MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KURT OHLFS

“It is often said that hard times bring out the best in people. Recent economic woes would certainly qualify this year as hard times for Bay Area nonprofits. With funding dropping and the demand for services increasing, many local agencies are struggling to survive. Hard times, indeed. But at PACE, we’re finding that the glass is half full, rather than half empty...we are grateful for the support we have received from the many businesses, organizations, and individuals who believe in the work we do at PACE, and who have sustained us over the years. By focusing our mission on connecting and supporting, we are fortunate to have such a remarkable community to help weather this storm.

I wrote this message in the Fall 2009 PACE-Setter. Thirteen years later, I can confidently say that we continue to operate with a “glass half full” mindset and find ways to effectively adapt to changing times to meet the needs of the individuals and families we serve. This is made possible with the support from our donors, grantors, volunteers, families, and community partners.

Community is woven into every fiber at PACE. Together, we grow stronger and more resilient as an agency despite the economic challenges. As we approach the end of the calendar year, our goal for 2023 is to continue to fortify our strong community-based programs. We invite you to join us on November 29, 2022, for #GivingTuesday, a global celebration of togetherness and philanthropy. Thank you for supporting our mission.

KURT OHLFS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PACE EVENTS

Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Development Manager
Nonprofits rely on fundraising events to raise both essential capital to support their mission and to bring awareness to their cause and the community in which they serve. At PACE, we are fortunate to have two annual events that raise critical funds for our programs, and champion awareness of autism and neurodiversity.

In May of 2022, the Bay Area Real Estate Roundtable made a triumphant return to the Half Moon Bay Ritz Carlton for its first in-person event since 2019. For over 15 years, BAREER has raised significant funds for PACE programs (historically accounting for over 50% of PACE’s Annual Fund). The event brings over 200 attendees from the Bay Area and across the US to support PACE and to bring awareness of autism to the real estate world. This year, the event raised over $500,000 for PACE services and featured guest speaker Alex Smith, former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers.

The 14th Annual PACIFIC AUTISM Golf Classic was held on September 16, 2022, at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club in San Jose, CA. With 132 golfers in attendance and over $94,000 raised for PACE, this was one of the most successful PACIFIC AUTISM Golf Classics in its 14-year history. Funds raised will raise support a variety of facility enhancement projects for the PACE Residential Program. The PACIFIC AUTISM Golf Classic began in 2008, spearheaded by former PACE Board President Joe Dermer, and the Dermer family. Joe and the Dermer family continue to be make the PACE Golf Classic a successful PACE tradition, and we are grateful for their longstanding support of PACE.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the tremendous generosity of our BARER and Golf Classic communities. Thank you to all the sponsors, donors, attendees, golfers, vendors, volunteers, and staff for supporting PACE’s mission year after year. To learn about upcoming PACE events, visit us at pacificautism.org/events.

Christina Polyanko, Marketing and Development Associate
In the summer of 2022, we welcomed 18 students from 14 schools to the Youth Leadership Committee. This makes the largest YLC cohort in the last two years since the COVID-19 pandemic. We are looking forward to an exciting season full of fundraising ideas from members with various volunteering backgrounds. Ria Narang, a senior at Cupertino High School, is the 2022-2023 YLC President and in her role, she looks forward to connecting with members in person meetings and brainstorming sessions. Ria has been a member of the YLC since her freshman year of high school. Reflecting on her experience, she realized how much physical distance impacted the dynamic with YLC members and the challenges it brought to collaborating. In 2020-2021, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, YLC members met over Zoom once a month to discuss funding and community outreach plans.

In the new YLC cohort, we have students from The Harker School, Saratoga High School, Monte Vista High School, and Bellarmine Preparatory College, all with eclectic volunteer backgrounds. Wesley, a junior at Mountain View High School, is also the President of the Animal Assisted Happiness Club and Treasurer of the Spartan Buddies Club. Both organizations strive to spread awareness and raise funds for individuals with special needs. As a passionate and enthusiastic leader, Welsey hopes to bring his leadership skills and volunteer experience to support the YLC and PACE on various projects, such as creating art for an auctionable event.

Jason, also a student at Mountain View High School, has volunteered with Friends of Children with Special Needs, leading camps, concerts, and tutoring individuals in music. He is looking forward to performing in our annual “Voices for Autism” benefit concert with his guitar and recruiting fellow musicians to join his efforts.

Elia, a student at The Harker School, says, “Being part of the YLC means having an opportunity to collaborate with others and contribute to changes in the community, even as just a high schooler.”

Leadership plays an important role for members of the YLC and Shivani is eager to dive into the position. As a senior at BASIS Independent Silicon Valley, Shivani is working on AI (Artificial Intelligence) research in her AP Seminar class. “In my current Inspirit AI research, I am building an emotion recognition model for children specifically with autism. This software is meant to be applied to social stories so children can watch the social stories and respond to what-if questions, prompting them to understand appropriate responses to social situations.” She also works with special education students at Kumon Learning as a tutor. “I love my job and interacting with all the children; it truly is one of my favorite parts of the week.”

We are fortunate to have a strong, enthusiastic group of high school volunteers who are dedicated to making a difference in the ASD community. Keep an eye out for future fundraising events! In April 2023, the PACE Youth Leadership Committee will celebrate Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month with our annual “Voices for Autism” event. Stay tuned for more details! Follow us on social media or www.pacificautism.org for the most up-to-date news and information.

In November 2022, YLC President, Ria will be recognized as a Distinguished Volunteer at the 2022 Association of Fundraising Professionals’ Silicon Valley Philanthropy Day. Ria will be part of a group of volunteers and philanthropists who are celebrated for their dedicated and tireless efforts on behalf of the organizations they serve. Congratulations, Ria! Thank you for supporting PACE’s mission.
Ask a Therapist

Jennie Brevik, RBT
Faces Behavioral Services

Q: How can I prepare my child for the holiday season?

A: The holidays are a time to decorate and celebrate with our loved ones. Here are some tips on how to successfully manage the holidays with your child:

1. Talk to your BCBA or teacher about creating a social story about what activities occur during the holidays.
2. Mark important dates such as holidays or family gatherings on a calendar for your child to see.
3. Discuss what will be occurring and who they will be seeing.

Decorations: Decorating your house can mark the beginning of the holiday season, however, a rapid, unexpected change to your child’s environment can cause an increase in challenging behaviors. Here are tips to prepare your child for the decoration process:

1. Slowly add decorations around your home to help your child become familiar with the new additions.
2. Create a visual schedule to show your child when decorations are added to their environment.
3. Have your child be part of the decoration process! Utilize sensory friendly decorations such as lights, textures, and bells that can make the decorations more interactive.

Gifts: Gift giving and receiving is an activity that many enjoy during the holidays. Here are some tips on how to manage the gift giving and receiving process:

1. Practice opening gifts with your child. This can be done by modeling how to open a present. If your child is comfortable with handling presents to others, practice this with them as well.
2. Practice saying “thank you” when receiving and after opening gifts.

If you have any questions or concerns about how to manage the holidays, reach out to your child’s teacher or BCBA. Have a happy holiday season! For additional resources, visit us at www.pacificautism.org.

Children’s Services News

Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

Sunny Days Preschool welcomes Maddi Fraser!

Sunny Days Preschool is thrilled to introduce you to, and welcome, Maddi Fraser to PACE. Maddi is the new Sunny Days Preschool front desk receptionist. Please join us in welcoming Maddi to our team!

“Hi, everyone! My name is Maddi. I have a background in early education and sales. I’m very happy to be back on the education side! I recently moved to the Bay Area. I’m originally from a small town in northern Minnesota, but have lived in many places since then. I love road trips, travel, hockey, cooking, and spending time with my family. I’m very happy to be at PACE!”

Hands On Bay Area Revitalizes Sunny Days Preschool Campus

On June 30th, 2022, Hands On Bay Area, a San Francisco Bay Area-based nonprofit, coordinated 20 volunteers from a top corporation to help revamp the Sunny Days campus with various projects. The volunteers spent the afternoon giving the classroom doors a fresh coat of paint and turning old planter boxes into new benches for students and staff to enjoy when outside. For the Sunny Days and Faces staff, converting the planter boxes into functional and safe benches for students and clients has been a “wish list” project for months. Students may now use the benches for students and staff to enjoy when outside. For the Sunny Days and Faces staff, converting the planter boxes into functional and safe benches for students and clients has been a “wish list” project for months. Students may now use the benches for students and staff to enjoy when outside.

Faces Behavioral Services

ABA for Parents and Caregivers

Effective, Meaningful, and Realistic Ways of Implementing Positive Behavior Change for Your Child!

Group Class (6 Sessions)

Let’s work together to increase meaningful behavior change! Join our group class and learn how the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) can benefit your child. Our classes are designed for parents and caregivers of children with autism, as well as children who engage in challenging or disruptive behaviors. Classes will be facilitated by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

In-person and virtual classes available

Cost: $240/individual
$360/couple

When: Coming in January 2023

For questions, please contact: ameliaalbay@facesforkids.org
PACE School Welcomes Cady Driscoll

Melissa Watkins,
Marketing and Development Manager

PACE welcomes Cady Driscoll, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to the behavioral therapy team at the PACE School, where she joins school BCBA Sarah Devore. Our team of BCBAs are an essential resource and critical part of the PACE School program as they enhance the educational learning experience for our students and help identify solutions to behavioral challenges. BCBAs also utilize specialized training and specific techniques to bring behavioral changes in everyday family life. By working with a BCBA, an individual can improve their self-regulation, communication, and independent living and social skills.

In her role, Cady supports behavioral management, assessments, and data collection, and she collaborates with our team of Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, and teachers to ensure students are given the tools they need to successfully engage in learning and navigating their environment.

Raised in the Bay Area, Cady received her undergraduate degree from Palo Alto University in Psychology and Social Action. She then went on to earn her Masters Degree from Ball State University in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Cady states, “I was drawn to the field of ABA given the need for Behavior Technicians, and I wanted to get my foot in the field of psychology. Immediately upon working with students with autism, I knew this was the right fit for me. I enjoyed spending my day building relationships with my clients and seeing their progress over time using behavioral principles. Being a BCBA allows me to learn something new each day; my students are the real teachers and I am happy to be a part of their journey.” She adds, “What excites me most about working at PACE is the multidisciplinary approach to our students’ education and growth. I appreciate working with our therapists and teachers to make the most comprehensive plans for students. PACE has an abundance of resources to support student and staff growth and I am happy to be a part of the team.” In her free time, Cady enjoys spending time with her cats and spending time in nature.

Welcome to the team, Cady! With her dedication and passion for the field of ABA, she will make a positive impact on the staff, clients, and families at PACE.

Residential News

Melissa Watkins,
Marketing and Development Manager

By becoming an Eagle Scout through the Boy Scouts of America requires dedication and grit. The Eagle Scout is the highest rank an individual can reach in the BSA program. “In fact, only around 5% of all scouts who join ever reach the Eagle rank. As such, becoming an Eagle Scout is an exceptionally difficult challenge, even for scouts who can complete merit badges and rank requirements quickly!” (scoutsamts.com). According to Scoutsamts.com, it takes an individual 4-6 years to become an Eagle Scout. The majority of Boy Scouts join the program between the ages of 10-11, which means they are between 15-17 years old when they complete the Eagle Scout requirements.

To become an Eagle Scout, the candidate must earn specific merit badges and complete a capstone Eagle Scout Service Project. In 2021, Eagle Scout candidate Fauzaan Waqaas approached PACE to complete his Service Project, initially choosing to fix the gutters at Morehouse Group Home for Children. He learned about PACE through his involvement with the Cupertino Rotary, which inspired him to dedicate his capstone project to supporting our mission. Over six months of planning, the project evolved from replacing gutters to enhancing the backyard with a new patch of artificial turf. Fauzaan was methodical and thoughtful throughout the planning process; he researched the design and logistics involved in installing artificial turf. He took careful and detailed measurements of the backyard and suggested design elements to maximize the space. He connected with local businesses for supplies and materials, and to support funding for the project, he hosted a GoFundMe online fundraiser, raising over $2,100.

Fauzaan kicked off his project in July 2022. With help from his peers, he spent precious summer weekends removing the overgrown roots and preparing the soil. By August, Fauzaan and his group installed beautiful new artificial turf, giving our active clients a fresh, revitalized space for outdoor activities. Fauzaan’s work was truly remarkable, and it will have a lasting impact on the home for years to come. Fauzaan and his team also installed new gutter guards around the home.

We are grateful for community members like Fauzaan, who humbly dedicate their time and talents to support our programs. Thank you to Fauzaan for making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

PACE has an abundance of resources and critical part of the PACE School program between the ages of 10-11, which means they are between 15-17 years old when they complete the Eagle Scout requirements.

PACE and Gilfix and La Poll Associates LLP are hosting two free webinars for our PACE community. Join us in November for important information about Special Needs Planning and Prop. 19. Sign up today!

What you need to know about Special Needs Planning Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 6:00 - 7:00 PM

In this webinar, estate planning attorneys Michael Gilfix and Mark Gilfix (a proud member of the PACE board of directors) will go through the critical steps of creating a comprehensive special needs estate plan for your child. We will discuss why a Special Needs Trust may be the most important document you ever create, and how it works. We will also provide tools to ensure that a trust is properly funded for your child.

The end of Prop 13, and How to Preserve your Property for your Special Needs Child Wednesday, November 16, 2022, 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Where will my child live after I’m gone? If you own your home and/or rental property, this presentation is CRITICAL. In this webinar, we will review a critical change in California law that could result in the loss of your home or other property for your child with Special Needs. We will discuss how the new law (Proposition 19) works, why it could cost your family your home or other property, why its impact will be so severe for families with children with disabilities, and, most importantly, what you can do to preserve low property taxes for the next generation, saving your family your home.

Learn more and register by visiting us www.pacificautism.org/events
Great Givers: Remembering Patrick Barrett and Maxine Richards

Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

In this edition of the PACESetter, we dedicate our Great Givers column to two individuals who made a significant impact on the organization.

The PACE community was sad to learn of the passing of our friend and supporter, Patrick Barrett, who passed away on July 26, 2022.

Pat attended Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, CA, graduating with a B.S. in Engineering, followed by an MS. in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT. After accepting a position at Hewlett-Packard in 1967 and working as an engineer, he transferred to the HP legal department and worked as a patent agent while earning a Juris Doctor at Stanford Law School. He spent most of the rest of his career as an intellectual property attorney until his retirement in 2007.

Pat and his wife of 54 years, Penny, shared a vision of philanthropy, believing it is better to give than receive. Since their earliest days as a couple they always believed in giving back to their community. Penny describes Pat as someone who consistently asked the question: “How can I help?” Over the years the couple devoted countless hours of volunteer time to assist our agency: Penny was a PACE Executive Board member for 9 years. With his legal expertise in the area of patents and copyright law, Pat provided our PACE marketing department with legal counsel and advice.

The Barretts became involved with PACE in 2001 when their daughter Christine joined our school program. Shortly thereafter she was the very first client to move into the just acquired LaMar House where she was a resident for over five years. In subsequent years Christine participated in our Adult Day Program and later transitioned from a group home into her own place with live-in support.

In addition to his support of PACE, Pat served on the Board of Trustees for Arden Wood, a Christian Science Care Facility in San Francisco; on the Harvey Mudd College Alumni Board of Governors; and the Harvey Mudd College Board of Trustees. He was a longtime supporter of Berea College, local and national art museums, local theater, an active volunteer at his church, a talented amateur photographer, and a devoted fan of bluegrass and folk music.

Devoted to his family, his church and his community, Pat truly cared about people and always sought out ways in which he could help others, requiring neither accolades nor acknowledgement. He was generous of spirit and with his time.

Through his commitment to PACE and his dedication to supporting our agency in so many ways, Pat helped improve the lives of individuals and their families who struggle with autism and learning differences. He will be remembered by PACE for his quick and clever wit, his persistent generosity, and especially his kindness.

Remembering Maxine Richards This Spring we were sad to learn of the passing of Maxine Richards, autism advocate and mother of Randy, a long-standing PACE residential client.

When her son Randy was diagnosed with autism in the early 1960s Maxine got to work advocating and campaigning for services for her child and other individuals challenged by disabilities. Before the enactment of the ‘Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL-94-142) in 1975, the right to a free and appropriate education for all was not guaranteed for children with disabilities. Maxine fought tirelessly for the rights of all children and their families.

Over the years Maxine continued her commitment to children and reminded younger parents that the fight for equal access was not over. In her 2011 interview she told us: “They (young parents) should see that this system is not solid, and that they need to continue the advocating process to the government to make certain all children receive quality services.”

A longtime resident of Santa Cruz County, Maxine Richards was born in 1925. She died in April 2022 at the age of 97. She will be remembered by the PACE community as a loving and involved parent, and a fierce advocate for the rights of all children.