Assembly Resolution No. 608

BY: M. of A. Reilly

CELEBRATING the life and accomplishments of Nicholas W. D'Amora, inspiration for the autism community and distinguished citizen

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those individuals whose extraordinary spirit and determination are an inspiration to others; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas W. D'Amora of Annadale, New York, died on Monday, May 15, 2023, at the age of 25; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas William D'Amora, known to all as Nick, was born to Barbara and Billy D'Amora on January 29, 1998, in Staten Island where he attended PS 58 in New Springville, PS 373 at the Staten Island School of Civic Leadership in Graniteville and South Richmond High School in Prince's Bay; knowing he wanted to make a difference, he attended Day Habilitation programs at On Your Mark (The Treehouse), The GRACE Foundation, and most recently, CrimsonRise (The Studio); and

WHEREAS, In addition to his love for all people, Nicholas W. D'Amora liked good food and worked at various restaurants on Staten Island, including Dock's Seafood Restaurant, Project Brunch, and the Annadale Terrace; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas W. D'Amora's best friend and partner was his mother Barbara, who was inspired by her son to co-found The GRACE Foundation of New York in 2000; since its inception, this vital organization has stayed true to its mission of supporting, educating and enhancing the quality of life for children/adults and their families impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas W. D'Amora and his mother hosted seminars for years across the borough to promote awareness of a new method of communication that changed his life, Rapid Prompting Method (RPM); and

WHEREAS, Most recently, Nicholas W. D'Amora co-founded CrimsonRise, the first ever non-profit founded by four non-speaking autistics; Nicholas and his partners Tejas, Cris and Will established this vital organization to serve autistic individuals with sensory, movement and communication differences by presuming competence and providing communication access and regulation using a spin-off method of RPM called "Spelling to Communicate"; and

WHEREAS, In addition to working with various organizations, Nicholas W. D'Amora wrote a chapter of the book **Leaders Around Me: Autobiographies of Autistics who Type, Point and Spell to Communicate** by Dr. Edlyn Pena, and was a public speaker and presenter who shared his experiences and insights at numerous universities, including St. John's University, the College of Staten Island, Wagner College, and Touro College; and

WHEREAS, For his steadfast and unremitting commitment to the autism community, Nicholas W. D'Amora was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades including the Shining Star Award by The GRACE Foundation; in 2015, he was voted the most Inspirational Staten Islander by the **SI Advance**, and in 2019, he was honored at the On Your Mark Gala for his devoted work as an autism advocate; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas W. D'Amora truly loved life and spent each and every day living it to the fullest; he could often be found on the beach and liked to swim, dance, exercise, art and traveling; above all, he enjoyed spending time with his cherished family; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his grandmothers Patricia Pandolfi and Connie D'Amora, Nicholas W. D'Amora is survived by his parents, one brother, Christian; one sister, Natalie; his grandfathers, Robert Pandolfi and Joseph D'Amora; two aunts, Marie (Tim) Conheeney and Christine D'Amora; three uncles, Robert (Laura) Pandolfi Jr., Andrew (Christy) D'Amora, and Jimmy D'Amora; seven cousins, Anthony, Patricia, Rob, Gianna, Toni, Alexandria and Christopher, as well as numerous teachers, paras, direct support staff and friends who will long cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas W. D'Amora dedicated his life to lifting barriers and expanding choices for all persons with disabilities; through his intelligence and kindness, he instilled hope and inspired those within the autism community to be the very best they could be; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Nicholas W. D'Amora leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Nicholas W. D'Amora, inspiration for the autism community and distinguished citizen; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Nicholas W. D'Amora.