



City Hall set to “turn blue” for autism

Hamilton, Bermuda, March 24, 2010 – City Hall, Hamilton will join some of the world’s most famous buildings in “turning blue” on April 1 to mark World Autism Awareness Day and the start of Autism Awareness Month.

Hamilton’s famous landmark will “light up blue” along with buildings such as the Empire State Building in New York City and the CN Tower in Toronto, Canada which will be lit up as part of a worldwide “Light It Up Blue” campaign. The campaign, organised by Autism Speaks, a US-based autism science and advocacy organisation, aims to “shine a light” on autism as a growing global health crisis.

The Mayor of Hamilton, Charles Gosling said, “The Corporation of Hamilton is honoured to support the start of Autism Awareness Month. City Hall, together with hundreds of iconic buildings around the world, will be lit by blue lights to help raise awareness of and support for the issues affecting autism families. The lights of City Hall will be turned on at 7:30pm on Thursday April 1 and will stay lit for the entire month.”

Earlier in the day, at 12.30 p.m., City Hall will be the location for an official proclamation by Acting Health Minister the Hon. Zane DeSilva, J.P., M.P., declaring April 1 as World Autism Awareness Day. *[Note: The event is being marked in Bermuda on April 1 this year because of the Good Friday holiday on April 2.]*

Jenny Purvey, President of Bermuda Autism Support and Education, said: “We are delighted that Autism Speaks has reached out to Bermuda and that the Corporation of Hamilton has responded so positively in helping to raise awareness of this critical health issue. We would like to encourage other members of the community to ‘go blue’ during April to show their support too.”

Ideas for Light It Blue events can be found at www.lightitupblue.org. Suggestions include:

- Change your Facebook profile picture to the Light It Up Blue logo and tag at least 10 of your friends.
- Post on your blog about how you are “lighting it up blue” to raise autism awareness.
- Add the Light It Up Blue logo to your e-mail signature ... and type your e-mails in blue!
- On April 2 wear blue clothing and ask co-workers, schools and friends to wear blue too. Take photos and add them to the Light It Blue online gallery.
- Bake puzzle piece-shaped cookies – to reflect the puzzle icon used by many autism organisations - and frost them with blue icing for friends, family, co-workers or place of worship to raise autism awareness.

The April 1 proclamation endorses a United Nations General Assembly’s 2007 resolution declaring World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) to be celebrated on April 2 every year. This UN Resolution is one of the few official disease or disorder-specific UN Days and aims to bring the world’s attention to autism, a pervasive and complex brain disorder that affects tens of millions around the world.

Autism inhibits a person’s ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by extreme behavioural challenges. Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 91 children according to recent statistics by American Academy of Pediatric Journal. The prevalence of autism has increased tenfold in the last decade and more children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes, and cancer combined.

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For more details about these events and BASE, visit www.bermudaautism.org or contact Jenny Purvey, President 534-4376 or basebda@yahoo.com

For more details about autism and World Autism Awareness Day, visit: <http://www.worldautismawarenessday.org> or www.autismspeaks.org

For more ideas about how you can join the Shine A Light campaign, go to: <http://action.autismspeaks.org/page/event/create>