

GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE!

THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION, RIXYS, AND MY THANKS TO YOU AND EVERYONE AT THE DAN MARINO FOUNDATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF AUTISM AWARENESS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

COMMISSIONER DIAZ, THANK YOU, AS ALWAYS FOR INVITING ME TO BE PART OF THIS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH KICKOFF EVENT.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, COMMISSIONER DIAZ PASSED A RESOLUTION THAT APRIL BE NAMED “AUTISM AWARENESS” MONTH, AND EACH YEAR I THINK OUR KICKOFF EVENT GENERATES A BIGGER CROWD -- RIGHT, COMMISSIONER?

WELL, IT’S GREAT TO BE HERE WITH EVERYONE THIS AFTERNOON AS WE OFFICIALLY UNVEIL THE AUTISM AWARENESS DISPLAY HERE AT COUNTY HALL.

THE THEME OF THIS YEAR’S AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IS “EXPRESS YOURSELF.”

AND WE HAVE TWO INCREDIBLY TALENTED YOUNG MEN WITH US THIS AFTERNOON WHO ARE USING THEIR ARTISTIC GIFTS TO DO JUST THAT.

JACOB AND BRYAN, THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR TALENTS WITH US TODAY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'M PROUD THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS DOING *OUR* PART TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS.

AS WE KNOW, IT'S THROUGH INCREASED AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING THAT WE CAN HELP PEOPLE -- LIKE JACOB AND BRYAN -- WHO ARE LIVING WITH AUTISM.

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WALK THROUGH OUR LOBBY AT GOVERNMENT CENTER EVERY DAY, SO THIS DISPLAY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO REACH LOTS OF FOLKS WHO MAY NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT AUTISM.

I WANT TO THANK COMMISSIONER DIAZ ONCE AGAIN FOR HIS CONTINUED WORK TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK MIAMI-DADE FIRE RESCUE AND I.A.F.F. LOCAL 1403, WHO CAME TOGETHER THIS YEAR TO PARTICIPATE IN AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH. THEY'LL BE WEARING BLUE SHIRTS THROUGHOUT APRIL TO SUPPORT THE CAUSE.

AND THANKS TO THE PROCEEDS COLLECTED FROM THE SALE OF THOSE BLUE T-SHIRTS, M.D.F.R. AND LOCAL 1403 PRESENTED A \$10,000 CHECK TO AUTISM SPEAKS OF SOUTH FLORIDA LAST THURSDAY.

GREAT WORK, CHIEF DOWNEY, LIEUTENANT BLANCO AND TEAM!

LET'S GIVE THEM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF THE SPONSORS, FAMILIES AND SUPPORTERS WHO ARE HERE THIS AFTERNOON.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS PROUD TO STAND WITH ALL OF YOU AS WE KICK OFF AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH!

THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU, AND CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

