

Mary Kristina, thank you for your kind introduction and for all the work you are doing at the Dan Marino Foundation...

Michelle, thank you for leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance...

And thank you all for being here this afternoon as we join together during Autism Awareness month.

Mayor Gimenez is in Tallahassee for meetings during the state legislative session, but he sends his warm regards and support to you all.

I am honored to be here this morning and join the parents, grandparents, family members, caregivers, teachers, health and other professionals, who form part of this special group of people that have been touched by autism.

We have all heard the statistics, and we all know that autism is becoming more prevalent, with some figures going as high as one in every fifty children.

We also know that autism continues to confound us, and that a lot more work needs to be done for us to begin to better understand the causes.

We cannot give up, however.

And we must do all we can to raise awareness about autism not only during April obviously, but every single day.

This is why we are here, and why it's so important that we continue this work throughout the year throughout our community.

Let me take a moment to also thank Romero Britto.

No other artist captures the warmth and sunshine that is Miami, and Britto always opens his heart to the needs of our community. And today is no different.

Let me also recognize Alberto Gutierrez from Autism Speaks and Susan Morantes from the Dan Marino Foundation. Your organizations have done so much to move autism awareness into the forefront, thank you for all you have done.

Let us all join together to help these families, and to do everything we can to protect and care for our most valuable resource: our children.

Thank you again!

