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AUTISM in the wild
Building Trusting Relationships Between First Responders and Individuals with Disabilities

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About Us

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The ISAAC Foundation, Spokane, WA
• Founder and Executive Director since 2007
• Columnist writer for Spokane CDA Living Magazine
• Autism parent

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Spokane Fire Department
• Paramedic Firefighter for City of Spokane since 1999
• Fire Investigation Lieutenant (Special Investigation Unit)
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Objectives

• Identify common perceptions that detrimentally impact relationships between individuals with disabilities and first responders
• Understand methods for using special needs station visits to improve relationships between disabled citizens and first responders
• Understand why first responders who participate in advanced disability training are more likely to respond with greater skill and understanding when working with people with developmental and intellectual disabilities
An analysis of the 2013-2015 media coverage reporting death by police force suggests that half of individuals killed by police suffer from a disability. Of the 282 reviewed reports involving police violence toward disabled individuals, 21.6% involved individuals affected by autism, down syndrome, and intellectual and developmental disabilities, accounting for 61 incidents.

THE ISAAC FOUNDATION and The Spokane Fire Department developed the Autism in the Wild Program focused on bringing training to City and County First Responders, provide emergency education strategies to parents and caregivers, and create opportunities for individuals, with autism and other disabilities, to learn in a positive environment how to appropriately interact with first responders as a means of avoiding preventable conflicts which is less stressful to the individual and more informed community.

In 2015, Spokane Fire Department tested the pilot of the Autism in the Wild: Community Based First Responder Program.

In 2016, Spokane Police Department began its partnership with the Autism in the Wild: Community Based First Responder Program.
PHASE ONE: First Responders Training
PHASE TWO: ISAAC Alert
PHASE THREE: Special Needs Station Visits
PHASE FOUR: Emergency Preparedness
Workshops for Parents/caregivers

Community-Based First Responder Program

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- Desensitize and prepare special needs individuals to appropriately interact with First Responders in a fun and stress-free environment.
- Teach interaction skills to individuals with autism and other disabilities.
- Give First Responders an opportunity to gain experience interacting with individuals affected by ASD and other disorders in a real-time environment.

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core elements of a STATION VISIT

- Uniform identification
- Jobs of first responders
- Response vehicles

Station visit duration: maximum of 45 minutes
High functioning individuals with ASD and other disabilities have fear and anxiety of first responder encounters for fear of making social mistakes.

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station visit CORE SKILLS

- Fist bumps – no hugs
- Bubble space
- Back seat - not front seats
- Show body fronts – not backs

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first responder UNIFORMS
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**Supplies**

- Fist bumps: smarties, Hershey kisses, tootsie roll, stickers, stamps
- External motivators for participating in activities: bubbles or fidgets (see left)
- Transitions: Balloons and bubbles

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*REPETITION* is the key to success
You'll see a portrait of a boy. He is not how important these stories are yet. We need to grow and understand his photo until the end of this presentation. It's not just the Department of Transportation when the police officer arrives and when the pedestrian accident is cleared up and we're told it's an accident. It's the report that's needed, not the story. It's the report that's needed, not the story. It's the report that's needed, not the story.

- Amber Davis, Autism Parent

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TRAINING for first responders

Individuals with AUTISM and other developmental and intellectual disabilities are 7 TIMES more likely to encounter a 911 emergency than the general public
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Find responders who participate in advanced disability training are more likely to respond with greater skill and understanding when working with people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

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Dear colleagues, I'm extremely impressed. I have had first-hand experience with this subject matter. I really appreciate the time and effort you put into this.

Vi Hart, SpartanNet Project Manager

I am very pleased by the improvements we have made. I cannot stress enough how much this has affected our ability to deal with people. Thank you for your time.

Department of Defence, SpartanNet

This will be a very helpful tool in dealing with disability in the R&D field. It will definitely help us in interpreting the results obtained during the experiment.

Omar Khayyam, Keyport Head, R&D

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