

News Release

For Release: Feb. 24, 2015

Contact: Kristal Griffith

Email: kgriffith@naspa.org

Phone: (202) 265-7500 ext. 1177



Autism program at Adelphi University honored

NASPA names Adelphi University 2015 Excellence Award Grand Bronze winner

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Each year, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, recognizes the outstanding contributions of members who are transforming higher education through exceptional programs, innovative services, and effective administration. The Bridges to Adelphi Program at Adelphi University in Garden City, NY was named as the 2015 Grand Bronze winner of the 2015 NASPA Excellence Awards. The program was selected by a peer review process that was approved by the NASPA Board of Directors during their winter board meeting. The program was also selected as the Gold Award Winner for the Student Health, Wellness, Student Counseling and related category. Recipients will be honored in March at the 2015 NASPA Annual Conference in New Orleans, La.

The Bridges to Adelphi Program is designed to offer individualized, comprehensive academic, social and vocational support services to Adelphi undergraduate and graduate students who self-disclose with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Bridges services are offered through the Division of Student Affairs. The ASD population, whether by natural occurrence or enhanced diagnostic techniques is growing steadily in numbers, locally, regionally, and nationally.

Adelphi University, based primarily on its mission and unique blend of the Liberal Arts and Sciences and professional programs, was ready to model such a unique, innovative program. Results of research show that with the interventions that Bridges offers, students are retained at higher levels than the university norm, and with comparable academic achievement results (GPA). As a result, the program has grown from 3 students to 91, and the program, largely by word of mouth and parental networking, has become a much sought after source of information and best practices.

As the program received local and national attention, Bridges has become a prominent destination for students with ASD from all over the United States. Bridges services are based on social learning theory, cognitive behavioral principles, and a person-centered approach as theoretical foundations. Bridges staff uses a problem solving approach designed to model and teach these skills to Bridges students.

Bridges also offers a variety of individual and group socialization opportunities to the students. Activities include twice weekly social group meetings, weekly Men's and Women's groups, and twice monthly on and off-campus group activities. Students also have the opportunity to meet weekly, individually, with volunteer undergraduate peer mentors, who help the Bridges students become involved in campus events and activities.

Bridges has added a variety of vocational services including on-campus internships and job coaching. Bridges also partners with several local, national, and international agencies that have specific vocational programs that are designed for college students with ASD. These

programs work with Bridges graduates on job placement in the student's area of study, and then provide ongoing support after they are hired.

This successful program exemplifies the kind of work NASPA stands for – promoting student health and wellness, innovating programs and assessing their success.

-30-

NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 14,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.