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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Autism Safety Training for First Responders

Greater Pensacola area – At Autism Pensacola we believe that educating the community about autism creates a safe, inclusive community for families living with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Understanding what autism may look like in emergency situations can improve outcomes when interacting with police, fire, and other safety personnel.

This March, in partnership with Pensacola Police Department and Sacred Heart Health System, Autism Pensacola will present a series of FREE first-responder trainings. Training is geared toward law enforcement, firefighters, nurses, EMTs, social workers, and judicial personnel.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in 68 individuals will be diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder in the US. It is estimated that individuals with ASD will have seven times as many encounters with law enforcement during their lifetime than the general population (Curry, Posluszny, & Kraska, 1993).

Speakers for the training are Capt. Bill Cannata and Lt. Jimmy Donohoe. Capt. Cannata is a 34-year veteran of the Massachusetts fire service. Now retired, he is the Program Director for the Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition. Lt. Donohoe of the Pensacola Police Department is the creator of the Take Me Home Program, which is used nationwide. Both professionals sit on the Autism Society of America's Safe & Sound Task Force. Each are fathers of children on the autism spectrum.

Dates and locations for training:

-- Tuesday, March 12, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sacred Heart Greenhut Auditorium

-- Wednesday, March 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ECEM, 6575 North W St.

-- Thursday, March 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ECEM, 6575 North W St.

Registration is required as space is limited! Go to <http://bit.ly/AutismSafety18> to sign up.

Autism Pensacola (API) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by autism. Established in 2002, API works to support and educate parents and professionals regarding the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism. API offers educational sessions and materials, support groups, training programs, and fundraising opportunities to increase awareness of autism and assist families and individuals living with autism. API serves both Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

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