

AUTISM SOCIETY

Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism

South Central Wisconsin



2020 Annual Report

437 S. Yellowstone Drive, Suite 217A, Madison, WI 53719

www.autismsouthcentral.org (608) 630-9147

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OUR MISSION

Dedicated to improving the lives of all who are impacted by autism spectrum disorders by providing information, resources and support, while raising awareness and acceptance in our community.

OUR BOARD

President: Nancy Alar
Vice President: Jenn Moore
Treasurer: Ryan Strohm
Secretary: Lauren Usher
Past President: Danielle Tolzmann
Tim Markle
Jeff Spitzer-Resnick
Scott Allen
Rachel Tracosas
Linnea Bertram

OUR STAFF

Executive Director: Kirsten Engel
Executive Assistant: Catherine Streiffer

WHO WE ARE

The Autism Society of South Central WI is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all affected by autism. 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 across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

We believe that each individual with autism is unique and they and their families should determine the best treatment based on individual needs. This guiding principal is expressed in the national Autism Society's Options Policy.

As one of the oldest local chapters in the country, we have been supporting families affected by autism and the professionals who assist them since 1969.

We serve South Central Wisconsin with reach into Southwest Wisconsin – Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Iowa, Rock, Green, Lafayette, Grant, Richland and Crawford counties fall under our umbrella.

Our services include:

- Support groups
- Information and Referral services
- Social groups
- Community social/networking events
- Advocacy
- Education and training workshops

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your donations are tax deductible.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Mom's Night Out

Mom's night out is an informal social group that meets every other month. It is a chance for moms to share ideas and experiences and receive support from other mothers who have a child on the spectrum. **In 2020 we hosted 6 Mom's Night outings;** twice in person before the pandemic, and four times virtually during the pandemic.

Sauk County Parents Night Out

Parents Night Out is an informal support group for parents in Sauk County who have children on the spectrum. **In 2020 we hosted 2 in person meetings.**

AUsome Adult Support Group

The AUsome Adult Support Group is a support group for adults (18 and over) with autism and those who suspect they may have an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The group meets to discuss life issues on the spectrum and support one another. This is a peer-led group that uses an open-meeting format. **In 2020 this group met 11 times;** twice in person and 9 times virtually.

Autism Society of South Central WI Parent Facebook Group

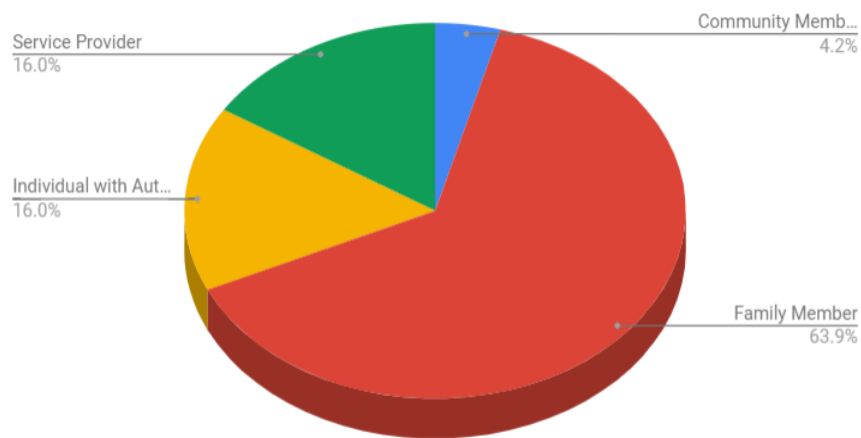
Our Facebook support group for parents of children on the autism spectrum in our ten county area is designed to be a positive and supportive place to share ideas, challenges, successes and resources. This group is important for parents in our area who are not able to attend support groups, or to get support between group meetings.

INFORMATION AND REFFERAL

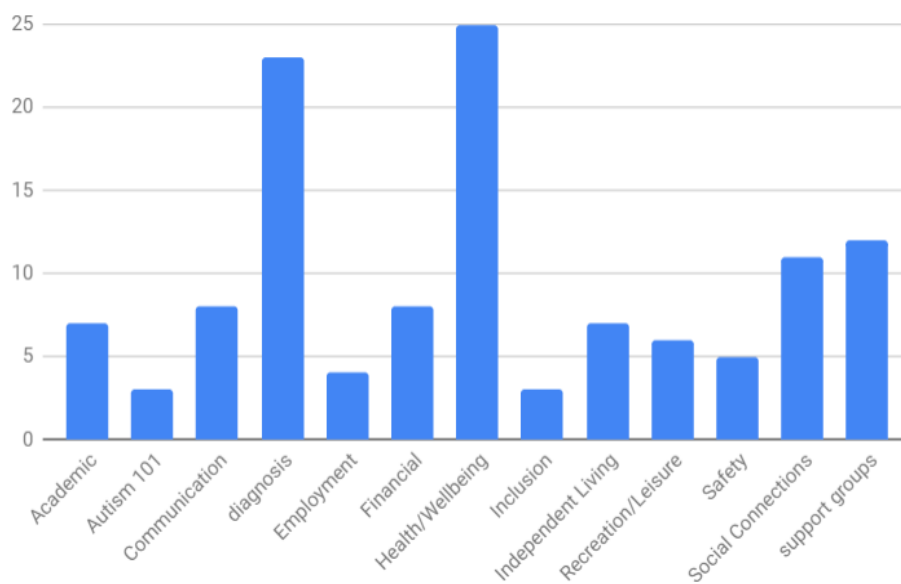
In 2020 Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin received 122 Information and Referral contacts from our community.

Contact Type				
Phone - 74	Email - 42	Facebook - 4	Web - 1	Walk-in - 1

Individual Type



Topic Type



SOCIAL GROUPS

Social groups are an opportunity for people who are on the spectrum to interact with others in a social situation and in a supportive environment. Each group identifies and coordinates their own activities based on the needs and interests of the participants. In 2020 we supported 4 social groups in our service area.

AUsome Social Group Dane County

The AUsome Social Group in Dane County is a monthly group for people on the spectrum ages 12 and older. **In 2020 there were 2 group outings** (juggling show and raptor program) before the group went on hiatus for the rest of the year due to the pandemic.

Board game night

Board game night is a monthly group for teens and adults on the spectrum. **In 2020 we hosted a total of 19 Game Nights**; twice in-person and 17 virtual.

AUsome Adult Social Group

Our Adult Social Group is a group for all adults on the autism spectrum (no formal diagnosis needed). It's place for Autistic Adults to enjoy some time out in the community with fellow members in a relaxed, conversational atmosphere. **In 2020 the group met 18 times.**

Janesville AUsome Social Group

The AUsome Social Group in Janesville is a monthly group for people on the spectrum ages 12 and older who live in Rock county. **In 2020 there were 2 group outings** (fire station tour and raptor program) before the group went on hiatus for the rest of the year due to the pandemic.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the year the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin hosts a number of special events for individuals on the spectrum, families, caregivers and community members. We had to get creative in 2020 to continue some special events during the pandemic.

In 2020 we offered the following special events:

- Annual Picnic: Home Edition
- Haunted House Virtual Walkthrough
- Thanksgiving Baskets
- Day with the Experts at the Waisman Center - Virtual
- INTEGRAL Adult Autism Conference – Virtual

ADVOCACY

Highlights of 2020 Advocacy collaborative efforts include:

- Submitted testimony to Senate Education Committee on seclusion & restraint bill. We discussed the pending seclusion & restraint bill-SB 527.
- Jeff testified at a hearing on a bill in the Assembly on bill 585 on seclusion and restraint.
- Gov. Evers produced a video proclaiming April as Autism Awareness and Appreciation Month and an official proclamation
- We signed on to an amicus (friend of the court) brief in support of Gov. Evers' Safer at Home order

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Autism 101

In 2020 we offered a total of **12 Autism 101 trainings** to families and community members. Before the pandemic we were able to offer 2 in person trainings, one for families in Rock county and one to Library staff. After the shutdown we offered 11 online trainings, 12 to family members and 1 to First Responders. In total we reached over **100 individuals** through Autism 101 trainings in 2020.

Educational Workshops offered in 2020

- IEP Advocacy
- Positive Parenting in the Time of Covid
- Neurodiversity
- Special Ed while Staying Safer at Home
- Compliance is not the Goal
- Safety and the Mail
- Safety and Elopers
- Interdependence Screening

Co-sponsored with the Southern Regional Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs:

- Hope for the Holidays: This is Supposed to be Fun! Navigating the Winter Holidays, Autism, and your Extended Family
- Hope for the Holidays: Transitions and Change
- Hope for the Holidays: Moving, Sensing, and Feeling

Jacob Trotter Memorial Scholarship

The winner of the Jacob Trotter Memorial Scholarship in 2020 was Jake Williams. Jake is a student at Ripon College.

INTEGRAL Adult Autism Conference

INTEGRAL is an autism conference like no other. It puts adults on the autism spectrum front and center, not as a subject for others to discuss, but for them to exchange perspectives with expert professionals and parents so that everyone can learn from each other. **62 individuals attended** the virtual conference in 2020.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue		Expenses	
Donations	\$29,046	Operational	\$17,351
Fundraising	\$27,029	Staff	\$32,022
Grants	\$15,450	Fundraising	\$2,045
Membership Dues	\$1,350	Programs	\$4,052
Other ASC Events	\$1,955	Other ASC Events	\$290
In-kind Revenue	\$4,200		
Investment Income	\$1,000		
Total Income	\$80,038	Total Expenses	\$42,278

FEEDBACK FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Information and Referral: A mom called because her young adult son was unemployed and suicidal because of the pandemic. Through the I&R process were able to offer the Mother support and find ways for her son to connect to other autistic adults. He now attends a number of our social and support groups regularly.

Email from a parent who received a picnic basket: Thank you so much!!! We didn't expect all of the stuff you dropped off. The boys loved their surprise from you guys!!! It's been a very rough year for our family and it put a huge smile on their faces!!! Thank you again for what everyone does for our kids to make some smiles in a very hard time right now!!!

Email from Community Group: "During times of stress and uncertainty, this event brought positivity into both the BWAH members lives as well as the families apart of the Autism Society"

Adult Support Group: "This group helped attendees: feel less alone, overcome social anxiety & come out of their shell, feeling more comfortable with being themselves, understand themselves and each other better. Serves as a sounding board for life's challenges"

Information and Referral: A mom today burst into tears while giving her email address, she said that she had felt so alone for the past four years and she finally felt like she was talking to someone who understood.