2023 Annual Report

New Name.
New Website.
Same Mission.

AANE
ASSOCIATION FOR
AUTISM AND NEURODIVERSITY

Letter from Brenda

Dear Friends,

Over the past few years, the AANE community has grown to support Autistic individuals, families, and professionals across the country and around the globe. With the expansion of AANE's virtual services, we have delighted in both our community becoming more diverse and helping community members forge deep, meaningful relationships that transcend geographic boundaries.

Our organization began over 27 years ago, and we recognize a lot has changed in that time, not least of which is the understanding and language of autism. In FY23, we set about listening and learning to ensure that our language and resources reflect and support the people we serve. This report highlights that work, which led to two important changes: a complete overhaul of aane.org, and a new name, the Association for Autism and Neurodiversity.

Before you scroll to the next page, I want to share what these transitions mean to me. My 27-year-old Autistic daughter gave her permission for me to share this painful story about friendship from her middle school years: When she joined her “friends” at the lunch table, they would all stand up at the same time and go sit at another table without her. Left alone and confused, she would try to join them at the new table, only to have the pattern repeat itself. What saved her were her online friends; she never felt left out or alone when she talked to them. To this day she has deep, reciprocal friendships that exist online. They have provided her with perspective, support, information, and joy. I hope that AANE’s expanded online offerings provide understanding and true connection for our growing community.

Thanks to everyone who has helped us along this journey of transformation. We are grateful for the way our dynamic community has informed our work, and we are excited for AANE to continue to grow. We are now named the Association for Autism and Neurodiversity, but our mission remains the same: AANE continues to help Autistic and similarly Neurodivergent people build meaningful, connected lives. We provide individuals, families, and professionals with education, community and support in an inclusive atmosphere of validation and respect.

Our promise is to continue to deliver on that mission every day.

Warmly,

Brenda

Brenda Dater, MPH, MSW
Executive Director

Our Impact

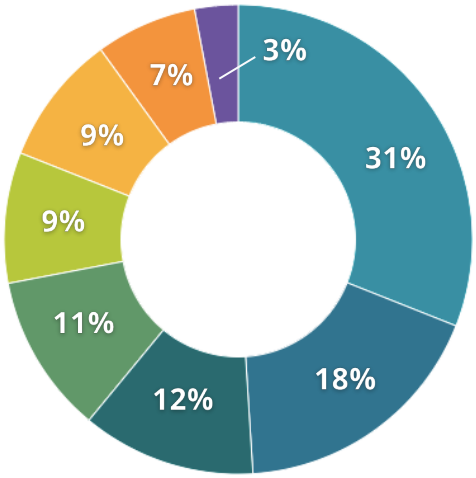
The AANE community grew substantially in the past fiscal year. We reached people in **all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and 74 countries** around the world.

1M

We reached nearly one million unique users last year through aane.org.

14,117

We increased the number of people we served in our programs by 15% over last year. Their affiliation breakdown is below.



31% Adult
18% Parent of Adult
12% Spouse or Partner
11% Parent of Teen
9% Professional
9% Parent of Child
7% Family Member
3% Teen

"I was recently diagnosed and have never sought out support for this before. This is one of the first experiences I've had where I've felt like people understood how I perceive and experience the world."

-AANE Adult

Our Impact

Check out **a year of AANE support by the numbers,** from social events to support groups, from coaching to conferences.

One-to-One Services

704

We responded to an average of 704 requests for support every month.

Group Services

189

Every month we provided an average of 189 group-based opportunities to meet.

17,884

Our LifeMAP Coaches provided more than 17,000 hours of coaching in a year, a 23% increase over FY22.

> **"I've lost count how many times I've signed on to this group. Although the people change, the same support and feeling of connection happens every time."**
>
> **-AANE Parent**

Support Groups	**1605**
Social Events	**325**
Trainings & Webinars	**88**
Conferences	**2**

Our total programs provided in FY23, by type.

New Name

An organization's name can be as impactful as a program or service, and our name should telegraph the sense of welcome that is essential to the AANE experience. As the language used by our community has changed in recent years, it became clear that, **in FY23, we needed to evaluate if "Asperger/Autism Network" still reflected current (and future) AANE community members**.

Our Process

- We sought input from the Autistic individuals on our Board of Directors and staff, and who take part in our services.
- Through surveys, one-on-one meetings, and open chats with our executive director on the use of language, we engaged our wider community of Autistic individuals, family members, and professionals.
- We assessed language use by our peer organizations, online Autistic communities, and key Autistic voices.

Our Findings

- "Asperger/Autism Network" no longer aligns with how the majority of people we serve—and intend to serve—refer to themselves and their loved ones.
- The majority of our community members use identity-first language.
- Capitalizing "Autistic" and "Neurodivergent" respects Autistic culture and acknowledges that an individual's neurotype is an intrinsic part of their identity.

What's in a Name?

As the **Association for Autism and Neurodiversity**, we aim to be more visible and accessible to those who need us. Our name is both a reflection of who we serve and how we provide support: **the autism community is who we serve, and we do this through a neurodiversity-affirming lens.**

AANE
ASSOCIATION FOR
AUTISM AND NEURODIVERSITY
Empowering Individuals • Building Community

We welcome all who feel they can benefit from our organization, with or without an autism diagnosis, using whatever language makes them feel comfortable. Our mission remains unchanged, and our new name honors the intention of that mission: **all individuals have value, deserve dignity, and should have access to community.**

New Website

Every year, we reach **nearly one million unique website users**. That means that aane.org is our most visible and most accessible platform for education and support. In FY23, we laid the groundwork to update aane.org and launch the new site in conjunction with our name change.

Identifying Pain Points

In addition to engaging Autistic individuals on our Board of Directors and staff, and those who take part in our services, we surveyed 200 people, nearly half of whom are Autistic adults, and over one third of whom are parents to Autistic individuals. Their feedback helped us identify aane.org's pain points and come up with solutions.

Creating Solutions

Difficult for users to find what they are looking for, especially support groups.	→	Redesign site navigation based on feedback from usability testing with Autistic adults as well as other community members.
Event calendar format is hard to read and tricky to sort.	→	Organize event listings with a robust, user-friendly filtering system.
An overwhelming amount of information for users.	→	Audit content and streamline resources—read more about this process below.

"The new site is a meaningful improvement! Easier to understand the various AANE offerings and ability to navigate to them."

-AANE Community Member

Easy-to-find, Trustworthy Resources

How do you take nearly 30 years of content and make sure it is helpful to today's expansive AANE community?

- Send **300+ articles for three rounds of review** by AANE staff and Autistic community members.
- **Cut the number of articles by more than half** so that only the most informative and up-to-date remain.
- **Radically reorganize** the remaining articles, **update language** across hundreds of pages, and **add new categories** like "Intersectional Identities" that are paramount to AANE's community.

Same Mission

For all the changes our new name and new website signal, **our mission remains the same**: AANE helps Autistic and similarly Neurodivergent people build meaningful, connected lives. We provide individuals, families, and professionals with education, community, and support in an inclusive atmosphere of validation and respect.

Core Programs & Services

One-to-One Services

- Free information and resource consultations
- Coaching for
  - Autistic adults and teens (LifeMAP)
  - Parents and caregivers
  - Neurodiverse partners
- Independent living support for Autistic adults (LifeNet)
- Peer mentoring for Autistic adults (Simpatico Pilot Program)

Group Services

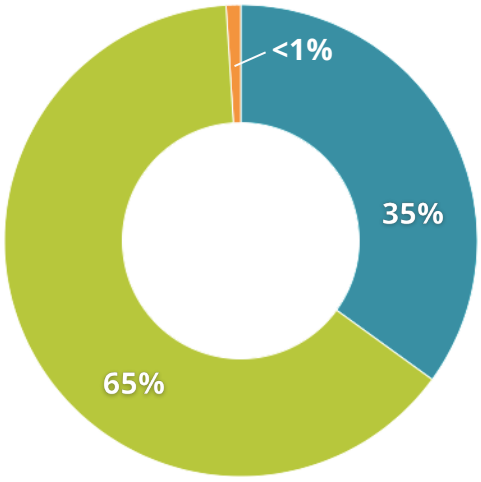
- Support groups for Autistic adults, Autistic teens, parents/caregivers, neurodiverse partners, and grandparents
- Interest-based groups and social events for Autistic adults and teens

Training & Education

- Conferences, webinars, and workshops for all members of the AANE community
- Training for employers, educators, mental health professionals, and other service providers

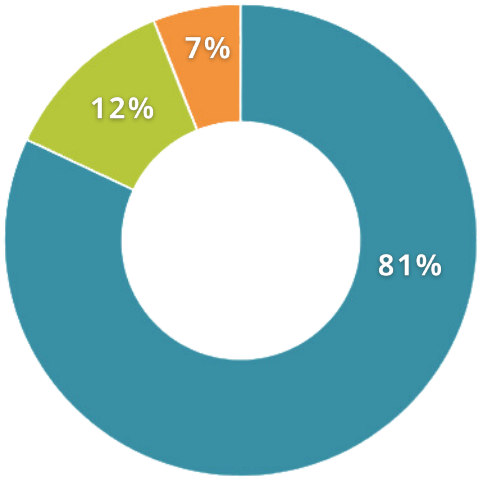
Financials

Revenue



35% Contributions & Grants
65% Program Service Fees
<1% Other Revenue

Expenses



81% Direct Service
12% Administration
7% Fundraising

Year End	6/30/23 Unaudited*	6/30/22 Audited
Revenue		
Contributions & Grants	$1,869,390	$1,916,993
Program Service Fees	$3,544,985	$2,455,542
Other Revenue	$4,537	$597,621
TOTAL	**$5,418,912**	**$4,970,156**
Expenses		
Direct Service	$4,712,640	$3,838,909
Administration	$672,160	$556,305
Fundraising	$399,710	$397, 525
TOTAL	**$5,784,510**	**$4,792,739**
Net Assets		
Change in Net Assets	($365,598)**	$177,417
Net Assets at FY End	**$908,726**	**$1,274,324**

**This preliminary financial information for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 is unaudited and therefore subject to change.*

***The excess of expenses over revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 was funded in part by donations received in a prior year.*

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Empowering Individuals • Building Community

For more information about this report, email us at fundraising@aane.org.

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Our Mission

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We provide individuals, families, and professionals with education, community, and support in an inclusive atmosphere of validation and respect.