

So we are an autism action partnership, we're a 501c3, we serve all of Nebraska and a little bit into western Iowa, but our headquarters and all of our staff are housed out of Omaha. So most of what we do outside of the Omaha metro area is usually in partnership with others and maybe like a training or two somewhere in like in outstate, middle state of Nebraska. So not regular everyday services outside of the Omaha area. We focus our programming, we talk about our program in three kind of buckets, support, inclusion and prosperity. But the other way we talk about it is we serve the autism community, families, kids, young adults, adults, as well as the non-autism community. And so that area of focus is really on kind of training on inclusion and what autism is and what it isn't in hopes that those individuals, businesses, organizations, whoever can better be more inclusive in their practices intentionally or less exclusive unintentionally. We do navigation light, so we don't have like a navigator on site, but we do have folks who just because of what we are, who we are, what we do, we just, we have family's call all the time saying we need information about this or that. And so we do our best to try to keep as much updated information as we can. We have a project lifesaver program, it's an international program with wearable devices and we work in partnership with the police for individuals who might elope or wander with autism. And so these are wearable devices. And so we are the administrators of the program. So we enroll families, we make sure the device is working and maintain it working throughout the time, as well as keep their information updated and current in the system. So when they, if they're missing their family called 911 gives the police the number on the bracelet or the anklet, and then they're able to track them down to find the actual bracelet or anklet. So that's another program we operate. We have a team which is it's like a after school social group for adolescents with autism. We have a workforce program, Prosper Workforce Services, working with young adults with autism as well as businesses looking for specialized talent. We have Prosper Academy, which is more of our recent program we've launched, which is an independent living program. Currently, we have five students, it's the, we just started year two of a two year program of our pilot. And they live in a dorm setting at the Newman Center at 71st and Pacific and our staff provides all the training and education, which is what Lizzie does. And then we have a Compass program. Our Compass program is the training program. So training and consultation services for, again, businesses. We've trained like the Kiewit Loominarium, which STEM STEM, interactive STEM museum. So we've trained all their staff. We do stuff at the zoo and children's museum and other things like that. And then the last kind of other bucket that we have, we call it making memories or basically just like social groups. So we rent out the zoo a couple of times a year, children's museum a couple of times a year and a number of other other places. We have bowling and it's just social groups either for the entire family or targeted to like young adults, art camp and things like that. So enrichment basically is kind of a refer to that. Anything to help people have a better day or a better couple of hours or a better life in general. So those are the areas that we focus in where the way I also speak to it is we there's your kind of medical house, your therapies, your interventions, those types of things. We don't do that. And then there's your special ed with your IEPs and things like that. We don't do that. Everything else in life that happens that is not inside those two areas, we either do it or we've vetted it and decided that it's not where we belong. But those are kind of like those two houses are where they are and we're not in those all the other components of life out after those things as well as kind of in between those things. And then the nonprofit sector, my 20 plus years, my entire career, I've got a background in social work and workforce development is more specific. But I was a job coach for a couple of years at Goodwill Industries. I was at Goodwill for probably 11 of my 20 plus years and worked with and around coworkers that had disabilities and so developed a passion for that and kind of a passion for the underdog as well as workforce. And so when I began considering this position, it was a population that I have experience working with in an arena that I enjoy working in as well as kind of admin opportunities there. I've been in this role for five years and outside of that pandemic, you may have heard about it, COVID-19, yeah, outside of that, we've

had a pretty good ability to meet the needs. I don't want to say meet the needs because the needs are consistently unmet because there's just not enough programs like ours or like MMIs or everybody in town is doing it. We could double all that and still not meet the need. But to your question, we listen to the needs of the community and we try to figure out where and how we can best respond. So even during the pandemic, we created, they were called activity kits that we made over 1,000 activity kits and got them across the entire state, the families who weren't able to go and do either to school or to therapy and have types of interventions. And so we created videos that families could then use the contents, watch the videos and have activities that were fun but also could help with person's learning and our advancement. So the most rewarding part of my job is I think the fact that we aren't restricted to a place where we can say, no, we don't do that. Yes, we do that. It's what is needed. Is that something we can do? And the answer really is, can we do it without not doing something else we committed to? And can we do it in a way that's sustainable and quality? So I've worked in a lot of other places where we're just really restricted. This is what we do. And if we need that, no, this is like, this is our goal, this is our mission. If it fits the mission, we at least passes that point and then we start vetting it as far as our ability to do it. We have a website, autismaction.org, but I would say our social media is probably certainly more updated more frequently. We have a newsletter as well. So you can go to our website or social media and connect to our newsletter, which is pretty comprehensive. Those are probably the best ways to do it virtually. And then should anybody, we welcome anybody to stop by or call if they want to learn more. We have a number of those events that we have kind of open to the autism community, which is inclusive of professionals, students, professionals, families. It's not like you have to show me your diagnosis to get through the door. It's pretty loose with that when it comes to some of those social events, some of the other programming, we got to be more specific, but the zoo nights and things like that. We want it to be a feel like a full celebrated community event. I mean, I guess everything I just shared, plus like we don't do this alone. We do almost everything that we do. We have partners in, whether it's partners to help us launch, partners to help us do it, partners for referrals. There's a pretty small group of organizations dedicated to individual disabilities and even a smaller group dedicated to the autism community. And so a lot of the work that we do is done in partnership and we hopefully have our expertise at our lane and we find people who compliment and similar with those who reach out to us. So whether it's arts community or the therapeutic folks or school systems or police officers or things like that, a lot of what we do relies on a third party or multiple parties saying, yes, let's do this together and let's all kind of bring our own, bring all the right stuff to the barbecue and make a success. So our name, Autism Action Partnership, the name partnership is in fear and is as true today as it was on the day we chose that name.