

Contact: Dee McVicker
Grassroots Communications
Gilbert, Arizona
480.545.7363
deemcv@grassrootsco.com

EXCEPTIONAL MINDS

Temple Grandin and Exceptional Minds to be honored with Visionary Awards at Club Nokia on May 20th



Exceptional Minds student Noah Schneider, left, discusses with Dr. Temple Grandin his career prospects in the digital arts. Grandin has inspired a generation of young people with autism.

Sherman Oaks, Calif. – April 22, 2015 – Exceptional Minds will join Temple Grandin and Friends for an evening of entertainment and inspiration at the Autism Works Now event held May 20th at Club Nokia, Los Angeles.

Spearheaded by Autism Movement Therapy, the special musical event will spotlight the lack of employment for young people with autism.

During the evening, world-famous animal scientist and autism self-advocate Temple Grandin will be honored, as will Exceptional Minds as one of three outstanding organizations committed to helping individuals with autism realize their

potential. Exceptional Minds visionaries Yudi Bennett and Ernie Merlán will receive the award on behalf of the vocational school, which is the first of its kind to create meaningful employment opportunities for young men and women with autism pursuing careers in the fields of visual effects and digital animation.

An estimated 90% of individuals with autism are currently unemployed or under-employed.

Exceptional Minds is known for its close working relationship with the movie industry and for its student work on high-profile movies such as *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* and *American Hustle*. The majority of Exceptional Minds graduates go on to professional careers in visual effects or related industries.

The event starts at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, at Club Nokia (800 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90015) and includes musical performances by American Idol finalist and recording artist James Durbin and several other artists. Actor Joe Mantegna (*Criminal Minds*) and other celebrity supporters will also be on hand. Tickets can be purchased online at www.TempleGrandinAndFriends.com.

About Exceptional Minds (<http://www.exceptionalmindsstudio.org>): Exceptional Minds is a non-profit vocational center and working production studio for young adults on the autism spectrum. Chartered in 2011 to provide the training necessary for creatively-gifted individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) who may not otherwise be able to make the transition from high school to the working world, a population that faces 90% unemployment. Exceptional Minds offers technical proficiency and work readiness skills that prepare students for careers in graphic arts, animation, web design, visual effects and rotoscoping. Located in Sherman Oaks, California, Exceptional Minds is both an instructional learning facility and a working studio with hands-on student involvement in production projects, many for the film industry.

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