

# PACESETTER

A news magazine of PACER Center, Inc. | Champions for Children | (952) 838-9000 | PACER.org

## 'Inspiring Opportunities' Visit PACER's Children's Mental Health Project website

PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project has been helping families of children with emotional and behavioral disabilities for many years. Among the issues PACER staff helps with are depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder.

The Project's new, expanded website, "Inspiring Opportunities," contains information for families and professionals. The site features youth videos, posts from PACER's blog on The Disney Company's Babble blog site, news from PACER's Youth Mental Health Advisory Board, information about transitioning to adult health care, links to resources, and much more.

The resource section of "Inspiring Opportunities" is full of amazing information for parents and families. According to Renelle Nelson, Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project coordinator, "Often parents wonder if their child's behaviors are significant enough to need professional attention, and if they are, where to turn. We have worked hard to provide resources to help them decide what's appropriate." Nelson suggests that parents begin by reading an article from the resource section: "Does My Child have an Emotional or Behavioral Disorder?"

Visit the "Inspiring Opportunities" website at [PACER.org/CMH](http://PACER.org/CMH).

## Jay Leno to headline PACER's May 13 Benefit!

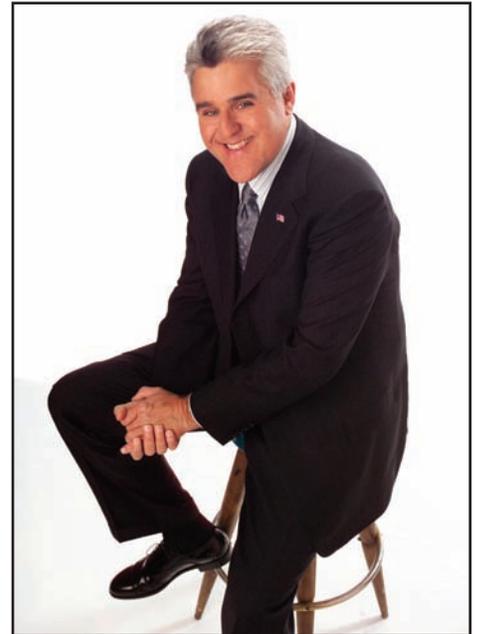
The legendary Jay Leno, one of the country's most popular comedians, will have the audience laughing nonstop at PACER's 35th Annual Benefit on Saturday, May 13 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Leno is an Emmy Award-winning late night TV show host, star of CNBC's "Jay Leno's Garage," and, first and foremost, an amazing stand-up comedian. "He's fantastic," said PACER's Executive Director, Paula Goldberg. "Jay Leno was our headliner previously, and people are still talking about how wonderful he was. We are thrilled that our audience will have the chance to experience Jay's magic."

Leno has performed thousands of comedy shows over the past 20 years. He averages more than 100 shows per year. Named "America's Favorite TV Personality" by the Harris Poll and a recipient of the nation's top humor prize, the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, he has been touted as one of the nicest people in show business, and the hardest-working. Leno remains passionate about performing in front of live audiences.

Proceeds from the Benefit support PACER's programs for children with disabilities and their families, and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. Tickets start at \$75 and include the amazing silent and live auctions.

To reserve Benefit tickets, please see page 3 of this newsletter, go online to [PACER.org](http://PACER.org), or call (952) 838-9000.



# PACER touches families in ‘deep and meaningful ways’

Jessica Mattson’s son, Ben, was just 18 months old when she started noticing differences in his behavior. Though he was growing well and meeting most of his developmental milestones, Ben wasn’t talking and he was hitting without warning. Jessica noticed more differences when she joined an Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) group and observed Ben alongside 16 other children who were the same age.

“My son was the only child who would not sit in my lap during circle time,” Jessica said. “He was the only one hitting other children, and who had a speech delay. My child was the only one who would say ‘hi’ to everyone in the classroom and then find a toy to play with alone. He would not interact with other children.”

Jessica eventually contacted her school district and requested a full evaluation for Ben, which led to weekly speech therapy services in her home. By the time he was two and a half, the speech therapist said Ben was making good progress, but she was concerned about his behavior, including frequent meltdowns and difficulty transitioning from one task to the next.

## A ‘confusing time’

The school district completed additional testing and evaluated Ben as having autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and a speech-language impairment. Jessica brought these findings to a pediatrician, who said, “I don’t see anything wrong with him.”

“It was a really confusing time,” Jessica said. “We didn’t know what this meant for our family and for Ben. We didn’t know what to do.”

Jessica pursued early intervention services through her school district. She also contacted PACER.

“I didn’t understand ASD or special education or what these services were going to mean for our family,” Jessica said. “You don’t know what you don’t know, and that’s when I called PACER for more information. I felt better that I had a place to call where I felt validated to ask lots of questions.”

Jessica began attending PACER trainings and workshops, including her first leadership training in 2010. Through PACER, she learned about special education law and the importance of sharing her own story. She also began building a relationship with Judy Swett, PACER’s Early Childhood Education coordinator.



Jessica Mattson (left) and PACER Advocate Judy Swett

## Cultivating a passion for education

Jessica considers herself a “big picture thinker,” and Judy helped her make sense of the special education system, both in Minnesota and across the United States. With guidance from people like Judy, Jessica joined her local Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC). As she learned more about the larger system, she applied and was appointed to the Governor’s Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC). She has just completed her four-year term as the co-chair and parent representative.

Jessica has also served on PACER’s board of directors, and she is finishing up her director of community education licensure program this winter.

Jessica said that Ben, now 10 years old, is successful in school.

“Being a parent of a child in special education is a lifelong learning experience,” she said. “A great school district can have a big impact, but organizations like PACER offer so many opportunities. I tell people about PACER and remind them that the trainings are free. The information PACER provides is invaluable. It touches a family’s life in deep and meaningful ways.”

# PACER honors the memory of Sandra Gish with endowment fund

PACER Center said a sad goodbye to Sandra Gish, who died of cancer on August 21, 2016. Gish, the sign language interpreter at PACER's benefit galas for the past 22 years, was an incredible and beloved leader for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. Gish created her own model of interpreting and taught American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpretation at the college level for more than 30 years. She founded the Bachelor's degree program in ASL/English interpretation at Western Oregon University.



Sandra Gish

"Sandra Gish was a wonderful human being," said Paula Goldberg, PACER's Executive Director. "She loved PACER, and we loved having her at the benefits. Her warmth and kindness were felt by all who knew her. She cared so much about individuals with disabilities. She is missed by so many people."

To honor Gish, PACER has created an endowment fund in her name. "PACER created this fund after speaking with Sandra Gish's brother, Richard," said Goldberg. "It seems so fitting to remember her with a gift to PACER Center."

## How to support PACER's Sandra Gish endowment fund

There are a number of ways to give to the Sandra Gish Endowment at PACER. A supporter may make a one-time gift, structure a gift to be given over a five-year period, or give through an IRA rollover. You can name PACER as a beneficiary in a will, in retirement plan assets, or in life insurance policies.

When someone includes PACER in their planned giving, they are making sure that their values and priorities live on. "Every gift is so important," Goldberg said. "PACER serves

children and families at no cost. Giving to the Sandra Gish Endowment at PACER means that children and families will always have access to PACER's services."

To learn more about PACER's endowment fund and how you can donate, please call Executive Director Paula Goldberg at (952) 838-9000 or email her at [pgoldberg@PACER.org](mailto:pgoldberg@PACER.org). You may also give online to the Sandra Gish Endowment at [PACER.org/help/donate.asp](http://PACER.org/help/donate.asp)

## Reservations for PACER's May 13th Benefit Featuring Jay Leno

To reserve your tickets for the 2017 PACER Benefit on May 13 featuring Jay Leno, please complete the form below and mail or email it to PACER Center. Reservations can also be made at [PACER.org](http://PACER.org) or by calling (952) 838-9000.

### Benefit Tickets (Please indicate number of each)

\_\_\_\_ \$75 Friend      \_\_\_\_ \$100 Supporter      \_\_\_\_ \$150 Patron\*      \_\_\_\_ \$225 Benefactor\*  
\_\_\_\_ \$300 Sponsor\*      \_\_\_\_ \$600 Champion\*      Total amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My check (payable to PACER Center) is enclosed.       Please charge my credit card.

VISA    MC    AMEX    DISCOVER   Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ Billing address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Names of persons for whom you are purchasing tickets: \_\_\_\_\_

I need:  Wheelchair seating (# of spaces \_\_\_\_\_)    Sign language interpretation    Assistive listening device

\* Includes post-performance patron champagne and dessert party

### Other Contributions/Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact me about:    donating to the Silent Auction    being a Corporate Sponsor (includes ticket package and ad)  
    advertising in the Benefit Playbill    volunteering on a Benefit committee

Please mail to: PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044 | Email: [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org)

# Surviving a child's suicide: Adam Levy's keynote at PACER symposium

It's been said that the hardest thing in the world for a parent is surviving the death of their child. When the child dies by suicide, grief takes on a whole new dimension. Parents commonly have feelings of guilt, failure, anger, shame, and depression. The stigma attached to suicide can make it hard to talk about, or to hear about, such a devastating loss.

But after Adam Levy, a nationally known singer-songwriter, lost his oldest child to suicide, he found that speaking about it was both healing for him and helpful for audiences. Levy, who is best known as the frontman for The Honeydogs, was a keynote speaker at PACER's symposium on August 9, 2016.

Levy's son, Daniel, a talented artist, was 21 years old when he died in 2012. Daniel had attempted suicide previously and struggled with mental illness for years. He was hospitalized seven times during the last two years of his life.

Symposium attendees found Levy's keynote address touching and inspiring. His presentation included a slideshow of photos of Daniel throughout the years, pictures of Daniel's artwork, and music he wrote about Daniel for the CD "Naubinway." The title refers to the beach on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where Daniel's mother last saw him smile.

Some of the comments about Levy's presentation included:

- "Adam's presentation was brilliant and insightful and so brave. Very helpful to me."
- "He has turned a tragedy into a learning experience, and that helps remove the stigma of mental illness for me."



Adam Levy performs at PACER's Symposium

- "Excellent presentation style and so helpful to hear from a parent who has faced the loss of his child to suicide."
- "I found this speaker extremely powerful and moving. I was surprised by how interesting and captivating this was. My favorite part of the entire day!"

Suicide is a major cause of death among children and young adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it is the third leading cause of death among children aged 10-14 and the second leading cause of death among teens and young adults 15-34. There are few statistical studies about the prevalence of suicide among people with disabilities.

## Appropriate language

It's important to use appropriate language when discussing suicide. Here is a guide to language suggested by the suicide prevention community.

### Instead of saying:

"Committed suicide" or  
"successful suicide"

"Failed suicide attempt"

### Say this instead:

"Died by suicide"

"Survived suicide attempt" or  
"Attempted suicide"

## SAVE THE DATE:

**PACER's 2017 Symposium  
on Mental Health and  
Learning Disabilities is  
Tuesday, August 15**

*Registration will open in Spring 2017*

# Run, Walk, Roll! National Bullying Prevention Month kickoff

The sun shone brightly on October 1, 2016 at PACER's annual Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying, presented by the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE). The event kicked off the 10th anniversary of National Bullying Prevention Month. Hundreds of people joined PACER at Lake Normandale Park in Bloomington, Minn. Jason Matheson of "The Jason Show" was the master of ceremonies. Special guests included 14-year-old race car driver Mandy Chick, who traveled from her home in Kansas to attend, and Madeline Van Ert, Miss Minnesota 2016.



Above: Mandy Chick with her race car that bears PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center's logo.



## Chris Moore visits PACER

Chris Moore, a well-known movie and video producer from Los Angeles and a member of PACER's National Business Advisory Board, spent a day with PACER staff in October, 2016. Chris, who is a producer of the award-winning movie *Good Will Hunting*, the *American Pie* films, *Project Greenlight*, and the new hit movie *Manchester by the Sea*, talked with PACER staff about effective ways to communicate through authentic video. "PACER does amazing work every day," he said. "Video is a great way to communicate about it."



L-R: Virginia Richardson, Julie Hertzog, Chris Moore, and Paula Goldberg

Supporting PACER runs in Moore's family: His daughter Maddie is a member of PACER's Los Angeles Youth Advisory Board for the National Bullying Prevention Center.

# 'Sit With Us': How a 16-year-old girl used her bullying experience to help others

Carolyn Hampton of Sherman Oaks, Calif., had always planned that her daughter, Natalie, would attend the girls middle and high school she herself had graduated from. Carolyn looked forward to Natalie, who had had a “great” experience in elementary school, attending the school she had loved.

## A difficult start

It didn't work out that way. “At first, it seemed like she just wasn't fitting in,” Carolyn said. Natalie wasn't making friends. Some of the girls verbally bullied her, and she ate lunch alone every day.

Then in the spring, Natalie was physically attacked. “She was slapped around and tripped,” Carolyn said. “She had fingernail marks on her face and bruises on her legs.”

A week later, a different group of girls bullied Natalie. “They took her laptop and played keep away with it in an area with a brick floor,” Carolyn said. “They knocked Natalie down, pinned her to the ground and stood on her head.”

Carolyn was shocked that the school's administration did little to stop the bullying. The school didn't seem to care about Natalie's experiences, and the students involved faced no consequences.

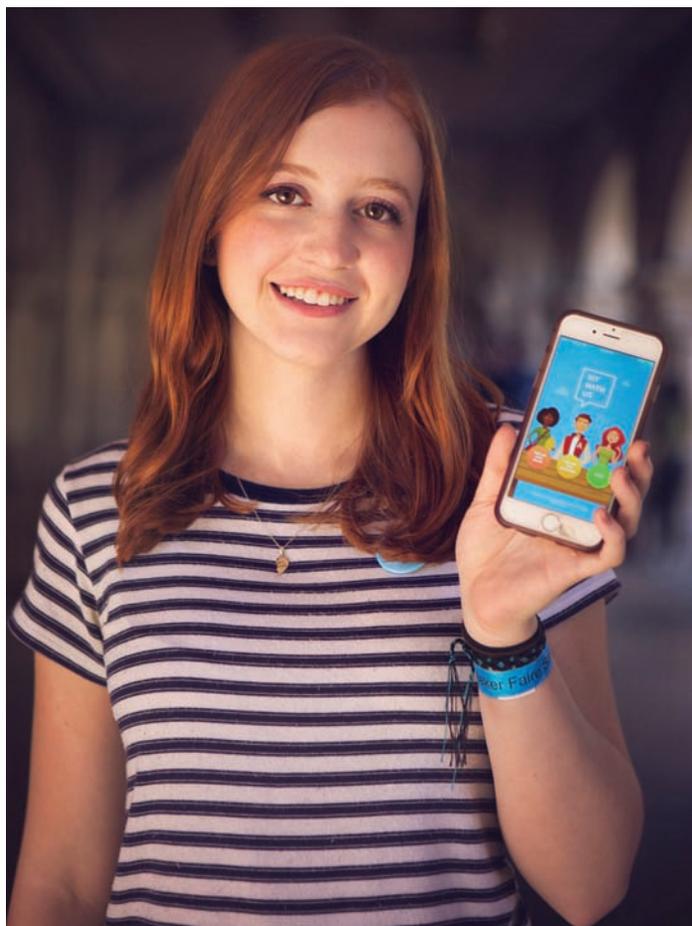
Meanwhile, Carolyn was troubled by the changes in her daughter. “Natalie went in to the school as a kid who was happy. She loved school and academics. After the bullying began, she started to say that she was sick to avoid going to school. She was withdrawn and shrunk into herself. It was so sad to see.”

Over the summer, Carolyn tried to help Natalie form some friendships with classmates. Though that didn't work out, the Hamptons tried to be optimistic for the next school year.

## The bullying continues

When school started again, so did the bullying. Sometimes it occurred after teachers praised Natalie's work. “Natalie is a good student. Teachers would hold up her work as an example,” Carolyn said.

Things came to a head when Natalie was the only student in her class able to complete a difficult physics lab. Another student threatened to stab her in the neck.



Natalie Hampton with the "Sit With Us" app she created.

Natalie was developing physical symptoms that Carolyn thought pointed to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “When she was in a room, she would scan the exit,” Carolyn said. She wanted Natalie to change schools, but after her theatre-loving daughter gained a good role in the school play, they postponed the decision. “We wanted to take the time to make sure the next school would be better.”

Natalie hoped to make it through the school year without another bullying incident. Then she saw a group of girls who had bullied her, bullying a younger student. “The kid looked terrified,” Carolyn said. “Natalie put herself between the group and the younger girl, and yelled at them to back off.”

After she transferred to a new school, “She fell in with a nice group of friends,” Carolyn says. Things were better from the very beginning.

*Continued on next page*

## Choosing to help

Even though she was happy in her new school, Natalie couldn't forget her experiences. She remembered what it was like to eat lunch alone everyday, and she wanted to help others in the same situation. The "Sit With Us" app was born.

The reasoning behind the app is simple: Students volunteer to be "ambassadors" and host "open lunches" in their school cafeterias. Other students use their phones to find a place to sit at lunch, without having to risk public rejection.

Word about the app spread, and Natalie was sought out for media interviews, starting with National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." Soon she was interviewed by the Today show, the Washington Post and Us Magazine.

The media attention was bittersweet, Carolyn said. "Natalie had to constantly relive what had happened to her." Natalie is willing to be interviewed because she believes that eating lunch alone everyday made her even more of a target for bullying. She wants to help end the isolation.

"Sit With Us" is currently available for iOS (iPhone), and an Android version is in the works.

## The PACER connection

The Hamptons have partnered with PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center (NBPC). "We looked at the website when Natalie was being bullied," Carolyn said, "Disney connected us to PACER's NBPC. We knew that we wanted to partner with PACER."



Natalie Hampton (second from right) celebrates Unity Day 2016 with friends.

Natalie taped a video for PACER wearing the Unity Day T-shirt (view it at [PACER.org/Bullying/getinvolved/natalie-hampton.asp](http://PACER.org/Bullying/getinvolved/natalie-hampton.asp)). She recently spoke to teens at the "Girls Can Do" conference and passed out PACER bookmarks to the 2,000 girls in attendance. She has joined the Youth Advisory Board of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center's Los Angeles office.

"It is important to Natalie that she make a difference for others who are excluded and bullied," Carolyn said.

## Thank you to the Walt Disney Company!

This year, for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month, the Walt Disney Company supported PACER as part of Disney's Choose Kindness campaign. PACER was included in a public service announcement (PSA) campaign on Disney Channel, Disney XD, ABC, and Freeform, and was highlighted in blog and social media posts. Disney amplified its efforts on Unity Day, October 19, 2016 with segments on *Good Morning America* and *The View*. Disney also held an event on its Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media campus to get employees involved in this important issue.

"PACER has many wonderful partners who support us in the work we do for children and families," said Executive Director Paula Goldberg. "We'd like to say a special thank you to the Walt Disney Company for its help during the 10th anniversary of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month. We are truly grateful for Disney's support!"



The "Choose Kindness" wall at Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media campus on Unity Day.

# PACER's corporate sponsor committee is a hard-working group of volunteers

PACER Center is fortunate to have friends and volunteers who are true Champions for Children with Disabilities. They choose to support PACER in a variety of ways.

Raising funds is a rewarding way to support families and children, and one of the longest-serving and hardest-working group of volunteers is PACER's benefit corporate sponsor committee. The committee consists of local business leaders and individuals who make financial contributions to PACER and share PACER's mission.

"Our corporate sponsor committee is an incredible group of business leaders and interested people who make a major difference in the lives of children with disabilities and children who are bullied," said Executive Director Paula Goldberg. "They are passionate about the work they do for PACER and the money they raise allows us to provide more services to children and families in Minnesota and around the country."

The committee is co-chaired by Don Davidson, owner and CEO of Sears Imported Auto, Hal Lieberman, president of Lieberman Companies, and Jim Oricchio, president of Coordinated Business Systems.

Davidson began his involvement with PACER 31 years ago. His daughter, now 37, was in first grade and the Davidsons worked with a PACER staff advocate who assisted them with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

meeting. He became a corporate sponsor shortly thereafter and joined the committee more than 20 years ago.

Hal Lieberman's family has been involved with PACER for many years, and his cousin Sam has a disability. He joined the corporate sponsor committee more than 10 years ago.

"Between my family's involvement and my relationship with Paula's sons, it was a natural fit for me," Lieberman said. "When you're busy and you want to get involved, you have to choose something that you're passionate about and, for me, that's PACER."



L-R: Hal Lieberman, Don Davidson, and Jim Oricchio

"I highlight the great work that PACER does for children with disabilities and the groundbreaking work it's doing on bullying prevention," he said. "A lot of people receive calls to support organizations, but PACER is easy to support for those reasons."

Oricchio began volunteering with PACER long before he had grandchildren. Then his first grandchild, who is now 16, was diagnosed with autism.

**“When you're busy and you want to get involved, you have to choose something you're passionate about. For me, that's PACER.”**

—Hal Lieberman

"I was already involved, so I had my daughter and son-in-law call PACER. They were scared, that's the best way to put it," Oricchio said. "I saw firsthand the important work that PACER does and its effect on families."

Oricchio said he is looking forward to making the 2017 benefit bigger and better than last year.

"Last year was over the top," Oricchio said, noting performer Idina Menzel's final song when she invited all of the young people to join her at the front of the stage. "To see the kids singing with Idina, that's what it's all about. I don't think there was a dry eye in the theater. We're giving these kids hope and we're getting together to celebrate PACER and raise money. That's what I'm looking forward to."

*Corporate sponsorships are available at all levels. For information about supporting PACER with a corporate sponsorship, contact Jackie Saffert at (952) 838-1315 or Executive Director Paula Goldberg at (952) 838-9000.*

# Innovative STEM technology workshops for teens with disabilities

PACER's Simon Technology Center's (STC) innovative Tech for Teens free workshop series brings together leading experts in the field of science and technology to open up a world of opportunities for teens with disabilities. Tech for Teens is offering two new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workshops over the winter and spring.

"This is such a unique and creative opportunity for teens with disabilities," said Bridget Gilormini, director of PACER's Simon Technology Center. "We are very sensitive to each child's disability, and we will make accommodations depending on their needs."

## Winter: 'Wheels and Wires'

In "Wheels and Wires," teens will learn the basics of an electrical circuit and how engineering can be used to help others, such as adapting a motorized car for a preschool child with a disability.

"The 'Go Baby Go' program, which adapts these little cars, is a real-life application of how electrical engineering can truly make a difference for a child with disabilities," Gilormini said.

## 'Star Wars' in the spring

The spring workshop is "Science or Science Fiction? A Star Wars 3D Printed Universe." Teens will learn from an instructor in full Star Wars costume about the science behind science fiction. They will learn the answers to questions such as "Can the 'force' actually be with you?" and "Is it possible to build a real droid?"

Teens will also learn about 3D printing technology, and walk through the engineering and design process through a hands-on simulated activity. The guest speaker will demonstrate how the printers work and their real-world application. Each teen will take home a Star Wars-themed 3D printed item.



PACER's STC Director Bridget Gilormini shows Lila how to drive her adapted Power Wheels Dune Racer, part of the "Go Baby Go" program.

"When teens with disabilities realize that they can create their own universe through 3D printed technology, anything is possible," Gilormini said.

*These workshops take place at PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd. in Bloomington. For additional information and to register, visit [PACER.org](http://PACER.org) or call (952) 838-9000. Registration is limited.*

**"This is such a unique and creative opportunity for teens with disabilities. It will be very exciting for them!"**

*— Bridget Gilormini, Director,  
PACER's Simon Technology Center*

## STEM workshops for teens

**"Wheels and Wires" • Saturday, Feb. 25 • 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

**"Science or Science Fiction? A Star Wars 3D Printed Universe" • Saturday, May 20 • 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

These workshops take place at PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd. in Bloomington. For additional information and to register, visit [PACER.org](http://PACER.org) or call (952) 838-9000. Registration is limited.

# Learning from each other: PACER's program for resident doctors brings teaching out of the hospital and into the home

PACER Center first began collaborating with the University of Minnesota Medical School's pediatric resident training program more than 25 years ago. The program initially focused on home visits by first-year resident doctors.

## Expanded learning

Over time, the program expanded, and now offers additional opportunities for resident doctors to meet with families in their homes. Today, the program includes an increased focus on the transition from pediatric to adult health care, and incorporates cultural competency in its focus.

Residents are matched with a family. The residents participate in several activities, including a family visit. According to parent participant Pat Lang, "It's an eye-opening experience for a resident to see the reality a family lives with and the methods they implement to keep their child alive. The resident saw firsthand the great lengths we go to as a family to be as hospital-like as possible in a loving, home atmosphere.

"I think the resident was surprised to see the organizational skills needed, the positive attitudes, love, and cost-effective way we make it work," said Lang.

The goals for residents include learning more about family-centered care and community resources for children and youth with special health needs or disabilities. Feedback from the residents involved has been very positive. One resident commented, "I want to thank you. This was one of the most memorable



*Pediatric resident Mikayla Lang with one of her patients.*

and impactful experiences I have had in my residency. This family is amazing, and I was so fortunate to meet them."

**“This was one of the most memorable and impactful experiences I have had in my residency.”**

*— Resident doctor*

Another resident referred to a youth and her mother as "Phenomenal. I will remember the home visit experience for a long time. It will change how I practice."

Families who are interested in participating in the program can contact Linda Cherwitz at

(952) 838-9000 or [linda.cherwitz@PACER.org](mailto:linda.cherwitz@PACER.org). Participants should be willing to open their home to a resident doctor and commit to a short training session and ongoing participation.

## And the survey says... Support PACER with SurveyMonkey

Helping PACER is now as easy as taking simple online surveys. PACER supporters can sign up on SurveyMonkey Contribute to receive short surveys from SurveyMonkey customers who need opinions on a variety of topics. For every survey completed, SurveyMonkey makes a donation to PACER, and participants have the opportunity to win \$100 in an instant win game. Participants' identities and information remain confidential. Sign up at [contribute.surveymonkey.com/charity/PACER](https://contribute.surveymonkey.com/charity/PACER).

# Families connect with PACER on social media — Please join us!

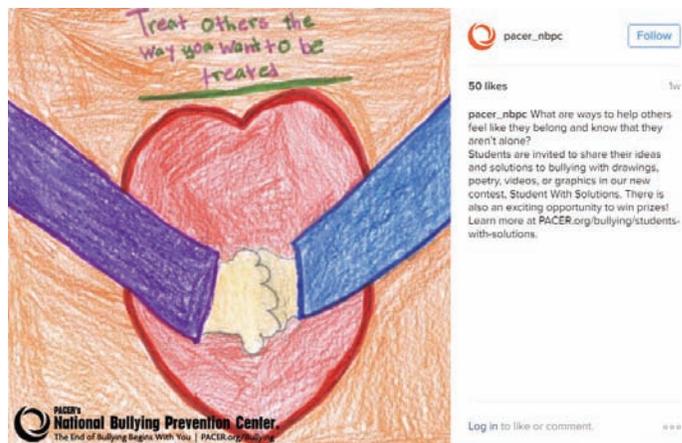
More people every day are “liking” PACER as its presence expands on social media platforms. “We are pleased to provide many ways for families to engage with PACER,” said Assistant Director Gretchen Godfrey. “Social media helps communicate information immediately, and share inspiring photos and stories from PACER families. It’s a great way for PACER friends to spread the word about PACER.”

You can “like” PACER Center on Facebook, and follow @pacercenter on Twitter and pacercenter on Instagram. You can find information on upcoming events and workshops, and resources that are available from PACER. You’ll see photos and videos of PACER families, staff, and supporters, and stories for families of children and youth with any disability and those who are bullied. More detailed information is always available at PACER.org.

## PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Month

PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center’s (NBPC) Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts (pacer\_nbpc) were very active in October, promoting National Bullying Prevention Month and Unity Day. One of the highlights was the release of four videos created by filmmakers and animators Lewie and Noah Kloster. The videos can be seen at PACER.org/Bullying; look for “Students with Solutions.” PACER also designed orange Facebook profile photo frames that were viewed by more than 5.5 million individuals.

Millions took part in the conversation around bullying prevention using #UnityDay2016, including The Disney



Follow [pacer\\_nbpc](#) on Instagram to get the latest news and updates from PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center.

Channel and ABC stars, the cast of the film *Loserville*, and YouTube sensation Bethany Mota.

Other PACER programs on social media:

- **The Simon Technology Center (STC).** On Pinterest: SimonTechCenter. Facebook’s “Minnesota Special Needs Equipment for Sale,” assists families of children and young adults with disabilities in buying and selling used assistive technology (AT) devices, software, and equipment.
- **PACER’s National Parent Center on Transition and Employment.** On Instagram: [pacer\\_parentcentertransition](#). On Facebook: PACER’s National Parent Center on Transition and Employment.

## Full circle with PACER’s puppet program

Fred Banister has been a volunteer puppeteer with PACER’s puppet program for more than 15 years. In December, Fred performed a very special puppet show for second graders at Randolph Heights Elementary School in St. Paul, Minn. Fred attended Randolph Heights from grades K-8, graduating in 1947. After the show, Fred took questions from the second grade children, discussing what Randolph Heights was like in the 1940s: how it has changed and what remains the same. This year is Randolph Heights’ centennial celebration.

The puppet show at Randolph Heights was paid for by the parents of a second grader with Down syndrome. A contribution of \$100 brings a puppet show to three classes of children.

Volunteers are needed, and training is provided. To contribute to the puppet program or to volunteer, contact puppet program coordinator Lynn Dennis at (952) 838-9000 or [lynn.dennis@PACER.org](mailto:lynn.dennis@PACER.org)



# Workshops

PACER Center workshops are free to Minnesota parents. For information and to register, call (952) 838-9000 (metro area) or toll free at (800) 537-2237, or visit [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops).

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL

### Special Education and Challenging Behaviors

This workshop offers information about how parents of children with mental health, emotional or behavioral challenges can effectively communicate through the school's special education process.

- **Jan. 19, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available
- **March 16, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Elk River)**

### Parent Leadership Training on Children's Mental Health

This workshop offers parents information about improvements and progress within systems of care, and support for children and youth with mental health and behavioral health challenges.

- **Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Challenging Behaviors and the Transition IEP: Making a Plan for High School and Beyond

This workshop provides information for parents of youth with challenging behaviors on creating a successful plan for graduation and beyond.

- **March 23, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Responding to Challenging Behaviors at Home, at School, and in the Community

This workshop covers tips and strategies on creating a home plan that supports positive behaviors, understanding the role of Section 504 and special education at school, and partnering with service providers when challenging behaviors persist.

- **May 8, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Becoming an Active Partner in Your Child's IEP

This workshop for parents of children ages three to five will provide an overview of the

early childhood special education process, including evaluation procedures, writing goals, family rights, and how to take an active lead in the IEP process.

- **Feb. 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Becoming an Active Partner in Your IFSP

This workshop features an overview of families' rights, roles, and responsibilities within the early intervention system process and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process.

- **Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Making the Move from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

For a child with disabilities, kindergarten readiness often requires special preparation. This workshop helps parents plan for this transition and learn how to help their child succeed in elementary school. Parents will learn how to become active participants in the transition process.

- **March 18, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Get a Seat at the Table: Learn How to Participate in the Decision-Making Process

This workshop helps prepare parents of young children up to age five to participate as stakeholders at multiple levels. Participants will learn about opportunities for involvement, review the skills needed to participate, and discuss the data used to make decisions.

- **April 1, 9 a.m. to Noon (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Everything You Need to Learn Before Your Child Turns Three

This workshop helps families understand the transition process from Part C Early Intervention Services to Part B Preschool Services. Topics include transition requirements, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), inclusion, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives. Parents will also learn how to actively participate in the transition process.

- **April 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Early Childhood Parent Leadership Training

The Family Leadership Summit is an interactive training for parents of young children up to age seven with developmental delays or disabilities. Parents learn how to make their voices heard and enhance their knowledge of the early childhood special education process. Email [jswett@pacer.org](mailto:jswett@pacer.org) for additional information.

- **April 22, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (PACER)**

## HOUSING

### Housing: Starting the Journey, three-part workshop series

#### Step 1 — Housing: How do we start?

This interactive workshop focuses on person-centered planning to help your son or daughter plan their vision for community living, housing, and services. An overview of the housing and services options will be provided.

- **Feb. 13, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Step 2 — Housing: How is it paid for?

Parents gain a "big picture" view of how housing is funded through federal, state, and county resources. Learn how your son or daughter can become eligible for and access funding. Topics include income supplements and budgets.

- **Feb. 27, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Step 3 — Housing: What are the options?

This interactive workshop provides a detailed explanation of individualized housing and services options to help parents and young adults consider their choices. A panel of parents, young adults, and housing providers share their journeys through the housing process.

- **March 14, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

### PACER's 13th Annual Housing Resource and Information Fair

Families meet with service providers, state and county representatives, and referral organizations to discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for young adults with disabilities.

- **April 15, 9 a.m. to Noon (PACER)**

## PARENT TRAINING

### Planning for Educational Inclusion

Parents of children with significant disabilities will learn about educational inclusion. Topics include Least Restrictive Environment, access to the general education curriculum, and tips for social inclusion at school.

- **Jan. 31, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### The ABCs of the IEP: A Guide to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for Minnesota Parents

This workshop helps parents understand how to use the IEP to benefit their child. Parents learn how each required part of the IEP can be developed to meet the child's needs.

- **Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Minnetonka)**
- **March 2, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
- **April 3, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (New Ulm)**
- **April 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Willmar)**
- **April 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Stillwater)**
- **April 25, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)**

### How Parents Can Effectively Communicate with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

This new, interactive workshop helps parents learn to advocate for their child in the special education process. Parents receive tips and tools to help them become more effective communicators as a member of their child's IEP team.

- **Feb. 16, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Hot Tips on the Individualized Education Program: Is Your Child's IEP Individualized and Appropriate?

Parents 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 must bring the child's current school evaluation and IEP.

- **March 4, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)**

### Tips and Tools for Talking with School Staff

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.

- **March 7, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Bullying Prevention – Everyone's Responsibility

Bullying can be an isolating experience, not just for the kids involved, but for their parents, too. This workshop offers a comprehensive overview for parents to learn what they can do to address and prevent bullying.

- **March 13, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Golden Valley)**

### Special Education and the Important Role You Play for Your Child

Participants will learn how to use their rights and abilities to advocate for their child and work effectively with the school.

- **April 4, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Cottage Grove)**

### IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

This workshop outlines the basic principles of special education and provides materials to help parents organize special education records.

- **April 4, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Marshall)**

### From Disability to Possibilities: The Power of Parents' High Expectations in IEP Transition Planning

Parent expectations have a powerful influence on future outcomes. This workshop helps parents create high expectations and communicate them to their student and the IEP team.

- **April 4, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### “Who Cares About Kelsey?”

Dan Habib's film “Who Cares about Kelsey?” tells the story of a near-dropout teen with emotional and behavioral disabilities. She learns how to become an empowered teen. Includes Q & A with a PACER advocate.

- **April 24, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Life Planning for People with Disabilities

Participants will learn about guardianship-conservatorship laws, power of attorney, trust, and other life planning issues. Each session covers different information.

- **May 1, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Guardianship) (PACER)**
- **May 15, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Trusts) (PACER)**

## SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

### Including Assistive Technology in the IFSP and IEP

Participants learn how to use the TIKES Project's Child-Centered AT Plan to consider and document assistive technology for children up to age five.

- **Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### 'Appy Hour: Apps to Support Social and Emotional Development of Young Children

Staff from the Simon Technology Center explore the latest app offerings that support a child's social and emotional development. Apps that help children learn how to regulate, how to calm, and how to handle big emotions are featured.

- **Jan. 24, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Going to School: Telepresence and Robotics

Students with disabilities or health concerns that keep them out of school now have a way to fully participate in their classrooms. This workshop explores telepresence and robotic technologies that can be used in the classroom.

- **Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Technology for Girls: A Digital Game of Simon Says

Middle school girls with disabilities are invited to join mentors from the University of Minnesota's MnDrive program to learn how fun programming can be. Participants will program lights, buzzers, and more following instructions based on code they write! No experience necessary.

- **Feb. 4, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (PACER)**

### Video Modeling in Early Childhood

Video modeling can be an effective tool for teaching novel skills. This workshop introduces participants to video modeling strategies and discusses implementation in early childhood settings.

- **Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### 'Appy Hour: Apps for Video Modeling

Staff from the Simon Technology Center will explore the latest app offerings that support using and making video models.

- **Feb. 23, 11 a.m. to Noon (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## Tech for Teens: Wheels and Wires

Teens learn the basics of engineering through a “day in the life of an engineer” presentation. They will also build an electrical circuit and collaborate and share ideas with their peers.

- **Feb. 25, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)**

## Social Media & Bullying: Using Technology to Keep Kids Safe

PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) and National Bullying Prevention Center (NBPC) will discuss the technology young people use, and how parents can use technology to keep them safe and raise responsible young digital citizens.

- **March 6, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## Assistive Technology for STEAM in Early Childhood

This workshop provides background information about STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) in early childhood settings, and information about how assistive technology can play a role in designing inclusive learning activities.

- **March 30, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## 'Appy Hour: Apps for Pre-Academic Skills

Staff from the Simon Technology Center explore the latest apps that support the development of fine motor skills, literacy, math skills, and more for young children. Tell us about your favorite app at [STC@PACER.org](mailto:STC@PACER.org) and we'll demonstrate it during the event.

- **April 17, 11 a.m. to Noon (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## Finding and Funding Assistive Technology for Young Children

Assistive technology (AT) can be a powerful tool for young children with disabilities. This workshop discusses a variety of ways to acquire, fund, and reuse AT.

- **May 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## Tech for Teens: Science or Science Fiction? A Star Wars 3D Printed Universe

Teens with disabilities learn from a professional – in full Star Wars costume – the science behind science fiction. Teens learn about 3D printing technology and walk through the engineering and design process in a hands-on simulated activity.

- **May 20, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)**

## TRANSITION

### Transition: Pathway to the Future

This workshop helps parents of children with disabilities understand how to use the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to develop transition services that support their youth in planning for life after high school.

- **Feb. 16, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Rosemount)**

### The Bridge to Work: Supplemental Security Income and Employment Planning

This workshop provides information on how parents of youth with disabilities can apply for Supplemental Security Income and Vocational Rehabilitation Service benefits for young adults at age 18.

- **March 1, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Anoka)**
- **April 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (St. Paul)**

### ABCs of the IEP for Transition-age Students and Their Parents

This workshop helps students with IEPs in eighth grade and higher and their parents understand how to use the IEP to assist with the transition to adulthood.

- **March 7, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Inver Grove Heights)**
- **April 25, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Mankato)**

## Shop at Amazon.com and support PACER

Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and register PACER Center as your favorite charity. Each time you shop Amazon through the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) portal, .5 percent of your purchase will be automatically donated to PACER.

*PACER Center workshops are free to Minnesota parents. For information and to register, call (952) 838-9000 or visit [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops).*

## PACESETTER

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*(Alternate format is available upon request)*

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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# Resources

## Special Education Record Keeping Folders

Special education records contain important information for making educational decisions. This set of six folders helps parents organize school paperwork to help them make good decisions about their children's education. Also available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. 2014.

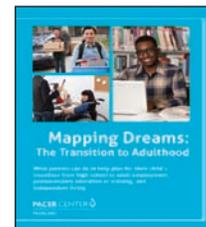
**\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5**



## Mapping Dreams: The Transition to Adulthood

What parents can do to help plan for their child's transition from high school to adult employment, postsecondary education or training, and independent living. Includes "Talk to Your Child" sections, checklists, and a resource list. Updated 2016.

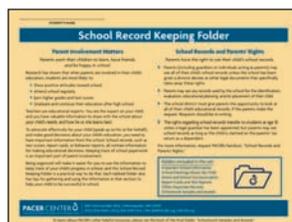
**◆ \$8 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | ST-40**



## School Record Keeping Folders (General Education)

This School Record Keeping Folder is a practical way for all parents to stay organized to keep track of their student's progress in school. Each of the six tabbed folders have tips for gathering and using the information to help your child to be successful in school. Also available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. 2014.

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



## A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Helps parents work with schools to address each child's special needs through understanding the required components of the IEP. Includes examples from the Minnesota state-recommended form. 2014.

**◆ \$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a12**



## To order the listed materials...

1. Specify how many you want of each item and their cost.
2. Total your order, adding appropriate sales tax.
3. Enclose payment with your order.
4. Mail to: PACER Center | 8161 Normandale Blvd. Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

You may also place orders on PACER's website at [PACER.org/publications](http://PACER.org/publications). Prices include postage and handling. A discount may be available if 10 or more of the same item number are ordered.

◆ Indicates one item is free to Minnesota parents or guardians of children with disabilities and to Minnesota young adults (age 14 and older) with disabilities. For foreign orders, please telephone or email PACER (see page 14). Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

Order number	Name of publication ordered	Quantity	Per item cost	Total item cost

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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Birth date of child with disability: \_\_\_\_\_ Disability: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ This symbol indicates one item is free to Minnesota parents or guardians of children with disabilities and to Minnesota youth (age 14 and older) with disabilities

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**Change Service Requested**

## Don't miss the Creative Kids Contest on February 25

Children with disabilities, ages 4 to 17, are invited to join in the fun at PACER's 10th Annual Creative Kids Contest on Saturday, February 25, from 10 a.m. to noon at PACER Center. All family members are welcome. It will be a morning of imagination and creativity through coloring and painting, and the winning design will be featured on PACER's 2017 greeting card. To register or donate art supplies, email [danna.mirviss@PACER.org](mailto:danna.mirviss@PACER.org) or call (952) 838-9000. Space is limited for this special event.

The 2016 Creative Kids card is still available for sale, and it makes a wonderful Valentine's Day card. A box of eight cards and envelopes is available for \$10 by calling Danna Mirviss at (952) 838-9000.



2016 Creative Kids Contest winner Isabella