



Autism Society Canada proudly celebrates World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) April 2nd 2009

EMBARGO for March 31st, 2009

March 31, 2009 Ottawa – Autism Society Canada, a leading national voice for the autism community in Canada, is proud to propose a *Canadian Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism* in celebration of World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) on April 2nd. Our ultimate goal is to one day adopt the Canadian Charter, recognizing the inherent Rights of all Canadians living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The international community is now recognizing that Autism is a growing global crisis. The world's governments have responded with action:

- Europe: *Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism* presented at the 4th Autism-Europe Congress in Den Haag on May 10th, 1992 and subsequently adopted as a Written Declaration by the European Parliament on May 9th, 1996.
- United States: The *Combating Autism Act of 2006*, a landmark piece of legislation, authorizes nearly \$1 billion in expenditures over five years to help families with autism through screening, education, early intervention, prompt referrals for treatment and services, and research. President Obama also singles out autism within his White House Disabilities Agenda as an area requiring special attention.
- South Asia: *South Asian Charter of Rights of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (January 2008) references the United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thereby reminding the international community that it is the responsibility of UN signatories to the convention to ensure that people with disabilities within their borders are able to enjoy these Rights.
- UK: The Parliament of the United Kingdom recently voted on an *Autism Bill*, now in committee stage, which aims to provide better information about the numbers of people with autism and their needs and to improve the local planning and delivery of services (February 2009).

ASC looks forward to working together with autism stakeholders to present, discuss, and ratify the *Canadian Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism*.

Autism Society Canada joins hands with its CASDA Alliance members - Autism Canada Foundation, ASD – Canadian-American Research Consortium, Autism Speaks Canada, Autism Treatment Services of Canada, Geneva Centre for Autism - along with National and International Autism Organizations to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day. Together, we can give a voice to the millions of individuals worldwide who are undiagnosed, misunderstood and looking for treatment, services and support.

On World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) let's join together to celebrate the acceptance and understanding of individuals living with an ASD while we shine a bright light on autism as a growing global issue. The time for Autism Awareness is now!

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