In this issue of PACESetter we highlight Marcia Goldman who as PACE Education Director spearheaded PACE’s affect-based, age-appropriate methodology, and provided the visionary leadership that encouraged PACE’s growth and success over the past 10 years.

Marcia Goldman's journey in the field of developmental disabilities began when she was a teenager volunteering for special needs organizations. Later, she earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Teaching Credential and her Master's Degree in Special Education—Teaching Credential and her Master's Degree in Special Education.

When her son was in preschool, she collaborated with his teachers to start their own nursery school that would integrate special needs children with typical preschoolers, otherwise known as an “inclusive” environment. This blossomed into The Learning Place in San Mateo. “The federal law that public schools were required to serve children with special needs from ages 3-22 was a brand new mandate,” Marcia explains. “Things were percolating but nothing had materialized, so we decided to see if it could work.”

The topic of Autism, which would fuel her passion later in life, had not yet entered her horizon. She knew little about Autism at that time. But one chance encounter changed that and as a result her life’s course.

A mom showed up on her doorstep a few years after she had started The Learning Place to tell Marcia about her 20-month-old who wasn’t walking or talking. She told Marcia that she felt like she was losing him more every day, and pleaded for help. After working with the child for months and not making any progress, Marcia recalled the little she had learned in school about Autism and came to believe that it might be his disability. When Marcia first broached the idea of Autism and the concept of Son-rise, one of the methodologies she had been learning and absorbing the animal names, showing that in fact he had been learning and absorbing the information all along. With a handheld computer, he then communicated his information all along. With a handheld computer, he then communicated his information all along. With a handheld computer, he then communicated his information all along.

Marcia used what she understood from the program with the child, seeing tremendous progress but knew she needed more training. Finally locating the Son-rise training center in Massachusetts, Marcia and the mother attended their weeklong program, and came back energized and empowered. Soon more parents came to her with diagnoses of Autism, asking for help.

And so her Autism work began. In 1987 Marcia started New Beginnings Family Workshop, a therapeutic-based program for children with Autism and their families, in San Carlos. She stayed there for 5 years before moving on to start a consulting service for families, school districts, and private organizations in 1997.

Then in 2001 she found PACE. Like many experiences in Marcia’s journey, the discovery was through a series of fortunate connections. Her friend Nancy Fredken had toured PACE and excitedly come to Marcia with news that they were looking for someone to take their school to the next level.

With skepticism, she agreed to meet with Dave Tiller, the PACE Executive Director at the time. By the end of the tour Marcia had signed on to consult once a week. “I was taken by the fact that it was already committed to a 1:1 student/aide ratio,” Marcia says. “I was also taken by the opportunity—there was such heart, such love, such devotion to these students who were clearly there as a last resort.”

Marcia found a tremendous partner in Marquis Zane, now PACE School Program Director and at that time a classroom teacher. Marcia says, “We had a mutual trust, and so we tried everything. What if we just taught anything that excited us to teach, instead of proving that the students can understand it first? We can lower the level if it didn’t click, but it’s so much worse to start so low that you never get anywhere.”

Soon there was a visible change in the students who were now taught a multidisciplinary curriculum. “Anything was possible,” Marcia recalls. “Every day we asked ourselves, ‘what miracles can happen today?’ I couldn’t get in my car fast enough every morning to get to PACE!”

One of Marcia’s most memorable experiences was with a student named Curtis. Scored with an extremely low IQ, many thought Curtis’ favorite activity, flipping through the pages of an encyclopedia, was just for the sensory input. But with Marcia’s encouragement of alternative ways of communication, staff taught him how to type on a keyboard. Soon Curtis had typed out 35 different animal names, showing that in fact he had been learning and absorbing the information all along. With a handheld computer, he then communicated his frustration with his math class; he was ready for calculator math. He wanted math textbooks which were not in the curriculum at the time. So they made those changes.

Marcia believed that it was critical to address social and emotional factors, while respecting each child’s desire and ability to learn age appropriate material. At the heart of the PACE model was the vision for every student to develop the ability to relate, to communicate and to self-regulate. This affective, age-appropriate methodology is the vision that Marcia brought to PACE. It transformed the love and attention already inherent in the School and infused it with hope for students’ potential. Indeed, cont. p. 3
From the Executive Director’s Desk

Autism trends and statistics, while often couched in macro-level language, have a very real impact on a micro level here at PACE and other local agencies.

For example, consider this dichotomy: in 2010 the Autism rate in California schools climbed another 13% in growth, the equivalent of 36 new students added every school day. Regional Center Autism growth rates, in contrast, dropped by almost half from 20% to 11% due to the budget crisis in 2009; legislative budget measures raised the eligibility requirements and reduced service levels in the Regional Center system.

These statistics and policy measures have impacted our agency focus at PACE. As fewer families are eligible for SARC or District Autism services, and anticipating a constraint of available therapy resources in the future, PACE’s Early Intervention program took a more responsive approach. The program built parent training models in order to provide home-based structure for development intervention in the absence of dedicated therapy services. This focused effort on creating solid training structures has established a lasting foundation for the program over the last five years.

An important component of that success is the commitment of the EI staff led by Gina Baldi. We would like to recognize Gina’s contribution to the program as she passes the reins to Lisa Parrot as the new Early Intervention Manager and Ashley Dahl-Koppelin as the Center-Based/Preschool Manager.

We are confident that the solid training structures and focus built into the EI program will sustain and encourage its growth in the leadership transition.

Kurt Ohlfs
PACE Executive Director

Morehouse and Miracle on Horseback

Up a winding, tree-filled road in the Saratoga foothills overlooking the Santa Clara Valley, Garrod Farms has kept horses since 1964. And for the past few summers PACE Residential children homes Morehouse and Miracle have gone horseback riding on this scenic property!

Rhoda Austin, Morehouse/Miracle Administrator, put the activity together three years ago after seeing the farm in a magazine. Each year she coordinates the best time, horse, and horse trainer with Vicky, the Garrod Farms contact. “The Garrod staff is very supportive,” Rhoda says. “Mr. Garrod has come out several times to talk and make sure the kids have a good time. And they do! It’s a great way to spend a summer afternoon outside enjoying beautiful weather.”

Rhoda Austin, Morehouse/Miracle Administrator, put the activity together three years ago after seeing the farm in a magazine. Each year she coordinates the best time, horse, and horse trainer with Vicky, the Garrod Farms contact. “The Garrod staff is very supportive,” Rhoda says. “Mr. Garrod has come out several times to talk and make sure the kids have a good time. And they do! It’s a great way to spend a summer afternoon outside enjoying beautiful weather.”

Thank you to Garrod Farms and the Miracle and Morehouse staff for making this possible. We look forward to riding next summer!

Every Tuesday afternoon during July and August, PACE residents enjoyed a guided horseback ride around the outdoor horse ring. Each resident was helped to mount and led around on the horse by Christina, a patient and kind Garrod Farms trainer.

The impact of horseback riding on the children was extraordinary to witness. Excited to enter the ring, once on the horse residents were noticeably serene. Alek, who normally cannot stand still and was pacing back and forth before his turn, became completely calm on the horse, trotting around the ring with a proud smile on his face. Yannin, a resident who often has difficulty focusing, went into the ring and, with focus and calm, pet the horse while looking directly up at him.

In June 2010 PACE held its third graduation ceremony in the new School facility! The multipurpose room was decorated with photos of the graduates on the walls, and blue balloons flanked the aisles up to the front where a “Class of 2010” banner set a festive mood.

The five graduates—Angelo, Bradley, Dorian, Marcus and Sheila—proceeded down the aisle to music performed by PACE’s own instructional specialists John Miller and Dickson Bentley.

Angelo, Marcus and Sheila made touching remarks to the crowd. “We’ll leave today to begin our new journey,” Angelo said. Sheila opened her speech by giving a thank you card to pleasantly surprised Beth Harmon, PACE speech and language pathologist. “We have learned to take care of ourselves... thank you to our families, students, aides, teachers and therapists,” Sheila said. “Without your help we would have not come this far.”

Marcus, who used to have difficulty speaking in front of a group, made a great speech and even closed with the quip, “We look forward to no more schoolwork!” Saberi, Room 6 teacher, spoke about the accomplishments of Bradley and Dorian.

The graduates then continued the tradition of giving flowers to people who especially touched their journey. The ceremony concluded with cake and lemonade. The graduation celebration celebrated not only the graduates’ achievements, but also the hard work and dedication of PACE instructional aides, teachers, therapists and their families.

Larry Records PACE PSA on KFOX

In the last PACEsetter, we detailed how Larry, an Adult Day client, had the opportunity to record a Mattress Discounters commercial in the KFOX studio. Larry’s opportunities continue to grow: Larry recently recorded a PACE PSA (Public Service Announcement) on KFOX 98.5!

Larry has always loved everything about the radio, practicing his radio voice since he was a child. Recently when our ADP clients were working at the pizza parlor Tony & Alba’s, a patron overheard Larry speaking along with the radio commercials on the air at the time. The patron turned out to work in production at KFOX; he inquired about our clients, and then invited Larry to come to the station to record a PSA. After taping, the staff was all so proud—Betty, his aide, was visibly moved listening to the recording.

The recording represents the hard work of Larry and PACE staff who worked very hard on the script, and this dream come true wouldn’t have been possible without the community connection through Tony & Alba’s and KFOX. Larry’s radio spot should play on KFOX until December. We’ve already been told excitedly by staff and community members that they heard Larry on the radio multiple times since it started airing a month ago. This is a wonderful demonstration of community support and highlights the value of community-based experiences for our clients.

Go to our website (www.pacificautism.org) under Media Center/PACE in the News to listen to Larry’s PSA!

Does your business have a job opportunity for PACE students? Contact Anne Chen at annechen@pacificautism.org.

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 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.

Sign up for PACE’s monthly e-newsletter!
Send your name and email to pacesetter@pacificautism.org or visit our website at www.pacificautism.org.
Great Givers

At PACE we’ve had the pleasure of working with a multitude of volunteers and donors. In this issue of PACEsetter we spotlight Diane and Bill Wilson whose annual contributions have made our Auction an ongoing success.

Little did Diane Wilson know when she attended her first PACE fundraising meeting in 2000 that ten years later, this Santa Clara Valley Medical Health Service Rep would be known as the “Basket Queen,” creator of magnificent gift baskets for PACE’s annual Gala. As our agency has grown, so has our need for increased funding each year to host our yearly Auction. Each year, the baskets that Diane creates help raise thousands of dollars for PACE programs.

Diane and Bill Wilson found PACE when looking for a non-public school placement for their son Christopher, who was then 17. Both native Californians the Wilsons hoped to find a school near their South San Jose home. Joining the PACE program in 1989, Chris enjoyed six years in our school as a student, graduating in 1994 and moving on to adult placements in various day programs. Shortly before Christopher turned 23 his parents decided it was important for him to make the move to a more independent living situation. PACE Mahalo house, which had only recently become a PACE residential home, had an open spot, and Chris happily made the transition from his parents’ to a place of his own. He has resided in Mahalo House now for more than eight years.

As parents of a PACE client, the Wilsons have always felt welcomed when visiting Mahalo House. They are very appreciative of the staff, the care they provide to the residents and the long term commitment many of them have made to remain at the house. According to Bill, “It’s the people that make the program successful and who sustain the clients. They don’t get thanked enough!”

One way the Wilsons have thanked the agency over the years has been their involvement with the annual Gala & Auction. After attending that initial meeting in 2000, Diane was inspired to parlay her artistic talents into fundraising on behalf of PACE. She started putting together “theme” baskets that could be auctioned off at PACE events. Each year as her confidence and abilities grew, so did the size and number of the baskets. One year she made 11 baskets for the auction!

The basket process begins in January with Diane keeping an eye out for bargains and unusual gift ideas. Throughout the year she gathers, collects and organizes materials for the baskets. Bill is in charge of “warehouse and delivery” annually turning his attic into a storehouse for Diane’s creations, and often helping deliver the oversized baskets that don’t fit into the recipient’s cars.

As November draws near, Diane hones in on specific themes based on her collection of items. Past year themes have included: Holiday Basket, Poker Night, Italian and Mexican Baskets and Tea Time. Annual favorites are Diane’s Boy and Girl Gift Wagons (packaged in authentic red radio flyer wagons) and her Baby Basket, which often comes packaged in a bassinet or stroller. Packed beautifully with items that come from local stores, online sales, and donations from friends, these gift “baskets” always delight the recipients. Auciton and Bill Wilson have recently launched and bidding on the Boy Wagon since Diane first created it, and says it is the “best Christmas gift” for her two nephews, Denver and Parker.

For their consistent support throughout the years PACE celebrates Diane and Bill as this season’s “Great Givers.”

Innovative Giving

Are You Competitive?

There are many unique ways to impact the lives of our children and adults at PACE. For example, you can select PACE as the beneficiary of a race in which you intend to compete. Many people in the Bay Area and beyond compete regularly in 10K runs, 100 mile bike races, marathon triathlons, and more. Are you one of those people? Have you thought of racing on behalf of PACE? It’s easy, empowering, and meaningful! You can find details and distribute the net proceeds for PACE is 77-0259858. The Tax ID number is 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.

For more: www.pacificautism.org
Ask a Therapist
Dear PACE Therapists,
There’s been a lot in the news recently about how iPads can help individuals with Autism. How does an iPad or other similar technological devices help an individual with Autism, especially as a teaching or therapy tool?

The iPad is a great tool because it can access many therapy and teaching activities or games that may not otherwise be portable. The easy-to-use touch screen makes it easier to navigate than using a laptop mouse or other handheld device. Many students who struggle to engage with a laptop can more quickly and independently engage with the iPad. Also, its large screen is enticing and allows for increased independence.

Many iPad or iPod touch applications (apps) serve as useful therapy tools. Many games, for example, encourage matching and visual discrimination skills. Letter tracing and other single finger apps address fine motor skills. Other games or apps boost language skills such as spelling, reading, and vocabulary building. Timer or schedule apps can target behaviors. Some apps are even written to transform the iPad into a voice output communication device. Depending on the application, they can be modifiable to fit the specific need of your student.

Some Apple apps found useful at PACE include but are not limited to:

**Fine Motor**
- Alphabet Tracing
- Monster Typer
- Doodle Buddy

**Language**
- Proloquo2go
- Talk Assist
- First word sampler
- ABC phonics

Happy learning!
PACE Therapists

For more information on the iPad, visit [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com). If you have a question for Ask a Therapist please send it to: pacesetter@pacificautism.org.

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**Early Intervention News: Leadership Transition**

**Fond Farewell to Gina Baldi, former PACE Early Intervention Director**

Gina Baldi has stepped down from her position as PACE Early Intervention Director in preparation for a move back east. Gina has brought tremendous vitality and heart to the EI program in the five years she has been director.

In her words: “I began working with PACE to gain direct experience with children on the Autism Spectrum. I walk away having gained more than I could ever imagine. Doing this work has filled me on a daily basis. No job has ever given me such laughter, love, creativity, discovery, originality… the list goes on. It is extremely hard to leave a job filled with such amazing children, parents and co-workers. I have been blessed beyond any expectations with daily gifts of love, laughter, and beauty.”

We will miss you Gina!

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**PACE Welcomes Lisa Parrott and Ashley Dahl-Koepplin as EI and Preschool Managers**

Lisa Parrott, formerly PACE's lead case manager, steps into her role as the new Early Intervention Manager. Lisa has been with EI for almost 5 years as a Developmental Therapist and Case Manager. Ashley Dahl-Koepplin, previously an early childhood special education teacher, transitions to her new role as Center-Based/Preschool manager. Ashley has been with EI's center-based program for almost 3 years.

“We are really excited to be a part of this new chapter for EI,” say Lisa and Ashley. “The quality and integrity of our program will remain the same and we hope to continue to grow. The staff we have is wonderful, and we could not ask for anything better for this next stage of growth.”

We look forward to the continued strength of the EI program!

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**PACE Volunteer Spotlight**
Richard To joined PACE's volunteer program in February 2010. His main contribution has been the design and coding of the new PACE website that launched in September.

“Since organizations can spend thousands of dollars redesigning their websites, finding Richard was a blessing,” says Nora Martin, PACE's Marketing/Communication Manager who oversaw the project. “Richard did an amazing job incorporating our vision and the PACE brand into the design.” Not only was Richard talented in design, he was also a responsible volunteer, replying promptly to emails and working with deadlines.

“When I decided to volunteer at PACE, I knew nothing about Autism,” says Richard. “But as I worked on the website I learned more about Autism and what PACE does to help. The best part about volunteering is I leave feeling more aware.” He continues to help with website features and design. Thank you Richard!

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**In Memoriam: Eric Risser**

Beloved Student and Resident
1989-2010

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PACE is proud to introduce our newest Board member, Madhu Ranganathan.

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