

The connection is you.™

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Letter from our Leaders



Christopher Banks
President/CEO



Tracey Staley
Chair of the Board

For 57 years and counting, the Autism Society and our nationwide network of 70+ affiliates, connects people to the resources they need through education, advocacy, support, information and referral services, and community programming.

As the nation's oldest and largest grassroots Autism organization, the work we do is a reflection of both our local community efforts and our expansive reach across the country.

We recognize the wide diversity of the Autism experience in terms of needs and support across the lifespan. This makes it clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to address the needs, goals, and desires for all individuals with Autism.

In 2021 the Autism Society launched our new brand with updated brandmarks, visuals, and modernized messaging. The previous Autism Society brand was over 20 years old and no longer served the needs of the community. Through this massive undertaking, the Autism Society set out to create a space that was fully inclusive, accepting, and representative of all those in the Autism community from the very beginning of the process. The twenty month development project evolved with the guidance, insight and feedback of our valued creative partner and over 150 members of the Autism community. **Our new brand was designed with the Autism, and is an expression of the community.**

The Autism Society is proud and excited to advance our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community

with the resources needed to live fully. Our vision is to create a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it. We do all of this while embodying our core values of **Dignity, Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Integrity.**

Over the past year, hundreds of thousands of Autistic individuals and families turned to the Autism Society and its affiliates for information & referral services, support, and to participate in community events. **Over 1.2 million people accessed resources and education materials at our National website; 204,295 people attended events across the country,** which surpassed our numbers pre-pandemic, demonstrating the desire for connection and community. Relatedly, the **Autism Society National Helpline saw a 30% increase in calls and emails from 2020, as more people turn to the organization for trusted, quality support.**

In 2021, the global community continued to face challenges and uncertainty related to the Covid-19 pandemic. We recognized that people with Autism and other developmental disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing public health and economic emergency caused

1 in 44 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.**

There are approx. **5.8 million Autistic adults** in the United States.

Children who receive an Autism **diagnosis by age 4, are fifty times more likely to receive services.**



by Covid-19. **We established the Autism Society Covid-19 Vaccine Education Initiative** focused on advocating for individuals with Autism and developmental disabilities to be prioritized during the vaccine roll out, and focused on increasing vaccine confidence. We believe through advocacy, education, and providing educational resources we take the necessary steps to improve the lives of people with Autism, their families, and communities.

In April 2021, the Autism Society of America and our affiliates, continued to lead the effort to advocate for April to be designated as “Autism Acceptance Month,” a progression from “Autism Awareness Month.” Throughout the month, at least 10 states achieved proclamations to officially change the month’s name from direct efforts from affiliates, plus additional local proclamations from the National team, Council of Autistic Advisors, and affiliates.

The Autism Society is thankful for the generous support of our donors for being the connection - allowing us to provide essential services and support in the Autism community. Because of your support, we can continue to develop resources, advocate for inclusive policies and practices at local and federal levels, and build connections - not just to resources - but to each other.

As effective stewards, we continually strive to be responsive and accessible to societal needs, challenges, and opportunities that arise.

Through the work of the Autism Society, individuals and families can connect with each other, with resources, and with supports and services so that they may live full, vibrant, self-actualized lives.

Thank you to all the individuals, families, corporations, and foundations that have played a crucial role in fulfilling our mission and positively impacting the lives of so many.

The connection is you.

Christopher S. Banks

Christopher Banks
President/CEO

Tracey Staley

Tracey Staley
Chair of the Board

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Being part of the Autism Society’s Council of Autistic Advisors is both a privilege and a great responsibility, as there is, in my opinion, no greater, more honorable authority in the national dialogue on Autism. The rebrand and associated messaging beautifully emphasize the interwoven stories of dignity that the Autism Society tells; it advocates for, and empowers the community in every facet of its work. Our momentum is growing, our reputation ever-more esteemed, and our ambition exciting. In short, the Autism Society is the premier advocacy agency in America, and I could not be more proud to be on the team.” **Jennifer O’Toole**, Author, and Council of Autistic Advisors member



Autism Society Impact Report 2021

In 2021, the Autism community continued to face extraordinary challenges during the Covid-19 crisis, yet through the uncertainty, we saw our community persevere, progress and resiliency. The Autism Society continued to advocate to address health inequities related to the pandemic, created supports, expanded our reach and launched a new brand. We are proud to fulfill our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.



November 15, 2021
the **Autism Society**
introduced its new
brand to the world



2,300+
individuals
attended water
safety and
wandering
events

1.2 million people
accessed resources
and education
materials at our
National website

230k+ people
engaged with
National's posts
and content on
social media

204k+ people attended events
across the country; up from
180k attendees pre-pandemic



34k people attended
support groups

176 advocacy
events were
held across the
country, with
8,700 participants



Autism Society of America successfully
advocated for **25 bills**, including
the American Rescue Plan,
Build Back Better Act, and
the Keeping All Students
Safe Act.

Information & Referral Services

- **133,000 Helpline phone calls and emails** supported network-wide.
- The Autism Society National Helpline saw a **30% increase in calls and emails** from 2020.
- **41% of inquiries came from Parent/Guardians**, while Autistic adults represented our second highest inquirers at 21%.
- 33% of people needed support "**Navigating Services**," and 21% sought help surrounding "**Adult Services**."

Patience and empathy plus useful resources are extremely valuable and mean the world right now, thank you so much for the kindness and understanding.

I&R Services Testimonial



Thank you so much for your promptness and patience on the phone! I still have no idea whether I'm on the spectrum... but you were the first person I spoke to on the topic who was accepting, welcoming, & informative. Thank you!

I&R Services Testimonial





7,500+ first responders received training on safely and effectively interacting with the Autism community

9,488 adults on the Autism spectrum attended support groups nationwide; up from 7,000 in 2020



3,700 letters were sent to members of Congress from advocates through the Autism Society Action Center

Affiliates held 280 Autism 101 programs, that served over 7,700 people, surpassing pre-pandemic numbers



58k+ people attended educational events

7,700+ events were held across the country

334k people were served by affiliates; up from 275k in 2020



154k people visited our "What Is Autism?" resource page



177k individuals engaged with content on National's Facebook page



13,706 parents attended 1,216 support groups across the country



Approximately 2k people **attended employment workshops**

Covid-19 Support

The Autism Society's commitment to support the Autism community throughout the pandemic's many phases has not wavered. In 2021, we led a collaborative effort, along with other national disability organizations, requesting for people with Autism and other developmental disabilities to be prioritized for Covid-19 inoculations as the vaccine was introduced to the public. The Autism Society has continued to work alongside the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), along with other partners to educate the community about the Covid-19 vaccine to quell myths and hesitancy in order to keep the community safe.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have developed Covid-19 resources to specifically support the Autism community:

- The Autism Society of America developed a COVID-19 relief toolkit, accessed over 135,000 times reviewing policy, healthcare, education resources, and more.



- Our Coronavirus Information Series featuring Autistic self-advocates and industry experts has been viewed over 191,000 times.
- With the help of professionals and self-advocates, we created social stories that address COVID-19 issues like mask-wearing, which were downloaded over 15,000 times.



Better Together

The Autism Society's national network of 70+ affiliates work tirelessly to exemplify our mission of creating connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. **Our affiliates served over 334,000 individuals and families within the Autism community in 2021**, which is an increase of 275,000 from 2020. Grassroots advocacy allows us to serve Autistic individuals and community members with localized services and supports. The resiliency of our affiliate network has strengthened our impact and connection to the Autism community.



Family



Connection



Resources



Support

Investing in our Network

The Autism Society of America supports our national network of affiliates in the areas of marketing, public policy, operations, governance, development, education, affiliate connection.

- National provided over **5,000 staff hours** to supporting affiliates.
- **15 marketing toolkits** provided marketing assets, messaging, and campaign resources.
- **National hosted 29 webinars** focusing on monthly meetings, topical trainings, and affiliate requested learning sessions.
- 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.

I just wanted to send a big thank you for putting together a wonderful Affiliate Conference 2021. The information presented was right on point and reflects that you definitely listened to what affiliates wanted. I am eagerly awaiting the handouts!"

Beryl Herbert, President,
Autism Society of Greater Baton Rouge

"I just wanted to say THANK YOU! You all did a phenomenal job producing this conference and I am so proud to be part of this organization. I learned so much and have a full dry erase board of to-dos now! Thank you to such an incredibly fierce team!"

Brie Seaward, Executive Director,
Autism Society of Southern Arizona



Affiliate Highlights

The Autism Society of Greater New Orleans, Hurricane Ida Grant Program: Greater New Orleans’ entire service area was impacted by category 4 hurricane, Hurricane Ida. A 10k grant program was approved to assist families in the Autism community with immediate needs in underserved parishes by providing food, evacuation-related costs, and other needs. Families were evacuated, without power, lost homes due to flooding, or had no running/safe water. ASGNO responded to the immediate need to serve their community. There were 25 \$400 grants and the program funding ran out in an hour.

Autism Society Central Virginia, AuSome 54-Day Challenge: The affiliate credits this event as one of the most successful events in its history. There were 90 teams of 960 participants that ran, walked, hiked, biked, and moved over the 54 days of the Challenge in honor of the 1 in 44 individuals diagnosed with Autism. Collectively, they logged over 62,571 miles and over 76 days of activity. Through registrations, sponsorships, and especially fundraising, the AuSome 54-Day Challenge raised more than \$188,000 to support the ASCV’s programs and services!

Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and Minnesota, virtual conference collaboration: For a second year, these affiliates hosted a virtual conference in April 2021. “Inform, Influence, Innovate Together” featured virtual exhibits, and live breakout sessions, with Temple Grandin as the keynote speaker. The content was available for 30 days following the event. The content included modern voices and non-regional specific resources for the broader community. Information provided was diverse across the lifespan, addressed various levels of independence/support needs, and was geared for multiple audiences.

“The team at the national office is so incredibly helpful. As one of only two part time staff members of a small affiliate, I don’t have a lot of time to get everything done. The marketing resources in particular are hugely helpful for us because they cut down our time creating content, while also helping us expand our reach and effectiveness with quality posts and information. I really feel like the whole national staff are on our team and really care about helping us be as effective as we can be. From answering my random email questions to providing us with excellent content for our free use, I know that if I need something, someone in the national office can help me with it.”

Claire Tibbetts, Administrative Manager, Autism Society of Greater New Orleans



New Look, More Impact

Because the experience of Autism is not one thing. Because it is many things. And because the connection between those experiences is you.

Because we see you. The way you think. The dreams you hold. The talents you bring. Because you can't be categorized into neat little diagnostic boxes. Because you break the mold.

Because sometimes you're quiet. Because sometimes you need help reaching for where you belong. Because sometimes what happens is not always right or fair or just. Because there are keys to every door that looks locked.

Because no matter how you were born, the person you are is infinite—and you are the only you there is.

Because Autism is just one part of who you are and the potential you hold.

**The Autism Society,
the connection is you.™**

For far too long, individuals living on the Autism spectrum have been categorized, labeled and placed into diagnostic boxes. But life experiences are far more complex, and the Autism Society embraces the infinite ways in which people live their lives. **In service of those unique experiences, the Autism Society has undergone a major rebranding effort.**



In November 2021, the Autism Society proudly re-introduced itself to the world with its modernized and inclusive new brand of updated landmarks, visuals, and messaging.



Logo

**The
connection
is you.**

Tagline

Mission

Our mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

Vision

Our vision is to create a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.

We do this while embodying our values of Dignity, Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, & Integrity.

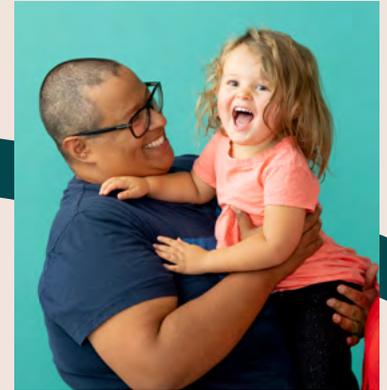
The previous Autism Society brand was over 20 years old and no longer served the needs of the community. It lacked important visual and written components that clearly demonstrate our organization's values of inclusivity, connection, and acceptance. Through this massive undertaking, the Autism Society set out to create a space that was **fully inclusive, accepting, and representative of all those in the Autism community from the very beginning of the process.**

After twenty months of development, and over 150 members of the Autism community actively providing guidance, insights, and feedback, this new brand was **designed with the Autism community and is an expression of the community.**

“

As a minimally speaking Autistic individual, I experienced respectful and meaningful inclusion as a working member of the Autism Society of America's Brand task force. I hope that I contributed insight that includes, and values, my minimally and nonspeaking peers' experiences in the process.”

Samuel Capozzi, Self-Advocate, and Marketing Task Force member



“

After four years of professional advocacy for a new brand, and a twenty-month project, we proudly reintroduced the Autism Society, a leading, national Autism organization with a 56 year history. I'm thankful for the process, the experiences and the passionate group of people who brought this to life. Our dedication to diversity and inclusion allows me to proudly say that we successfully had 150+ people within the Autism community work on this brand development project. From the beginning, we unknowingly exemplified our new mission—to create connections, empowering the Autism community to live fully. And together, we demonstrated that the connection is you.”

Kristyn Roth, Chief Marketing Officer, Autism Society of America



Created with the Autism Community

Inclusivity has been an essential component, not only to the design process, but at every step of the project. An in-depth examination was undertaken to ensure equitable access to content, so the Autism community could easily access information without visual, auditory or other sensory barriers. Design elements meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and were implemented across brand guidelines.

Throughout the brand development process, 150 individuals representing the key groups within the Autism community were involved: Autistic individuals across the spectrum, families and caregivers, Autism Society affiliates and professionals in the Autism field all participated in the process.





The Mark

The brandmark is a symbol for community, strength, equity, diversity, pathways and, of course, connection. The single threads of the Autism Society brand mark represent individuality and unique experiences that are simultaneously interconnected and woven to the greater community. **The mark speaks to the interdependence and interconnectedness of the Autism community through the threads “woven” together.**

Affiliate Support

The Autism Society of America was proud to educate, empower and support our affiliates as we worked together to adopt the new brand and successfully launch together in November 2021. Leading up to our public launch, we facilitated eight workshops to train our leaders on brand tone, voice, messaging, creative development, and the step-by-step changes needed for a coordinated launch.

The strength of our brand continues to be paired with the strength of our network, and the passionate group of people working alongside the Autism community each and every day.



Actionable Advocacy

With COVID-19 continuing to be a pressing issue in America in 2021, the Autism Society of America's policy team focused on relief for the Autism community. In a significant victory, the American Rescue Plan, signed into law on March 11, 2021 provided direct support to the Autism community; most notably, it provided a 10% increase in the Medicaid federal matching rate for these services - a \$12 billion increase for Medicaid funding home and community-based services, \$2.6 billion to IDEA state grants, and \$250 million for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. In addition, the American Rescue Plan provided significant funding for vaccine distribution, housing, child care, nutrition assistance, health care, tax credits, and stimulus checks for all, including dependents.

Through the power of the Autism Society's affiliate network, over 3,700 letters were sent to Congress urging Representatives to ensure these protections were included in the 2021 COVID-19 relief package.

The Autism Society continued to lead a collaborative effort with other national disability organizations to unite and urge the Autism community to be vaccinated as distribution became possible. The groups collectively advocated that people with Autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) should be included in the group of high-risk diagnoses and prioritized for vaccination. **The Autism Society has continued to work alongside the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to dispel myths and hesitancy through vaccine education, in order to keep the community safe.**

Lastly, the Autism Society collaborated with other national disability groups to provide comments on notices of proposed rulemaking and guidance documents during the pandemic. Most notable was our advocacy to prevent an attempt to waive the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment during the pandemic. We also advocated for the appointment of new Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee members and urged the Committee to reconvene.



In addition to addressing the public health emergency, the Autism Society continued to advocate for its legislative priorities, including advancing legislation to:

- Promote employment opportunities
- Authorize funding for law enforcement and first responder training
- Prevent use of dangerous restraints and seclusion in schools
- Reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Act (Public Law No: 116-324)
- Expand access to health and long term services and supports
- Increase funding for all programs that support people with Autism and families



2,300 people sent letters to their representatives in support of the Build Back Better Act. Keeping All Students Safe Act, and the Safe Interactions Act, were the second and third most advocated bills by constituents, respectively.



The Autism Society of America had over 150 meetings with federal legislators.

Celebrate Differences

The Autism Society strives to empower individuals and families who experience Autism by providing the support needed throughout the lifespan. In 2021, our donors included individuals, foundations, corporations, and volunteers that continue to make our vision possible with their generous gifts.

Through the Autism Society, individuals can connect with each other, with resources, and with supports and services so that they may live full, vibrant, self-actualized lives. Millions of people have spread our message across social media channels and within our digital landscape to positively impact more individuals. Advocates, parents, loved ones, and professionals shared personal stories, advice, and their own resources to create connections. Our reach expanded to donors across the country, and the world to make our vision possible.

We are dedicated to being responsible stewards as we promote a more inclusive, accepting, and connected world.

Make Waves Family Foundation was a matching gift partner for Autism Acceptance Month, empowering other donors to double their impact. In addition, Make Waves made a significant contribution that allows the Autism Society to further the state of employment through our national program initiative.

While the **Embassy of the State of Qatar** was unable to host its annual in-person gala, it still **gave funds allowing us to continue to support the Autism community to live fully.**

The Hussman Foundation continued its generous, annual support that **provides grants to our affiliates to execute a variety of programs and events across the country.**

The Autism Society of America **raised \$273k during National Autism Acceptance Month.**



12,380 people donated to the Autism Society of America.



1k people hosted Facebook Fundraisers, raising \$196,908 - the power of peer-to-peer impact!

Our Facebook and Twitter posts **reached over 7 million people**



1.2 million+ individuals visited our website for information, resources, and support.

\$191 is the average dollar amount donated.



Thank you to our donors who changed the lives of so many.

Longtime donors, and friends, the **Ireland Family Foundation continues to make an impact** with families around the country through its generous giving.

We are grateful for our collaborative partnership with **Liberty Mutual, who's team has worked passionately and efficiently to support our technological needs** as part of our strategic plan.

Keystone Insurance Group hosted its annual Fore Autism Golf Classic, successfully raising \$138k benefiting the Autism Society of America.



Ways to Get Involved

- Become a sustaining monthly donor at autismsociety.org/donate.
- You can also review all giving options on our website at: autismsociety.org/ways-to-give.
- 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.
- Donate a life insurance policy, or an unwanted vehicle.
- Donate as part of the Combined Federal Campaign or other workplace giving campaign. **We are CFC #11808.**
- Create your own personal Facebook fundraiser benefiting Autism Society of America at: facebook.com/fund/AutismSociety.
- Donate a portion of every Amazon.com purchase to the Autism Society using Amazon Smile. For more information about the **AmazonSmile** program, go to: smile.amazon.com/about.
- Take action and support our public policy efforts through our online Action Center at: takeaction.autismsociety.org.

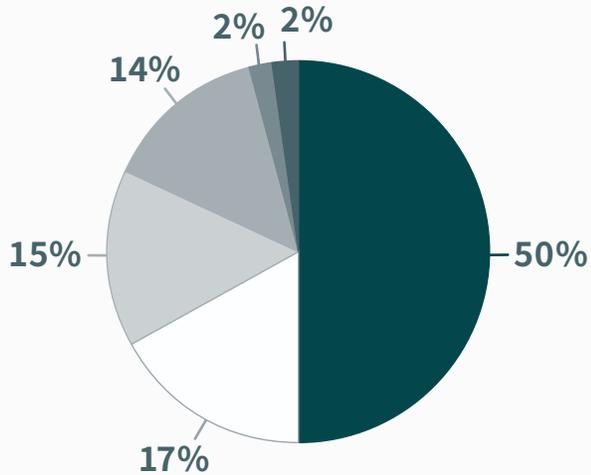
If you are interested in learning more about supporting the Autism Society of America, please contact our development staff at development@autism-society.org.

Thank you to the generosity of all of our donors who helped make an impact, including:

Susan Knox, Runs for a Purpose, Jennifer and Billy Frist, William Davenport, The Association of University Centers on Disabilities, EMC Insurance, Y International USA Inc, The Frist Foundation, PhRMA, Excelerate Energy LP, Eleanor Collins Boas Foundation, Kirkman-Nelson Family Fund, Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, Curemark, LLC, Westfield Insurance Foundation, The Walt Disney Company Foundation, Baker Hughes, Daytime Stars and Strikes for Autism, John Hardwick, Taxbiz USA, Sea Foam Sales Company, Howard Miller, Embassy of the State of Kuwait, Delman Mortenson Charitable Foundation, Color Street Foundation

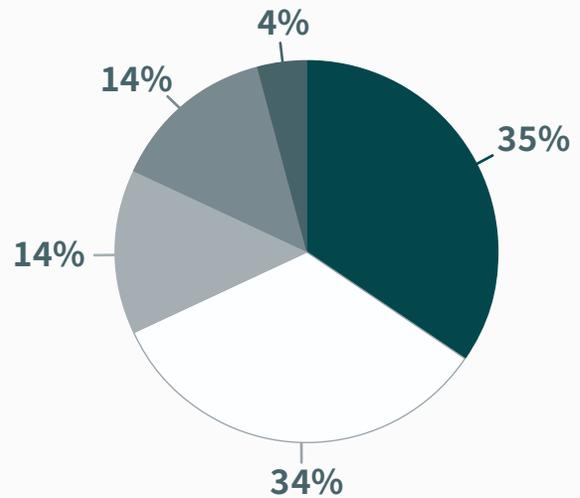
Financial Data

2020 Revenue \$3.7M



- Contributions
- Fundraising Events
- Bequests
- Corp. + Found.
- Program Service Revenue
- Other Revenue

2020 Expenses \$3M



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

Revenue

Contributions	\$1,850,136
Fundraising Events	\$604,380
Bequests	\$555,750
Corp. + Found.	\$515,500
Program Service Revenue	\$84,308
Other Revenue	\$64,601

\$3,674,675

Expenses

Program Expenses

Core Services	\$1,026,491
Education & Awareness	\$1,001,399
Public Policy & Advocacy	\$403,699

Support Services

Fundraising	\$412,449
Management & General	\$114,293

\$2,958,331

Change in net Assets: \$716,344

Governance

“The Board of Directors is made up of a passionate group of people with a diverse background who want to make a positive impact for individuals on the spectrum. It’s been an honor to serve with them on the board for the Autism Society.”

Donna Roth, Board Member,
Autism Society of America

Board of Directors '21-'22



Tracey Staley
Chair of the Board



Brian Roth
Vice-Chair



Howard Miller
Treasurer



Lars Perner, Ph.D
Secretary



Neal Beggan



Elizabeth Benevides



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Joan Fallon



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Joe Ireland



Robert Johnston



Joseph Joyce



Ryan Lockard



Carly Ott
Chair, Council of
Autistic Advisors



Donna Roth



Jack Scott
Chair, Panel of
Professional Advisors



Jose Velasco



Curt Warner



Christopher Banks
President/CEO

Panel of Professional Advisors

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Committee Chairperson
- **Ruth Aspy**, Ph.D.
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- **Barbara Becker-Cottrill**, Ed.D.
- **Diane Cullen**
- **Geraldine Dawson**, Ph.D.
- **Marc Ellison**, Ed. D
- **Doreen Granpeesheh**, Ph.D.,
BCBA
- **June Groden**
- **Barry Grossman**, Ph.D
- **Michael Hannon**
- **Martha Herbert**, M.D., Ph.D.
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- **Bill Kiernan**
- **Gary LaVigna**, Ph.D.
- **Bennett L. Leventhal**, M.D.
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- **Kathleen Ann Quill**, Ed.D. BCBA-D
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- **Amy Van Hecke**, Ph.D
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- **Sam Brandsen**
- **Darrius Frazier**
- **Michael Gilberg**
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- **Jean Bender**
- **Evelyn Lu**
- **Jacquie Benestante**
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- **Laura Carr**
- **Betsy Mahoney**
- **Rachel Deaton**
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- **Cate Fopma**
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- **Joseph Joyce**
- **Ellie Wilson**
- **Susan Kabot**
- **Melanie Tyner Wilson**
- **Jonathan Kratchman**
- **Barbara Yavorcik**

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- **Howard Miller**
- **Neal Beggan**
- **Kim Musheno**
- **Laurie Cramer**
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- **John Dabrowski**
- **Brian Roth**
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- **Pete Schwarz**
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- **Jack Scott**
- **Carly Ott**
- **Tracey Staley**
- **Mary Helen Richer**
- **Jose Velasco**
- **Joseph Joyce**
- **Curt Warner**
- **William Kiernan**
- **Ellie Wilson**
- **Russell Lehmann**
- **Robin Lerner**



The connection is you.™



A sincere thank you for the dedicated work, commitment and passion from the Autism Society of America team.

Our work is possible because of you. The Autism Society sincerely thanks each and every one of you for being the connection. Because of you, more people within the Autism community are connected to the support they need, when they need it.

The connection is you.

