

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-78**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION DECLARING PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS, AND URGING ACTION BY NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESSES, AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES CONSISTENT WITH THESE PRINCIPLES.

**WHEREAS**, April is National Autism Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to reflect on the inherent dignity of all human beings, and the importance of including and accommodating and accepting children and adults on the autism spectrum, as well as children and adults with other special needs and disabilities in all aspects of daily life; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 1 in 44 children have an autism spectrum disorder according to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which supports inclusion and accommodation of children and adults with special needs and disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Convention has identified the following core principles of inclusion:

- a. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- b. Non-discrimination;
- c. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- d. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- e. Equality of opportunity;
- f. Accessibility;
- g. Equality between men and women;
- h. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities; and

**WHEREAS**, inclusion is an attitude, an approach, and a mindset, which welcomes and facilitates participation by those with disabilities and special needs, and encourages accommodations beyond those required by law; and

**WHEREAS**, the City and the Coral Gables Police Department's commitment is also demonstrated through its work developing an Autism-Related Standard Operating Procedure for Coral Gables police officers, which is intended to set standards nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Police Department, to further autism education and promote inclusion, acceptance and understanding, has wrapped a City Police Vehicle that is assigned to one of its police officers, whose brother has autism, with the autism logo; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is committed to integrated employment and has partnered with Best Buddies to hire individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to help people with IDD reach their full potential and become as independent as possible and the City is also working with the Chamber so that City businesses can deliver meaningful employment, fair wages, and career advancement for individuals with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City in April of 2021 launched its GUIDE Program. The GUIDE Program is a voluntary program offered to residents with individuals and/or "special circumstances," who live within the City. Residents or parents/legal guardians of a resident can provide information about themselves or about the resident that they are registering that can be crucial to GUIDE the City's first responders to more effectively interact with that individual. Understanding the enrolled individual's disability or complex medical need prior to responding to a scene, allows first responders to continue acting with care and diligence while providing more efficient services, primarily in cases involving safely locating an enrolled individual; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's commitment to the principles of inclusion also can be seen in the City's Community Recreation Department, where all programs are inclusive, and the Department among many other programs/activities started a Community Bocce Program for all ages and abilities, has inclusive music and dance programs, had sensory friendly days at the Holiday Park, and opened its first all inclusive playground in October of 2021 (Salvadore Park); and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Community Recreation Department also recently launched My Squad. My Squad is a monthly social gathering hosted by the City for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism. The activities change every month. Past activities have included game night, karaoke night, fishing, and decorating cookies during the holidays; and

**WHEREAS**, the City further demonstrates its commitment to inclusion through its Advisory Board on Disability Affairs, which advises and provides input to City staff regarding matters affecting individuals with disabilities in Coral Gables in an effort to support full inclusion and accommodation; and

**WHEREAS**, the City also demonstrates its commitment to inclusion through the Special Needs Initiative being spearheaded by its School & Community Relations Committee, in conjunction with Miami-Dade Public Schools and UM-NSU CARD, which is actively seeking to promote inclusion of individuals with special needs, and provide additional educational, residential, occupational, and recreational opportunities in doing so; and

**WHEREAS**, with participation from the Disability Affairs Board and the School & Community Relations Committee, the City is working with Miami-Dade County Public Schools so that Miami-Dade County Public Schools offers self-contained classrooms for students with disabilities in public elementary and middle schools located within City boundaries; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's commitment is also demonstrated in the passage of a Resolution declaring principles of inclusion for individuals with Autism and other special needs in April of 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021, as well as passage of a Resolution declaring principles of inclusion for all individuals with disabilities, passed by the City Commission in October of 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, City Hall will be lit up in blue on April 2, 2022, for World Autism Awareness Day in support of understanding and acceptance for individuals with autism;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES:**

**SECTION 1.** The foregoing "Whereas" clauses are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made a specific part of this Resolution upon adoption hereof.

**SECTION 2.** The City expresses its commitment to the principles of inclusion of children and adults with special needs and disabilities in all aspects of its governance and services, and seeks to welcome and facilitate such participation.

**SECTION 3.** The City urges businesses to express their commitment to the principles of inclusion in both employment and commerce.

**SECTION 4.** The City urges developers, homeowner associations, and condominium associations to adopt policies supporting the principles of inclusion in residential communities.

**SECTION 5.** The City urges universities and other places of learning to prioritize programs supporting inclusion of individuals with special needs and disabilities.

**SECTION 6.** The City urges national, state, and local governments to express their commitment to the principles of inclusion as well, and to continue expanding services to children and adults with special needs and disabilities.

**SECTION 7.** The Advisory Board on Disability Affairs is commended for its excellent work in this area and is directed to review the City's initiatives to promote inclusion on an ongoing basis, and provide input to City staff to assist the City in fulfilling this goal.

**SECTION 8.** The School and Community Relations Board is commended for its excellent work in this area as well and is directed to continue its Special Needs Initiative and to continue working with Miami-Dade Public Schools and UM-NSU CARD to expand opportunities in Coral Gables for individuals with special needs and disabilities.

**SECTION 9.** The City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Florida League of Cities, Florida Association of Counties, Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Miami-Dade County, Miami- Dade Public Schools, and municipalities in Miami-Dade County.

**SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Resolution shall become effective upon its passage and adoption hereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS TWELFTH DAY OF APRIL, A.D., 2022.


(Moved: Menendez / Seconded: Fors, Jr.)

(Yeas: Mena, Menendez, Anderson, Fors, Jr., Lago)

(Unanimous: 5-0 Vote)


(Agenda Item: I-2)

APPROVED:

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VINCE LAGO  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BILLY Y. URQUIA  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

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MIRIAM SOLER RAMOS  
CITY ATTORNEY