

PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION

Connect • Support • Educate

PACE Celebrates 30 Years of Service!

PACE was founded in 1989 by a group of concerned parents and educators as a non-public, non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization to meet the critical need of providing education and care for children and adults with autism/developmental disabilities and their families. Today, we coordinate with over 25 local school districts to place children with moderate to severe autism in our school, operate 6 residential homes, behavioral services, a preschool, and global online platform to support parents, caregivers, and teachers.

As Pacific Autism Center for Education celebrates 30 years of service to individuals with autism, we are grateful to be surrounded by a community of donors and volunteers, whose philanthropy and generosity has offered our students and residents innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care. Together, we have become experts in teaching and bridging communities for those affected with moderate to severe autism. Our goal is to keep the *future* of the agency and those whom we

will serve for the next 30 years as a top priority.

BECOME A PIECE OF THE PACE 30th ANNIVERSARY PUZZLE



PACE is building a 30 piece MAGNETIC WALL PUZZLE for our boardroom to commemorate this historical moment. The puzzle will be framed and will represent the interconnectedness of our community. We are offering ONLY 30 PIECES. PACE has secured \$20k in matching donations for this project. Be a part of our puzzle and make a difference for those whom we serve. Go to the PACE website to purchase a piece today!

www.pacificaautism.org



PACE 2019 Golf Classic

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER FOR EDUCATION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th
SAVE THE DATE!



Cinnabar Hills Golf Club
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA



2019 Sponsorship Opportunities still available

To be a sponsor
contact
MelissaWatkins@
pacificaautism.org

Course Sponsor - \$15,000

Dinner Sponsor - \$8,000

Gear Sponsor - \$5,000

Sign Sponsor - \$3,500

Lunch Sponsor - \$3,500

Cocktail Hour - \$3,000

Beverage Cart Sponsor - \$3,000

30th Anniversary Sponsor - \$1,500

PACE Golf Classic Committee:

Joe Dermer, Tom Marchok, Debbie McCarroll, Marina Djordjevic

Ask a Therapist By Chris Topham M.Ed., BCBA

Behavioral Therapy comes in many forms. As professionals, we develop intuition on how to best retrain behaviors to create more positive outcomes for our clients. In this article, we will focus on using visual schedules for transitions.

Visual schedules, the pictorial representation of what is expected to occur throughout a student's day, have become commonplace as an intervention for individuals diagnosed with autism. Often used to target behavioral issues with transitioning between activities, visual schedules are used to signal a change in activity, location, or task.

For autism related interventions, visual schedules are sometimes overused and we may place too much confidence in their ability to be effective. Research has uncovered that when we signal a transition to a less preferred activity, we reliably produce pausing, and escape related behaviors from the learner. Typically, around 50% of the time when we use a visual schedule we are signaling a transition to a less preferred activity, so why do we continue to use them?

Visual schedules have their place. It makes good sense to use a schedule for a learner who may have anxiety in a new program or environment. However, as clinicians we should be mindful that a visual schedule is a prompt for the learner and once their behavior comes under control of the visual cues we should come up with a plan to fade the support.

If you are using a visual schedule and your learner is still having transition issues try this:

1. **Remove the signals.** Stop using the visual schedule altogether and measure the effects on the behaviors associated with transitions.

2. **Surprise boxes.** The research completed by Jessel et. al. (2016) found that using surprise boxes as part of a visual schedule had a positive impact on transitions. When the learner does not know if the transition will be to a better or worse activity you may eradicate some of the transition issues.

Porchlight Education offers strategies for parents; the forthcoming Porchlight University promises training development curriculum, such as outlined above, designed for professionals working in the classroom environment. Created to promote a greater understanding of autism in schools, the online modules will use a behavioral approach to understanding autism in the classroom.

For more occupational and behavioral therapy tips go to
www.porchlighteducation.org

A Message from the President of the Board

By Tom McGovern, PACE Board President

As PACE celebrates its 30 year anniversary, we are proud of what we've accomplished and we are equally excited about the future of our agency. Today, we are surrounded by many negative narratives concerning our country and humanity in general. Although I acknowledge the validity of these narratives, I choose another. I choose to look at modern inspirationalists to create a new narrative that resonates with the paradigm we cultivate at PACE. In his book *Abundance: The Future is Better than You Think*, Peter Diamandis, sites emerging forces that are conspiring to solve our biggest problems. Diamandis articulates what we believe at PACE, "Abundance is not about providing everyone on this planet with a life of luxury—rather it's about providing all with a life of possibility." We believe in providing a life of possibility for the students and clients we serve. Sir Richard Branson says it another way, "Abundance provides proof that the proper combination of technology, people and capital can meet any grand challenge" again at PACE we are working to innovate using technology, train our staff, and raise funds to provide life changing programs for our students and clients. Arianna Huffington says it a different way "Abundance is a reminder of the infinite possibilities for doing good when we tap into our own empathy and wisdom".

Our challenges are great, however, PACE is committed to effectively employing our technology, people and capital to best serve our community of youth and families affected by autism. On the technology side, our Porchlight program leverages technology to enable us to literally touch an unlimited number of families and help them provide support to their children with autism. On the people side, our leadership and staff are filled with "empathy and wisdom". At PACE, 'abundance' is fulling our mission which is "to enhance the lives of people impacted by autism through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care".



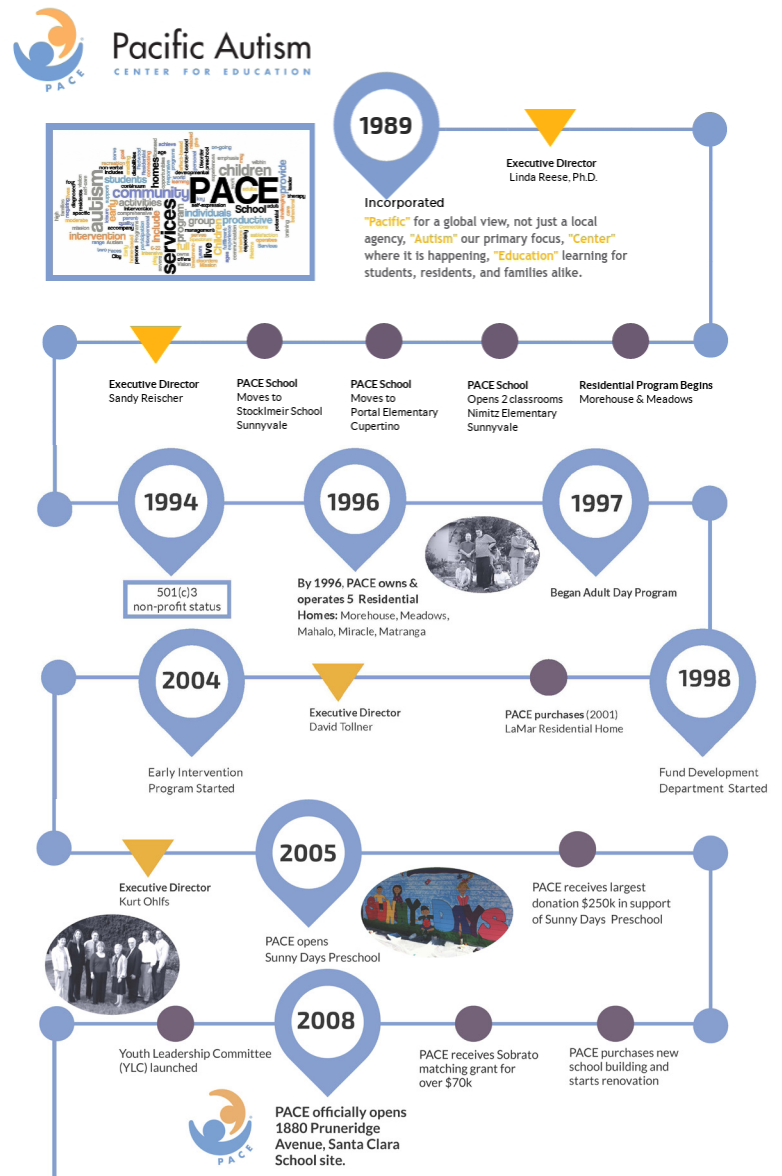
Tom McGovern

Tom McGovern
PACE, Board President

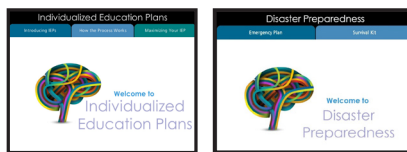
1989-2019
30 YEARS

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER FOR EDUCATION

Celebrating 30 years, the Pacific Autism Center for Education provides high-quality programs for children and adults with moderate-to-severe autism.



The Porchlight Education Series is a free eLearning training platform with over 50 modules that offers solutions to common daily challenges a parent or caregiver may confront in the world of developmental disabilities.



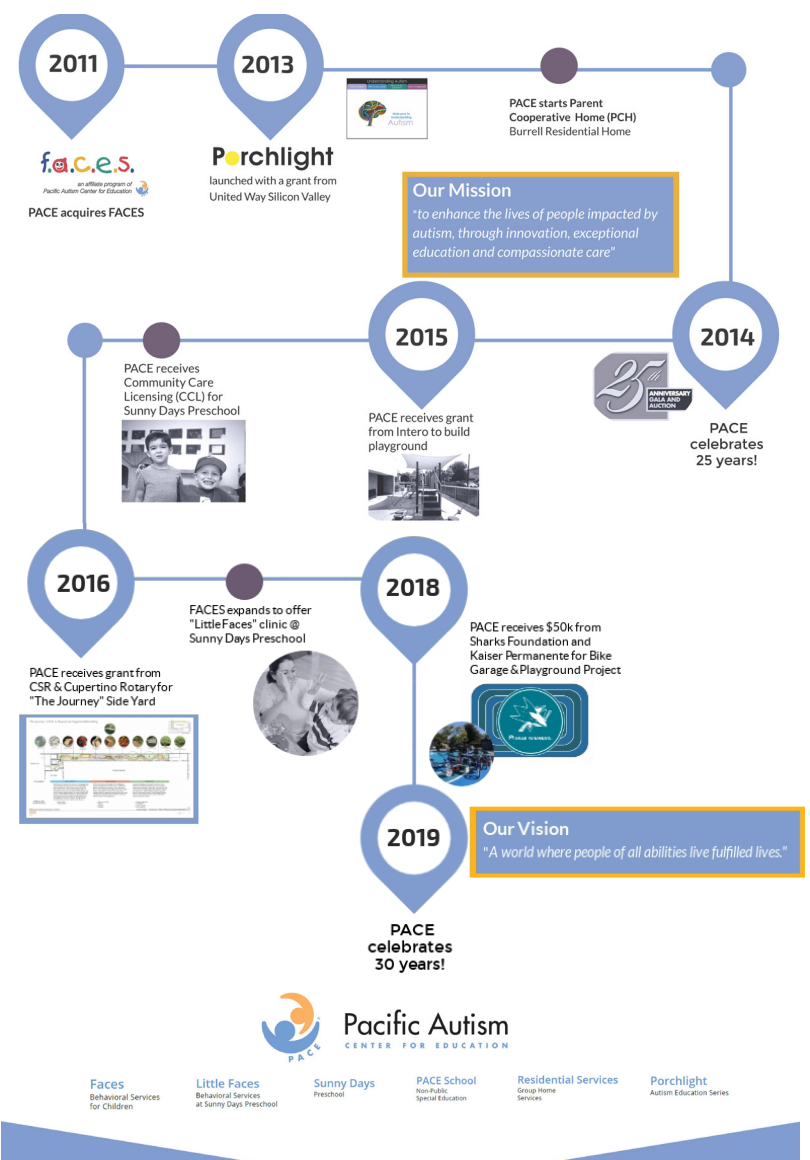
We are expanding the scope of Porchlight. The project is called **Porchlight University**. Porchlight University offers a resource to teachers and educators who primarily work with neuro-typical students.

These modules will guide teachers on how to facilitate learning for students on the autism spectrum and of differing abilities who are integrated into their classrooms. Porchlight University offers teachers classroom strategies and quick implementation tools and tips.

According to *disabilityscoop*, a new study looking at elementary schools in districts across the country finds that providing teachers with just a little bit of extra knowledge about how to work with children with the developmental disorder can yield significant results. More students with disabilities are being educated alongside their typically-developing peers, according to new federal data.

The first Porchlight University Module will answer questions like 'What is autism?' and 'Why is it important as a teacher to know about how to work with learners on the autism spectrum?'

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.



Ways You Can Help

• Make a donation

By Mail: 1880 Pruneridge Ave.
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Online: 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**.

• Go to **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)

• Donate your old vehicle to **Donate for Charity!** 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 School: Building Skills

By Iris Yang, OTR/L

At PACE, participating in activities is an element of everyday life. However, participation and engagement can present unique challenges for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Whether the activity is on an individual, group, or community basis, participation provides important opportunities for utilizing various movement patterns, interacting with different people and environments, and generalizing skills. Our staff encourage meaningful participation in activities by providing students with the “just right challenge.” While many students are provided with one-to-one guidance throughout the school day, moving from an individual to a group setting offers many positive benefits. Furthermore, group and community instruction prepares learners for adult life by increasing exposure to new experiences and social interactions. Through participation and engagement in daily activities, students are provided with opportunities to reach their maximal level of independence that will ultimately facilitate community integration and vocational engagement. At PACE, our role is not just teaching students to tolerate the environment or task, but creating chances to learn and build foundational skills for the future.

Here are some of the activities that our students participate in every week and the benefits of each



Art groups inspire creativity and motor skills.

- o Works on visual-perception and fine motor skills
- o Provides a structured sensory experience
- o Addresses problem-solving/increased attention span
- o Encourages side-by-side work with classmates



Physical education groups provide students with time to engage in exercise with their classmates.

- o Different/new ways to interact with an object (e.g., marching instead of walking, playing kickball instead of throwing a ball)
- o Core strength/postural stability (e.g., ability to support their own body to participate in exercises/activities)

Cooking groups teach students to interact with a variety of foods.

- o Sensation (e.g., tactile, smell, taste)
- o Fine motor precision (e.g., holding utensils, modulating pressure)
- o Social skills (e.g., sitting next to peers, following verbal/visual directions)

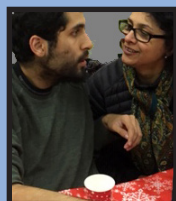


activity, like Art, Cooking, and Physical Education.

Residential News

By Dave Gilbreth, Residential and Facilities Manager

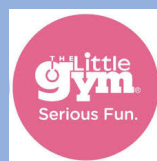
Thank goodness for our incredible team running the Group Homes; Aida, Naward, and Sabra managed all of the twists and turns 2018 brought us. Our staff works daily to ensure the health and safety of the residents as their most important job.



During the holiday season all the group homes and classrooms hosted or attended several Thanksgiving and Christmas parties. Our students and residents faces light up with the hand selected gifts given by Family Giving Tree for all everyone. Thank you Family Giving



Tree for always making the holidays special at PACE! We are also sending a huge thank you shout out to Janice Morreira and The Little Gym, San Jose, for hosting our children's group home parties. The kids enjoyed activities and Santa (thank you to our very own Dave Gilbreth) even made a special appearance to deliver the gifts! All of the parties were an opportunity for the residents and their families to enjoy time together. Thank you to the staff for all they do— 365 days a year.



A volunteer group from Hands On Bay Area prepared an area for the small basketball courts (15ft x 15ft) at both the Meadows and Mahalo group homes. We are in need of a cementing expert. We would like to put in the basketball courts as soon as the rain stops. Hands on Bay Area also trimmed trees, and planted gardens for the clients to nurture and enjoy. A big thank you to Hands On Bay Area!



The Scales of Justice Lions Club will hosting BBQs at the adult group homes for clients and their families to show appreciation for our hard working staff members and to start our summer season off.

DONATIONS PLEASE! If you know someone who can help us with putting in the courts, we would greatly appreciate it. This project directly benefits the health and happiness of our residents, not to mention we are all excited to finally get outside after the longest Californian winter ever! Donations of gift cards for our adventures are also especially appreciated, it means more adventure-time. If you would like to donate to the group homes please contact Dave Gilbreth @ 408-882-7284.

PACE's Youth Leadership Committee

By Melissa Watkins, Fund Development Associate

In 2018, a new study found that approximately 1 in 40 American children have autism, a significant increase from the previous estimate of 1 in every 59 children. In December 2018, the California Department of Developmental Services reported there are now over 100,000 individuals with autism statewide. With a rising population of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, it is vitally important that our communities, schools, and workplaces are educated about autism, inclusion, and acceptance.

PACE's Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) is helping to serve that mission. The YLC is a volunteer program for high school students in the Bay Area which strives to educate their peers and community members about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Their interactive workshop called “Operation Enable” allows teens and community members an opportunity to experience “what it would be like” to have autism. Through this demonstration, they hope to build

better community acceptance, awareness and inclusion.

In March, the YLC held a workshop at Monta Vista High School which prompted 15 student attendees to engage in conversations and ask questions about autism. The students exhibited full interest in learning more about the challenges of ASD.

April is Autism Awareness Month. Kicking off the month is the **YLC's 5th Annual Voices for Autism Benefit Concert, on Saturday, April 6th 12 - 4pm at Park Valencia, Santana Row.** This popular event helps raise money for PACE programs and increase awareness of autism in the community. The concert will feature youth musicians from around the Bay Area and interactive autism awareness demonstrations. It is free and open to the public – we hope to see you there!

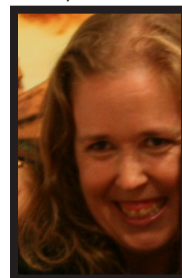


Sunny Days Campus Projects

By Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director

In January 2019, our Sunny Days Preschool students moved into a newly renovated classroom. With its freshly painted walls, colorful carpets, and spacious closets, the new classroom provides a warm and welcoming space for our young students in the morning program and our Little Faces Behavioral Therapy clients in the afternoon. We are pleased to welcome new staff members, Caroline Berryessa Brown and Arlina Phillips to our classroom team as Instructional Aides. Both have previous experience working with children with autism and are great additions to the class.

Sunny Days Head Teacher, Jessica Solchenberger, is delighted with the renovations and has even more reason to celebrate this year. Jessica joined PACE in 2009 after receiving her teaching credential from San Jose State University with a specialization in Early Childhood Special Education. This year celebrates her ten year teaching anniversary. Jessica not only provides leadership for the classroom, she also trains and mentors the classroom instructional aides, volunteers and assistants. She works closely with the behavioral team



to create an appropriate classroom environment to meet the individual needs of each student. Says Jessica, “Each day is a joy. These students inspire me to be a better person, and I'm thankful for each moment with them.”

Karen Kennan, Assistant Executive Director and Program Director for the preschool says: “As PACE celebrates 30 years of providing service to the community it is only fitting that we celebrate the individuals who make our work possible. With her ten years of commitment to Sunny Days preschool Jessica demonstrates the compassion, conscience, and competence that makes PACE special. Her dedication to her students is inspiring.”

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR A SPECIAL PRESCHOOL OR BEHAVIOR SERVICES?

Sunny Days preschool provides a warm and welcoming environment for children on the autism spectrum and those needing a little extra support. We accept children of all abilities between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years. Our Little Faces Behavior Services offers one on one applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy in our on-site clinic or in your home.

For Behavioral Services call:
408-625-6198

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



Great Givers: Amanda Ferris and Kelly Schwarzhoff

By Melissa Watkins, Fund Development Associate

Great Givers come in many varieties. Some volunteer their talents and ideas; some volunteer their time; and some make generous financial contributions to support our ongoing mission. Some do all of the above. In this issue of PACE Setter, we are pleased to honor Kelly Schwarzhoff and Amanda Ferris. As parents of a child on the autism spectrum, Schwarzhoff and Ferris know firsthand the challenges of finding high quality programs and resources for children with autism spectrum disorders, communication disorders, and beyond. “You would think in Silicon Valley that it would be easy to find accessible resources, but it really isn’t”, says Ferris. They placed their child in several programs before learning about PACE and Sunny Days Preschool. “PACE has an extremely loving environment that we didn’t experience at other facilities”, explains Ferris, “our child has developed a positive bond with the teachers and therapists. He’s excited and runs into school each day

because he’s happy to be there.”



Their child’s positive experience at the preschool inspired Schwarzhoff and Ferris to become more involved at PACE. In September 2018, Schwarzhoff volunteered at the 10th Annual PACE Golf Classic, helping with event setup in the early morning. They have also made generous financial contributions to and have “become” a piece of the commemorative PACE 30th Anniversary Puzzle. In addition They also donated to be a matching donor for the puzzle project. “It’s important to us to give back to PACE. Our child started out not making eye contact, but all of the lessons and therapies have helped him grow and develop foundational skills that will help him to transition into an inclusive kindergarten environment”, says Ferris. With their contributions, Ferris

and Schwarzhoff understand that financial support allows PACE to expand programs and services beyond the standard Department of Developmental Service funding allowances and offer enrichment programs such as music and art therapy to significantly enhance students’ lives. “Our child really loves music. It’s where we can join him in his world and build our relationship with him”. With additional funding from donors such as Schwarzhoff and Ferris, PACE hopes to always prove the impact of offering these additional services that only come through generous donations.

Although their child will be phasing out of Sunny Days Preschool this year, Schwarzhoff and Ferris plan to continue to support PACE. “We want PACE to continue the great work. We’ve seen firsthand how it has helped our child, and we want other families to have the same experience”, says Ferris, “This is a wonderful organization that any family should have access to.” Their vision of providing other families this opportunity may come to fruition this year. The Schwarzhoff and Ferris Scholarship Fund was established in March 2019

to assist families in need with tuition and/or therapy expenses. “We understand not all families have the means to fund the therapy or school programs their child needs. We want to pay it forward as much as possible so other families have the opportunity to access the services at PACE”, says Ferris. They hope the scholarship fund will provide some relief for families, as Ferris explains, “You don’t understand the challenges of having a child on the spectrum until you have a child on the spectrum.” PACE is immensely grateful for Schwarzhoff and Ferris’ ongoing support, generosity, and advocacy for PACE programs.

