



To Whom It May Concern:

Skateboarding has always been counterculture. Even as it edges closer to the mainstream, skateboarding remains on the fringe. It's still an emblem of rebellion, still a little outlaw. Skaters don't follow the herd. They're often thought of as different. Those of us who skate view skateboarding as an outlet to express our individuality and creativity.

What better sport to represent kids who are too often thought of as outsiders?

Autism is a severe developmental disability that affects speech and social interaction. Children with autism have a difficult time communicating and relating to others socially. They may also suffer from a heightened sensitivity to sensory input--which can cause them to retreat even further into isolation.

The A.Skate Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-for-profit that was created to introduce kids with autism to the world of skateboarding. It's our belief that skateboarding can help autistic children connect with the greater world around them. Playing team sports is out of the question for most children with autism. They find it very hard to follow directions and because they struggle with language, communicating with coaches and teammates can be difficult. Skateboarding and autism are a great fit: no team, no coaches, no rules!

A.Skate Foundation holds free skate clinics for children with autism. Raising kids with autism can be expensive; A. Skate offers grants to those who can't afford skateboard gear. We also help promote autism awareness in the skate industry.

One of our major initiatives this year centers on Go Skateboarding Day. On June 21, skateboarders around the globe will celebrate the pure joy of skateboarding by dropping everything to go skate. On that day, we would love to see skateboarders everywhere make the day even more special by taking a child with autism skateboarding. It's a crazy idea, but one that's perfectly suited to skateboarding.

Here's where we need your help. We have a campaign in place ready to implement but we don't have the means and resources to take this idea national. That is our ultimate aim—to see skateboarders in towns around the country invest part of their Go Skateboarding Day taking a child with autism skateboarding. Please take a moment to consider being a part of this fledgling but important movement. You can contact Autism Speaks to find your local chapter by going to this link:

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/community/chapters/index.php>

or you can contact us directly to find out how you can help. Visit [askate.org](http://askate.org) to find out more about who we are.

Five years ago, approximately 1 in 150 children were diagnosed with autism. Today, the number has risen to 1 in 100 children, with 1 in 70 of those being boys. That's an alarming number. Autism might even have touched someone close to you. For us, autism is a daily reality—both of us are parents of an autistic child.

Children with autism can flourish given the right circumstances—they are bright, creative and sensitive individuals who need venues where their uniqueness can be celebrated. Let's help them find a place to express themselves through skateboarding.

Sincerely,

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