



OUR SON BEN was diagnosed with autism in 2005. We'd suspected for a few years that something was wrong. I mean, there's a process that every kid goes through — crawl at nine months, walk at 12 months, and then start talking and so on. With Ben we started thinking: "Why is he not crawling? Why is he not walking? Why is he not looking at me in the eye?" Things like that. We soon discovered he was quite severely touched by Autism.



Here's the reality, our son is part of an epidemic. It's almost unbelievable that one in 91 children is affected by autism. It hits the whole family hard. For a long time you're trying to figure out 'What just happened to my life?' You feel sorry for yourself, for your child and your family — at first. And then Liezl and I realized that we were in a unique position, we could help make a difference not just for Ben but for all children like him.

And so we've spent the last year developing a Center of Excellence for those on the autism spectrum. It's everything I hoped it might be, it incorporates all the services a child with ASD needs to become a productive member of society. What's even better, the Center connects the international autism community with best practices, latest information and research on a real time continual basis.

Years from now people may remember me as a golfer and a major champion. But I'd like also to be remembered as somebody who took the issue of autism and did something with it. The rest of my life, I'll be fighting this thing... I hope you'll join me,



What IS in 2010

- The latest autism statistics: 1 in 91 births (1 in 58 boys)— This devastating disorder is now an epidemic. The research, services and care that exist to address autism are fragmented and uncoordinated. Millions of affected individuals and their families in the U.S. and abroad need more effective education, treatment and support.

What CAN BE by 2012

- The Els Center for Excellence will bring together the vital components of education, medical, and professional treatment, research, transition to adulthood and global digital learning into one integrated whole. It will be the first facility of its kind in the world.
- Each Center program, from school practices to life skills training to digital learning will be of the highest quality and at the leading edge of the field.
- The Center will be a global hub for applied research, training and the development of best practices in education, adult life skills and treatment. Its impact will extend far beyond Palm Beach County via a state-of-the-art web-based interactive global learning network.
- The Center will establish active partnerships with other autism facilities and will foster replication of its integrated model in other cities in the U.S. and abroad.

Once the \$30 million capital campaign is completed, the Center will fund its ongoing operations through sustainable annual revenues.





The Center is exactly what we need to advance the fight against ASD. It brings together all the fragmented pieces in an integrated way that will provide valuable insights that are missing from what is being done today."

— BETTY MEKDECI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BIRTH DEFECT RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN

"I love the idea of providing a continuous network of support, from the moment a child is diagnosed with ASD to helping him or her find a job."

— MICHAEL SLUSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASD FOUNDATION

"The Center sounds like it will serve as the role model for how we should approach the ASD problem."

— JODY FIELDS, FIELD OFFICER DIRECTOR OF AUTISM SERVICES CENTER



THE ELS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

