

EXTRAORDINARY SPEAKER MEETING

Public Safety for Autistic Children and Youth

Tuesday, May 12; 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Rockville Memorial Library: 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD

Members: Free; Nonmembers: \$15

SPEAKER: SCOTT CAMPBELL

People with developmental disabilities such as autism are up to seven times more likely to come into contact with law enforcement than the general population. Autistic children and youth may not respond well in emergencies or be able to communicate important information (even if they are verbal). Due to stress, they may not respond to commands, or they may be perceived as suspicious or a threat because of their unusual actions. Unfortunately, their interactions with law enforcement can have tragic consequences, as we've read in the media about the cases of Ethan Saylor in Maryland and Neli Latson in Virginia.

Since the vast majority of first responders and law enforcement officers receive little to no training in the characteristics and best practices for individuals with autism, it's imperative that parents are proactive in using strategies that can help minimize the risk that their child will be a victim of bullying/crime or have negative interactions with law enforcement. This presentation will inform parents and other community members of essential strategies and resources to keep children and youth on the spectrum safe.

Scott Campbell is the vice president of POAC (Parents of Autistic Children) in Northern Virginia, and the proud father of a boy with autism. He has conducted hundreds of trainings for first responders and law enforcement officers across the United States and presentations for parents.

Partnership for Extraordinary Minds (xMinds) is a parent-run nonprofit in Montgomery County dedicated to improving the educational experiences and outcomes of students on the autism spectrum. Become a member of xMinds and enjoy free admission to speaker meetings and family events, our member directory to help you connect with other families, and monthly newsletters that feature helpful resources and regional programs that focus on autism, education, special education law, and advocacy. Visit xMinds.org or call 301-444-5225.