

## Autism Society Southeastern WI Summary Report

### **Information about the Applicant**

Over forty-five years ago a group of parents came together to find support for their families, and to advocate for their children under the umbrella of the Autism Society of America, forming a chapter for Southeastern Wisconsin. From a small group of dedicated parents, we have grown into a leading organization that is recognized for our impactful services and programs. Our mission is to improve the lives of all affected by autism, and we work every day to reduce stigma, promote acceptance, and give people strategies that will help them be successful. We strive to increase public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people with autism, advocate for appropriate services across the lifespan, and provide high quality information to help people make the best decisions possible for themselves and their families. We also provide support services such as a help line, support groups, education, and community programs for those whose lives are affected by autism. This is a much-needed service in Southeastern Wisconsin as we provided over 4,231 help/support contacts in 2021.

### **Statement of Need**

Our work with law enforcement officials to make sure they are aware of the resources our organization provides and to provide accurate information is more important now than ever before. In 2001, the FBI released a study that showed that people with developmental disabilities are seven times more likely to have encounters with law enforcement than their typical developing peers. A 2006 Autism Society of America survey of individuals with ASD and their families indicated that 35% of individuals with autism had been the victim of a crime and that 23% have had interactions with first responders due to wandering or eloping. Safe & Sound provides information and strategies to benefit individuals on the spectrum, their families and the professionals who work with them. We have been doing this work since 2009 because it is so important. This is the first grant we have written for this project for 2022-2023.

### **Project Goals and Expected Benefits**

Funds will be used to provide Safe & Sound trainings to first responders and autism families. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others across their entire lifespan. Individuals with ASD are at a greater risk of injury than their neurotypical peers because of deficits in language and skills, difficulty picking up social

cues and understanding other individual's thoughts and behaviors, self-stimulatory behaviors, narrow interests and limited leisure skills, and a fixation with water.

Safe & Sound training is an all-inclusive opportunity for first responders and families to gather strategies and information on how to keep loved ones safe in their home and in their community. Safe & Sound helps parents and professionals identify potential safety situations and provide possible solutions so individuals with ASD and those who care for them can be prepared for or avoid disastrous situations. The training is conducted in two parts. One session is for families and teens. This 90-minute session provides practical tools and information about how to interact with first responders. More than one-third of children with ASD who wander are never or rarely able to communicate their name, address, or phone number, and not all people with autism may recognize the uniform or command presence. These skills can be taught and generalized, but not without the inclusion of family and purposeful teaching. The second session is a 6-hour training for first responders. This can be between one and six hours depending on the request of the CIT Department. A lack of personal familiarity with individuals who have a disability may cause first responders to feel professionally awkward and uncertain when providing emergency care and assistance. It is important for first responders to learn how to recognize

autism and effectively approach a person on the autism spectrum to minimize the risk or victimization of the individual, as well as the risk to those intervening.

### **Project Implementation Plan**

The Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin is currently the largest affiliate in Wisconsin, serving 38% of the state's population. We are the primary autism resource for Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha, Dodge, Jefferson, Ozaukee, Walworth, and Washington counties. Many of the families we serve are low-income families. Recognizing this barrier, Safe & Sound training will be free to all participants to allow this valuable information to be accessible to everyone. We are planning to have a family and CIT training in every county we serve in 2022- 2023. YTD, we have partnered with NAMI and offered seven trainings in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Jefferson County. CIT departments are contacting us monthly to provide resources and offer training to new recruits. Currently we have seven more requests just for 2022 and two for 2023 already. If we receive support through this grant we will be able to give CIT vehicles items to have at their disposal when they encounter an individual with disabilities. Recently we had a training and an officer confessed to not knowing what Stimming meant. We have much education work to do.

Rechelle Chaffee and Emily Levine are updating curriculum and do the trainings with and separate of NAMI.

Angela Maslowski will be revising and updating collateral materials and leave behind items. Managing print of revised/updated materials as well.

### **Evaluation Plan**

The log-loss evaluation method is used to evaluate trainings. Attendees are given a survey to gauge if the training met expectations, provided useful information, gave specific tools, if the presenter seemed knowledgeable and if the handouts/materials were helpful and useful. We also solicit suggestions for improvements that can be made to future trainings. We use this knowledge to learn which topics are resonating with our audience and which speakers and events have been the most helpful to our community.

We also request and receive verbal feedback from our attendees. Our on-site program staff spend time after the training talking to attendees and watching interactions with the speaker and with each other. This allows our staff to assess the immediate impact the training has made by the excitement and interactions observed following the session. All feedback is carefully reviewed and considered, and future projects and events adjusted in reflection.

### **Budget**

## **Safe & Sound CIT Trainings -- 2022-2023**

### **Budget**

	<b>Price</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Total</b>
Marketing (print, web and social media, event banners and signage)	\$1,500.00	1	\$1,500.00
Spanish translation of materials for family	\$2,000.00	1	\$2,000.00

Training Giveaways (Reusable Bag, Police Car/CIT vehicles including cards, Fidget bags)	\$10.00	500	\$5,000.00
Development Director, Director of Education & Outreach, and Development Coordinator (Event planning, and job assignments, recruitment/scheduling and tracking) 80 hours	\$25.00	80	\$2,000.00
Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin Staff at each event (Day of event 4 hours x 25 trainings = 100 hours)	\$25.00	100	\$2,500.00
Mileage (1 staff member x 24.6 miles (roundtrip office to event) = 183.4 miles)	\$0.55	615	\$335.18
<b>Budget Total</b>			<b>\$13,335.18</b>

**Staff Recommendation**

The Grant application can be recommended for approval with some amendments to the budget. The grant can be applied to the expenses for marketing, translation, and training give aways. We cannot pay for the costs related to staff hours and the work of staff at the events. WE can provide a grant in the amount of \$8,500.00