



Yampa Valley Autism

Strategic Plan 2024-2027

11.26.23

Background

Yampa Valley Autism began in 2002 as a grassroots support group led by a small group of parents who had children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Their goal was to obtain high quality, up-to-date services for their children with autism in a small rural community. The group and services grew so much that Yampa Valley Autism Program (YVAP) was formalized in 2004. With more demand, Yampa Valley Autism (YVA) professionalized, transitioning from a working board and volunteers to hiring an executive director and staff. The following strategic plan outlines the broad goals and strategies to ensure the viability and sustainability of Yampa Valley Autism and to increase its support and financial foundation.

Vision, Mission, Values

1. **Vision for the Future:** Neurodiverse individuals and families in the Yampa Valley are valued and accepted. (DRAFT)
2. **Mission:** Yampa Valley Autism helps neurodiverse youth aged 3-21 by providing individual therapy, social skills integration, community partnerships, community education, workplace readiness and family resources. (DRAFT)
3. **Our Values:** Yampa Valley Autism upholds the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility for our employees and the individuals we serve.

Goals and Strategies

I. Individual Therapy

A. **Goal 1:** YVA is able to provide individual therapy for all kids that need it.

1. *Strategy 1:* Identify the need in the community (how many kids).
2. *Strategy 2:* Prioritize early intervention, regardless of Medicaid/health care status.
3. *Strategy 3:* Educate pediatricians, other health care providers, and school districts in Routt County on how to identify autism and refer to YVA.
4. *Strategy 4:* Recruit and train more Applied Behavior Analyst (ABA) therapists.
5. *Strategy 5:* Recruit and train more Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT).
6. *Strategy 6:* Identify and secure larger office space for individual and group therapy and programming.

7. *Strategy 7:* Create clear measures of success of program, beyond clearing the waitlist.

II. Social Skills

- A. **Goal 1:** YVA provides opportunities for clients (3-21) to practice what they learn in individual therapy in a social setting.
 1. *Strategy 1:* Combine social skills training with ABA.
 2. *Strategy 2:* Adapt social skills therapy with ABA to get reimbursed by Medicaid.
 3. *Strategy 3:* Create measures of success for program and individuals.
 4. *Strategy 4:* Reframe Special Activities Support (SAS) as part of social skills.

III. Community Partnerships

- A. **Goal 1:** Community partners contribute financially to integrate YVA clients into their programs.
- B. **Goal 2:** Community partners recognize the benefits of working with YVA.
 1. *Strategy 1:* Link Special Activities Support, community partnerships and social skills training.
 2. *Strategy 2:* Rename SAS to community partnerships.
 3. *Strategy 3:* Brand YVA as an asset to community groups
 4. *Strategy 4:* Let community groups know the benefits of partnering with YVA based on their values.
 5. *Strategy 5:* Clarify Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements to community partners.
 6. *Strategy 6:* Continue process where parents pay for program (SSWSC, Hockey, running, etc) and YVA supports.
 7. *Strategy 7:* Train businesses and organizations on how to work with neuro-divergent community, like DEI.
 8. *Strategy 8:* Explore ways partners can financially contribute to working with YVA and their clients.
 9. *Strategy 9:* Continue and improve relationship with Steamboat Springs School District.

10. *Strategy 10*: Recruit and train staff to work with clients at community partner activities.
11. *Strategy 11*: Develop an evaluation tool to determine impact of the programs on clients.

IV. Workplace Readiness (Strides and Community Cultivation)

- A. **Goal 1**: YVA partners with local businesses and organizations to help clients get and keep jobs. (15-21)
 1. *Strategy 1*: Rename YVA program to Workplace Readiness and define that STRIDES is part of Workplace Readiness.
 2. *Strategy 2*: Integrate Community Cultivation as part of Workplace Readiness in addition to other work options.
 3. *Strategy 3*: Extend Steambat Springs School District 1 year contract to three years.
 4. *Strategy 4*: Identify businesses where neuro-divergent populations thrive - tech, music, math, cybersecurity, etc. - and develop ways to partner with them for workplace readiness for YVA clients.
 5. *Strategy 5*: Communicate the successes of this program to the broader community.
 6. *Strategy 6*: Keep contracts with SSSD and DVR to reduce operational costs.

V. Community Education and Communications

- A. **Goal 1**: YVA is known as the unique leader for neurodiverse youth with therapy and programming for clients 3-21.
- B. **Goal 2**: Pediatricians, parents, schools and organizations recognize and support the uniqueness of YVA, what it does and who it serves.
- C. **Goal 3**: Community organizations understand how to work with, teach and hire neurodiverse youth.
 1. *Strategy 1*: Promote the uniqueness of neurodivergent kids and how they benefit the community.
 2. *Strategy 2*: Publicize what YVA does well: partnerships, providing services, community outreach.

3. *Strategy 3:* Develop a communications/community outreach plan with target audiences, messages, and messengers.
4. *Strategy 4:* Develop communications materials based on strategic planning process.
5. *Strategy 5:* Create a way for parents and families to come together.
6. *Strategy 6:* Provide resources for parents.


V. Organizational Health/Capacity Building

- A. Goal 1: Sustain YVA financially and with the same staff for at least 3 years.
- B. Goal 2: By 2027, build capacity of organization to better serve clients.

1. *Strategy 1:* Move into larger space to allow for more private meetings and meet needs of increasing number of staff.
2. *Strategy 2:* Provide enough staff for administrative and specialist support to be efficient and avoid burn out.
3. *Strategy 3:* Create organizational chart to make it easier for board to understand potential growth every year.
4. *Strategy 4:* Increase overall fundraising to exceed actual operations budget.
5. *Strategy 5:* Create systems and standard operating procedures for staff.
6. *Strategy 6:* Increase bilingual capability. (Spanish)
7. *Strategy 7:* Create evaluation system of all programming to show impact.
8. *Strategy 8:* Strengthen and expand the board; clarify expectations; and update board contracts.

VI. Funding

- A. Goal 1: By 2028, secure enough funding to be at full capacity to serve all neuro-diverse kids who need help in the Yampa Valley.
 1. *Strategy 1:* Set clear numerical fundraising goals for grants, YVGD, events, etc
 2. *Strategy 2:* Continue to pursue grant funding.
 3. *Strategy 3:* Double the number of high donors by 2025.

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4. *Strategy 4:* Increase donations from Yampa Valley Gives Day (YVGD) by 10% every year.
 5. *Strategy 5:* Clarify what funding will be used for to help board members reach out to potential donors.
 6. *Strategy 6:* Consider ways YVA can increase Medicaid reimbursement.
 7. *Strategy 7:* Develop clear measures of success (ROI) for events.
 8. *Strategy 8:* Continue annual signature event with goal of raising funds.

VII. Conclusion

Yampa Valley Autism (YVA) has a strong foundation and has grown exponentially since the first group of parents joined together. The demand for direct services for neurodiverse youth continues and will expand as Northwest Colorado grows in population. This plan is the foundation for solidifying what already does well and how it can expand to serve more youth for the next three to five years. Join us in making our plan a reality!