PACE Employee Excellence

Each year PACE honors those employees who demonstrate excellence in their work and who actively promote PACE’s values:

- Providing the highest quality of life for our clients
- Promoting a culture of continuous improvement
- Showing commitment to serve all who can benefit from PACE services

This January, the 2013 award was granted to one person in each program (School, Residential, Connections and Faces). Philip Clarkson, Employee of the Year, demonstrates outstanding service residents she serves. She continually provides the highest quality of life for our clients, and ready to get the day started. She’s arrived to work with a positive attitude and a general ‘get it done’ type of employee. Philip is consistently reliable, hardworking, compliant and dedicated. He is a model of how staff should approach their job, and is a consummate professional at all times.

Melba Tolentino from Matranga House received the Employee Excellence Award for our Residential Program. Melba’s coworkers and supervisor tell us that Melba continually arrives to work with a positive attitude and ready to get the day started. She’s well respected by her peers and the residents she serves. She continually demonstrates outstanding service and is a team player, always willing to lend a helping hand. Matranga would not be the same without her exceptional experience, care, and concern for the clients we serve.

The Connections team chose Urmi Sheth as winner because, “She is very encouraging and comes to work with the most positive attitude. She deserves the Employee Excellence Award for her joyful attitude, helping hand and loving spirit,” say her colleagues. Urmi has a BA in Psychology from Pitzer College, and started at Faces in 2005. She has made herself invaluable at the Connections program with a proactive approach to helping others and her flexibility. She continues to step up and expand her role, which now includes administrative duties.

This year at Faces, 11 people on the staff received nominations! Of those 11, six individuals received multiple nominations, but in the end, the award went to Joyce Marashlian. Joyce was hired in 2004 as a tutor, and is now a case manager. Joyce has a BCaBA and is an excellent clinician who always demonstrates professional interactions with parents, school officials, and coworkers. Joyce notes, “I have been blessed to have wonderful training from many that I have crossed paths with from FACES and I am so grateful for the nurturing environment that I currently work in.”

Congratulations to all of you who continue to make working at PACE an excellent experience.

PACE Volunteer Spotlight: Anish

by Rachel Palmer

PACE is fortunate to benefit from exceptional volunteerism. One of our longstanding volunteers is Anish Seshadri, a freshman at Saint Francis High School. Anish worked the past three summers at Sedgewick Elementary School in Cupertino as an aide to children with moderate to severe autism. Through this experience, he formed a goal to improve the quality of resources and help available to children with autism and reached out to PACE with his ideas.

Anish developed a collection of sensory therapy bags for PACE students. The bags include a variety of textures for sensory arousal and removable scented packets.

Danielle Borras, Occupational Therapist says, “We are truly thankful for Anish caring about our students and taking the initiative to create something that helps make a difference in their daily lives.”

Additionally, Anish orchestrated a book drive in his neighborhood to collect books, games and DVDs for the children of PACE. His local community and even small businesses responded to Anish’s book drive and over 300 items were donated to PACE! “I hope to make a difference in their lives through my efforts in teaching and raising funds so they can have access to computers, books and other learning tools,” said Anish.

6th Annual Golf Classic

May 2, 2014 | Cinnabar Hills

Plan on joining us at our very popular golf tournament, the 6th Annual PACE Golf Classic. Each year, we hold this event on a Friday in May at the beautiful Cinnabar Hills Golf Club in San Jose. Last year, we raised over $45,000, enabling PACE to reopen our children’s residential home, Morehouse.

Your ticket includes 18 holes of golf, lunch, a swag bag, hole-in-one and other contests, dinner, and a raffle and auction. It’s a full day and a great way to support PACE while having fun. Contact development@pacificautism.org to register or visit pacificautism.org/events.

Autism News

Autism Speaks posted the Top 10 Advances in Autism for 2013 — which includes whole genome sequencing advances, very early detection methods using high-tech eye tracking, and information helpful to those planning a family. There is strong evidence that prenatal folic acid supplementation may greatly reduce the occurrence of ASD. The article states, “The findings suggest a safe and practical step women can take to reduce autism risk. However, the benefit may turn out to be restricted to women with propensities to low folic acid levels.” The report appears in the Journal of the American Medical Association, and the findings support previous research showing lower risk of autism in children of mothers who take folic acid in the weeks before and after conception. To see the entire article or learn more about advances in autism, visit www.autismspeaks.org.
Connections & Sunny Days Preschool
by Deborah McClellan

Always a flurry of activity, our Sunny Days Preschool is planning its Open House for Friday, April 4th, 11am-1pm, 897 Broadleaf Lane, San Jose. One of the highlights of this year will be Shanti Kurada, editor of Autism Bay Area magazine. Shanti will be discussing life / family balance. Sunny Days Preschool founder and PACE supporter, Marcia Goldman and her therapy dog, Lola will also be joining us. Marcia is author of the book, “Lola Goes to Work.” We hope you can join us and visit with our highly-trained, energetic staff.

Sunny Days Preschool is an inclusive preschool, serving all children, including those on the autism spectrum for ages 3-5 years. Working out of the preschool site, our Connections program also offers Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy services for preschool aged kids. Children don't need to be part of the PACE program or preschool in order to receive these services. To find out more, contact (408) 551-0312, or visit the Sunny Days website, sunnydayspreschool.com.

Residential Homes

PACE owns and operates two Residential Homes in Santa Clara County, each licensed to serve residents from 6 to 59+ years of age.

Each Residential Group Home works under a Code of Honor which is posted by the front door of the home. Each quarter, Operations Manager, Janice Morreira determines which home has done the best in sustaining that code. For the last quarter, Meadows House received the Code of Honor Award because their team did a great job of involving the residents in appropriate activities and quickly responding to problem behaviors as they occurred. Their continued dedication and commitment to following their house Code of Honor is greatly appreciated. The Meadows team will receive a plaque for their house and a celebration lunch for their efforts.

Our Mahalo House received a wonderful new backyard and therapy garden in 2013. This is the second such garden designed for a PACE group home.

The Mahalo House landscape was designed by Paul Jay Reed of Reed Associates Landscape Architecture. Mr. Reed donated his thoughtfully designed planting plan to create a flow of colors and smells for a calming therapy garden for residents to enjoy. The walkways were finished in October 2013 and the planting was completed in November.

Boy Scout, Corban provided the organization and volunteers to plant the garden following Mr. Reed's design. This was Corban's service project which will help to complete his Eagle Scout award. Monies raised at two PACE fundraising events provided the labor and materials for the landscape and for the plants.

The PACE School

The PACE School is currently working to develop continuity among students’ programs (general course-work, Occupational Therapy, exercise, etc.) so that instructional aides, teachers and therapists are all working from the same checklist. This continuity of skills and training will benefit the transition to home, as well.

At 9:15 am each morning, PACE students start their day by going outside to exercise (weather permitting!). They get fresh air and activity, allowing them to then focus on their school curriculum and goals for the day.

We've also instigated a new meal preparation program at the school and are improving food selections in the school store in order to provide more nutritious options. The Occupational Therapists have been working with students on cooking and preparing nutritious meals and have revamped the kitchen so that it's more functional.

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 development@pacificautism.org.

• View the PACE Wish List here at pacificautism.org/donations/pace-wishlist/.
PACE Receives Sobrato Family Foundation Matching Funds Grant

By Jennifer Welling

The Sobrato Family Foundation has been an ongoing supporter of PACE since 2008 and for this we are both honored and grateful. This January, we were excited to learn that our fourth consecutive Sobrato Family Foundation two-year challenge grant.

With their commitment to “Investing in People and Places,” the Sobrato Family Foundation has generously been supporting the local non-profit community for eighteen years. Created in 1996, the Family Foundation is their commitment to sharing their success with the Silicon Valley communities in which their development business has thrived for over 50 years.

The Foundation exists to provide capital that supports nonprofits’ capacity to deliver services, achieve their community mission and strengthen the local community. The Foundation’s mission is to create and sustain a vibrant and healthy community where all Silicon Valley residents have equal opportunity to live, work and be enriched. To support these efforts, the Sobrato Family Foundation is a place-based grantmaker that invests exclusively in nonprofits serving those most in need in Santa Clara, San Mateo and Southern Alameda counties.

The Foundation’s innovative People & Places portfolio utilizes both cash and real estate to achieve maximum impact. Funding from the Sobrato Family Foundation is flexible and may be used to support salaries, Board development, staff training or volunteer training; or to support our PACE facility, including building renovations, renovations, or general utilities and our on-going facility operation expenses.

This year PACE has been selected, through a competitive grant review process, to receive a 2:1 Challenge Grant from the Sobrato Family Foundation totaling $102,500 over a two-year period (through August 2015). To benefit fully, and where we are asking for your participation, our challenge is to raise new and increased contributions to PACE that total $50,000 by December 31, 2014.

We are looking now for all current donors to increase their annual donation, for lapsed donors to renew their commitment to PACE, and for new donors to step forward and make their financial commitment in this calendar year. Once we meet this challenge, the Foundation will match and double those donations and provide a second year of funding of $52,500.

With your donations, and two years of funding from the Sobrato Family Foundation, by January 2016 we will have raised at least $152,500 in new monies, all to support PACE’s staff, facilities, and programs. Our first Sobrato Family Foundation grant was in 2008. Our challenge this year is a 60% increase over this first grant.

We invite you to invest in Pacific Autism Center for Education during calendar 2014. If your contribution is less than $100,000 this year it will be doubled by the Sobrato Family Foundation.

All your new or increased contributions received during the 2014 will be matched 100% by the Challenge Grant and show the Sobrato Family Foundation that our community is committed to PACE.

April is Autism Awareness Month

April is designated as Autism Awareness Month – a good time to review the updated findings and facts associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that have occurred over the past year. A good source of information on the latest on ASD research is the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI). To find their most important developments in autism for 2013, visit sfari.org. National advocacy group, Autism Speaks is also an excellent resource for those searching for answers to the autism puzzle, autismspeaks.org.

In Santa Clara County, the number of school-aged children being diagnosed with autism has risen 13.4% annually since 2002. And in 2012, more children were diagnosed with autism than with AIDS, diabetes, and cancer…combined. PACE was founded as an answer to this need and offers three key areas of service for those who are living with autism.

If you want to participate in Autism Awareness Month, we’d love to have you volunteer with PACE! Simply contact development@pacificautism.org or visit our website, pacificautism.org/about-pace/volunteer/ for more information on how you can help.

Morehouse homes.  We’re looking forward to another spring event to purchase some arts & craft supplies to provide needed items at our residential group homes.

Lily’s mom is PACE Operations Manager, Janice Morrele, so Lily has a good understanding of the needs of our clients. Lily says, “I started The Dozens of Love Club at my school to support the needs of children living with autism. Right now we have 19 members and we’ve mostly held bake sales. The money we’ve earned so far went toward Christmas gifts for the children living at PACE Miracle and Morehouse homes. We’re looking forward to another spring event to purchase some art & craft supplies to donate to the children at the PACE preschool.”

Thank you Lily and Dozens of Love for helping the children of Miracle and Morehouse and for your ongoing fundraising efforts through 2014.

Dozens of Love

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April 2nd is World Autism Awareness Day

The United Nations has declared April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day. Join the autism community for this “Shine a Light” event! PACE is planning to spotlight our building at 1880 Pruneridge Avenue in Santa Clara with blue light to show our support for this world-wide event. To find out more, visit www.pacificautism.org/events/autismday.

• Go to www.exscrip.com and select 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.

• Follow PACE on Facebook to get the latest photos and updates! www.facebook.com/pacificautism

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

PACE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Tax ID #77-0529858. Contributions to PACE are tax-deductible as specified by the current tax law.
Parents and caregivers! We need your help in guiding our Project Porchlight program this summer! Project Porchlight is an open-source free-access internet program designed specifically to provide parents and caregivers with solutions for behavioral therapy to implement at home.

Our program will involve creating a set of video training modules and making them available on-line for easy and free access. Each module will be a short demonstration course, showing theory and hands-on instructions, and giving parents specific and concrete examples of behavior modifications they can make in their own homes to help their child gain back the losses from a development disability. We're planning the first few parent education modules and we'll need testers who can offer input on subject area and ease of use. If you have ever wished for a quick, simple example and direction on working with your child on behavior modification, you're an excellent candidate for our beta test! We expect the first training sessions will cover issues such as:

- Eating habits
- General health and wellbeing
- Grooming

Our aim with this project is to provide you with a useful resource that can be accessed 24/7, when you need it most. Email info@pacificautism.org, include 'Porchlight' in the subject line, and we'll put you on our contact list. Thank you for your help!

Project Porchlight: How You Can Help!

What Kind of Legacy Will YOU Leave?

Leave a legacy that will sustain us long into the future by including PACE in your estate plan. Your donation will help PACE connect, support and educate by ensuring high quality programs for children and adults with autism, now and into the future. If you have made a gift to PACE in your will or trust, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize your generosity. To learn more about how you make a legacy gift to PACE contact Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director, at 408-625-6176 or e-mail karenkennan@pacificautism.org. We welcome your inquiries and will respond to them with no obligation.

Save the Date!

The PACE 25th Anniversary Gala is set for Saturday, October 25, 2014 at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View! Join us for our ‘silver’ anniversary celebration. We’re planning a night to remember with a live and silent auction, excellent food, and entertainment. Call Rachel if you’d like to join the planning committee, (408) 625-6191. This is your chance to meet other PACE parents and our wonderful supporters and staff!

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) published a series of documents reviewing early intervention research that highlighted some key early intervention principals. For more information, please visit www.asha.org/ policy.

1. Services are family centered and culturally and linguistically responsive.
2. Services are developmentally supportive and promote children's participation in their natural environment.
3. Services are comprehensive, coordinated and team based.
4. Services are based on the highest quality evidence that is available.

Parent involvement in early intervention is critical. The following suggestions were taken from a handbook created by the Memorial Foundation for Lost Children for parents of children with autism called The ABCs of Autism (shared with permission).

"Narrate what your child is doing. I.e. Emmy is looking at book or Max is playing with car. Sometimes they respond better to singing. Sing their name to get their attention.

Use short phrases. Don’t clutter your speech with meaningless words. Use short commands like give, touch, and do this. Teach every possible moment. During meals say, ‘use fork’ and ‘look.’ Request a sound from your child before automatically giving him/her something they would like.

Copy what your child says or the sounds s/he makes.

Use positive reinforcement after desired actions. Be consistent in praising your child’s accomplishments.

Youth Leadership Committee

by Rachel Palmer

The PACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) has a special emphasis on community involvement and bringing individuals from high schools in the Bay Area together for worthy causes. Our 2013-2014 YLC members have organized several restaurant fund-raisers and a Valentine’s Day teddy-gram fund-raiser to raise money for PACE programs and services. The group plans to raise over $5,000 this year through various fun fund-raising events.

Calling all high-school students! The YLC is excited to announce the 2014 ‘Breaking the Silence’ Mixer will be held April 25th at Addison-Penzak Jewish Community Center in Los Gatos. The mixer will bring together high school students from all over the South Bay Area to raise awareness and funds for PACE while dancing the night away to live Wild 94.9 DJs. Registration is easy – go to pacificautism.org/home/events/ylc-events/. To find out more about this high-energy group of high school philanthropists, or to receive an application for the 2014-2015 school year, students can email development@pacificautism.org.

To learn more about how anyone can volunteer at PACE, please visit pacificautism.org/about-pace/ volunteer, or call us at (408) 625-6191. Thank you for your support!

Thank you for your support!