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Sunday, November 2, 2008
Arizona Walk Now for Autism 5K and 1 Mile Family-Fun Walk
Tempe Beach Park - 8:00 a.m.

Register Today:
www.walknowforautism.org/arizona

Together we’ll find the missing pieces.
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Elogios para el Programa JumpStart

Queremos manifestar nuestro más profundo agradecimiento por la ayuda que nos dieron para nuestro hijo, Adrián Noreña, a través del programa JumpStart. El haber asistido a las sesiones del programa nos dio la oportunidad de entender y aceptar su condición. Con la capacitación que nos brindaron tenemos, como padres, un nuevo camino para darle a nuestro hijo la oportunidad de que, en el futuro, tenga una mejor y mayor capacidad de vida y que pueda integrarse a la vida productiva del país sin ningún contratiempo o rechazo. Nuestro más profundo agradecimiento por su ayuda.

Enrique y Danitza Noreña
Phoenix, Ariz.

Praise for JumpStart

We want to express our most profound gratitude for the help you gave us for our son, Adrian Noreña, through the JumpStart program. Participating in the program gave us the opportunity to understand his disorder. With this knowledge, we have, as parents, discovered a new path to give our son the opportunity to have a better future and a more fulfilling life. We believe he will be able to be a contributing member of society and will face far fewer challenges and rejections throughout his life now that we know how to best support him. Our most sincere thanks for your help.

Enrique and Danitza Noreña
Phoenix, Ariz.

Action for Autism Inspires Listeners to Learn and Give Back

Every once in a great while, a person will be going about everyday life and something will catch their attention. That person may not understand what got their attention, but they can’t seem to turn away. After watching and listening, they realize that they are in the midst of watching the greatness of the human heart at work.

This is exactly how I felt listening to Action for Autism. I have never known anybody directly affected by this disorder, but I couldn’t ignore it either. After listening for about 10 minutes, I was hooked on wanting to know, understand and help. SARRC and KTAR’s Action for Autism affected me in a way that I didn’t know was possible. After listening to all of the donations coming in, I reflected on what it means to be a hero and felt inspired. A hero is someone who stands up and fights for the cause that is greater than any one person. They fight for those who can’t fight for themselves. It is one fighting for the greater good of the many, never asking and never wanting reward or recognition, just success. In my eyes and to so many others, you are all heroes. If there is anything more that I can do to help, please let me know.

Rick Franklin
El Mirage, Ariz.
All parents worry about their children. It's part of our job. When they're little, we worry about bruised heads and skinned knees. As they age, we worry about curfews and peer pressure. And it doesn't stop when they become adults.

For parents of children with autism, those worries are magnified exponentially. A lack of social and communication skills plus the repetitive obsessive-compulsive behaviors indicative of the disorder combined with insufficient vocational training puts those with autism at a disadvantage. We know that many adults with autism excel in their chosen fields, but the harsh reality is that current unemployment rates for adults with autism hover around 90 percent. By comparison, 67 percent of adults with disabilities are unemployed.

We must provide people with autism and their families with a vision for the future — one they do not fear, but look forward to. One that means living in a place that feels like home because it's theirs and working in a job that puts their talents and skills to use, builds their confidence and helps them be productive members of our society. And one that involves friends and a community that support them.

At the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), we're working to engage our young people now in hopes that as adults, they will be contributing members of our community who are valued and appreciated. It begins with CommunityWorks, our pre-vocational program for teens ages 13 to 18 with ASDs and their typical peers. SARRC's vocational and life-skills program is designed to help young adults and adults with ASDs express interest in potential careers while learning necessary life skills that will maximize their ability to live and work independently to the greatest degree possible.

Our teens work at the Phoenix Zoo, the Burton Barr Central Library, the Arizona Science Center and the Desert Botanical Garden. The programs that comprise CommunityWorks — ZooWorks, LibraryWorks, ScienceWorks and GardenWorks — give our teenagers and young adults the opportunity to gain valuable life skills and job experiences, make new friends and earn a paycheck. (Learn more on page 42.)

It is only through the support of our community that we are able to serve our families. Earlier this year, KTAR, with Sanderson Volvo's sponsorship, produced the 26-hour Action for Autism radio event. This fundraising drive raised much-needed awareness of autism in addition to greatly appreciated funds. Through generous corporate sponsors, individual donors, local partners who employ our adolescents and adults, and communities that respect, value and support them, I truly believe we can empower individuals with autism to embark on the promising futures they deserve.

Many thanks,

Denise D. Resnik
Co-Founder and Development Chair
his issue of Outreach is dedicated to raising awareness for the needs of Arizona’s multi-cultural populations, particularly its Hispanic population, which represents 29 percent of all Arizona residents and 30 percent of Maricopa County residents (2006 U.S. Census).

Since 2003, SARRC has offered its JumpStart parent training program to Spanish-speaking families, as well as dedicated efforts to raise awareness to help Latino families obtain an earlier diagnosis.

In the past year, we have dedicated even more resources, hired additional bilingual staff, partnered with GALA (Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos con Autismo) to offer training to Spanish-speaking families, worked with the media to raise awareness, and helped bring autism training to the staffs of prominent agencies such as Valle Del Sol and Chicanos Por La Causa. We are committed to serving the needs of our Hispanic families and look forward to working together in the coming years to do even more.

In other news, SARRC recently conducted a statewide consumer survey. The results were overwhelmingly positive, and we gleaned important information. For example, of the 220 survey respondents, 74 percent said they would like more parent training.

Empowering and supporting parents has been documented in many studies to be highly effective at improving lifelong outcomes for individuals with autism. Parent training has always been an important part of SARRC’s services. To respond to the demand for more parent training, SARRC will offer a new specialized habilitation parent training model starting in January 2009. In less than two years, the new habilitation model will enable SARRC to double the number of families served with in-home services and will include:

- 18 months of specialized habilitation that supports the entire family through a parent-based training model.
- SARRC’s most highly trained behavioral interventionists will implement a parent training model for families, all supervised by a Ph.D., Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. Each interventionist has a minimum of a bachelor’s degree and extensive training in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). Many of them are also certified by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board.
- Families receiving specialized habilitation from SARRC may also obtain additional habilitation hours from other agencies.
- Bilingual staff will serve the needs of Spanish-speaking families in the program.
- SARRC’s workshops covering topics such as ABA and PRT, etc., will be offered at no charge to habilitators working with families in the program (including habilitators working with SARRC families at other agencies).
- Initially, the program will be offered to families of children 5 and younger, but will later expand to support older children.
- In addition to state funding, private-pay options will be available to families.

Information sessions are being scheduled for November with enrollment to begin in December. Please contact training@autismcenter.org for more information.

While this is our first step, we are also assessing how to better meet the other important needs identified in the survey. If you have not provided us your feedback or ideas, our survey is still online, and we would greatly appreciate your input. Go to www.autismcenter.org, then “Research and Medical Affairs.” Combined with our work with parents, physicians, educators and paraprofessionals, this survey will help us ensure the programs and services offered best respond to your needs.

Also, please feel free to contact me at lglow@autismcenter.org to share your input. I look forward to hearing from you!
Thunderbirds Fund Playground for Exceptional Children

With a Thunderbird Charities donation of $250,000, SARRC will build the Thunderbirds Playground for Exceptional Children, a sensory playground that provides children with rich opportunities for physical and therapeutic recreation.

“Playtime provides children with autism an opportunity to work on a variety of skills in a fun environment,” said SARRC President/CEO Lisa Glow. “Our entire team is looking forward to the new sensory playground, and we are truly grateful to Thunderbirds Charities for their continued support for our kids.”

The Phoenix Thunderbirds have been in the Valley since 1937. Better known as the host organization for the FBR Open, the group has a strong philanthropic arm dedicated to organizations based or with a significant presence in Arizona. The mission of Thunderbirds Charities is to assist children and families, help people in need and improve the quality of life in our communities.

Sky Harbor Invitational Hits a Hole in One

SARRC was selected as a beneficiary of the Sky Harbor Invitational, hosted by HMS Host and Marriott, for the third year in a row. Held at the JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa, preliminary numbers indicate the tournament raised about $50,000 for SARRC and included 450 players.

Founded in 1987, the event is the Valley’s most profitable charity tournament, raising more than $5 million for Arizona-based nonprofits.

Valley of the Sun United Way Reinvests in SARRC’s Intervention Programs

For the second year, Valley of the Sun United Way has invested in SARRC’s Spanish JumpStart early intervention and PARENT (Parenting Autism with Research and Evidence-based Naturalistic Teaching) programs. The $37,200 will help cover program costs, including staff time and supplies.

Since 1999, the Valley of the Sun United Way has contributed more than $600,000 to SARRC through grants and individual contributions.

Phoenix Suns Charities Support Community School

Phoenix Suns Charities recently awarded SARRC $10,000 to help fund the Community School, which is comprised of two inclusive classrooms for toddler and preschool-age children with ASDs and typically developing peers.

Thanks to the generosity of fans and sponsors, and underwriting by the team, Phoenix Suns Charities distributes more than $750,000 annually to more than 100 local charities.

USAA Helps Fund SARRC’s JumpStart Program

Since 2001, the USAA Foundation has supported SARRC with much-needed funding for a variety of early intervention and training programs. Most recently, the foundation helped fund SARRC’s JumpStart program, which is offered in both English
and Spanish. Past program support includes the Gateway Project, Family Tune-Ups and Project Play.

**Cox Charities Funds Friendships**

SARRC recently helped facilitate a pilot school-based program, the FRIEND Playground Club, which is designed to encourage social interaction among children with autism and typically developing peers. Thanks to a $7,500 contribution from Cox Charities, the program will continue to run at Copper Ridge Elementary School through December.

To learn more about the FRIEND Playground Club, turn to page 34.

**Boeing Mesa Gives Back**

SARRC received a $5,000 grant from the Employee Community Fund (ECF) of Boeing Mesa for the PARENT (Parenting Autism with Research and Evidence-Based Naturalistic Teaching) Program.

Taught by a master’s level speech-language pathologist, the PARENT Program provides parents/caregivers with a basic understanding of how their children communicate and how to facilitate language development.

**Lori Vincent Completes BCBA Certification**

Lori Vincent, M.Ed., BCBA, program manager at SARRC, recently became a board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), a goal she has been working toward since entering the autism field nearly five years ago.

“I started working with children while completing my undergraduate program in St. Louis, and I was amazed by the progress children made using an applied behavioral analysis (ABA) program,” Vincent says. “Knowing this, I made a commitment to learn as much as I could about ABA so that I could provide children with the best autism intervention possible.”

The certification shows the behavior analyst is able to effectively develop and implement assessment and intervention methods for use in unfamiliar situations and for a range of cases. Vincent is also certified to supervise other analysts as they complete the rigorous certification process.

**Children’s Fitness Center Makes Exercise Fun**

Exercise is a key ingredient to physical and emotional health. For children and young teens with special needs, establishing a healthy fitness routine can be especially challenging.

With this in mind, Matt McMahon, vice chairman of SARRC’s board and the father of a child with autism, and Lance Dreher, Ph.D., former Mr. Universe and founder of The Fitness Institute, co-founded The Kids Fitness Institute.

“The program’s success is tremendous, and the positive effects on self-image and health are life-changing for participants,” McMahon says. “My son really enjoys the team-based exercise model, and the program’s peer-to-peer interactions continue to support his friendship-making skills.”

For more information, please call (480) 951-7177.

**Diana Diaz Named 40 Under 40**

Diana Diaz, M.Ed., SARRC’s Hispanic Community Relations Manager, was recently named among the 40 Hispanic Leaders Under 40 by the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Univision Radio. The program recognizes leaders in business, nonprofit and government sectors in the Valley.

“It’s an honor to be recognized among this distinguished group for my work at SARRC,” says Diaz, who joined SARRC in 2007. “I’m so proud of what
we've been able to accomplish in the Hispanic community — most notably, raising awareness of autism and providing programs in Spanish to our families.”

**DBack Orlando Hudson Launches Autism Nonprofit**

Arizona Diamondback and SARRC supporter Orlando Hudson recently founded the Curing Autism Through Change & Hope (CATCH) Foundation to help fund therapy, education and activities for children with autism.

In partnership with SARRC, the CATCH Foundation hosted its first event in September, bringing friends and teammates together for Hudson’s Strikeout Autism charity bowling event.

Participants bowled with Hudson, raising $5,000 for SARRC programs.

To learn more about the CATCH Foundation, visit orlandohudson1.com.

**Denise Resnik Receives Alumnae Achievement Award**

Kappa Kappa Gamma, one of the oldest women’s fraternities, recognized alumnae member and SARRC co-founder Denise Resnik for her contributions to the autism community with the Alumnae Achievement Award.

The Alumnae Achievement Award is the highest honor for community and professional achievement that Kappa Kappa Gamma can bestow upon its members.

**Beauty of a Bonzer Rocks for Charity**

Outback Steakhouse and Budweiser hosted the 8th Annual Beauty of a Bonzer charity concert event, featuring Daryl Hall & John Oates, in September. The event raised nearly $113,000 for six Valley nonprofits. Special thanks to US Airways for donating $15,000 in travel gift cards for the live auction event and to the other community organizations, who helped make this year’s event a success.

**Thanks for making us smile.**

When we think of the wonderful things SARRC makes possible, we can’t help but grin from ear to ear. SunBank is proud to help you put a smile on the faces of very special kids in the Phoenix area.

SunBank has banking center locations throughout Arizona.
Visit us online at www.sunbankaz.com or call (602) 952-0044 for the location nearest you. Member FDIC.
Summer Theater Camp Brings Children with Autism to the Stage

Children with autism enjoyed an enriching theater camp experience this summer, thanks to a partnership between Phoenix Theatre and the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC). Adventure Stage provided an opportunity for children to explore dramatic concepts and techniques while immersed in Kampalooza 2008, an already-existing summer camp at Phoenix Theatre.

Phoenix Theatre's director of education, Gary Minyard, is proud of what the program has achieved. “In those moments of celebration, when our differences make us all the same, I realized this program was successful at not only achieving the goals we had set out to achieve months before,” he says. “But that the theater itself has the power to bring all of us together.”

You deserve some extra credit.

Building the future means doing one thing every day - surpassing expectations. We proudly salute the staff and volunteers of SARRC, which makes a world of difference in the lives of autistic children and their families.

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jpmorgan.com
SARRC Board Member Leo Valdez Honored for Humanitarian Efforts

SARRC board member Leo Valdez was recently honored with Valle del Sol’s Rosa Carrillo Torres Humanitarian Award. Valdez was recognized for his tireless work on behalf of families living with autism, and for striving to make autism services available to underserved families and those of multicultural backgrounds.

Valdez is a member of SARRC’s finance and public policy committees, and was instrumental in working with state Sen. Amanda Aguirre to advocate for the autism insurance legislation, known as Steven’s Law.

Janet Kirwan, R.N., Family Services Director

Q: What is your role at SARRC?
A: I've been with SARRC for eight years, and before there was a physical building, I worked drawing blood for the nonprofit’s first research study. I helped create the first JumpStart curriculum and actually served as the executive director during the early years. Today, I still help with research studies, and I field all of the calls from parents, which I've done since the beginning.

Q: How does your personal experience with autism help other parents?
A: Parents who call me are looking for resources, guidance and hope. Parents don’t feel judged when they talk to someone with shared experience. My mile in their moccasins encourages them that anything is possible and that now is the time for action. I think there is a message of hope in my story, and parents need to hear that their children can grow up to live healthy, happy lives.

Gretchen Cherrill, Owner of Airpark Signs & Graphics

Over the years, SARRC has benefited from Gretchen Cherrill's creativity and dedication. For the owner of Airpark Signs & Graphics, the donor recognition display in SARRC's lobby in 2007 was her first volunteer project with the organization — but certainly not her last.

“We were able to incorporate some wonderful photos of the very special children at SARRC so not only did we recognize generous donors, but the display also serves as a special piece of art in the lobby,” Cherrill says.

Since that project, Cherrill’s contributions to SARRC have included the room plaques throughout SARRC’s campus and signage for the Arizona Walk Now for Autism.

“We all work long hours with short-fuse deadlines and lots of stress, so it is rewarding to have projects that, at the end of the day, make us all feel grateful,” Cherrill says.

“I’m happy that we can use our resources to make a small difference.”

DMB Associates and SARRC Give Back

Employees from Arizona-based DMB Associates Inc. volunteered this summer alongside adults from SARRC’s vocational program to assemble 150 shoeboxes of personal hygiene supplies for the homeless and working poor for the Shoebox Ministry.

“This has been a really difficult summer for donations, so what you’ve done has been a true blessing to us,” said Laura Borgeson, program director for the Shoebox Ministry.

To learn more about Shoebox Ministry, visit shoeboxministries.com.

Above: Christopher Ryan Miller, a Vocational & Life Skills Academy client, assembles a shoebox filled with personal hygiene supplies.
Giving Back
Four Corporate Donors Who Make a Difference

BY LYNDSEY WAUGH

**Company:** Dino Design, full-service graphic design studio
**Owner:** Dino Paul
**Contact:** (602) 952-0665 or dinodesign-o.com

Dino Paul and the creative team at Dino Design are the driving force behind several SARRC communications projects, including the organization’s prestigious annual report, which has been designed pro bono by the firm since 2000. Several of the annual reports have garnered graphic design awards. Thanks to Dino’s creative vision, 2007’s Action Moves Forward was just named a top 100 annual report. The 2006 annual report, The Power of Numbers, also was selected as one of the top 100 annual reports for the year and also received a top illustration award from The Black Book, the country’s largest and most noted competition for annual report production. The same publication was also featured in Communication Arts Design Annual.

The Phoenix-based design studio is known for producing smart, creative concepts with a goal-oriented impact for a wide range of clients. For more information on Dino Design, and to read the studio’s unique philosophy of “thinking inside the box,” visit dinodesign-o.com.

**Company:** Fast Frames, custom framing
**Owner:** Kate Matsler
**Contact:** (602) 522-1701 or fastframes.com

When Kate Matsler acquired the Fast Frames location on Camelback Road and 32nd Street, she didn’t know that SARRC was part of the deal. For nearly two years, the previous owner had donated framing services to SARRC for donor-recognition projects and silent auctions. Matsler learned about the previous relationship, and she personally committed to donating her services to SARRC at both of her store locations.

Last year alone, Fast Frames produced more than 75 custom pieces for SARRC personally underwritten
by Matsler, and most recently, she produced thank-you gifts for all of the companies that sponsored SARRC’s community breakfast. Stop by her locations at 3112 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix, or 2018 N. 67th Avenue, Glendale, to learn more about how expert framing can enhance a project for your home or office.

**Company:** Great Scott Productions, full-service video production house  
**Owner:** Heidi Scott  
**Contact:** (602) 254-1600 or greatscottproductions.com

Great Scott Productions began filming and producing SARRC’s annual community breakfast videos pro bono two years before owner Heidi Scott learned that her son, Jake, had autism. Like many friends of SARRC, Scott decided to donate her time and services because she believed in the organization’s work in the community.

It was while watching a video her team produced that she realized her son had autism. Since then, Scott has served on SARRC’s board of directors, public policy and marketing committees, and has played an instrumental role in shaping the organization’s vision. Great Scott Productions has produced countless videos for SARRC for more than 10 years, ranging from public service announcements to educational videos. The one-stop production house is home to one of the Valley’s few sound stages, and the team at Great Scott offers a wide range of services, including audio and video production, that cater to budgets of all sizes.

**Company:** PJ’s Flowers, flower studio  
**Owner:** Tony Medlock  
**Contact:** (602) 995-4999 or pjsflowers.com

In 2005, Tony Medlock, AIFD, owner of PJ’s Flowers, a family-owned and operated flower shop in Phoenix, donated centerpieces for 160 tables at SARRC’s Community Breakfast. Since then, he and his staff have handcrafted more than 600 custom floral arrangements for the breakfast event. Like each element of SARRC’s Community Breakfast, the creative floral centerpieces thoughtfully tie into the event’s theme and serve as the only decorative component of the event. PJ’s Flowers also donates 10 percent of sales generated from any SARRC referral to the nonprofit. For more information about custom floral arrangements, the flower shop’s delivery services or how to send flowers anywhere in the U.S. for no extra charge, visit PJ’s online.

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The **future** belongs to those who believe in the **beauty** of their **dreams**.  
—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Northern Trust salutes those whose **dreams** have broadened our horizons, brightened our worlds and helped in the continued success of the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center.

---

David A. Highmark  •  602-468-1650  
2398 East Camelback Road, Suite 400  •  Phoenix, Arizona  
northerntrust.com

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How to Explain Autism

BY DOREEN MUIR AND LINDA KRAYNAK, AUTISM AWARENESS, PEER SENSITIVITY AND PARENT OUTREACH COORDINATORS, SCOTTSDALE UNITED SCHOOL DISTRICT; AND JANET KIRWAN, R.N., SARRC’S FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTOR

What is the best way to explain my child’s autism to other children?

When educating a child’s peers about autism, it is important to be age-appropriate with the content and length of discussion. Books and interactive activities, such as My Best Friend Will, by Jaime Lowell and Tara Tuchel, which includes great activities, as well as SARRC’s FRIEND Program video and the Intricate Minds Series by Coulter Video are great resources. In addition, Wings of EPOH, a collaboration between SARRC and educational media company FableVision, tells the story of a young boy with autism. Using the book or the video and the accompanying activity guide, parents and educators can help other children better understand autism.

In addition, specific examples that children relate to may aid your explanation. Before you begin, create a list of examples, such as most children smile and laugh when they are happy, but many kids with autism may smile and jump up and down, and flap their arms as well.

What key points should I make sure any typical peer or adult understands about my child and his disorder?

Autism spectrum disorders are complex and difficult to explain. To help aid your discussion, here are a few important messages to include:

• No two people with autism are the same; each person is affected differently and has varying levels of ability.
• Autism can affect the body systems (five senses, balance/coordination) as well as language and communication skills, and can lead to unexpected behaviors. Try to cite specific examples about your child.
• Autism can make it difficult for some children to understand how another person is feeling or why someone is doing something differently.
• Understanding why something is upsetting or hurts your feelings is difficult for some children with autism, which can lead to challenges with social skills and making friends. But they do want support and friendship.
• Despite their challenges, children with autism also have special, positive qualities and interests that are worth learning more about and should be the focus during interaction. Be specific to your child when discussing these interests.

How do I explain autism to my child or teenager who has the disorder?

Many children are acutely aware of their inability to “fit in” with others, and having a discussion about this will help them understand why. When explaining the disorder, be sure to focus on your child’s unique way of thinking and special talents rather than on problems or weaknesses. Helping children understand some of the components of their individual autism will allow you to work together to develop strategies to make them feel more comfortable or fit in with their peers.
¿Cuál es la mejor manera para explicar el autismo de mi hijo/a a otros niños?

Al educar a otros niños sobre el autismo, es importante que el contenido de la plática sea apropiado para su edad. Libros y actividades interactivas, como My Best Friend Will (Mi Mejor Amigo Will), de Jaime Lowell y Tara Tuchell, el cuál incluye magníficas actividades, así como el vídeo del Programa FRIEND de SARRC y la Serie Mentes Complicadas de Coulter Video pueden ayudar. Además, Wings of EPOH (Las Alas de EPOH), una colaboración entre SARRC y la compañía de difusión educativa FableVision, cuenta la historia de un niño con autismo. Con el libro o el vídeo y la guía de actividades del educador que vienen juntos podrán ayudar a otros niños a entender mejor el autismo.

Además, ejemplos específicos pueden ayudar a explicar. Antes de que comience, cree una lista de ejemplos con los cuales los otros niños se puedan relacionar. Por ejemplo, la mayoría de los niños sonríen y ríen cuando están felices, pero muchos niños con autismo sonríen y brincan, y también mueven sus brazos.

¿Qué puntos importantes debe entender cualquier adulto o niño típico acerca de mi hijo/a y su trastorno?

Los trastornos del espectro del autismo son complejos y difíciles de explicar. Para ayudarle en su plática, a continuación hay algunos mensajes importantes de incluir:

- Ninguna persona con autismo es igual; cada quién se ve afectado/a de manera diferente y tiene niveles variados de capacidad.
- El autismo puede afectar los sistemas del cuerpo (los cinco sentidos, balance/coordinación) así como habilidades de lenguaje y de comunicación, y puede causar comportamientos inesperados. Trate de mencionar ejemplos específicos acerca de su hijo/a.
- El autismo puede hacer que a algunos niños se les dificulte entender cómo se siente otra persona o por qué alguien está haciendo algo diferente.
- Entender por qué alguien está molesto o se siente mal es difícil para algunos niños con autismo, lo cual puede causar retos con las habilidades sociales y para hacer amigos, pero ellos sí quieren apoyo y amistad.
- A pesar de sus retos, también tienen cualidades e intereses especiales y positivos que vale la pena conocer y deberían ser el enfoque durante la interacción. Sea específico con su hijo/a cuando hable de éstos intereses.

¿Cómo explicar el autismo a mi hijo/a o adolescente que tiene el trastorno?

Muchos niños están plenamente conscientes de su incapacidad de “encajar” con otros, y el tener una plática acerca de esto les ayudará a entender la razón. Cuando explique el trastorno, asegúrese de enfocarse en la manera única de pensar y en los talentos especiales de su hijo/a en vez de enfocarse en problemas o debilidades. Ayudar a los niños a entender algunos de los componentes de su autismo individual les permitirá trabajar juntos para desarrollar estrategias para hacer sentir a los niños más a gusto o encajar con sus compañeros.
Research Snapshots

BY SHARMAN OBER-REYNOLDS, MSN, R.N., C-FNP, SARRC RESEARCH COORDINATOR

OAR Hosts Autism Research Convocation

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) hosted its second Research Convocation at the Marcus Institute in June, bringing together a select group of prominent researchers and service providers, along with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), professionals and parents, to discuss the current research. The event focused on social skills and adaptive behavior in individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Clinical Services Director Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA, represented SARRC at the event.

The convocation’s goal is to improve the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families by providing a comprehensive review and summary of current ASD-related research in specific areas to be able to make recommendations of best practices and identify future research priorities. A comprehensive publication of proceedings is expected to be completed by December 2009. OAR will host the next Autism Research Convocation in June 2010 about Speech, Language and Effective Communication. – By Lyndsey Waugh

Professional Participant Roster
Shahla Ala’i Rosales, Ph.D., BCBA
Stephen R. Anderson, Ph.D., BCBA
Daniel Crimmins, Ph.D.
Joanne Gerenser, Ph.D.
Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.
Connie Kasari, Ph.D.
Kathy Koenig, R.N., MSN
Suzanne Letso, M.A., BCBA
Erik Mayville, Ph.D., BCBA
Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA
Roy Sanders, M.D.
Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA
Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA
Thomas Zane, Ph.D., BCBA

Openden Presents on PRT
Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA, SARRC’s clinical services director, presented on pivotal response treatment (PRT) at the annual Association for Behavior Analysis International Conference in May. PRT is an evidence-based behavioral intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs).

Based on research conducted at the University of California-Santa Barbara, Openden’s presentation of the paper, “Large-Scale Dissemination & Community Implementation of Pivotal Response Treatment,” reported on a collaborative effort aimed at the dissemination and implementation of PRT for young children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) in
Current Research Projects

Investigating a Drug to Treat Irritability and Aggression

SARRC is part of a nationwide research study evaluating an investigational medication for behavior challenges often seen in children with autism, including tantrums, irritability, agitation and crying.

To be considered for participation in this study, a child or adolescent with autism must be between 5 and 17 years of age. Research volunteers will receive study medication, travel reimbursement and medical care at no cost to the family. Participants may be eligible to receive the investigational drug in a six-month follow-up study.

Social Referencing Study in the Works

Researchers at SARRC hope to better understand the differences in social referencing — a child’s response to others — between typically developing children and those with an autism spectrum disorder that occur during a common diagnostic assessment, the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS).

The ADOS does not currently measure social referencing. However, social referencing may be an important predictor of response to treatment and positive outcomes.

Research News

Gene Findings Hint at Common Mechanism in Autism

Six genes not previously associated with autism have been implicated by researchers. Using genetic mapping, researchers identified regions where segments of DNA were deleted from the chromosomes of the affected children, according to Christopher Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., of Children’s Hospital Boston. It’s encouraging that five of the six genes are still present, Dr. Walsh reported, implying that missing on-off switches are causing the disorder. If that’s the case, it may be possible to turn the genes back on, he believes.

Potential of Protective Gene Variants

Dr. Antonio Persico, of the University Campus Bio-Medico in Rome, and frequent SARRC collaborator, has been awarded $120,000 from Autism Speaks to further his research into possible protective genes for autism.

Because even unaffected siblings may carry multiple vulnerability genes that are also carried by their siblings with autism, it is hypothesized that unaffected siblings may have additional, protective genetic variants that help resist the development of autism.

Understanding the function of these protective gene variants may help identify ways to prevent the negative effects of the vulnerability genes.

For More Information

Please contact SARRC study coordinators Sarah Brautigam (602-218-8196), Josh Jones (602-218-8217) or Sharman Ober-Reynolds (602-218-8225) for more information or if you are interested in participating in SARRC research.
On Their Own

Six steps to teaching children with autism how to play independently

BY LORI VINCENT, M.ED., BCBA

Engaging a child with autism during every waking hour is not a realistic expectation. During unstructured time, you may see your child engage in more repetitive play, such as lining up items, or display disruptive behaviors, like throwing items across the floor. What can you do to make sure your child’s alone time is productive?

To decrease self-stimulatory and other inappropriate behaviors during unstructured time, it’s important to teach your child how to engage in appropriate independent activities. Here are six steps to help you increase the number of toys your child can play with on his or her own.

1. Assess Your Child’s Toys

The first step in teaching independent play is to assess your child’s toys. What can he or she play with appropriately and independently? Which toys does he play with appropriately with assistance, and which toys does he currently not play with appropriately?

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If your child has toys that he/she can appropriately play with independently, these are the toys you want to make available to your child during unstructured times. For this exercise, select a toy that he or she currently doesn’t appropriately play with on his or her own.

2. Understand What Your Child Likes

When selecting toys to teach appropriate play, you should choose toys of interest to your child to use your child’s natural motivation to teach the new play skills. Once you have selected a toy of interest, determine what is naturally reinforcing to your child about that toy. For example, your child may enjoy lining up markers or repeatedly spinning the brushes on a carwash toy. This is called the natural reinforcer.

3. Determine the Target Behavior

Next, determine what you would like your child to be doing with that toy. For example, with a carwash toy, the appropriate play skill is to push the toy cars through the carwash. For markers, the appropriate play skill is to color on paper.

This is your target behavior.

4. Teach Appropriate Play Through Prompts and Praise

Now that you have determined the toy’s natural reinforcer and the target behavior, it is time to begin teaching your child appropriate play skills.

Using the example of the carwash toy, teach your child to drive the car through the carwash by providing assistance as needed and then immediately providing access to spinning the brushes to reinforce the appropriate play skill. As you provide your child with access to the natural reinforcer, be sure to praise your child for playing appropriately.

As your child succeeds, decrease how much assistance you provide. Once he or she can independently drive the car through the carwash, you may want to start teaching other play skills with the car, such as driving it into the garage.

Once your child begins to independently engage in these appropriate-play activities, start to vary the reinforcement provided. Continue to provide access to the preferred activity of spinning the brushes for appropriate play, but not after each play skill. Provide your child with praise and other preferred activities, such as hugs or tickles, for appropriate play.

5. Decrease Your Involvement

As your child continues to be successful with this play activity, begin to decrease your involvement. You should remove yourself from this play activity slowly, so your child continues to be successful.

First, you may want to move a few feet away from the activity for a very brief amount of time (around 15 seconds) and then provide your child with enthusiastic praise when you return if your child continued to play appropriately. As your child succeeds, increase the amount of time you are away from the activity, and then begin to increase how far away you move from the child.

Once your child is playing appropriately with a toy independently, it is still important to give your child praise as often as you can even during his/her unstructured time.

6. Let Your Child Play Independently

Now that your child can play independently with this toy, you can begin to leave that toy out for your child during unstructured times. Any toys that your child is not yet appropriately playing with independently should be stored out of reach and used during times you can engage with your child and target appropriate-play skills with that toy.

When your child is playing with a variety of toys independently, you can rotate the toys that are available during unstructured play time. By changing the toys present in the environment, you will keep your child’s motivation in these play activities high while decreasing the amount of self-stimulatory and disruptive behaviors present during unstructured time.

Remember that unstructured time is still a time for your child to learn how to engage in appropriate behaviors, and teaching independent play skills may further enhance your child’s development.
Por su Propia Cuenta

Seis pasos para enseñar a niños con autismo a jugar independientemente

POR LORI VINCENT, M.ED., BCBA

mantener ocupado a un niño con autismo durante cada hora que esté despierto no es una expectativa realista. Durante el tiempo libre podría ver que su hijo/a se ocupa en juegos más repetitivos, como poner en fila objetos, o manifestar conductas perturbadoras, como arrojar objetos al otro lado del piso. ¿Qué puede hacer para asegurarse que el tiempo a solas de su hijo/a sea productivo?

Para reducir comportamientos autoestimulantes y otros comportamientos no apropiados durante el tiempo libre, es importante enseñarle a su hijo/a cómo ocuparse en actividades independientes apropiadas.

Aquí se presentan seis pasos para ayudarle a aumentar la cantidad de juguetes con los que su hijo/a puede jugar por su cuenta.

1. Evalúe los Juguetes de su Hijo/a

El primer paso para enseñar el juego independiente es evaluar los juguetes de su hijo/a. ¿Con qué puede jugar de una manera apropiada e independientemente? ¿Con cuáles juguetes juega de manera apropiada con ayuda, y con cuáles en realidad no juega de manera apropiada?

Si su hijo/a tiene juguetes con los que puede jugar independientemente de manera apropiada, esos son los juguetes que deben estar disponibles para su hijo/a.
durante los tiempos libres. Para este ejercicio, elija un juguete con el cual él o ella en realidad no juega apropiadamente por su propia cuenta.

2. Entienda lo que le Gusta a su Hijo/a

Cuando seleccione juguetes para enseñar el juego apropiado, debe seleccionar los que le interesen a su hijo/a para que haya una motivación natural para que aprenda habilidades nuevas de juego. Una vez seleccionado un juguete que le interese a su hijo/a, determine cómo le recompensa naturalmente. Por ejemplo, su hijo/a puede disfrutar poniendo en fila marcadores o hacer girar repetidamente los cepillos de un lavacoches de juguete. A esto se le llama una recompensa natural.

3. Determine la Conducta Deseada

A continuación, determine lo que le gustaría que su hijo/a estuviera haciendo con ese juguete. Por ejemplo, con un lavacoches de juguete, la habilidad de juego apropiada es empujar los coches de juguete a través del lavacoches de juguete. Para los marcadores, la habilidad de juego apropiada es colorear en papel.

4. Enseñe el Juego Apropiado a Traves de Ayuda y Elogios

Ahora que ha determinado cual es la recompensa natural del juguete para su hijo/a y el comportamiento deseado, es tiempo de empezar a enseñarle a su hijo/a habilidades apropiadas de juego.

Utilizando el ejemplo del lavacoches de juguete, enseñe a su hijo/a a manejar el coche a través del lavacoches proporcionando ayuda como sea necesaria e inmediatamente proporcionando acceso a que gire los cepillos para recompensar la habilidad apropiada de juego. A medida que proporcione a su hijo/a acceso a la recompensa natural, asegúrese de elogiárle por jugar de manera apropiada.

A medida que su hijo/a tenga éxito, disminuya la ayuda que le brinda. Una vez que él o ella pueda manejar el coche independientemente a través del lavacoches, usted tal vez quiera empezar a enseñar otras habilidades de juego con el coche, tales como manejarlo adentro del garaje de juguete.

Una vez que su hijo/a empience a ocuparse indepen- dientemente en estas actividades de juego apropiadas, empiece a variar la recompensa proporcionada. Debe continuar proporcionando acceso a la actividad preferida de hacer girar los cepillos por un juego apropiado, pero no después de cada habilidad de juego. Continúe elogiando a su hijo/a y proporcione otras actividades preferidas, como abrazos o cosquillas, por un juego apropiado.

5. Disminuya su Participación

A medida que su hijo/a continúa teniendo éxito con esta actividad de juego, empiece a disminuir su participación. Usted debe retirarse lentamente de esta actividad de juego, para que su hijo/a continúe teniendo éxito.

Primero, tal vez quiera alejarse de la actividad algunos pies por un periodo de tiempo muy breve (aproximadamente 15 segundos) y después elogiar a su hijo/a con entusiasmo cuando regrese, si su hijo/a siguió jugando de manera apropiada. A medida que su hijo/a tenga éxito, aumente el tiempo que usted permanece alejado/a de la actividad, y después empiece a aumentar la distancia.

Una vez que su hijo/a juegue independientemente de manera apropiada con un juguete, es importante seguir elogiándole tan seguido como pueda incluso durante su tiempo libre.

6. Deje que su Hijo/a Juegue Independientemente

Ahora que su hijo/a puede jugar independientemente con este juguete, usted puede empezar a dejar afuera ese juguete para él o ella durante el tiempo libre. Cualquier juguete con el cual su hijo/a aún no juega independientemente de manera apropiada debería ser guardado fuera de su alcance y ser usado durante tiempos por los cuáles usted pueda participar con él o ella y enseñarle habilidades de juego apropiadas con ese juguete.

Cuando su hijo/a esté jugando independientemente con varios juguetes, usted puede empezar a alternar los juguetes que estén disponibles durante el tiempo de juego libre. Al cambiar los juguetes presentes en el ambiente, su hijo/a se mantendrá altamente motivado/a en estas actividades de juego mientras disminuyen los comportamientos autoestimulantes y perturbadores presentes durante el tiempo sin estructuración.

Recuerde que el tiempo libre aún es un tiempo para que su hijo/a aprenda a ocuparse en comportamientos apropiados, y aprender habilidades de juego independientes que pueden avanzar más su desarrollo.
When Sandra Catalán's son Leo was just over 3 years old, he was diagnosed with autism.

His mother had no idea what that meant. Not because she was new at motherhood. Catalán is married with five children; Leo is her middle child. She had raised two children prior to Leo and recognized quickly as he grew into a toddler that something was wrong, different and potentially unfixable.

She knew that even as Leo's first pediatrician assured her that he was developing normally and just going through a phase. She knew what she was witnessing was far more serious.

Leo was easily frightened.
He cried.
He cried a lot.
He didn't look at his mother and shunned being kissed or hugged. It would break his mother's heart.

And from as young as 9 months, he would lick his fingers in an almost trancelike distraction.

All Catalán knew when her new pediatrician told her that Leo may have autism was that she finally had an answer and, at the same time, a multitude of new questions. To compound her distress, she was also confronted with a language barrier. Her English was weak, and when she searched to find information in Spanish, she found mostly dead ends.

“I finally found SARRC, and I got Leo involved in therapies and went through SARRC's Spanish JumpStart program,” Catalán says, her voice cracking at the memory of finding someone on SARRC's staff who was able to speak Spanish and help her start her family...
Leo Esperiqueta’s involvement with SARRC began when his mother, Sandra Catalán, enrolled him in SARRC’s Spanish JumpStart program. He has since participated in research at SARRC and has completed several programs.
on a path to help Leo. “In the Hispanic community, people aren’t reading these articles about autism and understanding what it means. But SARRC is open for everyone.”

While stories like Catalán’s motivate SARRC staff to reach out beyond language barriers to arm parents of all communities, they are equally motivated by the idea of hearing fewer stories like hers.

The SARRC staff is also motivated by the hard numbers. A 2006 study conducted by the University of Arizona and supported by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention found that the median age of diagnosis for children in Arizona is 5 years and 3 months, more than two years later than the median age of diagnosis for children in other states. Many attribute this discrepancy to Arizona’s higher Hispanic population and the limited healthcare resources.

Knowing the value of early diagnosis to get children integral therapies at a very young age, SARRC staff members are on a mission.

So far, the results have touched many lives.

Raising Awareness

When Diana Diaz shows up for work at SARRC every day, she believes she has the best job in the organization. A former member of the Spanish-language media, Diaz has a deep understanding for how best to deliver information to the Hispanic community. As the parent of a child with autism, she also knows the questions that are most likely burning in newly diagnosed families’ minds within the Hispanic community. When she joined SARRC, Diaz found a way to fuse her two selves together to inform a community that had previously been in the dark on much of autism’s mysterious waters and create new paths for information and access to SARRC’s amazing tools.

“Kids are diagnosed later in the Spanish community because there are so many barriers,” Diaz says. “It’s quite tragic because the window of opportunity to have intervention earlier in life is so very important. So often, their autism isn’t diagnosed until they’re in school. My bottom line is to create an awareness that hasn’t been there before. SARRC has the training — it’s just a matter of getting the word out.”

And Diaz is talking to anyone who will listen.

Her son Sammy was diagnosed with the disorder at the age of 2, and that’s when she first learned about SARRC and the organization’s JumpStart program, a program for newly diagnosed families to help guide them through therapy options, challenges they will face and avenues for information. Diaz was delighted to learn that JumpStart™ was also offered in Spanish, and she quickly became a SARRC volunteer, lending a hand with translations and helping to promote the 2006 Arizona Walk Now for Autism to the Spanish media.

In March 2007, Diaz was hired fulltime. She has since forged close relationships with Hispanic media giants Univision and Telemundo in Phoenix and is doing a weekly segment on autism for a Univision TV. She also worked with Cox Cable to create a Spanish public service announcement that introduces people to the signs of autism, which features Cox employee and SARRC board member Sergio Peñaloza.

“The Hispanic media has really embraced us and are really paying attention,” she says. “There is finally a real awareness, and that was minimal before.”

The results from the media outreach are seen in the growing numbers of families signing up for SARRC’s Spanish-language JumpStart program. Just a year prior, SARRC employees were happy to see a handful of families at Spanish-language programs offered every other month. Now, the programs are full.
Leo Esperiqueta and his mother, Sandra Catalán, play together at SARRC. Enrollment in SARRC’s Spanish-language JumpStart program has increased dramatically over the past few years.

**Growing Programs**

Rachel McIntosh, BCBA, used to prepare for every Spanish-language JumpStart program she facilitated at SARRC by driving throughout the Valley to personally pick families up just to ensure she got them in for the vital training she had to offer. “We were lucky to get three families signed up, and they wouldn’t always show up because of work or a lack of transportation,” she says. “Now, every class is full. And I actually had a child in the class recently who was diagnosed at 2. Six years ago, that was unheard of.”

McIntosh sees hope in the menu of programs SARRC is now introducing to Hispanic families, and she says the way that many of the programs work together to support different aspects for every family make progress possible. For example, last year she recommended two of the Spanish-speaking children she worked with in JumpStart to be enrolled in SARRC’s Community School, a program that places children with autism in a preschool setting with typically developing children and some of the most highly trained teachers. The opportunity for children with autism to learn social interaction is incredibly valuable as is the chance for kids who are not affected by the disorder to learn more about autism and how they can be a positive force in another child’s growth and therapy.

“It is our vision that families, regardless of whether they speak Spanish or English, can access all of our services,” McIntosh says, adding that the growth in attendance for JumpStart led to SARRC’s hiring of another outreach coordinator to handle the organization’s in-home visits and habilitation for Spanish-speaking families.

Recently, SARRC also added a support group for Spanish-speaking families affected by autism. The group meets at SARRC once a month and is hosted by Dr. Julio Ramirez, a Mexican-born licensed clinical psychologist.

“It’s coming together,” McIntosh says. “It is a slow process, but we want to provide a quality service and do it right.”

**Promoting Education and Training**

Part of SARRC’s goal to assure things are done right is ensuring that providers and those on the frontlines of diagnosing autism and working with families are well-trained in best practices. As such, SARRC seeks those organizations that make an impact and help aid in diagnosing children to give providers, nurses, teachers and others the tools they need.

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**The New El Portal**

117 W. Grant, Phoenix

Delicious Mexican cuisine, open for breakfast and lunch.

**GALA and SARRC would like to thank Earl & Mary Rose Wilcox, owners of The New El Portal restaurant, for their generous contributions to the 2008 Spanish Autism Conference.**

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(602) 271-0521
“We know there’s a need for more early intervention for all kids,” says SARRC CEO/President Lisa Glow. “And because of that, we have trained others serving the Hispanic community.”

One of the organization’s biggest advancements in this effort came when SARRC staff worked with Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC), a statewide community development corporation serving some of Arizona’s most socially and economically deprived communities. Each year, CPLC hosts a large training conference for Head Start teachers. This past year, SARRC participated by offering Red Flag training to help teachers look for the signs of autism. CPLC and SARRC leadership continue to explore ways to collaborate and reach more underserved Hispanic families affected by autism.

SARRC also reached out to Southwest Human Development (SWHD), the state’s largest early childhood provider offering a highly regarded Head Start program aimed at giving low-income children a high-quality education, health screenings and family services. “We did a Red Flag training with SWHD staff aimed at those who work closely with Hispanic families,” McIntosh says. “All of these teachers work within the Hispanic community.”

SARRC is also spearheading efforts to reach deep within the Hispanic community and offer important training directly to parents. McIntosh points to a few instances recently when she and fellow employees attended Spanish-speaking events and resource fairs to share information printed in Spanish to give people useful resources.

“More than anything, we need to let people know there are resources and places they can go for support,” McIntosh says.
Forging Collaborations

To more effectively reach all families, SARRC has also formed valuable partnerships with some highly visible organizations within the Hispanic community, including some that share a common mission, such as Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos con Autismo (or GALA).

Founded by Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities workers, GALA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping minority individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. SARRC’s relationship with GALA began a few years ago when JumpStart facilitators worked with the GALA members to help bring families to the Spanish JumpStart program.

Since those early days, GALA and SARRC have both experienced substantial growth and have found ways to promote each other’s strengths and services to their respective audiences.

“GALA is an amazing partner and for years has been linking families with SARRC,” Glow says. “Their passion, commitment and outreach are phenomenal.”

That passion has spawned an annual GALA conference that, after four years, has grown to nearly 200 attendees. SARRC takes part in that conference, aiding with presentations, and also shares information at regular community meetings. Jose Luis De la Torre, GALA spokesman and one of the organization’s founders, says GALA’s growth is due in part to the organization’s link with SARRC. “We’re getting known more, and that’s because SARRC is helping to advertise our name, which lets the community know we’re here for them,” he says.

Helping get the SARRC name and mission out to the masses are Univision Radio and TV, a media partnership that has helped form unprecedented support for a major autism awareness event — Arizona Walk Now for Autism, which is being held this year on Nov. 2.

“Both Univision Radio and TV in Phoenix are running PSAs to promote the walk, air public affairs programs to educate and inform about autism, and will be registering Spanish-speaking walkers and walking on the day of the event,” says Mary McEvilly, general manager of Univision Radio Phoenix.

For McEvilly, the opportunity to help families find their way when faced with a diagnosis was more than just rewarding; it was personal.

“It is devastating to a parent to receive a diagnosis of autism,” she says. “When our son was diagnosed 14 years ago, we were lost. He is doing amazingly well now, but at the time, we did not know where to turn.

“Each time a PSA airs or an interview with Diana [Diaz] occurs as part of our public affairs programming, the center is inundated with Spanish-speaking callers. These calls are primarily from people who are hearing about the signs or symptoms of autism for the first time and are making the connection to a child in their lives. Thanks to SARRC’s Hispanic outreach program, they now have a place to go for help — in their language. We are proud to be in a position to help our community by sharing this important information via our television and radio stations.”

Just the Beginning

It is easy to see the results from the formal strides SARRC has made to reach out to the Hispanic community. Media exposure, vital connections to other organizations and the growth in Spanish-based programs have all helped pave the way to bettering the lives of more children and their families. And SARRC leaders are confident that these efforts will also result in seeing some of those stark statistics go down.

“We are strong collaborators, and we believe in partnering to reach more families,” Glow says. “More Hispanic children are being diagnosed earlier, and that’s the most critical thing that has come from this awareness.”

But perhaps more powerful than any commercial or sponsorship is the sense of empowerment that is now being sparked in an entirely new set of parents who may not have been reached before — parents like Sandra Catalan, who is quick to share her knowledge with others and point them down the path she was led on through SARRC.

“The people at SARRC, I call them my angels, because that is what they are,” Catalan says. “One day, I am going to pay them back. I don’t know how, but I will.”

But for SARRC, Catalan’s renewed passion to fight on behalf of her son is the only payment they will ever need.

For more information on SARRC’s Hispanic outreach efforts, contact Diana Diaz at (602) 218-8193 or ddiaz@autismcenter.org.
Cuando el hijo de Sandra Catalán, Leo, tenía pocos más de 3 años de edad, fue diagnosticado con autismo. Su madre no tenía idea de lo que significaba.

No porque fuera nueva en la maternidad. Catalán está casada y tiene cinco hijos; Leo es su hijo de en medio. Ella había criado a dos hijos antes que naciera Leo y reconoció rápidamente cuando él creció a pequeñín que algo estaba mal, diferente y potencialmente sin remedio.

Aunque el primer pediatra de Leo aseguraba que él se estaba desarrollando normalmente y simplemente estaba pasando por una etapa, ella supo que lo que estaba presenciando era mucho más grave.

Leo se asustaba fácilmente. Lloraba. Lloraba mucho. Él no miraba a su mamá y rechazaba besos o abrazos, lo que rompía el corazón de su madre.

Y desde los 9 meses, él lamía sus dedos en una distracción casi de trance.

Lo único que sabía Catalán cuando le dijo su pediatra nuevo que su hijo podría tener autismo fue que ella finalmente tenía una respuesta y, al mismo tiempo, varias nuevas preguntas. Para agravar su angustia, ella también se enfrentaba con la barrera del idioma. Su inglés era pobre, y cuando investigó para encontrar información en español, sólo encontró callejones sin salida.

"Finalmente encontré a SARRC, y conseguí que Leo participara en terapias y fuera al programa JumpStart en español de SARRC," Catalán dice mientras su voz se quiebra al recordar que encontró a alguien en el personal de SARRC que pudo hablar español y que ayudó a guiar a su familia para ayudar a Leo. "En la comunidad hispana, las personas no leen estos artículos acerca del autismo y no entienden lo que significa. Pero SARRC, SARRC está abierto para todos".

SARRC se extiende hacia la comunidad hispana para formar un frente unido en contra del autismo.

POR GINGER S. EIDEN

FOTOS DE

STEPHEN G. DREISESZUN/

FOTÓGRAFOS VIEWPOINT
Niños en el programa JumpStart en Español de SARRC disfrutan de juegos.

Mientras que historias como la de Sandra Catalán motivan al equipo de SARRC a ir más allá de las barreras del idioma para dotar a los padres de todas las comunidades, también le motiva la idea de oír menos historias como la de ella.

También se inspira por números concretos. Un estudio en el 2006 realizado por la Universidad de Arizona y apoyado por los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades descubrió que la edad promedio para diagnosticar niños en Arizona es de cinco 5 años 3 meses, dos años más que la edad promedio para diagnosticar niños en otros estados. Muchos atribuyen esta discrepancia a la población hispana más alta de Arizona y a los recursos limitados del cuidado de salud.

Los empleados de SARRC tienen en una misión al conocer el valor del diagnóstico temprano para que los niños reciban terapias integrales a temprana edad. Hasta ahora los resultados han tocado muchas vidas.

**Creando Conciencia**

Cuando Diana Díaz se presenta a trabajar en SARRC todos los días, ella siente que tenía el mejor trabajo de la organización. Ex-miembro de los medios de comunicación en español, Díaz tiene un entendimiento profundo de cómo hacer llegar mejor la información a la comunidad hispana. Como madre de un niño con autismo, ella también sabe las preguntas que probablemente están consumiendo las mentes de las familias recientemente diagnosticadas dentro de la comunidad hispana. Cuando se unió a SARRC, Díaz encontró una manera de fusionarse para informar a una comunidad que había estado anteriormente en la oscuridad de los muchos misterios del autismo y crear nuevos caminos de información y acceso a las asombrosas herramientas de SARRC.

“Los niños de la comunidad hispana son diagnosticados más tarde porque hay tantas barreras,” dice Díaz. “Es bastante trágico porque la oportunidad de tener intervención a temprana edad es tan importante. Con frecuencia, su autismo no es diagnosticado hasta que entran a la escuela. Lo primordial es crear una conciencia que no ha estado presente anteriormente. SARRC tiene el entrenamiento — es simplemente cuestión de correr la voz”.

Y Díaz habla con cualquiera que escuche.

Su hijo Sammy fue diagnosticado con el trastorno a los 2 años de edad, y fue cuando ella por primera vez se enteró de SARRC y del programa JumpStart de la organización, un programa estilo taller ofrecido a familias recientemente diagnosticadas para ayudar a guiarles a través de opciones de terapia, retos que enfrentarán y avenidas para información. Díaz estaba encantada de saber que JumpStart™ también se ofrece en español y pronto se convirtió en voluntaria de SARRC, echando la mano con traducciones y ayudando a promover la caminata Arizona Walk Now for Autism del 2006 en los medios de comunicación en español.

En marzo de 2007, Díaz fue contratada tiempo completo. Desde entonces ella ha forjado una estrecha relación con los gigantes de los medios de comunicación hispana Univision y Telemundo en Phoenix y estará haciendo un segmento semanal sobre el autismo en Univision 33. Ella también trabajó con Cox Cable para crear un anuncio de servicio público en español que introduce a los espectadores las señales del autismo, presentado por Sergio Peñaloza, ejecutivo de Cox y miembro del consejo directivo de SARRC.

“Los medios de comunicación hispanos realmente me han respaldado, y realmente prestan atención,” dice ella. “Finalmente hay una conciencia verdadera, y esa era mínima antes”.

Los resultados del alcance de los medios de comunicación se ven en los números crecientes de familias que se inscriben en el programa JumpStart en el idioma español de SARRC, que experimenta reservaciones de hasta seis meses. Justo hace uno o dos años, los empleados de SARRC se ponían felices...
de ver un puñado de familias en un programa que era ofrecido cada dos meses.

Programas en Aumento

Rachel McIntosh, BCBA, se preparaba para todos los programas de JumpStart en el idioma español que ella facilitaba en SARRC conduciendo por el Valle para recoger personalmente a familias sólo para asegurarse que éstas vinieran al entrenamiento esencial que ella ofrecía. “Con suerte conseguíamos que tres familias se inscribieran, y no siempre se presentarían porque los padres tenían que trabajar o no tenían transporte para ir a nuestra instalación,” dice ella. “Ahora, veo asientos llenos. Un niño de la clase fue recientemente diagnosticado a los 2 años. Hace seis años, eso era insólito”.

McIntosh ve esperanza en el menú de programas que SARRC introduce ahora a las familias hispanas de Arizona, y dice que la manera en que muchos de los programas funcionan juntos para apoyar diferentes aspectos de cada familia hace posible el progreso. Por ejemplo, el año pasado ella recomendó a dos niños de habla hispana con los que trabajó en JumpStart a que se inscribieran en la Escuela Comunitaria de SARRC, un programa que coloca a niños con autismo en un programa preescolar con niños de desarrollo típico y maestros altamente adiestrados. La oportunidad para niños con autismo de aprender interacciones sociales es increíblemente valiosa así como la oportunidad de niños no afectados con el trastorno de aprender más acerca del autismo y cómo pueden ser una fuerza positiva en el crecimiento y en la terapia de otros niños.

“Es nuestra visión que las familias, independiente-mente de que si hablan español o inglés, puedan tener acceso a todos nuestros servicios,” dice McIntosh, agregando que el crecimiento para asistir a JumpStart llevó a SARRC a contratar a otra coordinadora de servicios hispanos para manejar las visitas en casa de la organización y habilitación para familias de habla hispana.

Recientemente, SARRC también agregó un grupo de apoyo para las familias de habla hispana afectadas por el autismo. El grupo se reúne en SARRC una vez al mes y es presentado por el Dr. Julio Ramirez, un psicólogo clínico con licencia nacido en México con antecedentes en teología.

“Se está empezando a concretar,” dice McIntosh. “Es un proceso lento, pero queremos proporcionar un servicio de calidad y hacerlo bien”.

Promoviendo la Educación y el Entrenamiento

Parte de la meta de SARRC para garantizar que las cosas se hagan “correctamente” es asegurar que
Gracias al programa de Servicios Hispanos de SARRC, éstos niños ahora tienen un lugar a dónde ir para recibir ayuda, y en su idioma.

los proveedores y aquellos en primera línea para diagnosticar el autismo y que trabajan con las familias estén bien capacitados en las mejores prácticas. Como tal, SARRC ha trabajado para encontrar a esos grupos que pueden hacer un impacto temprano y ayudar a facilitar el diagnóstico en niños para dar a los proveedores, enfermeras, maestros y otros las herramientas que necesitan.

“Sabemos que existe la necesidad de más intervención temprana para todos los niños,” dice la directora ejecutiva de SARRC, Lisa Glow. “Y por eso, hemos hecho cierta capacitación con grupos que sirven a la comunidad hispana”.

Uno de los más grandes avances de la organización en este esfuerzo surgió cuando el personal de SARRC trabajó con Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC), una corporación de desarrollo comunitario a nivel estatal que presta sus servicios a algunas de las comunidades socialmente y económicamente más en desventaja de Arizona. Cada año, CPLC presenta una conferencia grande de capacitación para maestros de Head Start. Este año pasado, SARRC participó ofreciendo capacitación de “señales de alerta” para ayudar a los maestros a buscar señales de autismo. El liderazgo de CPLC y SARRC continúa explorando maneras de colaborar y alcanzar a más familias hispanas necesitadas que se ven afectadas por el autismo.

SARRC también ha colaborado con la organización Southwest Human Development, el proveedor más grande del estado para niños de edad preescolar que ofrece un programa de mucha reputación de Head Start para dar a los niños de bajos ingresos una educación de alta calidad, exámenes de salud y servicios familiares. “Hicimos otra capacitación de “señales de alerta” aquí dirigida para ayudar a aquellos que realmente trabajan estrechamente con familias,” dice McIntosh. “Todos estos maestros trabajan dentro de la comunidad hispana”.

SARRC también está encabezando esfuerzos para alcanzar profundamente a la comunidad hispana y ofrecer importantes entrenamientos directamente a los padres. McIntosh señala unos cuantos casos recientes cuando ella y compañeros fueron a centros comunitarios con materiales impresos en español para dar a las personas recursos útiles para llevarse consigo.

“Más que nada, necesitamos informar a las personas que hay recursos y lugares a donde pueden acudir para recibir ayuda,” dice McIntosh.

Forjando Colaboraciones

Para poder alcanzar con más eficacia a todas las familias, SARRC también ha formado asociaciones valiosas con algunas organizaciones sumamente visibles dentro de la comunidad hispana, algunas que
Para más información sobre los servicios Hispanos de SARRC, comuníquese con Diana Díaz al (602) 218-8193 ó dDíaz@autismcenter.org.
A new program for schools helps teach children social skills and encourages friendship.
When Karen Donmoyer walked her twin girls to school, she watched as other students happily greeted one another and ran off to play. She recalls the pain of seeing an absence of similar engagement or even basic greetings exchanged with her children. “It was as if my children were invisible,” she says.

Jennifer Croll saw the same patterns of isolation in her son, Jack.

Seeking a way to socially engage children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), Donmoyer and Croll co-founded the nonprofit FRIEND™ Playgroup Club Inc. in January. FRIEND is an acronym coined by the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) that stands for Fostering Relationships In Early Network Development. After a $5,000 jumpstart from The Enlightened Coalition for Heightened Opportunities (ECHO) and more fundraising, they hired SARRC to facilitate the program at the K-8 Copper Ridge School in Scottsdale.

“One of the major symptoms of autism is difficulty with social skills,” says Joseph Gentry, Ph.D., SARRC’s director of school consultation services. “So, we put them in school and give them a classroom aide to assist them with academics and social skills and ensure they are successful throughout the school day. But lunchtime is the most unstructured part of the day and the most social part of the day—and they’re typically all alone.”

The Program

Crucial to the FRIEND Playground Club is the education and empowerment of a child’s typical peers. Without fully understanding the scope of autism, typical children may be reluctant to approach a child with the disorder. Sometimes, not understanding why a child is “different” lends itself to teasing, bullying or socially shunning that child. Once educated, however, children gain the understanding and skills to befriend, guide and mentor others.

The FRIEND Playground Club adds structure to playtime and encourages interaction. “During the pilot program, a SARRC staff member went out to the playground from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. every day and set up structured activities like Jenga, potato sack races or a kick ball game,” explains Gentry, who also designed a study to measure the program’s effectiveness.

“We started with baseline data on each of five target students at Copper Ridge,” Gentry says. “We filmed their interactions and recorded the number of times they approached a typical peer, how often they were approached and if they were part of games and activities. After we started with all of the activities, we saw major increases in engagement.”

Croll doesn’t need a study to tell her that the program delivered results for Jack. “Three days before the program, he was circulating the perimeter of the playground,” she says. “Three days into the program, he was playing Jenga with other kids. He’s now interacting. He has friends. His self-confidence has increased, and he looks forward to going to school.”

Donmoyer, too, has watched her girls develop friendships. “They seem to be proud of the fact that they have friends. They’re invited on play dates more,” she says. “It’s such a simple program, but it delivers such huge results.” And those results aren’t limited to children with ASDs.

“This isn’t necessarily an autism program. It’s a friendship program,” Gentry says. “It can help every student. For example, we saw two little boys who were getting in trouble a lot. They started participating in some of the games. It turned out they just needed structure, and the disciplinary actions decreased.”

What’s Next

For Donmoyer and Croll, the mission is ambitious. “We want to reach all kids and change the social community in the school,” Donmoyer says.

To do that, Gentry explains, the group is evolving the program to make it easy to implement and affordable for schools. This evolution includes developing training for school staff and parents, engaging sixth- through eighth-grade students in the mentoring and facilitating process, and partnering with local colleges and universities to provide graduate students as program facilitators in exchange for college credit.

Meanwhile, Croll says she envisions the program expanding to schools throughout Arizona and all over the country.

“Nobody’s socially coached in our nation,” she says. “I am passionate about the need for that.”

SARRC owns the FRIEND trademark, and SARRC has licensed it to FRIEND Playground Club.
SARRC leaders help build a national autism research agenda led by the NIH Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.

To maximize the impact of the limited federal funds allocated to novel and necessary autism research, the 2006 Combating Autism Act called for a strategic plan to optimize investments in research over the next five years. The final plan, which has been developed with input from scientists, clinicians, government officials and parent advocates, will be presented to the National Institutes of Health Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) in November. This committee is charged with approving the recommendations and budget.

The plan is designed to answer the following urgent questions and needs of individuals on the autism spectrum and their families:

1) When should I be concerned about their child’s development?
2.) How can I understand what is happening?
3.) What caused this to happen, and can this be prevented?
4.) Which treatments and interventions will help?
5.) Where can I turn for services?
6.) What does the future hold?

The Guiding Principles
As it strives to answer these critical questions, the IACC Strategic Planning Workgroup has set forth six guiding principles to further define the team’s mission and inspire the strategic plan.

“The strategic plan is helping us formalize a new paradigm for working together through public-private partnerships that support our collective sense of urgency to identify the causes, most promising interventions and cures for autism spectrum disorders,” says Denise D. Resnik, SARRC co-founder and member of the Workgroup. “The guiding principles provide us with a functional roadmap for a plan that supports family participation, advances scientific discovery, respects all private and public investments and maximizes the impact of each.”

The core principles are:

Sense of Urgency: We will focus on the steps we can take now to be responsive to the needs of individuals and families affected by ASDs.

Excellence: We will pursue basic and clinical research of the highest quality to protect the safety and advance the best interests of those affected by ASDs.

Spirit of Collaboration: We will treat others with respect, listen to diverse views with open minds, and foster discussions where participants can comfortably offer opposing opinions.

Consumer-Focused: We will focus on making a difference in the lives of people affected by ASDs, including individuals with ASDs, their families, medical practitioners, educators and scientists.

Partnerships in Action: We will value cross-disciplinary approaches, data sharing, teamwork and partnerships with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Accountability: We will develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) research objects aligned with funding priorities and develop systems for evaluation and course corrections.

The Research
In developing its strategic plan, the IACC’s first step was to assess the current body of autism research. The IACC called on autism researchers and organizations across the country to describe their current projects, which were then reviewed by nationally recognized scientists and clinicians organized into four work groups: neurobiology, diagnosis, genetics and treatment.

Each group was charged with developing a list of major goals that need to be achieved in autism research and treatment. These goals will guide autism research over the next decade.

Christopher Smith, Ph.D., SARRC’s research director, participated in the diagnosis group.

“Working with this distinguished group has been a tremendous experience,” Smith says. “Thought leaders in the field are collaborating and innovating, which is critical to advancing discoveries, finding answers and improving the quality of life for individuals with autism.”

The Significance
After the IACC meets in November, the committee will work to finalize the research projects and budget allocations proposed by the Strategic Planning Workgroup and begin to empower researchers nationwide.

“We believe the plan will responsibly direct funds for autism research, not duplicate previous efforts, and enhance promising areas of study,” Smith says. “The institute’s collaborative approach will likely have a significant impact.”

NIMH Director: What’s Next?
As part of his visit to SARRC earlier this year, Dr. Thomas Insel, M.D., director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), presented a summary of what we know through autism research and, more importantly, outlined what we still need to know.

According to Dr. Insel, what we need to understand is the pathway from genetics to behavior. While we know that about 10 percent of all individuals with autism may have a spontaneous genetic “accident,” or mutation, we still need to learn if there are differences in the behavioral expression of the disorder in individuals with such mutations.

Beyond genetics and treatment, we need to know the effects of specific environmental insults like pesticides and other industrial chemicals on early development. Neurologically, we know there are a variety of differences in the brains of individuals with autism, but we need to know the role that specific structures, neurons and cells play in development, and how they are different in autism.

Visit the NIMH’s Web site on autism at nimh.nih.gov/topics/autism.shtml.
Join SARRC, Autism Speaks at Arizona’s Walk Now for Autism event on Nov. 2

BY RACHEL SOUTHARD
SARRC SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

ace up your walking shoes and join honorary chair Orlando Hudson, second baseman for the Arizona Diamondbacks, and thousands of others Sunday, Nov. 2, at Walk Now for Autism, Arizona’s largest autism awareness and fundraising event.

Last year more than 7,000 participants and 500 volunteers banded together at Tempe Beach Park and raised more than $600,000 in support of local and
national autism research and rehabilitative programs. Benefiting the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) and Autism Speaks, more than 10,000 supporters are expected to hit the trail for the 5K walk and one-mile family fun route this year.

Arizona’s Walk Now for Autism event is much more than just a walk. With numerous activities at the family fun festival, an autism resource fair and live entertainment, the morning will be fun for children with special needs, their typical peers and adults alike.

There are numerous ways to become involved with this year’s walk:

**Form a team.** Rally your family, friends, co-workers, church or service organization to join your team – it’s easy! Come up with a creative team name and register at www.walknowforautism.org/Arizona.

**Join an existing team.** Hop on board with Arizona Diamondbacks all-star second baseman Orlando Hudson’s “O-Dog’s Team C.A.T.C.H.” In honor of his two cousins who were diagnosed, O-Dog has made it his mission to promote autism awareness and research. You can join Orlando’s Team C.A.T.C.H. at www.walknowforautism.org/Arizona by clicking on “Search for a Team” and typing “O-Dog” in the field for team name.

**Raise funds.** Coordinate a fundraising challenge at work, school or in your neighborhood. Call on your out-of-state family members to donate in honor of your team. Be creative in your efforts! Ask your accountant, hairdresser, dry cleaner… all the folks you support year-round.

**Volunteer.** More than 500 volunteers are needed to ensure the success of this year’s event. There are numerous opportunities available. Please contact Rachel Southard at 480-603-3280 or rsouthard@autismcenter.org to sign up.

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- La Nueva 105.9 FM
- Recuerdo 100.3 FM/106.3 FM
Despite the overwhelming prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) in the U.S., many parents and community members are still new to the disorder. And, for those who may have some familiarity, understanding is oftentimes based on sensational news stories or stereotypical characters from movies or television. This spring, NEWS-TALK 92.3 KTAR and Sanderson Volvo partnered with the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) to set the record straight with an on-air autism event, Action for Autism. In total, the inaugural event raised $430,000 for SARRC and promoted awareness around-the-clock to hundreds of thousands of listeners.

The event kicked off with a series of vignettes, featuring families and children living with autism and national autism experts like Dr. Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health. On June 3-4, KTAR set up shop in SARRC’s multipurpose room for a live remote broadcast totaling 26 hours. On-air personalities covered a variety of topics ranging from the early signs of autism and programs at SARRC to the importance of community integration for individuals with autism and the exciting discoveries on the research front.

Many friends of SARRC stopped by to lend support.
during the event, including board members Matt McMahon, Leo Valdez, Rose Arck, John Ogden and Tom Kelly, Keith Earnest, vice president for development of RED Development; Michelle Schechner, private banker with Bank of America; Al McCoy and Rick Welts of the Phoenix Suns; Orlando Hudson, Daron Sutton and Derrick Hall of the Arizona Diamondbacks; Travis LaBoy and Ken Whisenhut of the Arizona Cardinals, as well as local media personalities Kent Dana, Sean McLaughlin, John Hook, Tim Hattrick, Willy Loon and Catherine Anaya.

“We met and exceeded this year’s goal, thanks to the wonderful support of our event sponsors and all of KTAR’s listeners,” says Scott Sutherland, vice president and market manager for Bonneville International, KTAR’s parent company. “We are pleased with the results that will help this worthwhile organization.”

Special thanks to sponsors Sanderson Volvo, Wachovia, Arizona Office of Technology and “CVS Pharmacies for their leadership in making this event possible.”

Giving Autism a Voice

SARRC extends a big thank you to the following individuals who participated in the Action for Autism on-air fundraiser:

**Guest On-Air Personalities**
- Catherine Anaya, CBS 5
- Kent Dana, CBS 5
- Tim Hattrick, Tim & Willy Kids FUN-dation
- John Hook, FOX 10
- Willy Loon, Tim & Willy Kids FUN-dation
- Sean McLaughlin, CBS 5
- Dave Pasch, ESPN

**KTAR On-Air Personalities and Reporters**
- Darrell Ankarlo
- Mark Asher
- Diane Brennan
- Dave Burns
- Paul Calvisi
- Jim Cross
- Ned Foster
- Doug Franz
- John Gambadore
- Larry Gaydos
- Sandra Haros
- Pamela Hughes
- Rob Hunter
- Bob McCay
- Al McCoy
- Pat McMahon
- Hanna Scott
- Steve Soliz
- Kevin Tripp
- Mac Watson
- Connie Weber
- Jayme West
- Ron Worley

**Special Thanks to On-Air Guests and Interviews**
- Neil & Lynn Balter
- Kathy Bosco
- Joe & Lisa Campbell
- Jane Christensen
- David Craig
- Phil & Patty Dion
- Karen Donnamoyer
- Keith Earnest
- Rob & Kym Feidler
- Attorney General Terry Goddard
- Nicole Goodwin
- Mayor Phil Gordon
- Mayor Hugh Hallman
- Orlando Hudson
- Tom Insel
- Shaun Klein
- Linda Kraynack
- Travis LaBoy
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- Raun Melmed
- Doreen Muir
- Margaret Ortiz

Jesse Ortiz
- Denise D. Resnik
- Bob & Michelle Schechner
- Daron Sutton
- Leo Valdez
- Gerda Weissman Klein
- Rick Welts
- Paul & Jill Wiley
- Ken Whisenhut

SARRC and Sanderson Volvo leadership pose with KTAR’s Darrell Ankarlo.
Vocational & Life Skills Academy provides job opportunities for teens and adults on the autism spectrum.
eighteen-year-old De'Sean Young starts his day out like most teenagers. He dresses, eats his breakfast – usually cereal, a banana and yogurt – brushes his hair and teeth, puts on his shoes and waits for his ride. Unlike most teens, he is very detail-oriented – meticulous in following his morning regimen. He is always ready to go on time and watches the clock anxiously – sometimes reminding his mom it’s time to leave.

De'Sean’s attention to detail and strong work ethic make him an ideal employee and model for other teens just entering the workforce. But for De'Sean, who was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome, opportunities are few and far between.

**Startling Statistics**

Unfortunately, his story is not uncommon. Nationally, the unemployment rate for adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) is 90 percent, and according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, just 38 percent of working-age individuals who have disabilities are employed.

In an effort to decrease the unemployment figures among individuals with ASDs, the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) has created the Vocational & Life Skills Academy, which is geared toward helping adolescents and adults gain continuing education, training, support, life and social skills development, and interest-based employment, while providing employers with the training and tools needed to ensure successful outcomes.

Within the Academy is CommunityWorks, a pre-vocational program that builds job skills in a community-based setting and is geared toward adolescents, both typical and those with autism, ages 13 to 18.

Stephanie Hock, CommunityWorks program coordinator, says individuals with autism and their typical peers bring different skill sets to the table, and by working together, they are able to enhance their skill sets.

“Individuals with autism are much more detail-oriented, and they are very concerned with making sure the job is done correctly,” Hock says. “Individuals on the autism spectrum model how to do a job correctly, and their typical peers model how to interact with others appropriately – like how to make eye contact or make conversation. So they learn from each other.”

**Forging Partnerships**

Under the CommunityWorks umbrella is ZooWorks, LibraryWorks, ScienceWorks and GardenWorks. Teens in these pilot programs experience several work sites, including the Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix Public Library, Arizona Science Center and the Desert Botanical Garden.

“We are so grateful to our community partners for the impact they are making on the teens in our program,” says Jeri Kendle, director of the Vocational & Life Skills Academy. “Our collaborations not only benefit the teens we work with, but we’re able to provide training to employees and volunteers of these organizations and raise awareness of autism and related disorders.”

Since its inception, CommunityWorks has served 74 teens with ASDs, created awareness and understanding for 62 teen mentors and provided training for 175 staff members and volunteers at six community sites. These individuals have provided more than 4000 hours of community service at the Phoenix Zoo, the Phoenix Burton Barr Library, the Arizona Science Center and other nonprofits throughout the Valley.

CommunityWorks has been made possible in large part by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, which seeks to help people in need, especially women, children and families; to protect animals and nature; and to enrich community life in the metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Indianapolis.

“Pulliam had the confidence to invest in our young adults and the progress we’ve made with CommunityWorks,” Kendle says. “Their support has helped drive the program’s growth over the past year and has fueled excitement in our mission.”

Despite the program’s growth, current demand far exceeds available capacity. In fact, more than 60 teens are currently enrolled and active in CommunityWorks, while an additional 70 teens are enrolled in the program but still awaiting placements. As SARRC strives to increase capacity, additional resources and funding are being pursued.

Those resources help people like De'Sean and his 17-year-old brother, Darien, who got their first taste of work life earlier this year at the Burton Barr Library. While Darien has continued with LibraryWorks, De'Sean, after turning 18, made the transition into SARRC’s Employment Services program where he landed an internship at the Arizona Black Pages.
Through Employment Services individuals receive vocational and interview training, job placement and on-site job coaching from vocational support staff at SARRC.

“We find the job that best fits our clients’ needs,” Hock says. “The Arizona Black Pages needed someone to make customer service calls. De’Sean needed to work on his social skills, so we thought that would be a good fit. After his training, De’Sean’s boss, Desmond Peartree, commented that it was like two different people from walking into his office on the first day to when he got his routine down.”

De’Sean’s mother, Kim Young, says both jobs exposed him to something new and taught him how to use his time wisely, complete tasks and get a feel for what the working world was like.

“SARRC opens you and your kids to other opportunities that are out there and allows them to experience things like other kids,” she says. “I believe this will help De’Sean determine where he wants to go as far as his career or if he wants to pursue more training or continue with school.”

New Opportunities

Though Arizona has some vocational programs for adults with disabilities, none focuses on the growing population of adults with ASDs. Now, as some of the earlier generations of individuals diagnosed with autism age out of the school system, there is growing concern among parents about where their child will go next.

For Nancy and Lon Licht it was important that their daughter Sydney, 17, have a place where she could learn job and interpersonal skills in as close to a real-world setting as possible.

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“With Sydney, we’ve always had the philosophy that we want her involved in community programs and have avoided programs for special kids,” Nancy says. “As she’s gotten into her teen years, it’s been more difficult. We’re hoping that through the CommunityWorks program, with the help of the facilitators and peer mentors, she will get the skills she needs for later in life.”

Sydney has completed ZooWorks and ScienceWorks, and now her parents are looking forward to GardenWorks at the Desert Botanical Garden, which she started in October.

“CommunityWorks helps us stay focused on the steps we need to take to lead her to a lifestyle of independence one day, which is our goal for her,” she says.

Giving Back

The program helps individuals with autism get one step closer to a life of independence by integrating them with their typical peers, who are also gaining the work skills necessary to survive in the workplace.

“I really liked being able to work side by side with the teens with ASDs and be more like a fellow peer rather than a helper, but being able to help when necessary,” says 17-year-old Megan Kirchgessner. “I feel like I’m using my time more wisely and getting more life experience rather than working a typical part-time job. I’m figuring out what I want to do with my future and how to help people.”

Though Megan is studying music at the Arizona School for the Arts, she knows she wants to integrate philanthropy into her career somehow and CommunityWorks is providing her that stepping stone. To give individuals with autism the same opportunity to give back, the program is extending to multiple sites in the community like the St. Mary’s Food Bank, UMOM New Day Centers, Project Cure, Arizona Animal Welfare League and YMCA.

“We’re giving back to other nonprofits, which is also good for individuals with autism to understand that it is important to help others in need,” Hock says. “Being able to give back to your community is essential for us all, regardless of our abilities or disabilities.”
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The Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center


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Great Flexibility

A bequest also lets you balance your philanthropic goals with your current living expenses, future medical costs and the needs of your loved ones. Because you’re not actually making a gift today and giving the asset away irrevocably, you need not worry that you won’t have enough to live on sometime in the future should you need the asset after all.

How It Works

To make a bequest, you need a current will or revocable living trust. You can specify that the bequest be used for a certain purpose or you can make it an unrestricted gift. An unrestricted gift will be used where it is needed most.

Your gift can be made as either a specific bequest or as a percentage of your estate. Through a specific bequest, you give a certain amount of cash, securities or property to a charitable organization. But because most people do not know what the exact size of their estate will be at their death, making a gift to a charitable organization by using a percentage amount may be a more appropriate way to divide the estate. It allows you to benefit charitable organizations and individuals in relative proportion.

Explore Your Options

A charitable bequest is not the only way to help support SARRC’s mission. To learn about all the ways you can help, contact Development Director Alisa Wheeler at (602) 218-8211.

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Education opens minds and opens doors. And early childhood education is a critical foundation for future success. Research has further demonstrated that particularly for children with autism, these formative years (ages 0-5) are crucial to maximizing their potential.

Armed with that knowledge, Helios Education Foundation, the largest foundation in both Arizona and Florida focused solely on education, recently awarded the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) a $1 million early childhood education grant.

Of the total $1 million gift, $950,000 has been allocated to SARRC’s endowment to ensure that the organization’s high-quality early intervention services and training programs continue to be available to children, families, educators, physicians and other professionals statewide. The funds will allow SARRC to innovate, replicate and build capacity so more children, both with autism and without, are positively affected.

“Helios Education Foundation invests its resources and expertise in programs that help pave the way for students to succeed across the education continuum — from pre-K through postsecondary education,” says foundation Chairman Vince Roig.

The remaining $50,000 will enable SARRC to launch its early intervention school consultation program, the Helios Early Intervention Initiative for Exceptional Children, which will work with toddler and preschool programs in Arizona to set up effective learning environments for children with ASDs and other behavioral challenges from birth to age 5.

Effective learning environments for these children take place in inclusive settings where typical peer role models play an active part in the child’s education. Research has demonstrated that this experience not only benefits the child with autism or other behavioral challenges, but greatly enhances the compassion and leadership capabilities of typical peers.

“Early intervention programs that focus on behavioral, social and cognitive issues are an integral part of keeping children on a path that not only gets them ready to learn, but helps them succeed in elementary school,” says Helios Education Foundation President and CEO Paul Luna. “Our commitment to SARRC is in part a reflection of our overall vision to bolster professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and help equip them with the right tools to foster a successful learning environment in today’s classroom.”

Focus on Helios

The Helios Education Foundation is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals by creating opportunities for success in education. The foundation’s community investments are focused on three areas: early childhood education, the transition years (grades 5-12) and postsecondary scholarships.

Helios was created through the sale of Southwest Student Services Corporation, a student loan services company. Since its inception in 2004, the foundation has invested more than $48 million in education-related programs and initiatives in Arizona and Florida.

For more, visit www.helios.org.
Working with the Spanish-speaking population living with the daily challenges of autism has been a life-changing experience for me. As a support coordinator for the Division of Developmental Disabilities, I realized a desperate need in our community.

The majority of my clients were immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries who did not speak English and had very limited educational resources. They knew there was something wrong with their children, but they didn’t know what it was called.

They had never heard of autism. They had many questions: What is autism? Does it have a cure? They didn’t know where to go for answers, and they were facing a terrifying and confusing world in which they were alone without any tools.

It was then that three of my co-workers and I founded GALA — Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos con Autismo. Our goal was to bring much-needed information and resources in Spanish to our families within the comforts of our culture. Since then, GALA has made a big difference in the lives of the Spanish-speaking autism community.

Our support group has continued to grow since its formation seven years ago, and so has our capacity for helping this incredible group of families. This nonprofit organization provides a home for these individuals. GALA is a place they come to socialize, learn more about this common enemy and how to fight for their children’s future.

During our monthly meetings, GALA brings various autism experts, including psychologists, therapists, special education professionals and more, to teach our parents how to help their loved ones. We also hold annual conferences that include nationally renowned Spanish-speaking professionals from various fields related to autism.

Our mission would be difficult to fulfill without the assistance and support of friends, such as the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), who have been our constant and faithful partners over the years. The availability of the JumpStart™ program completely in Spanish and run by Spanish-speaking personnel has given new hope and opportunity to our children on the autism spectrum.

SARRC now has a special unit devoted to helping the Spanish-speaking community under the capable hands of Diana Diaz, who together with a dedicated team of professionals, co-sponsored GALA’s third annual conference, which was a great success for our Spanish-speaking autism community.

Thanks to friends like SARRC, our families are now better prepared for the fight against autism, and we look forward to working together on new projects in years to come.

Alberto Serpas is the co-founder of GALA and an advocate for autism care in the Spanish-speaking community. You can learn more about GALA by calling (480) 831-1009 or visiting www.arizonagala.org.
T rabajando con la población de habla hispana viviendo con las dificultades diarias del autismo ha cambiado mi vida. Como coordinador de apoyo del División de Discapacidades del Desarrollo, me di cuenta de una necesidad desesperante en nuestra comunidad.

La mayoría de mis clientes eran inmigrantes de países de habla hispana que no hablaban inglés y tenían muy pocos recursos educacionales. Sabían que algo estaba mal con sus hijos, pero no sabían como se llamaba la condición.


Fue entonces que tres de mis compañeros y yo fundamos GALA — Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos con Autismo. Nuestra meta era traer información y recursos muy necesarios en español a nuestras familias, dentro de la comodidad de nuestra cultura. Desde entonces, GALA ha hecho una gran diferencia en la vida de la comunidad de habla hispana viviendo con autismo.

Nuestro grupo de apoyo ha continuado a crecer desde su formación hace siete años, y también nuestra capacidad para ayudar a este increíble grupo de familias. Esta organización sin fines de lucro provee un hogar para estos individuos. GALA es un lugar donde vienen a socializar, a aprender más sobre este enemigo común, y como luchar por el futuro de sus hijos.

Durante nuestras reuniones mensuales, GALA trae a diferentes expertos en autismo, incluyendo psicólogos, terapeutas, profesionales de educación especial y muchos más, para enseñar a nuestros padres a ayudar a sus seres queridos. También realizamos conferencias anuales que incluyen profesionales de habla hispana reconocidos nacionalmente en varios campos relacionados al autismo.

Nuestra misión sería difícil de cumplir sin la asistencia y apoyo de amigos, como el Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, quién a través de los años, ha sido nuestro fiel y constante socio. La disponibilidad del programa JumpStart completamente en español y dirigido por personal de habla hispana ha dado nuevas esperanzas y oportunidades a nuestros niños en el espectro autista.

SARRC ahora tiene una unidad especial dedicada a ayudar a la comunidad de habla hispana bajo las manos capaces y dedicadas de Diana Díaz, quien junto a un equipo de dedicados profesionales, co-patrocinaron la tercera conferencia anual de GALA, que fue un gran éxito para nuestra comunidad Latina viviendo con autismo.

Gracias a amigos como SARRC, nuestras familias ahora están mejor preparadas para luchar contra el autismo, y esperamos trabajar en más proyectos en años futuros.

Alberto Serpas es el co-fundador de GALA y un activista por el autismo en la comunidad Hispana. Puede aprender más sobre GALA llamando al (480) 821-1009 o visitando arizonagala.org.
Arizona Walk Now for Autism

SARRC is teaming up with Autism Speaks to host the third annual Walk Now for Autism at Tempe Beach Park. The family-friendly event includes a variety of children’s activities, live music and entertainment, arts and crafts, and an autism resource fair. Registration opens at 8 a.m., and the 5K walk (about three miles) begins at 9 a.m.

Last year, nearly 7,000 people walked raising more than $615,000 to help fund important autism research and programs at SARRC and Autism Speaks. It’s not too late to get involved. Visit walknowforautism.org/arizona to preregister and build a walk team.

Date: Sunday, Nov. 2
Time: 8 a.m. to noon
Place: Tempe Beach Park, 54 W Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe
Cost: Free; donations encouraged

ABA Training: Evidence-Based Interventions for Supporting Individuals with ASDs

SARRC is expanding its applied behavior analysis (ABA) training to include three workshops created specifically for parents, habilitators and professionals working with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Participants will learn evidence-based strategies for supporting individuals of all ages with varying levels of ability as well as information about communication skills, positive behavior support, how to structure the environment and reinforcement procedures. Participants will receive a certificate of attendance for professional development. To register, please contact SARRC’s Intake Coordinator at (480) 603-3284.

Session 1: Introduction to ABA
This training will cover the basic components of ABA, including the ABCs of behavior, reinforcement and prompting strategies and the importance of understanding typical child development for designing effective interventions.

Session 2: Advanced ABA
This training will provide information on evidence-based interventions for working with individuals with ASDs. Topics will include Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT), Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

Session 3: Decreasing Problem Behaviors and Increasing Appropriate Social Skills
Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) are essential to identifying the reasons behind difficult behaviors and to the development of effective behavior support plans. This presentation will detail information regarding the use of structured interviews, observation techniques and data collection procedures necessary for successful assessments. Practice exercises also will be conducted to assist participants in the development and implementation of behavior support strategies.

Dates: Introduction to ABA: Friday, Nov. 7
Advanced ABA: Friday, Dec. 5
Decreasing Problem Behaviors and Increasing Appropriate Social Skills: Friday, Jan. 23
Time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Place: SARRC, 300 N. 18th Street, Phoenix
Cost: $40/session or $100 for all three sessions.
Discounts are available for groups of five or more.

Doug Davis Foundation Celebrity Invitational
Join Diamondbacks pitcher Doug Davis and dozens of his celebrity friends to raise money for SARRC and other worthwhile charities. For more information, visit dougdavisfoundation.org.

Date: Monday, Dec. 8
Time: 11:30 shotgun start
Place: Troon North Golf Club
Cost: $750 per player

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN EPSTEIN
Support Groups

East Valley Autism Parents (Mum’s Night Out) Support Group
Join mothers of children with autism for a night out. Share your experiences, make new friends and learn something new. Call Janet Kirwan of SARRC at (602) 340-8717 for more information, including restaurant locations.

**Dates:** Nov. 6, Dec. (Holiday party; date TBD), Jan. 8
**Time:** 7 p.m.
**Place:** Rotating restaurant locations at Stapley Road and U.S. 60, Mesa

Support Group for Spanish-Speaking Families
Dr. Julio Ramirez, a Mexican-born licensed clinical psychologist, donates his time to lead a monthly support group for Spanish-speaking families at SARRC. For more information about this support group, contact Diana Diaz (602) 218-8193.

**Dates:** Saturdays, Nov. 1, Dec. 13
**Time:** 10 to 11:30 a.m.
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix

Grandparents Group
This informational group focuses on educating grandparents of children with autism about the latest news and research happening in the field. New grandparents are welcome to come at 9 a.m. for a meet-and-greet and tour of SARRC. For more information, please contact Addie Mocca of SARRC at (602) 218-8203.

**Dates:** Nov. 14, Jan. 16
**Time:** 10 to 11:30 a.m.
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix

West Valley Parent Support Group
Join parents living in the West Valley for a monthly support group where you can meet other families and learn something new. For more information, please contact Shelly Vinsant at (623) 572-5289.

**Dates:** Second Tuesday of the month: Nov. 11, Dec. 9, Jan. 13
**Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.
**Place:** New Life Community Church, 8155 W. Thunderbird Road, Peoria

NEW!
Teen Social Group
SARRC has formed a social group for teens with autism spectrum disorders and their typical peers ages 13 to 18. The group provides a positive environment that encourages social interaction with peers and builds friendships through a variety of activities, including board games, discussion groups, movies, arts and crafts, and field trips.

** Dates:** First Sunday of the month
**Time:** 1 to 4 p.m.
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix (unless other plans have been made ahead of time for an offsite activity)
JumpStart™ teaches parents about the characteristics of ASDs and covers a variety of important topics, including improving social communication, reducing problem behaviors, addressing concerns surrounding sleep and feeding, accessing state services and much more. JumpStart uses ABA-based interventions, including Pivotal Response Treatment and Discrete Trial Teaching. This five-week series is open to parents and children up to age 6, and includes discussion groups and hands-on training led by SARRC’s team of specialists.

The SARRC Community School toddler and preschool classrooms include children at risk or diagnosed with autism along with typically developing children in a naturalistic classroom environment. The school promotes language and social development while providing positive supports to minimize behaviors that interfere with learning. Diagnosed children receive additional 1:1 interventions throughout the day that focus on the development of cognitive, motor, self-help, communication and social-emotional skills. Structured activities are available to all the children throughout the day and are specifically designed to foster engagement and social interaction. All-day care is available for typically developing children.

The PARENT (Parenting Autism with Research and Evidence-based Naturalistic Teaching) Program provides parents and caregivers a basic understanding of how their children communicate and how to facilitate language development. Parents leave the program with strategies for increasing and improving their child’s communication and social interaction while decreasing disruptive and/or self-stimulatory behaviors. Sessions are led by a master’s-level speech-language pathologist.

SARRC provides family-centered intervention based on the principles of applied behavior analysis with hands-on, intensive, in-home support for families and habilitators. Families are assigned to program managers who oversee the development of a treatment plan, conduct monthly home visits to monitor success, mentor parents through issues related to development and provide ongoing training and support to habilitators.

SARRC’s board-certified music therapist provides weekly individual, multi-sensory music therapy sessions and collaborates with parents and school professionals to determine desired outcomes. Therapy sessions focus on developing motor and communication skills, self-expression and sensory integration, and can complement other therapies being received by the child.

SARRC’s speech-language pathologists work with parents to formulate goals and tailor individual speech therapy sessions based on each child’s needs. Ongoing sessions focus on expressive and receptive language skills and work to enhance the child’s social communication.

SARRC hosts recreational family camps at Whispering Hope Ranch in Payson. The camp experience includes interaction with animals and other unique activities for individuals with autism, siblings and parents.

The summer camp program is designed to help children with autism learn to build social skills through a variety of group activities held within existing community programs. Children are grouped by age with their peers for themed activity days, including gymnastics, karate, pottery-making and more.
### Arts & Culture

The Kemper & Ethel Marley Arts & Culture Program blends artistic experiences with therapeutic autism intervention techniques. The program utilizes art to promote autism awareness, therapeutic intervention and opportunities for the talents and contributions of individuals with ASDs to be appreciated.

### CommunityWorks

This is a community-based job training program for adolescents, ages 13 to 18. Participants with ASDs and neuro-typical peer mentors receive job training, coaching, support and oversight from SARRC staff. Recreational activities are built into the program, providing participants with ASDs an opportunity to develop their social skills and the peer mentors the opportunity to develop a better understanding of their peers with disabilities. CommunityWorks sites include The Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix’s Burton Barr Library, the Arizona Science Center and the Desert Botanical Garden.

### Parent Orientation

In parent orientation classes, SARRC provides information and guidance to parents of newly diagnosed children. SARRC’s family services director also offers ongoing support to parents as they explore therapeutic and education options, and as they learn to deal with their child’s intervention.

### Training Services

SARRC offers public and private schools a selection of training topics tailored to school-specific needs and interests. Trainings and workshops can accommodate both small and large groups. The training model promotes the use of best practices in creating comprehensive individualized programs based on the challenges and abilities of each student. Training topics address the identification and implementation of strategies and techniques used to support students with autism across all skill levels, educational settings and activities.

### Consultation Support

School-based consultation is offered to schools and districts to support individuals with ASDs and help them reach their personal potential. School-initiated services include classroom observation, behavior, educational and social-skills assessment and evaluation, and inclusion-based consultation. Consultation services build capacity within schools and districts to independently support the social, academic and behavioral needs of children with autism, including those within inclusive programs. SARRC’s behavioral and educational specialists will consult directly with the school and IEP team in identifying appropriate supports, program development and other issues for a student and members of the IEP team.

### Education and Training Workshop Series

SARRC hosts workshops led by local and national speakers. Workshops address the needs of parents, educators, professionals and other specialists working with individuals affected by autism.

### FRIEND Program

This peer sensitivity program for K-through-12th-grade students provides increased awareness of ASDs among students and school staff, and creates supportive opportunities for students with ASDs to interact appropriately with typical peers. Innovative materials, including the FRIEND program manual and Wings of EPOH children’s book, DVD and educator activity guide can be used as an inclusive social skills curriculum to promote awareness of ASDs, social differences, and appropriate strategies for facilitating social interactions. The materials provide easy-to-follow instructions for implementation and may be purchased in any number of combinations or individually, depending on the need. For additional support, direct training is also available.

### Physician Outreach Program

SARRC’s Autism Spectrum Disorders Screening Kit enables physicians to effectively screen for autism during developmental checkups. The kit includes parent questionnaires, presented in English and Spanish, scoring templates and referral materials to assist with timely referrals and earlier diagnoses. SARRC’s physician outreach efforts also include the Distinguished Lecture Series, where national autism experts present the latest autism information to both physicians and parents.
**Research That Matters**

“Through our collaborations with organizations like the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange, the Translational Genomics Research Institute and the Clinical Trials Network, SARRC is contributing to a growing body of research about autism and its potential causes. We learn more every day about the range of the spectrum, what that means for our kids and how we can develop the best therapies and treatments for them. I’m incredibly optimistic about the future.”

— Christopher Smith, Ph.D., SARRC Research Director

“I have four typical children and two children with autism, and we know how hard living with autism can be for a family. Participating in research at SARRC wasn’t a difficult question for us, because we knew it was the right thing to do. We didn’t sign up just because it might benefit our own children, but we want to do whatever we can to help prevent parents in the future from having the same difficult experiences as we have.”

— Becky Anderson, Mother, SARRC supporter and research participant since 2004

**33** Research studies at SARRC since 1997

**789** SARRC research participants in 2008

**44** SARRC research participants in 1997

**1** Full-time research staff member in 1998

**10** Full-time and part-time research staff members today

**$4.3 Million** Funds dedicated to SARRC’s research efforts from 1999 through 2007
Real Estate
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20% of All Commissions Donated to SARRC

Rob & Kym Feidler, parents of a child with autism, are giving back. Rob will donate 20% of all commissions from home sales or purchases to SARRC, or a charity of your choice, and you receive the tax credit.

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Call Rob at (480) 818-1406 or visit www.agent4autism.com

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www.a-p.com
Sanderson Volvo of Phoenix would like to thank SARRC and KTAR for including us in all the “Action For Autism”. We are very proud to be involved.