Growing up on the East Coast in a blue-collar family, Jim Oricchio couldn’t have predicted what fate had in store for him. By 1996, he had experienced many successes: he was married, the father of three children, and president of Coordinated Business Systems, a thriving document imaging business headquartered in Burnsville. That same year, a new twist of fate arrived by phone. Someone called to invite him to a Ray Charles concert. Jim knew it would be an enjoyable evening. What he didn’t know was that it would be the beginning of a long relationship that would benefit countless children with disabilities—and eventually his own family.

“I love Ray Charles,” Jim says. When he heard that the singer would be performing at PACER’s Benefit, he and his wife, Donna, were happy to go. The event impressed them, “and I kept PACER in the back of my mind,” he says. “The following year we donated something to the auction. I connected with Paula Goldberg [PACER’s executive director], who asked if I would join the corporate sponsor committee. I said ‘yes.’”

Jim has been on the committee ever since. As co-chair with Don Davidson for the past two years, he and the group have raised more than $1 million in corporate sponsorships for PACER programs.

“It’s not me who has done it,” Jim says with characteristic humility. “It’s the people on the committee. When we set a goal, we make it. It’s the great committee members who make it happen.”

Jim has made generous personal contributions as well. For two years in a row, he has helped promote PACER’s annual Benefit by donating his company’s entire April advertising budget—including the voice talents of his company spokesman, Minnesota Timberwolves VP Kevin McHale.

“I love kids, and I think businesses should give something back to the community,” Jim says of his motivation to help. “I believe so much in PACER and what it does. Almost every dollar it raises goes into programs for children and families. Whatever I can do to make the Benefit successful, I’ll do. We do it so people will learn about PACER and realize that services are available.”

That mission took on a personal note two years ago when fate stepped in again. One of his nine grandchildren was diagnosed with autism.

“PACER was the calming factor for my daughter,” he says. “It’s like the lifeboat that you need just to calm things down and know there’s somebody out there who will help you through this. The family unit needs to be helped as well as the child,” he adds, “and PACER does that.”

Thanks to PACER’s services, his grandson, now 5, is doing well and is ready to participate in public school, Jim says.

With perspective brought by experience, “I remember that not everybody has an easy ride,” he says. “PACER gives hope. It’s not as dark as it may seem when parents find out their child has a problem. There is a blue sky at the end of the storm. People involved with PACER put their egos on the shelf. They remember that there’s something bigger than they are that needs to be done. Everybody at PACER is a great team player. That’s why it works with me.

“This is one organization where you know that whatever you put in, you’re really helping. It’s so evident,” Jim says. “There is a self-fulfilling reward knowing that what you do is helping a family somewhere in the community.”
The United Way allows employees to support PACER Center through their workplace campaigns. PACER benefits from the donor choice programs of the Greater Twin Cities United Way, Tri-State United Way, and others. Please consider writing in “PACER Center” under “Other” when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections. If your pledge card does not have a defined area to nominate PACER Center as the beneficiary organization, you may still write in PACER as your choice recipient.

PACER is not a United Way agency organization and therefore does not receive support from their general funds. Your specified support, however, helps PACER continue to respond to the 36,000 requests for assistance received each year.

“Identifying PACER as your choice organization provides important funds to PACER while still contributing to your overall workplace campaign,” says Mary Schrock, PACER’s Director of Development. “Your donation helps PACER open doors for children with all disabilities.”

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If you are tired of spending too much on repairs, unhappy with the trade-in value offered, or simply looking for an opportunity to help, this may be a great choice for you. By donating a vehicle to PACER, you are making a tremendous difference in the lives of children with disabilities. ☝️

Tired of Your Old Car? Donate It!

PACER accepts donations of cars, boats, trucks, and more! It’s easy to do!

1. Just gather your keys, vehicle title, and lien release (if applicable).
2. Call PACER at (952) 838-9000 to arrange a time to deliver or pick-up your vehicle. A receipt will be provided at the time of exchange.
3. After the vehicle has been sold, PACER will provide you with a written acknowledgement of the final value of donation. Please keep the letter with your other tax records as all donations are tax deductible.

Write in PACER on Your United Way Pledge

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Please consider writing in “PACER Center” under “Other” when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections.

☐ Other PACER Center

Thank you for helping us serve families of children with all disabilities.
Planning for PACER with a Simple Bequest

Board member Eleanor Swanson has been involved with PACER since the beginning of the organization in 1978, and she has made a personal commitment to ensure that PACER will continue into the future. Eleanor has named PACER in her will.

“PACER serves children with all disabilities, which is important to me. I believe in the integrity of this outstanding organization, and I know it will be around for a long time. My family is pleased that I have made the commitment to do my part,” Swanson said.

PACER is a family affair for Eleanor, a retired speech pathologist who, at the age of 81, is still active in the community. Eleanor’s niece, Karen Reynolds, is a member of PACER’s Board of Directors and her grandniece, Elizabeth Reynolds, volunteers for PACER events.

“There will be many needs in the future that we aren’t even aware of today. I hope that I can motivate others to remember PACER when they are doing their estate planning so that PACER can meet those future needs,” said Eleanor.

A simple statement in a will or living trust is all it takes to make a powerful gift. Gifts by bequest may be made in cash, securities, real estate, or tangible personal property and may be fully deductible in determining estate taxes.

Any provision should state PACER’s legal name:

PACER Center, Inc., a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation in Minnesota.

Development Director Mary Schrock is available at (952) 838-9000 for questions for additional information.

If you wish to make a bequest, please notify PACER Center so that you can be acknowledged and thanked. In addition, you will provide information that will help PACER plan for the future. Friends of PACER who make their planned gifts known become members of the PACESETTER Circle.

“Thank you to those who have already provided for PACER in their planning. You serve as beacons of hope and role models in providing for children with disabilities in the future,” said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER’s executive director. “We encourage others to consider naming PACER Center in their will.”

Panera’s Giving Program Still Raising Dough for PACER

In the four years since Panera Bread® chose PACER as its “Operation Dough-Nation” charity partner, the partnership has been growing. It raises money to support PACER’s projects that help children with disabilities and their families as surely as yeast raises bread. Panera Bread is a company that is dedicated to helping people with disabilities, not only through its financial and public support to PACER Center but by employing people with disabilities in its bakery-cafés.

One customer told Panera that in addition to being extremely pleased with the service and products at Panera, the customer is “always so impressed” that Panera employs people with disabilities who work with the same dignity and pride as all other Panera employees. “This is a rare company,” said the customer. “I am honored to be a customer with a company like this.”

Mary Schrock, PACER’s director of development, described PACER’s relationship, “Panera and PACER have a true partnership. It involves employees as volunteers and provides in-kind donations at events, in addition to the extremely generous financial support PACER receives through the Operation Dough-nation program. Panera managers meet at PACER annually and receive program updates from PACER staff. That way, managers have a true understanding of the organization they are supporting. We so appreciate Panera’s commitment to community and to children with disabilities.”

Panera recently presented PACER with a check for more than $40,000 for PACER programs. This funding came through the Operation Dough-nation program, in which Panera matches funds collected in coin donation boxes located at Panera Bread bakery-café registers in the Twin Cities metro area. “Thank you to all who contributed at Panera in the boxes by the cash register and thank you to Panera for matching the customer’s donations,” said Mary Schrock.

PACER thanks Eleanor Swanson for her past, present, and future support of children with disabilities.

PACER thanks Paula Goldberg for a generous check from Jim Rand, COO of Panera Bread. The contribution was raised through the Operation Dough-nation program.
The Paul Adelman Tech Connect Initiative

The Paul Adelman Tech Connect Initiative, a new project of PACER’s Simon Technology Center, is bringing the benefits of assistive technology to community centers throughout the Twin Cities.

For people with disabilities, having access to technology opens doors to academic achievement, employment, social and economic opportunities, and full participation in the community. “Because disability is a part of every community, it is critical for community services to move toward a more accessible environment,” said Mary Schrock, PACER’s director of development. The Initiative offers training, equipment, and advice on accessibility to community-based organizations that serve low-income and underserved populations. Funding for the first year of the Initiative is provided by: St. Paul Travelers Foundation, The St. Paul Foundation, and the Paul Adelman Children With Disabilities Endowment of the Jewish Community Foundation of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation.

During the pilot year, the Paul Adelman Tech Connect Initiative is collaborating with four community-based organizations: Guadalupe Alternative Programs, the YWCA of St. Paul, CommonBond Communities in St. Paul, and the Sabathani Community Center in Minneapolis.

The goal is to create social and economic opportunities for children, youth, and adults with disabilities from low-income and under-served populations by increasing access to technology training, time at computer labs, and technology skills.

The first step in the project was to conduct an accessibility assessment of each organization’s technology programs. The organizations’ staffs worked with the Initiative on surveys and analyses of communications, facilities, operating system and software, and website presence. The second step was to identify an organization’s assistive technology needs for funding and procure appropriate equipment for it. PACER staff then developed a curriculum. They are now providing hands-on training sessions at each of the four sites.

Overseeing the project is Kristi Hansen, coordinator of the PACER Simon Technology Center.

“A child who can move only one muscle can operate a computer if given the appropriate assistive devices; this in turn opens the world of the Internet, e-mail communication, and educational software, thereby bridging the divide and enhancing success in education and employment,” said Paula Goldberg, PACER’s executive director.

PACER’s Simon Technology Center is committed to:

- helping children and adults with disabilities from low-income and underserved groups develop skills needed for employment.
- being the agent of change for bringing the benefits of assistive technology to low-income neighborhoods through these community-based agencies.

Through Tech Connect, PACER staff assists young adults and adults with disabilities from low-income and underserved populations in community-based technology labs. The Paul Adelman Children with Disabilities Endowment Fund, a designated endowment of the Jewish Community Foundation of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, pays tribute to Paul Adelman, a courageous 12 year old who died in 1996 after battling brain cancer. This endowment was created in Paul’s memory to help other children with disabilities, a cause very close to Paul’s heart.
The companies listed have generously donated their time and in-kind services to PACER’s 24th Annual Benefit. Their support results in greater funds and contributions directed to PACER’s programs for children and young adults with all disabilities.

If you use the services of one of these local providers, please thank them for helping PACER. By mentioning the organization, you magnify our thanks to the community that supports PACER’s work and the families it serves.

Partners of PACER is a directory produced by PACER Center. It features only major in-kind donors who have made contributions valued at approximately $1,000 and higher to PACER between Feb. 1 and May 31, 2006.
Haskell’s
The Wine People
81 S 9th St
Minneapolis, MN 55402
800.486.2434
www.haskells.com

Marshall Field’s
Retailer
700 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612.375.2200
www.fields.com

Neiman Marcus Minneapolis
Retailer
505 Nicollet Mall on 5th St
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612.339.2600
www.neimanmarcus.com

Peters Billiards
The Game Room Store
6150 Lyndale Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612.866.8433
www.petersbilliards.com

Polaris Industries
ATVs, snowmobiles, recreation
2100 Highway 55
Medina, MN 55340
763.417.8690
www.polarisindustries.com

Red Wing Shoe Company
Shoe retailer
314 Main Street
Red Wing, MN 55066
1.800.RED.WING
www.redwingshoes.com

Target
National Discount Retailer
1000 Nicollet Mall, TPS-3080
Minneapolis, MN 55402
1.800.440.0680
www.target.com

Winsome Orchids
Orchid wholesaler
7978 County Rd 11
Maple Plain, MN 55359
763.972.9708
www.winsomeorchids.com

Wisconsin Cheese Group
Distributor & maker
1380 Corporate Center Dr
Eagan, MN 55121
651.994.1120
www.wisconsincheesegroup.com

2006 PACER Benefit Committee Members

Benefit Co-Chairs
(from L to R) were
Danna Mirviss, Mary Frey,
Colleen McGough Wood.

Members of the Corporate Sponsor Committee were (back row)
Mary Schrock, Don Davidson,
Ken Rosenblum, Allison Sweasy,
Sharon Tapper, Jeanne Crain,
Don McNeil, Paula Goldberg; (front row) Jim Oricchio, Dave Huguelet,
Frank Bennett, John Valente.

Members of the Silent Auction Committee were (back row, from L to R) Nancy Martin, Beth Jasco,
Sandra Thielen, Marilyn Forsman,
Sabine Dudda, Trish Lies,
Nancy Kleve, Jan Flora (front row)
Danna Mirviss, Patrice Alkire,
Lisa Miller, Joan Valente, Mary Frey.

Silent Auction Co-Chairs
(from L to R) were Joan Valente,
Lisa Miller, Patrice Alkire.
Splashes and dashes of radiant color highlight the front of the new 2006 Official PACER Greeting Card. Created by Jarek Belle-Isle during a Creative Kids workshop earlier this spring, the artwork is the grand prize winner of the first annual Creative Kids Contest.

Throughout the months of February and March, children with disabilities from across the Twin Cities area submitted their artwork from PACER workshops or by mail. Inspired by the opportunity to have their art featured on the PACER greeting card, imagination came alive through paints, pastels, stamping and more. At the close of the contest, the Creative Kids Committee chose the grand prize winner.

With the cover chosen, PACER volunteers, artist Anthony R. Whelihan, Mimi Fisher, and Danna Mirviss, enlisted the time, energy, and services of local businesses to produce the colorful note card.

To purchase a box of 8 PACER Greeting Cards for $10 per box visit your local Creative Kidstuff, or mail in the following coupon along with your check or credit card information to:

PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437

Blank on the inside, these cards will make any correspondence special. Whether sending a simple thank you, or an overdue hello, your purchase will not only help children with disabilities, but will also help spread the word about PACER and its services. Order your box of cards today, and help PACER continue to make a difference in the lives of children with all disabilities.

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Thank you to the following businesses who contributed to the note card project:

Ambassador Press • B&B Adcrafters • Creative Kidstuff • D.G.Inventif • Gallery Services • Shapco Printing

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2006 Official PACER Greeting Cards

Each box contains 8 cards/envelopes for $10.00 per box

| Name: |  |
| Address: |  |
| City/State: | Zip Code: |
| Telephone: | E-mail: |
| No. of Boxes Requested: | Total Amount: |
| Payment: Check [ ] Credit Card [ ] |
| We accept the following credit cards: (circle one) | VISA | Mastercard | Discover |
| Account Number: | Expiration Date: |
| Card Holder’s Name: |  |
A Portrait of the Artist: Jarek Belle-Isle

By Marcia Kelly

To hear Jarek Belle-Isle tell it, winning contests, being in the media eye, and meeting celebrities is all in a day’s work. At 11, he takes it all in stride and is as happy to talk about defeating his grandma, Joyce Belle-Isle, at chess as he is about meeting Bo Derek at a wheelchair event last fall. (“She’s, like, 50,” he says, slightly mystified at people’s awed reaction to his luck.)

The story is a little different, however, when he talks about winning PACER Center’s Creative Kids art contest this spring and the spate of publicity and opportunities that have followed. With enthusiasm, he tells of how he became the grand prize winner, had his artwork featured on PACER’s official 2006 greeting cards, was invited backstage to meet singer Michael Bolton at PACER’s annual Benefit in May, and had his picture with Bolton and artist Anthony R. Whelihan appear in CJ’s column of the Star Tribune.

“It was fun to meet Michael Bolton,” Jarek says, recounting his backstage adventure accompanied by Whelihan, PACER’s artist in residence who developed the art contest. “I gave Michael a box of my cards. He said he’ll treasure them forever and only use them on special occasions.

“It was fun to work with Tony,” Jarek adds. “Tony loves me. I always crack him up.”

Did Jarek think his artwork would win? “Fifty-fifty,” he says, with characteristic aplomb. “I didn’t really care. At least I liked it, and that’s the main thing. It’s beautiful colors. When I look at it, I see happiness.”

Happiness seems to find the Minneapolis fifth grader just about everywhere—whether he’s at school (“Science and math are my favorites!”), using his PlayStation, exploring a rhythm on his drum, watching NASCAR races, or playing sports. He was born with a form of cerebral palsy known as periventricular leukomalacia (PVL). Already a fan of watching football, hockey, and baseball, he has also garnered some attention for his athletic pursuits. The Pioneer Press ran a picture of him waterskiing on a “sit ski” at a summer camp, where he also learned to play wheelchair ice hockey and basketball. Jarek has become a formidable wheelchair soccer player as well. “If I’m in the right place, I stop quite a few goals,” he admits modestly.

The press coverage, celebrity meetings, and awards are all fun, and that suits Jarek just fine. “You have to make some memories—like waterskiing. You rarely get that chance,” he says. “Don’t sit around and be bored. You can’t let that happen. Otherwise, you’re like Humpty Dumpty.”

There’s little chance of that fate befalling Jarek. His plans include being an engineer and possibly being a NASCAR driver. In the meantime, he just might enter another PACER art contest, if the opportunity arises. PACER figures into Jarek’s future in other ways, too. His mom, Tamara Belle-Isle, has registered him for Creation Station (PACER’s monthly arts and crafts activity), and she has attended a consultation at PACER’s Simon Technology Center to learn how technology can help her son achieve even more of his dreams.

Jarek is ready for all of it. “Just have fun,” he advises. “All you have to do is be nice, get a little bit of luck, and good things happen to you.”

PACER gives a special thanks to all of the children who contributed their inspiring artwork to the Creative Kids contest, to Anthony R. Whelihan, PACER’s artist in residence and head of the Creative Kids Program, and to all the sponsors who made the art contest possible: Ambassador Press, Inc., Creative Kidstuff, B&B Adcrafters, Gallery Services, D. G. Inventif, and Shapco Printing.

Jarek Belle-Isle, grand prize winner of PACER’s 1st Annual Creative Kids Contest, poses with his pal Oliver.
Creative Kidstuff Shows it Cares

Over the past eight months PACER and Creative Kidstuff have enjoyed a partnership dedicated to the benefit of all children. PACER is Creative Kidstuff’s Charity Partner for 2006.

Roberta Bonoff, CEO and president of Creative Kidstuff, and Katie Seleski, product promotions manager, recently presented PACER with a contribution raised from the sale of coupon books in the spring.

“This donation will help PACER continue to provide services at no charge to families. This, however, is just the beginning of the countless ways this partnership has touched the lives of children with and without disabilities,” said Mary Schrock, PACER’s director of development.

At the close of the coupon sales in May, PACER staff visited Creative Kidstuff in St. Paul to present a PACER puppet show to expand disability awareness for children and parents visiting the store. PACER staff have also helped Creative Kidstuff staff identify universally designed toys in their inventory so they may better serve children with disabilities. Universally designed toys promote play and development opportunities among all children and are accessible for children with disabilities.

Recently all six Creative Kidstuff Twin Cities locations began selling the 2006 Official PACER Greeting Card from the Creative Kids Contest. The cards feature the artwork of the Creative Kids grand prize winner, Jarek Belle-Isle. The proceeds raised will go directly toward PACER’s programs helping families of children with disabilities.

To learn more about the Creative Kidstuff-PACER partnership and the greeting cards, see www.pacer.org, or visit a Creative Kidstuff store and ask them to tell you about PACER!

FAMILY FUN DAY 2006

You are invited to PACER’s 2nd Annual Family Fun Day on Nov. 19, 2006, at the Lindbergh Center in Minnetonka. Join other families for a fun-filled, totally accessible and inclusive family event! Enjoy lunch from Panera Bread, and then have a great time with your family’s team while you play games, meet friends, and participate in wacky, PACER-approved activities for children with and without disabilities.

When: Sunday, Nov. 19, 2006
12 noon to 2:30 p.m.

Where: The Lindbergh Center
2400 Lindbergh Drive, Minnetonka
www.lindbergh-center.com

Cost: $5 per person
$25 to sponsor a family who could otherwise not attend.

Registration: Look for registration information in the “Save The Date” notice in your mailbox in the coming weeks.
Toddler Tuesdays!

Join PACER and friends for Toddler Tuesdays at the Mall of America. Hang out with Twins Mascot, T.C., and PACER puppets for a morning full of fun and educational activities. Come watch the PACER puppet show, find out how to donate to Change for Children with disabilities, and much, much more!

**When:** OCTOBER 10, 2006 • 10 A.M. TO NOON  
**Where:** At the Rotunda in the Mall of America  
**Cost:** FREE OF CHARGE!

Thanks, PACER…

Throughout the year, PACER receives many thank you letters from parents and professionals. The following is an example.

**Dear PACER Advocate,**

Thank you so much for your help today. I am grateful that PACER exists. It is often lonely and very uncomfortable advocating for my daughter. The advice, guidance and strength you and the other fine people at PACER give me makes an enormous difference in my life.

Sincerely,

Parent served by PACER

JOIN THE CLUB!  
**Be a Kid Against Bullying!**

It’s here! PACER’s long-awaited, much-touted, cooler-than-cool Kids Against Bullying Web site is now launched! Log on and meet the Club Crew, watch videos, play games, and learn how you can become a “kid against bullying.” (Be sure to click on the “top secret” trunk on the home page!)

Meet Pip and the rest of the Club Crew at  
**www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org**
Thank you!

PACER appreciates the hundreds of people—volunteers, board and advisory board members, donors, corporate and foundation sponsors, and staff—who contributed their time, energy, and resources to PACER’s 24th Annual Benefit. As a result of their energy and dedication, the 2006 Benefit was the most successful ever! Thank you to everyone who helps PACER in its vital role of helping children with disabilities at no charge to families.

PACER continues to offer new events and opportunities in which to participate. Mark your calendars now for these upcoming festivities:

**Ongoing:** Visit a Creative Kidstuff store or stop in at PACER to purchase a box of 2006 PACER Greeting Cards!

**Fall 2006:** PACER’s Annual Phonathon

**Nov. 19, 2006:** PACER’s Family Fun Day

**Jan. 20, 2007:** Hot Party, Cool Cause

**May 5, 2007:** PACER’s 25th Annual Benefit

PACER welcomes your participation, ideas, and energy. To be involved, please call the development department at (952) 838-9000.