

The David Conforti – Reach for the Stars Award

David Conforti was a remarkable and caring young man who made a difference in his community and inspired others through his volunteer work in York Region, Ontario. His family has described him as someone who never thought of his autism as a barrier throughout his life; to him, autism is “a difference that makes us who we are.” David’s contributions directly challenged stereotypes associated with autism as he became a confident self-advocate, even reaching out to encourage other peers to work through their anxieties about getting involved and connecting to others whenever possible. He was recognized by the broader community for his academic and volunteer efforts when he became a recipient of Autism Ontario’s Eleanor Ritchie Post-Secondary Scholarship.

David's eagerness and enthusiasm in academia with the 'Voices of Youths' research project (<https://voicesofyouthresearch.com>) provided insight on quality of life and inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. His volunteerism and community building brought awareness that "belonging really does matter", people with disabilities have important and intelligent things to say and do and can contribute to society. David aimed to redefine Autism by; coaching soccer to people with disabilities, through his public speaking, and by reaching out to parents of children with Autism so they could see their own children beyond the prognosis.

The Award

In order to recognize the importance that volunteering had on David’s life, and to further encourage and recognize volunteerism with community impact among other people with autism, his family, together with the Autism Ontario – York Region Chapter, created **The David Conforti - Reach for the Stars Award**, as a lasting tribute and in memory of David Conforti’s life.

How To Apply

To apply for this award, the candidate must submit the application package by **May 15, 2018**. The following documentation must be mailed to:

Autism Ontario
C/O David Conforti – Reach for the Stars Award
1179 King Street West, Suite 004
Toronto, ON, M6K 3C5.

1. David Conforti - Reach for the Stars Award Questionnaire
2. Application form
3. A copy of the individual’s diagnosis from a qualified medical/psychological diagnostician.
4. Two references from someone with knowledge of the applicant’s volunteer work who can support their nomination for this Award.

Autism Ontario York Region Chapter is committed to offering a minimum of one award per year. If Autism Ontario York Region Chapter receives more applications than we have funding to support, a lottery could be conducted. This is in consideration and respect for those individuals who all rightly deserve support.



If you are the successful recipient of The David Conforti Reach for the Stars Award, your name will be published in Autism Ontario communications (including Autism Matters and Social Media channels) to highlight the achievements of people in the Province living with autism.

Your application must be received by May 15, 2018. Applications received later than this date will not be accepted.

For additional information please contact scholarships@autismontario.com

- 4) Explain the impact your volunteering had on the community?

Please mail this application along with the application package to: Autism Ontario C/O The David Conforti – Reach for the Stars Award, 1179 King Street, West, Suite 004, Toronto, ON, M6K 3C5. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address indicated on the application once your application has been received.

