

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first two years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults on the autism spectrum typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Autism is one of five disorders that fall under the umbrella of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), a category of neurological disorders characterized by "severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development."

Autism is the most common of the Pervasive Developmental Disorders, affecting an estimated 1 in 110 births. Roughly translated, this means as many as 1.5 million Americans today are believed to have some form of autism. And this number is rising.

Based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and other governmental agencies, autism is growing at a startling rate of 10-17 percent per year. At this rate, the Autism Society estimates that the prevalence of autism could reach 4 million Americans in the next decade.

Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries, family income levels, lifestyle choices, or educational levels, and can affect any family and any child.

The overall incidence of autism is consistent around the globe, and it is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls.



While many people with autism find the typical work environment confusing, irritating, boring or even frightening, the farm provides a wide variety of work activities that can be adjusted to suit the needs of many individuals. If gardening is not a good fit, then perhaps caring for the animals or maintaining tools would be more suitable. When a person gets bored in one area, they can easily move to another activity. Importantly, most of the jobs are simple, can be done within a relaxed schedule and in a relatively quiet and peaceful environment.

The crops, animals and craft-works that the participants produce provide them with a source of income which gives them a sense of ownership, accomplishment and self-worth that goes beyond simply receiving a paycheck. They see, feel and taste the fruits of their labor.

Program participants are typically funded through a Medicaid Waiver, however other sources of funding for attendance may be available.



Hiram Farm is fortunate to have acquired a long-term lease on a 120-acre organic farm. The farm was owned by the late Al Couch who was a pioneer in organic farming in Ohio. We are committed to honoring his legacy by maintaining Hiram Farm as a certified organic farm. All of our vegetables and livestock are raised without the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.



Our Vision of the Future

In the years ahead our goals are to increase the number of participants in the day habilitation program to as many as fifty individuals. We want to add programs that will include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, Special Olympics, and personal enrichment in areas like arts and woodworking. We will offer respite care for children and adults with ASD as well as support services for their families.

We will continue to develop partnerships within the community to improve our habilitation services and our farming operations.

We also intend to develop residential programming for participants.

How can you help?

Hiram Farm depends in large part on monetary donations and in-kind donations to provide the buildings, equipment and other infrastructure to support our program. We have a wish list of much needed items on the Hiram Farm website as well as an easy link to a donations page. Please support our program in any way you can. The web address is: www.hiramfarm.org

Hiram Farm is an independent social service agency related to the Christian Church of Ohio (Disciples of Christ).

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Hiram Farm Living and Learning Community
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Hiram Farm Living and Learning Community is a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to grow, learn, work, and live in a setting focused on respect and support for individuals and the environment.



It is a community project that seeks to provide employment and therapeutic activities that will offer security, individual growth and personal fulfillment to our participants.