



AUTISM STRONG  
FOUNDATION

# IMPACT Report 2022



# Our Mission

Founded on integrity and led by inclusion, our mission is to provide the strongest support, community and hope for those touched by autism. All funds raised by Autism Strong are mindfully donated to our community in the way that will make the greatest impact; connecting families and children to the resources they desperately need.

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By establishing long-lasting partnerships with businesses and organizations, we are able to impact the local community with support through our signature therapy grant: Landon's Hope Scholarship as well as financial aid for emergencies, summer camps, the holidays and proudly provide additional opportunities for families to receive necessary resources and unique experiences.

*"Our foundation supports families who are not financially able to provide the best for their children. The key is early intervention for autism but it's expensive, we want to help."*

**- Becky Thoms, Founder & Landon's Mom**



*Landon Thoms, Autism Strong's Inspiration*



# About Us

We understand that raising a child with autism can be very expensive and that many families struggle to afford the necessary treatments, therapies, and equipment. We come alongside families to provide financial assistance to help them pay for these expenses, which make a significant difference in the lives of children with autism and their families. Autism Strong is a valuable resource for families facing financial challenges as they raise a child with autism.

## Our Values

We believe everyone is created in a unique and beautiful way and should be accepted and celebrated as individuals. Acceptance is demonstrated through the genuine interaction, advocacy, and appreciation of one another, regardless of any differences in mind, body, or opinion we may have.



We believe everyone has the right to be encouraged in a loving environment. Encouragement is demonstrated through the words, hugs, and cheers both in times of success and struggle.

We believe everyone benefits when they have a foundation of strong conviction. Conviction is demonstrated through the belief in what you cannot see yet having contentment and confidence that our journey has a purpose.



We believe everyone who has hope will triumph over any circumstance they face. Hope is demonstrated through the unwavering determination and conviction that our future is brighter than our current situation.



# Board of Directors



**D. Rudy Thoms**

Founder & Landon's Dad  
President of the Board  
Ascensia Diabetes Care



**Becky Thoms**

Founder & Landon's Mom



**John Neuman**

Roche Diagnostics



**Dean Buttrely**

Perficent



**Jon Little**

Choate Construction



**Chrissy Wilson**

Flourish Dentistry



**Dallas Strager**

Olympus Company of Americas



**LauRen Strager**

Radio Host & F is For Fiesta

## A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

2022 was a year of milestones for our small but mighty organization. We had our first \$1M fundraising calendar year, which wouldn't be possible without the dedicated community and corporate support we have experienced throughout the years. This year, that support helped:

- *Added a third signature event to our fundraising portfolio, a blue-tie gala by the name of HopeStrong, and experienced an overwhelming response leading to a sold out event in year one.*
- *Created a partnership with Camp Royall, the oldest and largest autism summer camp in the country located a mere few hours from Charlotte, and provided scholarships so our NC families can attend a week-long camp that features 1:1 counselor support at no cost to them.*
- *Skyrocket BuildStrong: Festival for Autism both in attendance and funds raised, making it responsible for over 60% of our 2022 income.*
- *Wrapped and delivered over 1,000 gifts and \$9,000 in food gift cards to in-need families during the holiday season.*

Well, it's been a wonderful year of celebrations, but there is more to do. As the people on the frontlines, we're inundated with the emails and requests from families for help. Not only for the financial support to give their child proven autism therapy services, but for basic survival aid to cover utility bills, diagnosis assessments and the holidays.

Together, we are making change for our local autism community, supporting them with critical needs through financial aid and in turn, helping them be **Autism Strong.**

Stephanie Melish Neuman  
Executive Director

D. Rudy Thoms  
President, Board of Directors



# Leadership Team



**Stephanie Neuman**  
Executive Director



**Stacy Greene**  
Director of Development & Corporate Partnerships



**Christy Priester**  
Fundraising Events Manager



**Kaitlin Nye**  
Marketing & Social Media Manager



**Steve Hartle**  
National Brand Ambassador  
AMRAP4AUTISM

# Presenting Sponsors



**LANDMARK**  
DENTISTRY  
*Family and Cosmetic Dentistry*

**LENNAR®**

**keffer**  
AUTO GROUP

# Story of Hope

Landon is the inspiration  
and entire reason  
Autism Strong Foundation  
exists today.

Watch Landon's  
Story of Hope  
Documentary

*Scan me*



*Thoms Family*

# Landon's Hope Scholarship Recipient



Written By: Alejandro,  
Santiago's Dad



## About Santiago

Santiago was born on February 23rd, 2019. After his first birthday we noticed that he quit saying any words. Almost like he just forgot. By 18 months we were also noticing a lack of functional play, eye contact, and overall social engagement. We brought up our concerns to his doctor who was quick to dismiss them and told us it was just typical speech delay. When we brought up autism, we were given a quick questionnaire to fill out that determined he did not have ASD. Now looking back on it, we were probably a bit generous with our answers. 2020 placed our family in quarantine and we would not see another child for an entire year. At this point and after plenty of research, I was very convinced Santi was autistic. I began to reach out to different doctors to try and get an examination but was turned down because of Santi's age. Finally in October of 2020, I was able to find a doctor who would work with us. I was shocked when he was diagnosed with Level 3 ASD. Santi has now been in his ABA program for almost 6 months. In this short time, we have seen a dramatic increase in his task retention, functional play, eye-contact, and just overall affection. Santi is almost four and is still nonverbal but still communicates his needs in his own special way. Santi is a sweet and clever child who is constantly trying to out-smart his parents. Equipped with a great support system, Santi continues to meet his goals and will begin potty training after his fourth birthday. Please pray for us!

# Community Focused Programs

The Autism Strong Foundation was founded with the mindset of community, and helping those that need therapy, but were unable to attain them. Having your child diagnosed with ASD is intimidating enough, but then to navigate insurance and therapy centers is another arena all together. ASF bridges the financial gap for families that otherwise would have to do without.



## Landon's Hope Scholarships

Landon's Hope Scholarships is how The Autism Strong Foundation began. Our families apply in September and it goes directly toward the cost of their child's therapies that they need. Often, insurance does not cover everything or the co-pay and deductibles are too much for the family to cover, that is where we come in.



## Emergency Financial Aid

ASF offers emergency financial aid to our families as another way to help ease the burden that often comes with the many uncertainties having a child with autism entails. They can apply through our website and help can be anything from diagnosis fees, overdue therapy bills or special equipment to critical utility bills or groceries.



## Sensory Friendly Events

ASF strives to provide sensory friendly events to our families without the worry of the financial burden. We know that it is important to create those memories with their children and siblings, however, many times they are not given a safe environment to do so and we make that happen.



## Angels4Autism Holiday Relief Program

Angels4Autism is a way for us to come alongside the family and help relieve the burden of the holidays by purchasing gifts for the child AND the entire family that lives in the home. We also distribute grocery gift cards and help pay overdue bills so these families have food on the tables during the holidays.



## Camp Royall Scholarships

Every summer, we are lucky enough to send 32 amazing kids to Camp Royall for a week-long, over-night summer camp. The families don't have to worry about the financials, and the kids are with people who are trained and certified to give them the best week of their lives.



## Personality Portraits & Santa Portraits

We provide sensory friendly photos where families are given a safe haven to bring their child and experience one-on-one time with a special needs experienced photographer and Santa!



*"Thank you so much for picking Ethan as one of the many kids you are helping. We appreciate it so much, I was in shock when we received the call. This is a huge weight off our shoulders this year, for helping to afford things he needs to help him be his best self. We can't say thank you nearly enough."*

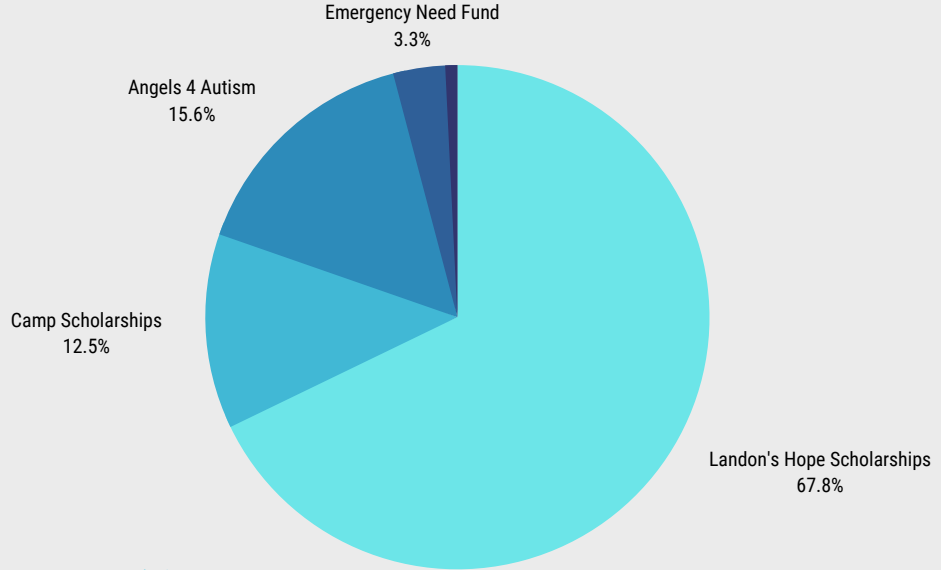
**--The Quarty Family, Ethan**



# Where Your Money Goes

## Mission Programs

Landon's Hope Scholarships
Camp Scholarships
Angels 4 Autism
Emergency Need Fund
Non Profit Partnerships



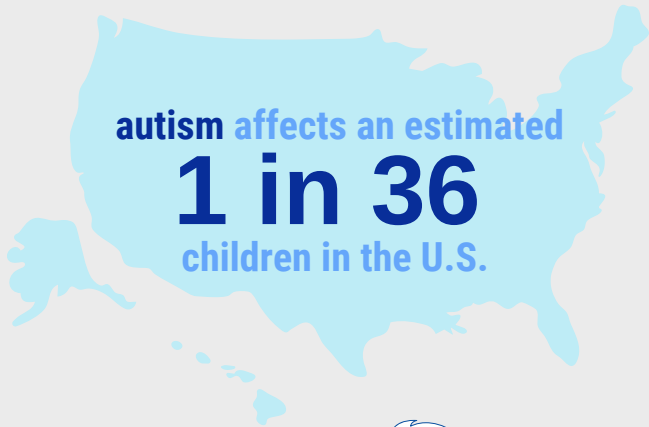
\$0.92 of Every Dollar Donated Goes Directly to Our Programs

# Autism By The Numbers

autism affects an estimated

**1 in 36**

children in the U.S.



It is estimated that nearly 1% of the World's Population has autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Per the CDC, it costs an extra \$60,000 annually to care for a child with ASD

The presence of Autism has increased 317% since 2000

1 in 6 children diagnosed with autism are also diagnosed with a developmental disability

Boys are 4x more likely to be diagnosed than girls.



1 OUT OF EVERY 42 BOYS

1 OUT OF EVERY 189 GIRLS

# Impact By The Numbers

32 Full Week  
Scholarships to  
CAMP ROYALL

Over 41,392+  
Therapy  
Hours Funded

60 Children with  
ASD & 58 Families  
Received Holiday  
Aid through  
Angels4Autism

40 families  
participated in  
our first Sensory-  
Friendly Santa  
Photos

30 Therapy  
Center  
Partnerships

## 2022 Service Area



## Landon's Hope Scholarship Recipients



76% Boys



24% Girls

70% of  
Scholarships  
went to  
1st time  
Recipients

# Signature Events


*We were excited to add a third signature event to our fundraising portfolio this year, with a gala event: HopeStrong. Our events not only help raise all of the critical funds needed to support our mission, but they help us connect with the community and shine a light on autism.*

The **2nd Annual BuildStrong** in partnership with Choate Construction was a tremendous success! Held on Saturday, October 9th at Symphony Park. Over 1,400 attendees joined us, and with the help of over 140 organizations, we raised over \$640,031.

**BUILDSTRONG**



**HOPESTRONG**



A Blue-Tie Gala for Autism

The **Inaugural HopeStrong: A Blue Tie Gala for Autism** presented by Landmark Dentistry was a SOLD OUT event held at Emerald Lake Golf Club on Saturday, April 2 (World Autism Day). It raised an amazing \$247,530 in it's first year.

The **9th Annual AMRAP4AUTISM** presented by Lennar Homes and Keffer Automotive was held on Saturday, April 30th at Matthews Sportsplex. Hundreds of athletes worked out for 32 minutes in honor of the hard work individuals with autism put in each and every day. The event raised over \$96,000

**AMRAP  
4 AUTISM**

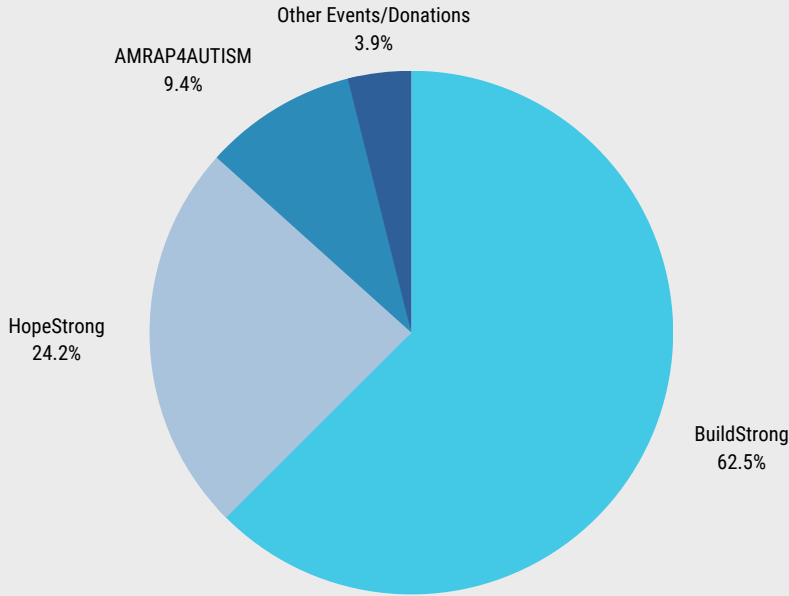
Hope for London

*"I wanted to express how grateful we are for the support from Autism Strong Foundation. It's amazing to see our little girl gain more independence each day, which would not be possible without specialized and intensive therapeutic services. Even with health insurance, paying for these services is a huge financial undertaking for our family. Thank you for giving us the ability to watch her grow and develop for a full year without the financial burden weighing on us."*

- - **Ashley, Mother to Addison**



# Where Our Funding Comes From



## Fundraising Revenue

HopeStrong	\$247,530
BuildStrong	\$640,631
AMRAP4AUTISM	\$96,721
Other Events/ Donations	\$40,047

Total:	<b>\$1,024,929</b>
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*"We are extremely thankful that Valentino was selected for the Landon's Hope Scholarship Award. This truly means a lot to us. We are heavily invested and dedicated to Valentino's advancement and this scholarship will definitely help us financially to get him all the help he needs. Again, thank you guys from the bottom of our hearts for this awesome opportunity. May God continue to bless you guys for all you do for families with kids with autism."*

**--Megan, Mother to Valentino**



# Impactful Donors

**\$25,000+**

Choate Construction

CPI Security

Landmark Dentistry/Mark Tripp

**\$20,000+**

CompleatKidz

Mooresville Glass & Mirror Co Inc.

**\$15,000+**

Anonymous Donor

Buchanan Concrete of the Carolinas, Inc.

Electrical Construction & Design, Inc.

*(In memory of Jeff Wydra)*

Herlocker Mechanical Systems

Incentive Contracting

Keffer Automotive Group

Lennar Homes

LKN Mechanical

Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

SunCap Property Group

Anonymous Donor

# Impactful Donors

## \$10,000+

American Structural Concrete, LLC  
Bartels Construction Solutions, LLC  
Carolinas Contractors Services, Inc.  
Eldridge Concrete Construction, Inc.  
Excel Electrical Solutions, Inc.  
Forcine Concrete  
Lanier Material Sales  
Leeward Construction, Inc.  
Preferred Electric Co., Inc.  
Rugs.com  
SteelFab, Inc.

## \$5,000+

A & K Painting Co., Inc.  
Allison Fence Co. Inc.  
Joel & Heather Beck  
Cambridge Hospitality Group  
Carolina Structural Welding & Steel Erection  
Carolinas Premium Deli Provisions  
Coatings 2000 Inc  
Colt Builders  
Commercial Roofing Associates, Inc.  
Conmat  
Cook & Boardman  
DH Griffin Companies  
Elevation Church  
Empire Plumbing  
Fessler & Bowman Inc.

# Impactful Donors

**\$5,000+**

Forconi-Bongiorno, Inc.

Fountain Electric & Services

Bob Fremgen

Stuart Grant

Brad & Lucrecia Hauck

Hayden Power Group

Heede Southeast, Inc.

Interstate Electric Company, LLC

Adi Khindaria

Howard & Julie Levine

McCombs Steel

Merlo Construction

Metromont

Motor City Electric Co.

Oil Capital Electric

Palmetto Waterproofing, LLC

Platinum Coating of NC

Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, P.A

RS Electric

Dan & Kathleen Rush

Shambaugh and Son LP

Siteworks LLC

Soprano's Building and Restoration Services

Star Orthodontics

Stevenson-Weir Southern

The Home Depot Rental

The Office Gym - Rock Hill

Traco Drywall

United Mechanical Corporation



# Impactful Donors

**\$2,500+**

Alfred Williams & Company

B.A. Hoft of Charlotte, Inc.

BFS Operations *dba Bianchi and Company*

Corey & Leah Barnes

The Boggs Family Foundation

Bonitz Inc.

Jason & Tracy Bria

Dean & Anna Buttrey

Capital Electric Supply

Crabapple Roofing Contractors, LLC

Dale Smith

Dixon Hughes Goodman

John Dudas

EF Belk & Son, Inc.

Flourish Family & General Dentistry

Foster Grading

FreeState Electric

Full Tilt Contracting, LLC

Garmon & Co Commercial Flooring

Gates Construction

Harris Teeter

Adam & Buffy Hawthorne

Mark & Jodi Henninger

Tyson Higginbotham

Hoopaugh Grading Company

HotWorx

Jay & Julie Jenkins

JC Building, Inc.

Kent Companies

Kingdom Demolition

Stratos & Margarita Lambos

Lithko Contracting

Lomax Tile & Marble, Inc.

Loveless Commercial Contracting, Inc.

M&DK Contractors, INC

MO Flowe

PIMCO

Royal Welding LLC

Schindler Elevator Corporation

Shamrock Landscaping

Southeastern Architectural Systems

SouthState Bank

Steel Specialty, Inc.

Stratos Solutions

Supply Source Products

Sylvan, Inc.

Chris & Jennifer Taylor

Timber Wolf Excavating LLC

Trussway

Victory Glass

Warco Construction

Bruce & Lori Wolno

# Impactful Donors

## \$1,000+

Absolute Fire Control  
Action Masonry Construction  
Adolph & Maria Smith  
Keri & Justin Anderson  
Architect Sports and Physical Therapy  
Atlantic Oral Implant and Facial Surgery  
Blythe Development Co.  
BMW Wealth Strategies  
Carolina Floor Systems, Inc.  
Carolina Floors, Inc.  
Catawba Waterproofing  
Complete ABA  
Complete Dentistry  
Conover Metals  
Converge  
Vinnie Curtis  
CW & Sons, LLC  
Design-Build Mechanical  
Duke Energy  
DXI Construction  
Fab'rik South Charlotte  
Tony & Lee Faucette

Ferebee Corporation  
Flooring Solutions  
Friendly Dental  
W. Gardner  
Frank & Carol Halloman  
Matt & Amy Hartig  
Henderson Properties  
Heric Solutions  
Huffman Grading  
Alisha Hurria  
ICAD Services  
Interior Enterprizes, Inc.  
Johnson's Roofing Service  
KC Larson  
Kiser Masonry, Inc.  
LS3P Associates LTD  
Martin Marietta Materials  
Metrolina Woodworks  
Andrew Miller  
Miller Brothers Construction, Inc.  
Millwork on 31st  
Milwaukee Tool

Eric & Sarah Moody  
Blake Narr  
NC Interiors Contracting  
Neill Grading and Construction Co., Inc.  
North American Lawn & Landscape  
Old North State Masonry, LLC  
William Oldland  
Opal Autism Centers  
Otis Elevator Company  
Mike & Sue Parrino  
Piedmont Pipe Construction  
Piedmont Stucco Inc.  
Playbook Management Company  
Power Works Electric  
Premiere Communications & Consulting  
Pro Klean, Inc.  
Prytime Medical Devices  
Q Insulation  
Robin Quill  
Rock Hill Glass Co. Inc  
Rogers Grading, Inc.  
S&ME

Santee Land Group  
Tim Schneckler & Holly Disser  
Joe & Marisa Shipbaugh  
SolutionStart  
South-Fair Electric Contractors  
Dallas & LauRen Strager  
TAS Concrete Construction, LLC  
TCC Multi-Family Interiors, Inc.  
The Metrolina Landscape Company  
Titos  
TNT Specialty Cleaning  
Rudy Sr. & Arlene Thoms  
Triangle Grading and Paving  
Vara Home  
Vercusky Painting  
Walker Engineering  
Waste Pro  
Weifield Group  
Zen Windows

# Upcoming Events



October 14th, 2023

# HOPESTRONG



A Blue-Tie Gala for Autism

March 9th, 2024

**NEW**



Conference for Autism Parents and Caregivers

April 27th, 2024

# AMRAP 4 AUTISM

August 2024



**AUTISM STRONG  
FOUNDATION**

*Together,  
Change is Possible.*

Take action!



Give



Volunteer



Tell a Friend

*Thank you for your part  
in an incredible year!*



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