

Dear Vendor(s),

I am really excited to inform you that I am raising money for educating myself and others about Autism. It's something that speaks right into my heart, because just last year my son, Jedidiah was diagnosed with PDD-NOS, which is the top of the umbrella of Autism. He has a "touch" of autism, and is God's Gift to me.

Jedidiah has strengthened me, and has helped me be a better parent through our struggles trying to do the right things to help him succeed in life for now, and for later. It took me years, to get him to where he is now. I had to deal with Family, and friends trying to comfort me, telling me he was just a boy going through a stage and that he would grow out of it. If you are a parent, you just know something is "different". I was afraid of ignoring the signs that seemed to be yelling at me. I asked his Doctor to get Jedidiah's hearing tested, because I wanted to know if that was why he wasn't talking or trying to talk much at 10-12mo old. After feeling like we had to twist the doctor's arm to get the test done. He finally wrote a prescription for Jedidiah to go to a specialist to have his hearing tested. He passed it with flying colors. It wasn't his hearing. One thing off my list of worries. Later, He was enrolled at SFCC Early Childhood Center while my husband and I were going to College there. He was roughly 1 ½ yrs old when he started there. Because of the resources, they were able to offer me; I was able to get a hold of multiple places. On top of his behavior, he had eating issues. He had issues with Textures, and smells. He still does. ☺ But because of it, doctors had issues with it and enrolled him into the Sacred Heart Feeding Clinic. Even though it had started out because the nurse practitioner, said he wasn't gaining any weight, among other not so great things. The feeding clinic ended up being a great resource to know about in the end. They helped teach us methods of preparing food for him, and they also gave us additional resources, we had no clue about.

When Jedidiah was enrolled at SFCC later, his teacher wanted to test his speech. The Speech therapist wanted a full hearing test conducted for him because of how he didn't respond to her at all. She wanted proof of the hearing test we already had put him through it. She was surprised to see that he had passed it. So talking with his teacher about what I was leaning to about Autism, she as a professional couldn't, say what she thought, because she isn't a doctor. She just gave me resources of people to get a hold of. She told me, she felt I was going in the right direction, but didn't know for sure. It was a small encouragement, against the others that meant well, but were making it hard for me to continue on. However, we kept on, keeping on. It took calling tons of places to get anything and everything for my little guy. That was including getting on waiting lists for tests to be done, or enrolled in special programs. We made an appointment for a development test to be done through a program that we found through 'Infant Toddler Network'. What a great resource. We went to appointment where we got an evaluation done, and he failed a few parts of it, so I got him enrolled in a preschool program for developmental delays. It was later, that we were able to get him medically diagnosed with having PDD-NOS. All of this happened within 4 years. All of it was a learning experience. Which in the long run it's a great thing. You learn a lot about yourself when you have to stick up for your child, and do what you need to do.

There is a lot of resources out there, but a lot of parents don't know about it. This is why I am really excited about Link Autism Leadership. The founder, Sharon Link Ph. created, Link

Autism Leadership which serves individuals, families, and Educational Leaders impacted by autism disorders.

<http://linkautism.com/Index.htm>

“Link Autism Leadership is a non-profit that was formed in 2009 by Sharon Link, Ph.D., mother of a child with autism spectrum disorder. Link Autism Leadership offers online courses, group training, publication, research for parents, professionals, and organizations – including schools and universities nationally and internationally. Our online courses for parents are in the process of being developed and will be posted shortly!

We are making a difference in the lives of children around the world!

We provide scientific and educational material and support to educators relating to autism. We serve professionals and individuals facing the challenges of autism disorders. We enable students with autism to overcome organizational and social systems barriers by empowering Educational Leaders to be equipped to serve them. Link Autism Leadership fills the void for autism educational resources and training. Our work is based on the servant leadership notion of building capacity within schools, parents, and individuals diagnosed with autism. Especially for impacted individuals in adolescence and entering adulthood, Link Autism Leadership works with systems in place to build the most productive outcomes for individuals impacted by autism.”~from the website listed above.

The reason for this long letter to kind of give, you a reason why I am putting this event together. It is really important to me, to not only educate myself, but to give the community more resources. Sometimes we don't know what is out there still, it's put out there for us to learn about it. Or like me, learn about only by going through a long process of learning. I believe this is a great resource for many people to know about.

I am hoping that not only will this event help give a great resource for those who might need it or know about it to share it to others. It will help have you the vendors get your business/company out there. I am hoping that each table will be able to donate something for a raffle to raise money for the cause.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to see and work with you!

Melody Turner

Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultant