



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT

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# Message from the Director

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support.

Autism touches the lives of many, and in California alone, it now affects 1 in 26 children. Within the Inland Empire, over 20,000 individuals and more than 100,000 family members navigate the challenges of Autism daily.

As we celebrate the 36th anniversary of the Autism Society Inland Empire, we reflect on our impact over three decades. Our strategic initiatives have transformed local and state services, creating a more supportive environment for those with Autism. Our dedicated team focuses on four critical areas: social support, safety, work opportunities, and overall well-being.

Every day, we strive to make meaningful changes in the lives of families residing in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Our commitment extends beyond mere existence; we work tirelessly to ensure that everyone in our community feels safe, respected, and valued. Our efforts aim to provide quality-of-life enhancements and opportunities for a brighter future.

Together, we are changing the paradigm of how individuals with Autism thrive throughout their lives. We remain fiercely committed to a better, more inclusive, and more equitable world. Thank you for being an essential part of this transformative journey. Your generosity makes a difference—one step at a time.

With heartfelt appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Burt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Beth Burt**  
Executive Director



# WE'RE ON A MISSION

We create connections, empowering everyone in our local Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.



# 32,000 People Served in 2023

## Education

Workshops,  
Conferences &  
Webinars

## Advocacy

Ensuring  
policymakers hear  
the concerns of our  
local community

## Programs & Events

Virtual & in-person  
programs geared to  
children, teen, and  
adults; fun family  
events

Person centered services,  
connecting &  
empowering individuals  
& families in our local  
Autism community to live  
more fully.

## Special Initiatives

Employment, Law  
Enforcement,  
Safety, & Leadership  
Classes

## Resources & Referrals

Assisting in  
navigating  
different agencies  
and services.

## Support

Support groups for  
children, teen,  
adults and family  
members





*"I love you, Autism Society. Thank you for being the collective voice that understands when everyone else will not or cannot".*

*- TeDreanna, Coachella Valley*

*"Every program I've been a part of has been helpful. I'm so thankful for the community you all have created to make these kiddos feel a part of something, as well as for providing the parents and guardians with support".*

*- Shanaun, Riverside area*

# FY23 FINANCIALS

**+ 42%**

Increase in revenue in 2023 from 2022.

**+ \$91k**

Change in Net Assets

**\$250k**

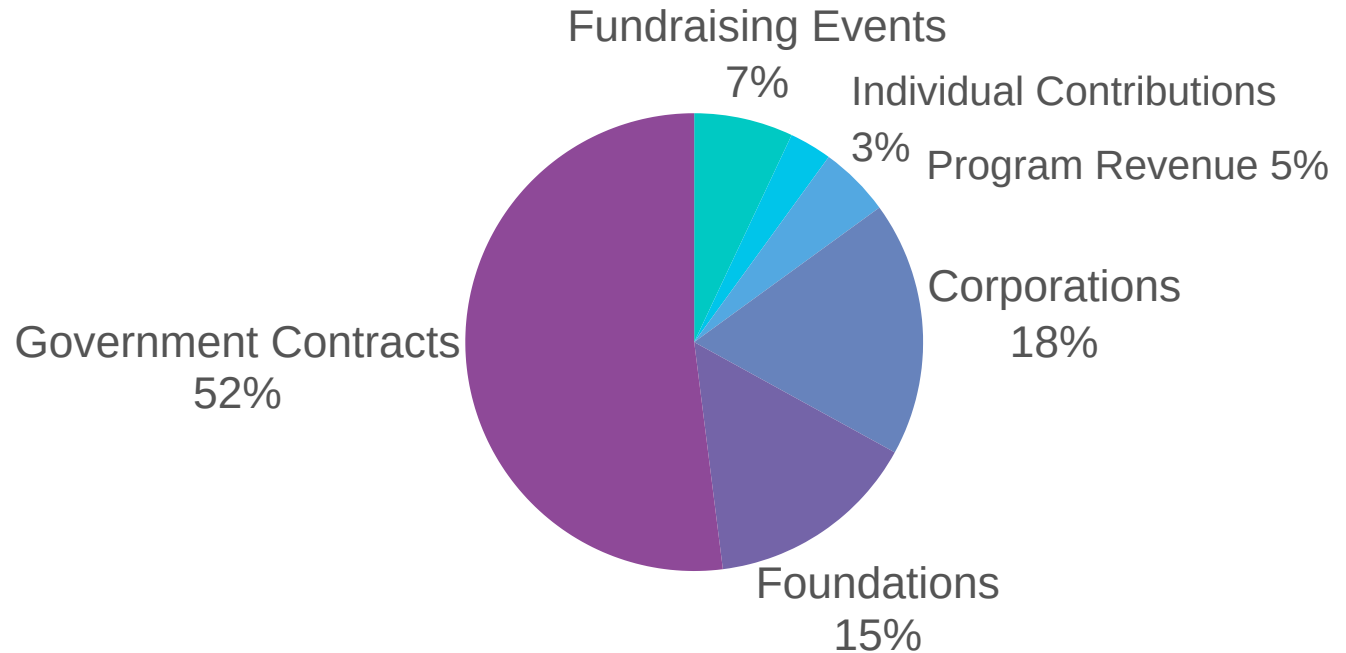
Held in reserves

**89%**

of expenses went to programs

**Over 476 people volunteered over 3,300 hours**

## Revenue: \$1.095M



## Expenses: \$1M



# Resource & Referrals

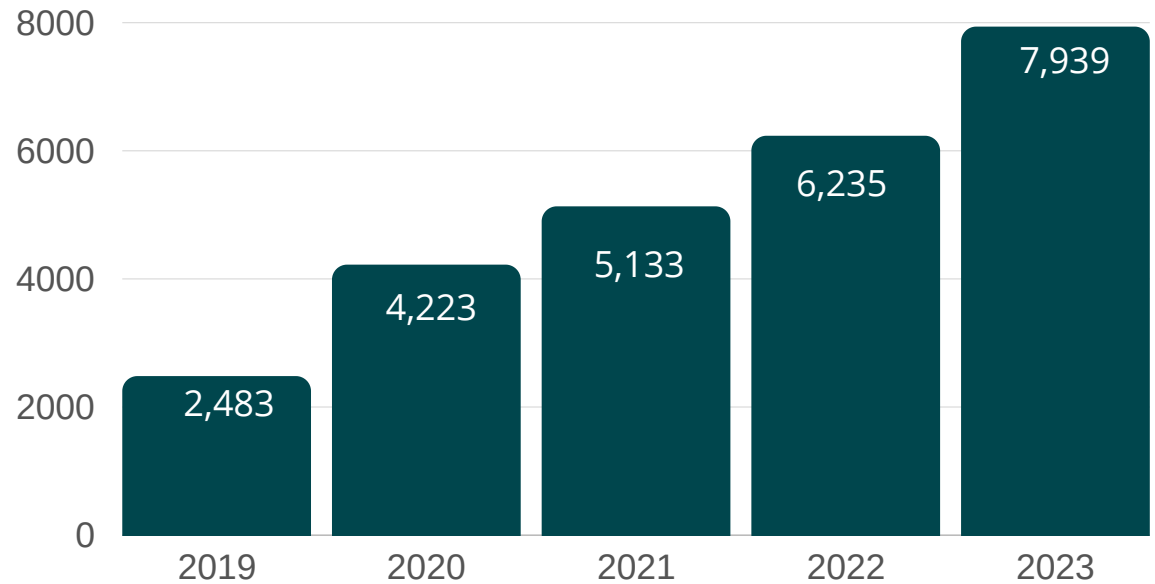
In 2023, our Resource Specialists answered 7,939 calls, emails, and social media requests. These are families new to Autism starting to navigate systems and are looking for help to families in crisis needing immediate support.

Our Resource Specialists were there and spent the time it took to resolve the issues - sometimes hours for one family.

**+27%**

Increase in calls since 2022

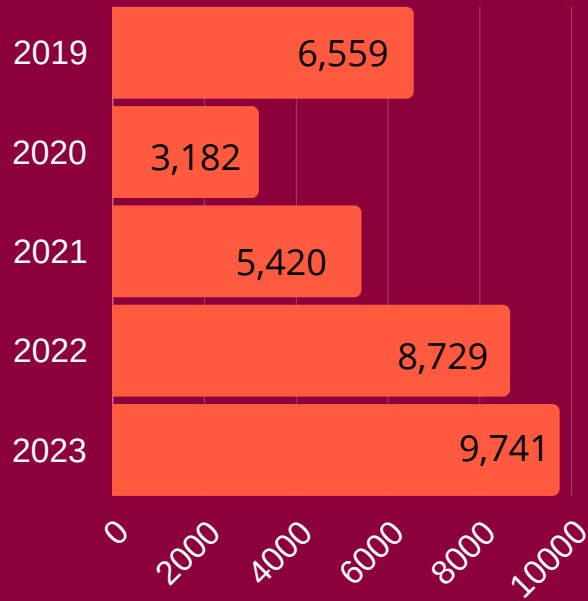
## Growth in Resource Calls



# Social Programs

2023 was another record year in attendance. Autism Society Inland Empire hosted over 200 virtual and in-person events. From Halloween parties, Holiday parties, bowling, movies, swimming, Jump Nights, Art classes, Meet-ups for teens and adults, Jump Nights, and more!

## Growth in Our Social Rec Programs





# Education & Outreach

**216**

First Responders trained

**7**

Toolkits created in 2023: College Toolkit, Social Recreation Services, Summer Fun, Swimming and Summer Camps.

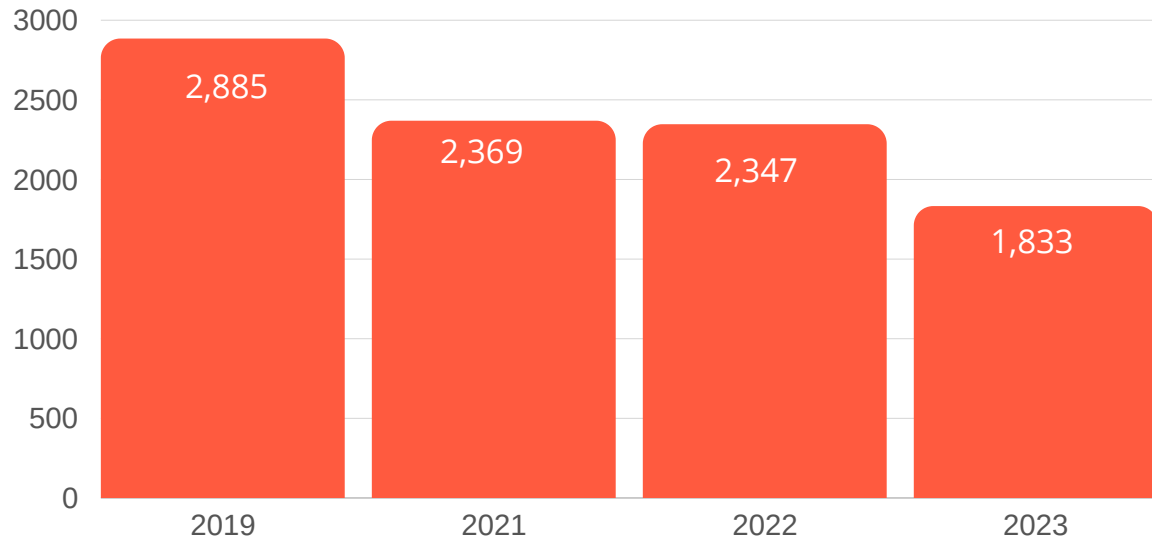
**9,303**

people attended an outreach event.



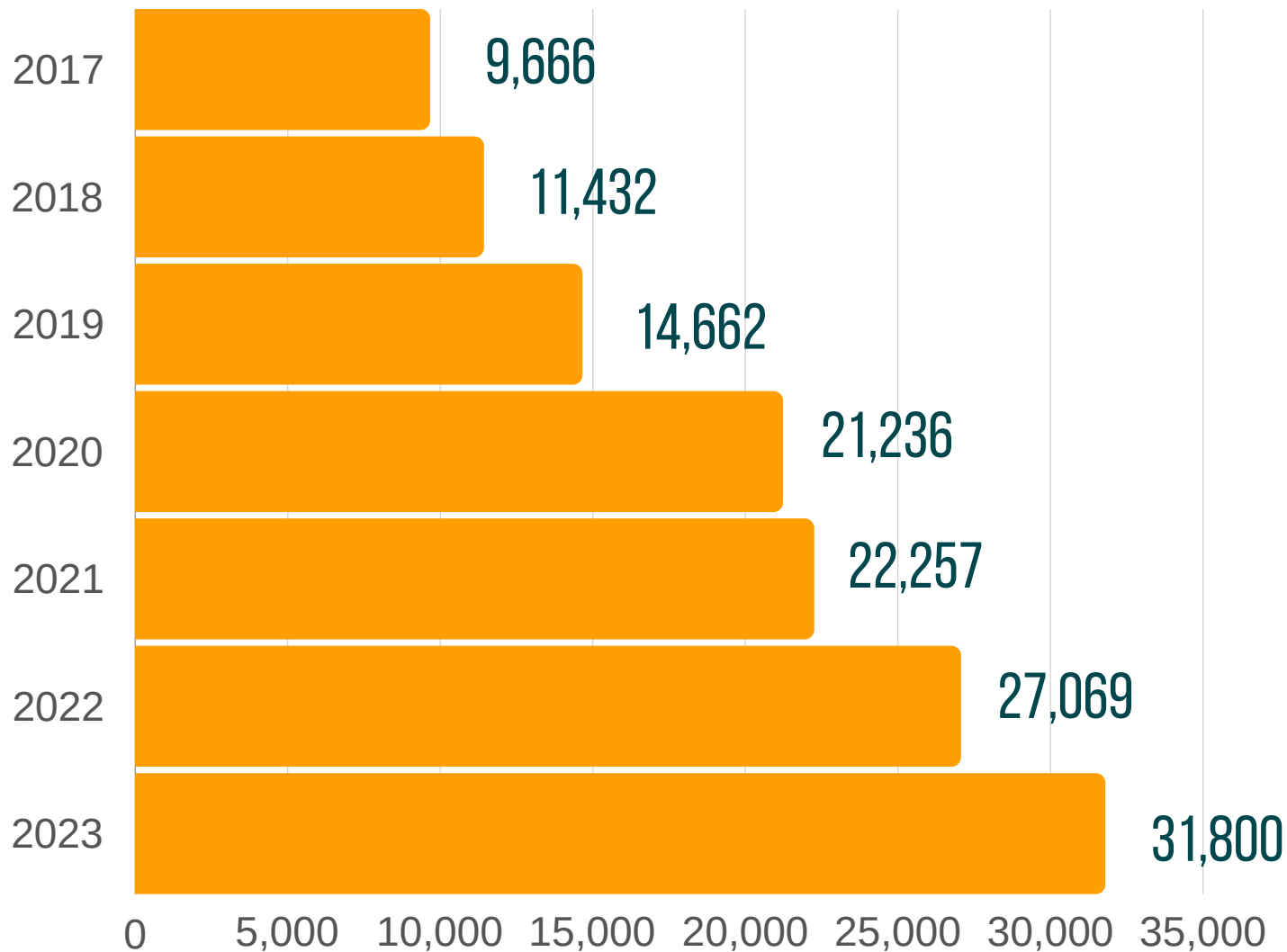
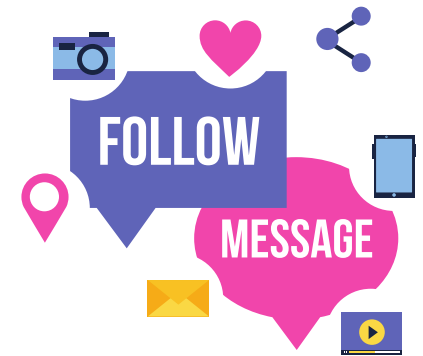
## # of People Who Attended Educational Presentation

Either in person or through our recorded webinars



# Reach Into the Community

## Autism Society Inland Empire Social Media Community



*includes Facebook page, Facebook group, Linked In, X, Instagram and email list*



# Our Initiatives

**At the core of the Autism Society's work is our goal to influence meaningful change in supporting the Autism community to ensure everyone is empowered in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.**

- Ending Disparities for People of Color
- Employment
- Inclusion in the Community
- Leadership Class
- Safety



# **Our Initiatives: Ending Disparities for People of Color**

**Across multiple systems, people of color and non-English-speaking families face different barriers to obtaining and accessing services.**

**The promotion of fairness necessitates the distribution of decision-making authority to those most impacted by inequalities.**

**Individuals from diverse backgrounds who are clients of Regional Centers bring to the table a wealth of knowledge and understanding rooted in their personal experiences and the challenges faced by their communities. Their involvement goes beyond just providing input; it's about acknowledging them as equal partners in identifying core issues and collaboratively crafting solutions from the ground up.**

**These initiatives are centered around creating platforms and opportunities for these individuals to be integral to the solution. It's about changing the narrative, shifting the balance of power, and truly embodying the principles of equity and inclusion.**

## **Early Start Services**

Funded by the California Department of Development Services, this two-year grant focuses on increasing awareness and access to Early Start services for Spanish-speaking, foster, and Native American Communities. This project focuses on outreach campaigns designed with stakeholder input and ideas from marginalized communities to increase Early Start services and Early Intervention. Additionally, this project increases the knowledge of medical professionals, preschool/childcare facilities, and families/caregivers for appropriate diagnoses, treatment, and resources.

## **CLASE Community of Practice**

The Autism Society Inland Empire developed and facilitates the Colaboración, Liderazgo, Abogacía, Servicio y Educación (CLASE) Community of Practice. Funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), CLASE is a Community of Practice for leaders of groups and non-profit organizations that serve Hispanic and Spanish-speaking individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) here in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

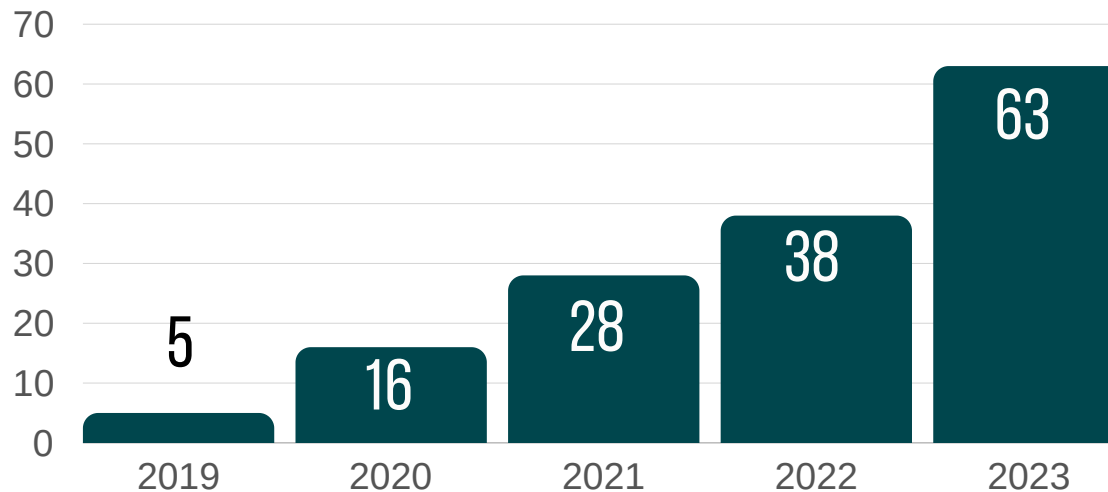


## Our Initiatives: Remote Employment and Day Services

The Autism Society Inland Empire offers paid and unpaid opportunities for adults with Autism and developmental disabilities to explore different types of employment.

We have a speaker's bureau for public speaking opportunities, volunteer opportunities at our significant events, our Marketplace - free space at our Walks and Holiday parties for those interested in self-employment, and the new Remote Employment Program, which we have partnered with Daivergent to explore over then different careers in the field of remote employment.

### # job exploration opportunities for adults on the spectrum





# Our Initiatives: Inclusion in the Community

The California legislatures restored funding for Social Recreation and camping services for Regional Center clients in 2022. These services can be critical for social development, mental health, physical health, and community inclusion.

To foster a greater understanding of the needs of our community to have access to parks and recreation and other social programs, the Autism Society Inland Empire created training to teach about how to include individuals with Autism in social programs. Thanks to a grant from Inland Regional Center, the Autism Society Inland Empire created and trained a total of 279 participants who received Inclusion training.

Twelve training sessions were held throughout San Bernardino and Riverside County, representing 71 different social recreation programs. Many after-school programs offer free or low-cost after-school programs and options for lower socioeconomic families. We trained underserved communities such as Coachella, Mecca, Thousand Palms, North Shore, Colton, Perris, Lake Elsinore, Hemet, San Jacinto, and Menifee. Training was available in English and Spanish; however, all trainings were done in English. What cultural proficiency was and how to include families who speak a different language were included in each training.



**“I think the course was very helpful because I took a lot of key information to help kids out in different ways when it comes to the disabilities they have. You want to make accommodations to some students, however treat them the same when it comes with expectations of the classroom.”**

**- Michael Henkis**

**“An incredible variety of tools to incorporate in the classroom setting that will make me a better educator. I would like to incorporate visual aid components that were mentioned in the presentation! Very informing training! I would recommend this introductory course to every education program.”**

**- Justin Verducco**



# Our Initiatives: Learning to Live Your Best Life Classes



This project, spearheaded by a BIPOC leader with Autism, was designed to create and implement a new self-advocacy and leadership curriculum for peers. The program, aptly named “Learning to Live Your Best Life,” saw the participation of 13 clients from the Inland Regional Center.

The curriculum offered a blend of online, in-person, and mentorship training, equipping participants with essential advocacy and leadership skills. This comprehensive approach aimed to enhance their capacity to advocate for themselves and others, fostering lasting and meaningful change. Participants not only acquired new skills but also worked on personal goals, culminating in the selection of several group projects:

1. **Educating Ontario Airport Staff:** The group addressed challenges faced by travelers with Autism and IDD, such as wheelchair damage and overwhelming sensory input. This enlightening presentation was delivered to 60 airport staff members on January 24, 2024.
2. **Creating a Video for the Native American Community:** Two group members undertook this initiative and are currently in the editing phase.
3. **Organizing a Conference for People with IDD:** The group successfully organized “Level Up” on December 9, 2023. The event, planned entirely by the group, included the selection of speakers, the agenda, and the food. Of all the speakers, all but one were individuals with IDD. The keynote speaker was Dani Bowman, known from “Love on the Spectrum.”



This project exemplifies the power of self-advocacy and the potential for individuals with IDD to lead and inspire change.



## Our Initiatives: Law Enforcement & Safety Training

In 2020, the Autism Society Inland Empire received a grant from the California Commission on Police Officer and Standards Training to develop a 4-hour curriculum on De-escalation and Communication for Individuals with Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Since 2021, we have trained over 650 First Responders, including police officers, deputies, school resource officers, EMTs, and firefighters throughout Southern California. Over 750 Sensory kits have been distributed.

In 2024, we are expanding these efforts by not only continuing to train law enforcement but also expanding in creating a new curriculum for Emergency Room personnel. This new curriculum will be done with stakeholder input, professionals, and law enforcement and will be planned in the second half of 2024.



In October 2023, the Autism Society Inland Empire said a sudden goodbye to our trainer and co-creator of the Law Enforcement training, Brian Herritt. Known nationally as the “Autism Cop,” Brian left an indelible mark on law enforcement and First Responders across the United States. His expertise, sense of humor, personal experiences, and gift for storytelling ability left a lasting impression on the thousands he trained throughout his illustrious career.

For over 20 years, Brian served his local Inland Empire Autism community. He dedicated his time and skills to training families and professionals on safety measures and effective communication with Law Enforcement. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to families in crisis, generously volunteering his time.

Words cannot express how deeply he will be missed. May his legacy continue to inspire and guide us in our journey forward.



# OUR PARTNERS IN 2023

We could not have done it without you!





**Thank YOU for making  
our community a  
better place!**