ARTISTS IN THE MAKING
Budding artists explore their creative side in Autism Artisans program
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EARLY LEARNERS
SARRC Community School offers integrated learning environment
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BRANCHING OUT
FRIEND® program expands into more schools, districts
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Soup’s ON!
Eddie Matney teams up with SARRC to produce tantalizing soup creations for Culinary Works® entrepreneurial program Page 16
Our Law Firm Proudly Supports SARRC in its Research and Assistance to People and Families Affected by Autism.
16 Soup’s On! Under the guidance of talented local chefs, SARRC launches Culinary-Works®, a program designed to give adults with autism the opportunity to prepare, package, sell and serve delicious soups.

20 Inspired Creations SARRC’s Autism Artisans program gives adolescents with autism and their typically developing peers a chance to explore new art mediums while working with local artists who volunteer their time.

22 School’s in Session The SARRC Community School enrolls typically developing toddlers, preschoolers and pre-Kindergarteners in its state-of-the-art early education program that boasts small class sizes, individualized instruction and a focus on communication.

25 Gaining FRIENDS The popular FRIEND® (Fostering Relationships in Early Network Development) program is now offered at nearly two dozen schools in the state, which are experiencing results, especially on the playground.

26 Opening Doors A new study examining residential concerns of adults with autism and related disorders was recently released by a partnership between the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Arizona, SARRC, the Arizona State University (ASU) Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, and the ASU Herberger Institute School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

27 Canadian Collaboration SARRC teams up with the Sinneave Family Foundation in Calgary, Alberta, Canada to advance discoveries, replicate SARRC programs in Western Canada and jointly develop and pilot new programs for children, adolescents and adults with ASDs.

28 Walk Time For the sixth year, SARRC and Autism Speaks are teaming up on Walk Now for Autism Speaks, which will be held Oct. 31 at Tempe Town Lake. This year, Sprouts Farmers Market is taking on a major role as a top local sponsor and fundraiser.
VSLA Parent Inspired by Son’s Excitement, Happiness

My 21-year-old son participates in SARRC’s Vocational & Life Skills Academy’s Monday Night Out. I can’t thank you enough for a recent experience he had.

On a drive home from the Monday Night Out program he talked excitedly about his time. He said he had fun, which is a major accomplishment for us! I asked if he was happy and he said he was… I can’t even tell you the last time I have seen him happy. He told me, “I taught Ken how to bowl on the Wii and when he did good I cheered for him.” My son cheered? Again, another major accomplishment!

Words cannot explain how much joy it brought me to drive home with him happy and talkative. It is hard for a lot of people to understand, but my son is not a happy young man and it meant so much to me that being at your event brought him happiness. Thank you.

Jeri Wheaton, Peoria
Since our son was diagnosed with autism more than 16 years ago, we’ve been part of a powerful learning experience full of the highest highs and lowest lows. At every age, our family and millions like us have struggled to answer immutable parenting questions that come with autism: How will my child communicate? Will he find his place in school? How can I best support her? These questions intensify as our children enter adulthood and we wrestle with the question of who will care for our adult children when we are no longer able to do so.

A few years ago, the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), collaborating with the Urban Land Institute and Arizona State University, began studying more than 100 residential programs here and abroad, looking for best practices. We took special note of models with potential for scalability and replicability, seamlessly woven into urban and suburban communities, close to where families live. Further, we evaluated the financial catalysts needed for public-private-nonprofit collaborations to create residential options for the more than 500,000 U.S. children with autism who will become adults in the next 15 years. We’re now pleased to share our study, “Opening Doors: A Discussion of Residential Options for Adults Living with Autism and Related Disorders” (see page 26).

Even as SARRC attends to issues of adult housing, we’re enhancing programs for childhood learning, teen social-skills development and adult employment. In our Community School, preschoolers with autism are paired with typically developing peers to promote learning, model neurotypical behaviors and bridge understanding for what it means to be different (see page 22).

Peer mentors also engage in SARRC’s FRIEND® program in nearly two dozen schools throughout the Valley, impacting 500 children with and without autism (see page 25). And through SARRC’s Arizona Diamondbacks Good DeedWorks®, more than 225 teens living with autism and their peer mentors have contributed 10,000 hours of volunteer service at Valley nonprofits over the past two years.

In the face of economic challenges and with the remarkable support of this community, we’re embracing entrepreneurship with new energy, both for our clients and for SARRC. Through SARRC Employment Services, more than 110 adults receive vocational training and 40 have found jobs in partner companies. In our Entrepreneurial Center for Special Abilities, we have launched the first SARRC-owned businesses that provide vocational training for our clients (see page 16 to learn about CulinaryWorks®).

Our son Matthew, now 18, has four years left in the public school system. That’s four years to achieve our goal of empowering him to join the workforce and to someday live on his own. In the early years, we thought we’d have so much time — for therapy, for science to develop the cures, for Matthew to outgrow his autism. Time for a miracle...

While we have not reached all our goals, SARRC, Autism Speaks, Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism, and our local and national partners continue to progress toward meaningful futures for our children and adults — futures that include friends, lifelong education, jobs, homes and communities that support and value them. Please join us in this journey.

Denise D. Resnik
SARRC Co-founder
ARRC’s mission of advancing discoveries and supporting individuals with autism (and their families) throughout their lifetimes is one I think about daily. As the father of triplets, one of whom has autism, that mission is a driving motivation in my life.

The years are going by so fast as my triplets, now age 11, matriculate through school. Of course, school is different for Tyler than it is for his brother and sister. But I marvel daily at the spirit, courage and gentle kindness with which his siblings express their love and support for their brother. I can’t help but think that they will be stronger and more compassionate for having traveled the journey of autism.

That journey is all the more difficult for our SARRC families in this trying economy. While some believe that economic conditions are slowly improving, SARRC still faces daunting challenges due to severe governmental budget cuts. To compensate for the loss of critical state funds, SARRC has significantly reduced its overhead over the last 18 months, created a leaner operation and sought new strategies for sustaining the services on which so many families depend.

We served newly diagnosed families through our early intervention JumpStart® program, added a pre-K classroom to the Community School, expanded LibraryWorks™ to additional sites and offered new summer programs focused on social skills and community integration.

On the research front, SARRC continues to be one of the most robust sites in the country for the recruitment and enrollment of subjects in its molecular and genetic studies and proudly continues its partnership with TGen and AGRE. In 2009, SARRC also piloted the ThinkAsperger’s® screening tool in five schools and trained more than 75 teachers; established new collaborations with Northern Arizona University and Arizona State University; provided 20 families with in-home parent training and documented promising early signs that our telemedicine project, which connects families in rural communities to SARRC therapists, is proving successful.

To continue to provide and expand such valuable services and further our research, SARRC must increase its fundraising efforts and continue to tighten its belt.

SARRC is grateful for the recent generous grants from organizations that include the Col. Harland D. Sanders Foundation, the Sinneave Family Foundation, Arizona Diamondbacks, Humana Healthcare, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the Kemper & Ethel Marley Foundation, Noah’s Family Foundation, CVS and many others.

The community started SARRC, and the community has kept SARRC strong and growing for 13 years. Now SARRC needs its community more than ever. There are many ways to get engaged in SARRC’s mission. From volunteering, to writing a check, to including SARRC in your planned giving. You can start by joining us April 29 at our 12th Annual Community Breakfast and generously supporting our mission of hope and opportunity for individuals and families living with autism and its lifelong challenges. On behalf of my son, Denise’s son and more than a million others like them, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Howard Sobelman
SARRC Board Chairman
Resnik Named to NIH Committee

SARRC co-founder and board member, Denise D. Resnik, has been appointed to serve on the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) of the National Institute of Health. The IACC is a federal advisory committee that coordinates autism-related efforts within the Department of Health and Human Services. The IACC also facilitates the exchange of information and coordination of activities among member agencies and organizations as well as increases public understanding and awareness by providing public forums for discussions related to autism research and services.

New Scholarship Fund Supports VOICE Program

The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation, a national autism organization committed to developing and awarding grants to exemplary and replicable programs that address critical needs for adults with ASDs, has collaborated with SARRC to establish The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Scholarship Fund for Adults with ASDs.

Scholarship funds will be used to expand participation in SARRC’s Vocational Opportunities for Individualized Career Experiences (VOICE) program. The VOICE program collaborates with local and national employers like Outback Steakhouse, CVS Pharmacy, PetSmart, Hensley & Co. and McDonald’s to provide job training and support for individuals with autism.

In the last year, more than 100 individuals enrolled in SARRC’s VOICE program and 39 are actively employed. The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Scholarship Fund will allow SARRC’s team to empower a greater number of adults with autism.

SARRC Collaborating on Study of Telemedicine Technology

In collaboration with the Organization for Autism Research (OAR), SARRC is conducting a study on the use of telemedicine as a tool for providing feedback and support to parents of children with autism. Using a product called B.I. CARE™, families can capture behaviors on video and share them privately and securely, via the Internet, with a SARRC clinician.

The use of telemedicine allows intervention by the parents to take place in the child’s natural environment. This allows the clinician to provide feedback regarding the intervention and the child’s behaviors on a consistent basis and gives families living in remote areas access to quality intervention.

SARRC Keeps Eye on the Future Thanks to Arizona Philanthropies

Three years ago, SARRC was chosen to participate in the second class of charities to benefit from the Arizona Endowment Building Institute, a project of the Arizona Planned Giving Institute collaboratively funded by the Stardust Foundation, the Arizona Community Foundation and the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

Continued on page 9
Another ‘Grand Slam’ for SARRC

For the second time in a decade, SARRC is honored to be selected as one of three Arizona Diamondbacks $100,000 Grand Slam Award recipients. The award from the Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation will fund SARRC’s Good DeedWorks® Training Center, which is a program created to provide teens with ASDs training, mentoring and volunteer experiences at local community venues.

Teens with ASDs work alongside peer mentors to learn about and volunteer with numerous Valley nonprofit agencies. These volunteer experiences provide social and life-skills training that can be used throughout their lives to help them become productive, independent members of our community.

Erin Dunham

Q. What is your role at SARRC?
A: I work at SARRC’s Vocational & Life Skills Academy (VLSA). I wear many hats, including heading up provides job training through the of SARRC’s signature soups. I’m also helping individuals 18 years of age. In addition, I coordinate VLSA’s Life Skills on their own—working, cooking, managing a household, as well as building social skills.

Q. What do you enjoy the most about your job?
A: I love the clients I work with and the variety of things I do here. There is never a dull moment. There are things going on all the time at VLSA, so there's no room for boredom. It challenges me daily. It's also a great feeling working with our clients and helping them achieve their goals no matter how large or small they may be.

Kevin Hommert

Kevin Hommert became aware of the autism community about eight years ago when his wife began working with children with ASDs. Recently, he has worked with SARRC and employed several adults with autism. As the proprietor of the Outback Steakhouse in Paradise Valley, Kevin currently has four employees with ASDs who help contribute to the success of his restaurant. Through his employment of these individuals, Kevin formed a strong relationship with SARRC’s job coaches and committed to serve as a key participant in SARRC’s CulinaryWorks® program, providing the kitchen used to make the soups.

“I love seeing how excited the CulinaryWorks participants get when they’re finally able to start chopping vegetables and using the larger kitchen equipment,” he says. “Then, of course, watching their faces when they get to taste their creations is priceless.”

To support Kevin’s Outback Steakhouse and the individuals with autism who are employed there, visit 4715 E. Cactus Road in Phoenix.
Jane Christensen, SARRC board member, and Jeri Kendle, director of the Vocational & Life Skills Academy, joined SARRC development staff in the 18-month curriculum and mentorship program, which laid the foundation for SARRC to build an endowment program that will ensure the organization can serve future generations of Arizona families impacted by autism.

SARRC’s endowment was jumpstarted by a gift of $950,000 from the Helios Education Foundation and a $1 million pledge from Valley humanitarian Jerry Bisgrove. SARRC Development Director Kristine Wilcox, who joined the SARRC team in fall 2009, is developing a Phase 2 endowment campaign plan to roll-out this year.

**SARRC Hosts Lunch at the Legislature**

On March 17, SARRC hosted a Saint Patty’s Day lunch on the Senate Lawn for Arizona legislators and their staffs. The weather was spectacular and the corned beef and cabbage provided by Matt McMahon’s Outback Steakhouse and signature soups provided by SARRC’s CulinaryWorks® program drew quite a crowd. Many thanks to SARRC board member Rose Arck and Char Ugol for their efforts raising autism awareness and ensuring the day was a success.

**OAR and SARRC Publish Autism Guide for Military Families**


This guide was produced in collaboration with SARRC and funded through a grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The guide is intended to serve as a stand-alone reference for parents and as a handy companion resource for the “Operation Autism” Web site OAR introduced last November. To preview or order the guide, please visit: www.researchautism.org/resources.
Donors Who Make a Difference

Growing a Garden with Help from Humana

Mark El-Tawil, president of Humana of Arizona, recently named SARRC the winner of the 2009 Arizona Benefits grant, funded by Humana Inc. The grant will provide funding for GardenWorks™, a community-based program designed by SARRC to engage young adults and adults with ASDs in every stage of developing and sustaining a revenue-producing venture.

The program will teach individuals with ASDs gardening and landscaping skills they can use to sustain their future financial independence. Training includes (1) caring of commercial, public and residential landscape spaces; (2) creating sustainable landscaping, gardening and water harvesting systems; and (3) growing, preparing and selling products from SARRC’s organic garden and greenhouse. The program will also tie into SARRC’s CulinaryWorks® program (see page 16), as SARRC hopes to use the fresh produce in its culinary endeavors. Look for an in-depth story on GardenWorks™ in the fall 2010 issue of Outreach.

Company: Sanderson Ford Lincoln Mercury & Volvo
Owner: David Kimmerle
Contact: (866) 797-3235 or www.sandersonford.com

David Kimmerle’s first introduction to SARRC was a few years ago when he attended SARRC’s Annual Community Breakfast. He was so impressed with the scope of SARRC’s programs and the number of lives SARRC touches that when Sanderson Ford Lincoln Mercury & Volvo were looking at organizations to support, he immediately thought of SARRC.

“I didn’t really know anything about autism so I looked it up on the Internet,” Kimmerle says. “I couldn’t believe how many people are affected by this disorder. Many people have heard about autism, but are not aware how far reaching it is and all of the varying degrees of the disorder.”

Sanderson Ford Lincoln Mercury & Volvo has become a true champion of SARRC. One of their most important contributions is their continued sponsorship of KTAR’s Action for Autism radiothon, which helps raise much needed funding for SARRC as well as autism awareness. Sanderson Ford was also instrumental in helping SARRC secure a 2010 Ford Transit Connect van via the Ford Motor Company Fund for use in SARRC’s CulinaryWorks® program (see page 18 for more info) and another van for the GardenWorks® program via the Valley Auto Dealers Association.

Company: Jaburg Wilk
Founder: Gary Jaburg
Contact: (602) 248-1000 or www.jaburgwilk.com

Gary Jaburg, founder and managing partner of Jaburg Wilk, was introduced to SARRC at one of the Annual Community Breakfasts a few years ago. Impressed by the organization, Jaburg and the Jaburg Wilk Foundation championed a collaboration between SARRC and another nonprofit, P.O.S.I.C.L.E., that addresses the unique feeding and nutritional challenges associated with autism. The Jaburg Wilk Feeding Series, held last year, has completed its final training session in the three-part series. Thanks to the law firm’s additional
funding, more trainings are being scheduled in 2010.

Jaburg and his partner, Larry Wilk, founded Jaburg Wilk, in 1984 as a business law firm. Long-time supporters of Valley nonprofits, Gary and Larry soon formed the Jaburg Wilk Foundation to give back to deserving organizations like SARRC. The Foundation is committed to enriching the quality of life for residents of Arizona by fostering private giving and strengthening smaller service providers.

Inspired by the success of the collaboration between SARRC and P.O.P.S.I.C.L.E., Jaburg Wilk recently announced its inaugural “Sharing the Prize Seed” grant, which is awarding funds to two nonprofit organizations for the purpose of establishing a collaborative community improvement project.

In addition to funding the Jaburg Wilk Feeding Series, the law firm also recently sponsored KTAR's Action for Autism radiothon.

Company: DHR International
Co-owner: David Bruno
Contact: 602-992-7810 or www.dhrinternational.com

David Bruno, vice chairman and managing director of DHR International’s Phoenix office, first learned about autism from his daughter Kate. Kate was studying biogenetics in California and became interested in a study involving the connection between bright individuals and individuals affected with ASDs. She told her father about the study and he shared her interest.

Bruno decided he wanted to be involved in the local autism community, so he looked into what Arizona offered in the way of research and resources for individuals affected by ASDs. It was during this time he met SARRC Co-founder Denise Resnik and, as he says, “that was it.” Bruno became a believer in SARRC’s mission.

DHR International is the fifth largest executive recruiting company in the U.S. Bruno thought the best way he could help was by offering his services as an executive search consultant. Since then, Bruno has helped fill several key positions at SARRC and continues to stay involved.

“I’ve never offered my services pro bono before, but I know what an uphill battle SARRC is fighting. I am so impressed by everyone; staff, parents, grandparents and volunteers. Their dedication and passion are inspiring.”

A special thanks to the following organizations and individuals who sponsored events to benefit SARRC families and children:

**Channel 12 and Change the Game for Autism**
From television segments to collecting donations at Streets of New York and AIA football games, this campaign raised community awareness as well as funds to support programs at SARRC.

**Sky Harbor Golf Invitational**
Nearly 400 players hit the links to raise funds for SARRC and Phoenix Children’s Hospital during the Sky Harbor Invitational Golf Tournament. Organized by HMS Host and Marriott, the event is the Valley’s largest charity golf tournament.

**Kierland Cares**
Kierland Commons and SARRC joined together for an evening of food, fashion, festivities and fundraising — all in the name of helping those with autism. Event proceeds benefited SARRC’s 2009 Walk Now for Autism Speaks team.

**Phoenix Postal Customer Council Classic Golf Tournament**
The Phoenix Postal Customer Council generously designated SARRC as the beneficiary of its 18th annual golf classic. Registration was a sellout for this great event held at the Club West Golf Club in Ahwatukee.

**Canon Business Solutions Golf tournament**
Canon Business Solutions held their annual golf tournament at the Raven Golf Club in Phoenix with proceeds benefiting SARRC. Ken Scott, Canon employee, SARRC supporter and father of a son with autism, was responsible for introducing Canon to SARRC.

**Pro Players’ Classic**
Dozens of major celebrities rounded out the full playing field at the 12th Annual Pro Players’ Classic held at the Terravita Golf and Country Club in Scottsdale. Proceeds benefited several local charities, including SARRC. Dave Smoot, founder and CEO of Natawa, spearheaded the event.

**New Year Ball Drop**
Troon North Golf Club was the site for 2010’s Golf For Cause New Year Ball Drop, benefiting SARRC. The daylong event included a golf demonstration by LPGA player Pam Wright, lunch, silent auction and dinner. Long-time SARRC supporter Debbie Waitkus managed the event.

**Baseball Wives**
The wives of Major League Baseball players launched a Spring Training charity event to benefit SARRC and the Autism Resource Foundation. Some 200 players and their wives from teams in the Cactus League participated to support the many families in baseball who are impacted by the disorder.
**Making Sense of Steven’s Law**

**BY BETHANY CHADD, M.A.**

Who is eligible to receive insurance coverage under Steven’s Law?

Benefits issued by participating insurance companies cover all Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism, Asperger's syndrome and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified [PDD-NOS]) for children 16 years old and younger. Children between the ages of 0 and 9 are eligible to receive up to $50,000 of benefits per year, and children between the ages of 10 and 16 are eligible to receive up to $25,000 of benefits per year. Exemptions include children covered by insurance plans for small companies (50 employees or fewer), insurance plans not underwritten in the state of Arizona, and self-insured plans (though some self-insured plans are covering autism services).

How do I find out if services will be covered for my child?

The first step is to ask your employer’s Human Resources department (HR). Ask if there are fewer than 51 employees and if the insurance plan is “self-insured.” If the answers to both questions are “no,” and the plan is underwritten in Arizona, then call your insurance company and ask for “member benefits.” A customer service representative should be able to provide you with information about your specific plan, including coverage of autism services, as well as any deductibles, co-pays or co-insurance that you will be responsible for paying. For more information, SARRC has adapted the Arizona Autism Coalition’s “Determining Eligibility Under Steven’s Law” available at autismcenter.org by clicking on “Steven’s Law Resource Center” on the home page.

What services are covered?

Steven’s Law includes coverage of the diagnosis and behavioral therapy services for all ASDs. This includes psychological and psychiatric care and evidence-based, medically necessary autism therapies. More specifically, it includes coverage for interventions based on applied behavior analysis (ABA), such as Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) and Discrete Trial Training (DTT).

What programs does SARRC offer that are eligible for insurance coverage?

Many of SARRC’s in-home programs are now available through insurance coverage, including:

- Specialized Habilitation Program (ages 0-5): This program focuses on increasing the child’s social communication through correct implementation of Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) in 16 in-home parent training sessions (also funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities [DDD]).
- In-Home Consultation & Program Development (ages 0-9): This program is highly individualized for the needs of the family and child and may include consultation on areas such as increasing functional language, potty training, reducing problem behaviors and habilitator training.
- Comprehensive In-Home Program (ages 0-9): This program offers both parent training and one-to-one intervention provided and supervised by highly skilled behavioral interventionists.

Additional research is under way to determine the eligibility of insurance reimbursement for other SARRC programs, including JumpStart® and the SARRC Community School. Please check SARRC’s Web site regularly for updates at www.autismcenter.org.

If you would like more information on SARRC’s In-Home Programs, please contact SARRC Clinical Supervisor Bethany Chadd at (602) 218-8174 or bchadd@autismcenter.org.
La Ley de Steven Tiene Sentido

BY BETHANY CHADD, M.A.

¿Quién califica para recibir cobertura de seguro bajo la Ley de Steven?

Los beneficios de compañías participantes de seguros cubren todos los trastornos del espectro del autismo (autismo, síndrome de Asperger y el trastorno generalizado del desarrollo, no especificado de otra manera [PDD-NOS, por sus siglas en inglés]) en niños de 16 años de edad y menos. Los niños entre 0 y 9 años de edad califican para recibir beneficios de hasta $50,000 al año, y niños entre 10 y 16 años de edad califican para recibir beneficios de hasta $25,000 al año. Se excluyen coberturas de planes de seguro de pequeñas compañías (50 empleados o menos), planes de seguro no suscritos en el estado de Arizona, y planes de autoseguro (aunque algunos planes de autoseguro cubren la prestación de servicios a niños con autismo).

¿Cómo verificar si los servicios cubrirán a mi hijo/a?

El primer paso es preguntar al departamento de recursos humanos de su empleador (HR, por sus siglas en inglés). Pregunte si el plan de seguro tiene menos de 51 empleados y si es de Ñautoseguro. Si la respuesta a ambas preguntas es Ñno., el plan está suscrito en Arizona, entonces llame a su compañía de seguros y pida los Ñbeneficios a los miembros. Un representante de servicios al cliente debe proporcionarle información referente a su plan específico, incluyendo la cobertura del autismo, así como cualquier deducible, copago o coseguro que usted será responsable de pagar. Para más información, SARRC ha adaptado la Ñdeterminación de elegibilidad bajo la ley StevenÑ de la coalición del autismo de Arizona disponible en autismentcenter.org haciendo clic en el ÑCentro de Recursos de la Ley de StevenÑ (“Steven’s Law Resource Center”) en la página inicial.

¿Qué programas de SARRC califican para la cobertura del seguro?

Muchos programas internos de SARRC están ahora disponibles por medio de coberturas de seguro, incluyendo:

- Programas de Habilitación Especializada (para niños de 0 a 9 años de edad): Este programa se enfoca en aumentar la comunicación social de los niños a través de la implementación adecuada del tratamiento de respuestas centrales (PRT) en 16 sesiones internas de entrenamiento a los padres (también financiado por la división de discapacidades del desarrollo [DDD, por sus siglas en inglés]).

- Consultas Internas y Programas de Desarrollo (para niños de 0 a 9 años de edad): Este programa se enfoca en aumentar la comunicación social de los niños a través de la implementación adecuada del tratamiento de respuestas centrales (PRT) en 16 sesiones internas de entrenamiento a los padres (también financiado por la división de discapacidades del desarrollo [DDD, por sus siglas en inglés]).

Se están haciendo más investigaciones para determinar la elegibilidad de reembolso del seguro para otros programas de SARRC, incluyendo JumpStart® y la escuela comunitaria de SARRC. Por favor vea el sitio de la red de SARRC con regularidad para revisar las actualizaciones en www.autismentcenter.org.
Clinical trials at SARRC help researchers better understand which study medications might be effective in improving the quality of life for children with autism now and in the future.

SARRC is currently enrolling children with autism for two research projects. Study medication is provided at no cost and comprehensive study-related evaluations, diagnosis and close follow-up with Dr. Raun Melmed, developmental pediatrician and SARRC medical director, is provided. Families who participate in these research projects are reimbursed for their travel expenses. The research projects include:

**ConneCtMe Study**
*Children 6 to 12 years old*
To date, there are no pharmacologic agents approved in the U.S. to treat core symptoms of autism. The ConnetMe clinical research trial will determine the effect of an investigational medication on social interaction and communication skills for children with autism. Families who participate in this double-blind study will come to SARRC for eight visits over the course of approximately 14 weeks. All children who complete the 14-week study can receive the investigational medication in a long-term extension trial.

**ENzyME STuDy**
*Children 3 to 8 years old*
This 12-week research study compares the safety and effectiveness of an investigational medication and placebo in treating difficulties associated with autism. The study medication is an enzyme that is sprinkled on food and has no taste. There are no pills to swallow in this research project and no blood draws are required. Children who complete the 12-week study are also eligible for an extended trial in which all participants will be given the investigational medication.

**Genetic Research**
SARRC continues to collaborate with the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange in assessing families throughout the state who have more than one child with autism. SARRC hopes this collaboration will identify the genetic vulnerability to autism and lead to an early screening test and, eventually, better treatments for the disorder. For more information, visit www.agre.org.

**Behavioral Research**
SARRC is involved in research projects evaluating best-practice interventions for individuals with autism. SARRC is also committed to supporting parents and schools in their efforts to help children with autism overcome the disorder. A project funded by the Organization for Autism Research is currently evaluating the use of telemedicine to train parents to provide interventions to their children with autism. SARRC is also evaluating the FRIEND® program: a three-component intervention designed to improve the quantity and quality of social interactions between students with ASDs or other social challenges and their typically developing peers in local schools.

Please contact SARRC research coordinators for additional information about these projects:

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(602) 218-8225  
soberreynolds@autismcenter.org

Sarah Brautigam, MPH  
(602) 218-8196  
sbrautigam@autismcenter.org
At the SARRC Community School, responsibilities and teaching goals related to language, literacy and play are met by dividing the class into different learning zones, including structured activity, one-to-one teaching, free play and circle time. Following is a glimpse at what takes place in each zone throughout the day:

Structured Activity Zone

Every 15 minutes, a new structured activity begins in the Community School classrooms. These activities focus on varying domains such as play skills, fine motor, social-skills and pre-academics. Goals at the activity change daily and expectations are individualized. For example, if the goal at a painting activity is “requesting,” then the lead teacher will place a visual reminder of the goal on the table. The teacher leading the activity will focus on having students request, regardless of how messy their painting is getting. Requests might range from an approximation of “paint” to “I need more paint on my paintbrush,” but are always based on individual child expectations.

Appropriate engagement is also a focus during structured activity. If the child needs to be redirected to the activity more than twice, he will be asked to use language to leave the activity. The amount of time a child is expected to remain at the activity varies from class to class – toddlers are expected to try the activity, while pre-K students travel to and from the activities as a group.

One-to-One Teaching Zone

Each child diagnosed with an ASD has three individually selected goals that target receptive language, expressive language, social interactions and academic skills. These skills are worked on every day within the classroom environment during 15 minutes of one-to-one teaching time.

A play-skills goal might focus on teaching a classroom favorite, Sponge Bob Memory, and breaking down the game into 12 specific steps. These steps range from opening up the box, arranging the cards and taking turns to cleaning up the game. Once the child masters the steps and rules of the game, a peer is then introduced to play with him.

Free Play Zone

The free play zone is available throughout the entire day and a teacher is always ready to engage the students. The goal of free play is engaging both typically developing students and students with autism. At the Community School, teachers are in constant

Continued on page 29
Powerful Ingredient
SARRC partners with Valley chefs to cook up a program that gives adults with autism on-the-job experience with a dash of business savvy

BY GINGER S. EIDEN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL O’NEILL
Brian Merring has never considered himself much of a cook. But there he was, dressed in kitchen whites at the helm of a professional-grade stove and armed with a spoon and a palette of tasty ingredients. Merring, 34, was diagnosed with autism when he was 6, and he has never held a job. He wasn’t sure if he would be able to complete the task at hand—turn the raw flavors before him into retail-worthy soups for the masses—but he was willing to try. It was the experience that he craved, and that’s exactly what the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) is serving up with this newest addition to its Vocational & Life Skills Academy.

Called Culinary Works®, this program was recently launched by SARRC through a partnership with notable Valley chefs, and the program offers young adults and adults with autism spectrum disorders hands-on job training through the preparation, packaging, distribution and sale of classic soups. The program is supported through grants from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and the Noah Family Foundation. Like most programs in the academy, Culinary Works aims to give those with autism vital trade skills that can be translated into employment opportunities in the future that will allow them to live and work independently.

“It’s about creating a quality of life and a sense of independence for our adults with autism,” says Jeri Kendle, Vocational & Life Skills Academy director. “Our participants will be trained in a variety of skills, with opportunities in bookkeeping, business, public relations, accounting and cooking. We want to give these individuals valuable skills so they can go out and find jobs, have meaningful experiences and build self-esteem.”

**Foundation for the Future**

Developing skills and working toward employment and independence is crucial for many in this program. Brian’s parents, Mildred and Dr. Leroy Merring, want their son to have every advantage possible in the job market. Both in their 70s, they also worry about what will happen to their son when they are no longer around to take care of him.

“He has never had a job, and we’re not going to be here forever,” Leroy Marring says. “This is the first program out there that does something for the future of people like Brian. Before this, there really wasn’t anything that would give this kind of training, and it’s a relief that something like this is now available.”

Using an in-class, hands-on curriculum model, the

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### Ford Connection

SARRC recently received a brand new 2010 Transit Connect courtesy of the Ford Motor Company Fund and the Arizona Ford Dealer’s Operation Goodwill campaign. Over the past two years, the Ford Motor Company Fund has donated more than $2 million to local nonprofits in the metro Phoenix area.

SARRC’s 2010 Transit Connect is being used to transport the CulinaryWorks® staff and its signature soups, and is powered by a 2.0-liter I-4 engine with a four-speed automatic overdrive transmission. The vehicle offers double the fuel economy of full-size vans with a rating of 22 mpg city and 25 mpg highway.

SARRC’s Transit Connect has been the perfect mobile billboard for SARRC and the CulinaryWorks program thanks to the custom wrap that was also installed on the vehicle. With the Transit Connect’s eye-catching design, outstanding fuel efficiency and functional interior, it is no surprise this vehicle recently won the 2010 Truck of the Year Award at the North American International Auto Show.
CulinaryWorks program is 11 weeks. During that time, participants learn all facets of the soup-making business. Students in the program are guided through four soup recipes that they ultimately package into 16-ounce containers to be sold for $4.25. In Merring’s first two weeks in the program, he already mastered two recipes and was diving into the business aspects of the project.

“I needed to learn some sort of trade with the way the economy is,” Merring says. “I never had much of an interest before in cooking, but I want to learn all types of skills, and I figure there are 7 billion people on this earth and that’s a lot of mouths to feed.”

The soups are made available for catering opportunities, but every Tuesday through April, the public can purchase these tasty comfort meals at the Plaza View Café in APS’s corporate headquarters building in downtown Phoenix.

“It has been a wonderful experience to work with the members of SARRC on this project and to make it a reality,” says Christy Russell of APS Real Estate and Facility Services. “I feel fortunate to be a part of such a meaningful partnership.”

Entrepreneurial Spirit

CulinaryWorks began small, with around two dozen participants, but SARRC hopes to grow the program over the next two years to 80 to 100 participants, with multiple retailers carrying the soups and mobile carts that the students will be able to take out into the community to sell during the busy downtown lunch hour. And Chef Eddie Matney, who donated his Mediterranean Chicken soup recipe to the CulinaryWorks label, thinks SARRC and the students in this program have just enough entrepreneurial spirit to make it happen.

“These individuals are very special and very capable; they just needed someone to give them the tools to learn how to be independent,” Matney says. “To be the lead chef on this project and to share my skills with someone to help them make their life better is so rewarding. Anytime you can be a part of something with SARRC it’s just an awesome experience.”

Fellow participating chef Barbara Pool Fenzl of Les Gourmettes Cooking School in Phoenix echoes Matney’s enthusiasm.

“Working with the staff of SARRC to produce CulinaryWorks was a pure delight,” Fenzl says. “They were visionary, supportive, organized and appreciative of my time. But it was cooking my soup with two of the clients that was the real highlight. I loved interacting with the students, and they were so attentive, hard working and gracious.”

While Kendle and the others at SARRC are excited to see the business venture mature into a program that one day they hope will be not only self-sustaining but also revenue-generating, they are equally excited by the new opportunities CulinaryWorks is giving them to educate the community.

“The awareness this creates with those buying our soups and allowing them to learn about the tremendous talents of those who have autism is truly powerful,” Kendle says. “When people hear autism, they automatically think about kids. But we (SARRC) are working with more than 300 adults and adolescents with autism, and this program really gives them an opportunity to learn valuable skills and participate in our community.”

Meet the Chefs

A special thanks to these talented Valley chefs, the people behind the recipes for the CulinaryWorks soups.

**Chef Eddie Matney – Lead Chef**
Eddie’s House
Mediterranean Chicken Soup

**Chef Barbara Pool Fenzl**
Les Gourmettes Cooking School
Squash Soup

**Chef Carolyn Ellis**
Arcadia Farms
Tuscan White Bean Soup

**Chef Charles Kassels**
El Chorro Lodge
Tomato Soup and Split Pea Soup
Most teens would jump at the chance to go to Hawaii and spend a week basking in the sun and playing in the waves. Not Matthew (pictured at right). He tried to negotiate his way out of the trip when he found out he was going to miss his Autism Artisans class that Saturday.

Matthew, a 16-year-old high school student with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), has always had a passion for art. He has a natural ability to draw. In the past, he spent hours creating detailed recreations of the entire Disneyland theme park, but his sketches were always in black and white. Matthew’s parents were eager to expose their son to other art mediums.

After seeing a flyer for the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center’s (SARRC) Autism Artisans program at school, they eagerly signed him up. Matthew was nervous to try something new without any friends or family, but by the end of his first ceramics class he was hooked.

“I was really anxious as I waited to pick him up after his first class,” explains Connie, Matthew’s mom. “But he came out with a big smile on his face. He absolutely loved it!”

Matthew has participated in Autism Artisans classes on pottery, painting and computer graphics. The program fostered Matthew’s creativity and opened his mind to the possibilities of using color and other mediums in his art work.

**Autism Artisans introduces teens and adults with autism to new art mediums thanks to the contributions of volunteer instructors**

**Connect and create**

SARRC’s Autism Artisans program is a series of art workshops that expose emerging and established artists with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and their typically developing peers ages 13 and older to a variety of art mediums. This program utilizes art to promote autism awareness, therapeutic intervention and opportunities for the talents and contributions of individuals with ASDs to be appreciated.

With limited time and money for art in schools, many individuals with autism have not had a chance to explore and develop their artistic abilities. Autism Artisans gives the participants an opportunity to explore the arts and expand their creative talents. According to Erin Dunham, Employment Services Program Coordinator at SARRC, “The program gives young adults with ASDs a different avenue for expressing themselves, which is important when verbal communication may be a challenge.”

Beyond artistic development, the workshops provide structured time for clients to interact with new people and to build appropriate social skills. SARRC plans to exhibit Autism Artisans artwork in an effort to raise awareness and showcase the participants’ talents.

SARRC leverages the talent of the local art...
community by inviting local artists to teach workshops on their medium. Six local artists have contributed their talents to the program (see sidebar) and two more are joining the ranks this summer. To date, workshops have included instruction on the mediums of graphic design, painting, sculpting, drawing and ceramics.

In addition, several local organizations have supported the program by donating space for the Autism Artisans workshops. The SARRC Vocational & Life Skills Academy, the Scottsdale Artists School, University of Advancing Technology and the Devereaux School have all held workshops at their facilities.

**IMcreative**

Graphic artist Lisa MacCollum has played a major role in building the partnership between SARRC and the Phoenix art community. Lisa was the creative director for the Heard Museum for nearly 23 years and now contracts with several museums and cultural institutions in the Valley.

Lisa teaches a workshop on graphic design and recruits different artists to teach a variety of other mediums. Her enthusiasm makes it difficult for them to say no. “Each participant is unique,” MacCollum says. “We have so much fun.”

The artists enjoy the opportunity to get to know the participants and cultivate interest in the arts. The participants make a lasting impression on the art instructors and often surprise them by their caliber of work. “It is a fulfilling experience for all who are involved,” MacCollum adds.

More than 60 individuals with ASDs participated in the Autism Artisans program in 2009, and SARRC is looking forward to another 100 clients participating in 2010.

As for Matthew, he has unleashed his newfound passion for color on a full-scale redecoration of his bedroom. The project includes the creation of 3-dimensional art posters and a colorful diorama. His parents eagerly await the big room reveal!

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**IMtalented**

Special thanks to SARRC’s exceptionally talented Autism Artisans instructors. This program would not be possible without your enthusiasm, passion, time and talent:

- Lisa MacCollum
- Kimberly Harris
- Michael Marlowe
- Michael McCauley
- Kevin Winters
- Neil Borowicz
Two little boys. One is shoving things off a counter for his own amusement and that of his little partner in crime. Two sets of eyes are sparkling; giggling can be heard at their own naughty behavior.

Instead of being annoyed at the antics, crashing sounds and subsequent piling up of various items on the floor, the teachers in this preschool are overjoyed.

One boy is on the autism spectrum and the other is a typically developing child, and this could be a chance to get them talking.

Rachel McIntosh, M.A., BCBA, SARRC Community School director, says she and her teachers don’t see such behavior as a no-no, but rather a great social reaction and one to capitalize on to get the two talking.

By relishing this behavior, “It also teaches them that social interaction is fun,” McIntosh says.

SARRC Community School offers 3:1 student-teacher ratio, includes students on the spectrum and typically developing peers

By Christia Gibbons

Pivotal Response Treatment Encourages Social Communication

The Community School, which works with toddlers to pre-kindergartners, uses Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) and “incidental teaching” in a real-world environment to improve engagement and communication, McIntosh says. The classrooms at the SARRC school are colorful, filled with fun activities, and like any preschool, have rambunctious kids learning to interact and react appropriately.

There is an equal number of children on the spectrum and typically developing kids in three groups – toddler, preschool and pre-K – and one teacher for every three students. The toddler and preschoolers are on campus four hours a day, five days a week. The pre-K students get five hours a day, four days a week.

Research suggests, McIntosh says, that motivating children in a natural environment can be more
successful than pulling them out of a classroom into a more structured therapy session.

“We don’t keep students in secluded situations,” she said. Social communication and engagement are the two goals of all teaching and activities so children are ready for general education classrooms beginning in Kindergarten.

“We can teach anything, but the goal is to target socially significant behavior,” McIntosh says. Her own daughter, Olivia, was a typically developing student who made tremendous gains in the Community School, and she and mom were sad when Olivia aged out.

“I wouldn’t put my own daughter here if I didn’t believe in it,” McIntosh says.

Using PRT to Motivate Students

PRT combats the more usual experience of failure for a child on the spectrum by targeting motivation.

McIntosh explains that children with autism “have learned helplessness” because they often repeatedly fail to see the connection between their behavior and its impact on their environment. So, at the Community School, teachers target motivation to gain success and teach kids the positive consequences that talking brings about.

Teachers are constantly watching for communication opportunities throughout the day and then work on turning silence into sound, sound into an approximate word, and then getting a child to say the full word.

Activities are completed in 15-minute blocks to maintain novelty and motivation, and rotate between free play and special activities with targeted goals in mind. For instance, gluing rays on a sun is targeting requesting, sand play is about pouring, and rolling a ball to a friend is about appropriate play.

Lessons are not autism specific, but focus on what’s developmentally appropriate, McIntosh says.

As Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, SARRC vice president and clinical services director, puts it: “The role of the teacher is to engage children and get kids talking to access what they want in the classroom throughout the day.”

Funding Challenges

Three-year state funding for the Community School ends June 30, so Openden says he hopes people, businesses and/or foundations will see the good the Community School does for children on the spectrum and typically developing children and will want to contribute to keep costs down for parents.

Cost for a child on the spectrum is $2,150 a month and also includes at-home parent training to help what’s learned in school carry on into the rest of the child’s day. For typically developing children, the cost is $350/month for a half day and $700/month for a full day.

Openden points out, “The benefits for both children with autism and typically developing peers are substantial, especially when you consider the high level of systematic instruction across every activity and interaction. We’re so much more than a preschool. We’re an intensive therapeutic program in a preschool setting, an optimal environment for all children to learn language, as well as appropriate play skills and social interaction.”

It’s all that and more to McIntosh.

“Who wouldn’t want to give a kid the ability to understand their world and to communicate in it?”

SARRC Shares PRT Expertise

SARRC took its expertise in Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) on the road the last four months of 2009 and hit 38 early childhood centers in Phoenix, Tucson, San Luis and Wilcox.

Funded by the Helios Education Foundation, SARRC experts conducted 10-hour training/consultation sessions for more than 514 students – including more than 50 students with autism and 200 English-language learners.
SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

TriWest is proud to sponsor the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center 12th Annual Community Breakfast, and salutes its mission of advancing research and helping children become happy, healthy and productive adults.

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Shannon Blair can see the difference. Within less than a year of implementing the FRIEND® program at Kiva Elementary School in Scottsdale, the school psychologist has noticed changes in the students.

One kindergartener who has social differences started the year with no friends and played independently during recess. Today, she has a group of friends who engage her in activities.

“Our students are happier to come to school,” Blair says. “And I see improved behaviors on the playground.”

Blair credits the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center’s FRIEND program, which over the past year has grown in scope and numbers — it’s now in 23 schools statewide.

The FRIEND Program

The Fostering Relationships In Early Network Development (FRIEND) program includes peer sensitivity training and a lunch program, which provides children with ASDs the opportunity to build social skills through a structured lunch with peers and a teacher or paraprofessional who facilitates the interactions. The program now also includes a playground component.

The FRIEND Playground Club began as an independent nonprofit and piloted its program last year. The group’s co-founder Karen Donmoyer said that merging the Playground Club with SARRC’s existing program just made sense.

“It fit really nicely with the lunch and peer sensitivity program to address the social needs of children with autism and other social differences,” Donmoyer says.

According to Lori Vincent, M. Ed., BCBA, senior educational consultant for SARRC, eight schools have implemented the comprehensive program, which includes all three components; 13 use only the playground; and two, just the lunch. These schools are in Scottsdale, Tempe, Laveen, Cave Creek, Tucson, Safford and even Prescott Valley.

“We feel very lucky because so many schools have been interested and have embraced this program,” Vincent says. “And we’ve seen how it can create a culture of acceptance.”

Vincent explains that SARRC’s goal is to continue to help schools benefit from the program, and part of that is training them how to successfully implement the program and how to train others to do the same. The ability to train others in a school or district keeps a school’s costs down because it reduces the amount of SARRC staff time required to launch the program. Vincent and her colleagues are also developing a comprehensive manual and an online resource, which will allow schools to share their experiences and best practices.

Blair is looking forward to continuing the program at Kiva.

“It’s been very well-received,” she says. “It’s been a positive experience for everyone involved.”

Donmoyer has seen the program’s benefits in her own daughters and says the real benefit goes beyond what happens in school today.

“Our children with autism have a lot of potential, and we need to integrate them now alongside typical kids so that down the road, they can have a meaningful and valued place in the community,” she says. “Let’s work toward a world where adults with autism are valued for their talents and skills.”

Above: Students in the FRIEND® program at Kiva Elementary School in Scottsdale participate in a team relay during playground time. Each student had to work with his or her teammates to use only the PVC pipes to carry the ball from one point to another without dropping it.

BY STEPHANIE R. CONNER
disorders was conducted by a partnership between the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Arizona, Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC), the Arizona State University (ASU) Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, and the ASU Herberger Institute School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

The study, called Opening Doors: A Discussion of Residential Options for Adults Living with Autism and Related Disorders, is designed to advance the development of replicable residential models that offer quality, affordable housing options within the fabric of their communities.

Our goal is to respond to the pressing question that’s looming today for millions of parents of children with autism and related disorders: Who will care for my child when I’m no longer able to do so? The dramatic increase in the population of affected individuals gives rise to serious concern among families, service providers, government and the community at-large that residential services for post-school-age adults with autism and developmental disorders must be created as an integral part of a healthy community’s housing plan and opportunities. The companion study for Opening Doors is Advancing Full Spectrum Housing: Designing for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and it was produced by the Arizona State University Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, and ASU Herberger Institute School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

“We must restructure the way existing government funding is allocated to housing resources for the developmentally disabled in order to grow a sustainable real estate supply over time,” says George Bosworth, Urban Land Institute Arizona Executive Director.

The studies are intended to highlight existing residential options and support services, and guide the development of new options so they may serve as organic living and learning laboratories for scholars, social workers and families.

Opening Doors proposes actionable steps that address the increasing demand for supportive housing and communities, which maximize independent living. Both studies were funded through grants by Urban Land Foundation, Pivotal Foundation and SARRC, and are available at www.autismcenter.org (under Resources tab) and http://stardust.asu.edu/research_resources/ (click on Use-Inspired Research/view all).

Denise D. Resnik, SARRC co-founder and mother of an 18-year-old son with autism, is the editor of Opening Doors.
Ties That Bind

The Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) and the Sinneave Family Foundation of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, have forged a collaboration that’s advancing discoveries, replicating SARRC programs in Western Canada and jointly developing and piloting new programs for children, adolescents and adults with ASDs.

“For nearly two full years, representatives of the foundation traveled across Canada, the U.S. and around the world, meeting with leaders in the field and assessing impressive centers of excellence,” explains Margaret Clarke, M.D., Sinneave Family Foundation executive director. “As we developed our vision and plan, we wanted to learn from the best—and we did. We knew we wanted to impact the greatest number of individuals possible and create a family-focused and collaborative institution that supports those individuals and families throughout their lifetimes. And when we visited SARRC, we realized they did.”

The Sinneave Family Foundation was created by Alberta businessman Jim Sinneave and his wife Marion. Their goal was to innovate and work in partnership with the community to improve the quality of life for those living with autism. Representatives of Sinneave have made repeated trips to SARRC over the past few years, and SARRC leaders have also spent time in Calgary.

According to Dr. Clarke, “SARRC quickly emerged as a model for the community-based, empirically supported, best practice training and education programs we aspire to demonstrate and implement in Canada in collaboration with partners throughout the Province.”

“This opportunity to replicate SARRC’s programs and help more families while co-developing new ones is a dream come true,” says Denise D. Resnik, SARRC co-founder. “Through Sinneave, we have found a partner who shares our values, commitment and DNA.”

In Phase 1 of the partnership, which runs through December 2010, SARRC Vice President and Clinical Director Daniel Openden will lead training sessions in Pivotal Response Treatment for Sinneave behavioral interventionists working with adolescent and adult individuals with autism.

In Phase 2, beginning July 2010, Jeri Kendle, SARRC acting president and director of the Vocational & Life Skills Academy, will consult with Sinneave to develop an Autism CommunityWorks® program for adolescents and an Employment Services program for adult clients.

Phase 3 of the partnership will commence in January 2011, when SARRC and Sinneave will collaborate to design JumpStart® III, an adaptation of SARRC’s early intervention JumpStart program that will focus on 13- to 18-year-olds with ASDs and successful transitions into adulthood.

“Together, I’m confident Sinneave will achieve its desired position of serving as a fully integrated, best practices research and resource center that promotes evidenced-based quality autism programs, services and research, and supports individuals and families throughout their lifetimes,” Dr. Clarke says.

Above: SARRC is working with the Sinneave Family Foundation of Alberta, Canada, to develop an Autism CommunityWorks® model that replicates programs like SARRC’s Good-DeedWorks® collaboration with the Arizona Diamondbacks.
For the sixth year, the autism community will come together at Tempe Beach Park to walk for autism at the 2010 Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks. As a collaboration between Autism Speaks and the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), the Arizona walk is an awareness and fundraising event that supports important projects underway with both organizations.

Nationally, proceeds are used to advance family services through grants and free online tool kits, as well as to fund research into the causes and treatments for autism and advocacy projects that will improve the quality of life for families affected by the disorder. Through SARRC, dollars raised support programs that benefit the local autism community in areas such as research, school outreach and vocational and adult programs.

Sprouts steps up to help

This year, Doug Sanders, president and chief operations officer of Sprouts Farmers Market, is serving at the walk’s chairman. Doug and his wife, Cindy, attended last year’s event shortly after their 3-year-old son was diagnosed with autism.

“Participating in the walk gave our family a way to connect with the local autism community,” Sanders says. “We visited every booth at the walk’s resource fair to learn about the different organizations providing services that could help our son, Ethan.”

As one of more than 80 walks held in the U.S. and Canada, the Arizona walk has one of the largest resource fairs with nearly 43 community resources represented.

For the 2010 walk planning committee, providing parents with resources and education so that they can make informed decisions goes hand-in-hand with the walk’s fundraising and awareness goals. Volunteers

Annual Arizona Walk

Sprouts Farmers Market steps up with major support for 2010 Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks

BY LYNDSEY WAUGH
working on the event’s awareness committees focus on how communication, school outreach and even sponsorship requests can build meaningful partnerships that give Autism Speaks and SARRC the chance to use the walk to provide education.

Last year alone, walk committee volunteers made more than 25 school and corporate autism awareness presentations, including several to corporations interested in volunteering or supporting the event.

“Companies that participate in the walk through sponsorships, corporate teams or volunteer groups find the experience to be very rewarding because, in many instances, a handful of employees are directly or indirectly affected by autism,” explains Amy Hummell, Arizona Director for Autism Speaks. “Based on the national rate of autism prevalence, an average company could have up to 10 percent of its workforce directly affected by autism — whether it’s a child, family member or neighbor.”

Raising awareness

For Sanders, the need to promote autism awareness among Sprouts Farmers Markets’ customers, employees and industry partners was the attraction of signing on as the Arizona walk’s first Visionary Sponsor at $30,000.

“The positive response from our partners and employees has been overwhelming,” says Sanders. “Nearly everyone I speak to knows someone who is affected and is eager to learn more. We are proud to help with providing access to nutritional food and meaningful information.”

In addition to sponsoring the walk in November, Sprouts Farmers Markets is also designating May as in-store autism awareness month at 49 stores throughout Arizona, California, Colorado and Texas, where shoppers can learn about autism and have an opportunity to donate to the cause. With Sanders’ leadership, the company is also hosting a corporate walk team with the goal of raising at least $100,000 in addition to their sponsorship.

In the Zone

Continued from page 15

motion, moving strategically from one student to the next ensuring each student is contacted approximately once per minute.

Contacts can include opportunities for students to respond both expressively and receptively. They can also be social praise for appropriately engaging or helping a child find a friend or toy to play with. To increase motivation in the free play zone, toys are rotated on a weekly basis. Each toy rotation has a theme, and each toy bin has a wide variety of toys that address students of varying abilities.

Circle Time Zone

All of the zones in our classrooms are meant to be fun, engaging, educational and, above all, provide the opportunity for communication. Circle time provides many communication opportunities for the children, even when we are reading a book or singing a song. The key to providing the language opportunities is motivation, and in our circle time we work hard to ensure multiple activities are performed and all children are engaged.

Receptive language opportunities are provided a minimum of five times during circle time, which allows all children to work on receptive skills and provides plenty of opportunities for participation. Participation ranges from a verbalization (approximations all the way to sentences), exchanging a picture card using the Picture Exchange Communication System, or eliciting an electronic output from a Voice Output Communication Aide (VOCA).

Above all, a successful day in the Community School classrooms is achieved when the children have a great time – communicating just happens to be a part of a great time!

This article was prepared by Rachel McIntosh, BCABA, Community School Director, Dana Silverman, Toddler Clinical Interventionist, LeeAnne Contreras, Preschool Clinical Interventionist; Megan Bailey, PreK Clinical Interventionist, and Katie Halpin, PreK Clinical Interventionist.
Sutton Strokes for Little Folks Golf Tournament
Daron Sutton, the voice of the Arizona Diamondbacks, and his wife, Kristin, will host the 5th Annual Sutton Strokes for Little Folks golf tournament benefiting SARRC and the Scottsdale Soccer Foundation. Join us at the Arizona Grand Resort for a day of golf, good food and great music. For more info, visit www.suttongolf.org.

Date: Thurs., April 22
Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m. check in; noon shotgun start
Place: Arizona Grand Resort, 7777 S. Point Parkway, Phoenix
Cost: $150

12th Annual SARRC Community Breakfast
Join Breakfast Chairs Shellie and Alex Poulos along with more than 1,500 community leaders to learn the latest news about autism, the nation's most prevalent childhood developmental disorder. SARRC will spotlight local programs that are making a difference for individuals with autism and their families.

Date: Thurs., April 29
Time: 7:30-9 a.m.
Place: Arizona Biltmore, 2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix
Cost: Free; donations encouraged

Autism Awareness Day at Chase Field
Watch as the Arizona Diamondbacks take on the Colorado Rockies during D-backs Autism Awareness Day. Five dollars from each ticket purchased at www.dbacks.com/autism will support the 2010 Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks, also benefitting SARRC. The log-in to purchase online tickets is “autism” and the password is “awareness.” For more info, please visit walknowforautismspeaks.org/Arizona.

Date: Sun., Aug. 22
Time: Game starts at 1:10 p.m.
Place: Chase Field, 401 E. Jefferson Street, Phoenix
Cost: Single game tickets range from $15-$35 per person
Support Groups

**Grandparents Group**

The Grandparents Group focuses on educating and supporting grandparents of children with autism and presents the latest news and research in the field. The group meets once a month October through May. New grandparents are welcome to come at 9 a.m. for a meet-and-greet and tour of SARRC.

**Dates:** May 7, Oct. 15
**Time:** 10 to 11:30 a.m.
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
**RSVP:** (602) 218-8203

**Autism Spectrum Support, Information & Strategies for Transition (ASSIST)**

Get together with other parents who are in the process of navigating their child’s transition from high school to adult life. This is an informal group of parents who, through experience, have gained a wealth of information and are eager to share with and support one another. Discussions about services available include vocational rehabilitation, Social Security, Magellan Behavioral Health, SARRC and high school transition planning in an IEP. For additional info, meeting dates, times and locations, contact Debbie at asparentsupport@gmail.com.

**West Valley Autism Parents Support Group**

Join mothers of children with autism for a night out. Share your experiences, make new friends and learn something new. Contact Shelly Vinsant for more information at shellyvin@cox.net.

**Overview of the IEP Process**

This training provides an overview of the Individual Education Program (IEP) process. Learn how information is gathered and what leads to the development of an appropriate IEP. A brief overview of the parents’, school’s and individual’s rights will be covered. Participants attending this training also will learn how to read and successfully interpret an IEP and understand educational acronyms and specific IEP components.

**Date:** Fri., May 14
**Time:** 9 a.m.-noon
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
**Cost:** $25 per person (registration limited to 15 participants)

**Trainings**

**Vocational Training**

Joanne Gerenser, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, executive director of the Eden II Programs, provides training focused on vocational-related issues.

**Date:** Thurs., May 6
**Time:** 4-7 p.m.
**Place:** SARRC Vocational & Life Skills Academy, 2225 N. 16th St., Phoenix
**Cost:** Please call SARRC at (480) 603-3283

**The Key to a Quality of Life is Effective Communication: Addressing the Speech, Language & Communication Needs of Learners with ASD**

It has been well established that effective communication skills are essential to achieve a good quality of life. In this workshop, Joanne Gerenser, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, executive director of the Eden II Programs, focuses on the deficits children with ASDs demonstrate across all areas of speech, language and communication.

**Date:** Fri., May 7
**Time:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (registration starts at 8:30 a.m.)
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
**Cost:** $75 per person

**Overview of the IEP Process**

This training provides an overview of the Individual Education Program (IEP) process. Learn how information is gathered and what leads to the development of an appropriate IEP. A brief overview of the parents’, school’s and individual’s rights will be covered. Participants attending this training also will learn how to read and successfully interpret an IEP and understand educational acronyms and specific IEP components.

**Date:** Fri., May 14
**Time:** 9 a.m.-noon
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
**Cost:** $25 per person (registration limited to 15 participants)

**Using PRT to Teach Academic Skills**

This four-day intensive training focuses on ways to implement Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). Participants are required to videotape themselves working with one child with autism prior to and during the training. These videotapes are viewed and discussed during the training, so there is interactive feedback.

**Date:** Mon., June 7 through Thurs., June 10
**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
**Cost:** Early registration (prior to May 1): $950; After April 30: $1,000

For a complete list of SARRC’s workshops and trainings, visit autismcenter.org and click on calendar. To register, call (480) 603-3283 or e-mail training@autismcenter.org.
### Parent Orientation

SARRC provides information and guidance in this orientation for parents of children newly diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). SARRC’s Director of Family Support Services provides direct support to parents as they deal with issues related to autism. The contents of the orientation include: assistance in developing plans of care, identifying client and family needs, accessing supports, partnering with professionals and overcoming service barriers.

### JumpStart®

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.

### Community School

The SARRC Community School toddler, preschool and pre-K classrooms include children at risk for 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.

### Comprehensive In-Home Program

For families with children up to age 9 who have been diagnosed with an ASD. SARRC’s new comprehensive in-home program offers both parent training and 1:1 intervention from highly skilled behavioral interventionists.

### In-Home Consultation

In-home consultation is available for families with children up to age 9 who have been diagnosed with an ASD. This program is highly individualized for the needs of the family and child and may include consultation on areas such as increasing functional language, potty training, reducing problem behaviors and habilitator training.

### Specialized Habilitation Services

Specialized habilitation is available for children up to age 5 who have been diagnosed with an ASD. The program focuses on increasing the child’s social communication through correct implementation of Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) in 16 in-home parent training sessions (also funded by the Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities).

### Remote Telemedicine Program

SARRC clinical interventionists provide parents of children with ASDs intensive training in the motivational procedures of PRT to meet each child’s individual communication, social and behavioral needs. After their initial week-long training at SARRC, families return home and receive telemedicine support from SARRC’s clinicians by sharing video over a secured internet connection, allowing SARRC clinicians to remotely provide ongoing feedback to parents as the child’s skills and needs change over time. The program is particularly useful for families living in rural/remote locations or outside of Arizona.

### Get Connected

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Autism CommunityWorks®
This is a community-based training program for adolescents ages 13 to 18. Participants with ASDs and typical peer mentors receive vocational training, coaching, support and oversight from SARRC staff. The program provides participants with ASDs opportunities to develop their social skills and the peer mentors the opportunity to develop a better understanding of their peers with disabilities. Autism CommunityWorks sites include LibraryWorks® at the Burton Barr Library and Scottsdale Civic Center Library, GardenWorks® at the Desert Botanical Garden, TheatreWorks® at the Phoenix Theatre and Arizona Diamondback Good DeedWorks® serving other Valley non-profit organizations.

Employment Services
Vocational Opportunities for Individualized Career Experiences (VOICE) is an employment services program for adults with ASDs offered through SARRC’s Vocational & Life Skills Academy. By collaborating with local and national employers, VOICE uses best practices in job training and provides support for adults with ASDs. These adults benefit from the job training components of the program by increasing their work skills and enhancing their social skills.

Entrepreneurial Center for Special Abilities
ECSA provides young adults and adults with ASDs training and work opportunities that involve them in every aspect of operating a business. ECSA’s CulinaryWorks® program partners with Arizona’s most celebrated chefs in the packaging, preparing and selling of SARRC’s signature soups. ECSA’s newest program, Humana GardenWorks® engages individuals in developing and sustaining a revenue-producing co-op garden. Community members are encouraged to mentor individuals with ASDs in both programs to help them gain skills they can use to work toward financial independence.

Education & Training Program
The Education and Training Program offers a range of topic-based training activities created for families, providers, school faculty, administrators, therapeutic and medical professionals, and others living, working or with an interest in supporting individuals with ASDs. The content for trainings and workshops addresses practical knowledge and skills for implementation of evidence-based interventions. This program furthers understanding of ASDs, cutting-edge research and evidence-based treatment approaches.

School-Based Services
School Based-Services are provided by SARRC educational consultants to school staff and administration, as requested. Through professional development trainings, school consultation and evaluation services, educational consultants provide school staff with skill-based knowledge on educating students with ASDs. Interventions and strategies taught through these services are evidence-based and applicable to all students in special and general education settings.

FRIEND® Program
The FRIEND program is an inclusive curriculum designed to improve social skills for school-age students with ASDs or other social challenges. Children with social challenges are taught how to appropriately engage with their peers through structure and support in the natural environment throughout the school day. Typical peers are taught strategies to assist their peers with social challenges during naturally occurring social interactions. The FRIEND Program includes three components: Peer Sensitivity Training, FRIEND Playground Program and FRIEND Lunch Program.

Vocational & Life Skills Academy Classes
SARRC’s VLsA provides teens and adults with ASDs training in social, life and vocational skills. Social get-togethers as well as classes in cooking, communication, landing and maintaining employment, and managing a household are held monthly.

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. Additionally, SARRC has developed the ThinkAsperger’s® screening kit and program for detecting Asperger’s syndrome in school-age children.

For more information on any of these programs or services, please contact SARRC directly at (602) 340-8717.
Advancing Futures

1 in 10,000
Children diagnosed with ASDs in 1990

1 in 100
Arizona children being diagnosed with ASDs today

10
National autism organizations partnering with Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism (AFAA) to address the increasing demand for services for adolescents and adults with ASDs

16 cities and 1,200 people
Participants in AFAA’s National Town Hall meeting designed to collect information, develop strategic solutions and advance the national agenda for adults living with autism

10,000
Volunteer hours contributed by teens in the Arizona Diamondbacks Good DeedsWorks® program over the past two years

500,000
Americans with ASDs who will enter adulthood in the next 15 years

PHOTO © STEPHEN G. DREIES2UN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS
We are proud to support SARRC in making a world of difference in the lives of children with autism and their families.

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7720 N. 16th Street, Suite 450 • Phoenix, AZ 85020
Thank you to the entire team at News/Talk 92.3 KTAR and the generous Action for Autism sponsors for making your imprint on autism. For the third year, your tremendous leadership and vast community outreach efforts have been instrumental in educating the community about autism and generating support for vital SARRC programs.