

PACER PARTNERS

PACER CENTER
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES™

Connecting families, friends,
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PACER.org

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Muffy MacMillan: Planting Seeds for the Future

As president of her garden club, Muffy MacMillan knows a thing or two about nurturing plants and helping seeds to grow. It takes patience, time, and a constant willingness to dig into a project.

For nearly 20 years, she's taken that same patient, hands-on approach to growing support for PACER Center. The results include flourishing programs and a burgeoning number of people who find both respite and inspiration when they call PACER for help.

Before admiring how this commitment has blossomed over the years, it's worth looking at its roots, which run strong and deep. The year was 1987, and MacMillan's first child, Mara, 2, was diagnosed with Williams



Muffy and her children: Mara, Frankie, Win, Ben, and Noel

syndrome, a developmental disorder that can affect physical and intellectual growth.

"The diagnosis was quite shocking," Muffy says, remembering the doctor's explanation of Mara's disability. "It was painful."

For a few years, she continued with life, raising Mara and four other children who were born over the next five years. "Mara was a gift to me and to her siblings," Muffy says, but with five children under 7, one with a disability, life seemed overwhelming. Then she heard about PACER.

"A close friend of mine who has a child with disabilities called me one day and told me about PACER," Muffy says. As she made those initial contacts, Muffy discovered more than she could have imagined. "I found a lot of support, hope, and a community for myself and the entire family," she says, noting that all her children have discovered great rewards and joy in being with other families of children with disabilities. In addition to providing "countless services," from education and health to opportunities for outings, PACER offered "a place for Mara to develop another family, friends, and ideas

Volunteer Spotlight continued on the next page

on how to live her life in a positive and, most important, fulfilling way,” Muffy says.

As Muffy’s family and PACER’s became intertwined, Muffy became increasingly supportive of the organization’s work. “I’m very hands on,” she says with trademark enthusiasm. While generous with her financial support, Muffy does more than “just write a check.” She puts her energy and heart into what she funds, and she has cultivated that spirit of giving in her children as well.

Her son Win, for example, was sensitive to the fact that Mara was excluded from many social events when she entered her teenage years. Thinking that other teens might have the same problem, he did what you might expect the son of a gardener to do: He dug into the problem with gusto, turned the soil, and in 2004 planted the seeds of a volunteer social program for teens with and without disabilities.

Called Fun Times, this PACER program has grown steadily through the years. Participants have attended Timberwolves games and Twins games; gone to the Guthrie Theater, Science Museum, and movies; hung out at the Mall of America; and more. Muffy has provided financial support for the program, and her other children—Frankie, Ben, and Noel—have all followed Win in providing its leadership.

Muffy’s commitment to PACER can be seen in many activities throughout the years. She co-chaired the successful capital campaign that allowed PACER to buy

its current building, where thousands of people each year find welcoming space when they attend workshops, technology consultations, and more. With that financial stability, PACER was able to devote more resources to developing and expanding programs for families of children with disabilities.

Muffy’s unflagging support for PACER’s annual Benefit bursts forth in her energetic efforts to invite countless people to attend and bring many friends as guests. The

Live Auction always finds her and Mara in the front row, eagerly bidding on exciting items and generating enthusiasm throughout the auditorium. During the rest of the year, Muffy supports the HOT Party and actively participates on PACER’s advisory board.

“Everyone has the ability to positively affect the world.”

- Muffy MacMillan

When she’s not busy with her many PACER activities, working on community causes, serving on the board of the American Federation of Arts, being on the board of governors of Opportunity International, and helping others in many ways, Muffy travels the globe with her children to broaden their perspective and deepen their appreciation of other cultures, universal human need, and even the beauty of a single flower on a distant mountain. While a global citizen, she has her roots planted firmly in family, in Minnesota, and at PACER. Season after season, PACER benefits from Muffy’s support. Such perennial commitment takes patience, time—and a passion for creating a thing of beauty.

“Everyone has the ability to positively affect the world,” Muffy says.

Plan for PACER with a Bequest in Your Will and Estate Planning

PACER is fortunate to have supporters who care so deeply about children with disabilities that they name PACER Center in their wills. Planned gifts, such as bequests or trusts, help ensure that PACER’s services will be available to families in Minnesota far into the future. Bequests can be in cash, real estate, securities, or other assets, and they may be deducted from your taxes.

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

For more information, contact Mary Schrock, PACER’s chief operating and development officer, 952-838-9000.

PACER thanks all of the generous supporters who have made PACER a beneficiary in their wills.

He's Eight and Doing Great: Meet Jake

Colleen McGough-Wood sounds like a typical proud grandmother when she talks about her grandson Jake. "He's really amazing. He's the happiest, sweetest, most loving guy you can imagine," she says without much prompting. "He has the most contagious laugh in the entire world."

Eight years ago, however, those weren't the words people used to describe the newborn. The terms were frightening: rare brain defects, septo-optic dysplasia, schizencephaly, seizures, blind, deaf in one ear, non-responsive, unable to eat, never walk.

"We knew before he was born that he'd have disabilities," she says, but no one knew how those issues would affect Jake or the family. Awash in shock and confusion, the family turned to their doctor, who told them not to give up—and to contact PACER Center. The family did just that.

"We got help before Jake was even here," Colleen says. "The big thing PACER helped us realize was that the earlier you connect with the experts and get into the early intervention system, the better off your child will be. Never would we have thought to obtain services so early.

"PACER gave us so many ideas, like finding a therapist to help Jake learn to eat," she says. "They gave us names and places to go. Sometimes that's all people need—some help to know where to start."

Following PACER's advice, the family immediately found a therapist who taught the infant how to suck and swallow. Thanks to that early intervention and despite those dire initial predictions, Jake learned to eat and has never needed a feeding tube. It was the first of many victories.

With PACER's help, the family identified other services and resources that would help Jake. He has had a personal care assistant since he was born, for example.



When Jake was ready to begin school, PACER helped again. "Some families want their child with a disability to be mainstreamed in every class and every field trip," Colleen says. "We felt differently. He's not going to benefit from math class or writing class. It's more helpful for him to spend more time working on his speech. PACER helped us understand our rights to ask that Jake's special education services fit his needs. He spends about half his time in the regular classroom and half outside it."

PACER also helped the family deal with another concern. "Jake has seizures, especially if he doesn't get enough sleep," Colleen explains. Due to some other disability issues, he goes to bed at 12:30 or 1 a.m., so he wakes up after a typical school day begins. The family wondered if Jake had to attend a full school day. "Thanks to PACER digging into it for us, we found out he can have a modified school day, with the agreement of the Individualized Education Program team members," Colleen says.

All the efforts are paying off. "Jake's in first grade this year, and it's going well," Colleen says. "He absolutely loves getting in his gait trainer for gym class, and he loves music class. He's able to use a head switch to turn the music on and off for the kids. And every other week, he either goes swimming or bowling.

"He really loves the water," Colleen adds. "We have a swim spa at home. That's his joy, to get in the water. He can maneuver himself.

"He's way more functional than we expected," she adds. "They told us he'd never walk, but he can use a gait trainer. He can't talk, but he can communicate. If he's done eating, for example, he'll clench his teeth."

Most important, "he's very sweet, loving, and funny. He just goes with the flow," Colleen says. He occasionally gets bugged by his two younger siblings, but that's the happy fate of a big brother. Once he comes to PACER's Simon Technology Center to explore accessible switches,

Child Helped by PACER continued on the next page

he'll be able to give his brothers and four cousins a run for their money on who turns on the TV.

Before Jake was born, "I'd had no exposure to disability and I'd never heard of PACER," Colleen says. Now, however, it's her first thought when friends share concerns about their own children with disabilities. PACER advocates are always there for parents, she adds. "PACER has the ability to work with families to help them get what they need and let them be the one to make the decision about what's right for their child. If they don't know the answer, they'll find out. If what they first propose doesn't work, they tell you to call back and they'll explore more solutions."

Colleen is always there for PACER, as well. For several years, including this one, she has been a Benefit co-chair. She also has supported the Benefit by serving on the corporate sponsor committee, bringing in items for the silent auction, and even recruiting her sisters to be on the Benefit committee. "I would never be involved with PACER if I didn't think they were amazing," she says. "PACER understands that no child with a disability is the same as another one." Having someone to help parents secure the services their child needs is invaluable, she says. "You may need someone to help you advocate. So often, you're just trying to get through the day and you haven't slept.

"PACER is your full-service stop," Colleen adds. "It's your first call and every call in between."



Far left: Children creating art at the Creative Kids Contest

Right: Artist Tony Whelihan poses with two young artists.

Creative Kids Artwork Available for Purchase

Contest Winner to Be Announced at PACER's 28th Annual Benefit

Anyone interested in acquiring award-winning original art will want to check this out: The top 10 drawings from the fifth annual Creative Kids Contest will be framed and available for purchase at the Silent Auction during PACER's Benefit on May 8. Adding to the excitement, the first-prize winner will be announced that night. The picture by that lucky artist will be made into the 2010 PACER greeting card.

Behind every drawing is a young artist with disabilities who came to the February contest with creativity flowing. Equipped with colorful paints, crayons, pencils,

markers, and more, dozens of children used their imagination and talents to create vibrant masterpieces. Several dozen drawings were submitted, and the artists were excited and proud to share their creations.

Celebrated artist Anthony Whelihan was on hand to provide inspiration and direction to the artists at the Bloomington Art Center. Children with disabilities from ages 3 to 17 were eligible to enter the contest.

The new PACER greeting card, as well as cards from previous years, are available for purchase. See the whole gallery of cards at PACER.org/help/creative2009.asp.

Come to
PACER's
28th Annual
Benefit
Presented by

SUPERVALU
and **P&G**

Four-time
Grammy Award winner
LYLE LOVETT
AND HIS LARGE BAND



Four-time Grammy Award winner Lyle Lovett and His Large Band will bring their irresistible music to PACER's 28th Annual Benefit at the Minneapolis Convention Center on May 8. Be part of it! Come hear Lovett's inventive blend of folk, swing, blues, gospel, and jazz, and discover why he has been called "one of the all-time great American singer-songwriters."

PACER is thrilled to have this year's Benefit generously presented by SuperValu and P&G. With their help and that of many other wonderful sponsors, PACER is planning a truly fantastic evening for you to enjoy.

Offering everything from getaways to sports memorabilia to jewelry, the Silent Auction begins at 6 p.m. in the Ballroom on the main level of the Convention Center.

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
952.838.9000 | PACER.org

2010 Ticket Prices

\$55 | \$85 | \$140* | \$200* | \$275* | \$550*

*Tickets include Patron Party after the performance

The "Extra Special" category features items you won't want to miss, including:

- ***Experience the Minnesota Twins and the new Target Field during this inaugural season!***

With two Champion's Club Level tickets (Row 9G, seats 5 & 6), you can sit just 45 feet from home plate. The package includes valet parking at the game, dinner at a restaurant, private entry to the game, plus food and beverage service at your seat.

- ***Treat yourself and guests to luxury at Sofitel Minneapolis—and an amazing food experience!***

This package begins with five overnight accommodations for 10 guests (five rooms at double occupancy) in the newly renovated Presidential Suite at this four-diamond luxury hotel. Executive Chef Serge Devesa also will give your group a French cuisine cooking lesson and invite you to the chef's table for a five-course dinner paired with wines. Breakfast for 10 guests in Chez Colette Restaurant is also included.

If you are feeling lucky, here are two exciting opportunities. Roving teams of young volunteers with prize bags on their arms will be selling raffle tickets (\$100) for a **chance to win a two-year lease on a Mercedes-Benz GLK350 4MATIC donated by Sears Imported Autos.** These ambassadors of

mystery, chance, and opportunity also will be selling Extravaganza gift bags (\$100). Sponsored by the renowned jeweler and philanthropist **Judith Ripka**, these fabulous bags will contain beautiful jewelry pieces. Based in Manhattan, Ripka has generously donated a stunning jewelry piece as the grand prize for the Extravaganza, along with many other high-end jewelry items. Each Extravaganza bag will contain a gift from Ripka, many of the bags will contain special gorgeous prizes, and one bag will contain the grand prize that will take your breath away. Your \$100 will go to PACER programs, and in exchange you will receive a delightful surprise.

Following the Silent Auction you'll move to the auditorium. While excitement builds for the Lyle Lovett concert, WCCO TV news anchors Amelia Santaniello and Frank Vascellaro will emcee and join auctioneer Karen Sorbo in leading a fast-paced and spirited Live Auction.

Known for offering priceless and rare opportunities, this year's Live Auction will not disappoint. Look for VIP tickets to the U2 Concert in TCF Stadium, an Exclusive Resorts vacation with a stay in a multimillion-dollar home in Los Cabos, Mexico, a trip to see the Ellen DeGeneres Show in Los Angeles, and much more.



Winners of last year's Live Auction items are still buzzing from their experiences. Muffy MacMillan and daughter Mara Bennett, for example, enjoyed the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend a day with Matt Damon while filming his new movie in New York City. "It was the best day ever," Mara said enthusiastically after receiving a hug from Damon.



Cindy Page and friends were treated to a taping of the Ellen DeGeneres Show at Warner Bros. Studios in Los Angeles. Upon arrival, the women discovered that the episode being taped was

part of Ellen's "12 Days of Giveaways," and each audience member received prizes totaling \$3,000. These lucky winners will not soon forget the fantastic experiences offered in PACER's Live Auction.

Thank you to every person and business that has contributed to this year's event. PACER's Annual Benefit provides a significant portion of the budget each year. Its success is vital in keeping PACER's free services available to families of children with disabilities.

Act now to experience an incredible evening and to help families throughout Minnesota. Purchase your tickets at PACER.org or call 952-838-9000.



The crowd at PACER's 2009 Benefit Silent Auction

Thank You!

PACER thanks the following sponsors:

SuperValu and P&G
Steve and Mary Sue Simon Family Foundation
Allen and Kathy Lenzmeier
Whitebox Advisors
Carlson Family Foundation
Best Buy Company, Inc.

PACER also thanks the Benefit Committee co-chairs Patrice Alkire, Jessica Broyles, Colleen McGough-Wood, Danna Mirviss, and Judy Schumeister along with Corporate Sponsor Committee co-chairs Don Davidson and Jim Oricchio. PACER thanks the amazing Silent Auction Committee and the wonderful Benefit committee members, generous sponsors, dedicated volunteers, and loyal attendees who are all Champions for Children with Disabilities.

Two Lucky Ways to Win—for Just \$100!

WIN A 2-YEAR LEASE ON A
MERCEDES-BENZ GLK350 4MATIC



Mercedes-Benz

PURCHASE A \$100 RAFFLE TICKET
AT PACER'S 28TH ANNUAL BENEFIT FOR A CHANCE TO WIN!

Drawing is May 8, 2010. Need not be present to win.

Beautiful Black exterior
Rich Almond interior

Fully equipped with
Premium 1 Package

Suggested retail value
of the lease: \$18,000

GENEROUSLY
DONATED BY **Sears**
Imported Autos



PACER CENTER
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES™

Shine a little every day.



JUDITH RIPKA

Donate \$100 to receive
an Extravaganza bag

and find a stunning treasure inside only
at PACER's 28th Annual Benefit.

Saturday, May 8, 2010

Tour a Rare Architectural Gem

The 40 guests who win this Extra Special Silent Auction item will be wowed by a tour of this beautiful home designed by renowned architect Charles Stinson. As they enjoy a spectacular view

of Cedar Lake and the Minneapolis skyline, guests also will enjoy an hors d'oeuvres-and-cocktail reception donated by Thyme to Entertain. This special experience will take place Aug. 19, 2010.



Teens Address Bullying through PACER's New Youth Leadership Board

Bullying ends when people stand together to change what has happened to so many for so long. It stops when people stand up and say, "Enough!" More than a dozen students from 10 high schools in the Twin Cities are making that stand by joining PACER's new Youth Leadership Board. Their mission: to promote PACER's Bullying Prevention Project in their own schools and beyond.

Using the Internet, Facebook, and other social media, these teen leaders are urging their classmates to visit PACER's teensagainstabullying.org Web site and sign a worldwide petition that says, "The end of bullying begins with me." Through monthly activities at their schools, they hope to build awareness about the petition, invite students to check out the award-winning site created by and for teens, and encourage schools to participate in National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week next October.

Their involvement doesn't stop there. Two teens from Wayzata High School have already filmed a short bullying prevention video. It's posted online at teensagainstabullying.org and [facebook.com/PACERCenter](https://www.facebook.com/PACERCenter), reaching untold millions around the world.



Front Row: Timmy Carr, Isabel Redleaf, Jonna Herbstritt, Sophie Mirviss **Back Row:** Rebecca Southern, Symone Jones, David Ottman, Jake Klopfenstein **Not Pictured:** Jenny Adkins, Lucia Carr, Chelese Ewart, Andrew Graham, Michael Greenberg, Victor Greenberg, Moriah Kilgore, Lewis Kloster, Wes Kloster, Amy Kuller, Evan McNeil, Aubrie Nelson, Kelly Olin, Eliana Ringer, Emily Swanson

As powerful as social media can be, the students know there's no substitute for personal action. They're also recruiting friends to volunteer at PACER's Benefit on May 8 and support the Bullying Prevention Project.

The group began in an unusual way. Last fall, teensagainstabullying.org was selected to be one of four nonprofits featured on Best Buy's @15 Web site. It would receive a share of \$250,000, depending on the percentage of teen votes it garnered. To rally teens, raise awareness of the Web site, and promote the competition, PACER created an event in the Best Buy Rotunda at the Mall of America (photo left and below).



More than 100 people, many of them enthusiastic teens, attended. When it became clear that these teens could be a great resource for ideas,

creativity, and feedback on PACER's bullying prevention projects, the Youth Leadership Board was born.

Meeting regularly, the group continues to plan ways to spread the word about bullying prevention. Their efforts matter. Students who are being bullied can see that people care, and schools can become safer for everyone. The Youth Leadership Board members give life to the words, "The end of bullying begins with me."

5 FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL TED & DR. ROBERTA MANN FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM

AUGUST 17

Teachers, parents, and administrators throughout Minnesota will once again benefit from the generosity of Dr. Roberta Mann, who for the fifth year is helping to underwrite the Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation National Symposium about Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. American Dairy Queen Corporation is also providing support this year through its Blizzard grant program, and DQ employees will be volunteering throughout the day. The free, full-day event is Aug. 17 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel.

National keynote speakers will address a variety of topics, including depression, school safety, and strategies for parents and teachers to use at home and at school. A partial list of presenters includes:

- Kevin Jennings, assistant deputy secretary of the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education. He is the author of six books and was a teacher and nonprofit executive prior to being named to this position.
- Dr. Verna Price, an author and motivational speaker with a doctorate in educational policy and administration. She also has a child with developmental delays and understands the challenges faced by both parents and professionals.
- Dr. Read Sulik, assistant commissioner of the Chemical and Mental Health Services Administration for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. A child and adult psychiatrist as well as a pediatrician, he was in private practice prior to his current appointment and has extensive clinical experience with children and adults with mental health disabilities.

Participants will attend morning and afternoon breakout sessions. Topics include nonverbal learning disabilities, positive behavioral intervention supports, restorative justice, and much more.

Dr. Mann's passion for helping children with learning and mental health disabilities inspires her to provide this excellent educational opportunity. Through this generous gift to the community, teachers and parents can gain a greater understanding and learn strategies to help the young people in their lives achieve their full potential.

PACER, a co-sponsor of the symposium, expects a full-capacity audience of 1,100. Registration opens May 12 and fills very quickly. To register, visit PACER.org or call 952-838-9000. Registrations will not be accepted prior to May 12.



Above Right: Dr. Roberta Mann listens to an opening song performed by Dorothy Benham, former Miss America.
Right: Conference participants network and learn at the Mann Symposium.

HOT PARTY RECAP

PACER's Bullying Prevention Project got a boost last fall when young professionals with dancing feet and caring hearts attended PACER's sixth annual HOT Party, COOL Cause fundraiser at the Fine Line Music Café in downtown Minneapolis. Under a ceiling lit with pink lanterns and glittery disco balls, partygoers grooved the night away to the funky beats of Christy Love with former members of Boogie Wonderland as they supported this important project.

The evening was hosted by the charming Marni Hughes of FOX 9 News. During a brief intermission, Hughes quieted the energetic crowd to introduce Meghan McNeil, the daughter of PACER's board president, Don McNeil. Meghan's poignant speech about

Young Professionals Party Down for PACER at the HOT Party, COOL Cause



PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org homepage

having a disability and being bullied brought the crowd to its feet and a few tears to the partiers' eyes. Meghan concluded with a simple directive: "You guys have to make bullying stop. You just have to."

The bash continued into the night, and the money it raised will support efforts to do just that. One of the newest efforts of the Bullying Prevention Project is its award-winning teensagainstbullying.org Web site. Created by and for middle- and high-school students, the site is a voice for teens with and without disabilities and is the impetus for the worldwide "The End of Bullying Begins with Me" campaign.

HOT Party, COOL Cause was presented by the Friends of PACER Advisory Board.



PACER thanks the following generous sponsors who made the HOT Party possible:

- Fogel Law Offices
- Johnson Mediation
- Colle+McVoy
- The Madison Center
- Minnesota Twins
- Martha MacMillan
- Derm Rowland



Mary Schrock
Chief Operating and
Development Officer
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Thank You!

It takes a lot of time, energy, and resources for PACER to provide all its services and programs—and it couldn't be done without the amazing support of hundreds of volunteers, board and advisory board members, donors, and corporate and foundation sponsors. You each play a vital role in helping families of children with disabilities. Your efforts have far-reaching impact and are deeply appreciated. Thank you so much!

EX.I.T.E. Camp for Girls, Aug. 5 – 19

Middle-school girls with disabilities have until May 1 to apply for this fun science and technology camp at PACER. Creative, energetic volunteers are also needed for this fantastic day camp. Visit PACER.org/stc for more information about applying or volunteering.



Campers at the 2009 EX.I.T.E. Camp

SPRING 2010

PACER's 28th Annual Benefit, Presented by Supervalu and P&G, May 8

Don't miss the premier event of the spring, featuring Lyle Lovett and His Large Band. Exciting Live and Silent Auction items are pouring in as this newsletter goes to print. See pages 5-7 for details on what intrigues and treasures the night holds, then order your tickets at PACER.org

SUMMER 2010

The Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation National Symposium about Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Aug. 17

The fifth annual Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation National Symposium about Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities will be Aug. 17 at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel. Teachers, administrators, and parents will gain insights and strategies to help them work with children who have these issues. Registration for the popular event opens May 12. You can register online at PACER.org or by phone at 952-838-9000. PACER thanks the Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation and American Dairy Queen for providing this important full-day conference.

PACER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Help Children Learn about Inclusion and Bullying Prevention

PACER's Count Me In® and Kids Against Bullying puppet programs rely on volunteers to go into Twin Cities metro elementary schools as trained puppeteers. Become a volunteer and bring the important messages of inclusion and bullying prevention to children. (See page 12 for more information about this opportunity.)



Lend a Hand

PACER's front office can always use volunteers to help with many tasks, particularly when preparing for events and conferences.

We welcome your ideas, energy, and participation. To be involved in these or other opportunities at PACER, call Mary Schrock, chief operating and development officer, 952-838-9000. Thank you!

PACER Partners is published by the PACER Development Office | ©2010 PACER Center, Inc. | PACER Executive Director Paula F. Goldberg
Chief Operating and Development Officer and *Partners* Editor Mary Schrock | Communications Coordinator Julie Holmquist
Partners Contributing Writers Willa Hathaway, Marcia Kelly, Kelly Lorenz, and Nicole Stanich | Masthead Design/Layout Rachael Zevenbergen

New Kids Against Bullying Puppet Show Can Make a Difference — with Help from Volunteers



Shawn McKinney

PACER's new Kids Against Bullying puppet program elicits a "100 percent positive response" from elementary students who see the show, according to PACER volunteer Shawn McKinney. While the response to the bullying prevention show

has been encouraging, additional volunteers are needed to carry the message to more children.

Created in 2009, this entertaining program is an effective way to teach children how to prevent and respond effectively to bullying. Following one show, for example, a school reported that two children witnessed bullying on the playground, talked about the lesson they had learned from the puppet show, and decided to tell a teacher what they had seen.

"I like that I'm able to plant a seed in their mind about bullying prevention," says McKinney, who recently joined PACER as a volunteer puppeteer. McKinney, who has a

brother with Down syndrome, has a full schedule but says volunteering as a puppeteer takes only a few hours a month.

There's no need for volunteers to have a theater or education background, says Lynn Dennis, PACER's puppet program coordinator. "We need people who believe in our mission, who like to talk to kids, and who aren't afraid to speak in a loud voice."

New volunteers attend a three-hour training to learn puppet and presentation skills, participate in a few practice sessions, then become part of a team presenting programs at Twin Cities metro schools two to three times per month. Volunteers need their own transportation to the shows and must be available during the school day. To learn more, visit PACER.org/puppets/volunteer.

Mark Your Calendar! Next Training is April 30

The next volunteer training for the Kids Against Bullying puppet program is Friday, April 30, from 9 a.m. to noon at PACER. To register, call Lynn at 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/puppets/volunteer. Thank you!