When Melanie Barry and her husband Chuck were invited to attend PACER Center’s Annual Benefit many years ago, they had no idea that an evening out with friends would become a life-changing experience. That night, Melanie reconnected with Paula Goldberg, PACER’s executive director and co-founder. Their conversation would lead to many years of volunteer contributions to the organization. “Paula started talking to me that evening and, as you know, she is very persuasive,” Melanie recalls with a laugh. “I was asked to sit on a committee and before you know it I was involved. It has been wonderful.”

From serving as co-chair of the PACER Advisory Board to raising funds and providing invaluable insight in so many different ways, Melanie has left her mark on numerous PACER endeavors. She was co-chair of the organization’s 25th anniversary celebration, a milestone event in PACER’s history. For many years she served as co-chair of the Gourmet Dinner at the Annual Benefit, leading a remarkable transformation that has seen the dinner evolve into an event that draws rave reviews every year.
“I think the first time we went to the dinner there were 50 people there. Now there are more than 250,” she says. Instead of the usual fare of roast beef and mashed potatoes, the dinner has featured gourmet cuisine, a variety of ethnic flavors, and dinner themes based on who the entertainer is. “I guess we just made it more fun and the PACER volunteers have been great. Whether it’s tying a bow onto the back of a chair cover or making sure that the flowers are arranged properly on the table, there is always somebody there to help,” Melanie says. “And the community has been wonderful, donating everything we have needed.”

Of course, planning spectacular dinners came naturally for Melanie. In addition to her exceptional organizational and leadership skills, she has developed a well-deserved reputation as a ‘foodie.’ She is also a world traveler and has often combined those two passions into one extrasensory experience. From the farthest reaches of China to many nations on the African continent, Melanie has been keen to sample all manner of local delicacies.

“My grandchildren laugh at me because I will eat whatever is put in front of me. I have eaten just about everything imaginable,” she says. “Wherever we are, I’m willing to try the food because that’s part of travel. You have to be a little bit daring.”

Chuck has participated in fund-raising efforts on PACER’s behalf and the family business — Twin City Fan Companies, Ltd. — has been a longtime corporate sponsor. Now their daughter-in-law, Etta Barry, is serving as a PACER volunteer, as well. “What strikes my heart is that it helps people who have all sorts of disabilities. It helps all children,” Melanie says. “That is very important. I have had the opportunity to meet other parents and I have recommended PACER to so many people.”

The support and involvement of individuals like Melanie and Chuck Barry means so much to PACER’s ongoing efforts to help parents of children with disabilities. “They are just wonderful people,” says Paula Goldberg. “I can’t say enough about their contributions. Melanie is such a fun person. She brings a sparkle to everything she does.”

Melanie remembers the frustration she felt when one of her children was diagnosed with a learning disability at age five. There was little help available at that time and Melanie and Chuck had to seek solutions on their own. Today, parents of children with disabilities can turn to PACER Center for help, thanks to the support of tireless volunteers like the Barrys.

“What I like about PACER is it’s an organization that includes everybody and so many of the programs are critical,” she says. “I will continue to help where I am needed. I believe that everybody who has had good things happen in their life owes it to the community to give back, and PACER is such a wonderful organization to give back to.”
Don't miss your chance to groove with Earth, Wind & Fire — winners of six Grammy Awards and members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame — at PACER Center’s 30th Annual Benefit, presented by Whitebox Mutual Funds, at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Saturday, May 5. With more than 90 million albums sold, Earth, Wind & Fire’s soul-funk fusion sound has made them one of America’s favorite musical acts of all time.

Tickets to the Benefit include the performance, as well as silent and live auctions. This year, the Silent Auction will offer your choice of many fantastic items, beginning at 6 p.m. in Exhibit Hall B. Here are a few of the extra special opportunities you may bid on:

- **Make your escape to a luxurious log home vacation in Utah's Wasatch Range**
  
  Take your family on vacation this summer for five nights at Big Cottonwood Cabin, a luxurious log home escape located in the heart of Utah’s famous Wasatch Range near Salt Lake City. Enjoy spectacular views and starry nights while relaxing in this 3,500 square foot residence where no expense was spared to create the perfect rustic getaway.

- **Savor a collection of the world's finest Cabernet Sauvignon from Quilceda Creek**
  
  “Wine Advocate” magazine says “There is no producer in the world that fashions Cabernet Sauvignons as consistently extraordinary as Quilceda Creek.” Indulge in this rare five-year Vertical Collection (1999-2003) of Quilceda Creek's finest, including two 100-point bottles.

- **Enjoy Roger Waters’ spectacular “The Wall” Live in the comfort of a luxury suite**
  
  Pink Floyd founder Roger Waters’ monumental “The Wall” Live tour comes to St. Paul in June for one of the most complex, ambitious rock shows ever staged. Enjoy the concert in the comfort of an Xcel Energy Center luxury suite.

Purchase a $100 raffle ticket for your chance to win an amazing prize — a two-year lease on a Mercedes-Benz GLK 350 sport utility vehicle, donated by Sears Imported Autos. Benefit volunteers will be selling “Extravaganza

Don’t miss out on this year’s Benefit! Act now to reserve your tickets by calling (952) 838-9000 or visiting PACER.org.
PACER would also like to thank the Benefit Committee co-chairs (Jessica Broyles, Mary Holmes, Colleen McGough Wood, Lynne Singer Redleaf, and Judy Schumieister); the Corporate Sponsor Committee co-chairs (Don Davidson and Jim Oricchio); and the Silent Auction Committee co-chairs (Nancy Kaysen, Donald McNeil, Julianne McNeil, Teri Moore, and Jennifer Rowland). Thank you to all of the Benefit committee members, generous sponsors, dedicated volunteers, and loyal attendees, who are all Champions for Children with Disabilities.

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! 952.838.9000 | PACER.org

2012 Ticket Prices
$65 | $90 | $140* | $200* | $275* | $550*

*Tickets include Patron Party after the performance

2012 PACER BENEFIT

Bags” for $100 each, filled with glittery treasures including beautiful 18K white gold earrings with 4.08 twc of round brilliant diamonds, or a 1.18 carat certified loose round, Starburst cut diamond, both courtesy of Mary, Max, Jake, and Kip Holmes.

Following the Silent Auction, the Live Auction takes place in the auditorium where WCCO TV news anchors Amelia Santaniello and Frank Vascellaro will join auctioneer Karen Sorbo to offer a few rare, priceless items and opportunities, including:

- VIP Tickets to see “The Ellen DeGeneres Show”

  Picture yourself and three friends in the live audience for the Emmy Award winning “Ellen DeGeneres Show.” You’ll be guaranteed VIP seating during Ellen’s spectacular “12 Days of Giveaways,” when every guest receives fabulous gifts which were valued last year at more than $3,000 each. As part of this rare opportunity, you’ll enjoy an exclusive Warner Brothers Studio tour — watch actors at work on the set of a hit show like “Mike and Molly.”

  TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

  952.838.9000 | PACER.org

  2012 Ticket Prices

  $65 | $90 | $140* | $200* | $275* | $550*

  *Tickets include Patron Party after the performance

Two Lucky Ways to Win—for Just $100!

WIN A 2-YEAR LEASE ON A 2012 MERCEDES-BENZ GLK350 SUV

For your chance to win, purchase a $100 raffle ticket at PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit, featuring Earth, Wind & Fire, on May 5, 2012, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Suggested retail value of the lease: $15,000

Suggested retail value of the lease: $15,000

Mercedes-Benz

Extravaganza!

By purchasing an Extravaganza bag during PACER’s Silent Auction for $100, you will shine in your community for supporting programs for families of children with disabilities. Inside you may find one of these beautiful treasures:

- Beautiful 18 karat white gold, “inside-out” hoop earrings, with 4.08 twc of round brilliant, G/H color, VS2 clarity diamonds. Suggested retail value: $14,600

Generously donated by:

Sears Imported Autos
searsimports.com

- A 1.18 carat certified loose round, Starburst cut diamond, with 88 facets, a Very Good cut rating, H color, and I1 clarity. Suggested retail value: $6,700

Thank you to all of the Benefit committee members, generous sponsors, dedicated volunteers, and loyal attendees, who are all Champions for Children with Disabilities.
• **A luxury vacation with Exclusive Resorts in the location of your choice**

Luxury is yours when you travel to Exclusive Resorts in Costa Rica or one of 10 exotic locations. You’ll experience the spacious comforts of a multimillion-dollar private residence, along with the services and amenities of a luxury resort. Your group of eight (children are welcome!) will enjoy six nights, including the services of a dedicated concierge to fulfill your every request.

The PACER Benefit would not be possible without the generosity of so many people and businesses that contribute to the event. The Benefit provides a significant portion of PACER’s budget each year and helps keep PACER’s vital services free to families of children with disabilities. Thank you, as well, to PACER’s wonderful volunteers who donate their time to the various committees, including the Silent Auction Committee and the Corporate Sponsor Committee.

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**Make a Lasting Impact on the Lives of Children**

*Plan Your Own Donations to PACER*

If you could make a lasting impact on the lives of children for generations to come, would you do it?

Since 1978, PACER Center has been enhancing the quality of life and expanding opportunities for children, including those with disabilities and their families, so that each person can reach their highest potential. By designating PACER Center in your will, or as a beneficiary of your retirement plan assets or insurance policies, you can ensure this good work will continue well into the future. Here are two simple ways to do that.

**Retirement Plan Assets**

Giving retirement assets to PACER Center at the end of your life makes sound financial sense. Because PACER is a nonprofit, we are able to receive the full amount of your gift without paying the federal taxes your heirs are required to pay.

**Life Insurance**

Naming PACER Center as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy is as easy as filling out a “change-of-beneficiary” form and returning it to your insurance company. To name PACER as beneficiary, simply contact your retirement plan administrator or insurance company for a change-of-beneficiary form. Decide what percentage you would like PACER Center to receive and name PACER Center as the beneficiary. Then return the form to your plan administrator or insurance company.

Your family may not ever need to use PACER’s services but thousands of Minnesota children and their families do need help every year. Now you can do your part to ensure PACER is here for them in the future. By naming PACER in your estate plan, you are expressing what is important in your life. You will keep your assets during your lifetime and support PACER’s important mission for generations to come. All planned gifts help to build PACER’s endowment.

For more information, please contact Marcia Yanz, Major Gifts Coordinator at (952) 838-9000 or marcia.yanz@PACER.org.
Kate Moe loves to ride her bike, go swimming, and play with her friend Florin. Like most third-graders, her two favorite subjects at school are recess and lunch, although she does excel at math. “Kate is very social,” says her mom Jill. “She’ll join clubs, she is in Brownies, and she will sign up for anything just to be around other people.” The nine-year-old from St. Paul is also a child with a disability.

Kate has Achondroplasia — sometimes called ‘Dwarfism’ — a genetic condition that results in short stature and short limbs. When she was very young Kate had chronic pneumonia and was in and out of the hospital much of the time. She has had numerous surgeries and there are more to come. In spite of the obstacles, Kate plays soccer, has learned to ice skate, and insists on doing the things her friends do.

“She has really surprised us in terms of her attitude, just the way she views herself,” Jill says. “She doesn’t see things as challenges. She’s like a truck. She just powers through and doesn’t let anything slow her down.”

The family moved to Minnesota from Seattle just as Kate was about to enter elementary school. That’s when Jill was referred to PACER Center, just in time to begin developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for her daughter. Jill and her husband John needed to learn about their rights within the special education process, and how to be effective advocates for

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**Tee it Up for PACER on Aug. 11 in St. Paul**

What better way to support PACER Center than by making birdies and pars. The Fourth Annual Jayhawk Mechanical Golf Classic will be held on Saturday, Aug. 11 and proceeds from the event support a number of important PACER programs. Join us at Phalen Golf Course, on the shores of beautiful Lake Phalen, in St. Paul. The tournament begins at 1 p.m.

Thank you to Jay and Betty Kay Crothers of Jayhawk Mechanical in Minneapolis for organizing the tournament again this year. To register, call Laura at (651) 324-3121 or e-mail Crot0856@stthomas.edu.

If your organization would like to hold a golf tournament, bowling party, or another fun event to benefit PACER, we would love to hear from you! Please call Mary Schrock at (952) 838-9000.
their child. Jill attended several PACER workshops and has relied on PACER advocates for advice along the way. “PACER has been a really great resource,” Jill says. “It has just helped take a lot of the emotion out of the process. It calms you down when you know what to ask and how to ask for it in a constructive way.”

Kate has low muscle tone which impacts her stamina and her ability to write. Her IEP provides for occupational, physical, and speech therapy. She also receives support in physical education. Through PACER, Jill and John learned how to ensure that Kate's IEP accurately reflects her educational needs and that appropriate services are delivered. Jill now requests that required documents be provided in advance of IEP meetings so there is ample time to prepare.

“They speak this language in the IEP meetings that everybody on the team speaks all day, every day except the parent, who comes in once a year for the meeting,” Jill says. “What I learned through PACER has helped me to follow along in the IEP meetings, to know what’s happening, and what decisions are being made.”

With the help of PACER advocate Pat Anderson, Jill was able to build an effective IEP for Kate. Of course, there will still be challenges ahead but Jill and John are confident that they are equipped to handle whatever comes their way. Jill says they will continue to turn to PACER Center for support.

“The advocates have been so great, they have been so caring,” Jill says. “Sometimes you need somebody to feel for you. Sometimes you need somebody to tell you what to do. It’s just a comfort to know that you can call and get that kind of support. I can't imagine trying to do this alone.”

PACER YOUTH SUCCESS

Kate Moe

Selling your used vehicle is a hassle. Donating your car to PACER’s Give a Car, Help a Child program is easy, and you’ll avoid the disappointment of receiving a low trade-in value. By donating your car or other vehicle to PACER, you will help support a variety of important programs and services for children and teens. You’ll also receive a tax deduction.

Vehicles should be 1991 or newer and running. Exceptions can be made depending on the vehicle’s condition. Donating your vehicle to PACER is easy. Simply gather your keys, vehicle title, and lien release, if applicable. Then call PACER at (952) 838-9000 to arrange a time when you would like to deliver your vehicle to PACER or have your vehicle picked up. Once the vehicle has been sold, PACER will provide you with a written acknowledgement of the final value of your donation. Your contribution is tax deductible so please be sure to keep the acknowledgement letter with your other tax records.

By donating a vehicle to PACER, you can make a difference in the lives of children, including those with disabilities. For more information on the Give a Car, Help a Child program, please call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or e-mail PACER@PACER.org.
It was a blast from the past aimed at ensuring a brighter future for children at the PACER Rocks for Kids party in January at the Fine Line Music Café in downtown Minneapolis. A packed house rocked to the 1980’s retro sounds of Brat Pack Radio as the band led the crowd down memory lane, all for a good cause.

The evening was filled with fun, dancing, and drinks amid the flashback sounds of Wang Chung, Culture Club, Cyndi Lauper, and more. Emcee comedian Raleigh Weld kept the raucous crowd of 300 PACER Center supporters laughing throughout.

More than $32,000 was raised with the help of PACER’s Young Professional Advisory Board, who are committed to making a difference in the lives of children, including those with disabilities. The board’s collective effort — and the generosity of their fellow partiers — is contributing to the success of two of PACER’s projects, the National Bullying Prevention Center, and the Simon Technology Center.

PACER thanks the Young Professional Advisory Board:
- Jessica Billings
- Adam Blitzer
- Jeana Blomme
- Stefanie Chern
- Natalie Furst
- Raleigh Golden
- Danielle Himmelman
- Amy Inserra
- Alex Levin
- Sormeh Majouri
- Dan Maloney
- Amy Marx
- Mary McConnell
- Jori Miller
- Ruth Richardson
- Zach Robins, co-chair
- John Samec
- Ben Schleuss
- Breia Schleuss
- Andy Schumeister
- Robert Short
- Jonathan Weinhagen, co-chair

PACER thanks the wonderful sponsors who made this event possible:

LEGENDS
- Anonymous
- FarmLaw
- Newhall Schleuss Family Foundation
- Target

HEROES
- Minnetonka Moccasin

SUPERSTARS
- Brat Pack Radio
- Dave & Jody Dent
- First Farmers & Merchants Bank
- Highland Federal Finance
- Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi

STARS
- AbleNet
- Advanced Capital Group
- Amy Inserra-Peterson & Jeff Peterson
- Derm Rowland
- Morries 394 Hyundai (Valet Sponsor)
- The Peyton Group
- Weber Shandwick
Minnesota teachers, parents, and administrators will have an outstanding learning opportunity at the Seventh Annual Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation National Symposium about Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. The symposium, co-sponsored by the Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation and PACER Center, will be held Monday, Aug. 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Doubletree Hotel Bloomington-Minneapolis South (I-494 & Hwy. 100).

The symposium will provide high quality professional and parent information regarding children's mental health and learning disabilities, and proactive, positive teaching strategies and interventions. Among the keynote speakers are two outstanding filmmakers and advocates who will use portions of their films as points of discussion:

- Dan Habib, the Emmy-nominated filmmaker of “Including Samuel,” is Filmmaker in Residence at the Institute on Disability, at the University of New Hampshire. His powerful new production “Who Cares About Kelsey?” explores how students with complex emotional or behavioral challenges are being successfully included in general education. The story follows Kelsey Carroll’s transformation from a defiant and disruptive student to a motivated and self-confident young woman.

- Bryce Mackie is a 23-year-old college student from Battle Creek, Mich. At age 17, he produced the award-winning film “Eternal High” about his experience with depression. The film was selected for inclusion in more than 60 film festivals, won 25 awards, and has been distributed throughout the world. Bryce received the National 2009 Welcome Back Award for his efforts in reducing the stigma of mental illness.

The symposium is made possible in part through the Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation. The late Roberta Mann Benson was a longtime PACER friend and supporter. Because of her passion for helping children with learning and mental health disabilities, this impactful symposium continues to inspire teachers, parents, and the community each year. PACER would like to offer a special thank you to Roberta’s family.

“Roberta was a visionary,” says Paula Goldberg, PACER’s executive director, “and through her support the lives of countless children and adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues have been changed.”

Registration for the symposium will open May 14 and spots do fill quickly. To register, visit PACER.org or call (952) 838-9000. Cost for the event is $20 per person and includes lunch.
More than 30 young artists with disabilities let their imaginations run wild at PACER Center Feb. 25 during the seventh annual Creative Kids Contest. More than 40 paintings and drawings were submitted in hope of winning the invaluable first-place prize.

Children with disabilities from ages three to 17 were eligible to enter the contest. Celebrated artist and longtime PACER supporter Anthony Whelihan worked alongside each child, offering ideas, feedback, and encouragement as their creativity flowed.

The winning design, which will be revealed at PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit on May 5, will be featured on the 2012 PACER greeting card, available for purchase on our website. In addition, the top 10 creations from the contest will be framed and available for purchase as part of the Benefit’s Silent Auction.

Congratulations to 11-year-old Juliet, an energetic, creative artist diagnosed with arthrogryposis, who won last year’s contest. To see her winning design and other past creations, visit PACER.org/help/creativeKids/creativecustom2011.asp.

Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying Oct. 6, 2012

Communities across the country will join with PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center on Oct. 6 by supporting Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying presented by American Dairy Queen. Individuals, schools, businesses, and organizations are urged to get involved in this and other events during PACER’s Sixth Annual National Bullying Prevention Month in October. There will be a four-mile run and a 1.5 mile fun walk/roll, and participants will compete for the coveted “Orange Shoe” award for the person collecting the most pledge dollars.

Online registration begins in June and the cost is $20. All proceeds from the event help support PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center and provide resources to the community, students, and schools. For more information visit PACER.org/bullying.
More than 2,000 students have participated in PACER’s Kids Against Bullying Puppet Program this school year. The charming, multicultural, child-size puppets help students learn ways to respond if they are being bullied, how to help if they see someone else being bullied, and — most importantly — that no one ever deserves to be bullied.

There is no doubt that the presentation makes an impact on children. At a recent presentation, children in the audience were asked, “How do you think Sally felt after they sang the mean song?” One third-grade girl responded: “She felt like she wanted to die because that’s how I would feel if it happened to me.”

The feedback from teachers, whose students have taken part in the program, has been excellent. They like the way the puppets capture and hold their students’ attention, and they comment on the realism of the bullying scenarios. “Every child in the country should have the opportunity to see this!” a teacher wrote in a recent evaluation.

Many more public schools, charter schools, and community programs would like to participate but do not have the necessary funding. A performance costs $100 with an attendance limit of 50 students per show, but this is only a fraction of the true cost. PACER relies on contributions from individuals and foundations to make up the difference.

The program was developed in response to requests from parents and teachers to supplement the tools available on the PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org website and the puppets have proven to be a comfortable, effective medium to reach children in first through third grade. Opportunities exist throughout the presentation for children to learn through dialogue and question and answer. “The audience interaction is key because it keeps children involved,” says Lynn Dennis, PACER’s puppet programs coordinator. “I am bowled over sometimes by the degree of insight that the kids show.”

There are currently eight puppeteers who volunteer their time to participate but more are needed to meet the demand. New volunteers attend training to learn puppet and presentation skills. Following hands-on rehearsals, they present at schools in the Twin Cities metro area two or three times a month. “Every show is different because every group of kids is different,” Lynn says. “The show is scripted but the kids are not.”

To learn more about the program, purchase puppets or scripts, or volunteer, visit PACER.org/puppets or call (952) 838-9000.
**DEVELOPMENT CORNER**

**Thank You!**

PACER is making a difference in the lives of children, including those with disabilities, but we could not do it without your help. We’d like to say a special thank you to Whitebox Mutual Funds, Presenting Sponsor of PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit on May 5. It is only with community support from all of our sponsors, donors, and Benefit attendees that PACER can continue to provide its services at no charge to families. Thank you to all of you!

Would you like to reach out and volunteer your help to others? For more information, please call (952) 838-9000 and ask to speak with our volunteer coordinator in the Development office. We would love to have you involved with PACER.

**SPRING 2012**

**PACER’s 30th Annual Benefit featuring Earth, Wind & Fire, May 5**

Don't miss this spectacular event, featuring the soul-funk fusion sound of Earth, Wind & Fire, one of America’s favorite acts of all time. See page 3 for details.

**SUMMER 2012**

**EX.I.T.E. Camp for Girls, July 30 to Aug. 9**

Middle school girls with disabilities have until May 1 to apply for this fun science and technology camp at PACER. Visit PACER.org/stc for more information.

**The Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation National Symposium About Children’s Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Aug. 6**

This year’s event will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Bloomington-Minneapolis South and registration opens May 14. For more details on the Symposium, see page 9.

**FALL 2012**

**PACER's Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying, Oct. 6**

Join us in October for Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying, part of PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Month. For more details, visit PACER.org/bullying.