

A group of seven young adults, four men and three women, are standing behind a large, dark wooden sculpture. The sculpture depicts a person sitting inside a large, circular frame. The group is diverse in age and ethnicity. The background is a dense, leafy green wall. The image has a dark blue overlay.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR AUTISM 2020

Circle of Peace
By Judith Sileo
American Sculptor
A Gift of Charlotte Ford
April 2004

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE

For a community that historically has seen its fair share of challenges, 2020 still tested us. And we responded with strength and resolve. NEXT for AUTISM is proud to report on our extraordinary efforts in 2020, which we were only able to achieve with the dedication of each and every one of you. We thank you.

[DONATE NOW](#)

NEXT FOR AUTISM RELIEF FUND

NEXT FOR AUTISM

Relief Fund

We asked and you answered. Within weeks of the COVID-19 quarantine, NEXT for AUTISM created the Relief Fund to respond to the immediate needs of organizations that directly served families facing the adverse effects of the pandemic. The funds we raised made a world of difference to our partner organizations. Thank you!



Personal protective equipment to front line service providers caring for adults with disabilities living on their own and quarantined from their families

*Mobile technology
to adults with autism,
enabling them to
continue to receive
job and life skills
coaching remotely*



*Mentorship to young
adults with ASD on
topics such as
COVID19-related health
and safety guidelines,
managing anxieties,
and avoiding job
disruption*



Additional instructional support to students and families as they navigated remote learning

Participation by young adults with ASD in TECH camp, assistance to adjust to a new virtual reality and to live as independently as possible

Bilingual autism-safety training toolboxes that provided Spanish-speaking families with information about navigating safety issues

PROJECT SEARCH AUTISM ENHANCEMENT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING



With only a few months left until graduation when the quarantine began, the Project SEARCH Autism Enhancement Program (PSAE) moved quickly to virtual learning. NEXT for AUTISM worked closely with our partners at the Arc Westchester to assist with the complex tasks of modifying the curriculum and guiding interns to adopt online work habits. Within a week, the program resumed with a modified curriculum and busy interns.

PSAE ZOOM GRADUATION

PSAE's first-ever, virtual graduation took place in June. Employers, instructors, loved ones and former graduates dialed in for speeches and good wishes all around. After months of quarantine, the interns delighted in each other's company, even online.

ARI



"My favorite part was working in Housekeeping and Pharmacy. I liked the Training Room and talking about Weekend Plans. I Like Going To The Cafeteria."

TARIQ



"In the future I would like to work in an office, using some of the skills I learned in telecommuting. Data entry, learning Google tools and Zoom will help me a lot in the future. I will also like to continue taking art classes, my daily workout and learning to cook different types of food."

ANTHONY



"I'm glad and prideful today to FINALLY graduate. The experience on PSAE was like a real job, it was pretty hard, but I made it through it. I learned to do video meetings and it's the first time that I EVER worked at home. Even this COVID-19 pandemic won't slow Project SEARCH down, it survived to June!"

NICHOLAS



"Another favorite moment was when the IT supervisors were surprised that I [completed all of my tasks] and they said, "You finished them all?" And then they gave me more!"

MADISON



"This year was all sorts of nerve-wracking since this experience took me way out of my comfort zone, but I feel a sense of accomplishment for making it to this day."

ISABELLE



"I'm very excited to be here as a 2020 graduate today because when I first arrived in September, I felt uncomfortable. I wasn't sure if I could handle feedback. I have learned that addressing feedback appropriately is an important job skill."

JASON



"When I first came to the Project Search Program, I wasn't sure that this was the right program for me. But when I think about this program, it was very helpful indeed. As I graduate from Project Search, I WILL REMEMBER THIS PLACE AND I HAD THE BEST INTERNS AND THE BEST PSAE STAFF I EVER HAD THIS YEAR IN 2020!"

KEVIN



"I loved working as a member of a team and I learned many skills. I learned that it's easier to work in a group."

EMPLOYMENT

CLIENT SUPPORT

The universal move to remote work meant that companies and organizations needed support to transition their disability workforce. Our consultants guided corporations such as Cintas and Freddie Mac, as well as non-profit clients, through this difficult period and served as their sounding board. We established work-from-home guidelines that were tailored to individuals with ASD, collaborated with the Simons Foundation on an internship guide, and developed free content on topics such as [How to Attend Online Meetings](#), [How to Structure Your Day When Working From Home](#), and [Tips for Supporting Employees with ASD During Stressful Times](#).

SUPPORT TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS



- 18 Webinars produced in 6 Months
- Attended by an average of 83 people per session, from 32 States and the U.K.

To ensure continued support for service providers in the employment field during the COVID-19 shut-down, NEXT for AUTISM swiftly introduced a webinar series to share knowledge with job coaches, providers of vocational services and clients. From across the country, service providers who support individuals with ASD and other disabilities tuned in to these popular webinars each week.

"I was able to hear great advice on how to be a more inclusive employee and team member." - Financial Services Employee

"I find them to be incredibly valuable and I attend them whenever I can." - Nonprofit Employee

"Great job, so thorough and yet concise! I really need to pass this along to my students again with a fresh perspective from your presentation today. Thank you!" - School District Employee

For more information about NEXT for AUTISM's Employment Program, please visit our [website](#).

ADA 30TH ANNIVERSARY



What's NEXT for Disability Employment?

A Virtual Panel: Insights From
Corporate Leaders

www.NEXTforAUTISM.org/corporateemploymentconsulting

To mark the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we gathered corporate leaders from JPMorgan Chase, Freddie Mac, Cintas, and WhiteFox Defense to discuss best practices in disability employment in a webinar that drew nearly 600 registrants.

WATCH PANEL RECORDING

COMMUNITY LIVING



As ever, we are committed to helping individuals with autism live within their communities with the right supports for them to thrive and become as independent as possible. NEXT for NEIGHBORS's pilot program, in partnership with the Arc Westchester, opened a new home this year. We worked with New York State to facilitate the individual's new residency, and with the Arc to train direct support professionals and the management team.

In 2021, NEXT for NEIGHBORS will continue to build relationships with community living providers and shape their services. Our goal is to empower individuals with autism towards independence within neighborhoods across the country.

FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING FOR THE ASD COMMUNITY

NEXT_{FOR}AUTISM PricewaterhouseCooper FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING IMPACT



FLORIDA

Professionals Trained: 7
PWD Impacted: 150
Volunteers Engaged: 1

NEW JERSEY

Professionals Trained: 10
PWD Impacted: 800
Volunteers Engaged: 5



NEW YORK

Professionals Trained: 4
PWD Impacted: 200
Volunteers Engaged: 1

OHIO

Professionals Trained: 25
PWD Impacted: 1,500
Volunteers Engaged: 4



Thanks to a generous grant from PricewaterhouseCoopers, NEXT for AUTISM explored teaching financial literacy to individuals with autism in 2020. We held workshops to train service providers on how to teach financial literacy, and facilitated a direct-training session by PwC volunteers to individuals with ASD. We look forward to continuing this important area of independence building for adults with autism.

PARTNER PROGRAMS

- **The Center for Autism and the Developing Brain** welcomed Dr. Stephen Kanne, Ph.D, as its new Director. A world-renowned autism expert, Dr. Kanne was most recently Executive Director of the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders at the University of Missouri.
- **The NYC Autism Charter Schools** in Harlem and the Bronx went above and beyond this year to care for its students and their families throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, providing technology and support for online learning, as well as assistance to families impacted by the economic downturn.

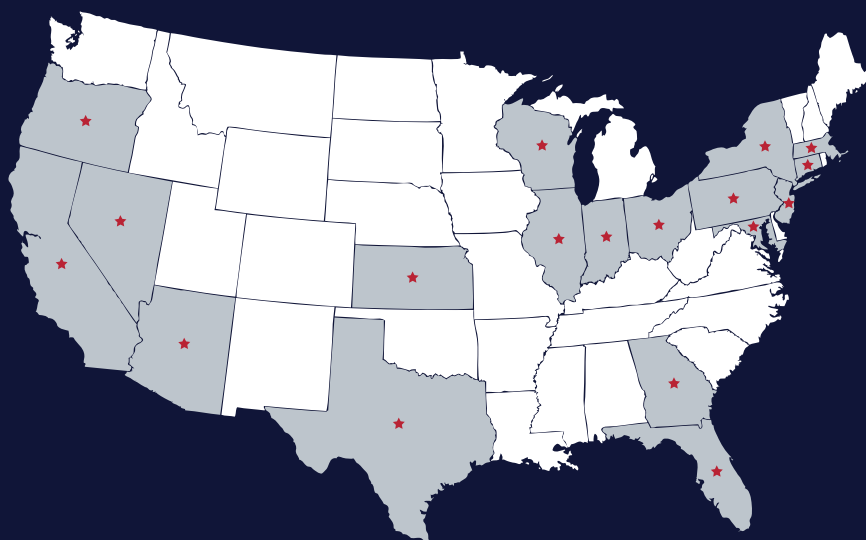


- The NYC Autism Charter School Responds to COVID-19 -

- **Hunter Autism Research, Practice & Policy Center** continued to provide autism training to education majors at Hunter College, which during the pandemic, went online. Graduates from this program are the next generation of practitioners and researchers helping to meet the needs of people living with autism and their families.



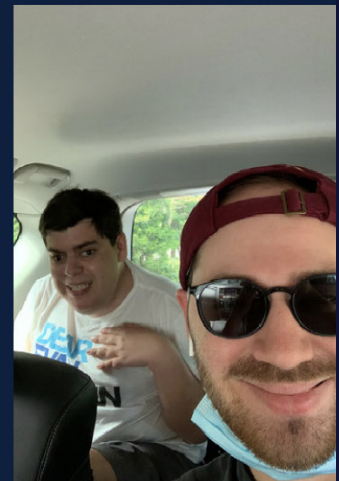
- **Night of Too Many Stars Grantees** Throughout 2020, organizations funded across the country pushed forward to provide services to individuals and families. Since 2017, Night of Too Many Stars has supported 50 such organizations, and although this year's fundraising event was postponed, we were able to sustain limited support to a handful of grantees during the pandemic.



- Night of Too Many Stars Grantees Across the United States -

NEXTERCISE

Within weeks of the quarantine, NEXT for AUTISM organized its first-ever, choose-your-own-adventure, virtual 5K fitness event. Participants from across the U.S. came out to run, walk, kayak, bike, and help raise funds in support of individuals with autism who were impacted by the pandemic. A fun community event, NEXTERCISE reminded us of the importance of health and wellness for people on the autism spectrum.



- Families and friends NEXTextercising for autism! -



Team NEXTONIANS for NEXTERCISE 2020



Watch later



Share

- THE FRAGRANCE FOUNDATION - GIVE BACK PARTNER



The Fragrance Foundation & NEXT for AUTISM



NEXT for AUTISM is proud to be named The Fragrance Foundation's Give Back Partner in 2019 and 2020. In 2019, we launched our first, joint fundraising event, which provided critical support to individuals with ASD and their families. In 2020, we are doing it again! On December 8th, NEXT for AUTISM, The Fragrance Foundation, and AARMY Studios will join forces, this time virtually, for another super-charged, community wellness event.

Please visit our [event page](#) more information.

DONATE NOW

NEXT GEN BOARD

This year, our NEXT Gen board rallied to support #GivingTuesdayNOW, which directly supported the NEXT for AUTISM Relief Fund and NEXTERCISE, raising funds as a team! In December they plan an exciting announcement on #GivingTuesday, December 1st.

NEXT Gen leaders are professionals from academia, consulting, finance, publishing, and marketing. They are siblings, cousins, and friends of people with autism who share NEXT for AUTISM's values and are devoted to cultivating a community of leaders to forward our mission.



Andrew Klestadt, Erik Rutter, Alexa West, Jenna Grippio, Tania Ryalls, Matthew Tinkelman

[Not pictured: Marni Hirschfield Gomez, Ali Goldsmith, Jennifer Hilibrand, Kayla Lebovits, Aaron Weiner]

AUTISM ALLIES



So many of you went above and beyond in service of individuals with autism and of our organization this year. Thank you!

We are deeply touched by your continued support in this year of historic challenges and extraordinary action. 2020 tested us all, and we responded by supporting each other with resilience and resolve. We send best wishes for your health and safety in 2021 from all of us at NEXT for AUTISM.

NEXT for AUTISM transforms the national landscape of services for people with autism by strategically designing, launching, and supporting innovative programs. We believe that individuals with autism have the potential to live fulfilling, productive lives when supported by excellent services and connected to their communities. We continually ask, what's next for people on the autism spectrum?

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