



SunTrust Foundation Awards \$540,000 Grant to Autism Speaks

Funding supports development of innovative financial-planning tools and resources for people with autism and other disabilities

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New York, N.Y. (May 24, 2017) — Expanding upon a well-established partnership, the [SunTrust Foundation](#) today announced a two-year, \$540,000 grant to Autism Speaks. The organization is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for people with autism and their families. Launched in 2016, the partnership is expanding its financial programs, tools and resources to enhance the quality of life for the nation's disability community, including the estimated 1 in 68 children with autism.

"We know that children, adults and families with special needs have life and financial considerations that can be all-consuming," said David Fuller, president of the SunTrust Foundation. "This new grant demonstrates our commitment to continue the important work we started together and identify even more ways we can help people move from financial stress to confidence."

Specifically, the \$540,000 grant enables Autism Speaks to add another member to its Autism Response Team (ART), specially trained to provide information and resources; introduce an app as a companion to the [Autism Speaks Special Needs Financial Planning Tool Kit](#), and help fund financial planning workshops that also supplement the tool kit.

"Some of the biggest concerns for special-needs parents are financial ones, especially as their children transition to adulthood," said Lisa Goring, Autism Speaks chief program and marketing officer. "We're grateful to the SunTrust Foundation for helping us empower people with disabilities and their families to make the best possible financial decisions."

Funded by a 2016 SunTrust grant, the first financial access specialist who joined ART last year has responded to more than 7,500 inquiries from 49 states and Washington D.C. The new round of funding enables ART to add another member to the team, expanding its ability to connect individuals, families and caregivers to vital information and resources, in English and in Spanish.

Part of the grant is funding a new mobile app, designed to provide easy access to financial planning tools. For example, users can set and track budget goals, locate a financial planner or special-needs attorney in the local area, and explore topics such as education, insurance, housing and assistive technology.

Lastly, the grant helps finance four SunTrust Foundation Special Needs Financial Planning Workshops in 2017. These free workshops are comprehensive events: Families and adults with special needs can talk with financial experts and local service providers to learn how to secure their financial future. In addition to workshops held this month in Miami and Nashville, others will take place in Alexandria, Va. (June 3), and Charlotte, N.C. (September 30). The workshop in Alexandria also will be streamed live.



SunTrust Foundation Press Release

Topics include:

- **Accessing Funding:** Getting Medicaid, Social Security and other benefits a child may be entitled to receive
- **Special Needs Trusts:** How to find money to fund a trust, and how a trust can protect assets
- **ABLE Accounts:** How the new tax-preferred savings accounts can help secure a child's future
- **Guardianship and Conservatorship:** Determining who will make medical and legal decisions for a minor or an adult who cannot do so

To learn more about the workshops, go to [AutismSpeaks.org/financial-workshops](https://www.AutismSpeaks.org/financial-workshops).

ABOUT AUTISM

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, most caused by a combination of genetic and environmental influences. An estimated 1 in 68 children is on the autism spectrum.

ABOUT AUTISM SPEAKS

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. We do this through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of autism spectrum disorder; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions. To find resources, join a fundraising walk or make a donation, go to www.AutismSpeaks.org.

ABOUT SUNTRUST FOUNDATION

The SunTrust Foundation is committed to SunTrust Bank's purpose of *Lighting the Way to Financial Well-Being* by engaging with local and national organizations to advance financial confidence. Grants and activities focus primarily on financial education, financial counseling, career readiness and small business/entrepreneurship, in addition to local community grants. The SunTrust Foundation supports American Red Cross disaster relief efforts and contributes as a United Way Global Corporate Leader. Established in 2008, the SunTrust Foundation has proudly provided grants totaling more than \$112 million throughout the United States.