Autism Ontario Mourns the Tragic Death of Parker Wells in Calgary

[July 31, 2026 - Toronto, ON] Autism Ontario extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Parker Wells, the 11-year-old autistic boy from Calgary whose disappearance and tragic death have profoundly impacted communities across Canada.

Our hearts are with Parker's family as they face an unimaginable loss. We also hold in our thoughts the search and rescue teams, volunteers, advocates, and community members who dedicated their time and commitment to bringing Parker safely home. The scale of the response reflected the very best of Canada: people rallying together out of compassion and determination for a child.

Parker's story is a heartbreaking reminder that wandering, or “elopement,” remains a significant safety concern within the autism community. Autism Ontario Board Member, Tanya Rocca, shares: “On behalf of the entire Autism Ontario Board, I offer my most sincere condolences to Parker’s family on this unimaginable loss. The autism community has experienced devastating losses involving autistic children and adults who wandered and were later found deceased. Each of the people we lost reinforces the importance of autism awareness and ensuring that first responders have access to autism-informed training and resources.”

Autism Ontario continues to support efforts to strengthen missing-person response systems across Canada. Parker’s death has renewed national discussion about how emergency alert systems can better respond when someone goes missing, particularly when there is no evidence of abduction but there is a clear and immediate risk to life and safety. This discussion includes consideration of alert systems that can rapidly help mobilize communities while also addressing important privacy and consent issues.

We also recognize the important contributions of autistic self-advocate Nicole Corrado, whose lived experience, research, and advocacy have helped bring greater attention to the intersection of autism, wandering, missing-person investigations, and respectful public communication. Her work has challenged institutions to better understand autistic experiences and to build more effective, neuro-affirming responses when autistic people go missing.

As Canadians mourn Parker, Autism Ontario calls on governments, community organizations, first responders, families, researchers, and autistic advocates to work together toward meaningful solutions. We need continued investment in improved public understanding of autism, autistic-informed resources and training, stronger prevention strategies, enhanced search protocols, and emergency response systems that capture the unique considerations needed for autistic individuals.

Today, we honour Parker’s memory and express our gratitude to everyone who refused to give up.

For more information, please email Autism Ontario’s Media Team at **media@autismontario.com**.