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PACE Staff Highlight: Employee Excellence Award Nominees

This past year, the PACE HR department held employee excellence award nominations. The process was exhaustive: each Teacher nominated an Instructional Specialist from his/her classroom, each Residential Administrator nominated a staff member from each house, and EI nominated one Developmental Therapist (DT) and one Instructional Aide. Here are the nominees with excerpts from their nominations:

- Christian Taeza, PACE School Room 1: "A thoughtful, reliable person who cares deeply about children with disabilities."
- Adriana Carrasco, Rm 2: "Her positive affect starts and ends with a smile."
- Mattie Briggs, Rm 3: "Her flexibility includes volunteering to work with more challenging students and taking on additional responsibilities."
- Justin Wirth, Rm 4: "He has a friendly and kind demeanor toward students and staff alike."
- Jessica Tucker, Rm 5: "She is reliable and eager to take on a leadership role in the classroom."
- Dickson Beckley, Rm 6: "He provides positive encouragement to his peers, and volunteers to conduct mini lessons in the classrooms."
- Troy Scott, ADP: "He is reliable and able to work with all students with a positive demeanor."
- Shantea Huery, EI (DT): "She always arrives early to sessions and takes extra time to speak to parents when needed, as well as volunteers for

extra sessions when necessary."

- Ariana Lee, Sunny Days Preschool: "She is flexible, always willing to help and is a source of encouragement in the classroom."
- Corazon Dee, PACE Morehouse: "She creates a positive, safe work environment."
- Teresa Rivas, Miracle House: "She enforces guidelines and boundaries with residents with a positive smile."
- Helena Serpa, Meadows: "Her big heart and reliability motivates her co-workers through example."
- Petronila Tacmo, Matranga: "She is a team player that communicates effectively with team members as well as residents and their families."
- Massa Moigua, LaMar: "She has a great positive personality and willingness to step out of her comfort zone when needed."
- Maria Bassiga, Mahalo: "She finds positive ways to encourage residents to do their daily tasks."

Congratulations to all PACE Employee Excellence Award nominees!



School staff celebrating the Indian festival of Holi in March

PACE Events

PACE 3rd Annual Golf Classic
 Monday, May 23, 2011
 Cinnabar Hills Golf Course, San Jose
 11am Registration; 12:30pm Tee-Off
 Scramble Tournament

Your ticket includes:

- * lunch
- * 18 beautiful fairways
- * refreshments on course
- * goodie bag
- * exciting contests including closest to the pin, putting, longest drive, and hole-in-one
- * dinner and awards
- * live and silent auction
- * team picture
- * and more.

Hole-in-One wins a 2011 Buick Regal!

Early Bird Special
 \$175/single, \$700/foursome
 After May 2nd: \$195, \$780

To purchase tickets, become a sponsor or make a donation please visit www.pacificautism.org, email development@pacificautism.org or call 408.245.3400. All proceeds benefit PACE programs and services.

The South Bay Autism Resource Fair
 Saturday, April 16, 2011
 Notre Dame de Namur University
 9am to 3:30pm

Presented by Wings Learning Center, this 1st Annual Information Exposition features workshops about sensory integration and ASD, housing needs, special needs financial planning, Autism and health insurance, curriculums for students with ASD, and more. Go to www.pacificautism.org to learn more.

Spring Rebuilding Day 2011
 Saturday, April 30 2011

The Cupertino Rotary Club has chosen Morehouse for rehabilitation during their 2011 Spring Rebuilding Day. Stay tuned for the results on the PACE blog (blogs.boomerang.com/pace.)

Save the Date
PACE's 10th Annual Gala "Imagine"
 Saturday, November 5th, 2011
 Dolce Hayes Mansion, San Jose

PACE Volunteer Spotlight: Carmen Pascual

Spectacular volunteers come to PACE on a weekly basis doing everything from landscape design to assisting at Sunny Days Preschool. Over the past two and half years, one volunteer in particular has made an impact on PACE's Development Department. Carmen Pascual has been involved in nearly all of PACE events since our 2008 Gala, An Enchanted Evening.

When Carmen volunteers, she comes in with a mission; the mission usually involves procuring amazing auction items for the PACE Golf Tournament and Gala. And, according to Bridget Holian, PACE's Annual Fund Manager, "Carmen has increased the caliber of PACE's auction items tenfold! Her persistence and determination on the phone is unparalleled."

When Carmen is not volunteering for PACE, she is donating her time at many other community organizations and advancing her professional skills. In addition, she was the campaign manager for a local candidate in the 2010 elections. Carmen is well known and connected in the community; we are grateful to have her at PACE!



Carmen as the Queen of Hearts at 2010 Gala, An Evening in Wonderland

If you are interested in volunteering for PACE, please visit our website at www.pacificautism.org or call Bridget Holian at 408-625-6175.

Autism News

Excerpt from ScienceDaily.com. For every \$1 invested in a Chicago early childhood education program, nearly \$11 is projected to return to society over the children's lifetimes — equivalent to an 18 percent annual return on program investment, according to a study led by University of Minnesota professor of child development Arthur Reynolds in the College of Education and Human Development. For the analysis, Reynolds and other researchers evaluated the effectiveness of the Chicago Public Schools' federally funded Child Parent Centers (CPCs) established in 1967. Their work represents the first long-term economic analysis of an existing, large-scale early education program. Researchers surveyed study participants and their parents, and analyzed education, employment, public aid, criminal justice, substance use and child welfare records for the participants through to age 26. As public institutions are being pressed to cut costs, the findings suggest that increasing access to high-quality programs starting in preschool and continuing into the early grades is an efficient use of public resources. For more information on this story, go to www.sciencedaily.com.

From the Desk of the Board President



In February, we were proud to publish our first Annual Report for fiscal 2009-2010. The report illustrated PACE's impact on the lives of students and residents in each of our four programs. We also achieved the goal of providing financial transparency to our individual donors and corporate supporters. The Annual Report highlighted one of PACE's strategic visions: to utilize the infrastructure in our school and residential programs to serve as working models for the community at large. By passing along the tools, techniques and infrastructure, we will enable and empower individuals, families and the community with strategies for a lifetime of education and care.

As the report exemplifies, in Early Intervention our Parent Clinic Program equips parents with the tools to provide in-home developmental treatment for their child. In our School, we have developed educational modules that others may replicate to teach those who are impacted by moderate to severe Autism. In our Adult Day program we focus on partnerships with local businesses, and in Residential we have developed a guidebook for others who wish to start their own Residential programs.

By encouraging the development of these models on an "open source" platform, we will provide the basic design and methodology of our model to the greater Autism community free of charge and without licensing restrictions, encouraging others to collaborate and build stronger collective programs around the PACE model.

Finally, the client impact stories in the Report illustrate another facet of the PACE strategic vision: the prime importance of quality of life for our students and residents. We recognize that a long-term developmental strategy that bridges home, school and vocation is lacking in special education today. As a result, PACE is developing a formal program design that incorporates a "quality of life plan" for each individual that we serve. In this way, we will continue to encourage the highest potential of our students and residents.

Go to www.pacificautism.org under "Donations" to read or download the fiscal 2009-2010 Annual Report. We look forward to the continued strength of the agency and to your feedback on this first Annual Report and those in the years to come.

Joe Dermer
PACE Board President

EI's Wish Comes True

Last holiday season, PACE Sunny Days was featured in the San Jose Mercury News Wishbook; the wish was to receive the funds to get a therapeutic swing for the preschool to provide therapy for the children with Autism.

The final numbers have come in, and generous readers of the Mercury News have donated over \$10,000 (through the SJ Mercury) to PACE!



A type of therapeutic swing

This will cover the swing, accessories and then some. The campaign elicited a tremendous outpouring of community support. For example,

an SJ Mercury reader who had never heard of PACE before the Wishbook article sent this email:

I have posted a pledge at the Mercury News for \$100 toward a "swing" after reading today's article on your organization. It is contingent upon one more person doing the same... the donation is yours in any case, but it would help if others kicked in, too, thus my challenge to others. Maybe we can get that machine ASAP!

And a former EI parent was so committed to securing the swing that he pledged to match the swing donations collected by the end of 2010. This amounted to over \$4,000!

It's moments like these that highlight the generosity of our local community and the heart of many who come together around a good cause.

Want to read more about PACE current events? Sign up for PACE's monthly e-newsletter! Latest stories from the blog:



- Ask a Therapist: What is BCBA?
- PACE Art of the Month
- The Spirit of Giving: Sunny Days Preschool
- Dell Video on Technology, TechSoup and PACE
- Autism News: CA Deficit and DDS Purchase of Service Standards

Go to our website, www.pacificautism.org, to subscribe.

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.

PACE News

School is Re-Certified with Flying Colors

In February, PACE School went through the triennial Non-Public School (NPS) re-certification process. This involved 3 days of an in-depth, on-site review by three reviewers from the California Department of Education (CDE). We are proud to report that PACE School was re-certified with flying colors!

The CDE commended PACE School in multiple areas, including:

"A facility that welcomes the students and provides a clean, appropriately lighted school which incorporates the use of technology in almost all instruction throughout the day."

"Teachers' enthusiasm and dedication towards their students - they demonstrate overwhelming compassion and caring."

"Cohesive teams of teachers, aides, OT and speech therapists as well as behaviorists to address student behaviors and redirect those behaviors in a positive manner."

"The wonderful school website that is easily navigated and informative."

"The interactive IEP process in use during IEP planning meetings where discussion is led based on a video recording of the performance of the

student demonstrating their proficiency of each goal."

"Focus on student participation in community experiences including vocational training."

"The effective use of pictorials of students displayed throughout facility and in specific lesson plans."

Thank you to all PACE staff for supporting such a wonderful learning environment for PACE students!



Student participation in community experiences: apple picking



Effective use of pictorials

PACE Greets New OT and Behaviorist

Melissa Schulz will serve as our PACE Behaviorist. This is the first time PACE has had a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) on our staff. As an added bonus, Melissa is also a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). She has over 8 years of school experience working with students with moderate-to-severe needs. Melissa will spend half her time with the residential program and half her time with the school.

Jennifer Davis is our new Occupational Therapist in the School program. Jennifer is a recent masters graduate in OT from San Jose State. Her masters thesis focused on the perception of play and social interactions in children with visual impairments, so she is on track to help build social engagement with our students.

Wells Fargo PMB Los Gatos Program Benefits PACE

Besides the unveiling of Christine's hard work, PACE received another substantial gift at the Lamar celebration. Sonia Avila of Wells Fargo Private Mortgage, Los Gatos presented a check for \$2100, which will support PACE's programs and services. The monies came from seven individuals who selected PACE to benefit from Wells Fargo Private Mortgage community program. Anyone who takes out a mortgage with Wells Fargo, PMB Los Gatos can select a nonprofit to receive a \$300 contribution for any refinance or purchase transaction! For more information about the program, contact sonia.avila@wellsfargo.com.



L to R: Christine Reed, Karen Kennan, Kurtis King (Wells Fargo), Sonia Avila, Gregg Nurnberg

- To include PACE in your workplace giving options, please contact Karen Kennan at **408-625-6176**.
- Do you have an item you want to give away? It may be on PACE's Wish List. Contact karenkennan@pacificautism.org to make an In-Kind donation.

Great Givers

In this issue of *PACEsetter* we turn the spotlight on Christine Reed, whose extraordinary contribution of time and talent as the landscape architect for Lamar House's redesigned backyard has enhanced the quality of life of PACE residents.

The PACE volunteer description on VolunteerMatch.org merely detailed the need for a landscaper to take care of safety and aesthetic issues in Lamar House's backyard. But when Christine Reed, a landscape architect with over eight years of experience, came across the listing and PACE's description, she imagined higher potential for the space that would respond to the specific needs of individuals with Autism. Hundreds of hours of volunteer time and donated materials later, Lamar House realized that potential.

Christine's experience with both private and public sector landscape projects, through her own firm CE Reed Studio and her work with an established San Francisco firm on larger scale civic and campus landscapes, put her in a unique frame of mind when considering Lamar's potential. While the backyard would have a private focus for the residents, she envisioned a space that could also be a gathering place for other houses. Even further, the project could also be treated as a case study about what landscape architecture could do for individuals with developmental disabilities, and in turn become an inspiration for other spaces.

"Since individuals with Autism often have difficulty with sensory processing, I decided that my garden design would focus on perception," Christine says. "I wanted to make the space more responsive and accommodating to the residents."



Lamar House before construction:
February 2010

Christine did copious amounts of research to start the project. While there were many examples of utilizing outdoor space for therapy in hospital settings, she found none for smaller residential environments for people with special needs.

From February to August of last

year, Christine researched the general topic of Autism; interviewed and fleshed out ideas with Kurt Ohlfs, PACE Executive Director, the School therapy staff, and the Residential staff; and investigated how residents used the Lamar backyard, including crafting a detailed questionnaire for caretakers and PACE staff. She used all this research to identify the key criteria and goals of the new landscape.

After the research came the design phase: this included conceptual drawings that depicted a safe and functional environment. She presented this to the PACE Board of Directors, and after the Board approved her direction Christine created more detailed and specific construction drawings.



Lamar House during construction:
December 2010

Good fortune enabled Christine to obtain Jensen as a contractor. The well-known construction firm gave PACE a discounted price on the project and through their sub-contractor also donated some of the actual building materials, such as trees, plants and mulch. Construction started in early December and just finished in February. In all, the whole process took exactly one year from February 2010 to February 2011.

Indeed, after one year the landscape has made an amazing transformation. Before, Christine says, "the backyard was one long space. You could see from one end to the other with no visual separation, which made for a confusing sensory experience."

In response to this, Christine divided the space into 3 segments each of which has its own purpose while also flowing into a cohesive whole. For example, the quiet zone, intended for residents when they need peace and quiet, includes more plants and blue mulch to provide that sense of calm while also allowing residents to enjoy the outdoors. The second space, "the outdoor living room," is an extension of the indoor living room, with a huge deck that looks out onto the yard. Then the "fun area" includes a trampoline and space to release some energy.

• 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/jumpfrom.html. Donate for Charity handles all the details and distributes the net proceeds to PACE!

• Go to www.escrip.com and go to 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.

Employee Corner

by Veronica Rodriguez

PACE welcomes the latest additions to our growing team of dedicated professionals, and wishes a happy anniversary to our seasoned veterans who have been with PACE for more than five years:

Welcome!

September-December

- Kristofer Thacker
- Angel Wilson
- Jason Davis
- Jairo Picazo
- Daniela Quintana
- Lyubov Grobman
- David Vargas
- James Holmes
- Amanda Froese
- Fanny Williams
- Moges Degu
- Tendai Mashamba
- Christopher Dumlao
- Simone Scott

January-February

- Carla Brooks
- Jason Louie
- Jesus Borceguin
- Jesus Arias
- Jeana Rabanal
- Jennifer Davis
- Melissa Schulz

Happy Anniversary!

October - February

- Sara Gutierrez, 6 yrs
- Elvia Aguilera, 7 yrs
- Teresa Gonzalez, 8 yrs
- Leonora Solis, 9 yrs
- Cora Dee, 13 yrs
- Nancy Moiforay-GBondo, 14 yrs
- Chay Xaochay, 15 yrs

- Nery Bravo, 5 yrs
- Rosita Dacuycuy, 9 yrs
- Catherine Njie, 9 yrs
- Marlene Tazea, 9 yrs
- Zona Rice, 14 yrs
- Ricardo Velazquez, 5 yrs
- Chris Pono, 9 yrs
- Alejandra Jahen, 10 yrs
- Helena Serpa, 10 yrs
- Marquis Zane, 11 yrs
- Kanwarjit "Gogi" Kang, 12 yrs
- Mary Carter, 14 yrs
- Nancy Brown, 18 yrs
- Matu Kamara, 18 yrs
- Ravinder "Ruby" Kaur, 9 yrs
- Rosie Villarreal, 9 yrs
- Daysi Aguilar, 10 yrs
- Sonia Aimonetti, 13 yrs

PACE Committees

Join PACE Social and Safety Committees! Make a difference and have your voice be heard while planning for employee events and making PACE a more enjoyable and safe workplace. If interested email the HR department at hr@pacificautism.org.

Open enrollment is soon approaching in June/July 2011! More information regarding changes to the PACE benefits for medical, dental, vision, life insurance, long term disability and the employee assistance program will come shortly.

Join the PACE Team! Open positions:

Special Education Teacher L1 / L2 - K-12
Instructional Specialist --K-12 School

Thanks to all employees for making PACE such a great place to work!

Christine considered every detail in providing a unique space for individuals with Autism. For instance, she levelled all the ground flush to avoid tripping hazards. Partly transparent partition screens divide the three distinct spaces, which allow one to see through but still gives a psychological sense of separation. This makes it easier for the brain to structure and process the landscape. Christine got the idea for the screens from touring PACE School: she noticed that the students used their desks to provide order and structure for their bodies in the classroom.



Lamar House after construction:
March 2010

Christine is very excited about the project coming to fruition. "Kurt and Karen [Kennan's] support and enthusiasm pushed me to work further and craft something that would work for adults with Autism," Christine says. "Much of the landscape architecture out there right now is aimed toward kids, but as the Autism population ages, it's imperative to have designs in place to improve their

quality of life too."

Christine will continue to monitor the space as part of her goal to use Lamar as a pilot study to see how these specifically designed spaces can improve quality of life for individuals with Autism. Before the project started, Lamar staff logged how and for how long residents used the previous space. Using that as baseline data, now that the project is done the staff will continue to document how the residents use the area to assess the impact.

"The therapeutic benefits of gardens and outdoor spaces are well documented," Christine says. "So above all, the goal has been to create a place that draws residents, caretakers, visiting family and friends outside to enjoy the stress-relieving and therapeutic benefits of a garden. The space's design aims to encourage connection to the environment, and in turn instill an awareness of how our environment shapes how we experience the world."



Lamar House after construction:
March 2010

PACE is a 501C(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to PACE are tax-deductible as specified in the current tax laws. The Tax ID for PACE is 77-0259858.



Ask a Therapist

Dear PACE Therapists,
What is "active listening," and how is it relevant to communicating with my child with Autism?



As we all know, the most important part of communicating is being a good listener. This is no less true—and perhaps even more important—while communicating with an individual with Autism. Active listening shows that we are interested and that we care about what the individual has to communicate, which motivates him to communicate with us. Here are a few specific aspects of "active listening":

- **Reflecting:** Identifying your feelings and the feelings of the other person. Example: "It seems like you are scared right now, is that right?"
- **Encouraging:** Sounding open and positive so that the child will be more comfortable. Examples: Nodding your head, saying "yeah"
- **Clarifying:** Asking questions to make sure you know what he/she is asking or saying. Using clarifying statements ensures that you understand what he is trying to say and just as importantly he knows you understand him. Paraphrase what you heard. Example: "is that right?"
- **"I" Statements:** Using "I" puts less pressure on the individual and prevents her from feeling like she is being interrogated. Example: "I need you to please put your toy away" instead of "Put your toy away."
- **Summarizing:** Repeating what came out of the conversation and clearly stating the decision or take-away. Example: "So because you are feeling sad because of what happened at home, we have agreed that you can write in your journal instead of doing math today. Is that right?"
- **Eye Contact:** Making and keeping good eye contact shows interest, involvement, and respect. Of course, be aware of student's comfort level. Eye contact can be difficult for individuals with Autism, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try to make eye contact with them!

While these tips are helpful to be a good communicator with anyone, it is especially critical to exercise these foundations for individuals with Autism, who often have difficulty with communication and social interaction. After all, modeling behavior is one of the most effective ways to teach!

PACE Therapists

If you have a question for Ask a Therapist, email pacesetter@pacificaautism.org.

YLC Raises \$8500 at Mixer

On March 19th, PACE hosted the 2nd annual "Breaking the Silence" Mixer for a sold-out crowd of over 900 Bay Area high school students at the San Jose City College gym. The event was organized by PACE's Youth Leadership Committee (YLC), a group of passionate young philanthropists who raise awareness and funds for PACE. The group topped last year's successful event: mixer tickets were sold out by Friday evening, and ultimately the dance raised over \$8,000! The Mixer included music spun by DJs from WILD 94.9, spectacular lighting effects by PLM productions, drinks, and dancing.

Joseph Wang and Ji An as co-project managers of the Mixer spearheaded the efforts and overall vision, and the whole committee participated in publicizing and logistics planning.

Joseph said, "With the help and guidance of Hannah Nguyen, YLC President, and Bridget Holian, PACE's Annual Fund Manager and YLC advisor, Ji and I were able to make the Mixer as successful as possible. The whole process of collaborating with other people who really care about Autism was what made my experience as the chair of the subcommittee so rewarding. All of the effort that everyone from the YLC and PACE put into the Mixer made me realize that success comes with the help of other people."



The YLC at the Mixer



2011 Flyer

High school students interested in joining the committee for the 2011-2012 school year should send a letter of interest to bridgetholian@pacificaautism.org.

April is Autism Awareness Month!

More exciting events in recognition of Autism Awareness Month are:

- **"Wretches and Jabberers" screening:** 12pm, April 9, AMC Theatres Santa Clara. This new movie follows two men with Autism who embark on a global quest to change attitudes about disability, intelligence and communication.

For more information visit www.autism-society.org.

- **Free photo session for families with an individual with Autism:** imotion, Los Gatos. Each family will be gifted a complimentary photo shoot and a 12x18 canvas of their favorite picture (together worth over \$500). imotion will host this campaign throughout the month of

April for Autism Awareness Month.

- **PACE community presentations:** Your workplace. Does your work have a brown bag lunch or presentation series? PACE would be more than happy to present at your workplace about Autism, especially in the month of April. Contact **408.625.6176** or development@pacificaautism.org.



Need a Gift for Mother's or Father's Day?
Making a donation in honor of someone is a lovely way to show your appreciation. Call **408.625.6175** or email development@pacificaautism.org for more information.

PACE Board of Directors

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Innovative Giving

What Kind of Legacy Will You Leave?
Leave a legacy that will sustain PACE long into the future. Please consider a gift to PACE in your estate plan. Your donation will help PACE connect, support and educate by ensuring high quality programs for children and adults with Autism, now and in the future. If you have made a gift to PACE in your will or trust, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize your generosity. To learn more about how you make a legacy gift to PACE contact Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director, at **408.625.6176** or e-mail karenkennan@pacificaautism.org. All inquiries are confidential and without obligation.



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A newsletter providing information on PACE programs and services.

Published by Karen Kennan

Edited by Nora Martin

Contributors: Joe Dermer, Karen Kennan, Bridget Holian, Nora Martin, PACE staff
Executive Director: Kurt Ohlfs

PACE's mission is to provide high quality programs for individuals with Autism and its related developmental disabilities, so they may experience the satisfaction and fulfillment that accompany learning, self-expression, self-care, productive work and interpersonal and community experiences.

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