



Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland



2023 Annual Report

Prepared by
Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland

CHY 19293
RCN 20075491



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CHAIR'S NOTE

Welcome to the annual report of Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, where we reflect on our progress in delivering our mission “To Change the lives of Children with Autism.”

In the face of the global challenges of recent years, our organisation has emerged stronger and more determined than ever. The strategic investments made in 2020/2021 have delivered the planned increase in assistance dogs' placement.

The board has been focused on the medium-term strategy with a prudent approach to growth ensuring the sustainability and stability of AADI. We look forward to engaging our stakeholders on our plans soon.



The key pillars of the strategy are:

1

Revenue growth

As a self-funded organisation, predictable and sustainable funding is critical to our long-term goals.

2

Engagement

Engaging families and the wider community behind our purpose.

3

Growing

Growing our breeding programme to increase the number of assistance dogs placed, reducing the waiting list.

4

Building

Building our organisational processes and capabilities to support our ambitions.

Assistance dogs are transformative in the lives of children and families living with Autism. They open up everyday experiences that were previously impossible. At AADI we have realised that our work to transform the lives of children does not stop there, we need to go further to support acceptance and inclusion of autistic people in our communities.

We continue to receive feedback suggesting awareness and understanding of the work of assistance dogs can be improved. The communities that our dogs work in need to understand their role and how to behave around them in everyday settings such as retail and hospitality.

In the spring of 2023, AADI introduced the “Failte” campaign to raise awareness of autism and inform communities about the role of assistance dogs and the work of AADI. We welcome the opportunity to educate groups on autism assistance dogs and how to behave around them when they are working. We look forward to growing the Failte campaign in 2024 helping to make our communities and society a more welcoming and inclusive place for autistic people.

CHAIR'S NOTE

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to our success over the last year. Thank you to all our resolute supporters, individual donors, corporate partners, foundations and trusts, sponsors.

To our wonderful volunteers who support our work year-round and are vital to our accomplishments.

Without the dedication and passion of our Founder Nuala Geraghty and her talented team we could not change the lives of children and families living with Autism.

I wish to thank my fellow Board members for their continued commitment to the work of the charity and for giving generously of their time and expertise throughout the year. A special thank you to Maggie O'Donovan who stepped down from the Board and from her role as Secretary and to John Considine who stepped down as treasurer this year.

I invite you to delve into this annual report which encapsulates the stories and accomplishments of another successful year.

It is a privilege to serve as the Chair of this incredible charity, and I am excited about the possibilities that the future holds.

Irene O'Riordan

Irene O'Riordan
Board Chair, Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland



CEO MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year at Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland (AADI), I am filled with pride and gratitude. 2023 was a remarkable year, marked by significant growth across our Operations.

Our commitment to delivering our mission, "To Change the Lives of Children with Autism," has never been stronger, and the achievements we celebrate today reflect the dedication and passion of our entire community.



This year, we witnessed an uplifting 31% increase in the placement of Autism Assistance Dogs (ADs), surpassing our strategic goal of 24 by placing 25 ADs with families across Ireland. This achievement is not just a number; it represents hope, independence, and a better quality of life for children with autism and their families. Thanks to our enhanced breeding program, in partnership with the ADI Breeding Cooperative, we added 6 new breeding stocks, ensuring the sustainability and quality of our assistance dogs.

A highlight of the year was the successful pilot of our Dog Assisted Education Programme, a testament to our innovative approach to supporting the autism community. Placing 3 dogs in the past 18 months has laid the foundation for a transformative educational environment for neurodivergent students.

Our commitment to excellence is further evidenced by the accreditation to ADI, a recognition of the high standards we uphold in training and placing our assistance dogs. The reduction in the failure rate by 10 dogs signifies our relentless pursuit of perfection and our focus on delivering the best outcomes for those we serve.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated team of staff, whose tireless efforts ensure the highest standards in everything we do. Your commitment, care, and understanding are the backbone of our success. To our volunteers, you are the unsung heroes, selflessly giving your time and heart to support our mission. The charity could not thrive without you.

Our supporters, donors, and funders, your generosity fuels our mission and enables us to touch more lives each year. The trust and support you place in us are immensely valued and never taken for granted.

As we step into the future, we are excited about the potential to deepen our impact. The introduction of innovative initiatives like the Fáilte Program and the Dog Assisted Education Program, coupled with our Community Champions initiative, underscores our commitment to not just meet but exceed the needs of the autistic community.

CEO MESSAGE

Together, we have created a tapestry of support, compassion, and excellence. Let's continue this journey, inspired by the lives we have touched and motivated by the opportunities that lie ahead.

Here's to a future where every child with autism in Ireland has the support, love, and independence they deserve.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.



Warmest regards,
Nuala Geraghty, CEO



INTRO TO AADI

2023 marked a year of remarkable growth for Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, fuelled by an overwhelming wave of support from our community. Our commitment has been to enhance and expand our mission thoughtfully and strategically. This report showcases our focused efforts to not only increase the number of Autism Assistance Dogs across Ireland but also to enhance the quality of our services.

An Autism Assistance Dog is more than just a companion; it's a beacon of safety and independence for families affected by Autism. These dogs open up new horizons, allowing children to safely attend school, parents to regain their flexibility, and families to celebrate life's moments together, out in the world. Each dog that we match with a family creates ripples of positive change, touching lives and strengthening our community.

Our dedication extends beyond simply reaching more families; we strive to maintain the excellence in our dogs' training and care. The stories in the following pages bring to life the profound impact of our work, from transforming the lives of children and families to fostering a more inclusive community.

We are deeply grateful for your support in making this vision a reality.



Sincerely,
David Mc Carthy
Head of Fundraising and Communications



THE YEAR IN REVIEW



DOGS PLACED

25 Assistance Dogs
8 Buddy Dogs
2 School Support Dogs



PUPPIES TRAINED

60



1-TO-1 TRAINING

9,500

hours of advanced
training sessions



VOLUNTEERS

321

active volunteers
across Ireland



TOTAL FUNDS RAISED

€2,137,320

(€796,000 of which
was legacy donations)



APPLICATIONS

321

families registered
their interest



INFORMATION SESSIONS

200

families attended



TRAINING PLACES

35

families accepted

WHAT A GIFT MEANS FOR AADI

The difference your gift can make...

€50

Allows one family to be assessed for an Autism Assistance Dog with our Instructors

€100

A routine vet visit for a puppy in training to ensure they are in top condition

€250

An aftercare visit to ensure a family's Assistance Dog is working to its full potential

€500

Providing an Autism Awareness Workshop to educate the public about our work

€750

A four-day intensive class training before the Assistance Dog is placed with their new family

€1,000

A week's worth of one-to-one advanced training for a dog in training with an Instructor



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023 we made significant advancements in our breeding program seeing almost 99% of our puppies coming from the AADI or International Breeding Cooperative, allowing us to greatly enhance support for families with Autism.

AADI's participation in the IBC ensures access to dogs with a lineage of successful assistance dog breeding, adhering to high international standards. This involvement has significantly improved the quality and training success rates of our dogs, enabling better support for more families with Autism.

Through our membership of the International Breeding Cooperative (IBC), we have been able to work with global leaders in breeding helping us to delivering superior assistance dogs. Elaine Cannon, heading the development of the Breeding Program, has introduced three exceptional female dogs, Ottie, Wren, and Dove, into the programme.



Ottie, from Centar Silver in Croatia, had two successful litters. We were able to provide pups from each litter to support other assistance dog schools in the cooperative around Europe. Wren and Dove joined our programme from America, showcasing our global collaboration efforts. This summer, Nixa from Croatia joined, and her puppies have started their international journeys to Croatia, Malta, and Ireland.

Our global reach extends to The Netherlands, Belgium, UK, Israel, and the US. A recent project involved importing frozen semen from US assistance dog studs for successful breeding, with Ottie being the first successful pregnancy and Dove set to benefit next. This speaks to level of sophistication and the scientific approach we maintain in our programme.

We remain committed to our mission of providing exceptional assistance dogs, continually striving for excellence in breeding and training programmes.

WHAT 2024 HOLDS...

As we step into 2024, we are excited to further develop our autism awareness initiatives. The Fáilte Program continues to be a cornerstone in promoting autism awareness and enhancing community integration. This year sees the introduction of the Fáilte Badge certification and training workshops for business. Through this program, we aim to deepen our influence using innovative awareness campaigns and the development of autism-friendly resources.

Simultaneously, the Canine Educational Assistance Dog Program is set to transform educational experiences for neurodivergent students. By integrating specially trained dogs into mainstream schools, we anticipate a positive impact on the social, emotional, and academic spheres of these students, fostering a more empathetic and inclusive environment.

Complementing these efforts, our Community Champions initiative will be instrumental in extending our reach and impact. This program focuses on harnessing the power of volunteers for fundraising and advocacy, creating a network of dedicated individuals who are passionate about our cause. Through grassroots recruitment and targeted training, these champions will play a crucial role in raising awareness and funds, contributing significantly to our mission.

Looking ahead, we are poised to enhance our services and expand our reach, driven by the synergy of these programs. We remain committed to empowering families affected by Autism through our exceptional assistance dogs and community-focused initiatives.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee

(not having share capital and limited by guarantee)


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(including the Income & Expenditure Account)
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
		2023	2023	2023	2022
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Income from:					
Grants and Donations	4	796,000	117,362	913,362	42,515
Charitable activities	5	<u>1,223,858</u>	-	<u>1,223,858</u>	<u>990,993</u>
Total income		2,019,858	117,362	2,137,220	1,033,508
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	682,777	-	682,777	581,058
Charitable Activities	6	747,552		747,552	789,885
Total expenditure		<u>1,430,329</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,430,329</u>	<u>1,370,943</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		589,529	117,362	706,891	(337,435)
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>220,647</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>220,647</u>	<u>558,082</u>
Total funds carried forward		810,176	117,362	927,538	220,647

All income and expenditure arises from continuing operations.

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the (deficit)/surplus for the above two financial years.

On behalf of the Board


Irene O'Riordan
Director


Emily Ennis
Director

Date: 14th February 2024



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