

The Autism Society Launches New Brand with Accessibility Standards, Created with the Autism Community

Rockville, MD -- The Autism Society has launched a new brand developed with the Autism community in an inclusive process that ensures accessibility standards for those seeking connection to resources, support and community.

Over the course of a year, 150 individuals in the Autism community participated in the brand development. This includes Autistic self-advocates across the spectrum, parents, siblings and caregivers to those with Autism at all life stages, professionals and researchers in the field, and many leaders across the Autism Society's affiliate network. This significant number of participants helped shape the new brand from early research to final delivery of the look, feel, tone, and accessibility standards.

"We got involved in the brand process because our three sons all have Autism, and our local affiliate, the Autism Society of Central Virginia, has been an incredible resource for our family," said Kate and Gary Fletcher of Richmond, Virginia.

Portland, Oregon-based Watson Creative was tapped to develop a brand that could bridge the diverse experiences across the Autism spectrum. Watson's research-based creative process included interviews, focus groups, and the use of advisory councils, which developed an understanding of the depth, diversity, and complexity of needs within the Autism community.

"After hearing from so many people, we were struck by the enormity of this task – creating a brand that serves a huge, diverse audience," said Matt Waston, CEO and Executive Creative Director of Watson Creative. *"We needed to thread the needle to empower and support people across the spectrum with something grounded, actionable and true."*



The brand also had to serve as an accessible space welcome to all. To do so, it was designed to eliminate structural barriers to resources and information, and to create inclusive practices that support the diverse needs of the Autism community.

The Watson team reviewed all colors, fonts and shapes using the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) to ensure that any individual engaging with the Autism Society and those seeking resources could easily access information without visual, auditory or other sensory barriers. Individuals, families and professionals were consulted throughout the process to test and measure the impact of each design choice along the way.

“In our conversations with members of the Autism community, the one thing that kept repeating was a sense of disconnection – disconnected to opportunities, to basic needs, it was universal,” Said Mr. Watson. *“So, connection was the universal response to these disconnected experiences.”*

The work resulted in an inclusive color system, “threads” that visually tie in our story of connection with line fluidity that helps create a calm, visual stimulation. In addition, the portrait photography authentically captures people within the Autism community, amplifying true representation in the brand’s visual components. The new logo weaves the colors and threads to create a visual that represents individuality and unique experiences that are simultaneously interconnected and woven into the greater Autism community.





“For us, it’s important that the brand creates visibility for the wide spectrum of individuals with Autism. There are self-advocates living fully independent lives, and then there are families like ours, where our children will need significant support throughout their lives. We want to see more connections being made between these groups,” said the Fletchers.

The Autism Society’s new brand will support the organization, including the 75 affiliates across the country, as it aims to deliver its mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. Whether an individual with Autism advocates with the organization or a parent of a newly diagnosed child comes seeking information – the brand is designed to support a person’s emotional, practical, and intellectual needs to build and foster connections.

*“No matter how you engage with the Autism Society, we want you to feel welcome, included and connected to the resources, support and community you are looking for,” said Autism Society of America’s President and CEO, Christopher Banks. “That’s why I am so deeply inspired by our new tagline - **The Connection is You™**. This is a call to action for every one of us in the Autism community to create connections intentionally. When you come to the Autism Society looking for information, you are the connection. When you create a local support group for fathers of Autistic children, you are the connection. When you are an Autistic self-advocate showing up to share your story for policy changes, you are the connection.”*

About Autism Society Baltimore-Chesapeake

The Autism Society’s mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. As the nation’s oldest leading grassroots Autism organization, the Autism Society and its 75 local affiliates serve over half a million members of the Autism community each year. It envisions a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it - including education, advocacy efforts, and supports and services throughout the lifespan for more information, go to www.autismsociety.org, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).