



To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today to provide a letter of reference for the Autism Society of the Florida Keys. There are many not for profit organizations located in the Upper Keys. All compete for the same grants and funding opportunities.

Years ago, the leadership of both Island Dolphin Care and the Autism Society of the Florida Keys decided to combine efforts wherever possible to assist the children and families that we both provide services to. The ability to share our resources enabled both organizations to provide valued programs to our community and increase the number of individuals that could receive services.

As founder of IDC, I have had the privilege to learn from families the high quality of the programs, services and support the Autism Society has been able to provide to them.

The population of children with disabilities within the Florida Keys has grown throughout the years. In 2020, the CDC estimated that one in 54 children would be diagnosed with autism or a related disability. This is a 10 percent increase from the previous year. The numbers keep increasing.

At the time of diagnosis most parents are young, feel lost and isolated. They need knowledgeable, caring support and guidance from others that understand their feelings, isolation, and concerns for their family's future. The Autism Society of the Florida Keys does an extraordinary job providing support, workshops, family gatherings educational resources and recreational opportunities throughout a child and families developmental life cycle.

The Autism Society of the Florida Keys is a necessary organization that is dependent on grants and donations to operate. No other organization in the Florida Keys is available to facilitate in providing the specific resources to meet the varying needs for families coping with a child having Autism or a related disorder.

I am confident that you will find the Autism Society of the Florida Keys worthy of your support.

Sincerely,

Deena Hoagland lcsw

Founder

Island Dolphin Care, inc.