



PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION

Connect • Support • Educate



"On the Set" Fox Tour Winners from 2014



2014 PACE Classic Golfers & Staff

Golfers, Get Ready to Swing!

by Deb McClellan

GOLF CLASSIC!

If you love to golf, and you love to win great prizes, you and a few of your friends need to join us for our **7th Annual Golf Classic** on Friday, May 8th at Cinnabar Hills in San Jose.

This popular event will raise funds for PACE programs and services, so that we may continue our mission to provide exceptional services for PACE students and clients. Your ticket price will include:

- 18 beautiful fairways with golf cart
- Full lunch and refreshments
- Tee prizes and exciting on-course contests
- Complimentary swag bag
- Awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams
- Raffle and Live Auction
- Dinner and cocktails

To purchase tickets, become a sponsor or to make a donation, visit www.pacificautism.org/events, email events@pacificautism.org, or call 408.245.3400. ■

BARER!

The **Bay Area Real Estate Roundtable** will be held at the Ritz Carlton Half Moon Bay on May 26 - 27. Proceeds from the auction will again benefit PACE programs and services. This annual event consists of two days of workshops, dinner and an auction, culminating in a golf tournament.

Long-time PACE supporters, **Cassidy Turley** (now DTZ) are the sponsors of this popular realtor networking event. We thank DTZ/Cassidy Turley and the BARER event for their ongoing support.

RAFFLE TICKETS

You need not be registered or present to win the **raffle prizes** at the Golf Classic! You can look at auction and raffle items online and purchase raffle tickets at www.pacificautism.org/events as we get closer to the event on May 8th.

Thanks for supporting PACE and *good luck!* ■

Porchlight Website Launch!

by Deb McClellan

Our **Project Porchlight** website is now live! Go to porchlighteducation.org and view our free-access internet program designed specifically to provide parents and caregivers ideas and solutions for modifying behaviors at home.

Almost all government funding and grant dollars are focused exclusively on supporting the individual with developmental disabilities, with very little monies available for parent training and support. However, a successful quality of life for individuals with disabilities depends greatly on having a community of qualified support. Porchlight aims to build that competence and compassion in raising a collective higher conscience in the community. Our goal is to supply consistent and dependable resources; providing much needed structure in the lives of those who live with autism.

The first modules are more informational, and focus on the basics of autism and include:

- Understanding Autism
- Treatment Options for Autism
- The ABCs of ABA
- Creating a Supportive Environment
- Toilet Training

The platform is highly focused on direct usable strategies for delivering specific solutions from a collection of modules that take 5-8 minutes to complete. We'll also offer direct concentrated group workshops for more hands-on experience and collaboration.

Future modules will offer simple examples and direction on working with your child on behavior modification, and will cover:

- Challenging behaviors
- Eating habits
- General health and wellbeing
- Grooming

Porchlight was designed to provide you with a useful resource that can be accessed 24/7 -- it's available when you need answers. We expect to roll out 10 new modules in 2015, so please check the website often.

We thank the **United Way** for providing the funding that made this project possible. With the addition of Project Porchlight, PACE will expand the high-quality services we already offer through our school, children's services and residential program, allowing us to connect, support and educate throughout the larger community. ■

Ask a Therapist

by Danielle Borrás, OTR/L, CVE, Occupational Therapist

Q: My child is often overwhelmed by the ongoing activity at our home. We have a large family, pets, and there's always something going on. Can you **help me create a soothing environment** for my child with autism?

A: Great question! There are many things that you can do to structure an environment throughout the home, in a way that supports a child with autism.

The suggestions that follow, can be applied to a child's bedroom, play space or even the whole house. Please remember, that each individual is unique, and therefore these suggestions need to be discussed and evaluated by your child's occupational therapist or behaviorist. Each child may react differently to the changes you make.

The goal here is for you to create an environment that:

- is predictable and manageable;
- reduces potentially overwhelming stimuli; and
- encourages positive social interactions and opportunities to communicate.

Visuals

Bright lights, colors, objects, pictures and decorations may work well

for typical children, but can often be overwhelming for a child with autism. Therefore, some suggestions to consider for you home include:

- Choosing pastels or soothing, muted colors for wall paint.
- Reducing items that make the room too busy.
- Changing fluorescent lighting to natural lighting or incandescent lighting.
- Changing light fixtures to create "soft" light.

Sounds and Smells

Loud sounds or continuous low noise can make a child with autism feel uncomfortable and overwhelmed. Smells can have a similar effect on some children. Suggestions to help reduce their discomfort include:

- Removing continuous noises such as a loud fan, air conditioner or the low hum of other appliances.
- Minimizing other sounds that may be distracting, such as leaving a television on for extended periods.
- Not using room fragrances or strong perfumes in a closed room.

This is a very short sampling of suggestions to create a supportive environment for your child. Go to www.porchlighteducation.org for more ideas and options. ■

Porchlight

Outings, Visits and Fun!

by Dora Tao

Students at the PACE School have been keeping very busy with many new activities that we rolled out in the past few months! While they continue with their educational programs, working on general coursework, exercise, therapy, and the like, students are also participating in many outings and learning from community visitors who have come to the school.

As part of a lesson about community helpers, **firefighters** and a **police officer** came to speak to the students. Students had the chance to talk to the firemen and learn about what they do, climb on to the fire engine and also ring the bell on the truck! When the police officer visited, he read a story to the students about what police officers do and some students even got to sit in his patrol car.



Different classrooms have also enjoyed outings to the **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library** — this event took place after learning about Dr. King through lesson plans. Another class visited the **Levi's Stadium** field for their Disability Awareness Day. In February, **lion dancers** visited the PACE School and put on a colorful performance in celebration of Chinese New Year! Students will soon be participating in more community outings to parks, museums, to the local mall, and learning to ride public transit. ■

PCH Model Launched!

by Janice Morreira

We are very pleased to announce the opening of our first **Parent Collaborative Home (PCH)** in March! In our continued effort to seek out affordable housing options to support the needs of those individuals requiring residential placement, PACE has requested and received our vendor certification to make this program a reality. This 2-bedroom home in San Jose will house one special needs resident and be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In the PCH model, the parents or caregivers own the home and PACE provides the one-on-one support to their child under Title 17 regulations. Elements of the PCH model include:

- Long-term housing for adults with disabilities;
- Committed family who desire a secured living solution for their family member;
- A PACE Housing Coordinator that will work with the parents/



caregivers to form the Parent Collaborative Home;

- Homes or properties that will accommodate up to four people and are appropriate for individuals living with disabilities;
- A Supported Living Service (SLS) provider to care for the residents.

The PCH program provides additional security to the family knowing their child will always have a home to live in for the rest of his/her life. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact Operations Manager, Janice Morreira at 408.625.6172. ■

Employee Excellence Awards for 2014!

PACE's annual **Employee Excellence Award** goes to those who demonstrate excellence in their work and who actively promote PACE's values: providing the highest quality of life for our clients; promoting a culture of continuous improvement; and showing commitment to serve all those who can benefit from PACE services.

The **Children's Program** chose **Danielle Valenzuela**, who has demonstrated talent for working with her young clients. Starting as an aide at the preschool, she went through the Faces Tutor training and became a Behavior Tutor working with clients in the South Bay. Danielle's degree of communication with each staff member is professional and valued. She has taken on a dual role of both behavioral therapist, and instructional specialist (when needed in the classroom). Without a doubt, she embodies an Employee of the Year.

Amy Keeney has been with the Children's Program at Faces since 2001, starting as a Behavior Tutor. Currently a Case Manager, Amy is an exemplary model of someone who is committed to providing the best possible services for her clients. Her strong knowledge and application of applied behavior analysis is evident in her work every day, and her easy-going personality and attitude towards problem solving and managing cases makes Amy someone who we feel exceeds the expectations of a Faces Case Manager.

The **Residential Program** selected **Chris Pono** from Mahalo House who has been with PACE for 13 years! His dedication and loyalty to the residents is respected and appreciated by everyone. "Chris is very conscientious, diligent, and passionate on the job." "Chris puts his heart into everything he does. It's always a joy working with him. He treats the clients like family. He goes above and beyond." "He cares about everyone he works with and treats his peers and residents with the utmost respect." Thank you Chris for exemplifying excellence in all you do!

At the **School Program** **Cindy Adrian**, Behavior Support Associate is always there in a flash when she's needed. She is confident and respectful of others. Her constructive coaching is extremely helpful when needed. Cindy takes initiative when she sees room for improvement. She really listens and is always receptive to suggestions. We're glad you're on our team!

Speech Therapist, **Olivia Krakower** is the awardee in the faculty member category. She always puts the kids first no matter what else is going on. Other staff can bounce ideas off of her and she has great insight. Olivia is creative, has a positive attitude, and is always willing to help. Most importantly, you can see a noticeable improvement in the students with whom she works. Thank you for everything you do for PACE and our students, Olivia! ■

Independent Activity Club

by Dora Tao

Occupational Therapist, Danielle Borrás has created a new initiative, the "Independent Activity Club," which helps PACE students transition to a more independent lifestyle. Rather than looking for prompts from adults, these students are gaining skills to be able to take initiative on daily tasks, such as preparing breakfast and following recipes.

With two members so far, this club teaches students skills that they also will be able to take home with them.

The goal is for students to understand how to make the transition from being teenagers who rely on others to more independent adults who are able to make choices for themselves.

During the club, therapists don't prompt the students for the next step, allowing them to take ownership over their actions. Initiatives such as this club are important for students, particularly those who have a goal of being independent in the future. ■



How You Can Help

Please consider making a donation to PACE in one of the following ways:

- Secure online donations can be made directly to PACE on our website at www.pacificautism.org.

- Donate by mail by sending your contributions to **1880 Pruneridge Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95050**.

- Donate by telephone by calling **408-245-3400** and using your credit card to make a contribution.

- Double your gift with an employee matching gift contribution.

- A donation made in someone's honor is a lovely way to acknowledge someone special and also support PACE.

- To include PACE in your workplace giving options, please contact development@pacificautism.org.

- View the **PACE Wish List** here: pacificautism.org/donations/pace-wishlist/.

Celebrating 25 Years of Service

By Rachel Palmer

PACE celebrated its 25th Anniversary as an agency in 2014 and commemorated the milestone at our **Annual Gala and Auction** on October 25, 2014. During the event, over **\$120,000 was raised!** The Fund a Need portion of the event alone raised over \$37,000 to endow the **Marcia Goldman Mission Fund** to directly support PACE programs and services including capital improvements and upgrades to PACE homes and facilities, enrichment activities for students and residents, and continued innovation that will expand our reach. NBC Bay Area TV Anchor, Laura Garcia-Cannon served as Emcee at the event.

"This year's gala represents a major landmark for PACE," noted Executive Director Kurt Ohlf. "Twenty-five years of providing services and solutions for the autism community is quite a milestone. We have learned

so much and expect the next 25 years will show an even greater expansion of PACE services for the Bay Area."

PACE debuted a heartwarming video at the event which provides an excellent overview of our services, told by a long-term client's appreciative parent. You can view the video on the PACE Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/PACE1880.

PACE would like to thank all guests, corporate and individual sponsors, supporters and volunteers who made this event possible. Special thanks goes out to Platinum Sponsor, **Turn-Key Mortgage Solutions.** ■

*Celebrating 25 Years
of providing programs and services
for the Bay Area.*



The PACE School Gets a New Playground!

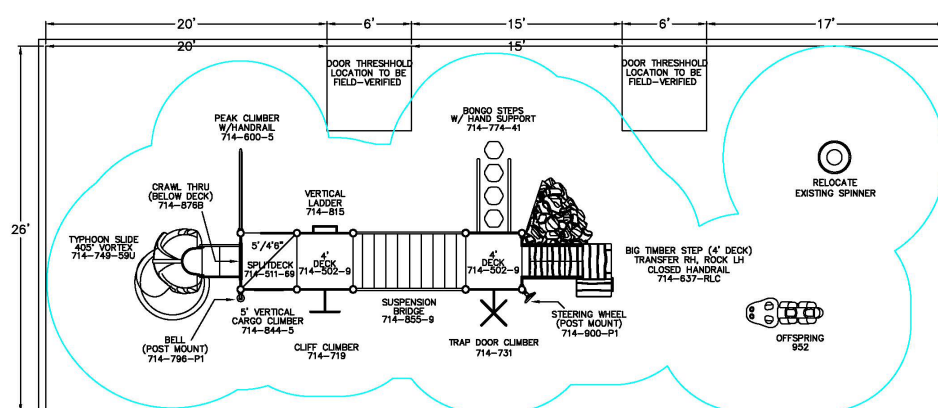
By Deb McClellan

A vast majority of PACE students suffer from agility and balance problems. Our Occupational Therapists (OTs) have created a program at the school to help students with these issues via daily use of **obstacle course** challenges. The more severe the autism and pronounced the symptoms, the greater the challenge each child has to develop their motor functions and regulate the sensory data that is otherwise overwhelming and unmanageable for them.

When students have a way to participate in physical activity, their bodies are often able to calm down as a result of the activity and they can begin to receive and process information. Allowing students continued opportunities to engage in gross motor movements gives them practice in improving these developmental skills. Physical movement stimulates the entire nervous system, and encourages cross

body-cross brain learning which ultimately increases our students' ability to move through the physical world with higher levels of engagement and safety. For children struggling with the social, cognitive, and physical deficits of autism, physical activities are the essential tool with which we support our therapeutic mission.

Funds for the playground will come from the **San Jose Mercury News Wish Book** article from December 2014. Additionally, **eASIC Corp.** graciously donated funds for the playground! OTs have selected playground equipment such as tires, a suspension bridge, and stepping stones that will enable our students to apply balance and sensory integration principles. The new equipment will be purchased this spring, giving students the opportunity to take part in more structured play in their physical education curriculum. ■



PACE Thanks Our Great Givers in 2014

by Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

Support for PACE comes in many forms. It comes from the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to our cause. It comes from the corporate world in the form of sponsorships, financial and in-kind donations. It comes from the foundations that are tasked with making the world a better place. And it comes from individual donors who, in their generosity, send annual financial contributions. Over the years, PACE has benefited from the generosity of so many supporters. We're pleased to acknowledge the efforts of just a few of the special individuals and organizations who have made a difference in the life of our community this year.

In 2014 PACE received a 2:1 Two Year Challenge Grant from **the Sobrato Family Foundation**, where they donated \$50,000 in the first year. PACE was "challenged" to match this

amount from new and increased donations by December 2014. Once this challenge was met, the Foundation provided a 2nd year of funding resulting in more than \$150,000 for PACE!

Upon learning that our Occupational Therapy Dept. was in dire need of new playground and therapy equipment for our school students, **eASIC Corp.** CEO Ronnie Vasishta and his executive team stepped up with a targeted donation of \$50,000. This donation will support the purchase of new equipment that will enable our students to work on balance, sensory integration and overall physical and motor development.

PACE school parent and Bellarmine College Preparatory varsity basketball coach, **Patrick Schneider**, raised funds for PACE by hosting a youth basketball clinic in November and

donating all of the entry fees to PACE. Over \$1000 was contributed to our annual campaign.

Having watched her younger brother with autism benefit from behavior therapy at Faces, 7th grader **Rachel Lit** was determined to educate others about ASD. In 2014 Rachel celebrated her Bat Mitzvah and used the event as an opportunity to increase autism awareness. In lieu of gifts she encouraged her guests to make donations to PACE. She then volunteered her own time to observe and help out at Sunny Days Preschool. Rachel has selected PACE as the NPO she wishes to support for her current class philanthropy project where all students participate in fund-raising and distributing a pool of money to worthy non-profits.

JiaChi Luo, a senior at Irvington High School, selected PACE for his Question,

Understand, Experience, Service, and Testimonial (QUEST) project.

Students are required to pick a social issue and learn more about it through volunteering. To learn more about individuals with autism and PACE's approach, Jay observed at Sunny Days Preschool, at PACE School and interviewed staff members. Jay also helped by volunteering with our administrative team and translating our marketing materials into Mandarin.

Thanks to all the volunteers, donors and contributors whose efforts support our mission to enhance the lives of people impacted by autism through innovation, exceptional education and compassionate care. ■



April is Autism Awareness Month. **Everyday is Autism Awareness Day at PACE.**

• Go to www.escrip.com and select the "sign on" screen. Enter PACE's ID number: 472692 to register your credit and reward cards. PACE will receive a percentage of the money spent on your purchases when using preferred merchants such as Safeway, Macy's, American Airlines and Draeger's Market.



• Follow PACE on Facebook to get the latest photos and updates! www.facebook.com/pacificautismce

• Donate your old vehicle to **Donate for Charity**, a company that processes vehicle donations. Call 866-392-4483 or use their website www.donateforcharity.com. Donate for Charity handles all the details and distributes the net proceeds to PACE!

PACE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Tax ID 77-0259858. Contributions to PACE are tax-deductible as specified by the current tax law.



PACE is a UWSV Partner.

PACE Setter

1880 Pruneridge Ave.
Santa Clara, CA 95050
www.pacificautism.org
pacesetter@pacificautism.org
408.245.3400

Editor: Deborah McClellan

Contributors: Danielle Borrás, Karen Kennan, Deborah McClellan, Janice Morreira, Rachel Palmer, Dora Tao

Executive Director: Kurt Ohlfs

The PACE mission: To enhance the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education and compassionate care.




WE BLEND
PLAY WITH
LEARNING
AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

Our specialized
Children's Program is
open to children
on the autism spectrum
and those needing
a little extra support.

- Behavioral Services
- Speech and Occupational Therapy
- Social Skills Group
- Morning Preschool Program
- Low child to adult ratio, small groups



Sunny Days
PRESCHOOL
Pacific Autism Center for Education
WEST SAN JOSE LOCATION
408.551.0312
www.pacificautism.org
www.sunnydayspreschool.com

Autism News

Brain scans confirm significant differences in play behavior, brain activation patterns and stress levels in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as compared with typically developing children. In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers at Vanderbilt University examined social play exchanges on multiple levels, revealing associations among brain regions, behavior and arousal in children with ASD. The results were released in the journal *Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience*.

"Play is a fundamental skill in childhood and an area in which children with autism often have difficulty," said the study's principal investigator, Blythe Corbett, Ph.D., associate professor of Psychiatry and a Vanderbilt Kennedy Center investigator. "However, the psychobiological study of play in autism is seldom com-

prehensively investigated using multiple levels of analysis."

Corbett and colleague Kale Edmiston studied children with ASD using an innovative study design in which participants played with a typically developing child on a playground and then played a social exchange game with either the same child or a computer partner during functional imaging. To measure physiological arousal, salivary cortisol sampling was used before and after the playground protocol.

Corbett said the findings suggest that "some children with autism not only find social engagement with peers less motivating, but it may be stressful, even aversive." Read more at www.sciencedaily.com. ■

www.pacificautism.org

In Remembrance - Scott Johnson

by Karen Kennan

Everyone at PACE was sad to learn of the passing of our great friend and supporter, **Scott Johnson** in November of 2014. Scott became involved with PACE in 1998, after his son Kevin was diagnosed with severe autism. Kevin attended the PACE School from the age of 6 until he graduated from the program in June of 2014.

Further cementing the Johnson family's ties to PACE, Kevin has resided in two of our residential homes, **Miracle House** and **LaMar House**, where he lives today. Scott was an actively involved parent, visiting Kevin regularly and getting to know the staff. His dedication to his son brought him to the PACE Board of Directors in 2009 where he was an enthusiastic and vocal participant, always ready with an opinion to offer or a joke to interject during a tense discussion. During his

three years on the Board, Scott co-chaired the **Golf Classic** tournament and coordinated fundraisers with UPS.

Scott worked as a senior-level manager for the UPS, retiring in 2012 at the completion of a distinguished 30-year career. He started as a parcel delivery truck driver and moved up the ranks into senior management, ultimately supervising one of UPS's largest parcel delivery centers in Northern California.

Through his commitment to PACE and his dedication to supporting our agency in so many ways, Scott helped improve the lives of individuals and their families who struggle with autism. Scott will be sorely missed by the entire PACE community. ■



Scott Johnson at the 2013 Golf Classic

PACE Board of Directors

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David Setti

Upcoming Events

By Deb McClellan

Please join PACE at one (or all!) of our upcoming spring events! Visit www.pacificautism.org/events for all of the details on these events.

Get ready for **Color Me Rad!** The 5K race is set for Saturday, March 21st at California's Great America! Register on our website 'Events' page using Promo Code "PACE" and get a 10% discount - 15% of your registration fee goes to PACE! Don't want to run, but want to take part in the fun? Volunteer!

The PACE Youth Leadership Committee is planning a **concert at Santana Row** for Saturday, April 18th, noon-4pm. Watch our Facebook page for the final lineup and further details.

Join us for the **Om Run, 5K & 10K Run / Walk and carnival** on Sunday, April 26th, 8am-2pm at Hellyer Park. Proceeds benefit PACE!

We'll be holding a community-wide Open House, **"Food, Fauna and Fun"** on Friday, April 24th from 5:30-7:30pm! **Animal Assisted Happiness** will have their adorable farm animals on hand for a petting zoo. Come tour the school, meet our teachers and staff, and view student artwork. There will be **food trucks**, crafts, music, and more in celebration of Autism Awareness Month. ■



New Mission and Vision for PACE

In the fall of 2014, the PACE Board of Directors felt it was the right time to refresh our original Mission and Vision Statements. You may have seen this update in a recent email, on our Facebook page, or other social media sites. We hope you agree this fresh take will serve us for many years to come. After 25 years of service, we continue to be inspired by PACE families and supporters who support us in our efforts to serve those most deeply affected by autism. ■

Mission Statement:

To enhance the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education and compassionate care.

Vision Statement:

A world in which people of all abilities live fulfilled lives.