

PACER PARTNERS

PACER CENTER
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES™



Connecting families, friends,
donors, and staff of PACER

2007 FALL
www.PACER.org

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In the curious way that life sometimes works, Danna Mirviss found her path to PACER Center in a chance encounter. A decade ago, she settled into her seat on a Chicago-bound flight and began to talk with her seatmate. They chatted about

their families and work—and discovered they had some connections. Danna had gone to the same youth group as the woman's son; her dad and her seatmate's

husband had worked on a community project together. Danna shared that she was a sign language interpreter. Her seatmate shared that she was Paula Goldberg, executive director of PACER Center. Anyone who knows Paula knows that the next piece of conversation was an invitation to become involved. Danna took her up on it. Ten years later, she is still an enthusiastic PACER supporter and most recently served as the Benefit co-chair.

"After my second daughter was born in 1997, I was looking for something to do," Danna says, explaining why the invitation was so appealing. "I had been a sign language interpreter freelance, but it was hard to keep up skills while home with two children."

She spent the next two years giving PACER's COUNT ME IN™ puppet shows. "One of those years, I also served on the Benefit committee," she says. "In 2000 when I became pregnant with twins, I stopped doing the shows but stayed on the Benefit committee. When the twins were little, I did a lot of work from home on the Silent Auction, calling people who had donated in the past." From 2003 to 2005, she co-chaired the silent auction committee and loved it. "You're part of a team. It was wonderful," Danna says with warm enthusiasm. After a couple of years, however, "I felt like it was time for

me to move into a different position," she says, so in 2006 and 2007, she co-chaired the Benefit committee and she



Volunteer
Spotlight
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Danna Mirviss volunteered countless hours as a co-chair of PACER's 25th Annual Benefit. Her daughter, Hannah Mirviss (left), enjoyed the success of the evening with her mother.

is a co-chair for the April 26, 2008 Benefit. "Being the co-chair of the PACER Benefit is an honor," she says, noting the "fabulous work" of her co-chairs.

Though no one in her family is personally affected by disabilities, Danna was influenced in her early years by another chance connection that led her into the field. A family friend had grandparents who were deaf, and Danna fell in love with sign language. "I thought it was beautiful and thought the culture of their lives was very interesting," she says. "As I grew older, I became more curious and wanted to learn more about that."

After receiving a degree in criminal justice from American University, "I found I had an aptitude for sign language," she says. During her senior year, she was tutored by a woman who is deaf and also found a mentor who encouraged her to take a job with an organization for people who are deaf. "From there, I decided to become an interpreter," Danna says. She took two courses at Gallaudet University to study sign language and deaf culture, then went to Western Oregon State College to take the interpreter training program. Though she didn't know it at the time, her program director, Sandra Gish, was the interpreter for PACER's Benefit (and has been since 1985).

Danna is creating connections for others, as well. Coming from a family that has always been involved in the community, she's continuing the tradition with her own children. Two of her daughters helped out at the Benefit and come to PACER occasionally when their mom has work to

do for one of her committees. Even Danna's mom, Phyllis Heilicher, has become part of the effort, working for PACER as a volunteer, Advisory Board member, and supporter. Phyllis has always been active and involved in the community.

"I know how tiring and stressful parenting can be for families," Danna says. "Having a child with disabilities can put additional stress on families and marriages. I just want to help," she says.

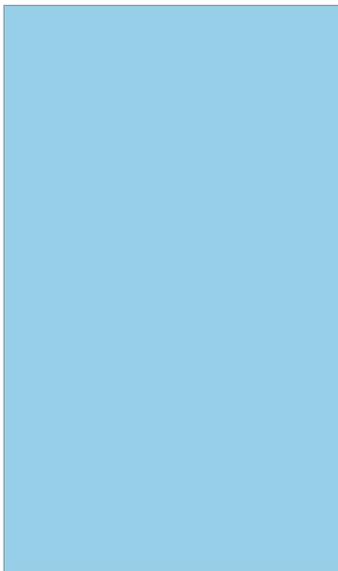
Just as her involvement with PACER began with a chance encounter, confirmation for the importance of her work and PACER's comes in unexpected ways. A neighbor, upon learning of Danna's involvement at PACER, shared that her daughter had struggled with a disability in high school. "I called PACER," the woman told her, and learned how to secure the extra help her

daughter needed. She gained the confidence to approach the school, and the school cooperated. Her daughter graduated and is now a successful adult.

"I have really enjoyed my time volunteering with PACER," Danna says, looking back at all she's accomplished over the years. "It's an exceptional organization that's outstanding. I'm proud to be part of it and to co-chair the Benefit. I plan on being involved with PACER for a long time."

Given Danna's past experience with fortuitous encounters, that involvement could occur in the most unexpected of ways. Her next chance meeting and PACER connection might happen anywhere. It could even happen to you.

PACER is an exceptional organization that's outstanding. I'm proud to be part of it and to co-chair the Benefit. I plan on being involved with PACER for a long time.
– Danna Mirviss



Danna's support crew takes advantage of the great outdoors: (clockwise from top) husband Joel; daughters Hannah, Rachel, Michelle, and Sophie Mirviss.

PACER UPCOMING EVENTS

PACER's Third Annual Family Fun Day Is Nov. 18

PACER's Third Annual Family Fun Day at the Lindbergh Center is the place to be on Sunday, Nov. 18 if you have children and your family likes to have fun!

Join PACER and friends for this exciting, accessible, and inclusive family event. Don't miss out on the return of emcee extraordinaire, Captain PACER, as he leads your family's team through fun-filled activities for children of *all* abilities.

Registration available online at www.PACER.org.



Family Fun Day!

Sunday, Nov. 18, 2007

Noon to 2:30 p.m.

The Lindbergh Center

2400 Lindbergh Dr.

Hopkins, MN 55305

www.lindbergh-center.com

Cost:

\$5 per person (lunch donated by Panera Bread)

\$25 to sponsor a family who could otherwise not attend



Turn up the heat for
PACER's
HOT Party COOL Cause
SATURDAY, FEB. 9, 2008

Featuring Christy Love
with former members of Boogie Wonderland

Tickets available online now!
Visit www.PACER.org to be a part of this HOT event!



Deandra Bardell Wins Creative Kids Art Contest

Deandra Bardell's life is filled with humor, sports, art, and the usual joys of childhood. Whether she's playing soccer in her power chair, enjoying computer games, playing with her dogs, or creating designs for greeting cards, she cheerfully embraces her life with gusto. Her passion for soccer and design projects has translated into the many successes that are evidenced by her trophies and several news features that profile the 11-year-old.

The latest in a long list of honors came Deandra's way in April. Deandra's mother, Barb Fealy, received a call from PACER Center announcing that her daughter had won PACER's

second annual Creative Kids art contest. As the winner, Deandra would have her artwork featured on PACER's 2007 greeting cards, which are sold to raise funds to help children with disabilities.

Barb kept the happy news a secret for more than a week, wanting her daughter to find out firsthand at the Benefit. Upon arrival at the Convention Center, Deandra made a bee line for the Creative Kids contest display. PACER's artist in residence, Anthony R. Whelihan, who created the contest, greeted her with the exciting news. Deandra was thrilled to see her painting featured on the cards.

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at 8 months old, Deandra was given a bleak prognosis. Undeterred, her parents immediately began looking for ways to help their daughter reach her fullest potential. When Deandra was only 18 months old, her grandmother, Elaine Fealy, brought her to PACER's Simon Technology Center, where the staff discovered she could control a computer by using a large hand switch. Deandra is now in a regular sixth-grade classroom where she is able to interact and communicate with others through assistive technology.

As for the future, Deandra is considering pursuing her interest in art. Working with water and markers, she already has designed a collection of cards that she hopes to sell someday. Winning the Creative Kids art contest and having her design published may be just the beginning.

In Deandra's Own Words

Artistic inspiration comes from many sources. When asked to describe the heroes in her life, Deandra giggles and gestures for her mom and dad to explain about her recent award-winning essay that she wrote for school. Here is what she said about her hero.



Deandra's family has steadfastly sought ways to help her achieve success. Shown here are her parents, Barb Fealy and Scott Bardell, and her 9-year-old brother, Ben. Not pictured are Deandra's two big dogs, Keo and Coco, and a fish named Flush.

My Mom, My Hero

By Deandra Bardell

The injury I had received when I was brought into this world must have also brought much sadness to my family. It was my mom who immediately took responsibility for my every comfort and need. She continues to do so to this very day.

Doctors told my parents that I would never be able to eat, that it would be impossible for me to chew and swallow. My mom put my food in a little fine-mesh pouch. This taught me how to chew the food into tiny pieces and suck through the tiny holes and swallow carefully. My mom built my first walker. She built me a floater and with it I learned to swim. When I developed a love for power soccer, she custom built my guard onto my wheelchair. We haven't missed a practice and my family is able to travel all over the country for my tournaments. With mom, I am shooting for tournaments around the world!

Psychologists and other "professionals" said that I would be dumb and always behind kids my age. My mom has a sharp mind; of course I would too! I am in all pre-advanced placement classes at my school. My mom gives in other ways, too. She has volunteered at my school and in our community as long as I can remember.

My mom wasn't going to let my brain injury limit any of our lives. I am an ordinary kid who gets to have an extraordinary life. I am inspired to push myself wherever I can. I owe all of this to my hero—my mom. Thank you for all that you are and all that you have done.

2007 PACER Greeting Cards Are Now Available

PACER's 2007 greeting cards feature the exuberant colors and melodic blends of artist Deandra Bardell, an 11-year-old who has been involved with PACER since she was a toddler.

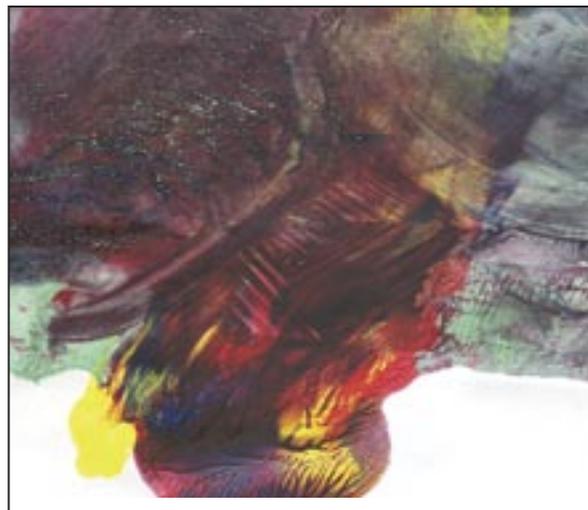
This year, the cards contain a variety of greetings to fit all occasions. Choose from Thank You, Happy Birthday, Happy Holidays, blank, or assorted packages to make any correspondence special.

Your purchase helps fund PACER projects and allows PACER to spread disability awareness into our greater community. Order your box of cards today and help PACER continue to be a "Champion for Children with Disabilities."

Deandra's award-winning art, along with that of the 10 finalists, was displayed and available for bid in the Silent Auction at PACER's 25th Annual Benefit.

Children with disabilities throughout Minnesota were invited to enter their artwork into the second annual Creative Kids contest by mail or by participating in one of two art workshops this spring. Led by artist in residence Anthony R. Whelihan, the popular workshops quickly filled beyond capacity.

Judges for the contest included Creative Kids committee members Brent Casey, Danna Mirviss, Sara Uz, and Whelihan. PACER thanks the following businesses who contributed to the greeting card project: B&B Adcrafters, Gallery Services, Gannett Offset, and Whelihan Fine Art.



Deandra's artwork graces the front of PACER's 2007 greeting card

To purchase a box of greeting cards, select the greeting card option on the enclosed envelope and mail in the order along with your check or credit card information to:

PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437

You may also order online at www.PACER.org or by calling 952-838-9000.

25th Annual PACER Benefit Shimmered with Stars, Style, and Success

More than 3,000 people gathered on May 5 to see “Dreamgirls” star Jennifer Hudson perform at PACER’s 25th Annual Benefit. As guests arrived, they inspected exciting Live Auction items displayed in the lobby, bought Tiffany & Co. Blue Bags from roving sales people, and eagerly shopped the much-anticipated PACER Silent Auction featuring nearly 1,000 fantastic finds.

WCCO-TV anchors Amelia Santaniello and Frank Vascellaro returned as emcees and set the stage with humor and style. PACER’s video brought the needs of children with disabilities into focus before auctioneer Karen Sorbo started the lively bidding for the Live Auction.

When Academy Award winner Hudson took the stage and entertained guests with her vibrant performance and dynamic vocals, the auditorium rocked. Her repertoire of songs and amazing encore left the audience and media so wowed that

reporters and columnists wrote about the event into the following week.

“The Benefit has again earned the reputation as one of the premier events in the Twin Cities,” said a happy Don McNeil, PACER Board president. “It was wonderful to see such a large crowd come out to support our PACER family.”

PACER is deeply grateful to the Benefit committee members, Corporate Sponsor committee members, generous sponsors, the 25th anniversary angels, dedicated volunteers, and attendees who are all “Champions for Children with Disabilities.”

**Mark Your Calendars
for PACER’s 26th Annual
Benefit on April 26th, 2008!**



Imagine being whisked away to Los Cabos, Mexico aboard this private, nine-seat Falcon jet donated by Jet Choice. PACER’s Board president, Don McNeil, and his wife, Julianne, recently enjoyed this dream vacation as guests of the successful bidder of this fabulous Live Auction package of PACER’s 25th Annual Benefit.

Right: Benefit guests (standing from left) Judy Jaffee, Jay Cavanagh, Betsy Cavanagh and, (seated) Elliot Jaffee of US Bank, enjoy a gourmet dinner served in the Seasons Rotunda. This separately ticketed event sold out to 300 delighted patrons who gave rave reviews. US Bank was the Benefit Ticket Sponsor,



Above: First time attendees (from left) Kathleen and Geoff Allen and Lisa and Greg Appelhof were among the 3,000-plus PACER supporters who caught the "rising star" performance of Jennifer Hudson.



(Right) PACER thanks the Benefit Committee co-chairs (from left) Danna Mirviss, Colleen McGough Wood, and Jessica Broyles.



The Silent Auction auditorium was filled with enthusiastic shoppers bidding on treasures.

Frey Foundation Grant Challenges You to Support PACER's Housing Project

Through the generosity of the Frey Foundation, PACER has received a one-time grant of \$15,000 for its Housing Project—and a challenge to double the gift. In addition to helping PACER, Mary and Jim Frey, directors of the Foundation, want to encourage others to give.

Toward that end, they will match gifts from new donors, previous donors who contribute 10 percent more than their largest previous contribution to PACER, and previous donors who have not contributed for two or more years.

The Housing Project assists families who are exploring affordable, accessible housing options for their youth with disabilities. Last year, PACER advocates answered almost 2,000 requests for information and assistance about housing for young adults with disabilities.

PACER is thrilled to have this opportunity. Are you up for the challenge?

To donate to this important project and help PACER earn the full \$30,000, visit www.PACER.org and click the "donate" link on the top right of the screen, or send a check, payable to PACER, to:

PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437

Thank you!

Write in PACER on Your United Way Pledge

The United Way allows employees to support PACER Center through their workplace campaigns. PACER benefits from the donor choice programs of the Greater Twin Cities United Way, Tri-State United Way, and others.

Please consider writing in "PACER Center" under "Other" when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections. If your pledge card does not have a defined area to nominate PACER Center as the beneficiary organization, you may still write in PACER as your choice recipient.

PACER is not a United Way agency organization and therefore does not receive support from their general funds. Your specified support, however, helps PACER continue to respond to the 36,000 requests for assistance received each year.

"Identifying PACER as your choice organization provides important funds to PACER while still contributing to your overall workplace campaign," says Mary Schrock, PACER's development director. "Your donation helps PACER open doors for children with all disabilities."

Please consider writing in "PACER Center" under "Other" when a United Way campaign pledge card is presented for your selections.

Other **PACER Center**

Thank you for helping us serve families of children with all disabilities.

PACER's Cars with Heart Donation Program Helps Kids—and You

When you donate your used car, truck, or boat to PACER's Cars with Heart program, everyone wins. Your donation raises money that supports PACER programs and services for children with disabilities—and you gain a tax deduction.

"Many people are tired of spending too much on repairs, unhappy with the trade-in value offered, or simply want an opportunity to help," said Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director. "By donating a vehicle to PACER, you are

making a tremendous difference in the lives of children with disabilities."

Here's how it works:

1. Gather your keys, vehicle title, and lien release (if applicable).
2. Call PACER (952-838-9000) to arrange a delivery or pick up time. We'll give you a receipt at the time of exchange.
3. After the vehicle has been sold, you'll receive a written acknowledgement of the final value of the donation. The letter will serve as your receipt for tax purposes.

Plan for PACER with a Bequest in Your Will and Estate Planning

PACER is fortunate to have supporters who care so deeply about children with disabilities that they name PACER Center in their wills. Sandra and Daniel Buendorf are two such supporters. In a recent letter, they graciously offered to share their motivation for doing so.

Giving to worthy causes is built into our family structure. It goes back more than a few generations. Once a person starts giving, the giving increases and includes not only money, but time and talent. We will be givers until the day we die and, through our will, our giving will not stop on the day we die. When our bodies are laid to rest, a number of charities will be getting letters from our law office which will include financial gifts to be used as they choose.

We heard about PACER from our lawyer and from a young boy who served as a ringbearer at a wedding I performed. God has been good, and we will share that goodness with others as we live and when we die. We encourage you to do the same.

Pastor Dan and Sandra Buendorf

A bequest in your will provides a gift that lives after you. Bequests can be in cash, real estate, securities, or other assets, and they may be deducted from your estate taxes. PACER Center, Inc., is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation in Minnesota.

For more information, contact Mary Schrock, PACER's development director, at 952-838-9000, or an attorney who represents your interests.

PACER thanks the Buendorfs and all the other supporters who have made PACER a beneficiary in their wills.



Sandra and Pastor Dan Buendorf's generosity will live on through their bequest to PACER.

Federal, Military Employees Can Donate to PACER During Workplace Charity Drive

If you are a federal civilian, military, or postal employee, you can now contribute to PACER through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) charity drive at your workplace. You'll find PACER listed in your local campaign booklet under "National/International Independent" organizations. To designate your gift to PACER, use code 12272.

This year marks the first time PACER has been included on the national portion of CFC's list. Each year tens of thousands of charities apply to participate. Only those that meet strict standards of eligibility are approved.

CFC is the largest workplace charity campaign in the country and the only campaign authorized to solicit and collect contributions from federal employees. Nearly 4 million federal employees and military personnel are able to contribute to the charities of their choice during the annual CFC charity drive.

PACER Thanks Panera for Partnership and Support

In the five years since Panera chose PACER as its charity partner, Panera's Operation Dough-Nation® giving program has successfully raised thousands of dollars to support PACER projects. In addition to their financial support, Panera's in-kind donations have made a tremendous difference. This past year Panera fed more than 200 people at PACER's Family Fun Day, provided lunch for monthly Benefit planning meetings, and supplied food and beverages to 400 volunteers on the day of the PACER Benefit. Thank you, Panera!



Jim Rand of Panera Bread recently presented this year's Operation Dough-Nation® check to PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg (left) and Development Director Mary Schrock. This generous check represents cash contributions made in the restaurants along with a matching gift from Panera. Thank you to Panera and to all who put money in the collection boxes at Panera cashier stations.

PACER Center Unveils New Brand Identity

Times change, and PACER is excited to be changing with them. When PACER's Marketing Advisory Board recommended last fall that PACER update its image to better reflect its mission and role in the community, PACER, with the help of Scott Heimes, sought the advice of OLSON, a Minneapolis creative agency that specializes in branding. The result is a beautiful new logo, tagline, and design for its materials.

With services generously donated by OLSON, the re-branding process began with focus groups conducted with PACER parents, board members, volunteers, donors, and others. The interviews revealed to Olson that all the

participants saw PACER as a "Champion for Children with Disabilities." With that, PACER's new brand identity and tagline were born.

Others also donated creative services to the re-branding project. Straight Line Theory, an information architecture and usability consultant, helped redesign PACER's Web site for increased accessibility, and design agency Gestalt provided consulting services.

PACER thanks Scott Heimes for leading the project along with the following Marketing Advisory Board members: Bob Anderson, Michelle Fitzgerald, Robert Goldberg, Jack Guze, Laura Keller, Michael Keller, John Lick, Mariko Miyamoto, Jessica Phillips, Paul Thibeau, Nick Tietz, and Scott Young. Special thanks to Kevin DiLorenzo and his staff at OLSON, www.oco.com, for their excellent pro-bono work for PACER.

Mann Symposium Draws Crowds, Accolades

More than 600 educators and parents attended the second annual Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium for Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities on Aug. 15. Led by five national keynote speakers, the Symposium increased awareness and identified strategies for responding to mental health and learning disabilities in children at home and in the classroom.

"Roberta Mann Benson has a passion for raising awareness about adult and children's mental health and learning disabilities among teachers, parents, and the general public. The community is fortunate to have an individual who is so committed to educating the public about these important issues," said Mary Schrock, PACER Center development director.



PACER thanks Roberta Mann Benson, sponsor of the Symposium, for providing general education teachers, administrators, and parents with the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of children's mental health and learning disabilities. To her right is Jeff Q. Bostic, MD, Ed.D., one of the national keynote speakers.

(Right) National keynote speaker LeDerick R. Horne captivated the audience with his motivating experiences of overcoming disabilities to achieve success as a poet, founder of a property management company, and board chair of Project Eye-to-Eye, a mentoring program for students with disabilities.



PACER directors converse with Symposium attendees. (From left to right) Mary Schrock, PACER development director, Barbara Gage, Mary Holmes, Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director, and Nancy Bergerson.



Thank You!

PACER appreciates the hundreds of volunteers, board and advisory board members, donors, corporate and foundation sponsors, and staff who contribute their time, energy, and resources to PACER. You are all "Champions for Children with Disabilities." Thank you for your vital role in helping children with disabilities at no charge to families.

We welcome your ideas, energy, and participation. To be involved at PACER, call Mary Schrock, development director, 952-838-9000.



Mary Schrock
Development Director

FALL 2007

PACER's Annual Phonathon

An annual fall event that brings PACER volunteers and staff together for friendraising and fundraising!

Nov. 18

PACER's Family Fun Day

Children of all ages are encouraged to spend an afternoon at the Lindbergh Center with PACER. Details on page 3.

WINTER 2008

Feb. 9

HOT Party, COOL Cause

PACER's HOT event warms up COOL Minnesota evenings. In its fifth year, this promises to be the best one yet!

SPRING 2008

April 26

PACER's 26th Annual Benefit

Don't miss out on this premier event of the spring.

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PACER CENTER 
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Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

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