



For nearly 25 years, the Howard County Autism Society has been supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families. Today, with hundreds of individuals, families, and professionals comprising our membership and with the support of local businesses, government agencies, and service providers, we are realizing our vision to serve as a knowledgeable and trusted resource to families and the community.

*Theresa Ballinger, President, HCAS Board of Directors*

### New and Ongoing Partnerships and Initiatives in 2016

- Organized 3rd Annual Transition Symposium, providing a full day of presenters and workshops covering a wide variety of Transition topics, including a self-advocate track.
- Hosted annual special needs camp fair, providing information on summer camp opportunities.
- Held monthly meetings of the various support groups, including the Asperger's group, transition and adulthood group, and general HCAS support group. These meetings included guest speakers on a variety of topics of interest to the community.
- Continued execution of the Family Advocacy and Parent Education (FAPE) Grant, offering assistance to those with questions and issues surrounding the school system.
- Collaborated with Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and RISE for Autism to hold the FAPE conference.
- Maintained our Special Education News Center with information and articles pertinent to special education advocacy and support.



*Patrick and Nicholas Boxall spoke at the annual county legislative breakfast on Dec. 6, a partnership with The Arc of Howard County, HCAS, and Service Coordination, Inc. Patrick advocated for adding additional slots to the Maryland Autism Waiver. It was Nicholas's birthday. Ultimately, 100 spots were added for FY2018.*

- Transitioned to the HCAS monthly newsletter, *Perspectives*, from print to an electronic format.
- Hosted Brown Bag Series workshops in partnership with Pathfinders for Autism.
- Provided state-mandated autism training to new recruit classes of the Howard County Police Department.
- Sponsored a BE SAFE training workshop attended by Howard County Police recruits and self-advocates.

## New and Ongoing Partnerships Continued

- ➔ Met with HCPSS Department of Special Education and Student Services leadership to continue work on improving the services and opportunities for those on the spectrum.
- ➔ Published the Middle School Workgroup recommendations, a two-plus-year effort focused on improving the educational experience of those in middle school.
- ➔ Implemented The Lions' Den; a "Best Buddies" like program at Murray Hill Middle School. The program can be replicated at other HCPSS middle schools.



HCAS families socialized with the Howard County Police Department's Academy Class 40 recruits during the annual winter pool party at Lifetime Fitness.

- ➔ Participated on the HCPSS Diversity and Inclusion Committee, providing a set of recommendations to expand programs promoting positive behavior and respect.
- ➔ Jointly organized the 2016 Board of Education Primary Election Candidates Forum on special education with SECAC and The Arc of Howard County.

## Social Events Held in 2016

- 11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala
- 10th Annual One Step Closer Autism Walk and 5K Run
- Trip to Kalahari Resort
- Restaurant fundraising night at The Grille in Maple Lawn
- Dad's Night Out events
- Bi-weekly yoga classes for 10-18 year-olds on the spectrum
- Fitness First events
- Semi-annual pool parties
- Sensory-friendly movie events
- Sensory-friendly Santa and Easter Bunny events
- Autism Awareness Month activities, including a trip to Skyzone in Columbia

- ➔ Continued our work with the Transition Outreach Partnership—in collaboration with HCPSS, Howard County Recreation and Parks, and Howard County Department of Citizens Services—to increase outreach, programming, and support for children transitioning out of the school system in Howard County.

- ➔ Recognized by the Howard County Commission on Disability Issues. County Executive, Allan Kittleman, presented HCAS with its Service Award.



Families and friends braved the rain to support loved ones with autism at the 10th Annual One Step Closer Autism Walk and 5K Run.



Attendees at the 11th Annual Pieces of the Puzzle Gala embraced the evening's totally rad '80s theme.

- ➔ Through the work of our Housing Subcommittee, we conducted a feasibility study for a potential housing solution for those on the spectrum in Howard County, culminating in a Discovery Workshop, which was attended by state and local authorities as well as developers and financiers in the industry.

# Thank You to Our 2016 Donors

## \$5,000+

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 Howard County  
 Dart Group II Foundation  
 Howard County (MD) Government  
 The John P. Hussman Foundation  
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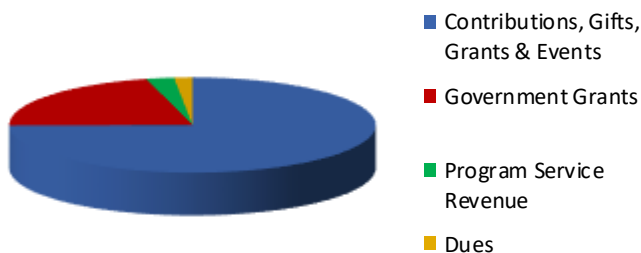
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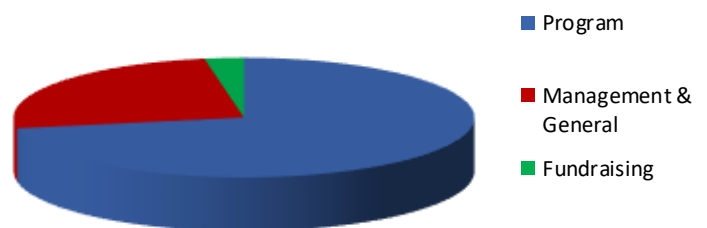
The Howard County Autism Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax-deductible under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Howard County Autism Society is an affiliate of the Autism Society of America. Our Federal tax identification number is 52-1857721.

# 2016 Financials

**Income: \$204,153**



**Expenses: \$191,745**



The Howard County Autism Society typically operates on a balanced budget and relies on the generosity of the community to support its programs and services. The net revenue in 2016, due primarily to lower than budgeted expenses, allowed us to achieve our financial stability goal of maintaining one year of operating funds available at all times.

## Summary of Programs and Services

- Monthly support group meetings for families
- Social outings for individuals and families that help prevent isolation
- Autism trainings for families, caregivers, businesses, government agencies, first responders, schools, and others
- Educational workshops for families and individuals with autism
- Sensory-friendly events
- 9-1-1- Flagging System in partnership with first responders
- Advocacy both locally and nationally
- Free special education advocacy and familial support for students with ASD
- Building awareness and acceptance of individuals with autism in our community



*HCAS was recognized by the Howard County Commission on Disability Issues for our commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities to live self-directed, meaningful lives as full participants in their communities.*

### About the Howard County Autism Society

The Howard County Autism Society serves individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), their families, and their communities by providing information, support, and advocacy; by promoting awareness of autism that values the dignity and uniqueness of each individual; and by working to improve the quality of and access to services and to educational opportunities. We believe that there is a place for every person with ASD in our world, a place of value and a place of worth. Much of our work is directed at raising awareness and educating the public about the complexities of ASD. Once people better understand ASD, they are better able to welcome and support people living with autism into our community.

### 2017 Howard County Autism Society Board of Directors

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