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A black banner advertisement for Gillie Hyde Auto Group. On the left, it features the Lincoln logo, the Ford logo with "Pre-Owned" underneath, and the Dodge logo. In the center, the name "Gillie Hyde" is written in a red, cursive font, with "AUTO GROUP" in a bold, red, blocky font below it. On the right, it features the Chrysler logo and the Jeep logo. At the bottom, a red bar contains the text "Click here to visit and shop GillieHyde.com from the comfort of your home!" in white.

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TOP STORY

## WKU announces new program for young adults with autism

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com) Apr 12, 2019



President Timothy Caboni speaks Friday during the announcement of the LifeWorks program at WKU on Friday, April 12, 2019, at the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex.

Western Kentucky University's Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex unveiled a new, two-year residential program Friday aimed at helping young adults with autism transition toward independent lives.

WKU President Timothy Caboni announced the new LifeWorks at WKU Program, which is the fifth program offered through the Clinical Education Complex.

"LifeWorks is a two-year residential program designed to support living, working and recreation for individuals on the autism spectrum who are 21 years of age and older," Caboni said. "It will fulfill an unmet need for those who graduate from the Kelly Autism Program Circle of Support and others in our community."

During the announcement at the CEC, Caboni was joined in making remarks by CEC Executive Director Mary Lloyd Moore and John Paul Blair, the interim vice president of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement at WKU.

Originally opening in 2006, the CEC provides services and support to families and their children from 2 years old through adulthood and training opportunities for WKU student clinicians. It houses the Communication Disorder Clinic, the Family Resource Program, the Kelly Autism Program and the Renshaw Early Childhood Center.

However, many of the participants in the CEC's Kelly Autism Program are reaching 21 years old, too old to benefit from most support services, Moore said in her remarks.

"Students in our service region benefit from services offered at KAP, including the Circle of Support college program that provides a six-tier support program for WKU college students," Moore said. That program offers single dorm rooms, weekly adviser meetings, social events, study sessions and mentorships, Moore said.

However, support for students post-graduation is lacking. Since 2015, the CEC has been working with various partners to develop a plan for what comes next for those students, Moore said.

That's where LifeWorks comes in.

"The focus of LifeWorks is the transition into independent living, securing employment and engaging in community and leisure activities for students from the Bowling Green/Warren County area and beyond," Moore said.

Moore said LifeWorks at WKU is a four-tier program, with the four tiers being supported living, supported employment, community engagement and education for relationships at home, in the workplace and in the community.

The program will provide accommodations for up to 26 individuals, and they'll follow a regular schedule that emphasizes education in social communication, job placement with job coaching social activities. The program is supported with funds from the community,

Moore said.

“This is an incredibly unique program in that there are relatively few programs of this nature, if any, that are directly attached to a university,” Moore said.

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– Follow education reporter Aaron Mudd on Twitter @BGDN\_edbeat or visit bgdailynews.com.

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## Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

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