

PACE Setter

PACIFIC AUTISM CENTER for EDUCATION
Connect • Support • Educate

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KURT OHLFS



Pacific Autism
CENTER FOR EDUCATION

A commitment to connect, support and educate is at the heart of all we do at PACE. This commitment extends not only to our students, clients, and their families but also to our teachers, paraprofessionals, and therapists.

As the demand for autism services continues to outpace capacity, we recognize that our ability to meet this vision means leveraging our resources to attract people to the fields of special education and human services. To that end, PACE is enhancing our efforts to provide internships and scholarships for individuals to become special education teachers and therapists, and meet their requirements through their work at PACE. Our training commitment extends to our paraprofessionals by offering them

real-world opportunities to learn how to work with the special needs population, manage classrooms and develop curriculum. With this goal in mind, we seek to provide resources for the community at large by increasing the pool of trained professionals prepared and eager to enter the field of special education.

Our ongoing success is also bolstered by our relationships with families, local businesses, and organizations. As we hop into spring we look forward to continuing the community partnerships that support our strength. In this edition of PACEsetter, you will read about fundraising partners and opportunities, parent, staff, and community highlights, and our upcoming "Voices for Autism" concert in April. I hope you will join us at Santana Row on April 29th to be part of the community of voices raising their voice in support of individuals with autism.

Thank you for your generous support and for being a part of a community that thrives when individuals of all abilities work together.

SAVE THE DATE! APRIL 29, 2023

VOICES FOR AUTISM

Benefit Concert at Santana Row

Presented by the PACE Youth Leadership Committee
Proceeds Benefit Pacific Autism Center for Education

April 29, 2023
1 - 4pm

FREE TO
ATTEND

In celebration of Autism Awareness Month, the PACE YLC will be hosting its annual Voices for Autism Benefit concert to help raise important funds for PACE programs.

Join us for an afternoon of music featuring local bands, Bay Area high school student dance performances, and other performing artists. This annual event celebrates individuals of all background and abilities and brings our community together to increase awareness and support for the autism community.

SANTANA ROW

Where: Plaza de Valencia at Santana Row
1008 Santana Row, San Jose, CA 95128
When: Saturday, April 29, 2023
Time: 1 - 4pm



About Pacific Autism Center for Education

Scan to learn more about the event or visit www.pacificautism.com to learn more about our mission, vision, and programs. Please contact info@pacificautism.org for any questions or comments.

The PACE YLC (Youth Leadership Committee) is a group of high school students in the Bay Area committed to increasing awareness of PACE and autism and raising money for PACE programs and services. In collaboration with PACE staff, the YLC participates in a variety of strategic and fundraising initiatives in order to sustain and deepen the mission and impact of PACE in the community. The mission of Pacific Center for Education is to enhance the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care.



AUTISM AWARENESS NIGHT AND SENSORY ROOM

April 6, 2023

San Jose Sharks Hockey, SAP Center

The San Jose Sharks are hosting Autism Awareness Night at their home game on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 7:30 pm against the Colorado Avalanche at the SAP Center. The evening will include access to an exciting one-night sensory room for individuals who need extra space to enjoy the game, and sensory kits, available at no charge for fans of all ages. The ticket prices will include VIP access to the private sensory room with a large screen, complimentary snacks, sensory-friendly activities, and seating in both the room and the stadium. *Your ticket purchase will also include a \$10 donation to PACE.*

Visit pacificautism.com/events for more information.

Autism Awareness Night Fundraiser

SHARKS HOCKEY SENSORY ROOM

THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH AT 7:30 PM
SAN JOSE SHARKS VS COLORADO AVALANCHE

Tickets include **VIP access to the sensory room, a sensory kit, and a designated section for the PACE community.**

PURCHASE TICKETS

PROCEEDS BENEFIT



SCAN ME

ASK A THERAPIST: COMMUNICATION

Leah Persing, M.S., CCC SLP

PACE Speech-Language Pathologist



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Expressive language is how a person communicates with others. Building expressive language skills helps individuals grow their independence and self-advocacy skills. Below are some tips on how you can support someone's expressive language skills.

Wait! Before asking more questions or moving on, first try counting to ten in your head. If they still haven't responded, then consider restating or rewording what you said.

Create opportunities for your child to communicate. Where you might traditionally anticipate your child's needs by giving them a favorite snack, wait and see if they take that opportunity to ask.

When your child says something (with either their voice, a gesture, or a communication device), **celebrate it and expand**

on it by adding one more word to that statement. For example, if your child says "car," you can expand on that word by saying "red car," or "car go."

Children learn through **imitation**, so provide your child with opportunities to imitate by modeling language throughout your daily routines. When your child primarily uses their voice, model with your voice. When your child primarily uses an AAC device, model on that device!

Don't forget - **communication is fun!** Try to encourage language through play and activities that your child enjoys.

"Children learn through imitation, so provide your child with opportunities to imitate by modeling language throughout your daily routines"

Thank you, Leah, for guiding us through the effective ways of building expressive language skills.

If you have any questions, Leah can be best reached at leahpersing@pacificautism.org.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS AT THE PRESCHOOL CAMPUS

Karen Kennan,
Assistant Executive Director

We would like to introduce, Rachel Harding, who is currently a student at Palo Alto University. Rachel is pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, hoping to specialize in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. Previously, she obtained an M.A. in Early Childhood Education and spent eight years teaching children 0-5, in addition to working as Assistant Director of Aspen Leaf Preschool in San Diego, where she designed their infant/toddler program.

She recently enrolled in the Napa Infant/Early Childhood-Parent Mental Health Fellowship at U.C. Davis where she will be learning techniques for observing children



and facilitating positive parent-child interactions. As part of this fellowship, she will be volunteering at Sunny Days Preschool/Faces in order to better connect theory with practice. Rachel will be on-site at the preschool/clinic once a week. In addition to observing and supporting the classroom, she is hoping to practice administering a few new assessment tools with parents that focus on child-parent relationships and mental health.

As a trained early childhood educator Rachel brings years of experience with her and the opportunity for us to collaborate around best practices for our children and families. We look forward to working with her.



INTRODUCING MADDI FRASER: GET TO KNOW HER

Karen Kennan,
Assistant Executive Director



Sunny Days
PRESCHOOL

On any weekday, if you visit the PACE Sunny Days campus, you might find Maddi sitting at the reception desk in the program office. Or you might find her helping out in a classroom. Or she could be outside organizing the supply shed, fixing a broken trampoline, or delivering lunches to students. Maddi is the Sunny Days Campus Administrator, and with abundant energy and enthusiasm, she provides care and support for the entire Sunny Days campus.

Maddi joined the PACE community in the summer of 2022. Her previous employment experiences as a telemarketer, sales and general manager, and

preschool instructor prepared her well for her role at Sunny Days, where every day brings new opportunities and challenges. In the eight months she has been with us, she has (among other things) enhanced the employee “lounge,” opened up a school “store” for students and staff, built and set up numerous pieces of furniture and equipment, reorganized our (limited) storage space, and, most importantly, she supports the teachers, therapists, and staff in their daily efforts to provide high-quality experiences for our students and clients.

As the connector between student families and campus, Maddi brings compassion and kindness to her work. She has made an effort to get to know all of the students and clients on campus, and they often stop by her desk to say “hello.” The staff as well appreciate her organizational skills, creativity, positive attitude, and passion she brings to the job. We are thrilled to have her on the Sunny Days team and invite you to get to know her.



JIAREN CAFE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Presented by
The PACE Youth Leadership Committee

Join us by supporting the PACE Youth Leadership Committee on their ongoing fundraising campaign. When you visit local nonprofit and coffee shop, Jiaren Cafe, and use the code PACE10, PACE will receive 10% of all proceeds.

JIAREN CAFE FUNDRAISER

Jiaren Café is hosting a fundraiser for Pacific Autism Center for Education by providing 10% off of drink orders using the code: PACE10 or by scanning the QR below! PACE will receive 10% of proceeds.

Jiaren Café is a female-owned local non-profit café located in Santa Clara offering a variety of unique teas and coffees.

Jiaren Café
1171 Homestead Rd
Ste 140B
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Mon - Fri: 8:30am - 10pm
Sat: 8:30am - 6pm
Sun: 10am - 6pm

www.jiarencafe.com



10% OFF

CODE: PACE10





ORDER HERE



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WWW.PACIFICAUTISM.ORG

The PACE YLC (Youth Leadership Committee) is a group of high school students in the Bay Area committed to increasing awareness of PACE and autism and raising money for PACE programs and services. In collaboration with PACE staff, the YLC participates in a variety of strategic and fundraising initiatives in order to sustain and deepen the mission and impact of PACE in the community. The mission of Pacific Center for Education is to enhance the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care.

15TH ANNUAL PACE GOLF CLASSIC

September 22, 2023
Cinnabar Hills Golf Club

The 15th Annual PACE Golf Classic will be held on Friday, September 22, 2023 at the incredible Cinnabar Hills Golf Club in San Jose, CA. Funds raised will support our day-to-day programs and a variety of ongoing residential enhancement projects. We are looking forward to a successful and fun day out on the green, fundraising for PACE programs!

Sponsorship and Auction Donations opportunities are now available!

Please reach out to the Marketing Department at marketing@pacificaautism.org for more information.

15TH ANNUAL PACE GOLF TOURNAMENT



2023 GOLF CLASSIC

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023
CINNABAR HILLS GOLF CLUB

SAVE THE DATE
WWW.PACIFICAUTISM.ORG



PACE SCHOOL UPDATE: FEEDING STRATEGIES AND “MY GREEN LUNCH” PROGRAM

Roma Ibera M.S., OTR/L, CAS
PACE Occupational Therapist
Christina Bavilacqua,
Development and Marketing
Associate



PACE recently started a new program with My Green Lunch, bringing healthy lunches to our students on campus.

My Green Lunch, a trusted provider of healthy school lunches in the Bay Area since 2012, is now delivering delicious and nutritious lunches to our students. These daily lunch deliveries help introduce new foods to our students’ diets and provide opportunities to work on feeding training.

My Green Lunch meals are prepared fresh and in small batches from scratch each morning, and include fruits and vegetables sourced from local and organic family farms whenever possible. The program is a proud member of the CAFF (Community Alliance for Family Farmers), and strives to meet all students’ dietary needs and restrictions, including gluten-

free, nut-free (of course!), dairy-free, vegetarian, and vegan options in our menu offering.

Roma Ybera, M.S., OTR/L, CAS, PACE Occupational Therapist, has been working with our students on the “Six Steps to Introducing New Foods” chart. The steps include tolerating, interacting with, smelling, touching, and ultimately tasting a portion of new food. She has been pleased to see progress with many of our students in their willingness to try new foods.

Watch our progress on the PACE Facebook and Instagram Page!



Steps to Feeding

Step 1: TOLERATES

- Food being in the same room
- Food halfway across the room
- Food being directly in child's space

Step 2: INTERACTS

- Child helps to set up food
- Helps to stir or pour food onto plates etc. outside of comfort space
- Help with clean up and bringing food to garbage
- Child plays or build an animal or fort in their space or on their plate

Step 3: SMELL

- Odor in room/table
- Odor in child's space
- Food on fork or spoon held by someone and they lean in to smell it on their terms
- Food on utensil and bringing it to own nose to smell.

Step 4: TOUCH

- One finger tip , finger tips, whole hand, shoulder
- Person holds or puts food on fork/spoon and taps on child cheek
- Child kisses food
- Taps food to teeth

Step 5: TASTE

- Licks lips or taps teeth
- Bites with front teeth
- Moved from front of teeth to molars chewing 3x then spitting it out.
- Chews and swallows some and follows with water
- Chews and swallows whole bolus independently.

Roma Ybera, M.S., OTR/L, CAS, Occupational Therapist

AYRES SENSORY INTEGRATION AT PACE AND SUNNY DAYS PRESCHOOL

Kelly Schwarzhoff
Former PACE Parent and Client
Iris Yang, M.S., OTR/L
PACE Occupational Therapist

Many individuals with autism experience challenges with sensory processing and integration. During the 1960s–1980s, using research and work from the Brain Research Institute at UCLA, A. Jean Ayres, an Occupational Therapist, developed Sensory Integration (ASI), a theory that studies the impact of sensory processing on these challenged individuals. She originated the theory to explain “the relationship between deficits in interpreting sensation from the body and the environment and difficulties with academic or motor learning.” Ayres Sensory Integration programs involve assessment and intervention by Occupational Therapists who have undergone specialized training and, who utilize specialized equipment in an “OT Gym.” ASI includes concepts from human development, neuroscience, psychology, and occupational therapy.

ASI includes the following concepts:

- Sensory integration is a developmental process and many individuals with autism need additional assistance to help process sensory stimuli functionally. Most neurotypical children experience development in a sequential order of milestones, and these experiences lay the foundation on which higher-level sensory-motor activities, social skills, and academics build.

- The “just right challenge” provides the basis for sensory integration to occur.

Occupational Therapy uses the

concept of the “just right challenge” to meet each individual’s unique needs to facilitate learning.

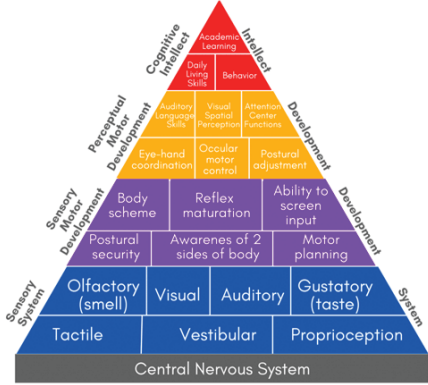
- Sensory integration allows for neuroplasticity of the central nervous system, which may result in new patterns for learning. This may help individuals learn to self-regulate as well as form/reorganize synaptic connections for increased tolerance for previously-intolerable sensations or stimuli.

The PACE school and Sunny Days preschool serve students on the autism spectrum. Both schools have an onsite OT gym that the students use throughout the day and includes various soft and therapeutic equipment such as swings, crash pads, balance balls, stepping stones, etc for students to meet their sensory needs.



Dr Ayres defined sensory integration as “the organization of sensations for use. Our senses give us information about the physical conditions of our body and the environment around us... The brain must organize all of our sensations if a person is to move and learn and behave in a productive manner”

PYRAMID OF LEARNING



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PACE Setter
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Mission: To enhance the lives of people impacted by autism, through innovation, exceptional education, and compassionate care.
Vision: A world in which people of all abilities live fulfilled lives.



2022-2023 PACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Donate: by mail at 1880 Pruneridge Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95050, online at www.pacificautism.org/donate, or by phone 408.625.6174.
Double your gift! Make a matching gift contribution at your workplace.

Please contact development@pacificautism.org for giving options.

PACE is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Our TAX EIN# is 77-0259858.
Contributions made to PACE are tax deductible as specified by the current tax law.

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GREAT GIVERS: REMEMBERING HENRY BUFFALOW

Karen Kennan,
Assistant Executive Director

Support for PACE comes in many forms. It comes from the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to our cause. It comes from the corporate world in the form of sponsorships, in-kind donations and matching gift programs. It comes from the foundations that are tasked with making the world a better place. And it comes from individuals who, in their generosity, support our work with financial contributions. Over the years, PACE has benefitted from the support of many; in this issue of PACE Setter, we remember Henry Buffalo who knew how important it is to support the causes and programs that make a difference in the life of our community.



PACE lost a great friend and supporter with the passing of Henry Buffalo, Jr. on December 7, 2022. Henry will be remembered by his family and community for many things: his

service in the U.S. Navy, his expertise in environmental engineering, his love of family, and his belief in “service over self”—at PACE he will long be remembered for his steadfast commitment to our agency, his energy and enthusiasm for making the world a better place for others and for his “roll up your sleeves, hands-on support for our autism community.

I was privileged to meet Henry more than ten years ago when he was the House Captain for the Cupertino Rotary’s Rebuilding Together project refurbishing two of PACE’s residential homes. Since that initial venture, the Cupertino Rotary, under the guidance of Henry, has partnered with PACE on numerous occasions to work on projects, both large and small, that upgraded and enhanced our program and facilities. Over the years, these have included, for our children’s residential programs: painting the interiors of two homes, replacing flooring in the homes, facilitating upgrades to the landscaping, constructing an obstacle par course, and funding our enrollment in the Cupertino Rotary Flag Leasing Program. In addition, the Rotary supported our Sunny Days Children’s program by painting the interior and exterior of the school buildings, building planter boxes, providing sand for an outdoor sandbox, purchasing and donating a mobile outdoor canopy to



shade our children’s program blacktop, and designing and painting a beautiful 16’ by 18’ mural that welcomes people as they enter the campus.

Henry was instrumental in helping us find volunteers to design and construct ten original “Corn Hole” games for a fundraising lawn party event in 2016. He used his professional expertise to

make sure our residential and school HVAC systems were always functional, and he organized a team of volunteers to “adopt” our two children’s homes, watching over them to make sure the facilities were in good working order. As the Community Service Chair for the Rotary, Henry always kept a vigilant eye on PACE and never passed up an opportunity to contact us with suggestions for local grants, other organizations with whom we could partner, and projects that would benefit our clients. Largely because of his efforts, our strong relationship with Cupertino Rotary continues to this day.

It was a privilege to know Henry. Through his ongoing commitment to PACE, he helped enhance the lives of individuals and their families who are impacted by autism. With no need for celebration or fanfare, he made the world a better place.

