Goodbye & Thank You, Joe Dermer
By Rachel Palmer, Annual Fund Manager

A
fter nine years of service to PACE
on the Board of Directors, Joe Dermer has completed his term and
moves onto the Advisory Board. Joe
joined the Board of Directors in 2007
and served as the Board President from
2010-2011. It was a natural progression
for Joe to join the Board after his
mother, Sheila Dermer, completed her
Board service. The Dermer family has
been highly involved with PACE since
the SPARK Foundation merged with
PACE in 1995. Joe’s brother, Josh,
has been a resident of PACE Matanga House since that time. Joe felt a strong
commitment to participate on behalf
of his brother and give back to the
community at large.

Joe’s favorite memory of his time with
PACE thus far was shortly before joining
the Board in 2007. He was asked to give
the keynote address at the annual PACE
Gala. Joe spoke passionately about
what life was like growing up with a
sibling with autism citing some of the
more challenging and humorous
moments in their family’s life. He was
very pleased and humbled with the
warm reception of the audience at the
event.

Joe has been involved in many aspects
of the Board and attended many events
over the years. He has been especially
instrumental in founding the PACE Golf
Classic, an event that he rekindled
(from earlier SPARK days) in 2008. It
has blossomed into one of PACE’s most
anticipated annual fundraising events
and Joe has remained a key player in
the planning of the event. This year,
PACE will be hosting the 8th Annual
Golf Classic on Friday, May 20th.

Looking back at his time on the Board,
Joe said he most enjoyed “seeing PACE
thrive. Over the nine years, there were
expansion of services and inclusion of
new programs that enhanced
the quality of care and services for
individuals with autism and related
development disabilities.”

When asked about his vision for the
future for PACE, he said “for the Parent
Collaborative Home model to come
to fruition. It is a great strategy for
managing care for individuals with
autism and other developmental
disabilities in their adult years. It forges
a nice compromise between living at
home and institutionalization. This
model provides a middle ground for
these individuals to become more
independent while keeping parents
involved in the choice of homes and

Tips for supporting your child’s AAC use at home

Q: What is AAC?
A: AAC stands for Augmentative and
Alternative Communication, and
refers to a system that helps
an individual communicate. This
might be a low-tech (e.g. a binder
with picture icons) or a high-tech
device (e.g. tablet) depending on
the individual’s communication
strengths, weaknesses and unique
needs.

Create opportunities for commu-
nication: Children with disabili-
ties often have fewer opportuni-
ties to communicate than their
typically developing peers. You can
help increase their communica-
tion experiences by asking more
questions and not anticipating their
needs. For example, ask “What do
you want?” for a snack instead of
driving their choice. Even
though you may know what your
child is asking for, encourage them
to use their device. This is a
great practice for communicating out
in the community (where others
will not know their needs!)

WAIT! Many of the students at PACE
benefit from being given time (up
to 15-30 seconds) to respond to
questions or use their device. It may
feel like a long time, but the extra
time to process information will
help your child to think about and
create their own unique response.

Talk, Talk, Talk: Our students can
benefit a great deal from more
exposure to language, helping them
understand how words relate to
their actions and their environment.
A great way to give your child more
language input is to use simple
phrases during their everyday routine.
For example, when your child is eating
their favorite snack, you can say, “It’s
snack time! You’re eating pretzels. Yum!”
Sentences that are short and clear are
the best way for your child to
understand new language.

Praise use of their system: For
many children, it’s often easier to
grab or point to things they want or are
interested in. Your child will need
to use communication to interact
with people in the community. To
courage your child to use their
system, point to their device as
a reminder. Be sure and verbally
praise your child if they use their
device more frequently or with
more independence, such as, “Great
job using your words!” or “Thanks for
letting me know what you want!”
This will help your child realize how
powerful communication can be
with an AAC device.

These are general recommenda-
tions on how to support your
child’s communication. Contact
your child’s speech therapist to
get more ideas on specific strategies.
PACE’s SLPs are available by phone
(408.625.6182) or e-mail. Thank
you all of the therapists to the
dedicated and wonderful parents of
our PACE students!”

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PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER FOR EDUCATION
Connect • Support • Educate
P A C E
Life After PACE
By Kurt Ohlfs, Executive Director

currently, the average age of PACE school students is approximately 16 years old. This is a good age to begin thinking about what your child might want to do once he or she graduates from PACE (usually at the age of 22). While there are many options to choose from in the Bay Area, parents and caregivers must take some time to consider which Adult Day Program would best benefit their child. Parents must also set aside a significant amount of time to tour these programs to determine the best fit for their child.

When your child is 1 to 2 years away from graduation, contact your Regional Center Case Manager and discuss options. Familiarize yourself with programs that are currently available, and consider if the child is best suited for a community-based program versus a day program.

The San Francisco Autism Society, Parents Helping Parents, SCOCOE, and others offer fairly comprehensive lists of services. Other than what information you can and begin to plan site visits. These programs are constantly changing and offering new services, so keep careful notes.

There are many things to consider when you are touring a program. Work with your Case Manager and devise a list of items that are important for your child and your family. You might want to ensure that they have a behaviorist on staff, vocational programs, or communication devices. Look at each program’s ratio of client to caregiver, licensing, and leadership. Determine if transportation to and from the center is available. If not, you’ll need to plan how your child will be transported daily.

You may be eligible for a reimbursement of costs for both the adult day program and transportation from your Regional Center. Check with your Case Manager and review the Department of Developmental Services website for Community-Based Day Programs and Respite Programs reimbursement rates.

There is much to know about this process, and indeed, some transition planning may have already been introduced into your child’s IEP if they are aged 14 or older. Your child’s classroom teacher, or School Program Director, Silvia Pinto may be able to provide some guidance on what an appropriate program might look like for your child, and I am always available to answer your questions.

I hope I have inspired you! Finding a quality program for your child is not a simple matter, but with careful planning and support, most families are able to find a placement that meets their needs.

Post-Graduation Planning

The Preschool Program is Expanding!
By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

The Sunny Days Preschool program is growing! We are pleased to announce that starting in the late Spring we plan to offer our inclusive morning program 5 days a week, Monday–Friday. In the coming months we will also be looking at the possibility of expanding our hours and, if need continues to grow, opening a second classroom.

Do you have a preschooler who is ready to start school in an inclusive supportive program that is individualized and tailored to your child’s specific needs? We have a few spots currently available in our Sunny Days morning classroom for children 3-6 years of age. Call 408-551-0312 for more information and to arrange a campus tour.

Developing Independent Play Skills
By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

The Porchlight Autism Education Series provides parents and caregivers a resource for better understanding their child with autism and developing many different skills. This free online series focuses on education and solutions to help with positive behavioral change, increasing developmental skills and building new communication skills at home. The Learning Modules are designed and written by PACE staff therapists. One of our most popular learning modules is “Independent Play Skills.”

For children with autism, playing independently can be challenging because they have limited social and communication skills, and often engage in repetitive behaviors that restrict their ability to play creatively and with other children. While independent play skills is a broad topic and may require input and planning from your child’s therapist, our module talks about a few things you can do to encourage your child to develop these skills. View the module at www.porchlighteducation.org and select “Learning Modules” at the menu at top. Click on “Daily Routines” – Independent Play Skills is at the end of the listings.

It is important for you to teach your child how to play independently for several reasons. First, play is a way for a child to learn new skills and develop themselves. Children develop their interests, and gross and fine motor skills through play. They also learn how to solve problems for themselves, and how to appropriately interact with others through play. Second, children who can play independently develop a sense of confidence in their own abilities and are more independent in other areas of their daily life.

Find out more at www.porchlight-education.org.

The News @ Faces
By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

We’d like to welcome our newest Faces therapist, Elise Tran! Elise is working on becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), and took her exam in February. Elise is a graduate of University of Washington where she studied Applied Behavior Analysis and received her Masters in Special Education. In addition to her early intervention training at an inclusive preschool in Seattle, she worked closely with families from multicultural backgrounds throughout her college career and is a strong advocate for supporting parents and new therapists in the education field.

Elise has already stepped up and taken on the job of Porchlight webinar host. She guided parents and caregivers through an hour-long webinar detailing the steps of creating “Independent Play Skills” for children on the autism spectrum. See the article to the left for a detailed description of the free online learning module. All Porchlight webinars are free, and are moderated by staff working in the area of their expertise.

Ways 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.pacificaustism.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@pacificaustism.org.
• View the PACES wish list here: pacificaustism.org/donations/pace-wishlist.

"PACE is an organization that is very close to my heart. My son was privileged enough to be a student at their Sunny Days program for a few years during which time he flourished. I have no idea where he would be today with his development without the care and direction offered by PACE." ~ David Setti, PACE Board Member
A bout me: I started work at PACE in 2012 as a Behavior Support Asso- ciate, I received my masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis in 2014, and become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst in 2015.

In the 3 years I have been at PACE we have used a behavior mitigation training program by QBS, Inc. called Safety-Care. Safety-Care gives our staff the tools to help prevent and manage chal- lenging behavior. As a PACE instruc- tional aides, teachers, and therapists are trained in Safety-Care. All of our Behav- ior Support Associates and I are Safety-Care Trainers. All trainers are trained by a QBS, Inc. Master Trainer once a year. The trainers train all the staff once a year during our August in-service days and there are refreshers throughout the year. All new staff are required to go through Safety-Care training within the first few weeks they start a PACE.

Safety-Care focuses on preventing, and then, as needed, managing challeng- ing behaviors. We train our staff to scan our students’ environments for possible triggers and to identify possible signals that our students are communicating. The majority of Safety-Care training is about prevention by meeting our students’ needs and providing our stu- dents with opportunities to communi- cate their desires.

Joe Dermer

Continued from page 1

services provided” PACE implemented the first Parent Collaborative Home in March of 2015.

Joe’s advice to someone thinking about joining the PACE Board of Directors is “If you have heart and passion for giving time, talent and resources to a worthy or- ganization; in my view, this is one of the best ways to help the autism and the developmentally disabled community.” The entire PACE community has been the beneficiary of Joe’s devotion and exceptional service. Executive Director, Kurt Olinf commented “I am deeply indebted to Joe’s dedication and Board leadership spanning almost a decade. Joe has been a champion for the community and PACE’s clients through his clear mission focused guidance on the Board.”

Welcome New Board Members!

By Deb McClellan, Marketing & Communication Manager

We’d like to welcome our three newest board members to the PACE family. Tom Marchok is a Senior Director of Corpo- rate Development at Cisco Systems. He has worked in the technology in- dustry for over 25 years – including past roles at Intel and Qualcomm. He earned a PhD in Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, and is a CFA Char- terholder. Tom is married with two teenage children, one of whom has autism, and resides in Mountain View, CA. An avid golfer, he has been active- ly involved with PACE as the co-chair for the PACE Golf Classic, (along with veteran Board member Joe Dermer) for the past three years. His areas of interest at PACE include finance and investments as well as specialized (precision) ABA education programs.

Sarah Mudgett is a sales specialist whose professional responsibilities have included sales and promotions of medical devices and pharmaceu- tical products to offices, doctors and pharmacies. Sarah originally came to PACE in May 2014 as a fund- raising and event volunteer for the annual Gala, and has assisted the PACE market- ing department part time by doing outreach to local school districts and agencies. She says; “I fully believe in the mission and vision that PACE presents and I want to be part of continuing the legacy. I have seen first-hand how PACE can help the students and their families in a positive way. I can bring a strong background of sales, marketing and fundraising to PACE.”

Our most recent board member, Deb- bie McCarroll is currently the Direc- tor of Marketing and Business Devel- opment for Sequoia Wealth Advisors in San Jose. She joined their Finan- cial Planning Team with over 30 years in the banking industry. Debbie has been involved with and served on the Board of Directors for many non-profit organizations in San Jose and Santa Cruz including: Opera San Jose, Silicon Valley Busi- ness Forum, Sa- cred Heart and Hope Rehabilita- tion Services. She is a current member of the Santa Cruz Rotary Club and a member of San Jose Chamber of Com- merce. Debbie joined the PACE Board because she believes that “this segment of disadvantaged people need to have advocates to live a productive and dignified life.”

The entire PACE team welcomes all three and we’re looking for- ward to serving our community to- gether for many years to come!
Have You Thought About Adding PACE to Your Will?

Will you be visiting your financial planner this year? Consider discussing how you can leave a legacy that will sustain PACE long into the future by including our organization in your estate plan. Your donation will help PACE “connect, support and educate” by ensuring high-quality therapy, educational and residential programs for children and adults with autism, now and into the future.

Our services will continue to be needed in the next 20-50 years. Bequests from families like yours will ensure a strong future of service.

If you have already 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 can make a legacy gift to PACE, contact Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director, at 408-625-6176 or e-mail karenkennan@pacificaustism.org.

All inquiries are confidential and without obligation. Thank you! 

PACE Board of Directors
Welcome New Members!

- Paul Lacy, President
- Tom McGovern, VP
- David Setti, Treasurer
- Kurt Ohlfs, Secretary
- Jeff Fallick
- Lisa Grisalin
- Harry Lopez, Esq.
- Tom Marchok
- Debbie McCarron
- Sarah Schwartz Mudgett

Animal Assisted Happiness in a petting zoo plus delicious food, music and activities for the kids. This is your chance to meet our teachers, therapists and staff in a relaxed atmosphere. Bring the entire family!

Support PACE while getting a great workout at the Zumbathon® "Party in Blue for Autism" at ClubSport, 800 Embdedded Way, SJ, 95138, Saturday, May 7th 5-6:30pm! Join Zumba® Jammers Meli Kirkwood, Annalisa Brown, Cecilia Mills, Claudia Lira, and more for this high-energy benefit for PACE! Doors open at 4pm, and tickets are only $20 in advance, $25 at the door. Get your tickets here: www.zumbafortasm.org/benefit.html.

More on these events here: www.pacificaustism.org/home/events.

Pacific Autism Movement

Be Stylish and Support PACE!

The artist behind the popular jewelry maker, the ROPEs of Maine has created original PACE bracelets! These beautiful bracelets in PACE colors are available now! Each bracelet is individually handcrafted from authentic marine rope and hardware. You may have seen this jewelry in local specialty shops, J.Crew, or elsewhere. $70 for either style: Kennabunkport (blue) or Camden (tan). Order via email development@pacificaustism.org, at www.pacificaustism.org, or call (408) 625-6191. 100% of the profits go to PACE and a portion is tax-deductible.

The PACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) has planned their second annual "Light It Up Blue" concert at Santana Row set for Saturday, April 16th, noon-4pm. The concert will include performances by Bay Area youth musicians who donate their time. Members of the YLC will have outreach booths at the event with information about PACE and activities to raise awareness about autism.

You don’t want to miss the OmRun at Quarry Lakes Park in Fremont on Sunday, April 24th! Om Run 2016 is a community building event that is aimed at bringing the larger Bay Area Chimnaya Mission families together for a day filled with fun activities for the whole family. Om Mela features a petting zoo, carnival games and many more new attractions. The event offers mouth-watering food options, a 5K Run/Walk, 10K Run/Walk and a Half Marathon.

The PACE School is holding an Open House on Friday, April 29th, 5-7pm! This popular event is open to the public, with a focus on PACE families. We’ll have farm animals from the ROPES of Maine to visit.

Help spread the word about PACE programs and services! Follow and share on Facebook! www.facebook.com/pacificaustismec

Welcome New Members!

Thank you!