



# PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION

Connect Support Educate



## PACE Staff Highlight

PACE welcomed Balia, PACE's first facility dog, as the newest addition to our therapy staff in February. Balia is a black lab/golden retriever mix with a very mild temperament, perfect for our students.



Allison and Balia get ready for the school day

Facility dogs are expertly trained dogs partnered with a facilitator working in a health care, visitation, or education setting. Her facilitator is Allison, one of PACE's occupational therapists, who applied for a therapy dog from Canine Companions for Independence and then attended an intensive two-week Team Training course to learn dog handling and care.

"Balia's first five weeks have been a learning experience (like anyone's first month on the job!), but we've seen some great progress, and she is overall doing very well," Allison says. "Students will come up to her and initiate communication, saying or indicating 'dog' or 'hi, dog,' which is a

huge deal for our students."

There are many benefits to facility/therapy dogs: they can perform over 40 commands designed to motivate and inspire clients with special needs; they give unconditional love and attention to the clients and patients; they help engage students in school and special education classes; and they encourage feelings of calm and security for clients in a visitation setting.

Balia will work with Allison to help teach PACE students and facilitate interactions. We are all excited to have her here, and she has already been a major hit with PACE School students!

For more information about therapy dogs, visit [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org).



PACE Student Demetri and his aide Rosie meet Balia

## PACE Events

**PACE 2nd Annual Golf Classic**  
Monday, April 26, 2010  
Cinnabar Hills Golf Course, San Jose  
11am Registration

2nd time event co-chairs Joe Dermer and Scott Johnson invite you to golf at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club on April 26, 2010! Your ticket includes: a chance to win a 2010 GMC Terrain, 18 beautiful fairways, lunch, dinner, awards, goodie bags, refreshments and more. This event was so popular last year that it sold out, so buy your ticket today!

Same great price as last year:  
\$175/person  
\$700 / Foursome  
\$60/Additional Dinner Guest

To purchase tickets, become a sponsor or make a donation please visit [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org), email [development@pacificautism.org](mailto:development@pacificautism.org) or call **408-245-3400**. Proceeds benefit PACE programs and services.

**Date Night**  
PACE Sunny Days Preschool  
897 Broadleaf Ln  
San Jose, CA 95128  
April 23, Time TBA

After several successful date nights, PACE's Early Intervention staff has decided to bring back the fun for children and parents alike. Families in our EI program are invited to bring their children with Autism and their siblings to PACE for this evening filled with fun child activities. For more information and to reserve your spot call **408-551-0312**.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**PACE 9th Annual Gala**  
November 20, 2010  
Hayes Mansion, San Jose  
6pm to 11pm

Join PACE for our 9th Annual Gala event, held at the same fabulous venue as last year, the Hayes Mansion in San Jose. The evening will include dinner, dancing, entertainment and an amazing live and silent auction!

## PACE Volunteer Spotlight

Linda Jhun joined PACE's new skill-based volunteer program in April 2009. Since then, she has led various graphic design projects which include the PACE Gala Program Booklet. In addition to creating the template and layout for the program, she developed advertisements and salutes for the event sponsors and advertisers. Linda's current projects include the PACE Golf Classic Program Booklet, PACE's New Donor Guide, supplemental program brochures, the new PACE wine label design and much more!

PACE's skill-based volunteer program was developed under the direction of Annual Fund Manager, Bridget Holian, in Fall 2008. Since then, volunteers have played an integral

role in the organization's success. Karen Kennan, Development Director for PACE, explained, "Volunteers like Linda allow PACE to reduce budget expenditures and free up more dollars for innovative programs and services. This is critical for our organization's growth and success."

Thank you Linda!



Linda created this PACE ad for the Gala booklet

## Autism News

The American Psychiatric Association recently released a proposed fifth edition draft of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the standard classification manual of mental disorders used by health professionals for diagnostic and research purposes. According to APA's press release, the new edition "will include new categories for learning disorders and a single diagnostic category, 'autism spectrum disorders,' that will incorporate the current diagnoses of autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder and pervasive developmental disorder (not otherwise specified)." This change recognizes that the symptoms of these disorders represent a continuum from mild to severe and so do not constitute separate disorders. Among other things, the criteria will also include a description of the individual's overall development, course, and language, as well as require that the symptoms begin in early childhood due to its neurodevelopmental nature. These proposed criteria will be edited and refined over the next two years, and will also go through field trials to test the proposed criteria in real-world settings. **For the complete press release or for more information about DSM-V, visit [www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org).**

## From the Desk of the Board President



During the PACE Board of Directors' Retreat in early March, we reviewed the latest data on Autism trends. The results made clear that the changing environment of Autism will have a staggering impact on PACE and other direct service providers for people with Autism and their families. The most recent statistic from the CDC puts Autism at 1 in 110 births, while a recent UC Davis study cited Autism "clusters" in California that indicate the disorder is even more prevalent. Santa Clara County has been identified as one of those "clusters."

PACE continues to develop leading programs and services precisely because we are aware of and adapt to the current changes in the Autism landscape. While PACE's foundation comes from the strength of its programs and our highly dedicated teachers and therapists in Early Intervention, K-12 School, Adult Vocational and Residential, our service offerings continue to evolve and expand to meet the needs of the community. Our technological resources, for example, have expanded to include assistive communication devices, video education programs, and developmental tracking models.

We have also recently come out with some statistical analyses of our own based on the data from the California Department of Education Services and the Department of Developmental Services. We must rely on these data to anticipate the demands for our services and to chart our future course as an agency and as caregivers.

The long-term vibrancy of PACE is critical, and our ability to not only continue but expand our services to meet the growing needs of the Autism community is paramount. Our vitality depends on your support. There are many ways to help, whether donating money, items, or time. This month PACE is hosting its 2nd Annual golf Classic at Cinnabar Hills Golf club on Monday, April 26. As the event co-chair for a second year in a row, I can say that this year's event will be even better than the last, with 18 beautiful fairways, refreshments and food, great prizes, contests, and more. We sincerely hope you will join us to golf in support of PACE, an agency that continues to evolve and respond dynamically to the current challenges in the Autism landscape.

Joe Dermer  
President, PACE Board of Directors

## ADP Client Makes His Radio Debut at KFOX

"Mattress Discounters made a special purchase direct from the Sealy Factory, so now you can get our bestselling firm Sealy mattress set for just \$597...We're really good at one thing: saving you money on a brand name mattress!"



Larry preps the script

Larry, one of PACE's Adult Day clients, got his KFOX debut this month when he was asked to do a voiceover of a mattress commercial with his radio-ready voice. He prepped a few times in the studio, and then gave it a go. It only took a few read-throughs of the 30-second spot to make a perfect recording. The sound mixer in the studio, Russ, then edited together the best readings of different sentences to make the fastest recording to fit in the 30 second spot.

Larry was so versed in radio vocabulary, asking for the "audio" at the end of each take, that one of the KFOX representatives remarked to the sound mixer, "Need a helper?"

Anne Chen, ADP coordinator, said, "We just ran into a few KFOX employees at Tony & Alba's [pizza restaurant near PACE] while ADP was at work one day, and they were so interested in Larry's radio voice that they offered Larry to try it out in the studio!"

While Larry was doing his voiceover, his peers worked at the station shredding paper and sorting KFOX files—another day at work for PACE Adult Day Program.

Congratulations on your first gig, Larry! We look forward to hearing you on the radio.



The KFOX sound mixer and Larry record the spot

## 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](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.

## PACE News

### PACE Goes Green

PACE is going green with the financial support of a grant from the City of San Jose's Environmental Services Department.

In December, PACE was the recipient of a Youth Education and Improvement Grant to be used in support of a composting and recycling project at the school. With the goal of fostering environmental education while helping our students meet their individual education objectives, this project will address the social and life skills area of the PACE curriculum. Students will experience the cause and effect of their work in the garden through recycling and composting, learning about the lifecycles of plants and food production and practicing the tactile experience of working with the earth.

Each PACE classroom has been outfitted with recycling bins for paper, plastic and cans as well as bins for collecting organic (food) waste for garden compost, and two of the classrooms are hosting worm bins.

Students also work on their vocational skills by gathering recyclables from around the school and bringing them to a local redemption center, where they can receive cash in exchange for their items. This money is used to support classroom activities and special treats.

PACE staff have formed a "Green Team" to direct the agency's recycling and composting efforts. If you'd like to get involved or make a donation to the "Green Initiative" contact Development Director Karen Kennan at [karenkennan@pacificautism.org](mailto:karenkennan@pacificautism.org).



PACE student Cesar works in the garden with teacher Paul Copeland

**Want to be green and know what else PACE clients are doing? Sign up for PACE's newly launched monthly e-newsletter!**

**It links to our blog ([blogs.boomerang.com/pace](http://blogs.boomerang.com/pace)) that has articles on PACE events, Autism news, therapist advice, and more.**

**To sign up, send your name and email to [pacesetter@pacificautism.org](mailto:pacesetter@pacificautism.org) or visit our website at [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org).**

## Sunny Days Gears Up for Summer

Even though Sunny Days Preschool is a year round program, the staff is gearing up for some special fun in the sun! During the summer, the afternoon playgroup becomes an unofficial summer camp, holding water play activities like slip n slide, arts and crafts and outside social games like Hide and Go Seek. The program may also try to organize a summer picnic at the San Jose Children's Museum, as well as similar outside activities. If you are interested in getting more information, contact [heena@pacificautism.org](mailto:heena@pacificautism.org).



Preschooler Alyssa celebrates the 4th of July

**Sunny Days is currently accepting applications for typical children as well as children on the spectrum. Contact: [heena@pacificautism.org](mailto:heena@pacificautism.org).**

• 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](mailto:karenkennan@pacificautism.org) to make an In-Kind donation.

# Great Givers

Over the years, PACE has benefited from the generosity of many supporters. In this issue of PACE Setter, we're pleased to acknowledge Stephanie Ramirez, who knows how important it is to support the causes and programs that make a difference in the life of our community.



Stephanie Ramirez

By the time she was 23 years old, Stephanie had left an abusive marriage and was the single parent of two toddlers. John, the oldest, met all of his developmental milestones in his first year, but by age two he started having seizures and was ultimately diagnosed with myoclonic epilepsy. By age two and a half, John had lost all of his words and by age three received the additional diagnosis of Autism and mental retardation.

Stephanie worked tirelessly to care for both boys, but by the time John was 6 years old she started looking for placement options and by age 8 she determined it would be best to go with residential placement. John moved into Miracle House, one of PACE's children's homes, in 1996 and enrolled in PACE School a few years later. Ever since, PACE has been fortunate to include Stephanie as an exceptional supporter!

Limited finances never stopped Stephanie from volunteering and assisting at the agency wherever she could. She would often cook and bring over an entire meal (from soup to nuts!) for the staff at Miracle House. During particularly busy times of year, she would do the same for the staff in the administrative offices. When PACE instituted a formal fundraising program Stephanie volunteered to make thank-you phone calls to donors. As the parent of a child who benefited from contributions, Stephanie appreciated the opportunity to say thank you, and was always gratified by the positive responses.

In the early years, PACE's fundraising efforts were largely dependent on outreach to family and friends in the community. Understanding this, Stephanie wrote a letter to her relatives and friends and asked them to open up their hearts and

their hands in support of the agency. Today more than 50 of Stephanie's contacts remain on PACE's roster and her immediate family continue to support the agency financially and through in-kind assistance.

In 1998 Stephanie remarried. She and her husband Ricardo have three more children and have remained committed to supporting the community by donating 10% of their monthly income to worthy causes. In addition to helping at PACE, Stephanie works at her children's elementary school, teaches Sunday school and runs a preschool program for a Mom's group twice a month at her church. She and Ricardo continue to support PACE with financial contributions, meals for the staff, holiday gifts for the house, and practical assistance whenever needed. "We will always put PACE at the top of our priority list," Stephanie says.

Things have stabilized for John. New medical technology has helped him remain seizure-free for the past few years. Last year he turned 22, graduated from PACE School and moved into PACE's Lamar House (for adults).

When the Ramirez family had the recent good fortune to come into some unexpected income, they immediately asked how they could use some of it to benefit John's new home. Lamar Residential Manager, Helena Serper, did not hesitate to let them know how much the home needed a new washer and dryer. With the Ramirez' generous contribution, PACE was able to purchase heavy duty, energy efficient appliances with extended warranties for the home. And additional money went to the PACE annual campaign to support the ongoing services and programs of the agency. Thank you Stephanie and Ricardo!

For her commitment to community, her volunteer efforts, her delicious meals and her financial generosity, Stephanie Ramirez exemplifies what it takes to be a "Great Giver."



Stephanie with her son John and her father Clark Bennett

• 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](http://www.donateforcharity.com/jumpfrom.html). Donate for Charity handles all the details and distributes the net proceeds to PACE!

• Go to [www.escrip.com](http://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!

**August**  
Alex Alves  
Stephen Frieden  
William Pichardo  
Christian Taeza

**January-February**  
• Ami Stevens  
• Feven Mahdere  
• Luis Olivo  
• Medasso Gameda

• Catherine Njie 8 yrs  
• Rosita Dacuycuy 8 yrs  
• Francisco Pacheco 8 yrs  
• Zona Rice 13 yrs  
• Mary Carter 13 yrs  
• Helena Serpa 9 yrs  
• Marcia Goldman 7 yrs  
• Chris Pono 8 yrs  
• Matu Hamilton 17 yrs  
• Marquis Zane 10 yrs  
• Nancy Brown 17 yrs  
• Alejandra Jahen 9 yrs  
• Sonia Aimonetti 12 yrs  
• Daysi Aguilar 9 yrs  
• Rosie Villarreal 8 yrs  
• Ruby Kaur 8 yrs

## October-November

• Romona Garcia  
• Yeama Yanguba  
• Donnell Forks  
• Maryann McDonald  
• Chris Sances  
• Joel Ferry  
• Betty Simons  
• Ibrahim Mansaray

## Happy Anniversary!

**October-February**  
• Teresa Gonzalez 7 yrs  
• Leonora Solis 8 yrs  
• Sara Gutierrez 5 yrs  
• Chay Xaochay 14 yrs  
• Cora Dee 12 yrs  
• Elvia Aguilera 6 yrs  
• Marlene Taeza 8 yrs  
• Lulu Irias 7 yrs  
• Nancy Moiforay-GBondo 13 yrs

## Announcements

The PACE benefit open enrollment period is the time to make changes to your existing PACE benefit plan. We will be announcing the date and time for the PACE benefit fair at the end of May 2010. If you have any questions regarding your benefits, please contact Veronica N. Rodriguez, HR Director or Michelle Fonte, HR Generalist.

## Come and Join the PACE Team! Open positions:

Instructional Specialist – K-12 School

Instructional Specialist – Preschool

Residential Facility Manager / Administrator – PACE Residential Facility

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

## PACE Board of Directors

Joe Dermer, President  
Kati Miller, Vice President  
Geoff Davis, Treasurer  
Valerie Burniece  
Gail Hashimoto  
Scott Johnson  
Yvonne Linney  
Christian Picone  
Jocelyn Zona

PACE is proud to introduce our newest Board members, Stephanie de Raynal and Lorna Drope.

## PACE Advisory Council

Jerry Matranga, Chair  
Edward Ball  
John Cheng  
Tom Crotty  
Paula Davis  
Bill Gould  
Maria Hermanussen  
Katie Nguyen  
Gregory Thomson

## Mother's Day is Coming

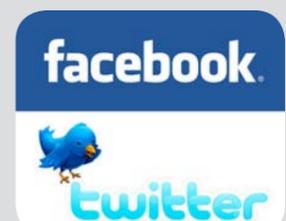
*Inviting your family and friends to make donations to PACE in recognition of an individual with disabilities is a lovely gift to a mom as well as an easy way to support PACE. If you would like to make a contribution to PACE, please contact Karen Kennan, Director of Development, at [karenkennan@pacificautism.org](mailto:karenkennan@pacificautism.org) or 408-625-6176.*

## Innovative Giving: PACE wine label coming soon!

PACE is partnering with CRUSHPAD, a custom winemaking facility, to create amazing benefit wine. Soon you will be able to order PACE wine through our website, and a portion of the proceeds will benefit PACE programs and services. Check our website for more information. Drink wine and give back!



Follow PACE on the web!  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
[www.twitter.com/PacificAutismCE](http://www.twitter.com/PacificAutismCE)



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

This issue's "Ask a Therapist" is inspired by recent events; namely, our new staff member, therapy dog Balia! All printed answers come from the PACE Therapy staff.



### What are the benefits of a therapy dog for my child with Autism?

There can be many benefits to a therapy or facility dog, especially in a school setting. For example, a facility dog can have a calming effect on many students: when the demands of school lessons and social interaction become overwhelming and overstimulating, the presence of a facility dog that does not make any demands can be both a calming and welcome presence.

In addition, the presence of a therapy dog can facilitate communication; more importantly, students may even initiate conversation because of a facility dog. For example, when our students walk by and see Balia, our therapy/facility dog, they may say "dog" or "hi, dog" without any prompt from the aide or the therapists. This is big for our kids on the spectrum.

Therapy dogs may also help engage in play a student who may be overwhelmed or intimidated by interacting with peers. A dog's undemanding, calm temperament makes play a fun activity. Further, therapy dogs can help with routine activities. Because a therapy dog is at the school every day, the dog becomes a part of the daily routine. If the therapy dog is causing a student to initiate communication, then this routine may extend to other areas over time. The fact that the therapy dog is present every day in a learning context makes the dog a great tool for social learning.

As a result, a therapy dog can be another avenue for building independence through these skills of initiating communication, engaging in play, and building routines. Of course, each individual is different and each person's reaction to a therapy dog will be different, but a therapy dog can be vastly beneficial for a person on the spectrum!

For more information about therapy/facility dogs, please visit [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org)

If you have a question for Ask a Therapist please send it to: [pacesetter@pacificautism.org](mailto:pacesetter@pacificautism.org)

## YLC Broke the Silence!

Youth Leadership combined with Philanthropy is the new trend, and PACE is setting it. If you are up on your PACE news, you have heard about our newly founded Youth Leadership Committee, which is comprised of 15 students from various high schools in the Bay Area. The group's newest project, Breaking the Silence [of Autism] Mixer, was held on March 20 and was a huge success!



YLC members and friends



YLC Breaking the Silence Mixer Flyer

Over 700 high school teens came out to San Jose City College's main gym to dance to music provided by a WILD 94.9 DJ. Tickets were \$10 per student and all proceeds benefited PACE programs and services. Kurt Ohlfs, PACE Executive Director and a chaperone for the event, shared, "It was amazing to see so many high school students out on the dance floor supporting such a good cause. These kids are 'Breaking the Silence' of Autism."



The WILD 94.9 DJ spinning some beats

YLC Co-Chair Hannah Nguyen and YLC Member Mariam Khan spearheaded the efforts and vision of the Mixer, and the whole committee participated in publicizing and logistics planning. Khan says, "It was a great learning experience for all of us on the YLC! We now appreciate the business side of event planning."

In all, over \$6,000 was raised by these eager young philanthropists!

High school students interested in joining the committee for the 2010-2011 school year should send a letter of interest to [bridgetholian@pacificautism.org](mailto:bridgetholian@pacificautism.org).

## Development News: Take the Challenge! PACE Awarded a Matching Grant

The Sobrato Family Foundation has awarded PACE a Challenge grant for the second time in four years! The grant amount has increased while maintaining the same unrestricted spending guidelines.

The Sobrato Family Foundation provides capital that supports nonprofits' capacity to deliver services, which as a result strengthens the local community in the Silicon Valley. The Foundation's Executive Director, Diane Parnes, explains why they chose PACE, "PACE's work has greatly contributed to the quality of life of their clients and of the community as a whole."

The grant value for PACE is \$35,000 in the first year, and if PACE successfully matches the grant with new or increased cash donations in 2010, in the second year they will award PACE \$36,750 (the first year's grant amount plus 5%). This new award will total \$71,750 over two years (not including what PACE raises).



The grant itself offers great flexibility: it allows PACE to decide how to invest in either "People" or "Place" expenses. The breakdown for donor requirements is as follows:

- A cash gift from a first-time donor will be matched 100%
- A cash gift from a lapsed donor (one who has not made a donation in 12+ months) will be matched 100%
- A cash gift from a current donor (one who has given within the last 12 months) will be matched 100% by the increased portion of their most recent gift (i.e., if the donor gave \$500 last year and gives \$750 this year, then \$250 is the eligible match amount)

PACE thanks the Sobrato Foundation for their generosity, and is excited to be part of this opportunity. For more information about the Sobrato Family Foundation, please visit [www.sobrato.org](http://www.sobrato.org).

Help us reach our matching grant goal of \$35,000 by making a donation today! To make a contribution, please use the enclosed envelope, visit the PACE website at [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org) or call 408-245-3400.



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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/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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APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH  
Support PACE Today!