Connecting Our Community & Raising Awareness About Autism

Foundation for Learning
Early intervention proves critical in K-12 journey
Page 30

Time Sensitive
New diagnostic network gets family an evaluation in 3 days
Page 32

Opening Doors
SARRC’s Employment Services team supports Air Force veteran in paving new path after diagnosis
Page 26
Title Sponsor
23rd Annual SARRC Community Breakfast

Continuing to be by SARRC’s side as they creatively provided services throughout the pandemic and launched their Easy Access Autism Screening Program for early detection.

Jaburg Wilk - Making a difference for our clients, our employees, and our community

jaburgwilk.com • 602.248.1000
3200 N. Central Ave. #2000 • Phoenix • AZ
Contents

Features

26  THAT’S THE TICKET
Thanks to the federal Ticket to Work program, SARRC’s Employment Services team guides adults like U.S. Air Force veteran Lindsay Palson, 32, toward independence and a new path following her autism diagnosis.

30  FINDING HER WAY
For 9-year-old Sofia, who was diagnosed with autism at age 3, her early journey at SARRC combined with her hard work, helped her achieve enrollment in a mainstream third grade classroom. Her participation in the Community School and also the Comprehensive Behavioral Program at SARRC set her up for success.

32  FASTER ANSWERS
Three-year-old Zander and his family received a formal autism evaluation in just three days as a result of SARRC’s Arizona Autism Early Diagnostic Network (AAEDN) and the support of licensed psychologist Carol McLean, Ph.D., who specializes in early childhood development and autism, and is part of the AAEDN.

Departments

4  Comments
5  Vision
7  Board Update
8  Noteworthy
10  In Brief
18  Giving Back
22  FAQs
23  Preguntas Frecuentes
24  Breakthroughs
25  Snapshot of ASD
35  Voices
36  Community Impact
37  Get Connected
42  Financials

On the Cover: LINDSAY PALSON
PHOTO: STEPHEN G. DREISESZUN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS

SARRC’S Beneficial Beans creates opportunities for adults with autism who are working toward meaningful, community-based employment.

Shop Signature Products | Volunteer
Learn more at autismcenter.org/beneficialbeans

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK
Learn how your support makes a difference at autismcenter.org/yourgift
INSTAGRAM
We are/will be forever grateful and thankful for SARRC and Gavin’s team. We would definitely not be surviving this year without them. To his clinician who’s been in our house 5 days a week since April, to his BCBA, those who have helped via Zoom sessions and behind the scenes: Thank you. Thank you so much. Words will never be able to express our gratitude.

-Jenrogsmith

I am not a parent, but I can say that it definitely takes the consciousness of a child with autism to spread awareness. It also takes organizations like SARRC to make the world a better place for people with autism, which they do. SARRC is one amazing organization!!

-Lindseyatoni994

I’m thankful for all the people who give hope. For all the people who never give in; no matter how much they feel like it sometimes. The caring folks that give of themselves so that even one person’s journey can be easier or more enjoyable. Every time that anyone keeps fighting through hardships, it gives the rest of us hope. I hope everyone at SARRC and their partners has a blessed day; a blessed life for being a part of leveling the playing field for my brothers and sisters with autism.

-Connectingmusicaldots

We are forever grateful to SARRC and its various programs! They have changed our lives and my son’s life since we first started with the JumpStart program almost three years ago.

-Laykutsu

FACEBOOK
We are so happy that we could play our part in supporting SARRC! Ann and our employees have shown that bettering our autism community is a priority and we are glad to help our employees give back to a cause that they think is important.

-DesertFinancial

SARRC LEADERSHIP
Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, President and CEO
Maureen Jorden, Chief Development Officer
Amy Kenzer, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Chief Operating Officer
Andrea Levy, CPA, CFE, Chief Financial Officer
Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer
Rachel A. Anderson, M.A, BCBA, Children’s Services Director
Devon Graham, Human Resources Director
Wade Newhouse, IT, Director
Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Teen and Adult Services Director
Raun Melmed, M.D., Medical Director, SARRC Co-founder

Outreach is published annually by the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center
300 N. 18th St., Phoenix, AZ 85006

CONTACT INFO
602.340.8717
sarrc@autismcenter.org

SPECIAL THANKS
to the writers, editors, photographers and designers who contributed in-kind time and service to SARRC.
Perhaps two of the most overused words during the pandemic have been “pivoted” and “adapted.” For instance, last year, SARRC pivoted when the pandemic hit by adapting our services, programs and research to ensure children, teens and adults with autism continued to receive medically necessary treatment.

And we are exceptionally proud of how we responded to many challenges over the course of 2020/2021, which were, to stick with the theme of overused words, unprecedented. But the truth is great organizations advance, they make progress, they move forward during both the good times and the bad.

It was essential that we did because the needs of individuals with autism and their families never shut down. In fact, they may have been magnified. The benefits of early intervention can only be realized with an early diagnosis, and there remains a shortage of professionals able and willing to provide evaluations, contributing to the state’s average age of diagnosis of nearly 5 years old.

Schools don’t often have the resources to effectively educate students with autism, not to mention socially integrate them into their classrooms, playgrounds and the broader school community. Consider the impact this has on teens with autism, many of whom report feeling isolated, and that was before schools were closed.

And while only 14% of adults with autism are employed nationally before the pandemic, we know that many became victims of unemployment during the pandemic like so many other hard-working Americans.

To address these needs and so many others, SARRC launched a new strategic plan in 2019 focused on a big idea: By 2030, we will become a statewide organization that puts effective services within reach of every Arizonan.

A prime example of us supporting our strategic plan can be found through our newly developed Arizona Autism Early Diagnostic Network, a robust — and growing — network of pediatricians and psychologists who are committed to helping families who have concerns about their child’s development and linking them to opportunities for additional support (see page 32).

Another example of us achieving this goal is through the expansion of our new SARRC campus located in South Scottsdale at the Paiute Neighborhood Center (see page 10). This expansion allows us to support more children, like Sofia, a graduate of our Community School who is now mainstreamed into a general education third-grade classroom and thriving (see page 30).

And finally, we are using virtual technology to continue to remotely serve clients like Lindsay Palsen, an Air Force veteran who receives support within our Employment Services program (see page 26).

In 2020 while pivoting and adapting to deliver our programs, we never considered changing or abandoning our big idea. Rather, today, SARRC is even closer to achieving it.

For nearly 25 years, SARRC and this community have had lots of practice pivoting and adapting to support the needs of individuals with autism and their families. If SARRC can achieve all of this during a global pandemic, just picture what we can do as we emerge from it. No doubt, it will be unprecedented.
Proud supporters of SARRC’s mission of advancing research and providing a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.

The Huckelbridge Family

Snell & Wilmer is proud to support SARRC

Snell & Wilmer
Committed to being your perfect fit.

www.swlaw.com

FENNEMORE.

We aren’t your average law firm because we aren’t your average lawyers. The team at Fennemore believes in embracing differences. We see the beauty and benefits of diversity and welcome the opportunity to help overcome adversity.

Fennemore is a full-service business law firm that can guide your business through formation, operation, merger, sale and handle any litigation needs that arise along the way. And among our diverse practice groups, our healthcare practice group represents a wide variety of different healthcare professionals and practices that are supporting individuals and families with Autism. We are proud to partner with Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center to do our small part to improve the lives of those with Autism through support, research and education on related healthcare laws.

Supporting Businesses Since 1885
www.FennemoreLaw.com

Snell & Wilmer
Committed to being your perfect fit.

www.swlaw.com

Thank you for all that you do!

To the staff, volunteers and benefactors of the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, your efforts are appreciated and create lasting impact on so many families.

Advisor Group is Proudly Headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona
Serving independent financial professionals and their clients.

visit us at advisorgroup.com
SARRC Welcomes 2 New Board Members

SARRC is pleased to welcome Julie Alpert and Stephanie King to its board of directors.

**Julie Alpert**  
**Community Volunteer**

Julie Alpert has a robust background serving in leadership roles in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. She most recently served as president of the Xavier Mothers’ Guild Executive Board where she managed membership, fundraising and parent participation for the families of 1,200 students and 20 committees. Her past volunteer involvement has included All Saints’ Episcopal Day School Parent Association, Boys Team Charity, Evergreen Development Foundation and Brophy Mothers’ Guild at Brophy College Preparatory.

Alpert first learned of SARRC in 2005 when she attended the Community Breakfast event as a guest. Since 2017, she has become extensively involved with assisting in the organization of the annual breakfast event serving as the event’s esteemed co-chair in 2019 and 2020, as well as participating on the planning committee. She also serves on the development committee, which supports and advises on fundraising efforts and strategies for SARRC.

**Stephanie King**  
**The Charles Schwab Corp.**

Stephanie King has been with The Charles Schwab Corp. for 17 years where she has held a number of leadership positions. She is currently head of Planning and Advised Consulting where she is responsible for building and delivering wealth management experiences that help drive better outcomes for clients.

King’s involvement with SARRC has evolved over the years — as a client, donor and most recently as a volunteer. Her connections have allowed a better understanding of the positive impact SARRC is able to have in the community.

**BOARD ACHIEVEMENTS**

**CHRISTINE WILKINSON**
for being named ATHENA Awards Public Sector Finalist

**NICOLE GOODWIN**
for Greenberg & Traurig being named Most Admired Company of 2020

**CHADWICK CAMPBELL**
for being re-elected as Secretary of the State Bar of Arizona Property Section Executive Council

**KIM SHEPARD**
for her Outstanding Women in Business 2020 award

**2021 SARRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**
Nicole Goodwin, Chair, Greenberg Traurig, LLP, Managing Shareholder  
Greg Wells, Vice-Chair, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, Vice President, Human Resources & Employee Development  
Christine Wilkinson, Ph.D., Vice-Chair, Arizona State University, Senior Vice President and Secretary of the University  
Monica Coury, Secretary, Arizona Complete Health, Vice President, Legislative & Government Affairs  
Gary Jaburg, Executive Committee Member at Large, Jaburg & Wilk, P.C., Managing Partner  
Scott Wallace, CPA, Treasurer, Wallace Plese+Dreher, Principal  
Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, ex-officio, SARRC, President and CEO

**MEMBERS**
Julie Alpert, Community Volunteer  
Neil Balter, Closet Guru  
Gregory Bernosky, Arizona Public Service, Director of State Regulation and Compliance  
Michael Bill, MJ Insurance, CEO  
Chadwick Campbell, Thomas Title & Escrow, Senior Counsel  
Pearl Chang Esau, Shàn Strategies, CEO  
Lev Gonick, Arizona State University, Chief Information Officer  
Tom Harris, AZ Diamondbacks, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Stephanie King, The Charles Schwab Corporation, Vice President-Investor Services  
Jason Lattin, CFA, Investments at BMO Private Bank, Regional Director  
Ken McElroy, MC Companies, CEO  
Kim Shepard, Cigna-Arizona, President  
Pearl Woodring, Southwest General Development, Owner

**EMERITUS MEMBERS**
Denise D. Resnik, Founder & President/CEO, First Place® AZ; SARRC co-founder  
Howard Sobelman, Esq., Partner, Snell & Wilmer, LLP
SARRC Announces Leadership Transitions in 2 Prominent Roles

Amy Kenzer, Ph.D., BCBA-D, will become SARRC’s first Chief Operating Officer, overseeing operations throughout the organization, and leading the clinical, HR, IT and facilities teams with a focus on increasing cross-departmental collaboration to achieve anticipated growth over the next 10 years. Under her leadership as Vice President of Clinical Services, SARRC’s clinical team has more than doubled in size, and most recently, she has been integral in restructuring clinical services by creating new, vital leadership positions that have distinguished children’s services from teen and adult services. As COO, Dr. Kenzer will draw from her experience in clinical services and reinforce the integration of the clinical and administrative services teams, creating operational efficiencies that can be leveraged to further support our research, development and accounting teams.

Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D., has served as SARRC’s Vice President of Research for 14 years overseeing diagnostic services, pharmaceutical trials and independent investigations, which Dr. Smith either initiated at SARRC or rapidly expanded. His innovative, collaborative approach has led to the development of new diagnostic tools and created national partnerships with some of the foremost autism researchers in the field. SARRC’s strategic plan will require Dr. Smith to further develop the organization’s infrastructure in 2021 so he can spend more time leading major organizational initiatives across departments and ensure their successful execution. To reflect and emphasize his expanded, interdepartmental responsibilities aligned with our strategic plan, Dr. Smith will transition to Chief Science Officer.

Staff Achievements

Over the past year, SARRC clinical staff members remained active, presenting at virtual conferences and sharing best practices developed while working with SARRC clients over the years. Following is a summary of staff highlights:

Stephanie Brockman, Senior Clinical Supervisor; Skyra Mayo, Associate Clinical Supervisor; Brooke Seavitt, Senior Behavior Specialist

The SARRC trio presented a poster for the Association for Behavior Analysis International Autism Conference titled “Modifications to a Comprehensive Treatment Model to Ensure Continuity of Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The study focused on the model used in SARRC’s Comprehensive Behavioral Program during the pandemic to ensure continuity of care, and compared the team-based model used prior to the
pandemic to the 1:1 dyads used during the pandemic. The 1:1 dyads paired one therapist with one client to reduce the potential spread of the virus. The study showed that direct treatment hours, parent training hours, direct supervision hours, and the number of targets mastered by each client either maintained or increased when SARRC adjusted its model to the 1:1 dyads.

**Kyla Christenson, Senior Behavior Therapist**

Kyla Christenson presented “Utilizing Differential Reinforcement to Increase the Generalization of Attending Skills” at the Association for Applied Behavior Analysis International’s Autism Conference. The poster highlights an intervention that took place primarily during quarantine, elaborating on how SARRC collaborated with and trained family members to deliver different types of reinforcement to increase responsiveness among individuals impacted by autism.

**Hanna Roen, Senior Clinical Supervisor**

Hanna Roen is co-leading the Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT)/Relational Frame Theory (RFT) special interest group for the Arizona Association for Behavior Analysis (AzABA).

**Christine Gomez, Senior Clinical Supervisor**

Christine Gomez presented “Back to Basics” to AzABA’s Feeding special interest group, which covered basic ABA feeding terminology and strategies used as well as associated challenges many clients experience.

**Michelle Reed, Senior Clinical Services Manager; Kelsee Mullen, Associate Clinical Supervisor; Valeria Armendariz, Clinical Supervisor**

In October 2020, this trio presented on “Supporting Adults with Autism in Employment: Focus on Interviewing Skills” at the virtual College Autism Summit. Additionally, Michelle and Kelsee had an encore presentation at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability’s Autism Imagine Conference in November 2020.

**Megan Mann, Senior Clinical Consultant; Alexis Boglio, Clinical Services Manager**

Megan Mann presented on Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) virtually to more than 200 professionals in Ohio through OCALI. Additionally, Megan joined Alexis Boglio in training 12 professionals via a series of virtual workshops on “Coaching Practices: PRT through parent-mediated intervention for young children with autism” in conjunction with two agencies in Ontario, Canada.
Easy Access Autism Screening Launches

SARRC recently introduced a new autism screening program aimed at parents of young children who have concerns with their child’s development. The Easy Access Autism Screening program is a project funded by the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona and is offered to families at no cost.

"If you notice that your child is not doing things other children are doing, or if you see behaviors that seem different, through this new program, our team can complete a free developmental screening assessment by phone in as little as 10 minutes," said Chief Science Officer, Christopher Smith, Ph.D. "We know that early screening leads to early diagnosis, which leads to early intervention — the most important tool we can offer to help people with autism reach their full potential."

After completing the screening, SARRC’s team may recommend families seek a formal (autism) diagnostic evaluation for their child, or they may recommend that a formal evaluation is not needed. To learn more about the Easy Access Autism Screening program, visit autismcenter.org/EZScreen or call 602.218.8204.


Three years ago, our Teen and Adult Services team set out to address a looming issue they were encountering among teens and adults with autism: online situations where individuals put themselves in potentially unsafe situations, including the sharing of sensitive and private information. “We have learned more and more about the risks associated with online activity and individuals with ASD, who may be especially vulnerable to those risks,” said Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, director of Teen and Adult Services at SARRC.

With generous funding provided by our friends at NEXT for AUTISM, our team recently completed the Online Safety Manual — an approachable
curriculum that can be used to teach individuals with ASD important skills needed to safely interact online. Topics include social media do's and don'ts, cyberbullying, online dating, parental monitoring apps, interfacing with law enforcement and more. Download the manual for free at autismcenter.org/resources.

**Essential Housing Resource: First Place AZ’s Groundbreaking ‘A Place in the World’ Report**

Named for PBS Newshour’s 2016 series featuring Phoenix as “the most autism-friendly city in the world,” A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities is the long-awaited sister study to the SARRC-led report, Opening Doors: A Discussion of Residential Options for Adults Living with Autism and Related Disorders, which guided the development of First Place–Phoenix. A Place in the World provides foundational nomenclature for housing and service-delivery models to define market segments, establish best practices and guiding principles, and drive partnerships and policies to address the current housing crisis.

A definitive resource for the housing industry, scholars, service providers, policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders, A Place in the World is a collaboration that includes Arizona State University’s Watts College and its Morrison Institute for Public Policy, the First Place Global Leadership Institute and its Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation Center for Public Policy and Autism Housing Network.

Aligning housing, long-term support services and community supports can more effectively fuel a dynamic marketplace that will one day make housing options as bountiful for people with autism as they are for everyone else! Download the report or order a print copy at firstplaceaz.org/a-place-in-the-world.

**Developing a New Generation of Housing Options**

A Place in the World is a comprehensive resource with essential terminology expressing what individuals with autism and other neurodiversities and their families need and want from a marketplace that can deliver. This groundbreaking report defines market segments, informs best practices and helps drive crucial partnerships to address pressing housing needs for special populations.

First Place is offering a series of three workshops focused on relevant, timely topics. Attendance is limited, so register soon at firstplaceaz.org/events. And visit the Autism Housing Network for resources leading you to more neuro-inclusive options!

aplaceintheworld.org  autismhousingnetwork.org  firstplaceaz.org
Utah Law Enforcement Agencies Receive VirTra Autism Training

The Office of the Utah Attorney General has partnered with VirTra and SARRC to provide law enforcement agencies with critical skills and understanding surrounding individuals with ASD. School resource officers throughout the state have been trained utilizing a two-hour VirTra simulator course, featuring a presentation by SARRC’s own Dr. Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, that was designed to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome when contacting individuals with ASD. The interactive course trains officers on how to recognize ASD behaviors, explains assisted communication techniques and what to do if an arrest must be made.

Kudos to the Autism Council of Utah and the Utah Attorney General’s Autism Advisory Board for engaging in productive classroom presentations with law enforcement officers, which provide real-world insight and meaningful feedback from families impacted by autism. This thoughtful approach and training represents community policing at its finest!
SARRC and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Form New Partnership

In fall 2020, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community awarded SARRC with a grant of $75,000 to support the delivery of telemedicine services for various SARRC programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This generous funding and partnership has helped SARRC continue to provide medically necessary services, programs and intervention to children, teens and adults with autism and their families throughout Arizona. SARRC is grateful to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for their support of this critical initiative!

JOIN US FOR SARRC’S
IGNITE VIRTUAL SPEAKER SERIES
brought to you by BHHS Legacy Foundation

Through informative, one-hour live lectures on pertinent topics centered around ASD, the 2020/2021 Ignite Virtual Speaker Series aimed to reduce health disparities for the vulnerable and underserved autism population and promote improvements in the delivery of autism services. Funded as a result of generous financial support from the BHHS Legacy Foundation, the goal of the series was to inspire and ignite change with presentations by Randy Lewis, “Employing a Diverse Workforce,” Dr. Patricia Wright, “Cultural Humility: Being Human Together,” Torrie Dunlap, “The Real Problem With Disability Is How We Think About It,” and Dr. Linda LeBlanc, “Providing Compassionate Care and Building Therapeutic Relationships.” Presentations were hosted online using Zoom and recordings can be accessed for free via SARRC’s YouTube channel, @SouthwestAutism.

BHHS Legacy Foundation Funds Ignite Speaker Series
In Brief

2020 Event Highlights

15th Annual Autism Speaks Walk in partnership with SARRC

SARRC and Autism Speaks celebrated their 15th annual walk event on Halloween. Although the 2020 event was transitioned to a virtual format, nearly 600 walkers and 130 teams celebrated the annual walk and raised funds for autism research. Participants live streamed a 15-minute virtual opening ceremony and were encouraged to walk 1.54 miles in their own neighborhoods. The suggested mileage refers to the one in 54 children diagnosed with autism in the U.S. Teams raised $250,000 that will support the autism research initiatives and programs at both SARRC and Autism Speaks.

19th Annual Operation Santa Claus Serves Over 300 Families

Thanks to our friends at Sanderson Ford, SARRC has been a proud partner and recipient of Operation Santa Claus for nearly two decades. Through Operation Santa Claus, toys, clothing and valuable funds are collected to support a handful of local Arizona charities, including SARRC. Through 2020 efforts, SARRC was able to help make the holidays a little brighter for more than 300 families in need.

SARRC Celebrates 22nd Annual Community Breakfast Virtually

SARRC’s 22nd Annual Community Breakfast was given a makeover for 2020 allowing nearly 1,200 guests to attend the annual event virtually. The breakfast, which was themed “Here for You,” recognized the ongoing efforts SARRC has been making to ensure that the necessary support continues for clients and families through the coronavirus pandemic. The 25-minute virtual event, which debuted on Thursday, May 21, featured personal stories from families, clients and community leaders who shared their experiences from home. Funds raised via the annual breakfast support SARRC’s mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.
Partnering together to help our community

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan is proud to collaborate with SARRC to help build healthy, inclusive communities.

PACIFIC DENTAL SERVICES® FOUNDATION

DENTISTS for SPECIAL NEEDS

We go above and beyond to create a relationship with our patients to assess and develop an individualized treatment plan. Our goal is to create a warm, welcoming, comfortable environment and provide the best care possible for each of our patients.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CALL 602-344-9530
EMAIL care@dentistforspecialneeds.com
VISIT DentistforspecialNeeds.com
**In Brief**

**SARRC Hosts Unique Culinary Event to Celebrate MVPs**

On Nov. 19, 2020, SARRC featured Chef Justin Beckett of Phoenix-based restaurants Beckett’s Table and Southern Rail in a virtual cooking demonstration. The event occurred during the organization’s annual donor appreciation event.

---

**Our best investments are priceless**

You can’t put a price on the things that matter most. That’s why U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management is proud to help fund Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center. We know that contributing to our community changes lives for the better. Thank you for working toward the greater good in our community.

Tim Hoekstra, Private Wealth Advisor
tim.hoekstra@usbank.com l 480.494.8363

privatewealth.usbank.com

---

**MFRG-ICON CONSTRUCTION**

Autism Awareness

is the first building block to a brighter future. We extend our gratitude to SARRC in all they’ve accomplished and continue to strive for. We are all one behind this great cause.

www.mfrg-icon.com | 310.450.5661
The live, two-hour demonstration included a three-course meal where guests were guided by Beckett through an interactive discussion as they prepared and cooked their dinners at home. Ingredients for the menu had been delivered in a SARRC-branded insulated tote bag prior to the event. After dinner, guests attended a panel featuring SARRC clinicians on “Learning from Our Mistakes: How Adults with Autism Are Teaching Us.”

The event was an opportunity for SARRC to recognize Multiyear Visionary Partners, comprised of donors who have pledged a gift of $1,000 or more for five years or longer.
SARRC’s Legacy Circle was established to create an endowment fund for the long-term needs of individuals with autism and their families. This circle of ongoing support was formed to honor some of our most loyal donors for their commitment to SARRC’s mission.

A gift to the Legacy Circle is a perpetual investment in SARRC’s research, programs and services, and allows for the continued expansion of SARRC’s essential services for the years ahead, despite economic conditions.

To learn more about the Legacy Circle or upcoming events, please visit autismcenter.PlanMyLegacy.org or contact Planned Giving Manager Beth Salazar at 602.606.9876.

Thiru Thangarathinam has created a legacy through his successful Salesforce company MST Solutions, but, for him, it’s not just about business. His family also is creating a legacy supporting SARRC. A “3Cs philosophy”—Community, Colleagues, Customers—was born early in the company’s history. “It also made me realize that I had the potential now to create a legacy in my life and my family’s life,” Thiru says.

Giving back became especially important to Thiru and his wife, Thamiya, after their children, Mukund and Eshwar, were born. “Raising children helps you see what is important in your life,” he says.

We apologize for any omissions due to the publishing deadline.
Special THANKS to our corporate and foundation donors

Arizona Cardinals Charities
Arizona Community Foundation
Arizona Complete Health
Arizona Dept. of Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
Arizona DES Child Care Administration
Arizona Multihousing Charitable Foundation Phoenix
Arizona Public Service
Arizona Together
Autism Speaks
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Bashas’
Charles A. Sullivan Charitable Foundation
Cigna Foundation
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
Community Health Charities
Cox Charities
Employees Community Fund of Boeing Arizona
Ethel J. Scantland Foundation
Faye & Lee Alport Foundation
Ford Motor Company Fund
Gila River Indian Community
Interest Ministries
Keller Foundation
Louis Foundation
MassMutual Foundation
Moreno Family Foundation
Morgan Family Foundation
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Salt River Project
Sanderson Ford
Sprouts Farmers Market
Teaumen & Grace Fuite Foundation
The Hartford
The Pakis Family Foundation
The Stahl Family Charitable Foundation
Valley of the Sun United Way
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
Weitz Family Foundation
Wells Fargo Charitable Foundation
Williams Family Foundation of Georgia

Donors Who Make a DIFFERENCE

VIRGINIA G. PIPER CHARITABLE TRUST

As a key partner for 17+ years, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust continues to support SARRC through funding mission-critical programs and initiatives. In March 2020, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust awarded SARRC a $500,000 grant. As a Piper Trust ATLAS program grantee in 2017, SARRC received an additional investment to build capacity in its operational efficiencies. As a result, over the course of 12 months, the SARRC team has been hard at work to migrate the current client database to Salesforce, upgrade fundraising and financial/accounting systems, and integrate data from administrative and clinical practice management systems into Salesforce. This grant enables SARRC to significantly enhance its technology infrastructure to reach more individuals with autism and their families across the state, improve the quality of programs and services, and increase efficiencies across the entire organization.

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

Gila River Indian Community has been a dedicated partner of SARRC since 2011, supporting initiatives that have allowed us to expand our footprint and services to rural and remote areas across Arizona. Most recently, they supported SARRC in fall 2020 through a grant of $70,000 for the Intensive Parent Training Program for families living in rural and remote areas with a young child diagnosed with ASD. The grant funding will also support SARRC providing outreach, education, training and resources to community organizations throughout Arizona. Through the generous funding of Gila River Indian Community, SARRC can continue to improve long-term outcomes for children with autism, empower families and build inclusive communities.
Become an MVP: Multiyear Visionary Partner

SARRC’s Multiyear Visionary Partner (MVP) program is an opportunity for annual donors to make a multiyear gift of five years or more that will be invested into our vital programs, services and research.

Make a difference by becoming an MVP and joining a community comprised of SARRC’s loyal supporters. MVPs are driven by a vision where people are meaningfully integrated into inclusive communities — empowered to make friends, learn, live and work in the community.

**SARRC MVPs**  **AS OF MARCH 17, 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLATINUM ($25,000+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weitz Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOLD ($10,000+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura and Mike Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SILVER ($5,000+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marimo Berk and Derek Drummond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Bidwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie and Neil Dreiseszun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghan Harahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie and Jon Huiburd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Scott McIntosh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle and Pat Riccobene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan and Scott Wallace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara and Wallace Weitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate and Roger Weitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRONZE ($1,000+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Aguirre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan Ahdoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Alpert and Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy and John Anton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose and Steven Arck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judi Bahr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil and Lynn Balter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyra and Ryan Barradas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vin Basa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cori and Greg Bernosky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle and Terry Biern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin and David Billings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorry Boni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Mark Bosco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley Brice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie and Jon Brovitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Camacho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elana and Chadwick Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane and Culley Christensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph T. Clees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan and Paula Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Comimso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie and Clark Crist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy and Mark Dalton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz and Gregg Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty and Steve Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Dee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni and Steve Dreiseszun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly and Doug Eaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac and Pearl Esau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca and James Felton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwynne and James Fijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie and Charles Goldstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie and Adam Goodman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. John Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie and Mark Hancock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen and Tom Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Balance Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Helseth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan and Ingolf Hermann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecelia and Anthony Herro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry and Diane Hillwig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel and Jonathan Hoffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlene and Sanford Horwitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Howard and Kelly Houle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy and Robert Hubbard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan and Brett Huckelbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jauerg Wilk, P.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie and Niels Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann and Brian Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadiant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teri and Tyson Kelley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya and Chrislaan Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackenzie Fitz-Gerald and Kevin Kemper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent and Jeri Kendle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Siebel and Stephanie King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Kinsella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Colombo and Louis Kirby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamee and Shaun Klein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob and Jenni Leinbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa and Ian Lopatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzi Resnik and Stanley Marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Martinez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Martuscelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janie and Jim Maxwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara and Jeremy McDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken McElroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kat and Mike McMahon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim McRoberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherri and Charles Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. and Mrs. Peter and Nicole Nakaji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kat and Ed Obuchowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathe and Tim Ogle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omni Biocutical Innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica and Daniel Openden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff and Lori Openden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socrates and Stephanie Papadopoulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clifford R. Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah and Sergio Peñaloza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Russ Perllich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Ann and Mike Philipsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Ralston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirstie and Jim Ransco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley Balzano and Jeffrey Rausch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan and Michael Reina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise and Rob Resnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laure and Chris Reynolds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karrin Taylor Robson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca and Stuart Rodie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Donald T. Rodie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Romo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue and David Rosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy and Eric Roudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louie and Lynda Sampedro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Schechter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Schubert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn and Kelly Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Shultz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celeste and Eric Silvernail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audra and James Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard and Wendi Sobelman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa and Arturo Solares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer and Tim Sprague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeeDee and Robert Stab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate and Paul Steinmetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faris Sukkar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis and Kim Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effie and Nicholas Theodore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy and Brad Vynalek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia and Jim Weber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leesa and George Weisz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desirée and Greg Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Flood and Larry West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan and Lawrence Wilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn and Kerry Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine and Don Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willmeng Construction, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlton Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather and Andrew Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen and Frank Ybarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We apologize for any omissions due to publishing deadline.
• Trust Administration
• Estate Management
• Special Needs Trusts
• Conservatorships
• Guardianships

602.606.7955
shieldfiduciary.com

6424 E. Greenway Pkwy, Ste. 550
Scottsdale, AZ 85254
License Number 20899

DEDICATED
TO YOUR
SUCCESS
SINCE 2012.

Our expertise in cloud systems, customer relationship management and marketing automation has earned us awards year after year, but it’s our 100% commitment to our customers’ success that has made us Arizona’s largest Salesforce partner.

Let’s work together.

480.719.1579

www.mst-solutions.com
What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

Applied Behavior Analysis, commonly referred to as ABA, is a scientific approach to understanding behavior. ABA refers to a set of principles that focus on how behaviors change, or are affected by the environment, as well as how learning takes place. ABA emphasizes direct observation, objective measurement and evaluation of the effects of specific interventions to be sure they are having the desired outcome.

ABA requires the implementation of established principles of learning, behavioral strategies and environmental modifications to improve and teach new behaviors. In practice, the implementation must be systematic so therapists can identify how behavior can be changed and understand how learning occurred.

The overarching goal of ABA is to establish and enhance socially important behaviors. Such behaviors can include academic, social, communication and daily living skills; essentially, any skill that will enhance the independence and/or quality of life for the individual.

Is ABA only for children with autism?

A common misconception is that ABA is only effective when used to support children with autism. While much of the research still focuses on children with autism and the benefits that can be achieved through ABA treatment, there is also evidence and support for the effectiveness of ABA with older individuals with autism. In fact, ABA is an approach that has been shown to be effective outside of the autism field. So, while ABA has been well documented with children with autism, it also can be a very effective approach when working with teens and adults with autism.

Are all ABA-based programs the same?

ABA-based programs utilize different behavior-based teaching paradigms to work on skills and, therefore, no two programs should look identical. Instead, there are commonalities that link each program together – for example, the use of reinforcement to maintain or increase a desired response or providing a prompt to help ensure success. Approaches should be based on the best fit for the individual along with the training and level of expertise of the supervising behavior analyst. Remember, if you have questions about the intervention, just ask! Behavior analysts love talking about the science behind what they are teaching.

What skills can be worked on utilizing ABA?

Just about anything you can think of can be taught utilizing ABA! Oftentimes, it is thought that ABA is only used when addressing problem behaviors or that it is used to teach very specific (or discrete) skills when in actuality, we are all learning and adjusting our behavior based on principles of ABA every day. At SARRC, you can find our therapists teaching everything from riding a bicycle to brushing teeth, to waiting for a turn.
¿Qué es Análisis Aplicado de la Conducta?

El Análisis Aplicado de la Conducta (ABA, por sus siglas en inglés), comúnmente referido como ABA, es un enfoque científico para el entendimiento de las conductas. ABA se refiere a un grupo de principios que se enfocan en cómo cambian las conductas, o son afectadas por el ambiente, y cómo ocurre el aprendizaje. ABA se enfoca en observación directa, medidas objetivas y evaluación de los efectos de intervenciones específicas para asegurarse del resultado deseado.

ABA requiere la implementación de principios establecidos del aprendizaje, estrategias conductuales, y modificaciones en el ambiente para mejorar y enseñar nuevas conductas. En práctica, la implementación debe ser sistemática para que los terapistas puedan identificar como la conducta puede ser cambiada y cómo el aprendizaje ocurrió.

La meta general de ABA es establecer y aumentar conductas socialmente significativas. Estas conductas pueden ser académicas, sociales, de comunicación y habilidades de la vida diaria; esencialmente, cualquier habilidad que aumenta la independencia y/o calidad de vida del individuo.

¿Es ABA sólo para niños con autismo?

Una idea común equivocada es que ABA sólo es efectivo cuando se usa para apoyar a niños con autismo. Mientras que la mayoría de las investigaciones todavía se enfocan en niños con autismo y los beneficios que pueden ser logrados a través del tratamiento de ABA, también hay evidencia y apoyo a la efectividad de ABA con individuos mayores con autismo. De hecho, ABA es un enfoque que ha demostrado ser efectivo fuera del campo de autismo. Así que, mientras ABA ha sido documentado muy bien para niños con autismo, también es un enfoque muy efectivo al trabajar con adolescentes y adultos con autismo.

¿Todas los programas basados en ABA son iguales?

Los programas basados en ABA utilizan diferentes paradigmas de enseñanzas conductuales para trabajar en habilidades, y, por lo tanto, dos programas nunca serán idénticos. En cambio, hay características comunes que conectan a los programas – por ejemplo, el uso de recompensas para mantener o aumentar la respuesta deseada o proporcionando ayudas para asegurar el éxito. Los enfoques deben ser basados en lo que mejor se ajuste al individuo junto con entrenamiento y nivel de experiencia del Analista Conductual supervisando el programa. Recuerda, si tienes preguntas sobre la intervención, ¡simplemente pregunta! los Analistas Conductuales disfrutan hablar sobre la ciencia utilizada en lo que están enseñando.

¿Qué habilidades se pueden trabajar utilizando ABA?

¡Básicamente todo lo que te puedas imaginar se puede enseñar utilizando ABA! Muchas veces, es pensado que ABA sólo es utilizado para trabajar problemas conductuales o que es usado para enseñar habilidades específicas (discretas) cuando en la actualidad, todos estamos aprendiendo y ajustando nuestra conducta basado en los principios de ABA todos los días. En SARRC, puedes encontrar a nuestros terapeutas enseñando todo desde montar bicicleta, cepillarse los dientes o esperar turnos.
Telehealth Diagnostic Evaluations During Pandemic Inspire Development of New Technology

Well before the COVID-19 pandemic, families reported obstacles to accessing diagnostic evaluations and long wait lists. SARRC’s research team was ahead of the curve when it collaborated with Behavior Imaging Solutions to develop and test the Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment™, or NODA, through a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health back in 2015. The goal at the time was to reduce wait times by connecting families with diagnosticians. Fast forward seven years and SARRC’s diagnostic clinic was well poised to transition to telehealth evaluations when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

In addition to using NODA, which was designed to evaluate children younger than age 7, SARRC’s diagnostic and research teams quickly developed a protocol for assessing older children, teenagers and adults for autism through videoconferencing. Further, the team designed a study to document the transition of SARRC’s entire diagnostic clinic from in-person assessments to telehealth. Currently under review at a scientific journal, this study found that our psychologists were able to make a diagnostic determination using only telehealth methods for 92% of the more than 100 clients evaluated between March and September of 2020. The remaining 8% of clients came in for a follow-up in-person assessment conducted while following a COVID-19 safety protocol. Whereas the telehealth model was crucial for ensuring continuity of care during the pandemic, it also has implications for the use of telehealth in autism evaluations after the pandemic is over.

The pandemic highlighted what our team has known for a while – we need to develop and validate telehealth methods to accurately assess for autism in individuals from toddlerhood to adulthood. SARRC and Behavior Imaging Solutions are teaming up again to develop new technology that will improve evaluations conducted through videoconferencing for clients who are too old to be assessed using the current NODA technology. Diagnosticians will have access to BI Live, a software that allows them to record a live assessment through videoconferencing and tag behavioral examples that either support or do not support an autism diagnosis. SARRC’s research team believes this technology will contribute to increased access to autism diagnosticians for clients of all ages.
SNAPSHOT OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

AVERAGE AGE OF DIAGNOSIS

ASD CAN SOMETIMES BE DETECTED AT 18 MONTHS OR YOUNGER

By age 2, a diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable. Despite this, most children are not diagnosed with ASD until after age 4. In Arizona, the median age of diagnosis by a community provider is 4 years, 9 months of age.

GENDER GAPS

THE GENDER GAP IN AUTISM HAS DECREASED

ASD has historically been more common in boys than girls. While current estimates suggest boys are four times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with the disorder, decreases in the male-to-female ratio have emerged in recent years. This is likely a result of improved identification among girls – many of whom do not fit the stereotypical picture of autism seen in boys.

RISK FACTORS

EXACT CAUSES OF ASD ARE UNKNOWN

Genetic and environmental factors, and their interaction, influence the risk of developing ASD. The significance of specific factors remains largely unknown, however, and no single cause has been identified. Occasionally, children with ASD are misdiagnosed with other conditions, like a mood condition or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which can delay the start of targeted intervention.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

AUTISM PREVALENCE

The most recent prevalence report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates 1 in every 54* children have ASD, but that’s a national average across specific states that contribute data to the CDC’s surveillance study. In Arizona, the rates are slightly lower at 1 in 63.

*Rates are based on CDC data collected from communities in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin.
Lindsay Palson was inspired to join the U.S. Air Force by her grandfather who served in the Army.
That’s the TICKET!

How SARRC’s Employment Services program is guiding adults with the skills needed to build independent lives

BY GINGER SCOTT
PHOTOS BY STEPHEN G. DREISEZUN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS

Lindsay Palson’s journey to an autism diagnosis happened a little later in life compared to many of her peers in SARRC’s Employment Services program. The Mesa woman already had eight years of U.S. Air Force service under her belt, as well as several college courses, yet she struggled with a constant lingering feeling that something in her life just wasn’t clicking.

“I remember a few years ago someone mentioning to me about displaying something that was an autistic trait. They quickly brushed it off, saying ‘oh no, someone would have caught that by now,’” Palson recalls.

So she brushed the notion off, too. Until a year ago, when she was watching a comedy special by Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby, who herself was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder as an adult.

“She talks about her own diagnosis and how autism can present differently in women and how it might get overlooked. I had never felt more seen in my life,” says Palson, now 32.

After years of struggling with her mental health and feeling like a constant outsider, Palson sought an evaluation in 2020 and was diagnosed. Suddenly, a lot of questions she had for most of her life, like

“I came to SARRC with a new hope.”

~Lindsay Palson
why her brain seemed to work differently or why she preferred less social environments, began to make sense.

Palson’s diagnosis was a vital first step down a new path, one that she hoped might lead her toward a more fulfilling career. That’s when she turned to SARRC.

**Getting to Work**

“I came to SARRC with this idea that I am not broken or wrong, and that someone might be able to guide me to the life I want,” Palson says. “I came to SARRC with a new hope.”

She also came to SARRC for help during the height of a worldwide pandemic, which meant while she was looking for guidance as she rethought her life goals and purpose, SARRC’s team was rethinking how it could reach people who needed that coaching in an environment that limited face-to-face interactions.

Thanks to innovative telemedicine technology, however, the clinical team was able to pivot, and for people like Lindsay Palson, the virtual environment has been a blessing.

“We learned that virtual sessions and a telemedicine approach can be quite successful for some individuals,” says Dr. Paige Raetz, director of SARRC’s Teen and Adult Services. “We were able to continue to support individuals on their goals toward greater independence and employment through virtual platforms. We even successfully ran our group-based programs for teens, allowing teens to continue to connect and gain confidence and skills in social interactions and early employment.”

For many, the virtual approach eliminated barriers that might have prevented them from accessing SARRC services, Raetz adds.

The convenience was a huge plus for Palson as she worked with job and skills coaches to zero in on her

“SARRC really empowered me to do things on my own.”

—Lindsay Palson
passions and interests. Through the virtual platform, Palson was able to brush up her resume and navigate the federal Ticket to Work program, eventually finding what she believes is the perfect fit for her future.

She had gone into the military in honor of her grandfather’s Army service, following in his footsteps, and had found her niche in medical work. Through her conversations with SARRC staff, she says she was able to pinpoint a future career that she’s confident pulls together her skills and work environment preferences. She is now taking classes toward a degree in medical coding.

“SARRC really empowered me to do things on my own,” she says.

No Path Is the Same
The transition into adulthood is a pivotal time, and SARRC aims to support individuals with autism through that journey with a variety of services to fit every person looking for guidance, no matter their age.

“We have several innovative programs to support teens and adults, and each one looks to address the critical skills related to transition,” Raetz says.

From CommunityWorks®, a program to support early employment skills for teens, to services that work on key skills in the areas of independence building and self-advocacy, SARRC aims to target the social, organizational and functional skills necessary for independence. Every approach is tailored to the individual’s needs and driven by the science of behavior analysis.

“We all want similar things in our lives as we move toward adulthood, things like greater independence, a supportive community, friends, a job we enjoy,” Raetz says. “At SARRC, the programs and services we provide are all focused on helping individuals achieve those outcomes.”

For Palson, being able to match her passions with her goals has been a bright light at the end of a very long path. She lives with her sister, who she also cares for, which has put a special emphasis on her need for self-sufficiency. But thanks to all she’s learned through SARRC, Palson says she is confident she will meet every goal she sets for herself. She has the added assurance that a willing ear will always be nearby when she needs it, too.

“It means so much to have someone understand what you’re going through and why your brain works the way it does,” Palson says. “Just having SARRC there to listen to what you have to say — it seems so easy for someone to do, but really... it means so much.”

Ticket to Work
Ticket to Work is a federal program under the Social Security Administration that connect adults ages 18 to 64 who receive Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income benefits with free employment services. Participants receive services such as career counseling, vocational rehabilitation, and job placement and training free of charge.

SARRC’s Employment Services program is an authorized Ticket to Work service provider. In addition to helping eligible adults find a career path that is right for them, SARRC also provides qualified participants with continuing support services to help them keep their job and increase their earnings over time.

MORE INFO: 866.968.7842 or choosework.ssa.gov

Lindsay Palson meets with her job coach, SARRC Associate Clinical Supervisor Kelsee Mullen, bimonthly to work on skills related to school, work and social communication.
Finding Her Way

For Sofía, SARRC’s Community School provided the foundation for future learning

“Here, we saw her interact with others. We saw her get out of her world where she was by herself and be part of a community.”

~ Olfa

When Sofía was 1, she wasn’t speaking. But being raised in a multilingual household, her parents thought maybe she was just a late talker or hearing too many different languages. But when Sofía started being picky with her food and becoming less social, they began seeking answers, turning to Arizona’s Early Intervention Program.

By the time Sofía was about to turn 3, she was still a very picky eater, less social and wasn’t speaking. Early Intervention, as well as Sofía’s preschool, suggested that the family seek out an autism diagnosis, and were referred by a teacher at the preschool who was familiar with SARRC.

Sofía was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in April 2013, two months before her third birthday. Her parents, Olfa and Samir, reached out to SARRC where they learned about SARRC’s Community School.

“The Community School is a preschool program for students with and without autism,” explains Christine Gomez, M.Ed.,
BCBA, senior clinical supervisor at SARRC. “For students who have a diagnosis of autism, the Community School provides an intensive, evidence-based treatment model for children 18 months through 5 years. For our non-treatment students, we offer a language-rich, play-based preschool program.”

“I was really impressed with it,” Olfa says. “The school had a smaller ratio of kids to teachers, and they were using ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) at the same time. Sofia was doing okay at her school, but she really needed ABA at school, and the fact that they were mixing kids on the spectrum with neurotypical kids was great. And, there she would be getting professional help.”

Sofia was able to join the Community School for her pre-K year.

“We saw so many changes that year,” Olfa shares. “We saw her blossom. We knew that she was in good hands with the experts. We saw huge progress and we were really hopeful for the first time. It took a lot of stress out of us because we knew we were on the right track.”

Not only did Sofia learn new words and begin speaking, but through the program, her social engagements increased and she became friends with others.

“In other schools she was always on one side of the classroom, even though she would have a friend or two that she would follow,” Olfa shares. “Here, we saw her interact with others. We saw her get out of her world where she was by herself and be part of a community. They had an emphasis on social skills. And for food — she would sit at the table and try things. That was the first time. She did things she had never done before. They gave her the tools she needed.”

“The Community School classroom model is designed to resemble a typical preschool experience, with a few key enhancements. Each classroom is supervised by a licensed behavior analyst and all therapists are registered behavior technicians with training in adapting their interactions to fit the unique needs of each student,” Gomez explains. “The program’s model not only benefits students with autism — neurotypical students receive opportunities for accelerated growth within highly individualized learning plans.”

Another benefit: Students are also provided with opportunities on how to demonstrate acceptance and compassion for the different types of learning and communication styles presented within the classroom.

For Sofia, the experience was, her parents say, “life-changing.”

Today, Sofia is mainstreamed in a third-grade classroom and able to both adapt to situations and integrate in ways her parents had only hoped, which they credit to both SARRC’s help and Sofia’s hard work.

“My biggest wish would be to see schools like the Community School everywhere,” Olfa says. “That should be the model. It was life-changing for us on so many levels. Sofia had all the attention she deserved and needed at the time.”

SARRC Community School Now Enrolling!

SARRC’s Community School features a blended classroom model that actively develops young minds through high-quality early childhood education.

Children (18 months to 5 years) enrolled in the Community School receive the benefits of highly trained classroom therapists with a 4:1 student-to-teacher ratio in a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with state education standards in a language-enriched environment structured to specifically improve meaningful engagement and social communication.

With campuses in Phoenix, Tempe and Scottsdale (opening summer 2021), learn more at autismcenter.org/CommunitySchool.

For more information on the admissions process, classroom availability or fees, please contact our Family Resource Team at 602.606.9806.
At Zander’s three-year check-up, his pediatrician expressed concerns about his language. So the family scheduled an appointment with their local school district to discuss an individualized education plan for preschool.

That was the first time Zander’s mother, Meredith, had heard the term ASD. She started learning more about autism spectrum disorder, and a family member told her she needed a formal diagnosis.

A local hospital said the wait time was 18 months to two years. A local medical group told her they could see Zander in 2 1/2 months. While that was an improvement, Meredith continued to research.

Early one morning, she sent SARRC an email, and within 24 hours, she received a call back.

“That was unheard of with what we were experiencing,” Meredith says. She answered questions about Zander’s speech and development over the phone. Based on the results of that screening, SARRC secured the family an evaluation appointment — for just three days later.

This is a result of SARRC’s Arizona Autism Early Diagnostic Network (AAEDN), which is helping to alleviate long waitlist times for families seeking diagnostic evaluations for autism.

About the Network

The AAEDN began with SARRC’s efforts a few years ago to have pediatricians conduct autism screening questionnaires at well-child visits for kids up to age 3. Then, if indicated, families came to SARRC for a formal evaluation.

“We were able to see kids and get them diagnosed — well before the age of 3. The

*Name changed to protect client privacy.
average age of diagnosis was about 22 months,” explains Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D., chief science officer at SARRC. “We showed that the screening and referral process worked well.”

But SARRC’s dedicated evaluators were only part of a temporary grant-funded project. It was clear to the SARRC team that early screening was critical, but so were psychologists who could evaluate kids. To perform evaluations without grant funding, SARRC would need to rely on public or private funds to pay for the evaluations. That makes the process take longer. Scaling the program would be difficult, if not impossible.

“We wanted a sustainable program that could scale and help more people,” Dr. Smith says. “The answer was to build a diagnostic evaluator network — a network of psychologists in the community who are licensed and trained to diagnose autism in young kids.”

SARRC continues to partner with pediatricians to distribute the screening questionnaire. If that yields any red flags, families are referred to SARRC, where a diagnostic coordinator helps families like Meredith’s get appointments with providers who take their insurance and are in their geographic area.

This way, SARRC doesn’t need to hire more psychologists to meet the needs of the pediatrician screening network. “We just coordinate the referrals. We work on the families’ behalf and get the evaluation scheduled,” Smith says.

**Getting Answers**

SARRC connected Meredith’s family with licensed psychologist Carol McLean, Ph.D., who specializes in early childhood development and autism.

Dr. McLean diagnosed Zander with ASD Level 2, and said she’d have a written report to Meredith and her husband within five days.

“We commit to having the report to families within two weeks, but try to get them out as quickly as possible,” Dr. McLean notes. “We tell parents the same day what the results are and give them an outline of next steps. But that report is what they need. It’s a clinical document designed to help them access the maximum amount of services possible. It’s a key that opens the doors to move forward.”

It did exactly that for Zander’s family.

“We were able to get approved for DDD (Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities) assistance. Zander (now 3 1/2) is in a developmental preschool and doing great, and he’s started speech and occupational therapy and music therapy as well,” Meredith says.

Getting kids screened early is critical. “If we miss these windows, it changes the trajectory of their life,” Dr. McLean adds. “These waitlists break my heart. SARRC does such a beautiful job connecting different parts of the community. I love the infrastructure they’re developing to bring together providers from around the state to help.”

Meredith hopes more families can benefit from the AAEDN.

“In our case, it was perfect. The stars aligned,” she says. “Every piece of literature I’ve read says the thing that is most effective is early intervention.”

Thanks to these early interventions, she can rest easier.

“I have every hope in my heart and in my mind that Zander will be fine,” she says. “He’s an amazing person.”

---

**Easy Access Autism Screening**

No costs. No appointments. Just answers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, well-child visits declined, and for some families, those visits had already been a luxury they couldn’t afford. But without those visits, early autism screenings were also foregone. For parents who have concerns about their child’s development, SARRC is here to help.

“All parents have to do is call a number to complete a developmental screening over the phone,” says Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D., chief science officer at SARRC.

“It’s low commitment on the parent’s part and no-cost,” Dr. Smith adds. “It’ll take 10 to 30 minutes, and you’ll know if you need a formal evaluation. And if you do, we can connect you with our diagnostic coordinator or give you a list of resources.”

Dr. Smith wants to ensure children with autism get the interventions they need as quickly as possible.

“I want parents to know they shouldn’t wait,” he says. “They should call and get their child screened and get the answers they need.”

Learn more at: autismcenter.org/EZScreen

To schedule a screening, call 602-218-8204 or email EZscreen@autismcenter.org.
Creating a stronger community, together.

Cox is proud to make meaningful partnerships throughout our communities.

We are pleased to support SARRC.

Find out more at cox.com

Working hand-in-hand with local partners to build strength in our community.

At Amazon, we look to leverage our scale for good to help strengthen local communities. That means combining our strengths with those of community partners, working together to find creative solutions that have a lasting impact.

Thank you to Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center for the positive impact you have on the community.

Visit www.aboutamazon.com/impact

Earn your degree in autism spectrum disorders

The steady rise in the number of those impacted by autism has increased demand for professionals who are aware of the issues and needs facing these special individuals, their families and service providers. With a master's degree in autism spectrum disorders, you will be well prepared to provide services and care, whether you are an educator, interventionist, psychologist, speech pathologist, behavior analyst or family member.

asuonline.asu.edu
Teen paves path to educational equity for peers with autism

“Why did you become a peer mentor?” When I was asked this question during my CommunityWorks® orientation at SARRC, I remember replying with a vague response. Truthfully, I had only applied to this program because my history teacher had recommended it to me. I knew very little about autism, and given my inexperience, I questioned whether I would fit in as a peer mentor.

But once the program started, my doubts quickly faded. Every Saturday morning, the hours flew by as I volunteered alongside newfound friends, who happened to have autism. While feeding turtles celery at the Phoenix Herpetological Society, I chatted with one teen about her interest in veterinary studies. The next week, another friend with autism taught me the chemistry of cooking as we prepared meals for First Place-Phoenix residents. With every volunteering session, I learned a little more about my peers impacted by autism – their hobbies, interests and routines. And frequently, I found myself blown away by their aptitude for science.

However, I was most surprised to learn that my friends had cultivated this scientific knowledge on their own. While the school system did help them learn the basics, an overemphasis on their diagnosis had impeded these teens’ scientific education. As an advocate for educational equity, I couldn’t stand idly by knowing my friends lacked access to STEM resources. My mission was simple: engage the talents and interests of my peers with autism by connecting them to inclusive, science-specific extracurricular experiences in the Phoenix community.

In April 2018, I launched my project by first sending a proposal directly to the president and CEO of SARRC, Dr. Daniel Openden. To my surprise, Dr. Openden welcomed my proposal and connected me with staff who could guide me. With SARRC’s support, I now had a platform to potentially train program staff and contact families whose children could benefit from this program. All I needed was someone who could provide science-specific activities for participating families.

Luckily, I found this partner in the Arizona SciTech Initiative, an organization with connections to hundreds of STEM-related companies and organizations. Its executive director showed great interest in my proposal and we soon scheduled a meeting between SARRC and Az SciTech. As discussions continued into the next year, this initiative only grew in scope as another organization, the Institute for Learning Innovation, joined our team. Soon thereafter, our group formally submitted a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to secure funding for an inclusive science outreach program.

After months of waiting, we finally received news that our program had been approved! Although the pandemic has delayed some plans, I am optimistic that our project will help many families nurture their child’s love for science.

In retrospect, I now can answer why I became a peer mentor. Through SARRC’s CommunityWorks program, I found many new friends whose dynamic personalities helped me reimagine how I view autism. SARRC has inspired me to do more and supported me every step of the way. I found a way to actually give back to this special community. Going forward, I will continue to champion inclusion and equity, and I know SARRC will continue to inspire others to do the same.

Shreyas Hallur is a 19-year-old student at Duke University who participated in SARRC’s CommunityWorks program as a peer mentor from 2017 to 2019. He currently serves on the Advisory Committee for SARRC’s Building Capacity for Inclusion with ASD audiences project, which has recently secured funding from the National Science Foundation.
78 infants and mothers supported through SARRC’s Milestones program

112,500 treatment hours were provided through SARRC’s clinical programs

43 adult students enrolled in the First Place® Transition Academy operated by SARRC to learn how to live independently

191 parents and caregivers attended Family Orientation

9 new Employment Partners bringing total to 63 employers across 103 locations committed to employing adults with autism

132 children with and without autism attended SARRC’s Community School

3,500 phone calls made by community members to SARRC’s newly developed Family Resource Team

14 teens with ASD and 25 teen Peer Mentors received pre-employment training in CommunityWorks®

8,624 parents, family members, typical peers and community members were reached through education and outreach efforts

1,437 educational and medical professionals received autism training

42 young children and 53 family members participated in JumpStart®
Programs, Services and Research

SARRC’s clinical model is grounded in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) with a particular focus on naturalistic behavioral interventions in inclusive environments, including but not limited to: in the home, in school, on the job or in the community. Each of SARRC’s therapeutic programs, classes and trainings are guided by best practice models; the most currently available science; increasing independence and producing meaningful outcomes; and the individualized needs of the children, teens, adults with autism and families we serve.

Additionally, SARRC frequently works with educators, healthcare professionals, employers and other community partners to help maximize their goals as it relates to supporting individuals with autism. Our outreach efforts can be individualized or offered in a group format, and they are listed under Community Services. All trainings and events promote the use of evidence-based interventions and strategies.

Unless otherwise noted, for more information on a program, service or research study, please contact SARRC’s Family Resource Team at 602.606.9806 or visit autismcenter.org. Para hablar con alguien en Español llame al 480.603.3283.

**EASY ACCESS AUTISM SCREENING**
The Easy Access Autism Screening program allows parents or caregivers to address concerns about their child’s development through a free screening assessment over the phone in 10 to 30 minutes. An experienced staff member will complete the interview, which is designed for parents or caregivers of children ages 12–36 months. To schedule a screening, call 602.218.8204 or email EZscreen@autismcenter.org.

**DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES***
Licensed psychologists conduct assessments to determine if an individual meets DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This program is available to individuals of all ages and includes parent/guardian/caregiver assessments to gather information about an individual’s developmental history. For children 6 and younger, the Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA™) is an accurate and effective alternative to the in-person assessment that uses smartphone technology and a team of clinicians at SARRC to diagnose—or rule out—autism.

*Tambien en Español.

**FAMILY ORIENTATION**
Family Orientation connects caregivers of individuals with ASD to current and broad information that will help them navigate the journey of autism. Participants will learn about issues that are relevant to their child’s stage of life. Orientations are for families with newly diagnosed children, those who have recently relocated to Arizona, and families making life transitions. Family Orientations are held once a month for caregivers of individuals in each age group: Young Child (younger than age 6), School-Age Child (age 6-12), Teens and Adults (age 13+). Orientations are free and delivered online.

**MILESTONES PROGRAM**
The Milestones program offers services and support for parents of infants starting as young as 6 months and continuing through 18 months of age. This program is ideal for families with infants who have an older sibling with a diagnosis of autism, as well as new parents looking for more information and support regarding their infant’s development. Services include 1) evidence-based information on developmental milestones and parenting practices, 2) consistent monitoring and 3) a very early intervention option for babies demonstrating early signs of ASD or with a diagnosis of ASD prior to 18 months.

**JUMPSTART**
JumpStart® is designed for families of young children waiting for a diagnostic evaluation or report, those who have been recently diagnosed, or are at risk for ASD. This is a six-week, entry-level program that provides information, support, training, and tools that parents and caregivers will need to navigate autism today and tomorrow. Parents will receive one-on-one coaching and learn strategies to immediately address their child’s social communication skills and challenges.

*Tambien en Español.
COMMUNITY SCHOOL
SARRC’s Community School is a preschool program that provides intensive, ABA-based programming for children with ASD and high-quality early childhood education for typically developing children with campuses in Phoenix, Tempe and Scottsdale (summer 2021). All children (ages 18 months to 5 years) receive the benefits of highly trained SARRC classroom therapists within a 4:1 student-to-teacher ratio; a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned with state education standards; and a language-enriched environment structured to specifically improve meaningful engagement and social communication. Children with ASD also receive 1:1 intervention in the classroom, parent-training sessions conducted in the family’s home and in the community, and program supervision from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). After-school care is available for typically developing children.

COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIORAL PROGRAM
SARRC’s Comprehensive Behavioral Program provides intensive, ABA-based programming across environments to meet the needs of children up to age 14 with ASD and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the home and in the community and is often coordinated with a student’s school. Families receive weekly 1:1 intervention sessions, regular caregiver training sessions, and program management and supervision from a BCBA. Goals are developed in coordination with the family and focus on increasing socially significant behaviors and highlighting each child’s individual strengths.

FIRST PLACE® TRANSITION ACADEMY OPERATED BY SARRC
In partnership with First Place AZ®, SARRC’s Transition Academy is a two-year program that provides comprehensive ABA-based programming to support transition for adults with ASD. Students live in apartments within the community while attending classes and working. Students receive a comprehensive curriculum, including career education and support, independent living skills, social and leisure skills, and transition services. The Transition Academy includes a 32-course sequence, consisting of classes on finances, interpersonal relationships, advocacy and personal safety, all completed at the GateWay Community College campus (or virtually during pandemic). Instruction is also provided within the students’ apartments applying the skills they learn in the classroom to the natural environment.

GT is proud to support SARRC
We applaud its mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.

Nicole M. Goodwin
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
2375 East Camelback Road | Suite 700
Phoenix, AZ 85016 | 602.445.8000

©2021 Greenberg Traurig, LLP. Attorneys at Law. All rights reserved. Attorney Advertising. “These numbers are subject to fluctuation.

GT Greenberg Traurig
We’re proud supporters of SARRC.
Visit one of our Phoenix, Arizona Metropolitan Area Branches:
Biltmore: 6350 N. 24th St., Phoenix
Chandler: 3031 West Frye Rd, Bldg D, Chandler
No. Scottsdale: 20301 No. Hayden Rd, #115, Scottsdale
Scottsdale: 7293 N. Scottsdale Rd, #107, Scottsdale
Sun City/Arrowhead: 16150 N. Arrowhead Fount., #185, Peoria

Brokerage Products: Not FDIC-Insured • No Bank Guarantee • May Lose Value
The Charles Schwab Corporation provides a full range of brokerage, banking and financial advisory services through its operating subsidiaries. Its broker-dealer subsidiary, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), Member SIPC, offers investment services and products, including Schwab brokerage accounts. Its banking subsidiary, Charles Schwab Bank (Member FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender), provides deposit and lending services and products.
©2021 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC. (5211-0YAJ) SCH3241-26 (2/21)
COMMUNITYWORKS®
CommunityWorks® is a pre-employment and community involvement program that helps prepare teens ages 13-18 for the transition to independent living, higher education and/or employment. CommunityWorks provides the opportunity for teens with and without ASD to engage in volunteer work throughout their communities while developing job skills and social communication skills. Teens with ASD also receive parent training and 1:1 intervention sessions conducted in the family’s home and in the community.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
Employment Services is aimed at increasing competitive employment opportunities for adults with autism, while teaching appropriate work behaviors, building social skills, and providing specialized vocational training. Clients receive a functional assessment to identify employment skills and interests; development of pre-vocational and vocational goals, supports and accommodations; resume and job interview preparation; and on-the-job training and coaching. Employment Services may also include vocational evaluations, internships and volunteer opportunities within SARRC’s Beneficial Beans® Garden or in the community.

PARENT TRAINING
Parent Training offers two options: a 1-week and 12-week model. Together, parents and coaches will collaborate to identify individualized and meaningful goals. Parents will walk away with strategies that will benefit their child and family. Through coaching and hands-on practice, coaches will come alongside parents to target their child’s language, social, play and adaptive skills in everyday routines and interactions.

PEERS® PROGRAM
The PEERS® curriculum is a manualized 14-week intervention that was developed to teach social and friendship skills to cognitively able adolescents with ASD, along with typically developing peers. During weekly 90-minute sessions, small groups of adolescents are taught social skills, including the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication. Parents learn the same material and are trained to coach their adolescents as they complete weekly assignments related to the course material.

PHYSICIAN OUTREACH PROGRAM
SARRC’s Autism Spectrum Disorders Screening Kit enables physicians to effectively screen for ASD during developmental checkups. The kit includes parent questionnaires, presented in English and Spanish, scoring templates and materials to assist with timely referrals and earlier diagnoses. Training meetings are held monthly for all medical personnel who are interested in learning more about autism.

SECOND GEAR
Second Gear is an 8-week parent training program for families with a child between 4 and 10 years of age. Parents learn strategies for managing behavior at home by meeting with a BCBA a couple of times each week without their child and once a week with their child. During two weekly meetings, parents and coaches will identify strategies for their child and family and develop a plan for reducing challenging behaviors. During the parent coaching session, parents put the plan into action with their child and their coach by their side.

INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES
Individualized Services for teens and adults provide intensive, ABA intervention across environments to meet the needs of our clients with ASD and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the home and community to target the unique needs of each teen and adult. Clients receive weekly one-on-one intervention services. In a typical week, individuals may receive between 5-20 hours of intervention. Sessions are highly individualized in order to incorporate the goals of each client and their family. Services are supervised by a BCBA and implemented by highly trained clinicians. Monthly parent training is also available to support the transition into adolescence or adulthood.
## Get Connected

### COMMUNITY: SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS

#### OUTREACH
Outreach efforts include a variety of informational services to meet the needs of the professional, organization or community program, including brief presentations about autism and evidence-based practices, providing resources and materials about SARRC programs and services, or scheduling tours and FAQ sessions with our experts.

#### EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS
Educational presentations are delivered to provide information and messages with impact. Our consultants use stories, video examples and interactive activities to engage the audience. Presentations can be customized and offered virtually or in the setting of your choice.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Professional development opportunities are offered throughout the year at our Sybil B. Harrington Campus for Exceptional Children. Most events offer continuing education units for BCBAs.

#### STUDENT-BASED CONSULTATIONS
Student-based consultations include initial assessment to guide development of a proposal to meet the needs of the student, teacher, classroom and school. Initial observation and assessment are completed and reviewed with the school and includes a variety of activities to meet the goals of the student and school.

#### INCLUSION TRAINING AND CONSULTATION
Inclusion training and consultation services are offered to school-based and recreational organizations that are moving toward an inclusive model or would like to improve upon an existing model by implementing best practices to promote the success of all participants.

#### THINKASPERGER’S®
The ThinkAsperger’s® mobile app is designed for parents, educators, pediatricians and other community stakeholders to consider ASD when they notice subtle social challenges in school-age children. Through the free mobile app, users can access a screening questionnaire, resources and a way to connect directly with SARRC. Learn more at autismcenter.org/resources.

*The ThinkAsperger's mobile app will be relaunching in 2021 under a new name. Please refer to autismcenter.org/resources for more information on how to download the free app.*

#### ARIZONA AUTISM EARLY DIAGNOSTIC NETWORK
The Arizona Autism Early Diagnostic Network (AAEDN) is comprised of pediatricians and psychologists committed to helping families who have concerns about their child's development and an opportunity to provide additional support if there are signs of ASD. This initiative is led by SARRC and focuses on shortening the time gap between an initial autism screening by a pediatrician and a formal autism diagnostic evaluation – the first step to early intervention and treatment. If you are a pediatrician or psychologist interested in joining the AAEDN network, contact us at 480.390.6559.

#### EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS
SARRC creates partnerships with local and national employers to increase competitive, community-based employment opportunities for adults with ASD. Nationally, adults with ASD experience low rates of employment, but through the help of our valued Employment Partners, SARRC is committed to increasing the employment rate among adults with ASD. Employment Partners commit to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and receive support from SARRC with autism awareness training for staff and individual job coaching for eligible employees.

#### PHARMACEUTICAL TRIALS & RESEARCH STUDIES
SARRC is committed to identifying effective behavioral, educational and pharmaceutical treatment approaches for people with autism of all ages. Our research department maintains a robust portfolio of pharmaceutical research studies. See our website for the most current list of projects. If you are interested in learning more about participating in a study, please contact a member of our team at 602.340.8717. Learn more at autismcenter.org/research.
We proudly support SARRC and their mission to help people with autism achieve their goals.

“The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance.”

-Brian Tracy

TOGETHER WORKS BETTER.

We’re proud to support the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center and its efforts to help so many people cope with challenges today—and live healthier, more resilient lives tomorrow.
**SNAPSHOT**

Financials

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2020 (unaudited)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>$8,454,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Assets</td>
<td>$9,725,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,180,406</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>$1,423,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Liabilities</td>
<td>$21,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,444,375</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>$10,949,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td>$5,786,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,736,031</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS| $18,180,406 |

Statement of Activities for the Period Ending December 31, 2020 (unaudited)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals &amp; Corporations</td>
<td>$892,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$3,395,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>$311,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>$1,000,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Fees</td>
<td>$10,292,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest, Dividend, &amp; Investment</td>
<td>$845,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Support</td>
<td>$25,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Support &amp; Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,763,434</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries, Benefits &amp; Professional Development</td>
<td>$11,827,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Labor &amp; Professional Services</td>
<td>$419,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Expenses</td>
<td>$971,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage, Printing &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>$266,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy &amp; Communication</td>
<td>$529,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events Costs</td>
<td>$29,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Expenses</td>
<td>$25,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amortization &amp; Depreciation</td>
<td>$402,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,471,193</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS    | $2,292,241 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Services</td>
<td>$4,598,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>$4,016,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Transition Academy</td>
<td>$1,110,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>$359,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$1,988,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$1,209,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Fundraising</td>
<td>$1,188,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses by Department</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,471,193</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A copy of the fully audited financial statements will be available after June 30, 2021, by contacting Andrea Levy, Chief Financial Officer, (602) 340-8717.
October 2021 marks the 19th anniversary of our Grandparents Support Group. The group started in 2002 as a place for grandparents to come together, learn about autism and how to best help their children and grandchildren on their autism journeys.

The group’s beloved founder, Kathy Bosco, became interested in the autism community when her grandson was diagnosed when he was only a year and a half old. She discovered SARRC and volunteered her time in order to absorb as much knowledge as she could. Realizing she wanted other grandparents to have the same support and resources, she founded the Grandparents Support Group with the humbling intent to not only educate but to empower others as they begin (or continue) on their autism journey.

“When I was asked to start a Grandparents Support Group nearly 19 years ago, I realized there was no roadmap for this. None existed, so I had to pioneer the journey,” Bosco said. “Even though the outstanding education and research updates are so important for grandparents, the most important piece throughout the years has been the support. Support not only given by myself and SARRC, but the support we give each other as we navigate through autism with our grandchildren.”

She added, “The role of the grandparent in the family dynamic has become such a sophisticated and integral part of the autism journey, and the Grandparents Group is here to acknowledge that role and assist in any way we can.”

These values of unity and communication are what has helped the group remain strong over the past two decades.

What started as a close-knit group of five members has now impacted the lives of over 450 members. In fact, many of the members joined when their grandkids were young, and are happy to report their grandchildren have evolved into independent, thriving adults.

LEARN MORE

autismcenter.org/grandparentsgroup | 602.340.8717
WE ARE EXPANDING TO SCOTTSDALE!

SARRC’s Scottsdale Paiute Campus | 6535 E. Osborn Road

SARRC is introducing a fourth location in the South Scottsdale area within the Paiute Neighborhood Center. We look forward to connecting with families in this new community!

FEATURED PROGRAMS

- Comprehensive Behavioral Program (up to 14 years old)
- Community School (18 months-5 years)

NOW ENROLLING!

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION
To learn more about enrollment, contact our Family Resource Team at 602.606.9806.

CAMPUSES IN PHOENIX, TEMPE AND SCOTTSDALE
autismcenter.org