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\_Certificate-Letter

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**CERTIFICATE OF GOOD PRACTICES  
AND SUITABILITY FOR THE AUTISTICS  
AWARDED TO  
PIONEER CONCEPT  
(ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN)**

- 1- This certificate is issued by** the Autistic Alliance, which is a worldwide organization of autistic self-advocates collaborating with the national organizations of autistics' parents, especially in order to help them to understand what is appropriate and what is harmful for the autistics.
- 2- This certificate is issued for :**
  - the governmental authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan concerned by autism, especially in the sectors of education, citizenship, sports, health and human rights ;
  - public or private organizations interested in contributing to the improvement of the well-being, development and autonomy of the autistics in Kazakhstan, especially through the efforts of Pioneer Concept.
- 3- The reason why the Autistic Alliance decided to collaborate with Pioneer Concept** is their obviously high potential for helping the autistics.

4- **This high potential** is the result of the following **personal capabilities of the director and owner, Zhanat Karatay** :

- she understands well autism and how to deal with autistics ;
- this is shown by her successful experience as a mother of an autistic child ;
- she is more appropriate than “professionals of autism” to manage project for autistics, because she understands that autism is a natural human difference, and not a “medical problem” ;
- she can guess what to do in difficult situations with autistics, and how to train the instructors : our help has been mostly about confirming and clarifying things that she already knew from her experience ;
- she owns a vast property in the mountain, including all the necessary facilities, and this is very important because :
  - her projects and concepts there are independent and not a “business”, unlike most centers for autistics ;
  - she does not need to convince directors or owners of “mainstream” structures to accept autistics, given that she can do that herself ;
- she understands how useful and necessary it is to receive the advices of the autistics themselves.

5- **Thanks to the fact that Pioneer Concept is managed by a successful parent** instead of by “professionals” who don’t understand autism and who are not even parents of autistics, there are **major benefits**, among which :

- there is no “medical approach” nor “business” here, and this is highly important and necessary in order to address autism in an appropriate manner ;
- the autistics are considered as human persons, just different and with special needs, and not as “deficient” or “weird” or “inferior” or “with problems”, and therefore they are respected and accepted, and they can feel this acceptance, which is something new and very enjoyable and positive for them, and this favourable atmosphere helps a lot to change them and to have them accepting new experiences, and to enjoy living with other kids (without any feeling of being judged negatively, rejected etc.) ;
  - therefore, it is possible (and necessary) to organize really inclusive seasons, with a small percentage of children with special needs mixed with “normal” children : this “mix” is the key of the success, because, given that they will be considered like the others as much as possible, the “special kids” will rather easily copy the “normal kids” ; they will see that it is no so difficult ; they will feel proud and stronger, then less afraid by new experiences and by social contact, and so on ; in other words, by focusing more on the “normal common points”, we can improve these points easily, instead of by focusing on “disabilities” or “troubles”, and the best way to learn things is to do them naturally and if possible by playing, instead of by boring and abstract “rehabilitation treatments for kids with deficiencies” in un-natural “centers” ;
  - all these good factors make that the autistics kids can start to “connect” with society : indeed, in order to get this “connection”, we need to have them desiring it, and for that, it is necessary that they feel good, well accepted, not seen as “inferiors” or “sick” : all the good conditions are perfectly present in the Pioneer Concept camps (as explained above) ; this is completely opposite to the usual approaches “treating” the kids as “deficient”, which of course cannot produce the necessary self-confidence nor the feeling of being desired by society, which explains why these approaches have very poor results.

Not to mention that usually these “approaches” and “methods” are carried in “special centers” disconnected from the “normal world”, so all is very abstract and difficult to integrate for the autistics, since they need concrete experiences in order to understand things.

## 6- What we have done with the Pioneer Concept :

### 6a- Winter 2015-2016 :

- A conference in Almaty, explaining the principles of autism ;
- **Adaptive ski sessions for autistics** : training of the ski instructors (Dmitry Voropaev, Vladimir Plahuta, Sergey Dzhumabaev, Nicolay Glushkov, Yuri Golodov, Nicolai Shedrolubov) ;

### 6b- Summer 2016 :

- Our permanent, on-site assistance, with an autistic advisor from the Autistic Alliance, at the Pioneer Resort in Almaty during 5 seasons of inclusive summer camp. It was fruitful, most of the children had a very positive and useful experience and it confirmed the success of our inclusive concept respectful of autism ;

### 6c- Winter 2016-2017 and summer 2017 seasons :

- The inclusive camps with autistic kids have been managed with success, following and improving the previous experiences ;
- The Pioneer staff could consult us in case of question or doubt or difficulty about some cases.

## 7- Our permanent remote assistance :

Given that the Pioneer Concept :

- is one of the very rare autism organizations in the world able to understand and respect autism ;
- hence, has the appropriate approaches ;
- has the means and the will to apply these approaches in a concrete and efficient manner ;
- and does it with success,

this organization is benefitting from our permanent remote assistance, anytime, through Internet.

## 8- The benefits of the Pioneer Concept formula for the autistics :

- Improvement of self-esteem (given that they are considered like the other kids, as much as possible, and not as “weird” or “kids with problems” or “to be treated”) – This is very important and necessary for the autistic in order to start accepting himself or herself as a human being with a life worth being valued, and, later, as a citizen ;
- Improvement of socialization, thanks to the fact that the non-autistic kids are given explanations at the beginning of each season, then not only they don't reject the your autistics, but also they help them having relations with them (which happens quite naturally between children, once the “autism fear” has been removed ;
- They spend nice and memorable holidays with other kids, usually for the first time of their life, and they start to realize that life with others can be fun – Is highly important to show an attractive society to the autistics, otherwise they have no reason to try some “visits” outside of their own personal mental world ;
- They live an important change of their life, far from their family and far from everything they know, and it is very important to get the autistics used to “changes”, so they can start to evolve – Sometimes we have noticed that the changes were actual “shocks”, but the more important they were, and the more positive and productive it was – Sometimes it is a kind of “unlocking”, which changes really their life, and sometimes the parents even talk about “little miracles” – Indeed, the autistic will not change if no change is operated in his living environment, but most parents do not dare to change anything, mostly because they don't know what to do and because, not understanding autism, they are scared that their kid could “go worse”.
- During the **summer camps**, thanks to the vast Pioneer domain in the mountain, the children can enjoy the nature, which is something very useful for everyone but especially for the autistics ;
- During the **winter camps**, the practice of ski offers very interesting benefits :
  - When skiing, the autistics are forced to be “more present” and “more connected” to their

environment (in order to avoid falling) – they cannot afford to be “in their mental world” or “disconnected” ;

-- When gliding on the snow, it is like if the earth is moving under you, therefore you have to be adapted and you cannot just decide to “ignore” or “do nothing” (which is something that the autistics can do easily and usually when their body is static) ;

-- Before starting to glide, you have to convince yourself that you can do it without falling, and you have to focus more on the control of your body, you have to transform your intention of doing something (here, gliding without falling) into a successful act, which is something not so usual for an autistic ;

-- When you finally succeed, your psychological and neurological system “understands” better how to synchronize your mind and your body, hence, how to transform your intentions into successful results ;

-- When you succeed, you get a proof that you can do concrete and difficult things ;

-- And of course this improves the self-esteem about the ability to do difficult things, and to do “like the others” ;

-- And also it improves the self-confidence, synchronization and harmony between you and your body, which can become more “friendly” ;

-- All this helps to dominate the fear, and to see that something looking impossible or dangerous can, in fact, be possible and not dangerous ;

-- When the young autistic starts to learn with the instructor, he has to pay attention to the instructions, he has to make communication efforts (otherwise, he or she may fall) ;

-- In conclusion, when an autistic manages to do such a real-time, fast adaptation like skiing without falling, then he or she can adapt to many things, and have enough control on his body.

**Note :** Of course, it is possible to train autistics to ski ; it is just more difficult than for non-autistics, and it requires patience and dedication from the instructors. If the autistics are considered as “sick” or “disabled” then for sure it will be very difficult, or impossible.

There are many experiences of ski with autistics in the world, which can be found easily on Internet by typing the words “autism ski”.

#### **9- The obvious usefulness of inclusion and citizenship of the autistics :**

- A life meeting the “normal” quality of life standards, dignity and decency ;
- A better life, towards self-fulfilment and happiness ;
- If things are done correctly, the autistic adult can enrich society with his own original visions and creations : indeed, it is necessary to have “different” persons, otherwise mankind will lose itself in “copies of copies” (all the inventors and creators who helped to improve mankind were “different”, and many of them were autistic) ;
- It is also useful, for a country, to ensure that the public authorities are caring about the most disadvantaged of their citizens (the Preamble of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation states : “(...) *the strength of a people is measured by the well-being of its weakest members*”).

#### **10- Conclusion**

The Pioneer Concept is really innovating and pioneering, given that it is valuing autism, not seeing it as “a disorder” and not segregating autistics and non-autistics.

Hence, there is no “medical” or “disease” (negative, “defectologist”) approach, but just a “difference” approach, which allows the young autistics (or other persons with special needs) to learn more easily and to enjoy what they are doing, and to appreciate living with others.

Therefore, the Pioneer summer camps and winter camps have an obvious and important positive effect.

Additionally, the ski sessions are very useful to help the autistic to be more synchronized with his (or her) body, and to manage fear and challenges.

For all these reasons :

- we fully support the Pioneer Concept ;
- we think that the organizations willing to help the autistics should support these efforts as well ;
- we hope that the Pioneer Concept will continue and will grow and improve ;
- we hope that it can serve as an example (and training center) for other structures, first in Kazakhstan, and later in other countries ;
- we are grateful to the Pioneer Concept for the way they help the autistics, and for the hope that they allow for a better life for all of us autistics.

Thank you.

Rio de Janeiro, September 7th, 2017

The General Delegate,  
**Eric LUCAS**

