



# *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS,** a Developmental Disability is considered to be a diverse group of chronic conditions that are due to mental or physical impairments that arise before adulthood; and

**WHEREAS,** the condition is likely to continue indefinitely and limits the individual in 3 or more of the following areas: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency; and

**WHEREAS,** the condition creates the individual's need for a combination of special, interdisciplinary services, individualized/person-centered supports, and other forms of long-term assistance that are individually planned and coordinated; and

**WHEREAS,** the disability experience is a natural part of life and is valued as a part of our rich diversity; and

**WHEREAS,** disability is a social construct. The 'problem' is not the medical condition that resides within the individual, but the 'problem' is that society does not create welcoming, supporting, and inclusive environments, policies, and/or systems for all, to promote quality and acceptance in all areas of life, including schools, places of employment, and in our communities; and

**WHEREAS,** the most effective way to increase awareness is through everyone's openness to learn and acknowledge that there are systemic barriers that reduce the likelihood of those with disabilities the ability to enjoy equitable experiences and to live independent, productive lives within their communities; and

**WHEREAS,** policies must be developed, attitudes shaped, and equitable experiences be offered to all individuals, including those with developmental disabilities; and

**WHEREAS,** citizens should do all within their power to recognize the value of the disability experience in our lives and the valued role it has in our rich diversity; recognize the barriers presented to those with disabilities across all aspects of their lives; create ways to include everyone - especially those with developmental disabilities, to be fully included in all aspects of life; understand the losses (financial, spiritual, human rights, contributions to community, and otherwise) when our communities segregate and create barriers for those with disabilities; demand policymakers create inclusive, equitable policies and systems for all.

**NOW THEREFORE,** I, Walker E. Reid III, Mayor of the City of Gastonia, do hereby proclaim **March 2022** as **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH** and encourage efforts that will lead our communities and policymakers to create real systemic changes that will allow people with developmental disabilities to enjoy equitable and inclusive lives.

**IN WITNESS THEREOF,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Gastonia to be affixed, this the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-two.

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Walker E. Reid III, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Suzanne J. Gibbs, City Clerk