

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AASCEND ANNOUNCES 2016 AWARD RECIPIENTS

San Francisco, CA – September 26, 2016: AASCEND, the Autism Asperger Spectrum Coalition for Education Networking and Development, has announced the recipients of the 2016 AASCEND's ENDS Awards for Education, Networking and Development: **The San Francisco Police Department, Laura Shumaker and Dr. Hackie Reitman**

Since 2006, the San Francisco-based nonprofit founded in 1999, has been honoring individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions in **educating** the larger society about concerns for adults with autism and Asperger syndrome, **creating networks** of advocacy and support, and **developing resources** for adults on the autism spectrum and their families. On October 8th, AASCEND will present **Neurodiversity Leaders 2016**, a one-day conference in partnership with San Francisco State University's Autism Spectrum Studies Program, and will honor the recipients of the 2016 Awards for Education, Networking and Development.

2016 Recipient for Significant Contributions in Education



AASCEND is honoring The San Francisco Police Department for its proactive work keeping the autism community safe. SFPD has educated our members on effective and safe interaction with law enforcement officers. SFPD has worked with AASCEND to develop and produce an authentic autism training video for use at the San Francisco Police Academy. The video features autism professionals discussing the autism spectrum, adults on the spectrum speaking for themselves and SFPD officers responding to a call and resolving the issue. SFPD's collaboration with the adult autism community is a model for law enforcement agencies across the nation.

2016 Recipient for Significant Contributions in Networking



For nearly a decade, [author](#) Laura Shumaker has written a blog for [SFGate](#) that focuses on employment, healthcare access, services, and all over inclusion for people with autism and other developmental disabilities. She is currently the Marketing Director for Menlo Technologies, and is also the Communications Director for [The Special Hope Foundation](#). Laura is the parent of three adult sons. The oldest, Matthew, is autistic.

2016 Recipient for Significant Contributions in Development



Harold "Hackie" Reitman, M.D. is a neurodiversity advocate, author and filmmaker. He is also the founder of the neurodiversity community site www.DifferentBrains.com. Dr. Reitman is an orthopedic surgeon, a former professional heavyweight boxer, the previous chair and present board member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County, Florida and the father of an "Aspie" diagnosed later in life. Dr. Reitman has been speaking around the country to raise awareness for neurodiversity.