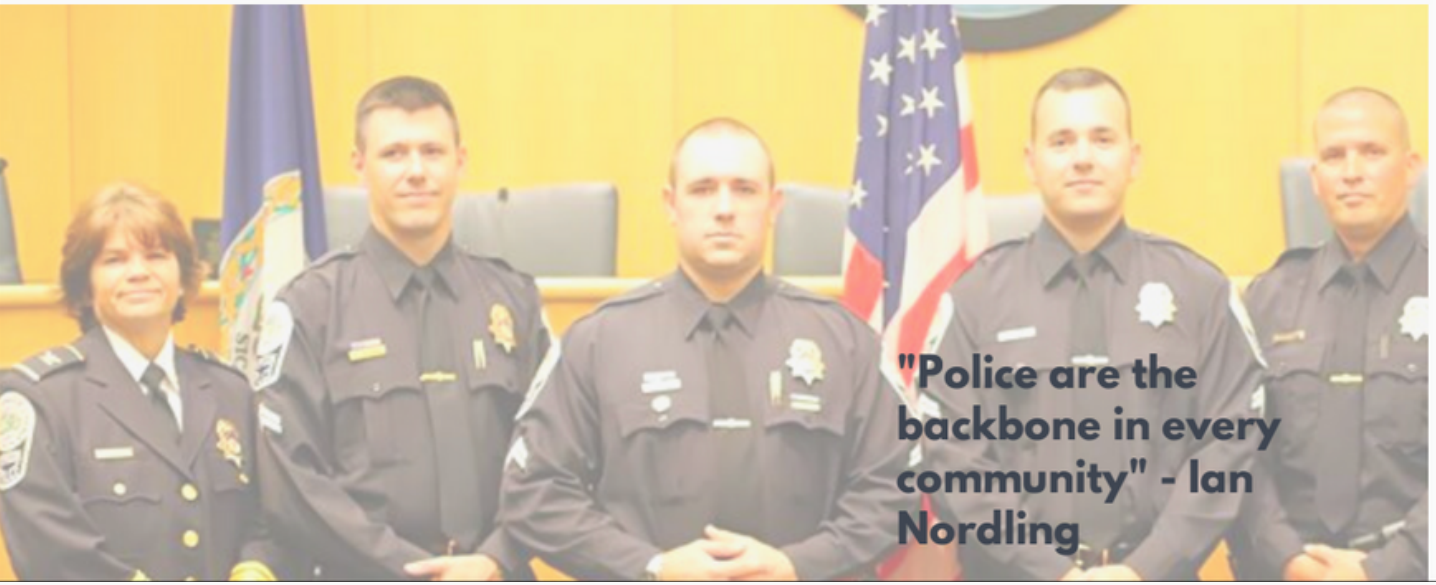
A GUIDE TO INTERACTIONS WITH AUTISTICS

Why we chose to make this...

"It is important that police are trained on Autism. Having been in a situation with police myself, I know how important this training is. I was so scared to be in trouble. From a personal standpoint it is critical that officers know how to work with Autistics in an emergency. Protocols for these crisis situations need to offer a viewpoint from Autistics. I am hopeful this guide will shine a light on this issue. Working with Autistics can be hard sometimes. Please know we mean no harm."

A person with Autism might not...

- Not follow or respond to verbal commands
- Look away from the officers and lights
- Get overwhelmed and look as if they are not following commands
- Run away
- Not speak to the police officer
- Look mad
- Wander into traffic or appear as a nuisance
- Might pace or stand up even when advised not to



"Police are the backbone in every community" - Ian Nordling

How should a first responder approach an Autistic?

- Slowly and calmly
- Listen and look for stressors such as lights, sounds, busy areas
- Give clear directions
- Give time for the person to respond to commands
- Most importantly, be patient

How should the officer interact with the individual?

- Do not touch the person
- Do not yell at the person, instead try using a firm but friendly tone
- Be on the lookout for a person who may be having a meltdown or sensory overload
- Look for signs of escalating anxiousness
- Give parents a careful warning that you might have to use physical restraints

Ian Nordling

My name is Ian Nordling and I am an Autistic. I am writing this brochure in hopes that law enforcement can identify and handle any interaction with Autistics successfully and safely. Making our community more inclusive is very important to me. I was without means of communication most of my life. It was during this time that I had a scary interaction with law enforcement. I want to make it easier for the youth in my situation, so they do not experience the same things I have. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Mayor Lisa Merkel for accepting me into the Herndon Youth Advisory Committee

The other students on the committee

The parents for their support

The Police Department and Police

Chief Maggie DeBoard for having this meeting and making the time to form relationships with the youth in our community

To my parents for their love and support

My communication partners for helping me put this brochure together

The International Association for Spelling as Communication and the Nonspeaking Advisory Council

The Nordling Family

- Ian Nordling

INFORMATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS DEALING WITH AUTISTICS
Herndon, VA 20170

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A GUIDELINE TO MAKING EVERY INTERACTION SUCCESSFUL

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