

LUCY SKYDIVES  
FROM  
150000 FEET AND  
GRACE RUNS  
MARATHON FOR  
AUTISM FORWARD

STANFORD  
NEURODIVERSITY  
VIRTUAL SUMMIT  
TO BE HELD  
7-9 NOVEMBER 2021

AS MENTORING'S  
EMPLOYER PARTNER  
PROGRAMMES  
FOR AUTISTIC  
CANDIDATES

AUTISM FORWARD  
FUNDS STEPS INTO  
WORK PROGRAMME  
FOR AUTISTIC  
GRADUATES

# AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

## Employment Success for Autism Forward Beneficiaries

We have now awarded 185 grants for mentoring support and we continue to see excellent employment outcomes for our grant holders across the country. Over 83% of our first, second and third year grant holders are now in paid (61%) or voluntary (22%) employment and over 45% of our new grant holders (who have only had between 3 and 6 months mentoring) have already secured paid or voluntary employment. Feedback from our current clients is also very positive, with 93% improving understanding of their strengths and challenges, 89% improving understanding of how to find work, 86% more confident about disclosing their diagnosis, 89% improving understanding of the 'reasonable adjustments' available in the workplace, 64% receiving support to access benefits or public services and 86% improving their self-confidence.

## Fundraising for Autism Forward



We have been lucky to have some enterprising fundraisers over the last few months. We were selected as the Lady Captain's Charity of the Year by Fiona Ross at Sunningdale Golf Club and one of their members, Lucy Wessely, raised over £1400 hurtling at 125 miles per hour sky diving from 15000 feet and Grace Cameron took up the challenge of the Virtual London Marathon to raise funds for Autism Forward:

*"My dad asked me earlier this year if I'd like to run the Virtual London Marathon supporting Autism Forward and I immediately said yes. I love running and dad, who is autistic himself and works for Matthew's Hub in Hull, speaks passionately about the work that Autism Forward does so it was perfect. I started training and fundraising in earnest over the last few months and then with only 1 month to go before the big day, I tested positive for covid. Thankfully that wasn't the end, my symptoms were mild and I was able to run again the day my self isolation ended!*

*Two weeks later and October the 3rd was a cold, rainy day but the along the route I saw over 40 other runners with numbered bibs on like mine and we all cheered and shouted when we saw each other. It may not have been in London but the community spirit was fantastic. I ended up running a Personal Best time and thanks to incredibly generous donations, have raised just shy of £1,000! No better way to spend a Sunday!"*



## Steps into Work Programme for Graduates

This summer Autism Forward funded the pilot “Steps into Work” programme developed by AS Mentoring (“ASM”) which targeted autistic adults who had recently graduated from Higher Education. The aim of the programme was to equip recent graduates with job searching skills, help them identify their strengths and begin to explore their own path into the world of work.

The participants were engaged with and interested in the programme throughout: there were a total of 12 participants taking part, 11 of whom fully completed the programme. The participants all joined in group discussions, and the preparation and follow-up work were reviewed at the start of each session along with the key targets.

In addition to six group sessions, each participant had a 1:1 mentor to further explore their goals with. The mentors saw improvement in the participants' CVs and cover letter writing, as well as in putting their own job searching plans into action and their ability to reflect on their skills, strengths, and what adjustments they may require at work in order to meet their specific needs.

A particularly positive outcome of the programme is that just after the final group session, one of the participants secured a 6-month paid internship position with Invesco, one of ASM’s employer partners.

Building on the feedback from the pilot, ASM have committed to a second rollout of the programme in November.

[Click here for further details and cost.](#)

## AS Mentoring - Employer Partner Programmes

ASM’s successful employer partner programmes have been coming back on stream over the summer. ASM started working with Invesco just before the first lockdown last year, with the first paid intern recruited and inducted remotely. Their internship was a great success, and the second intern (a young quantum physics graduate) has just been selected. The programme at Invesco is similar to the successful programme ASM have been running with Credit Suisse for the last three years. Having recently recruited an ASM client to a data analyst role, Credit Suisse have brought another team on board the programme and will be recruiting later this autumn for another internship starting early next year.

ASM have also recently been engaged with Capita and have identified candidates for a number of roles within the organisation. Capita will hopefully be recruiting their first cohort in the next month or two, having commented that the candidates’ CVs were outstanding. Please email [info@asmentoring.co.uk](mailto:info@asmentoring.co.uk) if you are interesting in finding out more about putting in place an employer partner programme at your organisation.

## STANFORD NEURODIVERSITY SUMMIT

Stanford Neurodiversity Summit will be running for its second year from 7th to 9th November 2021. The theme of this year's summit is "Your Neurodiversity Identity for You and Your Community".

This virtual summit is a unique conference bringing together neurodiverse/ neurodivergent individuals, employers, service agencies, educators and students, parents, and professionals from all areas of the field to share visions, innovations, and inspirations about how neurodiversity can make our society better.



The summit will have around 100 speakers, including neurodivergent individuals who will share their unique life and professional journeys, and significant contributions to the community.

[Please click here to see the preliminary program for the summit.](#)

Registration is free and open until the tickets are sold out.

[Click here to register for the summit.](#)