PROGRESS REPORT
Community School helps toddler make tremendous strides
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MILESTONES
Research team focuses on securing earlier diagnoses
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LIFE TRANSITIONS
SARRC partners with First Place on Residential Transition Academy
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Ready to WORK
Employment Services Program prepares adults with autism for job opportunities, partners with local businesses Page 24
SARRC’s Grandparents Support Group is the visionary creation of Kathy Bosco, a grandparent of a child with autism.

The Grandparents Group offers grandparents a place to grow and share in a community of support.

Through monthly gatherings, volunteer opportunities, and social events, grandparents gain education and hope.

Grandparents are empowered to learn about the latest autism research, and collect vital information, tips and strategies that will help their entire family on their journey with autism.

For more information and to get involved, visit www.autismcenter.org or contact Kathy Bosco at 602.340.8717
24 Ready to Work  With the help of SARRC’s Employment Services program, young adults like Chris Louttit and Andrew Ober-Reynolds are taking steps toward living more independently by securing positions with valued employment partners like Pro-Serv and Sprouts Farmers Market.

28 Next Step Kindergarten  The SARRC Community School helps 3-year-old David Weigel and family with early intervention strategies designed to put David on track for enrollment in an inclusive Kindergarten class in a couple of years.

30 Monitoring Milestones  SARRC was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to focus on a program with pediatricians that aims to reduce the average age of diagnosis of ASD in Phoenix.

32 Meaningful Internships  Two of SARRC’s most popular social enterprise businesses – the Beneficial Beans® cafes and garden – recently added internship components and will serve as a training ground for more individuals with autism.

34 Gaining Independence  SARRC has forged a partnership with First Place on a Residential Transition Academy designed to prepare adults with autism for the transition to independent living.

36 Full Circle  As a volunteer peer mentor in high school, Mia Sorensen developed a passion for working with individuals with autism in SARRC’s CommunityWorks® program. Armed with a college degree, Sorensen returns to SARRC as an employee.

37 ThinkAsperger’s®  Dedicated volunteers organized an inaugural fundraising event at The Sanctuary to raise funds for the ThinkAsperger’s® program, which enabled thousands of chatterboxes to be created and sent to schools to raise awareness.
Your Thoughts

SARRC serves family of 3 boys with ASD

Five years ago, we had just welcomed home our first child. Dante learned new things everyday, but his milestones hit a dead end around the 10th month of his development. At 14 months old, a profound change had occurred. It was clear my son was suffering from autism. After the formal diagnosis, I chose SARRC based on experience, consistency and the use of neurotypical peers in the Community School. With SARRC’s parent training and consistent use of Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT), we were able to see Dante’s eye contact and responsivity improve.

SARRC not only accepted my son, but also supported my family. When our second son, Vincent, was diagnosed with ASD, SARRC began working with our family right away to prepare us for the next step into the toddler classroom. The earlier intervention with my second son made an enormous amount of difference in socialization skills. Our family had one more child, and we started him with SARRC as a possible candidate for an infant study. Roman is now a happy child in SARRC’s toddler class. While he, too, is on the spectrum, we couldn’t be happier with his progress! Because of SARRC, all three of my boys are now on a clearer path to a future where we know that SARRC will be there every step of the way.

Elizabeth Lund

Action for Autism leads family to SARRC

I first learned about SARRC through the annual Action for Autism Telethon on KTAR, so when my son, Junior, was diagnosed with ASD just prior to his second birthday, I immediately called SARRC.

When he enrolled in SARRC’s Community School, he had no words, did not point, did not regularly respond to his name, and he had a habit of hitting his head on the ground in frustration. I’m elated to report that in the seven months since he started, he has made great strides — his self-injurious behavior is a thing of the past and he is beginning to express himself through language. I trust I have made the best choice for Junior by enrolling him in the Community School and I am excited to see what the future brings!

Amy D. Sells

A year of progress thanks to SARRC

Our son, Colin, was diagnosed with autism at age 3. The diagnosis was not a shock for our family, but it was still scary. Colin was the same sweet, funny, bright and happy child we knew before the diagnosis. But now we faced uncertainty. We knew very little about autism — how to proceed or what it meant for Colin’s future.

We took our first step and contacted SARRC. When SARRC opened an additional JumpStart® class, we were excited to be able to join the program, and we immediately took to SARRC’s research-based approach. We began implementing Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) and Colin responded extremely well. JumpStart helped us understand the world from Colin’s perspective a little bit better.

One year later, Colin has progressed immensely. He verbally requests things he wants. He interacts with peers at preschool. He sings. He forces his parents to act out Disney movies with him. He follows a kiss with the words, “I love you.” We are excited to take the next step with the intensive parent training program and build our skills and knowledge of PRT at SARRC.

Claire and Brian Kelley
Twenty years ago, upon receiving an autism diagnosis for their child, many parents were told the next step was to prepare for institutionalization. Options for families were limited and our community was largely unaware of what autism was, not to mention how we could help. SARRC knew that with a supportive community, there were more options for children with autism and their families.

Initially, SARRC focused on research and on providing training and resources for families and service providers. Our next steps included early intervention programs, then programs for school-age kids, and finally adolescent and adult programs. Today, an autism diagnosis is the first step toward accessing a lifetime of services that are helping individuals with autism thrive in an inclusive, supportive community.

Our families, and eventually adults with autism, take many courageous steps on a journey that is often described as a marathon, not a sprint. Receiving a diagnosis is important because it is often the key to accessing critical services, but identifying programs that are the right fit for the child and family is an important next step. Like families unaffected by autism, so is finding the right kindergarten, but for our families, finding the right kindergarten classroom with an accommodating teacher in a supportive school district can be one of the most challenging steps to take.

The journey continues as parents are encouraged to have their child participate fully in the community, from going out to restaurants, to attending sporting and cultural events, to signing up for little league, arts classes or swim lessons. And as children with autism transition to becoming adults with autism, there are essential steps to take to gain employment, foster meaningful relationships, and learn to live as independently as possible.

This year, SARRC turns 18 and continues its own transition to adulthood as we strategically consider how best to support individuals with autism and their families successfully take steps forward. We’re challenging ourselves to think critically about everything we do, expand those programs that are driving the most positive outcomes, and pivot on others to ensure we are pointed in the direction of having the largest impact on our community.

For instance, our research team has increased their focus on lowering the age of diagnosis by building a network of pediatricians who regularly screen patients for autism. We have also invested considerably in helping adults with autism obtain competitive employment, from the teens in our CommunityWorks® programs, to the new internships we have created in our Beneficial Beans Café® and extraordinary on-site garden, to the 19 new employment partners we added to our portfolio last year. And we also recently launched a new Residential Transition Academy to teach adults with autism how to live independently in the community in partnership with First Place, founded by our tireless co-founder, Denise Resnik.

SARRC’s commitment to excellence and outcome-driven focus for each individual we serve makes it difficult to meet the needs of the autism community on our own. Rather, we will further expand our research partnerships by leveraging one of SARRC’s most precious assets: our growing database of children, adolescents, adults and families. We will empower schools, after-school programs and even other autism service providers by providing training in SARRC’s best-practice programs and interventions. We will build a network of businesses and corporations that will commit to including, employing and supporting individuals with autism. The most impactful next steps, after all, will be the ones our families, individuals with autism, SARRC and our community take together.
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Giving back to the communities we serve

We don’t simply support our communities, we connect with them. We make it our mission to understand the needs, issues and challenges facing Arizonans. By partnering with Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, we are making a difference to ensure that children with autism and their families get the support they deserve.

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Hats Off to SARRC Board Members

SARRC Welcomes Two New Board Members

Tom Harris, the executive vice president and chief financial officer of the Arizona Diamondbacks, and Nicole Goodwin, a shareholder and litigator with Greenberg Traurig LLP, were recently elected to the SARRC Board of Directors. Harris is an award-winning financial officer who has worked with the Major League Baseball team for more than 20 years and is dedicated to serving organizations that support children and adults with developmental disabilities. Harris will chair SARRC’s Development Committee.

At Greenberg Traurig, Goodwin’s practice areas focus on business, real estate, health care and financial services litigation. She has supported and worked with SARRC as a member of the organization’s Development Committee and now as chairwoman of the Governance Committee. She and her husband, Dan, have also co-chaired two of SARRC’s annual Community Breakfasts. The Goodwins have two sons, one of whom is on the autism spectrum.

Patty Dion Wins Arizona Cardinals Community Quarterback Award

Patty Dion was recognized by the Arizona Cardinals with the Community Quarterback Award, a program that honors individuals who exemplify leadership, dedication and commitment to improving the communities in which they live through volunteerism. Dion was one of three finalists selected by a panel of community leaders because of her work with SARRC on ThinkAsperger’s®, earning SARRC $5,000.

Howard Sobelman named Lawyer of the Year

Howard Sobelman, SARRC Board Chair, was selected as the 2015 Phoenix “Lawyer of the Year” for Intellectual Property Law, Litigation by The Best Lawyers in America®. Only a single lawyer in each practice area and designated metropolitan region is honored and those recognized are selected based on particularly high voting averages received during the peer-review assessments conducted with thousands of lawyers each year. Congrats, Howard!
SARRC MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.
About SARRC

The Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to autism research, education and outreach for individuals with autism and their families. Established in 1997, SARRC provides programs that address the needs of individuals of all ages with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Following a family-centered approach, an integral part of what we do is assist families on their journey once a child has been diagnosed with ASD. From early intervention through adulthood, SARRC supports and empowers families to be the best educators and decision-makers for their children. We also recognize that one size does not fit all. Using evidence-based practices, our programs and services impact not only individuals with ASD, but also those who affect their lives: parents, grandparents, siblings, physicians, psychologists, behavior analysts, educators, therapists and habilitators. Our professional staff is armed with valuable information and resources to tailor programs and consultations accordingly.

To advance research, SARRC initiates and collaborates in large-scale studies to find answers to pressing questions faced by individuals with ASD and their families. SARRC’s cutting-edge research is focused on improving screening and diagnosis for autism, improving treatments for autism including behavioral and pharmaceutical treatments, and educating professionals in order to increase their capacity to serve the autism community.

From the enrollment of typically developing toddlers in our Community School and peer mentors in our pre-vocational Autism CommunityWorks® program, to inclusive internship opportunities and life-skills training, we are helping the community at-large better understand and value individuals with autism and include them in the fabric of society. This approach allows us to significantly advance SARRC’s goals of creating acceptance and long-term opportunities that enhance quality of life.

SARRC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

INTERVENTIONS
- JumpStart®
- Community School
- Comprehensive Behavioral program
- Home-Based Consultation
- Specialized habilitation
- Remote parent training

VOCATIONAL & LIFE SKILLS
- Autism CommunityWorks®
- Employment Services Program
- Residential Transition Academy
- Social Enterprise: Beneficial Beans Cafés and GardenWorks®
- Women’s Empowerment Series

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND OUTREACH
- Education and training programs
- ThinkAsperger’s*
- FRIEND® program
- School consultation
- Physician Outreach Program
- Hispanic Community Outreach
- Grandparents Support Group

RESEARCH
- Screening & Analysis
- Treatment Studies
- Professional Education
Receiving the diagnosis of “autism” for your child can be an overwhelming and bewildering experience especially if it comes later in your child’s life. While you may be wondering what to do first, it is important that you begin addressing the social issues with your child as soon as possible. The earlier intervention is started, the better the outcome.

Here are some steps to get you and your family started on the road to success. Please contact SARRC at 602-340-8717 for more information:

**1. Obtain a Formal Diagnosis**

Secure a medical report written by the psychologist, psychiatrist or developmental pediatrician who diagnosed your child. Many of the agencies you will be working with will request a copy of this report. Call SARRC and ask about our Diagnostic Services.

**2. Enroll in JumpStart®**

JumpStart® is a parent empowerment and education program, conducted in both English and Spanish, for families of children diagnosed or at risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children with ASD receive ABA-based intervention from highly trained SARRC clinicians. Parents receive hands-on, individualized training in Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) to teach children to communicate effectively.

**3. Identify Funding Sources**

Contact your health insurance provider to determine if you have coverage for applied behavior analysis (ABA) services. The Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) can provide services to help manage your child’s care. Social Security Supplemental Income may also be an option.

**4. Develop a Team of Specialists and Service Providers**

Put in place a coordinated team of professionals, including a behavior analyst, who are knowledgeable about treatments for children with autism. Do not be afraid to ask about their qualifications and experience.

**5. Create a Record-Keeping System**

Take the time to organize your child’s developmental history and medical and educational records.

**6. Take Time for Yourself**

Taking care of your health is crucial as you are your child’s best advocate! While it is important to schedule fun activities with your child, it will also be necessary to take time for yourself to relax. Maintaining a positive outlook will be important as you and your family work with professionals to navigate the autism journey. Reach out to support groups so you do not feel alone.

**7. Participate in Your Child’s Education**

Federal law sets educational standards for children with special needs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) established minimum educational guidelines for students with special needs. To help you better understand the IDEA law, several organizations conduct regular trainings that are free of charge.

**8. Educate Yourself**

While conducting online research, be cautious of claims of cures and interventions that are only using testimonials as proof of efficacy. Visit autismcenter.org for evidence-based resources and additional trainings.

**9. Begin Evidence-Based Early Intervention**

With a diagnosis of autism, time is of the essence and the sooner interventions begin, the greater the likelihood for success. Ensure ABA is a central component of your child’s program.
In 2014, SARRC provided more than 1,100 individualized services and research for children, teens and adults with autism; served nearly 4,200 parents, family members, typical peers and community members; and trained more than 2,000 educational and medical professionals.

**THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL,** which opened in 2005 with six children and one preschool classroom, served 67 children in toddler, preschool 1, preschool 2 and pre-K classrooms.

**SARRC’s Educational Consulting Program and FRIEND® school program** supported more than 250 children with ASD in 21 schools (13 school districts) throughout the state, impacting more than 1,000 typical students and 521 school professionals.

The Intensive Parent Training Program supported 19 families throughout North America by providing more than 500 hours of intensive therapy to 19 children with ASD and 34 family members, caregivers and professionals living out-of-state, in rural communities or on military bases.

**SARRC’s Volunteer Program** recruited more than 1,400 individuals who provided 6,800 hours of volunteer support.

**SARRC Education and Training** presentations educated more than 4,000 professionals, individuals, family members and community members.

**Hello - Hola!**

JumpStart® provided early intervention services to 72 children and 123 family members in both English and Spanish. Seven professionals attended as observers.

**Beneficial Beans Café** opened a second location in Mesa served 21,000 customers, employed four adults and trained six adults with ASD at both locations (including Scottsdale Civic Center Library).

**The Vocational and Life Skills Academy** served 519 teens and adults with ASDs and 175 typical peers across 25 programs. Employment Services supported 40 individuals, as well as placed and maintained 19 clients at 12 job sites.

**SARRC’s Research Department** performed 688 assessments and ran 11 research studies involving 174 participants.

**The Physician Outreach Program** distributed 184 autism and Asperger’s screening kits to pediatricians and pediatric residents in Arizona.

**Home-based services** were provided to 63 children, 109 family members and 13 professionals through 18,322 clinical hours.
SARRC Named to “Best Places to Work”

SARRC was recognized by the Phoenix Business Journal in its “Best Places To Work” competition. The Phoenix Business Journal works with a national research firm to survey, audit and rank each company following completion of an online employee survey. The survey measures team effectiveness, trust in senior leaders, feeling valued, manager effectiveness, compensation, benefits and more. The data is then computed and companies are given “engagement scores” that are used to rank finalists in each of the five size categories. SARRC is in the small business category (50-99 employees), and while hundreds of companies submitted surveys as part of the competition, only the top 25 are selected for an award.

ThinkAsperger’s® Webinar Attracts International Participants

More than 850 people participated last fall in SARRC’s ThinkAsperger’s® live webinar for educators, “Identifying Autism Spectrum Disorder in School Age Children: Keeping Asperger’s from Slipping Through the Cracks.” Sixty percent of the attendees were from the northeast, which extended our reach beyond...
Arizona. There were also international viewers from Kuwait and Trinidad. A second webinar is scheduled for spring of 2015.

**SARRC Attracts Highly Educated and Trained Staff**

SARRC takes pride in providing high-quality, evidence-based services that produce outcomes that are meaningful for the clients we serve. Recruiting and retaining highly educated and trained staff is key to making this level of service delivery possible. SARRC is a learning environment and as such encourages employees to continue their education while working at SARRC. Additionally, SARRC continues to attract highly credentialed staff that increases the breadth and depth of our expertise.

SARRC currently employs seven PhDs, who primarily support research and clinical programs. SARRC also employs 18 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), which is 13 percent of the total BCBAs living in Arizona, almost all of whom were educated and trained while working at SARRC. Several more SARRC staff members are either enrolled in a BCBA course sequence and earning supervision hours while working at SARRC or are eligible to sit for the exam later this year.

**City of Scottsdale, Mayor Honor Beneficial Beans® Café**

This year, the 28th annual Scottsdale Mayor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities honored SARRC for establishing the Beneficial Beans Café at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library. The mayor’s awards program honors efforts to advance employment for people with disabilities.

**SARRC Wins 2014 Community Partner Award**

Keep Phoenix Beautiful, a nonprofit that involves and educates Phoenix residents about recycling management and beautification practices, awarded SARRC with its 2014 Community Partner Award. This is especially gratifying because, since 2009, the award has only been given to a corporate partner. For the first time, two awards were given, one to a corporate partner and one to a community partner, making SARRC the inaugural community partner! We received the award for providing a welcoming, organized site with fun and rewarding activities.

**Sprouts Receives Philanthropy Leadership Award**

Sprouts Farmers Market has been chosen for the Philanthropy Leadership Award for Outstanding Corporation/Foundation from the Association for Fundraising Professionals (AFP). SARRC nominated Sprouts for all the support they have given SARRC and the Walk for so many years. The awards dinner was held in November at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. Doug Sanders (pictured at right), SARRC board member, was honored at the awards dinner.
In Brief

Fitzgerald Joins Sutton Stroke’s Golf Tourney

The 10th Annual Sutton’s Strokes for Little Folks Golf Tournament benefitting SARRC was held at the Mesa Country Club in March and boasted some professional sports star power. Larry Fitzgerald, wide receiver for the Arizona Cardinals, and veteran professional golfer, Pam Wright, participated in the charity tournament. They joined dozens of golfers and SARRC staff members on the links for an afternoon of golf and a 19th Hole party with a performance from award-winning singer and songwriter, Ryan McIntyre. A huge thank you to the Event Chair Daron Sutton, title sponsor Perfect Game, and all the golfers and supporters of the 2015 tournament.

Operation Santa Claus Nets Donations for SARRC

Thanks to the generosity of donors across Arizona, Sanderson Ford, Sanderson Lincoln, ABC 15 and UPS Stores, Operation Santa Claus 2014 was a huge success for the 13th year in a row. The effort raised a total of $843,000, which included toys, clothes, food and cash donations. This major holiday fundraising campaign benefits SARRC and three other local charities. Funding and donations provided to SARRC were in part redistributed during the holiday season to 225 families, which included 950 children. The remaining funds support SARRC’s programs and services for individuals with autism and their families.

Pearson Treats SARRC Families to Great Pumpkin Festival

Last fall, Pearson & Company supported SARRC’s Community School preschoolers, along with hundreds of other children with special needs, at the Desert Botanical Garden’s Great Pumpkin Festival. More than a dozen SARRC students and their parents or caregivers experienced an old-fashioned hayride, crafts, carnival games, face painting, a petting zoo and a hay bale maze. Each child selected a pumpkin at the pumpkin patch and decorated it alongside their friends. Special thanks to the Pearson family and Pearson & Company for making the fun-filled day possible.

Univision Arizona partners with SARRC on Hispanic Outreach

SARRC is continuing its efforts to expand outreach and programs for the Hispanic community every year. While the prevalence of autism for children in Arizona is 1 in 64, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), research shows that Hispanic children are less likely to get diagnosed with autism than other children. Even when a Hispanic child is properly diagnosed with autism, it is likely years later than their non-Hispanic counterparts.

This year, Univision Arizona is taking the next step by supporting SARRC through television and radio coverage throughout the year. With this
partnership, SARRC’s bilingual staff will have the opportunity to share information about autism and services available for Spanish-speaking families, promote events and much more. SARRC thanks Univision Arizona for the opportunity to partner and raise awareness about autism.

**Delta Dental Supports Oral Health Outreach, Education**

Thanks to a generous grant from Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation, SARRC has been busy promoting dental care in an effort to expand dental care for individuals with autism. Over the past year, trainings were offered across Arizona focused on understanding autism and how to apply evidence-based autism interventions to support success in effective dental care at home and in the dental office. Oral Healthcare & Autism Dental Information Guides and training videos can be downloaded for free at autismcenter.org. The information guides are available in English and Spanish and are a helpful resource for families, autism service providers and dental professionals. The resource guides were developed with input from a commissioned dental committee, which was made up of parents, SARRC staff and representatives from Affiliated Pediatrics, A.T. Still University, Arizona Dental Foundation, Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation, First Things First-DES Division-Child Health and Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

**SARRC Featured on Night of Too Many Stars**

SARRC’s programs were featured on a national stage in March as a grantee spotlight during Comedy Central’s biennial television production of “Night of Too Many Stars,” hosted by Jon Stewart. The nationally syndicated show, presented as a night when America comes together for autism, is organized by New York Collaborates for Autism (NYCA). SARRC’s segment featured the Rivera family and told the story of how SARRC and the Community School supported both of their children with autism. Night of Too Many Stars benefits a variety of autism programs across the country and SARRC has been honored to receive two grants from NYCA.
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Special THANKS

SARRC appreciates all the support from generous organizations throughout 2014, including:

Arizona Cardinals Charities
Arizona Community Foundation - Rachel Piekarski Fund
Arizona Community Foundation - Wayne Foundation
Arizona Department of Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation
Autism Speaks
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
Cox Charities
Arizona Coyotes Foundation
Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation
Dee and Charles Wyly Foundation
Els for Autism Foundation
Executive Council Charities
Ford Motor Company
Fry’s Food & Drug Stores
Gila River Indian Community Interest Ministries
Kemper & Ethel Marley Foundation
May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
MCD Foundation
MGC Pure Chemicals America, Inc.
Morgan Family Foundation
Muebleria Del Sol Furniture
New York Collaborates for Autism
Office Depot Foundation
Phoenix Knife House
Phoenix Suns Charities
Sprouts Neighborhood Grants
Studio Movie Grill
Subway Kids & Sports of Arizona
SynapDx Corp
Teaumen & Grace Fuito Foundation
Terlato Wines International
The Langerman Foundation
The Pakis Family Foundation
USAA Foundation
Valley of the Sun United Way
VanTrust Real Estate
Walmart - Individual Store Grants
Tech Camp Partnership Provides Inclusive College Experience

In the summer of 2014, SARRC completed the second annual summer college camp in partnership with the University of Advancing Technology (UAT) in Tempe, Ariz. SARRC staff and camp participants completed the typical admissions process; moved into UAT’s dorms; attended classes; studied in teams and completed a comprehensive group project in either video games or digital video. They also took part in student life activities, including video and board game tournaments and college cooking 101. The week-long camp ended with a commencement ceremony that was attended by staff and family members. The ceremony provided an opportunity for campers to share their individual and group work with family.

Lunch on the Lawn with Arizona Legislators

To recognize the tireless efforts of our state leaders, each year SARRC hosts a “Lunch on the Lawn” at the Arizona State Capitol. SARRC board members, staff and adult clients from the Residential Transition Academy were on hand to meet legislators, have lunch together and provide information about SARRC’s programs. The purpose of the event is to express gratitude to legislators for keeping families impacted by autism at the forefront of their minds as they lead the state, and for the investments and public policy changes in the past 10 years that allow SARRC to offer innovative programs and provide high-quality autism services. A huge thank you to Outback Steakhouse for donating the delicious lunch, Matt Cottle for bringing delicious pastries from his company, the Stuttering King Bakery, and John Dalen who served his Essential Energy Bars at the event.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Brad Herron, Residential Transition Academy Instructor

What part of your work inspires you the most?

Since 2009, I have been fortunate to work in our teen and adult programming at SARRC, starting with CommunityWorks®. It has been rewarding to see our teens with ASD develop skills and thrive in CommunityWorks. Many of our teens start out feeling different from their peers, broken, rejected and have been bullied for years in school. They soon begin to develop friendships, grow socially and gain self-esteem. I’m inspired by the hard work they invest every day to learn the skills they need to live an independent and fulfilled life. I’m also inspired by our numerous community partners who support our teens and adults with ASD, and the parents who have renewed hope for the future when they see their teen or young adult children develop confidence and self-determination.

What is your next step with SARRC?

My next step is working with young adults with ASD at the First Place Residential Transition Academy, operated by SARRC. Over the last five years I have gained experience and purpose, and I’m eager to work with an outstanding team to provide the outcome-driven services required for young adults with autism to excel. Adults with ASD will have an opportunity to live on site while learning the life, social and employment skills needed to maximize their ability to live independently. I’m passionate about this program and look forward to witnessing firsthand the exciting next steps for the participants in the program.

Caroline Ellis, Arcadia Farms Café

Caroline Ellis, owner of Arcadia Farms Café located in Old Town Scottsdale, has been a loyal supporter of SARRC for more than a decade. Arcadia Farms has provided delicious meals for numerous SARRC events and fundraisers, all pro bono. Ellis has also been an advocate of SARRC’s Grandparents Support Group and has catered their luncheon meeting every year. Carolyn’s husband, Dr. Howard Sullivan, was instrumental in SARRC’s early years, creating the grandparents manual. SARRC is grateful to have Ellis and Arcadia Farms as a friend and supporter for so many years.

What is your next step with SARRC?

My next step, and mission moving forward, is to enlighten families and friends I meet every day about SARRC’s services and programs for families impacted by autism. I am always trying to stay updated and informed of recent developments in the autism community so I can raise awareness. I am a long-time supporter of SARRC’s work and have seen amazing, positive outcomes for families receiving services and support from SARRC.
Sprouts Farmers Market

Since 2009, Sprouts Farmers Market has been SARRC’s largest corporate supporter, raising nearly $7 million with more than $2.5 million directly benefiting SARRC through the company’s participation in the Walk Now for Autism Speaks, the Valley’s largest autism awareness event benefiting Autism Speaks and SARRC, plus direct donations.

The Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks is part of Autism Speaks’ grassroots walk program comprised of more than 90 walks throughout North America. The Arizona walk is unique to the model because it’s one of only two walks held in conjunction with a local nonprofit organization; through SARRC’s partnership with the walk, half of the dollars raised each year remain local, providing financial support to SARRC. In addition to supporting the Arizona walk, Sprouts launched the “Sprouts Neighborhood Grants” program in 2013, designed to direct in-store fundraising (customer point-of-sale campaign) to local autism nonprofits in the communities where the dollars are raised. Since its creation, the program has raised $624,000 and supported 118 programs serving the autism population in eight states where Sprouts is located.

Beyond direct fundraising support through the walk, Sprouts has embraced the autism cause, along with feeding the hungry, as the top priorities for the company’s charitable giving. More than a funder, Sprouts is also an employment partner – an organization that is committed to SARRC’s mission and its profound ability to make a difference for families affected by autism in Arizona and beyond.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona & The Pakis Family Foundation

SARRC was awarded two grants for a new program to improve early detection and intervention for infants at high risk of autism. Thanks to significant contributions from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona and the Pakis Family Foundation, SARRC will recruit families to participate in the Milestones program. Through this program, SARRC will provide education and training to families that will help identify and achieve important milestones in their children.

Since 2009, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona has also supported SARRC through PowerWorks® – an Autism CommunityWorks® program where teens learn about fitness and nutrition in community recreational locations. With this funding, it further demonstrates the company’s commitment to those touched by autism. SARRC is deeply appreciative of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona and its efforts to equip families with knowledge and resources.

A supporting organization of the Arizona Community Foundation since 1996, the Pakis Family Foundation has long supported organizations and programs focused on women and children’s issues, job creation and education. A previous funder of SARRC’s JumpStart® program, SARRC is honored to have Milestones awarded by the Pakis Family Foundation to develop curriculum and materials, recruit family participants and prepare for the launch the program.
There are many ways to leave a legacy in your community. The SARRC Legacy Circle was created to honor those special individuals who have committed themselves to the guardianship of SARRC programs and services provided to the autism community. Through gifts to the endowment fund and/or including SARRC in long-range financial or estate plans, Legacy Circle members are ensuring SARRC services will continue beyond their lifetimes.

“Tired very little about autism until a family member was diagnosed on the spectrum at age 4. I observed his parents turning over every stone to help him. And the path is not easy,” says Meighan Harahan, SARRC board member and treasurer and chair of the Planned Giving Advisory Council.

“Tired moved to Arizona I was fortunate to meet Jeri Kendle, SARRC’s former President and CEO. I was very interested in getting involved and I started volunteering for the annual Operation Santa Claus campaign. It was such a rewarding experience that I continued to volunteer.” Harahan adds, “My goal was to help in some way. My experience with SARRC has been varied – from volunteer, to committee member, to now board member and officer. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the mission and each employee. They are truly making a difference and I want to see the work continue after I am gone. Remembering SARRC in my will is one way to ensure that my support continues beyond my lifetime.”

Remembering SARRC in my will is one way to ensure that my support continues beyond my lifetime.

SARRC launches Legacy Circle for planned giving

SARRC Legacy Circle Founding Members

Neil & Lynn Balter
Timothy & Diane Bolden
Dan & Paula Coleman
Nicole M. Goodwin
Meighan Harahan
Tom & Kathleen Harris
Gary Jaburg
Brent & Jeri Kendle
Tim & Sarah Newquist

Daniel Openden
Socrates & Stephanie Papadopoulos
Craig O. Pearson
Rob & Denise Resnik
Family Trust
Howard & Wendi Sobelman
Anonymous (2)

SARRC Legacy Circle Member Benefits

SARRC Legacy Circle Members receive special benefits including:

• Invitation to our special annual event created to honor SARRC Legacy Circle members.
• Recognition as a member of the SARRC Legacy Circle on the SARRC Donor Wall and in SARRC’s Outreach magazine.

SARRC
Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center

EXPLOR YOUR OPTIONS

Interested in contributing to a bright future for SARRC? Become a Legacy Circle Member. A charitable bequest in your will or trust is one of many ways to help SARRC ensure a future for individuals with autism. To learn about all the ways to help, contact SARRC’s planned giving manager at 602-606-9876.
In December 2014, the Stephen Beck Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 (ABLE Act) won final congressional approval and was signed into law by President Obama. The enactment of the ABLE Act culminated an eight-year campaign to gain approval for tax-free savings accounts to help individuals and families finance disability needs.

The ABLE Act is built on the foundation of the current 529 education savings plans that help families save for college. In the case of ABLE, families now have a tax-deferred savings vehicle to save for the care of people with disabilities. The National Disability Institute estimates there are 58 million individuals with disabilities in the U.S.

1. Briefly explain the ABLE Act and why it is so important?

The ABLE Act allows people with disabilities and their families to set up a special savings account for disability-related expenses. Earnings on an ABLE account would not be taxed, and account funds would generally not be considered for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, Medicaid and other federal means-tested benefits.

2. How does this differ from current law?

Current law makes savings for disability-related expenses difficult. Individuals and families can face the loss of federal benefits if savings exceed certain limits.

3. How soon will people be able to set up ABLE accounts?

As early as 2015. Before accounts can be set up, ABLE programs will have to be established in states.

4. Who is eligible for an ABLE account?

An eligible individual is someone who becomes disabled before age 26 and (1) receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or SSI; or (2) files a disability certification under rules that the IRS will write.

5. What are the disability expenses covered under ABLE?

Expenses made for the benefit of a disabled individual for education; housing; transportation; employment training and support; assistive technology and personal support services; health, prevention and wellness; financial management and administrative services; legal fees; expenses for oversight and monitoring; funeral and burial expenses; and any other expenses approved under regulations.

6. Does having an ABLE account affect Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits?

Only if the ABLE account exceeds $100,000. SSI benefits would be suspended but not terminated.

7. Does it impact Medicaid eligibility?

No.

8. Would ABLE regulations differ in each state?

Although federal law applies uniformly to all states, individual states may regulate ABLE accounts differently. Under current law, states provide different tax benefits for college savings accounts, which are similar to ABLE accounts.

9. Are there age requirements for an individual to open an ABLE account?

No, except that an eligible individual is someone who becomes disabled before age 26.

10. Where can people go to learn more?

Read more about the legislation at autismspeaks.org/site-wide/able.
10 cosas que debe saber sobre la Ley ABLE

POR STUART SPIELMAN,
ASESOR PRINCIPAL DE POLÍTICAS DE AUTISM SPEAKS

En diciembre, 2014 el Acto Logro de una Mejor Experiencia de Vida de 2014 Stephen Beck Jr. (ABLE por sus siglas en Inglés) obtuvo aprobación final del Congreso y fue convertido en ley por el presidente Obama. Esto culminó una campaña de ocho años para obtener la aprobación de cuentas de ahorro libres de impuestos para ayudar a individuos y familias a financiar las necesidades de personas con discapacidades.

ABLE está basado en los planes de ahorro educativos actuales que ayudan a familias a ahorrar para la universidad. En el caso de ABLE, las familias tienen un vehículo de ahorro con impuestos diferidos para la atención de personas con discapacidades. El Instituto Nacional de Discapacidades estima que hay 58 millones de personas con discapacidades en EE.UU.

1. Explique la Ley ABLE y por qué es importante?
ABLE permite que personas con discapacidades y sus familias establezcan una cuenta de ahorro para gastos relacionados con la discapacidad. Las ganancias no pagarían impuestos y los fondos de la cuenta generalmente no serían considerados para el programa de Seguro de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI), Medicaid y otros beneficios federales.

2. ¿En qué se diferencia de la ley actual?
La ley actual hace difícil el ahorro para gastos relacionados con la discapacidad ya que se arriesga perder beneficios federales si los ahorros superan ciertos límites.

3. ¿Cuándo se podrán configurar cuentas ABLE?
En el 2015. Los programas ABLE tendrán que ser establecidos primero en los estados.

4. ¿Quién es elegible?
Alguien con discapacidades antes de los 26 años y (1) recibe SSDI o SSI; o (2) presenta una certificación de discapacidad bajo reglas del IRS.

5. ¿Cuáles son los gastos cubiertos?
Educación; vivienda; transporte; capacitación y apoyo laboral; servicios tecnológicos y apoyo personal; salud, prevención y bienestar; manejo y servicios administrativos; gastos legales; supervisión y vigilancia; gastos funerarios y entierro; y cualquier otro gasto aprobado en beneficio de una persona con discapacidades.

6. ¿Tener una cuenta ABLE afecta los beneficios de Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI)?
Sólo si la cuenta ABLE excede $100,000. SSI se suspendería pero no sería terminado.

7. ¿Impacta la elegibilidad para Medicaid?
No.

8. ¿Los reglamentos serán diferentes en cada estado?
Aunque la ley federal aplica de manera uniforme, cada estado puede regular las cuentas ABLE de una manera diferente. Bajo la ley actual, los estados proporcionan diferentes beneficios para las cuentas universitarias, que son similares a las cuentas ABLE.

9. ¿Hay requisitos de edad?
No, excepto que la persona elegible es alguien con discapacidades antes de los 26 años.

10. ¿Dónde se puede ir para aprender más?
autismspeaks.org/site-wide/able

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Jaburg Wilk is proud to be a continuing sponsor of SARRC and its 17th Annual Community Breakfast.
Original SARRC Research Published

SARRC’s research team reached an important milestone in 2014 – the publication of original research studies in top-tier, peer-reviewed journals. Led by Nicole Matthews, Ph.D. (SARRC’s post-doctoral researcher), our research team published a study examining cognitive and adaptive functioning among children and adolescents with ASD in the Journal for Autism and Developmental Disorders (JADD). A second original research article examining adaptive functioning in ASD during the transition to adulthood was recently accepted for publication in JADD, and should be published by the end of 2015. JADD is well respected among autism researchers and accepts fewer than 20 percent of manuscripts submitted for publication, all of which are reviewed by multiple experts prior to acceptance.

An article describing the development and validation of the Detecting Asperger’s Very Early (DAVE) Screening Questionnaire was accepted to and will be published in the Journal of Applied School Psychology in 2015. Christopher Smith, Ph.D., SARRC’s Vice President and Research Director, led the research team in the development and validation of the measure, and the subsequent submission of the manuscript to the Journal of Applied School Psychology, which is the official journal of the American Academy of School Psychology. This publication will increase familiarity with, and use of, the DAVE questionnaire as a broad-scale screener among school psychologists and other professionals.

These publications are a testament to the caliber of research conducted at SARRC. Our research team continues to engage in a number of other original research projects that will result in a growing body of original, published research findings, which will expand SARRC’s national and international footprint.

SARRC Completes Clinical Trial of Diagnosis App

The Naturalistic Observation Diagnosis Assessment (NODA) is a smart-phone based system that connects parents to diagnostic experts. Parents download the app from iTunes and set up a secure account. The app prompts them to record short videos of their child in the home and the app uploads the videos to a web-based system. Clinicians at SARRC then view the videos, tag them with behaviors relevant to a diagnosis of autism, and use these tags to complete a diagnostic checklist for autism.

In December 2014, SARRC completed an National Institute of Mental Health-funded clinical trial examining whether the NODA system can effectively identify autism in 18-month-old to 6-year-old children. The study demonstrated that NODA agreed with the standard, in-person assessment for ASD in 88.2 percent of the cases. A manuscript describing the promising findings has been submitted for publication to a top-tier medical journal. NODA was commercially released in Arizona in February 2015 by developer Behavior Imaging Solutions, a medical technology company. Behavior Imaging introduced NODA in collaboration with research and development partners Georgia Tech and SARRC, and Barrow Neurological Institute at Phoenix Children’s Hospital (PCH). BNI at PCH is collaborating to inform and educate pediatric providers statewide about NODA, so providers may offer concerned families this new diagnostic option.
Ready to WORK

With the help of SARRC’s Employment Services Program, young adults take the next step toward successful employment

BY GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE DREISESZUN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS
Chris Louttit never leaves a job unfinished. From the time he leaves his home at 5 a.m. until the workday ends around 3 p.m., Chris is on the job, making sure floors are spotless, trash is emptied, elevators are clean and the downtown Phoenix building he’s responsible for looks its very best.

For the last several months, the 28-year-old Louttit has been working for Pro-Serv, a commercial cleaning service based in Phoenix. When he was diagnosed with autism as a young child, the thought that he may one day be employed, earning his own wage, was something his mom Melody Ballard wasn’t sure would be possible. Decades later, though, her son is not only working, he’s saving for a place of his own.

“For me, I just like to get a job taken care of. It’s important for me to keep things organized,” says Louttit. “And I’m really glad I’m doing so well at the job.”

The Perfect Match

Louttit is one of 117 adult individuals with autism who have been placed in employment through SARRC’s Employment Services Program. Designed to perform much like a typical employment agency, SARRC’s program works to match local businesses in need of long-term assistance with adults with autism who are ready to work. In the last year, SARRC has been able to find placements for 19 individuals, and as with Louttit’s experience, the results have been a win-win.

“This has been an incredibly positive experience for us,” says Rich Lyons, president of Pro-Serv, who employed Louttit after learning about SARRC’s Employment Services Program at SARRC’s Annual Community Breakfast. “You feel positive about giving someone an opportunity, and you get a great, dedicated member for your team. SARRC really works to find a person who is the right fit for your need.”

Finding the right fit, according to Jennifer Thorson, SARRC Employment Services manager, is the key ingredient for success—for both employer and employee.

“We look for a lot of things in an employer wanting to work with our job candidates, but mostly we want an employer that is looking for a qualified candidate who can be hired to do a real job and be a true member of their team,” Thorson says. “Every employer is different and has their own particular needs and interests, just as every job candidate is different and brings their own set of skills and abilities. We spend a lot of time on the placement to make sure we find a good match for both (employer and employee).”

In Pro-Serv’s case, Louttit was an ideal fit.

“I am really impressed with his dedication,” says Jose Puri, Louttit’s direct supervisor. “When he comes in, he is ready to work, and he immediately took pride in his job. Sometimes he rides a bike to work, and he is proud of it, because he earned it and paid for it himself. I think the consistency and routine in his life seems to really make him feel proud.”

Louttit’s mom agrees.

“Chris surprises me all the time,” Ballard says. “My worry was always ‘what is he going to do when he
gets out of high school? But now I see him, and he is accomplishing so much.”

**More Than Job Skills**

Beyond the job, Louttit has also learned many other life skills through his Pro-Serv experience. He enjoys having co-workers, and looks forward to socializing with them. He’s also learned to navigate the Valley’s public transit system, connecting to bus systems often for his commute to work. He’s been able to use these skills to meet up with friends at SARRC for socialization outside of work as well.

“I really like to be able to go meet with people. I look forward to that, and it’s something I can do,” says Louttit, who has also participated in SARRC’s Men’s Empowerment Group, TheatreWorks® and other programs.

Employers also gain important training through the program, learning how to develop a supportive environment for every client placed. This often means autism awareness training that can help fellow employees better understand certain behaviors. And the learning goes both ways.

When 25-year-old Andrew Ober-Reynolds first began as an employee with a Sprouts Farmers Market store in Phoenix in October 2014, he was put in charge of bringing in the carts from the parking lot. “At first, he would go and get them one at a time. You can imagine, this took a while,” says Andrew’s Sprouts Supervisor and Store Manager Mike McMaster. “But he just didn’t understand. And when we explained, he started to get the idea. Andrew has really changed and grown through this job.”

Tracking progress is another important part of SARRC’s placement services. Andrew meets weekly with SARRC staff regarding his performance on the job. His mom, Sharman Ober-Reynolds, credits these regular check-ins, coupled with the support he’s gotten along the way, with her son’s growth and commitment to his job.

“Andrew feels like he is part of that larger community now. He talks about Sprouts as a company he is a part of, that he’s proud to be a part of,” she says. “He’s not just sitting at home and
watching the world pass him by. He’s involved in it. And for us as parents, we are so proud to see him keep trying.”

A student at a nearby community college, Andrew is learning to balance his work life with his studies. He was recently offered another day to add to his work shift, and his mom says he hopes to add it when classes are done for the summer.

**Finding a Place**

Helping these adults find their place in the community is at the core of SARRC’s Employment Services Program. A continuum of SARRC’s clinical services, the job placement process aims to help clients become meaningful and productive members of society through competitive employment, Thorson says. What makes SARRC’s program different, she adds, is that it puts people in real jobs, where there is real need. And in the end—both businesses and employees are thriving.

“It is great that companies give an opportunity where one is really needed,” McMaster says. “A person will never gain experience if someone doesn’t open the door.”

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**Take the Next Step: Become an Employment Partner**

SARRC is always looking for employers that want to be involved in the Employment Services Program. If you have an opportunity with your company that you would like SARRC’s Employment Services manager to consider, please contact Jennifer Thorson at 602-218-8196. She will schedule an on-site meeting with you to gain more information about the job, working environment and your business goals.

**SARRC EMPLOYMENT PARTNERS INCLUDE:**

- Alliance Beverage
- AMC Theatres
- Burger 21
- CVS
- Fast and Friendly Express Carwash
- Fry’s Grocery
- Gompers
- Goodwill
- H.O.P.E. Group
- Harkins Theatres
- Hensley & Co.
- Joe’s Diner
- JW Marriott Camelback Inn
- Outback Steakhouse
- Peckham
- Petco
- PetSmart
- Pro-Serv
- Safeway
- SARRC
- Sprouts Farmers Market
- SSP America
- Surfer Express Car Wash
- TCH
- Tempe Diablo
- US Airways
- Walmart
- White House Design
Dr. Raun Melmed looked at David Weigel’s parents and asked, “What’s your worst fear?”

“That David is autistic,” his mother replied. “And I know he’s autistic.”

She had done her research after observing changes in David. At about 22 months of age, David was no longer using words. He had lost his eye contact. He wasn’t eating. He was banging his head against the wall.

At 24 months, David was diagnosed with severe autism. His parents, Cliff Weigel and Laura Breslow, asked Dr. Melmed and others for best-case scenarios. What should they do? Where should they go?

“Dr. Melmed told us it’s all about early intervention,” Laura recalls. “He told us about SARRC and the school he helped start there. So, I called SARRC and told them I had a 24-month-old with autism named David.”

That night Rachel McIntosh, MA, BCBA, Clinical Manager and Community School Director at SARRC, returned Laura’s call. At 9 a.m. the next day, Cliff and Laura toured the school. It was the last day of the school year.

“We were amazed by the program,” Laura says. “What was really amazing was watching all the graduating children,” Cliff adds.

It gave them hope that one day, David might also graduate from preschool — along with other children with autism and typically developing peers.

Digging In

The Community School was on summer break, but there was no delay in providing David with services. “When we get children who are identified at that early of an age, our goal is to start treatment as quickly and intensively as possible,” McIntosh says.

David began working one-on-one with a clinician three times a week in July of 2013. Cliff and Laura also participated in parent-training sessions on a weekly basis. And by August, David was attending the Community School 20 hours a week.

“When we first met David, he was a very anxious little guy. He had a very difficult time separating from mom or dad or his nanny,” McIntosh explains. “It was very difficult to get him to engage in any way … He didn’t use any functional communication. His form of expressing himself was crying.”

The primary goal of his treatment, she explains, was communication.

“Let’s get David talking — and pair that with engagement,” she says. “Let’s get him engaging with us, engaging with his peers and engaging with the materials in his environment like toys or bikes.”

What a Difference

Eighteen months later, David has blossomed, his parents and teachers say.

One question Laura asked David’s doctors at the time of diagnosis was: “Will my son talk?” No one could tell her for sure.

“That broke my heart,” she says. But now, at 3 years old, he’s one of the most social little boys she knows.

“I talk a lot. And he talks more than I do!” Laura says. “He’s funny and witty and has a wonderful sense of humor.” And he continues to grow.

“At this point, I can see changes almost right in front of my eyes,” Cliff says. “You can watch him pick upreaCH | 28 | 2015

OUTREACH | 28 | 2015

Next Step

KINDERGAR

Early intervention can help prepare children for their first day of school

BY STEPHANIE CONNER
up more structured language skills and new ways to communicate. It’s truly amazing.”

McIntosh adds that David’s social engagement is heartwarming.

“All of the kids in the classroom look forward to him arriving,” she says. “He knows everyone in his classroom. He knows all of their names, and he greets them by name. He’s a conversational, happy, engaged little boy. It really is a tremendous difference.”

And it’s a difference that can give hope to others, she says. But it’s more than just the work of SARRC.

“David’s family is a tremendous part of his great outcomes. They have 100 percent committed to SARRC and the intervention model we embrace,” McIntosh says. “They’ve gone at it with a level of intensity and commitment that drives exceptional outcomes.”

David’s next step is to continue on a path that would allow him to enter kindergarten with typical children in two years. As a result of his first 18 months with SARRC, his parents have hope.

“We appreciate it,” Laura says. “And we’re grateful.”

David Weigel has made tremendous progress and now is one of the most social students in the Community School.

**About SARRC’s Community School**

The Community School at SARRC is a preschool program that provides intensive, ABA-based programming for children with ASD as well as high-quality early childhood education for typically developing children. It’s open to children ages 18 months to 5 years. Benefits include:

- 4:1 student-teacher ratio
- Small class size
- Individualized instruction
- Highly educated and trained staff
- Language enriched environment
- Play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with state education standards

To learn more about taking the next step for your child and enrolling in the Community School, call SARRC at (602) 340-8717 or visit autismcenter.org.
Next Steps in EARLY Detection

SARRC research, new program aims to reduce age of diagnosis

By Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D., and Alexis Boglio

Research over the past decade has confirmed that early intervention leads to significant gains in skills for most people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Yet, as rates of ASD continue to climb, Phoenix has one of the highest average age of diagnosis in the country: 5 years old. In collaboration with the Autism Center of Excellence at the University of California, San Diego, and Dr. Karen Pierce, a leading investigator in early detection research, SARRC received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to bring a proven early detection program to Phoenix. Through
this project, SARRC expects to substantially lower the average age of ASD diagnosis in Phoenix.

**Partnering with pediatricians**

SARRC hopes to achieve this goal by developing a network of 100 pediatricians who will follow a set of procedures that will essentially identify every child with ASD in our network by the age of 3 at the latest. Participating pediatricians agree to screen for ASD at the 12-, 18- and 24-month well-baby visits. If a child fails the screening, the parents are referred to SARRC for a free evaluation with a licensed clinical psychologist. Families are provided with feedback at the end of their visit and have a report mailed to them within a few weeks.

If the child meets criteria for ASD, their family meets with the SARRC Family Resources Coordinator, who will help the family get connected with the Arizona Early Intervention Program and navigate insurance coverage for intervention. This project will potentially save families years of stress and unanswered questions. Most importantly, these children will have a much better opportunity to benefit from early intervention and lead richer, fuller lives.

The beauty of this project is in its simplicity. The procedures in the office add less than 5 minutes of time to each patient, and even less for children who pass the screening, but the benefits are immeasurable. SARRC has been actively recruiting pediatricians since November 2014, and as of April 2015, there are 35 in the SARRC network who have already completed screenings on 850 children. The plan is to screen at least 7,500 children over the next five years. Like any good screening questionnaire, it is over-inclusive, so not all of these children will meet criteria for ASD. Regardless of the outcome, every child is invited back for a follow-up evaluation once a year until they turn 3.

**Taking a look at incidence**

Beyond the obvious public health benefit, one of the most exciting scientific benefits is the opportunity to determine the incidence of ASD in a prospective study. In other words, of the 7,500 children who are screened in Phoenix, we will be able to determine the actual percentage of children who meet criteria for ASD upon careful, direct evaluation. This is very different from the work at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which determined prevalence by examining school and medical records for 8-year-old children. Even more exciting, the same procedures are being conducted in San Diego where they will screen another 7,500 children. Together our project will screen 15,000 children, which is a substantial sample size to determine incidence. It’s the first study of its kind for ASD.

To extend this reach further and lower the age of diagnosis even more, SARRC applied for additional funding to include pediatricians from more remote regions of Arizona. Pediatricians will follow the same simple screening procedures for children between the ages of 6 and 18 months. If a child fails the screening, the family will be referred to NODA, the remote-based Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA) developed and tested by SARRC, instead of the more costly in-person evaluation. If a child is showing significant delays according to NODA, they will be referred to Milestones, a new SARRC program that will promote healthy infant development.

**Engaging at an early age**

The Milestones program, set to launch in early 2016, is a combination of education, parent training and intensive infant intervention. Each educational session will provide parents with a didactic lecture pertaining to a specific developmental period in early childhood. Each lecture will outline specific skills that infants or toddlers should be doing by a certain age, and will include techniques for parents to do at home to help promote that level of development.

SARRC staff will observe some infants and toddlers in the program to document evidence of healthy development or delays. If a child is showing delays consistently for a period of time, the parents will be invited to participate in a parent-training program that will help the parent provide naturalistic strategies to encourage development. This project combines innovative research with evidence-based practice to make high-quality services available to more people.

By educating new parents about the nuances of healthy infant development, they will be better equipped to identify deviations in development at much earlier ages. And by identifying infants who show evidence of delays, SARRC will be able to apply its intervention program for infants and potentially prevent these infants from ever meeting full criteria for ASD.

For more information on SARRC research or the Milestones program, set to roll out in early 2016, contact SARRC at 602.340.8717 or visit autismcenter.org.
Internships with IMPACT

BY GABBY ABBOTT

cue the interns. Two of SARRC’s most popular social enterprise businesses – the Beneficial Beans® cafés and GardenWorks® – have recently added internship components.

“Instead of employing a few adults and having them work as employees at SARRC, we’re using our social enterprise businesses as a training ground for many individuals with autism who are receiving services through SARRC,” says Kate Thoene, Social Enterprise director at SARRC. “Once they are trained, our employment services team can then assist these adults with securing gainful employment in the community.”

From beans to baristas

Using the Beneficial Beans cafés as a training ground for adults with autism is not new to SARRC, but the organization expects to train and impact more clients using this new internship model.

“Working in a café is a great experience for adults with autism because it offers very visual and concrete tasks,” says Aaron Zuroff, a café lead at one of SARRC’s Beneficial Beans cafés.

In the past, an adult with autism would be employed by the café and work for an extended period of time as a barista and food-service worker. Now, as part of the new internship program, multiple adults with ASD will be able to work and learn in the café.

“Interns will receive job training and work experience by working side-by-side with social enterprise staff, which offers a form of peer mentoring as new interns work with typical adults who have job experience,” Thoene explains. “The internships will also make work at the cafés more enriching positions for our café staff. They are going to be trainers and role models.”

Zuroff adds, “The interns will be able to see the results of their work as they are completing it, which is important to help them have a sense of accomplishment and discover what jobs they enjoy doing.”
Growing more than a garden

The visual, creative and individualized process is what makes the work in the garden successful and meaningful for interns, says Program Coordinator Sarah Grone.

“The garden is a place where there are tasks and order, and you see tangible results when a garden is well cared for. It’s ideal for many individuals with autism who tend to prefer more concrete tasks, and it also gives them a chance to interact with other people,” Grone says.

She adds, “The garden draws a lot of other people in so they build social skills and it is a great place to learn a variety of tasks that will be applicable in various job situations.”

The new garden internship will have a strong business focus and will represent a normal work schedule. Approximately six interns will work Monday through Thursday, each session lasting 10 weeks, Grone says. Their days will include attending meetings, weeding, harvesting, planting and caring for the chickens in the chicken coop.

“Produce harvested in the SARRC garden will provide food for our cafés and also be sold weekly to the public though a CSA (community supported agriculture) business. This will enable interns to establish customer service and marketing skills,” Grone says.

“Ultimately, we want to use the Beneficial Beans cafés and garden as vehicles to reach people, impact adults with autism, raise awareness about autism and provide great products,” Thoene says.

To learn more about social enterprise at SARRC, please contact Kate Thoene, Social Enterprise Director, at (602) 218-8223 or kthoene@autismcenter.org. If you are interested in participating in a Social Enterprise internship, please contact Pilar Dowling at (602) 340-8717 or pdowling@autismcenter.org.
For the past four years, Ian McCoy has expressed his natural-born artistic talent through songwriting. Soon he will be able to express an array of newfound talents through a completely different medium: independence.

McCoy is one of the first students in the First Place Residential Transition Academy, a program operated by SARRC and designed to prepare adults with autism for independent living.

Like many other adults with autism in Arizona, McCoy encounters limited options when it comes to independence. With the arrival of this collaborative...
effort between First Place and SARRC, the dream of independent living is closer to becoming a reality.

“The Residential Transition Academy is a two-year program for adults with autism spectrum disorder. The program aims to teach individuals the skills they need to live independently in their own homes as well as establish and maintain competitive employment opportunities,” says Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Residential Transition Academy director at SARRC.

McCoy, who has worked with SARRC for several years including working as a barista at SARRC’s Beneficial Beans® Café in Mesa, said he is excited for the program to begin.

“I’m looking forward to living on my own and I think it will help me,” McCoy says.

Launching a beta site

The program has capacity for up to 16 students and currently has a few openings for new students in its beta site property, which opened in April. The beta site is an affordable housing property, named 29 Palms, that co-locates two-bedroom apartments for First Place students with apartments for seniors and individuals of all ages. The program will then expand to the First Place mixed-use residential property, which will house first-year students that will transition to 29 Palms during their second year, Raetz says. The new complex will be built at the corner of 3rd Street and Catalina Drive near downtown Phoenix and within walking distance to public transit.

“The reason this works so well is because you have the desire from the students and support from their families,” says Jeff Ross, executive director of First Place. “You have this incredible buy-in from the students. They know this is their shot at independence and work very hard to make it happen.”

Proven results

Prior to his involvement at First Place, Ross was the director of Disabled Student Services at Taft College in California for 38 years. At Taft he founded the residential program for students with autism and other intellectual disabilities.

Results from the more than 320 students have been astonishing.

After tracking his students in California for 10 years, Ross found that 95 percent of the graduates lived independently, 95 percent continued to socialize with their class, 89 percent were employed, 88 percent were living financially independently and 23 percent met their spouses while in the program.

There are three components to this program, each designed to educate the students about a vital life skill. The first component is that the students live in a community. The second component of the program is vocational.

“We anticipate that every student in our program will be in a paid student internship,” Ross says.

The third component is developing softer personal skills, such as self-advocacy, interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution.

Partnering to improve lives

In August 2015, a certificate program will be taught on the campus of Gateway Community College based on elements of the First Place/SARRC curriculum.

“The program is based on a curriculum I developed, tested and am now enhancing in collaboration with SARRC and Dr. Valerie Paradiz, First Place curriculum specialist and executive director of the Autistic Global Initiative,” Ross says. “The curriculum is very specific to this population.”

In an effort by First Place and SARRC to include the community, the classes at Gateway will be open to the public.

“A unique component of this program is the partnership between SARRC and First Place,” Ross says. “SARRC has an incredible record of quality programs that are offered to individuals with autism.”

He said the staff for this program is very specialized and after recently completing the staff orientation, he is optimistic about the future.

“Many individuals with ASD are moving into adulthood and unfortunately, there are not currently enough services to support them in reaching their goals for independence,” Raetz says. “This is an exciting step forward for our community.”

“You have this incredible buy-in from the students. They know this is their shot at independence and work very hard to make it happen.”

Jeff Ross, First Place Executive Director
Changing ROLES

S

ometimes inspiration hits you in the most unexpected moments. For Mia Sorensen, 24, a program interventionist at SARRC, her experience as a peer mentor for SARRC’s Autism CommunityWorks® program while in high school was a turning point for her future, although she didn’t realize it at the time.

When she was a senior at Arizona School for the Arts, which is across the street from the Burton Barr Library in downtown Phoenix, she was given the opportunity to volunteer twice a week as a peer mentor in a SARRC pilot called LibraryWorks®, part of the larger Autism CommunityWorks® program. She worked directly with teens impacted by autism at the library reshelving books and learning about how a library operates. Since the program uses an inclusive model, SARRC utilized neurotypical peer mentors like herself to participate in the program alongside individuals impacted by autism.

“At the time, I just knew my job was to be there and be friendly,” Sorensen says. “I knew the program staff was taking data and it was intriguing to me, but I didn’t have a real understanding of what it was used for or how the teens were impacted.”

Sorensen culminated her volunteer work with SARRC prior to her graduation with a presentation to staff members at her high school. She remembers her teachers commenting about how passionate she was about her time spent at SARRC. She didn’t think much about it until she was at Phoenix College and realized the degree she planned on earning in veterinary medicine was likely not a good fit for her.

“I thought about my passions and SARRC popped into my head,” she says. “I felt like in the short time I had volunteered there, I made a difference in the teens’ lives. So I decided to major in psychology and when I graduated from Arizona State, SARRC was the first place I applied.”

Sorensen started working with SARRC as an employee in the summer of 2014 and she is excited to be working in the Autism CommunityWorks® program once again, which she notes has grown dramatically since her volunteer work back in 2009.

Her addition to the SARRC team has been a positive experience for all involved. “Having Mia return to SARRC following college speaks volumes as to the impact of CommunityWorks,” says SARRC Clinical Manager Beatriz Conti, M.Ed., BCBA. “Mia’s experience as a peer mentor along with her enthusiasm for the program make her a valuable member of our team.”

Sorensen is now on the road to getting her registered behavioral technician certification later this year. She adds, “Eventually, I’d like to get my master’s degree and BCBA, but those are longer-term goals for me.”

For now, her favorite moments are the seemingly small ones she gets to witness every day at work – a teen boy with autism interacting with a teen girl for the first time or a peer mentor gaining a greater understanding about autism.

“The differences I can see in the teens in the short time they are in a CommunityWorks program are truly inspiring,” Sorensen says. “And I feel lucky to be a part of that.”
ARRC's ThinkAsperger's® program continues to do just that – make people think. Through one-of-a-kind events, creative awareness campaigns and ongoing opportunities for teachers to learn about the signs of autism spectrum disorder and Asperger’s in school-age children, this is one program that’s getting noticed, and rightfully so.

“When we first launched ThinkAsperger’s, the goal was to develop a simple screening tool that teachers could use in the classroom if they had concerns about a student’s social development,” explains Patty Dion, funder of SARRC’s ThinkAsperger’s program along with her husband, Phil. “Now, we’ve expanded our efforts to also include awareness in the community, as well as with professionals, including teachers and physicians – it’s exciting.”

Last April, Dion and a small volunteer committee cooked up the inaugural Swirl, Sip & Savor event to raise funds and awareness for the program. The generosity of the event’s sponsors and partners was astounding – and so were the results. More than 200 guests attended the private wine tasting and food-pairing event at the Sanctuary, raising more than $212,000 in a single evening. Sanctuary’s Executive Chef Beau MacMillan, along with El Chorro’s Executive Chef Charlie Kassels, and esteemed winemakers from Napa and Sonoma, delivered an extraordinary experience.

Following the event, the ThinkAsperger’s team went to work on a grassroots awareness campaign designed to engage educators and families. With the help of Awe Collective, a Tempe-based creative agency, and the support of SARRC’s volunteer coordinator and development team, the nonprofit mobilized the community to create 45,000 “chatterboxes” (see image above) to be distributed to teachers throughout the state.

“It was incredible,” says Addie Mocca, community resource and volunteer coordinator at SARRC. “We had more than 350 corporate, student and community volunteers donate hundreds of hours constructing the chatterboxes – then we distributed them to 380 schools.” The school outreach campaign culminated with a national webinar for educators led by SARRC Vice President and Research Director Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D.

Throughout 2015, the campaign will also challenge pediatricians to “Think Asperger’s”. “We know doctors play a critical role in identifying autism spectrum in school-age children,” Smith says. “This campaign will focus on encouraging pediatricians to consider a child’s social development as part of their evaluation of a child’s overall health – a simple inquiry into a child’s ability to make friends can provide insight into whether or not a child might be at risk for ASD.”
AETNA MEDICAID
Celebrating the differences that make us stronger

We’re proud to support the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center

www.aetnabetterhealth.com
At Camp Daisy and Harry Stein, a residential Jewish summer camp located in Prescott, Ariz., a major component of our camp mission is to create and build a sacred community that is inclusive and welcoming to all of its members. We strive to create an environment that fosters growth and independence, and is supportive to all of our campers and counselors. We pride ourselves on our ability to embrace and celebrate diversity.

A proponent of overnight (sleep-away) camp, we believe the immersive environment that campers experience leads to growth. Living at camp 24 hours a day for up to four consecutive weeks gives us an extended period of time for our kids to learn, create meaningful relationships and gain independence.

“Inclusion” at overnight camp is a very hot topic. Some camps are challenged by the idea of inviting kids with disabilities (whether physical, behavioral or emotional) to participate in their camp program. Those camps run sessions at the end of their summer specifically for kids with disabilities. At Camp Stein, that particular model does not align with our mission of building a truly inclusive environment for all kids who want to attend camp. We feel that true inclusion means having all kids, disabled or not, live in a cabin together and participate in all we are able to offer in the same meaningful, structured and supervised way.

When we contacted SARRC about partnering this summer and beyond, we were confident that taking the next step in building an inclusive setting for our campers was something we should be doing. Thanks to a generous grant from Ford Motor Company, we are very excited about the staff-training component that SARRC will provide to our counselors, because we feel the tools and skills SARRC teaches about inclusion will work for all children. The prospect of having a cabin made up of returning campers, new campers and SARRC campers will allow learning and growth for every camper in that cabin, as they are exposed and immersed in an environment that could be completely new to them. Together, the campers and staff will learn how to live alongside each other for the length of their stay at camp, and truly understand what it means to be inclusive.

Camp Stein is partnering with SARRC to build an inclusive setting for campers.

Brian Mitchell is the director and Maryn Gordon is the assistant director at Camp Daisy and Harry Stein, owned and operated by Scottsdale’s Congregation Beth Israel, and based in Prescott, Ariz.
When Jennifer and Donnie Colvin participated in the Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks two years ago, it was just a few months after their son, Stryker, received his autism diagnosis. New to the world of autism, the Colvins created a family walk team in their son’s honor called the Strike Team and decided to use the walk as an opportunity to share their son’s diagnosis with friends and family.

“That first year, the walk provided us with a way to tell our friends and family about Stryker’s diagnosis and to introduce autism to the people who mattered to us,” says Donnie. “Family participation and a good support network are key to making Stryker’s therapy work, and we’ve been lucky to have that support since the beginning.”

In bright green shirts, Stryker’s favorite color, more than 30 friends and family walked with Strike Team, raising more than $1,000 for the cause. “Everyone had a great time that first year, especially Stryker, who loves riding on our shoulders, so just about everyone took turns carrying him during the walk,” says Donnie.

In the weeks following, the Colvins began SARRC’s JumpStart® parent training program. “We enjoy supporting the walk each year because it’s a way for us to give back to an organization that has done so much for our family,” explains Donnie. “We learned so much from JumpStart – it was hands-down the most educational program we encountered early on.”

In 2014, the Colvin’s expanded their walk participation to include a golf tournament and raised nearly $4,000; they intend to do the same in 2015. “It’s great knowing that we’re raising funds, but the awareness is equally important. We want people to know our wonderful son, Stryker, and to share in his progress – he’s an incredible kid,” says Jennifer. “We’re looking forward to this year’s event!”

**JOIN THE WALK COMMITTEE!**

SARRC and Autism Speaks are actively recruiting volunteers to help with planning this year’s walk and run. Email Lyndsey Waugh with SARRC at Lwaugh@autismcenter.org for more information. Special thanks to Laura and Ken McElroy for serving as 2015 Walk Co-Chairs.
SARRC PROVIDES EDUCATION and training opportunities for parents, caregivers, healthcare providers, school faculty, administrators, therapeutic and medical professionals, and others interested in supporting individuals with autism achieve successful outcomes.

Trainings address practical knowledge and focus on skill development for implementation of interventions based on principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA).

Trainings are designed to further the participant’s understanding of autism spectrum disorders, cutting-edge research and evidence-based treatment approaches. Trainings address a range of topics related to individuals with ASD of all ages and varying levels of ability.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- Promote supportive learning opportunities, acceptance and tolerance by raising awareness and understanding of autism spectrum disorders.
- Foster the implementation of appropriate supports for individuals with autism spectrum disorders across settings to develop essential skills to achieve a good quality of life.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING:
“What I learned is applicable to students in my classroom and my own child with autism. What I already do was reinforced and I learned ways to make my interactions more effective.” — Parent and Teacher

“I really enjoyed the knowledge and examples that both instructors in the ABA training series shared and I really feel I can use this information to help individuals, families and providers.” — Case Manager, Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities

For a current list of upcoming trainings, visit SARRC’s education and training calendar online at autismcenter.org

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Thank you SARRC for changing lives and our community for the better.
Central to SARRC’s mission is to provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families. SARRC’s clinical model is grounded in applied behavior analysis (ABA) with a particular focus on naturalistic behavioral interventions in inclusive environments (e.g. at home, in school, on the job and in the community). Each of SARRC’s therapeutic programs, classes and trainings are guided by best-practice models; the most currently available science; improving quality of life and producing meaningful outcomes; and the individualized needs of the children, adolescents, adults and families we serve. For more information on any of these programs, services or research studies, contact SARRC at 602.340.8717 or visit autismcenter.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs &amp; Services</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Behavioral Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARRC’s comprehensive behavioral program provides intensive, ABA-based programming across environments to meet the needs of individuals with ASD and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the home and in the community and is often coordinated with a student’s school or adult’s employer. Families receive weekly 1:1 intervention sessions, a weekly caregiver training session, and program management and supervision from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Goals are developed in coordination with the family and focus on language skills, social skills, adaptive behavior, play or leisure skills, and cognitive development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Home &amp; Community-Based Consultation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Home &amp; Community-Based Consultation provides focused intervention to develop a specific adaptive behavior (e.g., safety, toilet training, chores, employment) or to address a particular problem behavior (e.g. aggression, elopement, challenging stereotypical behavior). Following an initial interview, a SARRC therapist, under the supervision of a BCBA, provides direct observation, conducts a behavioral assessment and develops a treatment plan. After reviewing the plan with the family or adult with ASD and agreeing to its components, a SARRC therapist works with the family or adult with ASD to implement the plan, objectively measure changes in behavior, and evaluate progress to address any necessary modifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JumpStart®</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>JumpStart® is a six-week program that provides information, support and training to parents of children up to age 6 who have recently been diagnosed with or are at risk for ASD. Components of the program include staff-led discussions on the most critical topics for newly diagnosed families (e.g. characteristics of ASD, improving social communication, reducing problem behaviors, toilet training, individualized education programs [IEPs], and accessing services), a classroom where children with ASD receive ABA-based intervention from highly trained SARRC therapists, and parent training in PRT to teach children to verbally communicate. JumpStart is also available in Spanish.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The SARRC Community School is an inclusive preschool program that provides intensive, ABA-based programming for children with ASD and high-quality early childhood education for typically developing children. All children (ages 18 months to 5 years) participate in one of four classrooms and receive the benefits of highly trained SARRC classroom therapists within a 4:1 student-to-teacher ratio; a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned with state education standards; and a language enriched environment structured to specifically improve meaningful engagement and social communication. Children with ASD also receive 1:1 interventions in the classroom, parent training sessions conducted in the family’s home and in the community, and program supervision from a BCBA. All-day care is available for typically developing children.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive Parent Training</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensive parent training is a one-week program for families living in rural/remote locations or outside of Arizona. Parents and their children (0 to 8 years) come to SARRC’s Campus for Exceptional Children to participate in therapy sessions Monday through Friday for 5 hours each day (a total of 25 hours of intervention). SARRC therapists train parents to implement the motivational procedures of PRT to meet each child’s communication, social and behavioral needs. After the week-long training, families return home and have the option of receiving telemedicine support from SARRC’s clinicians by sharing video over a secure internet connection, allowing SARRC clinicians to remotely provide ongoing feedback to parents as their child’s skills and needs change over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Autism CommunityWorks®</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PEERS (Program for the Evaluation and Enrichment of Relational Skills)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women's Empowerment Program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Enterprise Internships: Beneficial Beans® Café &amp; Garden</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Transition Academy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education and Training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIEND® Program</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Programs & Services

### School Consultation
SARRC’s educational consultants contract with schools and districts to improve educational programming of students with ASD in public, charter and private schools. School consultation services include didactic in-service training; in-vivo teacher and/or paraprofessional training; general classroom observation and recommendations; functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and positive behavior support (PBS) plans; classroom structure and/or environmental design; access to the common core curriculum; curricular modifications and/or accommodations; and inclusive best practices to support students in general education classrooms. While consultation and training is provided for school personnel, the focus is always on achieving the best possible outcomes for students.

### Summer Camp Programs
SARRC partners with existing summer camps to include children and teens with ASD (ages 3-16) with their typically developing peers and improve social skills. The FRIEND Summer Camp provides training and ongoing consultation to camp staff to ensure that children with ASD can successfully participate throughout the day and across structured and unstructured activities. Camp staff receive training in behavioral intervention and inclusive strategies to target communication, appropriate play and social interactions. Camp dates and times vary across locations and include half-day, full-day and overnight camp options during the months of June and July. For older teens and young adults, SARRC has partnered with the University of Advancing Technologies (UAT) to provide a Tech Summer Camp, a one-week, college life experience (e.g. attending classes, living in the dorms).

### ThinkAsperger’s®
This outreach program is designed to educate elementary school staff and pediatricians to ThinkAsperger’s® when they see subtle social impairments in young children. If undetected, subtle social impairments may lead to more serious social deficits and a lifetime of struggle. After interviewing parents of individuals with Asperger’s, SARRC developed an educational program and screening questionnaire to help teachers and pediatricians recognize these impairments and refer for a formal evaluation. Once individuals are properly diagnosed, intervention can begin so they can have meaningful interactions, develop friendships and ultimately reach their full potential.

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

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## Mission Driven

UCI Local Media Arizona is honored to support SARRC and help further their mission to impact the lives of individuals with autism and their families.

*Thank you for the opportunity to give back to the communities we serve.*
**RESEARCH STUDIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Night Out</td>
<td>A Night Out is offered four times a year to teens and adults to provide meaningful social opportunities and experience leisure activities in an inclusive community environment. Separate teen and adult events are held throughout the community and include a variety of activities, such as attending sporting events, bowling, bingo or indoor trampoline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VANILLA</td>
<td>The VANILLA study, sponsored by Roche Pharmaceuticals, is investigating the effects of vasopressin, a common blood pressure medication, on social behavior and communication. It is a 12-week double blind study that includes cognitive and social assessments, and careful monitoring by our research team. Adult males ages 18 to 45 and their caregivers (parents, siblings or significant others) are invited to contact us for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurim</td>
<td>The Neurim study is investigating the effects of a study medication for sleep challenges in children affected by ASD from ages 2.5 to 17. While other medications are available for sleep problems, this particular drug is long-acting and may help children with ASD get to sleep and stay asleep. This two-year study has a 12-week, double-blind phase, followed by an optional extended open-label phase where all participants can stay on the active medication and be monitored by our site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Screening Program</td>
<td>For any developmental disorder, early diagnosis is key. Because of this, SARRC is developing a network of 100 pediatricians who will follow a set of procedures that will essentially identify every child with ASD in our network by the age of 3 at the latest. Participating pediatricians agree to screen for ASD at the 12-, 18- and 24-month well-baby visits. If a child's screen results indicate potential concerns, the parents are referred to SARRC for a free evaluation with a licensed clinical psychologist. Families are provided with feedback at the end of their visit and have a diagnostic report mailed to them within a few weeks. If you are a pediatrician, or would like your pediatrician to be a part of this network, please contact SARRC Research at (602) 340-8717, extension 1187.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEERS Program Study</td>
<td>The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) is a 14-week evidence-based social skills intervention for adolescents with ASD without a cognitive disability and their parents. PEERS focuses on helping teens learn ways to make and keep friends; each group session centers around important social skills and opportunities to practice these skills during fun and interactive activities. Parents are an important piece of the program, and are taught feedback strategies to assist their teens in starting and maintaining friendships. SARRC will be performing a study of the PEERS program and its long-term effects on socialization, particularly the generalization of behaviors learned within the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SNAPSHOT

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2014 *(unaudited)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Current Assets $4,606,835</th>
<th>Long Term Assets $9,119,679</th>
<th>TOTAL ASSETS $13,726,514</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIABILITIES</td>
<td>Current Liabilities $552,586</td>
<td>Long Term Liabilities $106,305</td>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES $658,891</td>
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<tr>
<td>NET ASSETS</td>
<td>Unrestricted Net Assets $5,841,234</td>
<td>Temporarily Restricted Net Assets $4,588,261</td>
<td>Permanently Restricted Net Assets $2,653,128</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</td>
<td>$13,726,514</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement of Activities for the Period Ending December 31, 2014 *(unaudited)

| SUPPORT & REVENUE | Individuals & Corporations $570,153 7.8% | Grants $489,362 6.7% | Special Events $1,838,873 25.2% | Governmental $132,285 1.8% | Program Fees $3,766,979 51.6% | Interest, Dividend, & Investment $148,502 2.0% | Legacies & Bequests $100,000 1.4% | In-Kind Support $257,984 3.5% | TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE $7,304,138 100.0% |

| EXPENSES            | Salaries, Benefits & Professional Development $4,840,452 68.2% | Contract Labor & Professional Services $413,878 5.8% | Program Expenses $653,388 9.2% | Postage, Printing & Marketing $160,906 2.3% | Occupancy & Communication $227,494 3.2% | Special Events Costs $198,567 2.8% | In-Kind Expenses $256,359 3.6% | Amortization & Depreciation $344,789 4.9% | TOTAL EXPENSES $7,095,833 100.0% |

| TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | $208,305 |

| EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT | Programs 0-12 $2,961,807 41.7% | Programs 13-Adult $860,453 12.1% | Education & Training $209,523 3.0% | Social Enterprise $426,627 6.0% | Research $930,046 13.1% | Administration $605,101 8.5% | Development/ Fundraising $1,102,276 15.5% | TOTAL EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT $7,095,833 100.0% |

A copy of the fully audited financial statements will be available after June 30, 2015 by contacting Sean Husmoe, Chief Financial Officer, 480.603.3295
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Vincent, Age 3, Attends SARRC’s Community School

Thank you to Bashas’ Family of Stores for supporting SARRC through the Team Up for Autism Charity of the Month Campaign.

Special Thanks to our Partners!
Thank you to the entire team at KTAR and all of our sponsorship partners for making the 2015 KTAR Action for Autism Radiothon a success! For the eighth year, your leadership and community outreach efforts were instrumental in educating the community about autism and generating much needed financial support for SARRC’s programs. Many thanks to the SARRC families and clients who joined us to share personal stories about their journey with autism and to all who called in with pledges to become our Action Heroes.