

Carl  
Character Counts Essay  
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If our mayor asked me how to make Flossmoor a better town for kids to live in I would tell him that he could help the community learn about autism. Autism is a developmental disorder that affects more than a million people in the United States. Some people say that autism is an invisible disorder, since people with it look just like everyone else. This is because it mostly affects the person's language and social skills. Many people, like me, are very smart, do well in school, love their communities and schools, and want to be part of the world. We just need our community's support and special teaching approaches to do this.

To begin, the mayor and community could help by making autism awareness days, seminars, and parties, things that teach and bring the community together. This would show that the community cares about everyone. This would show **responsibility** and **fairness** of the community. This would be good because people with autism often have a strong sense of fairness (what is right and wrong).

Secondly, the community can work hard to understand people with autism. They would learn a lot of interesting things, like the fact that autistic people are honest, **trustworthy**, and extremely **respectful** of rules. If regular kids got to know and appreciate kids with autism they would make some good, loyal friends whose brains are hardwired with the most important pillars of character. It would also help the autistic kids since they would learn more about how regular kids act and perhaps learn to understand why they do things.

Finally, the community would find out that kids with autism generally are kind and **caring**. They try their best to help others and do the right things. The problem is that when you don't totally understand social stuff it can be hard to know what the right thing is. So the community could show caring by helping kids with autism. This would also help them to improve their **citizenship**.

In closing, I think our mayor could do something big if it made Flossmoor a community where people with developmental differences like autism are appreciated. When you have autism you have to work hard every day to do normal things, like social stuff. But other things like seeing the world differently, creating cool stuff or discovering things is easier. Many scientists, engineers, and mathematicians like Temple Grandin, Albert Einstein, and Bill Gates either had or are thought to have autism. People like this can solve important problems like saving the environment, solving world hunger, and even improving the economy. People with autism can bring a lot to a community and change the world.