



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared By



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Letter from our Executive Director



Dear Friends of SANDS,

As we reflect on 2025, I am grateful for an extraordinary year of growth, connection, and impact at Southern Arizona Network for Down Syndrome. I was honored to join the SANDS team during a year that marked our most successful Walk to date, with a record number of attendees and the highest funds raised in our organization's history. These achievements also allowed us to expand our staff by welcoming a part-time Program Coordinator, strengthening our ability to serve our community.

It is inspiring to look back at how far SANDS has come since our first Buddy Walk in 2001. What began as a small gathering rooted in advocacy and hope has grown into a vibrant organization serving individuals with Down syndrome and their families across Southern Arizona.

While we experienced a slight dip in membership in 2025, this prompted meaningful reflection and action. During our annual planning meeting, the SANDS Board approved the creation of an Advisory Council comprised of adults with Down syndrome to help guide and shape adult services moving forward—an important step in centering self-advocate voices in our work. Alongside this change we will also be completing a census of the individuals we serve to gain a greater understanding of our communities needs.

As we move into 2026, SANDS remains steadfast in our commitment to our mission, vision, and values. We are dedicated to expanding inclusive, supportive programs and continuing to serve the Down syndrome community across the lifespan.

Thank you to our donors, sponsors, volunteers and supporters. Your generosity makes our work possible and ensures that SANDS can continue building a more inclusive future for all.

With gratitude,

Kara Wiesmann



Our Why

Mission

SANDS provides resources and opportunities to our Down syndrome community while also working to shift public perceptions about Down syndrome by creating a supportive, inclusive and collaborative network within southern Arizona.

Vision

To develop a more inclusive society that encourages individuals with Down syndrome to thrive and lead fulfilling and dignified lives.

Values

Diversity: We believe that everyone belongs in our SANDS family and pledge to embrace a sense of acceptance and belonging in all that we do.

Collaboration: We believe in harnessing the collective power of our team by fostering open communication and shared decision-making to achieve optimal results.

Financial Stewardship: We believe in managing our finances with responsibility, integrity and foresight, ensuring long-term financial stability and positive impact through wise decision-making and ethical practices.

Trust: We believe in building strong, transparent relationships with our members and community by always acting with honesty, integrity, and accountability, ensuring their confidence and trust in our mission to serve.



Meet our Team

Board of Directors

Executive Team

Camille Stanbery

President

State of Arizona Disability
Determination Services

Karen Poppe

Vice-President
Retired

Kim Briggs

Secretary
Pima County Board of
Supervisors

Andrea Ballard

Treasurer
Jewish Family Services-
Utah

Members at Large

Katie Langan

Self-Advocate
Student and Costco

Tracy Carroll

Pima Council on Aging and
U of A

Terra Rivera

Raytheon

Robyn Dafoe

Easterseals Blake Foundation

Brianne McIntyre

Stay-at-home Mom

Estella Avila (2025)

Long Realty and Great Clips

Ben Renner (2025)

Self-employed

Staff

Kara Wiesmann

Executive Director

Lilian Yslas

Program Coordinator



Program Highlights

1 Parent Information

Our parent information program is a multifaceted program. We provide educational resources to:

- Families receiving a prenatal diagnosis
- Families who just had a baby with Down syndrome
- Families who are new to the state and our region
- Families caring for an adult with Down syndrome
- Medical facilities who care for individuals with Down syndrome



2 G.O.L.D. Program

This year SANDS provided \$39,625 in direct financial support to our families. Thanks to a generous donation from Dutch Bros. from their annual Dutch Luv day of giving we were able to send out over 250 grocery gift cards to families. We also funded routine requests for bikes, dance classes, adaptive equipment, occupational therapy, speech therapy, medical co-pays and tutoring assistance.

"This program helped me afford the adjustable bed that my child needed for sleep problems that have gone untreated for years. The adjustable bed was out of my budget as a single caregiving parent to my adult child. Without the assistance, I would not have been able to purchase the bed."



Program Highlights



3

SANDS Walk for Down Syndrome

2025 was our most successful walk yet! We hosted the event at the Tucson Convention Center for the second year and we saw record attendance of over 1,100 individuals that came out to walk for Down syndrome and celebrate our community!

“

Support from the GOLD program helped build my daughters communication skills through additional speech therapy during preschool. Integrating this therapy into a classroom setting gave her opportunities to grow her verbal and signed communication and social skills in a setting where she was already comfortable. The teachers even noted how the therapy sessions gave her the chance to act as a teacher and help her fellow students.

”

4

Community Events

World Down Syndrome Day at the Zoo (on or around March 21)

Mom's Night Out (Monthly)

Desert Buds (Monthly)

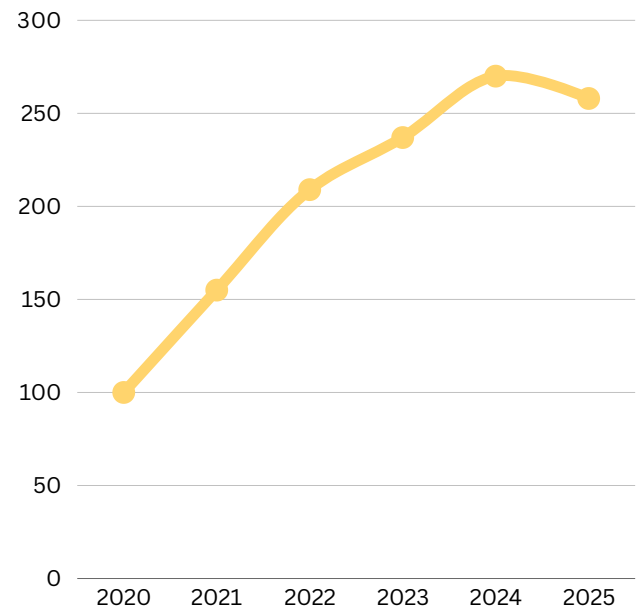
Night at museum (August)

Brewing Connections (Quarterly)

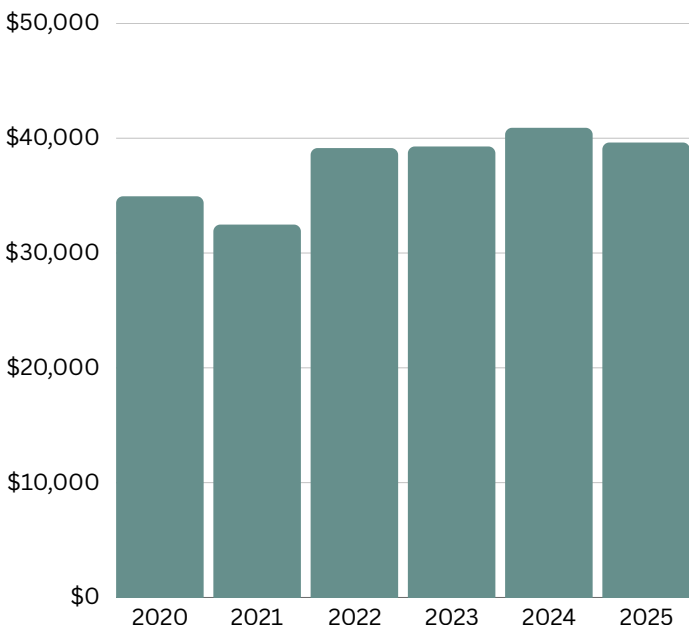
Community Impact



SANDS Membership



Direct financial assistance provided to families



Since 2004, SANDS has provided \$286,751 in financial awards to our families

Grants received for programs

Dutch Bros. <i>Food Program</i>	\$21,706.59
Auer Family Foundation <i>Parent Information Program</i>	\$6,991.41
Parker Hannifin <i>Operating Expenses</i>	\$6,000
CFSAZ <i>Consulting and Coaching</i>	20 Hours
TMC Health <i>Parent Information Program</i>	\$1,500
Desert Diamond <i>G.O.L.D. Program</i>	\$1,500

Total \$40,698

Event Engagement

World DS Day	240 people
Night at the Museum	99 people
Grocery Gift Cards	257 people
G.O.L.D. Grants	20 awards
SANDS Walk for DS	1,100 people
New Families	15 families
Medical Outreach	3 organizations
Community Presentations.....	3

Survey Results

In an effort to ensure we are meeting our community's needs, we provide survey opportunities for families who participate in our programs.

Mom's Night Out

A monthly meet up for our community moms to connect, recharge, and heal.

100% Agree that Mom's Night Out events provide a welcoming and supportive environment that promotes connection in a meaningful way & positively impacts emotional well-being and helps moms feel more supported.

"Love meeting up with moms going through or have gone through what we are experiencing"

GOLD Program

Our financial aid program for medical, educational, & therapeutic purposes.

100% said...

- Yes, this program had a positive impact on their family
- Yes, this program was easy to access and apply for
- Yes, this program improved the quality of life for their loved one
- Yes, this program alleviated a financial burden for their family
- Yes, they would recommend this program to other families

Desert Buds

A developmental play group for our youngest and newest families.

100% Agree that Desert Buds provides a welcoming and supportive environment that promotes connection, learning and development & positively impacts their child's well-being

SANDS Walk for DS

Our annual event to support our community.

- 87%** Were satisfied or highly satisfied with the event venue
- 100%** Liked or were neutral about the walking path
- 47%** Said there was an exhibitor that made an impact for them
- 53%** Were neutral about the new registration site
 - 20% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
 - 27% were satisfied or very satisfied
- 53%** Were satisfied or highly satisfied with food choices
 - 40% were neutral
 - 7% were dissatisfied
- 53%** Rated the walk 5 stars!
 - 33% rated the walk 4 stars
 - 13% rated the walk 2 stars

Financials

Income

Contributions <i>Personal & Corporate</i>	\$16,295.39	9%
Grants <i>Awarded to SANDS in 2025</i>	\$40,698.00	21%
Fundraising <i>Funds raised by special events & campaigns</i>	\$5,369.06	3%
Walk <i>SANDS Walk for Down Syndrome</i>	\$122,594.13	66%
Other <i>Interest</i>	\$1,494.36	<1%
Total	\$186,450.94	100%

Expenses

Programs <i>G.O.L.D., Walk, New Parent etc.</i>	\$57,125.27	38%
Food Program <i>Dutch Bros holiday food cards</i>	\$20,736.00	14%
Administrative <i>This also includes salary and taxes. 80% of time is dedicated to programs.</i>	\$52,846.51	35%
Fundraising <i>The cost of fundraisers</i>	\$2,507.54	2%
Operational <i>Rent, insurance, office supplies, memberships etc.</i>	\$16,347.48	11%
Total	\$149,562.80	100%

Volunteers

973 hours
volunteered
\$16,532 Value!

Volunteers make our mission possible!



Our volunteers are the heart of our organization. This year more than 20 individuals shared their time, talents, and compassion to ensure our programs reached families across our community. We are deeply grateful for every hour, every smile and every moment of support!

Volunteer Spotlight

A special thank you to these dedicated volunteers that went above and beyond for SANDS in 2025

The team at
Rain Bird

Karen Poppe

Trianna Oglivie

Chelsea Hansen

Jeff Miller
Photography

Bri McIntyre

Trail Life
Troop AZ-0747

U of A Cheer
Team

Mica Mountain
FCCLA

Rincon Cheer
Team

Belinda Acosta

Thank you

A special thank you to the Autism Society of Southern Arizona for hosting our monthly playgroup!



Thank You!



Thank you to our 2025 Grantors



Top Fundraising Walk Teams

Katie Langan
\$12,568

Team Luna
\$10,000

The Jaywalkers
\$8,367

Miles for Maddie-321
\$5,845

Jacob's Jets
\$4,630



To Our Platinum Sponsor



To Our Title Sponsor



To Our Gold Sponsor



To Our Silver Sponsors



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To Our Bronze Sponsors



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