Outreach
2014
CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY & RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT AUTISM

BAKERS' DELIGHT
Rising Entrepreneurs pilot program launches 3 new businesses
Page 26

DRIVING SUCCESS
Adult with autism finds his niche as car wash employee
Page 28

TRIAL AND ERROR
When it comes to clinical trials, there's often more to tell
Page 30

More 2 Me
Sprintz family finds reason to hope after receiving their sons’ diagnoses
Page 22
THERE’S MORE 2 EACH OF US.

Every Individual is a Precious Jewel.
22 More 2 Me The Sprintz family bands together after both of their young sons, Gavin and Gage, are diagnosed with autism. Both boys attend the SARRC Community School and parent training is an important part of their lives. The family is actively fundraising for Walk Now for Autism Speaks in hopes of besting the $10,000 their team raised last year.

26 Baker’s Delight The Rising Entrepreneurs pilot program results in the creation of three-home based baking businesses founded by adults with autism. Matt Cottle, founder of Stuttering King Bakery and Culinary-Works program participant, was the inspiration for this pilot program.

28 Model Employee 28-year-old Lance Rumsey believes his full-time job at Fast & Friendly Carwash in Peoria is the most important part of his life right now. He hopes to one day live on his own.

30 More to Measure Most pharmaceutical trials in autism are unsuccessful. Is it because the medication doesn’t work, or is something else going on?

32 Making Strides The 2013 Walk Now for Autism Speaks raises $1.5 million with a record-setting donation from Visionary sponsor Sprouts Farmers Market.

34 A Place to Call Home SARRC co-founder Denise Resnik launches sister nonprofit, First Place AZ, to address the long-term residential needs of adults with autism.

35 Growing Community The Canadian government announces funding to expand Autism CommunityWorks Canada – based on SARRC’s CommunityWorks® program – to six Canadian cities over the next three years.
Your Thoughts

JumpStart helps daughter gain words, make eye contact

I participated in JumpStart with my 18-month-old daughter, Juliet. When we started, I felt totally lost as to what I should be doing and how to get much needed services for her. Juliet seemed as if she were deaf when we would try to get her attention and didn’t have any communication skills. She didn’t know any words, avoided eye contact and often made a growling noise. During the JumpStart program we were taught everything we needed to know about autism, how to get services, how to start doing PRT (an ABA therapy), and how to engage our sweet little girl. On the last day of the program, Juliet spoke her first word, “Up!”

It’s been five months since we attended and Juliet no longer growls. In fact, she now can say 15 words and approximate so many more. She also now understands close to 100 words. Just these last few weeks her personality has come alive. She smiles so much and has started using more body language. My favorite change has been her eye contact. She now stares deep into my eyes and melts my heart. JumpStart gave me the knowledge and confidence to get started in the right direction. I know my little girl has a long road ahead, but I really have hope that if we keep pushing forward with these therapies she will continue to progress.

Jacque Ferguson

Teen will miss SARRC, pens thank you

Thank you for helping me throughout the years that I have been working with you. I hope that I can come back and visit again. My favorite memory with SARRC is the Whispering Hope Ranch camping trip last year. I also enjoyed the PowerWorks location for the past few months. I hope that I can do the Whispering Hope Ranch camping trip again this year. The SARRC staff that I like the most are Brad, Ean, and last but not least, Mary. I will certainly miss all of you guys when I move to Pennsylvania!

David Garrido
When our son, Matt, graduated from Chaparral High School last year, his daily routines and patterns, developed for years within the same safe, supportive environment, came to an end. As parents, we needed to find him something that would advance his skills, fill his daily schedule with meaningful activities and enable him to support himself.

Thanks to SARRC and Matt’s participation in its Rising Entrepreneurs program, Matt created a home-bakery business named SMILE Biscotti, an acronym for Supporting Matt’s Independent Living Enterprise (read more about Rising Entrepreneurs on page 26).

Since he started selling last October, Matt has baked, packaged, mailed and delivered more than 25,000 biscotti with the help of friends, family and Facebook, and we have plans to grow the business in the future.

At age 22, Matt represents a generation of more than 500,000 U.S. children with autism entering adulthood this decade. The looming question for parents continues to be: “Who will care for our adult children when we are no longer able to do so?” As the school bus stops coming, parents and communities are faced with autism’s “perfect storm,” an increasing population of special needs adults, many whom cannot live independently; dwindling government resources; and few housing options. Families are also faced with medical issues, developmental regression and aging parents.

In response to this challenge and with the support of SARRC, I formed a separate and sister nonprofit to develop a new real estate and innovative home option for adults with autism and related disorders. First Place AZ continues the important mission of SARRC, to provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families (read more about First Place on page 34).

First Place is preparing to break ground on its first model property, a mixed-use residential community development sited in the heart of Phoenix. It will include apartments for residents, a residential academy for students and a national leadership institute for training professionals and support-service providers. The development is leveraging the benefits of a supportive urban area in Central Phoenix that will connect residents to jobs, friends, lifelong education and their community.

With the groundbreaking of First Place and the strength of SARRC’s board and senior leadership team in place, it’s time for me to shift my focus to First Place, which separates the real estate ownership from the services, an important finding from our 15 years of research. While my daily involvement with SARRC is being reduced, I will always be a steadfast champion and supporter, and I hope you will continue to be as well.

I continue my personal mission in tandem with SARRC as we address what’s in the hearts of parents – the dragons and worries that keep us awake, the sense of urgency with each passing day and the enormous responsibility to do whatever we can to ensure our kids at every age are safe, happy, accepted, productive and fulfilled.

Gratefully,

Denise D. Resnik, Matt’s Mom,
SARRC Co-founder & First Place AZ Founder
Greenberg Traurig is honored to support SARRC in its mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.

Greenberg Traurig, LLP
2375 East Camelback Road | Suite 700
Phoenix, AZ 85016 | 602.445.8000

Celebrating the differences that make us stronger
Aetna Medicaid is proud to support Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center.

Visit www.aetnabetterhealth.com
Throughout my career, it’s been more common for parents to see me after they hear the word “autism,” but while the shock of the diagnosis is still fresh. Many are in denial simply because they don’t know what autism means. They want to better understand the disorder, but rarely know how to make sense of the diagnosis or where to begin.

“Autism” doesn’t carry a lot of meaning on its own. Further, the individual differences in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are so vast that it’s often difficult for parents to reconcile their perception of what autism is with what they are seeing in their own child.

Therefore, we try to help parents see ASD as a collection of symptoms: limited language, frequent tantrums, obsession with lining up toys or objects, or difficulty making friends are specific symptoms that we can and have treated successfully. As children, adolescents and adults receive individualized treatment, many of their symptoms can be replaced with functional skills that diminish the impairments associated with the disorder and improve quality of life.

In this issue of Outreach, we expose the many layers of what it means to have ASD. ASD is indeed a severe disability; its challenges are pervasive and impact not only the life of the individual, but also the lives of family members and friends. Autism may make it difficult for parents to feel socially connected to their infant or toddler. It is often challenging for adults with autism to get a job, not because they lack the technical skills, but because they may not have the social and navigational skills to work with other people.

When we treat symptoms, we see so much more in individuals with autism. Through our early intervention programs, children rapidly gain skills and their parents’ hopes and dreams for their future often return. Our teens are volunteering at local nonprofits to learn the work skills they’ll need to be competitive in the job market in our Autism CommunityWorks® program, which SARRC will begin licensing in Canada nationwide this year (see page 35). Our adults are gaining postsecondary opportunities on college campuses (such as the University of Advancing Technology), with our committed employment partners, or as entrepreneurs creating self-sustaining enterprises. And in partnership with First Place AZ and our visionary co-founder, Denise Resnik, we will demonstrate that adults with autism can live independently in the community (see page 34).

As the numbers of individuals with ASD continue to rise, there are so many more people to support. SARRC’s commitment to excellence and outcome-driven focus for each individual we serve makes it impossible to do it alone. There’s so much more we all can do.

We need to develop strategic partnerships that will help us attract more people into the field to further disseminate SARRC’s model. We need research partners who are committed to advancing discoveries that will make meaningful differences in the lives of individuals with ASD. We need schools to recognize the potential in individuals with ASD and see it as their responsibility to provide meaningful, inclusive educational opportunities. We need employers to partner with us to train our adults with autism to do their jobs effectively, and then place them in competitive employment positions. And we need our community to embrace the important contributions individuals with ASD can make, and to see that there is so much more to an individual with autism than having autism.
Eagle Scout builds benches, beautifies Vocational & Life Skills Academy

Becoming an Eagle Scout is a remarkable achievement that requires the planning, development and execution of a unique service project benefiting the scout’s community. Costa Theodore, a sophomore at Brophy College Prep, knew for a long time he wanted to do his Eagle Scout project at SARRC. Theodore has known Eleni Papadopoulos since she was born, and he was in kindergarten when she was diagnosed with autism. He understands how important SARRC has been to Papadopoulos’ treatment; he has participated on her team at the Walk Now for Autism Speaks events.

Theodore met with Brad Herron of SARRC and discussed his interest in doing a project to help individuals with autism. Together they toured the Vocational & Life Skills Academy and looked at areas of opportunity. Theodore noticed the large area where there was no garden under the shade. He thought it would be a good place for benches to be used during trainings. He came up with a set of plans, and then went to work building the benches out of a material that would withstand the elements. Then he organized the other scouts from Troop 401 and they spent two days digging the holes, filling them with cement, and installing six benches. As a bonus, the scouts also pulled weeds and cleaned up the back area of the Vocational & Life Skills Academy.

Theodore’s grandfather, Dr. Constantine Theodore, was an early advocate of inclusion in the days when children with autism were institutionalized, and Dr. Theodore still helps advocate for families who have children with ASDs.

SARRC Named to ‘Best Places to Work’

For the third consecutive year, SARRC has been named among the 2013 Best Places to Work in the Valley by the Phoenix Business Journal. Only 30 businesses are awarded in each category based on the size of the organization. SARRC is in the small business category (50-99 employees) and was #14, up from #28 last year. Selection was based on staff opinion surveys regarding team effectiveness, trust in senior leaders, feeling valued, manager effectiveness, compensation, benefits and more.

SARRC Ramps Up Hispanic Outreach Efforts

With 1 in 64 children in Arizona diagnosed with autism, the current prevalence estimates reflect a 78 percent increase across all children with a 110 percent increase among Hispanic children. Spanish-speaking families require nearly three times as many visits before a diagnosis is made compared to English-speaking families. This could be due to communication delays attributed to exposure to two languages instead of recognized as an early sign of autism, and because families face language barriers when trying to access services and navigate the world of autism.

Current outreach activities at SARRC include educational workshops for families, professionals and support organizations in the Hispanic community, individualized treatment programs available to Spanish-speaking families, increasing media coverage within the Hispanic community, and providing informational materials in Spanish at a variety of community health fairs and events.
PV School District Awards SARRC Professional Development Contract

SARRC was awarded a contract for staff development and leadership training services from the Paradise Valley School District, which allows SARRC to be a contracted provider of services for more than 100 school districts statewide. The effort will focus primarily on training school personnel in applied behavior analysis (ABA) teaching procedures and pivotal response treatment (PRT).

FRIEND Summer Camp Expands Partnership with Camp Simcha

Last summer, SARRC began a new partnership with Camp Simcha in Scottsdale to include children with Asperger’s, ages 5 to 10, as part of our FRIEND Summer Camp Program. The project was such a success that Camp Simcha will be expanding opportunities for children with autism and Asperger’s and serving those as young as 3 years old.

13th ‘Bonzer’ Benefits SARRC

Special thanks to Matt McMahon for his passion and leadership for another successful Beauty of a Bonzer – a Concert Party for Charity, sponsored by Outback Steakhouse and Fosters. Fans enjoyed music, had a wonderful meal catered by Outback Steakhouse, and helped raise nearly $17,000 for SARRC.

Kemper & Ethel Marley JumpStart Training and Resource Center Serves Families in English and Spanish

Since November 2012, the Kemper & Ethel Marley JumpStart Training & Resource Center has become a haven for families of children who have been recently diagnosed with autism. The area includes a children’s classroom, training rooms, private consultation rooms and observation rooms with closed-circuit cameras. The area is mainly used for the JumpStart program, which serves families both in English and Spanish. During times when
In Brief

JumpStart is not in session, the area is also used for SARRC’s Intensive Parent Training program, Community School and Home-based program sessions.

Kathy Bosco Recognized as 2013 Cardinals Quarterback Award Finalist

Each year, the Arizona Cardinals Community Quarterback Award recognizes outstanding volunteers in Arizona. A panel of community leaders selected award recipients and awarded a total of $20,000 to the charitable organizations they serve. This program honors individuals who exemplify leadership, dedication and commitment to improving the communities in which they live through volunteerism. Kathy Bosco, founder of SARRC’s Grandparents Group, was one of three finalists for the award. Bosco received her award of $5,000 in honor of her volunteer work at SARRC at an Arizona Cardinals game late last year.

Community School Attends Great Pumpkin Festival

Last fall, Pearson & Co. supported an opportunity for SARRC’s Community School preschoolers, along with hundreds of other children with special needs, to enjoy a special day in the Pumpkin Patch at the Desert Botanical Garden. SARRC children experienced an old-fashioned hayride and carnival games, had their faces painted, and carved pumpkins that they picked from the pumpkin patch. Special thanks to the Pearson Family and Pearson & Company.

SARRC’s Growth in Educated and Certified Staff

SARRC’s culture is often described as a learning environment, much like a teaching hospital. As a result, many staff members continue their education while working at SARRC and receive practicum and supervision as a benefit of employment. SARRC also continues to attract highly educated and credentialed staff, increasing the breadth of our expertise. In 2007, SARRC employed two doctoral-level staff, eight masters-level staff, and one Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Currently, SARRC has a total of...
seven doctoral-level staff, 26 masters-level staff and 15 BCBAs.

There are fewer than 75 BCBAs in the entire state and SARRC employs 15 of them, most of whom completed their coursework and supervision as a benefit of employment. BCBAs are required to bill insurance companies as supervisors for applied behavior analysis (ABA) treatments, and insurance revenue now makes up more than 30 percent of SARRC’s annual revenue.

G33K Camp at UAT Provides Authentic College Experience

Last summer, SARRC collaborated with the University of Advancing Technology (UAT) to create an opportunity for individuals with autism or Asperger’s ages 16 to 26 to participate in an authentic college experience. Together, SARRC and UAT developed a one-week program during which 10 participants moved into the dorms on the UAT campus and learned what it was like to live away from their parents, live with a roommate, plan and budget for meals, and take college courses from UAT professors. Some of the classes they took included Technology and Modern Culture, Horror Fiction, and Technology and Communication. They also attended life skills classes taught by UAT students in the dorms, including College Living, College Cooking, Dorm Sociology, Intro to Studying and Grilling.

All participants chose either a video game or a film track for their group projects to create and showcase their work in front of friends and family. Parents were thrilled to see their children were able to live away from home in a college environment. The camp culminated with a graduation ceremony where graduates were given a metal UAT Seal (a paper weight), received positive comments from their instructors, and presented their group projects to staff and families. SARRC and UAT will be hosting the camp again this summer.

SARRC Presents to the Latino Caucus at the State Legislature

In January, SARRC staff members Beatriz Conti,
Amy Kenzer and Daniel Openden, along with two passionate SARRC families, presented to the Latino Caucus on the impact of autism on the Latino community. The Latino Caucus, led by Rep. Anna Tovar, comprises approximately 30 state legislators. Rep. Tovar invited the SARRC team to present following a tour she took of SARRC in December along with Reps. Catherine Miranda and Juan Mendez.

**Hats Off to SARRC Board Members**

**HOWARD SOBELMAN,** SARRC board chair and partner at Snell & Wilmer, L.L.P., was selected as the 2014 Phoenix “Lawyer of the Year” for Copyright Law by The Best Lawyers in America. Only a single lawyer in each practice area and designated metropolitan region is honored as the “Lawyer of the Year.” Receiving this designation reflects the high level of respect a lawyer has earned among other lawyers in the same communities and the same practice areas for their abilities, professionalism and integrity. Sobelman has been a member of SARRC’s board since 2006 and board chair for five years.

**DOUG SANDERS,** SARRC board member and president of Sprouts Farmers Market, went public with his company in August. Sanders was in New York the morning of the public IPO offering to ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange.

**SCOTT SUTHERLAND,** SARRC board member and vice president of Bonneville International Corporation, was awarded The Dr. Herbert J. and Julie Louis Spirit of Hope Award for 2013 by Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

**SARRC Adds New Board Member**

In November, SARRC welcomed Meighan Harahan to the SARRC board of directors. Harahan is a private investor who lives in Scottsdale. She is serving her first term as board treasurer and chairperson of the Finance Committee. She has been involved with SARRC since moving to Arizona in 2011 and has been a member of the Finance Committee for two years.

---

**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 our communities. We partner with those making a difference in the community. Rallying together and helping others – it’s the Arizona way.
United Way Funds Make an Impact
SARRC is proud to be a partner organization with the Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW), which provided grants and donor designations exceeding $112,000 to SARRC in 2013. VSUW’s funding has supported SARRC’s JumpStart® program and numerous teen and adult programs at the Vocational & Life Skills Academy. Please contact Marcy Adkins at 602-218-8213 to find out how you can designate your VSUW dollars to SARRC (#8806).

SARRC Tees Off with Sutton’s Strokes Tournament
The 9th Annual Sutton’s Strokes for Little Folks Golf Tournament benefitting SARRC was held at the Arizona Biltmore Country Club last February. The tournament saw another record year of golfers and money raised. SARRC is grateful for the support of this year’s sponsors, which included Perfect Game as the World Series Championship Sponsor. A huge thank you to the following businesses for their support: Sanderson Ford, Lawyers Title, Custom Metal Fabrication, Wholesale Floors, Mutual of Omaha and Klement’s Sausage Company. Also, a big thank you to Glove It, Baseball Prospectus, Rawlings, Louisville Slugger, Evoshield, Leaf Trading Cards, Oakley and Sprouts for providing invaluable donated items. Congrats also goes to this year’s tournament chairs, Daron Sutton, Laurie Sandau, Tiffany Lauchlan and Amy Cornelius and their committee members for organizing a fantastic event.

Operation Santa Claus Touches 250+ Families via SARRC
For the 12th year in a row, Sanderson Ford and Sanderson Lincoln hosted the Operation Santa Claus charity drive and our community gave back in a big way to support local nonprofits, including SARRC. SARRC extends its thanks to Sanderson Ford and Sanderson Lincoln, ABC15, UPS and Clear Channel for their sponsorship and incredible support. This year’s drive resulted in a record number of donations with more than $40,000 in monetary donations and also tons of clothing and toy donations. The drive allowed SARRC to serve more than 250 families this year.
Kathy Hand
Business Manager

Q: Why did you want to work at SARRC?
A: After working for more than 20 years for a large semiconductor manufacturer, I was looking for a career change that would provide me the opportunity to give back to people and possibly help make a difference in their lives. I used a temporary agency to look for job opportunities in the nonprofit world and was fortunate to be hired for a part-time position with SARRC in 2003. It was a very small organization at the time, however, I was immediately touched and moved by the incredible work being done by the clinicians within SARRC to positively impact families touched by autism. I was also very inspired by the stories shared by Denise Resnik when I had the privilege of listening to her speak about her personal experience with autism and SARRC.

Q: Why is working at SARRC more than just a job?
A: I have been exposed to many different areas and facets of SARRC, all of which have helped me learn new things and see the organization grow and prosper. I have the opportunity to work with our client families, our board and committee members, many of our vendors, and our great team of employees. Each day brings new challenges and moments of joy as I am able to see the great work done by our clinicians truly make a difference in the lives of our clients and families. It is really heartwarming to personally witness the joy that comes from a child’s first word, an adolescent’s new experience with friendship, or an adult being able to find meaningful employment. It is inspiring to see the development and growth in the leadership team, the clinical staff, and the overall organization. I feel very blessed to be part of the support structure that is able to create hope and a future for those impacted by autism.

Nila Johnson

Nila Johnson has been a member of the Grandparents Support Group and has been volunteering at SARRC for five years. She has a grandson, Jared, on the autism spectrum who attended SARRC’s Community School. During Jared’s time here, Johnson volunteered her time to help out in any way with administrative work, lesson plan preparation, answering phones or just about anything that was asked of her. Jared is now in 3rd grade and is doing well, and Johnson continues to volunteer her time at SARRC two days per week and attends our Grandparents Group meetings. She is not only an amazing grandma, caregiver and volunteer, but there is so much more to her. Johnson has worked all her life and has the best organizational skills! She volunteers with a huge smile, a humble heart, and creates a warm and friendly atmosphere everywhere she goes.

Q: Why is volunteering at SARRC more to you than just a volunteer position?
A: I am not just a volunteer at SARRC, I continue to learn as I work. I learn from the Grandparents Group when they have speakers and hand out informational articles and also when the other grandparents ask questions to experts in the field at the meetings. I have seen my own grandson make huge improvements after he attended the Community School. I want to help all of the children like my grandson improve their lives. I also was given the opportunity to learn ABA and PRT behavioral training to help my grandson improve and have a better life.
IN MEMORIAM
SARRC Remembers Lisa Guingo

The Vocational & Life Skills Academy’s first employment partner was Lisa G’s, a small restaurant and wine bar on 7th Street in the Coronado District (now The Main Ingredient). Owner Lisa Guingo really “got it” and supported our efforts, hiring SaRRC clients to work in the kitchen and on the floor. She highlighted SaRRC and our partnership with a message at the top of every menu so customers were aware of the importance of employing adults with autism to support independent living. A few years ago, Lisa closed her restaurant to move to the East Coast to take care of her ill father, then returned to Phoenix after he passed away. Last August, Lisa was diagnosed with inoperable Stage 4 lung cancer, and local chefs and food professionals banded together to help her through an illness that was both financially and physically debilitating. Three months later, the 50-year-old nonsmoker unfortunately succumbed to the disease. Lisa will always be remembered as a champion for SaRRC and especially adults with autism. She is greatly missed.
Donors Who Make a DIFFERENCE

Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation

SARRC has been awarded a $15,000 grant from Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation for an oral health program for the third straight year, and we look forward to continuing the excellent strides we have made in this area.

The Delta Dental Project improves the oral health of uninsured and underserved children and families in Arizona. Currently, this project supports training and the development of information guides for families with individuals with autism, autism service providers and dental professionals in an effort to expand dental care for those on the autism spectrum.

To better support the provision of oral health care at home and in the dental office, an Educational Planning Committee of experts in Special Care Dentistry, parents with children on the autism spectrum, and professionals in the field of autism was created to address how to best support the dissemination of supportive information through education and training. The committee completed a review of what it believes are the best materials currently available in Special Care Dentistry and combined it with evidence-based interventions in autism. The content in the guides is designed to be easily accessible and to help facilitate the most positive experience possible for parents/caregivers, the dental team providing treatment and the individual on the autism spectrum.

USAA Foundation

Since 2001, the USAA Foundation has supported SARRC with much-needed funding for a variety of programs ranging from JumpStart® Early intervention for families of children newly diagnosed with autism to Employment Services for adults with autism. Most recently, USAA Foundation supported Autism CommunityWorks®, a community-based program pairing tweens (ages 10-13) and teens (ages 14-19) with ASD and their typically developing peers in an inclusive partnership with local schools and youth organizations. Together, they engage in various volunteer projects at local nonprofit organizations.

Autism CommunityWorks programs include LibraryWorks (volunteering at local libraries), Good DeedWorks (volunteering at local charity events and non-profits), PetWorks (volunteering at local animal rescues, zoos and other non-profit animal services), PowerWorks (learning about fitness and nutrition in community recreational locations), GardenWorks (volunteering in local gardens), and TheatreWorks (participating in local theatre productions).

SARRC appreciates the support of the USAA Foundation over the years through programs that strongly align with the efforts of USAA members and the communities in which they live and work.
SARRC was awarded a $25,000 grant in 2013 by the Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation to support SARRC’s “Young Women’s Empowerment Series: Education and Support for Women with Autism Spectrum Disorders.” This new program specifically targets women ages 18 and older who have been diagnosed with autism. The disorder impacts five males to every one female; therefore, support and intervention programs are either too general or male-targeted and lack the nuances necessary for young women living with ASD.

The 12-week program, held at SARRC’s Vocational & Life Skills Academy (VLSA), offers an innovative environmental approach to treatment by providing a classroom, private offices for counseling and a fully functioning mock apartment. The women are taught new skill sets in weekly workshops, discussions and social groups, in addition to one-on-one counseling sessions. Participants have the option to continue individual coaching following the 12-week formal program. Three 12-week programs are being offered during the year.

In 2013, the Young Women’s Empowerment Series coached 30 women covering topics ranging from personal and professional relationships, to independent living and finances, to securing employment and making appropriate, everyday life decisions. The success of this series has led to the addition of a Men’s Empowerment Series, which addresses the same topics, but focuses on how these complicated issues affect the lives of men with ASD. Freeport-McMoRan extended the grant through 2014 to develop a training model and materials, an interactive digital manual, and training curriculum for other Arizona agencies to provide the program.
Focus on Asperger’s

BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH, PH.D.
SARRC VICE PRESIDENT
AND RESEARCH DIRECTOR

What is Asperger’s?

Asperger’s is a pervasive developmental disorder that impairs social communication and is marked by restricted and intense interests. It is part of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but impairments may not emerge until elementary school or even later, whenever a clear difference from peer functioning occurs. Early detection is difficult because individuals with Asperger’s develop language by an appropriate age, and they have no significant cognitive impairment. Other than that, the presentation of symptoms is very similar to what we think of as autism.

I heard Asperger’s wasn’t a real disorder anymore because it’s not part of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). Is that true?

It’s true that Asperger’s is no longer a separate disorder in the DSM 5, but neither is Autistic Disorder (and some others). These disorders from DSM IV have all been renamed as one disorder, autism spectrum disorder. While many have criticized the new system, there is reason to believe there will be benefits to people with Asperger’s, who were previously denied support because they didn’t meet DSM IV criteria for autism. The changes are positive for people with Asperger’s, not negative.

Are people diagnosed with Asperger’s always high functioning?

Not necessarily. Early detection of Asperger’s is difficult, and people with the disorder often go undiagnosed or, even worse, misdiagnosed. If they are not diagnosed properly, they miss out on the benefits of early intensive behavioral intervention and then miss opportunities for skill development. Many people with Asperger’s have typical (or even advanced) language and do well in most subjects, but their functional skill development is very limited. This incongruence can be especially difficult because peers, teachers, coworkers and bosses can have expectations that far exceed abilities, and the individual is continuously set up to fail.

Are there treatments for Asperger’s?

Yes! Interventions based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) have demonstrated efficacy for building skills in people with ASD, and this includes Asperger’s. These findings are well documented in a number of studies conducted over the past few decades. Intervention teaches skills that individuals with ASD do not learn on their own, and helps improve functioning, which leads to an improved quality of life.

What should I do if I think someone I know has Asperger’s?

Direct them to www.thinkaspersers.org and ask them to complete the DAVE Screening Questionnaire. Then contact SARRC at 602.340.8717 for next steps.
Enfocarse en el síndrome de Asperger

POR CHRISTOPHER SMITH, PH.D.

¿Qué es el síndrome de Asperger?

Asperger es un trastorno generalizado del desarrollo que afecta las habilidades relacionadas con la comunicación social y está marcado por los intereses restringidos e intensos. Es parte del trastorno del espectro autista, pero las deficiencias pueden no emerge hasta la escuela primaria o incluso más tarde, siempre que se produzca una clara diferencia de funcionamiento con compañeros. La detección temprana es difícil porque los individuos con Asperger desarrollan el lenguaje a una edad apropiada, y no tienen deterioro cognitivo significativo. Aparte de eso, la presentación de los síntomas es muy similar a lo que pensamos que es el autismo.

Oí que el síndrome de Asperger no era más un trastorno real porque no es parte del Manual de Diagnósticos y Estadísticas. ¿Es eso cierto?

Es cierto que el síndrome de Asperger no es un trastorno separado en el DSM 5, pero tampoco lo es el trastorno autista (y algunos otros). Estos trastornos separados de DSM IV han sido Re-nombrados como un desorden, Trastorno del Espectro Autista. Mientras que muchos han criticado el nuevo sistema, hay razón para creer que habrá beneficios para las personas con síndrome de Asperger, que fueron negados apoyo anteriormente porque no cumplían los criterios del DSM IV para el autismo. Los cambios son positivos para las personas con síndrome de Asperger, no negativos.

¿Las personas con diagnóstico de Asperger siempre son de alto funcionamiento?

No necesariamente. La detección temprana del síndrome de Asperger es difícil, y las personas con este trastorno a menudo no son diagnosticados, o aún peor, mal diagnosticadas. Si ellos no son diagnosticados correctamente, se pierden de los beneficios de la intervención temprana conductual intensiva y luego pierden oportunidades para el desarrollo de habilidades. Muchas personas con el síndrome de Asperger tienen lenguaje típico (o incluso superior) y les va bien en la mayoría de los temas, pero su desarrollo de habilidades funcionales es muy limitado. Esta incongruencia puede ser especialmente difícil debido a que compañeros, maestros, compañeros de trabajo y jefes pueden tener expectativas muy superiores a las capacidades, y el individuo es continuamente puesto en una posición para fallar.

¿Hay tratamientos para el síndrome de Asperger?

¡Sí! Las intervenciones basadas en los principios del Análisis Aplicado Conductual han demostrado eficacia para el desarrollo de habilidades en las personas con ASD, y esto incluye el síndrome de Asperger. Estos resultados están bien documentados en una serie de estudios realizados durante las últimas décadas. Intervención enseña habilidades que los individuos con ASD no aprenden por su propia cuenta, y ayuda a mejorar el funcionamiento, lo que conduce a una mejor calidad de vida.

¿Qué debo hacer si creo que alguien que conozco tiene el síndrome de Asperger?

Diríjalos a www.thinkaspersers.org y pídales que completen el cuestionario DAVE. Después contacte a SARRC al 602.340.8717 para los próximos pasos.
SARRC Launched New Postdoctoral Training Program

With the funds raised from SARRC’s partnership on Walk Now for Autism Speaks, we hired a postdoctoral investigator to conduct research on our clinical programs and answer questions related to autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Nicole Matthews, Ph.D., a recent graduate of University of California Irvine Developmental Psychology will conduct four original research studies, publish four articles and present her work at scientific conferences on an annual basis.

Since beginning her position in August 2013, Matthews worked collaboratively with our Vocational and Life Skills director and designed a study to measure the effects of typical peers in our adolescent and adult programs. Typical peers are instrumental in many of SARRC’s programs and are consistent with core values of inclusion. Shah has applied for independent postdoctoral funding for this project. In December, Matthews and SARRC’s JumpStart Director Beatriz Conti designed a study to measure the effects of SARRC’s flagship program, JumpStart®, on parents and children who graduate from the program. Data collection began in February 2014. Both of these studies will continue for the next year to ensure an adequate sample size.

In addition to original studies, Matthews will also have an opportunity to complete analysis and publish on SARRC’s extensive archival data. Her first manuscript was completed at the end of January. It investigates functional profiles and their association to cognitive performance. Dr. Matthews has a bright and productive future ahead of her and we are pleased to support her career development. She was an excellent choice to begin this new and exciting program at SARRC.

Current Clinical Trials

SARRC is conducting two new clinical trials that involve the recruitment of individuals with ASD from ages 6 to 45. One study is investigating the effects of Lurasidone on irritability in boys and girls with
ASD from ages 6 to 16. While other medications are currently available for irritability in ASD, one of the hopes from this particular drug is fewer side effects such as weight gain. This study has a short six-week, double-blind phase and then proposed two-year open label phase where all participants can stay on the drug and be monitored by our site. The other study is investigating the effects of vasopressin on social skills and communication in males with ASD ages 18 to 45. This study has a longer, 12-week double blind phase and no planned open label phase. For more information, contact Amanda Millago at 480.603.3285.

**SARRC Continues Study of Diagnosis App**

For several years now, SARRC has been developing a novel method for assisting with the diagnosis of ASD remotely. The Naturalistic Observation Diagnosis App (NODA) is a smart-phone based system that allows parents who have concerns about their child’s development to record short videos of their child’s behavior in the home and upload them to a web-based system. Clinicians 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. SARRC is examining whether the NODA system can effectively identify autism in 2- to 6-year-old children. If effective, NODA will expedite the current lengthy diagnostic procedures for ASD and provide access to diagnosis to more families.

The early development and pilot testing for NODA was completed at SARRC using unrestricted funds through private donations. The formal development and validation study is currently funded through a collaborative grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

**NODA Work Extends to Social Outcomes**

In a new project, SARRC is extending the work it has done with the Naturalistic Observation Diagnosis App (NODA) to develop a more sensitive outcome measure for clinical trials. In this project, families who participate will be given specific instructions on what kind of video to collect in the home. Through smart phone technology, families collect video that will be uploaded to an online platform. Clinicians at SARRC will be able to log on, review the video and, through the system, identify and quantify behaviors that define social communication, or any other behavior that is targeted in a clinical trial. In this study, SARRC will develop and test this technology, which may revolutionize the way clinical trials are conducted.
For many families, a diagnosis of autism can feel like the end. But Jon and Kori Sprintz have turned their children’s diagnoses into a reason to fight—and they’re just getting started.

BY GINGER S. EIDEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN G. DREISESZUN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS
“That’s how Kori Sprintz describes the moment she first heard the word autism.

New parents, Kori and her husband Jon had no reason to believe anything was wrong with their now 4-year-old son Gage. He was meeting his milestones. More than that — he was exceeding them. He could tell you the names of all of the U.S. presidents and the order of the planets in our solar system. But when someone asked him his name, Gage wouldn’t answer.

“There were these quirks in his behavior,” Kori recalls. “Something was just off.”

The couple had Gage tested through Gilbert Public Schools at the age of 3, and when they found delays warranting early intervention, he was enrolled in a one-on-one setting rather than an integrated pre-school classroom.

“He wasn’t formally diagnosed at that point, but I knew he was probably on the spectrum,” Kori says.

A few months later, their second son, Gavin, now 2, began showing signs of autism — his speech and eye contact vanished, and he became more and more withdrawn. Gavin was diagnosed a week after his second birthday, and Gage was soon

“We didn’t think we were completely out of the woods, but we thought we were doing the right things (by not vaccinating our boys and following a strict organic diet). And while we didn’t feel there was this 100 percent connection to autism, we felt there may be some relation. We just wanted to give them the best chance.”

-Kori Sprintz, mother of two young boys with autism

Gage and a classmate react to a teacher in the Community School.
tested and officially diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

The couple, both chiropractors, had followed a strict organic diet throughout both pregnancies and elected against vaccinations for both of their children with the hope of reducing their risk of exposure to any toxins. “We didn’t think we were completely out of the woods, but we thought we were doing the right things,” Kori says. “Our children were going to be at home, in a germ-free environment. And while we didn’t feel there was this 100 percent connection to autism, we felt there may be some relation. We just wanted to give them the best chance.”

Searching for Answers

Like many families facing a new diagnosis of autism, the Sprintzes were overwhelmed with questions and desperate for answers. A close friend along with their contacts at the Melmed Center, where Gage and Gavin were diagnosed, directed them to SARRC, and they quickly enrolled in the organization’s JumpStart® program. Soon after, the Sprintzes found themselves empowered, and where days earlier they only saw heartbreak and worry, they now also saw hope.

“JumpStart is this fabulous thing that I think is actually a great program for any parent to go through,” Kori says. “You gain a lot of great tools that you can use to teach your kids. It also helped us to understand the laws and how they relate to a diagnosis of autism as well as how to navigate the school system and insurance.”

The Sprintz’s experience in JumpStart was followed by Gavin’s enrollment in SARRC’s Community School. During his first few weeks in the program, Jon and Kori worried as they saw their son’s irritable behavior increase, primarily because he was now required to communicate for everything he wanted in his environment rather than being provided with it freely. However, they soon learned that requiring communication across all of Gavin’s activities was integral to his success.

“He started to avoid us, but it was because he realized that anytime he was going to interact with us or a teacher, he was going to have to communicate in order to get his needs met,” Kori says, looking back on Gavin’s early days with the school. To decrease Gavin’s avoidance behavior while continuing to increase his communication, the teachers individualized their approach and began pairing themselves with fun games and activities so Gavin would learn that anytime he interacted with people, good things happen, and ultimately people — not just games and activities — became fun to be around. “That’s why the school is so amazing. They saw his avoidant reaction and were able to adapt their approach to meet Gavin’s need.”

Adapting to each child is at the core of everything done at SARRC’s Community School. The global goals of the program are the same for every child — increase social communication and engagement. But the road to get there, according to Community School Director Rachel McIntosh, must be molded to fit an individual’s needs.
“Every child presents differently, so it can’t just be the same approach for every child,” McIntosh says. “For example, with Gavin, we try to encourage communication through eye contact and reaching. So for him, maybe the behavior we are looking for isn’t to use a word to ask us to get something for him, but rather to utilize directed eye contact and to make a verbal attempt to communicate.”

Since adjusting the approach for Gavin, McIntosh and the Sprintzes have seen him make strides in his willingness to engage and make spontaneous eye contact to communicate his needs. Likewise, Gage, who has been enrolled at the school only a few weeks, has made leaps in how he interacts with his fellow classmates, and he has started to gain friends.

Bringing It All Home

The skills the boys learn during the day at the Community School are only the beginning. To be successful, McIntosh says, the same lessons need to be carried through at home. That’s why an integral part of the Community School program is parent training. The Sprintzes complete a total of five hours each week, two and a half for each boy. The training is a time for parents to ask questions and gain valuable tools that will help them interact and teach their children utilizing the same approaches the school does.

“I think this is what is truly making a difference for Gavin and Gage,” McIntosh says. “The Sprintz family has this amazing trust in the program, and we have had to make adjustments along the way, but they are always on board. It is hard as a parent to be flexible, but they are always willing to bend.”

For Kori, the parent training has helped her to become an even stronger advocate for her children. She says it’s more than learning techniques that can help her and Jon to communicate and reinforce what the boys are learning at school — it’s about being able to recognize what works best for their boys and conveying that to others.

“We need to get everyone on the same page,” she says. “And to do that, we have to be involved. This way we can make sure that everyone working with Gavin and Gage is doing it right.”

An Advocate for More

The Sprintz family’s fight has become a bigger mission, beyond their experience with the school and SARRC. Gavin and Gage were diagnosed just before last year’s Walk Now for Autism Speaks event held in October. And for Kori, this fundraiser was a much-needed outlet.

“The walk was like our coming out party,” she says. “Either I could be angry, or I could get involved.”

Kori created a sponsorship page online and set a goal to raise $1,000. Then, she told her story and shared it with friends through email and social media. They hit their goal within the first few days, and by the end, they raised nearly $12,000. For 2014, they are setting their bar a little higher at $15,000.

While the money is a wonderful benchmark, Sprintz says she finds even greater reward in educating others on what autism means and the potential that is out there for her children to be successful.

“Our goal is to continue to share our story and increase awareness, not just for our kids, but for everyone,” Kori says. “This has been an amazing experience for him.”

More 2 Me

Since their enrollment in the SARRC Community School, Gavin and Gage Sprintz have shown tremendous progress.

Gavin began with the 2013-14 school year, and during his first few weeks, he struggled to participate and connect with his teachers to work on his communication skills.

Now, the 2-year-old is able to make eye contact to communicate his needs, and he frequently seeks out interactions with his teachers and peers.

“Gavin is learning to play along side his peers, and best of all, when you observe him in the classroom, there is frequently a big smile on his face. Playing with his peers has become fun for him,” McIntosh says.

Gage, 4, has only been enrolled in the school for a few weeks, but he has already learned how to better interact with his peers. Prior to attending the Community School, Gage was still working in a one-on-one program.

“He actually looks forward to school, and he talks about all of his friends,” Kori says. “This has been an amazing experience for him.”

Since Adjusting the Approach for Gavin, McIntosh and the Sprintzes have seen him make strides in his willingness to engage and make spontaneous eye contact to communicate his needs. Likewise, Gage, who has been enrolled at the school only a few weeks, has made leaps in how he interacts with his fellow classmates, and he has started to gain friends.

Bringing It All Home

The skills the boys learn during the day at the Community School are only the beginning. To be successful, McIntosh says, the same lessons need to be carried through at home. That’s why an integral part of the Community School program is parent training. The Sprintzes complete a total of five hours each week, two and a half for each boy. The training is a time for parents to ask questions and gain valuable tools that will help them interact and teach their children utilizing the same approaches the school does.

“I think this is what is truly making a difference for Gavin and Gage,” McIntosh says. “The Sprintz family has this amazing trust in the program, and we have had to make adjustments along the way, but they are always on board. It is hard as a parent to be flexible, but they are always willing to bend.”

For Kori, the parent training has helped her to become an even stronger advocate for her children. She says it’s more than learning techniques that can help her and Jon to communicate and reinforce what the boys are learning at school — it’s about being able to recognize what works best for their boys and conveying that to others.

“We need to get everyone on the same page,” she says. “And to do that, we have to be involved. This way we can make sure that everyone working with Gavin and Gage is doing it right.”

An Advocate for More

The Sprintz family’s fight has become a bigger mission, beyond their experience with the school and SARRC. Gavin and Gage were diagnosed just before last year’s Walk Now for Autism Speaks event held in October. And for Kori, this fundraiser was a much-needed outlet.

“The walk was like our coming out party,” she says. “Either I could be angry, or I could get involved.”

Kori created a sponsorship page online and set a goal to raise $1,000. Then, she told her story and shared it with friends through email and social media. They hit their goal within the first few days, and by the end, they raised nearly $12,000. For 2014, they are setting their bar a little higher at $15,000.

While the money is a wonderful benchmark, Sprintz says she finds even greater reward in educating others on what autism means and the potential that is out there for her children to be successful.

“Our goal is to continue to share our story and increase awareness, not just for our kids, but for everyone,” Kori says. “This has been an amazing experience for him.”
MATT’S STORY: Sharing SMILEs

WHEN MATT RESNIK, 22, graduated from Chaparral High School in the spring of 2013, his daily routines and patterns – developed for years within the same safe, supportive environment – came to an end. Even minor transitions are not easy for Matt who excels in math and computer skills, yet is significantly challenged by simple communications and social tasks.

“As parents, we needed to find something that would advance his skills, fill his daily schedule with meaningful activities and enable him to learn to support himself,” says Denise Resnik, Matt’s mom and co-founder of SARRC.

With the help of Rising Entrepreneurs, Resnik found a new routine and joy in the creation of SMILE Biscotti (an acronym for Supporting Matt’s Independent Living Enterprise), developed as a result of his participation in the Rising Entrepreneurs pilot program.

The recipes originate from family Mandelbrot favorites and have generated an overwhelming response. Since he started selling in late October, Matt has baked, packaged, mailed and delivered more than 25,000 biscotti with the help of friends, family and Facebook.

SMILE Biscotti has been promoted through social media networks, his website development and lots of family and friends helping to spread the word. It’s been a family endeavor with his father, Rob, focused on Matt’s production skills and tasks, including shopping, baking, packaging, tracking orders and product testing; mom, Denise, lending support on marketing, outreach and sales; Auntie Debbie setting up packaging systems in the dining room, affectionately known as the “Biscotti Cave;” and a village of friends, family and members of the community who have “liked” and shared Facebook messages, placed biscotti orders and offered encouragement every step of the way.

Resnik’s goal is to sell 100,000 biscotti in his first year and build a business that grows beyond the Resnik home kitchen, employing other individuals on the autism spectrum or with related disorders.
ANOTHER MATT: The Inspiration Behind Rising Entrepreneurs

MATT COTTLE, 25, founder of Stuttering King Bakery, served as the inspiration behind the Rising Entrepreneurs program. A graduate of SARRC’s CulinaryWorks program, Cottle continued to develop his interest in baking and received one-on-one baking lessons from a talented pastry chef for three years. In 2012, he took a leap of faith with his mom, Peggy, to open up his own home-based bakery.

Since then, the company has seen great success with its muffins, brownies, blondies, bars, cookies and scones, catering to business clientele and serving up a slice of heaven at local events. He handcrafts each pastry with high-quality, natural and locally sourced ingredients.

Cottle has made it his mission to positively impact the lives of other individuals with autism and serve as an inspiration for them to be productive, active members of the community.

“I want to inspire everyone in the autism community to make their dreams come true — to persevere tirelessly for success — because we deserve nothing short of incredible,” Cottle says. “And to quote our bakery’s own inspiration, King George VI, ‘The highest of distinctions is service to others.’ ”

That’s why Matt plans to eventually open his own brick-and-mortar bakery, where he’ll employ and teach the art of baking to others with autism. He’s well on his way toward that goal, and has received support from Seed Spot, a local business incubator, which has provided Cottle with an office to manage its business affairs, receive mentoring and grow his support network.

Like Cottle, SARRC recognizes the potential of individuals with autism and offers a collection of programs and services geared toward adults with autism, including Rising Entrepreneurs, through its Vocational & Life Skills Academy.

For more information on Rising Entrepreneurs or CulinaryWorks programming at SARRC, contact Cece Russell at 602.606.9890 or crusell@autismcenter.org.

More to Bake

For more information on SARRC clients’ talented bakery businesses launched as a result of the Rising Entrepreneurs program, or in Matt Cottle’s case, the CulinaryWorks® program, please check out:

Essential Nourishment:
Started by John Dalen and serving up healthy energy bars.
602.535.5935

Petie’s Bakery:
Launched by Robert Woodcock in honor of his Grandma “Petie” and serving up family recipes with a focus on gourmet breads, petiesbakery.com

SMILE Biscotti:
Developed by Matthew Resnik, SMILEBiscotti.com

Stuttering King Bakery:
Founded by Matt Cottle, stutteringkingbakery.com

John Dalen, a graduate of Rising Entrepreneurs, serves up his Essential Nourishment energy bars.
Lance Rumsey, 28, who is living with high-functioning autism, leads a simple life and thrives on routine. “My job is the single most important thing in my life,” he says, but quickly adds, “I also like coming home to my two dogs and going for a run with them after work.”

He landed his job, what he calls a “lot keeper” position with Fast & Friendly Carwash in Peoria, as a result of SARRC’s Employment Services program. When car wash owner Jeff Dadam found out about SARRC from family friend Karie Dozer, an on-air talent at KTAR 92.3 FM, as part of last year’s Action for Autism event, he explored whether his company could help.

“I’ve owned and operated three businesses in my life, and loyalty is one of the most important traits you can find in an employee. Lance is one of the

BY STEPHANIE JARNAGAN

Driving AMBITION

Car wash employee proves there’s so much more to his story than a diagnosis of autism
most loyal, dependable and honest employees I’ve ever encountered,” Dadam says. “We have a mutual respect for each other and when I find employees like Lance, I know it’s important to reward them so they will hopefully stay employed with us for a long time.”

Dadam worked with staff at SARRC to find the perfect match for his job opening. According to Dadam, SARRC “hit a home run” when they hired Rumsey at the car wash. “I encourage other business owners not to be afraid of employing individuals with autism,” he says. “It will be one of the most rewarding things you ever do as an employer. Working together with SARRC, you can find an ideal match for your business needs.”

**HOW THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM WORKS**

Erin Dunham, SARRC Employment Services program coordinator, agrees. She’s seen many similar success stories over the seven years this program has been operational.

Prior to landing the job, Rumsey worked with SARRC to build his job skills, develop a resume and practice interview techniques. Rumsey’s job coach continued to work with him at the car wash for his first few weeks of employment before phasing out.

“Our initial involvement is critical because we’re able to help educate co-workers about autism and the specific strengths and weaknesses of our clients,” Dunham says. “Lance has been able to forge positive relationships with his co-workers, which has been critical to his success.”

What started as a part-time position for Rumsey has grown into a full-time job with benefits. SARRC maintains monthly check-ins with employers like Fast & Friendly Carwash in order to ensure that both parties are satisfied with their arrangement.

“We always get a great report back on Lance,” Dunham says.

As for future goals, Rumsey says, “I see myself working here for quite a while, and I hope to live on my own someday soon.”

For more information on SARRC’s Employment Services program, contact Erin Dunham, BSW, at 602- 603-3291 or edunham@autismcenter.org.

---

**SARRC Employment Partners**

SARRC acknowledges its 2014 employment partners and encourages donors, volunteers, staff and families to support these businesses for their commitment to helping individuals with autism gain invaluable vocational skills:

- AMC
- Alliance Beverage
- Beneficial Beans Cafe
- CloudBlue
- Compass Group
- Crates & Freighters
- Bell Ford
- CVS
- Fast & Friendly Carwash
- Gompers
- Harkins Theatres
- Hensley
- H.O.P.E. Group
- Joe’s Diner
- Marriott
- Matador Coffee
- Outback Steakhouse
- Paper Clouds Apparel
- PetCo
- PetSmart
- Pizza Hut
- Safeway
- SOS Printing
- Sprouts Farmers Market
- SSP America
- TCH
- Tempe Diablo Stadium
- Trinity Cross
- U. S. Airways
- Wal-Mart
- White House Design Studio
WHEN LYNN AND NEIL BALTER learned about the Seaside Trial, they thought their son, Jack, seemed like a natural candidate.

Seaside Therapeutics was testing a drug called arbaclofen, and SARRC was one of the clinical trial sites. The Balters were told that arbaclofen was designed to help improve social functioning in children and adolescents with autism.

“When we heard that, it was enough for us to want to be in the trial,” Lynn says.

ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical trials are designed to compare the effects of a medication to the effects of a placebo, or sugar pill with no active medication. Study designers typically have a primary outcome they’re targeting, as well as other secondary measures.
“The real struggle in autism is that we don’t have specific biomarkers to look at,” says Raun Melmed, MD, SARRC co-founder and medical director, which means there are no specific differences in biochemistry or bodily functions among individuals with autism. “We’re using behavioral probes in place of physical or chemical biomarkers.”

For example, when studying a cholesterol-lowering drug, researchers can look at the subjects’ cholesterol levels to determine if the drug was effective. With autism, scientists aren’t examining blood tests to see if a medication worked — instead they’re examining behavior, and changes can be very subtle. Currently, the best way to do this is to ask parents about their observations of a child’s behaviors or social interactions.

And parents’ interpretations of their child’s behavior — and clinicians’ understanding of parents — is subjective, says Christopher Smith, Ph.D., vice president and research director at SARRC. “There’s more to people with autism than we can accurately measure with these methods,” he says.

THE IMPACT OF SUBJECTIVE TESTING

For Jack, 11, who was diagnosed with autism at 3, empathy is an ongoing struggle.

He does well at school and is fairly social, Lynn explains, “but he doesn’t do well with understanding other people’s needs.”

But during their two years participating in the arbaclofen trial, something changed.

“Our son showed tremendous improvement,” she says, explaining that she saw in him the ability to empathize.

The study, however, failed to meet its primary outcomes measure. The trial was canceled, and the drug was no longer accessible to participants or any other individual with autism. Since the trial was discontinued, Lynn says, the improvements she saw in her son have dissipated.

The Balters weren’t alone, Smith says. SARRC, along with other clinical trial sites, had participants who saw a benefit to the drug. When word came down that the study was ending, it affected many participating families.


Following its failed trial, Seaside Therapeutics, a small company by pharma standards, wasn’t able to keep its doors open. And with those closed doors came diminished hope for parents.

This, Smith says, highlights the danger of not having strong objective measurements in place: “We could miss out on drugs that show real promise.”

IMPROVING TRIALS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Smith, Melmed and others don’t want helpful drugs to fall through the cracks. And the Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA), a collaboration among SARRC, Behavior Imaging Solutions and the Georgia Institute of Technology, may help to avoid this problem in future studies.

NODA allows parents to video their children and send it to experts to review to aid in the diagnosis of autism. Smith and Melmed see a great upside in adapting this technology for research purposes. With a finely tuned measurement tool, researchers could tag and tally behavioral markers such as eye contact, facial expressions and hand gestures.

“These are subtle nuances that promote social interaction and might lead parents to report an improvement,” Smith says. “But most parents don’t pay attention to these subtleties the way a clinician would … NODA would facilitate that.”

For now, experts are continuing to improve NODA so that its usage and scoring rubric are reliable in a clinical trial setting. After that, the possibilities in drug trials are clear.

“We’ll know our data are solid,” Smith says. “We’ll have direct hard evidence of a drug working or not.”

Should You Participate in a Clinical Trial?

Clinical trials are a critical part of autism research, and should not be considered treatment. Through SARRC, Arizona families have the opportunity to participate in leading-edge studies. Before you sign up, though, here are a few things to keep in mind.

You may get a placebo. There is no guarantee who will receive the drug being tested and who will receive a placebo.

Have realistic expectations. Even if your child receives an active drug, Smith says, expect to see only subtle changes — if any at all.

See the big picture. Clinical trials aren’t necessarily only for the benefit of those enrolled in the study, Melmed says, encouraging parents to consider the common good. “These are essentially experiments, an attempt to better understand autism treatment,” he says. “The better we understand it, the better things will be for everyone.”
Each year, the Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks unites thousands of walkers from across the state to raise awareness and funds for autism – and this year was no exception. More than 20,000 participants joined Autism Speaks and SARRC last October, including 55 walk teams, dozens of corporate sponsors and autism service providers, plus hundreds of volunteers. And, for the first time, runners also supported the event by lacing up for the inaugural Arizona 5k Run Now for Autism Speaks, which was held just prior to the walk.

Under the leadership of 2013 Arizona Walk Chairman Derek Greene and a hardworking volunteer committee, the walk raised an incredible $1.5 million. Sprouts Farmers Market, the event’s Visionary sponsor, contributed an unprecedented $1,155,000. Since 2011, Doug Sanders, president & CEO of Sprouts Farmers Market, has led a companywide effort to support the walk.

While the walk’s sheer numbers and fundraising success was impressive, Greene is most proud of the committee’s commitment to strengthening the walk’s team-mentoring program. “As a dad, one of the greatest moments at the walk is looking out and seeing so many teams gathered all in support of loved ones with autism,” Greene says.

One team in particular stood out in the crowd...
Team SARRC” in their signature purple shirts! SARRC employees and their friends and families pulled out all the stops raising more than $32,000. Their fundraising efforts earned national ranking as one of the top 25 percent of teams involved in Autism Speaks’ national walk program.

“Internally, we used the walk as a staff team-building exercise with lots of friendly competition and fun leading up to the event,” says SARRC’s Community Resource and Volunteer Coordinator Addie Mocca.

“Each year, we find more ways to strengthen the partnership between Autism Speaks and SARRC, and to expand the walk’s ability to raise more awareness and participation for the cause,” says Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, president and CEO of SARRC. “This event is a clear demonstration of what’s possible here in Arizona when we come together – the incredible success of the walk is truly owned by everyone who signs up and I couldn’t be more proud to be part of it.”

SARRC’s portion of walk proceeds remain local, funding clinical research studies; programs for young adults and adults with autism; and early intervention and parent empowerment programs. Through Autism Speaks, the dollars raised in Arizona support ongoing scientific research, advocacy and awareness, and family services programs happening across the country.

In 2014, the walk committee plans to focus on expanding its walk team program, to include helping new teams jumpstart their participation through mentoring and continuing to keep longtime walk teams connected to what’s new with the walk. “Walk teams are the lifeblood of this program and the connections that families make by forming a team expands their support network, especially when they’re initially navigating autism,” says Autism Speaks Senior Director Amy Hummell.

“The walk is an opportunity for families and people touched by autism to come together, share their stories and know that they are contributing to organizations that are making a lasting impact on autism,” says Jeff Lemaster, who is chairing the 2014 Arizona walk, along with his wife, Jennifer. “We’re both humbled and excited by the opportunity to give back and encourage others to do the same”.

Opposite page: From left, Alec Elbert of Autism Speaks, Doug Sanders of Sprouts Farmers Market and Daniel Openden of SARRC display the $1,155,555 donation from Visionary sponsor Sprouts Farmers Market. Right: The SARRC walk team raised $32,000, placing the team within the top 25 percent of fundraising teams in Autism Speaks’ national walk program.

SAVE THE DATE!

DATE:
Sunday • October 26, 2014

PLACE:
Tempe Beach Park, 80 W. Rio Salado Parkway

INFO:
www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/arizona

5K AND 1-MILE FAMILY FUN ROUTE
(8 a.m. walk registration; 9:30 a.m. start)

ATTENTION RUNNERS!
Participate in the 2nd annual Arizona 5K Run Now for Autism Speaks, which will be held prior to the start of the walk.
7 a.m. run registration
8 a.m. start
First Place AZ launched to develop mixed-use residential prototype that serves adults with autism

Thanks to the supportive community that’s been facilitated by SARRC through the years, a new mixed-use residential prototype is being set in the heart of Greater Phoenix. It’s called First Place AZ and it will be for the individuals who live there, the people who work and learn there, and the family and friends that come and go. Led by private-sector principles, First Place aspires to be a replicable model promoting collaboration among the private, public and nonprofit sectors, and a catalyst for advancing federal public policy focused on housing solutions for special populations.

According to Denise Resnik, First Place AZ founder and board chair, “First Place celebrates neuro-diversity, independent living and a path toward opening more doors for more real estate options. First Place is not a group home, licensed facility, congregate care or assisted living, and is not reliant on government resources.”

Backed by nearly 15 years of research, study, travel and ideation, an evaluation of nearly 100 residential programs across the U.S., and focus groups involving 100 family members and individuals with autism, First Place AZ represents a sister nonprofit to SARRC and is advancing the mission of SARRC set forth nearly 20 years ago: to support individuals with autism and their families throughout their lifetimes. It separates the real estate ownership from supportive services, an important finding identified through the research.

“SARRC’s focus on a lifetime of support has led to the development of services and programs that are inclusive and community-based, and that maximize independence. Building a residential program with the clearly stated goal of transitioning adults to live as independently as possible in their home communities is both a bold venture and logical next step,” says Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, SARRC president & CEO.

The three distinct uses offered by First Place include: 1) 50, one- and two-bedroom First Place apartments for lease by residents, supported by a suite of independent living services and amenities; 2) a two-year, tuition-based First Place Transition Academy operated by SARRC, accommodating 16 students annually who live at First Place in year one and off-campus in year two; and 3) a 10,000-square-foot National Leadership Institute for the continuing education and training of support service providers, professionals and physicians, and robust site for research and public policy advancements.

Jeff Ross, founder and creator of the celebrated Taft College Transition to Independent Living (TIL) program, founded in 1995 in Taft, Calif., retires from Taft this summer and will relocate to Arizona to serve as the executive director of First Place.

First Place and SARRC are launching the beta site for the Transitional Academy in January 2015 at 29 Palms, a recently renovated property by the Foundation for Senior Living that co-locates 16 apartments for seniors with six apartments (double occupancy) for adults with autism. Applications are now being accepted for the on-site living and orientation program that starts this fall.

To learn more, please visit the First Place AZ website at www.firstplaceaz.org.
The Canadian federal government is investing $11.4 million over four years to replicate SARRC's flagship Autism CommunityWorks® program in six cities across the country. The Autism CommunityWorks Canada program will train 1,200 young Canadians with disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The Canadian program, which targets 12- to 24-year-olds, prepares individuals with ASD and their typically developing peers for higher education and employment success. Through 1:1 peer mentoring, participants also learn and practice social rules required for employment success.

“As the population of children with autism matures into adults with autism, there is a pressing need to create training and employment opportunities. CommunityWorks takes this idea further by providing support for individuals with autism and related disorders, and helps us fortify them with new skills for long-term success,” says Jill Farber, the executive director of Autism Speaks Canada.

Beyond the training provided to individuals with ASD, the program’s broader goal is to increase awareness and understanding of autism across Canada. The Sinneave Family Foundation, Autism Speaks Canada and the federal government are partnering with SARRC in the effort.

“One of the best predictors of long-term stable employment is a history of part-time and volunteer work acquired during our teenage years,” says Tom Collins, president of the Sinneave Family Foundation. “Many young people with ASD don’t get this opportunity. CommunityWorks will help thousands of young Canadians get this important experience, helping to build their skills and their resumes.”

In recent years, the Sinneave Family Foundation replicated SARRC’s CommunityWorks program at The Ability Hub, an 18,000-square-foot vocational innovation laboratory in Calgary.

Participants have demonstrated significant positive outcomes including problem solving, staying on task, initiating social interaction, asking for assistance and appropriately engaging in important social exchanges. As a result, many of the CommunityWorks participants in Calgary and Phoenix are primed to obtain meaningful employment.

Based on the success of the Calgary program, the Sinneave Family Foundation applied for federal funding to expand the program nationwide. CommunityWorks was SARRC’s first program offered through its Vocational & Life Skills Academy. Adolescents with autism gain employment experiences alongside typically developing peers through volunteer opportunities at local libraries, urban gardens, museums, animal shelters and a broad collection of nonprofits.

SARRC’s clients and volunteers have worked at more than 45 sites in Phoenix including the United Food Bank, St. Vincent de Paul and the Arizona Small Dog Rescue. More than 40,000 volunteer community service hours have been logged through the Phoenix and Calgary sites involving 500 individuals with ASD and the assistance of more than 200 peer mentors.

For more information on the Canadian initiative, visit www.theabilityhub.org.
There are many reasons to make a charitable bequest, but perhaps the most important is to support the communities that have made an impact on you and your family. A gift from your estate supports the work of SARRC and will benefit future generations of children with autism and their families.

**Great Flexibility**

A bequest lets you balance your philanthropic goals with your current living expenses, future medical costs and the needs of your loved ones. Making a bequest is as simple as inserting a few sentences in your will or revocable trust. Because you’re not actually making a gift today, you are free to alter your plans in the future, eliminating the worry that you might make a commitment that may need to be modified at a later date.

Your estate is entitled to an unlimited estate tax charitable deduction for bequests to qualified charitable organizations. Making a bequest is tax-smart!

**How It Works**

To make a bequest, you will need a current will or revocable living trust. You can structure your bequest to leave a specific item or amount of money, make the gift contingent on certain events, or leave a percentage of your estate to us. You can specify that the bequest be used for a certain purpose or you can make it an unrestricted gift. An unrestricted gift will be used where it is needed most by SARRC. We would be happy to talk to you about our current needs and the needs we anticipate.

**Explore Your Options**

A charitable bequest is one of the many ways to help support SARRC’s mission. To learn about all the ways you can help, contact Maureen McDannel, SARRC development director, at 480.603.3292 or via email at MMcDannel@autismcenter.org. You may also visit our website at www.autismcenter.org and click on Support Our Mission.

To Make a Charitable Bequest

Determine if you need to update your will or revocable living trust. Decide which purpose you wish to support, or whether your gift will be made as an unrestricted gift or endowed bequest. Notify SARRC of your intention (unless you wish to remain anonymous), so we can thank you for your gift and keep you informed of our ongoing activities.

Copyright: The Stelter Company, All rights reserved. The information on this website is not intended as legal or tax advice. For legal or tax advice, please consult an attorney. Figures cited in examples are for hypothetical purposes only and are subject to change. References to estate and income taxes apply to federal taxes only. State income/estate taxes or state law may impact your results.
If only everyone could live that quote, what a world of possibilities we would see! I have been a preschool director for 16 years and have also been in the classroom as a teacher periodically throughout my career. This year I had the opportunity to be the interim principal at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School in Scottsdale, Ariz. A central part of our mission is working together to train leaders of the future. We work hard to ensure that we provide for the needs of each student in our program to help them achieve their own greatness.

In 2004, I was asked to be part of a grant program based on the LEAP preschool model (an inclusive, evidence-based model for young children with autism). They provide training and technical assistance to meet the educational needs of young children with autism. The main goal of the grant was to train our group on how to create and run a model classroom to include children with autism. The focus was on social skills, which every child has to learn. I quickly saw the benefits of focusing on and understanding the social and emotional needs of children, which resulted in a positive learning environment for all children.

My first experience having a child with autism in my classroom was in 2005 while teaching Kindergarten. Having implemented many of the techniques acquired through the grant program, we had a very successful year. A few years later at Shepherd of the Desert, a parent toured our program and asked if I was willing to have her son, who had been diagnosed with autism, in my class. I did not hesitate to say yes. By working together, we helped make his transition into preschool smooth. His mom created a preschool book with pictures of his routine at school and I witnessed the boy and the whole class grow together that year. The following year, we had three children with autism in our preschool classrooms.

I continue to work with families impacted by autism as a team, along with the classroom teacher, to provide a successful educational experience. One of my current goals is to continue to provide staff training to help my teachers be confident and further develop the skills needed to provide for every child in their classrooms.

I feel truly blessed by all of the children in our school. We are a family and families work together and support one another!

Lisa O’Brien is preschool director at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran School in Scottsdale, Ariz., and recipient of the 2013 AzTASH Legacy award for providing successful, inclusive schooling opportunities to students with disabilities. She was nominated by SARRC President and CEO Dr. Daniel Openden and two parents at Shepherd of the Desert, who are also involved with SARRC.
**SARRC's 16th Annual Community Breakfast**

This year’s theme, **More 2 Me**, recognizes the challenges of life with autism and promotes how much more there is to a child and an adult beyond their disorder. We want to expose the many layers of parents of individuals with autism, who have had to become so much more than parents, as well as those of our employment partners, whose commitment to supporting adults with autism means so much to the individuals they employ, their families and our community. More 2 Me also recognizes how much more each of us can do to create a supportive community, giving individuals and families impacted by autism more opportunities to succeed.

**Date:** Thurs., April 17  
**Time:** 7:30 - 9 a.m.; registration begins at 6:30 a.m.  
**Place:** Arizona Biltmore Resort, Frank Lloyd Wright Ballroom, 2400 E. Missouri Avenue, Phoenix  
**Cost:** RSVP only; donations appreciated

---

**2014 Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks**

Join Autism Speaks and SARRC for the 8th annual Arizona Walk Now for Autism Speaks at Tempe Beach Park. More than 20,000 participants are expected to participate this year. This family friendly walk is free to attend and includes live entertainment, a kids’ zone featuring dozens of activities and an autism resource fair with more than 50 community resources. For more information about how you can support the walk, details on how to form a walk team and more, visit www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/arizona.

**Date:** Sun., Oct. 26  
**Time:** 8 a.m. registration; 9:45 a.m. walk start  
**Place:** Tempe Beach Park, 80 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe

---

**Common Sense Parenting Series**

Sometimes being a parent can be a challenge! This series will provide parents with effective discipline strategies that are more about teaching than punishment and will help you to be more positive with your child. This training is for ANY parent with a young child. You will learn how to set up reasonable expectations based on your child’s age, development and ability; how to use “show and tell” to prevent and correct misbehavior; how to use praise to help your child stay on the right path; how to create plans for staying calm; and how to create rituals and routines to create family traditions.

**Dates:** Wednesdays; April 16, 23 and 30; May 14, 21, and 28; and June 4  
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.  
**Place:** SARRC Campus for Exceptional Children, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** $150 per person (for entire series), $100 discount per family member if receiving SARRC services

---

**ADI-R Training: Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised**

Join us for this intensive training workshop for research reliability administration of the ADI-R. Originally developed for autism research assessment, the ADI-R is considered the gold standard instrument for diagnosing autism and is widely used in clinical settings. The ADI-R is an in-depth parent interview designed to elicit a full range of information needed to produce a diagnosis of autism and related disorders. This training is designed for clinicians with a prior background in autism and formal testing, including psychologists, physicians, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, autism providers, as well as professionals and graduate students in related fields.

**Dates:** May 5-6, 2014  
**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
**Place:** SARRC Campus for Exceptional Children, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** $1,200 per person

---

**The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) 2nd Edition Training**

The ADOS-2 is a semi-structured, standardized observational assessment that allows clinicians to accurately assess and diagnose ASD. The assessment consists of various activities (or “presses”) that provide many opportunities for social and
communicative behavior. Presses are standardized, and training is required to ensure correct administration. The ADOS-2 can be used with individuals across ages, developmental levels and language skills. The ADOS-2 includes a new comparison score that provides information about the individual’s functioning as compared to individuals with ASD who have similar skills. The training is designed for clinicians with a prior background in autism and formal testing.

**Dates:** May 7-9  
**Time:** 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Place:** SARRC Campus for Exceptional Children, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** $1,200 per person

**The FRIEND Program**  
This training offers an overview of the FRIEND Program, an inclusive social-skills program for preschool-12th grade students that provides increased awareness of ASD, and teaches how to create learning opportunities for individuals with ASD to engage appropriately with typical peers in the natural setting at school during lunch and recess. Participants will develop an understanding of ASD learning challenges that may impact social interactions with peers. A discussion of how to implement the lunch and playground program will be reviewed. Innovative materials will be shared to include the FRIEND Program manual, children’s book Wings of Epoh, DVDs and educator activity guide, informational tips useful for peer sensitivity training to promote awareness of ASD and social differences, and appropriate strategies for facilitating social interactions for school-age students.

**Dates:** August 11  
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
**Place:** SARRC Campus for Exceptional Children, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**Cost:** $50 per person, $45 per person for groups of 2 or more

**Upcoming Training Sessions**  
SARRC will be hosting several additional trainings this summer. Please visit the calendar at autismcenter.org or contact Sheri S. Dollin, M.Ed., at training@autismcenter.org for more information. Future training topics will include:  
**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Training:** Now offered as a 6-part training series  
**Challenging Behavior Series:** An in-depth training series focused on understanding problem behavior and how to provide evidence-based intervention

**Level 1 Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT):** Offered as a one-day knowledge-based training  
**Level 2 Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT):** Offered as a four-day, hands-on video training to learn how to implement this treatment approach. Must complete Level 1 PRT training to participate.

**Registration:** To register, visit www.autismcenter.org or email training@autismcenter.org

---

**Support Groups**

**Grandparents Group**  
The Grandparents Group focuses on educating and supporting grandparents of children with autism and presents the latest news and research in the field. The group meets once a month October through May.

**Dates:** May 2, October 24, November 14  
**Time:** 10-11:30 a.m.  
**Place:** SARRC Campus for Exceptional Children, 300 N. 18th St., Phoenix  
**RSVP:** (602) 340-8717

**West Valley Autism Parents Support Group**  
Join parents of children with autism for a night out. Share your experiences, make new friends and learn something new. Contact Shelly Vinsant for more information at shellyvin@cox.net.

**Dates:** Second Monday of every month  
**Time:** 7-9 p.m.  
**Place:** New Life Community Church, 8155 W. Thunderbird Road, Peoria

**East Valley Autism Network (EVAN)**  
EVAN is a parent-led support group providing hope, resources, information and support for families with children on the autism spectrum. EVAN welcomes all families who would like to network and help each other get the services and education children with ASDs need. No RSVP necessary; no children at meetings please.

**Dates:** Fourth Tuesday of every month (August-April)  
**Time:** 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Mi Amigo’s Mexican Grill, 1264 S. Gilbert Road, Mesa
Central to SARRC’s mission is to provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. SARRC’s clinical model is grounded in applied behavior analysis (ABA) and psychology 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</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JumpStart®</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JumpStart is a six-week program that provides state-of-the-art information, support and training for 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 Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) to teach children to verbally communicate. JumpStart is also available in Spanish for monolingual Spanish-speaking families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community School</strong></td>
</tr>
<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 teacher-to-student 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 Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). All-day care is available for typically developing children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Home-Based Behavioral Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARRC’s comprehensive behavioral program provides intensive, ABA-based programming across environments to meet the individualized needs of children with ASD (0-12 years) and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the child’s home and in the community, and is often coordinated with the child’s school. Families receive weekly 1:1 intervention sessions, a weekly parent training session, program management and supervision from a BCBA. Goals are developed in coordination with the family and focus on language, social, adaptive behavior, play and cognitive development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-Based Consultation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based behavioral consultation is available for families with children up to age 12 seeking intervention for a specific problem behavior (e.g. tantrums, aggression), challenging routine (e.g. going to bed, getting dressed, taking a bath), or issues that affect the well-being of the child and/or family (e.g. toilet training, sleeping, feeding, safety). Following an initial parent interview, a SARRC therapist, under the supervision of a BCBA, provides direct observation of the child, conducts a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), and develops a behavior support plan. After reviewing the plan with the family and agreeing to its components, a SARRC therapist works with the family to implement the plan, objectively measure changes in behavior, and evaluate the child’s progress to address any necessary modifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Specialized Habilitation Services

Specialized habilitation is a 16-week parent training program implemented in the family’s home and in the community for children up to age 12. Under the supervision of a BCBA, a SARRC therapist conducts an assessment of the child and develops an individualized plan for teaching parents to implement the motivational procedures of Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). The primary goals of the program are to produce generalized improvements in social communication and reductions in problem behaviors in children. Once the primary caregiver demonstrates correct implementation of PRT, other therapists who work with the child (e.g., state-funded habilitators) are invited to participate in the parent training sessions. The SARRC therapist will also coordinate with the parents to identify additional goals that are important to the family.

### Remote Parent Training

Remote parent training is a one-week, intensive parent training program for families living in rural/remote locations or outside of the state 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 Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) to meet each child’s communication, social, and behavioral needs. After their initial week-long training at SARRC, 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.

### Autism CommunityWorks®

Autism CommunityWorks® is an employment preparation and community involvement program that helps teens ages 13-18 make the transition to independent living, higher education, and/or optimum employment. Autism CommunityWorks®, includes LibraryWorks, PowerWorks, GardenWorks, TheatreWorks, PetWorks, and GoodDeedWorks and provides the opportunity for individuals with ASD and peer mentors to engage in volunteer work throughout their communities while developing job skills, learning to socialize, and building lasting friendships. Monday Night Out is offered four times a year to teens and adults to provide a social opportunity for clients that includes members of the community that volunteer their time to assist with the events and to interact with clients.

### Vocational Opportunities for Individual Career Experiences (VOICE)

VOICE creates partnerships with local and national employers to increase competitive employment opportunities for adults ages 18 and older, while teaching appropriate work behaviors, building social skills and providing specialized vocational training. Clients receive a functional assessment to identify job readiness skills; development of vocational goals, supports, and accommodations; resume and job interview preparation; and on-the-job training and coaching. VOICE also provides employment classes, including Employment 101, Employment 202 and Tech Workshop.

### Social Enterprise

The Social Enterprise program provides training and work opportunities that involve adults ages 18 and older in every aspect of operating a business. The program also builds transferable skills likely to lead to on-the-job success and financial independence, while raising community awareness about the employability of individuals with autism. CulinaryWorks® programs engage adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to prepare, package and sell SARRC’s signature soups and own blend of coffee. Through hands-on gardening, sustainable landscaping and water harvesting training, Humana GardenWorks® engages individuals in developing and sustaining a revenue-producing co-op garden, including product development, marketing and sales. Finally, the Social Enterprise program provides employment opportunities at the Beneficial Beans Café at Scottsdale Civic Center Library and Adelante Healthcare in Mesa, and also through the Rising Entrepreneurs program, which helps adults start their own home-baking businesses.

### Academy of Classes

SARRC’s Academy of Classes help teens and adults develop the life, social and employment skills necessary to support independent living. Life Skills classes are offered for ages 10 to adult in a 14-week series that focuses on communication and social skills, basic budgeting, money management, household management, hygiene, preparing simple meals, executive function skills, public transportation, and navigating the community. Classes are also offered at the Microsoft Store in Scottsdale to teach technical skills, as well as community skills such as navigating the mall, social rules and safety.
SARRC's transition program provides 1:1 ABA-based programming across environments to meet the individualized needs of teens and adults with ASD (13-adult) and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the teen's home, at SARRC, and in the community, and is often coordinated with the child's school. Families receive weekly 1:1 intervention sessions, a weekly parent training session, program management, and supervision from a BCBA. Goals are developed in coordination with the family and focus on increasing independence by targeting appropriate language, social and adaptive behavior skills.

Psychology services help teens and adults better manage stress and/or anxiety and depression through 1:1 counseling and/or group support and are provided by a licensed psychologist. Diagnostic assessment and evaluation is available, and programs include the PEERS Social Skills Program, which builds social skills for teens through weekly classes and parent training; and the Women's Empowerment Program and the Men's Empowerment Program, which combines 1:1 counseling sessions with a weekly group that meets to discuss and build self-advocacy, finance, sexuality and relationship skills.

SARRC's Geek Tech Summer Camp is a one-week program available for teens and young adults to experience college life (e.g. attending classes, living in the dorms) and learn technology skills at the University of Advancing Technology.

Individualized transition planning services are available to help clients and families plan for the transition into middle school, high school or into adulthood and employment. SARRC staff may attend school IEPs, conduct home visits and assist with planning major transitions. Program planning at SARRC or within the community is included in the transition planning service.

The Education and Training Program disseminates current, research-based information related to the development, characteristics and treatment of ASD across the lifespan. SARRC staff, as well as local, national and international experts, design trainings for both specific and broad audiences, including individuals with ASD; parents, grandparents, siblings and other family members; teachers, paraprofessionals, and school administrators; and habilitators, behavior analysts, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, mental health professionals and medical professionals. Informational trainings focus on improving awareness, knowledge and understanding, whereas individualized, intensive trainings target correct application of assessment or treatment procedures and capacity-building projects focus on provider, school, district or statewide implementation.

This outreach program is designed to educate elementary school staff and pediatricians to “ThinkAsperger’s®” when they see subtle social impairments in very 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.

The FRIEND® program is a curriculum designed to improve social skills for school-age students, and includes three components: peer sensitivity training, the FRIEND playground program and the FRIEND lunch program. Peer sensitivity training increases awareness and understanding of autism so that typically developing peers are more likely to engage and provide support for students with ASD. The FRIEND playground program provides structured activities on the playground/during recess that are based on the interests of the student with ASD, yet are highly likely to attract typically developing peers and create opportunities for social interaction. During the FRIEND lunch program, a selected group of peers eats lunch with a student with autism daily so that social skills and conversation can be easily taught and facilitated.
**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND OUTREACH**

**FRIEND® Summer Camp**
SARRC partners with existing summer camps (e.g., YMCA) to include children with ASD (ages 3-12) with their typically developing peers and improve social skills. The FRIEND Summer Camp provides one-to-one facilitators to ensure that children with ASD can successfully participate throughout the day and across structured and unstructured activities. Facilitators receive training in behavioral intervention and inclusive strategies to target communication, appropriate play and social interactions. Camp runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays during the months of June and July, and children with ASD are required to attend camp for at least one four-week session.

**School Consultation**
SARRC's educational consultants contract with schools and districts to improve the educational programming of students with ASD in public, charter and private schools. 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 generally provided for school personnel, the focus is always on achieving the best possible outcomes for students.

**Physician Outreach Program**
SARRC’s Autism Spectrum Disorders Screening Kit enables physicians to effectively screen for autism spectrum disorders 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.

**VANILLA**
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. There are no costs to participate in this study.

**Illuminate**
The Illuminate study is looking at an investigational medication called lurasidone and its safety and efficacy in managing irritability associated with autism. Symptoms of irritability include aggression, tantrums and rapidly changing moods. This study begins with a 6-week double-blind period, followed by an optional 104-week open label trial. Individuals with autism between the age of 6 and 17 and their caregivers are invited to contact us for more information. There are no costs to participate in this study.

**NODA**
We are investigating the validity of a remote diagnostic assessment method for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Naturalistic Observation Diagnosis App (NODA) is a smart-phone based system that allows parents who have concerns about their child’s development to record short videos of their child’s behavior in the home and upload them to a web-based system. Clinicians then view the videos and use an online review system to complete a diagnostic checklist. NODA may expedite the current lengthy diagnostic procedures and shorten wait lists. Families with a child ages 2 to 6 and are seeking an evaluation for ASD, or were recently diagnosed with ASD, are invited to contact us for more information. There are no costs to participate in this study.

**LUMINENZ**
The LUMINENZ study is evaluating the safety and effectiveness of a digestive enzyme in mitigating some of the symptoms associated with ASD, including irritability. There are no blood draws or pills to swallow. Children ages 9 to 12 and their caregivers are invited to contact us for more information.

For more information on any of these programs or services, please contact SARRC directly at (602) 340-8717.
Perfect Game is honored to be involved with Sutton’s Strokes for Little Folks Golf Tournament benefiting the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center.

Thanks to everyone for their continued support of this worthy cause.

For more information please visit www.suttonstrokes.org
All About ASPERGER’S

For the past several years, SARRC has been working on its ThinkAsperger’s® program, which was designed to educate elementary school staff and pediatricians to “ThinkAsperger’s” when they see subtle social impairments in very young children. If undetected, those deficits may lead to more serious social deficits and a lifetime of struggle. The program aims to decrease the age of diagnosis, increase the number of individuals in support programs, reduce the effects of co-morbid conditions and improve the quality of life for individuals living with Asperger’s. Following are some statistics about Asperger’s as well as the ThinkAsperger’s program at SARRC:

- Asperger’s was first identified in 1944 by Hans Asperger. It was considered a disorder in 1992, when the World Health Organization included it in the International Classification of Mental Disorders, Tenth Edition. In 1994, it was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fourth Edition. In 2013, with much controversy, Asperger’s was no longer a separate disorder but considered part of autism spectrum disorder.

- Approximately 125 studies have examined the difference between autism and Asperger’s, 30 of these studies found they were similar, while 95 studies showed qualitative and quantitative differences between the two disorders.

- The average age of diagnosis for individuals with Asperger’s is 11.5 years, while the average age of diagnosis for autism is 5.5.

- The five most common co-morbid conditions with Asperger’s are depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, attention deficit disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder.

- Through our Physician Outreach Program, SARRC has trained 252 nurse practitioners, 93 pediatric residents and 63 first-year medical students.

- SARRC has trained 522 education professionals from 18 school districts in Arizona, and 13 additional schools regarding the early warning signs of Asperger’s.

- SARRC has distributed more than 1,000 ThinkAsperger’s Screening Kits, which include the DAVE Screening Questionnaire.

- ThinkAsperger’s, an awareness program developed at SARRC, began in 2007. The 15-item DAVE Screening Questionnaire was developed based on information from 30 individuals with Asperger’s who were diagnosed after age 6, then tested by 35 teachers from 8 elementary schools who completed questionnaires on 552 students in 3rd and 4th grade.

- SARRC has distributed more than 1,000 ThinkAsperger’s Screening Kits, which include the DAVE Screening Questionnaire.
SNAPSHOT

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2013 *(unaudited)

**ASSETS**
Current Assets $5,622,595 
Long Term Assets $8,067,757 
**TOTAL ASSETS** $13,690,353

**LIABILITIES**
Current Liabilities $656,752 
Long Term Liabilities $106,305 
**TOTAL LIABILITIES** $763,058

**NET ASSETS**
Unrestricted Net Assets $6,403,048 
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets $3,925,356 
Permanently Restricted Net Assets $2,598,890 
**TOTAL NET ASSETS** $12,927,295

Total Liabilities and Net Assets $13,690,353

Statement of Activities for the 
Period Ending December 31, 2013 *(unaudited)*

**SUPPORT & REVENUE**
Individuals & Corporations $527,410 8.4% 
Grants $187,165 3.0% 
Governmental $147,426 2.4% 
Special Events $1,446,790 23.1% 
Program Fees $3,543,895 56.7% 
Interest, Dividend & Investment $239,711 3.8% 
In-Kind Support $162,500 2.6% 
**TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE** $6,254,896 100.0%

**EXPENSES**
Salaries, Benefits & Professional Development $4,236,035 68.0% 
Contract Labor & Professional Services $370,216 5.9% 
Program Expenses $646,948 10.4% 
Postage, Printing & Marketing $79,467 1.3% 
Occupancy & Communication $239,205 3.7% 
Special Events Costs $150,777 2.4% 
In-Kind Expenses $162,500 2.6% 
Amortization & Depreciation $236,513 3.7% 
**TOTAL EXPENSES** $6,231,660 100.0%

**TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** $23,237

**EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT**
Programs 0-12 $1,562,945 25.1% 
Programs 13-Adult $1,049,046 16.8% 
Community Preschool $923,975 14.8% 
Education & Training $130,135 2.1% 
Social Enterprise $214,298 3.4% 
Research $952,255 15.3% 
Administration $462,851 7.4% 
Development/ Fundraising $936,156 15.0% 
**TOTAL EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT** $6,231,660 100.0%

*A copy of the fully audited financial statements will be available after June 30, 2014, by contacting Sean Husmoe, Chief Financial Officer, 480.603.3295*
Service Starts with Listening.

Our attention to detail and commitment to listening has made MJ Insurance not only a top insurance agency in Arizona, but ranked one of the Top 100 independently owned insurance agencies in the United States. From customized commercial insurance and employee benefits to personal insurance and bonds, you receive nationally recognized service to fulfill your needs.

2730 E. Camelback Road, Suite 250, Phoenix, AZ 85016
www.mjinsurance.com
Thank you to the entire team at News/Talk 92.3 KTAR and the generous Action for Autism sponsors for helping us show that there is so much more to individuals and families impacted by autism. For the seventh year, your leadership and community outreach efforts have been instrumental in educating the community about autism and generating support for vital SARRC programs. Many thanks also for the tremendous support we received from KTAR listeners who called in with pledges to become our Action Heroes.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS
Wells Fargo, Jaburg Wilk, Kinetico Water Systems, Arizona Diamondbacks