



FROM: **AUTISM SCIENCE FOUNDATION**

Rubenstein

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**FOUNDERS OF YES SHE CAN INC. AND [words] BOOKSTORE  
TO RECEIVE THE AUTISM SCIENCE FOUNDATION'S  
2018 CARYN SCHWARTZMAN SPIRIT AWARD**

***Recipients are Advocates for Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Autism***

NEW YORK, NY (February 13, 2018) – The [Autism Science Foundation](#) (ASF), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting and funding innovative autism research, today announced that Marjorie Madfis, founder of Yes She Can Inc., and Jonah and Ellen Zimiles, founders of [words] bookstore in Maplewood, NJ, will receive this year's Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award. Both organizations were founded in order to train and employ adults with autism. The award, which recognizes excellence in autism advocacy, will be presented at the fifth annual "Day of Learning" event, ASF's science conference for the autism community, on Wednesday, April 11 in New York.

The Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award is presented annually to parent advocates whose energy, tenacity, and commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals with autism best emulate Caryn's. Caryn was a loving and dedicated mom, and a tireless advocate who worked with the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR), Autism Speaks and the Autism Science Foundation to raise money, advance autism research and improve the lives of children around the country.

"It was always a dream of my mother's to ensure that individuals with autism spectrum disorders were given employment opportunities so that they would be productive members of society," said Allyson Schwartzman, 24, daughter of Caryn Schwartzman and sister to twin brother, Robby, who is diagnosed with autism. "She would be very proud of Robby, who is now involved in a work program, and would want nothing more than to provide employment support for other individuals with autism to do the same."

"These incredible leaders, who are committed not only to advocating for their own children but for all those with autism, are more than deserving of this year's Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award," says Alison Singer, president and co-founder of Autism Science Foundation. "Yes She Can Inc. and [words]

bookstore are exactly the types of organizations we need to jumpstart to help develop the careers of individuals with autism everywhere.”

After 30 years in corporate marketing, Marjorie Madfis was inspired by her daughter, Isabelle, to establish Yes She Can Inc., a nonprofit organization, in order to help teenage girls and young women with autism spectrum disorders develop transferable job skills to enable them to join the competitive workforce and achieve greater independence. Marjorie realized that her daughter and other teens with autism transitioning from high school to the adult world need specialized coaching and training to enable them to join the workforce. She combined her business knowledge with her understanding of autism to create a curriculum and immersive learning experience set in an authentic business, Girl AGain, a resale boutique in White Plains, NY for American Girl dolls and their accessories and books. Marjorie developed this business concept not only because of the passion her daughter has for this brand, but because there is market demand for gently used American Girl merchandise. Trainees use their expertise in American Girl dolls to delight customers while learning functional business skills and workplace social skills.

Jonah and Ellen Zimiles founded [words] bookstore in Maplewood, NJ, with the mission of offering an engaging and welcoming atmosphere for people and families of all stripes to pursue their literary interests. The vocational program at the bookstore has provided job training opportunities for over 100 young adults with autism. [words] has received numerous awards and has been named the best independent bookstore in New Jersey. The Zimiles' efforts on behalf of disabled customers and employees, especially those with autism, have helped Maplewood become a model community of inclusion. The Zimiles have two adult children, Liz, a 27 year-old daughter, and Daniel, a 22 year-old son with autism.

The Caryn Schwartzman Spirit Award will be presented at the Autism Science Foundation’s [“Day of Learning”](#) event, on Wednesday, April 11, which will feature TED-style talks by the nation’s top autism scientists who will discuss the latest developments in autism research, treatment and services to an audience including parents, students, individuals with autism, and other autism community stakeholders.

Tickets for the “Day of Learning,” which includes lunch, are available [online](#) now. Proceeds from the conference will benefit the foundation’s pre- and post- doctoral autism fellowship programs, which support early career research conducted by the nation’s most promising young autism scientists.

### **About the Autism Science Foundation**

The Autism Science Foundation (ASF) is a 501(c) (3) public charity. Its mission is to support autism research by providing funding to scientists and organizations conducting autism research. ASF also provides information about autism to the general public and serves to increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders and the needs of individuals and families affected by autism. To learn more about the Autism Science Foundation or to make a donation visit [www.autismsciencefoundation.org](http://www.autismsciencefoundation.org).

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