Miyana Holden  
*Bill of Rights: MyImpact Challenge*  
*Principles Essay*

**Founding Principle: Justice**

In the pursuit of justice and good citizenship, nonprofit organizations play a vital role in advocating for equality, inclusivity, and access to opportunities. SpectrumEYES, a great nonprofit that supports individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), stands as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change. By addressing the challenges of limited resources, financial burdens, and safety concerns faced by the ASD community, SpectrumEYES actively promotes the founding principles of justice and nurtures a vision of good citizenship. This essay explores how Spectrum Eyes support these principles, fostering a more equitable and inclusive society.

At SpectrumEYES, justice is one of the underlying principles that support our mission. We firmly believe in equality in treatment, care, and respect for individuals with autism. Through our organization, we strive to ensure that regardless of disabilities, everyone has access to the support needed to thrive physically and socially. By sharing the perspectives of individuals and families facing daily struggles, we shed light on the lack of justice and opportunity, challenging the barriers that impede progress. In doing so, we promote a world where justice prevails and those with autism can thrive in all spaces.

Resource constraints are a significant hurdle in achieving justice for individuals with autism. The lack of resources in New York City classrooms poses challenges for effective education. The smallest available classroom setting is 6:1:1 "for students with very high needs in most or all areas including academic, social and physical development." The students are pushed into 8:1:1 and 12:1:1 environments regardless of their IEP diagnosis. Many individuals require 1:1 individualized attention, which is only available in private schools that are too costly for many families. SpectrumEYES recognizes this injustice and advocates for providing adequate technology to meet the growing demands of individuals with autism.

Financial challenges further compound the struggle for justice. Research reveals that 62% of children with autism in the United States come from low-income households, exacerbating the financial burden faced by families. Through the organization, we acknowledge the close correlation between low income and autism rates, striving to alleviate the financial strain on families through our kits, ensuring that essential services and supports are accessible to all individuals on the spectrum.
Safety is another crucial aspect of justice that SpectrumEYES addresses. Disturbingly, 50% of children with autism engage in elopement or running away, posing significant safety risks. SpectrumEYES raises awareness about elopement and provides sensory kits that can help regulate individuals with ASD, ensuring their safety and reducing the incidence of elopement. By promoting safety measures and increasing public understanding, we strive to create a more inclusive and secure environment for individuals with autism.

In addition to safety, acceptance, and inclusion are fundamental to fostering good citizenship. Individuals with autism often face societal challenges, including discrimination and lack of understanding. SpectrumEYES aims to cultivate a society that embraces diversity and values the unique contributions of individuals with autism. By promoting acceptance and inclusion, we encourage a sense of belonging and equal participation, thus promoting good citizenship among all community members.

Through our efforts, SpectrumEYES works towards realizing justice and promoting good citizenship for individuals with autism. By addressing resource constraints, financial burdens, safety concerns, and the need for acceptance, we actively uphold the principles espoused by the founding fathers and create a society that values and respects the rights of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

**Civic Virtue: Respect**

Respect is a fundamental civic virtue that underpins a thriving democracy. It encompasses recognizing and valuing the inherent worth of every individual, regardless of their differences. SpectrumEYES, a nonprofit organization, recognizes the significance of respect in creating an inclusive society. By fostering tolerance and embracing neurodivergence and all types of contrast, SpectrumEYES promotes respect and contributes to developing a more robust democracy.

To understand the importance of respect, it is crucial to acknowledge the prevalence of neurodivergence, particularly autism, in our society. Statistics indicate that in the United States, 1 in 54 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This means that countless individuals and families are directly impacted by the challenges and unique perspectives associated with autism. By promoting tolerance and inclusivity of neurodivergent individuals, SpectrumEYES acknowledges and respects the diverse experiences and contributions they bring to our democracy.

One specific aspect where respect is pivotal is education. Students with autism often face various obstacles within the educational system, including stigmatization, lack of understanding, and
limited accommodations. SpectrumEYES actively works to address these issues and promote respect by providing resources, such as sensory kits (for the neurodiverse student) and educational curriculum (for the neurotypical student), to support the needs of autistic students. By ensuring that every student receives an inclusive and respectful education, SpectrumEYES helps nurture a democratic society that values all its members' diverse abilities and perspectives.

Furthermore, promoting respect and tolerance extends beyond educational settings. In public spaces, individuals with autism and other neuro divergences may face challenges related to acceptance and understanding. They often encounter misunderstandings, insensitivity, or even discrimination. SpectrumEYES aims to counter these barriers by raising awareness and promoting inclusivity. By fostering understanding among the general public, SpectrumEYES encourages a society that values and respects the rights and dignity of every individual, regardless of their neurodivergence.

An essential component of respect is recognizing the right of individuals with autism to participate fully in democratic processes. SpectrumEYES advocates for including neurodivergent voices in decision-making processes and promotes their active engagement in civic activities. By embracing the unique perspectives and contributions of individuals with autism, SpectrumEYES strengthens the democratic fabric of our society. When all community members feel respected and heard, a more robust and inclusive democracy emerges.

Concrete examples further highlight how SpectrumEYES promotes the civic virtue of respect. The organization actively engages in public awareness campaigns, sharing personal stories and experiences of individuals with autism. These stories emphasize the importance of respecting the dignity and rights of every individual, regardless of their neurodivergence. By shedding light on the challenges faced by those with autism and encouraging empathy and understanding, SpectrumEYES cultivates a culture of respect and tolerance.

In addition, SpectrumEYES collaborates with schools, community centers, and other organizations to create inclusive spaces and events. By hosting workshops, seminars, and support groups, SpectrumEYES provides opportunities for individuals with autism and their families to connect, share experiences, and offer support. These initiatives not only promote respect within the autism community but also encourage broader societal respect for neurodivergence and all types of differences.

In conclusion, SpectrumEYES actively promotes the civic virtue of respect by fostering tolerance and inclusivity of neurodivergence and all types of difference. Through education, public awareness campaigns, and community engagement, SpectrumEYES works towards creating a society that recognizes every individual's inherent worth and contributions. By promoting respect for individuals with autism and advocating for their inclusion in all aspects of
life, SpectrumEYES contributes to developing a thriving democracy that embraces diversity and upholds the rights and dignity of all its members.