



**Global  
Interdependence  
Center**



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**January 13 Symposium Brings Together Workforce, Nonprofit, Civic, and Academic Leaders to Discuss the Economics of Disabilities**

*PHILADELPHIA –*

**What:** The Global Interdependence Center and Columbus Community Center will host the third installment in their Bottom Line of Disabilities series on January 13, 2016 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. “Autism in the Workforce: Identifying Obstacles and Leveraging Innovation” will convene corporate and civic leaders, advocates, and industry professionals to explore cutting-edge academic studies, policy work, and employment practices emerging in the northeastern U.S. that address autism spectrum disorder (ASD) unemployment.

ASD has come to the forefront as a diagnosis that has lifetime implications for families and society. Currently, 1 in 68 children in the U.S. is being diagnosed, and worldwide 1% of the population is estimated to have ASD. New Jersey and Utah have the highest rates of autism in the U.S. with 2% of those states’ populations being diagnosed. Young adults with ASD leaving public school are facing an 80% unemployment rate, the highest of any demographic. Cost to families over a lifetime is estimated at \$2 million. However, IT companies like SAP, CAI, and Microsoft are re-thinking accommodations and recognizing the unique, innovative thinking that those with ASD can bring to the workplace. Expert panelists will share their experiences and explore new opportunities.

**Where:**  
Boehne Auditorium, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia  
100 N. Sixth Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**When:** January 13, 2016; 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Light breakfast will be served.

**Who:** This event will feature the following speakers and moderators:

- Ernie Dianastasis, Managing Director, CAI
- Philippa Dunne, co-editor, The Liscio Report and Sightlines Bulletin and GIC Board Member
- Joseph N. Gousie, Sr., Director of Non-Traditional Career Services and Training, Elwyn
- Stephanie Mackay, Director of Development, Columbus Community Center and GIC Board Member
- Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware
- Craig Newschaffer, Director, A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Drexel University
- Thorkil Sonne, Founder, Specialisterne and the Specialist People Foundation

**Contact:** To register for this event or for more information please contact Julia Strapp, the Global Interdependence Center's associate director of communications, at [jstrapp@interdependence.org](mailto:jstrapp@interdependence.org) or 215-238-0990.

**About the Global Interdependence Center:** The Global Interdependence Center is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization that seeks to stimulate thoughtful, global dialogue on a wide range of issues that affect the international community, including economics, health care and government. GIC convenes conferences and roundtable discussions, both domestically and internationally, to identify and address emerging global issues. For more information, visit GIC's website at [www.interdependence.org](http://www.interdependence.org).

**About the Columbus Community Center:** Columbus has provided services for individuals with disabilities since 1968. Columbus is recognized locally and nationally as a well-established, innovative nonprofit agency that works strategically with stakeholders to support individuals so they can make informed decisions, pursue meaningful careers and live with independence in the community. Columbus follows a "social enterprise" business model that offers business services and social services to create opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Columbus began as a grass-roots effort started by parents looking for a community-based program, opening its doors with eight young adults and has grown to serve over 400 people a year. Learn more at [www.columbusseves.org](http://www.columbusseves.org).

For information about past "Bottom Line of Disabilities" symposia, visit [www.interdependence.org/events/browse/programs/disability-employment](http://www.interdependence.org/events/browse/programs/disability-employment) and [www.interdependence.org/events/browse/programs/investing-social-capital](http://www.interdependence.org/events/browse/programs/investing-social-capital).

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