



# PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION

Connect • Support • Educate

## Lawn Party Wrap

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

A great big THANK YOU to all of the wonderful PACE supporters that came out to our **Lawn Party** at the Triton Museum of Art on Sunday, September 11th! We had a great afternoon of lawn games, a delicious BBQ lunch, craft beers, and FUN! The party was held outside on the gorgeous open garden surrounding the historic **Jamison-Brown House**.

Thank you to our generous sponsors, including **O2 Mortgage, John & Marcia Goldman, Berliner Cohen**, Gilfix & LaPoll, Digital Benefit Advisors, Friendly Auto Care, and everyone else who contributed. Auction items included one-of-a-kind cornhole boards designed by local artists -- they went like hotcakes! Special thanks to the Cupertino Rotary for building and priming the cornhole boards! See the story on page 4.

If you attended (or even if you didn't!), would you please help us to plan future events by filling out the short survey we sent you? It will really help us to plan events that *you* want to attend. Thanks again everyone for supporting PACE! There are over 100 children and adults with autism in our programs and they *all* thank you for your continuing patronage. ■



Cornhole Tournament!

## Jack & Nancy Brown Retire this Month!

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

Long-time PACE employees, Jack and Nancy Brown will be retiring this September, and we wanted to celebrate their over 35 years of combined service to PACE. It's bittersweet to discuss their leaving as Finance Director, Nancy and Facilities Manager, Jack fill some mighty big shoes around here! I feel that I can speak for the entire staff in saying that they will be terribly missed, but we wish them all the best. Here are some of the highlights of our interviews.

I asked Nancy how she first got involved with PACE. She told me, "I was working for the Cupertino School District as a 10-month employee when Jerry Matranga (my boss' boss) asked if I was interested in part-time work at a school he had started up. It was close by my house so I started to work in the summers and 3-4 nights per month doing financials for PACE. Eventually, a

PACE Executive Director convinced me to leave the school district and work at PACE full time." Jack came on board some time later, and noted, "Nancy was working here and I was semi-retired. They needed a new receptionist, so I offered my services. I did that job for about 6-7 months and then the ED asked if I wanted to take on some more tasks. The CFO, Ani, suggested I take on Accounts Payable, and then maintaining the vehicles and facilities management were added." Nancy has worked at PACE for nearly 24 years, and Jack for eleven.

When asked about some of their favorite memories at PACE, Nancy replied, "Number one is the kids, and also the employees! The friendships I've made, the school graduations and dances and holiday parties at the group homes, fund development events



Jack and Nancy Brown

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## 9th Annual Golf Classic

By Rachel Palmer, Annual Fund Manager

### Mark Your Calendar!

Friday, May 19, 2017 | Cinnabar Hills

Call your friends and join us at our popular **Golf Classic!** We'll be golfing on Friday, May 19th at Cinnabar Hills in San Jose. This event helps to make PACE's high-quality programs possible. Your \$200 per player ticket price includes:

- 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

Visit [www.pacificautism.org/events](http://www.pacificautism.org/events), or email [events@pacificautism.org](mailto:events@pacificautism.org) for sponsorship opportunities, and to register. Event Chairs Joe Dermer and Tom Marchok look forward to seeing you there! ■



## Ask a Therapist

**Maximizing Communication with Your Child – Do's and Don'ts**

By Becky Martinez, M.S. CFY-SLP

Individuals with autism may differ in their communication skills. This includes the way they express themselves as well as how much they understand when spoken to. There are some ways you can take advantage of your child's skills and help avoid communication breakdowns. Here are some do's and don'ts to maximizing communication when you are asking your child a question and understanding their response:

Some "do's" to communicating effectively with your child:

- Use simple language – short and simple questions and directions are easier to understand.
- Use earlier developing questions, if you feel they do not understand your questions. For example, skills for understanding Yes/No questions (questions that have a response of only yes or no) develop before Wh- questions (Who, what, when, where, why).
- When using Yes/No questions, keep in mind that preference questions (e.g., "Do you want this?") are easier to respond to than questions about complex ideas, including feelings! (e.g., "Are you hungry?" or "Are you upset?")
- "What" questions are easier than "who" and "where" questions. "When," "why," and "how" questions are even harder! You can ask questions about books, movies, or things you are doing

around the house to encourage communication! (e.g., "What is he doing?" "What's that?")

- Allow time for your child to respond before repeating your question. Sometimes, it can take longer to process the question.

Some "don'ts" that may make communication more challenging for your child:

- Don't ask too many questions before your child has a chance to answer one. This can be too much input at once, and they may not be able to process any of the questions.
- Don't ask questions that are too complex! Keep them simple and short if you feel your child is not understanding you.
- Added elements (such as length, an additional clause, unusual word order) make the question harder to understand.

Some responses you can expect from your child:

- Verbal responses – your child may respond orally or with a communication device to answer you. You can always encourage expanded responses by giving your child a prompt to add more, or modeling a longer response for them.
- Nonverbal responses – your child can respond to you with nonverbal behaviors too! For example, if you ask, "Do you

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## Changes at PACE

By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

Whoever said “The only thing permanent is change” must have had non-profit agencies in mind. In order to stay viable in today’s competitive and fast-paced business environment non-profits must be flexible, creative, nimble and open to change. It seems as if we are always scanning the horizon in order to anticipate the next innovation, or prepare for and adapt to something new. Let’s face it—change can be difficult for individuals (especially those on the ASD spectrum!) as well as for agencies. Change is disruptive; it forces us to confront our long held routines and beliefs and step outside of our comfort zones. But change can be a positive force too. It helps us grow, presents us with new opportunities, breaks up old routines and teaches us to be flexible.

Fall is a season of change at PACE as students return to reorganized classrooms, sometimes with new teachers and instructional aides. New students join returnees at Sunny Days preschool and Faces welcomes new families. New residential staff join the program and team members and residents adapt to shifting schedules. As well, this month we say goodbye to veteran administrative staff members Nancy and Jack Brown who, together devoted a collective 35 years to PACE

(see article on page 1). Their positive energy and enthusiasm will surely be missed by all of us but we celebrate them as they move onto the next phase of their life’s journey.

While good-byes are bittersweet we recognize that change can be an opportunity for reinvention and moving forward and in that spirit we welcome the following new members to the PACE leadership team:

- Todd Wood, Finance Manager
- David Nakamoto, Business Operations & Compliance Manager
- Naomi Betiku, Director of Education & Behavioral Services
- Manju Prabadaran, School Administrator
- Gounah Choi, K2 Special Education Teacher
- Heather Johnson, Room 1, Special Education Teacher
- Anuradha Mohan, Preschool Teacher
- Mark Peper, Board Member

We look forward with positive anticipation to the year ahead as our agency continues to grow, adapt and change in order to provide the best possible care for individuals with autism and their families. ■

## Welcome New Board Member!

By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

We welcome our latest addition to the PACE Board of Directors, Mark Peper. Mark is the Chief Operating Officer/Director of Operations for Sunshine Retirement where he has been employed since November 2012. In this role he has responsibility for oversight of Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care communities to ensure the growth of company revenue and occupancy. Mark is responsible for the operational set up and opening of new communities as well as the sale of existing communities.

Mark’s volunteer and community involvement has included: Manager for NCLL Baseball, Coordinator for MVSC swim program, Volunteer for CUSO and Volunteer for Special Olympics. Mark and his wife live in the Bay Area with their two sons, one of whom is on the autism spectrum.

Mark is interested in using his knowledge of senior housing and guest services to assist in the development of creative housing solutions for individuals with autism. The entire PACE team welcomes Mark to our organization! We’re looking forward to getting to know Mark and serving our community together for many years to come. ■



### KRON4 Teacher of the Week!



**Congratulations to Classroom 5 Teacher, Kaberi Bhattacharjee** who was named KRON 4 Teacher of the Week for the week of August 29th! Kaberi epitomizes what a special education teacher should be, and we are so pleased to see her recognized by a major news organization in the Bay Area. ■

## Party in Blue Zumbathon

By Rachel Palmer, Annual Fund Manager

On May 7th, 2016, over 100 people gathered for the “**Party in Blue**”, a **Zumbathon** to dance the evening away and raise funds for PACE. The event was conceived through the vision of **Rebecca Newman**, a 15-year-old Mid-Peninsula High School student, and the determination of her grandmother, **Tita Ganitsky**.

Rebecca’s journey began as a young child receiving services from **Faces** in Redwood City. She wanted to combine her two communities, autism and Zumba, for this event. “I’ve always loved Zumba and I’ve always wanted to help people going through what I went through as I learned to navigate the world around me. PACE and Zumba have always supported me through my journey,” says Rebecca.

The Zumba community responded strongly to Rebecca’s vision and with the help of Bay Area jammer, Meli Kirkwood, the event featured many talented Zumba instructors and a special guest performance by BollyX.

Thanks to the efforts of Tita, the event was recognized at a national level by **Zumba Cofounder Alberto Perlman**, stating “Our purpose at Zumba is to change lives through health, wellness and overall happiness. Rebecca is taking our mission even further with this incredible event. She is an amazing person and I am proud to know her.”

Thank you to Rebecca Newman, Tita Ganitsky, and Meli Kirkwood for your determination to make this event a success! ■



## Faces Welcomes Family Connections

By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

This month, Faces is pleased to welcome non-profit agency, **Family Connections**, to our Redwood City office. With the majority of Faces’ families now requesting home therapy sessions, Faces has had room to spare in our beautiful office/therapy suite located on Twin Dolphin Drive. Coincidentally, Family Connections, a parent-child participation program dedicated exclusively to low income families in San Mateo County, was in need of office space for their growing staff. With their mission to provide under-served children and families with early education and support, Family Connections was a perfect partner for our space.

The Family Connections executive and program staff will be utilizing some of our inner offices for administrative purposes. The remaining spaces will continue to be used as offices for the Faces management team and for individual and group therapy rooms. Faces will continue to offer the option for on-site behavioral services in our facility or in client homes and

schools. We are pleased to be able to provide space for such a worthwhile organization and look forward to developing great synergy with our new colleagues. We anticipate opportunities for collaboration providing education and behavioral support to children and families in our community.

**Do you know someone who is looking for behavioral therapy support?** Faces’ Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapists use the principles of learning and motivation to change behavior. Under the guidance of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) our team uses multiple ABA-based methods to address all significant areas of functioning (including language, behavior management, academics, self-help skills, peer socialization and play) across a variety of environments (home, school and community.) Faces currently has openings for morning sessions. Contact us at [intake@facesforkids.org](mailto:intake@facesforkids.org) or 408.785.0102. ■

## Ways 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](http://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](mailto:development@pacificautism.org).

- View the **PACE Wish List** here: [www.pacificautism.org/donate/pace-wish-list/](http://www.pacificautism.org/donate/pace-wish-list/).

## New Therapy Garden for the School

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

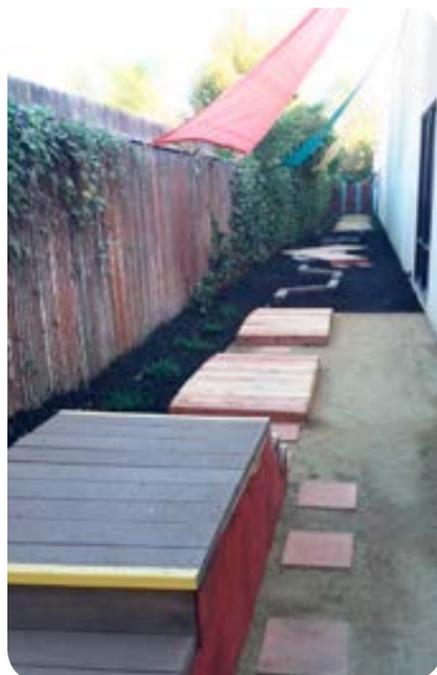
It's hard to believe, but we've been in our building at 1880 Pruneridge for nearly nine years. The obstacle course installed by the **San Francisco Forty-niners** on the narrow west side of the building has taken the love and attention of hundreds of students and is now in need of an update.

We are very pleased to have received a new landscape plan and fresh obstacle course layout from local landscape architect, **Christine Reed, RLA, ASLA**, pro bono. Ms. Reed worked with PACE Occupational Therapists on different tasks for the students to work through on the course. The School requested and received a grant from the **Intero Foundation** and **CSR Cares** to pay for the project including demolition of unused obstacles, installation of new obstacles and plants, new irrigation, pathways, benches and much-needed shade.

The new therapy garden, called "The Journey," offers an interactive, yet calming place where students can work on physical and cognitive skills. Regular use of the therapy garden's raised wood beam, stone cobble 'stream' and tire maze will improve students' gross motor skills enabling them to perform these basic balance tasks. With regular use of the obstacle course, and practice with their balance, we expect to see better focus

from our students, which leads to development of fundamental skills necessary for the more integrated and complex tasks that occur in the classroom. Many aspects of the therapy garden will help develop hand-eye skills, enabling students to perform their classroom work without experiencing a break in concentration.

Please stop by to experience our new lovely outdoor Occupational Therapy space. We're very happy with the outcome and expect the students will enjoy the course for many years to come. ■



## The Browns

Continued from page 1

have all been wonderful memories." Jack also enjoyed interacting with the students, saying, "That's hard, there are so many. Playing Santa is fun, but talking to and interacting with the students daily are the best memories. I also love the Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners at the group homes and getting to see the residents." For Nancy, the thing that most surprised her during her term was the growth of the organization. "When I started, we were one small school and two group homes (Morehouse and Meadows). And in 1995, we took over the SPARK homes. We didn't have the preschool or Faces." Jack was astounded by staff commitment, noting, "The aides, staff and teachers so love working with the students and their commitment."

On a more personal note, I asked Nancy and Jack what someone might be surprised to learn about them. Nancy told me that she used to play the piano and would like to start again in retirement. Jack noted that he served in the military during the Vietnam War – looking good Jack! They both said the thing they will miss most about PACE is the people. We feel the same

way about them, too. Nancy's looking forward to spending more time with their grandchildren during retirement and Jack said he's going to, "Relax a little, play golf a little, travel a little, read a little and spend time at our cabin – not necessarily in that order!"

Executive Director Kurt Ohlfs notes, "In a word, Nancy embodies the compassion that has been the beacon of the PACE effort over the years. Along with her husband, Jack, they have cultivated a whole community of support which has drawn in numerous family and friends to support all the PACE fundraising efforts. The most lasting legacy of Nancy is not what she is leaving behind, but what she has put forward. Nancy's core values and commitment to the students and staff at PACE has reinforced a highly mission-centered philosophy that will continue to shape decision making well into the future. Nancy has modeled this every day of her journey with PACE. It is one that will resonate in the halls of PACE for many years to come." Best wishes for a happy, restful retirement! We'll expect you to show up now and again to check in on our progress. ■

## Residential News

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

Special thanks to the **Google volunteers** who, in June painted the living areas and bedrooms at **Meadows House** which hadn't been painted in over 10 years. And another set of Google volunteers painted our **Morehouse** group home! Thanks to **Hands On Bay Area** who organized these events!

Residents enjoyed the 22nd Annual "Day on the Beach" sponsored by Shared Adventures in July. Designed for people with special needs, this event is a full day of kayaking, outrigger, canoeing, beach wheelchair rides and more. Live music and entertainment, free food, beach games, sand castle building are all part of the day. Volunteers lay down over 200 pieces of plywood on frames to create a platform for those with mobility issues to travel over the sand. If you've never been to this event, you should pencil it in for next summer! More here: [www.sharedadventures.org/dayonthebeach/](http://www.sharedadventures.org/dayonthebeach/). Our residents really enjoy this event every year.

If you are interested in learning more about the PACE residential program, please contact Janice Morreira at 408.625.6172. ■



## Ask A Therapist

Continued from page 1

want milk?" and they reach for the milk, that is an indication that they understood the question and they do want the milk.

- No response – your child may not respond. Try to figure out if you can help them understand by giving them cues (e.g. point to the object, or repeat your question in simple short form), or if perhaps your question was too confusing for them.

I hope that this general overview has helped you to understand some of the systems we have in place at the school and homes. If you have specific questions about your child's communication or speech strategies, contact his or her speech therapist. PACE's SLPs are available by phone, 408.625. 6182, or email them. You can also view several **Porchlight** modules that focus on communication and speech at [www.porchlighteducation.com](http://www.porchlighteducation.com). ■



Student Art

### What Kind of Legacy Will You Leave?

Consider including PACE in your estate plan and create a legacy that will sustain us long into the future. Your donation will help ensure that high quality programs for children and adults with autism will continue now and into the future. If you have already made a gift to PACE in your will or trust, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize your generosity. Contact Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director, at 408-625-6176 or e-mail [karenkennan@pacificaautism.org](mailto:karenkennan@pacificaautism.org).

All inquiries are confidential and without obligation. **Thank you!**

• Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and 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.

• Donate your old vehicle to **Donate for Charity!** Call 866-392-4483 or use their website [www.donateforcharity.com](http://www.donateforcharity.com). Donate for Charity handles all the details and distributes the net proceeds to PACE!

• When you shop on **AmazonSmile** ([smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases 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 Setter

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*Executive Director: Kurt Ohlfs*

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



## Sunny Days Preschool: Where all are Included

By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

**Sunny Days Preschool** is a PACE program offering an “inclusive” setting. This means that we serve both typically-developing children and children on the autism spectrum in an inclusive, welcoming environment. Parents of typically-developing children often ask: how will my child benefit from an inclusive classroom? As our instructional specialists, therapists, and teachers will tell you, an inclusive environment is enormously beneficial for both typically developing children and children on the autism spectrum. Here are four reasons why:

1) **Small class size means individual attention:** All children benefit from low student/teacher ratios. Sunny Days typically operates at a no more than 4:1 student to adult ratio, which means your

child will get lots of individual attention and support! Every child at Sunny Days gets a personalized education plan crafted around his or her current and future developmental goals.

2) **The staff is highly-qualified and motivated:** Our staff are especially qualified to work with children on the autism spectrum. They are motivated by a commitment to inclusiveness, support, and child development—which means a dedicated and enthusiastic staff! Therapists or specialists who work and consult with classroom teachers demonstrate strategies that teachers can use, making them a tremendous resource for all children.

3) **Responsive teaching promotes kindergarten readiness:** Responsive

teaching molds teaching opportunities around the individual needs of the child, which supports creativity and exploratory learning. This teaching method offers support in areas of need and builds upon strengths, promoting kindergarten readiness.

4) **Focus on social-emotional development:** At Sunny Days, social-emotional development is just as important as academic skills. We emphasize specific social skills such as taking turns and sharing, as well as appropriate communication skills and social cues. For children on the spectrum, an inclusive setting provides them with great peer role models and the opportunity to practice social skills which often results in less isolated play, less object play, and more participation

in activities. Parents of typically developing children often remark on their children’s confidence, self-esteem, empathy, and understanding of diversity. As a result, neuro-typical children often go on to become leaders in their kindergarten and elementary classrooms!

Sunny Days Preschool is open Monday-Friday from 9 AM to Noon. We’re growing! Starting in September we will be offering services to children as young as two, and later this Fall we will be extending our hours. Come check us out! ■

408.551.0312  
preschool@pacificautism.org  
www.sunnydayspreschool.com

Help spread the word about PACE programs and services! Follow and share on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/pacificautismce](http://www.facebook.com/pacificautismce)

## Insight into Picky Eaters Porchlight

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

PACE School Occupational Therapists, **Danielle Borrás** and **Claire Panziera** recently completed a course on the SOS Approach to Feeding offered by the SPD Foundation. Dr. Toomey’s 4-day workshop, called “*When Children Won’t Eat: Picky vs. Problem Feeders*” covered many aspects of eating.

Claire and Danielle came away with three great takeaways or main points from the course:

1. Eating is not instinctive or easy, you must learn how to eat.
2. It’s OK to play with your food – this teaches you how to eat through play.
3. Feeding problems are often a result of a combination of interactions between medical problems, family systems, behavioral difficulties, oral-motor and sensory challenges.

The information they learned has helped students at the PACE School by enabling therapists to identify all areas of students’ feeding challenges and to develop plans that address each area of concern. Feeding challenges are a common area of concern with students on the autism spectrum.

When asked what the first steps parents/caregivers with picky eaters should take, the OTs noted, “You must understand that picky eating is a complex problem, don’t stress about it. Find an approach that works for you and your family, whether it’s a home feeding program or a feeding clinic.”

The information they picked up was used to create the **Porchlight** module, “**Eating Challenges.**” You can view the module at [www.porchlighteducation.org](http://www.porchlighteducation.org).

If you have questions and concerns regarding your child’s eating habits, it’s best to contact your child’s pediatrician or doctor for their input. ■

### PACE Board of Directors

—  
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## PACE has the BEST Volunteers!

By Rachel Palmer, Annual Fund Manager

Thank you to **Tom Dyer** and The **Rotary Club of Cupertino** for *donating over 90 hours of labor* to create 13 sets of corn hole boards for the PACE Lawn Party on September 11, 2016!

This was the epitome of a home grown project. The wood and supplies were donated by **Home Depot** and **Orchard Supply Hardware**. From there, members of the Cupertino Rotary, led by Tom Dyer,

cut, sanded, built, primed, and perfected the boards. The boards were painted by local artists with one-of-a-kind designs. They were used in the Corn Hole Tournament at the Lawn Party and were put up for auction at the event. ■



Tom and Rotary Crew