

REMARKS BY BOB WRIGHT  
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ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION  
WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

- When we founded Autism Speaks just two and a half years ago, public awareness was practically nonexistent. We knew we needed to make people aware of all of these alarming statistics.
- Raising awareness became the cornerstone of our mission. We committed ourselves to bringing autism out of hiding ... to removing the stigma ... to shining a strong light on this disorder and all its difficulties so that private and public resources would start to flow.
- As a result of increased awareness, the American Academy of Pediatrics just released two new clinical reports which urge early screening for autism spectrum disorder...
- The AAP recommends that ALL children be screened for autism spectrum disorder twice before age 2 -- once at 18 months and once at 24 months -- as part of well baby checkups. Further, it recommends that treatment for autism be started when autism spectrum disorder is *suspected*, rather than when a formal diagnosis is made.
- The next big step is to fight for insurance coverage for autism treatments - behavioral treatments are a critical part of the medical management of autism. Behavioral interventions, such as Applied Behavior Analysis, and other structured behavioral programs, need to be recognized as medically necessary services and paid for by private health insurance.
- Based on data that we've collected from North America, Western Europe and Japan, it is conservatively estimated that 35 million people worldwide have autism. Autism Speaks is sponsoring an international epidemiology study that will accurately measure the scale of this global epidemic. We are working with over 20 countries to collect and share prevalence and clinical data that could inform policy and direct research into causes, diagnosis and treatment.
- With the declaration of April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day, we will bring autism organizations from all around the world together, in one single voice, to fight this terrible disorder. By bringing autism awareness to a global level we will give a voice to the millions of children worldwide who are undiagnosed, misunderstood, abused and looking for help.

- Combating autism is going to require a worldwide effort - ALL of us working together: the media and communications industries to provide awareness... governments providing support and resources... and the science community to discover the causes of this disorder, create improved treatments, and ultimately, find a cure.
- In solidarity with the State of Qatar and the international community, Autism Speaks looks forward to events on April 2nd, 2008 – we hope you will join us.
- I'd now like to introduce you to Jacqueline Aidenbaum-Brandt, who not only has been extremely involved with the United Nations over the years, but is also a steadfast advocate and mother of a child with autism.