



**Autism
Society**
Inland Empire

The connection is you.™



2021 Impact Report

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As I reflect back on 2021, I have a heart full of gratitude for each member of our community - our families, our donors, our volunteers, our staff, and our board members. 2021 has been a year of challenges, perseverance, and generosity like we have not ever seen in the history of the Autism Society Inland Empire. In Jan 2021, the Autism Society Inland Empire grew our service area to serve the families in the Coachella Valley. Our board did not know if we would have funding or the capacity to serve these families but were confident that it was the right thing to do.

In 2021 we shifted from distributing masks and hand sanitizers to access to vaccine information and clinics. We provided educational workshops to over 2,300 people in our community on a variety of topics including special education, how to re-integrate back into the community, and tips for the new normal of the holiday season.

Over 5,400 children, teens, adults, and family members attended at least one of our recreation programs, family events, or support groups. These programs were vital to the well-being of our community as they give opportunities for our families to connect with one another in a safe environment.

We continued our work in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) which you can read more about on page 13 of this report.

In 2021, we also wrapped up our pilot curriculum for Law Enforcement, training a total of 197 law enforcement personnel with a 98% rating the course as Very Good or above on a 5-point scale. This is a topic extremely important to our community and we have plans to expand training in 2022.

I am honored to be part of this richly diverse community and a team that is willing to innovate to meet their needs. We could not do any of this without your support. Thank you for making a difference in the inland Empire Autism community.

Beth Burt
Executive Director
Autism Society Inland Empire

About Autism

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that begins early in childhood and lasts throughout a person's life. Clinicians prefer to conceptualize the disorder along a spectrum, allowing for variety and degree of severity. ASD can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges.

There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people.

In 2021, the CDC released Autism occurs 1 in 44 children and 1 in 24 children in California. The CDC found for the first time, between White, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic children in California there were no significant differences in ASD prevalence for 8-year-olds.

There are over 17,000 children and adults with Autism living in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and another 55,000 family members.



About Us - New Mission!

We have a new mission in 2022! The Autism Society Inland Empire's mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

First established in 1986, we provide critical programs and services for children and adults with autism and their family members to empower, support, and help them be fully included in the community.

We work to ensure children and adults with Autism living in Riverside and San Bernardino counties are respected, are safe, are included in the community, and feel empowered to achieve their aspirations.

We are deeply connected to the Inland Empire autism community because we are the autism community. Our staff is comprised of parents with children and adults with autism as well as adults on the spectrum.





Top Problems We Faced in 2021

- The continuation of the COVID pandemic worsened their core symptoms of autism and mental health including anxiety and depression. Further exasperating this was the closing of schools, programs, and limiting services which increased social isolation.
- Additionally, researchers found that autistic people were at higher risk of getting the virus and becoming severely sick requiring hospitalization and ICU care than neurotypical people.
- Before and during COVID: Because of the lack of access to adequate services, individuals and families faced regression and intense and sometimes injurious/aggressive behaviors toward themselves or family members.
- Lack of Adult Services. Even before COVID adults with autism face a 96% unemployment rate and lack of quality adult services in the Inland Empire.
- Need for Law Enforcement, Safety and Disaster Training. Individuals with autism are seven times more likely to encounter police than “neurotypical” individuals and two to four times more likely to die or be injured in a disaster than the general population.
- Navigating Systems, understanding terminology, laws, and regulations. Families and adults have to navigate through multiple systems: special education, Regional Center, medical insurance, the Department of Rehabilitation, IHSS, Social Security and work with multiple providers - each with its own set of rules can be overwhelming.

Our Work

The Autism Society Inland Empire is here to connect members of the Autism community to the support they need when they need it.

We do this by providing:

- Educational Workshops
- Employment and Volunteer Opportunities for Adults with ASD
- Equity and Inclusion work
- Family Events
- Law Enforcement and Safety Training
- System Navigation and Support
- Trained Resource Specialists to help
- Wellness Programs including classes in Art, Music, Exercise and fun events





Autism Society Inland Empire Recognized as the National Affiliate of the Year for our work in 2021



Impact Stories

"I was born deaf, blind and with a hole in my heart. My parents did not believe in using my disability as a crutch and raised me to persevere and not depend or rely on my weaknesses but to learn and gain strengths and to build on them.

I will be graduating Spring 2022 With 2 degrees; An AS degree in University Arts & Humanities and an AS in Art for Transfer as well as a CSU GE Certificate. I will be applying to Disney Animation and Cal State University San Bernardino for Fall 2022. I currently hold an internship with the Department of Rehabilitation through the State of California.

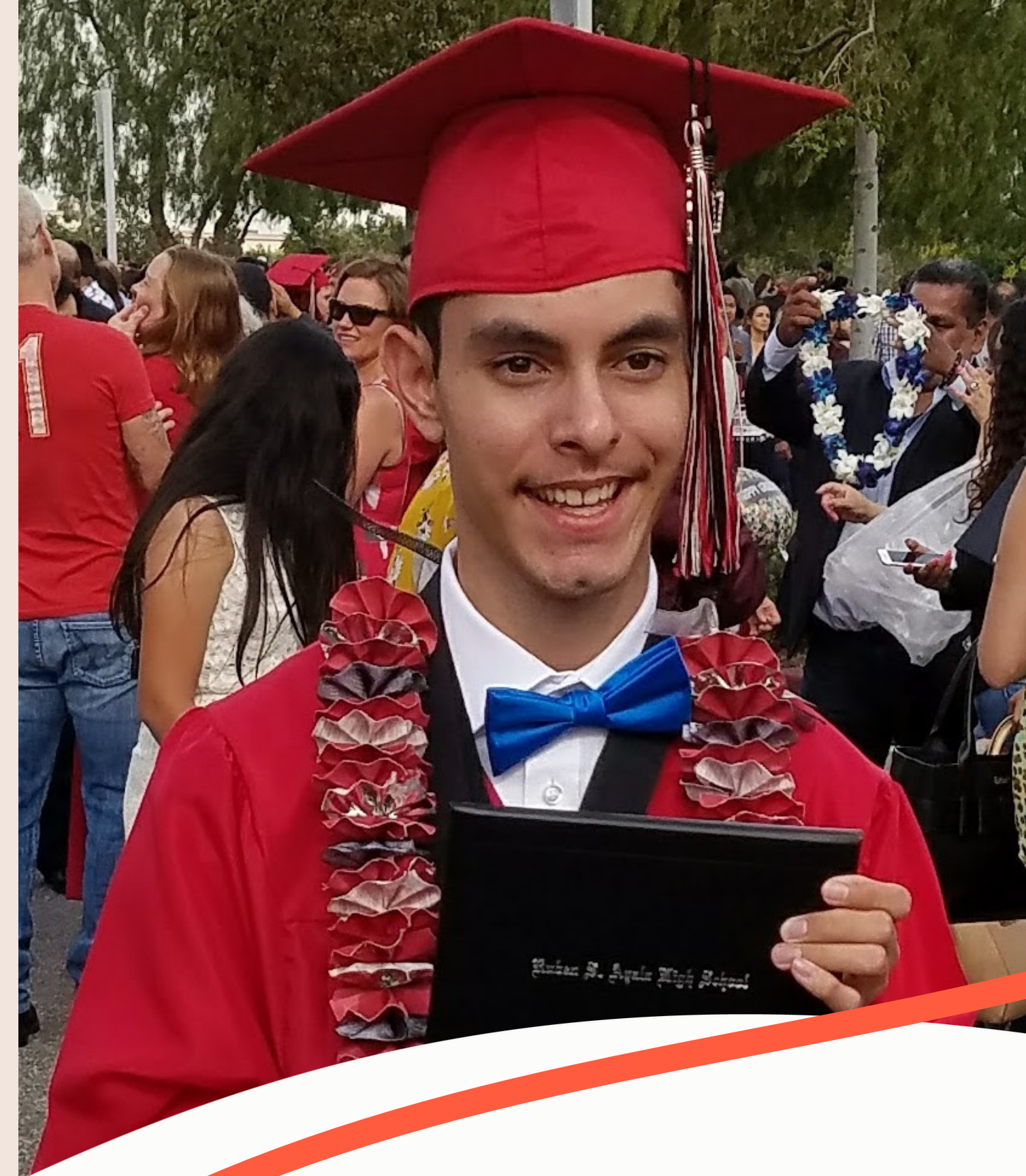
I would not be where I am today without pushy (lol) and supportive parents as well as people like yourself that I have met through the years. The Inland Empire Autism Society made me feel like I fit in and had a place to just be myself with my peers. Your team introduced me to programs, tools and resources as well as some great friends.

Your programs and informational sessions were a benefit to me as well. My participation with the Great California Shakeout and the Neurodiversity zoom was also a once in a lifetime experience for me.

I know that your team may not always get the thank you or the appreciation that you all deserve but, here is a big thank you from me to you and your team!!!!!!!!!!
Please feel free to share this email because you and your team DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Thank you for always being there for me!"

- Eric



Stories of Us

"When my daughter was diagnosed 12 years ago with autism, I felt alone and scared. I knew no one with a special needs child and did not know where to begin. The Autism Society of Inland Empire helped me navigate to find services, activities and support. I've met a wonderful group of parents I can share with, celebrate victories as well as disappointments. They've become a second family to me. I encourage everyone to support the ASIE. It is a wonderful beacon of hope to the special needs community."

- Robyn

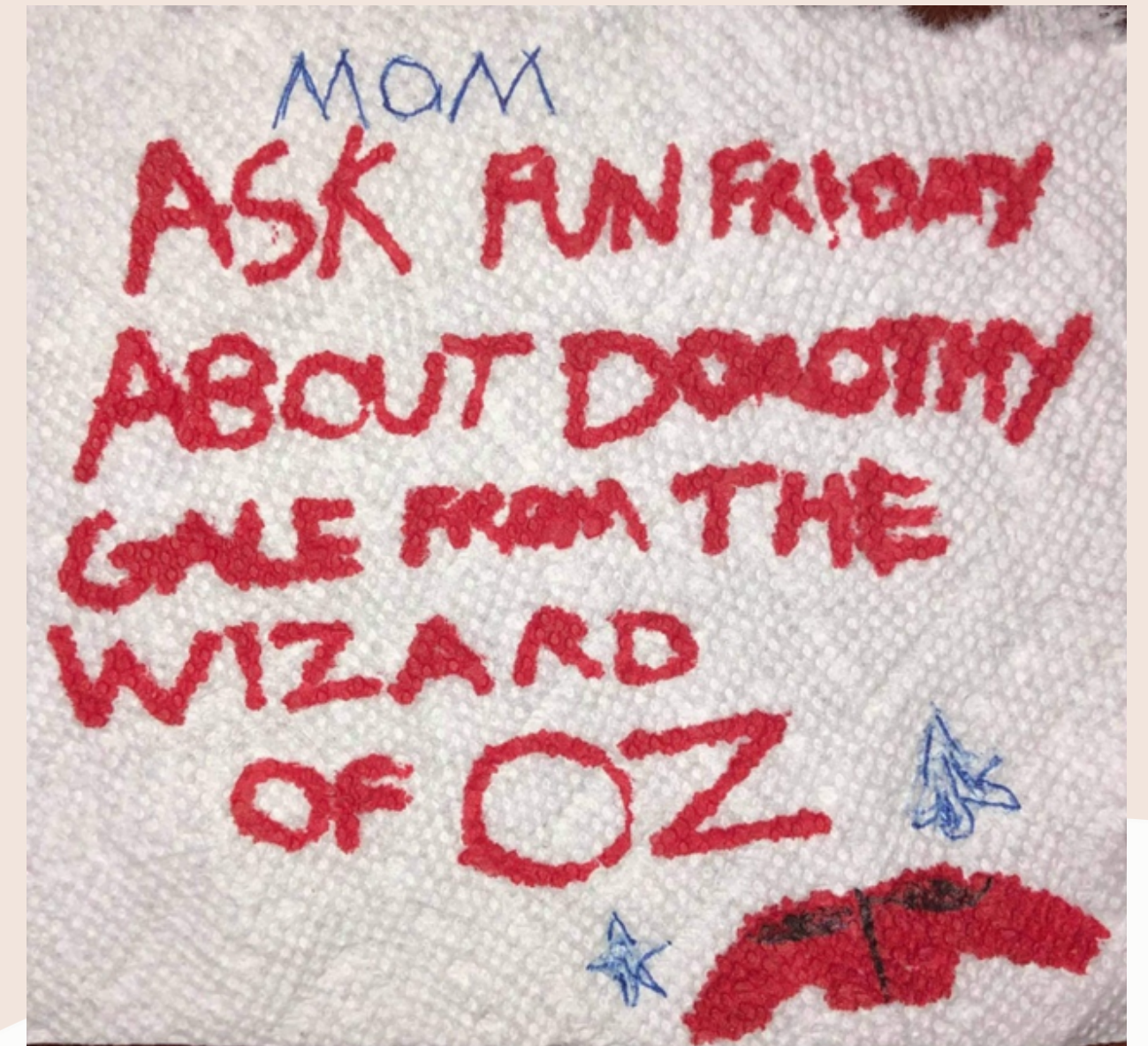
Stories of Us

"Hi, my adult son Kevin keeps asking me if I'll send the people who put together Fun Friday's a message. He wrote me a sweet little note on a paper towel last night to remind me. Kevin has been wanting me to ask if there was any way to have Dorothy from Wizard of Oz on there someday. I'm sure you guys get who you can and we are so grateful for that but I promised him I'd send the message for him.

Thank you so much for doing the Fun Friday's. It has helped Kevin get through the pandemic.

He loves Disneyland and he has been broken-hearted for a year since they had to close. Because of what you guys have done coming up with Disney Characters and other wonderful characters to appear on there he's been uplifted and looks forward to attending. I'm so grateful. You've really helped him get through these tough times and have lessened his crying, sadness, and devastation of not seeing his character friends in person.

Thank you so very much. 😊"



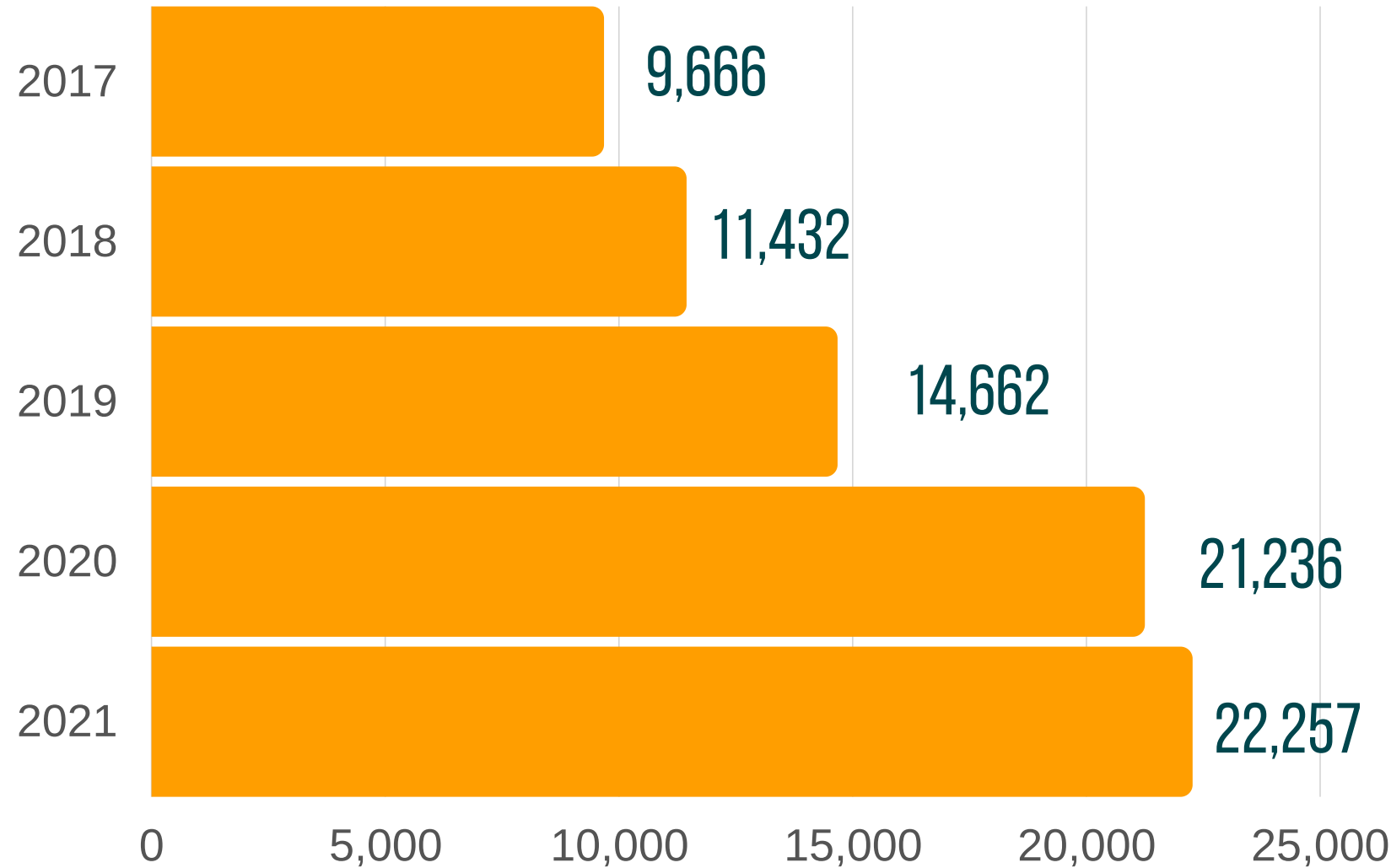
Our Impact

	2021	2020	2019
# beneficiaries trained	2,369	22,000	2,885
# individuals supported wellness programs	5,420	3,182	6,559
# individuals who received Navigation services	5,133	4,223	2,483
# meals provided	1,755	4,600	0
# Officers Trained	197	0	0
# job exploration opportunities for adults on the spectrum	28	16	5
Volunteer Hours	3,284	2,203	1,315



Our Reach

Autism Society Inland Empire Social Media Community



includes Facebook page, Facebook group, Linked In, Twitter, Instagram and email list



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The disability community is sometimes forgotten when the conversation of DEI arises. While our Autism community finds itself in spaces related to ableism (discrimination in favor of able-bodied people), many other issues including race, gender identity, and sexual orientation also pertain to our community. For instance, a man with Autism needs to learn how to interact with law enforcement, however, a black Autistic man may need different guidance.

Since 1986, the Autism Society Inland Empire has been working to ensure ALL members of our community can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in their community. Some of the ways we accomplished this goal in 2021 were:

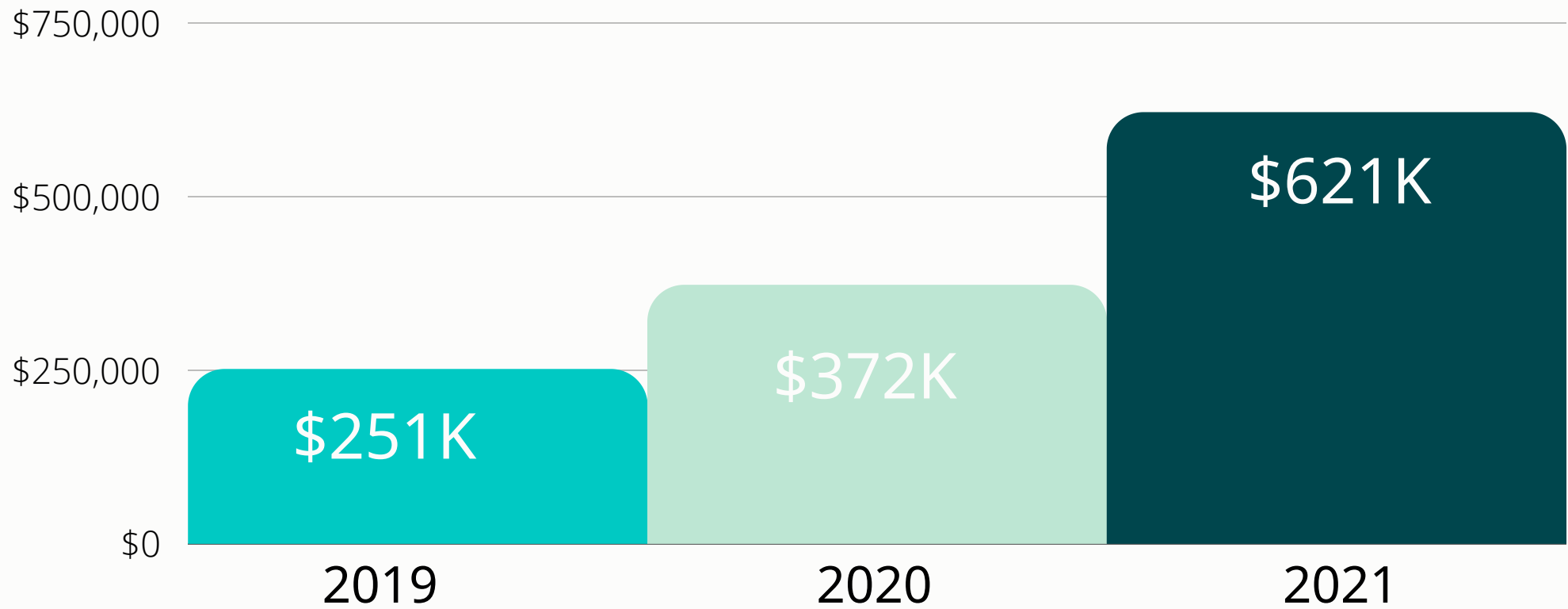
- In 2021, we established the Panel of Advisors. Made up of adults on the spectrum, this panel meets at least once a month to advise on problems and issues in the community, assist in developing educational videos, and speak on webinars about their perspectives.
- CLASE Community of Practice. We developed and have facilitated the CLASE Community of Practice, a collective of leaders who serve the Latino/Spanish-speaking Developmental Disability communities here in the Inland Empire for the last three years.
- Special Education Equity: We are currently looking at issues related to special education and Latino and Spanish-speaking students in the Inland Empire and will have a report in April 2022.
- Employment: With a 96% unemployment rate, we are leading the charge for employment opportunities. This year we were able to provide opportunities to 28 Autistic adults through speaking on webinars, training, or facilitating classes.
- Accessibility: In 2021, we contracted with an agency to ensure our website is now ADA accessible. Additionally, all live educational webinars have Spanish translation available and closed captioning upon request. Resources are released in plain language and Spanish translation whenever possible.
- Annually ask teens/adults with Autism for their input on programs, services, and issues that affect them.

FY 2021 Financials

88%
of expenses went to
programs



Revenue: \$621k



Expenses: \$413k



Looking Ahead to 2022

1. We are looking forward to transitioning to safe, in-person events for our community including fun family events while continuing our popular online services.
2. Continue our focus on Safety and Disaster Preparedness with Law Enforcement training, new Sensory Kits for First Responders, and training for children/adults with Autism and family members.
3. Carry on with our work to find systemic answers for meaningful employment and day services and address DEI issues in our community.
4. As we continue to grow we will build our infrastructure and capacity to ensure the Autism Society Inland Empire will be there to meet the needs of our growing community.

**Your local Autism
connection.**



OUR PARTNERS IN 2021

We could not have done it without you!



AIDAN'S ARMY



Moreno Valley





We are incredibly grateful for our communities support as we provide life-changing services for children and adults with Autism living in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Thank you!



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