



First. Then.



FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends,

“First...then...” is a common strategy we use to help individuals with autism prepare for what awaits. *First, we will go to our doctor’s appointment. Then, we will get ice cream.*

This is a fitting analogy for how we as a community must approach programs for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. First, we must make appropriate services available and accessible; we must support parents and professionals; and we must foster opportunities for community engagement, awareness, and inclusion. Then, and only then, children will get the help they need.

Then Nathaniel reduces his self-injurious behaviors.

Then Chloe speaks her first word.

Then Amiyah’s parents are empowered.

Then Jacob goes to the theater.

Then Isabel forms friendships.

Then our entire community benefits.

This was a year of advancing and adapting, preparing us to better serve a growing community of individuals with autism and their families.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters for helping us move from “firsts” to “thens.”



Felice

—Felice Brenner

Chair, Board of Directors

First we build it. Then a world of possibility awaits.

In 2016, ABC of NC embarked on a \$5 million capital campaign to expand our comprehensive autism services campus to offer a wider array of services to children with autism, their families, and our entire community.

Hello World is a campaign to open possibilities for individuals with autism. The enlarged ABC of NC campus—which includes renovations to the existing academic building, construction of a 20,000-square-foot clinical building, construction of a gymnasium, and programmatic enhancements—means shorter wait times for diagnosis, expanded availability of interventions, and greater access to vocational and independent living training.

Generous, committed donors provided strong, early momentum and we are confident that our community has the resources, heart, and will to meet this philanthropic challenge.

Hello World. We're excited to meet you!



Visit the campaign online to meet some of the children and families we serve, learn more about our expansion plans, and check on our progress to date:

ABCOfNC.org/HELLOWORLD

First we make services accessible. Then children thrive.



Because of your generosity...

When Nathaniel was diagnosed with autism, his family knew ABC of NC was the best place for their son, but they also knew tuition was not feasible for their family budget.

“When we found out we had received financial aid, we were so excited; we called every member of our family,” said Nathaniel’s mother, Jessica.

“We have seen so much improvement since he’s been at ABC of NC! He is better able to communicate, he’s made huge academic gains, and his social skills have improved tremendously, which has meant the world for our home-life and his relationship with his siblings. We will forever be grateful for the opportunity.”

Because of your generosity, Nathaniel and 27 other children benefited from ABC of NC’s financial aid program in 2015–16.

\$2.1 M

*Since its founding,
ABC of NC has
awarded nearly \$2.1
million in financial aid.*

Because of your advocacy...

For the English family—with two children with autism—the cost of providing appropriate interventions for their boys, Luke and Sam, would be prohibitive. The recommended treatment of one-on-one applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy is intensive, with as many as 30 hours per week prescribed, and until very recently wasn't covered by insurance in North Carolina.

Over many years, autism advocates worked tirelessly to advance autism insurance reform in North Carolina. And now, many (but not all) insurance plans are required to cover these critical therapies for families with a child—or children—on the spectrum. Following the legislative lead, many self-funded companies, like the Englishes' employer, followed suit, with NC Medicaid not far behind.

Because of your advocacy, the English family, and others, are now able to access medically necessary therapies for their children.

ABC of NC is committed to ensuring service accessibility to individuals from any economic background and seeks funding from a variety of sources, including individual donors, grants, educational partnerships, private health insurance, and Medicaid.

43rd

North Carolina became the 43rd state to sign autism insurance reform into law.

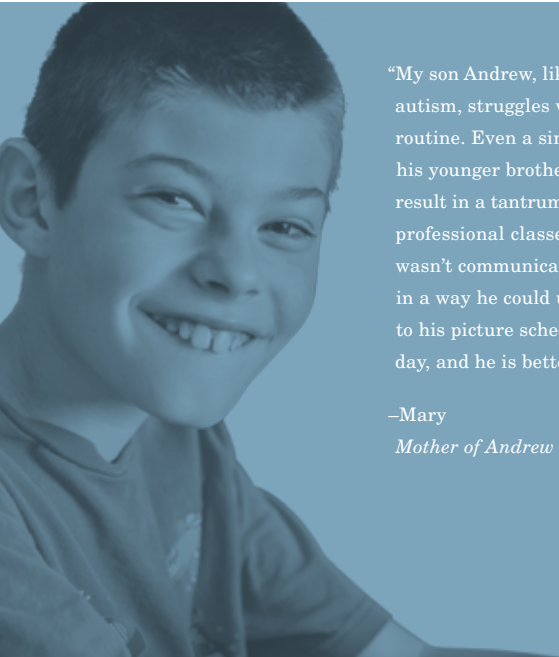
"I took my daughter Chloe to her yearly checkup with her pediatrician a year after he referred her for diagnostic testing at ABC of NC's Autism Clinic. He was amazed by her progress. He had recorded that she 'would not engage' with him, and a year later she was making eye contact and responding to his questions. Everyone who has been around Chloe notices how much of a difference ABC of NC has made, and we are so grateful."

—Alexis • *Mother of Chloe (age 5)*



We first empower parents and professionals. Then kids succeed.

When parents and professionals access information and training about effective educational techniques and therapeutic interventions for children with autism, children are the beneficiaries. Children with autism are surrounded by adults who better understand their needs and how to best meet them. Parents/guardians gain confidence. Professionals deepen their understanding and add to their skill sets.



“My son Andrew, like many children with autism, struggles with disruptions to his routine. Even a simple change—like taking his younger brother to school first—can result in a tantrum. Through the free parent/professional classes, I discovered that I wasn’t communicating changes in routine in a way he could understand. Now, we refer to his picture schedule before we start our day, and he is better able to cope.”

—Mary
Mother of Andrew (age 10)

This year, ABC of NC offered 20 free parent/professional classes on topics ranging from managing challenging behaviors to increasing communication, and from toilet training to diet expansion. We continued our collaboration with **Forsyth Technical Community College** on an Autism Paraprofessional class, and we built upon our relationships with public school districts.

Since 2013, 42 parents, educators, and professionals have participated in Forsyth Tech's Autism Paraprofessional class, a collaboration between the community college and ABC of NC.



“I was working as an early interventionist and found that I had more and more children with autism on my caseload. I sought out the Forsyth Tech Autism Paraprofessional class as a way to strengthen my skills and add to my toolkit. It was the most powerful professional development experience of my career.”

—Becky Medrano
*Registered Behavior
Technician (RBT)*



“When Amiyah was diagnosed with autism, we felt completely unprepared. We enrolled in the Autism Paraprofessional class at Forsyth Tech to get a better understanding of Amiyah’s needs and to learn strategies to help her. As parents of a child on the spectrum, it is the best thing we could have done for her—and for us.”

—Amy and Bishop
Parents of Amiyah (age 3)

**First we build a community
that embraces, includes,
and accepts.**

**Then everyone feels
welcome.**

Through a series of Community Enrichment Mini-Grants from the **Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County**, children in our community with autism and their families experienced visual and performing arts like never before. A desire to infuse current ABC of NC programming with arts education became an opportunity to bring together the local arts and autism communities in a powerful and lasting way.

*In April 2016, **ARTivity on the Green** joined other iconic buildings and landmarks in Winston-Salem as part of Light It Up Blue, an initiative to shine a light on autism in our community.*



A partnership with **Peppercorn Theater** at the **Children’s Museum of Winston-Salem** established sensory-friendly performances and created resources that help demystify the theater experience for children with autism.

An artist-in-residence worked with clients on art projects that were then on display at the **Southeastern Center for Contemporary Arts (SECCA)** during autism awareness and advocacy month, an exhibit that later moved to galleries in the Downtown Arts District.

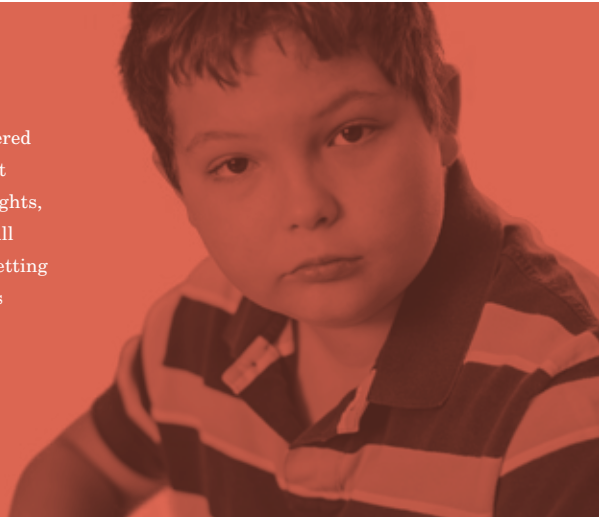
A collaboration with **SECCA** and **The Engaging Educator Foundation** made contemporary art accessible through social narratives that helped prepare children for trips to the museum, and activities—interaction with touch-friendly objects, museum walks, and multi-modal engagement strategies—that brought the art to life.

“It was important to all of us who worked on the project that individuals with autism felt at ease and were able to make connections between the art they saw in the museum and their everyday lives. And really, isn’t that the experience we want everyone to have in a museum environment?”

—Jen Brown
*The Engaging
Educator Foundation*

“We were so excited to be able to take our son Jacob to the Peppercorn Theater performances. We had never even considered going to a play before because I just didn’t think he would be able handle it—the lights, the loud noises, the costumes. It would all be too much. But, the sensory-friendly setting is so inviting to families like ours. It was amazing! He loved the cast interaction, the music, the whole experience.”

—Toni • *Mother of Jacob (age 10)*



First we engage the broader community.

Then we raise awareness and critical funding.

“Mid-way through the lunch, the tears started pouring down my face because it was as if the speaker was describing my son—the challenging behaviors, the difficulties with social interactions, the rigidity of thought and action. How could I have not known?”

—Anonymous

We get lunch invitations all the time, but how often do they have the power to change—*really change*—lives?

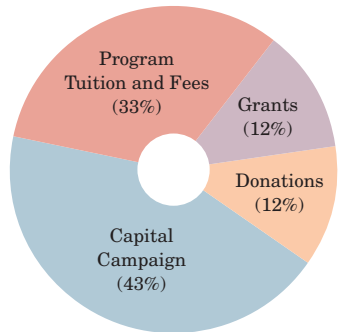
ABC of NC's Gourmet Lunchbox Lunch raises critical funds that support the organization's financial aid program and provide vital operating support, but the event is about so much more. It's about raising awareness about autism in our community. It's about starting a dialogue about the needs of individuals with autism and their families. It's about promoting greater understanding of how autism impacts our larger community. It's about bringing people—both those directly and indirectly impacted by autism—together around a common cause.



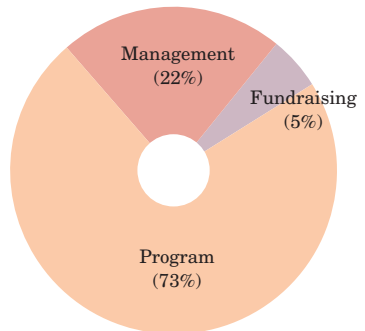
Avid golfers play, on average, 46 rounds of golf each year. But for golfers who participate in the **Modern Toyota Golf Tournament**, one of those rounds is elevated above all others.

“When our son Wyatt was diagnosed with autism, our family—like many others in our community—went in search of help and hope. And all roads led to ABC of NC. We found a warm, caring environment and cutting-edge, evidence-based educational and therapeutic interventions to help children with autism, like Wyatt, develop to their full potential,” said Omnia Fowler, Dealer Principal and General Manager at Modern Automotive Group. “This tournament is a way to give back to an organization that has given so much to our family while also educating the community about autism.”

2015–16 Total Revenue



2015–16 Total Expenses



We encourage relationships first, between individuals with autism and their neurotypical peers.

Then friendships blossom.

At ABC of NC, kids who have autism and kids like me—who don't have autism—get to spend a lot of time together and learn about each other. I have learned that we aren't that different from each other. I like being friends with the kids with autism and they like being friends with me."

—Isabel

*Summer Program
Participant (age 11)*

Many of ABC of NC's programs are inclusive, meaning they offer children with autism and children without a developmental delay an opportunity to learn and play together for a mutually advantageous experience. Children with autism benefit from the language, social, behavior, and play modeling of their peers, while typically developing peers gain understanding and acceptance of individual differences.



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"ix" indicates in-kind support.





VISION

Our vision is that all people living with autism spectrum disorder reach their full potential in a world where they are valued, accepted, and included.

MISSION

To provide high-quality, evidence-based diagnostic, therapeutic, and educational services to people with autism spectrum disorder; to ensure service accessibility to individuals from any economic background; to offer support and hope to families; and to advocate for inclusion and acceptance.

ABC of NC Child Development Center

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Winston-Salem, NC 27127

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ABC of NC is accredited by Advanc-Ed and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
United Way of Forsyth County code: #2652