



AJ Foundation

Empowering the Autism Community



The AJ Foundation and
Comprehensive Learning Center
2018-19 Annual Report



**Comprehensive
Learning Center**
For Individuals with Autism

Dear Families and Friends of The AJ Foundation,

I am so glad to have this opportunity to thank you for all the support you have given us this past year. We have had yet another very successful year of fundraising and, once again, hit new records with each event! We know we could not have done it without your help! When we first started The AJ Foundation we never imagined that almost 20 years later, we would have this amazing community of supporters who believe in our mission, our children, and our adults as much as we do! Thank you to everyone who came out to support us at our events, to those who attend year after year, and to the many new faces, we welcome you to our AJF/CLC family!



Your gifts to The AJ Foundation have helped CLC provide the incredible services that our children not only need but deserve! You have helped make a better life for all the students we serve and their families.

Thank you! - Joanne Corless

To our Comprehensive Learning Center Community,

This past year has been a huge milestone for us here at CLC. With the endless support of so many wonderful donors, we were able to move into a large facility, allowing more opportunities for our students and adults. It has been an honor to watch the progress our learners have made, and to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates. The community you have helped us build is so important for the success of these individuals with autism and their families. Our work is never done and we are so fortunate to have the continued outpouring of support from so many who are touched by CLC in some way. We are very happy to share updates about our program with you and hope you enjoy reading about how the work we do here at CLC impacts our students, graduates, and families in such a meaningful way.

Thank you so much for all you have done and continue to do!

Your gifts to the Comprehensive Learning Center have made opportunities available for people living with autism that otherwise, would not have been possible! Thank you for supporting our mission and allowing us to create these wonderful opportunities!

Thank you! - Cindy Murphy



Graduations & Promotions!

Congratulations Remi, Will B., Connor F., Will M., and Connor M.! These amazing young adults completed their time in CLC's Education Program in June 2018 and June 2019 and we want to celebrate their huge accomplishment! Many of these individuals "grew up" at CLC, entering our program when they were young children. Some spent far less time with us but made amazing progress just the same. Each of our graduates reached their goals through extremely hard work day in and day out.

If you have the privilege to know one of these incredible individuals, we hope you will marvel as we do at the dedication and perseverance of each to reach this milestone. We couldn't be more proud! We are thrilled that all have entered our Adult Life Skills Program and remain a part of our CLC family!



At CLC, our mission is to meet our learners' needs across their lifespan. Whether our students are attending our Preschool Program, our Elementary Program, our Middle/High School Program, or our Adult Life Skills Program, we are fully committed to helping each master the skills needed to live as independently and as fulfilling a life as possible!



Matt Ward began his career here at CLC in 2010 when he joined us in the role of Instructor. Despite not having prior experience with autism nor Applied Behavior Analysis, Matt quickly grasped many critical skills needed to be effective in his role. Over the next few years, Matt's continued growth led to a promotion in 2015 when he assumed the role of Trainer in Module E. As he continued to thrive and as the need arose, Matt took on additional responsibilities--overseeing two Modules in the role of Trainer. Matt not only took on more challenges at work but also expanded his formal education obtaining his Master of Education degree and certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). When the position opened for a Clinical Director in CLC's Education Program in 2018, Matt was the obvious choice for this role. We are very happy to have Matt be a part of CLC's leadership helping us shape our ever-evolving program to meet the needs of individuals with autism well into our future!



Understanding

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. There is often nothing about how people with ASD look that sets them apart from other people, but people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is characterized by:



- Ongoing social problems that include difficulty communicating and interacting with others
 - Repetitive behaviors as well as limited interests or activities
 - Symptoms that typically are recognized in the first two years of life
- Symptoms that hurt the individual's ability to function socially, at school or work, or other areas of life.
 - People with ASD may also experience sleep problems and irritability.

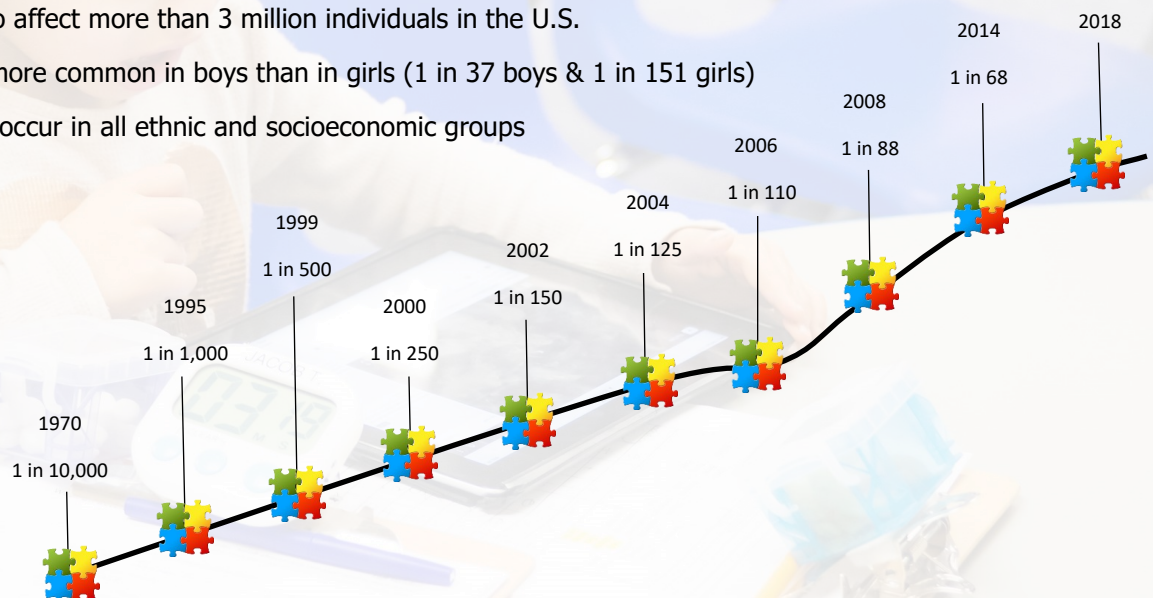
Although people with ASD experience many challenges, they may also have **Strengths**, including:

- Being able to learn things in detail and remember information for long periods of time
- Being strong visual and auditory learners
- Excelling in math, science, music, or art.

Prevalence The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates autism's prevalence as 1 in 59 children in the United States.

- ASD is estimated to affect more than 3 million individuals in the U.S.
- ASD is four times more common in boys than in girls (1 in 37 boys & 1 in 151 girls)
- ASD is reported to occur in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups

Autism rates rose 15% in the last 2 years. Data from 2019 looks to demonstrate 1 in 40 children are affected.



Autism



Today, autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S., and is estimated to affect more than 3 million individuals in the U.S.

Tackling autism with evidence-based treatment.

What does it mean to be an evidence-based treatment? "Evidence-based" means that the treatment has passed scientific tests of its usefulness, quality, and effectiveness. The method of treatment used here at the Comprehensive Learning Center is known as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

ABA is a scientific discipline concerned with applying techniques based upon the principles of learning to change behavior of social significance. ABA for autism intervention includes many different techniques focusing on antecedents (what happens before a behavior occurs) and on consequences (what happens after the behavior).

Why do we use ABA?

ABA is considered an evidence-based, best practice treatment by the US Surgeon General and by the American Psychological Association. More than 20 studies have established that intensive and long-term therapy using ABA principles improves outcomes for many but not all children with autism. "Intensive" and "long-term" refer to programs that provide 25 to 40 hours a week of therapy for 1 to 3 years. These studies show gains in intellectual functioning, language development, daily living skills and social functioning. Studies with adults, though fewer in number, show similar benefits.

Studies have shown...

- ABA is effective in teaching new skills
- ABA is effective in reducing challenging behavior
- When implemented intensively (more than 20 hours per week) and early in life (beginning prior to the age of 4 years), ABA may produce large gains in development and reductions in the need for special services; however, large studies with strong experimental designs are needed to confirm the results reported for intensive, early intervention.

With the rise of individuals being diagnosed with Autism, there comes a rise in cost for services meeting the needs of this population.

- The projected cost to society by 2025 is estimated to reach **\$1 Trillion annually**

With the generosity of our AJF Community, we were able to reach new heights in our fundraising efforts and do our part in addressing these growing needs!



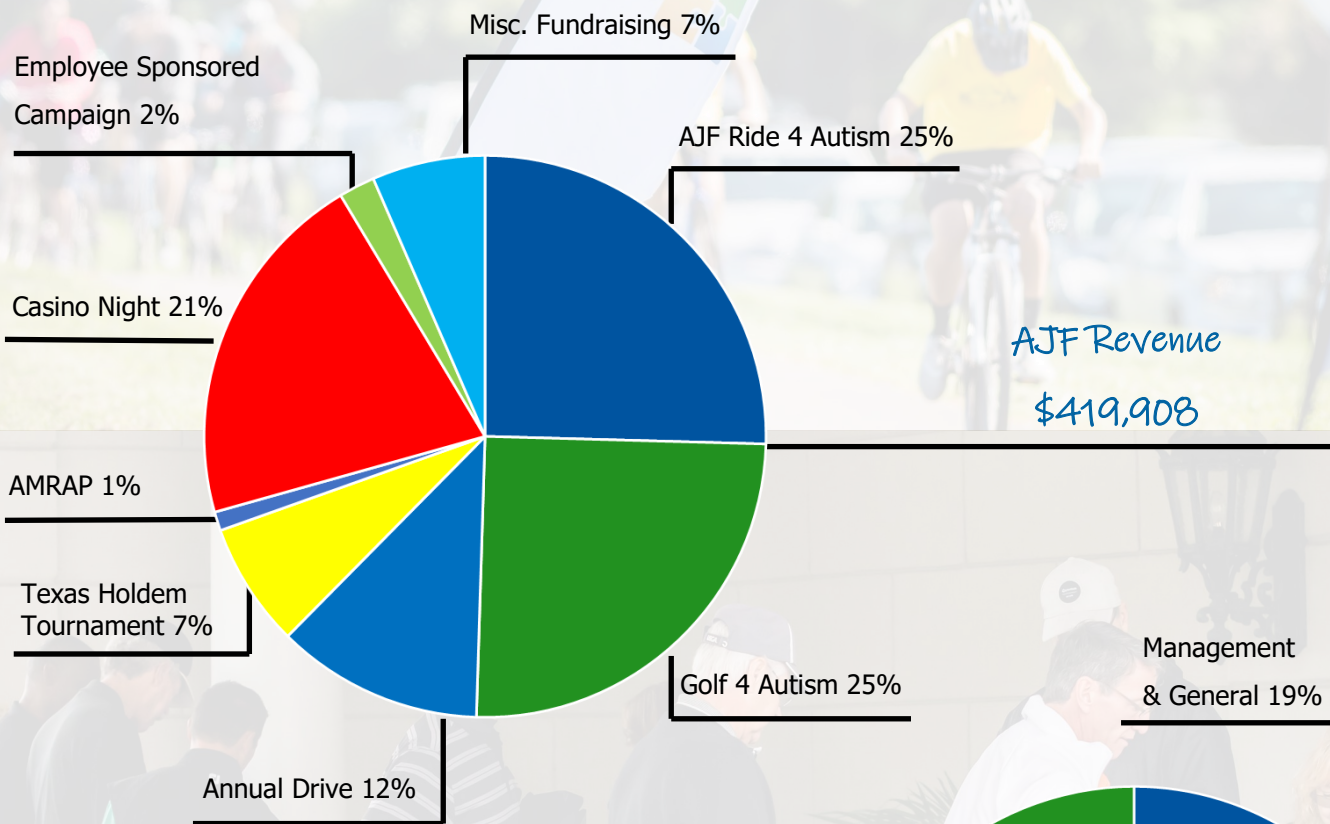
Information Sourced From:

The National Institute of Mental Health, The Center For Disease Control, Autism Speaks, The Autism Society, The National Autism Center, The Autism Community in Action, The Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders

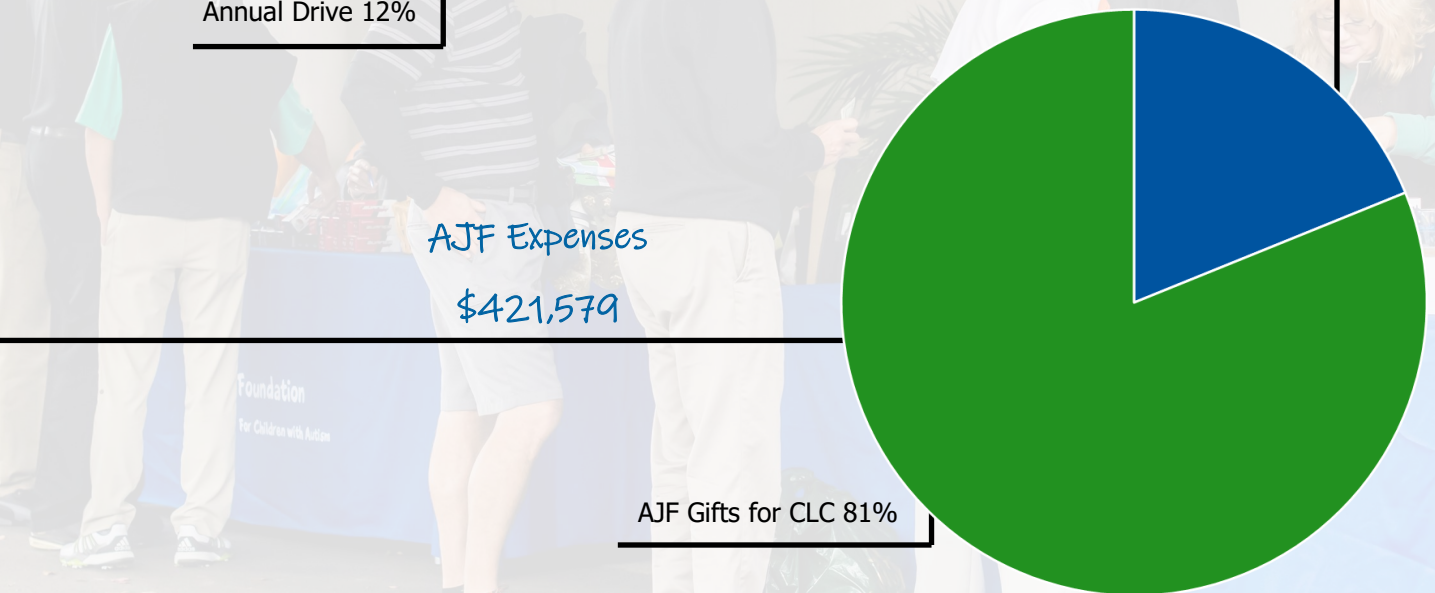


The AJ Foundation For Children With Autism is a *non-profit* organization formed by parents, *family members*, and friends of children with *autism*.

Our mission is to support quality *educational programs* that are based on the principles of *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)* and are dedicated to improving the lives of *individuals* with autism and their *families* within their *communities*.



AJF Revenue
\$419,903

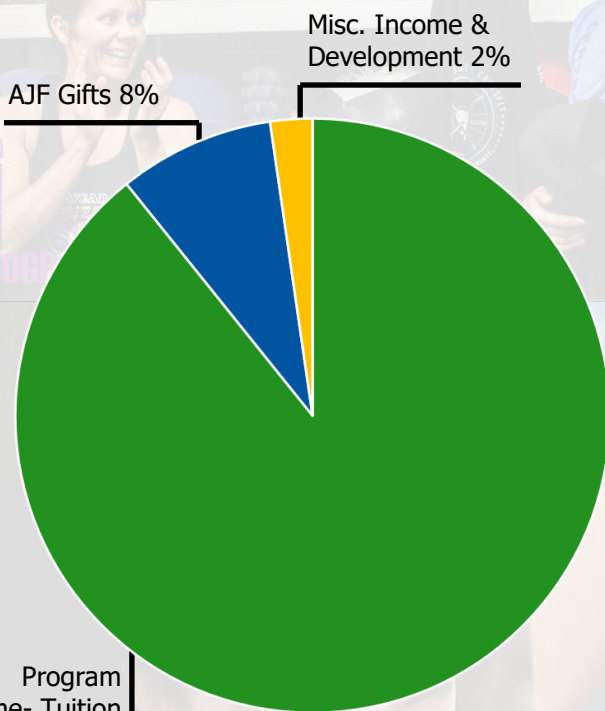


AJF Expenses
\$421,579

The Comprehensive Learning Center is a *non-profit* focusing on maximizing the potential of *individuals* with *autism* from preschool through adulthood by providing intensive and comprehensive state-of-the-art *education* and behavioral services based on the scientifically validated procedures of *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)*.



Through the intensity of our *program* and by working closely with *families* through collaboration and training, we prepare our learners to be as independent, self-sufficient, and socially adept as possible so they may be active, contributing members of their *communities* where they live, work, and play.

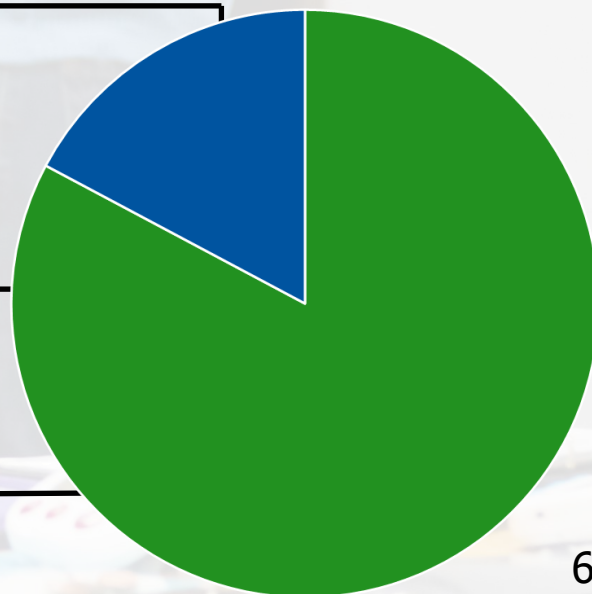


CLC Revenue
\$4,038,293

Program Income- Tuition & Waiver Funds
90%

Management & General
17%

CLC Expenses
\$3,975,729



Program Expenses - Education & ALSP
83%

The funds we have raised with your help make it possible for students like Lucas to excel and grow with the support he receives from CLC.



My name is Lucas and I have been at CLC for 15 years. I am 19 years old and I work 4 jobs. My favorite job is Replay Toys. When I first started at Replay it was hard sometimes, I got frustrated because I could not always finish my work. I have been at Replay Toys for 2 years. My teacher Leah set a goal of counting 7 games during my shift. The last 2 weeks I finished 10 games. My boss, Antoinette was so happy that she gave me a big Captain America figure because I did such a good job. I put the Captain America next to my computer. When I work on my computer, I look over at it and it makes me happy.

This year I learned how to take an Uber, I learned how to make a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich, I learned how to call work, I learned how to interview for a job, and how to eat new foods. I like video games, going to dances and social skills group. I like to be out and I like to be with people.

When I started at CLC I was 5 years old. I was the second Preschooler in the Preschool Program. I have learned a lot since then. I have known many CLC teachers a long time. CLC helps me do my favorite things and now that I am older I get to do so much more. Thanks CLC for helping me grow!

Looking back over our 18-19 School Year, there are so many of you that have made a difference in the lives of our students and their families, and we would like to take a moment to thank you all!

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Mark your calendars for our upcoming events!

AJF Texas Hold'em Tournament

January 25, 2020

AJF AMRAP 4 Autism

April 4, 2020

AJF Casino Night

April 18, 2020

AJF Ride 4 Autism

September 12, 2020

AJF Golf 4 Autism

October 19, 2020

