

2019 Annual Report

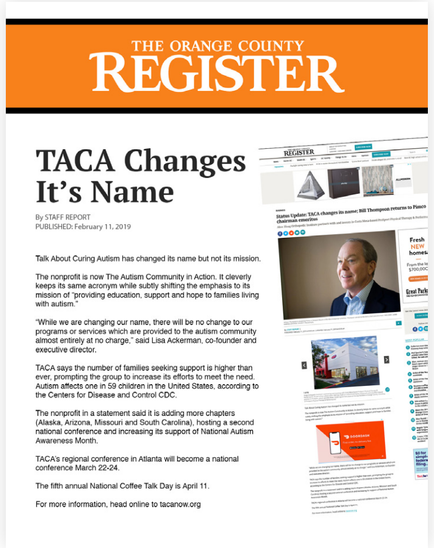
TACA
THE AUTISM COMMUNITY in ACTION



"TACA is everything I wanted and thought I was missing in the early days of my son's diagnosis! I know that finding this community and these resources, so readily and enthusiastically available is going to change lives, accelerate healing, and help stressed out parents who feel so alone and overwhelmed! Could not love TACA more!"

-TACA Parent

dear friends



THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

TACA Changes It's Name

By STAFF REPORT
PUBLISHED: February 11, 2019

Talk About Curing Autism has changed its name but not its mission.

The nonprofit is now The Autism Community in Action. It cleverly keeps its same acronym while subtly shifting the emphasis to its mission of "providing education, support and hope to families living with autism."

"While we are changing our name, there will be no change to our programs or services which are provided to the autism community almost entirely at no charge," said Lisa Ackerman, co-founder and executive director.

TACA says the number of families seeking support is higher than ever, prompting the group to increase its efforts to meet the need. Autism affects one in 59 children in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease and Control CDC.

The nonprofit in a statement said it is adding more chapters (Alaska, Arizona, Missouri and South Carolina), hosting a second national conference and increasing its support of National Autism Awareness Month.

TACA's regional conference in Atlanta will become a national conference March 22-24.

The fifth annual National Coffee Talk Day is April 11.

For more information, head online to tacanow.org

My favorite part of my job is sharing with you the great work our TACA team is doing as they push forward to help families living with autism. In 2019 we experienced another year where our records in supporting families were SHATTERED! We reached an all-time high in the number of people we served. We have over 72,000 constituents in our database and in addition we have over 340,000 social media followers.

We've surpassed our 2018 statistics in:

- responding to calls/emails;
- distributing TACA's Autism Journey Guides;
- awarding family scholarships;
- hosting family events and chapter meetings;
- conducting outreach events;
- and increasing the number of new families we reach every month. We have jumped from adding on average 474 people to over 600 every month to TACA.

TACA's priority is to support and bring hope to families living with autism. In a short three years, we have strengthened our commitment to families by increasing our budget by 41% to expand and fortify our programs. In 2019 alone, we grew by 19%! We are grateful for supporters like you and your dedication to invest in TACA to ensure we maintain these levels of growth.

What makes TACA different is the incredible number of volunteers that give their time and talents to help other families. The majority of our volunteers are families affected by autism. Nothing describes them better than this quote "I love when people that have been through hell walk out of the flames carrying buckets of water for those still consumed by fire." They are heroes and we are truly grateful that they continue to give so selflessly. If we had to pay every volunteer for their service hours, it would cost TACA close to $400,000 per year. This donation is not reflected in our financials and it deserves to be highlighted and celebrated.

In addition, we kicked off the year with a new name – The Autism Community in Action. A name that better represents who we are – an organization deeply committed to helping families overcome challenges and take action for their children with autism.

There is so much gratitude for our great team and the incredible help of our supporters and volunteers. Our community stands with families living with autism and I want to thank each and every one of them for their support.



Lisa Ackerman
TACA Executive Director & Co-founder,
Mom to Jeff & Lauren, Grandma to Will
and Wife to Glen

mission

TACA provides education, support and hope to families living with autism.

vision

For every individual diagnosed with autism to lead an independent life.

values

A
Authentic
We are honest, transparent and hold ourselves to the highest level of integrity.

C
Caring
We care deeply about families living with autism.

T
Tough
We help families overcome challenges and take action.

I
Informed
We believe knowledge is power and value families' abilities to make informed decisions.

O
Optimistic
We believe the future is not set and tomorrow is going to be better than today.

N
Never
We will never give up!





what we provide

TACA has been providing services since 2000 and all of the programs and services are provided at little or no cost to families.



Programs and Support Services Offered:

- Autism Journey Guides
- Autism Youth Ambassador Program
- Educational Conferences and Events
- Family Events
- Hope and Help Facebook Group
- Parent Mentor Program
- Parent Resources
- Scholarship Programs
- Spanish Outreach
- Webinars
- Weekly Meetings and Coffee Talks



quick look

year established **2000**

executive director **lisa ackerman**

employees **19 paid staff**
(13 full-time, 6 part-time)

volunteer contributions **1,000 volunteers**

hope, help, and information **in 50 States**

www.tacanow.org

- theautismcommunityincaction
- @tacanow
- @tacafoundation
- The Autism Community in Action

2019 accomplishments

OVER **72,000** INBOXES

341,585 FOLLOWERS



IN 50 STATES WITH HOPE, HELP AND INFORMATION

EDUCATED OVER **2,100** AT CONFERENCES

AWARDED MORE THAN **$204,851** IN SCHOLARSHIPS

WE HAVE RESPONDED TO A TOTAL OF **53,946** SUPPORT CALLS & EMAILS

WE HAD **615** COFFEE TALKS, MEETINGS & WEBINARS EDUCATING **7,000**

OVER **779** MENTOR/MENTEE MATCHES

WE HAVE **AWESOME 1,000 VOLUNTEERS** WHO LOGGED-IN ALMOST **25,000** HOURS TO CONTINUE TO HELP PEOPLE AND DELIVER OUR MESSAGE

SUPPORTED NEARLY **30,000+ PEOPLE** AT FAMILY & OUTREACH EVENTS

DISTRUBUTED **3,891** JOURNEY GUIDES

MORE THAN **1.3 MILLION** WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

HOPE & HELP FACEBOOK GROUP SUPPORTS **OVER 10,000 MEMBERS**



board of directors

- Dan Carney
- Keith Banning
- Inna Kassatkina Jones
- Robby Saggu
- Elizabeth McCoy
- Lisa Ackerman
- Kim Yang-Uk
- Erich Kreidler
- Glen Ackerman

physician advisory

We are honored to have the following Board-Certified pediatricians and medical specialists serve as Physicians Advisory Board Members:

- Dr. David Berger
- Dr. Richard Frye
- Dr. Elizabeth Mumper
- Dr. Nancy O'Hara
- Dr. Dan Rossignol
- Dr. Cindy Schneider
- Dr. Robert Sears
- Dr. Anju Usman












key programs and services

TACA provides education, support and hope to the autism community

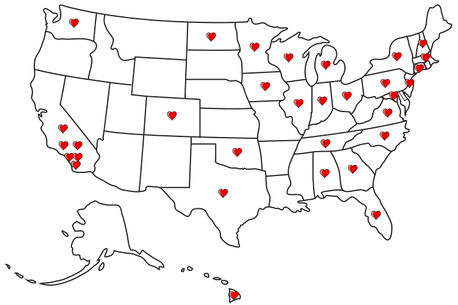
chapters

“Since the twins were born, the best day ever was the day I walked into my first TACA coffee talk! Can’t say enough good things about TACA.”

- TACA Parent







TACA has local Chapters across the United States, providing families affected by autism with education, resources and support. Chapters hold educational family events, meetings, and seminars. All chapters are run by coordinators who volunteer their time.

volunteer coordinators



Coordinator Spotlight

Johna Sommer, Illinois Chapter Coordinator understands the overwhelming impact that can come from receiving an autism diagnosis for their child. When she received the diagnosis for her daughter Brooke at three years old, Johna suffered from depression and wasn’t sure where to turn. She began to research resources to try and help her daughter, and that’s when she found TACA. Finally, an organization with people that would hold her hand and give her hope. After being part of the TACA community and experiencing what it takes as a family on the autism journey, she wanted to pay it forward. Although she knew it would be a big commitment, she decided to volunteer her time and become a Chapter Coordinator. Johna continues to dedicate herself to helping other parents and families. Her daughter Brooke is now 19 years old and although she is non-verbal, she is learning new ways to communicate, valuable employment skills and living a full happy life despite the struggles she sometimes experiences.



“TACA’s mission is about directly helping families TODAY and being on the ground running with them. As a chapter coordinator, it’s my responsibility to be in touch with what is needed in the community finding resources and bringing them to the parents and families.”

- Johna Sommer, Illinois Chapter Coordinator



mentor program

“The mentor program is such a great resource which TACA offers free to families. You can apply for a mentor at any stage or age of your child’s diagnosis because information is always changing and there is always something new to learn.”

- Malinda Dalton-Cook, TACA Mentor

Mentor Spotlight

Malinda has been a TACA Mentor for the San Diego Chapter for over 6 years. Today, her daughter who was diagnosed with autism at a very young age is 18 years old. Melinda was inspired to become a TACA Mentor because when she needed it most her TACA mentor was there for her and helping to guide her. She wanted to repay the kindness to others by becoming a mentor and help other families by sharing what she had experienced and learned from her mentor, as well as her own personal learning experiences with her daughter.



conference



“This conference is like no other! Not only are the top experts offering their wisdom & latest interventions but you are surrounded by loving parents who are there to offer guidance & support.”

- TACA Parent



TACA Autism Conferences give thousands of parents and professionals an opportunity to be educated in the latest research, treatment options, and therapy for individuals with autism. In 2019, we held our first three-day East Coast Conference in Atlanta, Georgia and added a new navigating adulthood track, devoted to the issues families are facing with their children who are reaching adulthood. Over 2,100 attendees were able to walk away with education and inspiration for their autism journey.



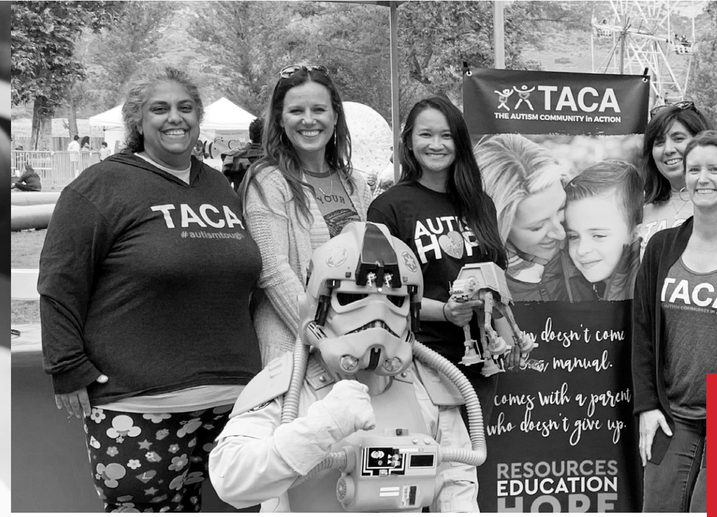


hope and help
(facebook group)

"Feeling blessed to be a part of this group. Learning so much from so many knowledgeable members."

- TACA Parent

Hope and Help for Autism is a private, moderated Facebook Group for TACA members to look to for support. TACA launched the Hope and Help Group in 2018 and now has nearly 11,000 members in all 50 states.



family events

TACA Family Events give families affected by autism a unique opportunity to have fun and connect in a safe and friendly environment with a like-minded community.

"It's always great to have a welcoming environment for our family! I love connecting with new families and reconnecting with families I've come to know."

- TACA Parent





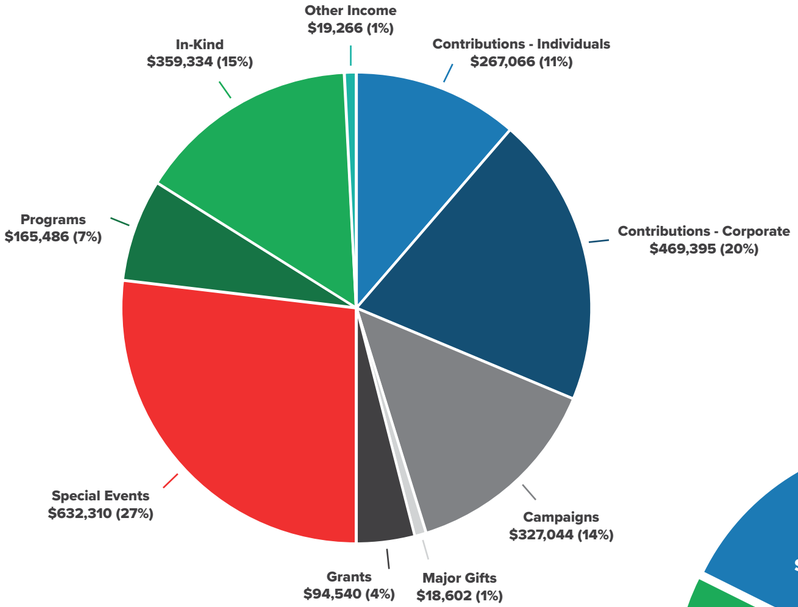


Over 25,000 hours were donated by our incredible volunteers

The value of these donated hours is almost $400,000 and is not calculated in our financials

2019

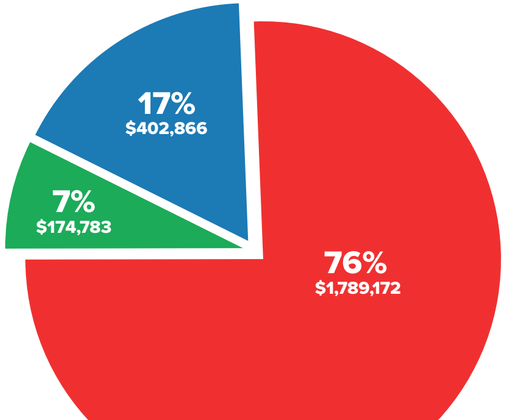
revenue breakout by type



- Contributions - Individuals
- Contributions - Corporate
- Campaigns
- Major Gifts
- Grants
- Special Events (Net)
- Programs
- Other Income
- In-Kind

expense by breakout type

- Programs
- General & Admin
- Fundraising



featured partner
Los Angeles Ride for Autism

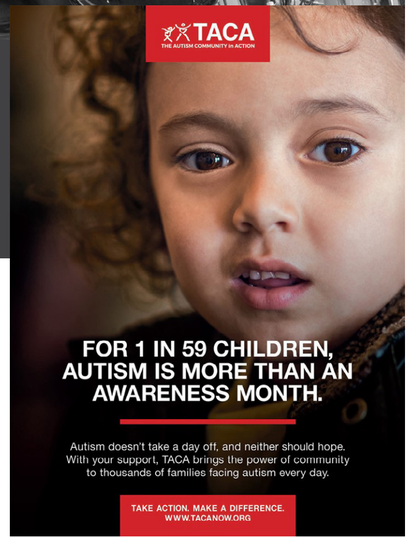
We are incredibly grateful to have the support of Ride for Autism since 2010. The Los Angeles Ride for Autism Foundation is dedicated to raising funds to benefit non-profit organizations directly involved with autism, such as TACA and D.E.S.I, by organizing motorcycle rides around Southern California and their annual Wine event. Over the past nine years, the Los Angeles Ride for Autism has donated more than $80,000 to TACA.



underwriter spotlight

designory.

Designory – a global, award-winning marketing agency adopted TACA this year. Their expertise stretches across the content creation spectrum including digital, print and video. Paul Hosea, designory Chief Executive Officer and long time TACA supporter led his team of product marketers, content creators, and digital experts to create captivating ads for Autism Awareness Month and the Orange County Business Journal Annual Giving Guide. In addition, the team produced the “Take Action. Make a Difference” video that premiered at the 13th Annual Ante Up for Autism Gala.



How did you find TACA?

“So many people had told me about TACA and how I need to get involved with them so I finally decided to attend the TACA Conference in 2006 as a sponsor. It was like nothing I had ever seen before. The parents that attended actually had a voice there. They could speak to doctors and professionals and ask questions. After that, I became a sponsor for all of TACA’s family events and conferences. In 2012, I was asked to be a board member for TACA and it has been my pleasure to be on the board and share my legal advice with such a diverse group that all care about TACA.”

Why do you feel it’s important to support TACA?

“TACA is probably the only non-profit I know that focuses on the family and helps through the entire journey, from the child’s diagnosis to adulthood. TACA does it all – the journey, the transition, the mentors, the conferences. It’s a lifeline for these families.”

What is your favorite program or support service TACA offers?

“The conferences are amazing! Parents are just stunned at all the knowledge. It helps parents no matter what age their child is. This is information that you cannot get anywhere else.”

Why should other companies and individuals get involved and help TACA?

“The rate of autism is exploding and they could really make a difference for these children. If you make someone a productive part of society then that will create a positive impact on the individual’s life.”



donor spotlight
Elizabeth McCoy

Elizabeth found TACA in 2006 and has been a board member for TACA since 2012. She is an attorney who specializes in estate planning with her practice primarily focusing on Special Needs Trusts and Conservatorships. Elizabeth and her husband, Mike, reside in San Diego County, California with their two sons.

donor honor roll

We would like to recognize and thank our generous contributors

$50,000 & $500,000

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The Rose Mellin 1998 Trust

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$1,000-$2,499.99

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Arctic Services
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Beacon College
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Christine Mansoor
Christine Pietsch
Christy Castillo
Communities Foundation of Texas
Creative behavior interventions
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Dan and Alla Kerker
Danielle Craig
Darcy Ramler
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David Bulow
David Dozzo
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Diana and Eric Tom
Dianna and Steve Claton
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Emily Colborn
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Fredric Sheu
Functional Genomic Analysis
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We are families with autism helping families with autism.

TACA

THE AUTISM COMMUNITY in ACTION

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