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
- 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
dear friends

Thank you and hello! We are truly so grateful for 2021! It is our record revenue year! The health and well-being of TACA have greatly improved thanks to the support of our incredible community and friends of TACA.

In 2021, TACA received our first ever Autism Hero Gift from our friends at Sun West Mortgage, Inc. This gift will be instrumental in getting TACA back into the community and bringing back much needed family services and support. Hundreds of other supporters also stepped up so we can recover and grow to meet the needs of the families we serve.

The ripple effects of COVID-19 continue to affect TACA families. The largest challenge is a continued disruption to school and services. Many families have seen a decrease in services and for some, their services have completely stopped. We are helping them navigate unprecedented times. Parents continue to report their children are experiencing regression, aggression, OCD, anxiety, and an increase in wandering.

TACA is needed more than ever. In December 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shared another autism prevalence update. There really isn’t any good news. The CDC now says that the prevalence of autism amongst US children is 1 in 44. This represents a 241% increase since 2000. However, even more staggering are these numbers:

- In California, 1 in 26 eight-year old’s have an autism diagnosis
- 1 in 24 four-year old’s have an autism diagnosis
- Every day, over 250 U.S. children will receive an autism diagnosis

Despite these enormous challenges, we are moving the autism community forward. I am happy to share some of our 2021 program highlights:

- Average member growth per month was 700
- 2.5 million website views
- Journey guides distributed was up 15%
- Meeting attendance was up 16%

Yes, it has been a rough couple of years. It feels like a quote I recently heard, “This too shall pass. It might pass like a kidney stone, but it will pass.” While we could all definitely do without that pain, it caused TACA to accelerate initiatives and develop new services that are helping more families navigate autism and access timely, relevant, and caring support for their children. Our extremely needed adult service programming expanded in the first year of development and will continue into 2022 and future years.

Our strategy going forward is to continue investing in and growing our virtual offerings and restart in-person support and family events. We love our volunteers and welcome them back with open arms. Nothing is like in-person community events. Navigating the pandemic has been difficult. However, we have learned that adding the virtual technology platforms to our existing in-person platform has created a more scalable organization, allowing us to reach and help more families at a lower cost.

Truly, I am so grateful for our autism community, great team, connected beard and ambassadors, and a community that supports us in fulfilling our mission. Because of you, TACA is poised to be the primary leader in family support services and innovation to meet their needs.

Thank you for helping TACA help families.

Lisa Ackerman
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CO-FOUNDER
MOM TO JEFF & LAUREN, GRANDMA TO WILL,
AND WIFE TO GLEN
quick look

year established 2000

executive director lisa ackerman

employees 21 paid staff
(12 full-time, 9 part-time)

volunteer contributions 571 volunteers

hope, help, and information in 50 States

www.tacanow.org

theautismcommunityinaction
@tacanow
@tacafoundation
The Autism Community in Action

accomplishments 2021

83,286 awesome members
377,399 social media followers

571 volunteers logged in hours to help families and deliver TACA’s message

responded to a total of 48,292 phone & online support requests

awarded more than $230,000 in scholarship

5,794

5.7 million

2.5 million website page views

14,800

14,800 hope and help fb group members

2,400

2,400 educated over 1 virtual autism conference

22,089

22,089 educated over with meetings, webinars, and social media content

545

545 mentor/mentee matches
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

Welcome Bill Oldham to the TACA Family
Key Programs and Services

TACA provides education, support and hope to the autism community.
volunteer coordinators

After age one, Vanessa noticed her son Cormac started regressing. This was her third child and she had previously been a preschool teacher, so was well aware of early childhood development, and it was obvious to her that her son was regressing. After being persistent with her doctors, she was finally able to get an evaluation where they confirmed her son had severe autism and recommended therapy and certain support groups. Vanessa went to some of these support group meetings and although it was nice making connections, she always felt more depressed after leaving those meetings. Vanessa researched herself and found other moms online recommending TACA. After going to her first TACA meeting she was hooked. She’s now been a San Diego Coordinator since 2014, and she always loved how TACA is adaptable and continues to evolve and grow to provide the support families need. Cormac is now 16 years old, and although the COVID lockdown was not easy on him, he had been turning a corner and been able to do things that were hard for him just a few months ago.

Nancy grew concerned after her son was not developing the way her previous child had. He was unable to transition to eating solid foods. He was not even close to meeting any of his developmental milestones. When approaching his first birthday, she knew from her online research that he was very autistic. It was a battle to get anyone to agree with her. Finally, a developmental pediatrician confirmed that he was not autistic. As a result of an improvement, she began searching for a biomed support group, which led her to TACA. Nancy’s daughter was also diagnosed with autism. But this time Nancy and her family already had the knowledge and felt the ground running. Nancy has been a San Diego Coordinator for five years. She is motivated to listen to families and provide resources, so that they feel less isolated and have an action plan. Her son Mitchell is now 16 years old. He started off completely unable to write, and after intensive feeding therapy, the only place he is now is able to write his name. He is socially isolated and has an action plan. Her son Mitchell is now 16 years old. He started off completely unable to write, and after intensive feeding therapy, the only place he is now is able to write his name. He is socially isolated and has an action plan.

Pivoting During the Pandemic

As a chapter, Vanessa and Nancy were very anxious about COVID, each having a Coffee Talk every month, along with a monthly meeting with a professional speaker, and another Coffee Talk that was hosted by San Diego mentors. It was heartbreaking for them knowing that for some of those parents, those Coffee Talks were their only in-person experience. The silver lining was that they were able to connect with the whole West Coast region through online meetings and that families showed up, not only from the local area, but from all over the United States.

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Mentor Spotlight

Martha Simpson, TACA Mentor

Martha and her family had been living in Papua New Guinea until Martha had growing concerns that her second child, Em, was regressing. She stopped sleeping through the night, was running away, and was sensory seeking. After not being able to receive answers from doctors in her area, Martha began researching and came across some Yahoo groups that mentioned TACA, which led her to looking into diet changes and supplements. Martha was hesitant about changing her family’s diet but decided to go forward with it even with doctors telling her diet change wasn’t proven to be effective. A few days after implementing the Feingold Diet, she saw changes in Em’s sleep and behavior. After meeting with a MAPS doctor in the states and realizing the road to recovery was a long-term effort with therapies, diets, and more, they decided to permanently move back to the states. And there’s been no regrets. After seeing major progress with a gluten-free diet, Em is now nearly recovered. Em is 15 years old, fully mainstreamed, doing online school, and is on track to do everything she wants to do in life. Em is very creative; she writes, animates, tells stories, and she is interested in learning more about animation, graphic design, and writing novels after high school. Her and Martha mentor TACA parents together, telling their story, from a parent and child’s perspective.

“For me to be able to give back just a little, it makes it worthwhile what we went through. Although it was completely worth it for our one kid, why should I only help one kid when I can help more?”

- Martha Simpson, TACA Mentor
"I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from experts in the field. How often does anyone get the chance to learn from those who are the best at what they do? I am filled with much hope."
- Virtual Conference Attendee

"The annual TACA conference is a reminder to me to reboot and breath. Gives me courage to fight on!"
- Virtual Conference Attendee

"I discovered TACA last year. It was like the light at the end of the tunnel. Great information, great speakers, great community. TACA gives me hope."
- Virtual Conference Attendee

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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 it now has over 15,000 members in all 50 states.

"I just joined this group and I’ve dived deep into a wealth of information, more than I’ve seen in years! It’s hard to put my phone down, I just want to keep reading everything this group has to offer."
- Hope and Help Member
Contributions - Individuals
Contributions - Corporate
Grants
Campaigns
Major Gifts
Special Events (Net)
Programs
Other Income
In-Kind

2021 breakout:
- Programs: $198,658 (11%)
- General & Admin: $314,348 (17%)
- Fundraising: $1,327,883 (72%)

Revenue breakout by type:
- Special Events: $740,440 (31%)
- Other Income: $151,088 (6%)
- Contributions - Individuals: $363,675 (15%)
- Contributions - Corporate: $192,409 (8%)
- Campaigns: $289,918 (12%)
- Major Gifts: $309,208 (13%)
- In-Kind: $91,892 (4%)
- Programs: $93,295 (4%)

Expense breakout by type:
How has autism played a role in your life?

“Well, it’s just changed our whole life. Our whole life revolves around Michael. All his therapies, traveling to different doctors from all around the country, all his activities. Michael received his diagnosis in 1997, at 3 years old, when there were virtually no services, and everything was new. I mean, a psychologist was diagnosing my son based on how he played with a doll in a room. That’s how it was back then. Nobody knew anything. Lisa, Glen, and all these families - we had to be the pioneers.”

What are some challenges you are seeing in the autism community?

“Well, what’s happened is, when we first started this organization, all our children were young. Now they’re aged. So now what? We need to evolve and see what the services are, who is going to care for them, what communities can they be a part of, who is going to be their advocate. That’s one question I get a lot from friends who have children on the spectrum – Who is going to take care of them when I am gone? We still don’t know and that is a problem we need to figure out.”

Why do you feel it is important to support TACA?

“It is for our community. We have no voice. It is a very fragmented industry, many people trying to be the voice, and TACA has done a good job at being an advocate, because these kids need an advocate. That’s the biggest thing – they are an advocate for our community.”

We believe that by December 2022, this amazing contribution will provide resources and support to more than 60,000 families living with autism.
We would like to recognize and thank our generous contributors.
We are families with autism helping families with autism.