

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nov. 21, 2016**

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### **Autism Live and We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym Host Annual Sensitive Santa Holiday Event**

*Children will have the opportunity to meet Santa and his helpers, who are experienced in interacting with children with autism.*

WOODLAND HILLS, Calif. (Nov. 20, 2016) – Autism Live and We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym have partnered again this holiday season to host a special event for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children who attend the Autism Live Sensitive Santa event will meet Santa, have their photos taken, and receive a wrapped toy, while also getting the opportunity to explore uniquely ASD-friendly gym equipment. Autism Live Sensitive Santa will be held Saturday, November 26 from 10am-3:30pm at We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym. For those who attended last year, please note the address has changed to 23010 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills, CA 91364. The event is free with registration at [autismlivesensitivesanta2016.eventbrite.com](http://autismlivesensitivesanta2016.eventbrite.com).

Spending time with Santa can be a challenge for children with ASD and their families. At the Autism Live Sensitive Santa event, Santa and his helpers are experts in interacting with children on the spectrum and know behavioral techniques to help keep children calm and attentive during their visit.

"The holidays are often especially challenging for children affected by autism and their families, and we wanted to create an event that makes the visit with Santa and his helpers a fun-filled, stress-free occasion," said Shannon Penrod, host of Autism Live, one of the event sponsors.

The high-quality toys each attendee will receive are featured on Autism Live's Festival of Toys, chosen because they are both fun and geared to help children on the spectrum build skills and make progress toward achieving their goals. Some of the manufacturers donating the toys featured on Festival of Toys include Think Fun, Endless Games, Imperial Toys, Laser Pegs, Lux Blox, Peaceable Kingdom, Learning Resources, Lekotek, and MakeyMakey.

"The reality is that many children on the autism spectrum don't know how to play appropriately or don't enjoy it," said Penrod. "A great toy and the right level of guidance can help a child grow and have fun!"

Autism Care and Treatment (ACT Today!) and My Brother Rocks the Spectrum Foundation were involved in creating the event, along with support from the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) and Skills® for Autism.

Approximately one in 68 children has been diagnosed with ASD in the United States according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ASD is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges.

### **About Autism Live**

Autism Live is an interactive web show providing support, resources, information, facts, entertainment and inspiration to parents, teachers and practitioners working with children on the autism spectrum. For more information, visit [www.autism-live.com](http://www.autism-live.com).

### **About We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym**

We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym is committed to providing a safe, nurturing and fun environment to foster learning, exploration and safe sensory experiences. Through its nonprofit My Brother Rocks the Spectrum Foundation, social skills groups and activities for children across the spectrum are also available. We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym provides children with a fun and motivational environment to help them in the areas of strength, movement, sensory processing, communication, positive behavior modification, social interactions and self-care skills. Our unique equipment assists all children in their neurological growth and development. For more information, visit [www.werockthespectrumkidsgym.com](http://www.werockthespectrumkidsgym.com).

### **About Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)**

CARD treats individuals of all ages who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at treatment centers around the globe. CARD was founded in 1990 by leading autism expert and clinical psychologist Doreen Granpeesheh, PhD, BCBA-D. CARD treats individuals with ASD using the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), which is empirically proven to be the most effective method for treating individuals with ASD and recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Surgeon General. CARD employs a dedicated team of nearly 2,000 individuals across the nation and internationally. For more information, visit [www.centerforautism.com](http://www.centerforautism.com).

**About Skills®:** With two patents pending, Skills® is the worldwide leading provider of software as a service solution for behavioral health, attending to the needs of four key segments: mental health clinicians, educators, managed care organizations, and families. The Skills® portfolio of web-based and mobile application tools is based on the evidence-based principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), with several studies published in peer-reviewed journals on its solid psychometric properties and clinical effectiveness. Founded in 2010, Skills® products are used in school districts and managed care organizations nationwide and by families and autism treatment providers worldwide. For more information, visit [www.SkillsForAutism.com](http://www.SkillsForAutism.com).

**ACT Today!** is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to raise awareness and provide treatment services and support to families to help their children with autism achieve their full potential. Our goal is to introduce and help facilitate early and on-going treatment by providing the necessary resources (including referrals, funding and guidance) to individuals with autism and their families. Studies demonstrate that early and intense intervention is important when treating individuals with autism, yet sadly very few of the effective treatments are covered by medical insurance and families are often delegated to piece together a treatment program for their child via multiple funding sources. Often, the child with autism must go without vital interventions due to financial restraints. ACT Today! strives to provide necessary services so that each child with autism can reach his or her highest potential.

<http://www.act-today.org>

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