

NTWMGO 2021 - GUEST SPEAKER

I started this facility because..

Play-Place's unparalleled destination of education, therapy, recreation and support will impact the unemployment rate of people with disabilities as well as help shave the nation's \$137 billion per year cost of autism (which in 10 years it is anticipated will rise to 200-400 billion – 60% of which is for adult services).

Play-Place for Autistic Children is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Sterling Heights, MI. Play-Place's mission is to provide a fun-filled, judgment-free, haven of hope for families affected by autism and other special needs. Through a unique play-powered environment, combining education and recreation with a variety of social, occupational and physical therapeutic overtones, Play-Place's one of a kind model will be a revolutionary compliment to the autism equation of intervention and

awareness. Designed to promote cognitive and social development, sensory integration, balance & coordination, endless hours of excitement, as well as professional support services and respite relief for parents and siblings, our curriculum will service all ages. Play-Place's bottom line focuses on development, life skills and independence to assist families with the everyday nuances of "living with autism."

Play-Place is open to all ages, all cognitive levels, and all special needs. Parents are required to remain with their children at all times; siblings are welcome here as well.

The opportunity to function in a natural environment is concrete, reinforcing, and assists in providing educational relevancy for autism-affected individuals and mental, social and emotional stability for the parents and siblings. Play-Place's holistic model of inclusion, acceptance & support encompasses the family as a unit, as opposed to an individual treatment approach. Our vision impacts the individual growth of those affected by autism through therapy, education, inclusion, and social support; family fortitude through respite relief, sustainability and renewal – thwarting the 80% divorce rate of marriages affected by autism; and community empowerment including cost alleviation, awareness & employability.

Play-Place is a nut-free facility. Please do not bring any nuts, including peanuts, into Play-Place.

Market Industry Analysis

Research shows that autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder in the United States and affects more children than cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined. Michigan is the nation's 4th state most affected by autism with over 16,000 students enrolled in Michigan schools and approximately 50,000 individuals living in Michigan with an autism spectrum disorder. Located in the heart of Macomb County, Play-Place will serve as a unique approach and much needed family support system for the underserved in Macomb as well as Michigan's two largest counties, Wayne and Oakland, in addition to St. Clair. These four counties combined house approximately 8,000 school-aged autism-affected children and approximately 26,000 adults affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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Shell Jones -
Founder & President

