

# 2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

**THE AUTISM SOCIETY  
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA**



**Autism  
Society**  
Southern  
Arizona

ANNUAL OVERVIEW  
PROGRAMS & SUPPORT  
FINANCIAL POSITION



## TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 3 LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- 5 OUR TEAM
- 6 OUR PROGRAMS
- 10 SUPPORTERS
- 11 FINANCIAL POSITION
- 12 IMPACT



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

It is a great privilege in my role as the Executive Director to be at the center of executing our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. According to the latest Autism prevalence rates from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (ADDSP), about 1 in 40 eight year old children in an area of Arizona were identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in 2018.

ASD affects us all in some capacity, whether it is a relative, a neighbor, or a student in the classroom. Parents reach out to us looking for information on where to find a doctor who evaluates Autism and for next steps following a diagnosis. Our vision to create a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it. At the Autism Society of Southern Arizona (ASSA), we provide program and information/referral to our community. In 2021, the world continued to be impacted by COVID-19 and our programs were delivered through virtual platforms. During this time, ASSA served over 1,000 individuals through our parent trainings, teen meetups, adult social clubs, Zoom with Santa, social skills classes, peer support groups, empower hours, workshops, and trainings. Our Navigating Autism Program delivered information and resources to 708 families. Although the world remained socially distant, ASSA never stopped delivering vital information and programming to our community.

In the summer of 2021, ASSA and the Pima County Health Department embarked on our first partnership together by launching, Autism: Education & Equity - A Virtual Public Health Discussion. The 2021 virtual conference highlighted the department's efforts to bring attention to Autism resources and knowledge to create more equitable environments, services and workspaces in Pima County. Dr. Theresa Cullen, Director of Pima County Health Department; Kathy Hoffman, Arizona Superintendent of

Public Instruction; and self-advocate Kris King, a student at Harvard delivered presentations sharing how the county is making efforts to support Autistic individuals. This conference showed how our city is aligning its priorities and leveraging resources with strategic partners to ensure that its work supports Autistic populations and the community at large. A web page on Pima.gov was created to host Autism resources and recorded presentations.

We could not do this great work without our supporters. In 2021, we received \$51,000 from sponsors who supported our "Walk with Us" campaign and donated directly to our programs. Our supporters believe in the work we do and are invested in our growth. Their investment in our organization will help us build more awareness, leading to acceptance. Autistic individuals and their families are looking to us for connection, support, and resources that will connect them to a vital service or provider. Thank you to everyone who believes in our mission to create a community that is more inclusive and accepting to individuals with Autism. We continue to march forward in the days ahead with the aim to create a more accepting world for those impacted by Autism.

With gratitude,



**Brie Seward**

Executive Director  
Autism Society of Southern Arizona





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## EXECUTIVE TEAM:

### **Kyle Lininger**

*Board President*

VP of Clinical Integration  
Intermountain Centers

### **Terry Randolph**

*Vice President*

Chief Program Officer  
Pyx Health

### **Josh Anbar**

*Secretary*

Professor  
Arizona State University

### **Eric Peterson**

*Treasurer*

Controller  
KE&G Construction, Inc

## BOARD MEMBERS:

### **Courtney Broome**

Sr. Director of Clinical Services  
HOPE Incorporated

### **Diane Kent**

Special Education Director  
Pima County Schools

### **Catherine Riley, MD**

Developmental Pediatrician  
Banner Health and Children's Clinics

### **Amy Figliolino**

Senior Manager of Member Experience  
Tucson Federal Credit Union

### **Eric Stark**

Sr. Marketing Coordinator  
Banner University Health Plans

### **Laura Valenzuela**

Speech Language Pathologist

## HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

### **Courtney L. Henson**

Attorney and Partner  
Snell & Wilmer

### **Pete Schwarz**

Autism Society of America  
VP of Affiliate Relations

### **Jared Perkins**

Chief Executive Officer  
Children's Clinics

### **Lynda Weigel-Firor**

Consultant/Grant Writer



# OUR 2021 TEAM



## Brie Seward

Executive Director

Brie was appointed Executive Director in January 2020. Since 2017, she has led the organization in fundraising efforts, developing community programs, and implementing the Navigating Autism Program. Brie received her master's degree in communications in 2020 and recently received the Nonprofit Leadership & Management Certificate from the University of Arizona's Eller Executive Education Program in partnership with the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona. Brie is a member of the Autism Society of America's Marketing Task Force and the Sonoran UCEDD Community Advisory Committee.



## Maxine Mathews

Information & Referral Specialist

A mother of two boys diagnosed with Autism, Maxine understands the Autism journey from the lens of a parent. As the Information & Referral Specialist, Maxine provides resources and support through our Navigating Autism Program in both English and Spanish.



## Kyle Lininger

Board President

Kyle is an experienced clinician with a demonstrated history of working in the behavioral health and wellness field. He is skilled in nonprofit organizations, public policy, program evaluation, and Applied Behavior Analysis. As a member of the ASSA Board of Directors, Kyle brings an understanding of the Autism community and its strengths, needs, and challenges. He is dedicated to the field and a long-time advocate for those affected by Autism.

---

## SATISFACTION SURVEY FEEDBACK

---

*"Maxine is a star! She helped so much and made me feel comfortable and even excited about the future."*

*"I am thankful for the organization being out in the community so I could get help when I needed it. I do plan on utilizing the program more in the future."*

*"Brie Seward was amazing, she had great attitude and was very helpful with the questions I had and provided information quickly."*

*"Thank you, I know you all work hard!"*

# OUR PROGRAMS



## NAVIGATING AUTISM PROGRAM

The Navigating Autism Program is one of our most essential services. We are often the first call for families after they receive a diagnosis. We provide support, resources, referrals, and guidance on navigating what can seem like a complex developmental disability atmosphere. Since 2020, incoming calls have increased by 38%. The demand is growing for resources, and we continue to build a comprehensive resource list for the community.



## EMPOWER HOUR

This virtual English/Spanish support group has been facilitated by Rosario Huerta, a bilingual licensed counselor with extensive experience working with children, adolescents, and adults with Autism. Rosario applied Acceptance and Commitment Therapy principles, an empirically based psychological intervention to support parents.



## TEEN MEETUPS WITH PLAYFORMANCE

The Teen Meetups are offered in partnership with Playformance, a local gymnasium designed to provide high-quality play experiences for all children. In 2021, attendance grew 21% as classes continued to be held online to ensure teens had access to social and active opportunities throughout the pandemic. At each virtual meetup, coaches offer experiences to develop participants' cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development.





## ADULT SOCIAL CLUB

In 2021, the Adult Social Club grew 29% and continued to meet virtually on the third Friday of every month. The group offers a safe space for Autistic adults to gather, have fun, socialize, learn, and build community. This very active and engaged group has an average of 22 participants at each meeting, with participants ranging in age from 18 to 62. ASSA board member and self-advocate, Eric Stark has joined Mirka Honkanen, Program Coordinator from the United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Arizona as our facilitator for this virtual and lively group.



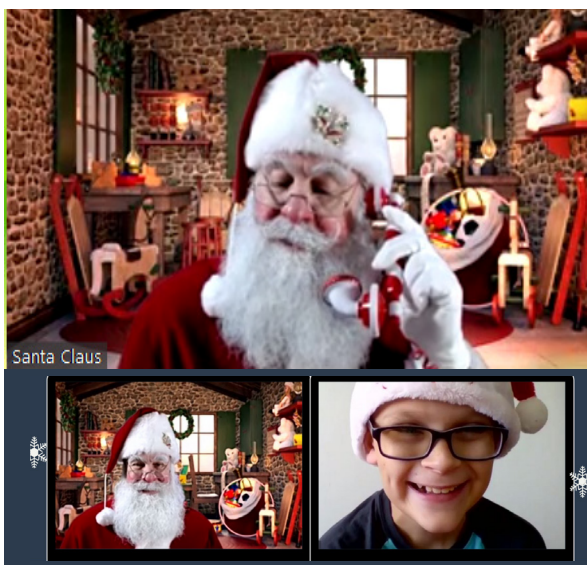
## STEPPING STONES TRIPLE P

The Triple P Stepping Stones program has been offered in partnership with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. ASSA provided three sessions for parents who have children with Autism. One of the classes was offered in Spanish. The 15-week course covers communication, troubleshooting, self-care, and self-regulation. The program gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships with their children, confidently manage behavior, and create effective problem solving practices. Each participant was provided two individual telephone consultations with the instructor to address their specific needs. Through this program, we served 40 families.



## SOCIAL SKILLS

Our Social Butterflies program partnered with Jenny's Speech & Learning Clinic to provide four virtual social skills programs. Each session focuses on a different age group: 7-9 years old, 10-12 years old, and 12-15 years old. The group was led by a Speech and Language Pathologist and participants were provided guided opportunities to connect with peers and learn fundamental communication techniques.



## ZOOM VISIT WITH SANTA

In 2021, social distance remained important as the COVID-19 pandemic transmission rates continued to be high in Pima County. Santa joined us virtually for another year of individualized meet and greets. He visited 25 families and learned about each child's needs and gift requests. Each child received a digital picture postcard with Santa to memorialize this special visit. For some children with Autism, we learned that Santa was much more fun on a virtual platform.



## PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Parent Support Group continues to grow and meets on the fourth Monday of each month. This opportunity allows parents time to discuss the joys and challenges of raising Autistic children. Parents with children at any age and at any point in the Autism journey have support and learn from each other along the way.



## AUTISM FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

In response to an expressed need from the community for education and awareness, we created the Autism Friendly Communities Program. The program offers training and coaching to schools, libraries, businesses, emergency responders, community-based organizations, and any entity interested in cultivating their organization as inclusive and welcoming to the Autistic community. We kicked off this program with a Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA), providing teachers at La Paloma Academy with strategies to best support Autistic students in the classroom. We provide tailored training from experts designed to meet the organization's individual needs. Any interested organization or group can contact us to schedule a training.



# LOOK WHO WALKED WITH US IN 2021

Thank you to all of our supporters who believe in our mission to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Arizona Complete Health               | \$28,000 |
| Bert W Martin Foundation              | \$20,000 |
| Banner University Health Plans        | \$15,000 |
| Premiere Wealth Advisors              | \$7,500  |
| Blue Cross Blue Shield                | \$5,600  |
| Helping Hands Behavior Therapy        | \$5,000  |
| Tucson Federal Credit Union           | \$5,000  |
| Ascend Behavior Partners              | \$5,000  |
| Trico Electric Charitable Trust       | \$5,000  |
| Rodger & Kate Graef Family Foundation | \$5,000  |
| One AZ Foundation                     | \$3,000  |
| Absolute HCBS                         | \$2,500  |
| Happy Saguaro                         | \$2,500  |
| Intermountain Centers                 | \$2,500  |
| Meridian Wealth Management            | \$2,500  |
| Hussman Foundation                    | \$2,000  |
| Nicholas W Genematas II Foundation    | \$2,000  |
| PICOR Charitable Foundation           | \$2,000  |
| AZ Aspire Academy                     | \$1,000  |
| Southwest Gas                         | \$1,000  |
| Children's Clinics                    | \$1,000  |
| Desert Diamond Casinos                | \$500    |
| Bank of the West                      | \$500    |
| Arizona Lotus Corporation             | In-Kind  |
| Univision                             | In-Kind  |
| Pima County Superintendent's Office   | In-Kind  |
| Bear Essentials News                  | In-Kind  |





# OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

## OPERATING REVENUE

|  |                     |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Contributions and Grants<br><i>Grants, Annual Giving, Services</i> | \$114,447.65        | (73.15%)    |
| Special Events<br><i>Registration Fees, Walk With Us</i>           | \$30,452.52         | (19.46%)    |
| Other Revenue (PPP Loan)<br><i>Registration Fees, Services</i>     | \$4,250.00          | (2.72%)     |
| PPP Loan Forgiveness   | \$7,301.84          | (4.67%)     |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$156,452.01</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## OPERATING EXPENSES

|   |                     |             |
|---|---------------------|-------------|
| Program Expenses                                  | \$16,239.48         | (12.42%)    |
| Administration Expenses<br><i>Wages, less ERC</i> | \$53,808.18         | (41.16%)    |
| Fundraising Expenses                              | \$23,596.77         | (18.05%)    |
| Operating/GA Expenses                             | \$37,096.65         | (28.37%)    |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>\$130,741.08</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## NET INCOME

**\$25,710.93**





## How the Autism Society of Southern Arizona met our community's needs in 2021

### Total Served in 2021: 1,500+ individuals

We continued through uncertain times to keep the Autism community connected and informed. Although we did not meet in person, we brought all our programs to you virtually. Thanks to our 2021 Walk with Us sponsors who made these programs possible! See what the community had to say about our programs.

#### Stepping Stones Triple P VIRTUAL PARENT TRAINING Program

- ★ 3 classes serving 40 families
- ★ 1 Spanish class
- ★ 15-week program

This program uses the evidence based Triple P curriculum to focus on communication, troubleshooting, self-care, and self-regulation



*"I would like to Thank you so much for organizing, making the Stepping Stones Class possible in Spanish. Mrs. Holguin is an amazing teacher and a very caring person. She is very knowledgeable and understanding."*

#### SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES Virtual Class

A Social Skills Program led by our partners at Jenny's Speech & Learning Clinics to cultivate friendships and encourage peer socialization

- ★ 4 sessions
- ★ 4-week program, includes parent training
- \*Parents who completed our survey stated their child made a friend as a result of the program

*"This program helped my son practice social skills in a small group setting, which is very beneficial. I think others would also benefit from this class."*

*"I can't think of another therapy that my daughter has looked forward to and she needs it very much. This was a big win for us."*



#### TEEN MEET-UPS with Playformance



We partnered with the Autism Society of Mahoning Valley in Ohio to connect teens to engaging activities and create social connections.

- ★ 1 group meet-up each month
- ★ Serving 175 teens in 2021

*"My son had a great time during the Autism Society Teen MeetUp! You would think that an Autistic child may not be bothered by staying at home and not having much interaction with the world. However, this was not the case and having time to socialize, even though on Zoom, meant the world to him. Thank you."*

*"My 11-year-old really enjoyed it. He was very proud of himself to have something on his schedule. As a mom, I am very impressed and grateful for the option."*

## ADULT SOCIAL CLUB



This group meets online the third Friday of each month. The club has participated in online escape rooms, presentations from the Red Cross, guided discussions and more!

★ **Serving 144 adults in 2021**

*"Our group is lit and awesome"*

*"The activities and games are wonderful!"*



## Parent Resource Drive-Through Event with the First Things First Parenting Outreach and Awareness Team

Distributing parent resources in Sahuarita in May



## PARENT PEER SUPPORT



## EMPOWER & HOUR GROUP

A virtual support network of parents who have children with an Autism diagnosis to obtain resources, knowledge, and acquire new skills to become Empowered Parents.

*"Greater motivation to have more patience and firmness when facing the events derived from Autism in our son."*

*"Mayor motivación para tener más paciencia y firmeza al enfrentar los eventos derivados del Autismo en nuestro hijo."*

## AUTISM CAMPAIGN PROJECT

The Pima County Health Department, in partnership with the Autism Society of Southern Arizona, hosted an online discussion titled "Autism: Education & Equity - A Public Health Discussion" on June 22, 2021.

The conference served as a platform to inform county residents about autism through the lens of public health to increase awareness and provide multi-sectional stakeholders and community members with the tools to create positive environments and change.

- ★ **A total of 350 participants registered**
- ★ **85% of attendees surveyed stated the conference helped them learn more about Autism**
- ★ **95% would refer others to this event in the future**

**THANK YOU**  
to our community  
partners for  
helping us  
improve the  
lives of those  
affected by  
Autism!

