Without a doubt, volunteers Don and Julie McNeil bring a special spark to PACER Center. Each time they enter the building, their smiles and enthusiasm become contagious. They’re always willing to share their ideas or help with a new project, going the extra mile in all of their efforts. Their motivation for volunteering their time and energy, they say, comes from one simple reason: They believe in the cause.

Because they’re so passionate about improving the quality of life for children with disabilities, volunteering at PACER is a natural fit for them. “We’ve seen the positive influence PACER has had on education and on the lives of children with special needs,” Don says. “We recognize the work PACER has done, and so we want to give back.”

Over the years, Don and Julie have put in many hours for PACER, becoming heavily involved in the operation of the organization. Don has been volunteering with PACER for eight years, and he has served as president of PACER’s Board of Directors. He also serves on PACER’s Corporate Sponsor Committee and does pro bono legal work for the organization. Additionally, Don and Julie both volunteer for PACER’s Annual Benefit, serving as co-chairs of the Benefit’s Silent Auction Committee. They help brainstorm new ideas and bring in exciting items for the auction each year.

Much of the McNeil’s passion for volunteering stems from their personal experiences with PACER. When their first child, Megan, 22, was born with William’s syndrome, they turned to PACER for help.
“When Megan was young, we benefited from the PACER workshops,” Julie says. “PACER was great in teaching us how to be an advocate for our child, so we weren't doing all the work by ourselves.”

When their third child, Ethan, was diagnosed with severe autism, PACER was again there to help. The two parents attended workshops on autism and utilized PACER resources to find occupational and physical therapy services for their son. Through PACER, they even found a behavioral team that worked with Ethan for more than a year.

“PACER provided us with resources to find people to help,” Don says. “Through PACER, we met many parents, both PACER staff and parents at the workshops, who gave us recommendations for different health providers. They had been in the same place that we were in.”

The McNeils were grateful for the help they received, and they quickly took the opportunity to reciprocate by volunteering. Their generous attitude has even inspired their oldest son, Evan, now a freshman at Carleton College, to become involved: He helped run PACER's “Fun Times” program at his high school last year. Fun Times is a program that connects high school teens with and without disabilities, and participants socialize together by going to sporting events, movies, museums, or malls.

It would be impossible to measure the impact the McNeil family has made on PACER and its work. Don and Julie are glad they can give back this way, because they personally understand how important PACER's work is.

“When we look at where our children will be as adults, we know that it's because of PACER they will enjoy a higher quality of life,” Julie says. “We have so much gratitude for PACER, it's immeasurable. That's why we're happy to do what we can to help.”

Don agrees, adding that he's proud to give back to an organization that has helped his family – and so many others – find the support and resources they need.

“If it's not for the staff and volunteers at PACER, then who will step forward on behalf of the kids who can't do it for themselves?” Don says. “So many children in Minnesota, whether directly or indirectly, have benefited from PACER's programs and services. It's amazing how many lives have been positively affected by the work PACER does. We feel proud to be a part of it.”

Federal and Military Employees Can Donate to PACER During Workplace Charity Drive

If you are a federal civilian, military, or postal employee, you are eligible to contribute to PACER through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) charity drive at your workplace. You'll find PACER listed in your local campaign booklet under the Children's Charities of America (CCA) heading or alphabetically. You can also watch a video about one of PACER's programs by visiting cfcvideospeakersbureau.org and entering PACER as the keyword.

To designate your gift to PACER, use code 12272. This code is unique to PACER and should be used under any heading where you see PACER's name listed. The charity drive runs through mid-December.

Please help us continue to offer PACER's important programs at no charge by contributing at your workplace.
PLANNED GIVING

PACER is fortunate to have loyal donors and supporters who also plan for the future of the organization. Al Apple is one of these special people.

Al has been involved with PACER since it was founded. He was PACER’s accountant, and this business relationship continued for many years. With his detailed knowledge of the organization, Al assessed the efficiency and management of PACER. He was impressed with Paula Goldberg and the important work of the staff, as well as the small percentage PACER spent on fundraising and management – a key marker for financial integrity.

When Al recently drafted his estate plan, he knew he wanted PACER to be included. He has made a legacy gift from his IRA to PACER that will be given upon his death. The funds from the IRA will pass tax-free to PACER, will reduce the size of the taxable estate, and will allow his family to avoid paying income tax on that part of the inheritance. According to Al, this gift is easy to arrange with the administrator of the IRA.

Because of Al’s thoughtful estate planning strategy, both PACER and his family will benefit. Although Al’s family never needed to use PACER’s services themselves, they understand what an important resource PACER is for Minnesota families who do need help, and they want to do their part to ensure that PACER is here in the future to help the thousands of families who request assistance each year.

If you would like to discuss your legacy and a planned gift for PACER, please call Mary Schrock, chief operating and development officer, at 952-838-9000.

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Write in PACER on Your United Way Pledge

When you receive your United Way pledge card from your workplace giving campaign, please consider writing in “PACER Center” under the “Other” or “Donor Choice” category. When you do, funds go to help PACER continue to respond to the 42,000 requests for assistance from families received each year.

PACER is not a United Way agency and does not receive support from its general funds. PACER does, however, benefit from the donor choice program of the Greater Twin Cities United Way, Tri-State United Way, and others. “Identifying PACER as your choice organization provides important funds to PACER while still contributing to your overall workplace campaign,” says Mary Schrock, PACER’s Chief Operating and Development Officer. “Your donation helps PACER open doors for all children, including those with any disability. Thank you for being a Champion for Children.”

Please consider writing in “PACER Center” under “Other” when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections.
PACER Center’s 29th Annual Benefit was certainly a night to remember. On May 7, more than 2,700 people showed their support for PACER while enjoying great entertainment, food, auction items, and more at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Grammy Award winner Sheryl Crow had the enthusiastic crowd up and dancing as she performed her popular hits, including “If It Makes You Happy” and “Every Day Is A Winding Road.” Prior to her performance, Benefit attendees bid on amazing items at the Silent Auction. They also had the chance to buy Extravaganza Bags filled with stunning treasures, donated by Princess Jewelry.

Later in the evening, WCCO TV anchors Frank Vascellaro and Amelia Santaniello joined auctioneer Karen Sorbo in auctioning several rare, exciting packages during the Live Auction. The audience engaged in lively bidding on the many exciting items, such as the Polaris Ranger EV LSV and tickets to “The Ellen DeGeneres Show.”

Proceeds from the Benefit support PACER’s programs for all children, including those with any disability. Since 15 percent of PACER’s annual budget is raised from the Benefit, these are important dollars that help keep PACER’s services available to families at no charge.

“This extraordinary evening could not happen without the energy and enthusiasm of the Benefit and Corporate Sponsor Committees, volunteers on the day of the event, corporate sponsors, and of course the loyal supporters who purchased tickets for the Benefit,” said Mary Schrock, PACER’s Chief Operating and Development Officer. “Thank you to everyone for supporting PACER and being Champions for Children!”

Save the date for next year’s Benefit on May 5, 2012. You won’t want to miss an evening of fun, friends, and entertainment for a great cause!
PACER THANKS THE MAJOR SPONSORS THAT HELPED MAKE THE BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS!

Presenting Sponsors
SUPERVALU and Procter & Gamble

Major Sponsor
The Simon Family Foundation

Live Auction Sponsor
Allen and Kathy Lenzmeier

Ticket Sponsor
Best Buy Company, Inc.

Raffle Sponsor
Sears Imported Autos, Inc.

Patron Party Sponsor
Whitebox Advisors, LLC

Reception Sponsor
Starkey Hearing Foundation

Extravaganza Sponsor
Princess Jewelry

Left: Benefit volunteers sell Extravaganza Bags filled with beautiful jewelry, donated by Princess Jewelry of Burnsville.
Above: The 2,700 attendees of PACER’s 29th Annual Benefit eagerly await headliner Sheryl Crow’s performance.

Left: The winner of PACER’s sixth annual Creative Kids Contest, Juliet Heinen, poses with artist Tony Whelihan. Juliet’s service dog was the inspiration behind her winning creation.
Right: Long-time PACER supporters enjoy the patron party following Sheryl Crow’s performance. Top row: Helen and Derm Rowland, a PACER Advisory Board member. Bottom row: Jennifer Rowland, a Silent Auction co-chair, and David Rowland, member of PACER’s Investment Committee.
The Sixth Annual National Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium About Children’s Mental Health and Learning Disabilities took place on Aug. 9 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. More than 1,100 educators and parents filled the room and left feeling energized and enlightened, with concrete strategies to use in their everyday lives.

Symposium attendees were even treated to one very special guest: Ellen DeGeneres! The comedian and talk show host, a supporter of PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center, greeted everyone and expressed her gratitude for the work they do. Ellen ended her presentation with her signature dance.

While the day was filled with learning and laughter, participants at the symposium also took time to remember and honor the life of Dr. Roberta Mann Benson, founder of the symposium, who passed away last October. Support for children and adults with mental health challenges and learning disabilities was Roberta’s passion. Through her support, the lives of thousands of children and young adults have been changed. A past symposium participant wrote, “I always leave the symposium with a fresh new attitude and great ideas to get me motivated to start off the school year. There is just so much wonderful material shared during the symposium, you can’t help but feel renewed and hopeful for the future for individuals with mental disabilities.”

Keynote speakers at this year’s symposium included: Josh Hanagarne, a librarian who has Tourette syndrome; Dr. David Goldbloom, vice chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada; Dr. Read Sulik, child and adolescent psychiatrist; and the PACER Center Youth Advisory Board, a group of seven talented and articulate teens with mental health challenges who shared their personal stories.

The event was co-sponsored by the Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation, PACER Center, and American Dairy Queen.
PACER’s Give a Car, Help a Child Program
Benefits Children—and You!

Donating your car or other vehicle to PACER is a win-win solution for both children and you! Your donation helps raise money to support PACER’s programs and services for children and teens, and it provides you with a tax deduction. You can also avoid the hassle of selling your vehicle or receiving a low trade-in value.

Donating your vehicle to PACER is as easy as 1-2-3!

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 your vehicle to PACER or to have your vehicle picked up. 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.

3. Donate online by visiting CarsWithHeart.com/donate, filling out the online form, and scheduling a time for your vehicle to be picked up. Make sure to select PACER Center as the organization to receive your donation. A receipt will be provided at the time of pick-up.

By donating a vehicle to PACER, you are making a tremendous difference in the lives of children, including those with disabilities. For more information on the Give a Car, Help a Child program, call PACER at 952-838-9000.

2011 EX.I.T.E. Camp

During five days in the month of August, 26 middle school girls took part in EX.I.T.E. Camp at PACER.

EX.I.T.E. (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) is designed to encourage middle school girls with disabilities to consider a future career in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Accenture, IBM, Medtronic, Target, and 3M provided more than 72 volunteers for the 2011 camp. These technology experts, scientists, and engineers inspired campers with their talents and enthusiasm.

PACER Benefits from Golfers’ Love of the Game!

More than 100 golfers gathered in July for the Third Annual JayHawk Mechanical Golf Classic at Phalen Golf Course in St. Paul. While enjoying 18 holes of golf, a delicious dinner, silent auction, raffle, and more, participants learned about the terrific ways that PACER helps children and families. The money raised will help support several of PACER’s programs.

PACER thanks Jay and Betty Kay Crothers, JayHawk Mechanical, and all of the participants for being Champions for Children!

If your company would like to hold a golf tournament, bowling party, or other event to benefit PACER, please call Kerry Jo Johnson, development coordinator, at 952-838-9000.
Parents, students, and schools across the country joined the bullying prevention movement during PACER’s sixth annual National Bullying Prevention Month in October.

On Oct. 1, PACER kicked off National Bullying Prevention Month with the second annual Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying. More than 300 eager PACER supporters of all ages and abilities came together at Lake Normandale in Bloomington to run, walk, or roll their way to the finish line and help promote bullying prevention. Special guests included U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, WCCO news anchor Frank Vascellaro, and author Robert Kroupa, who gave free autographed copies of his new children’s book “Just Like You” to participants.

The Run, Walk, Roll also debuted PACER’s Unity Dance, choreographed to the song “You Can’t Take That Away From Me” by Tim Akers and Libby Weaver. The song speaks about the importance of teaching children to recognize that personality and character are more important than popularity and outward appearances.

On Unity Dance Day, Oct. 26, people everywhere can make a statement against bullying by learning the dance at PACER.org/bullying and performing it in schools, businesses, or public places. Groups can also record their dance and post it on PACER’s Unity Dance Day Facebook page. The top two or three videos will then be posted on Facebook’s Safety page, which reaches more than 600,000 people.

Students, parents, and schools also took part in National Bullying Prevention Month by participating in Unity Day on Oct. 12. People everywhere joined the movement to “Make it Orange and Make it End” by wearing orange to show support for students who have been bullied. Facebook partnered with PACER for both Unity Day and Unity Dance Day.
PACER thanks our media partner, WCCO TV, for promoting the Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying by producing and broadcasting public service announcements (PSAs) for the event. PACER also extends a special thank you to talk show host Ellen DeGeneres for starring in the PSAs and for all she does to support PACER’s bullying prevention efforts through her television show and website.

PACER continues to be a national leader in the effort to end bullying. For more information on PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center, visit PACER.org/bullying.

**Save $1 on Secret Deodorant and Support PACER**

During its “Mean Stinks” campaign, Secret Deodorant is partnering with PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center to help young women take a stand against stinky behavior: bullying. Procter & Gamble selected PACER as the nonprofit to receive the proceeds from this campaign.

From now through the end of December, you can support PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center by requesting a coupon for select Secret Clinical Strength purchases at PACER.org/MeanStinks. For every coupon redeemed, Secret will donate $1 to PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center.

Secret is also launching an iAd for the Mean Stinks campaign on Apple’s mobile advertising network. Secret will donate $1 to PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center for every user who saves a special wallpaper to their iPhone or iPod touch when they see the ad in their favorite apps.

Actress Amber Riley, best known for her role as Mercedes on “Glee,” and author Rachel Simmons are also partnering with the campaign as spokespersons.

PACER thanks Secret Deodorant and its Mean Stinks campaign for raising awareness of bullying prevention and donating to PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center!
Like most 4-year-olds, James Gladen loves to be active, whether it’s swimming, playing baseball, or riding his tricycle. He has a form of cerebral palsy that affects him physically and uses a motorized wheelchair, but he still likes to do what other children his age do. So he felt discouraged when he had trouble writing the alphabet and using the computer in his inclusive preschool last year.

“He was frustrated with not being able to figure out how to maneuver the mouse on the computer,” Allison says. “We just didn’t know what to do to help him.”

That’s when James’ preschool teacher suggested that Allison sign up for PACER’s Project KITE (Kids Included through Technology are Enriched), a half-year program for teachers and parents that focuses on integrating technology into early childhood classrooms and homes. The trainings offer an introduction to assistive technology, with a focus on visuals and graphics to support learning, multimedia, augmentative and alternative communication, and universal design for learning. Project KITE also offers participants the opportunity to try out a variety of assistive technology, including software, digital cameras, printers, and computers.

Having the opportunity to access an adaptive computer and a different type of computer mouse proved to be extremely beneficial for James. He learned how to double click and drag items on webpages, and thanks to the adaptive mouse, he could finally use the computer with his classmates at preschool.

“A big portion of the course focused on how teachers in his classroom could use technology so that James could take it from home to class, class to home,” Allison says. “Once we found him a smaller mouse that was easier for him to use, he just took off. It made him feel good that he was able to participate on that level with his other classmates.”

At the end of the course, PACER’s Project KITE staff Tenley McDonald informed Allison about Minnesota Computers for Schools, a program that offers low-cost laptops and desktops to children with disabilities. Allison was able to acquire a laptop through the program for James, which he now uses at home.

“The course really opened my eyes to what assistive technology and adaptive equipment is available,” Allison says. “There’s so much information out there that it’s hard to figure out what will work best for your child. Project KITE helped, because it allowed me to try some things with him that I would never have even thought about. It worked out great, because we figured out what James could do and what he needed without spending a lot of money.”

Project KITE also helped Allison realize how much technology will continue to benefit James as he grows older.
Thank You!

We are always amazed at the energy, enthusiasm, and generosity of PACER’s volunteers and donors. From corporate sponsors to board members to Benefit volunteers, we appreciate each and every one of you!

There are many ways for you or someone you know to become involved with PACER. Are you:

- A marketing and branding expert? Share your ideas for PACER with us.
- Someone who loves to be with children? Volunteer to be a puppeteer with PACER’s Count Me In* Puppet Program for early elementary classrooms!
- Employed by a corporation? Consider asking PACER to do a “Lunch and Learn” session on a variety of topics for employees at your workplace.
- A young professional? Become involved with our PACER Rocks for Kids event!

To learn more about these and other volunteer opportunities, please call Mary Schrock at 952-838-9000. We’d love to have you involved!

FALL 2011


Dance, unite—and make a statement against bullying—by joining PACER’s Unity Dance Day. Join schools, students, and community organizations around the world to unite with PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center in music and dance to bring awareness to bullying prevention. For more information, visit PACER.org/Bullying.

WINTER 2012

PACER Rocks for Kids, Jan. 28, 2012

Save the date for the party of the year at the Fine Line Music Café in downtown Minneapolis. For more details on PACER Rocks for Kids, see page 12.

SPRING 2012

PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit, May 5, 2012

While the performer is still a surprise, mark your calendars for PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit on Saturday, May 5, 2012, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. You won’t want to miss this event!

“Any technology that can help him gain the same education at the same rate as his peers will create long-term independence and growth for him,” she says. “There will be no stopping his capabilities when he’s using the technology that’s available.”

To find that assistive technology, she’ll turn again to PACER.

“PACER will always be there to inform us of the latest assistive technology,” Allison says. “They help us to see what will work for James. In the future, we will definitely be taking advantage of all that PACER offers.”

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To learn more about these and other volunteer opportunities, please call Mary Schrock at 952-838-9000. We’d love to have you involved!
Mark Your Calendars for the Party of the Year!

**PACER Rocks for Kids is Jan. 28**

Get ready to rock on Jan. 28, 2012, at PACER Rocks for Kids! This rockin’ event brings together young professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of children, especially those with disabilities. The event will be held at the Fine Line Music Café in downtown Minneapolis, and it’s sure to be the party of the year.

Last year, more than 300 people attended PACER Rocks for Kids and danced the night away to the tunes of local musicians, all while raising funds for PACER’s important programs. PACER hopes to pack the house again this year. *So save the date and gather your friends, family, and neighbors for a fantastic night out in support of a great cause!*