed to support young children with ASD and their families. Evidence-based practices are used to develop programs to foster early foundational learning, communication and social skills for a child, as well as provide education and support to parents. Available programs include 1:1 ABA or speech and language therapy and individual or group parent-child education programs, for children through 5 years of age. The Foundation’s team of highly skilled professionals individualize programs, using the most current practices and methods. The programs are designed to address social communication, language, play and pre-academic skills.

- **Collaborative Autism Diagnosis and Intervention Program (CADI)** Our team of highly skilled professionals provides a comprehensive evaluation that not only aids the family’s pediatrician in determining if a formal diagnosis of ASD is warranted, but can also be used to develop individualized treatment goals.
ADULT SERVICES
These Programs and Services are for adults with developmental disabilities ages 18+ who have completed high school.

Work Experience Program
The Foundation offers an 18-week Work Experience Program to prepare adults with ASD or related developmental disability, who are seeking employment in hospitality or healthcare industries. Participants gain experience working twice a week with job coach support, and are encouraged to attend Job Club to learn pre-employment skills such as applying for a job, interview skills, obtaining letters of recommendation, teamwork, first impressions, self-advocacy, getting along with co-workers, handling criticism and customer service. For those needing additional skills before training in the community, we offer an on-campus intensive Bridge Program.

Applicants must have a goal of paid employment upon completion of the program, and must apply for supported employment services through the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Foundation is a Vocational Rehabilitation provider for Employment Services.

Social Club
The Spoken Wheel Society for adults is led by individuals with ASD, creating a network of peers and friendships that allow members to showcase their individual strengths and strive for a greater independence. The group meets at The Els Center of Excellence with the Adult Services Case Manager once a month. During the monthly meeting, members make plans for social gatherings together in the community.

Special Adults Life Skills Academy (SALSA)
The SALSA cooking and fitness program is designed to increase knowledge and skills related to nutrition, cooking and fitness. In the cooking portion of the class, participants use a recipe to prepare a meal, while working on identifying ingredients, improving motor and communication skills and complying with safety standards. During fitness, participants will participate in the Ernie Els #GameON Autism™ Fitness Program, which was designed as a comprehensive program for individuals with ASD to deliver fitness instruction related to different physical activities and specific autism focused learning concepts. At the end of cooking and fitness, participants will join to enjoy a well-earned meal together.

Family Roundtables
Roundtable discussions are for parents and/or families to share experiences. This is not a seminar hosted by experts, but rather a discussion between families. The discussions can make families better prepared and more informed to make decisions and access community resources. Roundtable discussions and social gatherings (i.e. cooking classes for parents) are held monthly at The Els Center of Excellence.
The Els Center of Excellence campus is currently comprised of four buildings:

**The Administrative Building** hosts the Foundation staff offices, 300-seat auditorium, meeting rooms and spaces to conduct therapy sessions.

**The Rupert Education Wing** hosts The Learning Center at The Els Center of Excellence, a tuition-free, nonprofit, Palm Beach County public charter school, serving students with autism ages 3-14. The school’s curriculum is based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and provides quality special education programs that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student. The goal for every student is to maximize his or her potential using evidence-based practices. [www.thelearningcenter.org](http://www.thelearningcenter.org)

**The Shanken Education Wing** hosts The Learning Academy at The Els Center of Excellence, a tuition-free, non-profit, Palm Beach County public charter high school serving students with autism ages 14-21. The Learning Academy’s mission is “Preparation for Life After School” and the school helps individuals with ASD in the areas of academics, vocational, functional life skills, social and communication skills. [www.tlacad.org](http://www.tlacad.org)

**The Pavilion** is a multipurpose classroom/studio for art shows, and other gatherings and, is equipped with a full catering kitchen.

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**Additionally, the campus contains:**

**Courtyard**
26,000 square feet, fence enclosed, central area with grass and sidewalks

**Golf Course**
Practice facility featuring 3 greens and 9 holes

**Two playgrounds**

**Sensory Arts Garden** A therapeutic and educational destination for children and adults of all abilities

**Outdoor basketball/tennis play court**
Building Momentum FOR THE FUTURE

To complete the campus, a major capital funding campaign is underway. Plans include:

### Medical and Research Services Facility

An on-campus building to host medical services and to research the nature of ASD and study cutting-edge treatments. The Foundation will create partnerships with prestigious medical and research institutions, and through these partnerships, will deliver indispensable research and solutions for improving the quality of life of those with ASD. This facility will be the focus for:

**Medical Services** Working with experts in neurology, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, mental health consulting services and behavior analysis, the Foundation will provide a continuum of treatment services for individuals with ASD from birth through their lifetime. Telemedicine suites will allow access to top experts in various fields of medicine including; gastroenterology, immunology and psychiatry to list a few.

**Applied Research** Developing practical and real-time solutions to improve the quality of life for those with ASD.

**Global Outreach** Extending the work accomplished, nationally and internationally, beyond the campus boundaries.

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### Sports Facility

An active lifestyle is essential for a healthy mind, body and spirit. The Sports Facility will feature; an airconditioned gymnasium, athletic field and an aquatic center with a swimming pool.

Why a swimming pool? From 2009 to 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91% of total U.S. deaths reported in children with an ASD ages 14 and younger. The Foundation recognizes the importance of teaching swimming skills in environments like South Florida, with many water sources including pools, beaches, lakes and canals. Being able to provide swimming lessons, to our clients at an early age, will enable the Foundation staff to teach this critical life-skill in a positive and safe environment.

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### Adult Services Facility

An on-campus building for individuals ages 18+ with autism or other related disorders. The Adult Services Facility will be the venue for the following activities:

**Supported Employment** Providing job assessment, training/coaching and opportunities. Establishing on campus microbusinesses for employment opportunities.

**Business Partnerships** Partnering with area businesses to employ trained individuals with ASD.

**Social Services** Organizing social groups, activities and life-skill instructional classes including; Special Adults Life Skills Academy (SALSA), Job Club and the Community Access Training Program.

**Self-Advocacy** Working with individuals with ASD to create “individual life plans.” Reviews will track progress to the goals with the individual and family.

**Supported Living** Rooms with private bathrooms and a common living/dining area will serve as training areas for individuals with ASD to learn independent living skills such as housekeeping, grocery shopping, food preparation and community access. A secondary use of the rooms will be for emergency respite for short-term support.

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[1] Study: Guan 2017/Injury Mortality in Individuals with Autism
When the Els for Autism Foundation was founded, the vision statement was: Els for Autism is a game-changing resource, delivering and facilitating programs that are leading examples of what can be available to people with ASD.

Today, this vision has become a reality for one family. Meet the Menezes De Castro Lima family; Ivy, Bruno and their twin sons, Theo and Caio. Ivy and Bruno are originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and have lived in many places as Bruno’s job as an airline pilot has taken them around the world. While living in Qatar on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf, Ivy and Bruno noticed the two boys, at the age of 18 months, were developing at startlingly different rates. They took the boys to Brazil to meet with doctors where Theo was given a diagnosis of autism. In Qatar, because of the lack of awareness and understanding regarding autism, therapy services were not available or accessible to Theo. As Theo’s needs began to increase, Ivy and Bruno needed a solution. Ivy joined an online group specifically for mothers who have children with autism. In asking for recommendations on locations offering the best services, Ivy and Bruno were told to go to the U.S.

In February of 2016, Ivy and Bruno came to South Florida. They explored different organizations offering programs and services for children with special needs from Miami up through Palm Beach County. When they toured The Els Center of Excellence and met the program staff at the Els for Autism Foundation, they felt it might be a good fit. They decided to commit to a month to receive intensive services through the Foundation’s Global Outreach and Learning Services (GOALS) program, so Theo could start receiving the speech-language, occupational and ABA therapies he required.

During the month they were receiving intensive therapeutic services, Ivy had an inspirational experience. She was taking Theo to one of his first therapy session and was met outside The Center entrance by the Foundation’s Director of Clinical Services, Erin Lozzott. Ivy wanted to get Theo to the therapist and not be late. Erin diverted her to get a cup of coffee from a food truck, called Foodies for Autism, parked in front of The Center. When Ivy ordered her coffee, the teenager taking the order did not look at her in the eye. Suddenly, she realized why Erin had brought her to the
food truck. The students taking orders and payment, making change, serving the coffee and replenishing the supplies, were all individuals with autism. She was astounded, as she was not aware programs existed to prepare teenagers and adults with autism to be productive in society. She became so impressed with the way the Foundation was working with the teenagers, she realized that Theo would have a bright future. Ivy said the experience, “warmed my soul.”

After the month at the Foundation, and seeing how much progress Theo had made, they decided to move Ivy, Theo and Caio from Qatar to Jupiter, Florida. Ivy and Bruno submitted the paperwork to be placed in the lottery waiting list for The Learning Center and soon found out that Theo's name had been selected for an opening in a pre-school classroom. For Ivy and Bruno, it is an assurance knowing the schools, The Learning Center (for ages 3-14) and The Learning Academy (for ages 14-21) and the quality of therapy services provided by the Foundation will be available to Theo, now six years old, through to his adult life. On The Els Center of Excellence campus, Theo can receive the integrated programs and continuity of therapy services he requires.

“I feel like we are at the right place, at the right time for Theo,” Bruno said. For the 2017-18 school year, Theo is attending The Learning Center and Caio is happily situated in a school a half mile away from The Center so for Ivy, getting both boys off to school, has become routine.

It is not an uncomplicated life for Ivy and Bruno, as Bruno’s job as a pilot for Qatar Airways has the family living half-the-world apart. Bruno is able to fly a route into the Miami International Airport which has him being with his family a few days each month. Ivy is a volunteer at the Foundation and has done a multitude of different projects including translating several of the Foundation’s online presentations and webinars into Portuguese, so that the information can be accessed more widely. She also serves as a translator and facilitator for other Portuguese speaking families seeking services from the Foundation.

In the long-term both Ivy and Bruno would like to make Jupiter their permanent home as they enjoy the community, the culture, the weather (even the humid Florida summers which are like the weather in their home country of Brazil) and, of course, the progress Theo is making from his therapy services and attending school at The Learning Center. “I come from a family that is very positive,” Ivy said. “There is no sad part about having a child with special needs.”
HOW TO GET INVOLVED

PLAN YOUR GREATEST LEGACY
Planned Giving is a way to make charitable gifts, enabling you to arrange philanthropic contributions in ways that maximize your personal objectives. By establishing a planned gift, you can secure the Foundation’s mission, not for just one year or generation, but in perpetuity. While you plan your legacy, help improve the future of people with ASD at the same time. The Foundation’s development staff is here to help you consider strategies to meet your financial needs, while making a lasting impact. Please contact Pam Minelli at 561-320-9528 or pam.minelli@elsforautism.org

FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Els for Autism Golf Challenge
One of the largest charity-driven, amateur golf tournaments, 2018 kicks-off the Els for Autism Golf Challenge’s 8th year. The Golf Challenge consists of 15+ regional events at top-rated golf courses across the U.S. and Canada from May through September. Teams who raise $13,000 or more qualify to attend the Grand Finale in Palm Beach, Florida in October.

Wine Spectator & Cigar Aficionado Pro-AM
Every year, top tour pros are joined by an enthusiastic group of amateurs, thrilled to be inside the ropes with a legendary cast of some of the greatest names in golf, along with sponsorships from a panel of prestige brands. This event, sponsored by Wine Spectator & Cigar Aficionado, is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2018.

Liezl’s Tea Party
Annually, a group of ladies are invited into the Els’ home to celebrate a new country and culture. Guests are always encouraged to dress the country theme as they join Liezl Els for an afternoon of fundraising. Liezl’s Tea is also celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2018, with a Moroccan theme.

Light It Up Blue
During Autism Awareness Month in April, we ‘Light It Up Blue’ with a landmark in the Jupiter community as a fundraising effort and to raise awareness of ASD.

Awe in Autism Expo
In April, we celebrate the awesome talents of people with autism. Open to the public, the expo features; an artist gallery, micro business products from people with special needs or supporting special needs, book signing, guest speakers and live performances.
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. The focus of the 2018 Annual Giving Program is the Sensory Arts Garden at The Els Center of Excellence. This internationally recognized and award-winning garden is a tranquil retreat that provides a meaningful experience of nature through exploration and stimulation of the senses.

**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 class rooms, the pavilion, gymnasium and swimming pool, to name just a few.

**Commemorative Brick Program**
Help us “Pave the Way” by having 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.

**Auditorium Seats**
The 300-seat, state-of-the-art auditorium is not only used for school related performances and events but is the heart of The Center’s global outreach programs. Become part of our future by naming an auditorium seat: VIP Gold Section: $5,000/seat | Blue Section: $1,000/seat

**Volunteer**
Volunteers are an essential and invaluable resource to the Foundation. Our volunteers share a common desire to make a difference by committing time and/or sharing expertise to positively impact the lives of individuals and families affected by ASD.

**Book An Event**
The Els Center of Excellence campus has many versatile spaces, both indoor and outdoor, available to rent for many types of events. 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.

For more information on how to get involved, please visit our website www.elsforautism.org or contact Pam Minelli, Director of Development, at 561-320-9528 or pam.minelli@elsforautism.org
The Autism SPECTRUM Award

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.

Els for Autism Foundation announced the 2017 Autism Spectrum Award recipient at the annual Els for Autism Golf Challenge Grand Finale Oct. 27, 2017 in Palm Beach, Florida. Previous winners include Joshua Deer and Gloria Mendoza.

AWARD NOMINATIONS

Criteria

- Open to any adult, age 18 and older, who identifies as having an autism spectrum disorder
- Significant achievement in their own personal context
- An inspiration to other people with autism and a catalyst for helping people with autism fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives
- In any area of endeavor (arts, employment, community service, recreation, etc.)
- The nominee has given consent for a nomination

To nominate an individual for the Autism Spectrum Award visit www.elsforautism.org/the-spectrum-award/

"I hope to inspire children of the next generation. "
- Rachel Barcellona

Rachel Barcellona is a compelling advocate for people with disabilities. Currently, Rachel is the international spokesperson for the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) at the University of South Florida and was recently elected to their executive board of directors. She was named ambassador for the Unicorn Children's Foundation and works with this international organization to help people with neurodiversity. Rachel is a member of the International Thespian Honor Society and is an honor student and vocalist who loves to sing opera. Congratulations to Rachel Barcellona!