

# Magellan Hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Autism Community Walk on April 27 in Bethlehem

Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania (Magellan) hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Autism Community Walk in Bethlehem at Saucon Park on April 27 to celebrate National Autism Acceptance Month, in collaboration with Lehigh County HealthChoices, Northampton County HealthChoices, Autism Society Lehigh Valley, and NAMI Lehigh Valley. This free event had 100+ people in attendance and was focused on sharing important community resources for transition-age individuals and adults with Autism.

This event also shows how important it is to support autistic individuals as they grow into adulthood. That means helping with things like jobs, housing, and mental health care. Magellan is working with partners across Pennsylvania to offer programs that meet these needs in ways that respect each person's strengths and differences.

## ***The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Autism Community Walk included:***

- Keynote presentation by Karen Beck Pooley, who read "[Listen Up: Autistic Youth Need to Be Heard](#)," a recently published article in *Pediatrics* by her son, Jace Pooley. Jace is a nonspeaking autistic 16-year-old who is a high-school student in the Lehigh Valley.
- Welcome remarks from Autism Society Lehigh Valley, NAMI Lehigh Valley, and Magellan.
- Autism resources and promotional materials for all attendees to include navigation guides, important contact information, and helpful tips for families.
- A .75-mile community walk led by Jace Pooley through the neighborhood adjacent to Saucon Park.
- Family entertainment activities to include rock painting, cornhole games, and ping pong.
- Light refreshments.

"Magellan, together with our county partners and community stakeholders, understand that Autism is not a 'one size fits all' diagnosis, and we do not view treatment as a 'one size fits all' approach either," said Tom Walker, senior account executive for Lehigh County and Northampton County, Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania. "Autistic individuals and their families may face many challenges, but you need to know there are strong advocates right here in our community."

To explore local autism resources for PA HealthChoices members and their supports, go to [www.magellanofpa.com/autism](http://www.magellanofpa.com/autism).

