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PHILLIPS' 3D Printing Classes Open Career Paths for Students with Autism and Other Special Challenges

ANNANDALE, Va. (April 7, 2017)—[PHILLIPS Programs for Children and Families](#), a local nonprofit helping youth with a variety of challenges and qualities succeed, started 3D design and print classes for high school students on the autism spectrum as well as those with other special challenges at its school in Annandale. In response to growing demand for these skills in this tech driven economy, PHILLIPS will also launch Saturday classes in 3D design and printing for teens and adults on the autism spectrum.

“3D printing is a career skill in demand; and one that is very appealing to many on the autism spectrum. Offering it in our curriculum has made a big difference to our students,” PHILLIPS President Piper Phillips explained. “Our students often struggle in the classroom, so finding a niche where they excel gives them confidence that they can learn and succeed.”

The program is modeled on the Youth Quest Foundation’s [3D ThinkLink](#) classes, which are designed to help children on the spectrum learn 3D printing. Youth Quest staff trained PHILLIPS teachers on how to incorporate 3D instruction into the classroom. Students participating in the 3D program learn to use 3D design software to create objects; develop critical thinking skills to complete a 3D design and print project; and problem-solve a design/print error.

In addition to offering it during the school day, PHILLIPS is [starting 3D design classes on Saturday](#) mornings. Classes start in April and will be held at PHILLIPS ~ Annandale School Technology Lab located at 7010 Braddock Road. Class will be taught by two staff that have their M.Ed. as well as many years teaching to individuals on the spectrum. Participants will explore this STEM career pathway. At the end of the course, students will have a portfolio of their designs that showcases their new skills. Registration is online at www.phillipsprograms.org.

PHILLIPS serves students with special needs ages 6-22 who have significant learning and emotional challenges and for whom school has often been a place of repeated failure and frustration. For nearly 50 years, PHILLIPS has helped youth succeed by providing customized support and education through three programs, including: Special Education Day Schools in Annandale, VA, Fairfax, VA and Laurel, MD; PHILLIPS Family Partners offering home- and community-based counseling and support; and PHILLIPS Building Futures, an onsite building trades youth training program in Fairfax and Loudoun counties.

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