



How One Ahold Delhaize USA Associate Finds Strength Through Autism Advocacy

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When Traci Holtzclaw's son, Chandler, was diagnosed with autism, she began a journey that would shape nearly every aspect of her life, from parenting and advocacy to the way she works as a Product Master Data Management Analyst at Ahold Delhaize USA each day. Autism Awareness Month is deeply personal for her.

"It's always meant growth and facing challenges head-on," Traci shared. "It's more about giving yourself grace and hope for the future. We always tell people, 'take your small victories where you can get them.'"

That mindset carries into her career. Navigating autism at home has helped Traci become more patient, adaptable and communicative with colleagues.

"Raising a son on the autism spectrum made me a better human being," she said. "You discover what your own personal challenges are and how to navigate life a little differently. It has taught me, in every aspect of life, to give folks a little more grace and patience."

Chandler's story also shows how representation and true support can create lasting change. A train enthusiast since childhood, he began sharing his model trains at the N.C. Transportation Museum. It was an experience that eventually grew into something bigger. His involvement helped expand opportunities for more individuals on the autism spectrum to share their talents. It also led to the creation of sensory-friendly days at the museum for families.

"It's about growth, respect and understanding of the autism community," she said.

For Traci, being open about her journey has made a difference in her career in unexpected ways.

"Sometimes you share what you go through with your coworkers," she said, recalling one colleague who regularly points others to her as a resource. "That gives me hope."

Her message for other families and teammates is simple but powerful: "A diagnosis doesn't mean it's over. You can keep moving."

Keep moving, just like the train that keeps on chugging.

