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Long Island Parents of Children with Autism Seek A Resource to Help Them Answer All Their What ifs?

Melville, NY...

Blackstone's of Melville, NY was the setting for a recent gathering of parents of children on the autism spectrum and professionals serving the autism community. The gathering, sponsored by Legacy of Love (www.legacyofloveplan.com), a division of CJM Fiscal Management (www.cjmfiscal.com, Melville, NY), demonstrated that families touched by autism are struggling to find answers to many pressing questions.

“What if something happens to us? Who will support our children? What if my child doesn't learn what is socially acceptable? What if I can't find a social worker who can help my child? What if my other children can't take care of him when we no longer can? Will we have enough money to provide for our retirement and our children's needs? These are just some of the questions that keep parents of children with autism up all night,” said CJM Fiscal Management President Charles Massimo.

Massimo should know. His two sons are on the spectrum. In fact, the frustrations and inability to get the answers and some peace of mind is what prompted Massimo to form Legacy of Love. It provides families touched by autism with a centralized resource for integrated investment planning, wealth preservation and individualized life planning services for their autistic children. Building on a foundation of a solid wealth management plan, the organization provides these families with sound investment planning a wealth preservation strategies

“Of all the questions parents of autistic children have many center on their financial needs, both short-term and long-term,” continued Massimo. He cited a Harvard University research study estimated the lifetime costs of treating and caring for an individual with autism are \$3 million. Building on a sound wealth management plan, something Massimo has been helping affluent families with for over two decades, meeting critical financial needs and life planning goals can be achieved.

“Regardless of affluence, the financial piece is a big concern for parents of autistic children,” said Massimo. “In fact, in many ways, the more affluent families have greater vulnerability in terms of protecting their wealth from lawsuits that could stem as a result of something their child did. That is why it so important to have a solid plan in place to build and preserve wealth, while also addressing other estate planning matters such as guardianship, special needs trusts and life planning needs of the autistic family member, from education and therapies to recreational, housing and vocational needs.”

Among the parents in attendance at the Legacy of Love event were parents of newly diagnosed children, those entering school or making the transition to a new school, and some who were now in adulthood. Regardless of the differences in their children's autism and life stage, the parents shared many of the same concerns. One universally-expressed need was, where could they go to get the answers or referrals they need? One parent questioned if they are destined to continue searching the Internet and running from one group to another?

“Finding resources to help your autistic child is more than a full-time job. It's all consuming,” said Massimo “And the worse part is, you never feel 100% sure that you have done all you can, or that you have made the right choices. It's a little like shooting in the dark. As much as there are many excellent organizations and professionals serving the autism community, there was no one place where you can gain professional feedback and guidance, access a range of services and referrals from experienced professionals. As hard as we tried, my wife and I couldn't find this resource, and our independent research came to the same conclusion. There was none.”

That frustration is what led Massimo to form Legacy of Love. In addition to his associates at CJM Fiscal Management, the division has already built a corps of experienced, well-known professionals serving individuals with autism. They include a special educator, social worker, Board Certified physician, Certified Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) behavioral therapist, physical/occupational therapists, parent advocate, special needs estate planning attorneys and nationally-recognized community resources.

Legacy of Love will be planning additional events for parents of children with autism. For more information, visit: www.legacyofloveplan.com or call: 631-777-1030.