



We are not just looking at an autistic child, but at the entire family, community and the whole system.



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Autismus jako dar z.s.

(Autism as a Gift non-profit organization)

Why do we primarily support parents of children on the autism spectrum?

We believe that their approach has a decisive impact on the child's development and independence, on the quality of life of the whole family and on the interaction with the environment.

Our goals

- 1 Raising awareness of autism
- 2 Support and education for parents of children on the autism spectrum
- 3 Spreading the concept of volunteering
- 4 Bringing families with autism and the public together



The non-profit organization Autism as a Gift was officially founded in 2017, but we started holding monthly meetings as early as in 2013. The impetus was and still is our 15-year-old son Ángel.

"Thanks to events held by Autism as a Gift, my son and I feel like ourselves. We can enjoy time with others without being constantly judged or commented on. We have the opportunity to meet new parents and our son can make new friends. He talks about all of them at home, because unfortunately he has no other real friends due to his originality."

PETRA

"The opportunity to meet our second family and stay with them for a few days is a huge gift for us. We are grateful that there are people whose humanity makes this possible. The combination of a good programme, education and self-knowledge, plus this great group, is just TOP for us."

JITKA

"Thank you for taking care of us and opening up new possibilities for us. You help us and our children "survive" in today's crazy world. You make the world more beautiful."

PETRA

2023 in a Nutshell

Volunteering

The premiere of our documentary about volunteering called **Seeds of Goodness** and numerous awards at international film festivals. Four screenings with talks in different regions: Karlovy Vary, Uherské Hradiště, Prague, Hostivice.

Events without children

Monthly meetings mainly for parents, but also for teachers, social workers, etc. Physically in Hostivice, online for participants from all over the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Events with children

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Autism Friendly – a half-day event for children with and without autism, with a parallel educational programme for adults. Three events in Hostivice in the library and Sokol gymnasium, one event in Chýně.

Participation of children with autism at the **Festival of Young Talents** at Prague Castle and an exhibition of their artwork.

Co-organisers of the **Rokytko Challenge**, a charity hurdle race for families with autism.

EVENTS WITH CHILDREN

FOR CLOSED GROUPS

Multi-day stays for a closed group of families with children on the autistic spectrum – at the Benedictine Monastery in Prague 6 and a remedial stay by the sea in Greece.

We are also **weekend guides** for families with children on the autism spectrum, organized by the Kolpingova rodina Smečno in the House of Families.

Consultancy

Tailor-made **individual consultations**.

Conferences

We gave lectures and talks at conferences: **Intermingling of Worlds** (Krásná Lípa), **Mental Health Festival** (Liberec), professional conference at the University of South Bohemia **Life with Autism** (České Budějovice).

Media

TV show Guest of the Day (Praha TV), two interviews in Czech Radio, podcast Tady Vodafone, other interviews in newspapers and magazines: deník.cz, Pravý domácí časopis, Hostivický měsíčník, What News.

+ 30
FAMILIES

In total, we worked with more than 30 families with children on the autism spectrum.

+ 350
EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

Our events were attended by more than 350 people (not only families, but also teachers, social workers, etc.)

+ 1,000
PEOPLE
AT TALKS

At conferences and discussions we had the opportunity to speak to more than 1,000 people, including students.

+ 3,600
FOLLOWERS

We have more than 3,600 followers on Facebook.

Volunteering

The premiere of our documentary **Seeds of Goodness** took place in Lucerna, Prague, in November. During the year, the documentary was shortlisted for 15 film festivals in the Czech Republic and abroad (Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, Italy, Moldova, India, USA, Congo) and won two first prizes, one second prize and two honorable mentions. It was part of the accompanying programme at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and the Summer Film School in Uherské Hradiště. In addition to the premiere, there was another screening connected with a talk in Hostivice.

The mission of the documentary is to show that volunteering is enriching for the child, parents and volunteers and has a positive impact on the society as a whole. It is a wish of ours that volunteering becomes common for people with autism and that there will be plenty of volunteers in the near future.

Let the good and voluntarism spread.



“It was something one rarely experiences. The intensity of humanity was extremely high and warm.”

ROŠŤA

Events without Children

We offer monthly meetings mainly for parents, relatives, volunteers, but also for educators, social workers and anyone interested in the world of autism. The goal of these meetings is education and sharing. Physically, they take place in Hostivice, and thanks to the online format, people from all over the Czech Republic and Slovakia join in.

THE MOST POPULAR TOPICS OF 2023:

- **How to Read Your Child** (Linda Cecavová)
- **The Impact of Nutrition on Autism** (Gábina Llewellyn)
- **On Reconciliation with Fate and Otherness** (Veronika Hurdová)

OTHER TOPICS INCLUDED:

- **Dolphin Therapy** (Olda Bureš)
- **Occupational Therapy** (Kamila Veselá Eliášová)
- **What Will Happen to Them When We Are Gone** (Jana Sieberová)
- **How to Get Financial Support** (Lenka Bártová)

"Thank you so much for the great webinar with Linda! It gave me strength again!"

JANA

"I had a few aha moments here."

MÍŠA

"I wanted to thank you so much for these online meetings. I can't participate in person because of the demands of care and these online seminars are a great help."

MICHAELA

"This sharing is fantastically relieving."

KATKA

Events with Children

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Autism Friendly

A half-day event for children with and without autism, with a parallel educational programme for adults. Assistants help take care of the children so that parents can participate in their programme. The events take place in as calm an atmosphere as possible (no crowds, loud music and flashing spotlights).

Children enjoyed music therapy, dog-assisted therapy, creative therapy, colouring, speech therapy, Lego corner, mobile planetarium, firefighters, police, rescue service, bouncing castle.

Parents participated in workshops led by experts, with topics such as A Kind Approach to Otherness (Václav Mertin), Autism Inside Out (Michal Roškaňuk), How to Dance with the Challenges of Fate and Yoga for Handicapped Children (Petra Fridrichová), Volunteering – a Network of Mutual Support, Music and Sounds as Tools for Communication and Calming (Ernesto Chuecos), Home Oasis – Aromatherapy, Snoezelen, Massage (Věra Petlanová Zychová), Music Therapy with Tibetan Bowls (František Horváth).

Four events were held: An awareness event for Autism Month in April in the Hostivice library, two events in the Sokol Gymnasium in Hostivice, and a summer outdoor event “Minions among Us” with a bouncing castle in Chýně.



“Thanks! Our kids had a great time in the bouncing castle where they were looked after by trained assistants and we relaxed together with our friends who have just received their diagnosis and are not sure yet where they belong. We all feel welcome here.”

MARTINA

“Saturday afternoon spent with you was a treat for me. The fact that I can leave my child with an assistant to play with and I can listen to a lecture and workshop in peace is priceless for a caring mom. Thank you for organizing these events.”

LENKA

“While I was able to work on my self-development in peace thanks to the trained assistants, my teenage daughter enjoyed the informal process of being arrested and handcuffed, and my youngest son enjoyed the work of the volunteer firefighters putting out fires. A beautiful day for the whole family, for children with autism and for siblings. Autism as a Gift, thank you so much.”

MARTINA

“Participating in the awareness event was very beneficial for me as the one who cares for a child with autism. I was most interested in the narration by Michal Roškaňuk, who is on the spectrum himself. He helped me understand interesting features of my son’s behaviour that I had not understood before.”

LUCKA

Events with Children

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Festival of Young Talents

We started cooperation with the Rotary Club Prague Golf – NGW and our first project was the opportunity to participate in the prestigious **Festival of Young Talents** at Prague Castle, where children with autism could exhibit their works. Children sent in their drawn or painted pictures as well as ceramic or paper creations.



"Thank you so much for allowing our son to "experience success" – to exhibit at Prague Castle, to be part of a wonderful exhibition, to receive a commemorative certificate, to stand in front of a large number of people who applauded him, and even to hear that they liked his pictures. The words he had only heard from his family and a few loved ones before. It was very challenging for him in a hall full of people, the noise, the heat... but I saw how happy he was and I think it boosted his very low self-esteem a bit. Thank you for giving joy."

PETRA

"Our son loves it when anyone appreciates him or praises him, because there is a lack of opportunity to do so outside the family. Our children are quite neglected and isolated in the society, it is not easy for them to find a circle where they are accepted as they are, and it is extremely difficult for them to cope with things that are so ordinary for the others, it always takes a lot of effort. That is why the appreciation of their efforts presented in such a festive atmosphere is a great reward and motivation. We thank the Rotary Club for their support and interest."

JITKA



Events with Children

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Rokytko Challenge

With the Renaissance of Movement association we were co-organizers of the **Rokytko Challenge** charitable hurdle race. This allowed people with autism to participate in the race – they even had their own category and separate start. They could be accompanied by their family and children were helped on the track by volunteers.

"In everyday life, there aren't many opportunities for autistic (or otherwise special) children to have their own category in a public sporting event. It was an amazing opportunity for the whole family to play sports together and for our talented kids to see what they can do with the support of professional athletes. A great event, I hope there will be more of them :)."

MARTINA

"My son had the opportunity to take part in the hurdle race at Rokytko. It took me by surprise that he joined the others and ran with them. The route also led up a relatively steep slope, which everyone overcame without difficulties. My son enjoyed most of the hurdles, he liked climbing the climbing wall the most. Thank you for a great event and we look forward to the next one."

LENKA

"There was an anti wave at the end of the race. I was worried whether we would make it and whether he kids would enjoy it. And you know what? They did. Fully! Incredible joy in their eyes and smiles on their lips."

KUBA

co-organizer of the race



Events with Children FOR CLOSED GROUPS

We organized a **weekend mental-relaxation stay** for a group of families with children on the autism spectrum at the Benedictine Monastery in Prague 6.

The programme included joint cooking, singing and dancing, dog-assisted therapy, a ride on a historic tram, special care for mothers and a joint photo shoot.



"The programme was beneficial for both the mind and soul. In this group, I always feel that all people on this planet are equal and that our children are not only here accepted for who they are."

MONIKA

"We are so grateful for such a relaxing and beautiful weekend, we went by a historic tram for the first time and spent some very precious time with amazing friends, who have become our second family."

ANDĚLKA

"I must say that I am greatly surprised by your behaviour to one another, you are like a big family that shares your difficult lot, and yet you radiate a palpable joy and hope that you can cope with everything when you stick together and have understanding for one another."

SISTER ANEŽKA from the Benedictine Monastery

Events with Children

FOR CLOSED GROUPS

Thanks to the cooperation and support of the organization Life for Children, we were able to take a **remedial stay by the sea** in Velika, Greece.

All the children had a great holiday, and some of them travelled by plane for the first time and were at the seaside for the first time. Everybody helped one another. It was a great school of life with many challenging situations, but in the end all the children made it through and thus moved on.

We are also guides for **weekends for families with children** on the autism spectrum, organized by Kolping Family Smečno in the House of Families.



"A great holiday with a programme that included opportunities for sharing, learning, as well as fun and relaxation. We have benefited enormously from these events and it has changed our lives forever. We feel great with this group, nobody judges us, nobody criticizes us, on the contrary there is a huge amount of love and belonging. We see incredible progress in all the children, which gives everyone strength."

JITKA

"Thank you for an amazing holiday with a wonderful group of people we love with all our hearts."

KAMILA

"This stay had such an impact on absolutely everyone that we will draw strength, motivation, joy and experience from it for a long time to come."

MONIKA

"Bára and Ernesto are amazing guides, they put a lot of their own SELF into these weekends. They radiate love for our children and our children love them back. They are huge role models in their approach to all people and are not afraid to take the more challenging and untrodden path. They change our lives, we don't feel alone, thanks to them we have a group of people behind us who understand and support us, and we can meet friends. What they do has a PURPOSE and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, RESULTS."

JITKA

Consultancy

Tailor-made individual consultations.

THE MOST COMMON TOPICS:

- problematic behaviour of the child
- seizures
- self-harm
- nursery/school
- siblings
- nutrition
- how to find and train volunteers
- (non-)cooperation
- independence of children



"The consultation helped me better understand my childhood experiences and their impact on my life today. Thanks to this, I was able to improve my relationship with my son. I learned to communicate and manage stress better, which led to my son becoming calmer and more open. I am grateful for the opportunity I have been given and I know that working on my personal self-development will benefit me and my son, too."

DÁŠA

"The consultation with Bára helped me a lot. We both have sons with similar disabilities, but she has been on this journey longer, so her experience helped me decide which direction to take. It was a pleasant conversation full of empathy, ideas and good mood."

BÁRA

Conferences

Intermingling of Worlds Conference

(Krásná Lípa)

Topic: **Otherness as a threat or a gift?**

Mental Health Festival (Liberec)

Topic: **Volunteering in the field of autism**

Life with Autism (České Budějovice)

International professional conference at the University of South Bohemia

Topic: **The benefits of volunteering and dolphin therapy for people on the autism spectrum**

“At first we let ourselves be carried away by the charming stories from the life of Barbora, Ernesto and their son Ángel, only to have our smiles slowly stiffen, we unexpectedly found ourselves in a family that is able to cope fantastically with the suddenly discovered reality of autism. When they finished, I was not ashamed of the tears that came to my eyes. They were tears of hope and joy that there are people like that on this planet. Their message – whatever you encounter in life, see it as a gift – was suddenly very natural and obvious.”

ROŠŤA



“We really appreciate your participation. I am happy I met you and your son. All of you radiated pure well-being.”

INGRID



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Special thanks to Pepa Dvořák – the creator of the documentary Seeds of Goodness

In conclusion, thank you to “our” children and all people on the autism spectrum who give us the impetus to change ourselves and our society by embracing our uniqueness as a mutual enrichment.

Profit and Loss Statement

summarized

as at the date of: 31 December 2023

(in whole thousands CZK)

COSTS		ACTIVITY		
		MAIN	ECONOMIC	TOTAL
A.I.	Purchases consumed and services purchased	388		388
A.II.	Changes in inventories of own operations and capitalisation	0		0
A.III.	Personnel costs	143		143
A.IV.	Taxes and fees	0		0
A.V.	Other costs	2		2
A.VI.	Depreciation, assets sold, creation and use of provisions and adjusting entries	0		0
A.VII.	Contributions made	0		0
A.VIII.	Income tax	0		0
TOTAL COSTS		533		533

REVENUES		ACTIVITY		
		MAIN	ECONOMIC	TOTAL
B.I.	Operating subsidies	151		151
B.II.	Contributions received	344		344
B.III.	Revenue from own performance and goods	38		38
B.IV.	Other revenues	0		0
B.V.	Proceeds from the sale of assets	0		0
TOTAL REVENUES		533		533
C.	Profit/loss before tax	0		0
D.	Profit/loss after tax	0		0

Balance Sheet

summarized

as at the date of: 31 December 2023

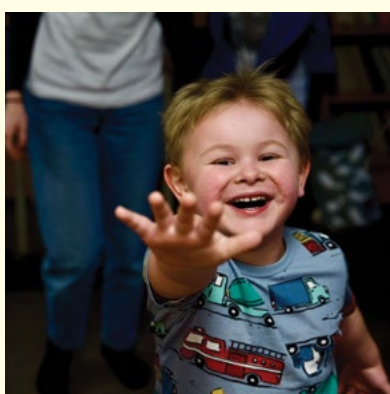
(in whole thousands CZK)

ASSETS		STATUS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE ACCOUNTING PERIOD	STATUS AT OF THE LAST DAY OF THE ACCOUNTING PERIOD
A.	Total fixed assets	0	0
A.I.	Total intangible fixed assets	0	0
A.II.	Total tangible fixed assets	0	0
A.III.	Total financial fixed assets	0	0
A.IV.	Total accumulated depreciation of fixed assets	0	0
B.	Current assets	61	142
B.I.	Total inventories	0	0
B.II.	Total receivables	0	1
B.III.	Total current financial assets	61	141
B.IV.	Total other assets	0	0
TOTAL ASSETS		61	142

LIABILITIES		STATUS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE ACCOUNTING PERIOD	STATUS AT OF THE LAST DAY OF THE ACCOUNTING PERIOD
A.	Total own resources	26	127
A.I.	Total assets	0	0
A.II.	Total profit/loss	26	127
B.	Total third-party resources	35	15
B.I.	Total provisions	0	0
B.II.	Total long-term payables	0	0
B.III.	Total short-term payables	35	15
B.IV.	Total other liabilities	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES		61	142



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at an autistic child,
but at the entire family,
community and
the whole system.



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