



World Autism Organisation

www.worldautismorganisation.com

Please address correspondence to:

Jill Stacey, President

Email: jill.stacey757@gmail.com

Suite 111, Private Bag X2, North Riding, 2162

Tel: +27 11 486 0122 / +27 83 449 5179

World Autism Awareness Day 2018

“Closing the Gap”

Disparity between service provision, knowledge and services between different countries and even within the same country is highly evident. Such glaring gaps in recognition and provision of government support need positive action to be taken wherever possible and therefore is one of the main objectives of the World Autism Organisation (WAO).

The ever expanding “World Wide Web” has made an untold difference in regard to enhancing access to information and learning, yet this still does not always provide the dire need for face to face peer companionship, personal interaction and learning, as well as the formation of essential support networks and friendships. Every four years the WAO hosts a large international congress to provide this opportunity, with the choice of host city being one that is known to be under-resourced and with neighbouring countries with similar lack of services.

Significant developments took place after the WAO congress in Mexico in 2010 and to further build on the dire need for services in Mexico and in other South American countries, as well as the fact that the state of Texas sadly is notorious for its lack of state support, Houston was chosen as the host city for the 5th World Autism Organisation Congress.

From 12 to 15 November, this meaningful congress will showcase a diverse programme with 7 concurrent streams and presenters from at least 20 different countries, to enhance knowledge and skills upliftment, thereby contributing towards closing the gap between lower and more resourced professionals and parents.

A highlight of the congress preparation has been the interest and submissions from people with autism, another gap that is closing. It has been wonderful to see how self advocacy has increased and therefore decreasing the area situation that historically has been more common, whereby professionals have on behalf of people with autism, guided the way as regards understanding of autism; looking from the outside in. Professional input is essential and well respected, yet self advocacy is showing how the perception gaps between the parents, professionals and people with autism are changing into a strong web of positivity, support and a sense of comradeship.

2018 is a year of a global determination to stop discrimination, whether be in regard to disability, colour, race or gender, closing up the barriers and gaps that put us into defined groups with resultant adverse effects. The emergence of self advocacy that has been mushrooming in the autistic community has been exceptionally exciting and positive to witness and is applauded by the World Autism Organisation as it is positively working to decrease discrimination against people with autism within education, employment and society.

Jill Stacey: President

World Autism Organisation

President: Jill Stacey (South Africa)

Registered Office: Rue Montoyer 39, 1000 Brussels, Belgium