



HELPING ADULTS WITH AUTISM  
PERFORM AND EXCEL



# Yearly Report

2023-2024



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# FROM THE FOUNDER

## A Year of Significant Growth and Expansion

As we reflect on the past fiscal year, I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished together at HAAPE. Thanks to the dedication and support of our entire community, we have made tremendous strides in creating meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for autistic individuals.

Our collaborative training programs have demonstrated a remarkable Social Return on Investment (SROI), providing over a 20-fold return for every dollar invested. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the effectiveness of our initiatives and the commitment of our partners. Moreover, our financial discipline has ensured that last year nearly 99% of donations were allocated directly to our impactful programs.

In the past year, we have expanded our reach by funding licenses for three "HAAPE Uniquely Abled Academies for Computer Numeric Control (CNC)" training facilities, each with the capacity to produce 10 graduates annually. Additionally, in collaboration with our esteemed partners at Aspiritech, we funded and facilitated two remote trainings for 20 individuals at their Chicago Headquarters and North Carolina State University in Raleigh. We also provided scholarships to 14 students at OCA in Orlando for the Supply Chain and Logistics Certification program.

Our mission has evolved to focus on establishing geographic "HAAPE Autistic Workforce Ecosystems," bringing together key stakeholders to create sustainable and meaningful employment opportunities. The HAAPE Southeast Florida Autistic Workforce ecosystem is anchored by three prestigious colleges: Miami Dade College, Broward College, and Nova Southeastern University. We are actively engaged in discussions with four other geographies to expand this impactful model. We are thrilled to welcome several distinguished individuals who have joined our Board of Directors and other HAAPE boards. Our Autistic Advisory Board has significantly expanded, and their role in shaping the direction of the organization has been enhanced, ensuring that the voices of those we serve are at the forefront of our decision-making process. As we move forward, HAAPE remains steadfast in its commitment to being the connector, innovator, and networker for the autistic community. We are dedicated to providing meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities, and we invite you to join us in making a profound impact on the lives of the people we serve.

I am deeply grateful to all who have contributed their time, resources, and passion to our mission. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and equitable world, one that celebrates the unique talents and abilities of autistic individuals.

Warm Regards,



*Larry Rothman*  
**LARRY ROTHMAN, PHD**  
HAAPE FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Over the past year, with the support of our board, advisory boards, and partners in the community, HAAPE has made tremendous strides toward developing an important role in creating meaningful and sustainable careers for autistic individuals.

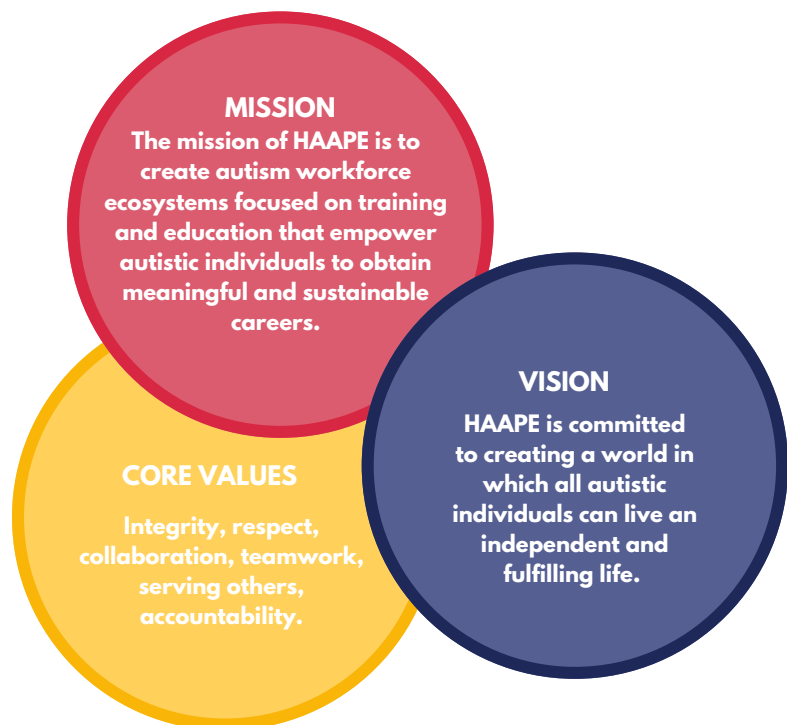
Following our strategic planning process, we refined our focus on developing Autistic Workforce Ecosystems. This has quickly generated support from our collaborative partners and positioned HAAPE to expand our efforts nationally.



**CONNIE ALDEN**  
**PRESIDENT**

## OUR MISSION, VISION & VALUES

**H**ELPING  
**A**DLTS WITH  
**A**UTISM  
**P**ERFORM AND  
**E**XCEL



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## AUTISTIC WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM



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### What is a HAAPE Autism Workforce Ecosystem?

A HAAPE Autism Workforce Ecosystem is a network of stakeholders including individuals and organizations that operate in cooperation and unified interaction to help educate, train, and employ autistic adults with the common goal of providing sustainable and meaningful career opportunities and an independent lifestyle.

Members of the ecosystem include employers, candidate sources such as high schools, colleges, support organizations, parents and caregivers. Also, nonprofit and government funded organizations to provide necessary support services for such as transition training services and job coaches.

## National Scale Partnerships and Breaking Down the Silos

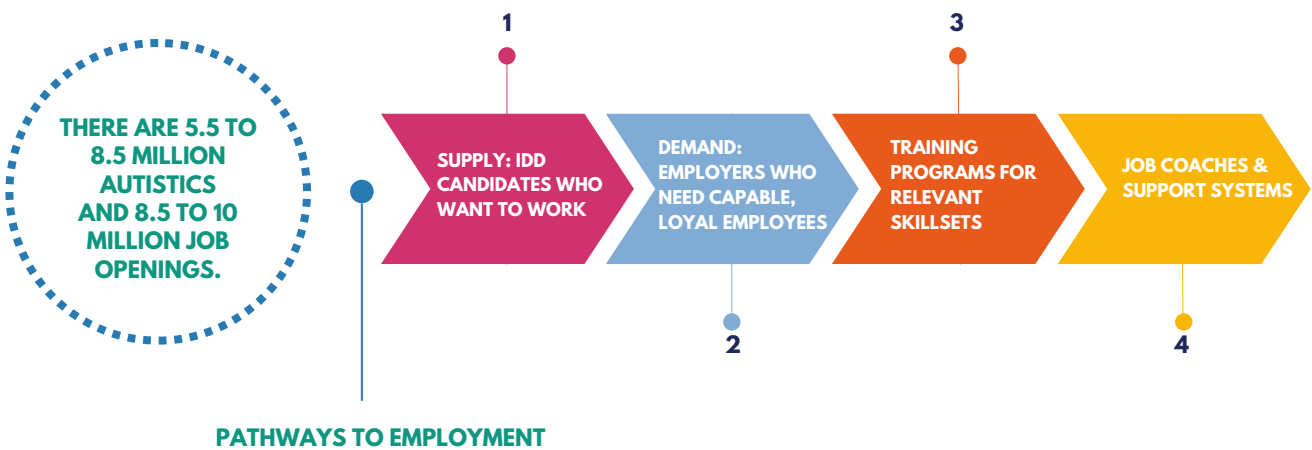
Underpinning our motivation to develop autistic workforce ecosystems is the basic reality that while there are numerous educational institutions, nonprofits, and government supported organizations focused on providing employment support for autistic individuals, most work independently with efforts primarily concentrated on their specific missions and goals.

Few organizations are working together to provide cohesive service offerings for adults on the autism spectrum. Even fewer are focused on providing integrated services across organizations that can lead individuals to sustainable employment and the ability to live independently.

## Excitement and Progress

HAAPE Autism Workforce Ecosystems encourage communication, sharing of best practices and challenges as well as ongoing collaboration to help autistic individuals find a pathway to employment while accessing available support services. Additionally, feedback from our education and community partners indicates that HAAPE has been able to provide an innovative, big picture view of employment for autistic individuals in local communities that not been put together in this way before. At the beginning of this year, HAAPE had one autistic workforce ecosystem that had been established in South Florida. As a result of the efforts of our HAAPE team and collaborative partners, formation of an additional 6 ecosystems is underway across the US.

### HAAPE’S PATHWAY TO BRIDGE THE SUPPLY-DEMAND GAP



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Providing Meaningful and Sustainable Career Opportunities

Bridging the Supply-Demand Gap

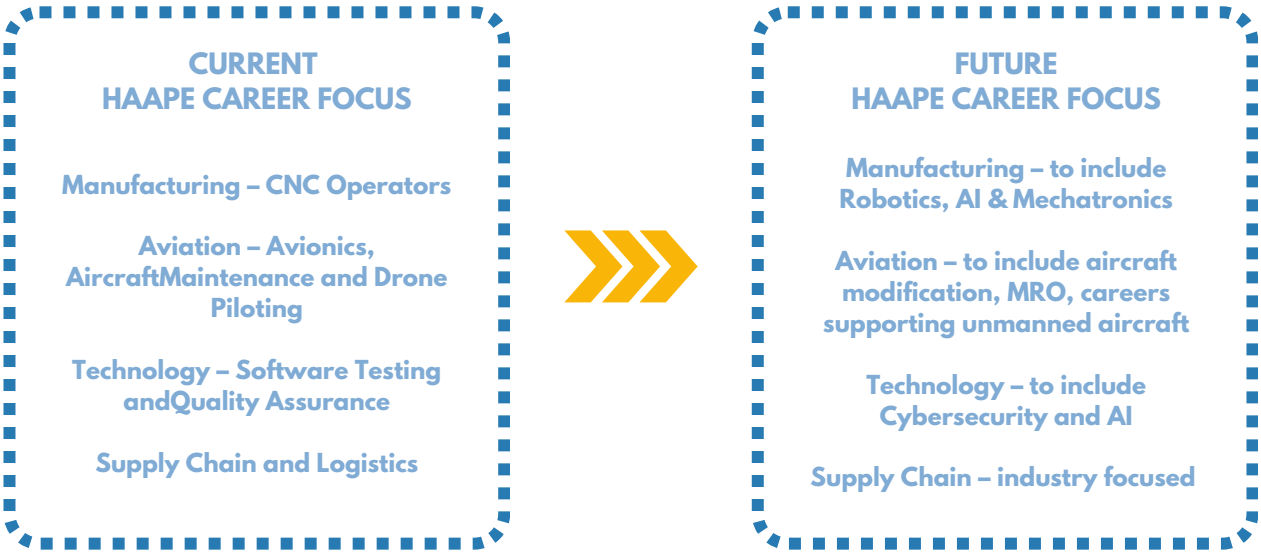
Many employers indicate that finding and retaining employees is one of their biggest business challenges. This is especially true of high demand jobs such as those in technical and advanced manufacturing and aviation industries where the need for talent is high and expected to grow in coming years.

According to the CDC, 1 in 36 people are autistic. In the US approximately 85% of autistic adults are unemployed or underemployed.

This group represents a largely untapped candidate pool that possesses both unique abilities and a desire for meaningful employment. HAAPE, along with our collaborative partners, are providing a pathway to close this supply-demand gap.

HAAPE careers focus on technology, aviation, manufacturing, supply chain and logistics. These are high demand industries with good career opportunities. As jobs in these industries change, due to technology and innovation HAAPE, through our collaborative partners, is adding new training content leading to new career opportunities such as those in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and robotics.

HAAPE AUTISM CAREER FOCUS







## Identifying Employment Opportunities and Delivering Programs

Our operating partners and local chapters are essential in order to identify employment opportunities and deliver programs as we expand into new geographies. HAAPE currently has 6 operating partners and 7 local chapters. Please see some examples of the incredible work they are doing in the spotlight sections of this yearly report.





## **NEW BOARD AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

We acknowledge the importance of our board of directors and advisory boards in contributing their time and talents to further HAAPE's Mission. The following talented and committed individuals have joined our board of directors and advisory boards in the past year. To see a complete list of board members, please visit our website at [Haape.org](https://Haape.org) report

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS



FOUNDER & CEO, TACT  
(TEACHING THE AUTISM  
COMMUNITY TRADES)

**DANNY COMBS**



CHIEF MARKETING &  
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER,  
HELPMEESEE

**DAN THORPE**



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE  
SOFTWARE & SOCIETAL  
SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT AT  
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

**DR. ANDREW BEGEL**



HAAPE'S LEGAL COUNSEL &  
PARTNER WITH THE LAW FIRM OF  
INGLESINO, WEBSTER,  
WYCISKALA & TAYLOR, LLC

**PAM KAPSIMALIS**

### AUTISM ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



**JULIA OPALINSKI**



**SAM FARMER**



**MAISIE  
SOETANTOYO**



**SARAH HOWARD**

### PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARD



**MARTHA SIMMONS**

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD



**JERRY SUTTON**

# FINANCIAL REPORT



During our FY 2023, HAAPE continues to demonstrate exceptional financial stewardship and impactful programming. Key points highlighting the financial impact of our work include:

## Efficient Administration:

- Administrative costs have averaged less than 4% of revenues since our inception in March 2016.
- In the last six years, administrative costs have been reduced to under 1.5%.
- We operate with no salaried staff, relying on board members' and volunteers' time and expertise to ensure efficient operations.

## Exceptional Social Return on Investment (SROI):

- Our SROI model demonstrates remarkable returns on our investments:
  - CNC training: Up to \$127 in social savings for every dollar spent
  - Aspiritech programs: Between \$37 and \$41 in social savings for every dollar spent

- These figures represent first-year savings only, with benefits continuing in subsequent years without additional investment.

## Substantial Societal Impact:

- From our \$70,000 investment in these programs, we conservatively estimate nearly \$5.5 million in societal savings in the first year alone.
- Our model factors in reduced support costs, increased income for participants, and the economic multiplier effect of new employment.

## Scalable and Sustainable Model:

- We are expanding these successful training programs nationwide, aiming to help more adults with autism find sustainable careers.
- The programs have a proven track record and are expected to improve further as we continue to make additional investments.

## Transparent Financial Reporting:

- Our official FY 2023 financial tax return (Form 990) has been filed and is available



## ESTIMATED HAAPE FIRST-YEAR SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR ASPIRITECH & CNC TRAINING

ASPIRITECH ACADEMY					
PROGRAM	SOFTWARE TESTING	CYBERSECURITY	CNC LICENSING	AVERAGE	TOTAL
HAAPE ACUMULATIVE INVESTMENT	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$30,000		\$70,000
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES TRAINED	10	10	30		50
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES PLACED	6	6	27		39
1ST YEAR INCOME	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$55,000	
AVERAGE ANNUAL SUPPORT COST	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	
50% SUPPORT REDUCTION	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	
DOL INCREMENTAL EMPLOYMENT	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	
DOL INCREMENTAL EMPLOYMENT AT 75%	\$26,250	\$26,250	\$26,250	\$26,250	
TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFIT PER HIRE	127,500	\$142,500	\$142,500	\$137,500	
TOTAL SROI	\$765,000	\$855,000	\$3,847,500		\$5,467,500
SROI %	3725%	4175%	12725%		7711%
SROI RETURN/INVESTMENT	\$37.25	\$41.75	\$127.25		\$7711

This data demonstrates HAAPE's commitment to maximizing the impact of donor funds while creating substantial, lasting benefits for adults with autism and society at large. Our innovative approach not only changes individual lives but also generates significant economic value, making our work a sound investment in both human potential and societal progress.



**RICH BENTLEY**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

# GROWTH DEVELOPMENT



HAAPE has experienced remarkable growth and development over the past year, demonstrating its significant impact and ability to transform the employment landscape for autistic adults through comprehensive training and education. Below are highlights of our accomplishments and strategic advancements.

HAAPE has continued to strengthen its network by adding OCA, Orlando, FL to its list of esteemed operating partners. We are in the process of developing new partnerships in Tampa FL, Phoenix, AZ, and Salt Lake City, UT . Additionally, plans are underway to establish HAAPE Chapters in Chicago, IL and Atlanta, GA in 2024, aligning with our strategic growth objectives.

Our collaboration with educational institutions has grown significantly. Newly added partners include: -Carnegie-Mellon University -NC State University - Seminole State College -Palm Beach Community College -Vanderbilt University- FRIST Center -Drexel University

These institutions have provided invaluable insights and support, furthering HAAPE's Mission.

## **Comprehensive Growth Strategy Plan**

This past year, HAAPE developed a detailed Growth Strategy Plan with both short and long-term goals aimed at ensuring sustained growth and stability.

Key elements include: -Operating Partners: Expansion as outlined above. -Chapters: Development in new strategic locations. - Educational Partnerships: Continued growth and collaboration.

To effectively move forward HAAPE's Growth Strategy for geographical expansion, the Organization thought it prudent to develop a specific methodology to locate (currently) where the appropriate job markets are to match our current and planned training programs.



**JIM FOLEY**  
**CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER**





We recognize in an evolving and dynamic economy that change can happen quickly, but HAAPE feels our CQ model provides us with valuable guidance for our Growth Strategy direction at this time. A significant focus will be on creating Autism Workforce.

Development of ecosystems in key metropolitan areas across the U.S., beginning with Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas: These ecosystems will unify stakeholders to address the need for coordinated training and long-term employment for autistic adults. Other potential areas for ecosystem development include Phoenix and Salt Lake City.

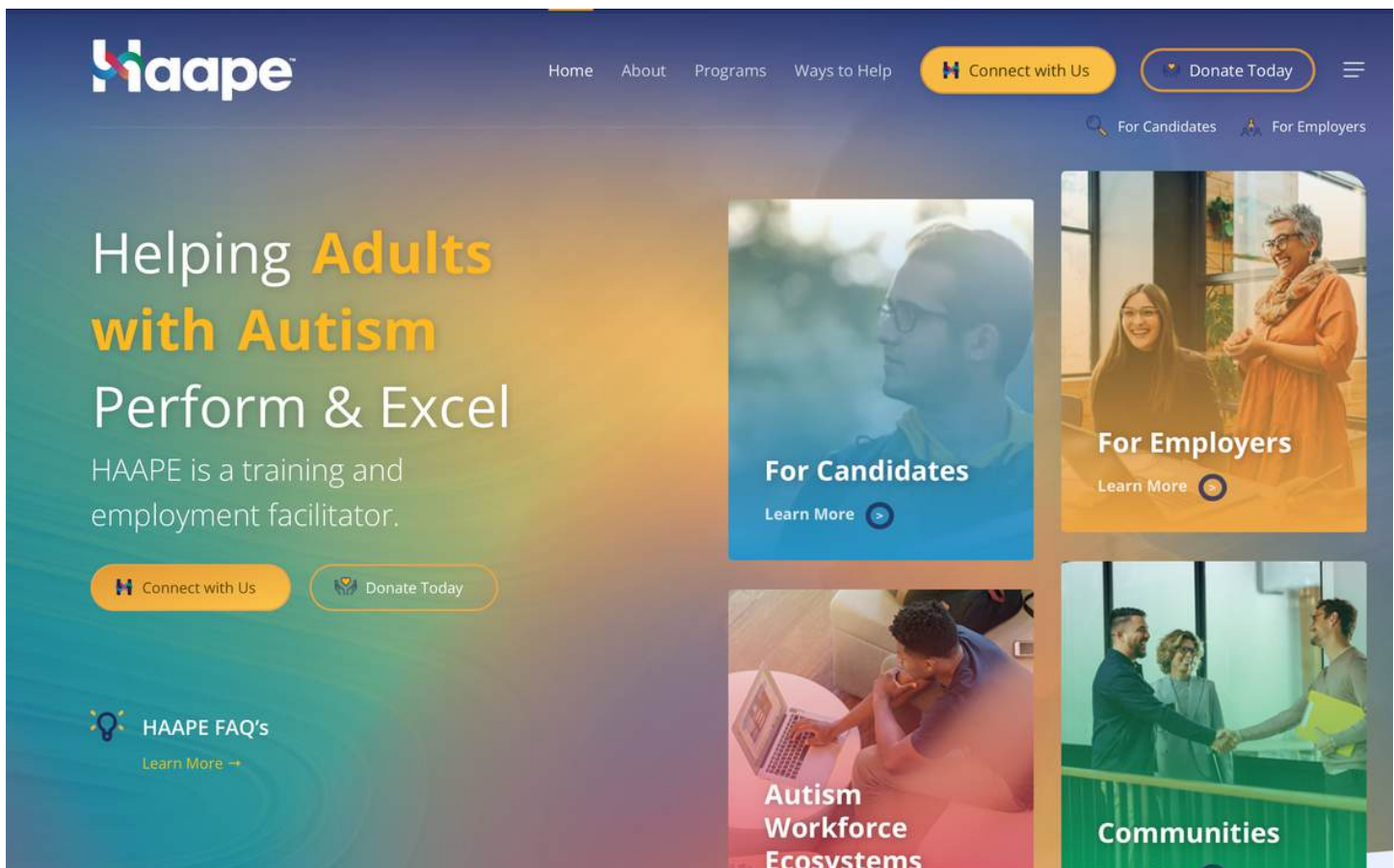


## Advancement of the SROI Model

This year, HAAPE has further developed our Social Return On Investment (SROI) Model to quantify the impact of our training programs. The model illustrates:

- Societal Cost Savings: Benefits to cities, counties, and states.
- Business Impact: Positive effects on businesses and trade associations within specific markets.
- Investment ROI: Significant returns on donor investments or HAAPE-funded training. The visual representation of these scenarios has greatly enhanced HAAPE's engagement with communities and other autism stakeholders. HAAPE's growth and development over

# NEW WEBSITE



Since its establishment eight years ago, HAAPE has experienced significant growth, driven by a refined strategic focus on employment and establishing relationships with numerous new collaborative partners and team members. The previous website did not adequately capture this transformation and this past August we launched our new website to reflect our evolution better. Additionally, the website includes accessibility mode for neurodivergent users and those with other types of disabilities.

Some of the significant changes include designated sections for Candidates, Employers, enhanced descriptions of our programs, FAQ's, an accessibility plug in for those with disabilities to better view our site, an expanded volunteer board reflecting HAAPE's autism experts, employment success stories, and testimonials. We will be updating the website regularly to reflect changes and new developments.

**BARBRA SLUTSKY**  
**BOARD SECRETARY**





HAAPE's Raleigh, NC Chapter, under the leadership of Joann Blumenfeld, has made significant strides in advancing employment opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum. Here's a summary of the recent achievements:

### Aspiritech Academy Collaboration:

In partnership with Aspiritech, HAAPE's Raleigh chapter successfully conducted an Aspiritech Academy. This initiative aligns perfectly with HAAPE's mission to provide meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for autistic adults.

### Program Details:

- Focus- Software testing, quality assurance, and job readiness
- Duration- 6 weeks
- Students- 10 students from The Science House at North Carolina State University
- Graduation rate- 100%, all participants completed the program and successfully graduated

### Outcomes and Future Prospects:

- Internship Placements- 4 graduates secured internships at ABB's US Research and Development Center in Raleigh
- These internships will allow students to apply their newly acquired skills in a professional setting
- Potential for full-time employment upon successful completion of internships

### Ongoing Efforts:

Joann Blumenfeld, the chapter's Managing Director, is actively seeking employment opportunities for the remaining program graduates. This demonstrates the chapter's commitment to long-term success for all participants.

### Impact and Significance:



**JOANN BLUMENFELD**  
**RALEIGH CHAPTER LEADER**

This initiative builds upon Joann's extensive experience in special education and her dedication to creating pathways for students with disabilities in STEM fields. The Aspiritech Academy complements her previous work with the Catalyst program at NC State University, which has successfully prepared students with disabilities for STEM careers.

By providing specialized training and facilitating internship placements, HAAPE's Raleigh Chapter is making tangible progress in addressing the employment gap for individuals on the autism spectrum. This approach not only equips participants with valuable skills but also connects them directly with potential employers, increasing their chances of securing meaningful, long-term employment in the technology sector.

OCA (Opportunity-Community- Ability) is a HAAPE Operating Partner in Central Florida. OCA offers programs for people, ages 18 months and up, with autism or other special needs. Their adult programs include vocational, companion and life skills tracks; recreation programs, including camps, inclusive arts and Special Olympic training, and mental and behavior therapy.

In the past year OCA has partnered with HAAPE to launch their First Flight Academy. This has allowed participants to take certification programs through the Council of Supply Chain Management and Broward College. In addition to the supply chain program, OCA provides soft skills training, internship placement, and job coach support.

This year OCA has begun delivering these programs on site. Year to date, participants have achieved a 100% pass rate with 15 students successfully completing the Introduction to Supply Chain/Customer Service Operations Programs. Another 12 have just completed the warehousing program and will be taking the certification exam soon. Additionally, OCA has been in discussions with local employers about internship opportunities for several graduates.



**OCA WAS FOUNDED BY PARENTS, TEACHERS, THERAPISTS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO KNOW THAT CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER DISABILITIES NEED MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR TYPICAL PEERS.**



## HAAPE COMMUNITIES

This year, Haape has reached new heights in our mission to support the autistic community. With a focus on education, employment, and community integration, we've directly assisted over 30 families, guiding them through the complexities of autism and providing tailored solutions for their autistic's son or daughter career path choices. From pioneering partnerships with educational institutions to fostering inclusive environments in cities and workplaces, Haape continues to be a beacon of support for neurodiverse individuals and their families.

In 2024, we expanded our initiatives through the \*Haape Autism-Friendly Verified Cities and Workplaces\* and the \*Haape Job Club\*, ensuring that autistic individuals not only have access to education and resources but also meaningful employment and community inclusion. We are excited to share our milestones and look forward to continuing this important work in the coming year.



**MARIA JACOBO**  
SENIOR VP



## 1. HAAPE HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

This year, we proudly welcomed new leaders for our Haape High School Clubs Founded eight years ago by Ike Grapin, these clubs have impacted over 200 students, both neurotypical and autistic. This school year marked a significant milestone as neurotypical students worked side by side with their autistic peers to create vision boards, fostering collaboration and understanding while empowering students to map out their futures with confidence.



*President: Nico Monterrubio / Executive Vice President: Chloe Brown / Vice President: Chloe Blum  
/ Treasurer: Josh Stoll / Secretary: Paige Arenberg / Historian: Jordana Brown / IEvent  
Coordinators: Lauren Mila and Sophia Paduano / Communications Director: Abi Eydelman / Chief  
Ambassador: Max Levinson*







*President: Gisella David / Vice President: Teagan Nickoson / Finance Director: Felix Gianni Cortez / Public Relations: Sophia Ferraro / Fundraising Directors: Emma Veghte and Sarah Jenkins / Internal Outreach Directors: Daniel Diaz and Alec Cao / External Outreach Director: Rolando Coto*

## 2. FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU) CLUB

The FSU Haape Club, now in its second year, has appointed a leadership team. The club continues to grow in membership, supporting neurodiverse students and promoting autism awareness on campus. This initiative provides university students with leadership opportunities and experience in fostering inclusion and building community partnerships.



### 3a. Nova Southeastern University Partnership

Announcement: “NSU Joins the South Florida Workforce Ecosystem” We are thrilled to share a major milestone in our ongoing efforts to create geographic Autistic Workforce Ecosystems. Nova Southeastern University (NSU) has officially joined the South Florida Workforce Ecosystem, a significant advancement in our mission to foster inclusion and employment opportunities for autistic individuals. NSU's dedication goes beyond a simple commitment. They have pledged to become an "Employer Center of Excellence," a role that involves actively providing the tools and support necessary to facilitate the inclusion of autistic individuals in the workforce. This designation is more than a title—it embodies NSU's proactive approach to building an inclusive work environment. What truly sets NSU apart is their concrete action plan. Rather than merely endorsing inclusivity, they are leading by example by launching a hiring program specifically for autistic individuals. This initiative showcases NSU's genuine commitment to fostering an environment where everyone, regardless of neurodiversity, has the opportunity to thrive. NSU's addition to our ecosystem marks a significant step forward in our collective journey. As we continue to build and expand our Autistic Workforce Ecosystems, let us draw inspiration from NSU's leadership and reaffirm our commitment to creating a world where everyone is valued and included.



### 3b. Nova Southeastern Community Partner Mentoring Program



We are honored to continue our partnership with Nova Southeastern University for the fourth year. This collaboration focuses on creating impactful projects to benefit the autistic community, particularly in employment and candidate sourcing. This year, public health students will play a pivotal role in identifying potential candidates within the community for our Haape Programs and Future Employers. .

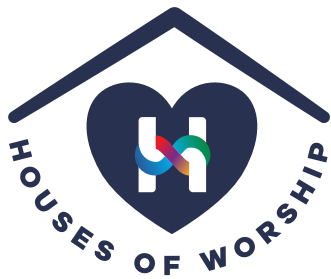






## 4. AMERICAN PREPARATORY ACADEMY (APA)

APA has solidified its commitment to inclusivity and neurodiverse education. Dean Andreina Fernandez has agreed to form a team consisting of a teacher, a parent, and a student to lead the initiative, fostering a collaborative approach that engages all stakeholders in the school's mission to support autistic students creating a pathway for their education and employment.



## 5. HAAPE HOUSES OF WORSHIP

This year, Haape Houses of Worship saw an important achievement as Enyol Martinez, one of our dedicated leaders, completed his leadership training and will officially graduate as a chaplain on October 5th. His leadership exemplifies the impact of our program in nurturing spiritual guidance and support for autistic individuals within faith communities.

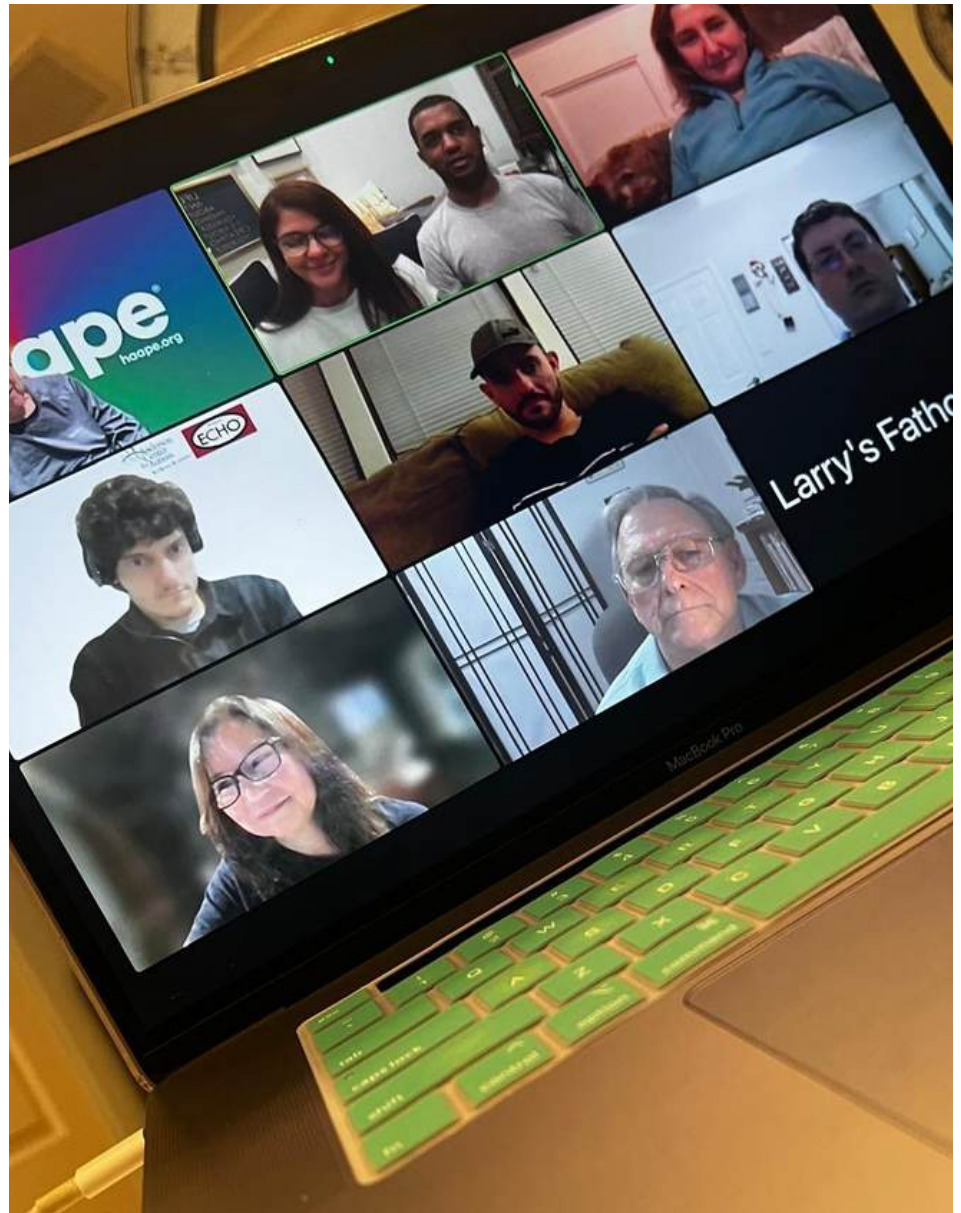


## 6. HAAPE AUTISM-FRIENDLY CITIES & WORKPLACES

We are thrilled to announce our growing list of **autism-friendly cities and workplaces**. This initiative, aims to create inclusive environments where neurodiverse individuals can thrive.

**Cities to date** in collaboration with UM, NSU, CARD and NeuroConsulting Solutions: Weston, Cooper City , Sunrise, Tamarac (In Process).

**Autism Friendly Workplaces:** Summit Aerospace, Scan it Forward.



## 7. HAAPE JOB CLUB

Under the leadership of John Comegys, the East Coast Job Club has been running successfully for over a year. Held once a month, this club has connected neurodiverse job seekers with employment opportunities, resulting in ten successful job placements. The monthly meetings provide a face-to-face and heart-to-heart connection, making it easier for members to bond and grow.





# FUNDRAISING EVENTS



BF Aerospace held their charity golf tournament and honored HAAPE as their designated charity. In addition to receiving a very significant donation, we discovered the aviation industry is extremely receptive to employing qualified autistic individuals. (Summit Aerospace is the perfect example of this now successfully employing 5 autistic individuals.) We just received news that HAAPE will again be BF Aerospace's designated charity for their upcoming golf tournament that will be held December 13 in Orlando.

If you are interested in hosting a fundraising event, please contact us at [info@haape.org](mailto:info@haape.org).

We had two successful fundraising events in 2023, the HAAPE Tennis and Pickleball Classic hosted for the third year in a row by Midtown Athletic Club on April 1st and the BF Aerospace Golf Tournament on December 8th held at the Plantation Preserve Golf Course.

The HAAPE Classic is run by the HAAPE team and created goodwill in the Weston community in addition to raising money.



**BARBRA SLUTSKY**  
**BOARD SECRETARY**





# PHOTO GALLERY



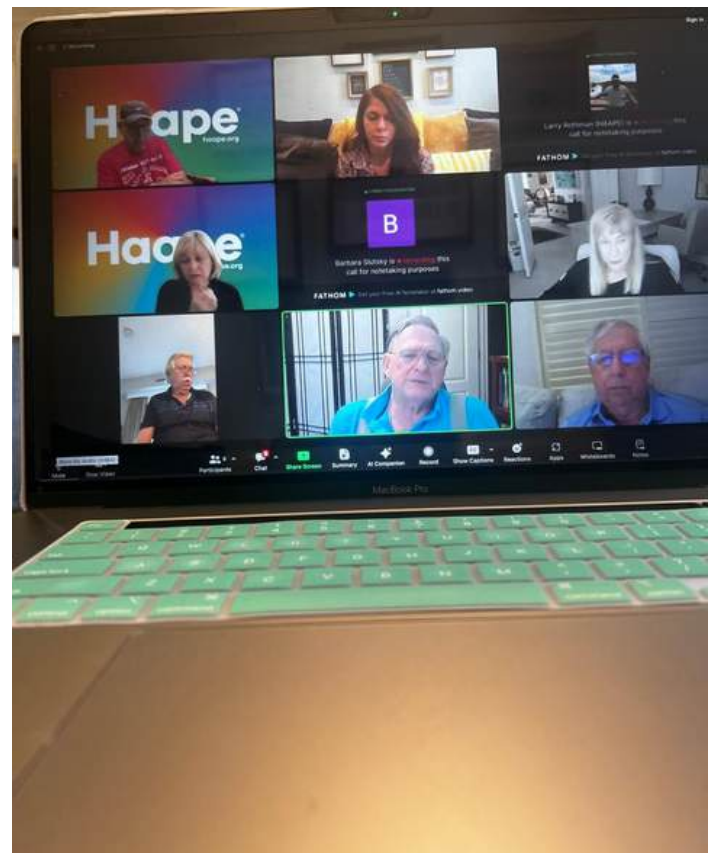












## WAYS TO HELP

HAAPE IS AN ALL-VOLUNTEER, 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization.

We change people's lives of autistic adults by creating, nurturing, and supporting educational, training, and employment programs that promote financial and personal independence.

Over 98% of all funds raised are directed or allocated to those programs.

With your help, we can create and open more programs as well as more opportunities for autistics who want to improve themselves and achieve their own independence. Our desire is to help them more and their families! Accompany us by supporting them on their journey where many efforts, resources, and teamwork are needed.

We count on your donation. Go to [haape.org/donate](https://haape.org/donate) now. Your contribution is vital to their success. Every donation from you counts as a lot!

Let's change the world!

[WWW.HAAPE.ORG](https://www.haape.org)



Here are some ways in which you can help:

💛 Donate Your contribution is vital to their success.

📍 Start a Haape Chapter in your city.

❤️ Volunteer to help us grow our community. We are 100%Volunteer.

💚 Employ autistic adults.

💙 Learn more by getting in touch with us. You can do so through our website.





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