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***\$200,000 Funding for Local Autism Non-profit
Signed into House Bill 33 by Governor DeWine***

State legislators to gather July 14th on Wickliffe campus to celebrate autism

Wickliffe, Ohio --- The board of SUCCESS for Autism, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting people with autism, has announced that its request for state dollars to train local autism teams was passed by both the House of Representatives and Ohio Senators and signed into House Bill 33 by Governor DeWine last week.

Event Information: 1:00pm-3:00pm at 28700 Euclid Avenue, Wickliffe, OH 44092 in the Founder's Room.

\$200,000 total will be allocated over the course of the biennial budget within Ohio Department of Higher Education's Program and Project Support line — appropriation item 235533 — for S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism (SFA) to administer *SUCCESSful Training for Autism: An Interprofessional Collaborative Pilot Program* for the purpose of training more professionals to administer The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM across Ohio.

The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM intervention model has been used primarily in northeast Ohio for the past 25+ years to educate and treat thousands of individuals with ASD since it was first coined in 1998. It is a research-based model, uniquely grounded in the science of brain

development that has shown predictable and rapid results.

A celebration event will take place on Friday, July 14th to officially announce the pilot program. Ohio legislators and local public officials are expected to speak at the event, which will be held in the Founder's Room on the campus of The Center for Pastoral Leadership (CPL), 28700 Euclid Avenue in Wickliffe, Ohio.

“Our goal is to best-serve people with autism and to support their families, caregivers, and professional teams to do the same,” says Dr. Scotese-Wojtila, board president of SFA and a pediatric occupational therapist who has been assessing and treating individuals with autism for 36 years, most of the time through Integrations Treatment Center, located in Wickliffe, Ohio, also on the campus of CPL.

“When parents and school teams are faced with a diagnosis of autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder, we want to change their expectations of what the future holds for the child they love and/or serve,” adds Maria Wojtila, MS, OTR/L, Dr. Scotese-Wojtila's daughter and fellow occupational therapist, who accompanied her mother to Columbus to educate legislators on The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM model and who will also be presenting at this Friday's event.

Longtime supporters of The S.U.C.C.E.S.S ApproachSM intervention model are on board with the new training program initiative, and families who know and love the model are thrilled to know that local autism teams can now access this training so more children and adults on the spectrum can have access to its life-changing benefits.

Within Ohio, roughly 185,000 individuals are diagnosed with ASD, 21,000 of which are school age. As the incidence of ASD rises, so does the need for schools, therapy centers, residential centers, county boards, and government programs to provide comprehensive, accessible, and impactful autism interventions. However, there are barriers to providing these impactful

interventions to Ohio students. These barriers include workforce shortages, limited team collaboration, team burnout, and limited team autism expertise.

Now that Ohio legislators have approved funding, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism will begin administering the *SUCCESSful Training for Autism* program starting in early 2024, with the hope of increasing the models accessibility to both children and adults in various settings across Northeast Ohio. “My mom and I have always agreed that the potency of her specialized model for autism is too great to limit to a private setting,” says Maria Wojtila, “So in her advocacy for best practice for Ohio citizens with autism everywhere, she partnered with expert lobbyists to secure state budget funding to pay already-existing teams of occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, and special education teachers to train in the model.”

“The need is high,” says Jennifer Repella, Director of Operations at ITC. “Teachers, therapists and parents are searching for resources for their children. This is evidenced by the drastic increase in the number of calls we receive at Integrations Treatment Center which, along with The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM, celebrates almost three decades of positive outcomes for those we serve!”

The request for funding began in February when S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism and Integrations Treatment Center partnered with a government relations firm, G2G Consulting, to create a funding ask to support a post-professional training program to help address the workforce shortage and generate highly trained occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, psychologists, and educators in The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM.

“The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM is different from standard of care autism treatment because it is brain-based, not behavior-based,” says Dr. Richard Smith, educator and parent adding “as an educator, it was instantly clear to me that The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM just makes sense as a best practice approach to autism. It is this individualized and critical brain-based intervention alternative that is changing the paradigm on how autism is assessed, treated and managed,” added Smith.

The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM consists of professionally designed and personalized programming that stimulates critical brain changes, or what Scotese-Wojtila has coined the model's unique ability to "*fire-up the wire-up!*". Each child receives an individualized autism treatment program aimed to quickly optimize brain functions by synthesizing only the most effective methods from seven different theoretical frameworks that themselves stem from either occupational therapy, speech therapy, special education, and/or psychology fields of practice. "This optimal brain function serves as the necessary foundation for a child to advance in six areas: Cognition, Language, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Social-Emotional, and Self-Care," says Scotese-Wojtila. "The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM provides the tools to directly activate brain functions that support skills like listening, eye gaze, self-feeding, communicating, sitting for classwork as well as more primal neurological functions such as sleep pattern regulation, bowel and bladder functions, coping adaptively with stress or emotion, and tolerating every day sensory experiences".

Success for Autism plans to launch this new state funded 18 month training program in the new year starting with the open application phase of the program. During this application phase, 4-member autism teams with support from local schools, residential facilities, daycare's, private clinics etc. can submit their autism team application following the guidelines for submission link [S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Autism website](#), which will be activated in early January 2024.

"The goal of the 18 month pilot program program is to train autism teams to bring The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM to where children and adults with autism are within their programs rather than children and adults with autism having to come to The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach" Scotese-Wojtila said adding " too many good Intervention Specialist, psychologist, and rehab services personnel are struggling in their current settings to properly meet the demands of this very diverse and complex population". Maria Wojtila added, "This is occupational therapy's way of contributing to the workforce shortage and burn out situation with many autism teams who would be happy to implement a well-rounded and effective program if they just had access to learning it and the support of their workplaces to implement it. We understand that districts don't have a lot of money to train their autism teams, so our 501(c)(3) can now help those teams directly, thanks to HB 33."

In her March 21, 2023 testimony to the State of Ohio Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education, Scotese-Wojtila states” Thirty years ago, the Centers for Disease Control reported the incidence of autism was 1 in 10,000. Today's incidence has increased to about 1 in 44. This reflects a staggering increase of 22,627% over three decades”. Watch the archived testimony by her and Dr. Richard Smith here

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M0CGacqmvWNBKbLI9FWSLkQN-kEx2ZMA/view?usp=drivesdk>. Note - since her testimony to incidence of suits has increased to 1:36, per the CDC.

“Autism stems from the brain. The treatment must also originate in the brain. Our method, The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ApproachSM, is a research-backed treatment model designed specifically for children with autism that focuses on brain health to help children be physically and mentally ready to unlock their true potential.

Integrations Treatment Center (ITC) is a treatment center and day treatment center for individuals with autism located in Wickliffe, Ohio. Established in 1995 by Dr. Lynette Scotese-Wojtila, ITC has helped thousands of individuals with autism and their families.

SUCCESS for Autism is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that supports people with autism.

For more Information visit: <https://www.thesuccessapproach.org/online-course>

For more information, contact Kristi Ward at (440) 943-7607 (landline) or (216) 258-7851 (mobile)

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