



## Mt. SAC ASD Student Statements:

"Most people don't know about high functioning autism, they just assume it's only low functioning."

"I feel Autism is important. I wish more people would learn about it."

"I go to the ATC, writing center, the MARC, and ACCESS counseling center."

"Autism makes me feel funny and strange."

"I have to talk to them (professors)."

"Autism has made me grow into a better person."

## Resources:

1. ACCESS counselor for accommodations and academic counseling **x4290**
2. Puzzle Project for social skills training  
**puzzleproject@mtsac.edu**
3. Student Health Services for personal counseling **x4400**
4. Accessible Technology Center (ATC) for ACCESS homework support **x5679**
5. Dr. Diana Chou,  
Licensed Psychologist **x4400**
6. Liz Hernandez,  
ACCESS Counselor **x6484**
7. Heather Ponce,  
Speech Pathologist **x6332**

## **ACCESS**

9B, 1st floor  
1100N. Grand Ave.  
Walnut CA 91789  
909-274-4290



## **Puzzle Project**

Social skills training for young adults with Autism in a college setting.



## **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

ASD is a lifelong developmental disability that affects social and communication skills. ASD is a spectrum disorder which means that all people with autism share difficulties in three main areas, social communication, social interaction, and inflexibility of thought. (Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum, 2010).

## WHAT IS PUZZLE PROJECT?

A series of workshops for Mt. SAC students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). During these workshops, students will learn a variety of skills that can be applied to college life.

## THE MISSION

To improve the social language, social interaction and its appropriate use; executive function (initiation, planning, organization, execution, and self-regulation), and control of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in order to facilitate positive educational outcomes to help students accomplish their academic and career goals.

## HISTORY

Puzzle Project was established in 2014 by Dr. Christopher Walker, Speech Pathologist, at Accessibility Resource Centers for Students (ACCESS) at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. Sac). After his retirement, the program continued to grow and flourish, and has served 80 students since then.

## MEET THE STAFF

The program operates with 2 co-instructors (an ACCESS Counselor and a Speech Pathologist), a behavioral consultant/ licensed Psychologist, 15 peer mentors, and 1 administrative support staff.

## PEER MENTORS

Students will meet twice weekly with a peer mentor to focus on applying social skills, time management and organizational strategies, utilize campus resources, and stay on track to meet their academic goals.

Peer Mentors are selected from a pool of exceptional, honor students enrolled at Mt. SAC. They possess extraordinary qualities in academia and inter-personal skills that will help students on the spectrum become successful.

## RESEARCH BASED MODEL

Puzzle Project was created based on the UCLA Program Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) model by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson. Puzzle Project's professional staff are PEERS certified and teach from the book PEERS for Young Adults.

## TOPICS COVERED

- Academic counseling
- Stress Management
- Social Skills training (entering group conversations, dating, handling disagreements, etc.)



## TIME COMMITMENT

The skill building workshops take place on campus and are held every Friday morning during the **Spring and Fall semesters**.

One-on-one peer mentoring sessions take place on campus **bi-weekly** (2 hours total). Schedules are arranged at the beginning of the semester and remain consistent.

## CRITERIA

Students who are accepted into the program must be enrolled at Mt. SAC in a credit, academic class. They should be on track to earn a certificate, an associate degree, or seeking transfer to a four year university.

### APPLICATION CRITERIA

1. Must be registered with ACCESS and have a verified disability of ASD.
2. ACCESS counselor referral to Puzzle project.
3. Puzzle Project intake interview.
4. Enrolled in a credit academic class.
5. Availability on Friday mornings.



Puzzle Project Workshop, Spring 2017