

 **AUTISM SOCIETY**

RISING THROUGH RESILIENCY

2020 ANNUAL REPORT





“

Acceptance is important to me because I consider my autism to be a part of who I am; similar to my other characteristics. I'm ready for more and more people to move from awareness to acceptance.

”

—Chloe Rothschild, Self-Advocate and David Joyce Advocate of the Year 2020 Recipient

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

Since 1965, the Autism Society of America has worked tirelessly to support the autism community through advocacy, education, information and referrals, support and community building.

We have made it our mission to improve the lives of all affected by autism, alongside our 73 affiliates nationwide.

Through the decades, the Autism Society has proudly served the autism community and established itself as the nation's leading grassroots autism organization. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and accepting society full of opportunities for autistic individuals to maximize their potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unparalleled challenges and grief to the global community, and our autism families were disproportionately affected. Through service interruptions, school closures, job loss, isolation, lack of respite care, and regression, many autistic individuals and families were left with few support options and increased worries.

In March of 2020, the Autism Society of America became the first national autism organization to develop a comprehensive COVID-19 relief toolkit with rapidly evolving

information and resources specific to the disability community. As April approached and we prepared for Autism Acceptance Month, we quickly pivoted as we saw more than 350 events and programs canceled essentially overnight. Our affiliates quickly responded with virtual support groups, game nights, mental health coffee chats, and so many more innovative and creative solutions. Throughout the many challenging times of the pandemic, **building a space in which the autism community could feel connected, supported and advocated for** became our main focus.

Over the course of 2020, our digital toolkit was accessed over 135,000 times to review policy, healthcare, education resources and more. Thanks to the generosity of Make Waves Family Foundation, the Autism Society network **distributed 53,000 medical masks** to Direct Support Professionals and autistic residents in congregate settings during the onset of the pandemic. We created social stories that provide simple language and visual cues to address COVID-19 issues like mask-wearing and the vaccination process; our social stories were downloaded over 8,500 times. We launched

1 IN 54 CHILDREN

are diagnosed with autism, the fastest growing developmental disorder in the United States.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, but is

**4X MORE COMMON IN MALES
THAN FEMALES**

**5.5 MILLION
ADULTS**

in the United States are estimated to have autism.

a Coronavirus Information Series on Facebook Live to feature autistic self-advocates and industry experts to discuss relevant topics like mental health, virtual learning, and more; our 29 episodes have been viewed over 191,000 times. **Collectively, our digital and virtual supports provided information, resources, and a connected community for over 391,000 people during 2020.**

The Autism Society and its network of affiliates served over 668,000 individuals and families affected by autism in 2020. 154,000 people called or emailed Autism Society helplines across the country; 124,000 people attended events, mostly virtual, to gain connection and community; 26,000 people attended online and live support groups to battle isolation, stress, and grief.

The Autism Society is incredibly grateful for the generosity of our donors who have allowed us to provide essential services and supports throughout a devastating year; as always, we are

committed to demonstrating our transparency, responsiveness and measurable outcomes.

Our organization works to use funds in the most efficient and effective way possible, so that we can produce positive, quality outcomes for the autism community. We continually strive to be responsive and accessible to societal needs, challenges, and opportunities that arise such as we did in 2020. Our mission drives us to support all affected by autism throughout the lifespan and across the spectrum, regardless of neuro-divergence, ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Every day we are proud of the work that we do at the national, state and local levels to ensure the autism community is represented, supported, and provided meaningful opportunities to be happy.

We thank all of the individuals, families, corporations and foundations that have helped us fulfill our mission and positively impact the lives of so many.



Christopher S. Banks
Christopher Banks
President/CEO



Lori Ireland
Lori Ireland
Chair of the Board



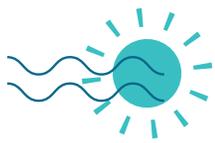
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	OUR 2020 IMPACT
4	STRENGTH OF OUR NETWORK
5	ACTIONABLE ADVOCACY
6	MAKING A DIFFERENCE
8	FINANCIAL DATA
9	GOVERNANCE



AUTISM SOCIETY IMPACT REPORT

In 2020, the autism community faced extraordinary challenges during the COVID-19 crisis. The Autism Society was the first national autism organization to provide a COVID-19 toolkit and ongoing resources to support the autism community. Last year, the Autism Society, and our network of 75 affiliates, served over 668,000 individuals and families affected by autism. We made strides to improve the quality of life for all affected by autism through five core pillars: education, advocacy, information & referral services, support, and community building at the local, state and national levels.



2,727 people attended summer camps or activities hosted by affiliates

14 Marketing Toolkits sent to affiliates

OVER 6K INDIVIDUALS

attended support groups in 2020

4,576 hours dedicated by full-time staff for affiliate support

OVER 7K ADULTS

on the autism spectrum attended **1,126 support groups** nationwide

9/10 individuals who reached out to the **National Helpline** would contact again, and recommend the Autism Society to others



3,436 letters were sent to members of Congress from advocates through the Autism Society Action Center

101,036 Helpline emails supported network-wide

20,384 individuals attended **IEP workshops** across the country



52,022 Helpline phone calls supported network-wide

1.35 MILLION+

individuals visited our website for information, resources, and support

Autism Society of America successfully advocated for Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2020, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, and the American Rescue Plan (passed in 2021)



5,046 first responders received training on safely and effectively interacting with the autism community

The Autism Society of America was the first national autism organization to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.



Digital and virtual supports provided information, resources, and a connected community for over 391,000 people during 2020

8,500 people downloaded **social stories** that explained COVID-19 related issues



Make Waves Family Foundation donated **53,000 life-saving masks** for the Autism Society network to distribute to Direct Support Professionals and autistic residents in congregate settings

29 episodes of our **Coronavirus Information Series** on Facebook Live have been viewed over 191,000 times

COVID-19 digital toolkit was **ACCESSED OVER 135,000**

times to review policy, healthcare, education resources and more



SUPPORTING OUR NETWORK

AFFILIATE EMPLOYMENT REPORT

FULL TIME	293
PART TIME	1,083

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SERVED YEAR OVER YEAR



INVESTING IN OUR NETWORK

- > National provided 4,500 staff hours to supporting affiliates.
- > 14 marketing toolkits provided marketing assets, messaging, and campaign resources.
- > Autism Society of America hosted a four-day Affiliate Training Event to educate affiliate leaders, board members and staff on strategies and best practices to achieve growth and organizational success.
- > National continues to offer a bi-weekly support group for affiliate leaders to navigate the added challenges of 2020, led by leading psychiatric professionals.
- > Autism Society of America developed a three-year strategic plan focused on network-wide growth through development, marketing, national programs, affiliate expansion, and advocacy efforts.

AFFILIATE HIGHLIGHTS

Autism Society North Carolina educated 5,416 individuals at their Autism 101 events in 2020



Autism Society Ventura County hosted 1,000 people during their family trips and outings

400 PEOPLE

participated in the Autism Society of Inland Empire's Bike & Swim events

Autism Society of Greater Akron received the 2020 Autism Society Affiliate of the Year Award; major achievements include its ICan Bike Camp, numerous virtual events, and the successful training of 650+ employees at Cleveland Clinic to be deemed "Autism Friendly Hospital"



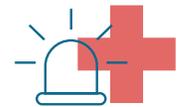
Autism Society Central Virginia hosted 667 teens at social events throughout the year

396 PEOPLE

attended the Autism Society of Howard County's sensory-friendly exercise events



Autism Society of Tidewater hosted served 32,282 individuals through programs, events, services, and direct support



Autism Society Florida trained 1,989 first responders to better serve the autism community



“ COVID-19 elevated the awareness of the extreme health disparities experienced by autistic individuals. Promoting health equity for the autistic community must be a priority. The Autism Society's rapid development of COVID-19 tools and resources to address the needs of people with autism and their families was a step in the right direction in ensuring safety and wellness for every citizen. ”

—Patricia Wright, Ph.D., BCBA, MPH
Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives at Next for Autism and Member of the Autism Society's Panel of Professional Advisors



STRONGER TOGETHER

We are honored to work alongside a strong and resilient affiliate network that tirelessly serves the autism community and the Autism Society's mission at the state and local level. Grassroots advocacy allowed us to adapt to the many transitions and challenges of 2020 through a collaborative, strategic, and dynamic approach. **The perseverance of our affiliate network has strengthened our bond and impact in the autism community, quickly adapting and providing service needed during the pandemic.**



“As an affiliate leader, I am truly grateful to the ASA team for offering such incredible support, guidance, and encouragement to us throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They hosted several helpful webinars and even started support groups for affiliate leaders, fostering relationships, camaraderie, and strength for our affiliate network at a time when we needed it most. It was a year filled with extreme uncertainty and challenges for our organization, and having the ASA team's support helped us not only get through our toughest year yet, but actually come out even stronger on the other side.”

—Ann Flippin, Executive Director of the Autism Society of Central Virginia

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

In 2020, advocacy was unlike any other year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented challenges it brought to the disability community. When a national emergency was declared in March of 2020, the Autism Society of America redirected its advocacy efforts to the safety and civil rights of people with autism and their families.

Our policy team tirelessly and successfully advocated for funding for home and community based services, support and protection for direct support professionals, inclusive paid leave, civil rights to medical treatment, access to testing and vaccinations, and additional funding for special education and related services. **Through the power of grassroots advocacy, the Autism Society of America constituents sent over 3,000**

letters to Congress urging that COVID relief packages consider the needs of the autism community.

Throughout the year, the policy team provided resources regarding federal legislation, regulations, and guidance through the Autism Society's COVID19 Toolkit. The Autism Society of America was a major player in helping to pass legislation to reauthorize three important laws: Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2020, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. In addition, the team developed a state advocacy toolkit for affiliates to help ensure that COVID relief funding was used by states and local communities to help the autism community.

IN ADDITION TO ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY, THE AUTISM SOCIETY CONTINUED TO ADVOCATE FOR ITS OTHER LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, INCLUDING ADVANCING LEGISLATION TO:

- > *Promote employment opportunities*
- > *Authorize funding for law enforcement and first responder training*
- > *Prevent dangerous restraints and seclusion in schools*
- > *Reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Act, expand access to health and long term services and supports*
- > *Increase funding for all programs that support people with autism and families*

547 LETTERS SENT TO CONGRESSMEN AND WOMEN

urging Congress to include HCBS in a relief package

1070 LETTERS SENT TO STATE LEGISLATORS

urging them to use money from federal covid-19 relief dollars towards autism related priorities



Fore Autism Golf Tournament

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Autism Society is driven by the desire to positively affect change in the lives of individuals and families affected by autism. In 2020, we received thousands of donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and volunteers, from \$5 to \$100,000.

We are fortunate that so many people helped amplify our mission across social media channels and within our digital landscape to positively impact more people. Advocates, parents, loved ones and professionals shared personal stories and advice to create connection. **Because of our great community, our reach expanded to donors across the country, and world to help us fulfill our mission.**

We understand that every contribution matters - big or small - and we are dedicated to being responsive as we work towards a more inclusive, accepting world.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

**11,900
PEOPLE**

donated to the Autism Society of America

**1,831
PEOPLE**

hosted Facebook Fundraisers, raising \$179,686 - the power of peer to peer impact!

**1.35
MILLION+**

individuals visited our website for information, resources, and support

Our Facebook and Twitter posts reached over

**7 MILLION
PEOPLE**

\$164

is the average dollar amount donated

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

- > Become a sustaining monthly donor at www.autism-society.org/donate.
- > Attend or sponsor an event like our golf tournament, affiliate training event, annual gala or Autism Acceptance Month.
- > Include Autism Society in your will. To help you start your planned gift, you can use our online will-writing tool created by our partner, FreeWill, and **write your will in 20 minutes online, completely for free.**
- > Become an Autism Society member at www.autism-society.org/membership.
- > Donate a life insurance policy you no longer need.
- > Donate an unwanted car or truck.
- > Donate as part of the Combined Federal Campaign or other workplace giving campaign. **We are CFC #11808.**
- > Create your own personal Facebook fundraiser. Learn how at: www.Facebook.com/fundraisers.
- > Donate a portion of every Amazon.com purchase to the Autism Society using Amazon Smile. For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to www.smile.amazon.com/about.
- > Take action and support our public policy efforts through our online Action Center at takeaction.autism-society.org.
- > Sign up for our Autism Matters monthly newsletter, www.autism-society.org/sign-up.
- > Use your personal interests and talents to create your own fundraiser or awareness event.

YOU CAN ALSO REVIEW ALL GIVING OPTIONS ON OUR WEBSITE AT www.autism-society.org/get-involved/donate.

THANK YOU TO THE MANY DONORS WHO SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES:

APRIL

The Autism Society of America raised **\$117k** during **National Autism Awareness Month**.

JULY

Keystone Insurance Group hosted its **annual Fore Autism Golf Tournament** successfully raising **\$108k** benefiting the Autism Society of America.

DECEMBER

The Autism Society's "Spectrum of Opportunity" campaign for **#GivingTuesday** - successfully raising **\$24,677**.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HELPING THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA, PLEASE CONTACT OUR DEVELOPMENT STAFF AT development@autism-society.org

SIGNIFICANT DONORS 2020:

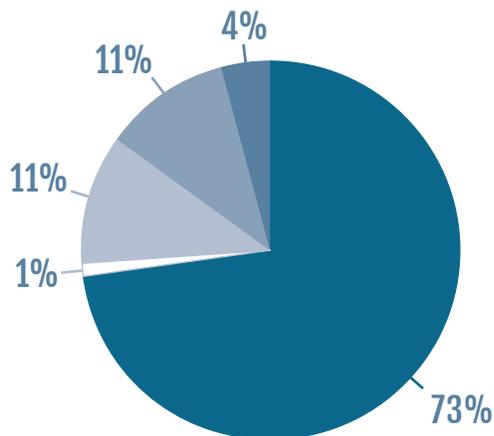
The Ireland Family Foundation \$100,000, the Make Waves Charitable Gift Fund \$50,000, EMC Insurance \$25,000, Keystone Insurer's Group \$22,000, Westfield Insurance Foundation \$15,000.



We are thoroughly grateful to these donors and to the thousands of other donors for their support of programs at the national level and throughout our affiliate network.

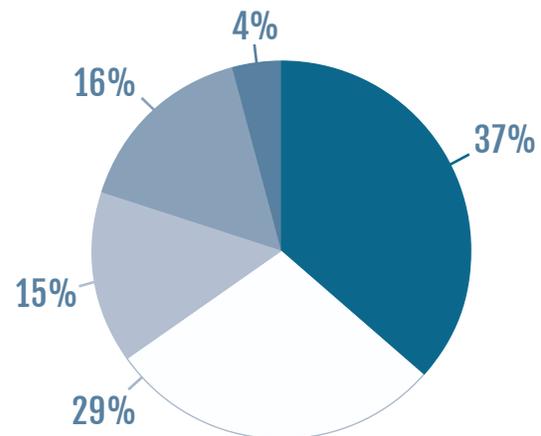
FINANCIAL DATA

2020 REVENUE \$2.1 MILLION



- Contributions
- Conferences
- Fundraising Events
- Corporations + Foundations
- Other Revenue

2020 EXPENSES \$2.3 MILLION



- Core Services
- Education & Awareness
- Public Policy & Advocacy
- Fundraising
- Management & General

REVENUE

Contributions	\$1,565,706
Conferences	\$21,200
Fundraising Events	\$230,277
Corp. + Found.	\$238,125
Other Revenue	\$83,887

\$2,139,195

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS: (\$194,082)

EXPENSES

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Core Services	\$855,361
Education & Awareness	\$670,790
Public Policy & Advocacy	\$338,504

SUPPORT SERVICES

Fundraising	\$375,256
Management & General	\$93,366

\$2,333,277

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021



Lori A. Ireland
Chair of the Board



Tracey Staley
Vice Chair



Christopher Banks
President/CEO



Lars Perner
Ph.D., Secretary



Neal Beggan



Elizabeth Benevides



**Michael J. Brown
Esq.**



Carly Otto Fulgham
Committee Chair,
Panel of People on the
Spectrum of Autism



Joseph P. Joyce



Ryan Lockard



Howard Miller



Brian Roth



Donna Roth



Jack Scott
Committee Chair,
Panel of Professional
Advisors



Curt Warner

PANEL OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Jack Scott, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Ruth Aspy, Ph.D.

Barbara Becker-Cottrill, Ed.D.

James Ball, Ed.D., BCBA-D

Diane Cullen

Geraldine Dawson, Ph.D.

Marc Ellison, Ed. D

June Groden

Doreen Granpeesheh,
Ph.D., BCBA

Barry Grossman, Ph.D

Michael Hannon

Martha Herbert, M.D., Ph.D.

David L. Holmes, Ed.D.

Sue Kabot

Bill Kiernan

Gary LaVigna, Ph.D.

Bennett L. Leventhal, M.D.

Kristie Lofland, MS, CCC-A

Robert Naseef, Ph.D

Cathy Pratt, Ph.D., BCBA

Kathleen Ann Quill, Ed.D. BCBA-D

Christine Reeve, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Wendy Ross

Stephen M. Shore, Ed.D.

Brenda Smith Myles, Ph.D.

Ruth Christ Sullivan, Ph.D.

Jennifer Twachtman Bassett,
M.S., CCC-SLP

Amy Van Hecke, Ph.D

Patricia Wright, Ph.D., BCBA, MPH

Vanessa Zuber

PANEL OF PEOPLE ON THE SPECTRUM

Carly Fulgham,
Committee Chair

Darrius Frazier

Michael Gilberg

Kate Gladstone

Kris Guin

Anthony Ianni

Russell Lehmann

Anita Lesko

Kerry Magro

John Miller

Jennifer O'Toole

Lars Perner, Ph.D

Chloe Rothschild

Regi Theodore-Wise

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Richard Wolf,
Committee Chair

Jean Bender

Jacque Benestante

Laura Carr

Rachel Deaton

Cathy Dionne

Cate Fopma

Stacy Hoagland

Terri Hussman

Joseph Joyce

Susan Kabot

Jonathan Kratchman

Janine Kruiswijk

Evelyn Lu

Jennifer Mahan

Betsy Mahoney

Hannah Marken

Jillian Nelson

Cathy Pratt

Tobi Rates

Kris Steinmetz

Melanie Tyner Wilson

Valerie Williams

Ellie Wilson

Barbara Yavorcik

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Brian Roth,
Committee Chair

Gyasi Burks Abbott

Neal Beggan

Laurie Cramer

Marc Ellison

Ann Flippin

Carly Ott Fulgham

Mary Helen Richer

Joseph Joyce

William Kiernan

Russell Lehmann

Robin Lerner

Howard Miller

Lars Perner

Pete Schwarz

Jack Scott

Tracey Staley

Jose Velasco

Curt Warner

Ellie Wilson



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT

Our work is possible because of you. The Autism Society sincerely thanks each and every one of you for your generosity, passion, and commitment to the autism community.

