Meeting the needs of Americans on the autism spectrum remains a priority for my Administration. Last September, I was proud to sign the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act, which provides critical funding for autism research, education, early detection, and support and services for children and adults. Under the Affordable Care Act, new insurance plans are required to cover autism screenings and developmental assessments for children at no additional cost to parents. Insurance companies can no longer deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions, and young people can stay on their parents’ health insurance plan until age 26, easing financial burdens for families. With the Department of Education, we are making substantial investments in enhancing education for children on the autism spectrum—from early learning to higher education. And federally funded research continues to explore how we can improve independent living, develop assistive technology, and advance vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with autism. For additional information and resources, I encourage all Americans to visit www.HHS.gov/autism.

As new policies and bold actions break down old barriers and reshape attitudes, we move closer to a world free of discrimination and full of understanding for our family members and friends living with ASDs. On World Autism Awareness Day, let us reaffirm our dedication to supporting those on the autism spectrum and their families, and let us continue the work of ensuring all our people have a chance at achieving the American dream.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2, 2012, as World Autism Awareness Day. I encourage all Americans to learn more about autism and what they can do to support individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8796 of April 3, 2012


By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

For centuries, the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of character have driven American progress and enriched our national life. On Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., we renew our commitment to these timeless aspirations, and we rededicate ourselves to fostering in our sons and daughters inquiring minds and compassionate hearts.

In a global economy where more than half of new jobs will demand higher education or advanced training, we must do everything we can to equip our children with the tools for success. Their journey begins early, and it demands stewardship from throughout the community—from parents and
caregivers who inspire a love of learning to teachers and mentors who
guide our children along the path to achievement. Our Nation’s prosperity
grows with theirs, and by ensuring every child has access to a world class
education, we reach for a brighter future for all Americans.

Yet, we also move forward knowing we cannot secure the promise of to-
morrow through formal education alone. With each generation, our Nation
has confronted questions that tested the quality and character of our peo-
ple. We have borne witness to seemingly insurmountable problems of in-
equality, oppression, or dire circumstance at home and abroad, and where
we have recognized injustice, the way forward has not always been clear.
Time and again, during moments of trial, Americans have demonstrated a
fundamental commitment to compassion, cooperation, and goodwill toward
others—doing not what is easy, but what is right. These qualities have
come to define us, and as we prepare today’s students to become tomor-
row’s leaders, let us nourish in them the virtues that have sustained our
country for generations.

On Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., we reflect on the teachings of Rabbi
Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who embodied that
humanitarian spirit. As a tireless advocate for youth around the world, he
inspired millions to lift the cause of education, to practice kindness and
generosity, and to aspire toward their highest ideals. His enduring legacy
lives on in those he touched, and today, we resolve to carry forward his
dedication to service and scholarship.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of
America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and
the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 3, 2012, as Edu-
cation and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon all Americans to observe this
day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of
April, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independ-
ence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8797 of April 9, 2012

National Volunteer Week, 2012

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Our Nation has been profoundly shaped by ordinary Americans who have
volunteered their time and energy to overcome extraordinary challenges.
From the American Revolution and the Seneca Falls Convention to the ev-
eryday acts of compassion and purpose that move millions to make change
in their communities, our Nation has always been at its best when individ-
uals have come together to realize a common vision. As we continue to
pursue progress, service and social innovation will play an essential role
in achieving our highest ambitions—from a world-class education for every
child to an economy built to last. During National Volunteer Week, we pay