

2022

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

To our Amazing Supporters & Community,

It is my great honor to have transitioned into the Executive Director position at the end of 2022 following the departure of Brie Seward. Brie was pivotal in building the Autism Society of Southern Arizona into what it is today, a strong thriving organization committed to creating connections and empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources they need to live fully. We are so grateful to her and all she has done for ASSA and are excited to make her proud as she passes the torch for us to carry into the future of the organization.

2022 was a year of great transitions for everyone as Covid restrictions were cautiously lifting and everyone was returning to a new normal, and it was the same for us at ASSA as we decided how to approach programing and keep everyone safe. As Covid concerns and restrictions began to be lifted, we were able to begin to transition our programming back to in person and we learned so much along the way. Our Adult Social Club remained a thriving group while being virtual through the pandemic, so much so that when we returned many members requested that we keep the virtual option due to travel and anxiety restrictions. We were able to expand this group to twice per month, one virtual and one in person, and the group has continued to grow and thrive due to this response to community need. Slowly we made this transition with each group balancing safety and community needs. By the end of the year we were even able to move off Zoom and hold our first in person Sensory Friendly Santa event where we were able to share all the magic and take wonderful pictures.

Transition back to in person allowed us to have a new way to come together and celebrate Autism Acceptance month with our Drive in Movie event. We had 100 families join us to watch a movie, hear about the wonderful organizations that support ASSA and be together in a safe way for the first time in so long. Our wonderful supporters showed us they were All In For Autism and helped us raise \$78,000 in sponsorships that make all that we do possible.

In 2022 we launched our Autism Friendly Communities program focused on providing training on how organizations can be inclusive of the Autism community in employment, school and play. We provided training for schools, the library and community organizations. Through this program we were also able to provide specialized training to police officers in southern Arizona, and we are proud of having provided training to the entire Wilcox and Tucson Police Departments. As we look to the new year and where these new opportunities will take us, I am excited to see what we can achieve to support

the Autistic community of southern Arizona. Through cultivating community engagement, opportunities to connect, education, advocacy and training to organizations that support our community we strive to make southern Arizona the best place to be Autistic. We invite you to join us in that goal and be All In For Autism. It takes the entire community and we are excited to have you with us.

The Connection is YOU!

Thank you!



Kate Elliott, MSW

Executive Director

Autism Society of Southern Arizona





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE TEAM:

Kyle Lininger

Board President

VP of Clinical Integration
Intermountain Centers

Courtney Broome

Vice President

Sr. Director of Clinical Services
HOPE Incorporated

Josh Anbar

Secretary

Professor
Arizona State University

Abby Moraga

Treasurer

Data Manager
Collins Aerospace

DIRECTORS:

Diane Kent

Special Education Director
Pima County Schools

Antoinette-Moran Briones

Tucson District Director
A Place to Call Home

Catherine Riley, MD

Developmental Pediatrician
Banner Health and Children's Clinics

Antoinette-Moran Briones

Tucson District Director
A Place to Call Home

Joe Salkowski

Dr. Director Communications & Public Affairs
Tucson Electric Power

Laura Valenzuela

Speech Language Pathologist

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Courtney L. Henson

Attorney and Partner
Snell & Wilmer

Pete Schwarz

VP of Affiliate Relations
Autism Society of America

Jared Perkins

Chief Executive Officer
Children's Clinics

Lynda Weigel-Firor

Consultant/Grant Writer

OUR 2022 TEAM



Brie Seward

Executive Director

Brie was appointed Executive Director in January 2020. Since 2017, she 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

Maxine is the Information and Referral Specialist for the Autism Society of Southern Arizona. She is an expert at finding resources across Pima County in the mental and behavioral health community. She began working in mental health in 2007 and have worked for nonprofits since 2010. She is the mother of a teenager diagnosed with Autism at age 4 and of a 14-year-old diagnosed with Autism at age 10. She loves helping people navigate through behavioral health systems from initial diagnosis of Autism to transitioning to adulthood, including working with state agencies and therapeutic agencies.



Kate Elliott

Programs & Grant Coordinator

Kate joined the ASSA team in 2022 after being a group participant and volunteering with the agency for years. She earned her Master's in Social Work from the University of Chicago with a specialization in Family Support and worked managing a Family Support program and working with families and a Domestic Violence Alternative Center at the Juvenile courts. She has two Autistic children, a son diagnosed at 9 and a daughter diagnosed at 3, and is excited to bring her experience and love for the Autistic community to support the families and individuals in our programs and raise awareness while strengthening our Autistic community.

SATISFACTION SURVEY FEEDBACK

"Very thankful for Maxine's quick thorough information, so that I was able to pass on info to my health care insurance referral person on the same day!"

"This is the go to place in Tucson for Autism information, community events, training, and support. The team is amazing! They are so compassionate, engaged, and knowledgeable. Watch their social media and website for upcoming activities and information filled events."

"The actual use of officer body worn camera footage to show the points provided in overall presentation. How it was geared towards L.E."
TPD Officer

OUR PROGRAMS



NAVIGATING AUTISM PROGRAM

One of our most vital services is our Navigating Autism Program. The Autism Society of Southern Arizona is typically the first call for families after they receive a diagnosis or those who are looking for help in getting diagnosed at various ages. Support, resources, referrals and guidance on navigating the Autism world for individuals and their families has always been a highly needed service and we have been here to provide the need. Since 2021, incoming calls have increased by 8% and we are continuing to develop a comprehensive list of referrals and recommendations to help guide everyone who calls and walks through our doors.



TEEN MEETUPS WITH PLAYFORMANCE

Our Teen Meet-Ups are held in partnership with Playformance, a local gym designed to provide high quality play experiences for all children. Meet-ups were transitioned to in-person in June 2022 for teens to gain social and active opportunities after the pandemic. Trained coaches at Playformance facilitate games, social activities to increase cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development for participants. This group received a total attendance of 111 people during 2022.





ADULT SOCIAL CLUB

The Adult Social Club grew an astonishing 117% in 2022. With Covid restrictions lifted, we were able to start in-person meetings in April of 2022. There was an increased interest in adding the virtual group back due to travel issues, personal Covid concerns, and general comfortability for our adult with Autism. With the continued interest in both in-person and virtual meetings, the group was essentially split into two monthly, lively groups. Whether in-person or virtual, this group offers a safe space for Autistic adults to engage socially, have fun, learn and build relationships within a community of their peers. Eric Stark, ASSA Board Member and Self-Advocate, joined Mirka Honkanen in facilitating this active group online and in-person. With an average of 26 participants per month, this group has continued to flourish.



SENSORY SANTA

As COVID-19 rates decreased and restrictions were lifted, we were able to host our first in person Sensory Santa. With 59 participants, we decorated the lobby of the Children's Clinic in festive decor. We allowed 5 families in per hour, to keep sensory concerns a priority and ensure each family would get the sensory accommodations they needed. An elf greeted them at the door and assisted them to a Christmas craft while they waited to see Santa. Santa's helper escorted the kids to meet Santa, take a picture, and receive a gift. With an increase of 146% from 2021's virtual Santa, this event is sure to happen again in 2023.



SOCIAL SKILLS

We continued our Social Butterflies program with Jenny's Speech & Learning Clinic to provide three virtual four week social skills programs. These sessions focused on different age groups: 7-9 years old, 10-12 years old and 12-15 years old. Led by a Speech and Language Pathologist, each group was provided guided opportunities to connect with peers and learn key communication techniques.



PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Parent Support Group grew 131% in 2022! This group meets once a month and transitioned from virtual to in-person meet ups. Having a space for parents and caregivers of Autistic children to discuss the joys and challenges of raising Autistic children has been a crucial support for our community. Holding space for one another in their shared experiences through this journey has proven to be an encouragement and guidance to parents raising children and adults on the spectrum.



AUTISM FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Our Autism Friendly Communities trainings emphasized different organization's desires to become more inclusive and welcoming to the autistic community. Thanks to a grant from Arizona Complete Health, we were able to hire Nancy Martinez, special investigator, from the Chandler Police Department to provide her training, "Navigating with Knowledge," which includes body camera footage of police interactions with Autistic individuals, in an attempt to educate officers of the needs and challenges the Autistic community faces during law enforcement encounters. We also trained the managers at the Amazon Fulfillment Center, Tucson Public library staff,

Wilcox Police Department, TROT, Norton Antivirus, the Human Society staff and other companies that were interested in expanding their knowledge of the Autistic community. In addition to these, we were honored to train at the Tohono O'odham Nation and their professionals and parents in the special needs department, as well as those in their early childhood educators at the Tohono O'odham Nation Community College. Any organization or group that is interested can contact us to set up training and we will provide personalized training from experts designed to meet the individual needs of each organization.

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.

Banner University Health Plans	\$15,000
Premiere Wealth Advisors	\$10,000
Absolute HCBS	\$7,000
Helping Hands Behavior Therapy	\$7,000
Ascend Behavior Partners	\$5,000
Intermountain Centers	\$5,000
Tucson Federal Credit Union	\$5,000
Hughes Federal Credit Union	\$3,000
Arizona Better Medicaid Friend	\$3,000
Truly Nolan	\$3,000
Meridian Wealth Management	\$3,500
Hopebridge	\$1,500
Southwest Gas	\$1,000
UCP of Southern Arizona	\$1,000
Children's Clinics	\$1,000
Action Behavior Centers	\$1,000
Flex It Academy	\$1,000
Autism Spectrum Therapies	\$1,000
BeachFleischman	\$1,000
Snell & Wilmer	\$1,000
Arizona Lotus Corporation	In-Kind
Pima County Superintendent's Office	In-Kind
<hr/>	
Total	\$78,000





OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

OPERATING REVENUE

Contributions and Grants <i>Grants & Annual Giving</i>	\$143,078.00	(80.36%)
Special Events <i>All In For Autism Drive-In Movie</i>	\$32,327.00	(18.16%)
Other Revenue <i>Fees for Trainings</i>	\$2,650.00	(1.49%)
Total	\$178,055	100%

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Expenses	\$94,841.00	(57.14%)
Administration Expenses <i>Wages, less ERC</i>	\$53,808.18	(27.89%)
Fundraising Expenses	\$23,596.77	(14.97%)
Total	\$130,741.08	100%

NET INCOME

\$12,063.00



**Autism
Society**
Southern
Arizona



WE ARE **all in**
FOR AUTISM

BECAUSE OF YOU...



111

Teens met at
Playformance
Teen Meet Ups

12

Kids practiced their
social skills at Social
Butterflies

We answered
the call for

747

families
Navigating Autism



PimaCommunityCollege
/// Keep striving.

We trained **715** new Autism
Friendly Community members
at organizations across
southern Arizona



NortonLifeLock



Therapeutic
Riding of Tucson



134

Parents supported
each other at the Peer
Parent Support Group

313

Autistic adults
connected at Adult
Social Club

400

People attended our
All in For Autism
Drive-In Movie

Provided information to **1570** community members at outreach events

41

People attended
our virtual
workshops

36

Kids met with Santa
at our Sensory
Friendly Santa Event

8

Kids learned
Science from U of A
professors at STEAM



Thank you to all of our Donors & Sponsors!
The CONNECTION is YOU!



Snell & Wilmer





AUTISM FRIENDLY

COMMUNITY TRAINING



Survey feedback from law enforcement trainings with
Chandler Investigative Specialist, Nancy Martinez

"This topic NEEDS to be taught to ALL officers. All of them. The more knowledge we have the better we can do what we do."

-Detective- Yavapai County

"Great job, very happy you taught this course. We have needed something like this for a while."

-Deputy/Admin MCSO Academy

"I wish there was a way this IMPORTANT Info would be taught in Police Academies."

-Detective, Yavapai County

"I really enjoyed this training, I'm familiar with ASD but didn't realize how much I don't know!"

-Code Enforcement- Buckeye PD

"With the increase in cases of Autism, it's good to learn all we can about it and better ways to handle and help individuals with the disorder."

-Deputy Sherriiff -MCSO

"Thanks for including questions that dispatchers can ask."

-Communication Specialist, Yavapai County

"Entire presentation provided excellent tools and actions for dealing with Developmental Disabilities. Very complete presentation."

-Detective, Show Low Crisis Intervention Team

"The videos were positive. I can't stand going to a training where there are a bunch of videos of cops doing stupid things. Show us the positive not the negative. Good Job. Thanks."

-Police Officer, Show Low Crisis Intervention Team

"Continue with the bodycam footage, it gives great perspective and different reaction with each person."

-Field Trainer, Goodyear Police

"I found the videos to be very useful. It was good to see examples then to walk through and break them down."

- Deputy Sheriff, MCSO Academy

AUTISM FRIENDLY

COMMUNITY TRAINING



Feedback from training participants: *What participants liked*

"I liked including the actual individuals with Autism and have them explain the definitions on some terminology is wonderful and very peer-interactive."

Teacher at AZ School for Deaf & Blind

"It was very visual, such as using slides showing different images and videos while you explain and share the facts. It helps me learn better"

Teacher at AZ School for Deaf & Blind

"Very informative, but at a level that my first graders could relate to and understand. The activities were very engaging and helped the students (and me) make connections to how the neurodiversity experiences the world around them."

Canyon View Elementary School-Teacher

"The breaking down of common misconceptions around people with disabilities in the work place. Autism Spectrum Visual."

Amazon Fulfillment- Manager

"I liked the actual use of officer body worn camera footage to show the points provided in overall presentation. How it was geared towards Law Enforcement."

Tucson Police Department - Officer

"WOW! So much Great information, examples and suggestions presented in varied formats!!! Extremely useful presentation. THANK YOU!"

Teacher at AZ School for the Deaf & Blind

"Examples of situations with officers having positive outcomes with those on the spectrum. Signs and movements that help indicate what someone on the spectrum is trying to communicate."

Tucson Police Department- Officer

"Everything was easy to follow. I felt all my questions were answered."

Tohono O'odham Special Needs Department- Parent

