



## **Zaniez To Launch Innovative Adult Work Study Program at Farm Trade School to Empower Autism Spectrum Adults in Arizona**

**Zaniez, planned to open in January 2026, is a trade school created for autism spectrum families set in an equestrian farm setting to achieve natural balance and independent living**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Zaniez, a dedicated nonprofit organization supporting autism spectrum families through innovative educational and vocational initiatives, today announced the launch of its Adult Work Study Program at the Farm Trade School. This comprehensive program addresses the pressing need for specialized vocational training and independent living skills for adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum, filling critical gaps in Arizona's support landscape.

In Arizona, approximately 1 in 59 children are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and as these individuals transition to adulthood, many face significant challenges. Research indicates that only about 5% of autistic adults live independently, while 37% require overnight care. High unemployment rates, limited access to job training, and barriers to independent living exacerbate these issues, with experts highlighting a dearth of comprehensive programs that go beyond basic support to foster true self-sufficiency. While Arizona offers valuable resources such as SEEDs for Autism's vocational training in Phoenix, the Autism Society of Greater Phoenix's transition programs, and Copa Health's day programs for adults with disabilities, there remains a notable gap in all-day, trade-focused schools that integrate work study, business creation, and farm-based learning tailored to autism spectrum needs.

Zaniez Adult Work Study Program is designed as a full-day vocational and trade school experience—distinctly not a “daycare”—emphasizing hands-on training in agricultural and farm-related trades as well as music, art, photography, science, sports, cooking, sewing, woodworking, crafting, and animal care. Participants will gain essential independent living skills, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and daily routines, to promote autonomy. Built-in work study opportunities will provide real-world experience along with a pathway to gain self-worth by participating in the workforce after building confidence through on the job training. The goal will always be to provide a pathway for independent living along with a chosen, fulfilling career.

As a pilot initiative under this program, Zaniez is excited to introduce “SITWALK,” a structured training module teaching participants how to build and operate a pet walking and care business under the Zaniez umbrella. This hands-on venture will equip students with entrepreneurial skills, from client management to animal handling, paving the way for sustainable income. Future press releases will delve deeper into SITWALK's progress and expansions.



“Zaniez is committed to bridging the service gaps for autism spectrum adults in Arizona by creating empowering, skill-building environments that lead to independence, self-fulfillment and intrinsic pride,” Dana Leigh Shafman, Founder of Zaniez. “With the support of private and corporate partners, coupled with the funding through Arizona’s Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Zaniez is positioned to make a meaningful impact for Arizona families who have long needed more options.”

Zaniez plans to distribute weekly press releases to keep prospective students, donors, and community champions informed about program developments, success stories, and opportunities to get involved.

**About Zaniez**

Zaniez is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) trade school in Arizona dedicated to empowering individuals with ASD through farm-based vocational training and life skills education. With phased openings in 2026, Zaniez aims to serve children (3-12), teens (13-18), and adults (19+) in Arizona, fostering independence and rewarding careers. Zaniez (ZaniezKids.com) is a pioneering nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting autism spectrum families through farm-based trade education, vocational programs, and independent living initiatives. Focused on holistic development, Zaniez empowers individuals on the spectrum to thrive in adulthood with practical skills and community integration.

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