The mission statement of any organization tells the reader or end user “who we are”. So, who is the GCA Centre for Adult Autism | Southeast USA? The mission statement of GCA is the following: “Empowering autistic adults and young adults and their parents/caregivers by serving as a resource center to provide mutual support, information, and activities.” Let’s break GCA’s mission statement down.

Empowering – The idea that someone is given the authority or power to do something. To make someone stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. Think of this as someone with being equipped to be liberated. GCA has seen numerous individuals who came to its events from feeling lonely, wanting to make new friends and build their own communities, and more. The liberated feeling from being around like-minded individuals and being equipped though a social support group, such as GCA’s, as the provider of that opportunity.

Autistic – The debate between person-first language and identity-first language has been ongoing for years. In each and every disability but autism, individuals prefer using person-first language because of not being referred to the disability. Autism is a different animal. Sure, autism is a developmental disability. At the same time, these individuals prefer being known by their identity because they can relate best to it and more so than any other disability. Autistic adult/young adult is preferable to adult/young adult on the autism spectrum.

Adults/Young Adults - This is the age demographic that GCA best serves. There is a strong lack of adult autism information anywhere in the USA. This is why GCA is focused on this demographic instead of the under 18 age demographic.

Parents/Caregivers – Just as autism does not end after an autistic child turns 18, a relationship between autistic individuals and their parents/caregivers typically do not end after that age either. GCA values the importance of a parent/caregiver in the lives of our adults and young adults – and makes social events “family friendly” for all to attend.

Resource Center – GCA is not a resource center in the physical sense of having its own building where people can obtain resources. However, GCA is a center of resources (website, Facebook group, newsletter, magazine, adult autism conference, social events, social support groups, etc.) that people can access to learn more about GCA and about adult autism in general.

Mutual Support – Support given and received at social support groups, through social media, etc.

Information – Information from the GCA website, Facebook group, newsletter, magazine, etc. that is shared from GCA to the end user.

Activities – Social events mainly.