

## **WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO AUTISM AND WE?**

My name is Krushawna Harper, and I am a core member of the autism, and we organization. And what does it mean to be a core member, a core member is basically a governing body. We planned, it's a smaller part of the autism and we group. So, we do the planning and basically do the housekeeping for the group.

I actually came a year after they started the group. I was lucky to find out that this group, even existed, which is something that I always wanted to be a part of.

We were sitting there were like, wait a minute. We didn't even know this group existed. So, we showed up one day at a meeting and we haven't left since so wonderful. And what was autism and we doing, and what was it like when you first joined. When I first joined, they were working on it was a it was a project for transportation, basically trying to get transportation for students that weren't in the public school district. And they, I know they were meeting with senators and things like that, so they were doing some great things already. Even at the first meeting when I attended.

## **HOW HAS AUTISM AND WE GROWN SINCE YOU JOINED?**

I think we've grown in that aspect where we we host a support group, every Wednesday night from 630 to 9pm and we are, we're empowering other individuals, other parents to basically be the strong advocate that they need to be for their family members, so I think they've grown in that aspect they've grown from having the idea to implementing

That's the thing that we want to do. We want to be out there to support the community and empower parents to do what they need to do to support their children so that's what we're excited about doing more things like that. The support group is just the beginning. We haven't a lot of other things, you know, in our little box that we are going to you know, release but it'll all be strategic.

## **WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST GOAL FOR AUTISM AND WE IN THE FUTURE?**

To be just as wide known and as any other support group or group that that empowers families. So, we have a great group of people, but I would love to see more individuals have a hands on with the group that be a part of the group. Just because there's so much to offer in so many black and brown families have been lost in the cracks, have fallen through the cracks because they haven't had the resources they didn't even know there were resources. So, I would love to see autism and we grow so that hey, it's just going to be like the SEC second nature for someone to say, Oh, I have a group for you. Let me tell you about this. So when you walk into your behavioral pediatricians office, and you're a black and brown family. They said hey we have this wonderful group for you

## **WHAT DOES AUTISM AND WE MEAN TO YOU?**

It means a lot to me. Because I remember when I first got the diagnosis for my son's. I have two children with developmental disabilities and when I first received the diagnosis. I didn't know where to go.

And so, I, I did everything I possibly could went to this seminar that seminar, and did all of those things but I was just grasping at straws and Autism and Qe is a place where it's like a one stop shop, all where those families They won't have to do all of that, at least not have to do that alone. There, they can come talk to them and we and give direction so autism away means so much to me and I'm so glad that I happened upon it because it's, It's a life changer is a sense ...And I'll I can't say it enough it's a sense of empowerment for families who feel hopeless, because that is a feeling that is a true feeling that happens a lot to our families, especially in the black and brown community, we, you know, they they've often feel hopeless because they don't have the tools that they need to even support their children and education and that's another thing with Autism and We.

We just don't, you know, provide information as to where you need to go to get the next therapy, but we're like, we're talking about things like IEPs and just educational goals and and trust, guardianship things like that so we try to basically cover the entire scope and whatever we don't know, we'll find someone to come to our group and talk about it so that's Autism and we, in a nutshell, it is. It has been a game changer for me.