The mission of the National Autism Association is to respond to the most urgent needs of the autism community, providing real help and hope so that all affected can reach their full potential.

We accomplish our mission by:

- **Advocacy**: Advocating for federal policy and resources that address the most urgent needs of the autism community.
- **Research**: Conducting and promoting research that uncovers and addresses the most critical challenges families and individuals face.
- **Education**: Providing education & training to families, first responders, and service professionals throughout the U.S.
- **Direct Tools**: Providing direct, tangible tools to families and schools in all 50 states.
- **Thoughtful Awareness**: Creating awareness that promotes understanding, compassion and respect for individuals with autism.
- **Hope**: Providing inspiration and empowerment through positive messaging, story-sharing and support.
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO MAKE PROGRESS.

From advocating for critical federal legislation, to putting tangible tools into the hands of families, NAA continued its mission in 2018 by providing meaningful help and support to individuals and families across the U.S. who are impacted by autism.
After noticing an increase in searches and fatalities among children with autism, NAA’s leadership began to monitor and collect case data to gain insights into frequency of wandering in autism and causes of death. In 2010, we took this data before our community’s federal Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee for the purpose of requesting additional data and federal resources. Over the past decade, NAA has worked to build critical awareness, national safety programs, nationwide training initiatives, and gain federal funding to help prevent further fatalities. In the last four years, our organization has worked to create and enact federal legislation that would provide law enforcement agencies and families with the resources they need to keep individuals with autism safe. We are extremely grateful that this critical legislation finally passed in 2018, and for all of the support among our lawmakers, fellow organizations, advocates and community members.

NAA LED THE WAY TO THE PASSAGE OF KEVIN & AVONTE’S LAW

- NAA sounded the alarm on autism-related wandering deaths before a federal committee; requested data, a diagnostic code and federal funding
- Trained staff at National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; assisted in creation of federal search & rescue guidelines; released first research paper on lethal outcomes related to wandering
- NAA New York Times OpEd called for federal legislation to help prevent wandering-related deaths
- Worked with Senator Chuck Schumer on creation of legislation; worked the next four years to get the bill passed
- Kevin & Avonte’s Law is finally enacted!
In 2018, NAA shipped over 5000 Big Red Safety Boxes to children and adults with autism. This lifesaving box is provided free to families throughout the United States, and contains critical tools to help prevent wandering-related emergencies.
In response to the increase in wandering-related deaths in the autism community, the National Autism Association created the Big Red Safety Box in 2011. Each box includes a caregiver checklist, family wandering emergency plan, first-responder profile form, wandering quick tips, sample IEP letter, student profile form, emotion identification cards, two GE wireless door/window alarms with batteries, one MedicAlert bracelet or pendant, one shoe ID tag, five stop sign visual prompts for doors and windows, two safety alert window clings for car or home windows, one red safety alert wristband and a Child ID Kit from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In addition this year, our teacher toolkits were shipped to over 300 schools in the U.S. Our safety programs have provided nearly 50,000 lifesaving boxes to date and are made possible through the generosity of American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Alex and Ani, Vivint Gives Back, MedicAlert Foundation, and with in-kind donations from Jasco Products Company and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

In response to the increase in wandering-related deaths in the autism community, the National Autism Association created the Big Red Safety Box in 2011. Each box includes a caregiver checklist, family wandering emergency plan, first-responder profile form, wandering quick tips, sample IEP letter, student profile form, emotion identification cards, two GE wireless door/window alarms with batteries, one MedicAlert bracelet or pendant, one shoe ID tag, five stop sign visual prompts for doors and windows, two safety alert window clings for car or home windows, one red safety alert wristband and a Child ID Kit from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In addition this year, our teacher toolkits were shipped to over 300 schools in the U.S. Our safety programs have provided nearly 50,000 lifesaving boxes to date and are made possible through the generosity of American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Alex and Ani, Vivint Gives Back, MedicAlert Foundation, and with in-kind donations from Jasco Products Company and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

The Big Red Safety Box has been a game changer for our family. I'm no longer as worried about him getting stuck, hurt or lost by going out his bedroom window again since I am now alerted as soon as he tries to open it.

JENNIFER T.
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

NAA’s Give A Voice program provides communication devices to individuals with autism who are nonverbal or minimally verbal, and whose communication challenges put them at increased risk of injury or harm. Each of our Give A Voice devices comes with Avatalker AAC communication software and a protective case.
Communication is not only a basic right, it’s often the first line of self-defense. Far too often, individuals with autism who are nonverbal or minimally verbal are left without a way to communicate basic wants or needs. This can lead to certain safety risks for those who may leave a safe place to seek out special topics or places without their caregiver, or who are experiencing medical issues or mistreatment. Communication helps ease anxiety and frustration, promotes independence, and provides building blocks for a variety of skillsets. For families unable to attain a device for use in the home, we provide a comprehensive communication package that includes a tablet, communication software, and protective casing. In 2018, 28 packages were provided to families in need. NAA also continued to educate families across the U.S. on how to obtain communication technology through their child’s school. This program is made possible through the generosity of Alex and Ani, GreaterGood.org, and Avatalker AAC.

“\nIt clicked in his brain that he could talk with it in under three hours! He loves it and loves being able to tell us he wants to go outside or eat. He giggles when he does it and we respond. His favorites so far are “Hello,” “I want a hug,” “I love you,” “I want to eat,” and “I want to go outside.” My Mom and I both cried most of Saturday when we gave it to him because it is SO amazing.

CHRISTINA M.\n
Avatalker® aac
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE UNDERSTOOD

This training and educational initiative for the autism community provides learning opportunities through on-site training, online webinars, toolkits, one-sheeters, and other educational materials that are free of charge for community members, first responders, and service professionals.
In 2018, NAA launched its new safety brochure suite that covers prevention and response information on wandering/elopement, restraint & seclusion, and bullying. The suite also includes important information for first responders on how to recognize the signs of autism, search and rescue information, interaction tips, and how to enhance safety within their local communities. This program also provides families with free access to educational webinars and free onsite and online training for law enforcement agencies. In 2018, nearly 15,000 families and agencies were directly served by the Autism Atrium program, with resources and educational materials reaching an additional 1.8M people through NAA’s website and social media channels.

“People would stare when he was younger, but as he’s become older, it’s more like a glare. One day at the beach, so many glared, including one of the lifeguards. You could tell they were wondering why he kept raising his arms, why he kept bending over, why he hummed, and was it a threat to them. He was simply having fun at the beach. Yet, because of those pointed glares, we were the ones who felt threatened. It’s days like this I’m reminded that we have so much work to do to create a culture of awareness, understanding and respect for all people with autism.”

LORI MCILWAIN
NATIONAL AUTISM ASSOCIATION

In 2018, NAA’s social media content continued to focus on safety, education, and positive story-sharing.
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO HOPE.

As a parent-run organization, hope is at the center of everything we do for the 1 in 59 families affected by autism. It drives us to initiate important national conversations, to push for better solutions, to strengthen our families and community, and to provide real tools and assistance that can be immediately felt on the ground.
Wendy Fournier, President
Claire Bothwell, Chairperson
Rosemarie Dubrowsky, Treasurer
Krystal Higgins, Executive Director
Lori McIlwain
James A. Moody
Leslie Phillips
Joseph Ranseth

One Park Avenue, Suite 1
Portsmouth, RI 02871

Phone: 877.NAA.AUTISM (622.2884)
Fax: 401.293.5342
Web: nationalautismassociation.org
Email: naa@nationalautism.org

facebook.com/nationalautism
twitter.com/nationalautism
instagram.com/nationalautism
2017 Financials

**2017 Income**

- Retail Partners/Sponsors: $287,697
- Major Gifts, Grants, Other: $165,824
- Events: $112,450
- Donated Goods: $6,010
- Total: $571,981

**2017 Expenses**

- Programs: $470,722
- Management & General: $58,790
- Fundraising: $15,045
- Total: $544,537

*Net Assets for 2017: $391,623*

---

To see NAA's 990s, please visit our website at nationalautismassociation.org.
Nothing is more important to us than making sure that our loved ones with autism live in a world that grants them all of the rights they so greatly deserve. The right to reach their full potential, to make progress, to be safe, to be heard, to be understood and to always have hope for a rich, fulfilling life.

We don’t take our mission here lightly - and we don’t give up.

The passage of Kevin and Avonte’s Law in 2018 was a long-fought battle, but thanks to your ongoing support, it is an accomplishment that we can all celebrate, with the knowledge that we have made a real and lasting difference for people with autism.

As we head into 2019, we want to let you know how grateful we are for your continued support of NAA’s mission and our programs.

With hope,

Wendy Fournier
President