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Raising Arizona Kids Congratulates SARRC on 10 Years of Community Service

We share your commitment to Arizona families by providing information that supports parents as they make important decisions about how they will guide, nurture, educate, enrich, entertain—and enjoy—their children.
Ten years ago, SARRC began as a virtual research and resource center, operating out of the home offices of its co-founders. We didn’t have a roof over our heads until year-end 1998 when we moved into an 1,800-square-foot facility. Family demands required we nearly double our space within eight short months. We now occupy an 18,000-square-foot campus and, once again, we’re bursting at the seams.

Last year alone, SARRC provided more than 120,000 service hours to children, family members, educators, physicians, professionals and para-professionals. And we continue to emerge as a national leader in the recruitment of subjects for research studies.

Our progress would not be possible without the generosity of our community, including those who have attended one or more of our nine annual community breakfasts. Generous sponsors have enabled SARRC to host more than 10,000 people over the years.

For our family, this decade has also been significant. Matthew has grown into a responsible 15-year-old who makes his bed, brushes his teeth (and flosses), washes his face, sets the table, empties the dishwasher, folds laundry, gets the paper, gets the mail and empties the trash — all without a single complaint. Inside this young man’s body is a smart, hard-working and loving child, who needs to be cared for and watched after just like a toddler at times. While Matt has made a lot of progress over the past 10 years, we still need to do more for him and for the thousands of other individuals living with autism today.

In this special 10th anniversary edition, you’ll read more about SARRC’s progress, our growth and plans for the future and our dedication to helping those who are affected by autism. During this next decade, we hope we’ll be able to crack the code and end the autism epidemic forever.

Denise D. Resnik
SARRC Co-founder and Board Chairman
Your Thoughts

Navigating the journey that is autism

“To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world.” This quote will always hold a special place in our hearts thanks to the amazing people at SARRC who helped my boys realize the world outside of their own. It’s a complicated world for someone with autism, but not an impossible place, filled with love, life, laughter and emotion… the human experience. When my sons were diagnosed with autism, I felt helpless, suffocated by a plethora of emotions. One minute I had beautiful, healthy twin boys and the sky was the limit; the next, our lives were swallowed up with autism.

SARRC provided a silver lining behind a dark cloud, giving us hope that our kids can be part of that human experience. They gave us hope that life wasn’t over when autism began and empowered us and transformed my sons’ lives. Through this journey, I have learned that although I have kids with autism, I am special to them and I can make a difference in their lives. Love will always bind us. I’ve learned to celebrate their spirits and their personalities beyond the autism. I’ve learned that suffering and love can bind us all. The love between you, your children and those who embrace them will always be the common ground. Thank you SARRC for embracing all of us through this experience. We are forever grateful.

Jamie Falzone

Mesa, Ariz.

Looking forward to Summertime Fun

Last year, our son Nolan, 6, participated in SARRC’s Summertime Fun program and it was such a positive experience that we’ve timed our family vacation to make sure he can do it again this year. Erin Paschke did a great job pulling together daily activities like yoga, karate and gymnastics that targeted social skills in a fun environment. The best part was that activities were structured so the kids felt a sense of accomplishment after they were done, and I know Nolan felt really proud at the end of each session. Thanks for providing this opportunity and for continuing to develop programs that help our children find and celebrate daily successes. We’re really looking forward to summer break!

Rob & Kym Fedler

Mesa, Ariz.
A wake up call? A public health crisis? An education and workforce crisis? The new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study finding that 1 in every 150 of our children is being diagnosed with autism must be understood as all of the above, and more.

The explanations for the continuing increase in numbers are not clear, although better diagnosis, broadening of the definition of autism and uncertain environmental triggers may all play a role.

How can we begin to understand and take action in response to this alarming new statistic?

Foremost, because individuals with autism typically will live a normal lifespan, with an estimated lifelong cost of $3.2 million according to a recent Harvard study, we must understand the service implications across an individual’s lifetime.

Research has shown that early intervention helps ensure the best chance of lifelong success. Last year alone, SARRC had an enrollment of more than 700 children in our early intervention services, including our Community School, our in-home Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) program, and therapeutic services such as speech and occupational therapy.

But there were many more children we could not serve, and the CDC study is a wake-up call to our community, to healthcare providers, to our schools and especially to our policymakers to consider how we fund services for our children at the earliest opportunity.

Of course, early intervention can only occur with early identification. And unfortunately, there are far too many children today whose autism is not diagnosed until after the age of 5.

For years, SARRC has provided training and resources to parents, physicians, paraprofessionals and teachers to help identify autism at the earliest opportunity. Last year alone, almost 2,700 family members and more than 1,100 medical and educational professionals were trained by SARRC to recognize the signs of autism and to support successful outcomes for children with autism.

Although we know that our efforts are contributing to the identification of more Arizona children at an earlier age, we believe that mandatory medical screening for autism is long overdue. Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended that an autism screening tool be administered to all children at their 18-month well-child visit. Likewise, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) recognizes the need for improved diagnosis of all developmental disorders, and is seeking legislative approval and funding for expanded use of the Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) tool statewide.

We also have miles to go to create a seamless infrastructure to support the educational, social and workforce success of all children and adults with autism. For years, SARRC has provided classroom management training to K-12 teachers. This year, we are training teachers working with children ages 0-5 and expect that we will train more than 500 providers. And in late summer, we plan to break ground on the Opus West Vocational & Life Skills Academy with the mission of serving adolescents and adults with autism, enabling them to live the most independent and productive lives possible.

Since 1997, SARRC has been committed to building quality and capacity into all systems, so that no matter where a child is being served they are getting what they need. The implications of 1 in 150 will continue to challenge all of us to do even more. Policymakers, business leaders, healthcare professionals, teachers and other professionals must stand together to speak for reform and for investing now in the human potential of our children.

The SARRC Community School provides high-quality toddler and preschool programs to children with autism as well as their typically developing peers.
SARRC Briefs

Glam Jam 2007
Raises Autism Awareness

The inaugural Glam Jam proved to be a homerun for spring training fans on March 22 when Raquel Aurilia, wife of San Francisco Giants player Rich Aurilia, launched her debut album at the opening of Glam Lounge in Scottsdale. Ballplayer Barry Zito joined Raquel on stage for a live musical performance, showing that his talent extends beyond the pitching mound.

Jennifer Croll, the retail developer behind The Mix Shops, plans to grow the event into an annual spring training event that will encourage Giants fans to visit Scottsdale for spring training. Croll also plans to use the proceeds from community events held at The Mix Shops to fund a pilot school outreach program that she is working to create with SARRC. As part of the program, Croll hopes to provide students of all backgrounds, including those with ASDs, with social support and friendship opportunities on the playground and in the classroom.

Glam Jam sponsor and waterfront real estate developer Safari Drive has pledged to donate $15,000 of any condo sale to the outreach program whenever SARRC or the Glam Jam event is mentioned. For more information, please contact Chris Cambralango at (480) 258-8030 or visit www.safaridrivesscottsdale.com.

Phoenix Mayor visits SARRC
Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon toured SARRC to learn more about its programs and services. During his visit on Feb. 23, SARRC’s President and CEO Lisa Glow and Board Vice Chairman Michael Sklar had an opportunity to discuss SARRC’s interest in continuing to build partnerships with the City of Phoenix, Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen), local hospitals and others. SARRC appreciates the Mayor’s continuing leadership and his efforts to build a vibrant downtown community that includes expanded research and medical facilities, and additional business opportunities.

SARRC appoints Joe Ray to board of directors
Joe Ray is principal and creative director of Estudio Ray, a Phoenix-based strategic design solutions firm that he created in 1985 aimed at connecting clients through marketing and branding with the general and Hispanic markets. Previously, Ray held stints as a designer and art director, working on both the agency and client side of marketing communications.

Ray, a champion of the business community, actively supports a variety of nonprofit organizations such as Xicanindio Artes Inc. and Workshops for Youth & Families and is a member of the American Marketing Association and Park Central Toastmasters Club. He is also founder of Estudio Arte, a national charitable foundation that will provide scholarships for Latino students interested in art as a career. Ray has been involved with SARRC for several years and led the design and creation of SARRC’s Autistic Disorders Screening Kit™.
SARCC research intern receives award for JumpStart work
SARCC’s Assistant Research Study Coordinator Sarah Brautigam recently received an Outstanding Internship Presentation Award in the Adolescent and Child Health session for her presentation and evaluation of SARCC’s JumpStart™ program. Her presentation was part of the College of Public Health Fall 2006 Internship Conference at the University of Arizona. Brautigam evaluated the program’s ability to improve child functioning and change parent perceptions of empowerment. Her research findings suggest a causal relationship between improvement in child behavior and change in parents’ severity of depression and feelings of empowerment.

Art Attacks Madison Park School
SARCC recently launched its first community-based art program for children and teens with autism, giving them an opportunity to have fun and express their inner artist. The six-week program was a collaborative effort between SARCC and Madison Park School in Phoenix and focused on helping participants at all skill levels have fun creating art. Typically developing peers participating in the program served as mentors and also received training in autism awareness and positive behavior support. Art Attack! is part of the Kemper & Ethel Marley Arts & Culture Program for Exceptional Children, which blends art experiences with therapeutic autism intervention techniques. SARCC is currently working to create community partnerships that will offer opportunities for the talents and contributions of individuals with autism to be recognized and appreciated.

It’s not always what you save. Somtimes, it’s what you earn.

At Compass, we know there’s more to life than banking. Like earning the trust and respect of those around you. And taking pride in the community where we all live and work. That’s why we’re proud to support the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center.

Rich Vogel, President
602.522.6881

Compass Bank
Arizona’s Strongest Raise Money for SARRC

The Valley’s strongest men and women amazed spectators with phenomenal strength as they participated in the 2nd Annual Arizona’s Strongest Man competition at the Sandbar restaurant in Scottsdale on Feb. 10. Participants competed in five signature events, including flipping tires weighing 450-925 pounds and lifting Atlas Stones weighing up to 400 pounds. Scott Porter, the 2nd place national champion and father of a child with autism, organized the qualifying event. At the end of the day, the participants had lifted, heaved and pulled approximately 245,000 combined pounds and raised $1,000 for SARRC.
Pulliam Supports New Community-Works Program

The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust recently awarded SARRC a $50,000 grant to support the pilot program CommunityWorks. This new effort will be a community-based job training program for young adults with autism and typically developing peer mentors ages 13-18. All program participants will receive job coaching, training, support and oversight from SARRC and community partners. Peer mentors will be recruited from SARRC’s existing FRIEND program.

SARRC receives Randy Werner Award for Excellence

The Arizona Disabilities Expo recognized SARRC’s commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities at their annual expo held on Feb. 28. The Randy Werner Award for Excellence was awarded to SARRC and created in memory of Werner’s advocacy and leadership in the disability community. The award recognizes organizations that provide individuals with disabilities an opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Sieg Organization gives gift of music

SARRC’s music therapy program received a special gift from the Sieb Organization late last year – new instruments and therapeutic toys. The donation was made on behalf of Sieb Organization’s clients in the real estate and hospitality industries and was personalized with a holiday card highlighting SARRC’s music therapy program and the benefits it offers children. Carolyn Anderson, a member of the design team working on the holiday project was so moved, she also organized “dress-down Fridays” during which Sieb employees could forego the conservative dress-code on Fridays if they made a donation to in support of WALK NOW ARIZONA, benefiting autism research.

SARRC would like to say thank you to our friends at FASTFRAME for their continued support.
How do I get over the grief and anger I feel about my child’s diagnosis?

Grief has five stages and often parents of an affected child pass through these stages of grief at different times, which causes further conflict and stress on the family. Try to recognize where your partner is so your expectations are commensurate with what he or she is able to give at the time.

The first stage is denial. For many of us, we have already been through this before we reach the doctor’s office. For others, it continues after diagnosis as we try not to accept the label. The doctor was wrong. He only spent 30 minutes with my child, so how could he know? It’s just a speech delay like my mother said. My child looks at me and is affectionate, so it must not be autism.

The second stage is anger – the “Why me?” phase. It is easy to see how painful this stage might be if one’s partner is still stuck in denial. What did we do to deserve this? How could we have prevented this?

The third phase is bargaining. It’s when you make secret pacts with whoever has taken control of your life to make this right in exchange for something from you. If you just fix Johnny, then I promise to never take anything for granted again.

The fourth and most crippling phase is depression. It’s the realization that denial is futile, that the anger has gone, and that there is no bargain to be made. For many, this stage can last for a long time and become a barrier to action. It is hard to advocate for services when just getting through the day is a challenge. Recognizing that depression is part of the grief process and allowing those feelings of loss without guilt is the best way to navigate through this stage. Support groups are very helpful at this stage so you do not feel that you are totally going it alone.

The fifth and final stage is acceptance. With it comes the ability to see the wonders in your child, celebrate the differences and marvel at your child’s progress. I can promise you will reach acceptance. In my case, I’ve also found gratitude because I’ve had the privilege to raise a very unique human being. Without my son’s talents, the world and our family would be all the poorer.

Editor’s Note: The author is the parent of an 18-year-old son who was diagnosed with autism when he was 2.
¿Cómo superar la pena y el enojo que siento por el diagnóstico de mi hijo/a?

La pena tiene cinco etapas y con frecuencia los padres con un hijo afectado pasan estas etapas en tiempos diferentes, lo cual causa más conflicto y tensión en la familia. Trate de reconocer la etapa de pena de su cónyuge para relacionar sus expectativas con lo que él o ella pueda hacer en ese momento.

La primera etapa es denegar. Para muchos de nosotros, ya hemos pasado por ésta antes de ir al consultorio médico. Para otros, continúa después del diagnóstico porque no lo aceptamos. El médico está mal. Solamente estuve 30 minutos con mi hijo, entonces ¿cómo puede saber? Simplemente es un retraso del habla como dijo mi mamá. Mi hijo me ve y es cariñoso, por eso no tiene autismo.

La segunda etapa es el enojo – la frase “¿porqué yo?” Es fácil ver lo dolorosa que podría ser esta etapa cuando un cónyuge sigue negando que su hijo tiene autismo. ¿Qué hicimos para merecer esto? ¿Cómo lo pudimos haber prevenido?

La tercera etapa es la negociación. Es cuando hace pactos secretos con aquella persona que ha tomado el control de su vida para mejorar las cosas a cambio de algo. Si se compone Johnny, entonces yo prometo nunca más tomar las cosas a la ligera.

La cuarta y peor etapa es la depresión. Es cuando se percata que la denegación es inútil, el enojo se ha desvanecido, y que ya no queda negociación alguna. Para muchos, esta etapa puede durar mucho tiempo y volverse una barrera para tomar acción. Es difícil pedir servicios cuando simplemente sobrevivir el día ha sido un reto. La mejor manera de sobrellevar esta etapa es reconocer que la depresión es parte del proceso de la pena y no sentir culpabilidad. En esta etapa, los grupos de apoyo ayudarán a que no se sienta totalmente solo/a.

La quinta y última etapa es la aceptación. En ésta etapa viene la habilidad de ver lo asombroso que es su hijo/a, celebrar las diferencias y maravillas de su progreso. Le prometo que usted alcanzará la aceptación. En mi caso, también he encontrado gratitud porque he tenido el privilegio de criar a un ser humano único. Sin el talento de mi hijo, el mundo y nuestra familia estarían vacíos.

Nota del editor: La autora es madre de un muchacho de 18 años de edad diagnosticado con autismo desde los dos.
Memantine trial looks at motor function

SARRC is participating in a Clinical Trials Network study created by Cure Autism Now (now Autism Speaks), which will focus on the possible role of pharmacological treatment of motor deficits in individuals with autism. Movement disturbances may be related to, or contribute to, core features of autism. This multi-site research collaboration will determine the effectiveness of memantine.

Memantine modulates the glutamate neurotransmitter system in the brain by blocking the activity of one particular type of glutamate receptor, the NMDA receptor, which plays an integral role in cell-to-cell communication in the brain. Glutamate is the most prevalent neurotransmitter in the brain and in individuals with autism, there is scientific evidence suggesting abnormalities in the glutamate neurotransmitter system.

The study will recruit children with ASDs who are ages 6 to 12 and verbal. Initial screening will include state-of-the-art diagnostic evaluation, as well as evaluation of motor abilities, motor planning, language and adaptive skills. Children will be randomly assigned to either memantine or placebo and will be followed closely for six months. Gold standard diagnostic and functional evaluations will benefit all participants. Please contact SARRC Research Coordinator Sharman Ober-Reynolds, MSN, RN, C-FNP, at (602) 218-8225 or soberreynolds@autismcenter.org for more information about this study.

SARRC recruiting for Bristol-Myers Squibb study

SARRC is one of several trial sites nationwide selected by Bristol-Myers Squibb to participate in a 14-week research study evaluating an investigational medication for behavior challenges often seen in autism, including tantrums, irritability, agitation and crying. To be considered for participation in this study, a child or adolescent with autism must be between 6 and 17 years old. Research volunteers will receive study medication, travel reimbursement and medical care at no cost to the family. To learn more about the study, please contact SARRC Research Coordinator Sharman Ober-Reynolds, MSN, RN, C-FNP, at (602) 218-8225 or soberreynolds@autismcenter.org.

Autism Genome Project uncovers new clues

The largest search for autism genes to date, funded in part by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has implicated components of the brain’s glutamate chemical messenger system and a previously overlooked site on chromosome 11. Based on 1,168 families with at least two affected members, the genome scan also adds to the evidence that tiny, rare variations in genes may heighten risk for ASDs.

The study is the first to emerge from the Autism Genome Project (AGP) consortium, a public-private collaboration involving more than 120 scientists and 50 institutions spanning several countries. SARRC is part of this consortium. With NIH support, the AGP is pursuing studies to identify specific genes and gene variants that may contribute to autism.
Autism prevalence increases to 1 in 150

ASDs are much more common than previously thought, and could affect as many as one in 150 school-age children based on data from a nationwide surveillance program. The overall prevalence of ASDs is about 6.6 per 1,000 8-year-old children, ranging from a low of 3.3 per 1,000 in Alabama to a high of 10.6 per 1,000 in New Jersey, CDC investigators reported in the Feb. 9 issue of Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

“Autism is more common than we believed and is an urgent public health problem,” said Catherine Rice, Ph.D., a behavioral scientist at the CDC’s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. SARRC collaborated with researchers Chris Cunniff and John Meaney from the University of Arizona in this study. Reasons for the difference in ASD prevalence between current and earlier estimates are unknown, but are thought to be related at least in part to better surveillance techniques producing more accurate estimates or to changes in diagnostic practice.

OAR and SARRC offer Transition to Adulthood guide

In collaboration with SARRC and Danya International, the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) has published the fourth book, A Guide for Transition to Adulthood, in its Life Journey Through Autism series of resource guides. This guide focuses on the transition from adolescence to adulthood and covers issues such as transition planning, transition agencies and legal help, vocation and employment, postsecondary education and life skills. The guide is available for free at SARRC or it can be downloaded at researchautism.org.

SARRC and OAR will also collaborate on developing a transition workshop model using the guide as a supporting resource. We thanks the Armstrong Family Foundation for making SARRC’s participation possible. For more information about the Life Journey Through Autism series, contact OAR at (866) 366-9710 or by e-mail at guides@researchautism.org.
An Extraordinary Lesson

SARRC Community School teaches students with autism and their typical peers in an inclusive environment

BY HOLLY BAUMANN
SARRC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT COORDINATOR

SARAH DENNO
SARRC COMMUNITY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

At first glance, the SARRC Community School appears to be two typical classrooms. There are toys neatly organized on miniature shelves, play areas divided by rugs, a circle time corner, a block and kitchen area and, of course, what classroom would be complete without children’s artwork adorning the walls? But upon a closer look, the special features slowly come into focus: a visual schedule hangs on the wall indicating what activity is going to happen next, furniture is strategically arranged in order to support active engagement and various other supports are in place for each child based on his or her individual needs. These special classrooms include both children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their typically developing peers (those without autism).

A bright start
The SARRC Community School first opened its doors to toddlers ages 18 months to 3 years in the fall of 2005 thanks to start-up funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the Arizona Chapter of the National Association for Industrial and Office Properties and private donors. The classroom was designed as a model program in which children with autism and neurotypical peers could participate in positive, engaging curriculum that supported their individual learning goals. For children with ASDs, the model includes supportive services such as one-on-one habilitation and music and speech therapies.

In the summer of 2006, toddlers “graduated” into the preschool classroom for 3 to 5 year olds and new students joined the program. Services were expanded to include occupational therapy and SARRC hired additional classroom staff.

Program structure and benefits
As a model program for children with ASDs, the Community School is also a high-quality preschool for typically developing children. The classroom is housed in an organized facility with a covered outdoor play area and a convenient downtown location. The classroom maintains a 1:3 teacher-to-child ratio and the bilingual staff members are highly trained, each with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree.

The Community School curriculum targets develop-
Workshops for Educators

The SARRC Community School offers free monthly workshops for professionals working with children affected by ASDs to help build greater capacity related to school-based interventions for toddlers and preschool-age children. Participants will learn strategies for supporting children with ASDs in a school setting, including an overview of ASDs, characteristics, how to support appropriate behavior and how to incorporate instructional strategies into a classroom. Participants will receive a certificate of attendance for three hours of professional development.

More information:
Karen Schultz
(602) 218-8220 or visit www.autismcenter.org

Participants in the SARRC Community School benefit from a low 1:3 teacher-to-child ratio.

In the spring, SARRC will reopen the Toddler School classroom with grant funding from the Arizona Department of Health Services. The grant will also fund SARRC training workshops for providers working with children diagnosed with ASDs in preschool classrooms throughout the state. The Community School is currently enrolling children ages 18 months to 2.5 years and will offer a morning or afternoon schedule for children with ASDs and flexible full-time or part-time hours for typical students.

Development in the following skill areas: language/communication, motor skills (fine/gross), play, self-help, social interaction and school readiness. Curriculum is developed based on the tenet that each child is an individual with a unique pattern of development and growth, and experiences are provided to meet the children’s needs and stimulate all developmental areas. Activities and educational materials are selected in order to achieve and develop positive self concepts, social skills, independence and physical skills; encourage creativity; and demonstrate positive health, safety and nutritional practices. A daily balance of indoor and outdoor, individual and group, and active and quiet activities is provided. During free play and structured activities, the amount of teacher support is based on the individual needs of each child.

All classroom activities are modified in order to accommodate the individual needs of each child, regardless of whether they have an autism diagnosis. For example, students with sensory considerations can use paint brushes to put glue onto projects and adaptive scissors can be used for students with poor hand strength or immature fine motor skills. Most importantly, due to the low staff ratio, children who are unable to complete an activity independently receive one-on-one assistance to be successful. Staff assistance is then faded out as soon as possible in order to encourage independent acquisition of the skill.

Now enrolling students

In the spring, SARRC will reopen the Toddler School classroom with grant funding from the Arizona Department of Health Services. The grant will also fund SARRC training workshops for providers working with children diagnosed with ASDs in preschool classrooms throughout the state. The Community School is currently enrolling children ages 18 months to 2.5 years and will offer a morning or afternoon schedule for children with ASDs and flexible full-time or part-time hours for typical students.
The Cougars are down by one run, bases are loaded, and it’s the bottom of the ninth.

Tommy gets up to bat. His teachers and classmates yell at him, “Just hit the ball and run!” Here comes the pitch. Strike! Second pitch … Tommy’s bat miraculously makes contact and he sends the ball flying into the outfield. His teacher is at third base flailing her arms wildly while instructing him to run. With bat in hand, he proceeds to run after the ball in what appears to be a game of retrieval. The teacher begins yelling, “No! Run to the base!” Tommy runs toward the teacher on third. By now his opponents are laughing and his teammates are appalled. Tommy’s team ends up losing the game.

Though they may look like every other kid on the playground, children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) like Tommy have special learning styles that often get overlooked or downplayed. Recess is often a frustrating time for them, not only because of the social-skills barrier, but also because they just don’t know how to play the games.

Children with ASDs need an environment geared for success. This is provided by incorporating needed structure and appropriate supports that facilitate the learning process, including a curriculum that emphasizes all the unwritten social rules. SARRC’s after-school and summer program curriculum breaks down these games into easy tasks that gradually build until the child is able to successfully follow the entire sequence. For example, a baseball game would be taught as: stand in line, get up to bat, bat, set the bat down, run to first base, run to second base, and so on. Peer initiations and interactions can then be elicited as a byproduct of a successful experience involving something as simple as kicking a ball into a goal.

Covering ALL THE Bases

SARRC’s after-school and summer programs encourage success

By Erin Paschke, MT-BC
Music Therapist & Intervention Specialist
SARRC offers the following After-School and Summer Programs:

**Hooked on Play**
Designed for children ages 5 to 13 with an ASD and their typically developing peers, Hooked On Play (HOP) is an enrichment program that fosters social skills and appropriate peer interaction, including teamwork, camaraderie, asking to join in an activity, responding appropriately, etc., through a curriculum that teaches age-appropriate games. The program combines supportive teaching strategies while implementing social and gross motor games that mirror activities at school and in the community. HOP is structured to provide participants with an opportunity to acquire and then practice the generalization of age-appropriate games and social communication.

- **Dates:** Wednesdays through May 30*
- **Ages:** 5-8 years
- **Group 1:** 4-5 p.m.
- **Group 2:** 5-6 p.m.
- **Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
- **Cost:** DDD/DDT reimbursement accepted; private pay is $170 per person**

*Program is currently underway

- **Dates:** Mondays through May 30*
- **Ages:** 9-13 years
- **Group:** 4-5:30 p.m.
- **Place:** Jewish Community Center, 12701 N. Scottsdale Road
- **Cost:** Private pay is $275 per person**

*Program is currently underway

**Summertime Fun**
SARRC’s Summertime Fun program offers individuals with an ASD and their typically developing peers a fun afternoon experience in which they can participate in numerous activities including, but not limited to, yoga, gymnastics, karate, ceramics, music and role playing. The program focuses on emphasizing appropriate social interaction with peers, building friendships and maintaining skills that were learned during the school year.

- **Session 1**
  - **Ages:** 6-9 years
  - **Group 1:** 1-3 p.m. June 11-29
  - **Group 2:** 3-5 p.m. June 11-29
  - **Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
  - **Cost:** DDD/DDT reimbursement accepted; private pay is $289 per person**

- **Session 2**
  - **Ages:** 10-14 years
  - **Dates:** 1-5 p.m. July 9-Aug. 3
  - **Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix
  - **Cost:** DDD/DDT reimbursement accepted; private pay is $577 per person**

All after-school and summer program participants must be independently toilet trained and able to participate in small and large group activities with minimal adult support. Typically developing siblings or peers are encouraged to enroll.

**PJ’s Flowers**
10% of all purchases* you make with PJ’s Flowers will be donated to SARRC.

*Amount applies to merchandise total. Delivery and tax excluded.

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800-456-0206
Moving SARRC toward a comprehensive, integrated model of clinical services

SJ, this image is 576.79%, is a larger one coming?

Building Excellence
While interviewing for the position of clinical services director late last year, it became clear to me that joining SARRC would provide me with many exciting opportunities. I was interested in the opportunity to work for a nonprofit with a business infrastructure. The opportunity to be involved in both clinical practice and applied research also matched my career goals.

I was intrigued by the opportunity to work for an organization that was well-respected and well-networked with both the local community and major national autism organizations. I had already provided training for many of SARRC’s program staff and knew that the opportunity to work with such a talented group of therapists, clinicians and habitators is difficult to find, particularly in a community-based center. More than anything, though, I was drawn to SARRC because it is uniquely positioned to build a comprehensive, integrated service delivery model wherein programs can be coordinated across disciplines, contexts and the lifespan.

SARRC currently offers a broad range of programs for a large number of families with children with autism. Further, these programs have been based on best practice models of intervention. However, our first goal toward developing a comprehensive, integrated model is to build excellence into each of our programs. Building excellence implies relying on evidence-based interventions and collecting data to drive decision making.

SARRC’s Habilitation Agency, which is implemented with young children in their homes, must be a core component of our comprehensive model. Currently, program managers write in-home Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)-based programs that are coordinated with families and implemented by habitators. Building excellence into the Habilitation Agency will include increasing the intensity of interventions through parent training; incorporating more naturalistic ABA procedures for teaching social
No dream is ever too small. No dream is ever too big.

Fennemore Craig is pleased to support the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center in its mission to provide answers and assistance to families touched by autism. For more information about Fennemore Craig, P.C., please visit our website at www.fennemorecraig.com or contact Timothy Berg at 602.916.5000, 3003 N. Central Avenue, Suite 2600, Phoenix, AZ 85012.

Fennemore Craig
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communication (e.g. Pivotal Response Treatment, Incidental Teaching); teaching across natural settings and environments; and using data to objectively demonstrate improvements, monitor child progress and identify areas of need.

SARRC has recognized the importance of home-school coordination by offering families the Community School, an inclusive toddler and preschool program. The Community School is an important component of a comprehensive intervention model because it creates opportunities for children with autism to interact with their typically developing peers daily and prepares children for their transition to kindergarten.

Building excellence into the Community School will include increasing the number of typically developing peers who participate in the program, improving generalization of skills by implementing interventions in a natural context, and using data to guide decisions about how interventions should be implemented with a group of children, as opposed to working one-on-one with a child. Further, a number of inclusive, naturalistic ABA preschool curriculums have been recognized as state-of-the-art programs for children with autism. Therefore, we can build excellence into the Community School by looking closely at models that have already been shown to be effective.

As excellence is built into each of SARRC’s programs, we will begin integrating our many programs into one comprehensive model. For instance, if the same evidence-based intervention procedures are taught to parents, habilitators, teachers and peers, children with autism will be engaged in high-quality programming throughout their waking hours. When these programs are further enhanced and coordinated with JumpStart™, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Music, Hooked on Play or other SARRC intervention programs, SARRC will likely be one of the first organizations to truly provide a comprehensive, integrated program for families.

Building excellence into each of our programs and realizing the vision of a comprehensive, integrated model has considerable implications for broad systems change. That is, SARRC may redefine the meaning of “best practices,” empirically demonstrate the efficacy of the model, disseminate our findings, and replicate the model in other communities, states and countries. While we await continued progress in phenotyping and genetic research that will affect future generations of children with autism, SARRC’s comprehensive model may greatly impact the one in 150 children living with autism today.
My first exposure to autism was at a SARRC Community Breakfast in 2002. I remember leaving the event feeling overwhelmed by the staggering statistics I heard regarding this neurobiological disorder and humbled by the strength I saw in parents of children with autism. Those same feelings accompanied me last summer as I walked through the doors of SARRC to assume my new role as Chief Advancement Officer.

The organization that I admired from afar is my new place of employment. I am honored to be rubbing shoulders with those who devote their time and talents to researching the causes, investigating new treatment options and educating the public about autism.

In the past year I have noticed a blossoming of autism awareness that is attributed in large part to those of you who have been championing this cause for many years and making sure that the story of autism continues to be told. Let me first say thank you. This new awareness is coming with financial support that will help SARRC continue collaborative autism research. The Arizona State Legislature has designated significant dollars for autism research and the U.S. Congress has recognized the importance of funding autism research through the Combating Autism Act of 2006.

These kinds of forward-thinking results are very exciting and a step in the right direction but continued and focused perseverance is critical. As we look forward to breaking ground on the Opus West Vocational & Life-Skills Training Academy, my fundraising energies will be focused on vocational program funding as well as sustained funding for the new Kemper & Ethel Marley Arts and Culture Program and existing early intervention programs at SARRC.

My professional mission is to keep telling the story of autism so that funding from private, public and governmental sources continues to sustain the ongoing efforts of SARRC. My personal mission is to encourage each and every one of you to stay engaged. Keep being the voice in your communities by talking with teachers, business associates, friends, family ... everyone in your sphere of influence. Keep writing to legislators about the importance of funding autism research, intervention and education. Join us at fundraising events to show the public that there is a large community that is passionate about raising autism awareness. Your efforts are making a difference and I truly believe that we each have a significant contribution to make.
For many years, SARRC has worked toward the goal of developing and implementing a vocational and life-skills program for youth and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). This year, that goal will be further realized with the groundbreaking of the Opus West Vocational & Life Skills Academy.

The academy represents the next evolution of education and training programs for individuals with ASDs. These programs will provide youth and adults, ages 13 and older, with instruction and practicum opportunities related to pre-vocational, vocational, life and leadership skills development.

Additionally, the academy will be a hub of support for communities, businesses, parents and families. As Leatrice Kitchell, mother of an adult daughter with autism and member of the Academy Planning Committee, explains, “As a parent of a daughter with autism who is in the workforce, I am excited to share information with other families and look forward to input from other parents. It is critical that parents support one another as our children approach adulthood.”
SARRC’s effort to implement this type of program is another piece of the holistic approach to providing a continuum of education and training across the lifespan. This ideal will be mirrored in the programmatic philosophies and methodologies upon which the academy will be founded on.

A great need

So why is SARRC building this academy? As individuals with ASDs age out of the public education system, employability prospects are dismal. Unemployment rates for adults with ASDs are estimated to be as high as 90 percent.

Vocational and life-skills education and training are the primary curriculum deficits most schools face. Many, if not most, teachers are poorly trained and equipped to teach these students. This can often be attributed to a lack of understanding of the social, communication, behavioral and learning attributes and needs of students with ASDs. Typical day treatment programs and technical/vocational schools are largely unable to serve this population for many of the same reasons.

Dana Hock, the mother of an adult son with autism and a former SARRC board member, recounts, “When Louis turned 22 he was no longer able to receive any additional form of education from the state. We searched program after program and not one program specifically addressed the needs of an adult with autism. They did not understand that Louis needs a special environment due to sensory issues, and they had never heard of the TEACCH (structured teaching) program, which Louis has done so well on since the age of 12,” says Hock, who is also a member of SARRC’s Academy Planning Committee. “The day programs are overwhelmed and cannot meet the needs of adults with autism who usually require a 1:3 ratio. The ratios in state programs are more like 1:8. An adult with autism will not survive that environment.”

SARRC’s vocational program will offer Louis and others learning opportunities in a setting conducive to the learning styles of teens and adults with autism. Individual programs will be tailored to the participants’ unique skills and abilities, and they will be given the chance to succeed.

Education ideally comes from many places beyond the home and the school. It comes from working part-time jobs, volunteering and interacting with a network of peers, friends and elders. However, the type of the enrichment and education readily available to typically developing individuals is often missing from the lives of youth and adults with ASDs. To that end, the academy will be a doorway to these opportunities.

Construction set to begin

The next 12 months will be an exciting time as construction begins on the academy building, which will be adjacent to the Don & Sybil Harrington Campus for Exceptional Children. As for current progress, Michael Sklar, SARRC board vice chairman and project lead for the construction of the academy, reports, “We are currently in the process of completing our application to the City of Phoenix and continue to work on the design of the Opus West Vocational & Life Skills Academy. Over the past several months, we have been securing our capital funding for construction and operations, obtaining the necessary zoning and code approvals, and assembling a dedicated and talented team of design and construction professionals.”

The Opus West Vocational & Life Skills Academy will utilize flexible fixtures, multi-purpose space and educational technology to maximize the space. Indoor and outdoor lines will blur as walls and doors open wide to accommodate larger groups and close to create more intimate and private areas for specialized training and instruction.

The design team expects to submit plans to the City soon, with permits and the start of construction expected by late summer.

Meet Todd Lewis

As director of SARRC’s new Opus West Vocational & Life Skills Academy, Lewis is charged with developing, implementing and evaluating the programs and services offered through the academy. He also oversees the management and coordination of the staff and programs.

Before joining SARRC, he worked as district program manager for the Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). In this role, he was responsible for the development and application of Support Coordination Services for District I, the supervision of more than 175 staff members, and management of a budget of more than $145 million.

In similar capacities, Lewis has also worked for the Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona State University and Tempe Union High School District.

Lewis is an Arizona State University graduate with a master’s degree in education with a focus in special education and rehabilitation, and a bachelor’s degree in English. Additionally, he is a member or past member of the board of directors for Best Buddies of Arizona, Arizona Public Health Association and the Arizona Adolescent Health Coalition, and committee chairperson for the Arizona Transition Leadership Team. He is also a faculty member at Mesa Community College.
SARRC was selected to present three research projects at the sixth International Meeting For Autism Research (IMFAR) in Seattle this May. Following are summaries of the research findings:

**The Impact of Family History of ADHD and/or Bipolar Disorder on Severity of Autism in Multiplex and Singleton Families**

Autism is the best known and most common of the heritable neurodevelopmental disabilities. Several disorders that share some of the same characteristics of autism occur commonly in family members. This suggests there may be a genetic vulnerability that results in a variety of clinical presentations. A family may have a child with autism and another child with ADHD or...
speech delay. The family may also report that there is an aunt who easily loses her temper or a father who is very shy. It is now clear that a dozen or more genes may be interacting individually or in concert to cause autism, and some of these genes may be shared with other psychiatric disorders. It is likely that autism and other psychiatric and learning disorders are all caused by the combined effects of many genes and unknown environmental factors.

Some researchers believe behavioral symptoms that are similar in each of these disorders may be caused by the same gene. Others believe there are certain genes in the genome that simply predispose people to develop any of a variety of mental disorders. Other factors, such as other genes and environmental influences, may determine which disorder the person develops.

In this project, SARRC researchers evaluated the occurrence of psychiatric disorders in extended family members of children with autism. In particular, SARRC looked at families with a history of ADHD or bipolar disorder. Using gold-standard tests for autism, we looked to see if there were any differences between multiplex families (families with two or more affected children) and singleton families (those with only one affected child). Subscales from the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Survey were utilized to compare autism severity in each group who reported a history of ADHD and/or bipolar disorder.

SARRC’s analysis showed the severity of autism was significantly greater in children of multiplex families with a history of ADHD and/or bipolar disorder as compared to children in singleton families with a similar history. Among families with a history of ADHD and/or bipolar disorder, autism severity scores indicate increased severity of autism symptoms among children in multiplex as compared to children in singleton families.

**Incidence of Psychiatric and Learning Disorders in Multiplex, Only-Child, One-Child and Control Families**

In a related study, SARRC compared the history of psychiatric and learning disorders in multiplex families, families whose only child has autism (only-child), families who have one child with autism and another typical child or children (one-child) and control families.

Data regarding the incidence of psychiatric and learning disorders was collected from 1,081 fami-
lies who completed the SARRC Parent Questionnaire. Families were compared on the reported history of the following psychiatric disorders: bipolar disorder, ADHD, anxiety, learning disorder, depression, obsessive/compulsive disorder and history of violence. The prevalence of each disorder differed across each of these family types. In each instance, however, multiplex families endorsed the most familial disorders, followed by only-child families, one-child families, then control families.

The reported family history of psychiatric and learning disorders is most prevalent in multiplex families and lowest in control families suggesting a general genetic vulnerability that may predispose an individual to a variety of mental disorders, including autism.

**Impact of Parental Depression on Outcomes of Children with Autism: An Evaluation of the SARRC JumpStart Program**

Parents of children with autism report more stress and depression than parents of children with other developmental disabilities. Given the deficits associated with communication and social skills in children with autism, the negative consequences of maternal depression may be more detrimental to children with autism than to typical children.

For this project, we evaluated our early intervention program, JumpStart™, a four-week early intervention program that aims to empower parents while improving child functioning through one-on-one intervention. Seventy-three children and their parents participated in this study. Efficacy of JumpStart was evaluated utilizing measures of parental empowerment, depression and child functioning.

Following participation in JumpStart, there was a decrease in parental depressive symptomatology and parents experienced increased feelings of empowerment. The children in the program showed statistically significant improvement in communication, sensory/cognitive skills and health/physical behaviors. This research suggests a causal relationship between improvement in child behavior and change in parents’ severity of depression and feelings of empowerment.
The National Commercial Services Division of First American Title is a proud supporter of SARRC and congratulates its work in the areas of research and education of Autism.

We are proud to support the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center and salute its efforts to promote awareness and provide resources for the education and empowerment of individuals with ASDs.

On behalf of our son, Benjamin, we thank you for your love and support of our family and those families like us in the Valley.

Shaun and Jamee Klein

Shaun M. Klein is a partner in our Phoenix office. We are committed to supporting the social, economic and cultural health of the communities in which we live, work and practice law.
Whispering Hope Ranch Family Camp

For the sixth year, SARRC and Whispering Hope Ranch will host a special all-inclusive camp experience for families affected by autism. The four sessions held this summer will include activities for campers, siblings and parents. Campers with ASDs will participate in programs ranging from animal-assisted activities, sports, arts and crafts, tie-dying shirts and therapeutic horseback riding. Siblings can participate in the same activities and will also work together during support group time. Parents will learn relaxation strategies and be treated to massage, yoga, quiet time and parent group discussions. Early registration is recommended due to limited space. The cost is $135 per person and the sessions are: July 1-3, July 4-6, July 29-31 and Aug. 1-3. Please contact Karen Schultz at (602) 218-8220 to register. Visit whisperinghoperanch.org to learn more about the camp experience and accommodations.

9th Annual Community Breakfast

This inspiring fundraising event, aimed at elevating autism awareness, is a great opportunity to learn more about autism and SARRC. All contributions raised at the breakfast will go directly to SARRC to support important research, as well as educational and developmental programs. Special thanks to Co-chairs Dan & Danielle Feroletto and Stephanie & Socrates Papadopolous, as well as Honorary Chairs Senator John & Cindy McCain.

Date: April 19
Time: 7:30 to 9 a.m.; registration begins at 6:45 a.m.
Place: Arizona Biltmore, 2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix
Cost: No cost, but donations are encouraged

Alice in Wonderland

SARRC families will be treated to a special showing of Alice in Wonderland thanks to the generosity of Wells Fargo Bank. The play is presented by The Cookie Company, a division of the Phoenix Theatre specializing in children’s theater, and is the first theatrical opportunity that SARRC has organized as part of its new Kemper & Ethel Marley Arts & Culture for Exceptional Children Program. Space is limited and families must RSVP to attend. Please visit www.autismcenter.org or call (602) 340-8717 for additional information.

Date: April 28
Time: 3 p.m.
Place: Phoenix Theatre, 100 E. McDowell Road, Phoenix
Cost: Free

Walk Now for Autism

SARRC will be teaming up with Autism Speaks/Cure Autism Now to host the second annual autism awareness and fundraising walk at Tempe Beach Park on Sunday, Nov. 4. Last year, walkers, friends and families raised more than $368,000 for autism research and we hope to raise even more with your help. To volunteer for the 2007 walk committee, become a sponsor or form a walk team, please contact Lyndsey Miholich at (602) 218-8210 or lmiholich@autismcenter.org.

Date: Nov. 4
Time: 8 a.m. to noon
Place: Tempe Beach Park, Rio Salado Parkway and Mill Avenue, Tempe
**Workshops**

**Phoenix Financial Education Series**
Arizona Saves and the City of Phoenix have teamed up to offer a free three-part series on money management geared toward parents of children with special needs. Topics include using credit wisely, budgeting and saving, understanding taxes and tax credits, and how to prepare for home ownership. To register, please contact Arizona Saves at (602) 246-3500 or info@arizonasaves.org.

**Dates:** April 12, April 15, April 22  
**Time:** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** Free

**Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood**
Dr. Peter Gerhardt, president of the Organization for Autism Research (OAR), will be hosting a workshop and discussion to address the issues surrounding transition from adolescence to adulthood. The workshop will examine education and training methodologies, including Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), as well as sexuality and the social world, and how they relate to successful transition. The workshop will conclude with a Q & A panel comprised of government officials, advocates, individuals with ASDs and parents.

To register, please contact Karen Schultz at (602) 218-8220.

**Dates:** April 20  
**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Place:** SARRC, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** $20

**8th Annual Autism Society of America National Conference**
ASA’s national conference will bring together experts from a variety of disciplines to address the diverse challenges facing individuals and families today. For additional information and to register, please visit autismsocietyofamerica.org. Early-bird registration specials are available through May 1 and there is discounted admission for individuals with autism.

**Dates:** July 11-14, 2007  
**Place:** The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, Scottsdale  
**Cost:** $225-$300 full conference registration

**Support Groups**

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

**Dates:** May 1 (Salty Senoritas), June 5 (La Parilla Suiza), July 3 (Chili’s), August 7 (Macaroni Grill)  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Place:** Rotating restaurant locations at Stapley Road and U.S. 60, Mesa

**Grandparents Group**
This informational group focuses on educating grandparents of children with autism about the latest news and research happening in the field. New grandparents are welcome to come at 9 a.m. for a meet-and-greet and tour of SARRC.

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

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

**Dates:** May 8, June 12, July 10  
**Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.  
**Place:** New Life Community Church, 8155 W. Thunderbird Road, Peoria

**Just Ask Us.** For more information on any of these workshops or events, please contact SARRC at (602) 340-8717 or visit www.autismcenter.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Parent Orientation</strong></th>
<th>In our parent orientation classes, SARRC provides information and guidance to parents of newly diagnosed children. SARRC also offers ongoing support to parents as they explore therapeutic options, sort out education issues and learn how to deal with their child’s behavioral issues.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SARRC Community School</strong></td>
<td>The SARRC Community School is an inclusive classroom for children ages 18 months to 5 years diagnosed with an ASD. Typically developing children are enrolled to serve as peer models. Children attend five days/week in one of two sessions. The morning hours are from 8 a.m. to noon and the afternoon hours are from 1 to 5 p.m. All-day care is available for typically developing children.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JumpStart</strong></td>
<td>JumpStart teaches parents how to develop and manage an at-home intervention program, which also supports skill development in school and community settings. During this five-week series, parents participate in discussion groups and hands-on training led by SARRC’s team of specialists.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More Than Words</strong></td>
<td>Based on years of communication research, More Than Words provides parents with a better understanding of how their child is communicating. Communication styles and ways to encourage language development are discussed in great detail during this seven-week session. All sessions are led by SARRC’s Hanen-certified speech language pathologist.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Autism Education Support</strong></td>
<td>SARRC offers school-based consultation to help individuals with ASDs reach their personal potential. Services include classroom observation, behavior and social-skills development, peer sensitivity training, paraprofessional development and more.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Habilitation Services</strong></td>
<td>SARRC provides family-centered intervention based on the principals of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), with hands-on, intensive in-home support for families and habilitators. Families are assigned to program managers who oversee the development of a treatment plan, conduct monthly home visits to monitor success, mentor parents through issues related to development and provide ongoing training and support to the habilitator.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Music Therapy</strong></td>
<td>SARRC now offers private music therapy sessions that use elements of music to create an environment that is structured and multi-sensory, allowing individuals to participate and express themselves in socially appropriate ways. Therapy sessions focus on increased motor skills, self-expression, sensory integration, and increased communication and attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational Therapy</strong></td>
<td>Occupational therapy helps children develop functional skills for daily living. Individual sessions focus on fine motor skills, gross motor skills, visual motor skills, self-help and sensory processing.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speech Therapy</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of individual speech therapy is to enhance intentional communication. Sessions focus on expressive, receptive and pragmatic language goals, which are individually tailored to meet each child’s needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speech Groups</strong></td>
<td>Children and teens ages 4 to 18 participate in group speech therapy sessions supported by a speech language pathologist. Speech groups will focus on turn taking, commenting, interactive play, conversations, complimenting and more.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hooked On Play</strong></td>
<td>Designed for children with ASDs and typically developing peers, Hooked On Play is designed to incorporate each child’s strengths and interests. Hooked On Play combines supporting teaching strategies, social games and creative activities to help facilitate socialization and interaction. The program is structured to provide participants with an opportunity to practice acquisition and generalization of social skills, social communication and motor-skills development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strummin’ &amp; Drummin’</strong></td>
<td>Open to individuals with ASDs and their typically developing peers, this group music session helps participants learn how to interact and communicate with each other. Opportunities to develop friendships are fostered through this shared musical experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FRIEND Program</strong></td>
<td>This peer sensitivity training for preschool-12th grade students provides increased awareness of ASDs among students and faculty, and also creates supportive opportunities for children with ASDs to interact appropriately with typically developing peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational &amp; Life Skills Training</strong></td>
<td>Currently in the development stages, this training is designed to help older teens and young adults with autism express interest in potential careers while learning necessary life skills that will enhance their ability to live and work more independently.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arts &amp; Culture</strong></td>
<td>The Kemper &amp; Ethel Marley Arts &amp; Culture Program blends art experience with therapeutic autism intervention techniques. The program utilizes art to promote autism awareness, therapeutic intervention and opportunities for the talents and contributions of individuals with ASDs to be appreciated.</td>
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</table>
It's amazing what we can accomplish when we all work together towards a common goal. SARRC has done an outstanding job of pulling people together to make a real difference. Banner Health is proud to sponsor SARRC's Community Breakfast and supports their ongoing efforts. With everyone's help, advancing autism research is within our reach.
We Listen. You Benefit.

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MICHAEL H. BILL
6900 East Camelback Rd., Suite 527
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(602) 346-9100

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SOUTHWEST AUTISM RESEARCH
& RESOURCE CENTER (SARRC)
300 N. 18th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85006
(602) 340-8717
sarrc@autismcenter.org
www.autismcenter.org

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