

# PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION

Connect • Support • Educate

## COVID-19: A Message from the Executive Director

As we enter the eighth month of Shelter in Place, PACE remains steadfast in its mission to support the individuals and families it serves throughout the Bay Area. Over the summer, the PACE School summer program ran from July 7th through August 24th during which PACE supported 19 students (33% of total enrollment) in a half day summer educational program on-site.

This Fall, PACE expanded its school program to welcome over 40% of the student body for in-person instruction. The PACE 2020-2021 School Year Reopening Plan is a continuation of the efforts already successfully deployed in the PACE School Extended School Year summer cohort program. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the school to adopt a variety of alternative delivery models to ensure limited individual exposure and appropriate social distancing in a hybrid learning approach that covers both in-person and distance learning. We are immensely proud of the collaboration between staff and families to make on-campus and distance learning a success for our students.

The mission of PACE is to enhance the lives of people impacted by autism through innovation, exceptional education and compassionate care. That mission is more evident than ever now as the agency strives to support its competence, conscience and compassion initiatives in safe and creative ways. As we look forward, we recognize the extreme importance in maintaining consistency and continuity for our students which warrants additional support for the entire family and community surrounding our students.

We will continue to provide updates on the agency on our website at [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org). Thank you for the ongoing support from our PACE staff, families, donors, and community.

Sincerely,



Kurt Ohlfs  
PACE Executive Director



[www.facesforkids.org](http://www.facesforkids.org)  
[intake@facesforkids.org](mailto:intake@facesforkids.org)



Now providing:  
Onsite Clinic Assessments  
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ABA Teletherapy

### We are here for you.

Amid these challenging times, we are here to support you.

Let us help you create a positive environment for managing your child's behavior! Faces is currently offering onsite clinic services, and online telehealth ABA consultation and therapy services during the Covid-19 crisis. Our sessions are all facilitated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts and can be customized to meet your family's unique schedule and individual needs.

For more information and to start the intake process contact us:

[www.facesforkids.org](http://www.facesforkids.org) | Phone: (408) 785-0102 | E-Mail: [intake@facesforkids.org](mailto:intake@facesforkids.org)  
Insurance and private pay accepted.

We use the principles of learning and motivation (Applied Behavior Analysis) to change behavior. Onsite clinic services are held at our Sunny Days Preschool campus. **We are not offering in-home ABA therapy services at this time.**

Faces Behavioral Services is a department of the Pacific Autism Center for Education, a leading Bay Area provider of autism services committed to enhancing the lives of individuals impacted by autism through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care.



## Ask a Therapist by Katia Kuzni, M.S., CCC-SLP

Katia Kuzni, CCC-SLP, is a Speech-Language Pathologist at PACE. Our team of SLPs, including Katia, are a critical part of the exceptional education that PACE provides to children and adults impacted by moderate-to-severe autism. Katia and our team of SLPs and Occupational Therapists have been instrumental in providing support to our students and clients during Shelter in Place.

COVID-19 has brought many drastic changes to our routines and way of living. It also means that children are expected to sit and attend to a computer or tablet device for periods of time for distance learning. For a child with special needs, the ability to sit, attend, and listen to a teacher or therapist online can be especially challenging.

In this edition of "Ask of Therapist," Katia discusses some of the questions she receives most often from parents and caregivers:

**Katia:** One statement I hear quite often is, "...But my child won't sit down in a chair long enough for you to do a good speech session."

When I hear this, I provide the following suggestions to improve a child's ability to sit and attend:

- Try to ensure your child is in the most naturalistic environment. An environment that is familiar and comfortable for the child is optimal for learning new skills. Some of my best sessions have been in backyards or kitchens!
- Depending on the novel environment, we can model new words on a device, use sign language or other visuals. During Shelter in Place, my favorite session was using AAC to communicate with a student to use the hose to fill up their kiddie pool. It was so fun, and she wanted to share about the water and who swam!
- I remind parents that a child does not always have to be sitting to have a productive session! It is good for the child to move and feel calm. I even enjoy walking around and demonstrating new words.

For more Shelter in Place resources, visit [www.porchlighteducation.org](http://www.porchlighteducation.org)

## 2020 PACE GOLF CLASSIC

### We raised over \$45,000 for PACE programs!

The 12th Annual PACE Golf Classic took place on September 25, 2020 at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club. 78 golfers came out for a fun, safe, socially distanced day on the course in support of PACE. Thank you to our golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and Cinnabar Hills staff for making the event a success!

### THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 SPONSORS!

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During these uncertain times, we are here to support you and your family with teaching materials, activities, and information about essential resources in response to the evolving circumstances around COVID-19. We provide several ways to keep our students, clients, families, and communities up-to-date with news and resources on our website.

You can access educational resources, tools for special needs families, and ideas for arts and crafts and movement during shelter-in-place created by our very own PACE School and Faces Behavioral Therapy, management teams. The list also includes COVID-19 specific resources, including important hotlines, Social Stories, and the best learning Apps for individuals with autism.

PACE is working hard to ensure you have a comprehensive tool kit through shelter-in-place.

**Visit our COVID-19 and Resource pages at [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org)**

## Children's Programs

By Karen Kennan, PACE Assistant Executive Director

In July, Sunny Days Preschool and Faces Behavior Services reopened our doors to students and behavior clients at the Sunny Days campus. Following COVID 19 guidelines provided by Community Care Licensing, Santa Clara County Public Health Department, and the California Department of Education, we've developed enhanced health and safety protocols that align with the most current scientific and community knowledge. We will continue to update these protocols as our understanding about the virus and local conditions change.

Here are the top ten COVID 19 "Best Practices" we have implemented at the Sunny Days Campus/Faces Clinic:

1. Remote student/child drop off and pick up at the car
2. Temperature and wellness checks for all staff and students upon arrival
3. No or limited campus visitors
4. Masks required for all adults on the premises at all times
5. Frequent hand-washing
6. Hand-sanitizing stations located throughout the buildings
7. Individual desks/tables for children located at least 6 feet apart
8. Frequent sanitizing/disinfecting equipment and furniture throughout the day

9. Reduced class size
10. Increased outside activity

For now, home therapy services are on hold and our Faces ABA program will continue to provide in-person therapy services only on site at our clinic. Face to face services are augmented by telehealth options which have become more widely utilized during the past 8 months. In our Sunny Days classroom we have reduced the number of enrolled students in order to keep exposure to multiple people to a reasonable minimum.

This is a challenging time for our community, families and staff and we recognize that there are still many unknowns ahead. And yet, as we move ahead into the holiday season, we are also grateful: grateful to be back on campus, thankful for the return of our committed staff and gratified by the ongoing support of our families and community.

If you are interested in early childhood services in our preschool or Faces program please go to:

[www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org)

[www.facesforkids.org](http://www.facesforkids.org)



**We are excited to announce that Porchlight University, our expansion of Porchlight Autism Education Series, is now available online!**

Porchlight University is a resource to teachers and para-educators who work primarily with neuro-typically developing students to facilitate better learning for students on the autism spectrum and of differing abilities integrated into their classroom.

This new eLearning program will consist of four 1-hour long modules; each module is broken down into 15-minute lessons. The courses include:

- Introduction to Autism Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the Law
- Creating Effective Classrooms (coming Nov 2020)
- Social Skills and Positive Behavior Culture (coming early 2021!)

Each course contains interactive activities and visuals to increase learning and real world scenarios to help teachers apply the knowledge, tools, and strategies quickly in their classroom. A Certificate of Completion is available to download after the completion of each 1-hour long program. The content is suitable for individual and group learning.

PACE continues to fund projects like Porchlight and Porchlight University through grants and private donations as a commitment to share our knowledge with the greater community.

Special thanks to our Porchlight University supporters: Heffernan Insurance, Autism Speaks, and Comcast NBCUniversal!

**Learn more about Porchlight University by visiting [www.porchlighteducation.org](http://www.porchlighteducation.org)**

## PACE's Youth Leadership Committee

By Yasmin Gomez, Marketing and Development Associate

Now more than ever, we count on the support of our community members to help us continue our mission of enhancing the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care.

Every school year, the PACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) unites passionate high school student volunteers to raise awareness for autism and help spread our footprint in the community and this year will be no exception. Bay area high school students continue to show their passion for philanthropy, and a strong desire to support their local community despite the uncertainty and challenges due to COVID-19.

This year, we have successfully kicked off the 2020-2021 YLC season with a new virtual format. This season's YLC will help enrich PACE's online presence with a variety of virtual events such as workshops

and fundraisers. Their work and tech-savviness will allow us to strengthen our bond with the community while keeping health and safety as a main priority.

The 2020-2021 cohort brings a total of 21 members, 9 of which are returning members and 12 of which are new members to the YLC. Make sure to follow us on our social media sites to stay updated and engaged with future virtual events hosted by the talented and dedicated group of students.

Thank you to our YLC members for your commitment to building a more inclusive community and acceptance of autism.

**If you would like to support the YLC's fundraising goal of \$2,000, please visit: [www.pacificautism.org/donate](http://www.pacificautism.org/donate)**

## Ways You Can Help

### • Make a donation

By Mail: 1880 Pruneridge Ave.  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
Online: [www.pacificautism.org](http://www.pacificautism.org)  
By phone: 408-245-3400

• Double your gift- **make a matching gift contribution.** To include PACE in your workplace giving options, please contact [development@pacificautism.org](mailto:development@pacificautism.org).

• Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and enter PACE's ID number: **472692** to register your credit and reward cards.

• Choose PACE on **Amazon Smile** ([smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com))

• 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!

## PACE School: Supporting Our Students

By Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Resource Development Manager

Ever since Shelter in Place began in March, the PACE School staff have been going above and beyond to ensure the students and their families remain connected, engaged, and, most importantly, supported. Whether through distance learning or on-campus learning, our students continue to thrive and make significant progress despite the shifts in daily life caused by COVID-19.

*"Special education is a huge task to undertake for distance learning, and the staff at PACE have gone above and beyond. The key takeaway is that everyone has been VERY responsive, helpful, patient, flexible, and understanding. Everyone's positive attitude and grace during a stressful time means a lot."* - PACE Parent

Many of our teachers and therapists have been creating engaging videos to teach students crafts, exercise routines, and even cooking lessons. The videos are also accessible on PACE's website, as part of PACE's ongoing efforts to support the broader community. In addition to the myriad of resources created by our PACE School teachers and therapists, the staff recently created extensive curriculum and material bins for each student. The bins include curriculum, activities, and sensory items, each tailored specifically to the individual

student and their needs. The materials are organized and labeled for parents to easily manage and prepare for distance learning sessions, alleviating some of the burden parents face in purchasing, creating, or print materials for their child. The reaction from parents was overwhelmingly positive.



Parents are also doing their part to support the PACE School. In June, the PACE School held a special "Donation Day," where PACE School families had the opportunity to donate essential items, such as hand sanitizer, gloves, and school supplies. THANK YOU to our PACE School families for your donations!



## Give a Gift to PACE this Holiday Season

As 2020 comes to an end, we take a moment to reflect on all we are grateful for despite the challenges and obstacles we faced due to COVID-19. We are grateful for our team of teachers, therapists, instructional aides, and residential caregivers who work tremendously hard to provide support and care to our students, clients, and residents during the COVID-19 crisis.

We are grateful for our generous giving community who helped sustain PACE's staff and programs through the crisis. Our work is possible because of our donors, families, friends, and the broader community's kindness and generosity. However, there is still much uncertainty, and COVID-19 will continue to impact nonprofits throughout the Bay Area, including PACE, in the months ahead.

Now, more than ever, we rely on our generous giving community to help offset some of the financial challenges due to COVID-19. By contributing to PACE, you can allow us to invest in the technologies, materials, and staffing needed to support our students, clients, residents, and their families.

**Make an impact this holiday season!** Please consider making a donation to support PACE programs. No donation is too small and everything makes a difference! **Donating is quick and simple. Visit us online at [www.pacificautism.org/donate](http://www.pacificautism.org/donate)**

### Donate by mail or phone:

Send check or credit card donations to:  
PACE Development Department  
1880 Pruneridge Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050 or phone 408.625.6174

## Residential News

By Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Resource Development Manager

The PACE Residential Program offers a loving family environment for children and adults with autism. PACE is licensed to serve residents from ages 6-59 years and currently operates two children's homes and four adult homes in the South Bay.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, PACE's six residential group homes have remained in full operation. PACE's extensive experience in maintaining safe essential worker and client environments throughout the pandemic period has allowed all six (6) of the agency's residential group homes to remain completely operational without incident. Each home continues to serve as 24/7 support for six (6) clients with a typical 8-12 person rotating staff per home. Thank you to our staff for ensuring our residents are safe and comfortable during Shelter in Place!

### Thank you, Cupertino Rotary!

Earlier this year, the Cupertino Rotary was set to give our Miracle children's home a landscaping makeover, including a new obstacle course. The project was put on hold due to COVID-19, however, two Rotarians, Larry Low and Bill Allen, were able to safely and successfully install the obstacle course in May. The course has allowed the residents a safe and fun way to exercise and strengthen skills such as balancing during Shelter in Place. The Rotary will also build three planter boxes with refurbished wood. We are so grateful for the support from the Cupertino Rotary, especially during these challenging times.



## Practicing Gratitude!

As we approach the holiday season, we reflect on all we are grateful for. **We are grateful for our donors, PACE staff, families, friends, and community!** While 2020 wasn't the year any of us were expecting, there are many positives we can focus on and appreciate.

To get in the holiday spirit, here are some ways you can practice Gratitude at home:

**1. Take time to notice what's around you:** The more often you tune into your awareness, the greater the chances you will notice all the good that's around you to feel gratitude for!

**2. Practice gratitude for the little things:** It can be more difficult to feel grateful for the small things we do every day. Reminding yourself that eating a meal, for example, is in itself special can be very powerful.

**3. Share your gratitude for your loved ones:** The next time you notice a kind act by a loved one, why not show gratitude by simply saying 'thank you'!

**4. Spread gratitude via your social media platforms:** Using it to share your gratitude can help create a more positive online atmosphere. Share an uplifting moment from a recent event or a lesson you learned from a book you read, or a photo of a place near you that you're grateful for!

(Source: <https://www.mindful.org/an-introduction-to-mindful-gratitude/>)



### Pacific Autism Center for Education 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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## PACE Setter

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Contributors: *Yasmin Gomez, Karen Kennan, Katia Kuzni, Kurt Ohlfs, Melissa Watkins*

Executive Director: *Kurt Ohlfs*

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




Bay Area Real Estate  
**Donate Today**  
TUESDAY MAY 26  
2020 **THANK YOU DONORS!** MAY 27

While the 2020 BARER event was canceled due to COVID-19, the BARER community came together and **raised over \$130,000** to support PACE programs. Our gratitude is immeasurable. Thank you BARER community for your incredible generosity!



Together we give.

**UNLEASH GENEROSITY**

Generosity gives everyone the power to make a positive change in the lives of others and is a fundamental value anyone can act on.

December 1, 2020

**SUPPORT PACE THIS #GIVINGTUESDAY, December 1, 2020**  
Help us reach our goal of \$25,000!  
[www.pacificautism.org/giving-tuesday](http://www.pacificautism.org/giving-tuesday)

## We're here for you.

During these uncertain times, we are here to support you and your family with important resources, teaching materials, and indoor activities during shelter-in-place.

On our website, we have a page dedicated to sharing these resources with you. You will find a myriad of educational resources, tools for special needs families, and ideas for arts and crafts and movement during shelter-in-place. We have also included COVID-19 specific resources, such as Social Stories, and as well as the best learning Apps for individuals with autism/developmental disabilities.

Our vision is a world in which people of all abilities live fulfilling lives, especially in this rapidly changing environment. We will continue to update our Resource page throughout the coming weeks. Stay safe, vigilant, and healthy.

Below is a list of resources compiled by our PACE School and Faces Behavioral Therapy teams. To see the full list, please visit

[www.pacificautism.org/about-pace/resources](http://www.pacificautism.org/about-pace/resources)

We encourage parents and caregivers to utilize our free online eLearning resource Porchlight Autism Education Series. Browse over 50 modules covering a range of topics at no cost:

[www.porchlighteducation.org](http://www.porchlighteducation.org)

### COVID-19 Specific Resources:

Get accurate, up-to-date information on COVID at:

- <https://covid19.ca.gov>
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### Important Hotlines:

- **Depression/Anxiety Crisis Hotline:** Text "Home" to 741741 for texting support (if texting is preferred over phone calls) <https://www.crisistextline.org/texting-in>
- **National Domestic Abuse Hotline:** Avoiding public spaces and working remotely can help to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but for many survivors, staying home may not be the safest option. We know that any

external factors that add stress and financial strain can negatively impact survivors and create circumstances where their safety is further compromised.) Call 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224 or chat on [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

### Support Groups:

- **Parents Helping Parents Autism Lectures, Parent Support Groups, and Tips for Parents During a Pandemic:** [www.php.org](http://www.php.org)

### Mental Health Resources:

- Taking Care of Your Emotional Health: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>
- Resources for Emotional Support and Well-being: [covid19.ca.gov/resources-for-emotional-support-and-well-being](https://covid19.ca.gov/resources-for-emotional-support-and-well-being)
- Taking Care of Ourselves: [www.ecmhc.org/relaxation.html](http://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation.html)

### Educational Resources:

- GoNoodle: Movement for kids with repetition: [www.gonoodle.com](http://www.gonoodle.com)

- NAT Geo 4 Kids: Easy to follow science resources: [kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)
- Vooks: Audible books for students with music: [www.vooks.com/parent-resources](http://www.vooks.com/parent-resources)
- LessonPix: Adapted materials for various activities and topics: <https://lessonpix.com/sharing>

### Resources by PACE:

Visit us at [www.pacificautism.org/about-pace/resources](http://www.pacificautism.org/about-pace/resources) to access videos and activities created by PACE staff! Our resources include:

- iSPY and shaving cream activity
- "Very Hungry Caterpillar" Read Along
- Make a fun fruit salad!
- Fireworks in a Jar experiment
- Homemade Puffy Paint Art Project
- Learning How to Wear a Face Mask at School
- Emergency Prep and Visual Disaster Supply Checklist