

**THE UPS FOUNDATION AWARDS \$25,000 TECHNOLOGY GRANT TO
SAN DIEGO NONPROFIT, UPGRADING AND EXPANDING THE REGION'S ONLY
SOFTWARE TESTING TRAINING CENTER FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM**

*NFAR Tech's Groundbreaking Program Gets an Upgrade for the New School Year,
With New Equipment, Larger Classrooms, and New Location
as They Help Create a Pool of Exceptional Talent for the Local Tech Market*

San Diego, CA – San Diego-based NFAR Tech -- a groundbreaking comprehensive training program that prepares young adults with autism for meaningful employment in the high tech industry -- is honored to once again be awarded with a grant from **the UPS Foundation, the charitable arm of UPS**. The \$25,000 grant will provide new laptops, networking equipment, printers, and other materials that will help NFAR Tech provide training on up-to-date technology. This is the third UPS Foundation grant awarded to NFAR since 2013.

Now, as many high school graduates head off to college, filled with hope of bright futures and new opportunities, too many of our young adults with autism, and their families, are seeing just how limited their career options are beyond high school.

Despite the fact that those with high functioning autism have exceptional skills and can be a strong contributor in the workplace, unemployment for these individuals has been historically high. NFAR Tech is working to change this.

Created in 2015, NFAR Tech uniquely integrates work expectations and social skill development into a technical skills curriculum and provides critical experience that can help students with autism be successful when they enter the job market.

"Instead of focusing on their disabilities, we really want to focus on our students' abilities," noted Juan Leon, NFAR Tech co-founder. "People on the spectrum have skills well suited for the technology field, they just need the training, the encouragement, and more importantly, the opportunity, to shine. High intelligence, attention to detail, and logical thinking can make them exceptional employees for tech companies."

"This is a population that is currently and historically unemployed, which only further limits their opportunities," said Jay Bautista, Director, Corporate Retail Solutions at The UPS Store, Inc., and a parent of a child on the spectrum. "Because the number of teens and young adults with autism only continues to increase, the UPS Foundation is committed to helping and funding programs that will make a lasting difference both in their immediate lives and their futures. By continuing to award grants to NFAR Tech, we hope to also build a stronger local community with a diversified workforce."

Knowing that finding meaningful employment not only offers people with autism a job, but also helps to build self-esteem, develop a social network of co-workers, and allow them to gain a level of financial independence, NFAR Tech is committed to creating these much-needed opportunities.

"We are preparing our students to walk into an office and be able to contribute as an employee," said Leon. "To date, we have worked with local companies to secure twenty-two 160-hour work internships."

As Cohort 7 begins its seven-month training program, NFAR Tech will also be moving into a new space, expanding their classrooms and offices to better suit the needs of their students.

“This grant from The UPS Foundation could not have come at a better time as we transition to our new location,” added Leon. “The equipment will help us stay cutting edge with our training and to send our graduates into the job market with the current tech knowledge and understanding required.”

NFAR Tech expects to hold an open house for their new facility later this fall.

The UPS Foundation, supported primarily by UPS® and its employees, is committed to building stronger, safer, and more resilient communities around the world. Last year alone, they invested nearly 2.7 million volunteer hours and more than \$116 million dollars into its communities. Visit the UPS Foundation online at www.UPS.com/foundation.

More information is available at www.NFAR.org or by emailing info@nfar.org

Fast Facts

- Autism now affects 1 in every 68 children in the U.S.
- The number of teens and young adults with autism has increased tenfold over the past ten years and nearly half a million autistic children will reach adulthood in the next decade
- **Unemployment for those with autism is as high as 85%**, yet individuals on the autism spectrum have skills well suited for the technology field, such as high intelligence, attention to detail, and logical thinking that can make them exceptional employees for tech companies
- Research studies funded by the National Institutes for Mental Health (NIMH) and the Department of Education (DOE) indicate that **as many as 1 in 3 young adults** with autism have no job experience, college, or technical education within seven years of leaving high school; **a poorer outcome than those with any other disability**

About the NFAR TECH Program

NFAR TECH, designed for young adults (age 18+), is a comprehensive, 7-month vocational program that combines instructor-lead, hands-on training with real life applications and internship placement, helping to build expertise and experiences that can lead to careers in software testing, and other technical professions.

About the National Foundation for Autism Research (NFAR)

NFAR was established in 2003 to serve the critical needs of families and their children with autism. NFAR is committed to increasing local awareness, information, support, and services to improve the quality of life for persons living with autism or an autism spectrum disorder. Since 2005, NFAR has invested more than \$1.5 million throughout the San Diego community to positively impact the living and learning environment for thousands of people with autism. NFAR’s main fundraising event, the San Diego Race for Autism, will be held on March 24, 2018 in Balboa Park in advance of April’s National Autism Awareness Month. www.NFAR.org. www.raceforautism.org

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