

# Annual Report | 2019

Investing In the Minnesota Autism Community



**ausm**

autism society of minnesota

Minnesota's First Autism Resource®



## A Note from Ellie

### 2019 came and went in a blink.

We at AuSM spent another year amongst advocates, colleagues, families, and friends. You have shared so much with us—reasons to celebrate as well as reasons to buckle down and get to work!

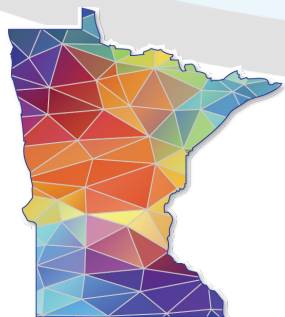
Because of what you have shared, we have felt enlightened. We have felt challenged. We have felt inspired.

This year, like many before it, we have tried to listen, to reflect, to connect meaningfully, and to stand out in the crowd.

But this year, more than ever before, we at AuSM have pushed ourselves to grow so that we can be the sustainable and dependable cornerstone for the community we cherish. We have worked hard behind the scenes and in front of the curtain so that we will forever be in a position to evolve geographically, culturally, and programmatically.

In our 2019 annual report, I invite you to learn about AuSM's expansion in counseling services; our increased efficacy in legislative advocacy; our new electronic training opportunities; our growing capacity for multicultural outreach; and our development of lasting, visible community partners. All of these efforts (and many others!) are embodiments of our mission and strategy. We choose to invest in our infrastructure so that we can continue to invest in YOU.

Thank you for another year of your support and engagement. They say hindsight is 2020, but we look forward to the next year with foresight and excitement for the growth we can achieve together.



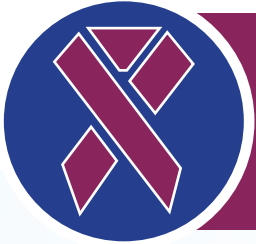
*The mission of the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) is to enhance the lives of individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder.*

AuSM serves Minnesotans, throughout their lives, with a fundamental commitment to *advocacy, education, support, collaboration, and community building.*

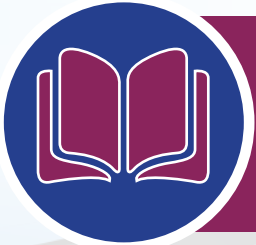


Ellie Wilson, AuSM Executive Director

## AuSM Goals with Purpose



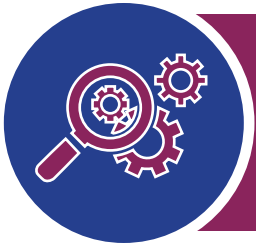
**ADVOCATE** at the local, state, and federal level for legislation and policies that lead to improved services, increased opportunities, and greater self-determination for people with autism.



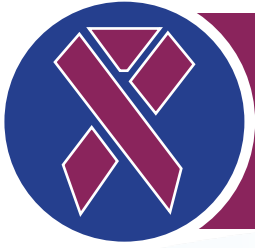
**EDUCATE** and inform individuals, families, professionals, and the broader community about autism and effective strategies for support and inclusion through events, classes, workshops, and information and resources.



**SUPPORT** individuals and families through quality programs, counseling services, and resource information that improve quality of life.



**OPTIMIZE** organizational capacity for the mission, including financial resources, human resources, technology, partnerships, and volunteerism that leverage and grow AuSM's capabilities.



**ADVOCATE** at the local, state, and federal level for legislation and policies that lead to improved services, increased opportunities, and greater self-determination for people with autism.

## Affecting change for positive outcomes



The AuSM Advocacy Committee (AAC) jumped into action in 2019, working with community organizations to pass a 12 percent TEFRA reduction, testified at important special education hearings to prevent passage of harmful legislation, spoke during an Attorney General work group on lethal use of police force, educated local legislators about autism, and lobbied in Washington,

D.C. for the CARES Act, which successfully passed into law. Committee members also met with the offices of Amy Klobuchar, Angie Craig, Dean Phillips, Illan Omar, Tom Emmer, and Pete Stauber.



## Autism community voices being heard



**Jillian Nelson**

AuSM expanded its advocacy impact through a new position, Community Resource and Policy Advocate. Jillian Nelson, an autistic advocate, leads the AAC and represents AuSM on committees while ensuring that autism community voices are heard.

AuSM served on committees and panels including: the University of Minnesota

LEND program; Senate Autism Council; Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities; Minnesota State Council on Disability; Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities; the Coalition for Children; EIDBI Advisory Council; and the State Rehabilitation Council.



# Serving Our Community



## By autistic adults, for autistic adults

On Sept. 21, more than 120 autistics came together for the second annual AuSM Self-Advocacy Summit. Held at Union Depot in St. Paul, the event was by autistic adults, for autistic adults. The Summit included a keynote speaker, breakout sessions, exhibitors, and the AuSM Bookstore. One hundred percent of the sessions included autistic speakers who shared personal experiences. The Summit also featured a quiet room, the opportunity to submit written questions, and special interest-focused socializing opportunities.

## Multicultural grant increases outreach

Fueled by a two-year Minnesota Department of Human Services Innovations Grant, AuSM is partnering with the Somali American Parent Association (SAPA) and the Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN) to support the metro area's multicultural population with autism and similar disabilities. The partnership will provide education about navigation of quality, culturally appropriate services and includes facilitated participation in inclusive community opportunities.



Ashwak Hassan

A project lead for grant fulfillment, AuSM hired Ashwak Hassan, MA, LMFT, in the new role of Multicultural Outreach Coordinator. In 2019, the project included training and community inclusion of nearly 100 families from the Somali and Oromo communities, with hopes for further cultural expansion in 2020.

"We need to simplify how families affected by autism access services," Hassan said. "This is a complex system; if we can help with navigation, we also will help build community and supports."





**EDUCATE** and inform individuals, families, professionals and the broader community about autism and effective strategies for support and inclusion through events, classes, workshops, and information and resources.

## Education supports access and inclusion

AuSM educated thousands in our community through social skills classes, the state autism conference, workshops, the Life with Autism series, trainings, and Autism Direct Support Certification classes.



To make information more widely available, AuSM introduced live-stream Internet broadcast availability of a limited number of AuSM Skillshops in the 2019-2020 AuSM Skillshop season.

AuSM's education team conducted specially tailored autism trainings throughout Minnesota at venues including, but not limited to, the following:

- Guthrie Theater
- Como Park Zoo & Conservatory
- Minnesota Orchestra
- Hennepin County Medical Center
- Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
- Office of the Minnesota Fire Marshall
- Minneapolis Institute of Art
- Minnesota Judiciary
- Bakken Museum
- North Hennepin, Century, and Condordia Colleges

## AuSM statewide

AuSM also provided education in 23 Minnesota counties through events including the ASD and Transitioning to Adulthood Workshop in Austin; the ASD Symposium for educators; and emergency preparedness, medical professional, and caregiver trainings in Thief River Falls, Virginia, Park

6 Rapids, Pine River, and more.

155+

Autism trainings for businesses and organizations throughout Minnesota.



150+

AuSM Skillshop participants at five community partner locations in the Twin Cities.



## MN Wild Offers Sensory Kits and Receives AuSM Autism Training

In October, the Minnesota Wild and Xcel Energy Center, in partnership with AuSM, announced the availability of complimentary sensory kits for fans with sensory needs. Additionally, the Wild, along with Xcel Energy Center and the Saint Paul Arena Company, underwent staff training from AuSM to better serve individuals with sensory needs.



"We are grateful to partner with AuSM to be able to provide our fans with special sensory needs a first-class game experience," said Wayne Petersen, Minnesota Wild Director of Community Relations and Hockey Partnerships. "Hockey is for everyone and we are proud to continue to create a greater State of Hockey."



**SUPPORT** individuals and families through quality programs, counseling services, and resource information that improve quality of life.

## AuSM is Minnesota's First Autism Resource®

AuSM's Information and Resources team answered thousands of e-mails, calls, and in-person questions at dozens of resource fairs throughout Minnesota.

## Counseling and Consulting Services expands



**James Rechs**

AuSM's therapists served more than 500 clients in 2019. Staff also facilitated five free support groups to meet the needs of more than 100 participants each month.

To increase reach and to serve the southeastern portion of Minnesota, the ACCS team added James Rechs, LICSW, a therapist who will provide individual therapy for adults and teens as well as psychoeducation and support for parents, families, and caregivers in Rochester.

**4,500+**

AuSM Counseling  
and Consulting  
Services appointments.



**1,500+**

Information  
and Resources  
responses to  
inquiries.



**461**

AuSM Summer Camp  
participants and staff.



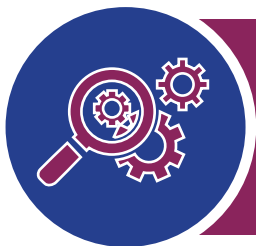
## AuSM Summer Camps

AuSM Summer Camps accommodate the needs of individuals with ASD, ages 6+ and served 326 participants in 2019. Camps are an integral summer experience for participants. Due to increased staffing, Camp Discovery was able to accommodate 12 additional campers.

The 2019 AuSM Summer Camp season was the final for two of our seasoned Camp Hand in Hand directors, Wendy McNeil and Todd Schwartzberg, MEd, MT-BC. AuSM celebrates their service and the connections they made during their collective 38 years with Camp Hand in Hand. Their contributions have shaped Hand in Hand to be the amazing place that it is today, with campers and staff united on the purposeful celebration that camp creates.

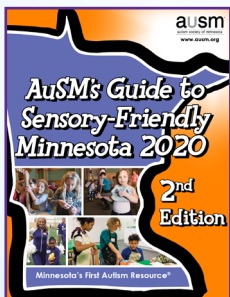






**OPTIMIZE** organizational capacity for the mission, including financial resources, human resources, technology, partnerships, and volunteerism that leverage and grow AuSM's capabilities.

## Community partners welcome all



AuSM Premier Partners are select businesses and organizations that align with AuSM's mission in support of the Minnesota autism community. AuSM also collaborates with organizations that make possible dozens of community-based social skills classes, including Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Minnesota Zoo, the Three Rivers Park District, and the Lake Superior Zoo. Working with these partners, AuSM created the second

edition of *AuSM's Guide to Sensory-Friendly Minnesota*, a resource that explains why it's important to make spaces inclusive and contains listings of sensory-friendly offerings throughout the calendar year.

## State autism conference

The 24th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference, held for the first time at the Minneapolis Marriott Southwest, featured exhibitors, expert-led education sessions, keynote speakers, and the AuSM Bookstore. In addition to the new venue, the 2019 conference featured a first-time collaboration with Minnesota LEND, who hosted a track of breakout sessions geared toward MN LEND Fellows, students, and community members who spend a year studying interdisciplinary approaches to supporting individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.

## AuSM Premier Partners

Allegra Downtown St. Paul since 2013

Minnesota Independence College & Community since 2013

Autism Advocacy & Law Center, LLC since 2014

St. David's Center for Child & Family Development since 2014

Anime Twin Cities since 2016

Accra since 2018





# Corporations Support Mission

## Lube-Tech's giving culture

Lube-Tech cares about their employees, customers, and the communities they live in; giving back to the community is woven into the fabric of who they are. Lube-Tech is committed to giving to causes that inspire servant leadership, are vital to the health and well-being of our communities, connect with their employees' passions and interests, and align with their purpose of making tomorrow a little bit better than today.

In support of AuSM, Lube-Tech holds Ride for Hope, an annual July motorcycle rally that has raised more than \$80,000 in support of programs and services for the local autism community. Lube-Tech also recognizes AuSM as a top charity in their recently implemented Employee Giving Program. Thousands have been donated to AuSM since this program's inception.

## Children's Minnesota values care and education

Children's Minnesota sees kids exhibit amazing qualities like strength, determination, and resilience, which inspire them to do everything they can to improve pediatric health care. In this drive for superior care, Children's Hospitals & Clinics of Minnesota and Children's Hospital Association reached out to AuSM five years ago, and from there an amazing partnership has grown.

In addition to supplying sensory accommodation kits, AuSM trains nurses, doctors, and support staff who seek to improve clinical care of children with autism and similar disabilities by learning strategies to work better with families and provide strategies for communication, socialization, executive function, and sensory support. Children's also has collaborated with AuSM for events and activities including Steps for Autism, Super Fest, and AuSM Camps.

“Autism has touched the lives of people we love. We support the Autism Society of Minnesota because they inspire more good days for those directly impacted by autism through customized programs, services, and education.”

Chris and Marna Bame, Lube-Tech

900+

AuSM members include individuals with autism, families, professionals, and organizations.

200+

Volunteers supported our community and put AuSM's mission into action in 2019.



# Resources Enhance Reach

## Technology advances mission

AuSM is working to leverage technology to better direct communications and to increase accessibility and inclusion for the Minnesota autism community. Our multi-year technology plan, guided by our strategic plan, will allow us to provide disability-focused programming directly into homes, workplaces, and schools throughout Minnesota, and specifically in areas outside of the Twin Cities metro region, where therapeutic, educational, and recreational programming for people with disabilities is scarce. Technology upgrades include web-based live-stream educational opportunities, a new AuSM database and programs registration system, and a refreshed website packed with easier-to-navigate information and resources.

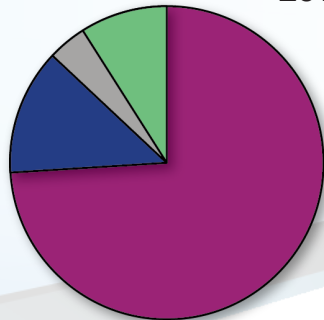




# 2019 Financials

AuSM is dedicated to transparency, accountability, and financial health. 100% of donations to AuSM support our local autism community. AuSM expenses breakdown: 74% programs and services; 13% donations and fundraising; 4% property/related expense; and 9% administrative.

## 2019 Expenses

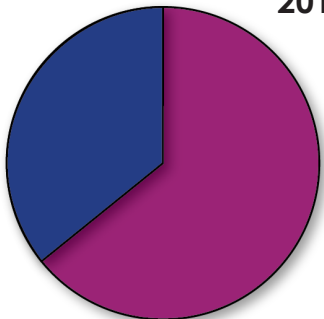


- Programs and Services  
74%
- Donations and Fundraising  
13%
- Property Related Expenses  
4%
- Administrative  
9%

<b>74% Programs and Services</b>	<b>\$1,584,396.42</b>
<b>13% Donations and Fundraising</b>	<b>\$ 270,862.00</b>
<b>4% Property/Related Expense</b>	<b>\$ 87,378.30</b>
<b>9% Administrative</b>	<b>\$ 186,415.58</b>

**Total \$2,129,052.30**

## 2019 Income



- Programs and Services  
65%
- Donations and Fundraising  
35%

<b>65% Programs and Services</b>	<b>\$ 1,409,134.00</b>
<b>35% Donations and Fundraising</b>	<b>\$ 745,517.00</b>

**Total \$2,154,651.00**



## 2019 AuSM Board of Directors

Paul D'Arco, President

Brooks Donald

Keith Guggenberger,  
Vice President

Noah Gerding

Kyle Bloch, Treasurer

Deeqa Hussein

Jenna Matteson Laabs,  
Secretary

Katie Knutson

Jean Bender

Michelle LaMar

Tom Cox

Shannan Paul

Laura Dettloff

Anantha V R Santhanam

John Skillings

Joe Timmons





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