

**WHEREAS**, Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a diverse group of conditions. They are characterized by some degree of difficulty with social interaction and communication. Other characteristics are atypical patterns of activities and behaviors, such as difficulty with transition from one activity to another, a focus on details and unusual reactions to sensations; and

**WHEREAS**, ASD is a lifelong neurological condition that manifests during early childhood, irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status. Minority groups tend to be diagnosed later and less often; and

**WHEREAS**, Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S. In 2021, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 36 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to 2023 data; and

**WHEREAS**, Autism now affects 1 in 27 boys and 1 in 116 girls. Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with Autism than girls; and

**WHEREAS**, more children will be diagnosed with Autism this year than with AIDs, diabetes & cancer combined.

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that 1 percent of the world's population is affected by Autism, or 67 million people. Early intervention affords the best opportunity to support healthy development and deliver benefits across the lifespan; and

**WHEREAS**, World Autism Awareness Day, celebrated on April 2<sup>nd</sup> annually, was adopted by the United Nations in 2007 to shine a bright light on Autism as a growing global health crisis which has no cure; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Laredo/Webb County recognizes that there are over 1000 individuals diagnosed with Autism in Laredo/Webb County; and

**WHEREAS**, the National *Autism Speaks* Organization and the Laredo Chapter of ***Families for Autism Support and Awareness*** are aiming to light the world blue to raise awareness for Autism and to commemorate World Autism Month in April.