



## 2013 Annual Report

### **About the Autism Society**

Founded in 1965 by Dr. Bernard Rimland, Dr. Ruth Sullivan and many other parents of children with autism, the Autism Society is the leading source of trusted and reliable information related to the autism spectrum. The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism throughout their lifespan. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy. The Autism Society's national office is headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland.

### **Mission Statement**

The Autism Society of Greater Phoenix is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information, tools, resources, and support to improve the lives of children and adults on the spectrum and their families. All of our board members are parents of children with Autism and share in the journey to provide the necessary supports for a successful future for all affected by Autism.

### **Autism Society Vision**

The Autism Society is the leading voice and resource of the entire autism community in education, advocacy, services, research and support. The Autism Society is committed to meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. The Autism Society accomplishes its ongoing mission through close collaboration with a successful network of chapters, members and supporters.

### **Autism Society Guiding Principles**

- The Autism Society's efforts are focused on meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.
- The Autism Society promotes individual, parental and guardian choice to assure that people on the autism spectrum are treated with dignity and respect.
- The Autism Society proactively informs, influences, guides and develops public policy at the federal, state and local levels, including setting agendas for policymakers and legislators, for the benefit of the autism community.
- The Autism Society is a respected voice in the autism community and the primary source for information by providing timely, frequent, relevant and professional communication.
- The Autism Society works to ensure that every chapter is a successful chapter, sustained by a collaborative relationship between the national office and chapters to realize mutual benefit and to protect the interests of both.
- The Autism Society advocates for multi-disciplined approaches to autism research focused on improving the quality of life for individuals across the autism spectrum and their families.
- The Autism Society works to ensure financial self-sufficiency and growth for all Autism Society operating units and integrated operations across all levels of the Autism Society.

At the very core of the parent choice philosophy is the belief that no single program or treatment will benefit all individuals with autism. Furthermore, the recommendation of what is "best" or "most effective" for a person with autism should be determined by those people directly involved - the individual with autism, to the extent possible, and the parents or family members. Providing information and education to help in decision-making are more highly regarded at the Autism Society than is advocating for one particular theory or philosophy.

The growing membership base of the Autism Society encompasses a broad, diverse group of parents, family members, special education teachers, administrators, medical doctors, therapists, nurses and aides, as well as countless other personnel involved in the education, care, treatment and support of individuals with autism. Recognizing and respecting the diverse range of opinions, needs and desires of this group, the Autism Society embraces an overall philosophy that chooses to empower individuals with autism and their parents or caregivers to make choices best suited to the needs of the person with autism.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Resources for Families:**

- **Parent Mentors** provided support to families affected by autism in the following ways; answered 2000 phone calls, moderated online support groups with 325 members and over 10,000 emails, responded to 576 website contact emails and provided extensive help to 43 new families through the Parent Mentor Program and continued assisting the 125 families from the following year.
- **Parent support group meetings** around the valley and additionally supports a teen group and adult group. We added a monthly military support group meeting as well.
- **Autism 101**, a monthly meeting for newly diagnosed families, rotates around the valley and is open to the public. We also added a Mom's Monthly Meet Up that actively meets in around the valley.
- **Treatment grants** for children on the autism spectrum whose families met the grant criteria.
- **Social activities** for families including 2 family picnics, 2 holiday parties for children, sporting events, Mom's Night Out events and AMC Theater Sensory Friendly Films monthly across the valley.
- **Educational opportunities** for families including 2 workshops and our annual conference where over 200 people attended.
- **Revamped website** to provide more resources for services, providers, treatments and advocacy including access to video webinars for our members.

### **Awareness**

- **Thousands of Autism Awareness brochures** distributed to pediatricians, therapists and schools across the valley.
- Distributed Autism Awareness brochures at a variety of events around the valley including the Zoo Walk for Autism, Autism Speaks Walk,, etc.
- **"Children Suffering in Silence" documentary** developed and distributed by Autism Society of Greater Phoenix.
- **"Autism Insurance" and "Medical Care"** CD created and distributed by Autism Society of Greater Phoenix.

### **Outreach and Training**

- **Training** for over 200 professionals including teachers and therapists at conferences and workshops.
- Autism Society of Greater Phoenix is creating partnerships with local community colleges to create special opportunities for college age students on the spectrum.
- Autism Society of Greater Phoenix participated in several IEP Partner Trainings.
- **Trainings** for 2 Pow Wow Cub Scout Trainings, Arizona State University Teacher Prep Class training and 2 Charter school trainings which resulted in the education of over 200 professionals and dozens of children.

### **Advocacy and Government Relations**

- **Assisted parents** in navigating the Department of Developmental Disabilities, AHCCCS and Long Term Care systems from enrollment to preparing for the Fair Hearing process.
- **Champion state and federal legislation** that will benefit children and adults with autism, in collaboration with the Arizona Autism Coalition.
- **Assisted hundreds of parents** in navigating the special educational system and provided referrals to local advocates when intense assistance was needed.
- **Created Fair Hearing Files** to assist families with the process. The files included potential exhibits for the fair hearing as well as potential responses to motions filed by the DDD. Templates for letters of medical necessity were created to assist pediatrician's document medical necessity for autism therapies for their clients. Templates were created for the courtroom process (i.e.: opening arguments, closing arguments, cross examination, etc.).
- Became a member of COPPA (Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates).

## **Board of Directors**

Jim Adams, President  
Cynthia Macluskie, Vice President  
Katie Wride, Treasurer  
Susan Sunseri, Board Member  
Catina Hoffman, Board Member  
Chris Ertz, Board Member  
Natalie Kotowski, Board Member

## **Key Partner Organizations**

AZ Assist  
Adult Support Group  
East Valley Autism Network  
Arizona Autism Coalition

## **Key Sponsors**

Aurora Day School  
Autism Academy of Education and Development  
Brightmont Academy  
Kile and Kuposzewski Law Firm  
Peaceful Solutions  
Melmed Center  
Sierra Academy

## **Options Policy**

The Autism Society promotes the active and informed involvement of family members and the individual with autism in the planning of individualized, appropriate services and supports. The Board of the Autism Society believes that each person with autism is a unique individual. Each family and individual with autism should have the right to learn about and then select, the options that they feel are most appropriate for the individual with autism. To the maximum extent possible, we believe that the decisions should be made by the individual with autism in collaboration with family, guardians and caregivers.

Services should enhance and strengthen natural family and community supports for the individual with autism and the family whenever possible. The service option designed for an individual with autism should result in improved quality of life. Abusive treatment of any kind is not an option.

We firmly believe that no single type of program or service will fill the needs of every individual with autism and that each person should have access to support services. Selection of a program, service or method of treatment should be on the basis of a full assessment of each person's abilities, needs and interests. We believe that services should be outcome based to insure that they meet the individualized needs of a person with autism.

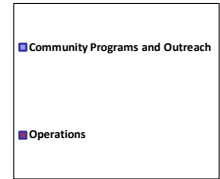
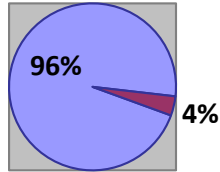
With appropriate education, vocational training and community living options and support systems, individuals with autism can lead dignified, productive lives in their communities and strive to reach their fullest potential.

The Autism Society believes that all individuals with autism have the right to access appropriate services and supports based on their needs and desires.

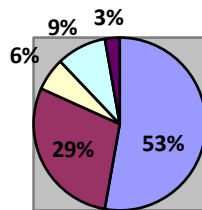
*- Adopted by the Autism Society Board of Directors, 4/1/1995  
- Revised by the Autism Society Board of Directors 12/12/2009*

# Financial Highlights

## Outflows



## Community Programs and Outreach



## Income

