



National Autism Awareness Month raises awareness for autism and Asperger's syndrome during April. Autism is a complex brain disorder that often inhibits a person's ability to communicate, respond to surroundings, and form relationships with others.



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### NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

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According to WHO, about one in 270 people in the world has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is a group of developmental disabilities that causes challenges in many areas of one's life. Some of the profoundly affected areas include social, communication, and behavior. Children with ASD are usually nonverbal or they have restricted or repetitive behaviors. ASD also affects people of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

National Autism Awareness Month began in 1972 as National Autistic Children's Week. The Autism Society founded the event to increase awareness, advocate awareness, and spark change in schools, communities, medical facilities, and businesses.

The month-long observance takes place during World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD), celebrated each year on April 2nd. WAAD was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 to shine a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. WAAD activities increase world knowledge of autism and impart information about the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention. Additionally, WAAD celebrates the unique talents and skills of persons with autism around the world.

### HOW TO OBSERVE

#### #Autismawarenessmonth

·Host an event supporting autism awareness.

·Attend an event and show your support for someone you know.

·Share your story and make your voice heard.

·While the MONTH also celebrates the stories and lives of those with autism, it's also important to remember that autism is a lifelong condition with varying degrees of severity. It's important to continue to support research for treatment and therapies that will improve the lives of those with autism.

·Speak out about autism to help eliminate the stigma associated with it.

·Use #AutismAwarenessMonth to share on social media.

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### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

April recognizes all those who give their time and energy during National Volunteer Month. In the United States, volunteerism is instilled at a young age. National Volunteer Month is an extension to an already-established holiday-week, National Volunteer Week that was first held in 1943 in Canada. The week was dedicated to paying tribute to the unwavering contributions of women during World War II who would collect supplies and help the wounded soldiers. It was in the early 20th century that organized volunteering reached its peak. Numerous groups opened up to escalate humanitarian services, many of which are still active today such as the Red Cross.

Once the war was over, the celebrations were damped down but resurged in the early 1970s. National Volunteer Week debuted in 1974 in the United States and was revered by the general public. Since then, National Volunteer Week, which later went on to become National Volunteer Month, has been celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm every April. President George H.W. Bush launch the 1000 Points of Light campaign in 1991 and established April as National Volunteer Month.

In many parts of the country, it is the cornerstone of summer vacation or woven into after school programs. Most organizations in small towns, rural counties and the largest cities would not function without volunteers. In some families, the baton of volunteerism is handed down generation after generation.

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. They pick a cause and make a difference in someone's life. Sometimes the difference is a drop in the bucket. Other times it creates a tidal wave of change. From the anonymous volunteers who donate their resources to those whose efforts are part of larger national organizations like 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts of America, or American Red Cross or a local grassroots group, their missions provide valuable support to communities in times of need.

### HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

·Thank a volunteer.

·Volunteer! Many volunteers will tell you it is a rewarding experience.

·You don't have to have a ton of time.  
·Do you have a special talent or skill that may benefit a charity or organization? Offer your services or ask how you can be of help.

·Use #NationalVolunteerMonth to share on social media.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Hoyleton offers a variety of volunteering opportunities within the organization. If you or someone you know would like to give back to those we serve, reach out to Christy Schult at [cschult@hoyleton.org](mailto:cschult@hoyleton.org) for more information.

### OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://autismsociety.org/>
- <https://illinoiscenterforautism.org/>
- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>
- <https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/links.html>

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P.E.E.R.S = PROMOTE \* EDUCATE \* EMPOWER \* REDEFINE \* SUPPORT