



Who We are

A group of proactive parents working collaboratively with family, neighbours, community, education & autism professionals, school districts, government, and private associations to create happiness and success for their children with Autism.

YEAR AT A GLANCE 2025!

We've just finished another **AMAZING year supporting families** in our community affected by **Autism and other special needs** and we are excited to provide you with an **overview of what we've been doing to help so many families**. This support would not be possible without the **generous contributions from individuals, businesses & community partners in Sooke** – we are so grateful!

MONTHLY CAREGIVER MEETINGS & EDUCATION

We provided **Monthly SASS Support Meetings** from **September to May** for parents, caregivers & community advocates with a variety of guest speakers providing valuable information making a meaningful difference in the lives of others and connecting families to the resources they need. Thank you Seaparc for allowing us meeting space!



SIBKIDS SIBSHOPS

We were delighted to offer another series of **Sibkids Sibshops** to families right here in Sooke! This **kind, fun & compassionate program** is for **siblings of those with special needs**. These special little souls will be in the lives of those with special needs longer than the parents will – taking over the caregiver responsibilities at some point in time. The program facilitator, Corrina Robb from **SWIM THERAPY** is amazing! Our 2026 program will be available to families free of charge due to a generous Grant received by The District of Sooke.



SOCIAL GROUPS FOR ADULTS 18+ WITH ASD

This is a **Social Group for Adults 18+ with ASD** and other special needs designed to provide social opportunities & connect them to their community! This group meets via Zoom each month to decide on their in-person activity for the month. So far this group has enjoyed the Flying Squirrel, Qasar's Arcade, Board Games, Bowling, Pumpkin Carving, Laser Tag, Video Game Hangouts, French Beach & more!



SENSORY SANTA PHOTOS

We provided **free Sensory Santa Photos** for **20 families** making memories for years to come! This is such a heart-warming event full of magic, smiles & a whole lot of love! We are especially thankful for our Volunteer Photographer, **Mary-Anne Bowcott** (The Lady Plumber) and Santa, **Dave McMillan** of McMillan Renovations & Repair. (Photo: Bailey & her children with Santa). Photo: Isaak & Santa



SENSORY SANTA PANCAKE BREAKFAST



This year, our SASS families were invited to the **Annual Santa Pancake Breakfast** graciously hosted by the amazing **Sooke Lions Club**. They went the **extra mile** to allow a full hour for our families to enjoy a private, quiet, sensory-friendly hour before this event was open to the general public.

CRAFT HOLIDAY & CARE PACKAGES

We provided **20 amazing Holiday & Craft Care Packages** to families in November. These were loaded with crafts and memory-making items for families to share together. We want to give a special shout out to **Village Foods** for providing us with 20 Family Gingerbread Decorating Kits at the best price possible - they were a hit!



FESTIVAL OF TREES

We sponsored a tree for **SASS the Festival of Trees in December** and families came down to add their home-made decorations, enjoy some holiday treats, and a **free family swim or skate on behalf of SASS**. Photo: Karissa Parrish, SASS Secretary.

These **HOLIDAY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES** were supported by the proceeds raised in the 50/50 Draw held in **October 2025** by the **Sooke & Juan de Fuca Health Foundation** – where SASS was the chosen recipient charity. It was an absolutely perfect way to acknowledge **Canada's Autism Awareness Month**.

The winners of the 50/50 Draw, **John & Donna Palle** graciously donated all of their winnings to SASS. This ensured we could continue to make a **meaningful difference** in the lives of families in Sooke at a time of year that is especially challenging for our SASS families.

Photo: Sherri Palle SASS President with Donna & John Palle.



FAMILY EASTER EGG HUNT

We had our second annual sensory-friendly **Family Easter Egg Hunt** in collaboration with **S.W.I.M. THERAPY**. Several families were delighted to participate in this quieter, smaller and more inclusive event with treats for everyone to enjoy!



SOOKARAMA

We also participated in **Sookarama** to promote awareness in our community and spoke to hundreds of people --- grandparents, parents, siblings, relatives and neighbours of those with ASD. Many signed up to be added to our monthly SASS E-Newsletter & FB page to stay connected & informed.



SUMMER CAMP GRANTS ❖

We provided \$750 in **Summer Camp Grants** to families in Sooke. These grants are designed to help families create a structured and engaging summer for their children while disconnected from the routine the school year brings them.



PRIVATE SWIM LESSON GRANTS ❖

We provided 10 families in Sooke with **Swim Lesson Grants** to enable them to enroll their children in private swim lessons. Swimming is an essential life skill, but especially when you live on an island! Often these kids need one-to-one private instruction to learn basic water safety and make gainful improvement in their swimming skills. These grants were made possible by the generous donation by the **Sooke Lions Club**.



EMCS SCHOLARSHIPS ❖

We awarded the **SASS Ambassador of Inclusion Scholarship** to a deserving graduate of EMCS who promoted the positive inclusion of those with special needs at school, in the community and/or at home! We also awarded the **SASS Individual Support Scholarship** to a deserving graduate of EMCS who has special needs to help them with the next chapter of their special needs journey! For a list of recipients, check out our website.



MENTORING & RESOURCE SUPPORT

We provided **several one-on-one mentoring and support sessions** to families receiving their new ASD diagnosis. We also responded to **several hundred emails** over the course of the year helping families with a variety of issues. It's impossible to put into words these experiences create for us and the families we support. **Knowing they are not alone on this journey** – especially at the outset of the initial diagnosis is life changing.

SASS AUTISM RESOURCE HUB

We are delighted to let you know that since we donated our entire SASS Library to the [VI Regional Library Sooke](#) this Fall, there have been dozens of wonderful resources signed out and used by families in Sooke! (Photo: Sooke Library Autism Resource Hub)

We are so excited to be able to make these items readily available to families who need them and deeply grateful for our partnership with the [VI Regional Library Sooke](#) for their continued support ❤️!



OUR IMPACT ON FAMILIES IN SOOKE!

- We provide **information, education, support, grants & programs** to **187+ families in Sooke!**
- We work collaboratively with **many community advocates, service providers & organizations**
- We have **716 followers** on our SASS FB Page
- Our SASS **website** www.sooke-sass.com is full of valuable information
- Our **Monthly SASS Newsletter** keeps our community fully informed
- Our amazing SASS Community is continuing to **GROW!**

A SINCERE & HEARTFELT THANK YOU

An extra heartfelt THANK YOU to the organizations and individuals who provided us with **grants and/or generous donations** which supported our SASS activities in 2025 along with the **local businesses** who supported us with donations of gift certificates.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS 2025 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS & SUPPORTERS:

- Sooke Lions Club - Sooke & Juan de Fuca Health Foundation - District of Sooke
- Mindset Consulting & Pareto Systems
- Morson Carson Wealth Council of Richardson Wealth
- The Provincial Employees Community Service Fund
- McMillan Renovation & Repair – Keith's Mini Excavating
- The Lady Plumber – Black Fern Plumbing & Gas
- Accutax Sooke (Jim & Eva)
- Village Foods - Western Foods - Wiskers & Waggs - Bosley's Pet Store
- Pizzability - Route 14 - Sooke 2-for-1 Pizza - Tim Horton's
- S.W.I.M. Therapy - Moment Yoga - Sea-to-Tree Wellness
- Seaparc - The Sooke Regional Library - SD62
- Several private donors
- The Sooke Bottle Depot – Feel free to donate your empties to our Account!

We appreciate you and we wish you all the very best for 2026!

The Sooke Autism Support Society (SASS) Executive

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