



**For Immediate Release**

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**First Place® & Autism Housing Network Release “A Place in the World”  
Report to Advance Neuro-Inclusive Housing & Community Development**

***Symposium Webinars and Report Release – Oct. 21 & 22***

PHOENIX (October 21, 2020) — First Place® AZ and Autism Housing Network have released a new study, [\*A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities\*](#), which offers the universal language for a guiding narrative to research, develop and achieve supportive housing solutions.

The groundbreaking 2020 report includes more than 150 terms to help guide people to better understand housing preferences, accessibility needs, supportive amenities, service delivery models and more. It aims to clearly define nomenclature and market segments for the benefit and application of all sectors; establish best practices and guiding principles; and drive crucial partnerships and policy decisions that address pressing needs compounded by the current housing crisis.

“We get daily pleas from desperate autistic adults facing homelessness and senior caregivers who just can’t support their loved ones’ needs anymore,” says Desiree Kameka Galloway, report co-author and director of Autism Housing Network. “They don’t know their options and the reality is they often must choose between the next empty bed 100 miles away or homelessness.”

Current data indicate more than one million adults in the U.S. with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)—such as autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy—live with a caregiver over age 60.

Informed by a cross section of pioneering leaders with expertise in real estate, community development and public policy from within and outside of the disability community, *A Place in the World* targets the housing industry, scholars, direct service providers, policymakers, researchers, residents and other stakeholders.

*"A Place in the World* will be the go-to source for developing and expanding housing and community solutions for neurodiverse populations in communities everywhere," says report co-author Denise D. Resnik, First Place AZ founder, president and CEO, and mother of an adult son with autism. "The report was designed to raise the bar on a new generation of options so that individuals with different abilities and their families recognize that a diagnosis need not stand in the way of friends, jobs, supportive communities—and homes of their own."

Named for the [2016 PBS NewsHour](#) series featuring Greater Phoenix as "the most autism-friendly city in the world," *A Place in the World* is the sister study to the groundbreaking 2009 report, [Opening Doors: A Discussion of Residential Options for Adults Living with Autism and Related Disorders](#), the first-ever study to focus on the housing challenges of adults with autism and other neurodiversities. *Opening Doors* resulted in the founding of First Place AZ, a real estate and community developer, and the Autism Housing Network, an online platform bringing together the best ideas and resources in housing for adults with autism and others with I/DD.

*A Place in the World* is a unique collaboration among a wide array of partners from the private, nonprofit, philanthropic and public sectors that includes Arizona State University Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions and its Morrison Institute for Public Policy, the First Place Global Leadership Institute and its Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation Center for Public Policy, Autism Housing Network, and pioneering leaders from across the U.S. and around the globe.

"Through a broad and more robust marketplace, individuals can better match their needs and interests with homes they choose, combined with natural supports and long-term support services," says Resnik. "Together, we can and will inform outcomes demonstrating what works, what needs to work better and how supportive policy can better align the interests of all sectors," says Resnik.

The report uses descriptive language defining features, amenities, locations, price points and economic realities in straightforward terms for consumers, developers, providers and funders. By aligning housing, long-term support services and community supports expressed in precise terms for the benefit of those poised to deliver, the report can more effectively fuel a dynamic marketplace of options.

"We have united to take a critical step toward fueling a marketplace of options while recognizing the historic disconnect among prospective residents and their families, service providers, housing developers and policy officials struggling to address demand based on vastly different experiences and points of reference," states Kameka Galloway.

Sponsors of the report include UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, the Phoenix IDA and the Arizona Community Foundation, organizations that recognize the value of housing as a major social determinant of health and the need for a common language to inform, improve and launch a marketplace of innovative housing solutions.

First Place is hosting its eighth semi-annual [Global Leadership Institute Symposium](#) Webinars on October 21 and 22. More than 500 attendees from most U.S. states and more than 280 cities, as well as six countries, are registered to participate in the free event launching *A Place in the World*. Sponsors include UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, the Phoenix IDA, Arizona Community Foundation, Sprouts Farmers Market, Inc., Jaburg Wilk and Interest Ministries.

For more information or to get involved, email [info@firstplaceaz.org](mailto:info@firstplaceaz.org) or visit [firstplaceaz.org](http://firstplaceaz.org).

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### **About First Place® AZ**

First Place AZ, a charitable nonprofit organization advancing innovative residential options for adults with autism and other special abilities, celebrates neuro-diversity, independent living and the belief that housing options for people with autism and other special abilities should be as bountiful as they are for everyone else. First Place is creating replicable residential and post-secondary education models that promote collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, serving as a catalyst for advancing public policy focused on housing solutions for special populations. First Place–Phoenix, the nonprofit’s first new property, opened in 2018. Leasing opportunities are available. View PBS NewsHour’s two-part series about First Place at [“Giving Adults with Autism the Skills to Build Independent Lives”](#) and [“How Phoenix Became the Most Autism-Friendly City in the World.”](#) Learn more at [firstplaceaz.org](http://firstplaceaz.org).

### **About Autism Housing Network**

Autism Housing Network, a project of the Madison House Autism Foundation, brings together the best concepts in housing for autistic adults and others with intellectual/developmental disabilities on an online platform. Our goal is to empower local communities to build the homes needed to address the current and persistent housing and supports crisis. AHN raises awareness for various supportive housing models while sharing lessons learned, providing technical assistance, conducting market analysis and advocating with our partners across the country to ensure that policy does not create barriers to home and community choices of adults with autism or other neurodiversities. Learn more at [autismhousingnetwork.org](http://autismhousingnetwork.org).