

## PACER's 2022 Benefit

*Live and In Person Featuring*

# PENTATONIX

They've sold out the Grandstand at the Minnesota State Fair, won multiple Grammy Awards (including one with Dolly Parton), and played to capacity crowds around the world... and now Pentatonix, the a cappella pop superstars, are bringing their amazing show to this year's PACER BENEFIT!

"We are so excited to be back with PACER's first in-person Benefit in more than three years, and to be presenting Pentatonix as our entertainment," said Gretchen Godfrey, PACER's interim executive director. "People of all ages are looking forward to attending what is sure to be a wonderful performance!"

Pentatonix are renowned for their imaginative cover versions of popular songs – hits by everyone from Billie Eilish

to Dua Lipa, Stevie Wonder, Kelly Clarkson, Daft Punk, and Michael Jackson, to name just a few – and wide repertoire of holiday classics. They also record and perform original material that spotlights their amazing vocal chops. Their unique pop style features vocal harmonies, basslines, beatboxing, riffing, and percussion.

The members of PTX, as fans call them, include Scott Hoying (baritone), Mitch Grassi (high tenor), Kirstin Maldonado (mezzo-soprano), Kevin Olusola (lyric baritone – beatboxer), and Matt Sallee (bass). While you wait for the PACER Benefit, listen to some PTX at [youtube.com/pentatonix](https://youtube.com/pentatonix), which has 19.7 million subscribers. ■

**Saturday, November 5 • Minneapolis Convention Center • Tickets at [PACER.org/Benefit](https://www.pacer.org/Benefit)**



# Online Bidding For PACER's Silent Auction Begins October 21 at PACER.org/Benefit!

**The following are just a few of the fabulous finds PACER's silent auction has in store for you! Other items include jewelry, restaurant packages, lunch with local luminaries, vacation getaways, sports packages, wine, original artwork, children's items, theatre tickets, and much more.**

## Sports Spectaculars

### Minnesota Vikings Purple People Eaters Helmet

Treat yourself or your favorite Vikings fan to some amazing memorabilia! This authentic Minnesota Vikings helmet is autographed by the legendary Purple People Eaters defensive lineup of Alan Page, Carl Eller, Jim Marshall, and Gary Larsen.

### Vikings 2023 Home Opener Tickets

Start the season off right when you cheer on the Vikings from US Bank Stadium! You and your three guests will experience the incomparable excitement of being there in person for the 2023 home opener. Seats are in section 216, row 12, seats 3-6.

### Minnesota Twins Package

Root, root, root for the home team from some of the best views of the ballpark at Target Field! This prize consists of two tickets in the Delta Sky360° Club (formerly the Legend's Club), at a mutually-determined date during the 2023 season, and also includes a basket of Twins merchandise.

### Golf Outing at Southview Country Club

The lucky winner and their guests will make up a foursome for a round of golf on one of the area's prettiest golf courses. This Par 71 course boasts beautiful water features, rolling tree-lined fairways, and superb greens. Win this prize and reserve your game date now!

## Groovy Getaways

### Marco Island, Florida

Spend a week on this fabulous barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico, south of the city of Naples. There's plenty of space for your friends and family in this four-bedroom waterfront home, close to resorts, beaches, golfing, and the wonderful Tigertail Beach Park, which offers a tidal lagoon for kayaking and paddleboarding! Dates to be mutually determined.

### Lake Cabin Stay: Five Nights on Crookneck Lake

You and up to nine guests will enjoy five nights in a charming cabin on Crookneck Lake in Motley, Minnesota. You'll enjoy lake and

dock access, a full kitchen and outdoor grill setup, kayak use, and a large outdoor entertainment space with comfortable seating, hammock, and firepit. Adventure and priceless memories await! Date to be mutually determined, between November 15, 2022, and May 1, 2023.

## Exciting Experiences

### Bowling Party for 24

Strikes and spares -- it's party time for the winner and their guests! This amazing prize includes four lanes, bowling, and shoes for up to 24 people at the popular Park Tavern Bowling Alley.

### Pontoon Day

The lucky winner and their guests will enjoy a full six-hour boat ride on South Center Lake in Center City, Minnesota. Have a party or bring the kids! This prize includes a cooler full of refreshments, and a boat captain will be provided upon request.

### Adult Magic Show

The winner will host up to 11 guests for a 75-minute aviation-themed magic show at their home. The evening will feature strong effects with an original, engaging presentation, and can be customized for a special occasion. Perfect entertainment for a dinner party or small gathering.

### Kids Ski and Snowboard Lessons

This fabulous Blizzard Ski + Snowboard School package offers 11 weeks of ski and snowboard lessons for kids in grades 5-12 during the 2022-23 season at a variety of Twin Cities locations.

### Family Genealogy

Have you ever wondered about your ancestors? Genealogy holds the key to your family history and origins, and the answers to questions about those who came before you. This prize features two hours of family history research from professional genealogist Tara A.F. Patregnani.

**... ALL THIS, AND MUCH MORE!**

Take a peek at all PACER's Silent Auction has to offer! Bidding begins on **October 21 at PACER.org/Benefit**. It's not too late to donate an item or experience! Email **Raleigh.Johnson@PACER.org** or call **(952) 838-9000**.

# PACER BENEFIT EMCEE SHANNAN PAUL

This year, PACER board of directors member Shannan Paul will be emceeing PACER's annual Benefit along with auctioneer Frank Vascellaro. "I'm honored to be able to help showcase the amazing things PACER does, and excited to work with Frank," Shannan said.

It's a great fit for Shannan and for PACER, too: along with being a certified charity auctioneer, Shannan is a professional comedian, motivational speaker, voice actor, live event host, and radio personality. You may know her from her shows on MyTalk 107.1 (she is the host of "Red Hot Real Estate" and "The Financial Health and Wellness Show") or on local tv, as a regular on FOX 9's "The Jason Show."

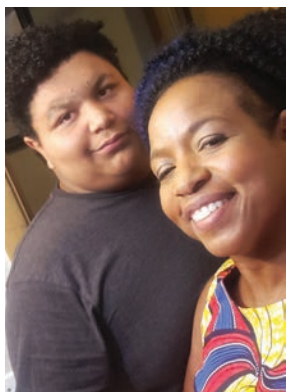
"Shannan's professional experience and personal connection to PACER make her the perfect emcee for our Benefit," said Gretchen Godfrey, PACER's interim executive director. "I'm excited for the energy she will bring to the event."

## The PACER connection

Shannan is the single mom of 14-year-old Dominic. "My journey to PACER is similar to a lot of parents," Shannan said. "After my son's ASD (autism spectrum disorder) diagnosis, someone suggested PACER as a resource."

"PACER helped arm me with tools to advocate for my son, and helped me teach him to self-advocate as best he can. I learned that it's okay to make requests for what he needs. I do comedy for a living; I would never have been able to get his IEP set up right without PACER's help. My son, and all children with disabilities, deserve the resources necessary for a quality education."

Shannan finds it rewarding to serve on PACER's board. "It's important to me to be a resource for other parents. Sometimes it feels very isolating to be the parent of a child with a disability. When I talk to other families, I say, 'you're right, it's hard!' Some days things are super funny, other days they're super hard."



Shannan and her son, Dominic

She also prizes her relationships with other board members. "It's a very like-minded group," Shannan said. "It's great to talk to other parents, to be able to have open and honest discussions with others who know how difficult this journey is."

## Becoming a performer

It was while Shannan was in college that the comedy bug bit her. "I was a stand-up fan, I used to go to shows, and people would say, 'you're really funny – you should be a comedian.' I took a comedy writing class and wrote a stand-up set," she recalled. "I reworked it and performed it at Acme Comedy Club's open mike. It was nerve-racking, but I didn't die!"

Shannan describes herself as a storyteller. "I like to be able to deliver a message and also be funny," she said. She enjoys using humor to explore difficult topics, putting a positive, "human" spin on them.

"I am really fortunate that I've managed to be able to build a career that allows me the flexibility to care for my son and allows me the time and resources to help him thrive," Shannan said.

Her career in comedy led to other opportunities. A friend suggested she become a benefit auctioneer, and she discovered that her ability to connect with an audience helped nonprofits raise money.

## Future thoughts

"This is a very complex time for PACER, but it's also an opportunity for us to grow, to look at what we can do differently to impact how we serve the families who need our help. One of the most important things PACER can do is evolve to meet the changing needs of families," Shannan said. "As a board member, it's

important to me to be part of an organization that makes such an impact on people's lives." ■



PACER board member and Benefit emcee,  
Shannan Paul

*"PACER helped arm me with tools to advocate for my son, and helped me teach him to self-advocate as best he can."*

*"I'm looking forward to being part of PACER's next chapter."*

- Shannan Paul



I  
Voted

# Election Day is November 8

## Voting for People With Disabilities

When youth with disabilities transition to adulthood, PACER is there to help families prepare their student for the changes and opportunities adulthood brings. Adults with disabilities have the right to vote, and families can play an important role in preparing their child to exercise this important right.

People with disabilities often face barriers in voting, and as a result, vote in lower numbers than those without disabilities. The good news is that the 2020 election brought historic gains in the number of people with disabilities who voted. Nationwide, turnout among people with disabilities was 17.7 million, up from 16 million in 2016. Experts say the increase is due to expanded access to mail-in ballots, which made it easier for people with disabilities to vote. According to the Program for Disability Research at Rutgers University and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, 62% of people with disabilities voted in 2020, an increase of 6% over 2016. This was greater than the 5% increase among people without disabilities. Turnout was higher among people with all types of disabilities and from all demographic groups. A majority – 53% – of people with disabilities voted by mail.

**Experts say that turnout increases when people with disabilities have more voting options, and that voters with disabilities benefitted greatly when states made it easier to vote during the pandemic.**

### Voting in Minnesota

Secretary of State, Steve Simon, the state's top election official, said that the state takes voting accessibility seriously. "Volunteers from the Minnesota Disability Law Center audit polling locations to make sure they are physically accessible, and they also check to see that assistive voting technology is easily available." Simon noted that since the passage of a 20-year-old federal law, the Help America Vote Act, all polling places have been required to have a ballot device that enables voters with a range of disabilities, including sight, hearing, and reading, to vote independently.

"A voter with a disability has the right to have another person read their ballot to them, mark their ballot for them, or even sign their ballot; however, no one can tell them how to vote." The voter may bring along someone to the polling place to assist them, or ask an election judge for help, Simon added.

Voters with mobility issues have the option to vote at the polls without leaving their vehicles.

Polling locations have curbside voting areas marked, and upon request, two election judges, one from each major political party, will bring the ballot to the voter. After the person votes privately

from their vehicle, both judges take it inside and put it through the voting machine.

*"Though it may be unfair, policymakers focus on those who participate. It's particularly important that people with disabilities use their power and amplify their voice, so it is heard and not neglected."*

– Minnesota Secretary of State,  
Steve Simon



### Advice from Abie and Analigia

Abie Curran, who is DeafBlind, voted for the first time in 2020. Abie was excited to vote back then, and she still is. "My parents included me in voting before I was old enough to vote," she said. "My first time to vote was in the 2020 primary and then the presidential election. I voted in the primary election this August, and I will be voting again in November."

Like Abie, first-time voter Analigia Batres Pearson, who is on the autism spectrum, grew up in a family where voting was important. Although Analigia is a new voter, she had some good advice to share. "Along with what [a candidate] is campaigning on in the moment and their current positions, it's important to look at their past, [such as] legislation they've passed."

Abie said, "I am paying more attention [this time] to all of the issues the person I am voting for stands for," and noted, "It is especially important [to know] if they are willing to learn about issues important to people with disabilities."

Analigia suggests looking beyond the party label. "I think that you should vote for your values. You shouldn't adhere blindly to one party; if a politician goes against your values, don't vote for them."

Beyond issues and candidates, Abie has advice about the mechanics of voting. "Find and look at your ballot online. That helped me review directions for voting in the primary before I voted." To see who's on your ballot, go to [MYBALLOTMN.SOS.STATE.MN.US](https://myballotmn.sos.state.mn.us).



Abie Curran



Analigia Batres Pearson

## Did you know...

**You don't have to wait until election day to vote in person.** Starting 46 days before election day, up until the day before the election, you can vote at your county's election office. Find out where this is at **MNVOTES.GOV**.

**You don't have to be registered in advance to vote on election day.** You can provide proof of your identity at the polls and register there – or, someone who lives in the same voting precinct can accompany you to the polls and confirm you are who you say you are and live where you say you do. This is called “vouching.”

**In most cases, you can vote if you are under guardianship.** Unless a court has revoked your right to vote, you have the legal right to do so. ■

## What's on your ballot?

### These races will be on every voter's general election ballot:

- ☐ U.S. Representative
- ☐ Governor & Lt. Governor
- ☐ Attorney General
- ☐ Secretary of State
- ☐ State Auditor
- ☐ State Senator
- ☐ State Representative
- ☐ Judicial seats

### Depending on where you live, you may also have on your ballot:

- ☐ County offices
- ☐ City or township offices
- ☐ School board

To find out where you vote, how to get assistance in voting, who's on your ballot, and more, go to Minnesota's one-stop shopping for voting: **MNVOTES.GOV**

# PACESETTER

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PACER Center enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for children, youth, and young adults with all disabilities and their families so each person can reach his or her highest potential. PACER operates on the principles of parents helping parents, supporting families, promoting a safe environment for all children, and working in collaboration with others. PACER is also the National Bullying Prevention Center, offering innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others.

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## Follow PACER Center on social media!

For up-to-date information on PACER workshops, events, stories, publications, videos, and more, go to:



Facebook.com/PACERCenter



Instagram.com/PACERCenter



Twitter.com/PACERCenter

# October is National Bullying Prevention Month!

*Here's how to participate*

National Bullying Prevention Month is a campaign that unites communities nationwide to educate people about bullying and raise awareness of bullying prevention. PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center launched the campaign 16 years ago, and it has continued to evolve, with PACER developing new resources in response to community needs. Initially held the first week in October, the campaign expanded in 2010 to include the entire month.

"There are so many ways individuals, school groups, and communities can celebrate National Bullying Prevention Month," said Julie Hertzog, director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. "If you receive this publication before Unity Day, October 19, you can wear and share orange to send a vibrant and visible message that no child should ever experience bullying. Share your Unity Day photos on social media, using the hashtag #UnityEVERYDay."

There is a wealth of information about how to celebrate National Bullying Prevention Month at [PACER.org/Bullying](http://PACER.org/Bullying). Here are just a few ways to participate:

- **Share information:** Post template images to social media and websites, write letters and opinion pieces to newspapers and online publications, and reach out to community leaders
- **Take the pledge:** Add your name to commit to promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion to prevent bullying
- **Check out the new campaign:** Co-created with Cartoon Network's Stop Bullying: Speak Up initiative this campaign empowers all kids to Redraw Your World Without Bullying, featuring the Bulletin Board Challenge
- **Order and wear the Unity Day t-shirt:** Wear a visible symbol of support for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion on Unity Day, during National Bullying Prevention Month, or every day! It's available through October 31 for just \$13 at [PACER.org/Bullying](http://PACER.org/Bullying).

"National Bullying Prevention Month draws attention to a problem, offers solutions, and informs our communities," Julie said. "It's a great way for everyone to be part of the solution." ■



Unity Day is October 19.  
Order your t-shirt today!  
Share your Unity Day  
photos on social media,  
using the hashtag:

**#UnityEVERYDay**

## Update on PACER's Executive Director Search

PACER's Board of Directors has hired a nationally-recognized executive search firm to recruit PACER's next executive director. "CohenTaylor Executive Search Services has significant experience working with nonprofit organizations that are transitioning from a founder to a new leader. We are very excited to partner with a firm of this caliber, and look forward to working with them," said Board member Matt Woods.

"Our Board is focused on taking the time necessary to recruit the right person to lead PACER," said Board President Mark O'Leary. "We are fortunate that PACER is fiscally healthy and in good hands under the leadership of Interim Executive Director Gretchen Godfrey." For current updates on the search, go to **[PACER.org](http://PACER.org)**.



# More Relevant Than Ever... PACER's Symposium is Back!

There was excitement in the air at PACER's 2022 Symposium on Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, which was back for the first time since 2019 after a COVID-fueled two-year absence.

Hundreds of parents and professionals attended the event, which was held on August 16 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Many commented on the hiatus. "Thank you for bringing us all together for the first time since the pandemic. It is so supportive to see the community of learners committed to the collective vision of helping our children and youth learn and thrive," one participant said. Another commented, "PACER is my happy place! I enjoy interacting with the participants and attending the workshops. Thanks for another great year! You were missed!"

The Symposium featured a total of 16 breakout sessions, including 10 different workshops and panel discussions. Symposium favorite Anne Gearity, PhD, gave the morning keynote speech, "Let's Not Go Backwards: Making Sense of What Happened, and Repairing Children's Interest, Motivation, and Excitement to Learn." In her moving summary, Anne said, "As we anticipate school year 2022-23, we hope this pandemic will be history. Our job is to help children recover. I believe it is imperative that we value their minds, their capacity for internal motivation, and excitement. Partnered with high expectations and high adult engagement, we may change education. It is about time."

The afternoon keynote speaker was Sondra Samuels, president and CEO of the Northside Achievement Zone. Sondra's speech was, "Break the Glass and Pull the Alarm! An Urgent Yet Hopeful Approach To Ensuring the Well-being of Our Children in the Era of COVID."

"PACER is an outstanding organization," Sondra commented. "The Symposium addressed crucial issues that need support. The emphasis was that we're not in silos, we have to work together: PACER, schools, parents, therapists, youth, and family." Sondra was particularly impressed by the presentation by PACER's Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health. "These young people's authenticity and vulnerability showed how their struggle becomes their strength," she said.

The event was a success, said Debbie Andrews, PACER's director of events and symposium coordinator. "Anne, Sondra, and all of the presenters were wonderful! People were happy to be back in person; the energy in the room was so positive."

The Symposium attracted repeat attendees as well as first time participants. Comments ranged from "Thank you! I always learn so much from this conference! I have been attending since year one! I am grateful!" to "My first symposium, and I'll be back!" ■

Anne Gearity, PhD,  
Symposium keynote  
speaker



PACER Simon  
Technology  
Center staff  
showcasing items  
from the Lending  
Library

Sondra Samuels,  
Symposium keynote  
speaker



*"Sometimes trainings repeat old topics. This symposium was different and spoke very much to the post-pandemic along with the changes in generations. It's time for our institutions to also change. Thank you PACER for having speakers acknowledge this and be part of the movement to move forward."*

— A longtime participant

# Renee Gallaher: *PACER by the Numbers*



Renee Gallaher, PACER's director of finance

Renee Gallaher has been at every PACER Benefit since 1993 – but she's never sat through a performance. As PACER's director of finance, a role she's held for the past 29 years, Renee's far too busy ensuring that the silent auction checkout is up and running smoothly so that guests can claim their prizes after the event, and wrapping up the raffle so the winner can be announced onstage. There's no time for her to sit down and watch the show. "I did see some of Jay Leno's show the first time he was our performer," she said, "and sometimes the doors are open or someone comes in or out and you can hear the music or performer."

## Settling in at PACER

It was a PACER Benefit that first drew Renee to PACER. At the time, she was planning a career change. "I was in public accounting and so was my husband-to-be," Renee, who is a certified public accountant (CPA), explained. "I didn't want to stay in the same field, and I was interested in going into nonprofit accounting. Around this time my mom, who was familiar with PACER, told me they were having a Benefit with Bob Newhart."

It wasn't long after that Renee saw an employment ad in the newspaper for an accounting job at PACER Center. "As soon as I saw the name 'PACER' I thought, I've been hearing a lot about this place!" Renee sent in her resume and Paula (PACER's late executive director, Paula Goldberg) called her for an interview. Renee was hired as PACER's second finance director.

Renee said that when she started at PACER, she found that the founding co-executive directors, Paula Goldberg and Marge Goldberg, had a sound financial system in place. "When we talked about finances, Paula understood them, even though she wasn't an accounting person. After I'd been there awhile, Paula felt confident that I knew what I was doing."

Renee recalled, "Paula's mom, Helen Friedman, worked in PACER's office. She wrote the checks and she was the best person to train me in on PACER and Paula. Helen would also call people who had donated to the silent auction the previous year and tell them she was sending someone over to pick up their donation for this year's auction. She knew how to get things done!"

## The PACER puzzle

One of the few things Paula and Renee differed on was Renee's hours. She eventually had three children, and told Paula, "I can't work full time." Renee thought she would need to find a new job, but although Paula wanted her to work full time, she and Marge did not want to let Renee go. "Paula would say, 'we'll work something out,'" Renee said. What they worked out was a part-time schedule that suits Renee perfectly.

Because of the nature of her work, Renee worked closely with Paula. "She was very responsive," Renee said, describing her relationship with Paula as "perfect from my side." The flexibility she has enjoyed, and knowing she was valued and appreciated, are two things Renee has always prized about her job. She also really enjoys the work itself. "I used to joke with Paula that PACER's finances are like a jigsaw puzzle. There are always new pieces to fit in place. And I like puzzles," Renee said.

"PACER's varied funding streams keep my work interesting. With new funding, individual pieces have changed and expanded but the main structure remains in place. It is definitely not boring!"

## Today... and tomorrow

When she's not at PACER, Renee loves to spend time at the family cabin, read historical fiction, do puzzles, and cheer on her youngest son, Ben, at his college baseball games. She and her husband, Tim, also have two older children, Sara and Jack.

One interesting thing about Renee: she recently became a citizen of Luxembourg, and now holds dual U.S./Luxembourg citizenship. "My grandmother was 100% Luxembourgish," Renee said. "I traveled to Luxembourg in September of 2021 to complete the citizenship process. It will give my kids and future grandkids extra options for travel, working abroad, etc. with an EU (European Union) passport. Extra options seem like a good thing!"

Looking to the future, Renee said, "I love that we have such an interest and ability to expand to areas that have a need," citing PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center and the Minnesota Statewide Family Engagement Center as examples. She's interested in seeing what comes next. In terms of what comes next for Renee, she said, "I'm tied to the organization and the people here. I plan to work at PACER until I retire!" ■



## **Transitioning to Adulthood:** *What Changes at Age 18?*

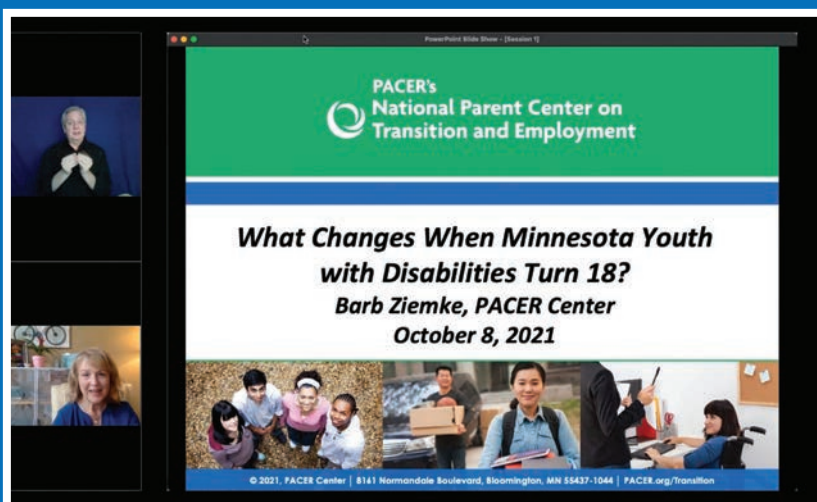
When a youth with a disability turns 18, their educational and legal rights change, as does the role of their parent. The transition can be complicated, but PACER is here to support families as they adjust to changing roles. A comprehensive PACER video presentation, ***What Changes When Minnesota Youth With Disabilities Turn 18?*** is available at: [PACER.org/learning-center/transition-mn](https://PACER.org/learning-center/transition-mn)

**The video includes information about:**

- Educational and legal rights
- High school graduation and continuing special education and transition services
- Publicly funded adult disability services, supports, and benefits
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits
- County and human services
- Medical Assistance (MA)
- Housing benefits
- Vocational rehabilitation services
- Community-based organizations
- Ongoing paperwork and “case management”
- Tips for youth who do not qualify for adult disability services

PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment co-director Barb Ziemke emphasizes that parental involvement doesn't end just because a youth becomes a legal adult. Parental support is important as to help the young person develops self-determination, autonomy, and interdependence.

**“The parent’s role changes from decision maker to advisor, but it is still an important role,”** Barb said. “Research shows that effective parental support and family involvement leads to a greater likelihood of success for youth with disabilities.” ■



Barb Ziemke along with an ASL interpreter presenting in the video ***What Changes When Minnesota Youth with Disabilities Turn 18?*** available on PACER's website.

Find this and more at:

[PACER.org/learning-center/transition-mn](https://PACER.org/learning-center/transition-mn)

# PACER's Parent Leadership Programs

## *"Leadership is within you"*

PACER has a legacy of empowering parents to advocate for their children's educational needs, and of advocating for change to educational systems. PACER's parent leadership training programs combine the two, giving parents the tools they need to lead systems change at the local and state levels.

"The parents who participate in leadership training are ready to move from advocating for their own child to advocating for systems change to benefit all children with disabilities," said Rachel Pearson, a PACER senior parent advocate and trainer.

One of those parents was Jennie Clare, who completed the parent leadership training two years ago. Jennie had already begun to take on leadership advocacy roles and, she said, "The training provided a context, a broader picture of special education as a whole." The training also was a factor in Jennie making a career change: she joined PACER's staff as a parent advocate, and part of her job is helping to lead parent leadership trainings. "The parent leadership training definitely inspired my desire to support parents."

**PACER currently offers four different parent leadership development programs:**

- **Advocacy for Systems Change: Leadership Training for Parents of Children with Disabilities**, for all parents of children in special education
- **Parent Leadership Summit on Children's Mental Health**, for parents of children with mental health, emotional, or behavioral disorders (CMH-EBD)
- **Early Childhood Family Leadership Summit**, for parents of children ages 0-5 with disabilities
- **Minnesota Statewide Family Engagement Center (MNSFEC) Parent Leadership Training for Educational Advocacy**, for parents of children in general education

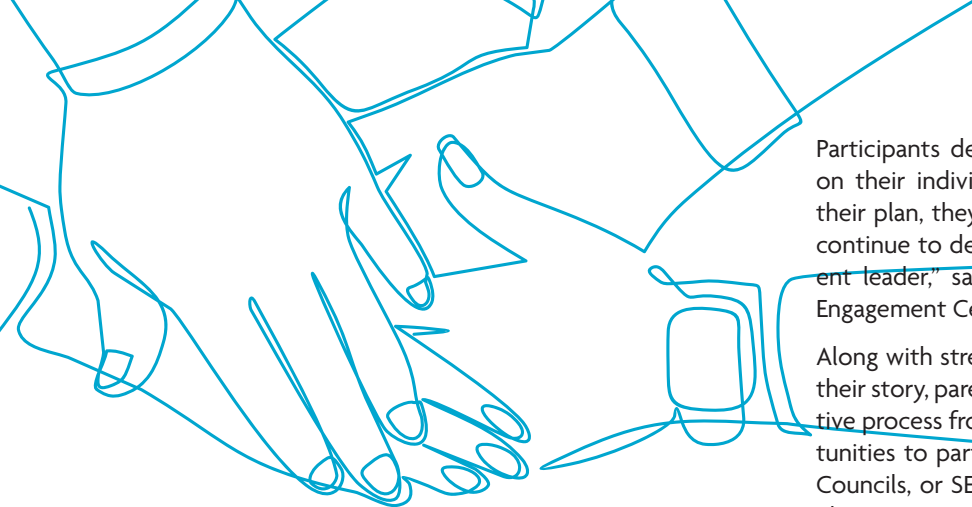
Though they focus on different areas, the goal of PACER's parent leadership training programs is the same: building the capacity of parents to advocate for educational systems change. One of the basic tenets of all four programs is understanding the power of the personal story. Parents learn to how to tell their stories in ways that touch hearts and change minds, and to hone their message to impact specific audiences.



Rachel Pearson,  
PACER senior parent advocate and trainer



Jennie Clare,  
PACER parent advocate and parent leadership trainer



Participants develop a leadership action plan, which is based on their individual strengths and goals. “As parents work on their plan, they consider how they can use their strengths and continue to develop their skills to achieve their goals as a parent leader,” said Rose Quintero, Minnesota Statewide Family Engagement Center (MNSFEC) project coordinator.

Along with strengthening their leadership skills and developing their story, parents also learn about public policy and the legislative process from expert speakers. The trainings explore opportunities to participate at the local (Special Education Advisory Councils, or SEACs) and state (boards and commissions) levels. The MNSFEC training discusses leadership opportunities for parents of children in regular education classes.



**Rose Quintero,**  
PACER's MNSFEC project coordinator

Participants in PACER's parent leadership programs must live in Minnesota and have a desire to become more deeply involved in advocating for systems change. They are selected through an application process, and no leadership experience is necessary, although it is very helpful for participation in the Early Childhood Family Leadership Summit, which is currently being revamped as part of a federal pilot program. “It's like a graduate level leadership course,” explained Judy Swett, PACER's early childhood program coordinator. “There is a heavy focus on learning how to understand and use data. The purpose of the training is working with parents to help them become members of stakeholder groups, reviewing data and making decisions for systems change.” When the new program is up and running, she hopes to recruit participants who have completed leadership training; however, the training will also be open to motivated parents who are willing to spend extra time up front to get up to speed on leadership basics.

“One of the most impactful parts of the trainings is not on the agenda,” said Maleenia Mohabir, the coordinator of PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project. “For some parents, connecting with others is exciting. Parents recognize other parents' skills, and help them view themselves as leaders.”

Jennie Clare agreed about the importance of connecting with other parents. “When I was a participant, I found it empowering to learn about the challenges and successes other parent attendees have experienced in their advocacy efforts.

“Shared validation and encouragement provide powerful inspiration for continuing pursuit of positive change.”

For more information about leadership training opportunities, go to [PACER.org/events/parent-leadership-training](https://PACER.org/events/parent-leadership-training). ■



**Maleenia Mohabir,**  
PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional  
Behavioral Disorders Project coordinator

*“Leadership is within you;  
opportunities to lead are  
all around you.”*

- PACER's parent leadership training motto





Debra Linder

## PACER's Endowment Fund:

*"Why I give"*

Debra Linder, a PACER donor for the last ten years, feels strongly about supporting PACER's endowment fund. "PACER is important to so many people," she said. "With government and other funding uncertain, many organizations are struggling with budget cuts. We need to make sure PACER is here in the long run to provide the services and support families need."

### Debra's PACER connection

Ten years ago, Debra was on a plane to Los Angeles to see a law client, when she noticed that the woman in the next seat was reading some material about Diana Ross. "My seat mate explained that she was Paula Goldberg, executive director of PACER Center, and Diana was going to be the entertainer at PACER's Benefit," Debra said. Debra, a Minneapolis-based attorney, was interested – she was a fan of Ross, and lived just blocks from the convention center. Debra enjoyed that first Benefit so much that she tries to attend every year.

Like many people who met PACER's late executive director on a plane or elsewhere, Debra became involved with PACER. It didn't start – or end – with the Benefit; Debra soon received a letter from Paula, inviting her to join PACER's business advisory board. "After I got the letter, I looked up PACER," Debra said. "I was very impressed with PACER's story and services." She's been on the advisory board ever since; this year she is also serving on the Benefit committee. "It's fun to be part of it," Debra said. "The committee and staff have it down to a science." In addition to Debra's individual support, her law firm, Fredrikson & Byron, has become a regular Benefit sponsor.

"PACER is about helping families, but also about bullying prevention and assisting teachers and professionals with awareness, support, whatever is needed."

*"I'm very happy to do what I can to help carry out PACER's mission and Paula's vision."*

- Debra Linder

### About PACER's endowment

PACER's endowment comes from donor gifts: cash, stock, estate plans, or other assets. These funds are placed in a legally restricted fund that is permanently invested; the interest and investment earnings may be used for PACER's programs or operations, but the principal is kept intact.

An endowment helps PACER plan for the future and ensures that PACER's programs will always be there to meet the emerging needs of families and children with disabilities and all children who are bullied. An endowment is not subject to the ups and downs of government funding; it helps provide a strong foundation so that PACER's funding remains stable, even when times are uncertain.

There are many ways to give to PACER's endowment. Endowment donors may choose to make a one-time gift, plan regular gifts, or make PACER part of their estate plan. One PACER donor likes to give at the end of the year; another gives small amounts monthly. Some donors who give on a regular basis also combine their methods of giving, such as making PACER a beneficiary of their estate plan or donating appreciated stock. Making an endowment gift can also benefit a donor by reducing their tax obligation.

"Donating to PACER's endowment is a great way to honor a loved one," said Gretchen Godfrey, PACER's interim executive director. "PACER also has established the Paula F. Goldberg Endowment Fund, which honors Paula's legacy, and is dedicated to ensuring PACER's long-term success."



PACER has established the  
Paula F. Goldberg Endowment Fund

To learn more about how to give to PACER's endowment, contact Debbie Andrews at (952) 838-9000 or [Debbie.Andrews@PACER.org](mailto:Debbie.Andrews@PACER.org).

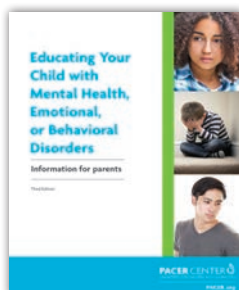
# PACER Resources

To see the full list of PACER publications and to order, go to [PACER.org/publications](http://PACER.org/publications).  
You may also order by calling (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237.

## Educating Your Child with Mental Health, Emotional, or Behavioral Disorders: Information for Parents

This guide helps parents of children with mental health, emotional, or behavioral disorders participate effectively in special education planning, including school discipline policies, placement options, and behavioral and emotional support needs.

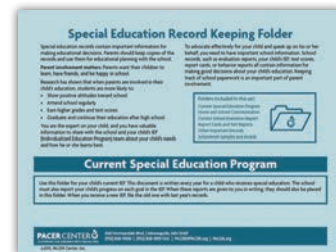
**\$5 | 10+ copies, \$4 each | PHP-a21**



## Special Education School Record Keeping Folders

These folders are a practical way for parents of children in special education classes to stay organized to keep track of their student's progress in school. Each of the six folders have tips for gathering and using the information to help your child be successful in school. Available in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

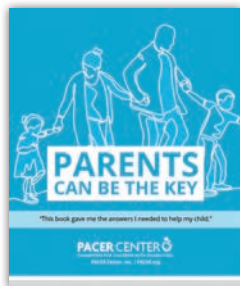
**\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5**



## Parents Can Be the Key

As a parent, you know your child in a way no one else can. You are an expert on your child and a vital member of the team that plans your child's education. You, as a parent, can be the key to an appropriate education for your child. To be an effective advocate, you must know your rights and those of your child. This book offers an overview of special education in Minnesota.

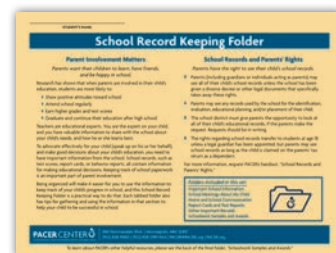
**\$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a1**



## General Education School Record Keeping Folders

These folders are a practical way for parents of typical children to stay organized to keep track of their student's progress in school. Each of the six folders have tips for gathering and using the information to help your child be successful in school. Available in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

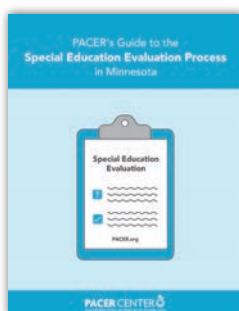
**\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | MPC-6**



## PACER's Guide to the Special Education Evaluation Process in Minnesota

If your child is having trouble learning at school, they may need more or different support. One option as a first step is to ask your child's teacher if they are also concerned. Another is to ask for a comprehensive special education evaluation. This guidebook is intended to help Minnesota parents and guardians navigate this process. Free to download.

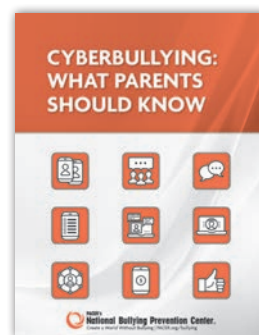
**\$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a58**



## Cyberbullying: What Parents Should Know

Students have instant access to cell phones, tablets, and computers, which open the door to exciting new ways of connecting, interacting, and learning. However, these modes of communication also present challenges. This 16-page booklet has information for parents on how to guide children through this virtual world. Free to download. Available in English and Spanish.

**\$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 | BP-23**



**Did you know** that many of PACER's publications are translated into **Hmong, Somali, and Spanish?**

To view our translated publications and learn more, visit: [PACER.org/translations](http://PACER.org/translations) or call PACER at **(952) 838-9000**

# PACER Workshops

Visit [PACER.org/workshops](https://PACER.org/workshops) to register for workshops, view the most up-to-date listings, and to learn where in-person workshops are held and which platform will be used for hybrid or virtual work-shops. If you have questions, contact [PACERworkshops@PACER.org](mailto:PACERworkshops@PACER.org) or call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237.

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

### Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

**Thurs., Oct. 13, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Fergus Falls)**

When children or teenagers experience escalating behaviors at school, a proactive crisis plan can help support recovery and wellness. This workshop will provide information on strengths-based planning in the school setting.

### Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

**Tues., Oct. 18, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Virtual)**

See above workshop for description.

### Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

**Tues., Nov. 1, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Brainerd)**

See above workshop for description.

### Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

**Wed., Nov. 9, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Virtual)**

See above workshop for description.

### Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges

**Tues., Nov. 15, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Virtual rebroadcast)**

See above workshop for description.

## PARENT TRAINING

### Hot Tips: Is Your Child's IEP Individualized and Appropriate

**Tues., Oct. 11, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Virtual)**

Parents will learn to use their child's special education evaluation report to determine how well the Individualized Education Program (IEP) addresses their child's needs. Parents should have the child's most current school evaluation and IEP.

### Tips and Tools for Talking with School Staff

**Tues., Oct. 25, 2022 • 6:30 to 8 p.m. (Virtual)**

This workshop provides parents of special education students with practical tips and interactive problem-solving experiences to build the skills necessary to communicate effectively with school staff and resolve differences.

### Starting the Journey: Travel Tips for Navigating the Special Education System with Your Child

**Sat., Nov. 12, 2022 • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. (Battle Lake)**

Parents who are new to special education will gain a broad overview of how it works, their important role in the special education process, and tools and resources from PACER Center to help them on their journey. This workshop is made possible using funding from the Minnesota Department of Education and is a collaboration with Lionseed Bookstore & Learning Commons.

### Effective Communication with the IEP Team

**Sat., Nov. 12, 2022 • 11 a.m. to noon (Battle Lake)**

Parents who are familiar with the special education process will learn communication strategies to help them advocate for their child at IEP team meetings to help shape their child's special education services and supports. This workshop is made possible using funding from the Minnesota Department of Education and is a collaboration with Lionseed Bookstore & Learning Commons.

## SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

### Back to School Stress: Apps and Tools to Minimize School Stressors

**Thurs., Oct. 13, 2022 • 1 to 2 p.m. (Virtual)**

School is back in session, and your elementary or high school student may experience increased stress. This workshop will explore tools and apps you or your child can use to decrease stressors and distractions.

### Assistive Technology for Students with Dyslexia: Part One

**Wed., Nov. 16, 2022 • 2 to 3 p.m. (Virtual)**

This workshop will discuss the fundamentals of dyslexia for families with students from elementary through college age. Demonstrations will include low-tech to high-tech tools to support literacy and reading.

### Alternative Access for Apple Devices

**Wed., Nov. 30, 2022 • Noon to 1 p.m. (Virtual)**

Learn about switch access for Apple products! This workshop will explore alternative ways to control your Mac computer, MacBook laptop, iPad, and iPhones.

### Assistive Technology for Students with Dyslexia: Part Two

**Wed., Dec. 7, 2022 • 2 to 3 p.m. (Virtual)**

This workshop will explore a range of tools that support students with dyslexia throughout their school years. Tools demonstrated will cover text-to-speech for various formats, audiobooks, and writing support.

### Assistive Technology Supports for Writing

**Tues., Dec. 13, 2022 • 2 to 3 p.m. (Virtual)**

Does your student struggle with writing? This workshop will cover the most up-to-date devices and tools that help improve writing skills.

## TECH FOR TEENS CLUB

### Intro to Video Game Coding

**Sat., Oct. 29, 2022 • 10 to 11 a.m. (Hybrid – at PACER and virtual)**

Participants in this STEM workshop will learn about video games and the basics of video game development, including what makes a video game work. Participants will code their own basic video game using Scratch. Stay for Video Game Coding: The Next Level to learn how to build more complex video game levels.



### Video Game Coding: The Next Level

Sat., Oct. 29, 2022 • 11 a.m. to noon  
(Hybrid – at PACER and virtual)

Participants in this workshop will code more complex video game encounters using Scratch. It is not necessary to have attended the intro workshop to attend this session.

### Intro to Coding Virtual Reality

Sat., Dec. 10, 2022 • 10 to 11 a.m.  
(Hybrid – at PACER and virtual)

Participants in this workshop will learn about virtual reality: what it is and how to create virtual reality experiences. They will then explore virtual reality experiences. Stay for Coding Virtual Reality: The Next Level to create your own virtual reality experience.

### Coding Virtual Reality: The Next Level

Sat., Dec. 10, 2022 • 11 a.m. to noon  
(Hybrid – at PACER and virtual)

Participants in this workshop will take virtual reality coding to the next level by creating their own virtual reality experience. It is not necessary to have attended the intro workshop to attend this session.

## TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

### Uncovering the Mysteries of Vocational Rehabilitation and Work

Thurs., Oct. 20, 2022 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
(Virtual rebroadcast)

Participants in this workshop will learn about their rights to services from Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB). A range of topics will be covered, including funding for college and other career training, assistive technology, transportation, and more.

### Young Adults and Social Security Benefits

Thurs., Nov. 3, 2022 • 1 to 2 p.m.  
(Virtual rebroadcast)

Participants in this workshop will learn about the Social Security Administration's decision-making process, including tips for submitting an effective application. We will discuss how benefits change at age 18, and programs that continue benefit payments.

## Foster and Surrogate Parents

### New PACER Video Explores Decision-Making Under IDEA

What is a surrogate parent, for the purposes of making decisions about a child's special education? What role do they play, and how do surrogate and foster parents differ? PACER's comprehensive new video, **Overview of the Difference Between the Roles of Foster Parents and Surrogate Parents in Special Education**, answers these questions and more.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a parent must be involved in every step of a child's special education process. This in-depth look at the role of parents under IDEA includes information about:

- Who can function as a parent in special education, including when and how foster parents are included
- The difference between foster and surrogate parents
- When and how a surrogate parent is appointed to fulfill the parental role
- How foster parents can navigate the special education system

This video can be viewed at:

[PACER.org/parent/surrogate/different-roles.asp](https://PACER.org/parent/surrogate/different-roles.asp)

For more information or questions about the roles foster and surrogate parents play in the special education process, contact [surrogate@PACER.org](mailto:surrogate@PACER.org) or call (952) 838-9000.

**PACER CENTER**  
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

### The Differences in the Roles of Foster Parents and Surrogate Parents in Special Education

Partial funding provided by Minnesota Department of Education



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*Live and In Person Performing at  
PACER's Annual Benefit*

**PENTATONIX**

**Saturday, November 5, 2022  
Minneapolis Convention Center**



**Tickets on sale NOW!**  
**PACER.org/Benefit**  
**(952) 838-9000**