



## Philadelphia Non-Profit Hosts Autism Awareness Block Party

April 7, 2016 9:00 PM By Cherri Gregg



*Jaden's Voice founder Terri Matthews with Councilman Derek Green. (credit: Cherri Gregg)*

*By Cherri Gregg*

**PHILADELPHIA (CBS)** — April is Autism Awareness month. To celebrate, a Philadelphia area non-profit is hosting an Autism Awareness Block Party on Saturday, as well as opening a new location.

“I really launched Jaden’s voice because of my experience,” says Terri Matthews. Her son Jaden was diagnosed with autism at age two, after months of doctors appointments and red tape. But the corporate executive soon realized she was lucky, her high end neighborhood meant she had access to services.

“I thought, money is separating something that’s free for people,” she says.

Matthews began using her own money and her own home to help families who lived in neighborhoods where services were less accessible. Eventually, she founded Jaden’s Voice as an official place where families could find out more about the disorder and gain access to services.

“My mission is to make sure that all services are provided equally in spite of the economic status, their gender, their race— none of that should matter,” she says.



Matthews is partnering with Councilman Derek Green on the Block party. Green's son Julian was diagnosed with autism at three. He's raised thousands for Autism Speaks and has worked hard to bring more services for children with autism to schools in his community.

"It's a big issue and I think we need to educate as many people as we can," he says, "some people have access and some people do not— we are trying to change that."

Green and Matthews will host the Block party at Jaden's Voice new west Philadelphia location at 5548 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19139 from noon to 3pm. Details at <http://www.jadensvoice.org/>.

An estimated 1 in 68 children have an autism disorder.

**Cherri Gregg**