MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KURT OHLFS

As we finish out the 2021 calendar year, it’s important to recognize the incredible work of our staff of teachers, therapists, instructional aides, and residential care staff. Our staff worked tirelessly through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, prioritizing the needs of our students, clients, and families. This fall, the PACE School reached full capacity with sixty-two students back on campus, making this the highest number of enrolled students in the agency’s 30-year history. Despite a competitive job market within the educational sector, PACE continues to excel in school program performance by putting continuous effort into staff training and retention, enabling us to serve more families throughout the Bay Area.

PACE is involved in education, training, and care for individuals and families affected by autism and related developmental disabilities across all ages. For 2022, the agency’s focus is to expand our impact and continually improve upon the quality and delivery of direct support services in our community. As we enter the new year, we invite you to support our focus and mission of enhancing the lives of individuals impacted by autism through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation toward our Annual Fund this holiday season by visiting www.pacificautism.org/donate.

HOLIDAY PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

Caitin Nobriga, BCBA and the FACES Therapist Team

It’s Fall! That means there are more opportunities to be out in the community and participate in seasonal activities. Let’s review some proactive strategies we can use while we get ready for fun seasonal activities.

As a reminder, proactive strategies should be used before a challenging situation occurs and/or before a child has the opportunity to engage in a challenging behavior. Proactive strategies can help children adapt to and cope with challenges or unknown situations. This increases the likelihood of success.

There are several types of proactive strategies that help promote positive interactions, clarify expectations, and promote learning. When preparing for fun fall activities, proactive strategies such as priming, visual supports, and social stories can be helpful to prepare the child for these new activities. Priming helps mitigate sudden changes in children’s routine. When priming, use verbal language to signal upcoming changes. This helps the child prepare for the change. Keep priming phrases simple and direct. An example of priming for a fun fall activity is to go to the pumpkin patch! Before getting to the pumpkin patch - Talk to your children about what to expect! Tell them the expected behaviors (i.e. walking feet, safe / gentle hands, using their words).

Visual support and social stories can help create predictability for a challenging situation. A visual support can be a non-verbal reminder to a child of a social expectation. A social story is generally a short and individualized story that outlines the expectations regarding a specific social event or interaction. This might be useful to teach a child what to expect when going to holiday events! For example, highlight safety expectations (i.e. holding hands, walking feet), waiting behaviors, and functional communication responses (i.e. Thank you, requests, etc.).

Implementing proactive strategies will help your family make new fun fall memories! Contact your BCBA if you have additional questions.

FREE PRIMING WORKSHEET:
(CUT ALONG THE DASHED LINE TO KEEP EACH NOTE WITH YOU FOR HOliday FEstivities PRIMING ACTIVITIES)

Tips Preparing for the Holidays

With the holidays around the corner, there may be colorful decorations, unexpected sounds, and flashing lights. These can be overwhelming for children with ASD or sensory sensitivities. Here are some ideas to help make seasonal festivities comfortable and enjoyable for your child from our FACES Behavioral Therapist Team!

(Tip: cut along the dashed line to keep each note with you for the festivities)

- Visit stores beforehand so you know what to expect
- Show them pictures of past holidays with friends, family or books
- Put up simple decorations so they have some familiarity with them (pumpkins, trains, wreaths, Santa, etc.)
- If wearing a formal outfit, have your child help to choose it. How fun!
- Keep in mind certain fabrics and/or tags can be uncomfortable, as hats and gloves may be, as well
- Have your child practice wearing formal outfits for short periods of time so they get used to the feel
- Have a pair of headphones handy to reduce sensory overload
- Let them know it’s okay if they don’t want to dress up or to go do festive activities
- Prepare your children for what they may see and hear during the holiday season

Find more interactive and printable resources at www.pacificautism.org
Tell us a little bit about yourself!

I am a learning leader and enjoy to explore culture, leadership and growth strategies to share with others while also continuing to develop professionally. Outside of my learning self, I meditate and try to keep active with my two dogs for self-care which is important to maintain a balanced continuum of work, family and me in general. My husband, daughter and I are also huge Disney fans and enjoy all things Disney, so much so, that we have not left our Calculated Disney in mind.

How did you become involved with PACE/Board of Directors?

I served on the PACE management teams as the INR Director from 2006 to 2013. After leaving PACE, Kurt and I remained in contact throughout the years. Kurt was one of my leadership mentors as I continued to develop within the HR profession. In 2016, I graduated from the Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley’s Latino Board Leadership program. This experience exposed me to Kurt for further mentorship, and encouraged finding in a non-profit Board on which to serve. It happened to be that PACE was seeking new board members.

FACES WELCOMES: BCBA MICHELLE HANG

Karen Kennan
Assistant Executive Director

We are pleased to welcome Michelle Hang, Board Certified Behavior Analyst to the PACE community where she will join BCBA Carrie Notizga and Armelia Lavine supervising the Faces ABA team.

Michelle is a native Californian, born and raised in San Francisco. After finishing high school, she ventured north to attend the University of California, Davis where she received her bachelor’s degree in psychology. Upon graduation, she returned to San Francisco where she took a position as a behavior technician and became a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). The more she learned about the field of ABA and the meaningful impact it made on the lives of children, the more interested she became in pursuing a career as a BCBA. She felt ABA was a field that would welcome: bcba michelle hang.

As a BCBA, she felt ABA was a field that would allow her to practice independent decision-making. PACE is the perfect place for me when it was presented. I want to be an effective leader and a great mentor to others while also continuing to stretch my community, fundraising and leadership abilities over the next few years. I want to be an effective leader and a great mentor to others while also continuing to stretch my community, fundraising and leadership abilities over the next few years. I want to be an effective leader and a great mentor to others while also continuing to stretch my community, fundraising and leadership abilities over the next few years. I want to be an effective leader and a great mentor to others while also continuing to stretch my community, fundraising and leadership abilities over the next few years.

RESIDENTIAL NEWS: LANDSCAPING TOGETHER

Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Development Manager

We are incredibly grateful for the many volunteers and local community organizations who continue to support PACE’s residential program. From landscaping to painting to installing new appliances, volunteers have made a tremendous impact on our gardens and the clients who use them. In particular, the Cupertino Rotary spearheaded several projects over the year, including a drought-tolerant front lawn at our Morhouse group home for children.

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In June, the Cupertino Rotary in partnership with Rotary member and owner of Water Efficient Gardens, Sheila Tan, designed and planted a drought-tolerant garden in the front yard and parking strip at the home. The work was done pro bono by the College’s horticultural program.

It was a large undertaking that required several weeks of prep work to remove old advisory and modify the irrigation system. On the day of the project, 20 volunteers came to dig, plant, and complete the rain garden. The final result was a beautiful landscape, thoughtfully designed with the environment and the needs of our clients in mind.

The project was featured in the Cupertino Courier as well as the Mercury News. According to the Mercury News, Ms. Tan explained: "The garden will provide a beautiful landscape for the residents and kids who live at the home, and provide sensory stimulation and independent decision-making. The native plants will also provide food and shelter to pollinators like butterflies, bees, and birds."

**FOR BEHAVIORAL THERAPY TIPS**

GO TO WWW.PORCLIGHTEDUCATION.ORG

UPCOMING PROJECTS:

Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley and Silicon Valley Mechanical selected PACE’s Meadows Group Home for Hands for the annual Rebuilding Together Day. In November, volunteers from Silicon Valley Mechanical will revitalize the backyard with new mulch, plants, and outdoor activities. They will also repaint the interior of the home, which is something our clients can do for the kids who live at the home.

About PACE Residential:

PACE’s residential program offers a comfortable and safe setting for children and adults with autism, enabling them to develop daily living and life skills and to lead independent and productive lives built on the foundation of personal choice and independent decision-making. PACE currently operates two children’s homes and four adult homes throughout the South Bay area.

PACE school news: SWINGS and STUDENT TV

Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Development Manager

With 62 students currently enrolled and back on campus at the PACE School, the staff welcomed back swinging motions can help improve balance and coordination, gross-motor skills, stamina, endurance, and fine-motor skills (strength, hand and finger coordination), and muscle strength. Swing can also stimulate and increase the development of various sensory experiences, such as touch, motion, sight, sound, and it can help improve spatial awareness and rhythm.

Not only does swinging improve motor movement and exercise, but it is also fun and enjoyable activity. The smiles are priceless with the new swing set.

We were excited to introduce a new column that highlights the amazing work of our PACE Board members. Our first highlight is Veronica Rodriguez, who joined the Board in August 2013.

Photograph University is a resource for teachers and professionals and help facilitate better learning for students on the autism spectrum. Our workshops are integrated into typical classrooms.

Each course contains interactive techniques, real-world learning and real-world scenarios to help teachers apply the knowledge, such as strategies quickly in these classrooms.

A Certificate of Completion is awarded following the completion of each 1-hour long program. The content is suitable for individual and group learning.

PACE continues to fund projects like Porchlight University or browse our library of 50 free modules for parents.

The courses include the following:

- INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (IEP) and the LAW
- CREATING EFFECTIVE CLASSROOMS
- SOCIAL SKILLS and POSITIVE BEHAVIOR CULTURE

**HOLIDAY SEASON GIVING**

During the holiday season, we invite PACE supporters and friends to make a special donation to our Annual PACE Fund, designed to support our students, clients, and residents. Annual Fund gifts advance our mission by providing sustaining funds for all programs and services at PACE. Every gift makes a difference, no matter how big or small.

The PACE School Student Store officially re-opened its doors, allowing students the opportunity to be social with their peers, practice transnational conversational skills, and math and counting.

To make a donation to support PACE programs.

**FREE PRINTING WORKSHOP:**

(FLIP OVER FOR CUTOUT)

**Enter PACE’s ID no. 472692 for the net proceeds!**

**Send check or credit card donations to:**

PACE Development Department
1822 S. Bridge Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050
By phone 408.626.6174

**Donate for Charity Donations from eBay**

866.392.4483 or visit www.donateforcharity.com.

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**For Behavioral Therapy Tips**

*To browse our library of 50 free modules for parents.

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GREAT GIVERS: YLC AND MEMBER, VIKRAM I.

Melissa Watkins, Marketing and Development Manager
Vikram I., YLC Member

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 mission. In this issue of the PACEsetter, we are pleased to honor our PACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) as our Great Givers. In 2008, PACE established the YLC in response to the growing number of high school students who were passionate about creating a more equitable world for people of all abilities. YLC members dedicate their time, energy, and enthusiasm to advocate for education and awareness of autism in their schools and community, and to support PACE’s mission through various fundraising and community outreach initiatives. One of their most notable initiatives is the Voices for Autism Benefit Concert, an annual fundraiser that brings musicians and attendees from around the Bay Area in support of PACE programs.

13 years and a global pandemic later, the YLC continues to champion for autism awareness and for PACE services. When the continuation of the YLC program was in question due to COVID-19, a group of steadfast individuals stepped up to keep it going. The 2021-2022 season is a virtual-only format with eight members representing numerous high schools from around the Bay Area. One of our returning members and now Co-Chair of the YLC, Vikram I., shares his story with PACE about his passion for helping others and how to promote inclusion and awareness of autism in the community.

Here is Vikram’s Story:
“I became involved with the YLC, because my brother was a part of the YLC. My experience and passion for helping individuals with autism would not be complete if I didn’t mention my brother, who has autism. Being a younger child, I saw a lot of challenges that he went through, so I’ve always felt [compelled] to help people with autism. For me, giving back to the community was always something drilled into my mind by my family. My mom always told me that many are not as fortunate as me, so I always wanted to help people who aren’t as fortunate as me.

To promote autism awareness, the first thing is to educate about some of the challenges that come with having ASD. I still learn so many things about ASD every day. Another way is reaching out. There are organizations in every part of the world, so reach out in ways that can be helpful.”

2021-2022 PACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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