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Contact: Emily Kafle

emily@autismcolliercharter.org

COLLIER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES AUTISM COLLIER CHARTER SCHOOL

NAPLES, FL - The Collier County Public School Board voted on October 8, 2024, to approve the charter school application for Autism Collier Charter School (ACCS). This groundbreaking educational institution will open its doors in Naples, FL, in August of 2025, offering a much-needed specialized environment for students with autism.

ACCS is committed to providing an innovative learning atmosphere where students with autism are the primary focus. The school's mission is to offer a safe, nurturing, and cutting-edge educational experience designed to meet the unique needs of each student. The vision is for students with autism to be empowered to reach their full potential and experience uninhibited growth.

Innovative Approach to Education

ACCS is designed to be more than just a school—it aims to create a comprehensive support system for both students and their families. The school will foster parent involvement and build formal partnerships with community organizations to offer a range of services including swimming lessons, health and fitness programs, family support groups, and even “Parents’ Night Out” events to give caregivers much-needed respite.

Currently, families of neurotypical children have a wide array of educational options that do not extend to those with significant autism. ACCS is focused on addressing this gap by providing families in Collier and surrounding counties with a choice that meets their child's specific learning needs.

Meet the Founding Team

- **Stephanie Nordin:** A mother of four, including twin boys significantly impacted by autism. Stephanie has been a tireless advocate for disability services, working with state officials to pass legislation that improves access to needed services for adults with disabilities. She was recently appointed by Senator Passidomo to the advisory council for the website clearinghouse on developmental disabilities. Stephanie is also the founder of Autism Collier, Inc., a nonprofit that connects families with community



resources, and We the People, by the People, a grassroots advocacy movement focused on increasing legislative support for individuals with developmental disabilities.

- **Jen Mitchell:** A former chair of the Collier County Public School Board, Jen is a mother of four and a dedicated community volunteer. She serves on multiple boards and volunteers at various organizations across the region.
- **Emily Kafle:** With over 20 years of experience in special education across multiple states, Emily brings leadership experience at the building, district, and charter school levels. She is an expert in autism education and previously served as Director of Special Education for Collier County Public Schools. Emily has personal experience with autism, as her niece is significantly impacted by the condition.

Community-Focused Programming

Autism Collier Charter School's commitment to improving the quality of life extends beyond the classroom. By partnering with local organizations, the school will provide a variety of family-centered programs that address the needs of students and their caregivers alike. These programs include health and fitness activities, specialized training, and community integration initiatives, all designed to offer support for the entire family unit.

For more information, visit the Autism Collier Charter School website at autismcolliercharter.org or follow us on social media. To contact the school principal for additional inquiries, email emily@autismcolliercharter.org.