The Welcome Inclusion Initiative

What is WIN?  The Welcome Inclusion (WIN) Initiative is a community awareness and capacity building campaign that will facilitate rapid, transformative community change to promote a world of inclusion for children and adults with intellectual, behavioral and social differences.

WIN is inspired by many stories from individuals and families impacted by conditions, such as autism. All too often these are shared experiences of not being welcomed into their communities, receiving annoyed glances and coping with mean comments that cause families to feel isolated in their own neighborhoods. But these stories are juxtaposed with wonderful examples of inclusion, memories filled with kind words and smiles that help individuals and families feel welcome.

WIN will position Seattle and King County as the model for community inclusion, laying the foundation for communities large and small to adopt and formalize welcoming practices. Officially, WIN has signed a fiscal sponsorship with the Arc of King County, with a two-year campaign launch planned in tandem with the Special Olympics USA Games in the summer of 2018.

What are the key elements of WIN? The WIN Initiative is based on several key points. First – the majority of citizens in our community are either already very welcoming of people with differences or they want to be welcoming. Second – what prevents people from adopting welcoming behavior is a degree of fear that is based out of a lack of understanding. Third – this fear-based ignorance is best overcome by education and hands-on experience. Instead of trying to change people with intellectual, behavioral and social differences, WIN targets societal change.

To accomplish this societal change, WIN has six key deliverables:

1) **The WIN App** – an interactive, mobile, map-based app that connects individuals and families with WIN-certified businesses in their local communities.
2) **WIN business recruitment** – grass-roots recruitment of 500 service-oriented businesses throughout Seattle and King County that will adopt the welcoming principles of WIN.
3) **WIN business training** – individualized training of WIN businesses based on creating hands-on, professionally guided, real-time learning opportunities.
4) **Community awareness campaign** – targeted communications to raise awareness of the problem, the need and the solution through the WIN website, social media campaign and earned media opportunities.
5) **The WIN Leadership Symposium** – one-day symposium bringing together local community, business and government leaders to promote inclusion. Official public launch of the WIN Initiative (app, website, business recruitment and training): Microsoft Redmond Campus, June 23, 2017.
6) **WIN impact analysis** – UW-led research which will measure baseline (pre-WIN) attitudes and opinions of King County technology and service-oriented businesses toward a representative group (autism) as well as change in these attitudes and opinions (post-WIN).

Why now? We believe our community is at a tipping point. We believe many people in King County want to be more welcoming to all people, but what slows the process is a certain degree of fear based in a lack of opportunity and understanding. Too many individuals and families in our community are suffering currently, and this change needs to happen now.

Also, the Special Olympics USA Games will be held in Seattle, July 1-8, 2018. Nearly 3,500 athletes from across the nation will compete with the support of 1,000 coaches and tens of thousands of volunteers and spectators. With ESPN and KOMO coverage as well as corporate and professional sports partnerships, the spotlight will be on Seattle and King County creating tremendous earned media opportunities to promote a world of inclusion.
Why is WIN so important?

First, it is the right thing to do. Second, we know people with autism and other related conditions are currently under-employed and, as a result, suffer from much higher rates of mental health illness than their peers. This is a crisis for not only these individuals but for our society as a whole. Third, we know families caring for people with developmental disabilities struggle in accessing opportunities to participate in the community – this creates a world of isolation for these individuals and their families. With WIN, we move beyond tolerance and acceptance and achieve a more welcoming community, a place where social and behavioral differences are understood and embraced as important parts of our community.

Who are we?

WIN is fiscally sponsored by the Arc of King County. The WIN Initiative is a grassroots movement. The bulk of work will be conducted by volunteers and the overall cost of the project will be reduced by in-kind donations. WIN work groups include fundraising, small and mid-sized business outreach, awareness campaign execution, training coordination, technology integration, legal oversight, and symposium management.

What does WIN cost?

The cost of WIN will be kept down through recruitment of volunteer services from community professionals, in-kind donations from WIN supporting businesses, research grant support, and donations collected from WIN-certified businesses and community supporters. The goal will be to keep project management, administrative support, operations, legal and fiscal management fees under $400,000 over the life of the initiative.

Timeline*

2016
Community forums: recruitment of families, professionals, self-advocates and early adopter businesses.
Key supporter meetings: recruitment of community business leaders
Baseline research

2017
App/website development
WIN business training development
Community awareness campaign
Leadership Symposium/official launch (June 23, 2017)
WIN business recruitment
WIN business training implementation

2018
Outcome research

2019
National launch and creation of 501c3

*Estimate start dates. Some items carry into future years.

In-kind Support

- Tactile: logo design
- Arc Media: WIN introduction video development
- WongDoody: awareness campaign: support
- Microsoft: Leadership Symposium

Steering Committee

Raphael Bernier, PhD: Associate Professor, UW School of Medicine; Director, Seattle Children’s Autism Center
Kari Donnor: Director of Marketing Strategy, WongDoody
Katrina Davis: Parent of child with autism and Family Advocate and Case Manager, Seattle Children’s Autism Center
Stacy Gillett, Executive Director, The Arc of King County
Jim Mancini, MS CCC-SLP: Director of Education and Outreach, Seattle Children’s Autism Center
Gary Stobbs, MD: Clinical Associate Professor, UW School of Medicine; Director, UW Medicine Adult Autism Clinic
Ben Wahl, MSW: Program Director, Aspiring Youth, Ryther

Research Team

Hala Annabi, PhD (Principal Investigator): Associate Professor, UW Information School
Ilene Schwartz, PhD (Co-PI): Professor, UW College of Education; Director, Hearing Center
Jill Locke, PhD (Co-PI): Assistant Professor, UW Speech & Hearing Sciences
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