



Autism Home Base Durham Inc.  
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June 18, 2024

Mayor and Council  
Municipality of Clarington  
40 Temperance Street  
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3A6

**Re – Request for Operating Grant through External Agencies budget line**

**Board of Directors**

Dear Mayor Foster and Clarington Councillors,

Lynne Lyon  
President

Thank you for your past support. Thank you for recognizing 11 years ago that there was demand for programming to serve a marginalized segment of this community, neurodivergent adults living at home with aging caregivers.

Erin Bibby  
Vice President

History

Autism Home Base is a registered Canadian charity founded in Clarington in 2013 by a handful of volunteer families seeking relief from social isolation related to the mental, physical, behavioural and economic challenges of autism.

Brenna Bizley  
Treasurer

Adriana Micanovic  
Secretary

Our adult children had ‘aged-out’ of school and there were no appropriate, available or affordable options for the decades that lay ahead. Family carers had retired early or been unable to fully pursue career aspirations due to caregiving demands, with the dual implication of reduced income, pensions, and the need to provide for dependent children beyond our lifetimes.

Terry Batley  
Director

Kat Bercuson Kawadri  
Director

So, we pooled our skills and resources. Each family would pay a small annual fee and volunteer our time to ensure we could get out of the house, active and connected with a supportive network of peers.

Brendan Hill  
Director

Gord Humphrey  
Director

The Municipality of Clarington worked with us to establish an accessible weekly swim hour and gym time. Your staff guided us through the Community Grants process which allowed us to add weekly art and music sessions held at rec centres and libraries.

Sheryl Hunter  
Director

Growth

By 2018, 84 participants enjoyed 145 annual meetups supported by 24 volunteers and one part-time staff. Clarington continued to fund us through the community grants program and through a sponsorship of our annual fundraising event.



We established a research partnership with Trent University to study the impact of our unique service model and we expanded programming to serve Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax and Pickering residents. And those municipalities provided community grants too. As well, more than 300 individual donors, 12 private sector businesses, and 7 regional service clubs responded to our urgent request for financial support to meet growing demand.

### Our Clarington Hub

In late 2019, Clarington staff worked with us to repurpose the decommissioned courtroom at 132 Church St in the Community Resources building that had been sitting vacant for a number of years. Autism Home Base painted, installed a kitchenette, new signage, planted the garden box, and reglazed the bathroom floors. Mun of Clarington installed a drop ceiling, new toilets, sinks, and dimmable LED lighting to create an amazing space that would become our hub – a drop-in centre for autistic adults & their families, where we would also run our daily programs, and house our intake and admin offices.

### Today

Five years later, Autism Home Base now serves 318 participants from 192 families. Aging moms, dads, and siblings participate in social, rec and wellness programming alongside the autistic adult in their life.

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*We need programs like Autism Home Base in every region of the province and the country.  
Social and recreation programs are integral for people's quality of life.*

**Dr. Jonathan Weiss**

*York Research Chair in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disability Mental Health  
Professor, Dept. of Psychology, York University*

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Today, we receive project grants from municipal, provincial and federal government as well as private foundations. We offer corporate sponsorships, and generate revenue through member fees, community and family-led fundraising initiatives and private donations. 86 community members lend their volunteer support. We have 11 staff, including six seasonal.

### Our Request

This year our application for a Community Grant under Clarington's Grow stream was declined, since the \$4,000 request could not 'take our organization or event to the next level', which is the criteria for that granting stream. We don't fit Clarington's Seed grant stream either, since we aren't piloting a new, untried idea.

Autism Home Base has outgrown the Community Grants funding process. We have a proven business model with requests for training and service replication by other community groups. Our annual operating budget has grown year over year. This year our budget is \$605,000.



**We respectfully request an annualized allocation of \$50,000  
through Clarington's External Agencies budget.**

This funding would offset direct program expenses as well as core operating expenses not eligible for funding under typical project grant and community grant streams such rent, occupancy costs, admin and fundraising, bookkeeping, audit and insurance. \*see budget details addendum

Precedent

Municipalities partner with charities who serve at risk and marginalized populations. Clarington priority supports include -

- Teen afterschool programming annual operating grant of \$329,000 + exclusive venue usage in three sites
- Arts programming annual operating grant of \$234,713 (2022)
- Older adult programming annual operating grant of \$337,309 and \$1 per year lease of the Beech Centre *(not including investment in Older Adult programming through COAA)*

Clarington values the contribution of charities and invests in those that improve quality of life for residents, especially those most vulnerable. We know that Autism Home Base provides immense value for the autistic adults and family caregivers we serve.

Community Impact

A full third of our membership resides in the Municipality of Clarington. Others travel from across Durham, east Toronto, Northumberland and the City and County of Peterborough. When visiting the hub, our participants contribute to the local economy here in Clarington.

Diversified support

We continue to pursue diversified funding streams. We are grateful for annual support from City of Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, and through the Pickering Charity bingos. We appreciate a new partnership with Town of Ajax that provides a full day of program space, gymnasium use and pool time each week at no cost in the McLean Rec Centre.

As background, Autism Home Base pays Clarington approx. \$17,000 per year for our leased space and approx. \$1000 each year for rec centre visits. We give back with in-kind staffing and resource support at community events, in-service advice for Lakeridge Health and community agencies, Earth Day clean up days in the community, and support for Clarington's provincial and federal funding requests.

Looking Ahead

With the anticipated overhaul of the Developmental Services sector funding by the province, we are leaving no stone unturned in our quest for sustainable revenue. We are exploring a bond issue program to raise capital to purchase a larger turnkey property that would allow Autism Home Base to



generate earned revenue through social franchising and social enterprise options in the future. The Board of Directors prioritizes a modest six-month operating reserve to mitigate risk and ensure viability.

In spite of the year over year revenue growth and diversification since our inception, we struggle to fund overhead expenses due to project grant restrictions. We ask for your consideration of an annualized unrestricted grant to offset core operating costs and see Autism Home Base through our next phase of expansion.

#### AutismAfter18: Family-led Solutions for Social Inclusion

Autism Home Base is a recognized thought leader in this sector at a national level. We empower and inspire families to work together to build their best lives. We provide training and advice for educators, first responders, hospital, municipal planners, and service agencies, as well as other family groups looking to replicate our model in their local community.

We need your support to continue to serve residents of Clarington and the broader community as the incidence of autism and demand for services grows exponentially. Municipalities do not yet have the expertise or resources to provide lifelong adapted programming for neurodivergent adults aging in place at home with family. With your support, Clarington's leadership will be recognized and emulated.

We would be pleased to provide additional information or clarification. Thank you for your consideration.

With appreciation,

Judy Hanson  
 Founder and CEO  
 judy@autismhomebase.com  
 cell 416-450-7716

c. Autism Home Base Board of Directors

2024 Budget details

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Unrestricted portion</b>
municipal -	14,000	
provincial	22,000	
Federal	19,700	
Private foundations	234,000	30,000
Individuals including service clubs	50,000	40,000
Corporate and business	45,000	40,000
Fundraising initiatives (includes portion of donor designated restrictions)	187,800	67,800
Member fees	30,000	30,000
Interest and other earned	2,500	2,500
	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$210,300</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Portion not typically covered by project grants</b>
Salaries (including MERC and WSIB)	417,000	170,000
Program supplies, instructors, venue rentals, permits	75,000	
Rent	17,000	17,000
Other Occupancy (phone and internet, maintenance, tech subscriptions)	14,000	12,000
Professional Services – Legal, Bookkeeping and Audit	29,000	29,000
Communications and Fundraising	17,000	14,000
Furnishing & Equipment including amortization of capitalized items	10,000	
Office supplies	2,000	2,000
Insurance and finance fees	12,000	12,000
Travel, meals, prof dues	12,000	4,000
	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$260,000</b>