FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montgomery City-County Public Library System to display Autism Awareness Art

Montgomery, Ala.—March 4, 2022—Disability as an Ability Toward Success: Moms on the Move, also known as D.A.T.S.M.O.M., a 501(c)(3) organization, is proud to announce its historic partnership with the Montgomery City-County Public Library System to display the *Faces of Autism* Campaign in all 10 library branches beginning March 15th, 2022.

D.A.T.S.M.O.M. Founder Tametria Conner Dantzler created *Faces of Autism* to help eliminate stereotypes and preconceived notions about children and individuals on the Autism Spectrum. The goal is to help raise autism and inclusion awareness through art.

"Faces of Autism is a way to humanize autism through artistry and connect the pieces by sharing educational facts, depicting autism symptoms or related behaviors and showing what the public may not see by looking at someone on the spectrum. I want to compel people to look at these faces and take action to help increase inclusion." Dantzler said.

Montgomery City-County Public Library System Director Zella' Ques Holmes says she's excited about the partnership as it helps the library continue its mission of creating community access to information that meets residents personal, educational, cultural, technological and occupational needs.

"The exhibit will help start the conversation on what can be done to help increase awareness in our community. It is my hope that library patrons, staff and this community will learn more about autism and the ways it affects those who are diagnosed with it." Holmes said.

The *Faces of Autism Campaign* is expected to be a high-impact campaign attracting residents of all ages. Holmes says the library system serves about 7,000 patrons each week.

"As a community, we must learn more about autism and support ways to bring awareness. I want to learn more and do my part to help," Holmes said.

Dantzler says the library system is the first of many stops of the *Faces of Autism* public awareness campaign. The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts will be the location of the next public display.

"I want both private and public entities to think about how to attract and serve families of children and adults on the spectrum year-round. Education should ignite change with sustainable accommodations and programs," Dantzler said.

"The Montgomery City-County Public Library is more than 'books and bricks.' We are a community gathering place, meeting the diverse needs of the community in which we serve," Holmes said.

Faces of Autism Artist Braxton Barker of Montgomery, Ala. is using his talent to share the stories of children on the spectrum. Barker, an E-4 U.S. Airman and Auburn University-Montgomery graduate, free handily drew each sketch using submitted photos. Barker hopes that shedding light on the different faces of autism will encourage people to not only research autism, but to search within.

"I hope that anyone who sees this campaign will automatically relate to it in some way. I

hope my art work encourages others to share more empathy and realize that love goes a long way," Barker said.

Follow *Faces of Autism* on our website www.datsmom.org, Facebook (DATS MOM), Instagram and Twitter (@datsmom). For additional information, please email info@datsmom.org or datsmo@yahoo.com

About Disability as an Ability Toward Success: Moms on the Move (D.A.T.S.M.O.M):

Disability as an Ability Toward Success: Moms on the Move, also known as D.A.T.S.M.O.M., is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving more than 150 families of children on the autism spectrum (or with related developmental disabilities). The goal is to provide a platform to help parents and caregivers shift their children's disability into an ability by equipping them with the knowledge, support and tools needed to be effective advocates for their children. By providing free support, programs, enrichment activities, resources, parent trainings and services for children and young adults on the autism spectrum, we help families progressively navigate the autism journey. Some notable programs include the Alabama Autism Safety Initiative, the Conner Dantzler Autism Scholarship Fund, the Spectrum Sky Airport Training Program and the *Faces of Autism* Campaign. D.A.T.S.M.O.M. has conducted autism training to more than 130 professionals, helping them better serve individuals on the spectrum.

About the Artist:

E-4 Senior Airman Braxton Barker was born and raised in Montgomery, AL. Barker says his love and passion for creating art started when he was introduced to it as a Baldwin Arts and Academics Magnet School student. There, he developed and honed his skill which led him to major in Graphic Art Design at Auburn University Montgomery. He is currently serving as a graphic designer for the U.S. Air Force Negotiation Center. Barker believes in giving back to his community and investing in the youth, in particular underrepresented and underserved youth. In addition to his significant contribution to the *Faces of Autism* Campaign, Barker will serve as the Lead Arts Instructor for D.A.T.S.M.O.M.'s latest initiative the *Au-Tastic Abstract Arts Program* that will debut in April for Autism and Inclusion Awareness Month.

D.AT.S.M.O.M. CONTACTS:

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