



# Firefly Autism

## December Newsletter

### 2025

#### Welcome to the December Newsletter!

As the year draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting with deep gratitude on all that this past year has brought. At Firefly Autism, 2025 has been a year of growth, resilience, and countless moments of joy as our learners reached new milestones and discovered their own unique strengths. None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our community.

As we head into a new year, we extend our heartfelt thanks to you. Your support, encouragement, and trust continue to light the way for our learners and families. Thank you for being part of the Firefly community and for helping us create brighter futures, one meaningful moment at a time.



#### **Lighting the Way Forward: A Year of Impact, Inclusion, and Hope**

Autistic individuals of all abilities will encounter barriers throughout their lives. Because autism is a broad and diverse spectrum, support needs vary widely. Some individuals require 24-hour care, others live and work independently, and countless fall somewhere in between.

Just like the spectrum itself, access barriers span a wide range of types and intensities. Emerging research continues to highlight the profound impact these barriers have on quality of life across physical, social, psychological, and work-related domains. Early findings reveal a clear pattern: difficulty accessing care is becoming one of the most significant predictors of reduced quality-of-life outcomes.

An individual's unique support needs, living circumstances, age, health complexity, and environment often shape the number and severity of the barriers they encounter. While every autistic person and family is likely to face some challenges, those with profound autism, complex medical needs, or those who have aged out of traditional services often face the greatest and most persistent gaps.

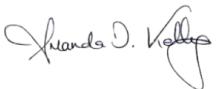
At Firefly Autism, we recognize these inequities and the urgency of addressing them. That is why we continue to focus on providing safety net care, training, consultation, and support. By equipping communities with knowledge, building stronger systems of care, and centering the needs of those most often overlooked, we strive to create pathways where every person has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

This December, we're reminded that holiday joy should be accessible to everyone. That's why we were proud to host Firefly Autism's Sensory Santa Event; a calm, sensory-friendly alternative to the busy mall where autistic individuals and families could enjoy the season in a safe, comfortable, and inclusive space.

As we look toward the future, Firefly Autism remains steadfast in its purpose: to empower autistic individuals with access barriers to thrive. This is a significant task that requires significant support. Please contact us to learn more and help us fulfill our important mission.



Dr. Amanda Kelly  
President & CEO of Firefly Autism

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda D. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Amanda" on the top line and "D. Kelly" on the line below it.

---

# Firefly's 4th Annual Sensory Friendly Pictures



Firefly Autism's 4th Annual Sensory Santa event was a powerful reminder of how meaningful inclusive experiences can be for autistic individuals and their families. Designed with sensory needs in mind, the event offered a calm, supportive alternative to traditional holiday photo experiences—one where families could slow down, feel understood, and fully enjoy the moment. For many, it wasn't just about capturing a photo, but about creating a joyful memory in a space where every individual was welcomed and celebrated exactly as they are.

We are deeply grateful to the families who joined us and entrusted Firefly to be part of their holiday traditions. Their smiles, patience, and shared moments of connection made the day truly special. Events like Sensory Santa reflect the heart of our mission: removing barriers, fostering belonging, and creating opportunities for autistic individuals to experience the magic of the season in ways that feel safe, respectful, and meaningful.



# Upcoming Events



You are invited to the...

## 15th Annual Firefly Autism Luminescent Gala!

Firefly Autism is excited to announce the 15th Annual Firefly Luminescent Gala—back with a fresh new energy and dazzling new look that will light up the evening in every way!

 **17** Thursday, April 23, 2026  
 5:00 PM – 8:30 PM  
 Seawell Ballroom at the DCPA

This year's celebration will feature an exclusive live performance by Kodi Lee, the extraordinary America's Got Talent winner, whose inspiring voice and story will make this night truly unforgettable. Guests will enjoy live and silent auctions, a paddle raise, and more—all in support of Firefly's mission to illuminate the path for individuals with autism.

 Don't miss this magical evening of inspiration, connection, and celebration. Buy your tickets now!



*Firefly Presents...*



April 23, 2026

Seawell Ballroom

# Kodi Lee

AMERICA'S GOT TALENT SEASON 14 WINNER!

[Buy Your Tickets Here!](#)

**Donor of the Month!**



Firefly is pleased to honor West Monroe Partners as our Donor of the Month for December. West Monroe is a global business and technology consulting firm passionate about creating value for the organizations and communities they serve. This fall, West Monroe provided a generous in-kind service by building a customized staffing model for Firefly, supporting our organizational administrative efforts and strategic planning.

Their expertise and partnership have strengthened our internal systems and will help guide Firefly's growth well into the future. We are deeply grateful for their support and commitment to our mission!

---



---

### **Creating joyful holiday moments in a space where every individual feels safe, supported, and celebrated.**

The holiday season brings many opportunities for connection and celebration, but it can also present sensory and routine-related challenges for many individuals and families. Bright lights, crowded gatherings, new environments, and changes in schedules can feel overwhelming without the right supports in place. By approaching the season with intention and flexibility, families and communities can help create experiences that feel joyful, safe, and inclusive for everyone.

Simple, proactive strategies—such as setting up a quiet space, previewing changes ahead of time, keeping expectations clear, and identifying safe spaces at events—can make a meaningful difference. These thoughtful adjustments help reduce stress and support regulation, allowing individuals to participate in holiday moments in ways that feel comfortable and empowering.

At Firefly Autism, we believe inclusion starts with understanding, and we're proud to share tools that help families navigate the season with confidence and care.

# Sensory Friendly Holiday Tips

Creating joyful holiday moments in a space where every individual feels safe, supported, and celebrated.



## **1. Create a “Holiday Quiet Zone”**

Create a calm space with familiar comforts like headphones, fidgets, or a favorite blanket.

## **2. Preview Holiday Changes**

Use visuals and stories to help children understand new routines or environments.

## **3. Keep Expectations Clear and Simple**

Review appropriate and inappropriate behaviors before entering a new environment.

## **4. Identify Safe Spaces at Events**

At family gatherings or community events, identify a quiet room, outdoor area, or space the child can retreat to if needed.

Need support or have questions? Firefly Autism is always here to help. Email [info@fireflyautism.org](mailto:info@fireflyautism.org).



## **Get Involved**

Every person deserves the chance to thrive—and at Firefly, we're committed to making that possible through donor support. Many of our learners face up to a \$2,000 monthly gap between the cost of care and what insurance covers. Thanks to generous donors, children who arrived nonverbal and overwhelmed are now communicating, regulating emotions, and engaging with the world.

Monthly gifts of \$50, \$100, or \$250 help us continue delivering this life-changing care, regardless of a family's financial situation. Your support powers programs like Transition to Work, our sensory garden, and community-based adult services. Help turn barriers into breakthroughs—one Firefly at a time. Donate to Firefly today by following the link below:



[Donate HERE!](#)



[MAKE A WISH COME TRUE!](#)

You can support Firefly Autism by helping to provide our center with niche items our regular funding does not provide. Curious about what we need? Check out our newly

[WISHLIST](#)

## HAVE A GREAT MONTH!

Thanks for being part of our community. We truly value our supporters, our readers, our staff, and our community.

We hope you have a great month and we will check in again with you in January.

As always, you can make a one-time or recurring donation to Firefly through our giving partner, **ColoradoGives**, anytime. Thanks for everything!

[DONATE](#)

Firefly Autism | 2001 Hoyt Street | Lakewood, CO 80215 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!