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Video: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofmiamibeach/videos/10153644842156871/>

Miami Beach Lights Up Blue For Autism Awareness Month *-- From Special Camps for Autistic Children to the Hiring of "Best Buddies," the City of Miami Beach Improves the Lives of those with Special Needs --*

Miami Beach, FL: In commemoration of United Nations-sanctioned World Autism Month, Miami Beach will be glowing in a blue light throughout the month beginning at sundown tonight, Friday, April 1.

Light It Up Blue is a unique global initiative that kicks-off Autism Awareness Month and helps raise awareness about autism. In honor of this historic day, many iconic landmarks, sporting venues, museums, and bridges are among the thousands of buildings around the world lit blue to raise autism awareness. From sunset to sunrise through April 30, Miami Beach City Hall, Historic City Hall, Pennsylvania Avenue parking garage, North Shore Bandshell, Normandy Fountain, Julia Tuttle and 71 Street welcome entrance signs, and South Pointe Park's pylon lights will be shining in a blue light.

Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy L. Morales, whose daughter has a form of autism, said, "By shedding the light on autism, we can work towards improving the future of all of those affected."

The City of Miami Beach also recognizes that to improve the lives of those with special needs, it requires more than shining a light -- one must nurture, teach and respect.

For the last eight years, the City of Miami Beach has teamed up with the University of Miami – Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UM-NSU CARD) to host a spring break surf camp for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Participating children spend the week focusing on swimming skills, basic oceanography, meteorology, and open water surfing. A video of this year's camp is attached.

"Autism is the fastest growing development disability in the United States, effecting more than 3 million people. It is an urgent public health crisis that demands a public response. As someone whose family is affected by autism, I am proud to work for a city such as Miami Beach that continually does its part to increase public awareness about Autism," said Commissioner Michael Grieco.

The City of Miami Beach encourages all commercial and residential buildings to light it up blue in April.

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