



Together  
we are making  
a difference.

JANUARY 1-DECEMBER 31

# IMPACT REPORT | 2020



research  
education  
support  
resources  
community  
outreach  
knowledge  
access



AUTISM RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
*Autism is Treatable*

## **Our Mission**

To support the health and well-being of people affected by autism through innovative, impactful research and education.

## **Our Community**

### ***1 in 54 identified with ASD***

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced in March, 2020 underscore the need for autism research funding.

## **Our Commitment**

More than 88¢ of every \$1 received by ARI directly funds research and education efforts.

Our past audits and annual reports are published online at:  
[Autism.org/financial-information](https://autism.org/financial-information)

## **Our Gratitude**

Our work is only possible through the partnership of our donors, funders, families, and volunteers. We are so grateful for your support for research that makes a difference.

# Our Impact: From ARI's Executive Director



Mark Rimland and Steve Edelson



We thank all who submitted their photos and stories to ARI in 2020. Those featured on the cover and on this page include the Alcoba, Dalton, Kintner-Duffy, Putman, and Tutté families, and were selected from this group.



AUTISM RESEARCH INSTITUTE

*Autism is Treatable*

Dear ARI Supporter,

For more than 54 years, the Autism Research Institute (ARI) has been committed to supporting the health and well-being of people affected by autism through innovative research and impactful education. After a challenging 2020, we are hopeful for brighter days ahead as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be addressed. A couple of our Scientific Advisory Board members are, in fact, currently studying the impact of the pandemic on individuals with autism.

As this report describes, the pandemic did not impede our ability to sustain autism research and education support. ARI continued its work through the many months of lockdowns. We funded cutting-edge autism research projects with generous donor support, and continued our efforts to network researchers and support groups worldwide. By leveraging technology, we expanded our online presence with free webinars, social stories, and continuing medical education webcasts. We also published a book on anxiety in addition to a quarterly science newsletter, and provided Covid-19 resources for individuals and families affected by autism.

Although we cannot know when life will return to normal, we know that your support is key to our ongoing work. The autism community has never faced a challenge quite like Covid-19. Now, as always, your support has energized our efforts and has kept these critical programs moving forward.

With your partnership, we will fund more research, empower more individuals and families, and educate clinicians worldwide.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen M. Edelson".

Stephen M. Edelson, PhD  
Executive Director, ARI



# 2020: ARI's Online Presence



## Created New Resources related to Covid-19



offering strategies for coping at home

**10** Covid-19 Social Stories

**8** Covid-19 Webinars

## Provided free online webinars

Content for people with autism, parents, caregivers, physicians, and other professionals.

**>30 hours** of live, original lectures

with free playback

**207,500** online views

and enduring material

**= 47,509** total learning hours



### Social stories

use words or images to explain concepts, events, behaviors, and social interactions.



### Covid Webinars

covered topics including:

- Reducing Anxiety
- Restoring Routine
- Sensory Strategies
- Learning Online
- Managing Stress



Provided

**free, on-demand educational lectures**

by expert presenters

**13,253** participation certificates  
**1,065** CME credits

“

As both a young researcher and person on the spectrum, these excellent presentations always contribute something to my understanding. I'm so grateful I had the chance to attend.”

– Kitteren Jester  
Rochester, MN



## 2020: ARI's Research Grant Funding

Provided more than

**\$282K** in  
scientific  
research grants



**funding 7  
new  
investigations**

focusing on medical  
and sensory disciplines



“

As the scientific community began to understand more about the impact of medical conditions on behavior, ARI supported research that enables clinicians to better care for their patients. We are all grateful for the ongoing support of the Autism Research Institute.”

– Harland Winter, MD  
Harvard Medical School  
Massachusetts General Hospital



“

Our work investigating the maternal autoantibody model of ASD would not have been possible without ARI's support. This work will catapult us much more quickly to something that may translate to prevention or treatment in the future.”

– Judy Van de Water, PhD  
UC Davis, MIND Institute



**The research community is deeply committed to continuing its work amid the pandemic. Thank you for your support.**

To view  
summaries  
of the research  
ARI funds,  
please visit:

[Autism.org/  
ResearchWeFund](https://Autism.org/ResearchWeFund)

**>\$2.9  
million in  
research  
grants**

in the past 10 years

**87  
scientific  
research  
studies**

in the past 10 years

**12 research  
areas studied**

including:

- gastroenterology
- immunology
- neurology
- sensory

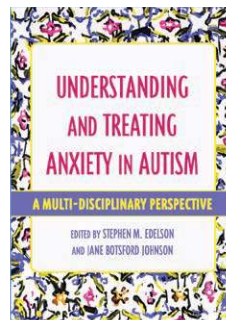
in the past 10 years

# 2020: ARI's Publications and Programs

## ARI published *Understanding and Treating Anxiety in Autism*

Edited by ARI's Executive Director, Stephen M. Edelson, and past ARI Board member, Jane B. Johnson, and consisting of chapters written by leading experts in the autism field, the book summarizes the current perspectives and research on anxiety in autism including neurology, medical, immunology, gastrointestinal, nutrition, sensory, and behavioral.

Anxiety is a prevalent and often debilitating condition for individuals on the autism spectrum. This book promotes a multidisciplinary approach to intervention and treatment of the condition, providing a professional understanding of the underlying causes and available treatments.



## Autism Awareness Month Story Share

For the 9th year, we invited Individuals and families to share stories and photos which we amplified online and in our print materials.



We coped with the pandemic by walking five miles a day in our neighborhood, saying hello to people, asking if they were OK. Counting trees and shrubs, and guessing colors of flowers. We slowly adjusted as best we could.”

– Jennifer Hildreth  
Port Jefferson, NY



**135,000+**  
subscribers:  
monthly e-newsletter

**9,900+**  
subscribers:

monthly clinical research e-newsletter



**= 145,400+**  
total subscribers:  
individuals, caregivers, and  
clinicians



**Continued Publishing  
*Autism Research Review  
International*,**  
our quarterly science newsletter  
now in its **35th year**

ARI's award-winning journal helps clinicians stay up-to-date with the latest research on autism spectrum disorder.

# 2020: ARI in the Autism Community



Facilitated more than

**40,000**  
Autism Treatment  
Evaluation Checklists  
(ATEC)



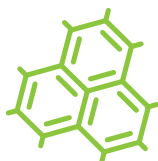
Provides a free online tool for tracking the effectiveness of various treatments.

**>150** completed per day

Now available in  
**24** languages

Continued expanding our  
Scientific  
Advisory Board

**16** members  
representing  
**12** institutions



## Think Tanks

While face-to-face meetings were not possible in 2020, ARI utilized technology to connect scientists and clinicians investigating the causes of and potential treatments for autism. These national and regional forums are set to resume as restrictions ease in months to come.



When my son was diagnosed years ago, ARI was among the first resources I found — and it helped us tremendously. I am grateful for the chance to support ARI's work leveraging technology to democratize information about quality autism research and potential treatments."

- Denise Fulton  
Administrative Director of Communications  
and Online Learning Autism Research Institute

## International Outreach

ARI networks with

**110** parent  
support  
groups  
in **52** countries



We continued to work directly with network groups and clinicians worldwide, especially in regions where awareness and support are still emerging, including areas of Eastern Europe and South America.

ARI is a Non-Governmental  
Organization (NGO) of  
the United Nations

## Translation

ARI facilitates translation of many online articles



## Telephone Support Line

ARI sponsors a free information line for caregivers







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## April is Autism Awareness Month!

Share how ARI has been part of your personal journey, family experiences, or professional work at [Autism.org/2021-stories](https://Autism.org/2021-stories)



Family has been key during the pandemic. Noah is blessed to have siblings that love him so much! We have purchased all kinds of books for story time and workbooks to practice writing. Walking the dog and checking the mailbox are favorite moments — Noah rides his bike and gets some fresh air.”

- Karolina Diaz  
Debary, FL



Thanks to the research I learned about through the Autism Research Institute — and years of hard work — Mary Gwen is a happy and very loving young lady.”

- Barbara Baker  
Dover, MA



**Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [Autism.org/donate](https://Autism.org/donate) to give today.**

Contributions are tax deductible as allowable by law. Fed ID No. 95-2548452  
Financial information is online at: [Autism.org/financial-information](https://Autism.org/financial-information)