



News Release

For Immediate Release

Cambridge Who's Who Recognizes Maria Calcagni for Efforts to Raise Autism Awareness

Autism Speaks Volunteer Leader Works to Resolve Issues

Uniondale, NY, February 12, 2007 – Cambridge Who's Who honors its member Maria Calcagni, a volunteer leader for Autism Speaks, for her efforts to raise awareness about autism.

Calcagni appeared on ABC's *The View* on January 29, 2007, with her husband and daughter. That day's telecast was devoted to autism, which affects 1 of every 150 children, with boys affected more than girls by a 4-to-1 ratio. A neuro-developmental disorder, autism results in impaired verbal and behavioral functions. Its only treatment is specialized education that trains the brain to create neural pathways that do not develop on their own in people with autism. However, educational entitlements end at age 21, and many people with autism are forced to discontinue education and therefore lose the independence gained through treatment. Calcagni's segment on *The View* focused on the challenges faced by people with autism who turn 21 and therefore lose access to federally funded educational programs.

Last year, the autism community had two significant legislative victories. The first was the enactment of the Combating Autism Act, which authorizes nearly \$1 billion over five years to combat autism through research, screening, early detection and early intervention. The second was the \$7.5 million Congress included in the FY 2007 Defense Appropriations bill for autism research to benefit affected military families and others.

In 2007, one of Autism Speaks' legislative goals is to work with Congress to develop and secure passage of a law to improve access to affordable autism treatment and services. As Calcagni says, "There is a critical lack of government-funded autism-specific support services, which are essential if adults with autism are to lead full, safe and dignified lives."

For more information about autism, visit www.autismspeaks.org.

About Cambridge Who's Who among Executives, Professionals and Entrepreneurs

The mission of Cambridge Who's Who is to provide its 250,000 members with recognition,

support and credibility to advance their careers. Cambridge Who's Who is also committed to delivering the highest quality networking resource, at www.cambridgewhoswho.com, for job recruitment, career enhancement and new business development.

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