



AUTISM ACADEMY

for Education & Development

AUTISM NEWS

November 2022 Edition

What Are We Thankful For?

At this time of year, we all like to stop and think about the many things in our lives that we are grateful to have. It may be our loved ones, our job, our home, or our school. This month we asked staff at all of our campuses to tell us what they are thankful for this Thanksgiving Season.

I am thankful for...

"...students that work through challenges and make me laugh and love my job daily!" – Ms. Taylor Scott

"...my family and friends for being supportive of me. I am also thankful for a wonderful family here at Autism Academy! We have grown so much, and there is so much support here. I love the kids and are also thankful for them! They help me learn something new each day." – Mrs. Kenya Perkins

"...my students and all of the paras at AAED Peoria!" – Ms. Rose

"...my wonderful kiddos that put a smile on my face everyday!!" – Ms. Marissa Smith

"...my beautiful fiancé, my family and my animals." – Mr. Hunter Stewart

"...the opportunity to help people and kids." – Ms. Leigh Ressler

"...my family decided to make Tucson our permanent home, this gave me the ability to continue teaching at AAED." – Mrs. Lyndsey Trenka

"...my students who have grown socially and academically since I've been in AAED. – Mrs. Sasha Espinoza

"...my students that make everyday a new adventure." – Mrs. Mary Horeish

"...laughter! I love to hear laughter in my home and here at AAED. Our students have the BEST laughs! Hearing our students laughter warms my soul." – Mrs. Missy Snyder

"...a wonderful and supportive community here at AAED. You all have been kind and welcoming, which has made my life in and outside of work so much better." – Mrs. Jo Gutzwiller

"...the support and the feeling of "team" we have here! I never feel like we have to do this all on our own!" – Mrs. Susan Floyd

Looking for more information?

[Autism Academy for Education and Development - Our Program: https://www.aaed.org/our-program/](https://www.aaed.org/our-program/)

[Department of Developmental Disabilities: https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities](https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Services: https://des.az.gov/services/employment/rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation-vr](https://des.az.gov/services/employment/rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation-vr)

[US Department of Labor: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/autism](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/autism)

[East Valley Institute of Technology: https://www.evite.com/](https://www.evite.com/)

[Empowered Adult Services: https://www.aaed.org/dta/](https://www.aaed.org/dta/)

Craft Idea!

[Gratitude Chain: https://www.carlaschauer.com/gratitude-chain-thanksgiving-activity/](https://www.carlaschauer.com/gratitude-chain-thanksgiving-activity/)

[Thanksgiving Chain Printout: https://www.aaed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Thanksgiving-Chain-Printable.pdf](https://www.aaed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Thanksgiving-Chain-Printable.pdf)

In this busy season, don't forget to say thank you for the positive things in your life. We would like to wish all of our students and your families a happy Thanksgiving from the entire Autism Academy team!!

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Parent Partnership Program

Need more information? You can email P3 for your campus. We would love to see you there!

Tucson - p3tucson@aaed.org

West Valley - p3westvalleyaaed@gmail.com

Gilbert - p3.gilbertcampus@gmail.com

Tempe - p3tempe@aaed.org

November Trivia

Trivia Time!

A small gift will be sent to the first 10 families to send the correct answer to autismnews@aaed.org.

November Question: Approximately what percentage of individuals with autism are employed after high school? – Hint: Numbers do vary depending on what articles you read, but they tend to fall within a similar range.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the October trivia question!

October Answer: A Speech Therapist



Upcoming Events - Valley & Online

November 22 - 1/2 day for students
November 23-25 - Thanksgiving break
December 2 - Temple Grandin event
December 14, 6pm @ Life Community Church - East Valley Winter Program
December 14, 6pm @ Glendale Campus - Peoria students Winter Program
December 15, 6pm @ Glendale Campus - Glendale students Winter Program
December 20 & 21 - Half days for all students
December 22 - January 3 - No school for Winter break
January 4 - Students return

Upcoming Events - Tucson

November 22 - 1/2 day for students
November 23-25 - Thanksgiving break
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November Potlucks!



B.R.I.D.G.E. - Building Real-World Independence and Developing a Game-Plan for Employment

What do you want to be when you grow up? This question is one that most people start asking early on. When they are little, kids' answers are things like astronaut, firefighter, princess, or dinosaur. When they get older, they start talking about becoming youtubers, programmers, business owners, or chefs. No matter the age, the dreams are big! But how do they get there? What happens when those dreams change and what supports are out there out to help? At Autism Academy we recognize that those answers can be difficult to find for any young person, but they can be infinitely more difficult for young people with autism. That's why we have developed a program to help our students learn and grow into the best adults that they can be.

The B.R.I.D.G.E. program focuses on building real world independence and developing a game-plan for employment. Beginning with your first transition plan in the 8th grade, our teachers and transition specialists work together with students and their families to build a plan for life after high school. Classwork changes to include more focus on real-world skills and opportunities to grow their job skills are incorporated into their schedules. After 12th grade, BRIDGE students with 22 credits or more will spend most or all of their time on transition activities and learning practical skills. These transition activities are part of the three BRIDGE Pathways.



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The Pathways – Essential Skills, Functional Vocational Skills, and Vocational Skills

Students in the Essential Skills BRIDGE pathway are focused on developing home-based independence skills through practical living opportunities. Students are exposed to multiple opportunities to build home-based skills such as cooking, rec-leisure, cleaning, and many more. Communication and self-advocacy are essential parts of their everyday routines and choices are given whenever possible. Students enrolled in the Essential Skills BRIDGE program will be seeking the highest level of home-based independence possible.

Students in the Functional Vocational BRIDGE pathway are focused on developing job-based skills through workshop opportunities and building community skills. Students are exposed to multiple opportunities to build job skills in the workshop and through school-based job opportunities. Students enrolled in the functional vocational BRIDGE program will be seeking guided employment after graduation.

Students in the vocational BRIDGE pathway are focused on developing employment skills and pursuing internships in the career path of their choice. Students are exposed to multiple school-based job opportunities and developing skills through the PAES lab. Students enrolled in the vocational BRIDGE program will be seeking employment after graduation.

So What Now?

No matter the age of your child, it helps to be prepared! We encourage you to reach out to teachers and campus staff with any questions you may have about how this program would work for your child. You can also visit one of our transition fairs held at different times during the school year. These transition fairs bring together representatives from the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Vocational Rehabilitation, and other organizations throughout Arizona that work with adults on the autism spectrum. Can't make it to a transition fair? Our BRIDGE program teachers and transition specialists can help give you information on how to connect with the services your young adult will need.

All young adults, regardless of independence level, deserve the opportunity for a fulfilling life. With the BRIDGE program, Autism Academy is committed to working with you to achieve that for your child as they transition into adulthood.

Transition Fair





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Take a look!

October events pictures!

