



Annual Report 2016



The mission of Arms Around ASD is to facilitate the growth and healing of the family as a whole.

Arms Around ASD is unique in that we provide services for the entire family including neuro-typical siblings.

From our massage therapists, talk therapists, speech therapist, yoga instructors and numerous other professional volunteers, we are a resource center providing therapies for people on the autism spectrum and their families regardless of age, ability or income.

Arms Around ASD is a giant hug for families who seek our services.



www.armsaroundasd.org
Facebook: Arms Around ASD

Paws on ASD changed its name to Arms Around ASD in January 2017. This report outlines activities, donors, volunteers and board members from 2016 when the organization was still Paws on ASD. To maintain brand consistency, Arms Around ASD is referenced throughout this report.

Letter from the Founder & Director

2016 was a year of development & learning



Michele Louzon
Founder, Director and
President of the Board of
Directors
Arms Around ASD

While 2015 was a year of enormous growth, 2016 was a year of development and learning. Dubbed by me as “the year we got out of the basement”, 2016 was actually the year of defining ourselves as a nonprofit. As much initiative as we put into finding a space of our own outside of my home, we put equal energy into figuring out who we are. Strangely, that very thing, that desire to get into our own space, actually molded us into the agency we are right now.

When I conceived Paws on ASD back in 2013, I envisioned a lot of children under 10. I envisioned all kinds of animal assisted therapies, hence our original name. (Paws on ASD changed its name to Arms Around ASD in January 2017). I envisioned families coming in together but receiving services individually. I envisioned paying our staff. I learned that vision is fluid and I must be flexible.

Children under ten get many of their services at school. However, as children age, they have access to fewer services and as they become adolescents and adults, they fall through the cracks. To combat this, we broadened our scope to include all people on the spectrum regardless of age, ability or income.

We added four new therapies to our repertoire - moving meditation, stop-action animation creation, yoga (all help to develop executive function skills) and parents of children over 16 support group (more support for families). New therapies meant more volunteers – **at least seven new volunteers were added in 2016 to serve over 100 individuals.**

Continuing Education

ASNC Annual Conference - The Autism Society of North Carolina parents support group sent me to the ASNC conference in Charlotte (March 2016) where I learned about a TEACCH study funded by Autism Speaks. That particular research paired with our new client base shaped what kind of programming Paws on ASD would promote. The study found that success in life (success defined as not just finding a job, but keeping a job) was dependent on executive function skills.

Fundraising Bootcamp - The first week of August brought a week-long fundraising boot camp led by Alex Comfort to add more tools to my fundraising toolbox.

Media and Community Outreach



Paws on ASD and I were featured “The Horses’ Mouth” on 103.3 FM



Our inaugural Hop 'til You Drop Sock Hop and Silent Auction in November was such a smashing success that we'll be doing it every year for the foreseeable future



Thank you for your continued support. We're looking forward to another year of development and learning in 2017!



Programs in 2016

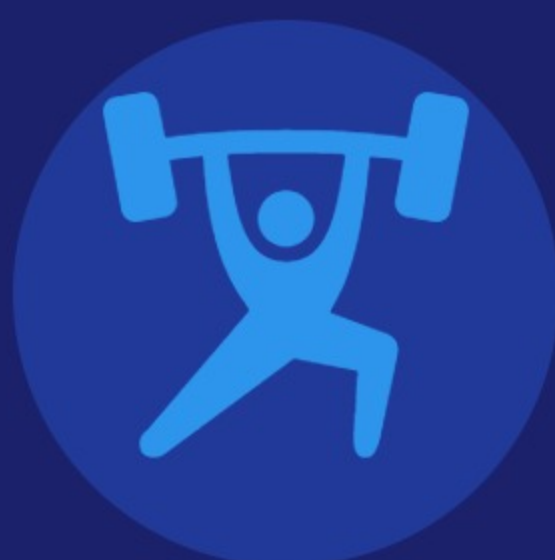
Moving Meditation

A combination of Qigong and meditation. The group is taken through a series of techniques designed to promote relaxation and focus, build internal energy or life force (qi, ki, prana, etc.) and hone executive functioning skills.



Parents of Children Over 16 Support Group

This group provides parents and caregivers a safe space to discuss the joys and concerns of parenting adolescents transitioning to adulthood and young adults on the spectrum.



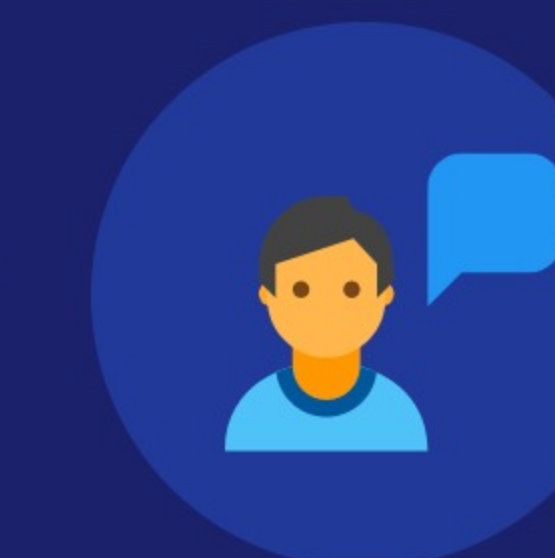
Communication Skills Group

The speech pathologist and occupational therapist lead an ongoing communication skills group of up to six participants. The group strives to improve social relatedness and self-regulation.



Talk Therapy

Clearly structured individual, group and relationship conversational therapy with the focus on current problems and practical solutions.



Stop Motion Animation Creation

By the end of each six week session, two participants will create a very short stop-action animation film. Weekly sessions will focus on identifying short and long-term goals, working memory and planning, organizational skills and breaking the project down into manageable pieces.



Aspergers Teens United

Arms Around ASD hosts the monthly meeting of Aspergers Teens United, an offshoot group under the umbrella of Autistics United. ATU and AU are slowly growing a mentoring program which pairs an adult on the spectrum with a child or adolescent on the spectrum.



Massage Therapy

Professional massage therapists provide massage for family members and caregivers. Massage instruction is also available for caregivers to enable them to provide therapy at home. Both the giver and receiver of massage experience the restorative, healing benefits of massage.



Acupuncture

A gentle, skilled practitioner applies five-element acupuncture with emphasis on treating the client's mind and spirit in a serene environment.



Yoga

Each class features gentle warm-ups, breath work, partner activities and a visualization/relaxation.



TRAP (The Rhythmic Art Project)

An innovative educational program teaching a wide range of subjects through percussion and drums. TRAP's primary objective is to promote the inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their typical peers



One Giant Hug for Families



Yoga (left) and TRAP (above) are just two of the programs Arms Around ASD offers to facilitate growth and healing of the family as a whole.



Michele Louzon
Counseling



Scott Middleton
TRAP



Emily Dancio-Grosso
Yoga



Bonnie Fenton
Massage Therapy



Travis Jackson
Massage Therapy



Ashley Campbell
Massage Therapy



Jake Louzon-Hadley
Stop-Action Animation
Creation



Vicki Neill
Massage Therapy



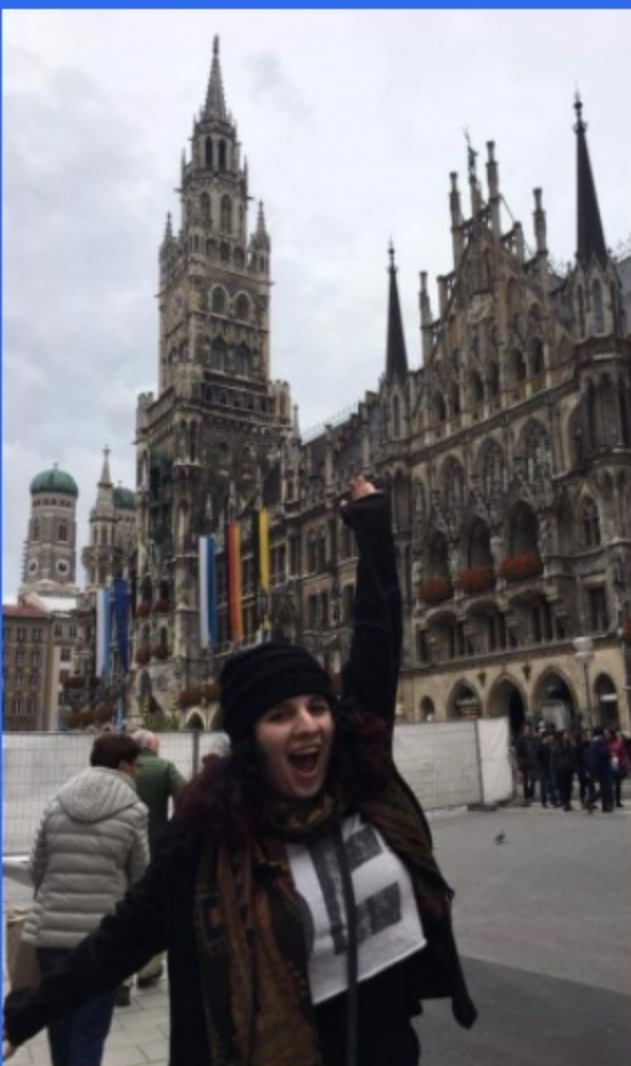
Sarah Thomas
Acupuncture



Brandon Hudson
Yoga



Tom Wright
Moving Meditation



Willow Lanier
Intern

Family Profile

Lee, mother of two sons on the spectrum, W. (16) and E. (15)

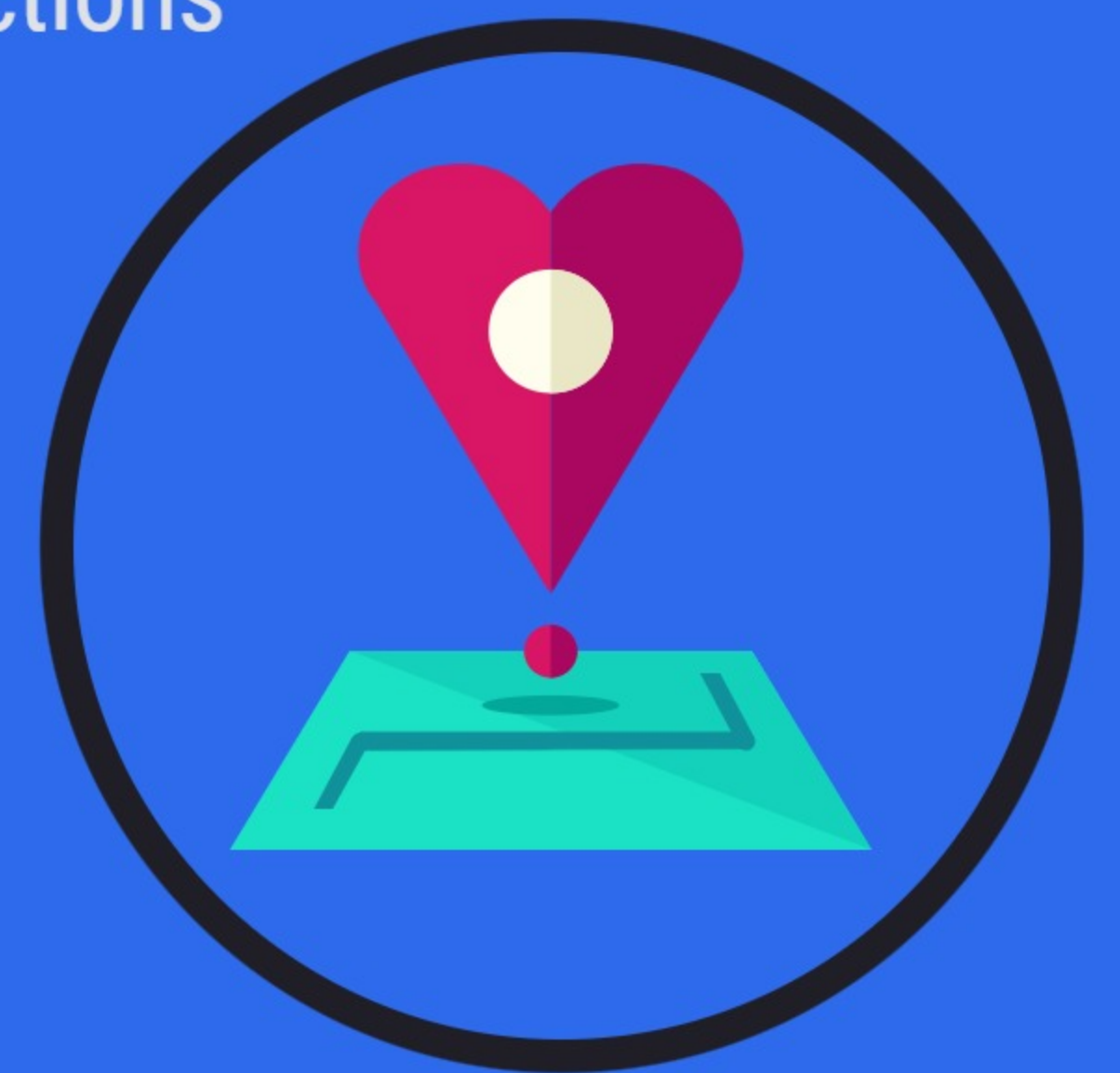


Arms Around ASD consistently and reliably provides many services that nurture and support W and me. With the variety of therapies provided, we have had opportunities to gain skills, friends, physical strength and flexibility.

Our executive functioning skills and our ability to concentrate have improved with yoga and moving meditation. Additionally, our physical, emotional and mental well-being have been fostered with acupuncture which has also supported and strengthened our immune systems.

The top indicator for health and well-being is social connections. Arms Arounds ASD supports and nurtures W's social connections with the group activities and monthly social functions.

Your socials have immersed us in a loving and supportive community that is fun and engaging. Within a safe space, Arms Around ASD provides my son a variety of activities with peers that give him the opportunity to make friends, gain confidence, laugh and share.



Arms Around ASD provides a compassionate and healing environment to take care of myself. The therapeutic massages I have received have decreased my physical pain and discomfort.



The quiet and peaceful space provides me emotional and mental comfort. That comfort and healing directly translates to my having more patience and being a better parent.

With more patience, better health and a deeper sense of well-being, I want to thank you for your mission, vision and results.

Arms Around ASD is definitely providing us a very loving and compassionate hug that is uplifting and most definitely improving our lives. Thank you over and over again for your continued support, guidance and kindness.

**Volunteer
Staff**



**Board of
Directors**



Our 2016 Arms Around ASD Family



Volunteers

Occupational Therapist

Donna Schutt OTR/L

Speech Pathologist

Sharon Van Dyke MS, CCC-SLP

Acupuncture

Sarah Thomas LAc

Counseling

Michele Louzon MS counseling psychology

Massage Therapists

Ashley Campbell LMBT
Bonnie Fenton LMBT
Travis Jackson LMBT
Vicki Neill LMBT

Yoga Instructors

Emily Dancio-Grosso
Brandon Hudson

TRAP

Scott Middleton - TRAP Certified

Social Skills Group

Donna Schutt
Sharon Van Dyke

Support Group (parents of children over 16)

Rebecca Demmer
Laura Saliba

Stop-Action Animation Creation

Jake Louzon-Hadley

Moving Meditation

Tom Wright

Autistics United Mentoring Coordinator

Daniel Landry

Intern

Willow Lanier



Board of Directors

Board President

Michele Louzon

MS Counseling Psychology

Executive Director Paws on ASD

Board Secretary

Roberto Hess BSW

Social worker with children and families

Board Treasurer

Jason Hadley

BS Mechanical Engineering, MBA
Mechanical engineer Kimberly Clark

Members at Large

Ellie Bluestone, JD

Attorney at Law at Bluestone Law, PLLC

Susan Maxwell, BA Humanities

Researcher and child advocate for twice exceptional children

Sarah Broberg

CEO, SB Corporate Consultancy

Martha Perry, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist
specializing in children on the spectrum
and their families

Sydney Moncrief

self advocate



Donors



Ace Hardware
Ad Lib
All Pets Animal Hospital
Allen Leduc
Amazing Pubcycle
Andy & Elizabeth Glatstein
Angel Hudgins
Angelika Wagar
Arminta Stacy
Asheville Pizza and Brewing
Asheville Sun Soo
Australian Art Glass
Avenue M
Batton Clayworks
Bean Werks
Biscuit Head
Black Orthodontics
Blue Mountain Clay
Blue Ridge Chair Works
Bluestone Law
Bojangles
Bongo Jerry
Bonnie Fenton
Breeya Barbree
Buffalo Nickel
Buxton Hall
Cakes by Gray
Carol Strittmatter
Cathy Searle
Chai Pani
Cheryl and Wayne Backes
Chik-fil-A
Chili's
Chimney Rock
Cici Nails
Conundrum
Copper Crown

Cynthia Alleman
Dancing Bear Toys
Dancing Woods Farm
DePaolo Orthopedics
Designs by Dara
Dina Rose
Diva Deluxe Design
Divine Spa & Nails
Donna and Tom Blankinship
Dr. & Mrs. Claiborne
Dr. Jojo Yonce
Earthfare
Elements Real Food
Evan Landau & Suzanne Arthur
Fast Signs
First Bank
Fresh Market
Friends of the WNC Nature Center
Firestarter Shrines
Fusion Pilates
Gabriela Bluestone
Geraldine's Bakery
Gould Killian CPA Group PA
Grail Movie House
Green4Life
Greenlife & Whole Foods
Harvest Records
Highland Brewing
Hip Re-mix
Instant Karma
John Hornsby Creative
James Carmody
Jason Hadley & Michele Louzon
Jason's Getaway
Jerri Bella
Jessica Tripp
Jo Ann & Buddy McElrath

Joelle Emma
John Nebraska
Josh Henri & Laura Carroll
Judy Levine
Karen Orenchuk & Arbonne
Kent House
Kincaid & Associates
Linda Yaverbaum
L.O.F.T.
Loretta's Café
Love, Daisy
Luke Atkinson Furniture
Mad Bull
Madeleine Barreto
Makeup by Ali
Marco's Pizza
Marjorie Diamond
Mary Diffendal
Mayfel's
Mellow Mushroom
MG Road
Minx
Nancy Richards
NASCAR
Navitat
Nico Wild & Wildly Impressive
Entertainment
Old Europe
Orange Peel
Oskar Blues
Paragon Financial
Pastimes
Pink Regalia
Posana
Posh Lash Lounge
Publix
Red Rabbit Tattoo
Roberto Hess

Rodney Smith
& Tempus Fugit
Ripley Drug & Compounding
Rotary Club of Asheville
Sally Butcher
Sandy Mills
Sarah Broberg
Sew Trashy Art
Sheryl Mann
Steven Vaughan-Nichols
Studio 30 Maney
Sue Belu
Sunflower Tie Dyes
Susan & Michael Maxwell
Ten Rivers Jewelry
The Hop
Tom Wright
Tops For Shoes
Toy Box
Trader Joe's
Tropical Gardens
Universal Joint
Ursula Powers
Victoria Baker
Vortex Donuts
Westville Pub
Whist
Williams Family Dentistry
Willow's Dream
Wine & Design
Write On!
Yaya Wenning
Zen Sutherland ROMP

Use Amazon Smile for all your Amazon purchases and add Arms Around ASD as the nonprofit to receive funds.



Client Profile



Danny (32), on the spectrum, receives massage therapy and acupuncture. He is the creator and program director for Autistics United, Aspergers Teens United and Aspergers Adults United. Danny began receiving services from Arms Around ASD in 2015.

I think the programming at Arms Around ASD is a wish come true for the autism community. It has so many benefits and offers a wide range of services for autistics of all ages.

It's a safe space for autistics and such a great organization to also benefit the families and caretakers. Also not to mention the need to help low income families or families that are small.

Arms Around ASD also helps families and autistics that may not be eligible for services.



Receiving massage has been incredibly beneficial for me. Travis, the massage therapist I've been going to for the past year, has medical expertise and knowledge that only my physical and rehabilitation therapist knows.

I have had two jaw surgeries in my later adolescence and because of that I have tightening in my jaw and facial muscles. Travis is able to loosen them and he's also very good at communication and helping me relax using pressure points and loosening muscles all over the body. When I have had stress from my job and other physical activity he has helped relieve that stress.



Acupuncture has been helpful with deep relaxation and overall tension throughout the day.

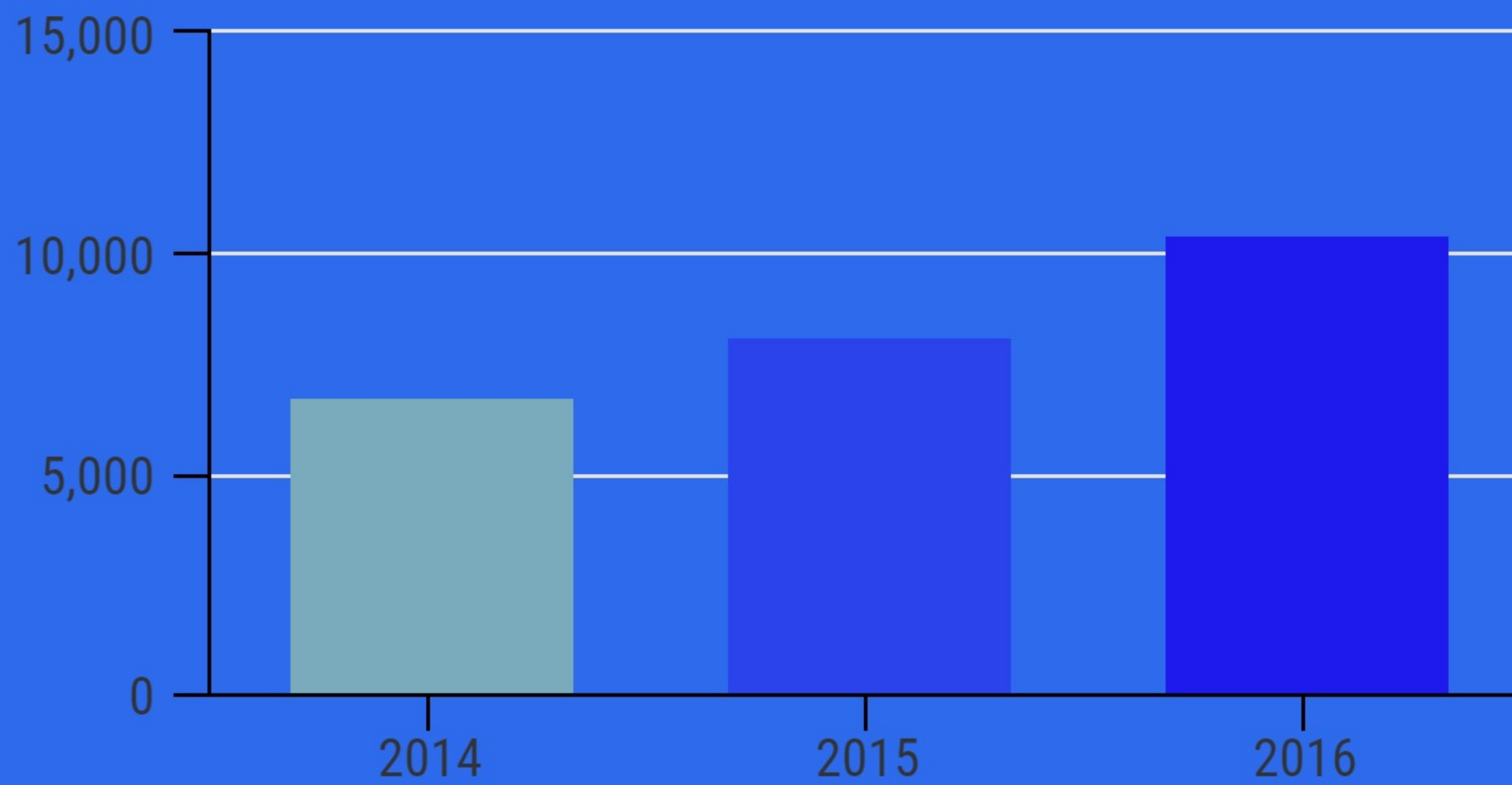
Without Arms Around ASD more families would struggle to get the help that they need and also not to mention a spot where they can meet other people and find out about other organizations such as Aspergers United AAU and ATU.

Arms Around ASD is exactly what our community needs and cannot live without.

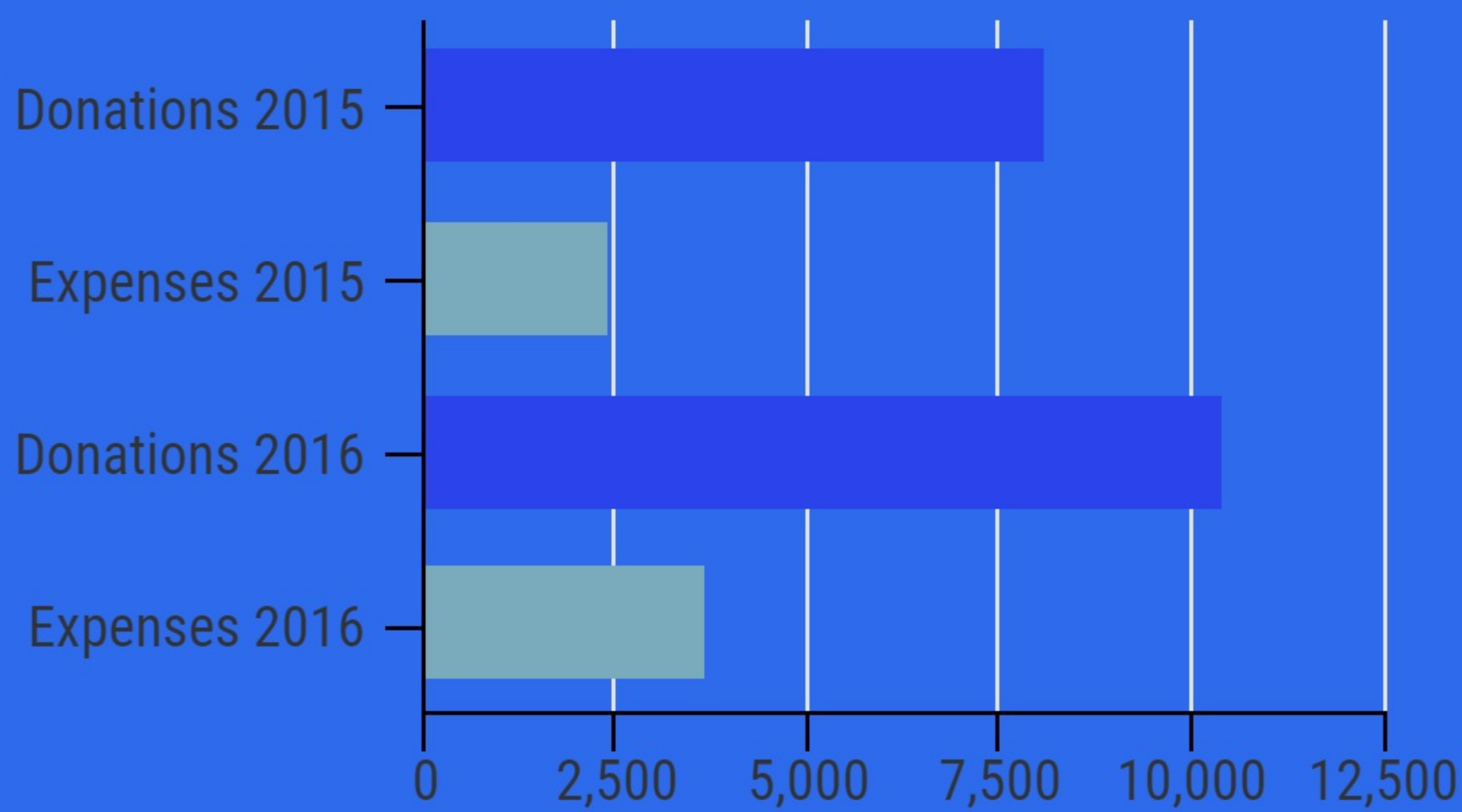




2016 Financial Information



Donations to Arms Around ASD increased 28% from 2015 to 2016



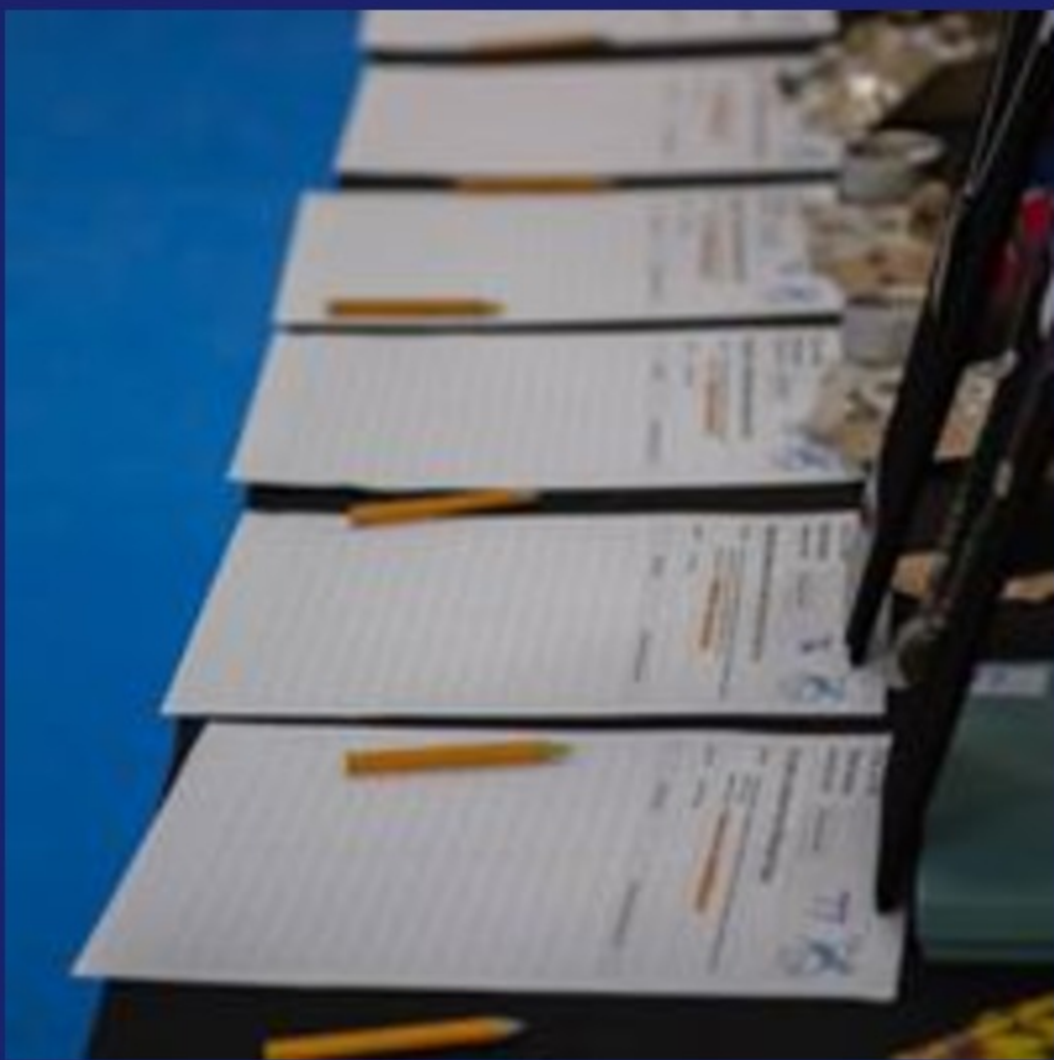
A total of 35% of Arms Around ASD donations were used for operating expenses and fundraising in 2016



Of total donations in 2016, 90% were generated by Hop 'til You Drop



Hop 'til You Drop 2016





Call To Action

Everything we accomplished in 2016 with our merry band of dedicated volunteers has set us up to move forward in 2017 and beyond. What can you do? Glad you asked!

1

Volunteer

If you're a/an:

WE WANT YOU!

Therapist
Music therapist
Play therapist
Art Therapist
Massage therapist
Yoga instructor
Acupuncturist
Reiki master
Artist
Autism specialist
Social Media expert
Computer whiz

Don't see yourself on this list? Call and ask if what you do is appropriate to Paws on ASD (DBA Arms Around ASD).

It probably didn't dawn on us that you'd be an amazing asset to our organization.

Donate

While we always need cold hard cash, there's so much than money that keeps our organization going.

We can always use books (children's, young adult, adult, autism and special needs related), office supplies, Method cleaning supplies and most possibly something you have that is not on this list.

2

Spread the Word

If you know anyone on the spectrum who could benefit from our services, please send them our way. We want to keep our sessions full.

We love getting out into the community and spreading the word. Help us do just that by creating an opportunity or letting us know of an occasion to get our message out there.

3

Share Knowledge

What do you know?

You probably have a talent, ginormous amount of information about one particular thing or special interest.

Yup, we need you.

There's always room in our schedule for mini-sessions, groups and classes.

4



www.armsaroundasd.org

Facebook: Arms Around ASD