COVID-19: A Message from the Executive Director

As of Tuesday, March 31, 2020, at 12:01 am, seven Bay Area counties were issued Shelter-in-Place orders. In compliance with this directive, PACE has shut down its PACE School, Sunny Days Preschool, and Faces Behavioral Therapy programs through May 3, 2020. Our Residential services will remain open. PACE’s administrative offices will be closed, however, the administrative and executive staff will work remotely.

Nothing is more important to us than protecting the health and well-being of the individuals and families we serve, as well as the greater community. We recognize that now, more than ever, our efforts to provide support remotely to individuals and their families is critical during these school and program closures.

During this time, PACE staff will work to develop remote learning opportunities and teaching and behavioral strategies for the families in our community. In the coming days, we will strive to provide materials, social stories, and communication to help our community work through this difficult time. We implore our families and community to utilize our free online resource, Porchlight Autism Education Series, to gain knowledge and strategies to help optimize the home environment for loved ones with special needs.

We know that COVID-19 will have a profound impact on nonprofit organizations. For PACE, due to program shutdowns and cancellations of pertinent fundraising events, we will need the support of our community to help offset potential financial challenges. Donations will not only help our programs, but it will help us sustain our staff of teachers, instructional aides, therapists, and residential caregivers who are committed to serving the needs of our students and their families. We thank you for your generosity and stand with you as a community as we get through this challenging and rapidly evolving situation.

Sincerely,
Kurt Ohlfs
Executive Director

Stay Up-to-Date with PACE

In response to the rapidly evolving circumstances around COVID-19, PACE is now providing several ways to keep our students, clients, families, and communities up-to-date with news and resources.

On our website, we have added a new COVID-19 updates page, as well as a resource page with tons of information compiled by our PACE School and Faces Behavioral Therapy management teams. Access a myriad of educational resources, tools for special needs families, and ideas for arts and crafts and movement during shelter-in-place. The list also includes COVID-19 specific resources, including important hotlines, Social Stories, as well as 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

CREATING A DAILY ROUTINE AT HOME

At PACE, we are working hard to provide our students, clients, and their families with support and resources throughout shelter-in-place. The shelter-in-place directives have profoundly impacted day-to-day routines and schedules. To better aid families during this time our PACE Behavioral Therapy team has put together a helpful resource for establishing routines at home for your child.

“Creating a Daily Routine at Home” is a FREE resource that can be used for children of all abilities. Learn how to best facilitate instructions, the best language to use, and what type of system best works to achieve your family’s daily goals.

To download a free copy, please visit www.pacificautism.org.
Support PACE Programs

Early intervention has long been considered the key to improving outcomes for individuals with autism. In 2005, after working with various professional and scientific literature PACE expanded its services to include early intervention for children under the age of six. Under the direction of the Executive Director, Marcia Goldman, the program initially provided the only comprehensive developmental therapy based on many of the principles of Floortex, a relationship-based therapy that follows the social and emotional development of children and help children expand their ‘circles of communication.’

Individual home therapists quickly expanded on site on preschool program where children who were receiving an early intervention on one intervention could practice their social emerging social and communication skills in a nurturing and supportive environment amongst their peers and under the guidance of trained specialists.

Our early intervention program has evolved over the years bringing in and benefiting from an expanded tool box of methods and practices. In 2011, PACE acquired Faces, a behavioral therapy program that was founded on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) a practice that is based on the science of learning and behavior. Although not used exclusively, ABA methodologies and practices have been considered the key to effective therapy and has now guided much of our early intervention practices through one on one sessions as well as within the preschool. As new literature emerges and new evidence-based studies inform our practices, our services continue to grow and change. However, our goal has always been consistent - to help our patients learn how to successfully relate, regulate and communicate.

• Ways You Can Help

For assistance, contact Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Resource Development Manager, phone 408.625.6714.

Donate by mail or phone:
Send check or credit card donations to: PACE P.O. Box 80328 Santa Clara, CA 95058 or phone 408.625.6714.

Donate online at www.pacificautism.org/donate

Donate through our Porchlight Facebook page!

Thank you, Cupertino Rotary!

In 2020 (date postponed due to COVID-19), the Cupertino Rotary will give our Miracle children’s home a landing technology makeover! They plan to build a new obstacle course and make the gardens engaging and way more fun. They will also build three planter boxes with refurbished wood, so the residents can enjoy growing healthy, organic vegetables. We are so thankful for the ongoing support from the Cupertino Rotary, who have supported our Sunny Days Preschool and Residential homes with numerous projects over the years.

Donate for Charity handles all the accounting and administrative support: www.thirtyhandmadedesigns.com/bakepuzzles.

Upon the completion of each 1-hour long program, the context is suitable for individual and group learning.

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

Special thanks to our Porchlight University supporter: Heffernan Insurance and Autism Speaks.

PACE’s Youth Leadership Committee

By Yasmin Gomez, Marketing and Development Associate

The PACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) is a group of talented, driven high school students who build a more inclusive future for individuals with moderate-to-severe autism. This event in 2019 had a record 16 mem-

bers, representing seven high schools throughout the Bay Area. Throughout the year, the team brainstormed numerous fundraising and outreach initiatives, including ways to get more of their peers involved in raising awareness of autism across the school and community.

In 2020 (date postponed due to COVID-19), the YLC hosted their first restaurant fundraiser at Mendocino Farms in Redwood City. In early 2020, the YLC looked out for volunteers to attend virtual events, such as hosting workshops at local libraries and additional event fundraisers.

Unfortunately, due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and shelter-in-place directives, PACE was forced to cancel all YLC fundraising and outreach events.

Shelter-in-Place directives, PACE was forced to cancel all YLC fundraising and outreach events.

The cancelled events include:

• April 2: Jiaran Cafe, Fundraiser for Autism Awareness Month

• April 18: 6th annual Voices for Autism Benefit Concert

PACE would like to thank the members of the 2019-2020 Youth Leadership Commit-

tee for their energy and dedication to furthering PACE’s mission. We look forward to the 2021-2022 season.

If you would like to sup-
 porter the YLC’s fundraising goal of $2,000, please visit: www.pacificautism.org/donate.

PACE School: Building Skills with OT

By Karen Kennan, PACE’s Assistant Executive Director

Katie Kuriy, CCC-SLP, joined PACE as a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in January 2019. Our team of SLPs, in- cluding Katie, are a critical part of the exceptional education that PACE pro- vides for children and youth, especially by moderate-to-severe autism. Katie brings warmth, enthusiasm, and passion to every session while balan-

cing carefully-designed activities with structure for students and a fluid approach for the team who need it.

At the PACE School, Katie assists in running the Student Store, facilitates reading and art groups, and conducts the Ther- apy. The Student Store is one of her favorite places at PACE! She enjoys her role to work side-by-side with PACE students and their families and staff to create a place for students to learn and to make friends. Katie is also responsible for organizing the Student Store, both staff and students can shop for items using cash. However, the Student Store provides more than just a place to purchase a deli-

cious snack. Students gain many skills while running and participating in the store and develop the interpersonal and communication skills by greeting each other (or someone in the store), making selections, and exchanging currency. Students practice waiting their turn, and saying please and thank you as they come and leave.

Social interactions help our students with communication skills and strengthen their independent living skills. Some students are even able to enter numbers into a cash register and hand back change to their customers. Vocational activities, such as the student’s vocational education, is an essential part of the student’s curriculum as it provides our students the opportunity to practice skills within a different context, helping to strengthen various skill sets. At the PACE School, Katie and PACE staff create engaging learning oppor-

unities for students and are a wonderful asset to the PACE family.

April is Autism Awareness Month

The month of April is recognized as Autism Awareness Month. At PACE, we embrace diversity, celebrate the ability to be unique every day. We are incredibly proud of our students, clients, and residents whom we serve.

Since we can’t celebrate in person this month, it’s impor-
tive that we come together to support our autism community in alternative, virtual ways. Read below some ways you can celebrate Autism Awareness Month from the safety of your home. Make sure to follow PACE on Facebook all month long for more on these initiatives.

1) “Light It Up Blue” On Your Autism Awareness Day

April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day! Show your support by wearing blue, the widely recognized color for autism awareness made pop-

ular by Autism Speaks’ “Light It Up Blue” fundraiser campaign. Upload your photos to Facebook or Instagram and tag PACE.

2) Bake puzzle piece desserts

Baking can be a great activ-

ity to do together as a family. This fun and easy recipe for a spin-

ner rice krispy treat recipe is a perfect opportunity to support your adults with autism.

www.thirtymadesigns.com/autismtreats/

3) Learn and share knowl-

dge about Autism!

There is a lot of information out there about autism and many abilities that are often unappreciated. Our free eLearning service, Porch-

light Autism Education Association, provides over 50 modules about autism, including myths and facts. Check out our free resources about autism, visit www.
porchlighteducation.org!

Celebrate with us all month long! Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pacificautism
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.

We have created a new page on our website dedicated to sharing these resources with you. On our new resource page, 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

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

COVID-19 Specific Resources:
Get accurate, up-to-date information on COVID at:
• https://covid19.ca.gov
• www.cdc.gov
• 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

Support Groups:
• Parents Helping Parents Autism Lectures, Parent Support Groups, and Tips for Parents During a Pandemic:
  www.php.org

Lunch Assistance (during school closures):
• Free lunches and breakfast for anyone under 18 years old in Sunnyvale: Bishop, Lakewood, San Miguel, Vargas, or Columbia Middle School, Monday-Friday from 11-1 p.m, Child must be present.
• Free lunches and breakfast for anyone under 18 years old in San Jose: visit www.sjusd.org

Educational Resources:
• BrainPop: Animated educational site for kids: www.brainpop.com
• GoNoodle: Movement for kids with repetition: www.gonoodle.com
• NAT Geo 4 Kids: Easy to follow science resources: kids.nationalgeographic.com
• Vooks: Audible books for students with music: www.vooks.com/parent-resources
• Smarty Symbols: Visual Support Access for families for 1 month: www.smartysymbols.com/
  Use Promo Code: HOMEVISUALS
• LessonPix: Adapted materials for various activities and topics: https://lessonpix.com/sharing

Apps for Autism:
• Choiceworks App: can be used to make visual schedules, visuals with a timer: www.beevisual.com
• Pictello (available on app store) - a make-your-own visual story app with lots of options for customization! Great for social stories or showcasing fun memories